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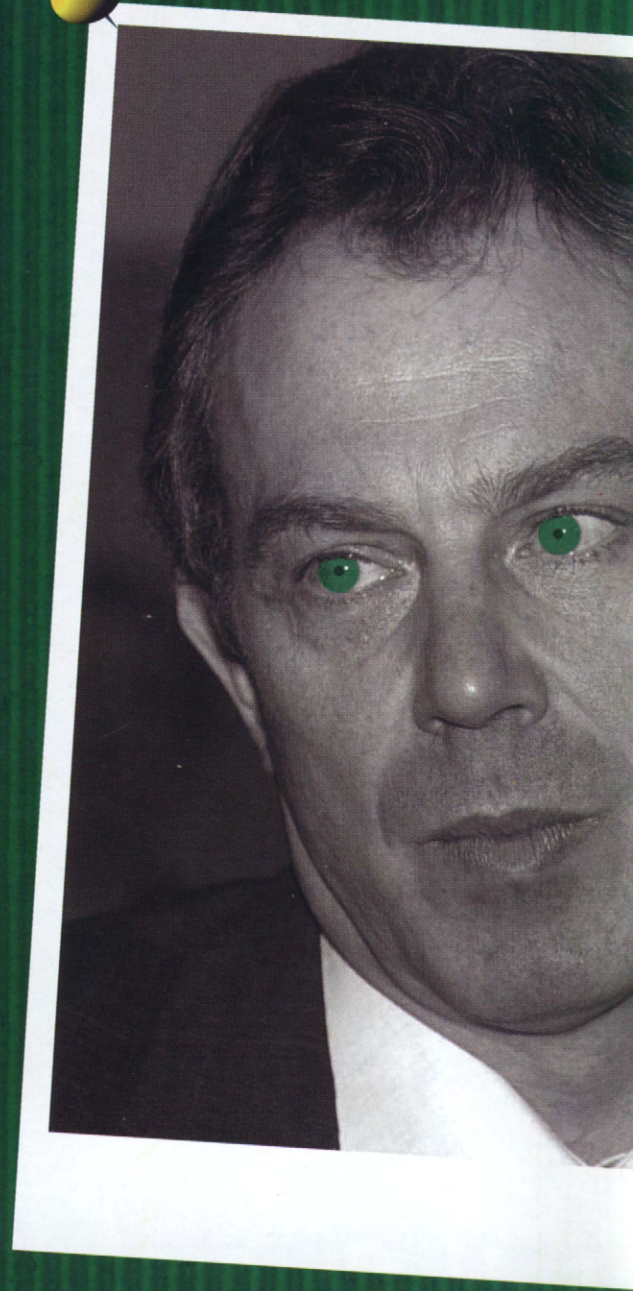
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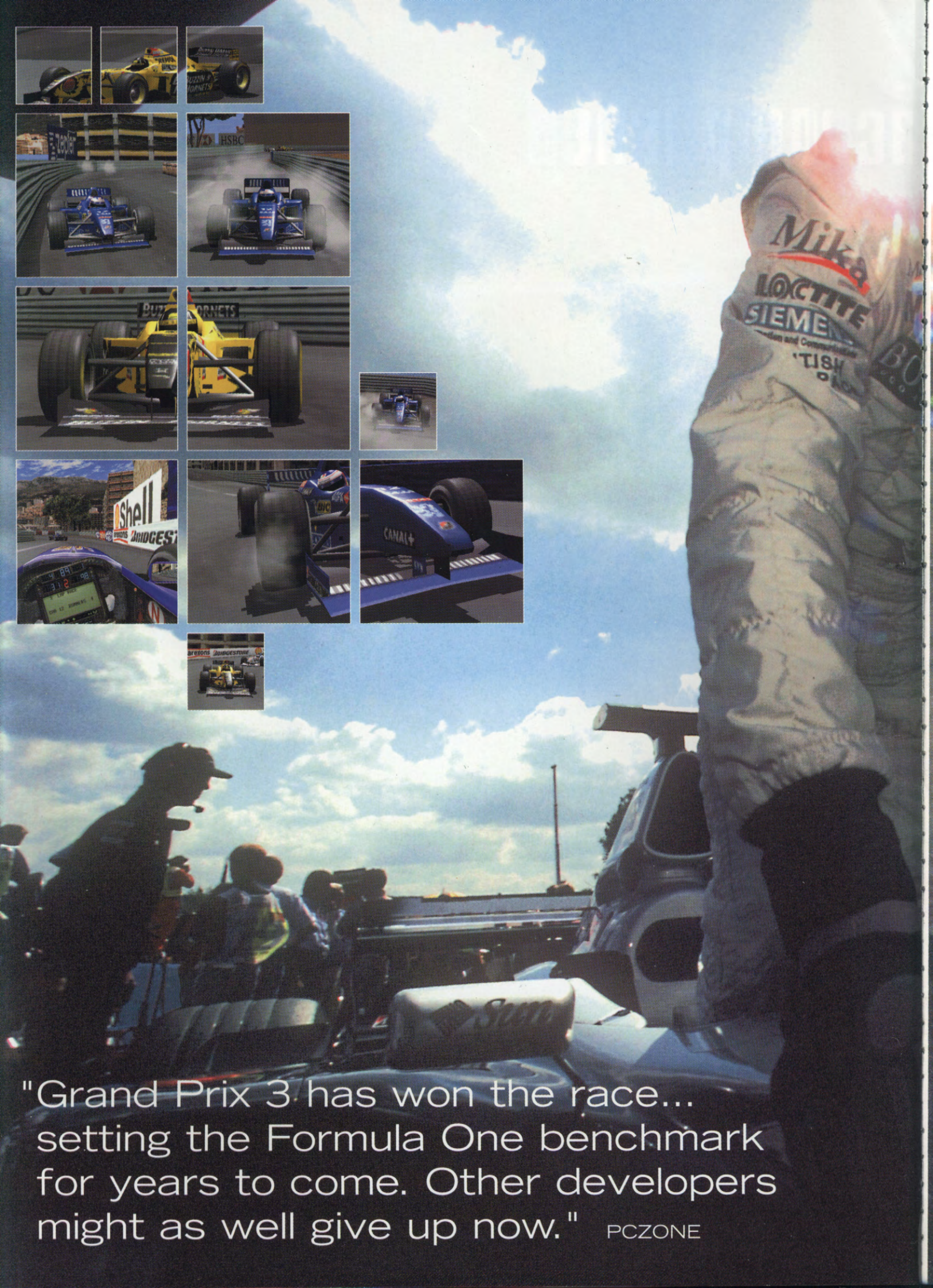
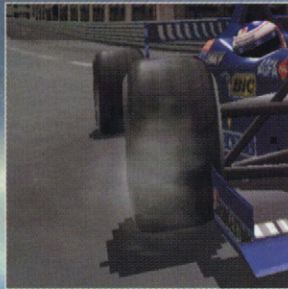
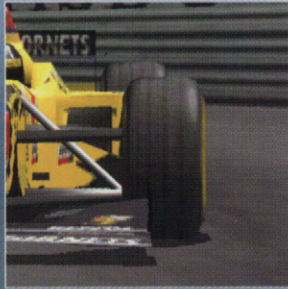


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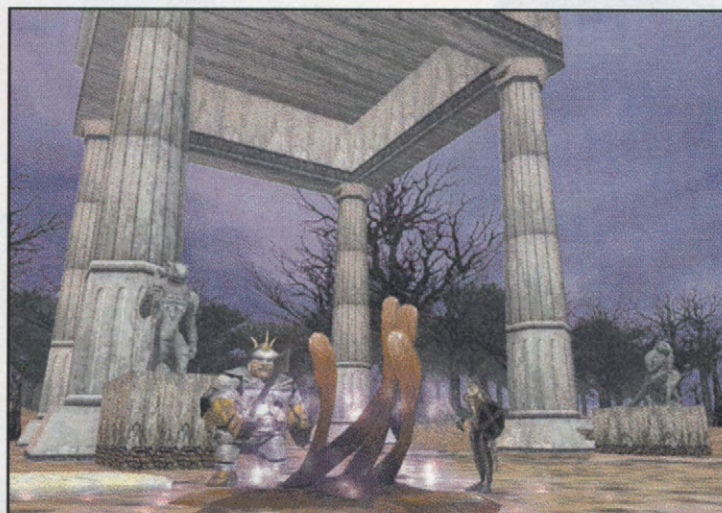


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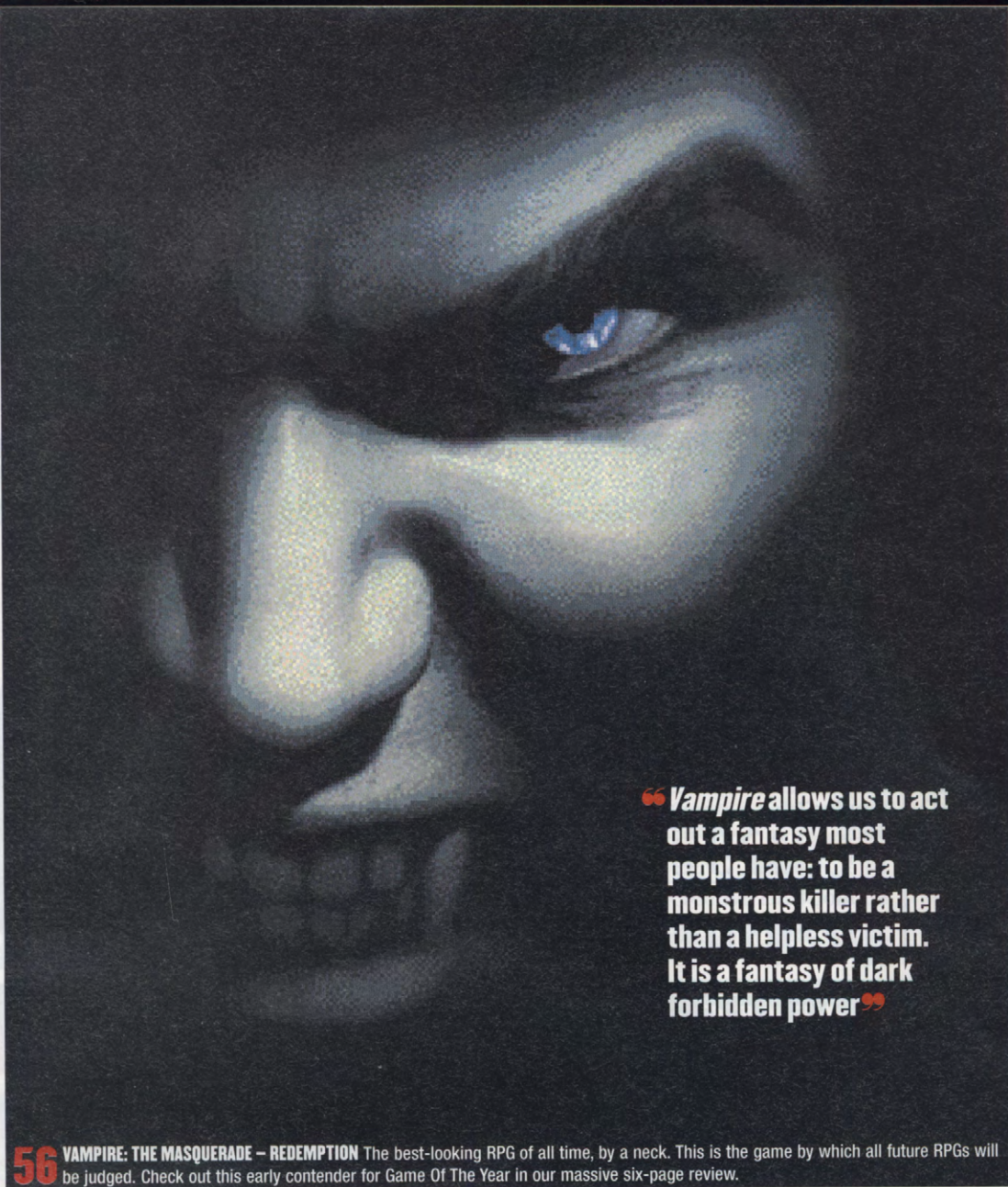
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MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2

PLUS

FLYING HEROES
GROUND CONTROL
WARLORDS BATTLECRY
STAR TREK: ARMADA
DIE HARD TRILOGY 2
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BEYOND OVERLORD

AND...

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WIN! **THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS** Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (92), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.** The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The editor's decision is final. Closing date: Thursday 27 July 2000. The winner of our June (#90) cover compo was Mr Mathew Beakes of Northumberland, who wins something from the ZONE prizes cupboard for sending in the correct answer to our last little teaser.



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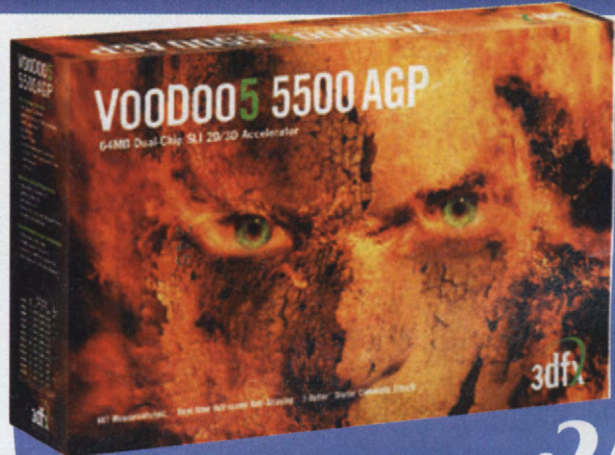
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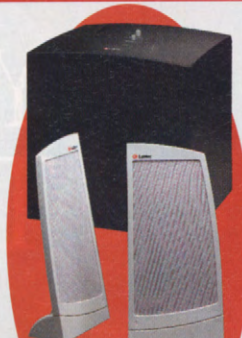
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ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT?



Despite the fact we reviewed *Daikatana* last month, it continues to be at the heart of all things controversial in the *ZONE* office. After continuous delays, it finally arrived in the our office for review last issue, looking years out of date and less than impressive. Rigorous play testing by Dave Woods revealed a game that was not exactly a total disaster, but was certainly destined to take its place beside the also-rans in the first-person shoot 'em up genre. We were disappointed. Little did we know at that stage that our *Daikatana*-related troubles had only just begun. HMV ran an advert last issue with a 'quote' taken from the June '98 issue of *PC*

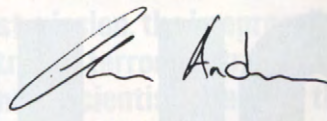
ZONE in which we said the game was "absolutely brilliant". This quote was taken from a news item, the exact wording was thus: "As these exclusive new screenshots show, *Daikatana* is currently looking absolutely brilliant." Well, that may have been the case two years ago, but as our review last issue clearly stated, *Daikatana* is not brilliant by any stretch of the imagination, quite the opposite, in fact. We have been

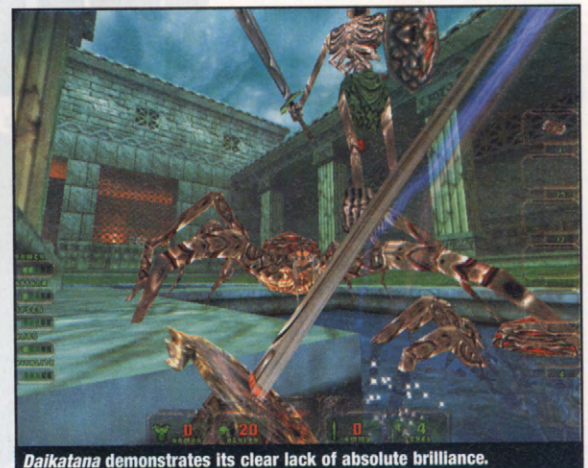
“For the record then, let me take this opportunity to announce to the world that *Daikatana* is definitely not brilliant, which is why it was awarded a distinctly average score of 53 per cent”

inundated with emails from concerned readers about this, asking if there was some mistake. We approached Eidos and its comment was: "We take quotes from the press throughout a game's development and store them. One of our marketing people must have used an

early quote before realising you did not like the game." For the record then, let me take this opportunity to announce to the world that *Daikatana* is definitely not brilliant, which is why it was awarded a distinctly average score of 53 per cent last month. On a related note, we stated last issue that our *Daikatana* review was exclusive. As far as we were concerned, it was exclusive. Unfortunately, we were told by Eidos that a rival magazine reviewed the US version of the game without its permission, thus scuppering our UK exclusive. There was nothing we could do about this, and I can only say we proclaimed the review to be exclusive in good faith and did not mean to mislead anyone with our cover claims last month. That then, is the final word on *Daikatana*. If I never see the thing again it will be about 50 million years too soon.

Enjoy the issue, see you all again next month.


Chris Anderson,
 Editor



Daikatana demonstrates its clear lack of absolute brilliance.



"...98, ...99, ...100.
Coming - ready or not!"

THAT'S GOOD GEAR MAN...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Konami
PUBLISHER Microsoft
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Late 2000
WEBSITE www.metalgear.com

IN SUMMARY

A first-person stealth-based action game along the lines of *Thief*. The atmosphere is also very tense, leading many fans to compare it to *Resident Evil*.

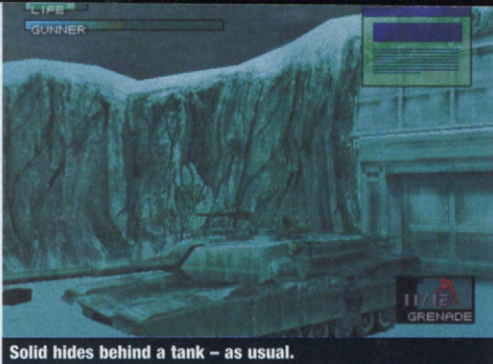
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Metal Gear Solid sent millions of PlayStation owners into fits of ecstasy proclaiming that the PlayStation was the best games machine on the planet. Well, now MGS is on the PC and it's going to be even better. Hah.

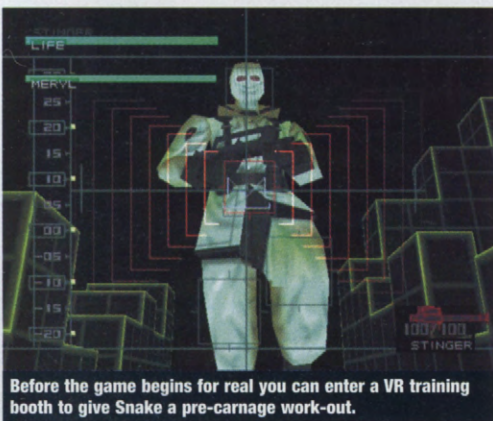
METAL GEAR SOLID

With a host of awards under its ammo belt, the PlayStation's espionage blockbuster is finally coming to the PC

★ **SOLID AS A ROCK** Keith Pullin

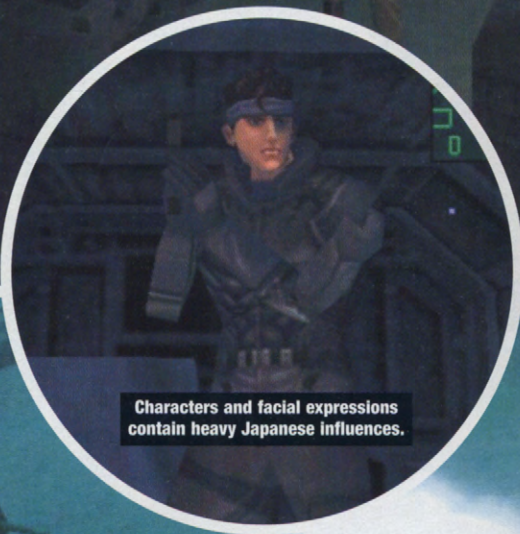


Solid hides behind a tank – as usual.



Before the game begins for real you can enter a VR training booth to give Snake a pre-carnage work-out.

Prepare to dodge bullets.



Characters and facial expressions contain heavy Japanese influences.



Konami promises plenty of cinematic action sequences.



One of the many interesting henchmen out to stop you from saving the world.

If the *Resident Evils* of this world left you quivering and gibbering in the dark, *Metal Gear Solid* will undoubtedly induce a similar terror. This, the most recent instalment of the long running console-based *Metal Gear* series of games, has actually been out on the PlayStation for about 18 months now – and as you should already know, the game was a monster hit worldwide.

Courtesy of a joint venture between Konami and Microsoft it's now the PC's turn to host the show. So just what is all the fuss about then? Well, the story goes something like this. In his latest and most dangerous mission, the irrepressible Solid Snake (a covert operations specialist as opposed to a 20ft boa-constrictor or 20in porn star) must infiltrate a terrorist stronghold, rescue a few feeble-minded scientists, destroy the infamous Metal Gear Rex (an enormous walking nuclear missile launcher), get the girl – or one of

them anyway, and then roar off in a F-16 while the base turns into a gigantic fireball behind him.

MGS is rip-roaring stuff: Alistair MacLean could have written it and Pierce Brosnan could have starred. Most of your time is spent hugging walls, crawling under tanks and dodging searchlights. One mistake and you're history. Enemy soldiers possess such finely tuned AI that they follow sound and footprints and even

“In his latest mission, the irrepressible Solid Snake must infiltrate a terrorist stronghold, rescue a few feeble-minded scientists, destroy the infamous Metal Gear Rex, get the girl, and then roar off in a F-16”

roll grenades into tunnels and holes if they suspect anything untoward.

And then there are guns. *MGS* features more than 30 weapons, including machine guns, sniper rifles and rocket launchers. There's also a huge selection of tools ranging

from night vision goggles to body armour to cigarettes – and you'll be surprised at just how useful they can be.

The real question is how will the PC version be different? Firstly, there's support for screen resolutions of up to 1,024x768, meaning that graphically the game is far sharper and more detailed than its console counterpart. Secondly, and much more significantly, the PC

offers a first-person as opposed to third-person view. Apparently this option was available in the Japanese PlayStation version, but you had to complete the game before it could be unlocked. No such gruelling effort needed here, although it has to be

stressed that the console version was third-person for a reason, and that very good reason was so that you could easily hide behind walls and watch enemy soldiers approaching before leaping out of your hiding place to break their necks.

Hopefully that's not going to affect the gameplay too much, although the feeling here at *ZONE Towers* is that the PC version will veer towards action rather than strategy – a theory bolstered by news that players can save whenever they like instead of at the end of each stage. Whether this is good or bad news completely depends on your own preferences, of course.

What is good news though, is the revelation that PC gamers will have access to literally hundreds of missions due to the inclusion of a mission pack as part of the deal.

MGS is due out towards the end of the year, and rest assured we'll get into gear to bring you more news when we have it. [X]

TOP STORY



With half a million years of Earth's history to cover, gamers will be playing this for months.

THROUGH THE AGES WITH...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Stainless Steel Studios
PUBLISHER Sierra
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Early 2001
WEBSITE www.sierra.com

IN SUMMARY

Guide your carefully chosen civilisation through 12 epochs covering 500,000 years of the Earth's history, from clubs to lasers, arrows to ICBMs, light spears to heavy tanks. Research 150 technological advances, with 150 different military units to fight, terrorise or sneak your way to ultimate victory.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Each civilisation will have its own strengths and weaknesses, while each military unit can be upgraded in terms of attack, defence and range, bringing endless strategic options and battles over land, sea and air. Heroes are also included, four in each epoch, and there will be no less than 12 different resources to harvest and collect. All you need to know.

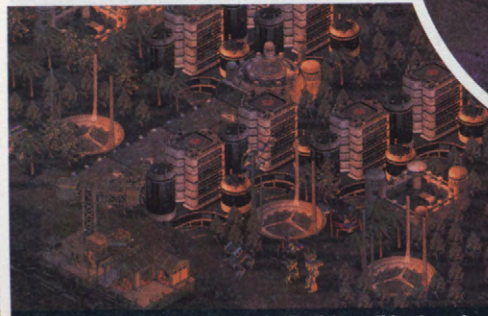
EMPIRE EARTH

How about a real-time strategy game with the complexity of *Civilization*, the graphical beauty of *Age Of Empires* and the intense action of *Command & Conquer*? Too good to be true? Sierra doesn't think so... **EARTHBOUND** Andrew Wright

Most units are made up of only a few polygons, so they are as smooth as *Total Annihilation* and as detailed as *Age Of Empires*.



Days and nights will pass and so will the seasons, through all of which your units will have to adapt.



Earth faces a bleak future if *Empire Earth* is anything to go by.



The sea battles make *Age Of Empires* look like *Battleship*.



Holding out for a hero.

Custom scenarios mean you can stick to WWII if that's what takes your fancy.



Skoda unveils its latest hatchback in the year 2340.



Fight over land, sea and air.

Empire Earth looks like two strategy game classics – *Civilization* and *Age Of Empires* – rolled into one, and it also comes from pretty good stock. Boston, Massachusetts, in fact, home of one Rick Goodman, head honcho at Stainless Steel Studios and lead designer on *Age Of Empires*. First off, *Empire Earth* is going to be big. Huge in fact, with massive randomly generated maps and varied terrain types. It will encompass half a million years of human history with a dozen epochs, along much the same line as *Age Of Empires*. Secondly, Goodman wanted *Empire Earth* to satisfy two types of gamer, the empire builders and the conquerors, something that no real-time strategy game has so far managed to do. It will offer several paths to victory, either through outright conquest or by building a Wonder. *Empire Earth* will feature a dozen different epochs from the Stone Age

through to the 24th century. Each epoch will have associated technologies, as well as 'real-life' heroes such as Alexander The Great, Napoleon, Patton and so on. The heroes will help a side in several different ways, from shortening build times to boosting defence or adding to attack factors. There will be four heroes in each epoch – two construction types and two combat types. Queen Elizabeth I, for instance, will speed up building in nearby cities, while Julius Caesar will add a combat bonus to his units. Players will be able to create and customise their own civilisations using

to 16 players possible, but there will be a population cap on the total number of units allowed in order to avoid slowing the game down. There will be 12 different resources available to collect, although some, such as oil, will only be available in certain epochs and with the correct technology. Other features will include disasters such as earthquakes, floods and disease in single-player mode and places like hospitals, which will improve the citizens' healing rates. A lot of thought has gone into the naval combat with boats and ships

“If the game plays as well as it looks, Sierra may have found the ultimate in real-time strategy...”

a points allocation system for attributes such as military strength, diplomacy and science, as well as playing the 12 ready-made civilisations. Naturally, the game will have the full range of multiplayer options, with up

having two sets of hit points, one for the hull and the other for the rigging. Rigging damage will immobilise a unit, hull damage will sink it. Perhaps the most important feature of the game, though, will be that naval and

other units will be upgradeable with ten different attributes for each, helping to differentiate each civilisation's units and making combat more interesting. Micro-management will be kept to a minimum, especially with aircraft, as they can be told to bomb an area or building, return to reload and attack again. The graphics in *Empire Earth* look nice and smooth, as each unit is made up of only a few polygons to keep the frame count up. And each one will have its own unique – and quite spectacular – death animation and signature sound. If the game plays as well as it looks, Sierra may have found the ultimate in real-time strategy... **PCZ**

CRASH & BURN

NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



If you'd care to flick through the magazine past the reviews (so long as you read it all later),

you'll notice my evil twin has taken residence in *PC ZONE's* new online section. I thought I'd point that out in case you were wondering what had happened to news on mods or online games that are coming up. And now for something completely different...

Although I'm not adverse to the odd space-bound dogfight, I'm not much of a flight sim fan. Even so, news that another flight sim has bitten the dust (*Attack Squadron*, see story opposite) leaves me wondering if the genre has any future. After *B-17 2* is released Hasbro will be pulling out of the genre, EA seems to be too, and apart from a few online sims there don't seem to be any new flight games on the horizon, apart from Microsoft's *Combat Flight Sim 2* and Rowan's *Battle Of Britain*.

It's easy to see why (if you're one of those hateful marketing types). Flight sims don't sell in the volumes that publishers such as EA and Hasbro demand.

However, I like to remain upbeat. In my view, with many developers turning to the Internet to distribute their games, innovative flight sims will still appear and there are always other publishers willing to take them on. Like role-playing games a couple of years ago, the flight sim genre is just going through a bad patch. Give it a year or so and they will be back.

Finally, I would just like to point out that it seems like our all-new-and-improved website is finally getting the overhaul treatment and should be ready to go live in a couple of months. That's not to say the old site is being left to rot. It will still be updated on a daily basis and if you are clamouring to chat to other *PC ZONE* regulars while the chat forum is down, why not visit the *PC ZONE* Readers Forum at <http://pub12.ezboard.com/fpczr67723discussions>. Our eternal thanks go out to Mike Price for setting the whole thing up.

THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P:22



ChartTrack

WILD WEST SHOOT-OUT

Desperados and Gunslinger

P:20



The final game from Looking Glass Studios – *Thief II: The Metal Age*.

THROUGH WITH LOOKING GLASS

Award-winning developer of *Thief II* closes down

Looking Glass Studios, developer of the *Thief* and *Flight Unlimited* series of games, has closed its doors and shut up shop for good, due in part to poor financial results. The news comes after an open letter from designer Randy Smith was posted across the Internet: "Yes it's true, Looking Glass has gone out of business. Sadly, there is a low chance that *Thief 3* will ever see the light of day, and it's even less likely that if it did, a majority of Looking Glass folks would be involved. I hope I'm wrong, but I think that's the sad truth."

Speaking of the direction *Thief 3* was headed Smith continued: "We were going to do this whole open-ended, self-directed city thing, where you get to wander around the city and steal at your leisure."

With a team that has worked on *Ultima Underworld* and *System Shock*, Looking Glass staff have been responsible for some of the best ever PC games, culminating last year with *System Shock 2*, co-developed by Irrational Games, many of whom are ex-Looking Glass employees. Creative director at Irrational, Ken Levine, was quick to mourn the passing of one of PC gaming's most creative developers: "A large number of our roster is drawn from former Looking Glass staff, and it is certainly an honour to be thought of in the same breath as such an extraordinary company. We will certainly strive to carry on making

games in the tradition of the great place where most of us started out."

As to Looking Glass's financial problems, we were aware that both *System Shock 2* and *Thief II* underachieved in terms of sales and although Eidos was reportedly fixing a deal to buy into the developer, the deal seems to have fallen through.

As well as *Thief 3*, Looking Glass was also working on a flight sim to complement its own *Flight Unlimited* series of games. *Jane's Attack Squadron* was to have been published by Electronic Arts and although it seemed as though development would continue in the light of the Looking Glass closure, EA has since cancelled the game. And after dropping *Jane's A-10 Warthog* earlier this year it seems that another major publisher sees fit to drive another nail in the coffin for the flight sim genre. There is hope, however, that another publisher will pick up Looking Glass's last final game.

Hopes of a sequel to *System Shock 2* remain.



WIN! EURO 2000 GOODIES

Signed shirts & games up for grabs

P:16



MAN WHO KNOWS

The latest industry gossip

P:30



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?

Three more games that should've been here by now

P:31



HOTSHOTS

Big games and even bigger pictures

P:32



PCZ

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

EA takes the lead in the PC games packaging revolution

Proving once again that where EA leads, the rest of the sheep follow, the company confirmed that all its future titles will eschew oversized cardboard boxes in favour of the more streamlined DVD-style packaging used by the film industry's latest medium.

In a rather egotistical statement to the press, EA Europe's vice president for marketing, Frank Sagnier, explained the decision as being both commercially and environmentally friendly. "EA has a long tradition of teaching the interactive entertainment sector to think outside the box. Now, quite literally, we are bringing every aspect of our industry into the digital age. For years consumers have been sold high-tech products in low-tech cardboard boxes and then thrown these boxes away as soon as they get



As well as new titles, EA will release its back catalogue in DVD boxes, which should mean more choice on store shelves.

course mean an end to *Ultima*-style free gifts and weighty manuals – further indication that the hardcore flight simulation genre is well and truly dead.

“EA has a long tradition of teaching the interactive entertainment sector to think outside the box”

EA EUROPE'S VICE PRESIDENT FOR MARKETING, FRANK SAGNIER

their games home. To carry on using boxes makes neither economic nor ecological sense. For retailers as much as consumers, the cardboard box is a literal waste of space.” This would of

Naturally enough, the rest of the industry was quick to jump on the packaging bandwagon. Infogrames claims to have already been looking at DVD boxes for a while now, while



After *The World Is Not Enough* DVD film, comes the DVD game.

Take 2 Interactive positively confirmed its commitment to the format. “We are very definitely in favour of DVD style packaging for PC titles,” commented chief publishing officer Gary Lewis. “It’s the obvious step forward for the modern games industry. The look of DVD packaging re-emphasises the dated, pre-historic sheer bulk of the ancient boxes. It’s big content that sells a game, not a big box, so yes we will make the shift later this year.”

Havas Interactive played its cards a little closer to its chest, although a statement from George Georgiou, UK

product manager, seemed to indicate that a move was more than likely. “A move towards standardisation of PC CD-ROM packaging can only be a good thing for all concerned. Most importantly, for the consumer it would bring an end to the confusion that undoubtedly results from entering a store and being presented with many different types of packaging for one format. Would PlayStation have been as successful with various sizes of packaging? One thinks not.”

The move is expected to begin sometime in October with the re-release of *F1 2000*.

DOOM'S DARK REVENGE

Although the rumours have been circulating for months, id Software's John Carmack has finally come clean about his next project: “We are working on a new *Doom* game focusing on the single-player game experience and using brand new technology in almost every aspect. That is all we are prepared to say about the game,” he announced in a recent update.

The idea to commence work on *Doom* came about during *Quake III*'s development and work has been going on in parallel with the *Quake III* mission pack, bringing about some turmoil within the id camp as to whether the game should go ahead. The game, due to use a new 3D engine, is only in the early design stages, so we are unlikely to see any screenshots before the end of the year.



JDoom is a 3D version of the original *Doom* games, from www.newdoom.com.

CHAMP MAN FOREVER

And the wait for *Championship Manager 4* will be

Eidos Interactive has finally made the announcement all bleary-eyed armchair managers have been praying to the footballing gods for, with the news that it has signed Sport Interactive's next three *Championship Manager* titles. The first two will be updates, *CM 00/01* this autumn and a special *10th Anniversary* edition next year. *CM4*, the first in the series to boast full online multiplayer gameplay, won't appear until 2002.

CM 00/01 will have ten new leagues (including the Welsh one) and enough new features to keep us going until the next instalment. We should have full details in the next issue. As for *CM4*, we quizzed the Collyers as to how the multiplayer side of things would work and whether they would need to simplify the game to make it work.

"Absolutely not," says Oliver, "we intend to bring the full *Champ Man* experience to the online game." He's not worried about the online footie games that will appear before *CM4* (like *Player Manager Online*) either. "In the same way that *Champ Manager* wasn't the first football management game, but is widely acknowledged to be the best, we won't be the first online football management game but we still intend to come out on top. Other

companies write football management games because they see the success of *Champ Man* and want a slice of the cake. So they hire some dudes to write one, and these people probably just see it as a stepping stone in their games industry career. We write football management games because we love doing it."

He has good reason to feel confident. A fully working version of *CM* that you can play against other people over the Web is what everyone has been dreaming of. The fact that they are taking so much time proves that they're determined to get it right. And anyone who complains that they'll just be updating data and charging the price of a full game clearly doesn't understand either the *Championship Manager* experience or the work that Sports Interactive puts into each version. It might not have a new engine and a completely different look, but we can safely say all the new features will be enough to justify its assured number one position in the sales charts. And, just in case you're wondering, Oliver adds that "the chances of us including a 3D graphics engine into *CM4* are about the same as the chances of Everton winning next season's Premiership." So now you know.

Champ Men Oliver (fore) and Paul Collyer.



Even Motty doesn't have this much access to information.

A dream start for the Ukrainian lad.



ENGLAND SHIRTS AND COPIES OF CM 99/00 SIGNED BY THE ENGLAND EURO 2000 SQUAD

Although by now the boys of the Euro 2000 England squad will have returned home after losing on penalties in the quarter finals (yes we did write this before the first kick was made), you can't fault Eidos as one of the team sponsors for their commitment to the cause. Inside the team's hotel in Belgium, Eidos set up a games room, featuring all their hits, including *Tomb Raider* and *Urban Chaos*. Each member of the squad also received a free GameBoy Colour, which although unlikely to increase their footballing skills, may well have had an effect on morale. Of course, if England are still in it, no doubt Eidos will take some of the glory, and why not we say.

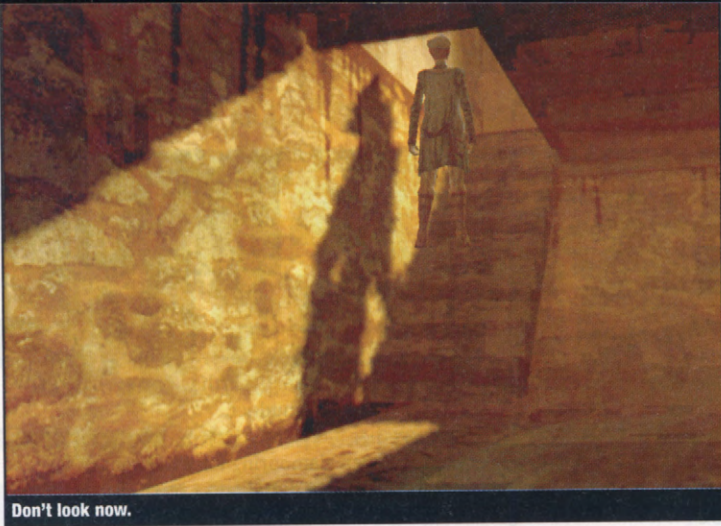
However, in between all off-the-pitch gaming, the England team did manage to find the time to scrawl their names on some team shirts, as well as copies of *Championship Manager - Season 99/00* and we've got three of each to give to you, which if the team go all the way, could be worth a fortune. To win either prize (please state your preference), just answer the following question:

Who is the oldest member of the Euro 2000 England squad?

Send your answers, along with your name, address and phone number, on a postcard to: Euro 2000 Competition, PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7JL. All entries to be received before July 27. We cannot guarantee which prize entrants will receive. Come on England.



Paul Ince lets another get past him, but he had the last laugh eventually.



Don't look now.



If I concentrate I can lift both buttocks off the ground simultaneously.



And you think a gun's going to help?

WHICH BLAIR TRILOGY?



Sticks and stones...

Tony, Lionel and Linda... oops sorry, wrong Blair

There are two schools of thought surrounding the *Blair Witch Project*. Depending on where you sit you'll have found the film original and genuinely creepy, or a boring stroll through the woods in the company of some very annoying Americans. There are similar doubts about the trilogy of games that are due to be released later this year from the Gathering Of Developers. Some people are excited at the prospect of playing through a few games whose purpose in life is to scare you witless; others are wondering just how the hell a film based on psychological fear is going to translate into three games built around the *Nocturne* engine.

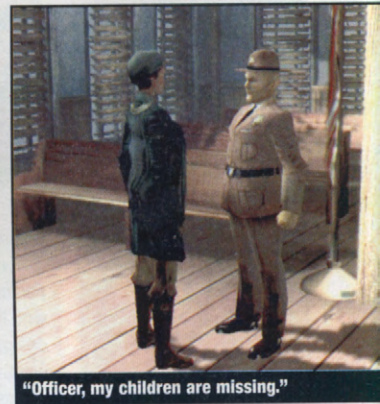
We managed to get to see some work in progress at E3 and there are signs that the cynics are going to be made to sit in the corner with their eyes closed. The three games are being developed by Terminal Reality, Human Head and Ritual respectively, and are currently called *The Rustin Parr Investigation* (set in 1941), *The Legend Of Coffin Rock* (1886) and *Elly Kedward's Tale* (1786). Each title is going to emphasise a different style of gameplay, from adventure in the first, through a more *Resident Evil*-style second outing and into an action and spell-based finale.

Rustin Parr is already looking (and sounding) good, and if you're a fan of the film you'll already know the unsettling nature of his plight. Born in 1903, Rustin was convicted of kidnapping and killing seven children in his isolated shack in the woods. But was he guilty and where did those voices come from?

The second and third episodes are due to be released three and six months after *Rustin* and the speed of the three releases and the guarantee of different slants from each comes from the fact that the Gathering Of Developers can throw together three separate units to code simultaneously. The games are going to be slightly smaller (and cheaper) than normal commercial releases, which should ensure the pace is kept throughout. Whether or not the suspense and psychological terror *can* be inserted is anyone's guess at the moment, but with developers of this calibre we're in with a shout.



A bloke with a sword.



"Officer, my children are missing."

HIGH FLYING
DEATH DEFYING

SHORTS

SUPER STAR WARS

Star Wars does Mario Kart, that's what *Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing* is all about in a nutshell. Each of the eight characters from *The Phantom Menace* will have their own distinctive vehicle and oversized craniums, all of which can be controlled over nine courses, from the plains of Tatooine to the Imperial city of Coruscant. There'll be power-ups aplenty and split-screen action for multiplayer fans. We reckon it could be a cracker, even though it's aimed at the kids. It's out in July.

NO STAR TENNIS

Ubisoft is soon to release *All-Star Tennis 2000*, which, contrary to its name, doesn't feature much in the way of household names at all – Todd Martin, Conchita Martinez and Richard Krajicek are perhaps the most well-known. Still, there'll be plenty of lobs and slices to be getting along with as players strive to reach number one across eight different courts. Interestingly, we are promised 'unique weather effects' which we hope will all be experienced outdoors. Each tennis player will have unique skills and some character-specific moves. We'll test it out next issue.



VOXELS DROPPED

NovaLogic's autumn release of *Delta Force: Land Warrior* will see a departure from its ageing voxel technology to a new graphics engine, allowing players to engage the enemy at distances over 1,000 metres. The action involves five veteran soldiers undertaking assignments ranging from hostage rescue to assaults on terrorist compounds. NovaLogic also promise speech communication via Voice-Over-Net as well as large-scale online action in Novaworld.

TAKE HART

The future, it seems, belongs to simple clay animation techniques. That's the view of Avalon Style Entertainment, who has used plasticine models for its game *Clay Dreams*, an adventure that will look more like *Wallace & Gromit* than *Sam & Max* as it introduces 40 locations and dozens of puzzles, all created from common-or-garden clay. US publisher 1C will release the game at Christmas.

THE SIMS LARGE IT UP

It's time to find bigger accommodation

The Sims have outgrown their SimLane neighbourhood and are ready to expand in every possible direction, first with the arrival of the an add-on, *Livin' Large*, which is due later this year, and then with a whole new game called *SimsVille* for next year. As you would expect, Maxis has stuffed *Livin' Large* with loads of new features, such as roach infestations, alien abductions, lamp genies and exploding garden gnomes. Ten new career paths will be available leading to 50 new jobs, including an *X-Files*-style UFO investigator, a golf caddy, a programmer and the slothiest profession in the world, games journalist. There are also more architectural and decorative designs, with the introduction of Las Vegas, medieval and retro '50s and '60s looks. Just think of the possibilities, like the dark room of a beta tester set in the

dungeon of a castle, with green and purple wallpaper and a dodgy heart-shaped bed no woman on earth would ever come close to. It's enough to make you shudder.

SimsVille is an altogether more ambitious project, making what many people have been clamouring for into a reality, by crossing *The Sims* with *SimCity*. This will give you the chance of creating a whole town, with shops, office buildings, parks and dark alleys, as well as managing the lives of the people living in them. Rather than just getting stuck in the mire of daily routine, you'll be able to explore the more complex

web of relationships of a bigger community. Whether this means that you can follow your Sim all the way to work, have an affair with your secretary and insult your boss is as yet unconfirmed. But rest assured, we'll give you more details as soon as we have them.



You too can own a tasteful rug. And a fat Germanic maid.



Sims hug in despair after losing all their life savings in roulette.



This early work-in-progress screenshot shows what your future *SimsVille* might look like.

NUCLEAR WINTER FOR FALLOUT

Before we start, let's get one thing straight, *Fallout: Tactics – Brotherhood Of Steel* is not *Fallout 3*. That has yet to be announced, and with the departure of the original *Fallout* designers from Interplay, bets are on as to whether the eagerly anticipated third game in the series will ever see the light of day.

So in the meantime, *FTBOS* is an *X-Com*-style turn-based strategy game set in the post-apocalyptic nightmare of North America. The game's storyline contains 20 core missions as well as 18 sub-levels, enabling the player to take numerous routes, à la *Tiberian Sun*.

On each mission the player chooses the six most suitable characters from a pool of 30. Each squad member has a variety of commands including scout, deploy, attack, defend, retrieve, destroy, follow and ambush. Characters that make it to the end of the mission gain the appropriate experience and return to the pool.

TCP/IP and LAN play is also a huge part of the game. Up to 18 players will be thrown together over eight multiplayer maps. Interplay also seems keen to promote the 'Quick game' option, which lets players create opposing squads of equally destructive potential.

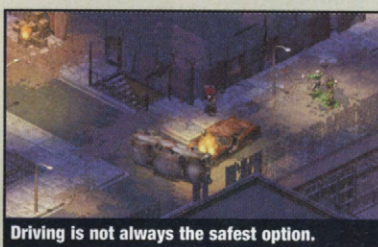
Another of *FTBOS*'s notable features is the ability to plan moves while other players or computer opponents are calculating theirs, an innovation that will hopefully eliminate those idle finger-tapping moments. Tying in with this is a new 'dying' stage where squad members get a chance to revive fallen comrades.

Teams can take advantage of vehicles too, although it's worth noting that drivers, passengers and key points on the vehicle can be targeted by your foes with some devastating consequences.

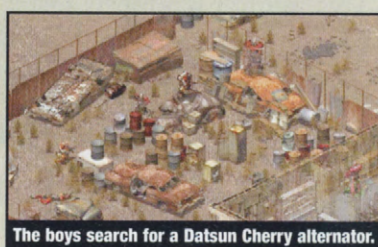
So will *FTBOS* live up to the *Fallout* reputation? Find out later this year.



Turn-based strategy at its most thrilling.



Driving is not always the safest option.



The boys search for a Datsun Cherry alternator.

SIGMA

Genetic engineering from the creators of *Homeworld*

What would happen if you mated a gorilla with a crocodile? That's the question Relic Entertainment has been asking itself since before *Homeworld* was released, and this is the basis of its next game, *Sigma*.

Set in 1933, *Sigma* casts you as an Indiana Jones-type character marooned on a remote series of uncharted islands, where an evil scientist has kidnapped an eminent zoologist with the intention of taking over the world with his bizarre creations.

The islands are home to their own ecosystems and creatures, 60 in all, from cheetahs and camels, to whales and bats, all of which can be captured and cloned using the *Sigma* technology. Mate a chimp with a cheetah and you get a fast intelligent predator that can climb trees and scratch its own arse. Conversely, combine the genes of a whale and a bat and you



Elebats, rhinosharks and Hammerhead spiders? Someone's had way too much pop.

get a flying heap of blubber that is weak in combat, but can certainly soak up a few hits. In all, we are promised millions of possible hybrid creations, some suited to Arctic conditions, others that will flourish in the dry and arid deserts.

Much like *Homeworld*, *Sigma* is a 3D real-time strategy game and already eclipses that sci-fi epic in terms of graphics. The animation is simply stunning and we are told each creature is made up of more than 10,000 polygons apiece. The style is what Relic's Alex Garden terms "dark Disney" and although there are no screenshots to show you, take it from us that this description is exactly what it looks like. Via Microsoft, *Sigma* is unlikely to be released until late next year, and with millions of permutations to work out it's hardly surprising. But it already looks a winner. When we get some screenshots you'll be able to see for yourself.

SHORTS

CHASING THE ENGINE

Currently working on *Battle Isle IV*, Slovakian developers Cauldron have announced details on its new action game, *Chaser*, which, in their own words, will use a new 3D engine to rival that of both *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament*.

Going by the name of Cloak, Cauldron's engine will be able to render photo-realistic textures and facial expressions, as well as including support for a number of other features -- all of which we'd be hard pushed to explain. The game, which is currently without a publisher, will be primarily a single-player title with role-playing elements, based in the future starring a hero suffering from severe memory loss.



MYST IN EXILE

Although unlikely to set our charts on fire, *Myst III: Exile* is sure to sell millions when it's released next spring. Developed by the team responsible for the first two games, as well as the recent *Stephen King's F13* and *Star Trek: Hidden Evil* (all of which were diabolical), Presto will introduce a 360° movement system and five new ages to explore. Mattel will be publishing the game and Martin Korda, who won *PC ZONE's* Coffee Maker Of The Year competition, will be reviewing it. Well done Martin.



CHICKEN RUN

Eidos signs some creature comforts

After the almost grating success of *Wallace & Gromit* and the unstoppable merchandising that has been draped across stores ever since, this summer's release of *Chicken Run*, the first big-budget feature film from its creators, Aardman Animations, will no doubt prompt another five years of getting cheap, oversized,



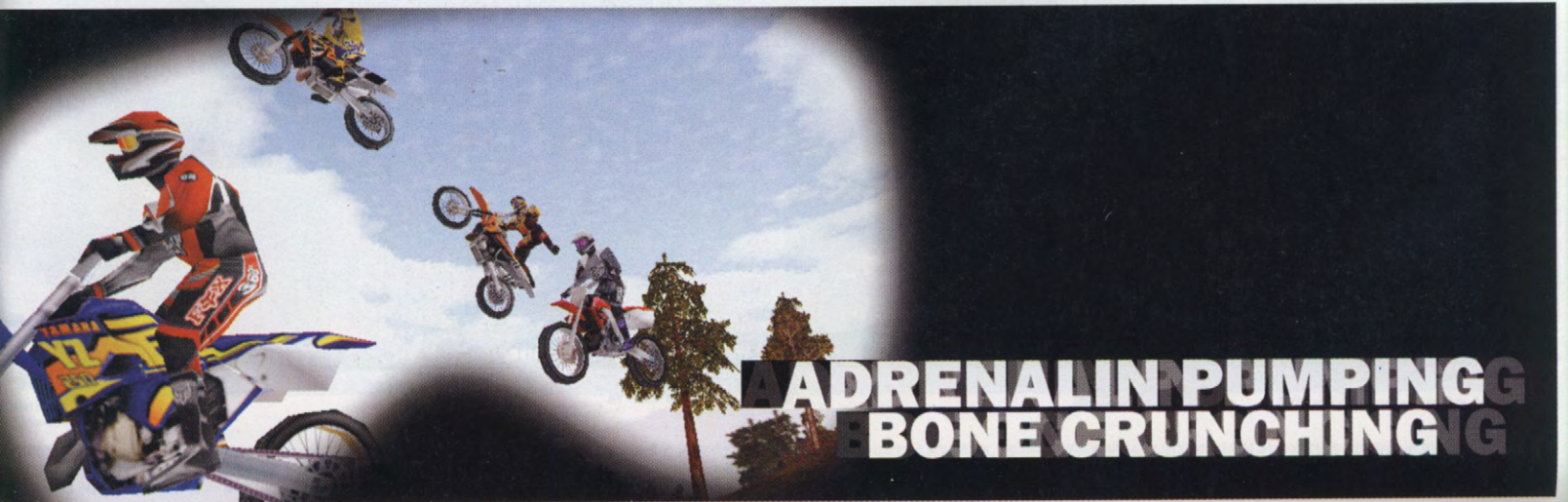
Chicken Run is being coded by the team responsible for *Glover*.

and this time gallinaceous T-shirts for Christmas. But for the first time we'll have a game to play while wearing them.

As with the film, the game is based on a '50s chicken farm in Yorkshire and the idea is to perform a great escape. The game is in development at Blitz Studios (formerly Interactive Studios), home of the Oliver twins and everyone's favourite platforming egg, Dizzy. In control of the film's 'stars' Rocky and Ginger, *Chicken Run* will be a 3D adventure, featuring the entire plasticine cast, and should hit the shelves (along with T-shirts, stock cubes and the inevitable McChicken Run Sandwich™), just before Christmas.



Expect to see the poster everywhere this summer.



WILD WEST DOUBLE BILL

DESPERADOS

Commandos dons a stetson and goes west

Developed by Euro coders Spellbound – with Infogrames lined up as publisher – *Desperados* looks set to be the first of many PC adventures starring gutsy gunslinger, John Cooper.

Due for release later in the year, this isometric real-time strategy is set during the US War of Session and follows the antics of Mr Cooper and his five fearless comrades as they attempt to track down a mysterious bandit-leader known as El Diablo.

To cut a long story short *Desperados* is basically *Commandos* in the Wild West. A similar amount of strategic options are on offer except that instead of Nazis you've got

Mexican bandits and instead of jeeps there are horses.

Played over 25 day and night missions, the graphics perfectly recreate the tumbleweed-infested wastelands and towns of New Mexico. As far as music goes, a twangy *The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly* type soundtrack should seal the atmosphere in tight. Gameplay elements include gunfights galore, stealing horses and possibly enjoying the delight of a bagnio or two.

So, if you liked *Commandos* and have a thing about spaghetti westerns, *Desperados* should be right up your alley. It's certainly better than renting *Wild Wild West* out on video anyway...



Characters can enter buildings and walk around.



Engaging in a little bit of fisty-cuffs with one of the locals.



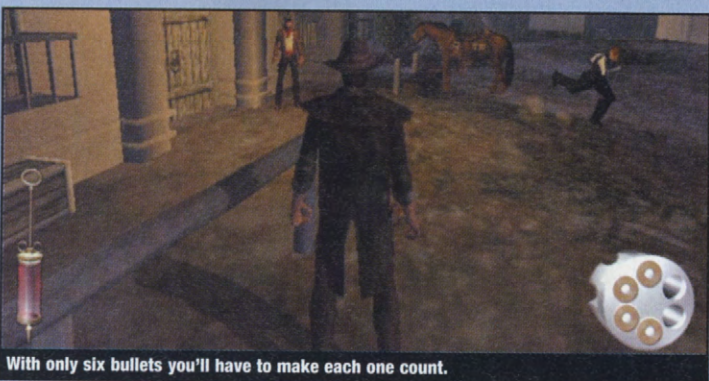
As well as fists and guns, sabotage is another highly successful tactic.

GUNSLINGER

The spaghetti western shoots its way onto the PC



Indoor and outdoor scenes will be integrated seamlessly.



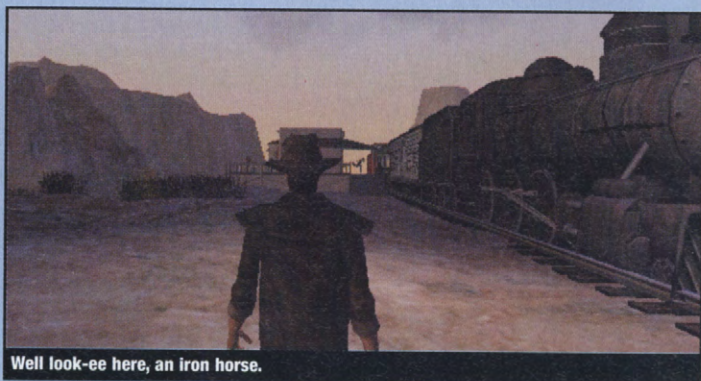
With only six bullets you'll have to make each one count.

As if *Desperados* wasn't enough for armchair Clint Eastwoods to be getting on with, Activision is also hoping to jump on the Wild West chuck wagon with *Gunslinger*, a third-person action adventure in development by the creators of *Drakan* and using a modified version of the exact same 3D engine.

On show at E3 for the PlayStation 2 with a PC version to follow, the game offers more of a freeform adventure than we first suspected as players can choose to approach each mission how they see fit. If there has been a robbery in one town, you can either seek out the culprits with a view to bringing

them to justice or helping them out with their next heist.

Gunslinger will introduce some role-playing elements as players increase their skills in gun fighting, horseriding and even gambling, as well as more traditional skills such as charisma and notoriety as players interact with the game's multitude of NPCs. On the action side, we are promised plenty of shoot-outs, with townsfolk running for cover and tumbleweed rolling across the plains. We don't know whether there'll be any multiplayer options, but seeing as it will primarily be a PS2 game, don't expect it to be a priority. Release is set for the end of the year.



Well look-ee here, an iron horse.

UNDYING

British horror maestro Clive Barker with a game of his own

Electronic Arts, purveyors of formulaic sports titles and driving games, has bolstered its line-up by signing DreamWorks' new horror FPS. Using a modified version of the *Unreal Tournament* engine and relying heavily on the fright-filled fingers of best-selling British horror writer, Clive Barker, *Undying* looks set to combine the intensity of *Resident Evil*, and the sneakiness of *Thief*.

Set in the '20s, you play Magnus Wolfram, a World War I veteran who has the unnerving ability to see dead people – *The Sixth Sense* anyone? Obviously with Barker's influence expect plot twists and shocks aplenty.

Graphically, the new particle effects system means that many in-game objects will be affected by wind. This, in conjunction with a revolutionary cloth-modelling technique, means that curtains, delicate cobwebs, flames and more, all ripple and waver according

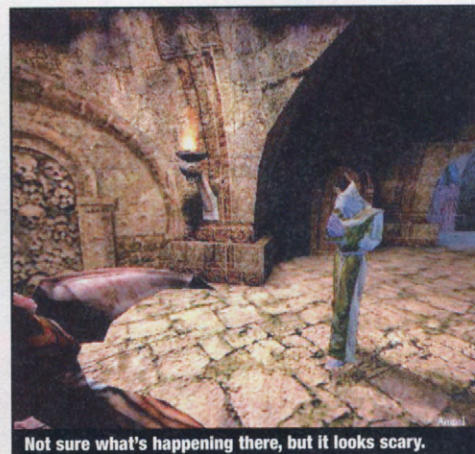
to the speed of the virtual wind. If you walk into a room and a cold, unnatural breeze slams the doors shut and extinguishes the candles, the chances are that something terrible is afoot – it's the kind of imaginative atmosphere rarely witnessed in a FPS.

There's no skimping when it comes to firepower either. Classic anti-zombie weaponry along the lines of shotguns, dynamite, scythes and spear guns (which you can use to pin ghouls to the wall), feature alongside eight offensive spells that can be amplified for greater effect. This means there's plenty of scope for creative dismemberment.

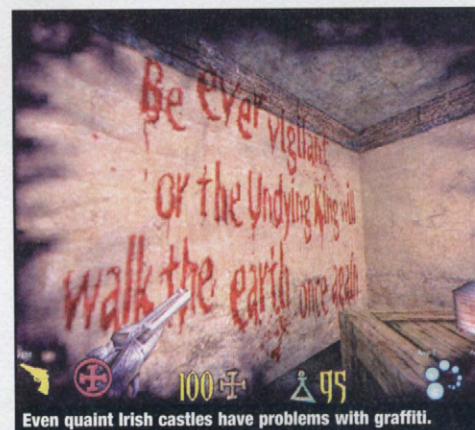
The finished game will boast ten areas including an old Irish estate house, an ancient monastery, caves, catacombs, a pirate's cove and the mystical city of Oneiros. A multiplayer version is also planned, but we'll know more about that closer to its autumn release date.



Oooh, what big claws you have grandma.



Not sure what's happening there, but it looks scary.



Even quaint Irish castles have problems with graffiti.



**JAW DROPPING
HEART STOPPING
MADNESS.**

MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2

Motocross Madness is back

- Wilder action
- Hair raising stunts
- Vast new terrain
- Spectacular landscapes
- New 'Enduro' & 'Pro Circuit' career modes
- 3D Track editor
- Multi-player action
- And more

Madness – it's in your blood.

www.madness2.co.uk

Coming soon on PC CD-Rom

CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what you think



The Sims: still at the top after 17 weeks.

THE TOP 10

MAY	JUN	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
1	1	CHAMP MAN 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
2	2	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
6	3	UNREAL TOURNAMENT	EPIC/DIGITAL EXTREMES	INFOGRAMES	90%
10	4	DELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%
4	5	C&C: TIBERIAN SUN	WESTWOOD	EA	82%
RE	6	SWAT 3: CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE	SIERRA	SIERRA	89%
7	7	HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS	VALVE	SIERRA	95%
NE	8	TACHYON: THE FRINGE	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	65%
RE	9	AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE AGE OF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOS	MICROSOFT	89%
3	10	STARLANCER	DIGITAL ANVIL/WARTHOG	MICROSOFT	81%

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

A strange chart this month that seems to be bucking the trend of late, where new games have been getting high chart positions on the week of release, only to drop out again two weeks later. Relatively new releases *Gunship!*, *Evolva*, *Devil Inside* and *Lemmings* have all failed to make any serious impact. Within the Top 10 itself *The Sims*, *CM99/00* and *Soldier Of Fortune* are doing well, especially *CM99/00*, which hasn't left the charts for years.

What surprises me as a space fan – here was me thinking they weren't popular – is that there are two in the charts: *StarLancer* and *Tachyon*. I only wish *Allegiance* was up there, but seeing as it's online-only, I wasn't hopeful to begin with.

Richie Shoemaker

THE TOP 10

MAY	JUN	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
1	1	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
2	2	CHAMP MAN 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
3	3	SOLDIER OF FORTUNE	RAVEN SOFTWARE	ACTIVISION	80%
9	4	AOE II: THE AGE OF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOS	MICROSOFT	89%
NE	5	TACHYON: THE FRINGE	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	65%
NE	6	EURO 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	70%
5	7	DELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%
8	8	STARLANCER	DIGITAL ANVIL/WARTHOG	MICROSOFT	81%
RE	9	HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS	VALVE/GEARBOX	SIERRA	95%
4	10	F1 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	75%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 2000)

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Well, with both *StarLancer* and *Tachyon* in the top ten, it looks like space combat sims are making a bit of a comeback, although as expected they're not selling as well as the big name stuff in the top four. Great to see *Half-Life* still hanging in there, outselling even the most up-to-date first-person games. Developers, take note – FPS fans do want storylines."

Mike Rovardi, Middlesbrough

"Oh dear, a chart of great old swingers and recent boring titles. It's nice to see *Euro 2000* isn't top of the charts at least, it's far worse than all the *FIFAs* up to 1998. Roll on next month when we will hopefully have *Vampire* and *MDK2* to talk about."

Mike Price, Herefordshire

"It's surprising to see *The Sims* at number one (given that it's boring after approximately two days) and *Soldier Of Fortune* selling less despite its probably superior longevity. I have no explanation for the sales of *CM99/00*, other than maybe an increase in the number of people with sadomasochistic tendencies. I can't see anything that's anywhere near competing with the time spent in the charts by the force that is *Half-Life*."

Rob Medlock, Peterborough

"*Tachyon* is far better than *StarLancer* and it's good to see it triumph over its big-name competitor. I've been playing it online for weeks and it knocks Digital Anvil's game into a cocked hat. *StarLancer* is just another *Wing Commander* game. I completed it in 14 hours and I'll never go back to it, even online."

Dan, Uxbridge

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (Activision)
- 2 *Star Trek: Birth Of The Federation* (Hasbro)
- 3 *Championship Manager 3* (Eidos)
- 4 *Rollercoaster Tycoon* (Hasbro)
- 5 *Star Wars: Episode I – Racer* (Activision)

2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *World Cup 98* (EA)
- 2 *X-Files: Unrestricted Access* (Fox)
- 3 *Ultimate Soccer Manager 98* (Sierra)
- 4 *Championship Manager 97/98* (Eidos)
- 5 *Might & Magic VI* (Ubi Soft)

5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *Full Throttle* (Virgin)
- 2 *Indy Car Racing* (Virgin)
- 3 *Discworld* (Psygnosis)
- 4 *Virtual Pool* (Interplay)
- 5 *Star Wars: Dark Forces* (Virgin)

COMPETITION

WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:

Tachyon features the vocal talents of Bruce Campbell. Which series of horror films is he most well known for?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with all the information requested, to the address below.

- ★ Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18
- ★ Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies
- ★ Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (CPCZ001A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: Thursday 27 July.

★ Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.

A WINNING FORMULA

EA's F1 Manager is in pole position

To add to its impressive back catalogue of official sports licenses, EA plans to release their first Formula 1 team management game, which unlike Hasbro's recent similar effort, includes "proper" 3D race highlights.

During a visit to the PC ZONE cavern, EA showed off a recent build of the game, and fairly impressive it was too, considering we had no F1 buffs at hand to appreciate it (none of us can drive).

Like all EA Sports titles the game features the typical Sky Sports presentation we've all come to expect, while at the same time remains simple to navigate and easy to set up. What surprised us

most of all, however, was that there was very little in the way of technical know how needed to play the game. *F1 Manager* is very much a strategy game, geared towards race tactics, personal management and sponsorship rather than testing sprockets in wind tunnels. A good thing we reckon, though many of you may think differently.

Based on data from last year's race season, *F1 Manager* will be released next month.

The 3D sequences are the best we've seen in a Formula 1 management game.



NUMBER TWO DRIVER ← This Year →

NAME Heinz-Harald Frentzen
NATIONALITY German
AGE 37
ANNUAL SALARY \$2,421,000
BONUS TYPE Race Win
BONUS AMOUNT \$180,000

INSIDE F1
Joined Sauber in 1994 and had 3 fine seasons before his crash. Almost 20 years on, he was still at the helm in 1999. A fine 7th position in the points in 1999 confirmed him as a driver of great promise.

FEEDBACK	95	FAST CORNERS	96
STARTING	96	SLOW CORNERS	96
DISCIPLINE	97	MANEUVRE	94
FITNESS	96	OVERALL RATING	95
ADAPTABILITY	96	OVERSTANDING	95

Each team has its own coloured interface.

RACING

FUEL	77 L	POSITION	4	Damon Hill	LAP 1/71
AVG. L / LAP	N/A	SPEED	16000PH		
NEXT STOP	Lap 23	AVG. WEAR	26%	ORDER	Push
PIT NOW	40 L	TYRES	100%	CAMERA	IN CAR

Jim Rosenthal will provide commentary before each race.

FROM	SUBJECT	DATE RECEIVED
Magneto Marelli	New Electronics	25 Jan 1999
AP Racing	New Brake Systems	23 Jan 1999
Jim Wright	Commercial Managers Weekly Report	18 Jan 1999
Colin Fabbey	Chief Designer Weekly Report	16 Jan 1999
Patrick Head	Technical Directors Weekly Report	18 Jan 1999
Jim Wright	Commercial Managers Weekly Report	11 Jan 1999
Damon Hill	Chief Designer Weekly Report	11 Jan 1999
Patrick Head	Technical Directors Weekly Report	11 Jan 1999
Patrick Head	Test Day	05 Jan 1999
Alexandro Zanardi	Welcome	04 Jan 1999
Jim Wright	Welcome	04 Jan 1999
Stavri Fabbey	Welcome	04 Jan 1999
Patrick Head	Welcome	04 Jan 1999
Jay Muller	Welcome	04 Jan 1999
Ralf Schumacher	Welcome	04 Jan 1999

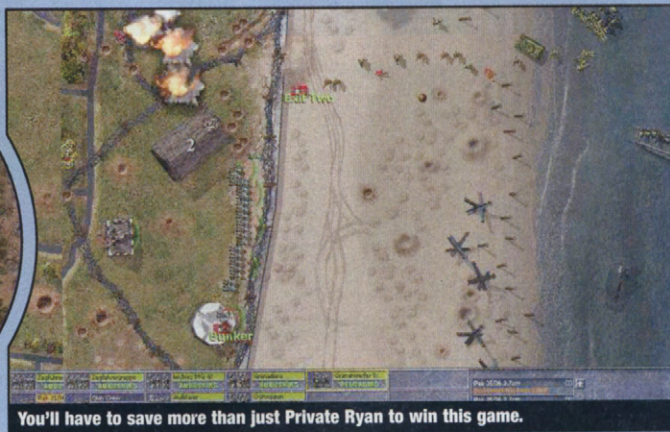
The game features hire-and-fire commercial and technical directors, as well as drivers and pit crew.

BEACH HEAD FOR CLOSE COMBAT V

Atomic Games, developer of all four previous *Close Combat* titles, seemed to have lost its way with its last effort, but we're confident the fifth game – subtitled *Utah Beach* – will see the team get back on form, promising a fully dynamic campaign model where you'll be able to direct multiple battle groups as you lead American or German forces across the Cherbourg peninsula. The units under your control will also carry their stats from mission to mission, as they fight over the course of the first month of the Normandy landings.

In a bid to make the game as realistic as possible, new sounds will be incorporated, modelled on each of the WWII weapons, and we can expect support from naval units. The game is out in September, through Mattel Interactive.

German defences can be attacked by naval bombardment.



PC GAMING WORLD

'INTENSE'

AWARDED ★★★★★, MAY 2000

www.starlancer.co.uk



SETTLERS GO FORTH

Blue Byte has announced that the fourth instalment of the *Settlers* series is in production, and is being scheduled for a November release.

The story will revolve around a character called Morbus, the most powerful of all the gods, and his nation of Dark People who are banished to Earth after they revolt against him. Morbus and his crew hate everything that's green and set about destroying the Earth's plant life.

Blue Byte is promising a host of new features for *Settlers IV*. As you can see from the screen shots, the graphics have improved no end, and the zoom function from the last game has been

enhanced to make it even easier to distinguish between your characters and the opposition. The introduction of an entirely new race (the Dark People), will also add greater scope for strategy, as you learn about their tactics and goals.

You'll be able to take the helm of one of three races, the Romans, Mayas and Vikings. Each one of these will have their own individual campaigns and missions, which will in some way involve stopping the Dark People from destroying the earth's vegetation. To aid you in your quest to overthrow this evil, there will be a greater selection of army units and weapons than in previous games, such as squad leaders, spell-casting priests and warships.

Trading and espionage have also been given a makeover, with transport and trading now possible not just within, but also outside of your territory. You can also use saboteurs to destroy enemy buildings.

“The story revolves around Morbus, the most powerful of all the gods, and his nation of Dark People”

With a whole new, easier-to-use interface, *Settlers IV* looks as if it will be a significant step forward from the last title. With its new improved graphics and interface, and greater amount of tactical possibilities, it may well enhance the already excellent reputation of the *Settlers* series, and it sounds like real-time combat will be central to the game, unlike in previous outings.

You're supposed to put the bloody heating inside the house you idiots.



The graphics have been improved since the last game.



There's going to be a whole host of new units and weapons to fight the Dark People with.



Looks homely.

CULTURES

Having worked on games such as *Albion* and *Settlers II*, German developer Funatics hopes to take on the mighty Blue Byte at its own game with the cartoon-style real-time strategy game *Cultures*.

As the head of a burgeoning colony of Vikings, *Cultures* tasks you with nurturing its development as it strives in the wilderness of the newly discovered American continent. With the overall aim to gather fragments of a

comet, the game is predominantly mission-based, centring on exploration and trade to prosper, and resource management and combat to overcome the various indigenous tribes. Each character will have its own personality and will age, marry and 'get it on' throughout the game. Although not accurate in the historical sense, *Cultures* should have broad appeal. Release is planned for August, just ahead of *Settlers IV*.



Each character has a number of stats to keep tabs on.



Head north and into Canada and it'll feel just like home.



Ⓜ This man is obviously of no use to you and must be terminated.



Backgrounds are pre-rendered, but feature a hell of a lot of detail.



Combat will play a big role.



It could blow any minute.

IN COLD BLOOD

Espionage and intrigue from the creators of *Broken Sword*

Those UK purveyors of fine point-and-click adventures Revolution Software have decided to take the genre in a new direction with the cold war thriller *In Cold Blood*.

Previously well known for such oldies as *Lure Of The Temptress* and *Beneath A Steel Sky*, as well as two *Broken Sword* games, Revolution has been quietly working on *In Cold Blood* for three years and has only recently broken its silence. We're told the game will surface on PC in the autumn.

Set in the fictional Russian republic of Vogia, the game sees you in control of MI6 agent John Cord, sent out to investigate the disappearance of an American agent whose country is financing a bunch of freedom fighters. While there, he comes across a Blue Nephilene and is drawn into a race to retrieve the substance. Cord is caught, tortured and, somewhat predictably, suffers a bout of amnesia. But you soon come to realise this the least of his worries.

Although mission-based, *In Cold Blood* expands the traditional adventure format

and takes much of its influence from games such as *Thief*, *Resident Evil* and *Metal Gear Solid* and, for an adventure, will feature more than its fair share of stealth and action. What we are most intrigued by, however, is the story, which promises as much in the way of twists and turns as the soon-to-be-released *Deus Ex*. Professional scriptwriters have been on hand to provide the content and it is already evident that we have an extremely original game coming our way very, very soon.

SHORTS

EA SPORTS 2001

Take the entire EA Sports range from this year and add one and you've pretty much guessed what's coming this winter from the world's biggest publisher. *Madden NFL 2001*, *NBA Live 2001*, *Triple Play 2001*, *NHL 2001* and *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001* make up the bulk of them. The ones we're really looking forward to though, are *FA Premier League Stars 2001* and *FA Premier League Football Manager 2001*. No doubt there'll also be *FIFA 2001* and *F1 2001* as well. Did we miss anything? Probably not.



GIANTS DO EURO 2000

Out now, in time to ride the Euro 2000 euphoria, is the totally offline *Giant Killers: Euro Manager*, the *Champ Man*-style footie management game aimed at the glue-sniffing under-16s. New features include new sounds and a training mode.

TARRANT ON PC

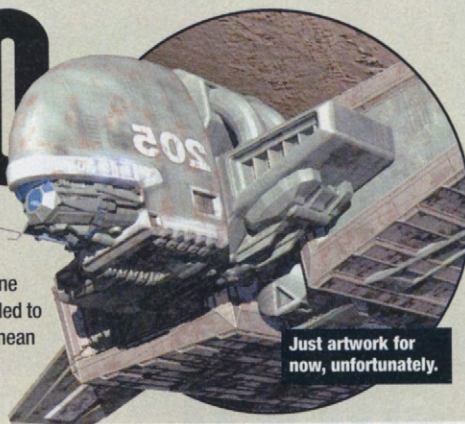
Although you won't be able to phone a friend, ask the audience or win a million smackeronies, Eidos will at least let you think you can when it releases *Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?* later this Autumn. Chris Tarrant will be lending his ubiquitous vocal talents to the game, which will feature plenty of simple questions, after 15 of which players will be able to win a million virtual pounds. "The format lends itself perfectly to PC and console games," said a marketing person who clearly has no idea.



MARS 2150

Topware Interactive has already begun work on *Earth 3*, sequel to the recently released *Earth 2150*, which received a well-deserved 86 per cent last issue. Again a 3D real-time strategy affair, the game follows on from *Earth's* destruction with now just two sides fighting it out, against each other and a new alien species,

all for the newly terraformed Mars colonies. *Earth 3* will feature an enhanced interface and graphics engine with the underground features expanded to include the building of entire subterranean bases. The game's release date is set for the end of next year.



Just artwork for now, unfortunately.

PC GAMEPLAY

'INCREIBLE'

AWARDED 9/10, GOLD AWARD

www.starlancer.co.uk





Is no game spared from the filth of prostitution?



If somebody worships something other than you - kill 'em.



Your island from above - is the climate suitable for tourism?

TROPICAL TRAIN STORM

Phil Steinmeyer, the creator of *Railroad Tycoon*, has taken a break from trains to create the *SimCity*-esque *Tropico*, due out in spring 2001. *Tropico* puts you in charge of an under-developed Latin island where you rule as a religious fanatic, communist dictator, or even-handed democrat, with the aim of turning it into a successful economic venture.

This can be done in a number of ways, not least of which is siding with a world superpower such as the USA or Russia in order to secure arms contracts, so you can keep your impoverished inhabitants in line. There are of course many other strategies

you could pursue, including building up a thriving tourist industry, or possibly exporting large quantities of coffee.

One novel feature of *Tropico* is the way you can create many personality traits at the start of the game. For example, you can give yourself flatulence, which creates a negative impact during meetings, or you can endow yourself with other charms in order to ensure those sleepless nights are not spent alone. Whichever way you play it, *Tropico* should contain the same addictive ingredients that made the *Railroad Tycoon* series legendary.



Get the pizzas in chaps.



Extreme close ups.

STILL PLAYS A MEAN POOL HALL

Still our favourite pool simulator after two years, *Virtual Pool* is making a welcome return to the PC later this year. *Virtual Pool 3* from Interplay will introduce a new career mode where players start with \$50 with the aim to beat top US women's pool shark Jeanette Lee (we've never heard of her either.)

There will be eight themed pool halls, a fully-customisable camera and an enhanced physics engine, which considering *VP2* still has one of the best, or at least most fun, should make its sequel an enticing prospect. Online we can expect worldwide rankings, leagues and even spectator support. A free dedicated server is being set up and the whole thing should kick off in the autumn.

INFESTATION AT FRONTIER

In a similar vein to *V2000* is *Infestation* from David Braben and his team at Frontier Developments. The sci-fi arcade game adds considerably to *V2000*'s flying action by offering you an attack buggy that can transform into six different vehicles by the end of the game, with the aim being to dispatch hordes of invading aliens intent on taking over the Earth. It will feature 24 non-linear missions, set across as many worlds, each requiring a quick trigger and a little brain power (a slice of strategy is required). We've had preview code sitting on our hard drives for a couple of weeks and we can tell you now that although the game is unlikely to set the world alight, it's a hell of a lotta fun in a retro kind of way. We'll review the final version next issue, when hopefully we'll be able to get through a few more missions and try out the five multiplayer modes.



Upgrade your buggy with more than 15 weapons.



Fight over arctic, desert, jungle and lava worlds. Plus a few more.



There are more than 40 types of enemy to dispatch, some more bizarre than others.

ROWAN'S FINEST HOUR

MiG Alley coders return to World War II to take to the skies over the English Channel

There are a number of things to look forward to in Rowan's *Battle Of Britain*, not least of which is that it's being coded by the developers of *Flying Corps* and *MiG Alley*, two of the finest games to cover WWI and the Korean War, respectively. Rowan also developed *Overlord*, a fond favourite from those heady days before 3D acceleration, a game so good that Paul 'I hate flight sims' Mallinson even played it. Now Rowan is going back to WWII and, unlike recent games, intends to cover Britain's attempt to keep the Germans at bay in the summer of 1940.

Much like *MiG Alley*, *Battle Of Britain* aims to again provide a dynamic campaign structure, with players able to take an influential role as the commander-in-chief of air operations of either side, setting up transfers and supply lines. As a fighter pilot, players will take a back seat in such duties, instead concentrating on air battles and staying aloft against massive odds as Rowan plans to be able to amass more than 1,000 planes in the sky at any one time. As a commander this will represent something of a challenge but as a pilot it will look nothing short of spectacular,

especially since we are promised a "dynamic cloud system", which will change on the fly, so to speak, according to the weather.

In terms of what will be on offer to fly, we can expect Mark I Spitfires and Hurricanes, Germany's Me109 and Me110, as well as the Ju87 dive-bomber. We should be able to take the gunners chair in a variety of bombers too. The release date is set for the end of the year and on the basis of Rowan's past games, *MiG Alley* especially, *Battle Of Britain* is a game we can't wait to get our hands on.



"There'll be blue skies over..."



Do17s in formation and ready to drop their deadly load.



Bombers over the Isle of Dogs.



More than 1,000 planes can appear on screen at once.



Rowan used over 800sq miles of OS data from the period.

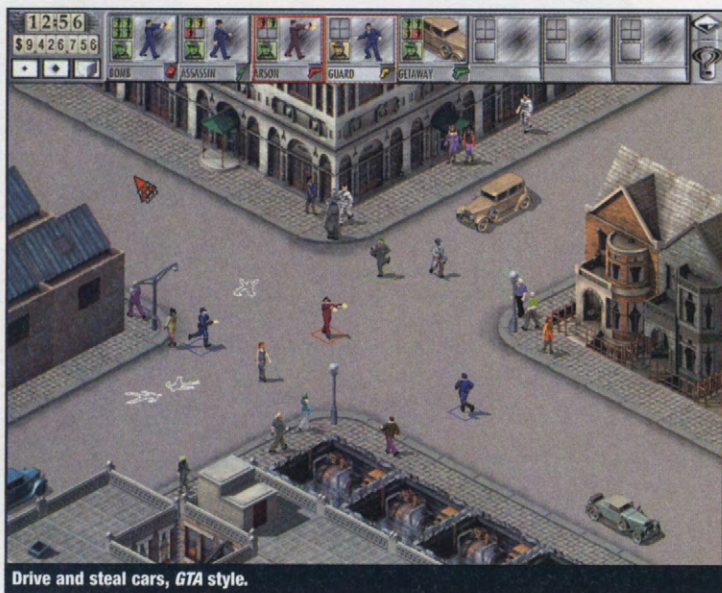
PC GAMER

'BLINDING'

AWARDED GAME OF THE MONTH, JUNE 2000

www.starlancer.co.uk





Drive and steal cars, GTA style.



Each of the city's inhabitants will have their own agenda and personality.

THE GANG'S BACK IN TOWN

Now it has to be said, the original *Gangsters* didn't really impress us when it was released early last year. Not only was it hard to play, it wasn't helped by an interface that had us cradling the manual in our laps from start to finish. However, the idea was a corker and it seems the developers at Hothouse Creations have gone back to that idea and started afresh, with all-new graphics, a real-time combat model and a far more streamlined interface.

Once again set in the fictional city of Temperance, *Gangsters 2* has expanded its borders to take in an entire state and the 15 major cities therein. In keeping with the *Godfather* feel, mobsters will be able to nurture an entire family, taking key figures with them to head up new branches in each city, lending the campaign a dynamic feel.

The cities themselves will be detailed and heavily populated, less so at night, with cops on patrol. Prostitution, gambling, extortion and assassination will all be means to increase your standing in this prohibition-era strategy game. If the interface is made simpler, we should all have an easier time of it than before. *Gangsters 2* is set for release next January.



Lighting your farts can be dangerous.

TURBAN CHAOS

Full of Eastern promise, *Arabian Nights* will be the next action adventure from Visiware Studios, the team currently engaged in the Unreal-powered movie tie-in of *Planet Of The Apes*, due to be released this autumn by Fox Interactive. Similar in look and style to the abortive release of *Prince Of Persia 3D*, *Arabian Nights* promises a lot more in terms of hand-to-hand combat and 3D adventuring, offering, we're told, plenty of mythical beasts, spells, evil sultans and belly dancing. Visiware plans to publish the game itself, via its website (www.visiware.com), with visitors able to download it in sections, only coughing up the readies it seems – the website is only in French at the moment and our understanding of the language basic at best – when completing the game. If you have the required GCSEs, feel free to check it out.



"My what a lovely rug."



"Taste my slipper, you oik!"



Real-time lighting, fitted as standard.

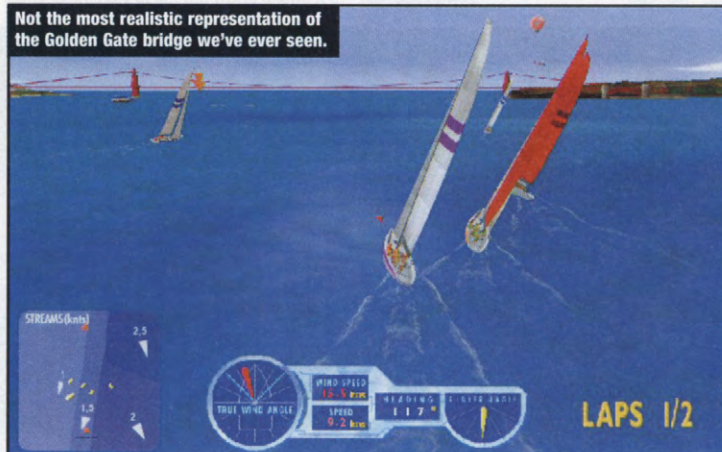


Full of Eastern promise.

SKIP TO THE LOO

Get out the rope and tie your hair in bunches chaps, because Ubi Soft is preparing to release *Virtual Skipper*, a simulation of... (checks press release) sailing. Damn.

Land lubbers that we are, the thought of boarding a real yacht and circumnavigating the world's oceans is enough to send us running to the little boys room. Thankfully, a game that allows you to do the same from the comfort of your armchair isn't quite so bad. We wouldn't claim to be too excited though, not seeing as you take the helm of three types of boat and race across San Francisco Bay. It's just not our thing, but for those who enjoy life on the ocean waves, there'll be wind shifts and currents to worry about, fleet and match racing and more than a few litres of the blue stuff. It should be sailing into shops next month.



Not the most realistic representation of the Golden Gate bridge we've ever seen.

EXPERIENCE THE FUTURE OF SPACE COMBAT

OUT OF DESPERATION, COURAGE IS BORN.

Starlancer

AVAILABLE NOW

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FROM ERIN AND CHRIS ROBERTS, CREATORS OF THE WING COMMANDER AND PRIVATEER SERIES

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The Man who KNOWS

ROMERO SPEAKS, WORLD SHRUGS

Daikatana is great, at least according to its creator, the much-maligned **John Romero**. Going firmly against popular opinion, the hirsute designer beamed: "I'm very proud of *Daikatana*; it delivers all the fast-paced action and thrills that I had hoped for and I consider it the best game I've worked on." If *Daikatana* is the best game he's worked on, that would suggest that there's some truth in the rumours that Romero's contribution to *Doom* and *Quake* amounted to little more than playing *Death Match*, drinking Dr Pepper and brushing his hair. However, undeterred by the almost universal backlash, Romero is already bigging up his next game, announcing: "I love making FPSs. There are tons of people making RPGs and RTSs, but there's not too many first-person shooter games out there. I love that style of game, so I'm going to keep on doing it and making it a little different each time. *Daikatana* used principles from *Quake* as a baseline and so my next title will use elements from *Daikatana* as a baseline for its content. It's an evolutionary process, as each game takes elements from its predecessors, but adds to and improves upon them." God help us. Still on the subject of the ludicrously delayed and embarrassingly poor game, there is already talk of a patch. **Noel Stephens** of *ION Storm* admitted: "I am sure there will be a good handful of bugs sent our way once *Daikatana* gets into full circulation. As for when the patch is going to be released? Can't say... because it is really a matter of how many more bugs pop up between now and the next few weeks." Don't hold your breath.

Back in the real world, an intriguing £2 million legal wrangle is set to kick off in **Belgium** this September between leading international footballers and major games publishers. A group of clubs including **PSV Eindhoven, Feyenoord, Slavia Prague** and **Vicenza**, plus players such as Romanian international **Georgie Hagi**, have lodged complaints about their names and likenesses being used without consent. Among those accused are **Eidos, Sony, EA** and **Infogrames**.

In further football-related madness, it has been revealed that **Ant** out of **Ant & Dec** is hopelessly addicted to *Championship Manager*. The erstwhile teen popster admitted: "I've recently got into *Championship Manager*, but once you start it'll ruin your relationships. I've been sacked by Newcastle because I wasn't any good, and I'm now with Colchester." Stick with it, lad.

And finally, the redneck US state of Tennessee is considering adding video games to its current obscenity laws. Apparently, a bill ruling out "nudity, sexual content, excess violence or sado-masochistic abuse and content harmful to minors" could prohibit a large number of games. At least it might keep *Daikatana* off the shelves.

TANK PLATOON! DECOMMISSIONED



The tracks have come off for Tank Platoon!



Our sights are now set on B-17 2.

Some of the finest combat simulations have come from the MicroProse stable and when it came to armoured combat, there was no better series than *Tank Platoon!* – the third of which was to have been released later this summer.

What was so appealing about *Tank Platoon! 3* was that it was to be made compatible with *Gunship 3*, allowing multiplayer gamers to take attack helicopters on to the same battlefield as tanks and infantry. Unfortunately *Gunship 3* was renamed to just *Gunship!* (the exclamation mark added to denote a more arcade-like experience), it was released unfinished and not to put too fine a point on it, it stank. Hence publisher Hasbro's decision to ditch *Tank Platoon!*.

A statement from Hasbro read: "We had hoped to be able to expand combat simulations beyond the traditional niche, to broaden their appeal and make them a viable market for us to participate in. But what we learned from our recent release of *Gunship!*, is that we're challenged to attract the hardcore fans and, at the same time, the more casual gamers. As both *Gunship!* and *Tank Platoon!* shared a common engine and game design, we saw little opportunity to rectify the situation and made the decision not to move forward with *Tank Platoon!*."

Maybe if Hasbro had stuck to the plan and made both *Gunship!* and *Tank Platoon!* the simulations they were meant to be, the series would have ended on a high. As it is *B-17 2* will be the last simulation from Hasbro, a game which we still have high hopes for.

OUR MOST WANTED

We've been asking ourselves recently what we'd most like to see that hasn't yet been announced. Much of what we came up with will never happen, but you never can tell. Anyway, here's our Top 10 of what we'd like to see on PC in the future. (*Daikatana 2* is in there purely for comedy value, you understand.) In a future issue we shall be following this lot up with a big feature, so keep your eyes peeled.

- 1 **Half-Life 2** Valve would be mad not to
- 2 **The Return Of Sam & Max** All depends on whether LucasArts wants to basically
- 3 **Elite Online** Considering *Elite 4* won't be out until 2002, it may well be totally online
- 4 **Star Wars Vs Star Trek** Highly unlikely, although an unofficial mod for *I-War* is on the way
- 5 **ISS International Superstar Soccer** Possible, Konami has a deal with Microsoft after all
- 6 **Gran Turismo 2000** No chance, but watch out for a PS2 emulator next year
- 7 **Theme Sex Farm** EA gave us a firm "er, no" on this one
- 8 **The Clangers** Imagine *Lemmings* on acid, actually don't
- 9 **Speedball 2000** We're told no, but we still remain optimistic
- 10 **Daikatana 2** Thankfully, we'll all be six foot under by the time it comes out



More puzzles than a jigsaw factory



After 17 years Dirk's still scared stiff.



Over 30 different creatures roam the lair.

RETURN TO THE DRAGON'S LAIR

A mere 17 years after its arcade release, *Dragon's Lair* is set to finally appear on the PC in autumn 2001. Developed by Dragonstone and to be published by Blue Byte software, *Dragon's Lair 3D* stars the hapless hero Dirk and the pathetic Princess Daphne as they again attempt to escape a deadly lair.

Featuring 16 levels packed with all manner of puzzles and traps, as well as a supporting cast of over 30 creatures (including many from the original arcade game), expect a third-person action/adventure with a slant on character-driven comedy rather than typical dungeon-exploring dross.

Helping to achieve that goal is the original *Dragon's Lair* creator and now film animator Don Bluth. Bluth has taken a break from Hollywood to write the script for the game and offer his expertise where needed. It's a tactic that seems to be paying off too: so far his influence has endowed Dirk with 150 separate animations, allowing him to run, jump, roll, sneak, climb, crouch, crawl, swing, push, lift and somersault.

If you're looking for laughs rather than Lara in your action/adventure, this could be the one for you. More details soon.

TICKER TAPE

STARTS++ An official mission pack for *Unreal Tournament* is in development, reportedly a cyberpunk-style team-based affair. *UT* is also up for a re-release in the form of a Game Of The Year edition. New maps and four extra characters are promised.

++STOP++ Hasbro has announced *Master Of Orion 3*, the sequel to one of the best space-based empire-building games ever. Enhanced diplomatic and multiplayer options are promised along with both turn-based and real-time play. **++STOP++** Infogrames has announced *High Impact Paintball*, a team-based FPS for solo and multiplayer, one where no one gets killed for a change. **++STOP++** At last Hasbro has given us a release date for what is undoubtedly one of the most eagerly anticipated driving simulations of recent years, Geoff Crammond's *Grand Prix 3*. Barring any huge cock-ups, it should hit your local store on July 28. Expect a review of the exact same copy next issue. Hoorah. **++STOP++** There's talk that Bungie's *Halo* could shift from a pure third-person game to a hybrid of third- and first-person views. **++STOP++** Red Storm has announced that its space-based strategy game *UFS Vanguard* is "on hold" while it diverts resources onto other projects for PS2. The game will now be released early next year. **++ENDS**

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

We catch up with the games that have gone missing



The first jet-propelled plane test didn't go according to plan.

SUDDEN STRIKE

LAST SEEN PCZ #90

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE February 2000

NOW OUT August 2000

Since featuring the demo on our cover disk back in *PCZ* #90, we've received further information about one of the year's most keenly anticipated RTS games. The initial delay for *Sudden Strike's* release was caused by publisher problems. CDV had a deal with a major publishing company, but after that fell through, it decided to release the game itself. Time was needed to raise the money to make this possible, and the situation was somewhat aided when CDV recently floated on the German stock market. The current delay has been put down to a summer recess which, CDV state, is "innate to the industry". At least we've finally been given a release date, which will be August 31. We've also been assured that due to huge amounts of testing, the game will be of an extremely high quality. We hope they're right.

MAX PAYNE

LAST SEEN PCZ #86

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE Spring 2000

NOW OUT TBC

After being in development for more than three years, *Max Payne* is finally reaching completion. The Gathering Of Developers chaps are currently honing the gameplay and content of the game, and are leaving any graphical bonuses until last. The game's focus has changed somewhat since we last featured it in the mag. Instead of concentrating on the multiplayer side of things, Gathering Of Developers has decided to pay more attention to the single-player gameplay. We've been promised many new, exciting and interesting ideas for the solo player game. If these turn out well, there'll be plenty to look forward to, and with visuals this impressive, *Max Payne* could well be one of the hits of the year.



Max Payne promises some exciting solo action.

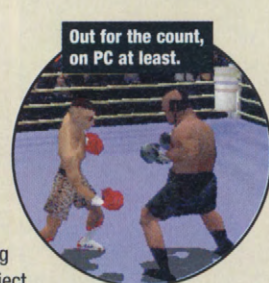
PRINCE NASEEM BOXING

LAST SEEN PCZ #86

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE Spring 2000

NOW OUT Canned

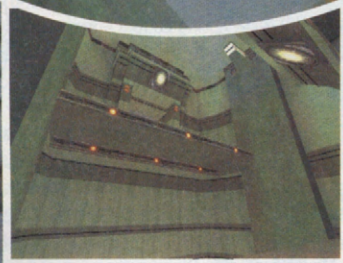
With the PC bereft of any decent boxing games, we all hoped that *Prince Naseem Boxing* might be the game to rejuvenate the genre. However, that now looks increasingly unlikely because Codemasters have gone and canned the project. *PNB* will still be available in this country for the PSX, but due to an apparent lack of interest from UK PC gamers in boxing games, the developers thought it best to stop the project.



Out for the count, on PC at least.

HOTSHOTS

Think *Unreal Tournament* outdoors. Think *Tribes 2*

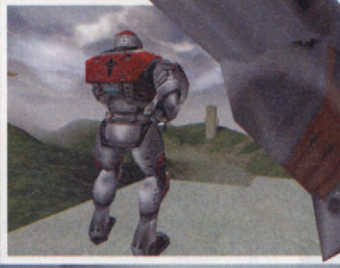


TRIBES 2

★ Sierra • Out winter 2000

When we heard Sierra had canned *Tribes Extreme*, the single-player extension to the original *Tribes*, we were a little gutted to say the least. Nothing has really matched *Tribes*' extensive outdoor environments, and as far as online action goes *Tribes* still is - *Counter-Strike* aside - one of the best team-based games around. The news wasn't all bad, however, as the single-player add-on was to be incorporated into *Tribes 2*, which considering its new vehicles and 3D engine (not to mention far meatier weapons) is a far better prospect altogether.

At the recent E3 show *Tribes 2* took pride of place on the Sierra stand, it was shown on massive screens overlooking the main hall, which was shared by the likes of Activision, Infogrames, Eidos and Hasbro. As it's primarily a multiplayer game, *Tribes 2*'s outdoor environments were pretty empty, with just a few players running about, but you can be sure when it is released there'll be hundreds of players flying about, driving or running across the huge maps, be they human or computer-controlled bots. *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III* may be the daddies indoors, but outdoors *Tribes 2* is the main contender. Oh, and it's not looking too shabby on the inside either.



MAILBOX



Angry, angry, angry, that's you lot, if it's not one thing it's another.
This month: *Daikatana*, late developers, and even psychologists
are lined up for a kicking

ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

CONTACT INFO

Write to us, and if your letter is selected as Letter Of The Month we'll send you a prize.

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CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

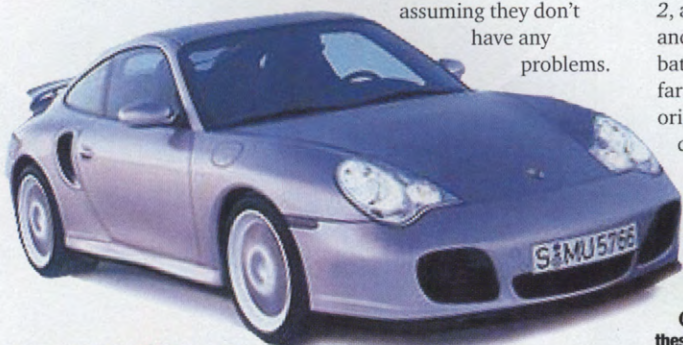
SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON

For the next few issues of PC ZONE, we will be giving away a Microsoft IntelliMouse to everyone who gets a letter printed in Mailbox. These digital rodents are perfect for 3D shooters and games that require a quick and precise response from your pointing device – you can even use them with Windows 98 if you

really want to. So get your writing skates on and send us your literary masterpieces. We promise not to be rude when we reply to them. Well, not very.



You too can own a Microsoft IntelliMouse. Simply send a vaguely intelligent/interesting letter to Mailbox and, if it gets printed, we'll send you one.



PORCHES ARE COOL

I think the analysis that you wrote about the *Need For Speed: Porsche Unleashed*, PCZ #90, was absolutely terrible. I not only own three Porsches and am terribly satisfied with them, I think that your comment on how Porsche owners only own the car to say that we are rich and insecure is so off base. I honestly think you are all a bunch of retards for that and can f**k off. Dissatisfied

Christopher Allen

★ I personally own 12 Porsches and eight Ferraris, but do not feel the need to write in to games magazines to point this out. You, on the other hand, are probably rich and insecure and so feel the need to justify your existence by bragging about your Porsches to PC ZONE, or am I just being "off base"?

DEADLINE DOLDRUMS

I would tend to agree with certain points that Andy Reynolds made in his letter to Mailbox which you published in PCZ #90.

However, Chris Anderson insisted upon sticking 100 per cent on the side of the developers, which, to me, considering the amount of stick you have given John Romero, seemed more than a little hypocritical.

The fact is that yes, the release dates published are realistic to the developers, assuming they don't have any problems.



Diablo 2, just one of many titles suffering from slippage.

But they invariably do. It would be far better for the consumers if we were not told a release date until the developer would, without fail, be able to get the product out.

If the delays were a matter of weeks or even a month or two then we, as consumers, wouldn't have a problem with it. I for one would rather have a complete game than a shambles that has been rushed out to meet a deadline. That isn't the problem. The problem is that we are given release dates that are quite obviously, looking back on them, impossible to meet. I cite as an example *Daikatana*, which was scheduled for release (according to Electronics Boutique's sources) at the end of May last year – an announcement made at the beginning of the same month. This date was delayed less than a week before the release date, and has continued to be delayed.

Another example is *Diablo 2*, a game which my friends and I are waiting for with bated breath. This has so far been delayed from the original stated release date by about two years. Although I want the game to be as bug-free as possible on release, it is very obvious to me that a delay of that

magnitude can't be totally unpredictable.

I'm not asking that developers don't ever have delays, just that they don't treat their customers like idiots when putting forward release schedules.

Craig Grattan

★ Are you really saying you would rather have no release dates at all than one which proves to be misleading? I think you'll find most people would rather have a rough ETA on big titles than to be left completely in the dark as to when they will arrive. Like it or not, release dates are usually wild approximations and the only way to avoid disappointment is to take them all with a pinch of salt and watch PC ZONE for updates on development progress for big games.

A PACIFIST WRITES

I was shocked to see the headline 'Official: video games really are linked to child violence', in the paper today. It seems that the Yanks think that a psychologist's report suddenly finalises the issue – regardless of the other more obvious social factors involved.

The article claimed games, such as *Doom*, *Quake*, and *Mortal Kombat*, were directly and indirectly responsible for

violent behaviour and psychological damage among young people in the States, and treated the report as some kind of reflection to the effects of games on British children.

I have played nearly every first-person shooter from the days of *Wolf 3D* and *Blake Stone*, age ten, to *Kingpin* and *Soldier Of Fortune* today. I have also never been involved in a fight or fired a gun. And I don't particularly want to do either, if that's OK.

Call me illogical, Americans, but if you allow a child who is sitting within ten feet of an over-laden gun rack, one for each member of the family (including the cat), to play a game such as *Kingpin*, what do you expect?

Violent games are being used as scapegoats to direct attention away from the morbid irresponsibility of American gun culture – just compare the levels of extreme juvenile violence there to those here and in Japan (where some of the most violent games are produced). I don't think it's right that this report should be linked to gamers in Britain and, frankly, I don't need a report from a society in which six-year-olds are allowed to shoot their classmates to tell me what the effects of my hobbies will be. The fact that violent games sometimes end up in unacceptably young hands is not an effective argument against them, it's just an argument for better retailing.

This report is an insult to any gamer's intellect, most of whom are capable of the simple task of distinguishing between the fantasy of a computer game and violently anti-social conduct.

Cheers for another great issue – I'm off to play *Quake III*. Followed by a murderous rampage, no doubt...

Kedron

Ⓢ Christopher Allen has one of these. Impressed? Neither were we.

PLAY FAIR

I usually find your mag informative and unbiased. However, I was saddened by your review of the *Soldier Of Fortune* game, PCZ #89, and your comments made about the magazine and its perceived effect on 'sociopaths'. This brings me to a few points:

1) The game appears not an awful amount dissimilar to other warfighting and police shoot 'em ups - *Commandos*, *Mortyr*, *SAWT* etc. The same comments were not made about these games, where the aim is the same - achieving an objective, usually by killing using the various weapons at your disposal.

2) If you've ever actually read *Soldier Of Fortune*, then you might find it an interesting experience. Yes it's full of the usual survivalist nonsense,

“Violent games are being used as scapegoats to direct attention away from the morbid irresponsibility of American gun culture”

KEDRON, WHO DOESN'T BELIEVE THAT GAMES ARE THE PROBLEM

with a right-wing bias and a focus on weapons and violence, but it does raise some interesting issues - for example the knowledge of the FBI that the gas used in Waco was inflammable. As with anything else, it's a case of reading between the lines.

3) In most of your reviews you focus on the effects of different weapon systems and their effect on targets - nailguns in *Quake* etc. At times, your magazine looks identical to *Guns And Ammo*, *Combat Handguns* and the rest of those nasty publications. Does it then follow that everyone who reads *PC ZONE* is full of persons of the same mentality as you describe?

Of course, your argument would be that you are talking about virtual reality, not actual reality, but at times I feel the line and distinction can be blurred somewhat. It is similar to BBC news saying, "Tabloids reported that..." giving the impression of being holier than thou while being at the same gutter level.

J Phillips

★ We find it disturbing that you feel the line that separates virtual reality and actual reality can be



Soldier Of Fortune: guilty or innocent?

blurred somewhat. Games are for fun, gun magazines are an altogether more sinister proposition for obvious reasons. And implying that fans of first-person shoot 'em ups on PC are of similar

many aspects of intelligent thinking and logic. Life, evolution and developing is certainly not black and white.

Yes we are all excited about the future consoles (mainly PS2 and X-Box), yes it would be crazy not to look at them as viable development platforms, and yes they propose a certain element of creative freedom in technological advancements, but hold on, a console has an advanced hardware life of a fruit fly, the minute it is designed, manufactured and distributed the hardware is suddenly out of date.

To quote Peter: "Consoles are so powerful and you can do some incredible stuff on them." This simply floored me, how can a 'supposed' revolutionary figurehead for the development industry base his creative future on that!

Lets look at the X-Box, it's coming from the PC, it's using SDKs that have matured from PC development, it's using PC hardware that has grown and developed from PC architecture. X-Box can simply be classed as taking a moment of time (in hardware/software evolution) and freezing it in a slinky box with a massive marketing budget.

Now compare this so called (and quoted) 'power' to the efforts of processor and 3D hardware companies, such as Intel, 3dfx and Matrox, and within a few weeks of the X-Box launch the PC is throwing out twice as many polygons at twice the speed and twice the resolution!

I know Peter is well respected within the industry due to his past creative developments and I'm sure *B&W* is going to be everything it's promised to be, but I'm always amazed at the level of publicity his statements receive when they seem to be based purely on the 'limelight factor' or for the 'make me an offer factor'.

By all means, develop and exploit the consoles, but to place your development future on a frozen technology and to completely rule out the most adaptive and progressive platform in the world seems naive.

Paul Carrington

★ Peter Molyneux, managing director of Lionhead Studios, responds: "I was very interested to read Paul Carrington's letter and feel that I need to clarify a statement that I made during a talk at E3. I did say that *Black & White* will be the last PC-led title Lionhead will produce. All this means is that the new games design that I currently have bubbling around in my head is aimed more towards consoles than PCs. This does not mean that Lionhead will not be producing any new PC games, whether it be lead or dual machine, nor is it an inditement of the future of the PC as a games platform, but rather that this particular games design is more oriented towards the next generation consoles.

I feel the PC will remain the home for many new and innovative games, in fact, I would imagine some gaming genres will remain most compulsive on the PC.

I have always seen and will continue to see the PC as an important format for innovative games and I am sure many of Lionhead's future titles will continue to support the PC where applicable. ☑



★ *Black & White* will not be Lionhead's last game on PC.

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PCZONE E3

As the dust settles on E3, the *PC ZONE* team reflect on the games that will be making the headlines throughout 2000 and beyond. Over the following pages you will see the games we have picked out for special attention, and we think you will agree that on this evidence the future looks very bright indeed for the PC gaming community

GAME OF THE SHOW

BLACK & WHITE

Everything in *Black & White* makes sense. *Chris Anderson* plays God

DEVELOPER: Lionhead
PUBLISHER: EA
WEBSITE: www.blackandwhite.ea.com
RELEASE DATE: September

The *Black & White* stand pulled massive crowds throughout the whole show and the most cursory of glances at the huge screen displaying the game was enough to explain why. Mind-blowing graphics married to initially simplistic yet ultimately deep and engrossing gameplay are the hallmarks of a title that is sure to

prove ground-breaking upon its release. The simple premise of two rival gods battling for supremacy over a huge landscape has never

their opponent. *Black & White* also sports the most unique magic system we have ever seen. Players use the mouse to draw symbols

Lionhead, unlike many of its industry counterparts, is promising a very strong single-player experience, but it's in its online incarnation that *Black & White* will really shine. Players can take their creatures online to fight against people from all over the world in *The Gathering* (*Black & White's* online community).

In an effort to draw in as many gamers as possible, Lionhead has devised what is surely the most impressive and intuitive interface we've seen to date. There are no

“Mind-blowing graphics married to simplistic yet engrossing gameplay are the hallmarks of a title that is sure to prove ground-breaking upon its release”

been so perfectly realised, with players taking control of their own populace and creatures effortlessly, as they grow their empires slowly but surely in an effort to wipe out

which determine the power and range of their spells, and the option to play as a good or evil god means the possibilities for open-ended and varied gameplay are endless.



Take your creatures into battle online.

I coulda been a contender



Black & White features the most unique and intuitive magic system we've ever seen.

AWARDS



There goes the neighbourhood.

endless banks of icons cluttering the screen and all game actions can be performed with the mouse. This will surely make even the most casual of gamers feel at home straight away.

Perhaps the most impressive thing of all though, is the AI of non-player characters. Leave your villagers to their own devices and they will get up to all kinds of mischief. Watch in amazement as they marvel at new creatures they find on the landscape, and even

learn how to play football to amuse themselves when you haven't given them anything to do.

We are a bit impressed by this game, can you tell? If there was one game at E3 we couldn't wait to get our hands on, this was most definitely it. Look out for a major feature in *PC ZONE* Online next month, which will investigate *Black & White's* peerless online capabilities in depth.



Left to their own devices, your villagers will get up to all sorts of mischief.

BEST ADVENTURE

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

DEVELOPER: LucasArts
PUBLISHER: Activision
WEBSITE: www.lucasarts.com
RELEASE DATE: November

Arguably the finest (and funniest) adventure series in the history of gaming, *Monkey Island* represents the pinnacle of its genre. So news of an addition to the series is something to get very excited about. The new game is being penned by the team



responsible for *Sam & Max*. This in itself is cause for celebration, as *Sam & Max* is generally considered to be one of the best games LucasArts produced in their adventure heyday.

We got a sneak preview of the game at the show, and it looks absolutely stunning. Expect more news on the game that looks set to revive the adventure genre in a forthcoming issue of *PC ZONE*.

BEST ACTION/STRATEGY

XCOM ALLIANCE

DEVELOPER: Hasbro
PUBLISHER: Hasbro
WEBSITE: www.hasbro.com
RELEASE DATE: Q3 2000

We all love first-person shooters, but let's be honest, how many more can we stand that seem to focus on nothing more than blowing someone's head off repeatedly? Enter stage left, *Alliance* with what seems to be the perfect solution: a first-person shooter with a strong research and resource management

side that lends purpose to all the non-stop shooting. We have a sneaky feeling that if Hasbro get this game right it could well be the surprise hit of the year.

Beautiful graphics, depth of gameplay and the opportunity to kill recognised aliens from the *XCOM* series in up-close-and-personal confrontations must surely be a recipe for success.

Alliance is scheduled for release at the end of the year. We can hardly wait. No, really.



Could this be the surprise hit of 2000? Possibly.

← MOST ORIGINAL GAME

AMERICAN MCGEE'S ALICE

Forget Disney. American McGee wants to take Alice back to the dark side. *Dave Woods* isn't complaining

DEVELOPER: Rogue Entertainment
PUBLISHER: EA
WEBSITE: www.alice.ea.com
RELEASE DATE: Autumn

Have we lost our minds? Voting a game based on the *Quake III* engine as most original at E3? In a word, no. You see for most people *Alice In*

HAS ANYONE SEEN...?

These are the games that were conspicuous by their absence

UNREAL 2

We were promised a sneak peak. What we got was a whole lot less – a quick demonstration of some of the technical advances being made in the *Unreal* world. "Can you tell us anything about *Unreal 2*?" was our enthusiastic question. "No" was the uncompromising, but straightforward answer.

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

id is famous for saying its latest game will be "ready when it's ready". If you think that's unhelpful you should try gleaning any information out of 3D Realms. Apparently the game will be released some time in the next millennium. Hail to the King, baby!

TEAM FORTRESS 2

We thought it looked ambitious and we were right. *Team Fortress 2* was a no-show at E3, although it could be a blessing in disguise. It's an online only game and we're not going to get the most out of it until we get affordable high-speed Internet accounts. Which we should have later on this year. Good.

Wonderland conjures up the Disney animated classic where there's a very strong distinction between good and evil. It's a great film, but it was designed for kids, and the Lewis Carroll original took a very different bent.

It's been well documented that Carroll favoured the company of little girls (sweet ones that looked just like Alice, in fact), and *Wonderland* was obviously a public manifestation of this. Throughout the book, Alice is subjected to nightmare after nightmare, from the sort of characters you'd hope not to meet after ingesting hallucinogens. Get a copy and check it out for yourself, it makes the perfect setting for a genuinely disturbing and scary PC game.

And that is exactly what American McGee is aiming to do (if you want proof of the dark side of the game then just take a look at these rather disturbing screenshots). *Alice* was shown behind closed doors at E3 and after witnessing the 15 minute demo we were all utterly convinced that this was going to be one of the best games to come out this year. As long as it meets its release date that is.

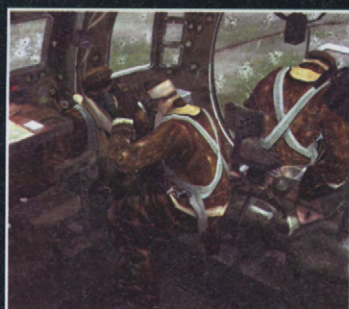
Yes, it's built around the *Quake III* engine, but the game is played from a third-person perspective. And, as well as blasting the living bejesus out of living playing cards and the like, there's going to be a big adventure element present.

Moving into one area, built around a gigantic chess board, the game switches into atmospheric black and white. Scattered around are various chess pieces, and in order to progress you're going to need to know the basics of the best strategy game in the world. We're not saying any more.

The game kicks off after the two books, by which time Alice has been driven completely insane. As she receives the call to return to *Wonderland* she's rocking her head back and forth inside a padded cell of a lunatic asylum. Which is exactly where you'd be if you'd been through the trials she's had to endure. Naturally she's not



BEST FLIGHT SIMULATION



You'd better get your first aid bloke, quick.



The graphics engine looks absolutely amazing in action.

B17 FLYING FORTRESS

DEVELOPER: MicroProse
PUBLISHER: Hasbro
WEBSITE: www.hasbro.com
RELEASE DATE: TBC

People were bemoaning the lack of flight simulations at E3, and some were actually going as far as to say

that the genre was dying a death. After looking at B17 we don't know what they were complaining about – there's enough quality here to keep anyone happy for months.

It maps the whole of Europe accurately and even provides an RPG element of sorts.

You build a crew up that comes with different skills, including first aid if you're unlucky enough to take a bullet fighting for Queen and country. This is going to be the last simulation for MicroProse and we're betting they're going to go out on a high.

“Get a copy of the book and check it out for yourself, it makes the perfect setting for a genuinely disturbing and scary PC game”

too keen, but as a particularly twisted white rabbit points out: she hasn't got much choice.

What more do you need? Great graphics, twisted characters and a general underbelly of darkness that would make you run for your life if it wasn't just a game. The rich heritage of the books provides a huge pool of ready-built and recognisable characters (although if you've only seen the Disney version you might wonder what sort of drugs McGee has been on), and already the code is looking superb. We can't wait.



Don't expect a BFG. The flamingo mallet is more up Alice's street.



Above you!!



Expect crooked and twisted architecture.



You take the high road...

BEST RPG

DUNGEON SIEGE

Eight legs bad.
Two legs good.



DEVELOPER: Gas Powered Games
PUBLISHER: Microsoft
WEBSITE: www.microsoft.com/games
RELEASE DATE: Jan/Feb 2001

We've been talking about this one since it was announced at Microsoft's Gamestock event and we're still convinced it's going to be the best RPG event of 2001. The graphics are nothing short of staggering and with Chris Taylor's inventive shortcuts and sense of humour prevalent all the way through, the gameplay should match.

The demo at E3 wasn't that much more advanced, but we did sneak a peek at a massive dragon that filled the whole of the screen and dwarfed our character, before looking irritated when he was torched with a couple of mouthfuls of highly flammable breath. Impressive? You'd better believe it.

TECHNOPHOBIE

We couldn't wait for *Diablo 2*. We were disappointed

High on our wish list before E3 was *Diablo 2*, the sequel to one of the best-looking RPGs on PC (well, it was at the time). Imagine our surprise then when we saw the sequel and discovered it looked suspiciously similar to its predecessor, albeit in higher resolution. This would not be a problem were it not for the fact that *Vampire* has redefined the graphic standard for the RPG genre, making Blizzard's title look decidedly dated before it's even been released. Let's hope *Diablo 2's* gameplay is up to scratch is all we can say. In its favour, *Diablo 2* will set the online gaming community alight in the same way the first one did. We've got an early version in the office, but we're not going to review it until it finally goes gold, which will be next month. Possibly.



Diablo 2: too little too late?

← BEST GRAPHICS

HALO

Richie Shoemaker shamelessly jumped a two-hour queue to see the demo of Bungie's alien v human game. What he got was a breathtaking display of PC visuals and a punch in the nose

BIZARRE BAZAAR

The weird and wonderful world of E3



Please take a seat.

There was good and bad at E3 this year, and no shortage of the downright freakish either. Stuck away in one hall we found force feedback gamepads, mice with built-in microphones, something called a ButtKicker and, worst of all, the Interactive BattleChair™, which after passing innocently by we were practically manhandled into, in order to experience the "unique 5°, three-way crystal clear drivers, adjustable T-Arms and high-back ergonomic cushioning". After walking around the show for eight hours it made a nice change to sit down, until the sounds of *Half-Life* barked through the "patented 8in back woofers" and nearly blew our brains through our nostrils. After five minutes our ears were aching more than our ankles and we almost paid the US\$249 (inc p&p) just to get away. Anyway, after leaving intact, minus our business cards, we found refuge outside on the pavement. It wasn't quite as comfy, but at least it was quiet.

DEVELOPER: Bungie
PUBLISHER: Take 2
WEBSITE: <http://halo.bungie.com>
RELEASE DATE: March 2001

There were three two-hour long queues at E3 this year: one for the shitter; one snaking around the Microsoft stand to snatch a peak at Microsoft's X-Box console; and the other camped around the Bungie booth, with people waiting patiently to see the third-person game *Halo* in action. The difference between the latter two queues was that while the line for X-Box was filled with Satan-worshipping marketing



Wish you were there.

types, those encamped around the Bungie stand were predominantly games developers, curious as to what all the fuss is about – the people in the know, basically.

Being awarded VIP status and herded around the back, we were able to jump the line and sneak in through a secret entrance to take

“It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say *Halo* was the best-looking game at E3 by quite a margin, so good in fact that it looked too good to be true”

all the best seats. The presentation, although brief, certainly had impact. First we were treated to a few minutes of real-time action, which although revealed nothing of the game's structure or AI, certainly forced the odd jaw to drop with the

graphics alone. The alien ring world on which *Halo* is based stretched far into the horizon. Firing each of the game's dozen weapons caused casings to roll downhill and when our



The demo was like watching a movie.

BEST FPS

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

DEVELOPER: Gray Matter
PUBLISHER: Activision
WEBSITE: www.activision.com
RELEASE DATE: TBC

Although on show to all and sundry, it was in one of Activision's



Watch out *Half-Life*, *Wolfenstein* is returning to the castle.

back rooms that we saw the best that the sequel to the granddaddy of all first-person games had to offer. The *Quake III*-powered *Wolfenstein* will primarily be a single-player game, offering intelligent AI (the Hun work in



It may look spooky, but *Wolfenstein* is far more action-packed than this suggests.

teams), plenty of WWII weaponry and puzzles that, for the first time since *Half-life*, should take the genre away from the ponderous malaise of switch-pulling and key finding.

Although ex-*Kingpin* coders Gray Matter will be handling much of the game's development, id Software will be keeping a keen eye on the project. id's Graham Devine was just as excitable as Gray Matter's director, Drew Markham, on the game, both of whom were keen to show off all the graphical enhancements that had been made to the *Quake III* engine. With allied troops to fight alongside you, experimental weapons to try out and some intriguing multiplayer modes, *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* could well be the game to topple *Half-Life* off the top spot. It is about time after all.



The engine allows the game to seamlessly switch from indoor to outdoor settings.

the best-looking game at E3 by quite a margin, so good in fact that it looked too good to be true.

Next up was the meat and veg of the presentation - a multiplayer ten minute rolling demo, recorded in real-time in the *Halo* offices prior to E3. Without going too over the top, it was almost like watching a film. And the promise is that within a year it will be an experience we will all be able to savour, with sleek aliens and their anti-gravity vehicles taking on a human force - all with realistic AI - across a dynamic and seamless world, featuring as realistic a physics model as you're ever likely to find. In terms of its graphical style, *Halo* manages to hit the right balance in that rather than pitch the humans as good and the aliens as evil, there



The aliens have their own distinct weapons and vehicles.

is almost the same tension as between the colonial marines in the *Alien* films and the same morality as the honourable hunter of the *Predator* films. As a multiplayer game *Halo* could

seriously take the crown. As a single-player game we will have to wait a few months to see what Bungie can add. In the meantime, it is clear that graphically *Halo* is light years ahead of anything else.

BEST SPACE COMBAT

FREELANCER



As characters upgrade their implants, they get better at flying ships.

DEVELOPER: Digital Anvil
PUBLISHER: Microsoft
WEBSITE: www.digitalanvil.com
RELEASE DATE: Early 2001

Winner of numerous awards at last year's E3, a full 12 months on and the *Elite*-style *Freelancer* was no less impressive. Exotic planetside cities shone with promise and in the depths of space the massive capital ships and stations demonstrated a breadth of scale that no other game has yet managed to portray. The various factions in the game were distinct and as for the



Each character in the game is in 3D, with real lip-syncing.

control system, well, some may scoff at mouse control, but it looks as if it might actually work. More than a simple space combat game, *Freelancer* is as much an RPG and an adventure and you can be sure that we will be taking an in-depth look at it very soon.

ONLINE ON SHOW

Our hit list of the best online games at E3

It was difficult to gauge what was the best online game of the show, half of them were unpopulated and the others were demoed to us with typical PR panache. *Ultima Online 2* (now called *Ultima Online World: Origin*) looked good, as did *Anarchy Online* and *Jumpgate*. But as a group, what most impressed us was the online versions of *Freelancer* and *Black & White*, both of which should appear shortly after their single-player versions. Also looking good were a number of *Half-Life* mods. However, if you asked the masses what the best online game was, you'd probably get the answer *Diablo 2*. There were dozens of fat Americans watching the game, but we have to say we were rather nonplussed. Maybe it's just us. Yes, that'll be it.



Ultima 2 is perhaps the most eagerly awaited next-generation RPG.

It's almost upon us...



That's what you get when you cross Mr Mallo!

UPDATE

DEUS EX

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Ion Storm Austin
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
WEBSITE www.deusex.com
OUT August

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ✦ Uses Unreal engine
- ✦ High-tech gadgetry
- ✦ Realistic, contemporary environments
- ✦ Action-packed story



ION STORM

Ion Storm finally ended up finishing *Daikatana* before *Deus Ex*. But they should never have bothered...

2000 *Daikatana* – John Romero's infamous first-person shooter finally makes its appearance, and – uh – it's all a bit crap.

1998 *Dominion* – Ropye real-time strategy game that Ion Storm inherited from US development house disaster *7th Level*.

Paul Mallinson has followed the development of *Deus Ex* with great interest, and he's now on the verge of having the final thing drop onto his lap. So how does he feel about that?

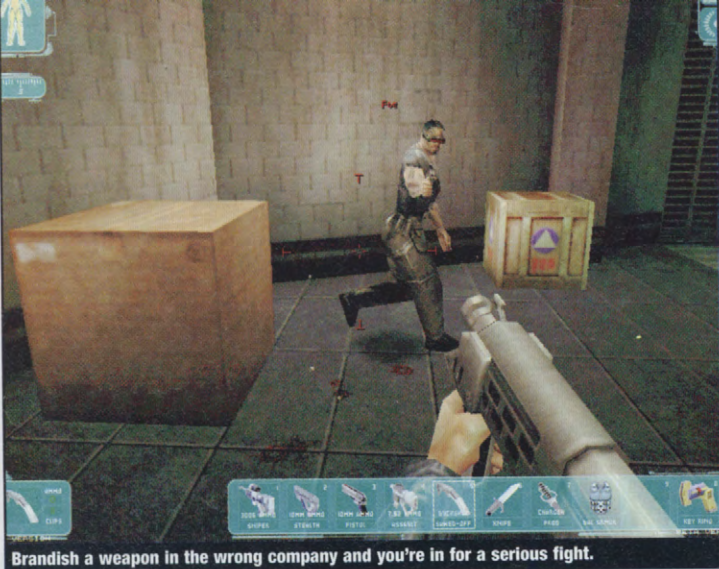
The last time we saw *Deus Ex* we had Warren Spector, the game's designer demonstrating it for us. Warren's involvement in some of our all-time favourite computer games, namely the *Ultima Underworld* series, had us in a state of anticipation, the likes of which we hadn't experienced outside a second visit to the clap clinic. But, from what we can remember of that morning, the game *looked* great and *seemed* like a hell of a lot of fun to play. We say 'looked' and 'seemed' because at that point in time Warren wouldn't let us

near the controls. *Oh no*. He would constantly say "I'll show you this", or "let me show you that". He wouldn't let us anywhere near the keyboard. But we didn't hold it against him. In fact, nobody in the room held it against him because we were witnessing the birth of a red-hot classic, and didn't need to be at the controls to work that out.

Now, with *Deus Ex* having slipped to August, Warren and his chums have seen fit to lend *PC ZONE* an almost finished beta of the game – to test for ourselves, until Eidos finish recording all the European voices and the game is finally shipped.

HOW'S IT SHAPING UP?

Where do we start? From the outset, when the game boots up to a rousing James Bond-style theme tune, it feels as if you're about to take part in something dramatic and special. The story of a modern-day 'super spy' on the trail of a highly-organised terrorist organisation, *Deus Ex* mixes first-person shooting action with cyberpunk-style role-playing in a contemporary setting, so you are immediately thrust into a fairly familiar environment (the game starts off in New York), with a fairly familiar set of controls. After an initial briefing, and the supply of the game's lower-



Brandish a weapon in the wrong company and you're in for a serious fight.



Your survival will depend on avoiding not only the guns and guards, but the deadly crossfire.



Anna Navarre, your cop buddy and pain-in-the-arse type person, will make things difficult.



Stealth, especially in this opening segment, will determine your eventual success or failure.

end weaponry, you're then sent out to neutralise a group of highly-organised terrorists who have taken over the Statue of Liberty.

Once you're on your own, creeping around the darkly-lit gardens surrounding the statue, you quickly begin to realise that *Deus Ex* is not all shooting. No, far from it. As a high-tech cop, you have a number of useful built-in devices at your disposal. These devices, called Augmentations, are upgraded and added to as you complete objectives in the various missions. On top of this, there are 11 different skills to expand and improve upon, from Computers (for hacking and stuff) to Environmental Training (resistance to hazardous environments), and everything in between. Basically, you start off as a weedy shadow of a supercop, and by the end of the first couple of missions you become a lean, mean killing machine – very much like something out of *Terminator*.

CHALLENGING

Which is just as well, as even on the easiest setting, *Deus Ex* is something of a challenge. If, like us, you storm terrorist territory on the first few goes without a thought for your own safety, you won't last two minutes. The guards

patrolling the area will not only open fire if they see or hear you, but they will also run for the nearest alarm and alert their cohorts who will promptly return and kick your head in if you do not dispatch them first. Staying low is a priority. There are not only guards, but robots, gun emplacements and surveillance cameras to deal with too. So, from the word 'go' you've pretty much got what seems like the whole world up against you – and it's scary.

“Stepping out from the shadows to a lit area in front of a terrorist will almost certainly award you with a bullet in the head, no matter how far away they are”

The learning process in *Deus Ex* is one of initial trial and error. Stepping out from the shadows to a lit area in front of a terrorist will almost certainly award you with a bullet in the head, no matter how far away they are. If they see you, that's it – all hell breaks loose. Stay in the shadows, however, and crawling instead of running will allow you relative invisibility. And if a terrorist's back is turned and you creep up behind them, they'll not know what hit them when you finally find the nerve to slit their throats. It's a messy business, but essential if you are to get anywhere near your

objectives. That said, you don't *have* to kill people to get on in *Deus Ex* – in fact, in some places you actually get told off for using unnecessary force. A handy 'electro prod' does a good job of incapacitating the enemy without actually killing them, and you can carry and hide bodies à la *Thief* to avoid further detection. But, in our opinion, the sniper rifle is a much safer bet because you can use it at arm's length and hide until the alarms are

PICK US A WINNER

Picking locks and bypassing electronic devices are some of *Deus Ex*'s other cool gameplay features. Lock-picks and MultiTools are used for these purposes respectively. MultiTools can even stretch to disabling surveillance cameras and opening electronic locks, but are in short supply so must be

used wisely. And they're not the only thing in short supply either. *Deus Ex* isn't *Quake*. There aren't floating, revolving boxes lying around waiting to be picked up on every corner. Every bullet counts, and running out of ammunition in the gravest of situations will no doubt feature heavily in your first few hours of play, like it did ours. But these furious, desperate occasions – when you alert the whole level to your presence by accidentally disturbing some pigeons, or by using the shotgun by mistake – are immense fun and can be quite an adrenaline rush.

The terrorist AI in these combat situations is already turning out to be quite exceptional, so God knows what it will be like in the final game. Throw a grenade into the middle of a group and they scream, before scattering in every direction to avoid the blast. Enemy groups also work together, catching you in a deadly crossfire if they can, while one runs off to raise the alarm and bring more troops in. Injured felons, if they know they're beat, will run away from you. But, unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be a way of cuffing them, which would have been nice. Is it too late to include it guys? Still, we can't have it all.

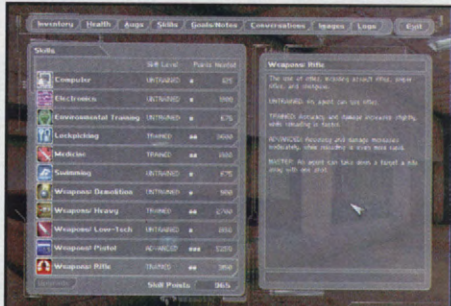




A rocket blast in the face... Owww! That's seriously gotta hurt.



This agent is packing some serious kit, but there's far more to be found in *Deus Ex* than can be seen here.



Each skill discipline has four levels of training and can be advanced by 'spending' skill points awarded for valiant play.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

One of the best features of *Deus Ex* is the abundance of non-player characters. All of them talk to you and play an essential role in bringing the world to life, and some even give you things or sell you weaponry.



So how about it then?

HIDING BODIES

It's not too wise to leave corpses lying around because if the enemy spots them, they'll run and set off the nearest alarm. Picking up bodies, and hiding them out of sight is a gruesome, but necessary process in *Deus Ex*.



Looks like the dustmen left some bits.

OR CAN WE?

Well, yes we can have it all. From what we've played of *Deus Ex* so far, we reckon we're gonna get pretty much everything we ever wanted in an action role-playing adventure of this sort, and much, much more. With *Deus Ex*, the game's designers have essentially combined the instant hook of a first-person shoot 'em up

“Running out of ammo in the gravest situations will feature heavily in your first few hours of play. But these desperate occasions are quite an adrenaline rush”

with the complex story of an adventure game, the depth of character of a role-playing game, the atmosphere of something like *Thief* and the ease-of-use and sophistication of *System Shock 2*. If the truth be told, *Deus Ex* does play startlingly similarly to the

above mentioned Looking's Glass classics in some places, and Ion Storm Austin will curse us for mentioning it – but sod it, it's true. And it's not exactly a bad thing either, as both *Thief* and *System Shock 2* are bona fide benchmarks in their own right, so anything remotely similar is fine by us.

On balance *Deus Ex* is going to be to PC gaming what *GoldenEye* was

to the N64 – and a whole lot more. After playing this nearly-finished preview version to death and beyond, we're itching, nay having kittens, in anticipation of the finished article. So fingers crossed for the full review in the next issue. **PCZ**



You get to kill dogs. Steve Hill will be pleased. But then it's only a game.

TWISTING STORYLINE

Deus Ex features a wonderfully-scripted storyline that twists and turns and creates real dilemmas. Obviously, this being a preview, we don't want to give too much away. So check the review for further details.



Skirting surveillance takes some skill.

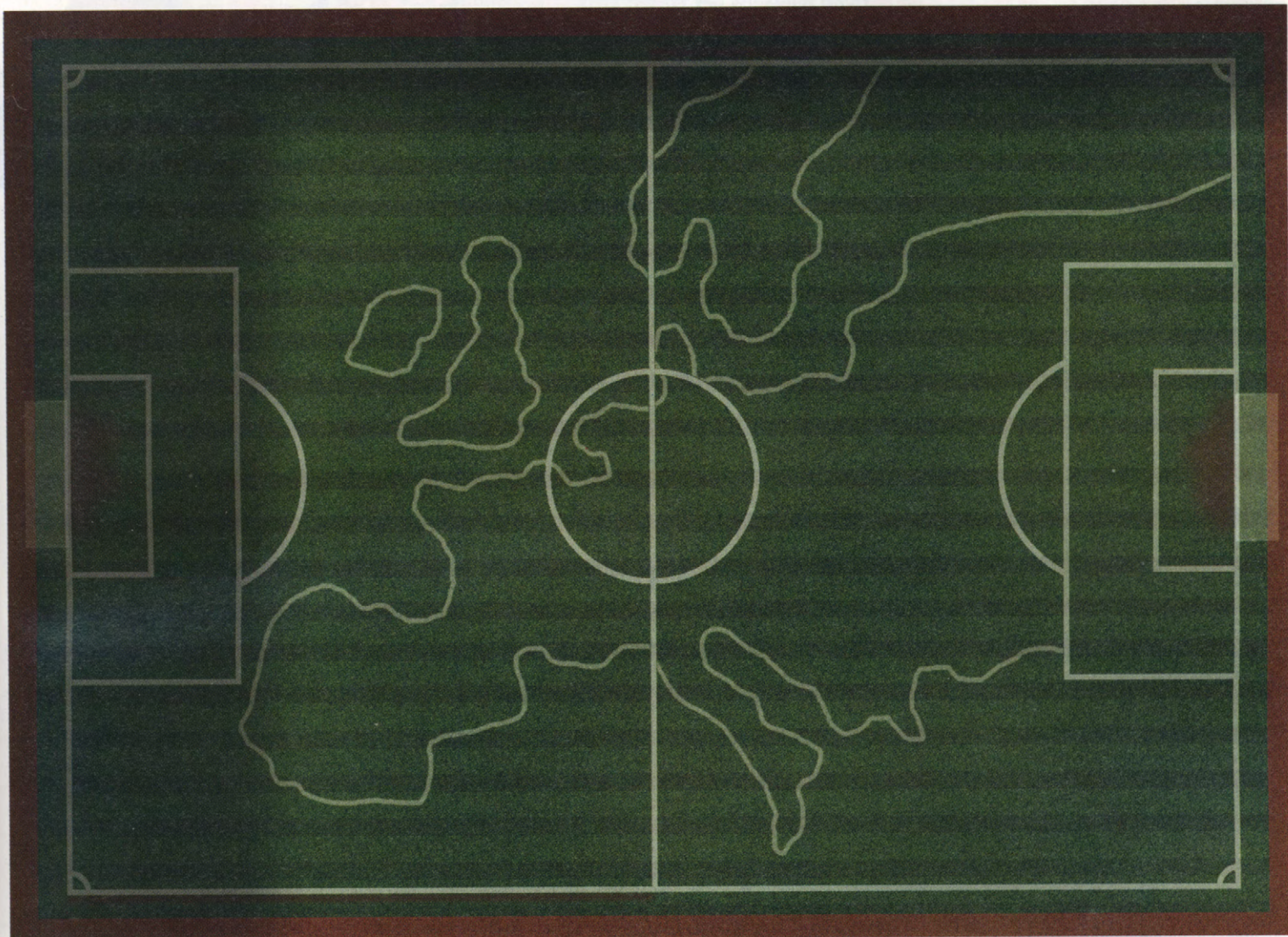
IRONING OUT THE BUGS

Take a close look at this screenshot here – and, no, you're not tripping. *Deus Ex* still has to undergo some final bug-testing. Only then will it be ready to be unleashed upon the slaving masses.



Use the statues for target practice.

...We'd like to mark out your area of responsibility



MANAGER

2 0 0 0

INFOGRAMES



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★ 100% European Football

Pick your team among the top European championships and win all domestic and European competitions.

★ 100% AI-based simulation

Unique player and staff AI routines. Detailed statistics for both teams and players.

★ 100% Graphics

See your team act in Real Time in a full 3D Match. 3D view of your stadium improvements.

★ 100% User-Friendly

Unique 'Football Today' section helps you to perform manager's duties.

Delegate difficult tasks to your assistants.

Intuitive interface using drag and drop system.

★ 100% Accuracy

In-depth tactical and transfer sections.

Detailed scouting, training and youth team management systems.

Comprehensive financial section including merchandising and ground development issues.

PC
CD
ROM

Take your team to European glory

Lock up your daughters...

KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS: THE NIGHTMARE CHILD



THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Third Law Interactive
PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive
WEBSITE www.kisspsychocircus.com
OUT August

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Single-player shooter
- ★ Modified LithTech 1.5 engine
- ★ Horde technology means dozens of creatures on five different realms, with a variety of weapons and special powers!

⬇ Put your tongue away, young man.



What's black and white and red all over? Kiss after a few too many hours on the sun bed. Dave Woods dies on stage and decides to stick to his day job

Unreal Tournament and Quake III might be great games, but if you're looking for a story-fuelled single-player shooter, then you can forget both of these.

In fact, games that fit this particular bill are a bit short on the ground, and if you've played through *Half-Life* and its sublime, but short-lived, add-on pack, then you're pretty well stuffed. Forget

Daikatana. We reviewed it in the last issue and it's not much cop. So where should you look for solo thrills next? A release based on the exploits of '70s supergroup Kiss? Well, why not?

Kiss Psycho Circus isn't a game that's been hastily thrown together to sit on the back of the Kiss moniker. It's actually based on the rather tasty comic of the same name created by Todd McFarlane, and it's got more in common with *Sandman* and *Helbraiser* than good old-fashioned American rock. In the comic, the *Psycho Circus* is a macabre collective and handily enough it's also a gateway to alternate realities, which lead to adventures drawn around the deepest and darkest recesses of the human soul. Sounds like our sort of gig.

KISS OFF

In the game, the 'Four Who Are One' (that's Kiss in case you hadn't realised) or Elders (or good guys) have been banished to the Void. The Nightmare King is getting ready for an immaculate conception, and if his child is born before the Elders can return, he'll "swallow the universe whole, just to spit it out again in a highly undesirable form". And no, we're not kidding.

This is where you come in. Lured to the circus by false promises you're soon enslaved by an old crone who demands that you scour five realms – Fire, Water, Air, Earth and Nightmare – to restore the Elders and save the world. Each of the element realms correspond with a member of Kiss,



THIRD LAW

The Third Law crew famously walked out on John Romero and his ill-fated *Daikatana* project. *Kiss* is their first release under Third Law, but its members have worked on some of the best titles in the genre.

1995 *Doom II Master Levels* – an official add-on pack that gave one of the best games even more shelf life.

1997 *Redneck Rampage* – kill hillbillies and chickens in deepest, darkest America. Not actually as much fun as it sounds.

1997 *Hexen II* – Raven's fantasy blaster won loads of fans and proved that pointy hats and good games aren't mutually exclusive.

1997 *Quake: Scourge of Armagon* – a quality mission pack for the original *Quake* game, which scored highly with the fans.



The flaming Unipsycho. Looks a bit evil, doesn't he?



who has different weapons, including a melee weapon (sword, battle-axe) and an ultimate weapon, such as the Beast King's railgun beater the Soul Lance. To complete each realm, you have to collect pieces of magic armour and transform yourself from mere mortal to the sex gods we know in their earthly form as Kiss. Riveting stuff, I'm sure you'll agree.

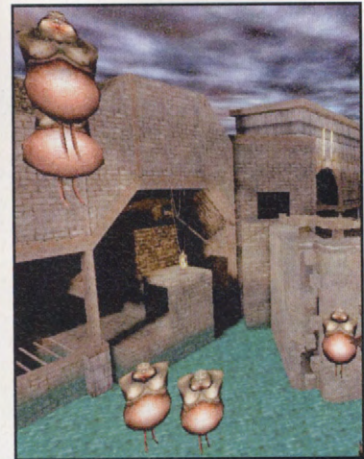
Taking a lead from the sublime *Half-Life*, *Psycho Circus* is going to include a number of smaller goals in

“Psycho Circus isn't a game that's been hastily thrown together on the back of the Kiss moniker”

the game that should ensure the atmosphere of is kept near boiling point. In the water realm, you'll have to escape from a flooding cathedral; and in the circus levels, you have to play your way out of some warped circus games, including the classic duck shoot where you start off providing the target practice.

SWARMS OF THE BUGGERS

You can also expect a slew of end-of-level and mini-bosses to fight against.



These floaters are about as welcome as the more traditional strain.

The preview code we've played through only includes the first realm, but we've already had to contend with a flaming Unipsycho and a giant clown that rolls up in a stunt car and proceeds to lob exploding skittles at your head. As far as the other monsters go, twisted is the name of the game. Floating Gasbags, old Gypsy crones, scuttling spiders, eight-legged Arachniclowns and Ballbusters and Stumps are all waiting to strike, and with the flexibility of the LithTech

engine and Third Law's Horde technology, you can expect to see literally dozens of these creatures on screen at once. Polygon counts drop when creatures are further away from you, and when frame rates start to drop on your machine. So, despite the frenetic *Doom*-style play, the game should never noticeably slow down. AI has been set to account for the swarms as well, with the emphasis on variation and speed, rather than stealth and cunning.

ROMERO VS THIRD LAW

Ironically, Third Law, developer of *Psycho Circus*, is the group that left the *Daikatana* project to set up on their own, and the four distinct realms and different weapons look like a two-fingered gesture to the long-haired one. In a recent fit of sour grapes, John Romero was quoted as having no regrets about the *Daikatana* project. The only thing he'd change if he could go back would be the staff. "It all came down to people, nothing to do with the game design. The design was not impossible to do with competent people. Now we have an awesome team and everybody pulled through.

IT'S KINDA TRAGIC

Rock bands and PC games are uneasy bedfellows. Here's the shocking proof

One thing we can say with certainty is *Kiss Psycho Circus* is going to be the best game based around a rock band, because there's not much competition. Anyone remember *Queen: The Eye*? A game set in the not too distant future where economic markets have collapsed, and citizens of the world are governed by a vast network called the Eye? Thought not. You played Dubroc, one of the agents of the network, eradicating images and notions deemed subversive or harmful to the Eye. Until you discovered music. Rumours that *Queen: The Brown Eye* was the original title have been sadly discounted.

Or does *Ed Hunter* sound familiar? It was a shooting game on rails in which the scariest and most challenging section had you scrambling for the escape key in a bid to shut off the Iron Maiden soundtrack that accompanied the carnage. The evil that men do, indeed.



Ed Hunter came with a separate Iron Maiden soundtrack. Shame.



Mark reckoned the game was bad, but the music 'dead good'. But then he's confused.

It took a long time to go through a lot of people who weren't used to doing their hobby as a job."

We should have a full review of *Psycho Circus* next month, and the fact that the team has managed to ship at almost the same time as *Daikatana* makes Romero's words slightly questionable. The game looks better (the LithTech 1.5 engine is vastly superior to the old *Quake II* workhorse) and, at this early stage, plays better. If the finished product is

tweaked properly, we could be looking at a game that delivers what *Daikatana* failed to – adrenaline-fuelled fun.

Psycho Circus doesn't have any pretensions and it's not likely to run off with any awards for innovation, but it might just provide the antidote for the rash of multiplayer shooters, and possibly keep us going until *Voyager* or *Alice* see the light. And the best news? You won't be plagued by a

raucous Kiss soundtrack that has to be switched off every time you play the game. Now that's got to be a real bonus. [E]



Are you ready to take on the Beast?

HOMEWORLD: CATAclysm



More real-time strategy in the bleak void of space. *Steve Hill* is well and truly lost

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Barking Dog Studios
PUBLISHER Havas Interactive
WEBSITE <http://sierrastudios.com/games/hwcataclysm/>
OUT Late summer

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Stand-alone *Homeworld* spin-off
- ★ From the makers of *Half-Life: Counter-Strike*
- ★ Features 17 new missions
- ★ Lots of stupid names

CV



BARKING DOG STUDIOS

The various employees of Vancouver's Barking Dog have worked on a host of top titles, but as a company this is only its second project.

1999 *Counter-Strike*. A reasonable debut, this was a mod for the little known *Half-Life*, a radiation simulator of minor repute.

When is a sequel not a sequel? When it's a "fully-fledged spin-off," according to Michael Gyori, the lead designer on *Homeworld: Cataclysm*. "Basically," he explains, "we have taken the original *Homeworld* engine and modified it to bring you a new tale from the *Homeworld* universe."

If you read the *Top Story* in our April issue, the rudiments of said tale were covered there, and suffice to say it's the usual science fiction fare. As such, it features some very silly names, indeed, as did the original *Homeworld*, last year's highly-acclaimed (at least by Paul Presley) space epic from Canadian outfit Relic Entertainment. But when it came down to the crunch, such as developing a follow-up, Relic didn't fancy it and instead stuck its collective head around the door of the nearest office and asked if anyone there felt like it. That office, luckily, was the headquarters of game developer Barking Dog Studios, who, after some protracted muttering, accepted the challenge.

Or, as Gyori explains: "In the spring of 1998, it was quite apparent that *Homeworld* was going to be big. At the time, Barking Dog was brought on board to help with *Homeworld* and work on an expansion pack. Sierra soon realised that *Homeworld: Cataclysm* should be a standalone product, and here we are today."

It all sounds very cosy, but it could be argued that taking over someone else's game is a bit like wearing dead man's pants. Not so, says the designer. "Well, first of all, Relic is far from being

continuity fans should rest easy knowing our story and manual were written by Marcus Skyler, the same person who wrote *Homeworld*."

COMPLETE CONTROL

With the fears of continuity fans firmly assuaged, it seems appropriate to ask what changes have been made to the engine, controls and so forth. "Various graphic tweaks have been made to ensure the game is even more stunning than before," Gyori claims. "Some of the new features

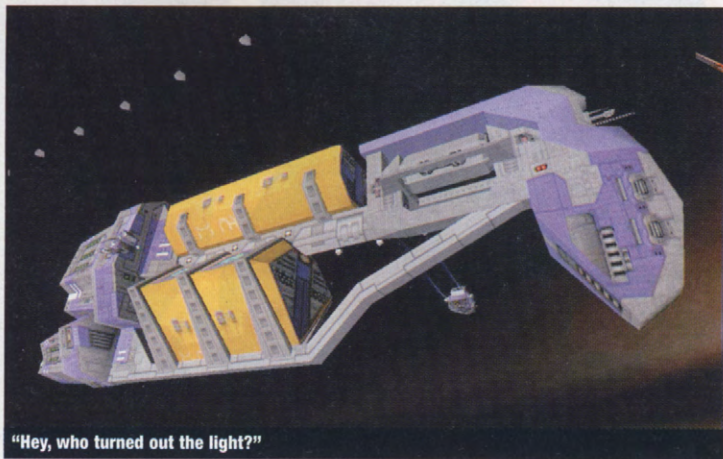
"This game has elements from many space movies. If *Homeworld* was like *Battlestar Galactica*, *Cataclysm* should give the player the feel of *Alien* or *The Thing*"

a dead man and some of them don't even wear pants. But seriously, this is no different than George Lucas letting someone else direct *The Empire Strikes Back* while he was busy elsewhere. We are honoured to have the chance to add our twist to an award-winning strategy game.

And

include large shockwave explosions, ships holographically mimicking other ships, polygonal accurate collisions, ships that project energy shielding, small repair bots moving around the hull of large ships, new salvaging effects, new weapons and their effects, external ship construction, new ship animations, lens flares, slip gates and dynamic Gouraud shading.

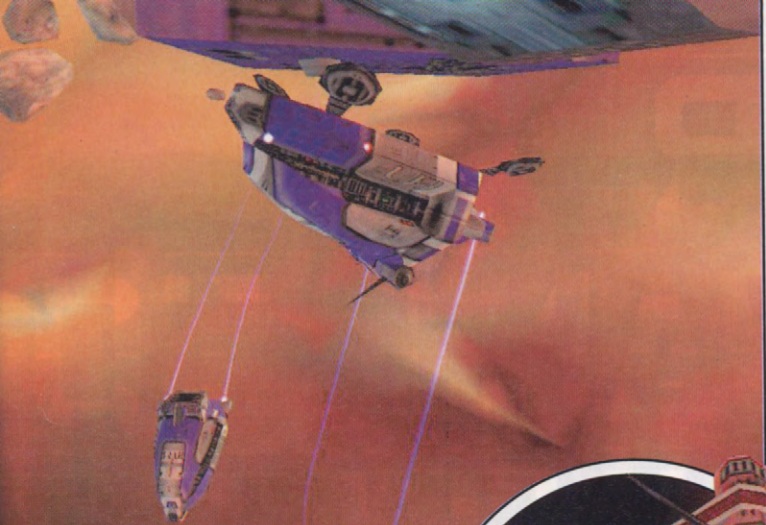
"As far as controls go, they are basically the same ergonomic, easy-



"Hey, who turned out the light?"



Red sky at night, shepherd's pie.



Ladies and gentlemen, we are floating in space.

to-use controls from *Homeworld*, with some improvements to the right-click menu and some changes to reduce micro-management. Players are now able to give many commands in the Sensor Manager, making it much easier to control your fleet over long distances. We've improved the AI as well, so ships will function better on their own while your attention is elsewhere."

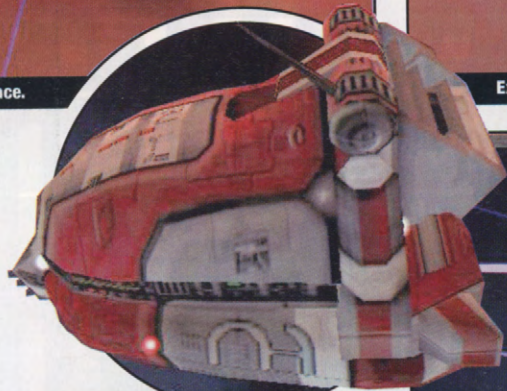
That's all very well, but some people can't think in 3D. "We have tried to make *Cataclysm* more approachable to all kinds of players," he continues. "The improved Sensor Manager interface, for example, will allow you to view the space battles from above and issue attack commands without worrying about 3D positioning. As I mentioned earlier, ships will also handle themselves better when unattended by the player."

Clearly, there is a tendency for all space games to look alike. After all, space is space, right? Wrong, says Gyori. "With all new backgrounds, dynamic 'terrain', such as moving asteroid belts, slip gates, many new effects and loads of new ships, this is as different as space can look while still having that dazzling *Homeworld* feel."

DIAL P FOR PLAGIARISM

Some people (well, Paul Presley) have suggested that *Cataclysm's* storyline has similarities with that of *Star Trek*. Have you ever heard of that?

"Heard of *Star Trek*? Hmmm, doesn't ring any bells. Seriously though, *Cataclysm* has elements from



The new alien race, the Beast, has an organic feel to it.

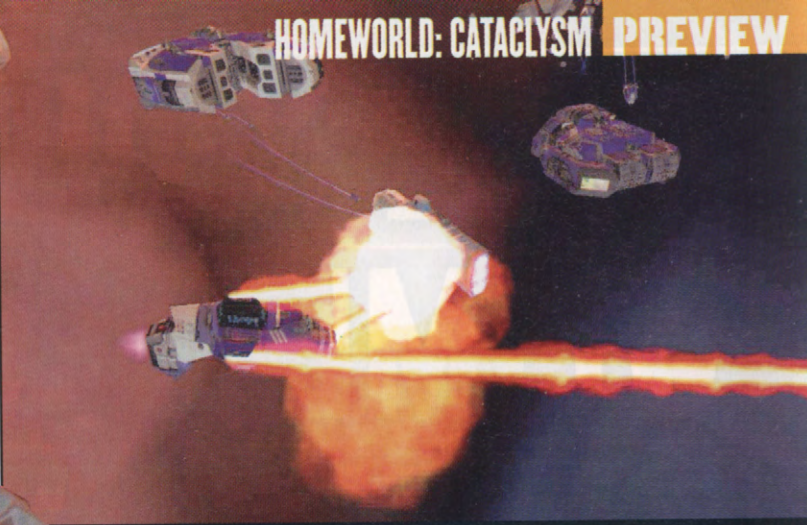
many space movies. If *Homeworld* was reminiscent of *Battlestar Galactica*, then *Cataclysm* should give the player the feel of *Alien* or *The Thing*."

Talking of *Battlestar Galactica*, the rumour of a licensed game proved false (although some chimps have actually made a model enabling ships to be used). As for *Cataclysm's* inspiration, Gyori admits: "The nature of the Beast (a techno-organic enemy race) was definitely influenced by the works of HP Lovecraft, while the general feel of facing the great unknown comes from classics like the stories of AE Van Vogt and early Arthur C. Clarke. I suppose there is a little of Frank Herbert's *Dune* and good old space opera thrown in for good measure."

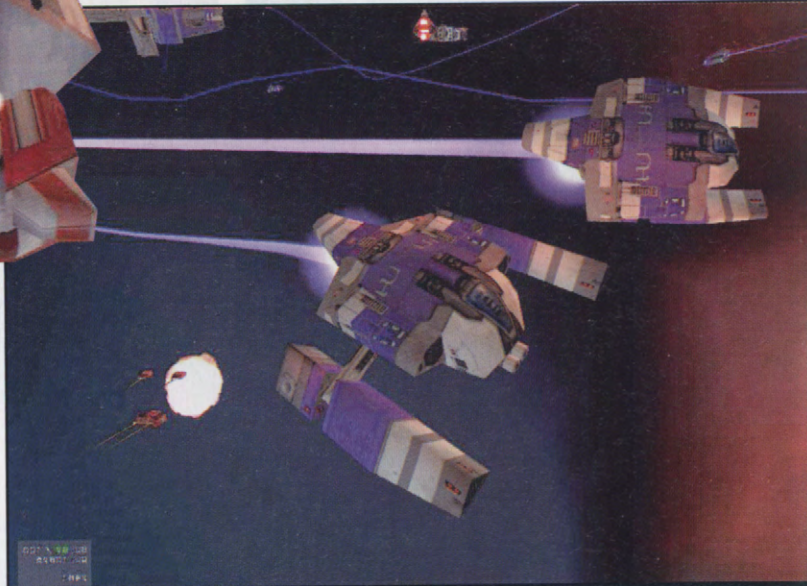
There you have it then. If pensive space combat is your bag, *Homeworld: Cataclysm* sounds like being all that and a packet of potato chips. If nothing else, it'll keep Paul Presley off the streets. **PCZ**



The terrifying blackness of space has rarely looked so colourful.



Explosive action from the game they're all calling *Homeworld: Cataclysm*.



That's one purple haze you don't want in your mind.

Q&A

MICHAEL GYORI



The lead designer on *Homeworld: Cataclysm* answers some questions using his mind

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

MICHAEL *Star Raiders* on the Atari 400. *Eastern Front*, a great Chris Crawford game, was a close second.

PCZ What's the best?

MICHAEL No clear winner... *Civilization*, *Warcraft II* and the early *Ultima* games

were all amazing. The first time I ever played deathmatch *Doom* was sheer joy.

PCZ What's the last game you paid good money for?

MICHAEL *Starcraft*.

PCZ What's your favourite space film?

MICHAEL *Aliens*. Bill Paxton's character 'Hudson' still makes me smile when he yells "Game over, man, game over!"

PCZ Have you ever had a fight?

MICHAEL What happened?

MICHAEL The first rule of Fight Club is that you don't talk about Fight Club.

KEEP MUSIC EVIL

Just say no to Yes...

In what was a crushing defeat for taste, the original *Homeworld* featured music from dinosaur prog rockers, Yes. It might have only been one track, but it was still one track too many. However, if *Cataclysm's* designer is to be believed, Barking Dog is taking a very different approach.

"Actually Andrew Lloyd-Webber is doing our title song and there's a good chance *Cataclysm* will open on Broadway. And it will be much better than *Cats*. You will want to see it again and again."

Err, thanks for that.

**ALL YOUR
WOMEN WANT TO
SLEEP WITH US**



**ROAST BEEFS, I CHALLENGE YOU.
PLAY ONLINE**



ONLINE CONSOLE GAMING HAS ARRIVED IN EUROPE THROUGH DREAMCAST

Now you can take on Europe head to head online through your Dreamcast console. To celebrate this we're giving away free copies of the online game ChuChu Rocket! if you buy a new Dreamcast. If you already own a Dreamcast you can apply for your free copy online through Dreamarena, Dreamcast's exclusive website.

PLAY ONLINE



Dreamcast

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PCZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the **ZONE** reviews first – we'll tell you which games you've got to buy and which games to avoid

THE PC ZONE GAMES SYSTEM

This is the machine we use to review new titles on. Our reviewers also use older machines to get an impression of gaming in the 'real' world, but this is what we currently consider the best value-for-money set up. As games become more demanding, the specs will change to reflect that

At the heart of the machine is a 600MHz AMD Athlon processor. These babies are seriously scorching, optimised for 3D applications, so first-person shooters fly like you wouldn't believe. Faster Athlons are now available, but at the present prices, this is probably the best value for money. The system bus runs at a godlike speed, so the whole thing is like a supercar with no brake pedal.

Supporting the processor is a MaxiGamer Xentor 32 from Guillemot, purveyors of all things graphicy. Based on the TNT2 chipset, these RAM-packed beasts are designed to cope with the polygons, textures and special effects that those game developers insist on chucking at the screen. Guillemot has a new GeForce 256-based card in the offing, which we're hoping to upgrade to soon.

Pionex has supplied the cases and 128Mb of PC100 memory for the motherboard. For gaming, especially with RAM prices as they are at the time of writing, 128Mb is the optimum amount. The cases have room for expansion without taking up excessive space. Nifty floppy slot too...

Hard drive services are provided by the stunning 7,200rpm, 20Gb Maxtor DiamondMax Plus (from the 5120 family



of drives). It's large and fast with room for full installs and quick to load games when you want to play them.

Sound services are supplied by VideoLogic. The SonicVortex 2 card is a PCI device featuring Aureal A3D 2.0, ideal for gamers. The latest drivers are stunning, using the card's own chip to reduce the processing overhead on the CPU when calculating 3D audio. Aureal's API now handles not only sounds themselves, but also their reflections: as you approach a doorway, you can hear sounds from the room reflected into the corridor. Immersive stuff.

VideoLogic also supplies speakers from the superb Sirocco range. We primarily use Crossfires for gaming – they may seem expensive, but you get twice the quality you pay for. Four satellite speakers and a humongous subwoofer give pinpoint accuracy for 3D audio and bass meaty enough for the rumbliest explosions. We also use other speakers from the range (the original Sirocco and new Sirocco Pro) for sound card testing.

Guillemot's DVD Theater setup provides not only the ability to load games quickly, but also to watch DVD movies (essential for reviewing games – not) with its bundled MPEG decoder card.

Peripherals are supplied by Microsoft, from USB mice (top-notch for first-person shooters) to the full force-feedback monty – joysticks and driving wheels – and the ubiquitous SideWinder gamepads.

Last but not least, are headphones from Philips (when the others in the office are suffering from Sirocco overkill) and fabulous 17in Brilliance monitors (107Bs). If you're used to cheap monitors typically bundled with new PCs, the crispness and stability of the image on these comes as quite a shock.

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at **ZONE** pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our reviewers are the most experienced and talented in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre, and won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we have our Feedback section on page 96. This is where you get the opportunity to put your point of view into **PC ZONE**.



CHECK THE SPECS!

The standard spec machine these days is a P233 with 32Mb of memory – but before a game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the tech specs on packaging can be a little optimistic, make sure you check out the We Say bit in our tech specs box. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call

Acclaim 020 7344 5000 • Activision 01895 456700 • Anco 01322 292513 • Blue Byte (Germany) 49 0 208 450880 • Codemasters 01926 814132 • Cryo 01926 315552 • Eidos Interactive 020 8636 3000 • Electronic Arts 01932 450000 • Empire Interactive 020 8343 7337 • Europress 01625 855000 • Gremlin Interactive 0114 263 9900 • GT Interactive 020 8222 9700 • Hasbro Interactive 020 8569 1234 • Infogrames 0161 827 8000 • Interplay 020 7551 4222 • Microids (France) 00 33 146 01 54 01 • Microsoft 0345 002 000 • Mattel 01444 246333 • NovaLogic 020 7405 1777 • Rage Software 0151 237 2200 • Take 2 Interactive 01753 854 444 • THQ 01483 767656 • Ubi Soft 020 8944 9000 • Zabrac 01626 332233

MEET THE TEAM

All **PC ZONE**'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a fan of the genre

Who's going to win Euro 2000 and why?



CHRIS ANDERSON
GENRE RPG, adventure, strategy
CURRENTLY PLAYING *EverQuest: Ruins Of Kunark*

England, because if they don't, I'm going to be absolutely skint.



DAVE WOODS
GENRE FPS, RPG, arcade
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Q3 Jailbreak*

England. Blind faith over common sense.



RICHIE SHOEMAKER
GENRE RTS, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Counter-Strike*

Turkey, because I have faith in them.



MARK HILL
GENRE Adventure, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Championship Manager 99/00*

Spain, because the boys have to come good sometime.

CRIMSON TIDE

★ **REVIEWS EDITOR** Dave Woods



Daylight isn't something that we're accustomed to at *PC ZONE*. We spend all day, every day, in the basement at Bolsover Street sweating over our mouse/keyboard combos, and occasionally ducking outside to stand blinking in the sunshine before scurrying to the pub. But something very strange has been happening this month.

We came back from E3 to find Mark Hill muttering to himself and blacking out the windows with sellotape and sheets of black card. We now have to work in pitch darkness, with the flickering of screens our only saviour from total sensory deprivation. But that's not all. He's been off his food as well, eschewing his usual lunchtime treat - pasta and a very tasty tomato and garlic sauce - in favour of one of those viscous red 'nutrition' meal-in-a-can-drinks. Ditching his beloved Spain in favour of Romania in Euro 2000 was the final straw, we had to take action. We've padlocked him in his coffin, but cleverly we waited until he'd finished reviewing the rather stunning RPG, *Vampire*. Flick the page and feast your eyes on it. It's damn gorgeous.

We also had a review copy of *Carnageddon TDR 2000* this month, but two days before deadline we were asked to pull the review by the publishers. Apparently the game is undergoing major changes over the next month. Rather than run a review of an unfinished version we decided to wait until next issue. We don't expect to see *TDR 2000* in the shops before the end of July now, and if you spy it you should wait for our finished review next month before purchasing it.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

90-100% Here at *ZONE* we score every game out of 100. If a game receives the impressive score of 90 or above, it is awarded the *PC ZONE 'Classic'* award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not really a fan of the genre.



80-89% Games that score 80-89 get the *PC ZONE 'Award For Excellence'*. These are excellent examples of their type of game and if you're a fan of the genre you should definitely consider buying the title.



70-79% Any games scoring between 70-79 have just missed an 'Award For Excellence', but don't ignore them. The score is well above average and that means you're getting a great title that's worth the investment if you're a fan of the genre.

50-69% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-49% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre, or if you happen to see them at a reduced price.

0-19% Games that score less than 20 should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged, then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.



REVIEWS CONTENTS

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A stunning and compelling RPG you can really sink your teeth into. Well someone had to say it.
- 62 GROUND CONTROL**
For those who prefer real-time strategy without the usual dollop of resource management.
- 66 MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2**
More tracks, more bikes, more stunts, more trees and a hell of a lot of horrific accidents.
- 70 OPEN TENNIS 2000**
Thwack. Thwack. Thwack. "15, love."
- 73 METAL FATIGUE**
Real-time strategy with huge customisable robots.
- 75 EMPIRE OF THE ANTS**
More RTS, mother nature style.
- 76 WARLORDS BATTLECRY**
The infamous *Warlords* series tries its hand at real-time.
- 79 FLYING HEROES**
Part flight simulator, part *Quake*'em up. No really.
- 80 DRACULA: RESURRECTION**
The original vampire gets an adventure of his own.
- 80 PGA GOLF 2000**
The best golf game on the PC gets a facelift.
- 81 ULTIMATE GOLF**
A bold claim to make. Especially with PGA sitting above.
- 81 CROSSCRAZE**
Make big words and receive big points in return.
- 81 TROPHY BASS 4**
The current catch of the day simulator.
- 81 CUECLUB**
Pool without the subsequent alcohol poisoning. Shame.

IT'S A TOUGH CALL...

Under the new *ZONE* scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. There are now very few titles that can justifiably be described

as *PC ZONE* Classics. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all *ZONE* Classics are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the *PC ZONE* Award For

Excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them. When we say a game is a Classic, we mean it!



MARTIN KORDA
GENRE Strategy, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Open Tennis 2000*

Probably Germany. Again.



PAUL MALLINSON
GENRE Action, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Deus Ex* beta version

Portugal, after seeing their performance against England.



CHARLIE BROOKER
GENRE FPS, action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Soldier Of Fortune*

Slovenia, they're a bit good, no really.



KEITH PULLIN
GENRE Adventure/ RTS
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Ground Control*

France, because they've got the Arsenal midfield.



JAMES LYON
GENRE Action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *System Shock 2*

In an ideal world, Scotland.



STEVE HILL
GENRE Football, racing
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Championship Manager 99/00*

France, they're the best team. I should know, I went to Euro 2000, because I'm a *real* fan.

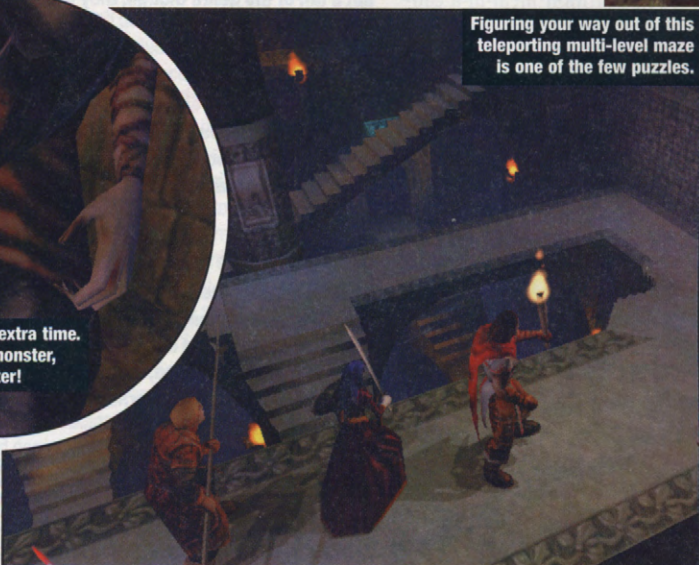
VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE REDEMPTION



"I'll open him up like a tin of beans."



2-1, Owen in extra time. Monster, monster, monster!



Figuring your way out of this teleporting multi-level maze is one of the few puzzles.

This year's most anticipated RPG is finally here. *Mark Hill* rises from his coffin to tell you all about it

It is a world of darkness. Beneath a bright exterior of harmless entertainment, large boxes with over-excited quotes plastered on them and pleasant magazines reaching out with a friendly hand from sunny newsagents, the computer games industry is populated by vampires. Clans of bloodsucking developers congregate in dark catacombs, leeching ideas from other clans and releasing their creations upon innocent peasants who carry on with their lives, safe in the knowledge that they've seen something similar before, that it all fits in their tiny frame of reference.

But the clans are only pawns in a larger war, which dark publishing princes conduct from their impenetrable castles before descending on the customers who pace up and down games shops like cattle. And if the developers are the foot-soldiers of this vampiric empire, then the journalists are the ghouls: parasites who live off the dregs of their more creative prey and who explain away the pallor of their skin with tales of drugs, alcohol and cigarettes. Which is another way of saying that reviewing a game



★ £34.99 • Activision • Out now

nearly always boils down to telling you what other games it's like and whether it's any better or worse than them. When I tell you that *Vampire* is a RPG you immediately place it next to other RPGs and start drawing conclusions. Well, stop right now.

BLOOD SIMPLE

We should start by saying what *Vampire* isn't. It isn't a free-roaming exploration game, like *Baldur's Gate*, although you can wander around without getting into battles if you want to. It isn't

a claustrophobic game of stealth and fear from a first-person perspective, like *System Shock 2*, although it can be wonderfully atmospheric at times and you can go into first-person mode to get a better look at the amazing graphics. It isn't an entirely plot- and character-driven game, like *Planescape: Torment*, although both are absolutely central to the experience. In many ways it belongs to the *Diablo* school of role-playing, in that it has a linear, mission-based structure, which involves a lot of hacking and slashing. But at the same time it is much more than all that because you *care* about what's

happening. You continue because you want to know where the story is going and because you want to see what the next environment and next monster will look like. The main character is Christof, a 12th century crusader who is injured in the field of battle by infidels and nursed back to health by the beautiful nun Aneska. Christof falls in love with her and



Wait a minute, I thought vampires didn't have a reflection.



It's worth getting killed by this monster to see it moving.



Your stats can be displayed in a side window, *Diablo*-style.

“Vampire allows us to act out a fantasy most people have: to be the monstrous killer rather than the helpless victim”

brings the wrath of the church upon himself. At the same time he pisses off a clan of vampires by slaying one of their number. A rival clan decides he would make a good addition to their ranks and embraces him (the technical term for turning someone into a vampire). The rest of the game sees the fallen crusader's relentless pursuit of Aneska and a way to regain his

own humanity, becoming a pawn in a great war between clans along the way in a story that twists and turns like an animal in its death throes.

A MEAN SERVANT OF GOD

But another thing that *Redemption* is not, is a horror game. Despite the electric atmosphere, the dark dungeons and the disfigured monsters, you

never really feel scared. There is a very good reason for this: you are one of the monsters. You are the one to be feared. Would *Resident Evil 2* be scary if you played a brain-gnawing zombie instead of a weak human? Of course not. The point is, *Vampire* never tries to be scary. Instead, it allows us to act out a fantasy most people have: to be the monstrous killer rather than the helpless victim.

It's a fantasy of power, of dark and forbidden power. With power comes responsibility, but not when you're a monster. You can throw off the shackles of civilisation and become an anarchic wave of violent rebellion.

Vampire tempers this chaotic drive for the sake of characterisation and plot. You have to keep control of the beast within by hanging on to the little

humanity you have left. Unlike the character played by Harvey Keitel in *From Dusk Till Dawn*, an ex-priest who regains his faith in God only to become an unthinking killing machine when transformed into a vampire, Christof is aghast at his loss of humanity and how his new condition clashes with his beliefs.

The theme of redemption leads us nicely to that of

FANG UK

And you thought vampires were scary

The original Vampire game is a table-top RPG with a huge following in America. No problem with that. We may poke fun at the traditional image of bearded blokes sitting in a living room, throwing dice and majestically announcing the spell they're going to cast on a passing gnome, but it's just a game like any other. However, there are people out there, people who have jobs and lead an otherwise perfectly normal existence, who actually act out Vampire games in live action gatherings, kitted with swords and capes, wearing make-up and running around pretending to suck each other's blood. Some of these events are taking place right here in England. This isn't sad, it's downright psychotic.



Transylvannia FC look forward to a promising season.

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY

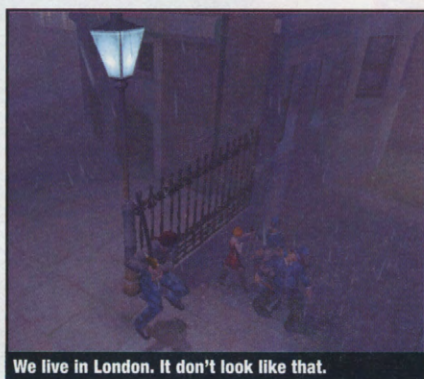
Vampire's Storyteller mode is unlike any other form of multiplayer you have encountered in a computer game. As the name gives away, one person must take on the role of the Storyteller, which is effectively the equivalent of a Dungeon Master in a table-top AD&D game. The Storyteller dishes out experience points, places objects and monsters (he can even control them directly), sparks off events and generally manages a story. Each multiplayer game is a story where the players are actors who can just chat with each other, make decisions on where to go and what to do and have a direct influence on the way the game goes. The Storyteller must react and sometimes change plot developments to suit the players actions. Obviously, the better the Storyteller the better the game, but *Redemption* does come with two chronicles (one in the Dark Ages and one in the modern world) that only need minimal supervision. And Nihilistic is promising more to come. We'll be covering the multiplayer aspect of *Vampire* in more detail in our new Online section in the near future, as the Internet community explodes with life. And, believe us, it will.



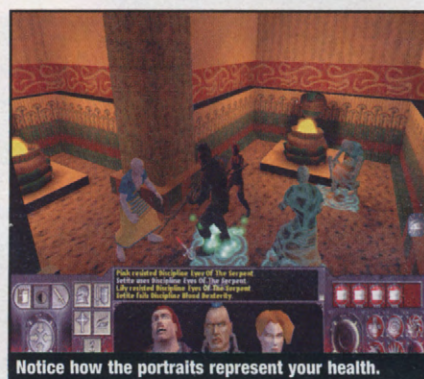
No shortage of weapons in the Storyteller mode.



Postcard n. 236. Horse statue in Vienna. "Catching some moon tan. Wish you were here."



We live in London. It don't look like that.



Notice how the portraits represent your health.

“We can't emphasise enough just how incredible *Vampire* looks. The screenshots give you an idea, but you really need to see it moving”



This Tremere vampire is going straight for the neck. And showing off his new manicure in the process.

salvation, or I should say, saving. To make the game harder you can only save in your Haven, the safe place where you can keep items and turn experience points into abilities and disciplines. If you're in the middle of a dungeon, the only way to get there is by casting the Walk The Abyss discipline. Luckily, the game automatically saves itself every time you load up a new area, but only by overwriting the last automatic save. Somehow, this system never becomes

frustrating, all it does is makes you more careful.

FIENDS WILL BE FRIENDS

Your party (or coterie, as it's called in the game) grows to up to four characters in some parts of the game, which means you can develop the stats for each one in different ways by exploring different disciplines.

At first, the fact that you can control other characters in your party takes away from the initial identification and empathy with

Christof. But, while the beginning of the game is all about plot and character development, you quickly realise these are just a way to carry you through between battles. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, it just means it's a different type of game, beneath whose unbelievably lush exterior lies a sophisticated hack 'n' slasher. And it isn't as if the story is superfluous. It's a grandiose yarn that keeps you wanting to know more to see what's going to happen next. It does seem

strange that you could conceivably play most of the game with one of the other characters, leaving Christof behind, when they are just people who have tagged along to help the central figure. This works in detriment of the role-playing in terms of depth, but it does add to the variety of gameplay and the tactics you can use in combat.

To begin with, the battles can be quite frantic and frustrating, especially when the other members of your coterie start

running around or using up valuable blood points in useless spells. The key is knowing the strengths and weaknesses of each character. You can change the stance of each (defensive, neutral and offensive), have them follow you or leave them behind, and decide which weapons, disciplines and items they use during combat.

THE DEVIL INSIDE

There is never any doubt whatsoever that your characters

DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH

There are around 15 discipline groups with a varying number of disciplines in each. Which ones you decide to follow is largely determined by your style of gaming and, likewise, how you go into battles will be determined by the discipline paths you have chosen. Some are ideal for straightforward hacking, like Fortitude and Feral Claws, while others encourage a more paused approach to combat, using stealth and mental control, such as Obfuscate and Domination. There are some disciplines which you need to develop in order to make your undead adventure a much smoother ride, and are grouped mostly under the Common Disciplines: Feed (the good old teeth in the jugular), Blood Healing (an exchange of blood for health) Awaken (to revive coterie members who have fallen into torpor), and Walk The Abyss

(which opens up a portal directly to your haven – this only closes once you have gone to the place where you cast it from). You'll also find Spirit's Touch (to identify objects) and Cloak Of Shadows (a certain degree of invisibility) pretty invaluable too. You often find scrolls lying around that allow you to use these disciplines even if you haven't learnt them, but relying on them can be a dangerous business: once you've run out, you're stuck.

Each discipline has five levels, although you'll need plenty of experience points to reach the higher ones. Levels affect the discipline's length, power and the amount of blood needed to cast them.

Here's a look at some of the more interesting disciplines.



PSYCHIC PROJECTION

Discipline Group **Auspex**

Effects Used primarily as a scouting device, you can send forth your astral form to wander undetected and unharmed among unexplored areas. This is especially useful in deciding whether you need to prepare yourself for an onslaught and if you should pop back to your haven to re-supply and save your game.



MASK OF A THOUSAND FACES

Discipline Group **Obfuscate**

Effects Want to walk among the enemies seen but completely ignored? Then with this spell you can take on the appearance of any other creature and walk around their domain. It is also most useful as a scouting method, because you can't attack monsters in this form. You can, however, walk right past them and take an item from under their noses.



COMMAND

Discipline Group **Dominate**

Effects Rather than taking on the appearance of your enemies, you can use this discipline to actually control their bodies from a distance. You jump into their skin and can attack anybody around you, hopefully causing chaos and damage. More often than not it will also end in the death of the possessed vampire.



SHAPE OF THE BEAST

Discipline Group **Protean**

Effects While Beckoning allows you to summon an animal out of thin air to fight on your side, this discipline actually transforms the caster into a wolf. It isn't particularly useful in battle unless you happen to be physically weak at the time, but it's worth trying just for a quick run around on four legs.



SKIN OF THE ADDER

Discipline Group **Serpentis**

Effects Although this snake discipline group belongs to the followers of Set, you do get to learn it later in the game. This spell turns your skin into a magical, snaky scale, making you more resistant to damage. There are also spells to create vipers and to hypnotise enemies.

SUMMON SOUL

Discipline Group **Necromancy**

Effects Wraiths are among the hardest creatures in the game to kill. Their contortions and lack of flesh make striking a hit an event in itself and their claws cause massive damage. This spell summons one of these wraiths to fight alongside you.

FLAME RING

Discipline Group **Lure Of Flames**

Effects A spectacular fire attack (remember that vampires are especially susceptible to be hurt by fire), this sends out a circular wave of flames, causing devastating damage to everyone around you except those in your coterie.

MIST FORM

Discipline Group **Protean**

Effects A vampire power shown in many films, this turns the user into a cloud of green mist. Only fire and sunlight can harm you in this form. Mist Form is perfect for reaching areas that you wouldn't be able to access when in solid form.

SECOND OPINION

ZONE's team of undead have their say

CHRIS ANDERSON



It has been said around the office that *Vampire's* incredible graphics alone are reason enough to play it. Consider then, that it has depth of gameplay to match its gorgeous visuals and you can imagine what you are in for when you finally get your hands on this game. *Vampire* is the new benchmark for the role-playing genre, and we have seen nothing on the horizon that comes even close to it (with the possible exception of *Dungeon Siege*). Game of the month, by a long shot.

DAVE WOODS



It's not often that I agree with Mark Hill. He supports Spain in football, hates hip-hop and thinks that he's better than me at *Quake III*. Yeah, right. However, this time he's spot-on. *Vampire* is not only the best-looking RPG I've ever seen, but an engrossing and brilliant game as well.

RICHIE SHOEMAKER



It was all going so well until reaching modern-day London where the accents, characters and locations were so out of step with reality that it's plain to me that none of the developers have ever been here. Either that or Nihilistic has been watching too much *Mary Poppins*.

However, that's just me and maybe I'm missing the point. *Vampire* is a truly masterful spin on the traditional RPG and coming from a non-RPG fan, it's certainly the direction I'd like the genre to go. In multiplayer games too, *Vampire* comes as a blessed relief. I'd rather get involved with *Vampire's* Storyteller mode than play *EverQuest*.



This monstrosity is an obscene collection of tendons, gaping mouths and razor-sharp teeth. Beautiful.

are vampires, rather than some random collection of fancy fighters with a few magical spells thrown in. You have a frenzy meter that measures how much of a grip the beast within you has. Every time a character takes a hit from an enemy your frenzy levels go up, especially if you're low on blood, and you have less and less control over them, up to the point where they'll start kicking, hacking and biting the nearest thing to them, even if it happens to be one of their friends. Your blood pool works much in the

same way as mana does in other RPGs and you draw from it to use your disciplines (or spells if you prefer). You can get blood supplies from vitae bottles you'll find scattered around (or plasma bags in the modern age) or from sucking it out of pedestrians and other vampires, you can also feed off other members of your coterie. The game forces you to resort to this in many instances where vitae is hard to find. However, suck a human dry and you'll lose humanity points, making you much more likely to frenzy. Can you imagine such a humanity system in *Soldier Of Fortune*? You'd be a slaving rabid dog within minutes.

As a result, there's always a delicate balance to be kept between blood, health and discipline casting. You also have to keep in mind that a low health level affects your stats, such as strength, dexterity and stamina.

Disciplines have a definitive impact on the gameplay. You use them to solve puzzles (although these seem to be rather simple and infrequent, like the one that requires you to transform into mist to get by an otherwise lethal swinging pendulum to the switch that turns it off) and to plan your attacks. Luring enemies towards you instead of rushing in like a

fool, is often the best tactic. At other points, you need objects in rooms so heavily guarded the only way to reach them is by disciplines of deception and shadows.

TONGUE-TIED

There's an extensive background history to the world of *Vampire*, as you would expect from a table-top RPG that's been around since the late '70s. It's a complete alternate world, with an intricate mesh of clans, personalities, social structures and a real sense of past. *Redemption* does a great job of introducing you to it all throughout the game, if you haven't been bothered to read some of the heavy tomes chronicling this history or the watered-down version in the manual. But there are still some instances where you'll wonder just what the hell the people around you are talking about.

Some of you will probably be put off by the language in the Dark Ages, with its constant use of cod-Shakespeare, littered with "thous", "thys" and "thines". As far as we know, people in the 12th century didn't speak like this. Especially in Prague and Vienna. And even more especially when they happened to be French Crusaders. But as an artificial means of creating a sense of

IN PERSPECTIVE

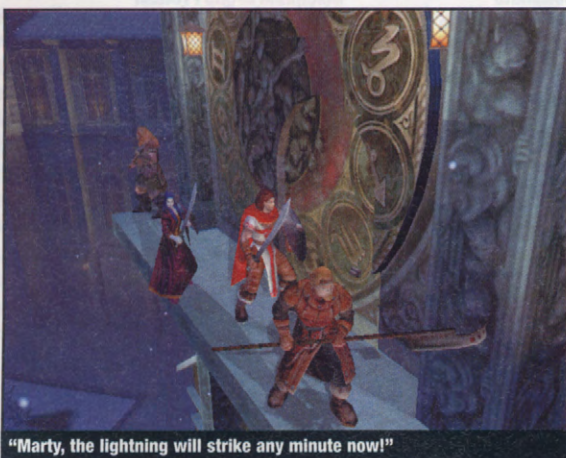
It seems unfair to compare such different games and pick out which is better, even if they are all ultimately RPGs. Nothing comes close to *Planescape* in terms of storyline and character development, while *SS2* is unrivalled for atmosphere. *Diablo* is pure hack 'n' slash and its upcoming sequel looks set to wither next to *Vampire*.

Planescape: Torment

System Shock 2

Diablo

Vampire



"Marty, the lightning will strike any minute now!"

WALKTHROUGH

CUTTING YOUR TEETH

You won't see daylight for long after starting this game. And we mean that in every possible sense



1 Still bandaged you leave your bed to slice up some obscene creatures.



2 Sent out to slay a vampire in the mines, you seek out the blacksmith.



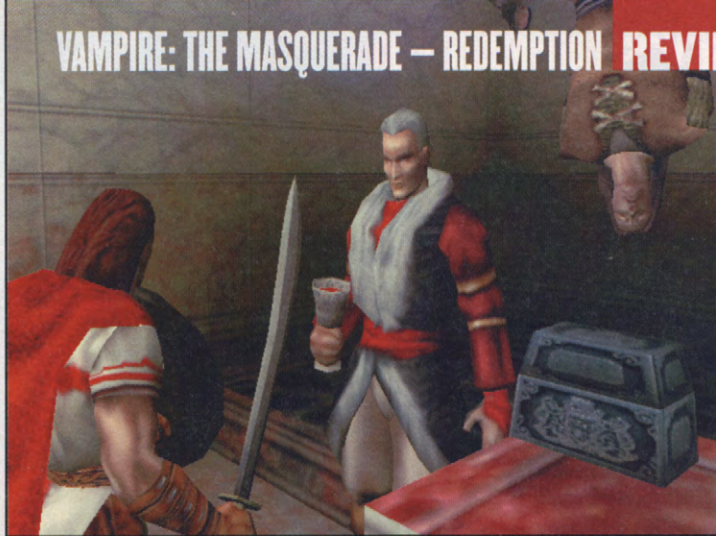
3 Here you buy a torch and a buckler. Unfortunately, it's all you can afford.



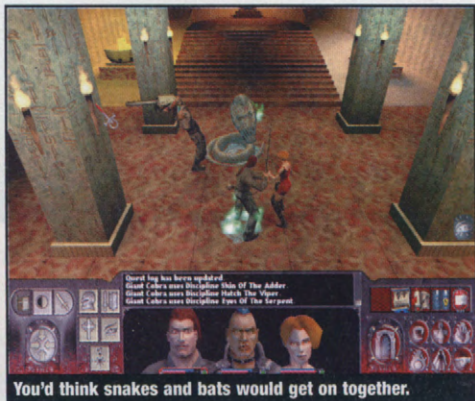
4 These knights don't reckon your chances much.



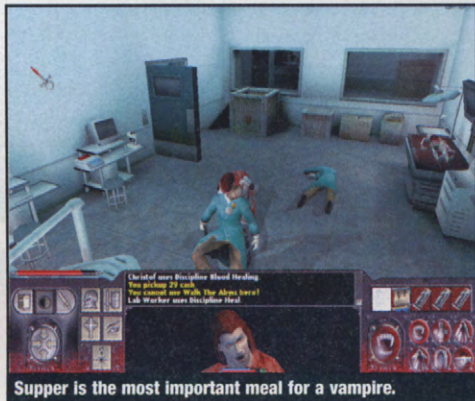
There are some ridiculously reflective surfaces. Perfect to show off your killer PC.



"Barman, bloody mary, easy with the Tabasco."



You'd think snakes and bats would get on together.



Supper is the most important meal for a vampire.



Modern day weapons don't seem as effective as swords.

being in a distant past it works. The Shakespearean tone isn't just linguistic though, it's embedded in some of the game's very themes. The forbidden love between Christof and Aneska echoes that of *Romeo And Juliet*, while Christof's inner struggle brings back memories of *Hamlet*.

If you fell asleep reading that last paragraph, though, you'll be pleased to know *Vampire* doesn't explore any of this in great depth, moving quickly to exploring dungeons, caverns and castles with the sole motive of hitting things over the head with a large piece of metal.

SMALL CITY LIGHTS

We can't emphasise enough just how incredible *Vampire* looks. The screenshots give you a fair idea, but you really need to see it moving to appreciate its full beauty. We guarantee that during the first few days you'll spend as much time angling the camera

and going into first-person view to admire the world around you as you will playing. We'd go as far as saying that it's the best looking game we've ever seen, and we can't imagine anything beating it for a while. You could stare at the architecture, the player models and some of the monsters for hours without getting tired.

It's not just visually stunning either, the music is superb throughout and the excellent sound effects create an atmospheric environment.

There is a certain trade-off to this. The cities are necessarily small and sparsely populated, and the interaction with the environment is strictly limited. You can roam the streets as much as you like, but you have no freedom to go into all of the houses. Most of the doors are just part of the scenery and serve no function, so no matter how much you want to play out your vampiric role, slipping into the

bedrooms of beautiful maidens to suck their blood before drawing your cape across your red-stained face before disappearing in a puff of smoke, it's just not possible. For the game to feature true free-roaming in a realistically modelled city would have taken Nihilistic a decade to program and you'd need a computer the size of your front room to run it. So for the most part, this isn't a problem. Until you come to London.

The modern age levels are mostly disappointing. They're not as bad as the Xen ones in *Half-Life* (although they are much bigger), but they have the same effect of not quite satisfying in the same way as the rest of the game. There are some excellent parts (the temple of the followers of Set in London, for example), and they are by no means boring to play through, they just don't meet the high standards of the first part and have you feeling almost immediate nostalgia for

a land of broadswords and plague-ridden streets. Not least because modern day weapons don't seem quite as effective.

London is such an awful American pastiche of clichés (bobbies, red phone boxes, red double-deckers) that it becomes impossible to suspend disbelief in the same way you can with the medieval era. The cobblestone streets, the gas streetlights, the fog, the rain and the architecture itself resemble the '30s Hollywood set for a Basil Rathbone Sherlock Holmes film. In New York, things improve considerably and you suddenly remember how fantastic the game really is. You're now an Elder vampire and your powers are greater than ever. As a consequence you spend more time exploring your disciplines.

VAMPIRE UNMASQUERADED

As long as you don't come to *Vampire* with the wrong expectations, you are unlikely

to find a more challenging, rewarding or gorgeous RPG. *The Masquerade* world is so engrossing that you don't want to leave it, its shapes and contours so exquisite you can't keep your eyes off it, its battles so demanding you can't stop rising to the challenge, its dark vampiric powers so alluring you are hypnotised and vulnerable, lost in a trance as it drains your life away. Soon, you too will look like us. Pale, bleary-eyed, afraid of the sunlight, your teeth aching with an insatiable hunger for more. [A-]

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Unsurpassed graphics • Great story • Hugely addictive • Music worth listening to
- DOWNERS Very linear • Small, unpopulated cities • Modern age not so good • Little interaction with other characters

90 Bloody marvellous

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** This game looks too good to play it on anything less than a PIII with a 12Mb RAM 3D card. However, you can turn as much detail as you want off on slower systems



5 And neither do you after seeing this fellow.



6 More monsters to slay until you finally reach your first vampire.



7 Instead of rewarding you, the bishop casts you out for fancying a nun.



8 These revenants have been sent to kill you. Soon you will be undead anyway.



A dropship gets ready for touchdown.



Missions take place in day and night.

GROUND CONTROL

★ £39.99 • Sierra • Out now

RTS games are coming thick and fast. Keith Pullin wastes no time getting stuck in

What's going on here then? This can't be right. Have those devious PR chimps been drugging our water again, or is this the third superb RTS game in as many months? Forgive the cynicism, but generally speaking this sort of thing doesn't happen round here. First *Shogun: Total War*, then *Earth 2150* and now this? Yes, *Ground Control* is an absolute stonker of a game from debut developer Massive Entertainment. Hailing from Ronneby, Sweden, they've spent the last three years creating what has turned out to be a hybrid of



Force Commander, *Earth 2150* and *Homeworld*. More significantly *GC* is a major leap towards ensuring that playing RTS games is as easy as scoring in a brothel.

So, what's the story? Basically, *Ground Control* is a straight race between two warring political parties, the Crayven Corporation (the player) and the Order Of

The New Dawn (the bad guys), to colonise an alien world. Both sides rely on giant motherships orbiting the planet to send troops to the planet's surface and to claim new territory – oh, and find alien artefacts of mass destruction.

enough raw materials to manufacture units, and thus you don't have to fall asleep, or browse pornography on the Internet while your production line troops are laboriously 'born'. *GC* simply pops your ready-made army onto the battlefield

plot and concentrating on creative scenarios, RTS isn't solely about building the biggest base or producing the most troops before the enemy attacks.

Anyway, just because you don't build bases yourself, it doesn't mean they don't exist. They play their part in the slowly unfolding plot, as do many other strategic locations throughout the 30 or so levels. Your job is to kill people – not build poxy houses. That's left for the builders – and so it should be.

So, what can we expect from the missions? Well, on one mission your team is dropped into the surrounding foothills of an enemy stronghold and ordered to attack the east defences while your computer-controlled co-commander and his squad

“Ground Control is a major leap towards ensuring that playing RTS games is as easy as scoring in a brothel”

CUT THE CRAP

To put it bluntly, *GC* gets straight to the point by washing its hands of the whole resource management thing. In other words, you never have to build a base, thus you don't have to go through the motions of collecting

using a dropship (or three) and away you go. It's a simple concept. Some argue that it's just a bit too simple, but let's get one thing straight: the strategy element does not suffer. *GC*'s level designers have proved that by adding enough twists to the



The route taken to a selected destination depends on the type of unit involved.



There's never a dull moment at the frontline – just look at those mortars go.



Attention to detail is incredible – the bullet holes in that barracks is just one example.



The marines get stuck into some electro-jungle warfare.



With action like this, the boys from the artillery always earn their money in style.



Simply click the icons at the bottom of the screen to select a unit. That's it. Easy.



Cornering the enemy in a tight valley usually has a positive outcome.

assault the west side. This co-ordinated push must be timed accurately or its curtains for both teams.

On another mission you're required to protect your own base. Two dropships speed your troops to the planet surface where you must find strategic locations outside the city to dig in and fend off the approaching Dawnies.

Other forays ask you to protect scientific convoys, some ask you to simply patrol an area and sometimes you have to rescue defectors. Rest assured there is plenty of variety – you won't be bored.

GROUND CONTROL TO MAJOR TOM

One of the most significant gameplay aspects of *GC* is the way you're encouraged to recognise the value of each individual unit. Whether it's infantry, light tanks, battle tanks, artillery, aerodynes (airborne attack units), or any of the other numerous units featured in the game, your primary concern is to have as many of them survive

as possible. The reason? Because in true *Cannon Fodder* style each unit gains experience for the amount of Dawnies killed and the manner in which those kills were achieved.

If your infantry charges ahead of the main pack and wipes out an entire enemy force single-handedly, they're awarded a medal for field excellence and classed as aggressive. Alternatively, you could have a tank platoon that sticks to the main core of your force and protects them like a mother would its children. The same amount of kills can be achieved this way, yet the unit is classed as defensive or balanced.

On top of all this, units also get promoted. Ultimately your strategy in the latter part of the game involves running around like a nutter protecting your experienced campaigners, because if you reach the final showdown with a bunch of rookies you don't stand a chance.

Of course, none of the above would have worked if the AI and interface weren't so damn good.

IN PERSPECTIVE

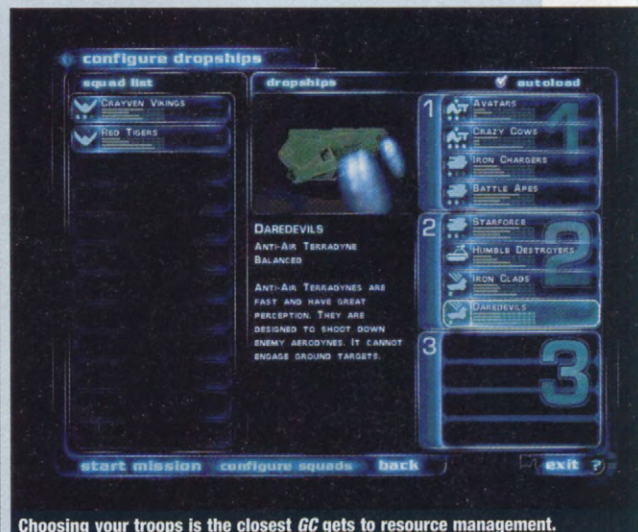
What's most impressive about *Ground Control* is how easy it is to get into and play compared to the likes of *Shogun: Total War* or even *Force Commander* and *Homeworld*. Graphically, it's probably the best RTS around, and it also shows exceptional value for money with more than 30 missions and four difficulty settings. *GC* is up there with the best and definitely shouldn't be missed.



Each unit has three attack modes: free, return and hold. You can also set the movement mode to offensive, defensive or hold position, and finally you can have the formation as line, box

DROPSHIP ALLOCATION

Before each mission you get to choose the units you want to send down onto the planet's surface. This is effectively the only resource management in the entire game. Thankfully, it's nowhere near as time consuming and drawn out as building a base and creating an army from scratch – however, it is just as important. After all, you want to make sure you've got the right tools for the job.



Choosing your troops is the closest *GC* gets to resource management.

← or column. Whichever combination you choose, units perform exactly what they're told. *GC* doesn't throw hundreds of icons at you either like other RTS games; in fact, you won't find a single confusing icon. The interface is so straightforward you can perform virtually every command with the right mouse button alone. It's simplicity personified and it makes the whole thing a joy to control.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Hiding in shadows beneath mountains, lurking in long grass and ambushing in narrow valleys are tactics that reward the wily player over and over again. Shrewdness is a massive part of the game and the sooner you grasp that the better. The addition of computer-controlled friendly forces also means you can experiment with a whole range of diversionary and flanking tactics. It's worth trying this at every available opportunity too,

“The view distances are incredible: landscapes seem to stretch for miles with textures laid down to perfection”

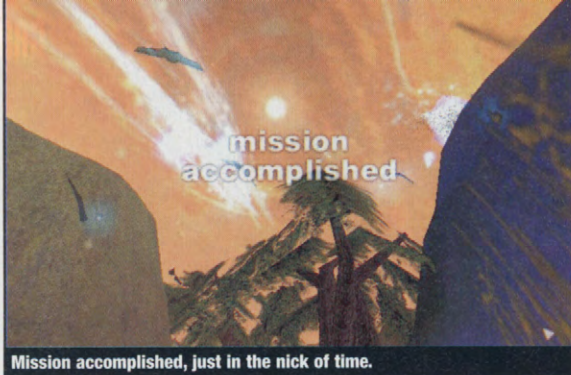
because like the tutorial says, armour is strongest at the front, so going for the sides or the rear can lessen your casualties and shorten conflicts.

While computer opponents are slow to catch on to these tactics (although not necessarily on the hardest of *GC*'s four difficulty settings) human opponents are an entirely different story.

The multiplayer options for *GC* are varied and utterly engrossing. Interestingly, yet completely in line with the game's general philosophy, LAN and Internet skirmishes focus more on the action side of things rather than waiting to build up your troops for one massive assault. Capture The Flag and deathmatch scenarios make up the majority of the remote play, but whether you choose to fight alone or as part of a team is completely up to you.

I SEE YOU

So far there hasn't been one mention of the graphics. Why? Because as you can see for yourselves, they defy belief. The latest batch of 3dfx cards are



Mission accomplished, just in the nick of time.



The battle rages outside the main base.



Use the camera to get the best view of the action.



If you zoom in close enough you'll find plenty of gory dismemberment.



An unstoppable force takes advantage of the shadows.

devastating weapons in the hands of the right coders, and *GC* is solid proof of that. The view distances are incredible: landscapes seem to stretch for miles with textures and intricate bump-mapping laid down to perfection. The explosions cause you to shield your eyes, and when all is calm the shadows from clouds and mountains sweep over the landscape in majestic silence.

The dust clouds and track marks churned up by your forces may be a gimmick, but as we all know it's the little touches that pay massive dividends. The only negative aspect in this respect is the lack of weather. *Earth 2150* – that prize is yours.

Then there are the camera angles. You can zoom in and out, rotate left and right, look up and down and generally experience total freedom to go wherever you want on the map – you can even assign the camera to follow specific units. What you can't do is split the screen up and have separate windows. Again this is where *Earth 2150* nudges ahead in the innovation stakes. This may be a small gripe, but you can't help thinking that multiple windows is set to become a mainstay RTS feature.

IN AND OUT

Unfortunately, and inevitably, the absence of resource management will put off many hardcore RTS fans. If you feel you fall into that category *Shogun* or *Earth 2150* will be more your cup of tea.

On the other hand, if all that resource lark bores the arse off you, this game has your name written all over it in 150ft high neon letters. *Ground Control* goes straight for the jugular – in, out and no messing about. Buy it – you won't regret it. [E]

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Very easy to pick up and play • Units can be carried to next mission • No resource management • Gorgeous graphics • Very few icons
- DOWNERS No resource management

87 Instantly playable, long-lasting RTS brilliance

TECH SPECS

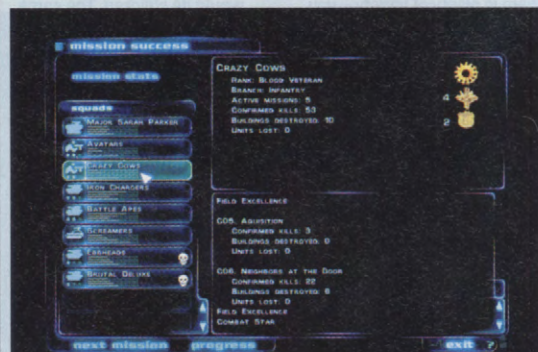
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 400Mb hard disk space **WE SAY** PII 333 with 64Mb RAM and a 3dfx card

MASSIVE ATTACK

Massive Entertainment was founded in 1997 by a couple of very bright University graduates. Based in Ronneby, Sweden, Massive now consists of about 20 programmers, artists and game designers – by today's standards a small team. *Ground Control* is its first game, but probably not its last.

VALUE YOUR TROOPS

The key to success in *Ground Control* is using the same units over and over again. The more missions they survive, the more experience they gain and the more lethal they become. Eventually you'll learn to love and protect your squads as if they were your own family. After each mission you can go to the debriefing room to find out exactly who killed what and whether anybody deserves any medals or special honours.



The more missions you survive, the more lethal your units become.

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MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2

★ £34.99 • Microsoft • Out now

Steve Hill used to do motocross, and he's also been in a mental hospital

When the original *Motocross Madness* washed up in the squalid basement that passes for the *PC ZONE* office, it's fair to say that more than a few eyebrows were raised. New-fangled 3D accelerator cards were all the rage and the game utilised them fully, throwing around some impressive visuals in a perfectly acceptable manner. More importantly, it was an extremely playable game, and grown men were seen to laugh



like children as riders were tossed around like rag dolls in a burlesque display of bone-crunching action. And it wasn't just us simpletons that lapped it up, the world in general clutched the game to its collective bosom, and it probably went some way towards

establishing Microsoft as a major games publishing force.

Two years on and the obligatory sequel is upon us, and while it hasn't quite inspired round-the-clock vigils, there has been a modicum of interest. It's a tricky title to follow up though, largely because the first one was so good, but also because of the nature of the game. After all, there's no tenuous licence to update and no tedious storyline to rehash. It's simply a case of attempting to make it better. If bigger is better, then that's what they've done, as *Motocross Madness 2* dwarfs its predecessor, both in terms of graphical detail and physical size of environment.

OBJECT OVERKILL

Basically, the developer Rainbow Studios has thrown in everything bar the proverbial kitchen sink, from trains, planes and automobiles to trees, bushes and

larger version of the original Baja section, but populated with the aforementioned objects.

Not since *Death Chase 2000* on the Spectrum has a motorcyclist been in such close

“Watching your rider go arse over tit is undeniably amusing. Unfortunately, watching it every 30 seconds isn't”

entire trailer parks (albeit sadly without white trash living off road kill while listening to Elvis Presley and watching *Godzilla* with the sound turned down). These and other delights are to be found in the “all-new” Enduro Racing section, which is basically a

proximity to such a large number of trees, and while the graphics may have moved on a tad, the outcome is the same. And it can be extraordinarily annoying. Watching your rider go arse over tit is undeniably amusing. Unfortunately, watching it every



Twatted by a land rover. The indignity.



“Look ma, I'm on top of the world.”



“If only I had a chainsaw.”

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The ones that never knock

The “all-new” career mode doesn't deviate wildly from standard fodder, enabling you to advance from raggy-arsed weekend warrior to stadium-bound idol. It is, however, notable for a piece of oblique comedy that occurs when you are down to your last dollar and accept a deal under the condition that you wear the sponsor's uniform. We don't want to give it away, but suffice to say it is one of the more absurd sights in recent gaming history.



Go from grease monkey to stadium icon.



The scope for carnage is even greater than before.

30 seconds isn't. One of the best aspects of the first game was the wide open spaces and the unfettered throttle opportunities they offered. Being sunk up to the nuts in cacti doesn't give the same sense of freedom, and while a careful rider can easily dodge them, you end up wishing they weren't there. And by the magic of "computer wizardry," they don't have to be. At least not in the traditional sense of solid, dangerous (and irritating) objects. By deselecting the so-called Vegetation Collision option, said vegetation can be reduced to the role of mere decoration, thus rendering its inclusion pointless, unless of course you derive a perverse pleasure from driving through solid objects like a ghost.

THINK BIKE!

So you can lose the trees, and for the sake of close racing it's probably advisable to do so.

However, the same can't be said for other objects, and while riding through the discarded wreckage of a light aircraft might make for a hilarious press release (unless you're David Coulthard or Frankie Dettori), actually getting entangled in its undercarriage is no more fun than playing *Extreme Biker*. The gimmicky approach continues with the so-called ambient vehicles, which aren't so ambient once your face has shattered their windscreen, leaving your body a twisted, contorted wreck. If the public information films of the '70s have taught us anything, it's that cars and bikes don't mix (and that gas explosions can be triggered by the spark from a light switch).

High speed collisions involving motorcycles and more conventional four-wheeled vehicles generally end with the motorcyclist crushed beneath the wheels or tossed through the air

like the aforementioned rag doll, something that happens regularly thanks to the scripted appearance of the odd juggernaut. Likewise, cars suddenly emerge from the midst of the desert in a somewhat contrived manner, almost as if they're there to make you crash.

Hang on though, that's exactly the sort of thing that happened in *Midtown Madness*, which was undeniably ace and skill. This might just be a random theory concocted during a brief moment of clarity, but it's quite possibly due to the fact that with a car there is a greater window of opportunity for evasive action. On a bike, it's all or nothing. If you clip something you're off. In a car you can scrape a bit of paint work without greatly deviating from your course, leaving you to concentrate on the time-honoured ritual of pretending to shuffle dice while unleashing a torrent of foul-mouthed invective into the rear view mirror.

All of which is a mildly damning overview of the game's supposed new part, which isn't really new, just bigger (with the added bonus of causing chronic slowdown on a borderline recommended spec PC with 3D card).

SAME AGAIN

So what else is new? Well, there's a career mode, which is covered in a mildly informative fashion elsewhere. Otherwise it's the same as it ever was, comprising open-plan Baja races, outdoor Nationals, indoor Supercross events, and the much feted Stunt Mode, as well as some multiplayer tag-based comedy. From the top, the Baja races really allow you to let rip – particularly if

WALKTHROUGH

GIVE ME FIVE

Motocross Madness 2 now features five different types of event for you to scramble over



BAJA

Wide open space and a series of checkpoints make for all-out speed racing.



ENDURO

Even wider spaces populated by a host of objects, including other vehicles.



NATIONAL

Hardcore races over a series of tight outdoor tracks.



STUNT

Points are awarded to riders who pull off the most outrageous stunts.



SUPERCROSS

The glamour event, raced over man-made tracks in front of a packed auditorium.

Think once! Think twice! Think bike!



Riders now stick their foot forward on corners.



Even the buses get involved.



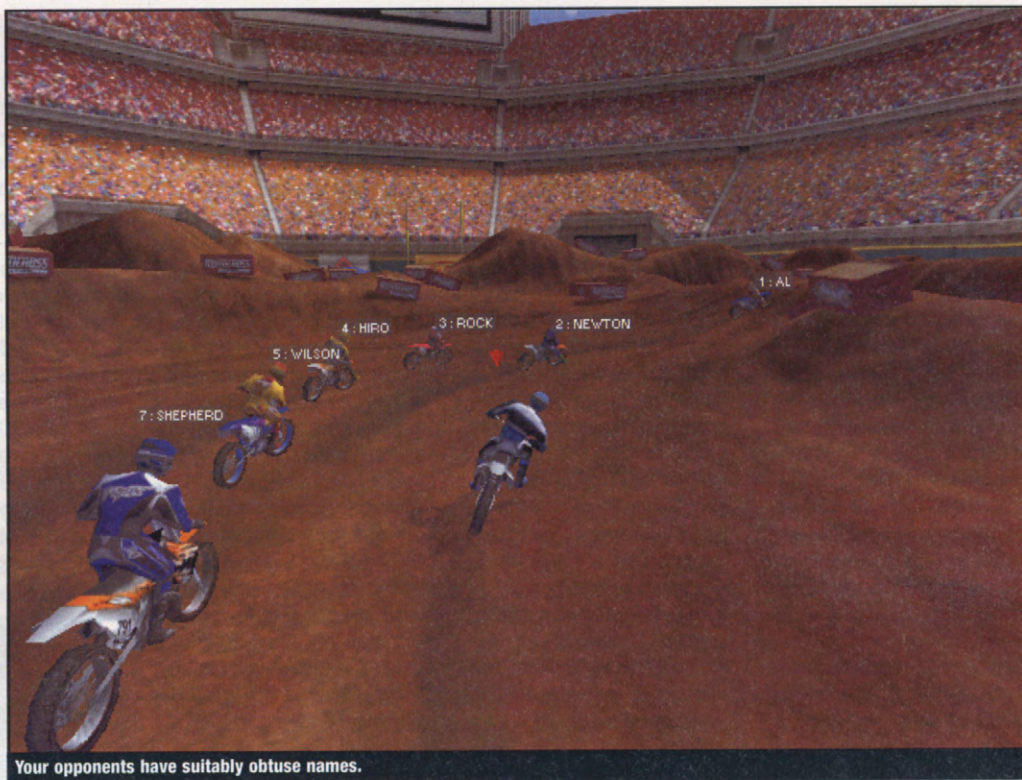
Watch out for the cacti.



A handily positioned plane crash.



"Look Dad, one hand!"



Your opponents have suitably obtuse names.

← unhampered by vegetation – with success hinging on a combination of speed, skill and navigation. The Nationals are virtually identical to the first game, and as such are raced over tight tracks that offer numerous opportunities for extended air time, with almost as much of the race spent off ground as on it. The supercross tracks offer even more airborne action, with the addition of a crowd to whoop at your aerial prowess.

If anything, the handling of the bike seems to be based on a more arcadey model than before, enabling you to comfortably make unnaturally lateral landings that would normally result in a pelvis-shattering experience. Also, the bikes seem to be grossly overpowered for the circuits, with one injudicious blip of the throttle enough to launch you into the shrubbery, or in the case of the stadium races, almost into the crowd. You then have to re-enter the track via the route of exit within five seconds lest you be magically transported back to

where the indiscretion occurred. The game is also extremely unforgiving in this aspect, as simply straying off the edge of the track for a second can result in this penalty, even if no advantage was gained. Bastards.

CUNNING

The stunts are as elaborate as ever, and while not providing a particularly fierce test of manual dexterity – press a button with a direction – they are undeniably spectacular, particularly if viewed with the aptly-named thrill-cam. On the subject of cameras, the game defaults to a fairly zoomed out chase view, sometimes giving the impression that you're operating the bike by remote control – which of course you are – rather than up close and personal. It can be zoomed in, at which point it becomes immediately unworkable as you can't see where in the name of Christendom you're riding. There is a first-person view, but without the reference point of the handlebars, it's akin to someone gluing your eyes open and

IN PERSPECTIVE

There is little to choose between the two *Motocross Madness* games, so get the cheapest. Forget the rest.

Motocross Madness 2

Motocross Madness

Moto Racer 2

Extreme Biker

shaking your head about in a life-threatening manner.

Getting back to the handling for a moment, a further modification is available in that accelerating in the air forces the front of the bike to rise whereas braking makes it pitch forward. Either or both options can be selected, but they do seem a little superfluous, given that leaning

backwards or forwards has the same effect. It was, of course, this independent rider movement that helped make the first game such a belter, and it makes a welcome return, going some way towards countering the perennial problem of bike game dynamics.

MUD IN YOUR EYE

Ultimately though, it doesn't really capture the feel of motocross, a sport that – for a competitor at least – is about more than sticking your legs out 30ft in the air to impress the ladies. In reality, it's about tight braking and acceleration, choosing the right line, and stalking your opponent until an overtaking opportunity arises, aspects that are rarely alluded to in this game. Motocross is also about the sheer terror of leading a field of 40 riders – the game allows only ten – and of being engulfed in a choking cloud of dust. Some weather effects

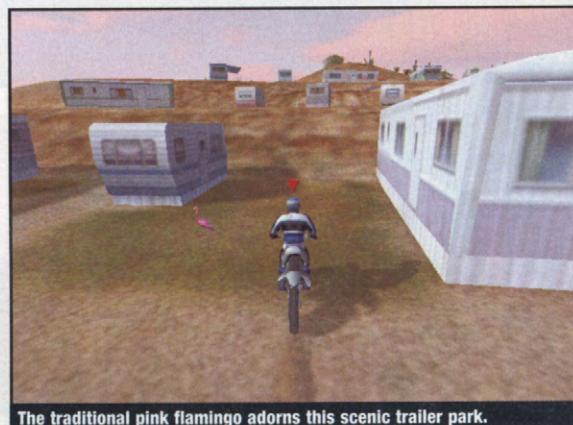
would have added variety, but as it is, the sun always shines.

The developers have clearly gone for the Pepsi Max angle, with the raucous soundtrack from beach metal no-marks Incubus providing an early pointer. To be fair, it isn't pretending to be a simulation, and despite the above gripes, there is still enough here to engage the weak-minded for a couple of hours. It's just not the great leap forward hoped for, and the gimmicky additions seem to be a case of over-egging the cake. Describing it as a glorified expansion pack might be a little harsh, but to all intents and purposes it's just some more tracks. *Motocross Madness* in new trousers. **PCZ**

WHOOO?

Man with girl's name designs game

Avid viewers of Channel 5's night-time output might have come across the exploits of young motocross champion Stephane Roncada, who is generously credited as the game's co-designer. Apparently, one of the developers went round his house to record some bike sounds, Stephane showed him some tracks he'd made for the first *Motocross Madness*, and business was done.



The traditional pink flamingo adorns this scenic trailer park.

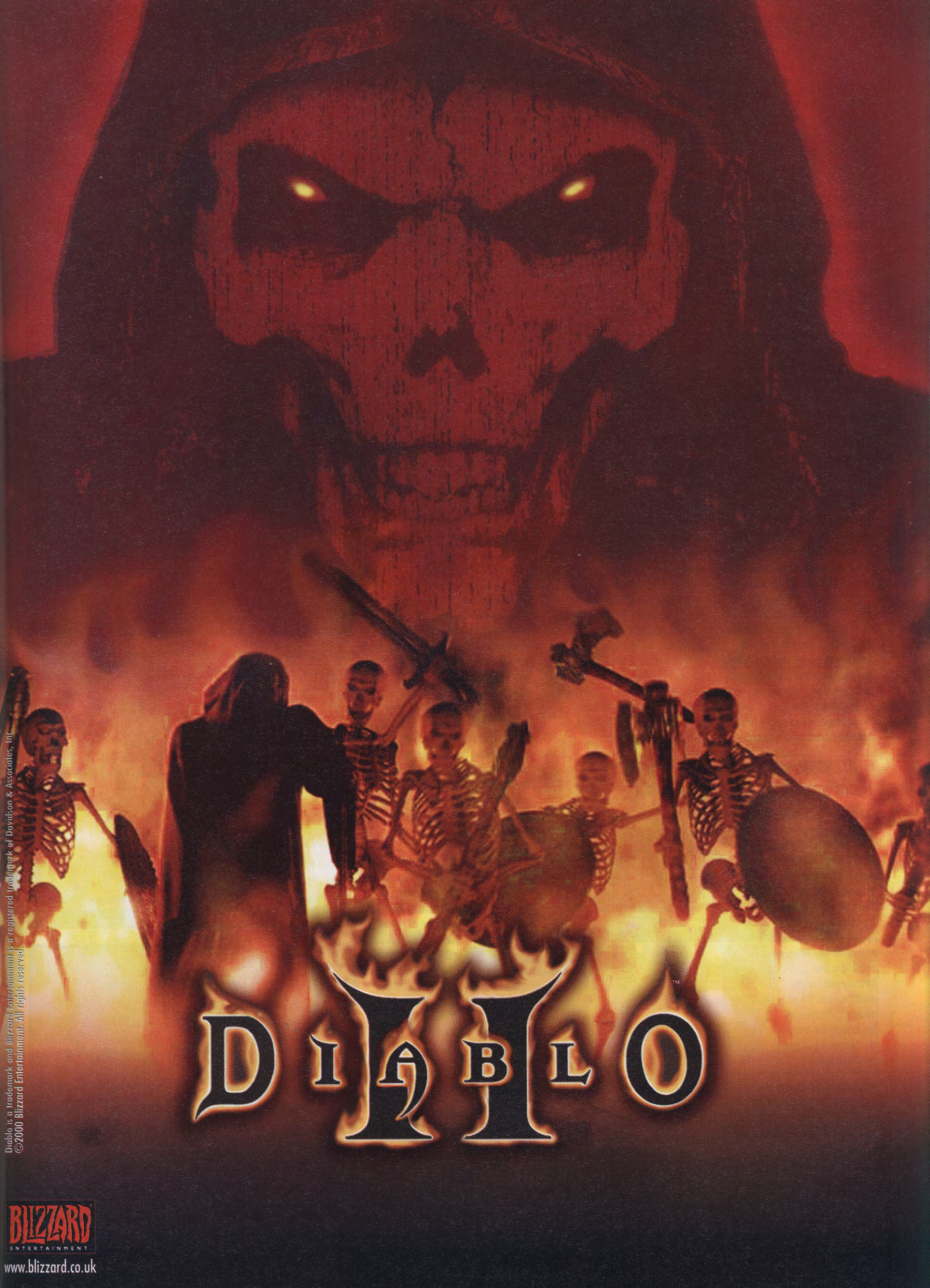
PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Independent rider control
 - Loads of tracks • Passable career mode • Track editor • Occasionally exhilarating
- DOWNERS No great advance • Only ten opponents • No weather effects
 - Ropy camera options • Often frustrating

80 It's much more of the same

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P300
Memory 64Mb **WE SAY** Despite claims to the contrary, you'll need at least an 8Mb 3D card



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DIABLO



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OPEN TENNIS 2000

★ £34.99 • Cryo • Out now

Martin Korda played heavy metal music in the office all week while reviewing this game. He claimed he needed a racket to play tennis. Sigh...

Not since *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III* has there been such a popular game in the **PC ZONE** office. So popular in fact that it achieved the near impossible feat of making Chris Anderson half an hour late for the pub so he could play just one more set. But *Open Tennis 2000* does that to you. It's got this strange kind of charisma, where you think you're going to hate it and yet, somehow, you end up loving it.

OT2000 manages to keep a near-perfect balance between realism and gameplay. Its crisp graphics and smart presentation draw you into the screen, to the point where you think you're actually there. All that's missing are the strawberries and cream and overnight queuing for Centre Court tickets. The thud of ball on racket sounds incredibly real, and the crowd chant, clap and

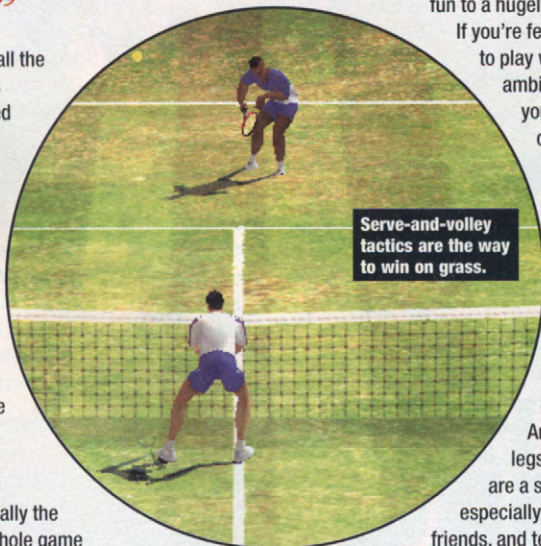


side of the net. If you get to where the ball's going to bounce quickly then you get ages to place your shot. If you're dictated into rushing from side to side then you only get a split-second to place your shot and thus have very little control over where it's going to go. Not only does this accurately replicate real-life tennis, it also stops the usual embarrassment of swinging your racket at the ball like a psychopath swatting flies.

It's a bit of a shame that the players tend to mince when they run and walk around as though they've lost control of their sphincter muscles, but hey, nothing's perfect.

“OT2000 is not just a little entertaining but hugely so, even if you don't like tennis”

even ooh and ahh in all the right places, which is almost unprecedented for a sports sim. Then there's the ball movement which is hugely accurate, and once you've mastered the initially confusing controls, you'll find yourself effortlessly executing the shots performed by real-life professionals.



Serve-and-volley tactics are the way to win on grass.

CONTROL FREAKS

The controls are actually the cleverest bit of the whole game and the reason why we're still playing it now. It works like this: as you move your player towards the ball, you choose your shot (slice or top spin) and then aim a yellow target on your opponent's

The most enjoyable part of *OT2000* is the ability to play the type of game which suits both you and the surface. On the speedy lawns of the English

IN PERSPECTIVE

You're going to have to hunt around for the other two games in this list if you want to play an alternative to *Open Tennis 2000*. Our suggestion is don't bother, just go and buy *OT2000* instead. However, if you're desperate to play tennis online, then *Game Net And Match* may well be worth a look.

Open Tennis 2000

Game Net And Match

Pete Sampras Tennis 97

Open (Wimbledon in all but name), using serve-and-volley tactics will nearly always prevail against Neanderthal ball pummelling. However, on the slower clay surfaces of the French Open, you'll find that baseline rallies are as numerous as crap British tennis players. Hard court and indoor surfaces are also available, and again affect the speed and style of play. Now here's where the unrealistic part comes in. Some of the rallies are truly mammoth affairs and require lightning reactions, at times resembling badminton rather than tennis. Instead of this being annoying though, it adds a real sense of fun to a hugely realistic game.

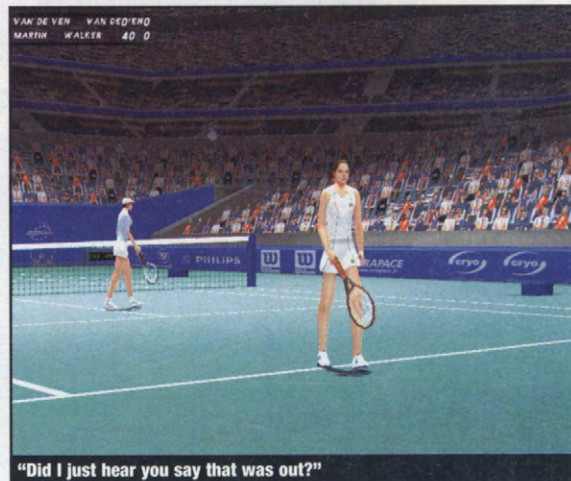
If you're female and prefer to play with girls (no ambiguity intended), or you're a pervy spotty oik desperately hoping to see a glimpse of some female panties, then there's the option to play women's tennis. This is also very true to life, with most rallies going on longer than Anna Kournikova's legs. Doubles games are a superb laugh, especially if you play with friends, and teamwork is essential. Up to four people can play *OT2000* at once, but unfortunately there are no LAN or Internet options. This is a huge shame, but we have been promised that this problem will



“And I haven't even broken out in a sweat. See?”



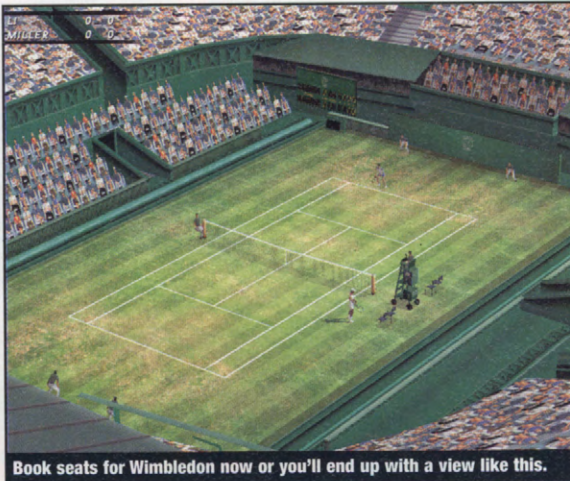
Not a gratuitous panty shot to be seen.



“Did I just hear you say that was out?”



"I can beat you standing on one leg."



Book seats for Wimbledon now or you'll end up with a view like this.



Use the linesmen for target practice.

be rectified in future titles. There are no real-life players, which is a little disappointing, but that's more to do with the red tape surrounding the multitude of sponsorship deals in professional tennis than any laziness on the part of the developers

DOUBLE FAULTS

Open Tennis 2000 is a game that has captivated the office like few others. It has some glitches of course, such as occasionally allowing you only one fault on your serve instead of two. The replays are also a little on the weak side, and you can't pick your opponents in single games. However, the most important thing is that *OT2000* is fun. Not just a little entertaining, but hugely so, even if you don't like tennis. Considering the inherent difficulties with reproducing a sport like tennis, we reckon Cryo deserve to look forward to healthy sales figures. As it is, the game will probably disappear faster than one of Pete Sampras' serves. Which is what I'm going to do now, so I can have another go. Anyone for tennis? [X]

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Very realistic • Huge amount of fun • Four-player multiplayer
- DOWNERS Strange player movement
 - No Internet or LAN options • Poor replays • You can't choose your opponents

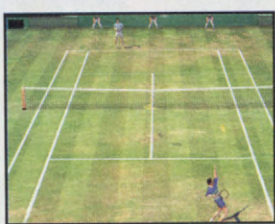
81 Game, set and match to Cryo

TECH SPECS

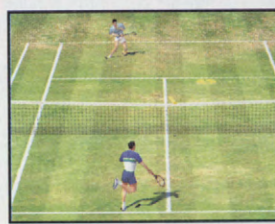
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233
Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
3D card **WE SAY** PII 266 with 8Mb 3D graphics card

WALKTHROUGH
GAME POINTS

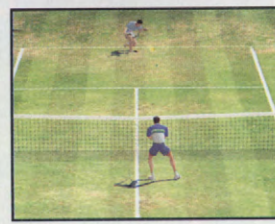
Henman and that Canadian chap notwithstanding, we're not very good at tennis. So, direct from the experts (alright, Korda actually), here's some helpful advice on how to master the court



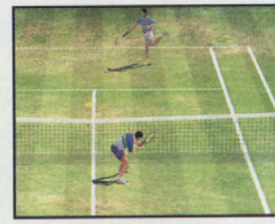
1 As you're playing on grass, it's important to get a good first serve in. Press the shoot button once and hold it down while you move the yellow cursor to the desired position in your opponent's box. Push forward when you release to put extra speed onto the ball.



2 As soon as you've hit the serve, rush towards the net. If your serve is effective, your opponent will have real difficulty returning the ball with any accuracy. By rushing the net, you're cutting down the angle for the opposition's return, as well as setting yourself up for a point-winning volley. You've got them on the ropes already.



3 As you get to the ball at the net, press the top-spin button and hold it down while positioning the cursor again. You may not have time to hit a winning shot at this stage, so play your return to the back of the court, aiming if possible for the corner furthest away from your opponent. To play the shot release the shoot button.



4 Due to the narrow angle that your opponent has for their return, it's likely that if they try a passing shot, you'll be able to intercept it, and win with a simple volley into the corner of the court. Again, hold down the shoot key to get you to the ball, and aim for the edge of the court. Power is not too important here. Placement is everything.

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TDR 2000



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Most missions are split into three layers: underground, surface and orbit. This is the underground.



Losing limbs isn't a problem - you can always nick some more from your opponents.

METAL FATIGUE

★ £29.99 • Psygnosis • Out now

Keith Pullin checks out some extremely heavy metal

With a name like *Metal Fatigue* you'd be excused for stifling a yawn at the prospect of another futuristic, base-building, resource collecting, real-time strategy jaunt. Indeed, *MF* has little in the way of innovation - even its 3D landscape seems

from a distinct lack of flair. In short, you won't find a more mediocre real-time strategy game if you scour every games shop on the planet, and then some. The real shame about it is that among this gaming rubble, there's actually one element that works surprisingly well. This single ray of light is the 'Combat'.

made up of salvaged enemy parts. It's actually great fun, especially when you discover an alien weapon that you've never come across before and end up vaporising half your own army the first time you attempt to use it.

The other units in the game are nowhere near as exciting. It's the usual suspects really: tanks, missile bikes, artillery and gun turrets are all there operating relatively intelligently (yet excruciatingly slowly) on a diet of basic sub-commands, such as guard, patrol, melee, wait and attack.

The only other vaguely interesting thing about *MF* is that you can play as one of three warring factions, which means there are three completely different scenarios on offer. This is scant consolation for a RTS game that's generally as bog-standard and tiresome as its title suggests. [CZ]

"You won't find a more mediocre real-time strategy game if you scour every games shop on the planet, and then some"

sterile alongside the full weather and day/night cycle of *Earth 2150*. To really rub salt into the wound, compare *MF* to the irresistible *Ground Control* and Psygnosis' limp misfit sinks into obscurity.

But don't get us wrong, *MF* isn't utterly awful - it just suffers

ROBOT WRESTLING

Dwarfing every other unit in the game, these four-story tall robots can be customised to suit any battle situation. Weaponry such as katana blades, axes, electrogrip hands, laser swords and more can be fitted for close-range duels, and if it's long-range gear you're after then plasma cannons, gatling guns, missiles and other ordinance should suffice.

Watching a brawl between two closely matched machines is surprisingly enjoyable: they duck, block and even kick and wrestle with each other to gain an advantage. It's a bit like watching a giant robot version of WWF - but with guns for when things aren't going your way.

Tussles can go on for ages, and at the bitter end the victor usually has a shortage of limbs to show for its efforts. Not that being limbless is a problem for too long - you can always pick up and use the weapons of other fallen 'bots. This means you can own a Combat that's entirely



Defend your base with gun turrets. Seen it all before thank you...



MF's one saving grace is combat between four-story customised 'bots.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Metal Fatigue could not have been released at a worse time. Compared to the likes of *Shogun: Total War*, *Ground Control*, *Earth 2150* and the rest, it looks dated, and plays even worse. Avoid it unless you really want to customise those robots, of course...

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

GROUND CONTROL

HOMEWORLD

EARTH 2150

METAL FATIGUE

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Extremely customisable robots
- DOWNERS Bog-standard units • Dodgy graphics

58 Fatigue? More like totally knackered

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM P200 **ALSO REQUIRES** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Any PII with 64Mb RAM and matchsticks to pin your eyes open



Careful with that axe Eugene.

AIRLINE *Tycoon*

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you can select your own planes and
choose from hundreds of routes.
It may not be an easy ride...



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This green git will cause you all sorts of trouble in the game.



Even we could draw better visuals for this ant hill interior.



Resource collection and combat take place above ground.



Time to slug it out with this beetle.



The micro management can really bug you.



A rock star insect gets mobbed by some fans.

EMPIRE OF THE ANTS

★ £29.99 • Out now • Microids

When *Martin Korda* was given this game to review, he started itching uncontrollably, but that's another story

The moment this game hit my desk, I have to admit I felt mixed emotions about it. Not even the editor's pacifying words of: "You're one of our resident strategy experts, here's an interesting looking RTS for you to review," helped sway me in a particular direction.

History is resplendent with high points for these little insects, such as *Antz* and *Bugs Life*. But there have been some equally spectacular lows. You need look no further than *Ant from Ant* and

text before starting the campaign, you'll find it actually helps give *EOTA* some much needed charisma.

The first thing that strikes you when you start playing are the graphics. Not the pretty nature artwork of the above-ground locations, but the sub-standard looks-like-an eight-year-old-drew-this interiors of the ant hill. This aside, we found that *EOTA* had a fair amount to offer.

As you've probably guessed from the previous paragraph, the game is set over two locations –

“The idea behind this game is to create a prosperous and powerful nation of ants who can survive in a world full of predators”

Dec to see what I mean.

Empire Of The Ants is at least based around an original enough concept (for an RTS game), which allows it to stand out from the crowd. The developers have given the insects human characteristics and a history, which is presented in a CD-based encyclopedia. If you can be bothered to wade through the

surface and ant hill. Resource collection and combat take place at ground level, while building your colony occurs in the ant hill. The idea behind *EOTA* is to create a prosperous and powerful nation of ants who can survive in a world full of predators, natural hazards (rain, frost, etc) and rival colonies.

You get to control every aspect of your industrious ant kingdom,

IN PERSPECTIVE

Hard one this, actually, a very hard one. In fact, none of us could think of anything really that would directly compare to *EOTA*, apart from the archaic *Sim Ant*. Dave and Mark did come up with *Hungry Horrace* (an old Spectrum game). So really, if you're into RTS, you're going to have to go for hi-tech super weapons (*C&C: Tiberian Sun* or *Earth 2150*) or knights in armour charging down archers (*Shogun* or *AoEII*).

Empire Of The Ants:



from egg laying to job allocation. You even have to make sure that your ant hill stays at the right temperature and is well maintained. Neglect any one of these tasks and your kingdom will fall into decay and disrepair.

Although it's a nice enough idea, the game actually suffers from being set over two tiers. Let's say you're underground

sorting out which type of ant to build next. You'll probably be too preoccupied to notice the praying mantis on the surface, sneaking up on your warrior ants. And by the time you do, it will be too late, and subsequently you'll end up losing loads of troops.

Controlling your ants is a simple enough affair, as warriors can be commanded with the mouse, and all other ants are directed through menus. This makes it easy to distinguish your army units from your workers, which is a huge relief considering the complexity of the game – and *EOTA* is complex. You're going to have to love micro management as much as nature if you want to get the most out of it. The combat sections are pretty uninspired affairs, even though there are plenty of predators out there prepared to have a little go at your troops. If you're going to get any real enjoyment here, then it'll be from managing your colony. Even then, you're going to have to be verging on the anally-retentive side to fully appreciate it.

Empire Of The Ants is a highly ambitious game, one which attempts to move the RTS genre away from hi-tech weaponry and into the natural world. OK, the graphics may not be up to scratch, but the involving gameplay

compensates for the shoddy visuals. The multiplayer and skirmish options help to improve it further, by adding a greater sense of immediacy and excitement, which is so sorely missing from the campaign missions. Despite all its flaws, *EOTA* is no disaster – far from it. But its below par graphics, slightly clumsy interface and dull combat sections hardly inspire you. As a result of these shortcomings, we can only recommend this to you if you're an RTS fanatic, a micro management freak or David Attenborough. **LV2**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Plenty of gaming depth • Interesting new slant on an RTS game • Loads of micro management
- DOWNERS Terrible ant hill graphics • Uninspiring combat • Slightly clumsy interface • Loads of micro management

54 A wildlife RTS, not quite how nature intended it

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233
Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
3D card, 200Mb RAM **WE SAY** P350,
8Mb graphics card and 64Mb RAM

WARLORDS BATTLECRY

★ Out now • Mattel Interactive • £29.99

To buy a Warlord or not to buy a Warlord, that is the question. Martin Korda is here to provide the answer

Imagine for a minute that you've just walked into a futuristic car showroom. You've been driving your old manual geared car for quite some time now, and you want to buy an automatic. No one's really making cars where you have to change gear every time you want to move anymore, and that's why you've come here.

After browsing for a short time, you're spotted by a salesman. He slithers over to you, looking greasier than Michael Portillo rolled in chip fat, and nods knowingly as he looks outside. "Ah," he says, "I see you're still driving the old Warlord Mark III. A great car for its time, but a bit dated now." You feel slightly embarrassed for being so retro, but assure him you're looking to buy a new vehicle today. Sensing a hefty commission, he gestures for you to follow him.

As you walk through the showroom, you learn about each of the cars. The *EA Shogun*, with its massive engine and state-of-the-art technology; the Westwood Conqueror, with its Hollywood image and easily accessible interior layout; the Microsoft Age II, with its host of features and precision workmanship.

Finally, you come to a car that looks somewhat familiar. The salesman turns and looks you in the eye. "Now this one I think you'll like. The Warlord Mark IV, the first ever automatic Warlord vehicle." You look at it dubiously. It's hardly the prettiest car in the showroom, and next to the other vehicles looks more out of place than a granny working a red-light district. However, it seems like a reliable car, and as you're feeling a little nostalgic, you think it wouldn't be such a bad choice after all. "So how much cheaper is this one?" The salesman laughs smugly. "All cars in this showroom cost practically the same." So here's your dilemma. Do you invest in the flashiest and most advanced car in the shop, or get all sentimental and go for the Warlord. Put that way, it would seem that the decision would be

obvious. Or would it? As the salesman knows full well, familiarity and nostalgia can be powerful selling tools.

LOOKING UNDER THE BONNET

The *Warlords* games have always been firm favourites among strategists. Up until now they've all been turn-based affairs, but *Warlords Battlecry* is an attempt to translate everything that's good about the series into real-time.

On the surface it looks like just another standard RTS relying on an established brand name, destined to fade into obscurity after selling ten copies, half of which are bought by the development team. But take a closer look and you start to realise that this is an RTS of some quality, and it does justice to all that we know and love about the *Warlords* games. So the graphics aren't great, and they look about two years old, but like opening the bonnet of a crap-looking car and finding a turbo charged engine, *WB* has more to offer than its visuals might suggest.

HERO OF THE DAY

The game's background is set up by an atmospheric intro, in which two strange comet-like objects crash on the mystical land of Etheria. It's then up to you to uncover their mystery. The main campaign is divided into several chapters and, after the second one, the storyline branches out, offering you two choices. You can either keep fighting for the side of good, or indulge your darker side by defecting to evil. This gives you the perfect excuse to do fiendishly wicked things, such as enslaving the land, plunging it into eternal darkness and putting your toenail clippings into people's sandwiches.

As with previous games in the series, you get a hero to lead your troops. Due to plenty of



Everything is dead calm after closing time in Etheria.

RPG elements, there's a lot of scope for character development, and as the story progresses, your hero will gain ability points. These can then be used to improve his skills and attributes.

It becomes imperative in each mission that you preserve your hero, so that you can keep

The hero development is one of the most engrossing parts of *WB*, especially as there are so many ways in which this can be done. You have to pick a profession for him, choosing from a selection of warrior, rogue, priest or wizard. These in turn influence your hero's skills,

each other in a triangular area, your hero can get boxed in and trapped, which is bloody annoying. There's a large selection of units to bolster your forces with, ranging from nancy-boy pikemen to hardcore cavalry. You can also research new technologies, units and unit upgrades.

Another nice touch is that your hero can learn and cast spells, which adds an extra dimension to every battle. There are numerous formations to put your troops into, and using the right ones at the right time can make a real difference to the outcome of an encounter, as they create some interesting tactical possibilities. Weather conditions and terrain also have an effect on combat, and very few units are immune to becoming overcome by fear and running for their lives when they come across a greatly superior enemy.

Completing each of the missions is made more difficult because of the limitation on the number of units you can build. This means that unlike in *C&C: Tiberian Sun*, where each mission could be won by sheer weight of numbers, you need to be careful and tactical about how and where to deploy your armies. After all, this is a strategy game, and cunning tactics are exactly what you need if you're going to get anywhere. It's unfortunate then, that sometimes the enemy AI shows about as much intelligence as David and Victoria Beckham

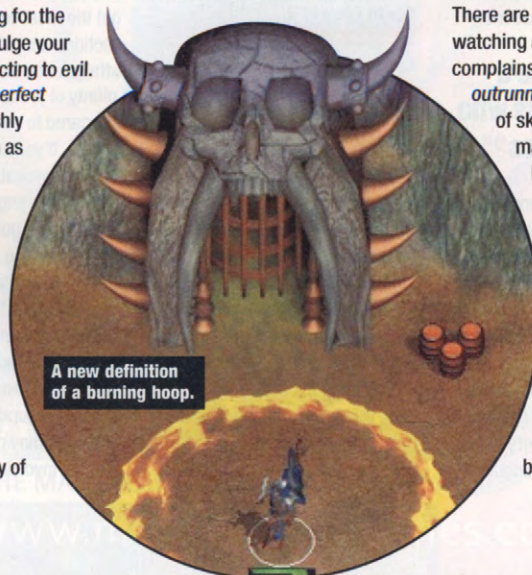
“You have two choices – you can either keep fighting for the side of good, or indulge your darker side by defecting to evil”

advancing him (oddly there are no female hero choices) throughout the campaign. He can influence the armies in his command, allowing them to move faster and fight better, while stopping them from being a bunch of cowardly wimps who run away at the first sight of a one-legged zombie armed with a blunt toothpick.

which range from physical prowess to spell-casting abilities.

TIME TO PICK A FIGHT

The actual missions are generally pretty entertaining and challenging. Although there are a couple of duds where you can literally leg it past hordes of enemies to get to your destination. There are few funnier sights than watching a geriatric wizard who complains he's tired all the time, outrunning an entire legion of skeletons. Resource management is kept simple, and constructing buildings is also very easy. Your hero doubles up as a builder, which is a bit strange, but it hardly ruins the game. One annoying glitch we found was that if you build three buildings too close to



A new definition of a burning hoop.



Those of you who need to go to the toilet should go now.



Another ritual burning – it's part a day's work.



Each race is affected in a different way by weather conditions, surroundings and terrain.



Everything was in place for the grand opening of the first minotaur kebab shop.

trying to grapple with algebraic equations. You'll be firing at enemy armies, and they'll just stand there wondering why they suddenly don't feel all that well. Instead of going to find out who's shooting them, they just die.

EXTENDED PLAY

After finishing the campaign, you can either play a skirmish mission or take on your friends in a multiplayer game, both of which are superb fun, as you can set your own victory conditions. There are nine different races to choose from, all with their own strengths and weaknesses. And because of this, you'll need radically different approaches to tactics for each one. The longevity

and multiplayer options of *WB* are two of its most alluring features, and you can even create your own maps with the editor provided. All in all, there's more than enough variation and fun to keep you occupied for months, and that's what makes *Warlords Battlecry* worth buying, despite its poor graphics and occasional quirks.

WHY BUY A CLIO WHEN YOU CAN HAVE A FERRARI?

OK, imagine you're back in the car showroom again. You've heard all about what each package has to offer. What's it going to be? The dated-looking but relatively well constructed and familiar *Warlord*, or the groundbreaking *Shogun*? If you go for the *Warlord*, you'll get

a reliable if slightly glitched product, which will be fun to drive and will last you a long time. But if you go for a test drive in the *Shogun*, you'll soon realise just how inferior the *Warlord* actually is in comparison, and it's unlikely you'll ever want to go back. The *Warlord* doesn't offer anything particularly new. Saying that, though, some people just don't like the flashy things in life. So before spending your money on this game, just ask yourself one thing. If you're seriously considering buying a new car, would you buy a Renault Clio if you could have a Ferrari for virtually the same price? We'll leave you to work the rest out for yourselves. **PCZ**

WALKTHROUGH

ZOMBIE KILLING FIELDS

Gather the troops, it's time to kill some undead. Hold on, isn't that technically impossible?



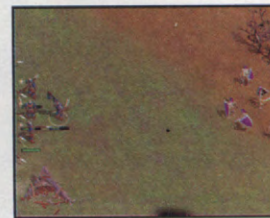
1 Minos tells you that the valley looks like a good place for an enemy ambush. Although he's got a stupid beard, which makes him look like Brian Blessed, he is an old war veteran and knows what he's talking about. Caution is required here.



2 Send a scout up the valley. Scouts have a better field of vision than most units, and so they can spot an enemy from a distance without endangering themselves. It looks like Minos was right – a group of undead are lying in wait for you.



3 The undead wizard is too high up to attack, and will cast devastating spells if your men are in range. Choose a formation that allows you to move in single file and hug the left side of the valley, taking out the skeletons as you go.



4 Now it's time to get rid of the skeletons on the other side of the valley. Get your men into formation and engage each group of undead separately. They won't stand a chance against your organised forces.



5 Time to take out that wizard. Stay in formation and, if he's low on health, leave your hero behind, just in case he gets killed. Although the wizard is powerful, he hasn't got a prayer against all your troops.



6 Victory is yours. Thanks to forward planning, sensible scouting and organised tactics, you've annihilated the undead with ease. All that's left now is for you to sit back and feel very smug about your tactical genius.

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS** True to the series • Plenty of scope for strategy • Excellent RPG and hero development elements
- DOWNERS** Occasionally suspect AI • Very poor graphics • Pales in comparison next to the new breed of 3D RTS games

70 Fun to play, true to the series, but never outstanding

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 130Mb HD Space **WE SAY** PII266, 64Mb RAM and a 4Mb graphics card

IN PERSPECTIVE

There isn't an RTS game out there which can touch *Shogun* at the moment. But if you're scared off by huge armies, *Age Of Empires II* is the better bet. If you prefer controlling futuristic units, then check out *C&C: Tiberian Sun*. *Warlords* is by no means a poor game, and if you've ever longed to play the series in real-time, you won't be disappointed.

Warlords Battlecry	████████████████████
Shogun	████████████████████
Age Of Empires II	████████████████████
C&C: Tiberian Sun	████████████████████

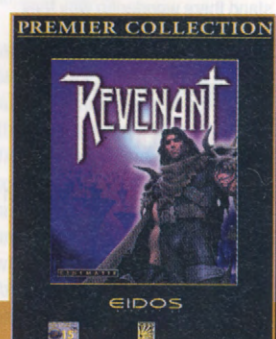
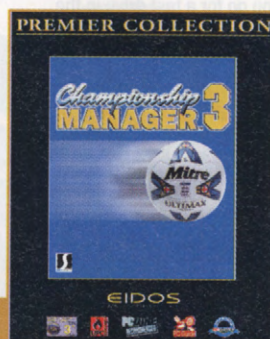
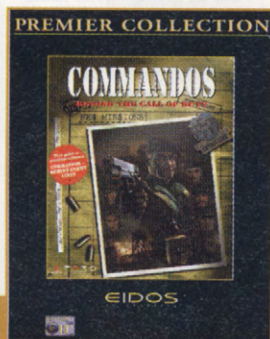
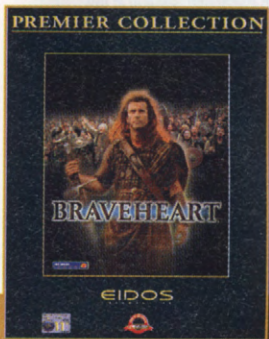
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INTERACTIVE

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Developed by Sports Interactive Limited. © and Published by Eidos Interactive Limited 2000. All Rights Reserved.

FLYING HEROES

★ £29.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

Putting down his copy of *Biggles Takes It Rough*, James Lyon dons his goggles and hops into the cockpit of the **ZONE** review plane

Since developers discovered that all gamers want to do is kill people they've never met, multiplayer games have been shooting out of their creative orifices thick and fast. *Flying Heroes* is no exception, a flying fantasy first-person shooter on the PC. Anybody who's played any other recent FPS will have no trouble picking this up. Unlike *Descent*, it's impossible to spin your craft through 360 degrees – only being able to hover up and down – which means less cause for confusion and less time trying to gain your bearings. And now for the bad news...

STRADDLING A GOOSE

It's best to concentrate on the single-player mode as this is what really lets the game down. You're presented with a career mode in which you compete in a set number of matches in different leagues, winning cash for frags so you can purchase and upgrade ships and weapons until you're daddy of the airways. There are four participating teams, which I could go into detail about but, apart from the Magions, they're not particularly interesting. The Magions, obviously having a sense of humour, like to fly around in giant barrels, teapots, prams or any other offbeat modes of air transport. Just for the record, the others have gone for slightly different variations of giant birds, flying lizards or airships. Each team has a different style of flight, but not so

“The Magions, obviously having a sense of humour, like to fly around in giant barrels, teapots, prams or any other offbeat modes of air transport”

much that they can't be controlled in a similar way.

All would be fine, if it were not for the fact that in this fast-paced gaming genre your initial choice of vehicles is agonisingly slow. There's always the option to boost your speed using a gradually replenishing supply of magic, but it would've made much more sense to be able to move at that

speed in the first place. But it does get better later. With the exception of the airships, the latter vessels zip along at a fair pace. Although playing in career mode it is going to take a long time to get that far and you are not likely to enjoy the pace beforehand.

Speed issues aside, you can't avoid the fact that the weapons are some of the most disappointing to grace the PC in quite a while. None of the weapons seem to stand out as being particularly striking. Most are weak, lacking any real feeling of power and variably having crippling long reload times.

DE(S)CENT?

Despite all its weaknesses, the game would be OK if it wasn't so unnecessarily complicated and difficult. Even playing on the easiest level involves the strong possibility of being shot down with great frequency.

Herein lies the problem: if you can't get enough frags to earn cash, you can't buy any upgrades and thus can't win any of the later, harder matches. And since you can't go back to earlier matches in a season, you're stuck until the end before you can start again. You do, however, get to start with all the cash and upgrades you accumulated before. It could be

placed against its rivals. *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament* et al have nothing to fear. *Flying Heroes* did show promise at first, but poor weapons and speed problems see it plummeting from the skies of fondness faster than a dead hippo in a hot air balloon. **WZ**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166
Memory 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES**
4Mb 3D card **WE SAY** PII 400, 128Mb
RAM, Voodoo3 or similar



Giant flying birds. How's that for bizarre flight modes?

IN PERSPECTIVE

Magic Carpet springs immediately to mind, as does *Descent 3* and *Quake III*. All better games than this.



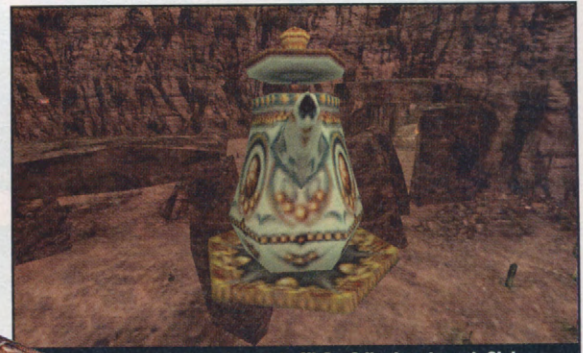
PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Nice looking • Levels try something slightly different
DOWNERS Poor weapons • Some annoyingly slow craft • Dubious difficulty levels

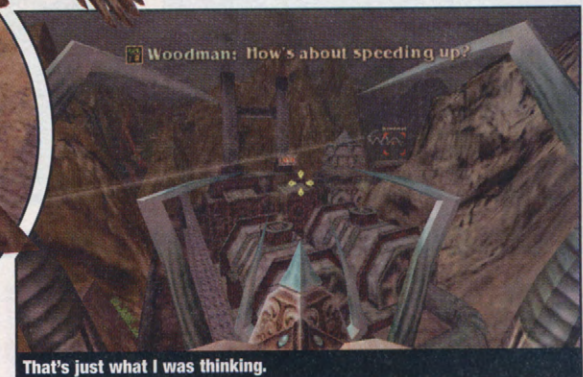
47 Disappointing, as it looked like it was going to be a whole lot better



It's certainly foggy in this fantasy land.



Let's hope I don't spout off! See? I'm in a teapot. Sigh.



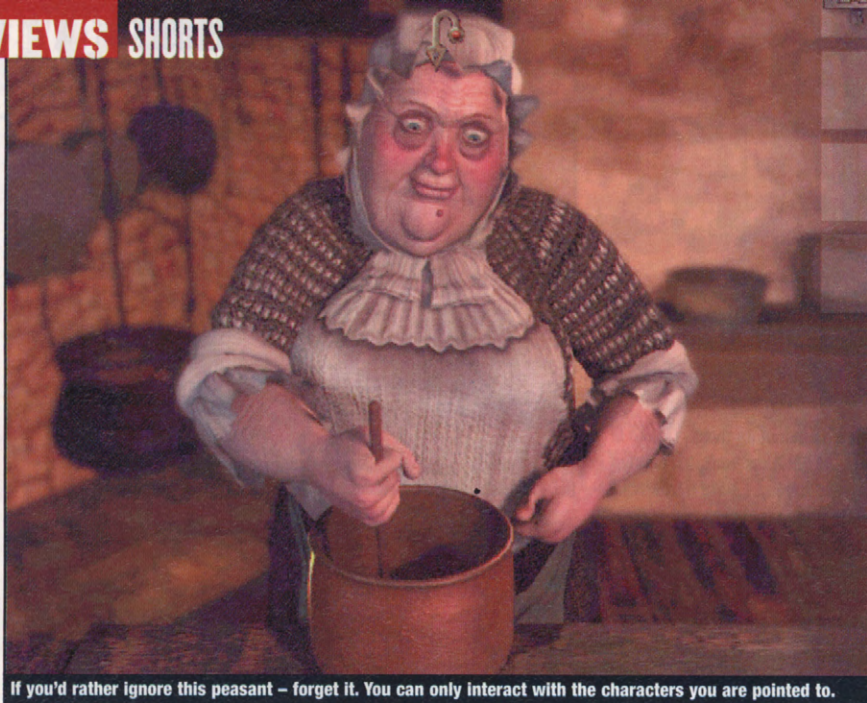
That's just what I was thinking.



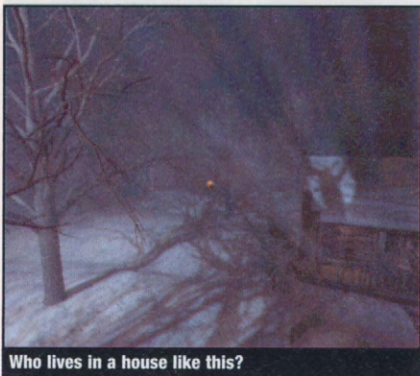
Floating islands? It doesn't get more magical than this.



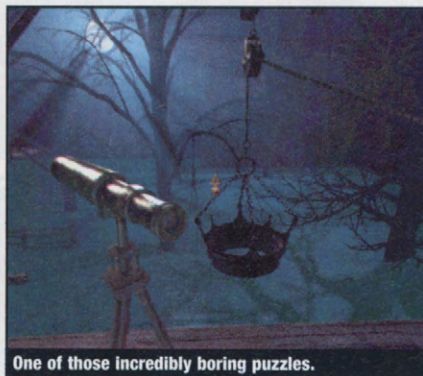
The airships, though the most powerful, are the slowest of the lot.



If you'd rather ignore this peasant – forget it. You can only interact with the characters you are pointed to.



Who lives in a house like this?



One of those incredibly boring puzzles.

DRACULA: RESURRECTION

★ £34.99 • Microïds • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P233 with 64Mb RAM

Be afraid, be very afraid. The dead are stalking the Earth, bringing a dark blanket of despair over all of humanity. Or at least the part of humanity that plays PC games. Those of you who thought the *Myst* adventure game was dead and buried with a 3D-accelerated stake sunk deep into its mororal heart will be distressed to know that *Dracula: Resurrection* is here to resurrect it.

The story follows on from where Bram Stoker's book left off, seven years after the Count has been hunted and destroyed by Van Helsing and co. Of course, the world's premiere vampire is still undead and sucking, prompting Harker's wife, Mina, to go to him, obviously deciding that necrophilia is the thing for her. Your job is to guide Harker to Dracula's castle, save his sex-crazed spouse, kill the Count, again, and solve some incredibly boring puzzles on the way.

The game borrows as much as it can from the Francis Ford Coppola film, right down to Jonathan Harker being a Keanu Reeves-style tosser with a weird mix of English and American accents. Unfortunately, it has none of the style, panache or imagery. The gameplay is as limited and simple as any *Myst* game, allowing you less freedom than you'd get in a rolling dice adventure book. You can only move where the arrow lets you, and you can only interact with the minute number of objects that the game points you to. If you're part of the generation who cried with joy into their cups of tea when *Riven* dulled our screens, you may very well be getting your PG Tips ready. The rest of you will just shake your heads in disbelief and mutter something like, "those crazy French people", probably using more offensive and xenophobic words.

Mark Hill

PCZVERDICT

39%

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF 2000

★ £39.99 • Sierra • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P266, 64Mb RAM

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

In *PGA Championship Golf 2000* Sierra has followed in the footsteps of yearly update maestros EA Sports, by providing minimum improvements to justify a full-price release.

Graphically, you'd be hard-pushed to notice any differences: greens, fairways, crowds – it all looks the same. Acoustically, nothing's changed either: the commentators' smart-arse digs remain identical and they still tell you where your ball's going to end up before it's even stopped.

In fact, at first glance you might be forgiven for thinking you've been palmed off with *exactly* the same game. Get a few rounds under your belt though, and the subtle, brilliant differences stand proud.

The physics engine is one of the best available. The ball bounces, kicks up, spins and bounds around the course with consummate realism. The patented Trueswing has also been adjusted to incorporate pace and tempo, and is now the most realistic swing interface ever devised.

There are five new courses and complementing this is a superb course architect. On top of that, the tournament designer means that you can now create entire seasons, with features such as prize money,

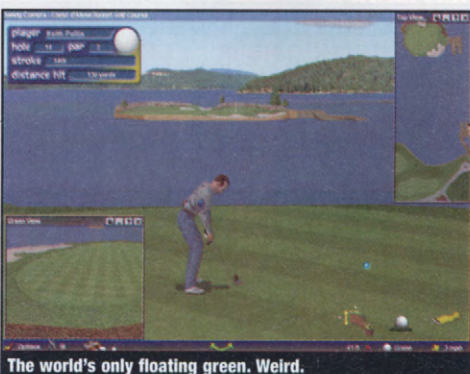
adjustable cuts and hundreds of golfers. And finally, as always with the PGA series, the online clubhouse is packed full of eager virtual golfers of all standards just gaggling for a round.

On the downside 40 quid is a hell of a lot to pay for what is essentially an add-on pack, and you just know that there's going to be yet another update out next year. But what can you do? *PGA 2000* is currently the closest you can get to playing golf without setting foot on the course.

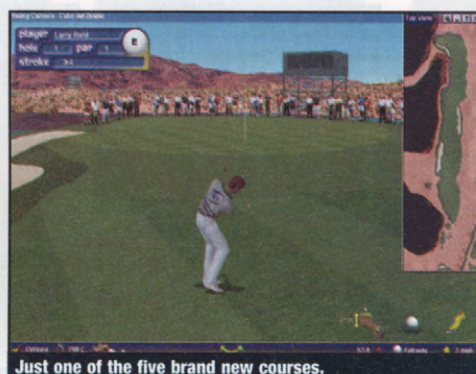
Keith Pullin

PCZVERDICT

84%



The world's only floating green. Weird.



Just one of the five brand new courses.



Various camera angles make it easier to plan your next shot.

CRICKET 2000

★ £34.99 • EA • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb video card **WE SAY** P233 and 64Mb RAM

EA released its first cricket game about a year ago, and the thought of getting the annual update didn't inspire us one iota. Having sat down and played through every type of match, we're still singularly unimpressed. It's not that it's a terrible game, and if you're the sort of person who's quite happy to sit in the stands at Lords for five days and watch a test match without: a) drinking yourself stupid; or b) falling asleep, then this is probably the one item your life is missing.

The trouble is, cricket isn't an easy game to code and the ills that are served up here are replicated in the previous version and Codemaster's *Brian Lara*. You never really feel like you're in control of the game, and exciting subtleties (like a ball nudging to the slips) are as dull as a pair of biscuit-coloured Y-fronts.

Another criticism is that *Cricket 2000* doesn't have the glitz or the glamour of other EA titles. Where *FIFA* and even *Ice Hockey* are getting the big budget treatment, the company seems content to make this look like a very distant cousin, with poor and unfinished animations heading up the list of suspects.

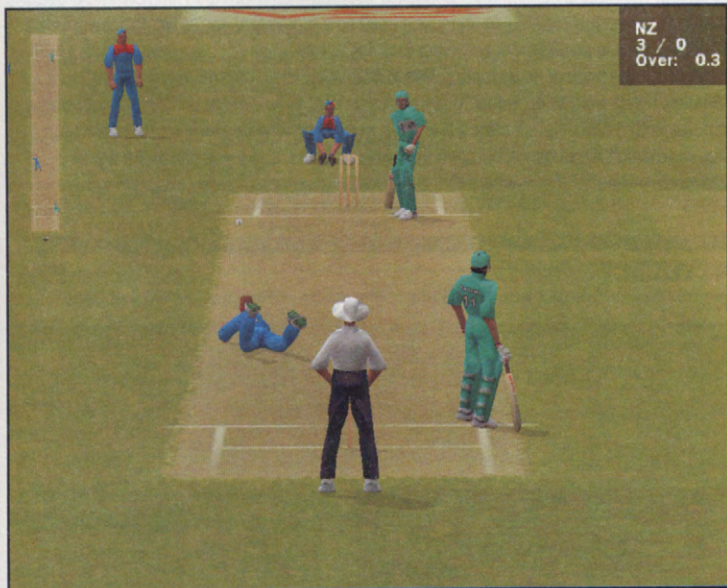
You do get more control than in *Brian Lara*. If you're batting you can move your man while the ball is being bowled and this gives you the freedom to move off the wicket to play a stroke. Bowling is a bit more tedious. A target moves around drunkenly and you get to place it as accurately as possible – it's not as hard as it sounds – and add spin. It's far too easy to move the ball and it's too easy to send accurate delivery after accurate delivery.

On the default settings we managed to bowl Australia out for 27 and then struggled to win the game (admittedly, we were playing as England). But if you persevere with the controls and ramp up the difficulty settings, there's a game for cricket buffs and toffs the world over. Us? We're praying for rain and dying to ask EA what the difference is between this one and last year's effort

Dave Woods

PCZVERDICT

51%



The world's least successful bowl.



Don't expect the sheen of other EA games.



Cricket. As seen from the field.

Raging fires and meteor storms

Tidal waves and hurricane winds

Perilous environments

Destruction and devastation

Amazing Kingdoms

Dragons and Serpents

Skeletons and Wererats

10 new character classes

26 new skills, spells
and special abilities

A completely new mission

Traditional class roles or
lead a band of monsters.

It's going to be a long day.

3DO™

VIII

ULTIMATE GOLF

★ Ubi Soft • £29.99 • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY**
A long walk ruined

Golf is all about subtle little nuances and a decent PC conversion has got to reflect this. Keith Pullin, in his review of *PGA 2000* (see review on page 80) made this point most eloquently: the update did little to enhance the graphics, but got the physics engine and the true-swing system spot-on.

Ultimate Golf, on the other hand, is a perfect example of how to get a game dreadfully wrong. Using the right-left mouse swing, it's possible to accurately place the ball to within 10 yards almost every time you take a shot. To end up with a scorecard that contains any pluses at all you have to attempt an impossible shot and end up in either the trees or the water.

When you get on the green the ball flies around at top speed until just before the hole when it screeches to a halt and stops. Curves on the green seem to play little part in the actual trajectory of the ball, and the distance shown is always in yards, never inches. So get less than a yard from the hole and you're told you're 0 yds away, which is helpful.

We also encountered a horrendous bug that meant we couldn't change clubs on the fringe of the green. Despite being recognised as fairway we were forced to use a putter and guess how much speed the game was going to take off for the longer grass. To add insult to injury, the caddy we were given was obviously on some sort of day release, suggesting we use a wood 16 yards from the hole. You get banned for that sort of thing round our way.

It's a shame because there are a few small touches that are good, such as the fact that you can switch to walk



The graphics are sparse and the gameplay stinks.

mode and inspect your shot from any angle. Pre-rendered golfing sims look stunning but don't give you this freedom. This obviously isn't enough to save this game from the panning it deserves, although if you've got a young child that's desperate for a golf game this one is simple and easy to play. And that's not supposed to be a compliment.

Dave Woods

PCZVERDICT

27%



I've got one. It's a monster.....

TROPHY BASS 4

★ £39.99 • Sierra • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Get a stick and find a river.

Fishing is a sport with multiple complexities, often scoffed at by those who know little about it. However, it's always proved difficult to convert into a computer game (except on the Dreamcast with the innovative rod controller), and that's the case with *Trophy Bass 4*.

It's immensely detailed, and comes with its own comprehensive guide which covers every type of fish, the effect of weather conditions and a host of fishing tips, but it fails to capture the serenity of the real thing. It only took us seven minutes to catch our first two fish by casting out and reeling in a few times. It isn't this easy to catch fish in reel life (groan! - ed).

Trophy Bass 4 isn't fun, although it's probably not aiming to appeal to the usual gamer. Avid fishermen may gain a bit of pleasure because of its comprehensive array of equipment and features and it's best suited to those who want to learn more about fishing. However, if we'd caught something as ugly as this, we'd throw it back in.

Martin Korda

PCZVERDICT

42%

CROSSCRAZE

★ £19.95 • Ort Software • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Shareware specs for a shareware game

Sadly, the title doesn't refer to a first-person shooter where everyone runs around yielding religious iconography and crushing other people's skulls in an effort to prove their madness. That would be fun. Instead we're presented with a £20 quid shareware Scrabble-clone which has the audacity to announce itself as a crossword game. No. Crosswords are the things people do on trains, screwing their faces in a mask of concentration, and are to be found on the back of newspapers. This is *Countdown* without the detestable Richard Whiteley. If you were to download this from the Internet you'd probably spend a few happy minutes with it and delete it after a few days wondering why you ever wasted your time. *Crosscraze* isn't a bad game, but then neither is *Solitaire*. See if you can make a well known phrase out of these letters: OGFUIFRPNFIC.

Mark Hill

PCZVERDICT

25%



It's like scrabble, you see. Only it's on your PC! Crazy, isn't it?



Dave overwhelms Chris at 8-ball. As per usual.



More balls. Smaller pockets. Not as much fun.

CUECLUB

★ £24.99 • Midas • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** It's not a complicated game and works well on a low-end system

In a recent game of Killer against the major game companies and a couple of *PC Gamer* wannabes, Chris Anderson surprised everyone, including himself, by taking the cash. And then proceeded to bore everyone (including the manager of the pool club) with the details of the brilliance of his winning shot, despite the fact it was over the pocket and about a foot away. The actual truth is that our esteemed editor was seeing double at the time, and was aiming for the phantom ball.

If you play pool this story will be very familiar. One of the greatest non-exercise sports going, it's best played with friends in the surroundings of a local pub. The PC equivalent is playing online, but amazingly this game has failed to exploit this possibility.

Even more bizarre is that the game is built around a virtual chat room, as if the developers wanted the Internet side, but couldn't code it. So instead I had to enter fictitious bars, and hawk around for a game. Laughably, getting a game is almost impossible to start off with. As a beginner no one's interested in playing you, and after about 15 minutes of being ignored and insulted by virtual opponents I left with a complex.

Thankfully, you can enter tournaments at any time, and the game itself is a faithful (if Americanised) version of the three best games (8-ball, 9-ball and snooker). Choosing a static overhead camera leads to problems, and it's not always easy to line up your shot properly, but the interface is very easy to use (set power, spin, aim and shoot) and after a while you forget the limitations and enjoy what is a very simple, but addictive game. If Internet play was in I'd have given it a much higher score. As it is I'm going to go back and sit in my virtual chat room hoping that someone finally notices the virtual pisshead in the corner.

Dave Woods

PCZVERDICT

59%



Day of the Destroyer

In the four corners of Jadame, gates to the planes of Fire, Earth and Water have opened and denizens of those realms are sweeping across the lands devastating all in their path. You must lead a band of rugged adventurers on a perilous mission to save the kingdom from ruin.



Key Features

- Completely new story spanning the lands of Enroth, Erathia and Jadame
- New skills, spells and special abilities to be acquired
- Choose your favourite game mode – real-time or turn-based
- Dozens of quests and sub-quests for hours of enthralling gameplay

PC
CD

3DO™ NEW WORLD COMPUTING™

PCZ SUPERTEST ACTION

The days of the traditional point-and-click adventure are well and truly over. But has the genre really progressed, or are we simply witnessing its dumbing-down?

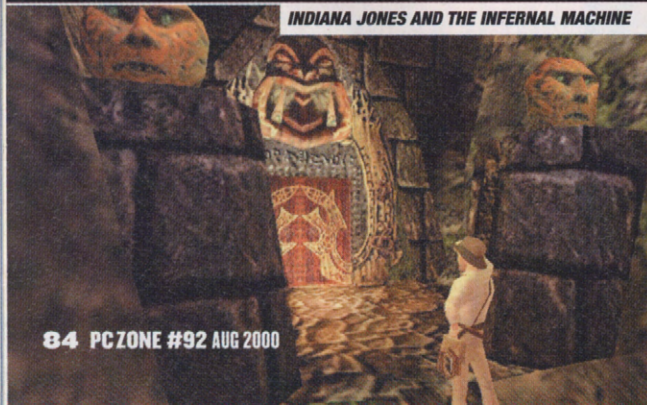
★ MAINTAINING ORDER Paul Mallinson

Back in the halcyon days of home computing when 8-bit machines such as Sir Clive's rubber-keyed ZX Spectrum and Commodore's cutting-edge C64 ruled the roost, adventure games were the staple diet of virtually every gamer. Decades ago, when graphics and style were way

down the list of priorities in a game designer's mind, we were more than happy to sit in front of a text adventure for hours on end, visualising far-off worlds within the confines of our own imaginations, rather than – like in this day and age – having the whole experience given to you on a plate with the aid of whiz-bang technology.



INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE



MESSIAH



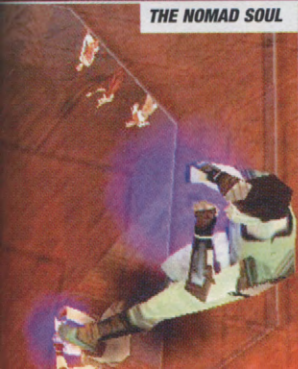
ADVENTURES



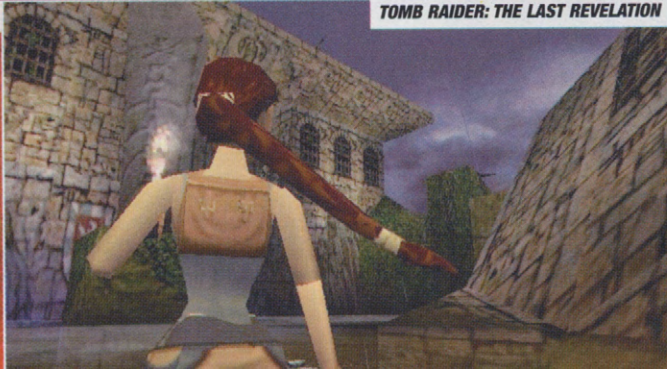
⦿ L to R: Paul Presley is also a ravenous and well-informed action adventure fan. ⦿ Martin Korda often embarks upon adventure-y bouts of digital orienteering. ⦿ Keith Pullin has written countless action adventure reviews and walkthroughs over the years. ⦿ A review of *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* reminded Mark Hill of his thirst for action adventures. ⦿ Paul Mallinson reviewed *Urban Chaos* and has been an ardent follower of the action adventure scene for two decades.

PHOTOGRAPHY Phil Ward VENUE The London Dungeons

THE NOMAD SOUL



TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION



URBAN CHAOS



← The actionisation of the adventure genre has been slow, but relatively total over the years. Text adventures are now pretty much non-existent, as are those side-on, two-dimensional classics LucasArts got itself known for some years ago. Their place in society has been filled by a meaner, tougher, more modern example of the adventure game – one that mixes gameplay styles, but usually involves lots of shooting, fighting, leaping and saving/re-loading. So what about the all important plot and storyline? Where did that go?

Does this new wave of 'dumbed-down' PC adventure games signal a slip into a sinister dark age of gaming, or are we really witnessing the re-birth of a genre? The PC ZONE team once again convene to argue the case in point.

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

Mallo: Mark, you reviewed *The Infernal Machine*. What did you give it?
Mark: 88 per cent.
Mallo: Do you stick by that?
Mark: Yes I would.
Mallo: Did it crash when you played it? *Indy* kept crashing when I was playing it. It would just freeze and lock up the entire machine. Every 15 minutes...
Mark: I didn't get that.
Martin: I installed it on my machine here and it crashed

quite a bit. Sometimes it wouldn't even let me in the game.

Mallo: And I patched it as well...

Martin: It's not the biggest 'crasher' in this Supertest...

Mallo: But the bits I played looked very good, although I found the control system sluggish.

Mark: Most people will dismiss it as a *Tomb Raider* clone, but it's much more than a platform game. You hardly ever miss a ledge, and you don't have to think about doing 'double somersaults' or anything like that. It's more a case of; you go into a room, discover the puzzle, then really think about what you have to do.

Keith: If you can imagine a 3D version of the first two *Indiana Jones* games – that's what it is.

Prezzer: No, no, no, no, no...

Keith: I think it's got such...

Prezzer: I wholly disagree with that.

Keith: So few things in *Indy* are similar to *Tomb Raider*. It's a totally different game.

Mallo: I expected it to be more like *Grim Fandango* than *Tomb Raider*.

Prezzer: OK, it might be better than *Tomb Raider*, but it's certainly not a 3D version of the first two (*Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* and *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade - Ed*). By any stretch of the imagination. They were class games – they had extremely strong storylines, strong characters, really gripping plots. *Infernal Machine* is, as you said, a platform game.

Mallo: It was the writing that made those games – it's more the graphics these days.

Mark: This game has got some really good puzzles, but you still

have to go through the platform-bits to get to them. There are hardly any conversations, which is one of the most important parts of an adventure game.

Keith: There are huge conversations – massive conversations. The plot unfolds and twists in the most incredible way. You will never see a plot like



that in a *Tomb Raider* game. This game has a proper cast of characters. Do you have a proper cast of characters in a *Tomb Raider* game? No – you have Lara. In *Indiana Jones* you have Sophia, your sidekick. You've got a bad guy – you've got an entire cast with a role to play.

Mark: I agree – I love it. I don't think it's as good as the point-and-click adventure – you can't compare it to that, but every other game now is an action adventure.

You hardly ever see an adventure game, as such, being released – it's always an action platform game with some puzzles in it.

Prezzer: I know what you're saying. *Infernal Machine* is nowhere near as good as the first two adventures, but that's the trouble: we're never gonna see those kind of games again, so...

“The plot unfolds and twists in the most incredible way. You will never see a plot like that in a *Tomb Raider* game”

KEITH RATES *INDY*

Mallo: And neither game is available to buy now.

Martin: The only thing in *Indy* that does exist outside of *Tomb Raider* is the storyline, which is fantastic.

Keith: It's classic *Indy*. It really is. That's what people want.

Martin: Nah. One thing that annoyed me about it was that they didn't get Harrison Ford to do the voice. I know it's a minor thing, but LucasArts is bloody loaded and I'm sure they could have forked-out for him.

Mark: Harrison Ford is the most expensive actor in the world.

Infernal Machine isn't all running, climbing and jumping.



Or swimming.



INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

This long-awaited update of the hugely entertaining *Indiana Jones* series from LucasArts did not disappoint those who played it. Some may pass off *Infernal Machine* as a *Tomb Raider* clone, but those that have played it know how rich and rewarding an adventure it really is.

Score	88% PCZ #84
Developer	LucasArts
Publisher	LucasArts
Price	£34.99

Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine: a superb melding of old skool adventuring and modern-day 3D graphics modelling.



MESSIAH

As far as lead game characters go, Bob – a baby with wings – is a little on the scrawny side. Thankfully, Bob's privileges as an Angel allow him to jump in and out of other people's bodies, to hilarious effect. Although the storyline is lacking, *Messiah* is a clever and challenging computer game.

Score	85% PCZ #85
Developer	Shiny
Publisher	Interplay
Price	£34.99



Messiah: dark, interesting and unusual.

Monkey Island too. That should be interesting. **Prezzer:** This *Star Wars* 'Bombad' Racer with Yoda and Darth Maul

driving around doing the *Mario Kart* thing... I mean, what the f**k is that about?! **Everyone:** (laughs) **Mallo:** It's the way the world is going, isn't it? **Mark:** Ker-ching! **Mallo:** I'm sure *Obi-Wan* will be as good as we expect. **Prezzer:** I'm not sure about that. **Martin:** There's too much prancing about in these games. I know that's the point, partly, but there's too much jumping ledge to ledge and not enough puzzle-solving. **Mallo:** That's one thing that's good about *The Nomad Soul* – there's hardly any jumping. In fact, the jumping is crap! **Martin:** You spend the whole time re-loading in *Indy* and *Tomb Raider* because you missed a jump. **Mallo:** There's a lot of that in *Tomb Raider*. That game is all about getting to those hard to reach places. **Keith:** Look – there's *isn't* a lot of that in *Indy*. **Mark:** There is at the start of the game. It's a very bad start actually, but it's been put there as a sort of training level – to force you to learn how to control *Indy*. **Keith:** And there are superb visual clues as well, like *Indy* turning his head to look at an objective. **Mallo:** That's one good thing about *The Nomad Soul* – the people turn and look at you if you're near them, and track you as you walk past. **Prezzer:** Then you push a button and you've solved the puzzle! **Everyone:** (uproar) **Mallo:** It is shite that the first level

definitely a PC game. It's not a console game that's been ported across. **Mallo:** *Indy* does look like it would work very well on PlayStation. It does look like a port in places. **Mark:** I disagree. Later on it's just *amazing* – there are some sprawling landscapes. They're not just like backgrounds, you do actually go to them. There's one scene when you're on a beach and there's a half-sunken boat in the sea across from you, and you have to use a torpedo that you find on the beach to punch a hole in the hull, then you can swim into it... **Prezzer:** See, I actually had a problem with that. Out of sheer logic. You're walking along the beach, you see a torpedo – you don't necessarily think: 'all I've got to do is arm this and shoot it at that boat over there!' **Keith:** Just like in any old adventure game isn't it? **Prezzer:** No, the old games at least conformed to some kind of logic. **Mark:** But torpedo?! Boat?! What more logic do you want? **Everyone:** (laughs) **Prezzer:** LucasArts has lost the plot. It didn't feel like *Indiana Jones* to me. **Mallo:** I'm not sure about that – maybe they're guilty of dumbing the games down slightly... **Prezzer:** They're dumbing it down far too much. This doesn't just apply to this game – the recent *Star Wars* games have lost the quality control they used to have. **Mark:** They're making a new

is the worst of the lot. **Keith:** It is bad, and I was stuck on it for ages, but once I got past that I just flew through the game. I really enjoyed it. **Mallo:** So there's more to *Indy* than a tight pair of shorts and a big pair of tits? **Mark:** Less than! **Everyone:** (laughs) **Mallo:** Actually, you're right – give me breasts and tight shorts every time.

MESSIAH

Mallo: I thought it was f**king excellent! A bit *MDK*-like in places. **Keith:** It bored the tits off me. **Mark:** The hardest game I've played in my life. I preferred *MDK*. **Prezzer:** Yeah! **Keith:** It is blummin' hard. **Prezzer:** Almost as hard as *Urban Chaos*. **Mark:** *Messiah* is harder because there's more roaming around in *Urban Chaos* – you tend to stay alive longer. **Mallo:** *Urban Chaos* is relatively do-able though. This is just too much in places. **Martin:** *Messiah* is the game I had to re-load the most because it's so bloody difficult. I filled up my hard disk with saved games! **Mallo:** Yeah, it is like that – you don't want to save over your last saved game. And this kept crashing as well. **Martin:** Yeah – kept crashing out to Windows. And that bloody movie trailer at the beginning! Was it just me, or could you not quit out of it? Every *bloody* time you'd get this trailer, which was about a minute long. **Mallo:** Interplay always does that. It is annoying, but it stops after four or five starts. *Messiah* is stylish. It's quality. The level design and the character modelling are absolutely amazing. **Martin:** It's got some fantastic features. The fact that you can possess whoever you want is brilliant. **Mallo:** *Messiah* is very clever,



Incredible weaponry abounds.



Messiah's character modelling is some of the best ever seen.

you can't just run around shooting, as you won't last two minutes. You've got to think about what you're doing. The only thing that annoyed me about it was how easy it is to get knocked out of a body. **Mark:** That's it – once you've started a fire-fight all you can do is jump from one body to another, but you don't have time to shoot anything and you're knocked out repeatedly. **Prezzer:** There's no auto aim is there? **Mallo:** There is, but you've got to be reasonably accurate. But once you get knocked out of a host, Bob – the baby – just gets

if you didn't have a host. So that when you were out of a body the guards couldn't see you... **Mallo:** Mmm... **Martin:** At the beginning the story says that it is 'a time of darkness' and that these people don't understand or care who you are. Which tries to justify the fact that you get the crap beaten out of you all the time. **Martin:** Well, I have a problem with the concept – running around as this baby... It's just too stupid for words... **Mallo:** The baby I liked – it's funny seeing a baby in a combat zone. The storyline, however, is hard-going and doesn't inspire. **Prezzer:** There are some weird boys working over at Shiny. You can tell they've got a sense of humour, which goes a long way. *Messiah* is a very creative game. **Mallo:** It reminded me of *The City Of Lost Children* and *Judge Dredd* – the way it looked. And it does possess a wicked sense of humour. There's one bit where you possess a female Commander, and if you face one of the nearby



“Messiah is the game I had to re-load the most amount of times because it's so bloody difficult. I filled up my hard disk with saved games!”

MARTIN ON MESSIAH

shot to shit. There's no escape. It's quite funny, when you die, seeing the soldiers wading in, kicking this baby. **Mark:** Don't you think it's strange that this angel – this so-called *Messiah* – can be killed as easily as it is? **Mallo:** Maybe he's dying for our sins? Repeatedly. **Everyone:** (laughs) **Mark:** It would have been better if he'd been invisible, but you weren't allowed to do anything

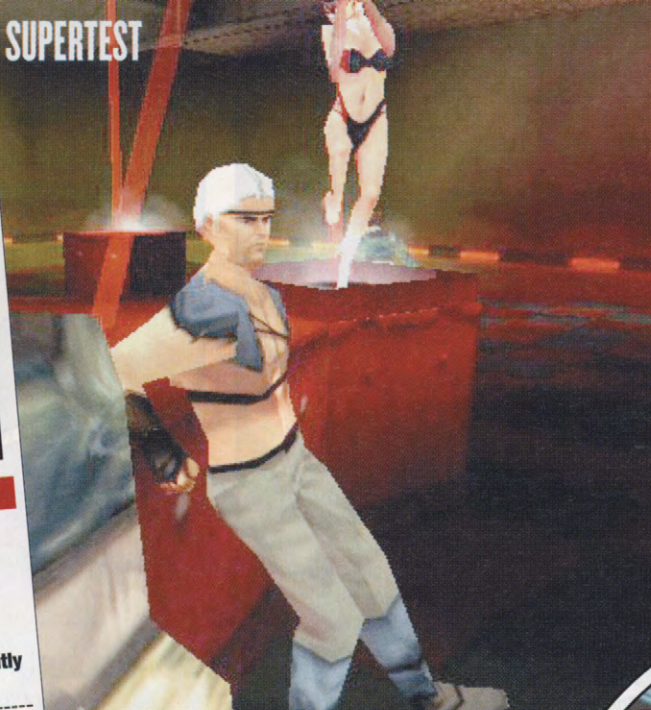
guards and press 'action' she snogs him! Then Bob moves from her body to his, through their mouths. **Prezzer:** Really? **Mallo:** Yeah – I've got screenshots of it as well. **Mark:** You would have! **Prezzer:** I spent a lot of time in *Messiah* wandering around just looking at stuff, thinking: 'wow – this is great!' **Mallo:** The control system is



THE NOMAD SOUL

Largely ignored when it first came out, *The Nomad Soul* is in fact one of the best action adventures of the last decade. You are flung headlong into the body of a cop in another dimension and the story manages to remain engrossing, believable and – at last – pleasantly erotic, the whole way through.

Score	88% PCZ #83
Developer	Quantic Dream
Publisher	Eidos
Price	£34.99



The Nomad Soul: a game featuring mature sexual themes.



An amazing fully-working city of the future.



Girls and guns go together hand in hand.



The first-person shooty bits work well too.

← the best out of all those here, too. Especially when reconfigured to use a mouse and keys, *Quake*-style.

Martin: The tactics you can employ in *Messiah* are also very interesting, especially when there are loads and loads of people you want to wipe out, but don't feel confident enough to shoot it out. Possess one guy and make sure they see you. Get them to kill you then leap into the next bloke. They end up wiping each other out and you then possess the last remaining bloke.

Mallo: Yeah – the fun to be had from possessing someone, then throwing them off a precipice and watching them break every bone in their body!

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: Their cries: "shoot me!"

Everyone: (more laughter)

Mallo: It's sick.

Prezzer: And what about in that police hang-out area with the weapons dispenser? Suddenly you get a flame-thrower! You look around at these groups of people and think... yeah!

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: Well, that's obviously why they've given it to you! Don't get too close though, or you end up setting fire to yourself. Burning babies running around...

Mark: I got as far as the room with the bloke firing that harpoon gun.

Mallo: Ah, that weapon is amazing. The projectile creates a tube of smoke around it in the air

through the air like a bastard!

Mark: How do you get past that?

Prezzer: There's a rocket launcher at the far end of the room. The thing is, though, when you pick up the harpoon gun a load of other guys start attacking you. Then it really starts getting hard.

Martin: The sound bites in *Messiah* get annoying after a while.

Keith: The story's crap too. The 'voices in your head' that explain what is happening... Nah.

Mark: It's the usual clichéd good versus evil nonsense.

Prezzer: It's this evil bloke called Father Prime that you're ultimately up against.

Mallo: Well, he's nothing. You should come across him earlier in the game.

Keith: Though not literally – that would be hideous.

Mark: Ugh.

THE NOMAD SOUL

Mallo: Charlie Brooker reviewed this and gave it, what, 85 per cent? I reckon, in this day and age with our stringent scoring system, that's about right.

Prezzer: I agree.

Mallo: The reason I wouldn't give it a Classic rating is because it is a touch too clichéd sci-fi. The look and feel of it.

Prezzer: Mmm... yeah. Mmm... I don't know...

Mallo: They're all wearing big shoulder pads for starters! There are ED-209s walking about and *Blade Runner*-esque towers belching fire.

The effect is beautiful. It's just fantastic. And if it hits you, you fly

Prezzer: Which eventually changes to this futuristic Arabia in the sand dunes. The only problem I've got with it is that the action sequences do get repetitive after a while.

Mallo: The first-person bits are hardly *Quake*, but they're OK.

Prezzer: I think that's where *The Nomad Soul* fails.

Mallo: The beat 'em up element is great, and it works as well.

Martin: And there are hardly any decent beat 'em ups available for the PC.

Mallo: You can also enter a tournament and fight progressively harder opponents for money. It's great.

Martin: There's some advanced humour in there, too.

Mallo: Did you hear the tannoy announcement in the sex shops? "Buy our new



biological penis implant!"

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: I couldn't find it, though...

Everyone: (more laughs)

Martin: This game is more like the old style of adventure game. If you take out the combat there's very little jumping around.

Mallo: As I said earlier, the jumping in *Nomad Soul* is actually pretty crap. You can jump onto very little.

Martin: Yeah, you jump about half a foot in the air.

“The sex in this game is realistic – the treatment is revolutionary.”

MALLO GETS A BIT EXCITED OVER THE NOMAD SOUL

Mallo: It's the opposite to *Shadow Man* – have you played it? *Shadow Man* is actually all right – I quite like it – but it's very quick and leapy-aroundy. As leapy-aroundy adventures go *Shadow Man* is one of the better ones. It's really dark.

Martin: In *Nomad Soul*, at the

dancing bars?

Mallo: Nah – not into that.

The sex in this game is realistic – the treatment is revolutionary.

Prezzer: And realistically proportioned women for once!

Mallo: I'm ashamed to admit it, but the girls in *Nomad Soul* are the sexiest-looking polygon women I've ever checked-out in my life...

Everyone: (riotous laughter)

Martin: You're made to think it's real life. You get to interrogate people, but you can't always say the things that you want to.

Mallo: Yeah, you get your end away once, then you go out looking for more – there's a whole world out there just waiting to be explored!

Martin: Then while you're in the police station and have picked up a few leads you get a call from your girlfriend inviting you out to lunch. Then you get called to a terrorist raid in the supermarket – a nice little sub-quest...

Mallo: Which is quite difficult.

Martin: It is difficult to get hold of those first-person shooter bits straight away – I got shot to bits.

Prezzer: The great thing is: *Nomad Soul* is played in a total 3D environment, so it's not that much of a jump from the adventure

sections into the first-person bits.

Keith: This Supertest shows how different countries approach development of these games – you've got UK, US and French games here. The best ideas tend to come from Europe – especially the French. You look at the US and they'll stick with mainstream, commercial ideas... *Messiah* is an eclectic mix of ideas, but it doesn't necessarily work.

Prezzer: The Americans rarely go for any of the transcendental nonsense that the French seem to like.

Martin: I thought the 'save rings' in *Nomad Soul* were clever. You've got to collect these things to save the game, and you can only save at certain points.

Mallo: Yeah, but there are plenty of save rings. They smack of console simplification to me.

Martin: I got over-exuberant, saving everywhere I found, but I'd run out by the time I got to the supermarket.

Mallo: Ah – you knob!

Mark: Did anyone find that the robot guard at the beginning of this game sounded exactly like Officer Barnaby in *South Park*?

Mallo: "Nothing to see here! Please move along!"

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: Yeah – it does! *The Nomad Soul* is so filmic. It's one of the most cinematic games I've ever played – even down to the 'lenses' used in the camera sequences...

Prezzer: The 'fish eye' lens effect?

Mallo: Yeah, the dream

sequences – they're in black and white, cut really strongly and it works to great effect. Some bits reminded me of *Jacob's Ladder* and *The Matrix*.

Keith: It's the only game here that properly creates the illusion that there's a world going on around you.

Mallo: I'm playing it at the moment in *Windows 2000* with 320Mb RAM and a TNT2 card...

Mark: Oh, here he goes – *Windows 2000!*

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: With the detail ramped-up and a fully-populated city it is brilliant! OK, there is still some slow-down. It reminded me of *Shadowrun* on the Super Nintendo – one of my favourite games of all time. *Nomad Soul* is a fantastic recreation of a futuristic city out of control.

Prezzer: It is the busiest free-form city. Much better than *Urban Chaos*.

Mallo: The traffic is great. It's rush hour every hour – just like where I live in Brixton.

Prezzer: I keep getting run over. The opening sequence is one of the best ever, and then it's like: 'my God, I'm in a full city here!'

Keith: *Nomad Soul* allows you to explore a huge city from the off, unlike other games here.

Prezzer: And then it opens up to encompass this futuristic Arabia. That's what impressed me about it. The first section of the game is in quite a big city – much bigger than *Urban Chaos*, but then you reach sand dunes, snowy bits, an underground cavern populated by demons...

Mallo: It's brilliant.

One thing that did annoy me though, was when you walk into the garage and there are all these cars and bikes lined-up waiting to be nicked... but you can't bloody use any of them!

Prezzer: You can get a taxi, but that's it.

Mallo: It's a wasted opportunity.

Prezzer: It's still a fantastic game. Loads of styles, themes, things to do... David Bowie.

Mark: And he's good in this.

Prezzer: It's a stunning game. The way 3D action adventures should be going – instead of 3D platform games, 3D worlds to explore.

Keith: It's the second best game here. After *Indy*.

Everyone: (grumbles)

TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

Prezzer: I'm just bored to death with Lara Croft now. The graphics might look slightly better, and they might have introduced some tiny story elements, but it's basically the same game over and over again.

Mallo: It's easy to slag it off, but it is an excellent game.

Keith: No, it's an excellent marketing campaign.

Prezzer: Core really know its audience. Listen to the slider on the sound effects options it's like... [makes sexual panting noise growing louder then quieter]

Everyone: (laughs)

Keith: I think they do keep dishing out the same game and it isn't easy to slag it off.

Mallo: They don't keep dishing out the same game!

Keith: Yes they do, and the reason

they can do it is because the popularity of Lara Croft is always high. She's in Lucozade adverts, she's in everything you see at the moment.

Mallo: Jesus – paranoid!

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: No, but honestly, they've got a good engine. It does become enjoyable and intuitive leaping around. You know – then diving into a pool...



Everyone: (absolute silence)

Mallo: Isn't it?

Prezzer: It's a sequel too far.

Mark: You start the game and you're 16 years old...

Mallo: You're joking?!

Mark: You didn't notice the ponytails?

Mallo: I had no idea! Right, I'm going back to play it again...

Everyone: (laughs)

Prezzer: The model playing Lara Croft is only 16.

Mallo: Really? I've met her – she's not that young.

Mark: I think they've changed her again.

Mallo: Gimme Nell McAndrew any day. Her Dad did her tits didn't he?

Prezzer: What?!

Mallo: Yeah, her Dad's a plastic surgeon – he didn't trust anyone else to do the job.

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: That's what the game needs actually. Maybe they should bring a bit of proper sex into *Tomb Raider* – like *Nomad Soul*? But anyway – I quite enjoyed the time I spent playing it, but I doubt if I'd complete it.

Prezzer: Don't you feel like you're playing the same thing over and over again?

Mallo: The development of

“Core really know its audience. Listen to the slider on the sound effects options it's like... [makes sexual panting noise growing louder then quieter]”

PREZZER HAS TOMB RAIDER SUSSED

Tomb Raider has been a bit like *Quake's* – nothing outrageously different, but incremental changes to the gameplay has refined subsequent instalments. It's intuitive stuff after a while.

Mark: *Tomb Raider* has changed as much as it can within the genre.

Mallo: No, they could do something more like *Nomad Soul*. Put a bit of sex into it. Make it a bit more adult. They've milked the kiddie market dry, why not turn out adult instalments and give us grown-up's a chance to have some fun?

Prezzer: What?!

Mallo: Yeah, her Dad's a plastic surgeon – he didn't trust anyone else to do the job.

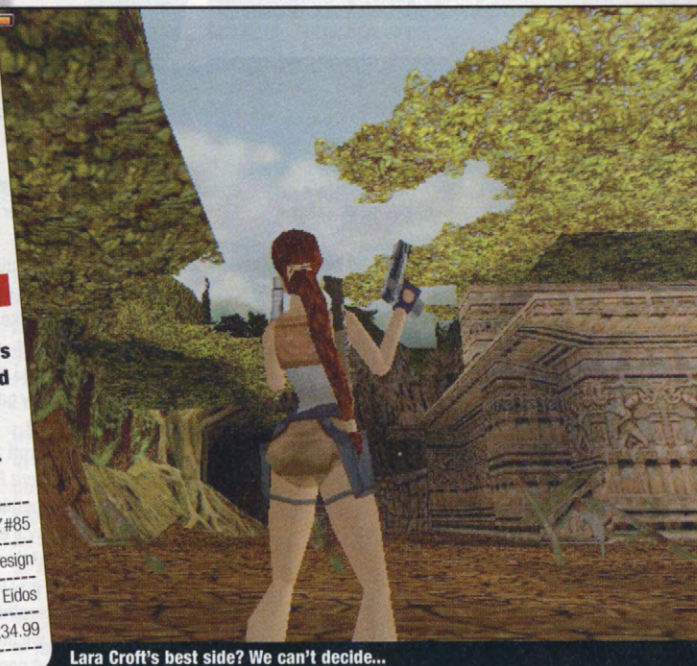
Keith: They could do something



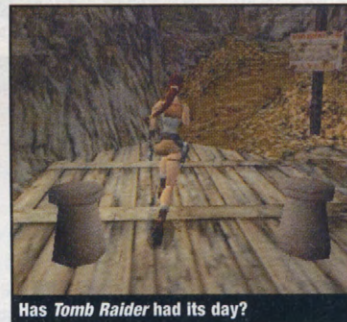
TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

The Lara Croft phenomenon rolls ever onwards in this fourth outing in the series. Thankfully, it's still great fun – if you prefer leaping around and shooting things to dialogue and storyline, that is. *The Last Revelation* is worth playing if only for the first level where you control a 16-year-old Lara with pigtails...

Score	83% PCZ #85
Developer	Core Design
Publisher	Eidos
Price	£34.99



Lara Croft's best side? We can't decide...



Has *Tomb Raider* had its day?



Get out of those wet clothes, Lara love.



FUTURE ADVENTURING

As always, the best is yet to come...

Nomad Soul fans should take note that *Omikron Exodus* – a follow-up, set 100 years after the first game – is on the cards as a sequel, but a release date has yet to be fixed. *Quark*, from the same developer, and using similar 3D story-telling routines as *Nomad Soul*, is also planned.

That said, since its unveiling at the E3 show in LA, American McGee's *Alice* – a Tim Burton

style 3D reworking of Lewis Carroll's books – has rocketed to the top of our action adventure 'must have' list.

Others to look out for include: *Star Wars: Obi-Wan* (although recent videos show it looking more like *The Phantom Menace* than *Jedi Knight...*), *The Real NeverEnding Story* (if they ever finish it) and *Simon The Sorcerer 3D*.



The strange-looking *Quark* from Quantic Dream.



The even stranger-looking *Alice*.

BEEN THERE, SEEN IT, DONE IT

There are fliploads of action adventures on the PC. Here are the also-rans...

There have been loads of half-decent action adventures released for the PC in the past few years. Just missing out on a place on our Supertest shortlist is Psygnosis' *Drakan: Order Of The Flame*, which is worth checking out if you like the idea of swords, goblins and flying around on dragons. Acclaim's *Shadow Man* – apparently accursed by Voodoo magic – is also

worthy of your attention if you prefer your adventures fast and platformy.

Jurassic Park: Trespasser (Microsoft), *Heretic II* (Activision), *Soul Reaver* (Eidos), *The Phantom Menace* (LucasArts) and *Escape Or Die Trying* (Psygnosis) all have elements that make them worthy action adventures, but none impressed us enough to include them in our Supertest.



Dragons in *Drakan*. Fun to fly they are too.



Stop press. Raptor bites off breasts in *Trespasser*.

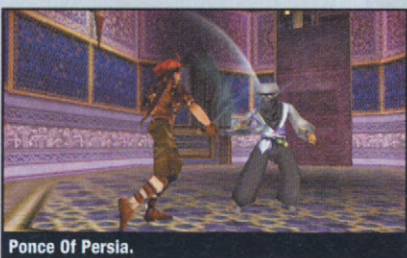
ACTION ADVENTURES TO AVOID

At the rubbish end of the spectrum

Quite what Jordan Mechner was thinking when he devised *Price Of Persia 3D* we'll never know. Devoid of storyline, devoid of character, *Prince Of Persia 3D* is not the exciting Arabian adventure game we were hoping for, turning out to be nothing more than a simplistic, repetitive reworking of the

'pure' platform action of the first games. A big mistake.

Others that deserve a kicking include *The Guardian Of Darkness* (Cryo) and *Asghan* (Grolier). So, unless you're stupid, don't bother with any of these – there are only so many hours in the day, etcetera.



Ponce Of Persia.



Raise your hand if you think *Asghan* is shite...

completely different. They could reveal that Lara is actually an alien from another planet and she can morph into the shape of any creature she meets...

Mark: What?!

Mallo: Or a baby falls out of her back and then leaps into the body of a tiger?

Keith: Mmm. Maybe not. The point I'm making is that they should make a radical change to the series.

Mallo: Have Lara murdered and have her sisters step in to investigate? Or her three sisters – it would be the gaming equivalent of *Charlie's Angels*.

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: Actually, that's not a bad idea. Lara's sisters Tara, Sara and O'Mara... How about it Core? I thought of it first, by the way.

Everyone: (more laughs)

Mark: 16 years old – all together in a swimming pool...

Mallo: Steady on old boy!

Keith: And they've all got different attributes...

Mallo: Yeah, one's got a fat arse, one's got big lips, one's got long legs, and one's got great big flapping hands – should've been a goalkeeper.

Mark: It should be her daughters – not her sisters.

Mallo: Mark, how young do you want them?!

Keith: There is a valid point to this banter: that they should change *Tomb Raider* radically. They should try something

falling for the same stuff over and over again?

Mallo: Why are we complaining, full stop?

Prezzer: Because it's our God-given right as British citizens.

URBAN CHAOS

Mallo: You start off thinking that there's *sooo* much to do in *Urban Chaos*, but a third of the way through you begin to realise how samey it is. I reviewed it, and with hindsight it was lucky to get what it did. The engine is great, the platformy bits are great, the beat 'em up bits are OK, and the atmosphere is fantastic, but the story and dialogue are pathetic.

Everyone: (silence)

Mallo: It's a super clichéd cop conspiracy story with really cheesy dialogue. Totally unbelievable. OK, so there's this gang rising to power from the madness of this big city, which is not a bad idea, but the piss poor dialogue ruins it.

Prezzer: It's a pity because the quality of the FMV is superb.

Mallo: I'm not just talking about the FMV.

Prezzer: When you first start playing it, you're running around the city thinking: 'yeah, this is pretty good', but it really becomes *very* small *very* quickly. If they had made it one large city, like *Nomad Soul*, then that would have been much better.

Mallo: Maybe they tried it, but realised people would



“There are only about three different types of civilians, which are multiplied to populate the city...”

MARK SEES THROUGH *URBAN CHAOS*' VENEER

just get lost?

Prezzer: No, they developed this for the PlayStation, and were working to the PlayStation's limits.

Mark: There are only about three different types of civilians, which are multiplied to populate the city...

Mallo: There are quite a few unique characters, but even the enemies are a bit samey. Grey bomber jackets and combat trousers. In fact, you stand there minding your own business and one of them slides into you from behind and kicks you in the head!

Martin: That's a real pain. You have to do that to them before they do it to you.

Mallo: That's the way to progress through this game properly: don't

completely different.

Mallo: They should make it less nice. The *Tomb Raider* series is so bloody nice.

Keith: But they'll continue to get away with 3D platform games because of people like Lara. It's as simple as that.

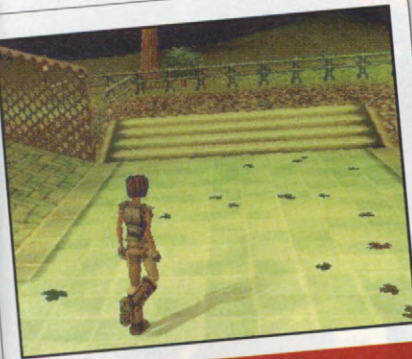
Mallo: How about a Lara Croft turn-based strategy game?

Everyone: (laughs)

Mallo: Or a Lara Croft zombie game – like *Resident Evil*? Now that would be something!

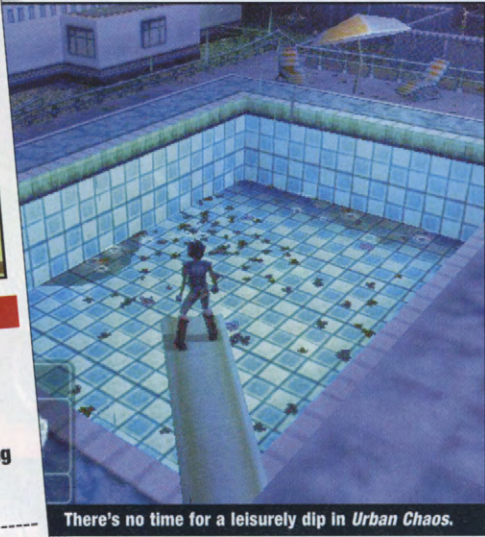
Prezzer: Then they'll end up doing what LucasArts did with *Star Wars* – we'll end up with *Lara Kart Racing* or something.

Martin: Why are we always complaining about people



URBAN CHAOS
 Pre-millennial tension reaches boiling point in this UK-made action explorer – this time with you as a black, female cop called D’Arcy Stern. *Urban Chaos* is full of punch-ups, blasting, driving, swinging, leaping and sliding action, but poor dialogue and a narrow field of play hold it back.

Score	75% PCZ #84
Developer	Mucky Foot
Publisher	Eidos
Price	£34.99



There's no time for a leisurely dip in *Urban Chaos*.



Boof!

get yourself involved in a firefight – run circles around ‘em, slide in and cuff ‘em quick.
Prezzer: There are some nice moments, like on the second level with the suicide jumper and you have to swing down a cable unnoticed behind him.
Mallo: Even further than that – I played well into double figures – the levels have lots of nice touches and situations. The problem was that they took too long to complete because you were constantly being rushed by villains. And that you didn't care whether any of the characters lived or died.
Martin: I liked the bit where you walk in the park at night and come across this guy taking a

van nearby. If you arrest him you get points for doing it.
Prezzer: I think there are random events like that – I didn't see the van when I played it.
Mallo: The leaping around thing as well... Climbing around is good fun for a while, but having to make your way up an extremely complex series of ladders and ledges to reach the top of a very large building is soul-destroying to replay.
Martin: *Urban Chaos* tries to be too many things in one game.
Mallo: The beat ‘em ups bits are good when you work out the special moves.
Martin: They're incredibly basic. I found it difficult to move around in combat mode.
Mallo: Target selection does sometimes go a bit boz, but just

hit 'next target' and you're sorted.
Keith: I suffered from massive slowdown with *Urban Chaos*.
Mark: Driving bits are good.
Mallo: They're OK. The problem is: you can't hold top speed, so you have to keep nudging accelerate... but you can powerslide around corners and stuff.
Prezzer: *Urban Chaos* had a lot of potential, but the developers limited themselves too much by not exploring the PC side of things properly.
Mallo: It's not perfect – the feel of controlling the main character. It's not quite as good as the control system in *Messiah*, which I think has the best out of all the games here.
Prezzer: Were you using a gamepad?
Mallo: No, mouse and keys.
Prezzer: It is a hell of a lot better game with a joystick.
Mallo: What, *Messiah*?!
Prezzer: No, *Urban Chaos*.
Mallo: Uh. I played three quarters



Urban Chaos is action-packed, but not too easy to beat.

of the game on keys. I don't play with gamepads, they make me think 'crap PlayStation port'.
Keith: The 3D engine's good.
Mallo: It's got the best shadows of any of the games here.
Keith: Best leaves.
Prezzer: It's the windiest virtual city I've ever been in.
Mark: And the water!
Mallo: The ripples are well cool. *Urban Chaos* is good. Atmosphere-wise it is superb, it

is quite dark. There are bits where you've got to go and meet people in the middle of the park, it's dark and you know there's going to be a ruck...
Keith: It's the most cartoony game out of all of these.
Mallo: The dialogue definitely is. They should have gone out and got the *RoboCop* licence and done something with that – it would have made an excellent *RoboCop* game. ☹

AND THE WINNER IS...

There are three front-runners... So it's anyone's guess

The general boredom surrounding the *Tomb Raider* segment of our discussion made it clear the PC ZONE team don't particularly rate Lara Croft's place on our monitors (despite the review scores...) and therefore resigned it to quite a kicking. Maybe Core should implement a few of our suggestions. It was also widely accepted that *Urban Chaos* wasn't good enough to be considered a winner here, but if you're looking for a simple but challenging action adventure game, both of the above are worth a look in. If you take your PC gaming more seriously though, *Indy* and *Messiah* are

your next best bet. "The music and presentation is superb," said Keith of *Indy*, picking it as his personal favourite. Mark added: "It's one of the best games I've played in the last year." Pretty much everyone rated *Messiah*. *The Nomad Soul* came out as top banana of the action adventure genre – in our opinion. "It is a pity it hasn't been bought and played by many people," says Mallo. With Prezzer adding, "it was an underrated game". Martin judged it as a clear winner, while Mark loved it, but couldn't decide between it and *Indy*. Only Keith was truly disappointed at *Indy*'s failure to take top slot.

OVERALL WINNER



The Nomad Soul. one of the best action adventures ever made.

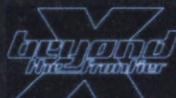


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PCWEEK
BEST OF
COMDEX

BUDGET ZONE

More gore and gibs for your money this month, plus a selection of the latest releases

★ RESIDENT CHEAPSKATE Mark Hill

RESIDENT EVIL 2

★ £9.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 24Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** A P233 and more memory smoothes things out

**PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE**

Like *Final Fantasy*, *Resident Evil* is the kind of game that transcends platforms (both are originally PlayStation titles) to become a phenomenon that affects all future releases and has massive impact on the gaming community's consciousness.

Essentially a gory action/adventure, you can play as either Leon, a copper, or Claire, an action girl, fighting your way through the living cemetery that is Raccoon City. The exploration is extremely linear, but if you play the game a second time after completing it with one character you receive the bonus of new plot developments and new enemies.

The puzzles are quite simple, but they go beyond the usual feeble attempts found in straight action games and push towards an adventure game feeling. The gaming world, however, is quite restricted and the whole thing suffers from the limitations of its console roots.

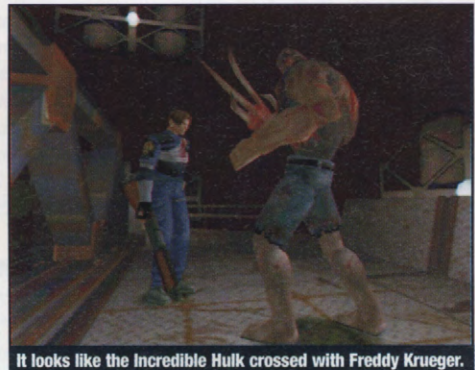
It's unavoidable to talk about *Resident Evil 2* and not mention George A Romero's trilogy of *Dead* films, as the game steals not only the terrifying sounds of the groaning, decaying undead, but also the camera angles and set pieces that scare the life out of you with unexpected shocks.

These 'borrowed' camera angles, however, are often frustrating and hardly show any of the action, giving only a fragmented vision of the zombie infested city and your struggle against them. At the same time it does create a hellishly tense atmosphere, simulating in many ways the tense helplessness of a nightmare.

For all its shortcomings though, *RE2* still remains one of the most tense and frightening experiences you can have with a gamepad.

PCZVERDICT

82%



It looks like the Incredible Hulk crossed with Freddy Krueger.



"You have the right to remain dead."

REQUIEM: AVENGING ANGEL

★ £9.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM

WE SAY You'll need a 3D card and at least a P233

Requiem is living proof that not all first-person shoot 'em ups, from the good to the downright mediocre, end up being hits. Since you probably missed this one on its full-price release, now is the perfect time to check out its bizarre blend of heavenly magic, futuristic urban chaos and good old-fashioned splatterfest.

As Malachi, an angel sent to the 21st century to rid Earth of some nasty fallen angels, you have a divine licence to kill. Unlike Bob, *Messiah's* cute cherub with a similar mission, you're armed with both terrestrial weapons (guns, rocket launchers) and divine spells. The latter definitely adds a different level to the gameplay, with spells that slow down time, turn people into pillars of salt, create a shield around you and even turn enemies to your side. Not that those enemies are particularly intelligent, displaying none of the AI that really turns an average shooter into a great shooter.

Most people will be put off by the first level, which is set in the realms of chaos. It looks suitably hellish, in a Clive Barker, fleshy kind of way, but plays like an absolute dog. Another problem is that later levels are just too similar to *Quake II*. From the brown pastiness, to the weapons and the soldier models, *Requiem* feels like an inferior clone. If you're an FPS fan looking for a cheap fix, however, this is one of the best bets on the market.

PCZVERDICT

72%



A poser. With a gun. Yesterday.

100
381



"You'll never pee on the carpet again."

THE BIGGEST NAMES, THE BEST GAMES VOL 3

★ £29.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

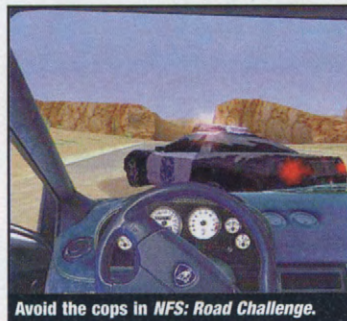
TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor A P233 Memory 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** A 3D card to help make them all run smoothly

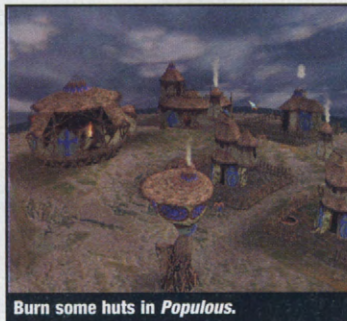
The third volume of EA's all-embracing series of compilations is probably the best yet, and continues the usual mix of eclectic titles. While none of them are state of the art anymore (what do you expect) there are no stinkers either. In the strategy corner there's the commendable *Populous: The Beginning* and *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri*, both updates of classic titles. For speed freaks there's the ever-popular *Need For Speed: Road Challenge* and the two wheeling *Superbike 99*. And, since the collection wouldn't be complete without some footy games, there's *FIFA '99* and *FA Premier League Manager 2000*. With the titles working out at a fiver each, this is a highly recommended box for anyone who doesn't already own any of the games.

PCZVERDICT

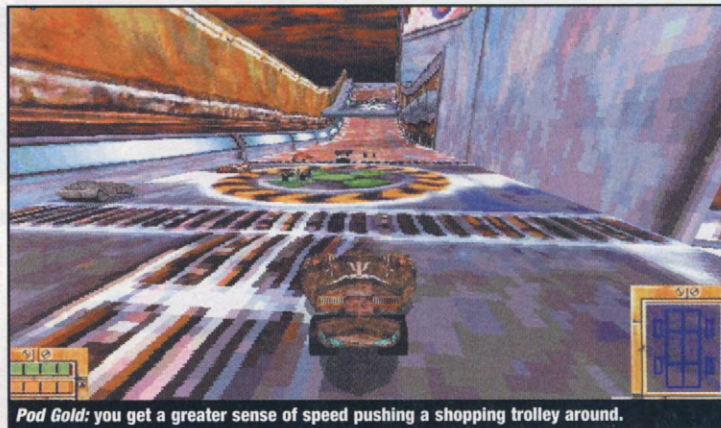
74%



Avoid the cops in *NFS: Road Challenge*.



Burn some huts in *Populous*.



Pod Gold: you get a greater sense of speed pushing a shopping trolley around.

POD GOLD

★ £9.99 • Focus Essential • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Looks much better with a 3D card, but we couldn't get any of the later models to work with it

Pod was originally released more than three years ago, and although it was repackaged a year later with the Gold appendage tagged on to it, its age really shows. Essentially a high-speed futuristic racing game, *Pod* never recreates any actual feelings of exhilaration or danger. Instead, the vehicles give the impression of being brown floating mattresses bouncing around a boxy sci-fi city. It's an undemanding arcade game that you'll enjoy if you don't already own anything similar, but considering that you can get the superior *Screamer Rally* for a fiver it really isn't worth bothering with.

PCZVERDICT

56%

V2000

★ £9.99 • Focus Essential • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P120 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P200 with a 3D card and 32Mb RAM

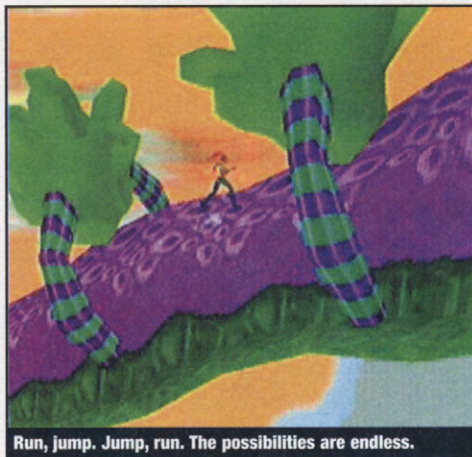
A lot of people were put off the original *Virus* by the control system and, although programming legend David Braben has made many improvements to it, it remains a bitch to get to grips with. Like in a 3D version of *Asteroids*, you rotate your craft and use thrust for impulse, and it's the kind of system you either learn to love or despise forever. As for the game itself it continues the space invader theme of days of yore, with the addition of rescuing the innocent humans running around, who you can then put to work in factories building weapons for you (swapping salvation for enslavement). There are secondary missions and secrets to be found beside the straight-forward alien blasting action, and the 30 levels ensure you won't be finishing this one in a hurry. An interesting game, but try before you buy.

PCZVERDICT

63%



Beware of the fishy control system.



Run, jump. Jump, run. The possibilities are endless.

PANDEMONIUM 2

★ £9.99 • Focus Essential • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** A 3dfx card **WE SAY** You're stuffed if your card isn't 3dfx

The harlequin smiling his evil rictus from *Pandemonium 2*'s cover should be read as a warning that someone is about to take the piss. It might look like an exciting 3D platform game with all the trimmings, but it is in fact a linear and boring platform game, which only allows you to move in one direction. The warped colours and landscapes are straight out of a '60s LSD trip, but the gameplay has little to offer to any seasoned leaper.

PCZVERDICT

52%

INTERNATIONAL RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

★ £9.99 • Crucial Entertainment • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Surely your system is better than a P100

Some games can happily watch the years go by without showing any real damage, their gameplay remains as good as it ever was, meaning that the now lacklustre visuals take on a secondary importance. This isn't the case with racing games. Graphics, sounds and the virtual physical feel are all essential elements in the driving experience. When they age, there's absolutely no reason to go back to them, and such is the case with *IRC*. There's no 3D acceleration, the engine sounds are pitiful and the cars move like cardboard boxes. You can get the infinitely superior *Colin McRae Rally* for a few quid more or *IRC*'s only marginally inferior predecessor *Network Q Rally* for a fiver, not to mention *Screamer Rally*.

PCZVERDICT

47%



A box on wheels.

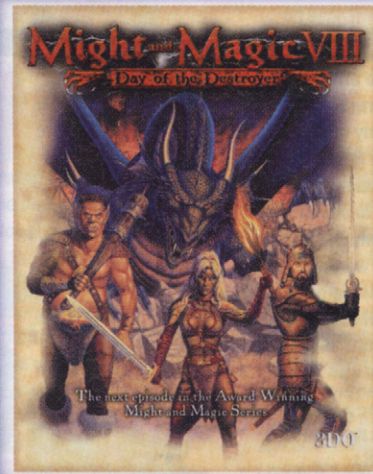
HMV

seriously addictive...



GROUND CONTROL

Ground Control offers a fresh gameplay experience for all action, RTS and wargame enthusiasts. Played out through stunning 3D terrain, players command their customised squads as they vie for control of a distant planet. Ground Control offers both classic and pioneering multiplayer options.



MIGHT AND MAGIC VIII

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FEEDBACK

Sometimes buying a game before the review is out can be an overwhelming temptation. *Mark Hill* shows you the error of your ways



IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in *PC ZONE* over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail them to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

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Gunship! comes crashing down under a wave of criticism.

GUNSHIP!

REVIEWED Issue 90, June
SCORE 49%

What we thought

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE "There is no way the game's myriad of problems should have got past the play-testing team and the whole thing smacks of a rush job by the publisher."

What you said

★ "*Gunship!* is a disgraceful product with such a collection of faults it would take a librarian on steroids to keep track of them. The throttle is the worst I've ever encountered in any game, both in terms of responsiveness and gradation of power. The autopilot doesn't work either, and there is no option to land and then turn off the engines.

Trying to perform a simple act such as selecting the next waypoint requires pressing a wildly complex selection of keys. I only found this out on the Web, as the manual doesn't list the key commands accurately. I've only

had this game a couple of days and played it for an hour or two, so god knows what else is wrong with it. I only wish to hell I hadn't bothered buying it."

Steve Gowen

★ "I can only agree with the sentiments expressed in your review – I wish I had read it before buying the game. In addition to the points mentioned, the fact you can't fly and fight from the same cockpit is ludicrous. You can't see what you are targeting or the choice of targets, and the game only distinguishes friend and foe in the easy level. You are dumped in the middle of the battle and can't pick out the anti-air targets to eliminate them first, so by the time you get to grips with the thing you are shot down. Patch my foot, the only thing Hasbro should be offering is a money-back return service for this rubbish."

Vernon Moorhouse

★ "I just wanted to congratulate Paul Presley on his review of *Gunship!* It is the most accurate



The sick but strangely addictive gore-fest that is *Soldier Of Fortune*.

review I think I've ever read. I am now wondering why your two major rivals both failed to outline the many shortcomings that are evident within a couple of hours of buying the game. Unfortunately, I found out about them the expensive way. Keep it up."

Gary Fisher

Comment

We pride ourselves on writing the only reviews you can really trust and this is just the latest example. Other magazines have just assumed that all these problems would be fixed in time for the game's release, without bothering to check with the publishers. And there's no excuse for ignoring the dozens of American websites (the game was released earlier in the States) where forums were full of complaints about the bugs. It only goes to show why you should always read our reviews before spending your

What you said

"I often play FPS games, I even consider myself to be a bit good, too. But I have to point out that even on tough play modes *Soldier Of Fortune* was, in all, a bit too easy.

Yes, it is strangely addictive. And yes, it is sick and wrong. It is one of the few games I have actually returned to the shops to claim my ten day exchange guarantee. I wasn't about to wuss out and play on no-gore mode. Hell, I'm 25! But after giggling with glee as I zoomed into the head of an enemy and smiled with a hint of smug satisfaction as a puff of red mist rose from the hole I had shot through his cranium, splattering pieces of grey matter to the wall, something had to be done. After a night of no sleep (every time I closed my eyes all I could see was

"*Soldier Of Fortune* is one of those games that doesn't come around too often, usually because they get banned. It's not a *Half-Life* or a *Quake* and doesn't try to be. Instead, it takes the same sort of strand that *Kingpin* tried and failed in, but this time it's been done right. OK, so the storyline is familiar, but the game plays well. Finally, an enjoyable game that combines gore and gameplay."

Michael Lomas



The best racing game available?

"Every time I closed my eyes all I could see was an image of zooming in for a head shot. I decided the game had to go"

PETER McCONNOCHIE ON HIS POST *SOLDIER OF FORTUNE* TRAUMA

pennies, no matter how good the graphics look on the box.

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

REVIEWED Issue 89, May
SCORE 80%

What we thought

"*Soldier Of Fortune* is an ultra-groesque, real-world take on the *Quake* genre that's nowhere near as good as *Half-Life*, and is demonstrably sick and wrong, yet exerts an unusual addictive pull all of its own."

an image of zooming in for a head shot) I decided the game had to go. It was promptly exchanged for *Midtown Madness* and I am now a much calmer individual. All in all, it is a great game, highly tense, very addictive and a whole lot of fun, but only for those who have no problems in following a gang around real-world locations, such as Bosnia and New York, trying to inflict some of the most realistic and horrific injuries."

Peter McConnochie

"Want *Half-Life* but don't like little green men? Want *Unreal Tournament* weaponry but without the silly skins? Want the best FPS of recent months? Then *Soldier Of Fortune* is your bag! Ignore the gore and guts (turn 'em off, you wuss). Ignore the really cheesy cut-scenes and abysmal ending. Enjoy the sneaking and the hiding, the sniping and the ducking. Play it and you'll be totally smitten by the 'one more go' bug. Give it a try and forget about life outside of a sniper scope for a few weeks."

Ian Goodwin

Comment

Returning the game because it's too sick? That's got to be a first for one of our readers. All in all, the general consensus is that most of you find the extremely explicit violence fascinating, while being aware that it is wrong. A bit like watching *Cannibal Holocaust*.

NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE 2000

REVIEWED Issue 90, May
SCORE 80%

What we thought

"A belter of a game, with a couple of nice touches to make it stand out from the crowd."

What you said

"All I can say is that this is an incredible game. I have a Force Feedback Wheel, and if there was ever a reason to go out

and buy one, *NFS2000* is it. Out of all my racing games, the feedback and feel of the cars are second to none and the realism is amazing. The car fights when turning in the opposite direction to the one you've just come from, and leans at varying degrees as you round a corner at speed. The Evolution mode does take a time to get going, but the Factory Driver mode is second to none. I won't even mention how long it took me to pull off a 360° turn in a box three car-lengths long and as many wide."

Ben Sweet

"This game is undoubtedly one of the best driving sims of all time. The graphics are near photo realistic, the cars handle like they should, and the Test Driver and Evolution modes are completely addictive and give it great longevity. Previous editions such as *NFS3* were generic and all the cars handled like big barges. This gets away from that, and both looks and plays superbly. I know it's still *Need For Speed*, but surely it's closer to being a Classic than 80 per cent?"

Rob Pridham

Comment

We agree that *Porsche 2000* is one of the best racing games out there, but to qualify for the ultimate accolade, a game has to take the whole genre to the next level, and we're not quite convinced this does. The message is clear, though: if you like car games, it's a must. [X]



Porsche 2000 is unbeatable with a Force Feedback Wheel, says Mr Sweet.

PC
ZONE
ONLINE

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE

YOUR HOST **Richie Shoemaker**



With free Internet access a reality at last, Internet gaming is about to take us into a new age of PC entertainment. Already you can download dozens of free multiplayer games, play your favourite single-player game against real people or extend the life of the games you already own, all by dialling in to the Web and downloading levels, skins and modifications. *PC ZONE* Online aims to point you in the right direction by giving you all the news, previews and reviews you need, something we've been unable to do until now. As the months roll by you can expect this section to get even bigger as more and more games, total conversions (TCs) and mods appear, and you can be sure that even though we won't review them all, we'll cover all the ones that matter and we'll squeeze as much as we can onto the cover disk.

As many online games are released in beta format, we've decided that rather than wait (sometimes forever), we'll review them as they are and when a new version comes out we'll review it again.

Additionally, we'll go back to games previously reviewed and take a look at the multiplayer aspect of games such as *Delta Force 2* and *Tiberian Sun*. If a major patch is released, we'll take a look at them also, as well as Internet tools for downloading files and chatting to your online colleagues.

Anyway, take a look and see what you think. I'm of the opinion that there's just as much happening in the online gaming world as there is offline, so the time to start playing is now.

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ONLINE REVIEWS POLICY

When it comes to mods and total conversions (TCs) for games such as *Half-Life*, they are often released in beta form (ie unfinished) and are generally being updated constantly. When we review them we will always try to take into consideration that they are often worked on by teams working just for the love of it and released free for our enjoyment. Even so, there is a lot of pap out there and downloading such things can often be a waste of good surfing time.

Similarly with retail online games such as *EverQuest*, code is always being updated and although we can't provide regular updates we will try to review major ones as and when they occur.

NEWS



Games Workshop aims to put some lead back in to your gaming pencil.

WARHAMMER ONLINE

Games Workshop to offer pay-to-paint

Games Workshop, the company behind *Warhammer* and its countless tabletop spin-offs has announced a deal with Climax Studios to create *Warhammer Online*, a multiplayer-only version of Games Workshop's fantasy battle game.

Set to be a 3D strategy game, *Warhammer Online's* Halcyon engine has already been in development for 18 months and is said to offer an infinite level of detail, although having not seen anything of the game – nor are we likely to until next year – we can only assume this will mean the game will support a wide variety of 3D viewpoints, from way above the battlefield to third-person views.

Unlike many strategy games that are played online, *Warhammer* will feature a persistent world, with players aligning themselves with various warlords and races to take control of an ever-evolving world, not unlike Tolkien's *Middle Earth*. Players will be able to customise armies, from how they look to how they're arranged, and play against anyone in the world.

A pricing structure has yet to be confirmed, although we have it on good authority that the game will be distributed free, both from the company's website at www.games-workshop.com and the 230 stores it currently owns. We don't know as yet if there will be monthly subscriptions to pay, but it seems Games Workshop is keen to introduce an innovative method of payment whereby credit vouchers bought at Games Workshop stores can be used to buy new units for armies or extra weapons. The idea being that younger *Warhammer* fans don't have to rely on pinching dad's MasterCard.

If it all kicks off, Games Workshop hopes to announce additions to the *Warhammer Online* range, including *Warmaster*, *Warhammer 40K*, *Space Hulk*, *Epic 40K* and *Necromunda*. Watch this space.

Before then, however, we should see the arrival of a multi-user dungeon (MUD) based in the *Warhammer Fantasy Battle* universe, which is set for release by the end of the year.



ULTIMA WORLDS ONLINE: ORIGIN



Origin's characters are beautifully animated, a vast improvement on *UO*.



Nice buildings, but you can't buy your own.



Look, they can dance and everything.

The game formerly known as *Ultima Online 2* made its debut at E3. Chris Anderson goes in search of goblins

Yes, you read that correctly, Origin has dropped the *Ultima* title from its best-selling online RPG and renamed it *Origin* for the sequel. This seems like a bizarre decision initially, why would they want to lose the branding on the game that has made them more money than any other Origin title to date? Well in fairness, having seen a work-in-progress version of the game, they couldn't really get away with calling it *Ultima* without upsetting veterans since *Origin* (the game not the company, I can tell this is going to get difficult) bears little resemblance to its predecessor. Britannia is still there and very nice it looks too, but just about everything else has changed beyond all recognition. There are three main lands in *Origin*, one of which will serve as a sort of training ground for new players where they can hone their skills and learn how to play the game before moving on to the other areas, which are far more dangerous but will be home to the best weapons and items in the game. Each of these lands has a distinctly

different theme (ancient, medieval and steam-punk) so travelling from one land to the next will almost be like skipping from one type of RPG to another.

While this will obviously make the game more varied and diverse, it's questionable as to how *Ultima* die-hards will react to a game that at one stage houses the familiar fantasy environment they are used to and at another flings them into a futuristic steam-punk world. This could prove disorienting to pointy-hat enthusiasts and may well drive many of them back to the original *Ultima Online* game just to get back on familiar territory. Conversely, many *UO* defectors who have since moved on to *EverQuest* may be tempted back by this unique approach as the gameworld will be more diverse and far more interesting as a result.

Origin also includes many 'safe zones' in the game, presumably in another attempt to bring back *EverQuest* defectors. It's a well-known fact that player-killing was the main reason many people left *UO* in the first place. New safe zones for those who

do not wish to engage in combat with other players (ie wimps) are included in the game in what is presumably an attempt to emulate the safety aspect of *EverQuest*, but *UO* fans will be pleased to note there will still be many zones in which to experience the adrenaline rush of taking on 'live' players in melee or magical combat and completely ripping them off for everything they own if they emerge victorious.

Origin, unlike its predecessor, sports a fully 3D environment, and while this is admittedly impressive, we have our doubts as to whether the inclusion of only three races and 100 spells will be enough to drag people away from *EverQuest* which has far more of both. It is to be hoped that *Origin* will be saved by the kind of attention to detail that was so evident in *UO* and is so sadly lacking in *EverQuest*. As ever, we will give you more details on this intriguing RPG as we get them. To add to all the confusion though, the www.ou2.com website is still active.

THE MOD SQUAD

INVASION 1955 FOR HALF-LIFE



Acclaimed: Ben Cousins.

Invasion 1955 is a curious one. Using Half-Life as a basis it is a team-based affair offering two very different sides, set in, of all places, London. Invasion Of The Body Snatchers meets Team Fortress if you like, with priests, journalists and construction workers fighting

against aliens who have snatched the bodies of the police and army. Ben Cousins, a games analyst at Acclaim Studios, is the team leader of this original and promising looking addition to Half-Life's blossoming stack of modifications.

PCZ What sets *Invasion 1955* apart from other similar mods like *TFC* and *Counter-Strike*?

BEN A distinct lack of guns. There's

only a pistol, shotgun and rifle in the game. You could say *Invasion 1955* is special ability-based, rather than a gun-based game such as *Counter-Strike*. Some classes have no weapons at all – like the athlete. He can run very fast for short stretches and has a punch that kills in one hit. The MI5 agent can make himself semi-transparent and has a lethal injection weapon that is also quite powerful.

The idea is to stop players using their tried and tested deathmatch skills, and force them to think of new ways of approaching this kind of game. Also setting the mod in a historical setting is pretty original. However, all this originality is nothing unless the game plays well – and we won't know that until we get feedback from players.

PCZ Why did you decide to use character classes like athletes and journalists and set it in London?

BEN: I live in London and it has loads of really good environments to set levels in – parks, terraced streets, churches – we even have a map based around Buckingham Palace. It was also a reaction to the very US-centric mods that are springing up all over the place as well as a chance for me to give a two-fingered salute to standard sci-fi and fantasy settings. As for the player classes, I wanted to have ordinary people versus police and military, so profession-based classes seemed the natural way to go. Making one of the classes a journalist has proved rather popular with people from magazines.

PCZ How close are you to finishing the game?

BEN Very close – in fact by the time you read this the first version may well be available. We are waiting for the new netcode to come out (the latest *Half-Life* patch) before we release anything.

PCZ What's been the most difficult aspect of developing *Invasion 1955*?

BEN Finding people, not only with the necessary skills to help us, but also the desire to follow things through. Luckily we've got quite a tight team now. We also have a famous *Half-Life* and *Quake II* mapper, Steve Lyne (aka Scary-One), doing a map for us, which is kind of an honour. Fitting all of this around my job at Acclaim is also pretty hard work, and often means I spend up to 15 hours a day in front of a monitor. Hopefully it will all be worth it. You can find out more about *Invasion 1955* by visiting www.planethalflife.com/invasion1955



Well at least the rent's cheap.



Mining asteroids is only one way of making money.



One of Jumpgate's jumpgates.

JUMPGATE

The game *Richie Shoemaker* has been waiting for all his life

Two words: *Elite* and online. Switch them around and what you get is something along the lines of what *Jumpgate* is all about. You download the game, log in, pick one of three factions to align yourself with, each subtly different in terms of their designs and skills, get a bog standard ship and some credits and set about making your fortune, either by trading, mining, piracy or bounty hunting. It's been done before, but not with vaguely real people piloting each ship and that alone is what makes *Jumpgate* such an enticing prospect.

Much more than a space trading game in the *Elite* mould, *Jumpgate* takes things a significant step further, allowing players to group together into squads or cartels, building towards a common goal. With pooled resources, groups can have a significant effect on the economics of the game thanks in part to the dynamics of the trading system: each product, for example, is built from other materials, all of which can be traded across the galaxy. With the right skills and equipment players will be able to

make their own products and with new systems added to the game as the user base expands, new markets will open up and groups of players can eventually build stations and buy capital ships to make these regions their own.

The first full release of the game, scheduled for the end of the summer, will feature just small to mid-sized ships, with new star systems, spacecraft and equipment being added on a regular basis. The idea is to create a persistent universe for space pilots to fly around in and hopefully shape, with the programmers stepping in only when things get hopelessly out of hand. For the future, developer Netdevil is planning to add a first-person mode (à la *Battlecruiser Millennium*), which will allow players a rest from sitting in their ships, to actually get out and board ships or fight through the corridors of space stations. That feature, however, is a long way off. For now we'll be quite happy in the cockpit. In the meantime keep an eye on <http://jumpgate.netdevil.com> and www.planetjumpgate.com where you'll find enough to be getting on with.



Ships are simple and sleek.



Equip your ship to suit your needs.



Dogfight online in the sim mod.

PHOTO-REALISM, COMING SOON

Photo reality in games is another step closer with news that two separate companies have developed software that allows users to email photos of themselves and have them converted into 3D models.

CyberExtruder (www.cyberextruder.com), which sounds more like a sex aid, is a new website that allows you to email a passport photo of yourself and have your face converted into 3D and emailed back to you. More than just a novelty, the technology has been developed primarily with gaming in mind. The UK co-developers of *StarLancer*, Warthog, will be using the software for their next game and other developers are taking a keen interest. Hopefully we will see some major announcements over the coming months.

Digimask (www.digimask.com) requires two images, one from the front and another in profile, allowing for more accurate modelling, and the company is also planning to incorporate its technology into games.

Apart from the obvious benefits for single-player games, it is the possibilities the modelling technology has for online gaming that interests us. Imagine playing *EverQuest* where each player has their own real face. Scary isn't it? Eventually we're told both applications will be able to reproduce facial gestures using simple routines. A smile for instance will require just one set of routines, applied globally to each facial model – all from just one or two images. Potentially huge, we've yet to see the technology applied to any games, but we may not have long to wait.



Send a passport-size photo to CyberExtruder...



...and see your ugly mug spin before your very eyes.

ANARCHY ONLINE

Never mind the balrogs, here's *Jed Norton* with a role-playing game that's out of this world

You can take your elves and goblins and shove them where the sun don't shine. *Anarchy Online*, from Scandinavian outfit FunCom, is sci-fi role playing all the way. Set far into the future on a planet ravaged by civil war, *AO* substitutes swords with guns, magic with nano-technology and fantasy-style resurrection with a Scottish Widows insurance policy (insure your genetic fingerprint and your items and you will resurrect at that level whenever you die). As with all insurance such schemes cost credits and as you acquire new items and skills, taking out bigger and better policies will become more important. Take out an expensive policy, for instance, and you'll ensure that the moment you pop

back out of the gene-tank, all your kit will be waiting for you.

Unlike current online RPGs, *AO* won't require you to ponder dozens of player classes or skills before venturing into the unknown. All new players need do is pick a race and decide on a gender, from there you can decide on what you want to specialise in along the way, be it a nanomage, a doctor, a trader, or dozens of other professions. Players will also have the ability to teach skills to other players, not by them grinning stupidly over their shoulder à la *UO*. Instead, the teacher creates an electronic module which will allow their student to increase various skills. After each level, you purchase another module to allow yourself to learn more.

Questing in *AO* aims to be far more dynamic than in *EverQuest* or *Ultima Online*. Say some guy stole your girl at the bar, you could grab his Genetic ID and put out a bounty on him, add a time limit, allow the hit to be passed on to other gamers or even offer items or experience as the final reward. There will also be 'hole in the wall' missions, found from ATM-style machines, which dispense quests based on your character's profession and other attributes. Once a quest is given, no other player will receive it. You will be given a pass key and the location of where the job takes place and, once you reach the location you enter your pass key and an area is dynamically created for you. In terms of storyline, FunCom has

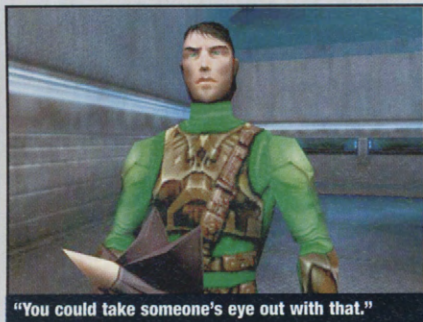
gone to town and promises to constantly add in new elements and keep the world evolving, which together with player-generated quests means players will be able to affect the world's development far more than in any current online RPG.

Within that world four types of areas will be available to explore: cities that are policed, much like *Ultima Online*; monster zones, where you can kill hideous beasts to 'level up'; political zones, where clans can fight mass wars; and free for all (FFA) zones, where indiscriminate player-killers (PKers) will be waiting in the bushes.

Winning the IGN award for the best online game at E3, *AO* is nearing beta version and should be out as soon as the leaves have fallen from the trees. You can find out more by pointing your browser to www.anarchy-online.com



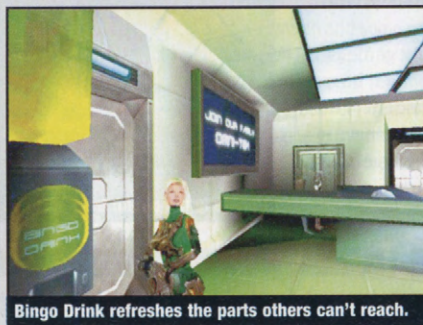
Does this remind you of *The Lawnmower Man*?



"You could take someone's eye out with that."



Pick a race and off you go.



Bingo Drink refreshes the parts others can't reach.

WIREPLAY NEWS

★ The beta 2 version of the popular *Quake III Jailbreak* mod is now available for download at www.wireplay.com from where you can break out of jail free against your online buddies.

★ You've got the *Daikatana* demo from last month's CD and now you can play it on Wireplay. And playing against real people should make a change from fighting against the abysmal computer AI, hopefully.

★ Fancy yourself at *Half-Life: Counter-Strike*? Well the Wireplay *Counter-Strike* League is filling up fast. Get your name on the waiting list and your team could be up for some huge prizes.

★ The alpha of *The Russian Front*, a WWII team-based *Half-Life* mod, is now up and running on Wireplay.

Wireplay
now at
gameplay.com



gameplay.com

we're never beaten

Online News is sponsored
by gameplay.com

LEAGUE TABLE

We fired up our copy of PingTool (www.pingtool.com) and took both player and server statistics from the top online FPS titles: *Half-Life*, *Quake III*, *Starsiege Tribes* and *Unreal Tournament*. While we'd often seen the huge number of *Counter-Strike* servers dominating the list of *Half-Life* games, we didn't realise just how big a following the mod has.

Just look at the table below to see for yourself: *Counter-Strike* players out number all the other games put together.

1	<i>Half-Life: Counter-Strike</i>	(10,199)
2	<i>Half-Life: Team Fortress Classic</i>	(2,934)
3	<i>Quake III Arena</i>	(1,438)
4	<i>Starsiege Tribes</i>	(1,429)
5	<i>Unreal Tournament</i>	(1,187)
6	<i>Half-Life</i>	(1,018)

Source: PingTool data

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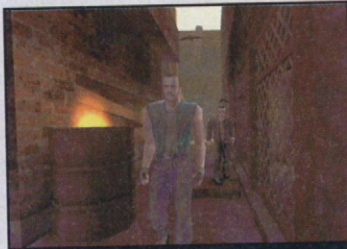
 **freeloader.com**

NEOCRON

Blade Runner meets Kingpin online. Jed Norton joins the gang



Reakktor's most recent game was *Bermuda Syndrome* in 1996.



There will be a number of weapons you can buy to use on the general public.

Reakktor Media is not your normal games designer and *Neocron* is not your normal online RPG. Where *Neocron* differs from the rest is with its attempt to create a virtual community: the designers want you to act out a virtual existence rather than plough through levels and collect items. Set in the distant future where most of Earth's population has run off to warmer climes (and subsequently fallen foul of aliens), the remnants of humanity survive inside huge shielded cities with the rest of Earth having become a mass of poisoned gases and industrial slag-piles known as the Outzones.

The usual player types are replaced with Spy, Private Eye, Tank and Psi Monk and climbing levels is not simply a question of acquiring points. Instead, certain sub-skills must also be raised before you can improve. You can also buy implants to boost your skills, but the purchase of these is not straightforward or entirely legal. Within the city itself Cop-bots keep the peace from invasions from the Outzones and nefarious player activities. Player-killing is possible and local 'job-centres' will hand out both quests and bounties. It's worth remembering that killing in front of the cops is not a good idea, especially in the two 'safe areas'. Death results in a slight loss of experience and total loss of equipment with regeneration occurring at clone generators.

You start the game in a private un-hackable room, to which you can return at will using a PIN code, and you also have the option of storing items in the future's version of a bank. What you do with your time is entirely up to you: hunt, steal, kill, trade or hack... whatever takes your fancy. The only thing to watch out for is that your 'SoulLight' (notoriety) doesn't fall too low. If it does, the Cop-bots will hunt you down on sight, although it's possible to sneak through them.

Neocron is hard to categorise but calling it a first-person role-playing game is not too far from the truth. There are no official system requirements as yet, but a 3D card is essential and Reakktor claims it will be fine on a 28.8K modem.

One thing that's certain is it looks fabulous and while Reakktor will be levying a monthly fee to play, the game will be available to download free of charge. Go to www.reakktor.com/neocron for the spiel where the developers are taking orders for beta testing, due to commence at the end of the year.



The Neocron City Police Department don't take too kindly to fare dodgers.



Hopefully the public transport will be more reliable in the future than it is today.



Shame it doesn't tell you who's calling, not that it ever matters.

LAST CALL FOR CALL WAITING

We all know how annoying it is when you're playing or surfing online and a call comes in that sends you crashing back into the real world. The only way around the problem has been to either install a second phone line (costly and typically never used) or to set up an ISDN or ADSL connection, which are both even more expensive. Another option would be to buy ComTech's new orange gizmo, the Internet Alert 510, a device that sits between your phone

socket and your modem and beeps and flashes whenever someone calls and you are downloading porn or otherwise engaged online. You can either pick up the phone, at which point you are disconnected, or, preferably, ignore it and continue. If you fancy a new gadget, you can find out more at www.cti-bolton.com. The Internet Alert 510 is available now for £29.99, cheaper than a new phone line. Hopefully we'll get one in for review next issue.



Unlike most up-and-coming online RPGs, *Camelot* is a team-based affair.



Anorexia was even more of a problem in the dark ages.



The Famous Four have a whizzo time on their latest adventure in Camelot.



Sir Eptitius. Fantastic, well done.

DARK AGE OF CAMELOT

We eat ham and jam and spam a lot, so says *Jed Norton*

King Arthur's dead and the old kingdoms are falling apart. The Celts and Norsemen are looting and pillaging whatever they can get their hands on and you must choose which of the three realms (Celts, Norse or Britons) you will fight for.

To encourage gamers to adventure, *Dark Age Of Camelot* uses Realm Points, which come from questing or capturing and defending Relics. Relics give bonuses to all gamers within that Realm as long as the Relic remains safe and at the appropriate location, usually some sort of shrine. Capturing all the Relics in the game will offer a substantial overall bonus in both fighting and magery, but with two thirds of the players after your side's Relics, this is unlikely to last too long.

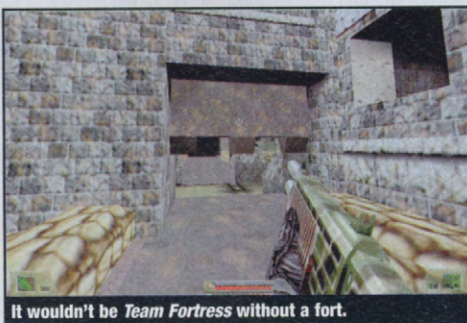
Because of all this Relic capturing, *Camelot* is a player versus player-intensive online role-playing game with a heavy emphasis on group warfare. While it has areas safe from PKers, the highest levels are not achievable without fighting for your king and country and killing players from the opposing Realms.

Items will decay, repairs in the field don't last as long as those done in a smithy and old weapons can be remade into new. Trade skills will reward their artisans and are an integral part of the game, as player-made items will generally be far better than those from NPCs or monsters. One thing's for sure, it will be both bloody and fast-paced along the borders. For those of a quieter disposition, safe areas will allow monster hunting and some questing, but these will not result in Realm Points.

Dark Age Of Camelot reminds us of the anarchic days of *Ultima Online*, but with pre-built controls and a lot of the old lessons learnt. To quote one of the designers: "I promise to make only new mistakes." So the developers (Mythic Entertainment) are making all the right noises and the engine also looks good. If the development team delivers the goods we'll put our money on this game being a winner.

Dark Age Of Camelot is scheduled for a spring 2001 release and you can follow its development by visiting www.mythicgames.com.

SOLDIER OF FORTRESS



It wouldn't be *Team Fortress* without a fort.

With all that leaning around corners, Activision's *Soldier Of Fortune* is perfectly suited to the *Team Fortress* style of online gameplay. It will come as no small surprise then that a small team is working on one, called, wait for it, *SoF Team Fortress*. A couple of month's after the source code for Raven's top first-person shooter is released the team hope to unleash an alpha version, which will include all the standard features of previous *Team Fortress* mods. After that we are told to expect new weapons and gameplay modes, including Datathief, Informant and Hostile Takeover, all of which offer variations on traditional *TF* themes. *SoF* fans should bookmark www.sof-fortress.com for updates.

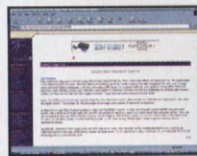
SEARCH ENGINE

Every month we will be pointing you at the best websites for the biggest online games. This month's game is *EverQuest*

EQ STRATICS

<http://eq.stratics.com/>

"A minefield of information," says Chris Anderson who, when it comes to *EverQuest*, is pretty much the only one on the *PC ZONE* team who knows what he's talking about.



EVERLORE

www.everlore.com

Like EQ Stratics, Everlore boasts plenty in the way of news and player guides, but what stands out most is the sense of community, with well set-out forums for people to hook up with.

OFFICIAL EVERQUEST SITE

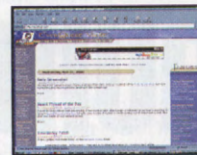
www.station.sony.com/everquest/

As with all official game sites, *EverQuest* is all about selling the game. You'll find the manual, screenshots and the latest FAQ, as well as news on what the developers are up to.

EVERQUEST VAULT

<http://eqvault.ign.com>

Apparently frequented by the developers of *EverQuest*, EQ Vault is a good place for news and opinion and is often first when it comes to info on what's happening next in the *EverQuest* universe.



ALLAKHAZAM

<http://everquest.allakhazam.com>

Very much reliant on feedback, Allakhazam is centred on quest and player guides. A lot of it is stat-based, but for the newcomer the player guides are succinct and a good place to start.

EQ ATLAS

www.eqatlas.com

The A To Z of *EverQuest*, EQ Atlas is basically a series of travel guides for almost every corner of the *EverQuest* universe and for anyone lost within. It includes maps of all the major cities and regions, including Kunark.



Ten player classes will make the first version.

REVIEWS



Kunark is home to some very impressive new architecture.



Lizard bloke gets in the thick of it.



The expansion brings new enemies.



The buildings in Kunark are more detailed than other EQ continents.



The Iksars. Would you want to play this race? Me neither.

EVERQUEST: RUINS OF KUNARK

★ £29.99 • Monthly fee US\$9.98 • UK distributor: Ubisoft • Out now

The first major update for *EverQuest* has arrived. But do you really need it? Let's ask **Chris Anderson**

For those of you yet to experience *EverQuest*, here follows a brief synopsis of the game and its concepts.

EverQuest, like its counterpart *Ultima Online*, is a constantly evolving online role-playing game. Create a character from a variety of races (human, elf, barbarian etc) and classes (druids, wizards, warriors, that lot...) and travel the game world, killing monsters, either alone or with the help of many 'real' players from all over the world, earning experience as you go and gaining higher levels in the process. It all sounds very simple. Fact is, it is very simple, and very enjoyable as a result. Unlike *Ultima Online*, however, *EQ* has impressive visuals. The whole game world is in full 3D and very nice it looks too. The expansion contains the original version of *EQ* and also brings a brand new continent to the game, namely Kunark and a brand new race to play in the form of the Iksars, an



odd-looking lizard-like evil race. The continent of Kunark is huge, with impressive architecture, pretty scenery and new NPCs, which seem more detailed

“Having returned to the game for this review after a nine-month exile, I'm once again losing large amounts of time to it”

than their counterparts in the other continents. This alone is probably enough to justify the cost of the expansion for *EQ* veterans, but there is another reason why the expansion disk is good news, and you don't even need to buy it to take advantage of it. Confused? Read on.

CROWD CONTROL

As anyone who has played *EQ* for any considerable period of time will readily attest, this game suffers from one major problem, a problem that was singularly responsible for many people leaving *EQ* once they achieved a reasonably high level: overcrowding. While Verant promised low server counts in the early days of *EQ*, it cheerfully neglected to stick to this promise as the game grew in popularity, resulting in massive server overloads for all the popular servers. It's not unusual to log on to Tunare, for example, and find 1,600 people hanging about there. Since the expansion's release, many high-level players have

moved to Kunark in search of new items, with the knock-on effect that the original playing areas are now far less crowded. This is, of course, a good thing indeed. Having returned to the game for this review after a nine-month exile, I am once again losing large amounts of my time to it, mainly

because I don't have to wait hours to get into one of the more desirable playing areas to 'level up' my character.

High-level players in particular will gain much from the Kunark expansion, since they can now level their characters up to 60 (50 was the limit with the original game). This means new spells for casters, and Verant has reduced the agonising wait for new spells between levels after 50 by introducing spells for every consecutive level you reach beyond 60 for most casting classes. The only downside of Kunark itself is the seemingly sporadic experience dished out for killing monsters. Most of the monsters con blue whether you're level 35 or 45 which seems weird, and anyone around level 40 will get much higher experience in somewhere like Upper Guk, although there are rumours that Verant will be increasing experience gained in Kunark to balance the gameplay (we can't confirm this as we go to press).

It's also worth noting that high level players (50 and above) are finding very impressive loot in Kunark, so the expansion would appear to be heaven-sent for people in this level range.

While Kunark doesn't radically change *EQ*'s gameplay, it has enough to justify upgrading, and the extra space afforded on each server due to a partial exodus to Kunark makes it far more appealing. *Ultima Online* may have more depth, but *EQ* wins in terms of sheer playability. **EQ**

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Dangerously addictive
 - Great visuals • Well-balanced gameplay
- DOWNERS Not as complex as *Ultima Online* • Class-tweaking (it all went horribly wrong for druids last year)

90 The last word in online RPGs



ULTIMA ONLINE: RENAISSANCE

★ £34.99 (US\$10 per month to play, first month free) • Electronic Arts • Out now

Ultima Online was the game that kicked off the current craze in online gaming. More than two years since its messy birth, Origin has released the latest retail version. Jed Norton gets up to speed

Renaissance is, and lets be clear about this, two years of patches in one box. There's nothing new here, nothing, nada, zip (well, OK, a tiny little bit). What it is, however, is what a new gamer to online role-playing requires to get a good start in *UO*. At long last there is a manual containing useful information with introductions to both the interface and how to play the game. It also describes how *UO* is now split into player-killing (PK) and non-PK mirror worlds (a damn fine idea) and thankfully it doesn't contain that stupid cloth map-come-handkerchief.

The game also has an online tutorial for the beginner, covering the basics of moving and fighting. It allows the newbie up to 40

hours of gaming in a new town called Haven, where nothing at all is aggressive towards you – which is very useful. Origin claims that there are “legions of friendly volunteers” to help you out, yet

“We spent most of our time staring at the screen wondering if we had run away from the Orc horde, or if, in fact, we were dead”

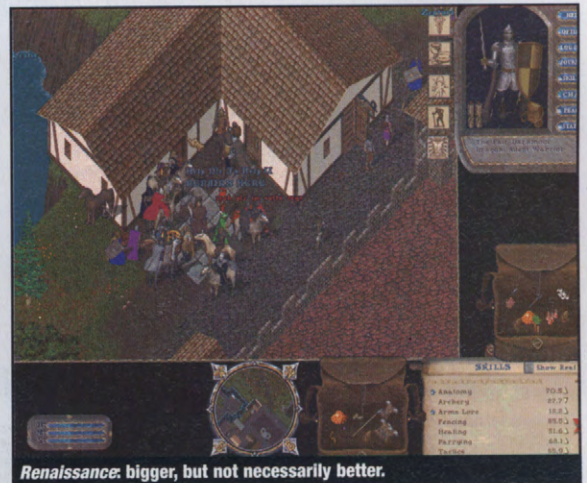
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Out in the real-world newbies' are bombarded with “helpful” NPCs who will endlessly show you how to use items and skills via mini-quests. All this is fine for the beginner and is definitely what *UO* needs to encourage new gamers to play without having to read hundreds of websites.

CAN YOU HEAR THE ‘BUT’?

If this was the game that was released two years back we'd have raved about it. We raved about last year's *Second Age* version if you remember, but

considering how far *EverQuest* has come with its latest incarnation, as it stands now *UO* struggles to keep up with its competition. Latency (lag) in *UO* is worse than we can remember (except when it was first released) and as we were using ISDN and the server is in Docklands, not America, we found this disappointing. We used four



Renaissance: bigger, but not necessarily better.

different ISPs (Freeserve, BT Internet, Pipex and AOL) and none of them cured the lag problems. In fact, it was only recently that we managed to get any decent speeds and even that was only at off-peak times. We can only hope the situation improves, which we're quite sure it will.

Add the fact that monster spawns are almost constant and we found we spent most of our time staring frustrated at the screen wondering if we had run away from the latest Orc horde or if, in fact, we were dead. Five to ten second freezes were common and travelling via 'Moongate' caused complete lock-ups about 50 per cent of the time.

The depth of *UO* is still by far the game's greatest attraction

and the role-playing freedom that it offers is unparalleled, but after playing other “massively multiplayer online RPGs” we can't seem to feel any real connection with our little isometric characters. *UO* seems to have finally had its day and when viewed next to the cheaper *EQ*, we can only recommend you try that instead. [E]

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Role-play freedom • PK and non-PK lands • Good for newcomers

DOWNERS Lag • looks dated.

75 A dying horse, truly flogged



For *UO*, 3D is just something that happens to other people.



Lots of people means lots of lag.



Red carpet? They must be important. Then again...

COUNTER-STRIKE BETA V6.1

★ Free download from www.counter-strike.net • Available now

It's the most popular online shooter, and also the most authentic. Phil Wand dons his Kevlar vest and helmet and heads off to reality street

A free, downloadable mod for *Half-Life*, *Counter-Strike* is a team-based action shooter with heavy emphasis on realism, co-operation and strategy. Where contestants of games such as *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III Arena* are able to rocket-jump tall buildings and take shotgun blasts to the face, *Counter-Strike* participants are dead if they catch a sniper's bullet or fall off a roof.

Although such unbending realism will piss you off at first, perseverance is the key.

GUN LAW

Each *Counter-Strike* map has a specific goal for both teams, and each team has different weapons and equipment at their disposal. Some require the terrorists to detonate a bomb in a designated

area; some require the CTs (counter terrorists) to rescue hostages; others involve the terrorists trying to assassinate an escaping president while the CTs do their utmost to protect him. The winning team is awarded a pot of cash to buy new weapons, equipment and ammunition during the purchase stage at the beginning of the next round.

Remarkably, players on both teams work furiously to achieve their goals with little or

no encouragement – very rarely do you find individuals playing the game as though it were a death-match and the only score that mattered was their own. One of the major downsides to *Counter-Strike* is that many matches will pass with neither team making any real advances. All too often, your team is dug in back at base instead of pushing forward.

GET REAL

The game is painstakingly realistic. If you fall even four or five feet, you stumble. If you fall further, you wince and hurt yourself. Misjudge your drop or come off a ladder and you'll break an ankle and be out. Bullets don't just strip you of health, they

cause you to recoil in pain, and there are no medi-packs to boost you back up again. Not only that, but once you're dead, you're *completely* dead, and out of the game until the next round. And don't think about cowering in the next room, because the powerful guns slice straight through wood doors, plaster walls and corrugated metal.

Almost without exception, the maps are simply magnificent. All are based on real surroundings and feature a mix of paths, avenues, houses, gardens, sewers, ducts, passageways, stairwells, warehouses, streets, office blocks and corridors – one even centres around rescuing hostages from a full-size Boeing 747. Detailing and layout are

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why this game works so brilliantly. Rather than being constrained by targets and shooed along to meet deadlines, the *Counter-Strike* team has suckled their baby lovingly, and with little consideration for anything but the gratification of those who play it. The result is a game worthy of its own box on retail shelves, and with Valve having bought into the project, that may actually happen. But until then, watch out for beta version 6.5, which should be out now, and includes new maps, weapons and smoke effects. [E]



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92 The best things in life are free



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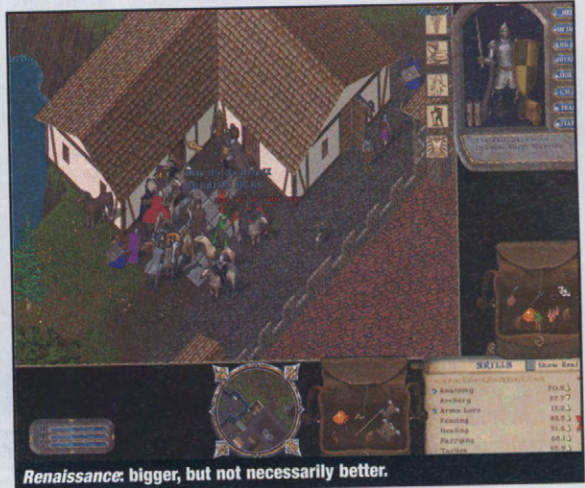
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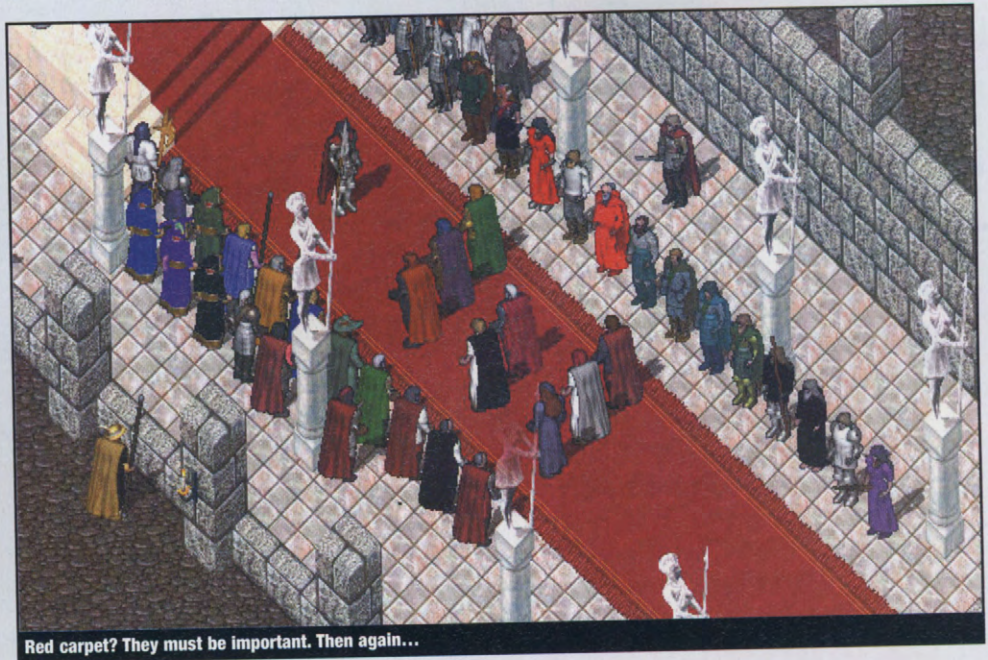
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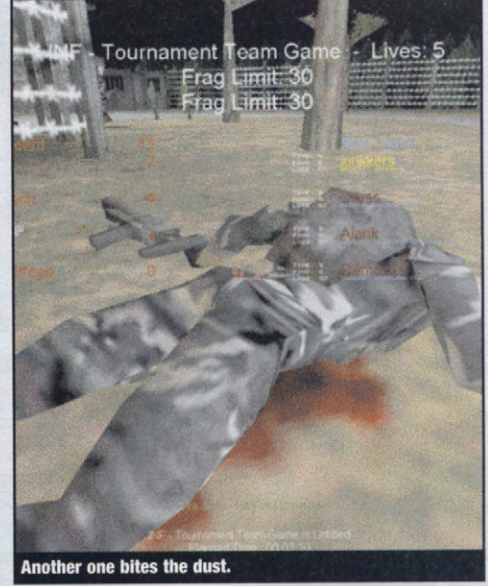
92 The best things in life are free



The alt-fire button allows you to take aim.



Someone's about to lose a limb.



Another one bites the dust.

INFILTRATION V2.75

★ Free download from www.planetunreal.com/infiltration • Maps from www.planetunreal.com/realmaps • Out now

Richie Shoemaker swaps his redeemer for a Robar and takes a look at one of Unreal Tournament's finest additions

It is perhaps a little unfair to be reviewing *Infiltration* for *Unreal Tournament*, seeing as it doesn't include any new maps or deathmatch weapons with contemporary ones, such as M16s, grenades and sniper rifles; adds a scanner so you can see where you are in relation to your team and the

importantly, they're well balanced. One new feature is the inclusion of static heavy weapons – machine guns etc – that fit in perfectly with the assault style of play.

However, where *Infiltration* falls a little flat is in its distinct lack of included maps, which thankfully there are plenty of on

the Real Maps website, some of which are duff, some truly excellent. We are promised a set in the next version of the game, as well as three new game modes. Something to look forward to then.

Although not quite up to the standard of *Counter-Strike*, *Infiltration* is probably the closest you'll get in *Unreal Tournament*. Movement is perhaps too quick compared to *Counter-Strike* and because it's more of an Assault-style mod, games are usually a case of progressing to new areas and hitting switches. However, that's not to debase *Infiltration* in any way. Because it is a *UT* mod it's easy to set up, with its own set of menus and customisable settings, so you can swap skins, weapons and speed the game down if you wish.

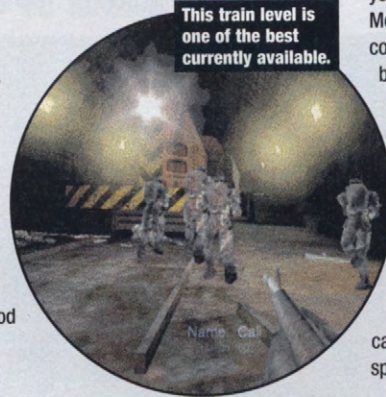
If you're into the online side of things, *Counter-Strike* is easily the best bet for its realism and originality, but for those times when you can't be bothered to dial in, *Infiltration* should keep you ticking over with its built-in bot support. Whatever way you decide to play, you may well find yourself playing *Infiltration* more often than vanilla *UT*. We certainly do. [X]

“What it does, and does rather well, is replace UT's weapons with contemporary ones, such as M16s and sniper rifles”

variations that aren't already included in *UT*. However, a quick email to the developer told us that the next version is some weeks off and as we can't stop playing it, we thought we'd review it anyway.

Basically, what it does, and does rather well, is replace *UT*'s

enemy; and replaces the traditional dual fire mode so you can aim rather than shoot from the hip. The weapons themselves, nine in this version, all look pretty good and jump around in the hand fairly convincingly and, more



This train level is one of the best currently available.

PCZVERDICT

- ⬆ **UPPERS** Real-world weapons and skins • Highly configurable
- ⬇ **DOWNERS** No new maps or game variations

78 The best real-world mod for *UT* so far



HOTDOG
the new movie magazine
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Hollywood Pin-Ups
Issue 2 on sale June 29

ALIENS VS PREDATOR — GOLD EDITION

★ £34.99 • Fox Interactive • Out now

Richie Shoemaker stops his grinnin' and drops his linen — just as well considering how scared he gets

Why, you may ask, are we reviewing *AvP Gold* in the online section when in the past it has mainly been played as a single-player game? Well, the answer to that very valid question is simple, because even though there are two new weapons to add to the Marine arsenal and nine extra levels, they are all geared towards multiplayer gaming. You can try out the marine pistol and skeet weapons in the skirmish game, of course, but that really isn't much fun if you are on your own. No, for single-players, especially those who bought the original game, *AvP Gold* is something of a no-no. The 'free' *Prima Official Strategy Guide* is obviously what has driven the price up from what should be a budget release and although you get a save-game feature (which is the same one

released as a patch some time after the original game) and the graphics have been updated, it all feels a bit of a con. Search the bargain bins instead and try and get hold of the original release.

On the multiplayer side of things, *AvP* has kind of got its act together. Developer Rebellion has tidied up the Net code and the game is now compatible with Mplayer, Static and Fragfinder, which means you will be able to find others to play against rather easily, or at least it's easier than it was before. (Mplayer it has to be said is not one the world's best servers to play across.)

Although the two new weapons are fun, they're not quite as effective as you would imagine. The pistol lacks firepower and the Skeet gun just doesn't fit in with the *AvP* setting. Quite frankly, we find it hard to fathom why no shotguns or

Autosentries were included, seeing as they featured quite heavily in the *Aliens* film. In fact, after watching the entire *Aliens* series on DVD, there's a hell of a lot more that could have been done to expand upon its themes. Although, with talk of a sequel on the way, it's obvious such ideas are being saved up.

AvP Gold's best features are its extra levels — and for the most part, the levels are good. Nostromo, based on the original *Alien* film is perhaps the weakest, as it is set around the outside of the ship from the first *Alien* film rather than within and constitutes one of the flatest maps you'll ever play. Leadworks, however, (from *Alien 3*) is absolutely superb, especially if you play as a group of marines against computer-controlled Aliens.

For a few extra levels and a couple of weak weapons, *AvP Gold* represents something of a

half-baked effort. To make matters worse, those who own the original game will be unable to play against those who buy the *Gold Edition*, although for US\$9.99, old-timers can upgrade, which represents far better value for money than buying this edition.

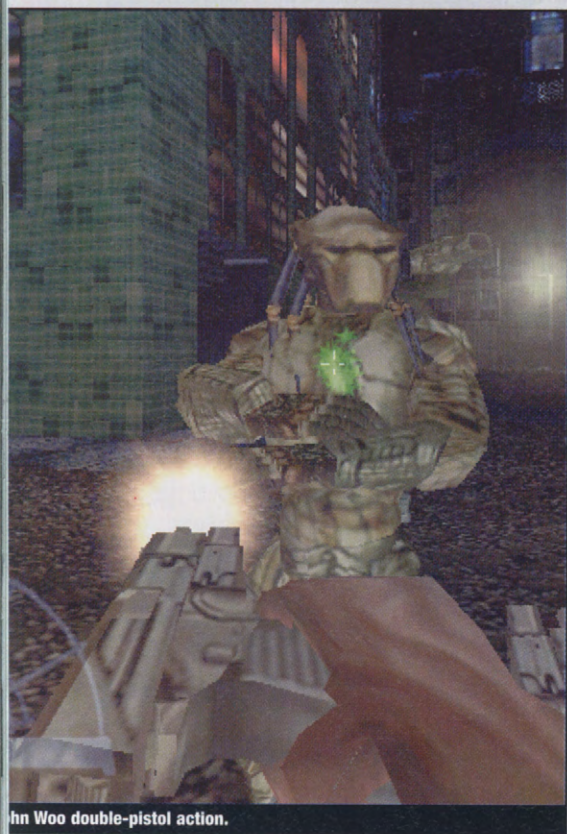
At the end of the day, *AvP Gold* can only be recommended to those who've yet to experience the original game. Even so, apart from the strategy guide, there's very little here to justify the price. *AvP* has dated and was never the multiplayer game we all hoped it would be anyway. As such, we can only recommend that first-

timers buy the original game and old hands eager for more get hold of the expansion instead. **PCZ**

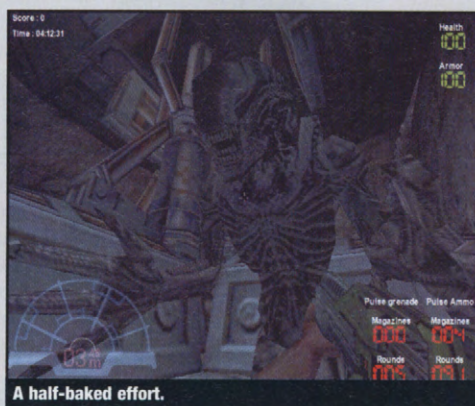
PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Scary as ever • Some excellent new maps • Updated and improved Net code
- DOWNERS Disappointing for single-players • A bit of a rip-off • Graphics look dated

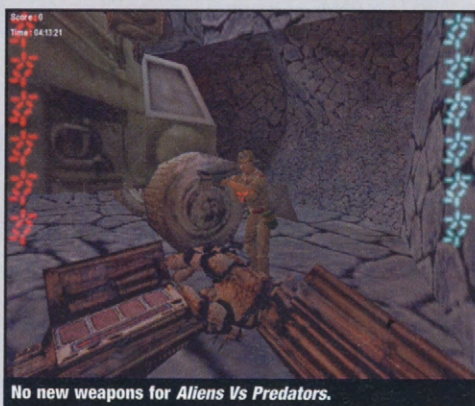
52 First-timers only need apply



hn Woo double-pistol action.



A half-baked effort.



No new weapons for *Aliens Vs Predators*.



Crappy explosions, nothing new here.



A great map that Headworks.

ACES HIGH V1.02

★ Free download (US\$29.99 per month) • HiTech Creations (www.hitechcreations.com) • Out now

Chocks away and tally-ho as Daniel Emery bids toodle-pip to the ladies and goes in search of some high-flying online action

Developed by a splinter group of the original team who brought us *Warbirds*, *Aces High* is, in essence, an updated and expanded clone of its predecessor – but not entirely. Where *Warbirds* has remained fairly static for two years, *Aces High* has introduced a number of aircraft that the online community has been unable to fly until now, like the Macchi C205 (coo). Future versions of *Aces High*, we're told, will even introduce land vehicles and targets (probably to pre-empt the launch of *WWII Online* (www.wwiionline.com), but for now, *Aces High* is simply about dogfighting, something it manages fairly well.

Contrary to popular belief, not every online games player

is an anal retentive who can quote the number of bullets carried in a plane, but in games of *Aces High*, most of those in the virtual skies can. Consequently, HiTech Creations has had to get the physics models of the aircraft just right to get the guns to actually disperse and so forth.

The graphics in the game are of a reasonably high standard and there are some nice touches, such as a proper 3D look around cockpit and some great stereo sound effects. In terms of connection ping times *Aces High* also does very well (we tested it with AOL, CIX and Pipex) and there was little UFO plane motion to be seen.

But it isn't all sweetness and light. The guns do tend to act like lasers and for a new player the

learning curve is very steep. But when you compare it to the slightly better *Warbirds* (which charges about £1.50 per hour), *Aces High* is far more economical, and because it's in constant development, it's a game worth keeping your sights on if you're into online dogfighting in any way. [X]

PCZVERDICT

- ⬆️ **UPPERS** Nice graphics • Wide variety of planes • New features constantly being added
- ⬇️ **DOWNERS** Steep learning curve • Just dogfighting at the moment

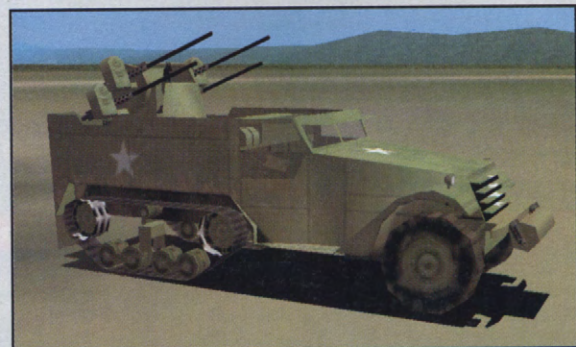
70 If you can afford it, stick with *Warbirds* for the time being



Ⓜ️ Now you can fly Macchi C201s.



Look around your cockpit in proper looky-roundy 3D, only in *Aces High*.



Soon you'll be able to drive one of these babies.

Q3 JAILBREAK BETA V2.2

★ Free download from www.teamreaction.com • Out now

Richie Shoemaker, you are accused of playing *Quake III*. How do you plead?

**PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE**

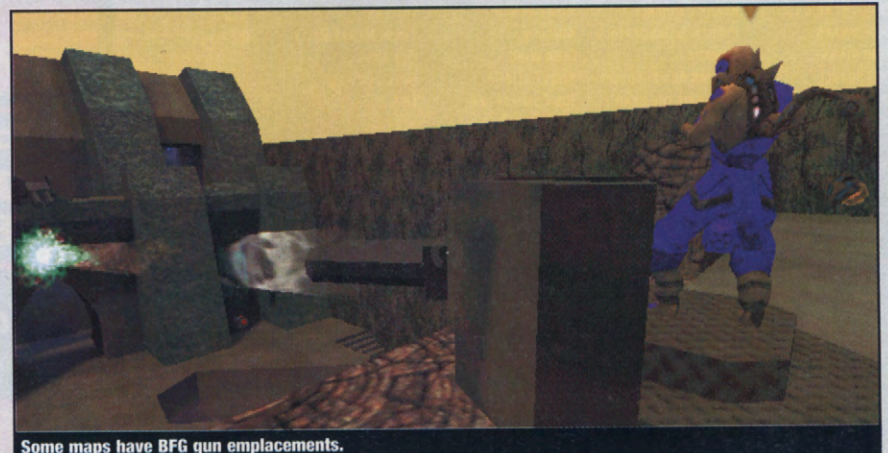
One of the biggest criticisms of *Quake III Arena* is that although its deathmatch game is certainly the fastest and the most furious, its team-based play is lacking in depth next to *Unreal Tournament's* wealth of Capture The Flag, assault and domination games. The *Quake III Jailbreak* mod, however, goes a long way to redressing the balance.

Like all good mods *Jailbreak* is deceptively simple. There are no cumbersome character classes or key bindings to worry about, neither is it based around

contemporary themes like so many mods these days. In essence it is more like a simple game of Capture The Flag, but with the emphasis on getting your mates out of the nick, which makes it more team-focused than any other mod you care to mention. And because it uses *Quake III*, it remains fast, furious and above all fun.

Although the range of *Quake III* weapons remain intact there are some maps with cameras and static weapons. However, *Jailbreak* comes with its own set of maps, some of which are tight and perfectly balanced, others sprawling and disorientating.

The aim is simple: to remain alive. If you die you are sent to prison. If your entire team ends up in pokeney, the opposing team has the fun of seeing you die horribly and you begin again. Therefore, it



Some maps have BFG gun emplacements.

is important that whenever someone ends up in the slammer they are rescued, if only for the simple reason that lifers will get increasingly bored, although there is some relief in killing your cell mates. Hence, unlike traditional CTF, *Jailbreak* maps offer more in the way of tactical options with the jails being a focus for both teams. Add to that the problem of losing teammates and you get a game that can

switch from all-out war to tense guerilla tactics in an instant.

Although there are a few niggles *Jailbreak* emphasizes just how much ground *Quake III* is gaining on *Unreal Tournament*. *QIII* is all about speed and *Jailbreak* is a perfect complement to it. If this and a few other mods had been included with *Quake III* at the outset, *Unreal Tournament* might never have had a look in. [X]

PCZVERDICT

- ⬆️ **UPPERS** Complements *QIII* perfectly • Some excellent maps.
- ⬇️ **DOWNERS** No new weapons • Being constantly in jail is boring • Contains a few bugs

81 It is worth doing time for

NEW

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- All the latest news, and new releases from the games world, and links to the major software companies

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KINGPIN	BATTLEZONE	HALF LIFE	SONIC ADVENTURE
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INSTANT MESSAGING SOFTWARE

It's the best way to communicate when online, and is also becoming the most popular. Phil Wand takes a look at the Internet's top four instant messagers

Back in the summer of 1996, a small group of Israeli computer geeks found a simple solution to a common problem: how to put people in touch with one another when they were connected to the Internet. Sure, there were already all manner of peculiar places to hang out and chat, but there was no obvious way of seeing the moment your chums became available online.

So ICQ was born, and the instant messaging market along with it. Released to an eager Internet community in November of the same year, the product sucked in new users at the rate of 900,000 every month for three years solid. And with no business plan, no revenue stream, no profit, and their product still in its beta stage of development, the four geeks sold their new company to AOL for US\$287m. And not one of them was a day over 30. ICQ and friends are electronic address books - albeit rather ornamental ones - filled with a list of online contacts. Each contact is assigned a unique, identifying number that can be given out in much the same way as an email address. The fact that everything is stored centrally on a main server means that when you update your details, for example to reflect a change of email address, folks who have you listed in their contact lists are able to update the information with the click of a button.

REVIEWS

ICQ 2000 ICQ Inc www.icq.com

The momma of all messaging products, ICQ is also the most popular. Thousands of people sign up every day and millions more use it on a regular basis. Its basic functions, common to all messaging products, allow you to add, delete, and modify



Fantastic range of features with an incongruous front-end.

your contact list, and to arrange people into groups. There's a range of privacy options, allowing you to make yourself 'invisible' so you can come and go without being noticed. ICQ also supports drag-and-drop file transfer, allowing you to send a file directly to one of your contacts without resorting to your email client. Plus, you can set reminders, prompt for action on someone's birthday, or listen to the radio. The latest versions provide seamless integration of ICQMail (much like Hotmail) and a more compliant interface.

Pros: Powerful • Feature laden • Everyone uses it
Cons: Clumsy non-compliant interface • Hideous website
Score: ★★★★★

POWWOW Tribal Voice www.powwow.com

PowWow has been around for some time and has evolved into a very useable, if slightly ropey, instant product. It was the first client to integrate Internet-based

instant voice messaging where contacts could send each other voice clips of up to one minute in length. Like ICQ and Yahoo it



Lacks the thrust of Yahoo and ICQ and feels a bit past it.

allows you to combine contacts into different groups, but it is unique in being able to read messages out loud and also in its ability to conduct online tours, where one person is able to take over control of another's web browser and guide them around a site. PowWow also uses bulletin boards where people can leave messages in public forums.

Pros: Ease of use • Voice chat through InstaVoice
Cons: Rough around the edges
Score: ★★★★★

YAHOO INSTANT MESSENGER Yahoo <http://uk.messenger.yahoo.com>



A solid product let down by the fact that ICQ got there first.

If every product here were released from the stalls at the same time, Yahoo Instant Messenger would be first past the finish line, a nose in front of arch-rival ICQ. It feels like a more solid, if not more substantial, product than its chief rival, it's more feature-packed than MSN and it's more customisable than PowWow. However, the ICQ boys had a head start, and in a market that thrives on sheer numbers, they'll always be at the front of the field.
Pros: Easy integration of news, weather and other data
Cons: Most people use ICQ
Score: ★★★★★

MSN MESSENGER SERVICE Microsoft <http://msn.co.uk>

Surprisingly for a Microsoft product, MSN Messenger Service is a real lightweight. Considering the muscle of the



Looks distinctly skinny next to its beefier rivals.

company behind it, we're surprised it packs less punch than its rivals - for example, the ability to create groups or send voice messages. OK, so it's refreshing to find a Microsoft front-end that isn't cluttered, but here it's simplicity at the expense of functionality. And when you're up against ICQ and Yahoo, all this does is put you at the back of the field.
Pros: Easy install • Familiar look and feel
Cons: Too simple • Lacks crucial functionality
Score: ★★★★★

Once you've used an instant messenger, you'll wonder how you lived without one.

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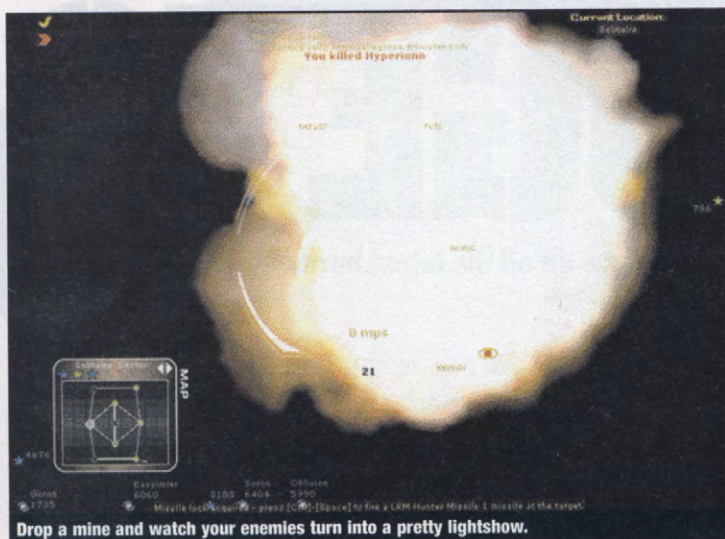
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Drop a mine and watch your enemies turn into a pretty lightshow.



Interceptors are perhaps the easiest ships to use if you're still getting the hang of flying.

ALLEGIANCE STARTER'S GUIDE

★ FLYING HIGH: Jed Norton

Allegiance is Microsoft's online space combat sim. Although it's a great game, especially for teamplay, it has a steep learning curve that tends to put some people off. Here are some pointers to help you get ahead

SCOUTS Scout ships armed with mines are deadly. The easiest trick is to run through an aleph and drop your mine as soon as you exit – any chasing ship will run smack into them. To help out your commander, when starting, load up with probes and drop them in as many sectors as you can.

FIGHTERS They are underrated by a lot of gamers who tend to use them solo and then slate them as weak. However, 'big wing' tactics work very well so always stay in a group and you'll draw in enough of the enemy's resources to plan a bomber attack.

INTERCEPTORS These are great short-range craft and are very easy to fly, but with no RIP facility they need forward bases to act as attack ships, otherwise they should stay in defence. Use them to ram smaller ships – other gamers hate ramming but just ignore them, it's a great tactic.

STEALTH FIGHTERS Stealth fighters are all about strategy and, er, stealth. Don't load them with shields or missiles in the external mounts – you need to keep your radar signature low. Use the + key to zoom in on enemies at ultra long range and snipe from afar. Use the Z axis (up and down) and cloak before going through alephs and only attack when you know you can kill.

PODS Below your target reticule is a red number. That's your damage bonus and it goes up with every kill. Pod killing is a big no-no, but if you see a pod with a high bonus, kill it. Any pilot with a high bonus (30+) is extremely deadly. And if you want to get back to base in a hurry, just ram your pod into the enemy.

VECTORING This keeps you flying in a straight line while allowing you to turn in any direction. Pilots assume scouts only lay mines while running away. Vector your ship, but turn towards your pursuer – he thinks you're on an attack run and will boost in at you... drop your mine and he'll get a surprise.



Vectoring is worth getting to grips with.

BOOSTERS Use boosters to cut down the time an enemy has to make a straight-line shot at you. When running away put

your ship in a permanent spin and then apply boosters and jink slightly (so as not to lose any speed). No small ship should be able to hit you.

PROBES Detection equals death, so always destroy enemy probes whenever you detect them. To lay a trap, kill all but one probe in a sector. Place your ships out of scan range then send in a bomber to be detected... the enemy will come for an easy kill.



Load up on probes if you want to know where the enemy is coming from next.

CHAT Squads use specific channels for each ship type or group, for example, Delta for defence. This allows for greater co-ordination without cluttering up the commander's channel.

RANKING Rank is stacked for those who kill lots of bases – the best fighter pilots

don't care about rank. I have an 8:1 kill ratio and never get close to the top 100. Anonymity holds its own kind of bonuses in *Allegiance* – opponents underrate you, then they die.

COMMANDING Unless you know what you're doing you should avoid taking on the commanding role in larger games. The best way to learn is to hook up with some mates and play a small game. If you screw up your mates shouldn't mind too much.



Commanding is a tricky business.

MORE TIPS We can't cover everything on just one page, so go online and check out two of the best *Allegiance* sites in existence, www.planetallegiance.com and <http://alvault.ign.com>. Both sites are great for news and reviews and you'll find comprehensive player guides for every aspect of the game. [E]

PC ZONE ONLINE COMING SOON

Log in to *PC ZONE* Online next issue as we'll be taking a look at *Dark Sector*, the online first-person action game and space combat sim from *Unreal Tournament* co-developers Digital Extremes. We'll also have the latest from *EverQuest* creator Verant with

its online real-time strategy game *Sovereign* (and maybe a few juicy tidbits on *Star Wars Online* too).

Not only that but the latest versions of *Counter-Strike*, *Quake III Fortress*, *Strike Force* and *Aces High* will also be upon us and if that's not enough,

Phil Wand will be rounding-up ICQ chat software and the goblin king Chris Anderson will be giving us his personal top tips for *EverQuest*. If there's anything else you'd like to see, email us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk.



Strike Force for Unreal Tournament, reviewed next issue.

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There can be no doubt that Ridley Scott's *Alien* and James Cameron's *Aliens* are both sci-fi masterpieces, but it has become traditional to deride the third and fourth films in the saga as no more than poor cash-ins. That's bollocks. Every film in this box set is great in its own way, from the gothic horror of the original to the post-modern marvel that is *Alien Resurrection*. *Alien 3* is a flawed, but still fascinating medieval tour de force that fares much better when seen as an episode in a wildly varied series. It's a DVD must-have.

Extra features: *Alien* contains deleted scenes and commentary from the director. The rest feature behind-the-scenes footage, interviews and trailers, and there's a fifth disc containing a feature-length documentary. Superb.

★★★★★

HEAT

£19.99 • Warner Home Video • Out now

Heat is a modern day epic in every sense of the word, featuring a host of stars, including acting legends Al Pacino and Robert De Niro. The story revolves around a LA cop hunting down the perpetrators of a massive armed robbery. With some of the best action sequences of any film to date, and the best gunfight ever, *Heat* is a must-see for all action movie fans with a spare three hours on their hands.

Extra features: none

★★★★★

ENTER THE DRAGON

Warner Home Video

• £19.99 • Out now

Even 27 years after its original release, Bruce Lee's martial arts classic is still highly watchable. Questionable voice-overs and a highly comedic performance from Brucey himself – when he's not kicking the shit out of everyone he meets – do not detract from an action movie that was light years ahead of its time. No extra features for DVD, but an essential purchase all the same.

Extra features: none

★★★★★

THE MATRIX

Warner Home Video

• £19.99 • Out now

Reality? What's that then? *The Matrix* isn't brand new on DVD, but it's not only one of the best films to test out your new system, it's also a showcase for the new digital medium with an amazing amount of behind-the-scenes footage. Jaw-dropping special effects and Keanu Reeves actually acting in a slightly corny but excellent action flick.

Extra features: *Making Of The Matrix*, plus special-effects mini-documentaries and PC storyboard, screenplay and genre essays.

★★★★★

BLADE RUNNER – THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

£19.99 • Warner Home Video

• Out now

Based on Phillip K Dick's short story *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?* *Blade Runner* is dystopian sci-fi at its best and remains as relevant today as it was nearly 20 years ago. This director's cut sets a darker mood than the original cinema release, with Harrison Ford's narration cut and the ending left more open. As a film it remains a classic, but as a DVD this could have done with extra features.

Extra features: none

★★★★★

GADGETS

This month we bring you reviews on all the latest hardware, books, DVDs and all things fun for your PC

CYBER3DVISOR

£70 • ANP • www.anp.co.uk

Things like 3D glasses and helmets have been knocking around in various guises for a few years now, but they've never really taken off. There are many reasons for this, not least of which is the fact that they make the user look really stupid. Lack of software support has also been a huge player in the downfall of virtual hat type things, but hey, we've found one that works. The Cyber3Dvisor gives the illusion of depth in any 3D-accelerated game. The 3D effect is mildly impressive, but not good enough to make you want to don your cyberhat every time you load up a game. The Cyber3Dvisor is reasonably cheap for this kind of technology (and it will be bundled with a game, although it hasn't been confirmed which one yet), but the illusion of depth it creates is not convincing enough to warrant the expenditure. ★★★★★



GIGANTA

US\$16.99 • EverGlide • www.everglide.com

You might not be shit at games. Did you know that any of your first-person shooting ills can be handily directed back at inadequate hardware? In actual fact, you might be good enough to walk away with the top prize at a gaming tournament, but if you're using a mouse that's clogged with enough flakes of skin to produce a clone and a worn-out mat then you might as well give up.

There is a solution. 1) Clean your mouse. 2) Invest in one of these specialised mouse mats. The EverGlide GIGANTA is made out of hard, inflexible plastic, and sports a textured surface for maximum accuracy. It takes a bit of getting used to, purely because it's so accurate and fast, but we guarantee that it will improve your game. If you're a bit of a hotshot already it might provide the extra per cent you need. If you're crap then you might be able to kill a few people online. If you're really, really crap then we wouldn't recommend buying one, because it's not a miracle cure-all. ★★★★★



SAITEK P2000 TILT PAD

£39.99 • Saitek • www.saitek.com

Every serious gamer needs a decent pad, and this latest addition to the Saitek range adds to the already sizeable choice. So what do you get for your 40 quid? The clue is in the name, as the P2000 comes replete with the latest tilt technology, making it perfect for girls who insist on tilting regular pads when playing driving games, for instance (and before you start bleating, it was a girl that suggested this). It works well enough, but it's a bit too much like exercise for our liking, and greater accuracy is offered by the analogue stick, a sturdy affair that can also be locked into either axis. Driving games are the P2000's forte, and for something like *NASCAR*, the analogue control is a blessing. It's certainly a usable pad, but despite the attempt to pass itself off as high-tech, it looks a little bit cheap, which it isn't. ★★★★★





IOMEGA ZIPCD 650

£229 • Iomega • www.iomega.co.uk

There are lots of things you can do with a CD-Writer.

Unfortunately, most of them are completely illegal, but even if you stick to the right side of the law, CD storage is definitely the most flexible medium money can buy. Blank CDs are cheap (about 50p each if you buy in bulk), can be read on almost every PC and offer 650Mb of storage space or about 70 minutes of audio.

As the name suggests, this drive also accepts the reusable CD/RW discs, although annoyingly Iomega hasn't bothered to stick one in the box.

The clever thing about this drive is that it hooks up to your PC via a USB port, which means it's as easy to install as a standard phone. SCSI-based drives are still a lot faster (up to 8x recording), but unless your PC is equipped it means buying and installing an extra card (which can be potentially messy). Add this to the fact that it's a relatively small external drive and the upshot is you can take it with you wherever you go, burning CDs with gay abandon. The only downside is the paltry 4x read speed, but as you're not going to be buying this to replace your standard CD drive it doesn't really matter. We love it and we want to keep it. (If Iomega asks, by the way, we've lost it.) ★★★★★

ACT-LABS GUN SYSTEM

US\$89.99 • www.act-labs.com

If you've got a Dreamcast or a PlayStation then you've probably got a gun and a shooting game. Games such as *Time Crisis* and *House Of The Dead* are excellent with a huge TV and a living room with plenty of sofas to hide behind. They're not so good on the PC, and that's why lightgun-games are a bit thin on the ground.

The Gun System kit provides two guns, a single-handed controller for movement, and a holster. First impressions are pretty poor. The guns are light, look like cheap toys (as opposed to expensive toys) and slip out of the holster unless you wedge them in with full force.

You get a game as well, *Remington Top Shot*, an "interactive target shooting game" which is about as interesting as it sounds. Compatibility with other commercial titles is a bit sketchy at the moment (check www.act-labs.com for the latest list), and Activision has just withdrawn from including any future support for *Soldier Of Fortune*.

However, there are a couple of mods that allow you to play with *Quake II* and *Half-Life* (check www.glitterstream.net), where you're shoved through the



game on rails (or move through it using the hand controller), blasting away at hostiles for all you're worth. It's good fun, for about ten minutes, but if this is your kind of thing then you'll get more out of it and, design faults aside, this is a decent enough piece of kit.

★★★★★

BOOKS

TRIGGER HAPPY

Author: Steven Poole
£12.99 • Fourth Estate • Out now

Unlike other established forms of entertainment, such as films and novels, games have struggled to be recognised as art and have received very little academic attention. This book sets out to redress the balance.

Poole is clearly a console man, most of his examples are drawn from console titles, so it's no surprise that *Trigger Happy* concerns itself with the aesthetics of video games rather than a search for meanings.

But it would be foolish to dismiss *Trigger Happy* for this console bias. He charts the pre-history of video games and explores their relation with films, psychology, architecture and painting, while exploding preconceived ways of thinking about them.

A landmark in the critical wasteland of video game writing, this could be the harbinger of a new radical approach to the maturing art of games.

★★★★★

OPTIMIZING WINDOWS FOR GAMES, GRAPHICS AND MULTIMEDIA

Author: David L Farquhar
£16.50 • O'Reilly • Out now

If you're fed up trying to track down ancient hardware mags to find out where you read about a particular Windows tweak, you'll probably find them in this book. The layout is tremendously boring, with no screenshots or graphics, but the information is concise. It has very little to say about games in general, but all the fine-tuning affecting performance will inevitably make your games run better.

★★★★★

FORCE COMMANDER STRATEGY GUIDE

£12.99 • Prima Games • Out now

With a useful run-down of every unit and structure in the game, general strategy tips and step-by-step guides of every mission, there's really little else you could want. You will also find some handy advice from the game's testers, who really know it inside out. Probably more polished than the game itself.

★★★★★

THIEF II STRATEGY GUIDE

£12.99 • Prima Games • Out now

Following the sad demise of Looking Glass, browsing through the guide to its last game is much like reading an autopsy report, with the very innards of the game exposed for the world to see. The exhaustive walkthrough, which reveals every loot location, is let down by shoddy structure and layout.

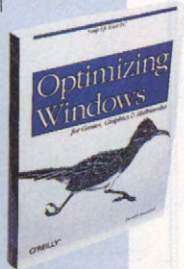
★★★★★

EVERQUEST: RUINS OF KUNARK OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE

£12.99 • Prima Games • Out now

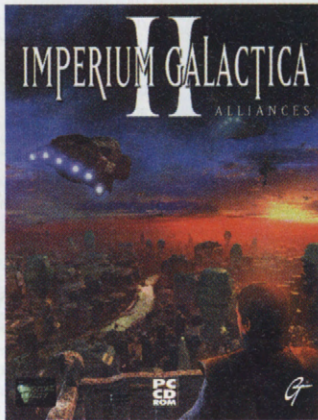
A wealth of information for Verant's online RPG, this guide covers most things to appease novice and even advanced adventurers. A strange oversight, however, is a complete list of spells in alphabetical order, which would have been far more useful had they been divided by class. This suggests the guide was written by someone who hasn't played the game, which is a bit crap. Apart from that it's an almost essential *EQ* companion.

★★★★★

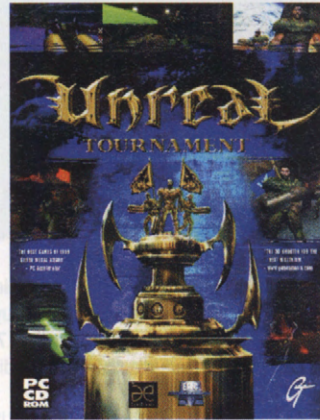


Mark Hill

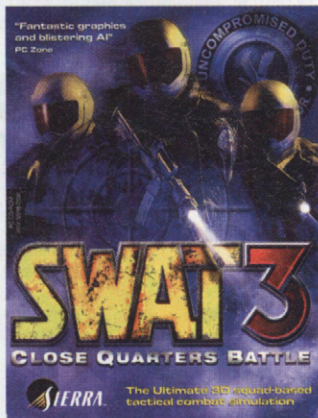
2 pc games for £40*



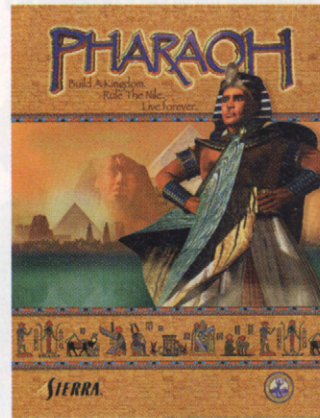
Imperium Galactica 2



Unreal Tournament



Police Quest Swat 3



Pharaoh



mind blowing savings

**SOUTH PARK
HALLY**

It's time to expose secrets
and new players in the latest
South Park game-off.

Great mode - Search for
intelligence and
Drew's Secret will be
Drew's name without

Play as Jerry - Use the
There is death - Love the

Play as the Doctor - Discover
any character - among them
to get some 'hints' for
to be in one egg with

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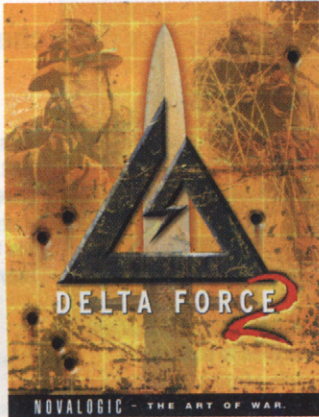
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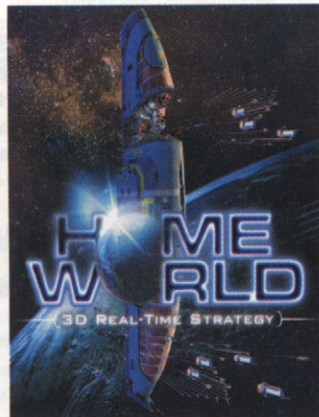
Play as Doctor - Discover
Play as Doctor - Discover



Delta Force 2



Tiberian Sun



Home World



Theme Park World

many more titles available in store

**DANGEROUSLY
ENTERTAINING**



megastores

*Stickered items only. While stocks last.

A BUNCH OF OLD...

★ **MAN IN TROUBLE** Mark Hill



You're nothing but a bunch of cheats. Every day we get dozens of letters and emails asking for personal replies containing cheats

for whatever game it is you're playing. Where is your sense of pride? Where is your spirit of competition, of striving to become better players and better people by overcoming insurmountable odds and tricky situations? We, of course, being the gaming experts that we are, do not shirk even the mightiest of challenges. We face them with confident defiance in search of no reward other than a sense of accomplishment. There's absolutely no truth in the rumour that Dave Woods played *Daikatana* with the *Strategy Guide Book* (which appeared months before the game) nestled snugly in his lap. We are professionals, we can perform miracles with a mouse and keyboard. Keep this in mind when you next supplicate for codes and cheats, you weaklings. By the way, does anyone know how to get into the police archives in *The Nomad Soul*? I'm completely stuck.

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

118 CHEAT MASTER

PC ZONE's biggest cheat, Keith Pullin, shows you how to get the most out of your games.

119 DEAR KEITH

Filled with gaming woes? Feel like there's no one to turn to? Fear not, your worries are over, Uncle Keith is here to help.

120 MESSIAH WALKTHROUGH

Yes, there really is a God, 'cos we have all the answers to the mysteries of *Messiah*.

124 THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

In part two of our super walkthrough Martin Korda guides you right through to the end of the maze that is *Thief II*.

128 DEAR WANDY

Our very own techno wizard waves his magic wand in your direction.

130 WATCHDOG

The consumers' champion, Adam Phillips, springs into action in an effort to find the answers to your gaming gripes.

YOUR HOSTS



Adam Phillips



Keith Pullin



Martin Korda

CHEAT MASTER

Cheats, cheats and then perhaps a few more cheats

★ **CHEATMEISTER** Keith Pullin

ON THE CD



More cheats, tips and solutions on the cover CD this month. Find out

what's in store by looking at the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser.

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, you can solve them if you...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/Cheat Master, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with Dear Keith or Cheat Master in the subject line.

STAR TREK: ARMADA

Activision

Here's another fine collection of cheats to add to last month's *apéritif*. Simply press 'Enter' during the game, then type:

Imoutastepwithreality Enter
Gamma quadrant

Youstopmecold Faster ship production

Avoidance Faster crew production

If you're feeling adventurous you can try the following file modification for invincibility. Open the file 'RTS_CFG.H'. Go to the line under difficulty settings and edit: 'float EASY_DAMAGE = 0.5;' or 'float HARD_DAMAGE = 2.0;' to 'float EASY_DAMAGE = 0.0;' or 'float HARD_DAMAGE = 0.0;'

It's also possible to transport extra people by again modifying the 'RTS_CFG.H' file and changing the 'TRANSPORTER_MAX = 5;' line to a higher value.

IMPERIUM GALACTICA II

Take 2 Interactive

Key in 'listenupeverybody!' on the title screen to activate the cheat mode, then type in any of these spacey codes:

Dienodie God mode
Shootem' All weapons
ghettoblaster All aircrafts

TACHYON: THE FRINGE

Novalogic

During the game press '7' on the keypad to display the console window. Type 'im a cheater' to activate the cheat.

Now, enter one of the following codes:

quickenig God mode
dillithium Full energy
come get some Full ammunition
ragtag All ships
kessel run Ship enhanced
boom stick All items
one million dollars 5000 more credits
there is no spoon Return to Starbase to complete mission

RAINBOW SIX: ROGUE SPEAR URBAN OPERATIONS

Take 2 Interactive

These cheats are activated in the same way as in the

☛ You need never die again in *Urban Operations*.



original game. Basically you just hit 'Enter' during the game to activate the console and then type one or all of the following terrorist terminating codes:

Avatargod Selected character is invincible
Teamgod Team invincible
Theshadowknows Invisible mode
5fingerdiscount Refill ammunition
explore Toggle victory conditions
nobrainer Disable AI

ABOMINATION

Eidos Interactive

Hit 'Enter' during the game, then type one of the following cheats:

autowin! Win mission
dolemite Invincibility
paul hany sees all Show enemy soldiers
toggle bottombar Switch bottom display
set_campaign X Skip to new campaign (where X is one of the campaigns below...)

Angola_tutorial
Angola
Romania
Kola
Caribbean
Kola_2
Ecuador
Peru
Angola_2

STARLANCER

Microsoft

To skip a mission, hold 'Ctrl' at the main menu and type 'potatoe'. 'M1' appears at the top-left corner of the screen. Use the numbers on the keyboard to change this to whatever mission number you like. Now hold 'Ctrl' and 'Enter' until the ship selection screen appears. You can now carry on as normal.

SOUTH PARK RALLY

Acclaim
Here's how to access cheats and new players in the latest South Park spin-off:

Cheat mode Complete championship mode without using any tokens.

Cheat Sheet option Win the Rally Days 1 race without collecting any power-ups.

Play as Jesus Win Christmas race.

Play as Bebe Lose the Cowdays race without getting any health power-ups.

Play as Big Gay AI Win Pink Lemonade race.

Play as Mr Garrison Activate all four checkpoints on the Rally Days 2 race.

Play as Cartman Cop Hit Chicken Lover five times with salty balls in the Read A Book Day race.

Play as Damian Win New Year's race as the only racer to touch the millennium key.

Play as Death Win Halloween race after only dropping off four candies at a time.

Play as Grandpa Win the Halloween race.

Play as Ike Collect the hidden power-up on top of the plane in the Memorial Day race.

Play as Marvin Win Thanksgiving



race without collecting any turkeys.

Play as Mephisto Win Independence Day race.

Play as Mr Mackey Win the Spring Cleaning race.

Play as Ned Collect more than 12 turbo power-ups in the

Independence Day race.

Play as Pip Activate checkpoints one and four on the Rally Days 2 race.

Play as Satan Win the New Year's race.

Play as Shelly Collect three hidden power-ups in the Valentine's Day race. There's one by each tower

and another behind the Skater picture in the jungle.

Play as Terrance and Phillip Collect the four hidden power-ups in the Christmas race.

Play as Tweak Collect five power-ups in the Spring Cleaning race.

Play as Visitor Collect the hidden

power-up above checkpoint one and the power-up between checkpoint four and the wooden bridge in the Memorial Day race.

Play as Scuzzlebutt Find a Phillip fart on the Easter Egg Hunt race. Then find the waterfall and fart your way to the Golden Cow next to the waterfall. [C2]

PHONE FOR HELP

Having trouble with a game and can't wait to see a reply in these pages? Then you need to check out...

THE PC ZONETIPS HELPLINE ON

0906 466 4475

OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, 8AM-11PM

On the rare occasion that they can't help, your query will be passed on to a support team who guarantee to find you an answer within 24 hours.

• Calls cost £1.50 per minute at all times. Charges will appear on your standard telephone bill. If you do not pay the bill yourself, seek permission from whoever does pay it before calling.

If you have any problems, please call Customer Services on 0870 800 6155.

DEAR KEITH

Keith Pullin wades through a river of tears to comfort your gaming grief...

RAMMING SPEED

Q I'm having some real difficulty staying on the track at the start of every race in *F1 2000*. Basically I'm getting rammed all over the place by other drivers and for some reason my beautiful Ferrari handles like a wheelchair in a swamp. Is there a problem with the game or is this something I've just got to learn to live with?

Paul Ingleford, Bradford-upon-Avon

A Pulling away from the green light is a traumatic event in *F1 2000* as the game suffers from severe slowdown at this point, however, there are partial remedies. First, turn down the graphics detail and have only six or seven cars on screen at once. Second, always take it nice and easy at the start of any race – just wait for a sensible passing opportunity rather than flying down the inside and braking late. Finally, try and qualify in pole position – that way nobody will be in your way. Simple!

SUPPLY PROBLEMS

Q All my troops keep running out of supplies in *Earth 2150*. I have a supply depot and everything, but it just

doesn't seem to work. I take it I'm missing something important here, so can you tell me what I'm doing wrong?

Steve Roberts, Great Yarmouth

A Your problem is simple. Due to a substantial shortage of common sense you have not realised that in order to supply the front line you must have some kind of transport to supply them with. In other words you need to manufacture a couple of helicopters and attach them to your supply depot. The rest you'll be delighted to hear happens automatically. Some people...

READING DIFFICULTIES

Q I don't know how to win the Read A Book Day race in *South Park Rally*.

I can't get enough chickens before everyone else, and if I am going well someone always bumps into me and steals the chickens I do have. Please help – this is driving me to distraction.

Burt Busby, Birmingham

A The simplest solution to this problem is to camp by the drop off area until another racer appears with some chickens. Ram them so that you steal their chickens and then

drive the short distance to the drop off area. Keep doing this until you have ten chickens in the drop off zone – it should take hardly any time at all.

IN THE CLUB

Q I'm playing the utterly wonderful *Grim Fandango* but I'm stuck. Why the hell won't Glottis leave the club? I've tried everything, even using the magnet to fix the roulette table to get the place shut down, but still nothing happens. What am I doing wrong?

Matthew Price, Parkstone

A You're on the right track Matthew. Go up to your office, and use the desk to look at the roulette tables. When the red light is on for the right-hand wheel, use the magnet then. Bogan shuts the place down, Glottis gets off his fat arse and you can get on your way.

DIRTY CASH

Q I'm playing *Planescape: Torment* but I end up skint all the time. I've heard there's a way to get more money, so could you please tell me how to do this?

Red Boy, email

A No problem. You need to find the Smouldering Corpse Bar. Go and see Moachi on the eastern side of the bar. Keep telling her that she is not a dustie and then ask for some money. She gives you 50 pieces of gold. Repeat this as often as you like and you can build up some useful reserves.

ON THE EDGE

Q I'm playing *Trespasser* and have made it to the jungle of death. I've avoided the T-Rex and now find myself trying to climb up a rocky gorge. The trouble is there doesn't seem to be enough ledges to make it all the way to the top. I try jumping to one ledge in particular and I just miss it and plummet to the bottom of the cliff. What's going on? Please, please help me!

Flannel Feet, email

A There's no denying it – those rocks are a total pain in the arse – but it is possible to reach each and every one of the ledges. Occasionally you need to use indentations in the rock face to line yourself up for a ledge, but that aside it's a case of crossing back and forth to slowly work your way up to the top.

MESSIAH

WALKTHROUGH

Keith Pullin's no longer in a flap with the *Messiah*...

REVIEWED PCZ #85 SCORE 85%

Use this walkthrough in conjunction with the cheats printed in PCZ #91 and you should complete the game quicker than you can say 'Daddy Pimp'. So dig 'em out and let's wing it...

SHIPPING SECTOR

Walk up the ramp, destroy the box near the welder and go through the door. Stay on that level, walk around the bend to the Navigation Control room and possess the scientist behind the pillar. Activate the small console and some cops run in from gate four to kill the other scientist. Exit the room, head upstairs and go through the restricted access door. Unlock gate four with the remote console. Go through gate four, pick up the machine gun and jump over the

lasers. Kill the soldier at the top of the stairs, jump from the ledge, dispossess and float to the ledges on the left. Climb up the wall and then float down into the fan room. Press the button to make the third fan from the left go up two levels. Go to the second fan from the left, and move it up once. Jump onto the lowest fan and then fly up from fan to fan, until you reach the control room.

Possess a radiation worker and activate all the consoles in the room. Go down in the elevator and through the exit. Possess the welder and then the commander behind the glass. Unlock gate three with the remote console. Head back to gate two, picking up a weapon on the way. Go through gate two and kill the Chots. Kill the guy with the speargun by strafing left and right. Finally, kill

the guy on the crate with any of the long-range weapons found in this room. Head through gate one to finish the level.



Manoeuvre the fans into this formation and fly to the top.



Prepare for a major gunfight and lots of hopping between bodies.

SHIPPING SECTOR



Only a welder has authorisation to pass by these heavy cops.

OLD TOWN



The only way to possess this guy is to get up high and leap straight into his shoulder blades.

OLD TOWN

Use the sentry gun on the roof to shoot the laser wall to the left. Go through here to end up in a room with some mashers. Climb onto the left ledge and crawl under the lasers. Press the switch to cause the floor to open and the scientist to drop into the masher. Repeat this twice more until the masher is full. Use the lower panel to make a large barrel move onto the floor near the incinerator door. Jump onto the barrel (keep flapping your wings) and then onto the ledge left of the incinerator door. Unlock the door and go through.



Bob finds the only way into the scientists' booth.

Use the barrels to jump onto the ledge. You now need to jump and flap your wings to reach the next ledge over by the door. Keep doing this all the way to the top. When you've reached the top, kill everyone in the next room, use the lift to go up to the middle platform, open the door and then possess the rat. Go through the tunnels and over the little lava maze. Keep going until you reach a cop versus Chot running battle.

Go right and break the glass in the cop area. Deactivate the laser wall. Run to the Chot side, go up the stairs, use the barrel to jump into the room behind the plasma shield and activate the lift. Go back outside and go up in the lift. Shoot the box on the ledge in the next room and go through the opening. Shoot the grate and then shatter the windows to drop safely onto the walkway below.



Use the bones to cross when the lava flow wanes.

Go through the window near where the woman is showering. Possess the commander. Go through the door into the room with three other commanders and take the door on the right back up to the room where you shot the box on the ledge. Activate the console on the right for a companion bot. Go back down to the commander room, go up the stairs and out the door. As the commander, kill all the Chots. Go through the gate, and jump in the sentry gun. Destroy the platforms on the building in the distance; this deactivates the nearest laser wall. Go into the next room and operate the panel on the right.

Go through the gate directly ahead and work your way along until you reach a green panel on the floor. Possess a cop and stand on this panel for clearance. Jump in the lift to go up. When it breaks down, go through the gap and possess the welder. Go underneath the lift and fix it, get back in and go up.

Exit the lift, turn left and go up the stairs into the sewer. Keep going until you enter a room with a thin walkway. Go right. When you reach the pistons, use Bob to fly across from one piston to the next to the other side of the broken walkway. Keep going to find a yellow laser door blocked by a body, crawl into the room. Possess a Chot and operate the computer to restore power. Head back to the garages and the main circular room. Find the door under the stairs. Go through here to find the beast. Possess the beast, exit the room, go up the stairs, turn left and continue to the cop with the bazooka. Kill him, unlock the door and crawl under. You're in the circular room again. Go through the garage to the left of the hall. Go to the wiggly red laser wall. Shoot the box in the room to disable the lasers. Go into the room and ascend in the lift.

You're now in the laboratory. Possess a scientist, use the console that is flashing, then open the main laboratory door. The behemoth crashes through. Lead him towards some people, then when he's occupied leap high into his back or head to possess him. Stand on the pressure plate to end the level.



Take out the distant platforms with the gun turret.

WAREHOUSE/ANNEX

Walk through the first garage, into the second and head for the control panel in the small room. Operate both consoles. Leave the room and enter the left door. Ascend the lift on the right side of the room. Activate the switch. Kill the 'arresting officers' and go back down. Walk to the other lift and go up. In the next room, go up again. Jump into a welder and operate the rad-bot panel. Go back down to the floor below and use the rad-bot panel there. Now get in the lift and drop two floors to the basement. Use the rad-bot panel here too. Enter the door labelled 'B.S.' and go down. Use a rad-worker to start the core and then go through the 'Annex' door up in the tank garage.



Operate this panel to get things moving.

Turn right, follow the left wall, go up the stairs into the room and use the panel. Exit the room and follow the left wall until you reach a hole. Take a worker down there and operate the switch. Move Bob back to the top of the stairs, run along the pipe sticking out and jump onto the other pipe. Walk along dodging the flames, bear round to the left and go through the big door at the end. Fly over the flames and possess the Chot. Take out the cops on the other side. Jump down to the bottom and go to the panel on the left. Activate this and wait until the ledges are in position for you to jump/fly to the exit. Climb the boxes and head to where you first came into the annex and open the door down the alley.



Careful timing is needed to avoid the flames.

STREETS/CONVEYOR

Go through the door with the face. Possess a cop on the bridge, kill the other one and activate the panel. Jump onto the pipes, then onto the moving platforms, and then up to the conveyor belt. Jump the lasers using the boxes, then climb onto the ledge on the left and go up in the lift. Press the red discharge switch, then the green door panel. Go down in the lift, jump to the next platform and press the switch there.



Discharging the reactor kills the two cops waiting on the opposite ledge.

WEAPONS FACTORY

Possess a scientist and use the panel by the big screen. Enter the door next to it and possess the cop. Turn left and go through the door at the end of the corridor. Use the panel next to the huge sentry gun. Jump off the ledge and operate the panel below. Enter the door. Use the console on the left, then the one below that to manufacture the maser. Take the lift up. Get out and then take the lift that is immediately on your right straight down to the basement.



Cops protect the area with a vengeance. Get rid of them before you start throwing switches.



Activate the Rad-bot in the basement and then run like hell back to the 'Annex' door.



Use the boxes on the conveyor belt to jump the lasers.



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gameplay

THE GATEWAY TO GAMES

WEAPONS FACTORY



The only way to destroy an Armoured Behemoth is with the maser gun.

WASTE PLANT



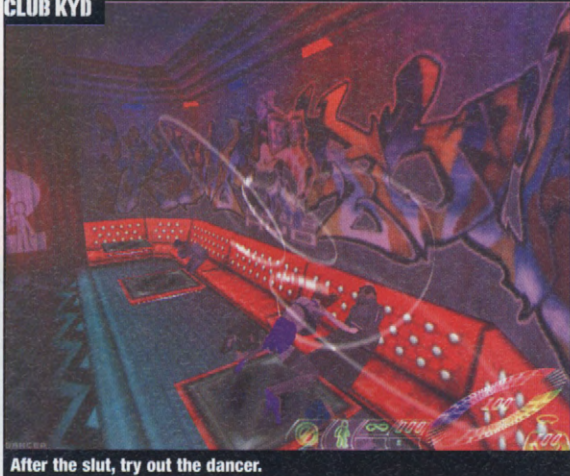
Keep going up after the platforms.

RED LIGHT DISTRICT



Most of the cops here can be taken out with a bit of careful sniping.

CLUB KYD



After the slut, try out the dancer.

← Walk right until the cut-scene. Drop the maser, dispossess the scientist and fly down to the door on the right below the lowered bridge. Go through to reach a relatively straightforward rotating platform jump section. Go through the door at the end and reactivate the bridge. Bring your maser back here to charge it up. Go back across the bridge and take the lift up.



↻ Duck under the bullets when the sentry gun goes haywire.

You are back near the start by the big screen. Go up the stairs, through the door and into the 'exit'. Head downstairs, and out the door on the left. In the next room take the lift on the left up. Dash to the end of the hallway, hit the switch and go through the huge door by the two cops. Blast the Armoured Behemoth with the maser. Run straight down the tunnel. Take out another four A.B.s. Go through the next door and into another jumping area. At the end of this section jump through the large open door. Go through the next door, then the next, and possess the worker. Activate the terminals and go back out the two doors and through the next large door on your left.



↻ Use the trucks and other objects as cover when taking out the Armoured Behemoths.

WASTE PLANT

Ride the platforms, and go into the second opening. Go over to the ledge opposite. Jump to the right and glide. Turn right and keep gliding all the way to the opening below the laser wall.



↻ At last – we reach the annoying rotating platform section...



Scientists never put up a good fight.

Jump onto the moving machinery and leap from platform to platform until you work your way up to a rad-worker. Possess him and go through the nearby door. Go up the lift. In the next room possess the commander behind the truck, activate the console and then get in the truck and drive.

RED LIGHT DISTRICT

Go left. Eliminate the two cops and the sub-girl. Jump onto the ledge. Leap/fly over the yellow lasers and when you reach the mashers hang from the edge of the left ledge and pass beneath them. Pull yourself up, jump some more lasers, and get onto solid ground.



↻ Shimmy under the mashers.

Possess the cop and kill everyone in the vicinity. Climb the stairs, go past the condemned door, and kill all the cops up to the barricade. Return to the stairs and go up another level. Enter the door and go around the corner to the last peep show booth. Go inside and possess the dweller. Now go through the door beyond the barricade. After decontamination head past the sub-girls, go down the stairs at the end of the road and enter the door on the left.

Flick the switch at the bottom of the room. Take the lift up to the highest level and jump on top of the centre column. Jump from that onto the next floor and possess the rat to go through the tunnel. When you emerge, possess the remaining sub-girl, open the bars, throw her over the edge and enter the door. Possess the pimp, get his VIP number from his safe and activate the video console.



↻ Take the VIP password from the safe and then activate the video console.

CLUB PERIMETER

Use the panel to confirm your VIP number. After the cut-scene go through the gap on the left and possess the welder. Use the panel, dispossess and fly over to the next panel. Activate that, and then get through the door before it shuts. Turn left to face the moving platforms. Jump across these, and then crawl through the tunnel on the right side of the bridge where the cop is. Fall through the floor, activate the switch and crawl back through the tunnel. Use the fans and platforms to work your way towards the lift at the end.



↻ Remember to flap those wings to jump further.

Jump onto its roof. Turn left and when you see the broken entrance fly through. Edge your way in until you find the green hand switch. Press it, then possess the cripple. Quickly crawl over and press the panel twice. Enter the lift and possess the guy inside. Leave the lift and disarm when the console tells you to get into the club.



↻ Nip through the broken gate to reach the club.

CLUB KYD

Go through the curtains to the green door. Possess the slut employee and go through the red door. Go upstairs and straight through the curtains.



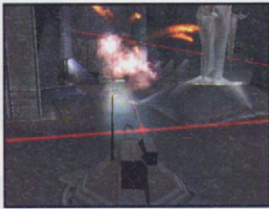
Get into the slut to go further.

Possess the table dancer, pass through middle curtain, go upstairs, through another set of curtains and enter the dance contest. When you're done showing off, go up the lift, pass through two more curtains, possess the commander and enter the door to end the level.



Oh, what a night!

you. When they've been eliminated, go through the big central door and kill the A.B. and the maser scientist within. Enter the next door and use the scientist to operate the panel and enter the teleporter.



Use the turret to go ballistic.



Jump in the teleporter and you're outta there.

CRYO

Use all the X-24 panels in the start room. Go through the door opposite and use one in there too. Go through the door with the bloody pentagram on it and go into the teleporter.



Follow the pentagram to find Satan.

OUTPOST

Jump to the island. Possess a cop and kill another cop to get his gun. Possess a worker and pick up a gun. Go and turn all the valves off. Possess Satan when he takes a breather. Game over. [P2]



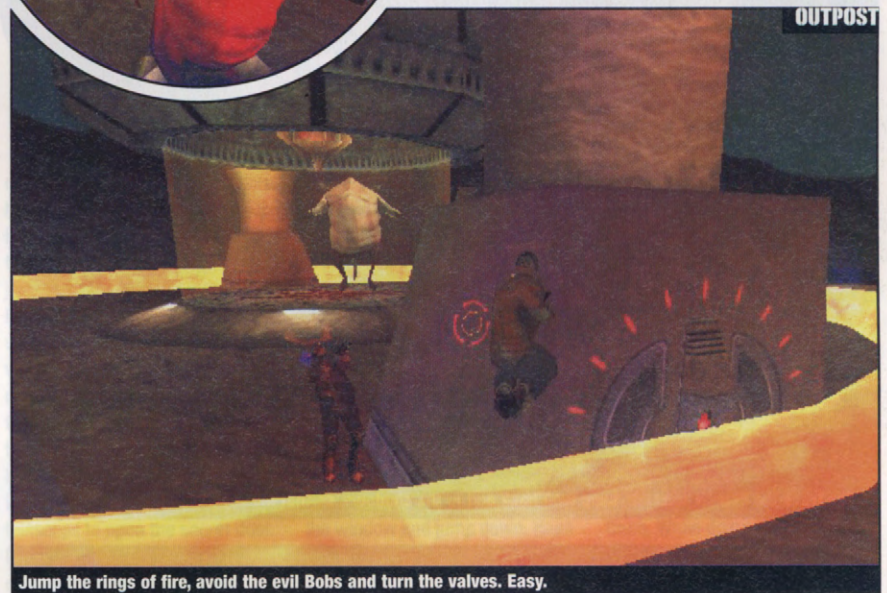
You might want to watch out for those maser guns...



Run around the valves to confuse Satan, then possess him high up the back when he takes a break.



More teleporting action from little Bob.



Jump the rings of fire, avoid the evil Bobs and turn the valves. Easy.



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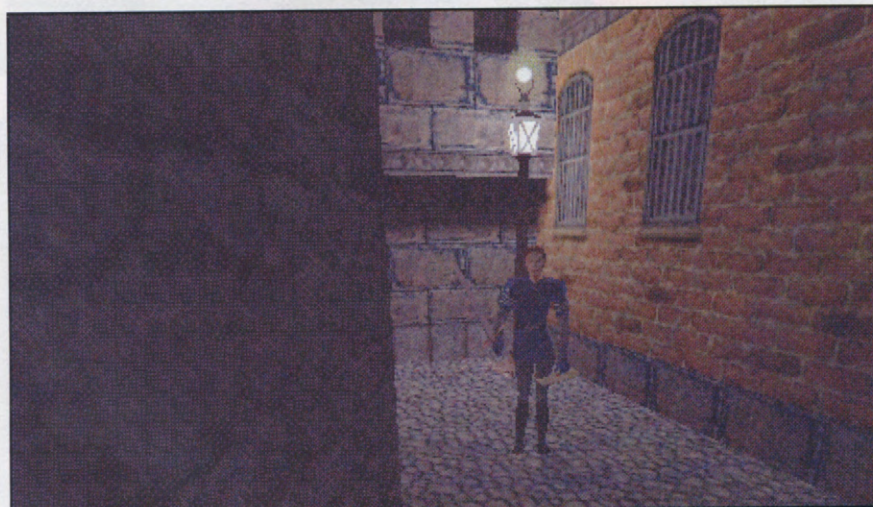
THE GATEWAY TO GAMES

THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

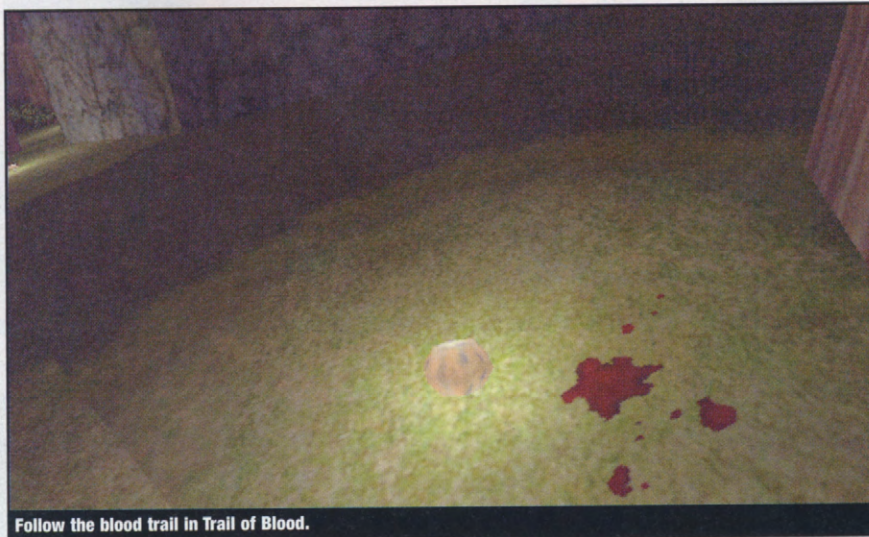
WALKTHROUGH — PART TWO

Martin Korda is your guide for the second part of our adventurous *Thief II* walkthrough

★ REVIEWED PCZ #88 SCORE 82%



In the Trace the Courier mission, keep well back and in the shadows, so that Mosley doesn't spot you.



Follow the blood trail in Trail of Blood.

TRACE THE COURIER

Follow Mosley, always keeping a good distance between you. Pick the pockets of anyone you pass. When you get to the ramp, make sure you have walked past it before the guard returns to his station. When Mosley heads left across the canal's plaza, use the stalls to your left to keep out of sight. At the bridge, hide in the gap until the guard passes. Then cross over the bridge and walk along the street, which runs next to the canal. Keep following Mosley and you'll see her drop a note. Once she's out of sight, read the note and put it back where you found it.

Follow Mosley again. Take a right then a left. Face the canal. You should soon hear the Pagan approaching. Follow him until you get to the graveyard, where he will pause. Wait in the darkness, by the intersection. Watch as the Pagan runs. Go through the archway to the south. Go right, then left. At the street light go left, then right at the intersection. Go left twice, then right down a small slope until you get to a wall with a fence on it and three grey stones. Get on it and activate the lever which is the top left torch.

Get into the tomb and open the double doors. Go to the graveyard. Follow the Pagan's blood trail. Open the double doors and steal whatever you find. Follow the

blood trail again. Open the doors of the tomb where it stops and crawl through the portal.

TRAIL OF BLOOD

Follow the trail of blood. Go into the hut and listen. Head for the stream. Search the Mechanist's body. Swim across the stream. Go round to the back of the hut. Go into the hut and search. Cross the bridge and follow the blood trail. After the garden, go south, round to the back of the house and head east. Go into the hut. Climb the ladder, search and then go back down. Go into another room and look around. Go east to another hut. Get to the right side of the bridge and go in the water and swim west. Climb out at the bridge.

Follow the blood trail again. Go into the hut with the lights on and take whatever you find. Leave the hut and go east. Go to the guard near the torch and knock him out. Head north, until you come across three torches. Go east through the trees, then north. Get into the building, where you'll find some eye sockets. Put the rubies into them. Then get into the mouth.

Follow the blood trail. You should come across four pools, search them. Go towards the purple light. Follow the stream until you get to a dead body. Go down the nearby tunnel. Keep following the blood trail. Take the opening to your left. Head west



Let off some steam during the Life of the Party mission.



At the start of Precious Cargo, go to the drill and head right.

down the slope, take whatever you find and then go back up the slope. Follow the blood trail. When the path divides into three, go west. Take the blue crystals and follow the trail to a guarded entrance. Go west and follow the tunnel. Hug the south wall as you walk along the cliff. Grab the blue crystal, go back to the guarded entrance and kill the beasts.

Walk over the bridge. Shoot a vine arrow into the stones overhead and climb up. Read Mosley's letter and head south. Get the diamonds, using the tree hollow as a hiding place. Ascend the stairs. Get the apples and Mosley's letter. There's a ring among the bones. Leave the room and go down the hallway. Turn left and walk down the slope, taking out the beast as you go. Go back up and head back down the hallway. When it's safe to do so, re-enter the room and go through the south door.

When the path splits go west. Enter the room and just take

everything you can find. Get into the icy room and find Mosley's letter. Go through the right-hand exit. Climb down the rope and follow the tunnel. Take the diamond from the stone, go north-west and get two more diamonds. Go south around the middle tree and pick up another diamond. Go back to where you found the first diamond. Find the other gem near the narrow path and then come back here. Climb up the rope and into the icy room with two exits. Go west and use your sword to get past the ice. Follow the trail of blood. Go through the log and find the Pagan's dead body.

LIFE OF THE PARTY

Get out of the tower from the west side. Get on the roof and jump on the ledge. Go north, jump down and on the ledge and head west to an open window. Go in and steal what you find. Go to the roof opposite the bell tower. Climb up and walk across the pipe on the



The scouting orb is a highly useful tool to have.

right-hand side. Head west over the roof. Climb up, then jump down. Head west, take the ladder down. Go through the window on the ledge and steal the vase. Follow the guard through the door. Go upstairs. Use a vine arrow to get onto the beam. Head east, turn left and go into the opening. Knock down the obstacles, go into the room. Head left. Use the telescope to open the secret door. Loot the secret room. Move two crates, go through the opening. Descend the ladder. Head up the

stairs, take the west door. Go to the roof and up the stairs. Get to the next roof. Fire a water arrow down the chimney. Go down the ladder and steal everything of value. Go back up the chimney and head back to the other rooftop. Get back in the room with the telescope. Jump down into the hallway. Head up the stairs. Climb up, get through the window and jump down. Head south, then west.

Go west from the guards and down the ladder. Turn right at the

bottom of the stairs. Get to the alley. Climb the wall. Get up the red wall. Take the key off the guard, use it on the door to the west. Get to the roof and find the fire escape. Go down to the third floor, loot the apartment and head down to the ground floor.

Get to the Necromancer's Spire. Take the lift. Use the highlighted book. Once on the top floor, jump from the window to the ledge. Go up the stairs and out the north window onto the ledge. Get in through other windows and steal what you find. Go to the roof. Go inside the greenhouse. Get to the armoury in the house. Blow the door. Steal the key from the guard in the foyer and use it to get into Tuttleshank's office. Go to the roof. Get through the door near the angel. Find the voice machines and activate all of them. While doing this, loot as much as you can. Once you've completed the objectives, climb into the bell tower.



you'll be back

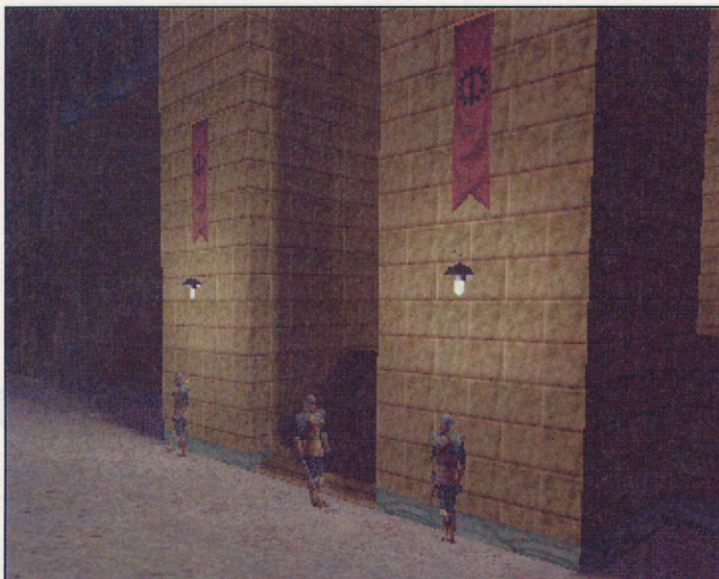
Gameplay is the site you'll want to come back to. It's easy to connect to the UK's best online games community. And the human opponents are the hardest around. Get into gameplay, again and again. www.gameplay.com/wireplay



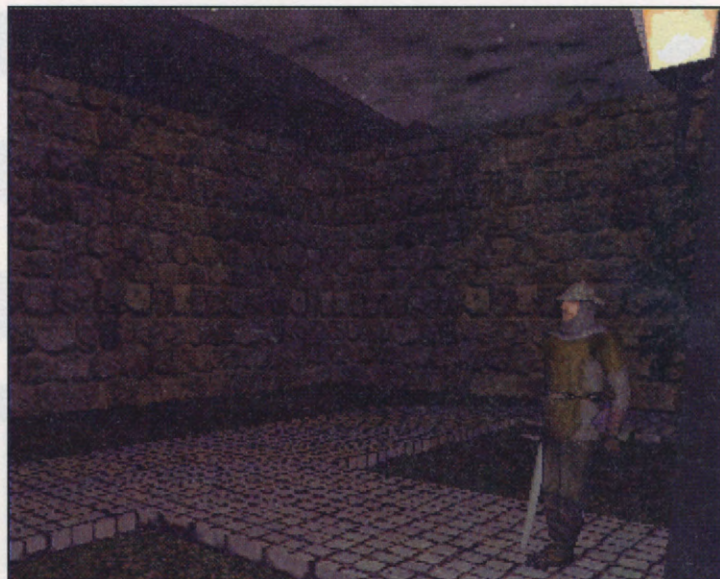
gameplay

THE GATEWAY TO GAMES

There is no charge for playing games on the gameplay site, however you will be responsible for call charges (from 1p per minute)



The Kidnap mission has absolutely nothing to do with children or sleeping.



In Casing the Joint, you need to take out that guard to get into the building.

← PRECIOUS CARGO

Walk past the drill and search the hut. Climb the three rocks and get across the ropes. Crawl into the tunnel and follow it. Push the switches up. Go to the lighthouse. Head through the north opening near the well. Go inside the building to the west. Burglar the house. There's a switch under the crates. Descend the stairs that lead to the lighthouse. Get the key from the priest.

Get to the Cetus Amicus and search it. Swim under the dock and into the passage. Get the key from the guard. Go back to the boat. Loot the ship. Swim under the dock and head left and through the hole. Get the scroll. Swim to the blocked tunnel. Remove the blockade. Swim to Captain Markham's ship and loot it. Find the room with the lockers. Loot them and the room. Make sure you pick up the key for Cargo Locker

No 5. To get to Cargo Locker No 5, go through the engine room. Then use the key on the lock and go in.

KIDNAP

Go up and then right. Move the barrels and enter the hall. Loot all the rooms. Go upstairs and get the key from the guard. Loot all the rooms. Use the key on the grey door south of the hall. Go downstairs and search all of the rooms. Hit the switch on the right to get into the Lost City. Go in.

Head up the slope to sites one, two and six. Get rid of and rob the guards. Go to site seven and take out or distract the guards. Search and loot the area. On the path to sites one, two and six, take the left tunnel. Find the scripture. Search all the rooms, then go to the ruins. By the lava pools, find a machine which ticks.

Find site five and loot it. Then go upstairs to Cavador's room,

knock him out and steal his key. Get his diary from his room. Pick up Cavador and escape with him without being spotted.

CASING THE JOINT

Get out of the water and head west. Throw the switch on the mansion wall. In the room with the tapestry and desk, throw the switch behind the tapestry. Put the switches to their off positions. Slash another tapestry to find another switch. Loot the rooms as you go.

Now get to the second floor. Throw the switch on the left side of one of the arches. In the trophy room, put the switches into their off positions. Go onto the balcony and get to the end of it. Get the cuckoo from the tool box. In a room near the ballroom, use the levers to deactivate the alarm

systems. Now go to the library through the secret passage way which opens when you press a switch low down on the wall of another nearby room.

Find and read the three books about the librarian and his helper's wife. Read the book near the fire. Then check the T, N, Y and P sections. Find the book in the P section which opens the secret passage. Go to the library's second floor and steal all the gold you find. Go back to the first floor and into the hallway. Put the cuckoo into the clock and set it to 12 o'clock. Make sure that you map half of the mansion. Once you've done that, go to the main hall, pick open the main doors and go outside.

MASKS

Go back the way you went in the last mission to get to the clock outside the library, looting as you go. Set the clock's hands

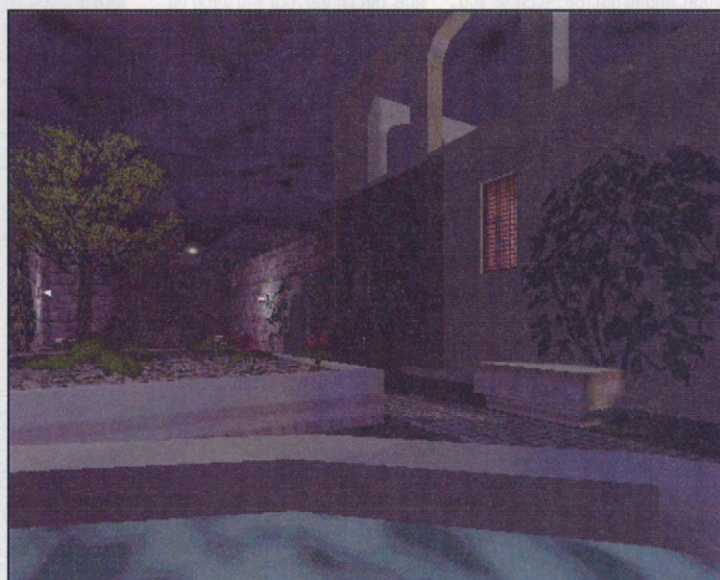
to 12 o'clock again. Walk through the secret panel and then up the stairs.

After getting past the guards, go up to the next level. Pick open the double doors and steal everything you find. In the security office, put all four of the switches into their off positions. Use the beams to guide you to the green room. Take the masks. Now head for the alarm room. Set the switch to its on position. Unlock the switch and set it to off. Go to the red room and get three more masks. Head back to the alarm room. Set the south-west switch to the off setting. Go to the blue rooms and get the masks.

Find and pick open the locked double doors. Pick up the cultivator. Then go back to the library. There's a switch behind the stand. Go through the passage it opens. Pick open the locked doors as you go. Loot every room as



You'll have to use many machines in the final mission Sabotage and Soulforge.



There's plenty of retracing your steps from the last mission in Masks.

you move through the mansion. When you get to the main hall, pick open the door and leave.

SABOTAGE AND SOULFORGE

Go to the wall with the three banners hanging off it. Keep looking above you, and when you see a grating, fire a vine arrow into it and pull yourself up. Follow the ledge, jump down near the pillars and then loot all the rooms nearby. Go to the plans room and read the note on the desk. Open the seven safes.

Head for the storerooms. Go left in the circular room, and head left when you get to the three banners. Climb the ladder next to the machine. Drop a signal bolt into it. Get the first stage piece. Use the machine in the next room, put the quicklime and iron chassis into it and throw the switch four times. Go to the room with the banners. Go south to some gears. Take out the robots. Now get to the rolling machine. Put the

Loot the barracks, then get up the ladder and follow the first pipe.

Go to the antenna and put the switch to B. Go to the room where there are several panels. Distract or destroy all of the robots. Make sure that both gates are up. Go north through the gates and up the lift. Go up the other lift and use the lever. Return to the room with the water tank. Go north through the room with the pipes. Find the room with the turrets. Shoot the button with an arrow. Go into the green room. When you come to an explosive device, set it off with a fire arrow, and stand well back. Pull the nearby red lever, then jump down to the floor from the ledge you get on from the catwalk. Hit the switch near the antenna. Run past the barracks, head south and then

phase one piece into it, press the button, then get the stage two piece.

Return to the room with three banners again, then go to the room with three arches. When you get to the pool of water, swim down to the bottom until it's clear to emerge. Use the red button on the linking machine. Grab the regulating round. On the other side of the room is another machine, put the phase two piece in it along with a mine bulb and a steel plate. This will make the stage three piece.

Find the fountain and head for Bay E. Go up the ladder. Nearby is the machine you need to make your guiding beacon. Put the stage three piece into it to do so. Exit west, then north. Walk through the double doors. After the arches, follow the ledge and drop down. Head east, following the corridor. Cross the courtyard, go through the door. Take the lift up. Go through the metal door. Climb the ladder. Put the switch to the B setting. Go north, then west and west again at the junction. Get to the room with flashing lights. Head north. Go through the stamping machine and go north again. Climb the ladder. Slide down the shoot and go up the lift. Put the lever to B. Get through the fire room quickly.



ⓘ You won't last long against these guys. So make sure you avoid them.

north at the junction. Lockpick the double doors. Go to the stairs then use the lift to take you down.

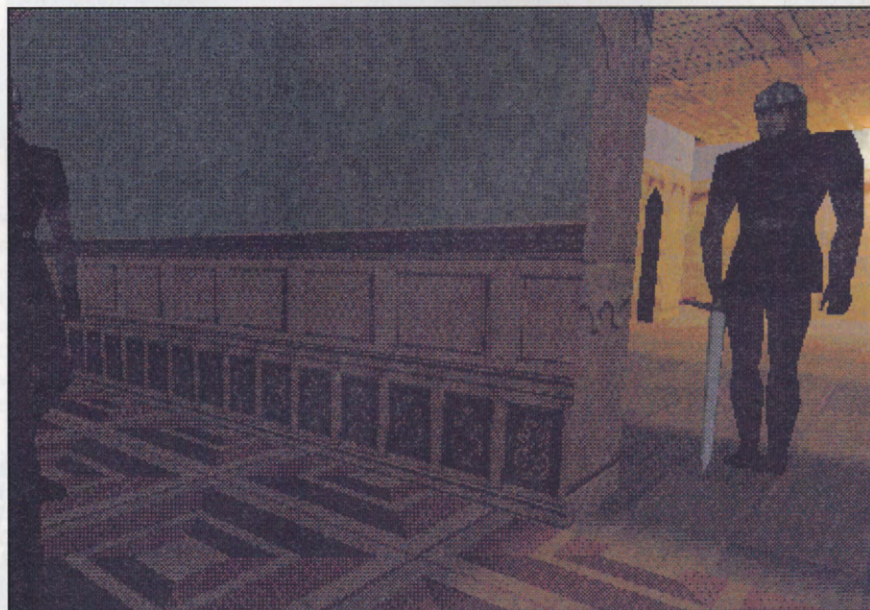
Head west, then left and up the slope. Hit the red switch. Go down the slope and head North. Go to the water and find the tunnel. Swim through it. When you surface, climb up the ladder. Hit the switch. Go through the hole and walk east. Climb up the ladder. Walk past the conveyor belt. Use the switch to turn off the alarm system. Go up the ladder, flick the switch, then go to Bay A. Now you want to head back out of this place. Retrace your steps to the three large banners, and turn left, then right into bay A. Go south until you reach the double doors, walk through, and if you've completed all of your objectives you should have finished the game. [PC]



Climbing up high not only keeps you out of sight, it also helps you survey a larger area.



Use moss arrows to cushion your steps over noisy surfaces.



Even though guards can't see you in the dark, they can still hear you moving.

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EMAIL Address your letters to us at letters.pzone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading Dear Wandy.

Please note: while we can assure you that we read every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

YETH TO ATHLON?

Q I'm a bit confused by all the processors that are on the market these days. You seem to use the new generation AMD Athlon processors, and I've seen stats which show that the Pentium equivalent is slower than the AMD. But on most 3D cards it says the card requires a 'genuine' Pentium processor to run. Is this a problem with AMD chips? Do you need patches for your games/3D card for them to run on AMD CPUs?

Also, I've been looking at new PCs on the Net, and have found that Dell is selling 1GHz Pentium IIIs – but one of my mates said that Intel had given up trying to make the Pentium III into a 1GHz chip because of some sort of limitations. Is this true? The last Athlon CPU I saw that was 1GHz had a giant fan unit bolted to it, do you think these gig Pentiums would be the same?

Gaz Priestley

A The processor world has gone a bit mad recently. There's nothing like a bit of healthy competition to get things moving, with the recent burst brought about by AMD producing the mighty Athlon. It's a truly wonderful

processor, and compared to the original Intel Pentium III, it's both faster and a whole lot cheaper (who said you can't have your cake and eat it, eh?). The race was then on to the 1GHz goal – a race which AMD narrowly won.

Only a few months ago, Kryotech came out with its SuperG system: an AMD Athlon 800 machine running at 1GHz with the aid of a fridge inside the case. No, we're not kidding, see www.kryotech.com.

This isn't the way it'll always be though. The faster you run a chip, the more heat it generates, so to get around this you make the chip smaller, because you can then run it with a lower voltage. Intel and AMD have improved on their original chips: they both run on lower power drain and can thus be cooled without having a bottle of liquid nitrogen bolted to the case. Indeed, Intel's new Pentium III (called the Coppermine) actually has a slight performance advantage over the Athlon due to its L2 cache running at full processor speed (the Athlon's cache runs at 350MHz and below).

As for drivers and the like, an AMD chip is actually better behaved than a lot of people tend to think. One of the world's largest and perhaps the most trusted PC maker, Compaq, uses AMD Athlons in its flagship products. 'Nuff said.

PLEASE SHUTDOWN

Q When I try to shut down Windows 98 on my computer, it never gets as far as the 'It's Now Safe To Turn Off Your Computer' screen and instead gets stuck at the 'Windows Is Shutting Down' screen. I've seen this on other computers and was wondering how to go about fixing it. I remember that before this problem came along, you could hear the hard drive wind down as it showed the aforementioned screen, but now I just have to turn the power off while it's still whirring away. Is this something I should be worried about, and if so could you please tell me how to fix it. I realise that this could be more complicated than it appears, but if you could point me in the right direction I would be very grateful.

Daniel Caddy

A When you ask Windows to shut down, it goes through all the programs and drivers that are currently loaded in memory and tells them it's time for bed. It then waits for the programs and drivers to confirm that they've finished, saving off anything they might have in memory. Once every program and driver has been given a thumbs up, Windows completes the shut down.

Only trouble is, it sometimes doesn't work, and often there's no obvious way to fix it. You could go through your hardware list, disabling

It's now completely unsafe to turn off your computer.

Go on, switch it off at the plug. See if we bloody care.

What the shutdown screen should say.

different devices until Windows reboots smoothly and without coughing, but we've been down that road at least twice before and it's far too much aggravation.

Visit windowsupdate.microsoft.com and make sure you have the latest version of Windows installed. Microsoft actually lists the shutdown grief as a bug, and has released a patch to fix it. We've updated our system and... it still does it. You may have better luck.

GREEN FOREVER?

Q I've been trying to get my dad to upgrade our PC for a while now, but the thing is our motherboard is a Soyo 5XA (Socket 7) with a 66MHz bus speed. I can't find any CPUs around that can be supported by our motherboard that will be significantly faster than our crappy P166 MMX. So I looked into getting an upgrade chip from Evergreen Technologies. It claims to speed up a CPU of 75MHz or above to 400MHz. There are a few things I'm not sure about, though: 1) How does it work? 2) What will the CPU's performance be like compared to a PII/III/AMD K6-2/K6-3 processor of the same speed? 3) Is it worth buying?

Andy Best

A The Evergreen upgrades work by putting a fast processor on top of a little circuit board, which then plugs into the old CPU socket on your motherboard. The little circuit board basically provides an interface between your slow motherboard and the fast processor.

They can be quite useful, but an old machine with an 'upgrade chip' like this will never be as fast as a machine with a motherboard designed for a 400MHz chip.

Is it worth buying? Well, that really depends on the rest of your machine and your technical ability. You could

The screenshot shows the Kryotech website in Microsoft Internet Explorer. The page features the 'SuperG' logo and text: 'KryoTech is making the Athlon™ the coolest chip in town.' Below this, it says: 'KryoTech™ has unleashed the ultimate in high performance desktop systems: The SuperG®. Running at a very cool 1,000MHz! Using the AMD® Athlon™ chatted out to -40°C, we have raised the standard in processor speed. Who has time to wait for Megahertz? Welcome to the Gig!' There is an image of a computer case with a large fan. At the bottom, it says '1 Billion Cycles Per Second!' and 'Keep your Athlon cool with Kryotech.'

Do not be afraid of the Athlon.

buy a new motherboard and something like an AMD K6-2-500 for less than the cost of the upgrade, but then you'd have to fit it – if you've not done it before, you could be in for a real headache.

DIGITAL WORLD

Q I'm writing concerning all the technological advancements in the PC industry. Everywhere I turn there seems to be faster processors, faster CD-ROMS, better graphics cards, sound cards and bigger hard drives being churned out. However, there is not much advancement with modems. Can you shed some light on this matter? Has the modem as we

bridges the gap (although 'modem speak' sounds more like pigs in a microwave).

The new technologies such as ADSL, Cable Modems – even ISDN that BT is still desperately trying to sell to home users – keep the signal digital all the way from your machine to the destination. They're also a lot faster. So along with punch cards, Telex and dot matrix printers, the analog modem is not long for this world.

GO GO GRAPHICS

Q I recently read the article in Dear Wandy on the SIS 6326. I also have one of these cards as the primary card in my computer. Reading your article got me

MORE RAM LESS SPEED

Q I have a 700MHz Athlon with 256Mb of RAM, Sound Blaster Live! Platinum and a RIVA TNT2 Ultra graphics card. I built it myself and have had no problems so far. However, when I ran 3D-Mark when I had 128Mb of RAM, I got a higher score (6,345) than when I have 256Mb of RAM in (5,679). Why is this?

Moby Duck, England

A This looks like the old problem with some of the Socket 7 motherboards. Some chipsets, including Intel's, would only cache the first 64Mb of memory, so when you stuffed 128Mb in, the second half was ignored by the L2 cache. And guess where Windows packs all its meat? Yup, at the top of the memory.

Athlon boards and chipsets are different, but the symptoms make it sound similar. I have had a look for something to confirm or deny my theory, but have drawn a blank. Can any of our helpful readers shed any light on this?

MODEM TO MODEM

Q Please help! A friend and I

Q Can you fit this beast through your phone line?

worried, as I want to have cutting edge technology – and what I have is obviously not 'it'. My secondary card is a Voodoo2 by the way. If I was to upgrade to a GeForce256 64Mb, could I also plug something like a RivaTNT2 into my motherboard as my primary card? I hope you can help.

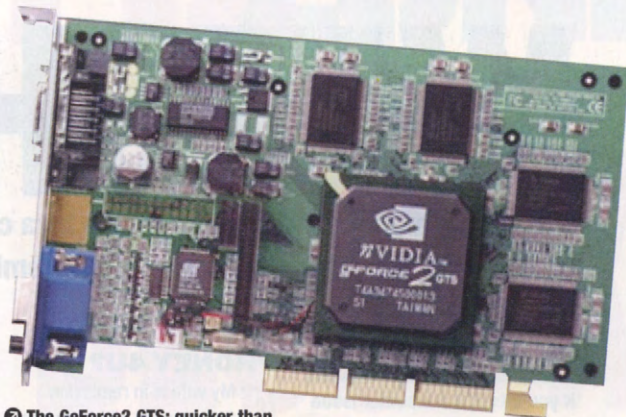
Alex Avery

A These days the idea of a primary and secondary card has pretty much gone out window. All the modern 3D accelerator cards are more than capable of providing the 2D graphics required for boring Windows desktop stuff. So, basically, you don't need a standard primary card anymore, and in the case of the GeForce and the TNT2, they're both capable of performing the 2D and 3D functions required. Obviously as the GeForce256 is the newer card in NVIDIA's range, it's also faster – but can you stretch to a GeForce2 GTS? If you want 'it', that's 'the' card to have.

want to know if it's possible to dial into each other's PC via telephone (we both have cable which gives us free calls after 7pm). We both have Windows 98SE and want to play Quake against each other. Is this possible?

Hayley

A This could prove a little tricky, depending on your familiarity with Windows. Games that allow multiplayer modes are usually designed for you to play on a Local Area



Q The GeForce2 GTS: quicker than a Voodoo5 5500. Ho ho ho.

Network (LAN) or via the Internet. The Americans have had free Internet access for years, so the idea that anyone would want to connect to each other directly is somewhat alien to many modern game programmers. That said, you can still do it, and while it's beyond the scope of Dear Wandy, fret not: a hugely useful tutorial is available online at

www.ozemail.com.au/~jenderby/q2net.

To be honest, the easiest way forward is to use a Net connection to bridge the gap between your two machines. I don't know which cable company you use, but some of them have 24/7 access for a fixed monthly fee (eg NTL at www.ntl.co.uk). Alternatively, have a look at some of the freebie ISPs that have recently popped out of the woodwork. Bookmark net4nowt.com/unmetered for details. [\[E\]](#)



“Everywhere I turn there seems to be faster processors, faster CD-ROMS, better graphics cards, sound cards and bigger hard drives being churned out”

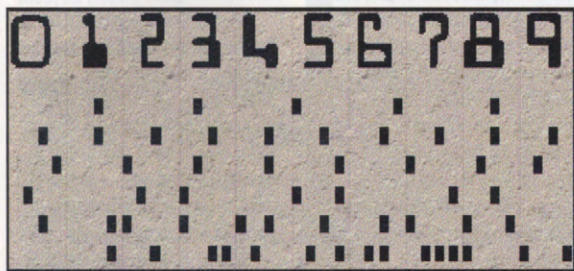
HEEGO, TRYING HIS BEST TO KEEP UP WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

know it 'hit a technological wall' whereby it cannot advance any more? I am confused, as so-called experts claim the Internet is worth billions – and how can we join the gold rush without a decent and advanced modem? The hype is about DVD, but what about good old modems?

Heego

A Yes, 56K is a technological wall. Then again we've had a fair few of those – we recall being told that 1,200 baud really was as fast as you could go. Then 14,400, then 28,800 and so on. Having said that, we can't honestly see modems ever going much above 56Kbps. Most of us will testify that they struggle above 48Kbps because of the ageing copper wire that BT rents to us each month.

But fear not. New technologies are here, and are taking over. The old modem idea was to have a modem on your machine and a modem on the destination machine – an audio signal no different to normal voice communication



Are punch cards likely to make a come back? We think not.

WATCHDOG

The software industry can sometimes be a closed shop when it comes to punters and their complaints. Let **PC ZONE** ramraid their premises for you and snatch some answers...

WRITER Adam Philips

LIVING IN A WORLD O' HURT?

If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line. Please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you've got a techie problem, then write to Dear Wandy (page 128)

WRITE TO Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL Email us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

PHONEY 4U?

Q My wife is in remission from cancer, which means we were online before it was fashionable as 90 per cent of our life is spent in the house and the Net opened up a whole new world. Money is always short, so the free Internet access services have really helped.

We were with Screaming.net and had no real problems with them, but along came what we thought was a better offer – 4UNet which had free 0800 all-day access. After checking there were no catches, we changed from Screaming.net to BT.

The lag was OK – no problems – but we noticed random disconnections. I checked that all the network settings were fine and then rang the 50p per minute help line. I was told: "Oh, didn't someone tell you we disconnect every hour?" I said: "No, they didn't." They replied: "Oh, you must be mistaken – all our operatives tell everyone that."

4UNet had no reply when I enquired as to why I would move from Screaming.net's three hourly disconnect to a one hourly disconnect service.

We were annoyed, but stuck with the service. We got a timer so we could stop fighting in on-line games, such as *EverQuest*, before 59 minutes! After all, it's free! But there are still random disconnections, and not just on the hour. I had the phone line tested and the gain increased by BT, but this didn't help. I even bought a new modem.

It still disconnects – sometimes it's on for a full hour, but mostly it's on for five minutes/two minutes/etc and then it disconnects. In fact, I've had six disconnects while writing this email!

Anyway, we had a bit of money set aside so we had BT put in its Home Highway dual ISDN line. Part of this is a complete test of your line and from 6pm at night we can connect via ISDN with no

problems and we use the analogue line during the day. I've tried the likes of Virgin and BT Internet to test the system and the lines are stable with no disconnects.

4UNet still profess nothing is wrong with its system and the last time I called, they said an engineer would phone us back, but hasn't so far. It really is worse than useless, but hopefully, we will be going onto Surftime as soon as it comes out. Some compensation would be nice, but I do think we are dreaming there.

Jason and Paola Alcock

A Watchdog trotted off to 4UNet to see if it could offer a conclusive explanation for the problems you have been experiencing. Emma Swindells, a spokesperson for the company, says: "While we express our sympathies with the situation that Mr and Mrs Alcock are experiencing, I would like to point out that to enjoy our free, unmetered

service, Mr Alcock agreed to our Terms and Conditions, which are clearly detailed at the end of our sign up process and are also generally available on our website. These explicitly state in Paragraphs 4(ix) and 4(x) that we automatically disconnect the service after five minutes of inactivity and at 60 minutes per session."

4UNet says the reason for this is to provide all users with "a first-class service – the quality of which has been widely recognised with many maximum performance scores and ratings in PC and Internet magazines, and to prevent abuse of the service."

While it readily accepts you are not wilfully "abusing" its service, it has created rules to satisfy the majority of its target audience, and "unless we have such anti-abuse procedures in place, we would be open to wide-scale abuse that would affect the large majority of our existing customer base."

4UNet says it's sorry for any inconvenience caused to you, "but they have signed up to our terms and conditions and are merely experiencing the consequences of those. I would further point out that ISDN connections are expressly forbidden under our Terms and Conditions."

3DFX WOES

Q Earlier this year I bought a Voodoo3 3000 AGP from a local computer dealer. I was looking forward to getting home and playing the free bundled games that were supposed to come in the retail package.

I found that the box had only the card and driver CD in it. I had heard that you were supposed to get *FIFA '99*, *NFS3* and *Unreal* with the card. The latter should have come with a coupon to allow you to trade it in for *Unreal Tournament* upon its release.

When I discovered it wasn't there, I was very disappointed.

PAPER CHASE

Manual loading ain't much fun...

Q I bought the *Armageddon* collection that includes *Worms Armageddon*, *Addiction Pinball* and the *WA* screen saver. Trouble is, the manuals are on a CD. I find this very annoying because I don't want to have to load the manual from the CD every time I need something.

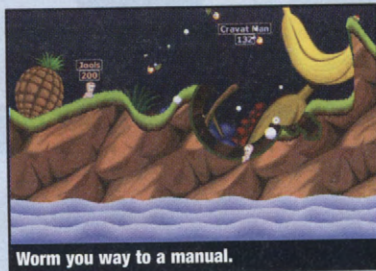
I contacted Team 17's support line and was told: "Unfortunately, the collection was designed to have the manual on a CD and therefore we have no spare copies." This gave me the impression that the original had its own written manual. They then suggested that I print off the manual. Why should I have to print off a 53 page document just because they felt like putting the manual on CD? It's absolutely pathetic. A mate of mine had the same problem when he bought the *Tycoon* Collection. They are just being slack because it's a budget release.

Andy Best

A Watchdog contacted games industry veterans Team 17 to find out what the situation is with CD-only manuals.

Martyn Brown, one of the top dogs at the company, told us that it can offer little in the way of help because the packaging and manuals are the publisher's responsibility, which in this case is down to Hasbro Interactive – who also did the *Tycoon* collection.

Martyn offers the following suggestion though: "Should users feel strongly about this and other 'paper-part' issues, I propose they contact the publisher directly as these decisions have very little to do with the people that actually develop the games themselves. On balance, I'd



also tentatively suggest that it's cost-cutting methods such as this one that allow the publishers to bundle extensive manual, multi-title compilations at attractive prices, especially when you look at the documentation with the *Tycoon* series – the inclusion of the bound manuals would have meant a very prohibitive cost in building the units in the first place and would certainly have led to greatly increased prices."

From a developer's point of view though, Martyn does agree that manuals are extremely useful: "I wrote the *Worms Armageddon* manual myself," he says, "and have never personally been happy with the thought that manuals should be anything other than of the bound paper variety – particularly for *Worms*, since it's a game where it's highly beneficial that you are aware of all its aspects."

In your case Andy, Martyn says he will be delighted to provide you with an original *Worms Armageddon* manual signed by the Team 17 crew.

I emailed 3dfx and was told to scan a picture of my receipt and the sticker on the front of my box, and send it to them. I do not have this sticker on my box, which leads me to believe that it has discontinued the offer.

This leaves me with an OEM package I paid retail price for. I do not see why I should have to pay an extra £40 for a retail package that isn't anything more than an OEM pack in a fancy green box. What really annoys me is that some stores are still selling the packs with the games in it at a cheaper price. I really wish I'd waited now, but the damage has been done.

Darren Maggs

A Fret not – the bods at 3dfx offered this explanation for the apparent screw-up: “Naturally we regret that Mr Maggs has experienced an inconsistency in the supply of product to market from 3dfx,” says Stuart Lester, 3dfx’s operations director. “The bundled games were removed from the product in late December, combined with a price reduction of the product, as we repositioned it in the marketplace. This is part of an ongoing process aimed at bringing the most cost competitive offers to consumers, and a natural phase in the product life cycle.”

“I don’t see why I should have to pay an extra £40 for a retail package that isn’t anything more than an OEM pack in a fancy box”

DARREN MAGGS, AIRING HIS 3DFX GRIEVANCES

3dfx says you have unfortunately suffered from seeing (and we quote) “inventory still in the channel with the bundled games, which had moved out to the stores more slowly than some of the new style product, but had still been priced down. We always try to minimise problems like these by closely monitoring inventory in the channel, and ensuring that sell-through is maximised (ahh, what glorious operations waffle! – Ed). We also, as noted, ensured that the game bundle stickers were removed from the packaging

when the content changed.”

The bottom line is 3dfx should have been in contact with you by now to make sure you’re happy with the card. And don’t be surprised if it offers you a “gesture of goodwill” in the process, ie the games you wanted. Bless ‘em.

LACK OF INSIGHT?

Q I am writing to tell you about the extremely poor standards of customer service I’ve received from Insight (www.insight.com). Six weeks ago I was looking for a replacement graphics card and noticed that Insight was offering a Voodoo3 2000 AGP 16Mb for £43.46, inc VAT. After checking its



Insight manages to incite a reader.

performance, I immediately ordered one – as I am a student and on a tight budget, the offer to upgrade to a card like this was one I could hardly refuse.

I filled in the application form and noted that the item was not yet in stock – but was expected in three days time. I then moved

onto the shipping options. There were three choices: ‘Next Day’ delivery, ‘Three Day’ and finally – although I forget the exact length – delivery in about a week. I did notice that all three were apparently free, so obviously I chose ‘Next Day’ delivery.

The following evening, I checked the status of my order only to find that for some reason Insight had added £10 for delivery charges. I duly complained, and eventually it removed the charge. However, the three days came and went. It is now six weeks later and the current date for arrival is April 28. I ordered the card on March 3!

I do realise that the control of stock is often out of the hands of the company, but I checked at www.dabs.com and it has 353 of the same item in stock! There may be a shortage, but it can’t be that bad!

I have tried asking other companies such as Dabs and Msquared.com if they will price match, but to no avail. People should be wary of such offers especially from Insight – other friends have had similar, though not as bad, problems.

David Candlish

A Sounds like a recurring problem with online services. We approached Insight with your complaint and it gave the following explanation: “We were offered these OEM cards by one of our major suppliers and advertised them accordingly, allowing customers to place provisional orders pending receipt of the goods,” explains Judy Greaves from Insight’s customer services. “Despite continuing to provide ETAs for delivery, the supplier has now confirmed it is unable to supply the cards, and consequently we have had to cancel all outstanding orders. The retail version of this card has been available for some time, but at a price of £63.99 + VAT. I assume this is the version stocked by Dabs and Msquared and why they are unable to price match the OEM version.”

Insight goes on to say that when you placed your order it was also experiencing some system problems whereby both the ‘Next Day’ and ‘Three Day Delivery’ services were offered free. Trouble was that upon selecting the ‘Next Day’ option, it generated the appropriate ‘Next Day’ charge. Insight says it has removed the charge and apologises for the error.

Insight concluded: “We regret the inconvenience caused to all our customers who placed provisional orders for this product, but this is beyond our control!”

It looks as if you’ll have to buy your card elsewhere, and perhaps you should only order stock that is available... ☹

READ THIS PLEASE!

If you are writing in to complain about a product whether it be a ropey piece of software or a shoddy PC, please supply us with your full name, address and contact number. With

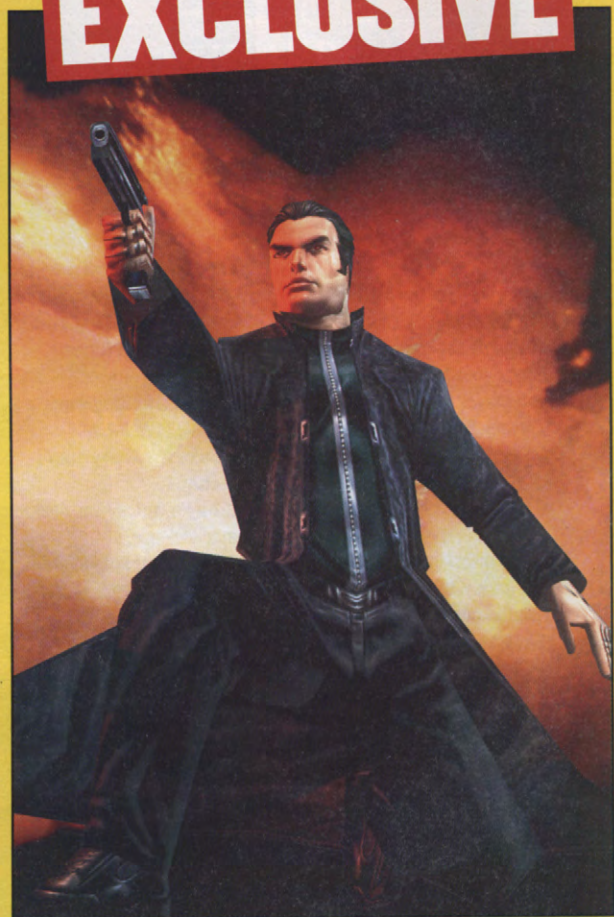
PCs especially, make sure that you also include all purchasing details, such as reference and invoice numbers. It means that we can resolve your problems much faster.

PCZONE

COMING NEXT ISSUE

DEUS EX

EXCLUSIVE



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ON SALE THURSDAY 27 JULY

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

We ask the public what games are currently residing on their PCs

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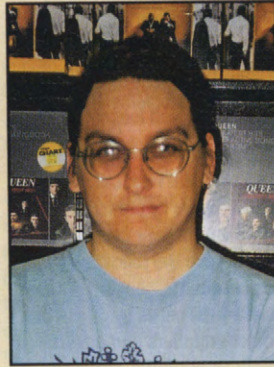
AD STEVENSON
28, Works in the games industry

What's on your hard drive?
"Counter-Strike, Team Alligator, Codename Eagle and Messiah."
What's your favourite multiplayer FPS?
"Counter-Strike, it's the most realistic and tactical FPS shooter."
What are you looking forward to playing in the future?
"Need For Speed Porsche 2000 is one I'm looking out for."
"We gave it 80 per cent, so it must be good."
"Ha ha ha, I hope so."



ROB ENDERSBY
37, Web Designer

What's on your hard drive?
"Soldier Of Fortune."
What are you looking forward to playing in the future?
"Delta Force 2 or Messiah. I'm looking for a military game in the mould of Half-Life."
So you're a military man by nature?
"No, no, I'm strictly into computer related violence."
You like one sided violence then, where there's no risk of being hurt yourself?
"Yep, that's my idea of fun."



KEVIN GARRET
25, Gardener

What's on your hard drive?
"TOCA 2, Carmageddon and Half-Life."
What are you looking forward to playing in the future?
"Carmageddon 2000. I'm really looking forward to playing that."
So what's your scoring system when you drive normally? You know like ten points for a granny etc...
"Five points for a near miss, ten points for a granny, 15 for an adult and two points for children and animals."



SIMON TONER
35, Planning Engineer.

What's on your hard drive?
"Quake II and Unreal."
Why such old games?
"Actually, I only discovered games about a year ago. When I've finished with these two, I'm going to play Unreal Tournament."
Are you looking forward to playing Quake III?
"Not really, because I played the demo and it's no good in single-player mode. Too many FPSs concentrate on multiplayer gameplay now. I don't like deathmatches."



MATHEW BAINES
51, Personnel Officer

What's on your hard drive?
"Quake III and Half-Life."
What are you looking forward to playing?
"More expansions I suppose."
Which is better, Quake or Half-Life?
"Half-Life, it's more fun and challenging."
What's the best Half-Life expansion or Mod?
"Opposing Force."
A bit too short perhaps?
"Not really, although it is much shorter than Half-Life was."



ALISTAIR READY
26, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"A whole bunch of games, do you want to know which ones?"
Now there's a thought...
"X-Wing Alliance, Close Combat 2, Dungeon Keeper II and some Star Trek games."
Wow, what a collection. Do you believe in having variety in all parts of your life?
"Yeah, absolutely, I don't specify a particular type of girl I have to go out with, or a certain type of game. Variety is definitely a good thing."



NICK COLE
41, Drugs Worker

So, how much is an ounce going for these days.
"No, I'm not that kind of drugs worker, I help people with drug problems."
Oh right. So what's on your hard drive then?
"Civ II and Napoleon 1812 and 1813."
So you prefer turn-based games over RTSs then?
"Yeah, RTSs tend to be a bit too manic. Turn-based games have much more scope for strategy."



AMANDA CLARKE
37, Works for BT

What's on your hard drive?
"Not a lot. Just some rubbish game that came with the PC."
What are you looking forward to playing in the future?
"Football games, especially football management games."
Are you a budding football manageress?
"Absolutely, but in this world it's really only possible in a game."
So why aren't women more interested in gaming?
"We consider it to be a bit geeky."
There goes my street cred.



PETER NEWMAN
26, Engineer

What's on your hard drive?
"Half-Life and Thief II."
Why do you like Thief II?
"It's a great deviation from the normal 3D FPSs. You have to use stealth and can't go in all guns blazing."
What are you looking forward to playing in the future?
"Team Fortress 2. I'm really getting into online gaming."
Will online gaming kill single-player games?
"No, but all games need online options in order to compete."



PETE TRUMAN
24, Technology Journalist

What's on your hard drive?
"System Shock 2, Messiah and Final Fantasy VII and VIII."
Hmm, an RPG fan. Ever done any live role-playing?
"No, but I think it's OK, it's just not something I'd do. Some of my friends like it though."
What are you looking forward to playing in the future?
"Black & White."
How do you think it's going to turn out?
"Hopefully well enough to run on my PC."



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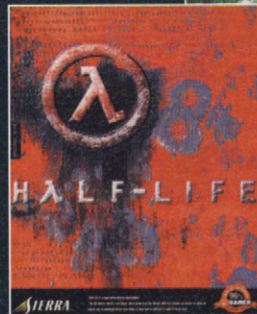
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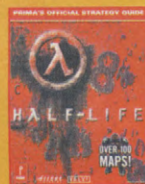
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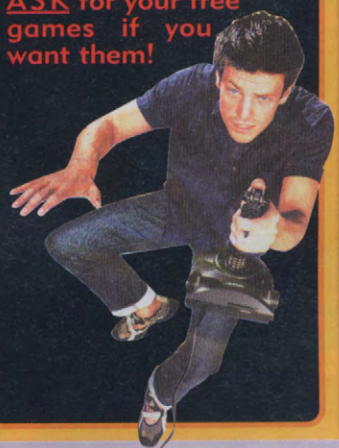
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PCZONE TOP 100

Welcome to the definitive buyers' guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages represent the best titles across all genres. Check here for regular updates

This is the new *PC ZONE* Top 100. Within it you will find the best games you can currently buy for your PC. All the games here deserve a place in our illustrious Top 100 as we go to print, but that could all change next month when newer titles come in and older games receive new ratings to reflect where they stand in the great scheme of things. Shrewd buyers will always check here first before parting with their money.

BENCHMARK GAME

Benchmark titles are the games that you simply must have if you are a fan of the genre. They are considered by the *PC ZONE* team to be absolute classics and should be bought without hesitation. All new games are compared to their genre's benchmark title when they are reviewed. Bear this in mind before writing into Mailbox

complaining that the latest 3D shooter didn't automatically get 90 per cent; check here first to see what it's up against! Additionally, all games in that genre will receive a new rating every time a new benchmark title comes along.

NEW ENTRY

In the wonderful world of PC gaming, new titles come in every month some of which are better than the games currently in the Top 100. When this happens, they will gain their rightful place in the Top 100, and a lesser title will drop out to make room for it.

BUDGET

If a game in the Top 100 is available on budget, it will be tagged accordingly. Games that are lower in price than other titles in their genre do not necessarily receive a new score to reflect this. The latest score the game received will still apply; it is up to you to decide whether or not the game is worth buying at its new price point.

Under the *ZONE* scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. There are now very few titles that can justifiably be described as *PC ZONE* Classics. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all *ZONE* Classics are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the *PC ZONE* Award for Excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them, as when we say a game is a Classic, we mean it!



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FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

HALF-LIFE

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #71 • 95%
 Taking the first-person shooter as its starting point, *Half-Life* redefines the genre with an engrossing story, cracking atmosphere and some of the best AI ever coded. *Half-Life* is probably still the best game you can install on your PC, and it's now available with the superb *Opposing Force* add-on in the 'Generations' pack.
PUBLISHER Sierra
 • 0118 9209 100



UNREAL TOURNAMENT PCZ #81 • 90%
 Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake III*'s multiplayer, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. The single-player mode might be too short, but it's still going to be more than a challenge for most.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



QUAKE III ARENA PCZ #87 • 89%
 The biggest brand name in PC gaming is back. The sheer speed, intensity and unrelenting action of *Quake III* makes it an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans, but sadly the lack of variety prevents it from topping *Unreal Tournament*.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



ALIENS VS PREDATOR PCZ #77 • 87%
 It might not be the best, but it's definitely the scariest FPS you can buy. *Aliens Vs Predator* is also the only game that offers three distinct ways of playing through the game, so if you're looking for a solid single-player blast, this provides excellent value for money.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



QUAKE II: QUAD DAMAGE PCZ #59 • 86%
 The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. The single-player mode might be a let-down, but if you have access to a network or a fast Internet connection you'll be in heaven. Now available with all the official mission packs.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



THIEF II: THE METAL AGE PCZ #88 • 82%
 The original *Thief* set new standards in FPS titles with its move away from mindless action towards stealth, and its excellent use of light and sound. This sequel delivers more of the same quality gameplay, minus the out-of-place zombie levels.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION PCZ #71 • 81%
 Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. Boasting great graphics and storyline, its only faults are iffy AI and the fact that it's a bit too easy for hardcore *Quake* fans.
PUBLISHER Microïds • 00 33 1 4601 5401



SOLDIER OF FORTUNE PCZ #89 • 80%
 More like an arcade explosion of unmitigated violence than a FPS in the *Half-Life* mould, *SoF* is a great deal of fun. It's also very sick. If you can stomach amputations and decapitations, then we can guarantee you pure, mindless entertainment.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME PCZ #77 • 80%
 This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. Because, quite frankly, that side of the game was crap. We still stand by the game though - it's 'classic adult entertainment'.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



SIN PCZ #70 • 80%
 Releasing *Sin* at the same time as the vastly superior *Half-Life* was commercial suicide. But you can now bag this title for less than a tenner, which gives you the perfect excuse to find out just how good it actually is. No Classic, but an excellent game in its own right.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

STRATEGY

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #89 • 93%
Shogun is the first strategy game that has blown us away in a long time. Command enormous armies in epic and bloody battles, send ninjas to assassinate enemy generals and conquer your way through the map of feudal Japan. The 3D engine works beautifully and the in-game options never get in the way of instant playability.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
 • 01753 549442



AGE OF EMPIRES II PCZ #84 • 89%
 It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *Age of Empires II*, the gameplay has been honed to perfection with balanced units and strong single and multiplayer campaigns. Forget the hype of *Tiberian Sun* and opt for this classic RTS.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



CIVILIZATION II: TEST OF TIME PCZ #68 • 88%
 A title that lives up to its name, *Civilization II* is probably the oldest game in the Top 100 and it will probably still be around in years to come. Turn-based and in 2D, it offers unlimited replayability and depth. One of the few games that everyone should own.
PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234



EARTH 2150 PCZ #90 • 86%
 A fantastic 3D engine and great detail team up with sheer playability to make this one of the best RTSs around. Second only to *Shogun* this year, *Earth 2150* is a more traditional strategy title, but it takes the genre even further than it has been before.
PUBLISHER Mattel Interactive • 0144 424 6333



HOMEWORLD PCZ #82 • 85%
Homeworld delivers the dream of millions of PC strategists the world over; a fully three-dimensional, strategic experience. The vast expanse of space is the battleground, the hundreds of ships at your command the weapon, and the only limits are your imagination.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



THEOCRACY PCZ #88 • 84%
 Blending the best of *Age Of Empires* and *Civilization*, *Theocracy*'s mix of real-time and turn-based gameplay allows you to guide the Aztecs through history and attempt to right the wrongs of the Hispanic conquerors. In short, an unexpected gem.
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000



IMPERIUM GALACTICA II PCZ #85 • 83%
 Space expansion and empire building has never looked so good. This title boasts the depth of a turn-based strategy game with the immediate action of real-time, plus a great interface and tutorial, which means you'll know your way around in no time.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



C&C: TIBERIAN SUN PCZ #81 • 82%
 Perhaps not as stunning as one might have hoped after a three-year wait, *Tiberian Sun* is nevertheless a truly great game. Pushing the *Command & Conquer* genre to its limits, it offers PC strategists immense depth, detail and variety.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



TOTAL ANNIHILATION PCZ #56 • 82%
 With a ridiculous number of units and unrivalled pace, the original *TA* still stands head and shoulders above more recent efforts. No story to speak of and weak single-player action, but still, for a tenner, no one should be without a copy.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER PCZ #89 • 81%
 Not the stunning classic everyone was hoping for, but the first *Star Wars* RTS is still a fun game. Based on the original trilogy, *FC* recreates scenes from the films along with all your favourite characters. Play it against other people for maximum enjoyment.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #80 • 93%

✦ Definitely one of the most compelling, original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully mix the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it in the house on your own with the lights off to prove how hard you are. In short, it's a title that's absolutely indispensable.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

PCZ #87 • 87%

✦ An incredible game from Black Isle, creators of *Baldur's Gate*. It's a dark, adult, scorcher of an RPG. Moreover, the character development is the best we've seen in any game of its kind – and the story is compelling, with well-scripted dialogue.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

BALDUR'S GATE

PCZ #73 • 85%

✦ With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. In a nutshell, *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

FINAL FANTASY VII

PCZ #66 • 84%

✦ Despite the recent release of *FFVIII*, we still rate this earlier episode in the series above it. The story is better, there are more subgames and the whole thing is more involving, especially if you like Japanese-style cartoony graphics. And it should be out on budget soon.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

FALLOUT 2

PCZ #71 • 83%

✦ Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you liked the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper and one of the best RPGs money can buy.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

FINAL FANTASY VIII

PCZ #87 • 83%

✦ *FFVIII* features westernised graphics and the most incredible cut-scenes we've ever seen on a PC. Like its predecessor, this outing suffers from console linearity and repetitive battles, but it still retains enough charm to entrance most gamers.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

DIABLO

PCZ #48 • 78%

✦ Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game. The much anticipated sequel is out this summer.

PUBLISHER Zblac/Blizzard • 01626 332233

ODIUM

PCZ #87 • 74%

✦ Imagine an RPG in the style of *Final Fantasy*, with battle sequences à la *X-COM* and you'll get a good idea of what *Oidium* is like. The story is set in a European city populated by UN soldiers and an amazing variety of monsters. In short, it's curiously compelling.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

NOX

PCZ #87 • 72%

✦ This *Diablo*-style RPG is immensely addictive. The levels may be a little repetitive, but you'll find that persistence pays off in the form of great spells and weapons. Watch out for a massive multiplayer community spawning around this one.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

LANDS OF LORE III

PCZ #74 • 70%

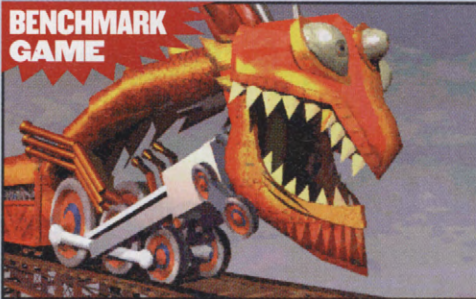
✦ Westwood knows how to tell a good story, and this latest title in the series is certainly the best of the lot. Combine that with ease of use and some highly polished artwork, and you'll find *LoLIII* a great alternative to more traditional RPG efforts.

PUBLISHER Westwood/EA • 01753 549442

ACTION/ADVENTURES

GRIM FANDANGO

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #71 • 90%

✦ If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. Sublime graphics and genuine humour ensure it's a classic. A word of warning: it's bloody hard and if your mind doesn't work laterally you'll be playing it until the day you die.

PUBLISHER LucasArts • 020 7368 2255

DISC WORLD NOIR

PCZ #79 • 89%

✦ Although the point-and-click adventure genre is dying, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games, and is all the better for it in our opinion, particularly if you're not a fan of Pratchett's off-the-wall humour. Don't miss it.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

PCZ #84 • 88%

✦ LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for the latest Indy outing. Thankfully, the adventure elements are still in place in this whip-cracking romp.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000

THE NOMAD SOUL

PCZ #83 • 87%

✦ Distinctly odd, but also refreshingly original, *The Nomad Soul* is a huge, intricate world populated by lap-dancers and (gulp) David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost pulls it off.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

NOCTURNE

PCZ #84 • 86%

✦ Why would you pay good money to be scared? Because it's damn good fun that's why, and if you find the average PC game laughable, we dare you to sit through *Nocturne* with your curtains drawn. It's a beautiful exercise in computer-generated fear.

PUBLISHER Take 2 • 01753 722900

MESSIAH

PCZ #85 • 85%

✦ Shiny's wonderful shooter features a chubby cherub, but also a bunch of whores and some gratuitous swearing. As Bob, under-age agent of God, you must possess people's bodies and, like a good Christian, kill absolutely everything that gets in your way.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

PCZ #83 • 85%

✦ Lara's back in her fourth (and best) adventure so far. More moves, better looks, intricate puzzles and a well-developed plot. It's not going to win over the cynics, but it's still a damn fine game.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

RESIDENT EVIL II

PCZ #75 • 82%

✦ Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore, make for top entertainment.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 020 7368 2255

MONKEY ISLAND BOUNTY PACK

PCZ #74 • 80%

✦ *Monkey Island 1* and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000

SAM & MAX AND DAY OF THE TENTACLE

NOT REVIEWED • 78%

✦ Two of the finest adventure games in the world ever are now available in a single pack for a bargain price. They still match most titles that are released today, so go and buy them. Now.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000

RACING GAMES

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

BENCHMARK GAME



BUDGET



PCZ #68 • 91%
 ⚡ Sporting an updated TOCA engine, *Colin McRae* is still the benchmark in rally simulations. It boasts realistic handling, car customisation and stacks of multiplayer options, which all contribute to keeping it well ahead of the competition. The fact that it's now available as a budget title makes it an absolute steal.
PUBLISHER Codemasters
 • 01926 814132



MIDTOWN MADNESS **PCZ #79 • 89%**
 ⚡ Jump in your car and drive around Chicago participating in races, annoying the police, or just cruising around. Not quite *Grand Theft Auto 3D*, but just as much fun, this is definitely the best all-out arcade racer you can currently buy on PC.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



MOTOCROSS MADNESS **PCZ #67 • 85%**
 ⚡ This is an astoundingly addictive game. It boasts loads of game and race options and is tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. If you want to have fun on two wheels, this is an absolute must-buy.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



LE MANS 24 HOURS **PCZ #87 • 83%**
 ⚡ Although not quite as challenging as the race it's based on, *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a driving game for skillful players who know their brakes from their elbows. You can even get involved in a rewarding career mode culminating in the famous race itself.
PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP **PCZ #84 • 82%**
 ⚡ Close, but no *McRae*. That was the verdict from the boy Hill on this new racer. It looks fantastic and the on-screen Ordnance Survey map is a nice touch, but it's let down by some poor camera angles and unnecessarily solid obstacles. Ouch.
PUBLISHER Actualise • 01625 855015



TOCA 2 **PCZ #76 • 82%**
 ⚡ Predictably, Codemasters has gone and done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrol heads. Graphically, it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



MONACO GRAND PRIX **PCZ #69 • 81%**
 ⚡ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. The game looks beautiful, plays even better, and the artificial intelligence is second to none. However, bear in mind that you need a hefty machine to have it looking its best.
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000



NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE 2000 **PCZ #90 • 80%**
 Not as good as hooking up with your mates at the arcade, but still a damn good conversion of a damn fine game. Forget realism and concentrate on flinging your car around the track as fast as you can. Who needs depth when racing is this much fun?
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



DRIVER **PCZ #82 • 80%**
 ⚡ Criticised for lacking the depth of *Midtown Madness* (it is a PlayStation conversion after all), this is still a good game. A pumping '70s soundtrack helps to recreate that *Starsky & Hutch* feeling. A wheel, an afro haircut and a false moustache are, of course, essential.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



SUPERBIKE 2000 **PCZ #88 • 78%**
 ⚡ The best motorcycling sim on PC, this game sports incredible visuals, slick handling and astonishing detail. But it's too easy to fall off unless you use computer-assisted help. For pure two-wheeled action, *Motocross Madness* is still the best option.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLIGHT SIMULATORS

FALCON 4

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #72 • 92%
 ⚡ We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that for once we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* sports beautiful 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure that leaves the competition well and truly standing. If you're going to buy one flight sim, make it this one – it's the best example of its kind and we guarantee that you won't be disappointed.
PUBLISHER MicroProse
 • 01454 893893



BUDGET

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR **PCZ #68 • 89%**
 ⚡ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece seems perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you who are looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this title.
PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633



F/A-18E SUPER HORNET **PCZ #83 • 88%**
 ⚡ If you like your flight sims to be realistic with a great big capital 'R', then look no further. In fact, this game is so lifelike that the US Navy has adopted it for promotional work and ground-based familiarity training. But make sure you watch out for friendly fire.
PUBLISHER Titus Software • 01926 335 5400



MIG ALLEY **PCZ #80 • 87%**
 ⚡ *Mig Alley* gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't let that put you off. If you're willing to put in the work, this title will repay you with a wealth of excellent in-flight graphics and a selection of brilliant mission planning elements.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337



FLIGHT UNLIMITED III **PCZ #82 • 86%**
 ⚡ For all those sim aficionados who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than as a lame excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this (along with the *Flight Sim* series) is an object of worship and devotion. It certainly deserves high praise.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



FLANKER 2.0 **PCZ #85 • 86%**
 ⚡ Hardcore pilots with a taste for Yank blood need look no further. Extremely hard to fly, but very rewarding nevertheless, *Flanker 2.0* recreates the real thing in minute detail. However, be warned: hours of practice are needed before you go off shooting stuff.
PUBLISHER SSI • 01293 651300



JANE'S USAF **PCZ #88 • 85%**
 ⚡ USAF offers playability that allows non-hardcore flyers to have a successful spin. While this means that the standards of realism are nowhere near other titles, it fills the gap for those of us who don't care about such things. This is a great flight sim that anybody can enjoy.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



ENEMY ENGAGED: COMANCHE HOKUM **PCZ #89 • 85%**
 ⚡ The latest helicopter sim to hit the shelves, it is also the best one to date. In no other game do you feel the excitement of being involved in a real war, largely due to an excellent dynamic campaign mode. Helicopter sims don't come any better than this classy title.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337



JANE'S F/A-18 **PCZ #89 • 84%**
 ⚡ Another game based on the US Navy's Super Hornet, this is an incredibly detailed jet sim that suffers slightly from being too hard for beginners. Graphically, it's up there with the best and the interface makes you feel as close to the real thing as is possible on a desktop.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



TEAM ALLIGATOR **PCZ #85 • 84%**
 ⚡ Helicopter sims are rare but, when they do appear on the scene, they are usually superb. Although *Team Alligator* doesn't quite surpass the cheaper *Apache Havoc*, it has truly beautiful graphics and feels great to fly. Without doubt, the best Russian chopper sim around.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

SPORTS

FIFA 2000



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #84 • 88%

⊕ The FIFA franchise has been rolling on for years and it does get better each time. Although it missed a Classic rating by a whisker, *FIFA 2000* is still the best conversion of the finest sport known to man. You should be able to find it on budget soon. Or you could always fork out the full price for the recent *Euro 2000*, which is essentially the same game.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442



SUPREME SNOWBOARDING PCZ #85 • 86%

⊕ Snowboarding is not a sport you'd expect to captivate a PC audience, but this game gives an exhilarating experience as you could hope for without breaking a leg. Oh, and all the streetwise attitude you'd expect is here, of course.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 8738 8199



NBA LIVE 2000 PCZ #85 • 83%

⊕ As slick as always, but what makes the 2K edition special is the inclusion of teams from the '50s onwards, comedy haircuts *et al*. Although not quite as immediate as *Inside Drive*, it's a more complete simulation of the sport all round.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



NBA: INSIDE DRIVE PCZ #82 • 82%

⊕ While not exactly the most popular sport in this country, *Inside Drive* manages to suck you in with its supreme playability. Its presentation is not quite up to EA standards (but then, what is?), but when the gameplay is this good, who cares?

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000



PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF PCZ #80 • 82%

⊕ Knocking *Links* off the office golfing perch is no mean feat, but *PGA's* gameplay is so addictive that all other contenders can tee off. Our very own Keith Pullin took the entire summer off to design his own courses for it. But then again he does have a hole in one in the head.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



VIRTUAL POOL 2 PCZ #58 • 82%

⊕ OK, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL 2 PCZ #68 • 81%

⊕ The finest snooker simulation on the PC. Chalk your cue and take on the PC or your mates, and when you're tired of the baize you can move round and have a go on the fully-featured darts board instead. Saves going down the Working Men's Club.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive • 020 7368 2255



ACTUA SOCCER 3 PCZ #72 • 80%

⊕ If you can't get on with *FIFA*, then *Actua* is the second port of call for footy fans. It plays a faster game and there's a good range of options and a huge number of teams to play against, which helps to maintain its shelf life.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



BRIAN LARA CRICKET PCZ #75 • 78%

⊕ Cricket isn't the easiest game to convert to the PC, but Codemasters has done quite a good job, despite the fact that *Brian Lara Cricket* has obviously been ported straight over from the PlayStation. For aspiring country-dwellers everywhere.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



TIGER WOODS 2000 PCZ #90 • 77%

⊕ Tiger's second outing proves to be as good looking as his first, and a lot more polished. There are eight courses, and if you get bored of those you can create your own. It still hasn't got the putting right, but it's playable all the same.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SPACE COMBAT

X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #82 • 89%

⊕ The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic from Germany, in which you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. The combat side of the gameplay may not be the best on offer, but with goods to trade and races to discover, it rewards patience with variety and months of play. This title is deeply hypnotic and beautiful, rather than tense and frenetic.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656



Freespace 2 PCZ #84 • 85%

⊕ Completely different from *X*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. It boasts a superb interface, epic story and amazing graphics, but it's a bit short-lived if you don't play online.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4222



X-WING: ALLIANCE PCZ #77 • 83%

⊕ At last! Fly the Millennium Falcon in the final episode of the long-running *X-Wing* series. Certainly the best-looking *X-Wing* game to date, *Alliance* is slow at first, but boy does it pick up later on.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



STARLANCER PCZ #91 • 81%

NEW ENTRY While *Starlancer* doesn't do anything startlingly new, it is a highly polished affair with compulsive gameplay and gorgeous visuals. A must for space sim fans.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000



PRIVATEER 2 PCZ #44 • 80%

⊕ Not as open-ended as *Elite*, but far more rewarding as an overall experience. The graphics look great even today and, hey, it's on budget – so it's better value for money than ever.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MANAGEMENT

CM 99/2000



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #84 • 92%

⊕ More than a game... it's a way of life. So say fans of the best football management game in existence. If you dare to play it you can kiss goodbye to your social life, and expect to spend hours each and every day poring over unknown players in a bid to discover the next Ronaldo. The word 'benchmark' doesn't really describe how much better than the competition this game is.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



THE SIMS PCZ #87 • 86%

⊕ This game offers a staggering amount of possibilities. Essentially, you create your own person, or family, and guide them through the ups and downs of life – it's the definitive docu-soap and makes for compelling gameplay.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



CAESAR III PCZ #70 • 85%

⊕ Starting from scratch you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens. So what? So it's utterly absorbing and probably the most addictive god sim in existence.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



SIMCITY 3000 PCZ #74 • 84%

⊕ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442



ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON PCZ #75 • 83%

⊕ Pack out your own theme park with the most fiendish rides your imagination can conjure up. From rickety wooden dippers, to *Nemesis*-style, white-knuckle gurners, *RT* is hugely addictive.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

ONLINE ONLY

ULTIMA ONLINE



PCZ #80 • 92%
 ✦ In many ways an old-school RPG, but with amazing freedom, depth and open-endedness. So addictive that *ZONE* editor Chris has sold his car, his house and his soul to finance a permanent Web connection. The best thing about *Ultima Online* is that your world is constantly changing and evolving, and it's populated by real people, just like you.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

EVERQUEST **PCZ #80 • 85%**
 ✦ If you find *Ultima Online* too vast, *EverQuest* may be the online RPG for you. It's far more combat-orientated than *Ultima*, and more linear as a result. Repetitive at higher levels, but worth checking out all the same.
PUBLISHER Sony (sold at Electronic Boutique only) • 020 7428 5961

ALLEGIANCE **PCZ #91 • 82%**
NEW ENTRY The first true online only space combat sim, *Allegiance* is a complex yet rewarding beast. Now you can fly around with hundreds of others, co-ordinating strategies and establishing chains of command.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

ASHERON'S CALL **PCZ #88 • 76%**
 ✦ The graphics and freedom to do almost anything make this title a commendable addition to the genre. However, it's a crying shame you can't kill other humans – most of the ones you meet deserve a good kicking.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

NETSTORM **PCZ #59 • 73%**
 ✦ A curious blend of chess, *Red Alert* and *Baron Munchausen*, *NetStorm* is also an elegant and addictive multiplayer game that works beautifully across a standard modem.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

3D ACTION/STRATEGY

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS



PCZ #79 • 91%
 ✦ You don't get a second chance in a real war, and *Hidden & Dangerous* is the game that's come closest to putting you in the middle of hell on earth. From the first missile it grabs you by the balls and doesn't let up until you're dead, with a bullet in the head. As a strategic shoot 'em up, games don't get any harder, or more compelling and atmospheric.
PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



SWAT 3 **PCZ #85 • 89%**
 ✦ Artificial Intelligence doesn't get any better than this. Add some spectacular graphics, an ingenious command interface and edge-of-your-seat gameplay, and you've got a top title.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



BATTLEZONE 2 **PCZ #84 • 87%**
 ✦ Stunning graphics and a winning blend of strategy and first-person action in this sequel to the highly acclaimed *Battlezone*. The fight for world domination has never looked so good.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



ROGUE SPEAR **PCZ #84 • 86%**
 ✦ We loved *Rainbow Six* and although this follow-up can't match *Hidden & Dangerous* for intensity, it's a superb romp through the world of terrorism. Pick your team, kit them out and plan your missions carefully.
PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



SPEC OPS 2 **PCZ #84 • 84%**
 ✦ Challenging *Hidden & Dangerous* for the top spot, *Spec Ops 2* puts you in charge of a four-man green beret squad intent on staying alive and shooting the enemy in the head. Incredibly realistic, with top-notch sound.
PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

PCZONE ALL-TIME CLASSICS



DOOM
 ✦ This is the game that needs no introduction. Without *Doom* we wouldn't have had *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament* or (gulp) *Half-Life*. Every time you play a first-person shooter you should take five minutes to pay homage to the game that changed the world as we know it. *Doom*, we thank you.



ULTIMA VII
 ✦ Still the best of all the *Ultima* games, and probably the finest RPG ever seen on a PC. The graphics might be old-hat, but the gameplay certainly isn't. *Ultima VII* blends exploration and character interaction, and it's the last title in the *Ultima* series to give complete party control.



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD
 ✦ We reviewed this game back in the first issue of *PC ZONE*. It was a landmark RPG then and it's still a landmark RPG now, although the graphics obviously look a bit dated. Do we think it's the best RPG ever? Almost, but not quite. Cast your eyes up the mag a couple of inches for the answer to that question.



DUNE II
 ✦ If you know your strategy, you'll know that *Dune II* is the game that's done more than any of its rivals to define the genre as we know it today. The 2000 update was disappointing, but only because it didn't add anything new. The fact that it still plays better than many new titles is testament to its staying power.



SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER
 ✦ EA's *FIFA* series might look the part, but we're convinced that *Sensible Soccer* was and is the ultimate example of gameplay over presentation. With its famous top-down view, *Sensible* offers fast frantic action that does more to replicate the real-life game than any of its predecessors.



UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN
 ✦ This game came out of nowhere and took the world by storm. Compelling strategy, tense turn-based battles, and a myriad of research options made this the most addictive game ever upon its arrival. Subsequent sequels were just as addictive, but this is the game that originally captured our hearts.



MAGIC CARPET
 ✦ Drawing gasps of amazement from everyone who saw it, Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet* was one of the most original and inventive games released in the early days of 3D. So original, in fact, that it never got the recognition it deserved. We still think the blend of action and strategy was spot-on.



WING COMMANDER
 ✦ The original space combat game spawned the first big-budget PC series. In fact, the *Wing Commander* series was so hugely successful that they went and made a film. Inevitably, this was absolute rubbish and the public stayed away in their millions. Will these people never learn?



TOMB RAIDER
 ✦ She might be getting a bit rusty round the gills, but when Lara first bounced onto the small screen we fell in love with her instantly. 3D action adventure games haven't been the same since and at the time nothing could touch it. Do you remember your first encounter with the T-Rex?



CIVILIZATION
 ✦ The original and some say the best turn-based strategy game. When *Civilization* first appeared, it was hailed correctly as the first game that changed and evolved depending on how you played it. Recent versions have presented more of the same, but in this case that is definitely no bad thing.

ON THE CD

Riding, driving, shooting, flying, cueing, turn-based and real-time strategy. You name it we've got it on this month's cover CD

★ ON VOCALS: Martin Korda MIXING THE DISK: Dan Emery

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk. Please do NOT phone the PC ZONE office. Thanks.

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points:

- ★ If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- ★ If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- ★ Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- ★ You need at least a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- ★ Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95/98 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 233 with 64Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- ★ Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are 3D accelerator only.

Jimmy's attempt to jump out of a plane on his bike went horribly wrong when he forgot his parachute.

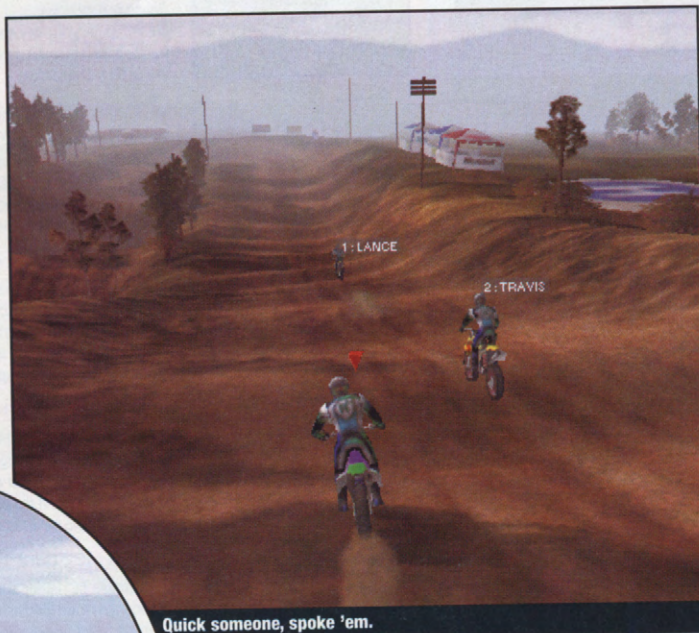


DEMOS + SHAREWARE

MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2

Microsoft

EXCLUSIVE



Quick someone, spoke 'em.



I'm losing to a bloke called The Wave. Someone shoot me now.

The much-anticipated sequel to Microsoft's *Motocross Madness* is here, and we've got the exclusive demo for you. Featured here are two of the game's five racing options, Stunts and National Race. The first of these throws you into an open-ai red stunt arena, where unsurprisingly you have to clock up as many points as possible in the given laps by performing the most daring stunts. In short, you've just got to be that little bit more psychotic than your opponents. Given that you can't hurt yourself, you may as well go for it. What have you got to lose apart from your dignity?

If performing daredevil aerial acrobatics isn't your thing, you can try your skills out on a two-to-five lap race against up to four opponents. The track is called the Voodoo Basin, and is packed with jumps and dangerously tight corners. The computer-controlled bikers can be set to one of three difficulty levels, but even on the easiest you'll be in for some serious competition. The beauty of it is that on the easier settings they fall off just as much as you do. If any of you are thinking of trying to win by using underhand tactics, then I'm afraid you're in for a disappointment. Cut too many corners, and you get booted back a couple of hundred metres.

There's more than enough here to give all biking fans a taste of what's in the full version. Although *MM2* hasn't made any massive leaps forward from its predecessor, it's a huge amount of fun and the best biking game currently available. All that's left now is for you to load it up and see for yourselves. You can read Steve Hill's full analysis of the game on page 66.

Controls: Arrow keys or gamepad



It may not be the fastest game around, but you'll still need to be a good shot.



You're suppose to shoot the enemy, not sneeze on them.

FLYING HEROES

Take 2

EXCLUSIVE

The second of our exclusive demos this month is Take 2's fantasy flyer, *Flying Heroes*, which brings together a flight sim and a FPS to provide gladiatorial type battles in the sky. You must select your race (all of which have their own particular strengths), and battle against an array of mystical creatures in an arena.

In this demo you only have the chance to fly as a Lizard Rider, but there are four difficulty levels to test yourself with. It also provides you with a tutorial, in which your guide sounds like that bloke from the BBC version of *Perfect Day*. You know, the one who

thinks perfect is pronounced *poifect*. Anyhow, he leads you through the basics of flying and collecting ammunition. Then it's off to the arena to battle against laser-toting pigeons and other such terrifying creatures. Although the action is never manic, you'll need a good aim and plenty of skill to manoeuvre your lizard during combat. For those of you who love flight sims and deathmatches but find *Quake III* and *UT* too fast, this could be the game that you've been waiting for. Turn to page 79 to find out more.

Controls: Keyboard and mouse.



Aim, fire and chalk another loser up on the side of your lizard.

Time to blow stuff up, namely the enemy.



After a tourist accidentally strayed onto a military testing ground, he was politely asked to leave.



GROUND CONTROL

Sierra

Ground Control is one of the most impressive RTS games of all time, and here's your chance to try it out for yourself. Along with *Shogun: Total War*, it's one of the best demos ever featured on the PC ZONE CD, and once you've tried it, you'll be hooked.

Before throwing yourself straight into the combat mission provided, we recommend you go through the tutorial. I know, I know, tutorials are boring, right? Wrong. In this instance, the three parts of the Boot Camp, as it's called, are almost as much fun as the game itself. It's incredibly detailed and clear, and by the end you're left in no doubt as to how to control your troops. One of the most exciting parts of *Ground Control* is that you can command flying units, which actually engage other airborne craft in dogfights. There's

also a huge emphasis on tactics, such as flanking, and the need to regenerate your marines during a battle.

Once you know what you're doing it's time to blow stuff up, namely an enemy base. As there's no resource management in *Ground Control*, all you have to concentrate on is leading your troops and annihilating the enemy. The combat is fast, intense and exciting, and once you've completed the mission, you'll feel proud, yet strangely empty, because you'll be wanting more of the same. The only way to fill the void is to go out and buy the full version, and believe us, after playing this demo, you will want to. There's a full review of *Ground Control* on page 62.

Controls: Mouse



ECONOMIC *War*



**THE FIRST
ECONOMIC WAR
HAS BEGUN.**

**WILL YOU LEAD YOUR COUNTRY
TO VICTORY?**



**THE FUTURE OF THE ECONOMIC
WORLD IS NOW IN
YOUR HANDS!**



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WARLORDS BATTLECRY

Mattel Interactive

The fourth episode of the *Warlords* series is also the first *Warlords* RTS game. After zipping through the tutorials, which teach you about moving, fighting, resource management and building, you can take part in a skirmish against three computer controlled opponents. While the full game has nine races for you to select from, this demo offers two, Humans and Undead. The former are a versatile race with no particular strengths or weaknesses. The latter perform poorly in battle and organisation, but excel in the intelligence

stakes, which is quite surprising considering their brains have probably rotted away. On the map provided, you must gain control of resources, build your troops and lead them to victory against all of your opponents. Along the way, your hero can complete quests and find magical items, which will make him both a more powerful warrior and leader. To find out more about the game, check out our review on page 76.

Controls: Mouse



Stop showing off you white robe wearing pansy.

Build up your army and annihilate your enemies.



A fire fight, the old-fashioned way.

ON THE CD ONLINE

With these programs, using the Internet will be a whole lot easier

Gamespy 3D v2.19

Fire it up and it'll find the fastest servers playing all your favourite games.

Neotrace 2.12a

Neotrace is a high-speed graphical traceroute with the integrated whois and ping.

PingTool 2.6a

PingTool helps you find the best online game servers on the Internet.

Winsock 2

Users of early versions of Windows 95 may require this to run PingTool.

DUN Manager 2.0d

Simplify and enhance Dial-Up Networking and Remote Access Services.

FTP Explorer 1.0010

Explorer-style FTP service.

GetRight 4.2

Salvage broken downloads and more.

MIRC 5.7

Latest version of the Internet Relay Chat software.

Mplayer

Excellent free online gaming software.

Kali 2.0

Useful client software for playing games over the Internet.

ICQ2000a build 3140

World's best Internet and online chat package.

Roger Wilco Mk1.1a

A virtual walkie-talkie app that runs alongside your favourite multiplayer games.

Datum Online

Find your next job online with Datum Online.

Peoplesound.com

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ON THE CD UTILITIES

To make your hard disk more user friendly, all you have to do is install this little lot.

WinZip 8.0

Windows 95 and NT version of WinZip.

EzDesk 1.8

Saves the position of your Desktop shortcuts and folders.

Power Toys

Useful add-ons for your Desktop.

TreeSize Professional v2.31

A powerful and flexible hard disk space manager.

Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.05

Readers for documents distributed in Adobe format.

HyperSnap-DX Pro 3.55.00

Screen-capture even in DirectX/Direct3D or 3dfx Glide modes.

SciTech Display Doctor v6.53

The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.

Windows Media Player

Play the Web's coolest audio and video with Windows Media Player.



Build an outpost, and defend it from any hostiles.



The Starship Enterprise, seconds before jettisoning Wesley Crusher.



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STAR TREK: ARMADA

Activision

The third of our RTS games this month is Activision's *Star Trek: Armada*. Take the helm of the Starship Enterprise, and build an outpost in a reportedly hostile area of space. You must build a star base and a mining station, and then eliminate any enemy craft who have the intention of wiping you out. Patrick Stewart does the voice for Jean-Luc Picard, adding plenty of authenticity to the proceedings. Thankfully though, there's no Wesley Crusher to annoy the hell out of you, and for that we can all be thankful.

Controls: Mouse



Reviews and ratings for 100s of top games

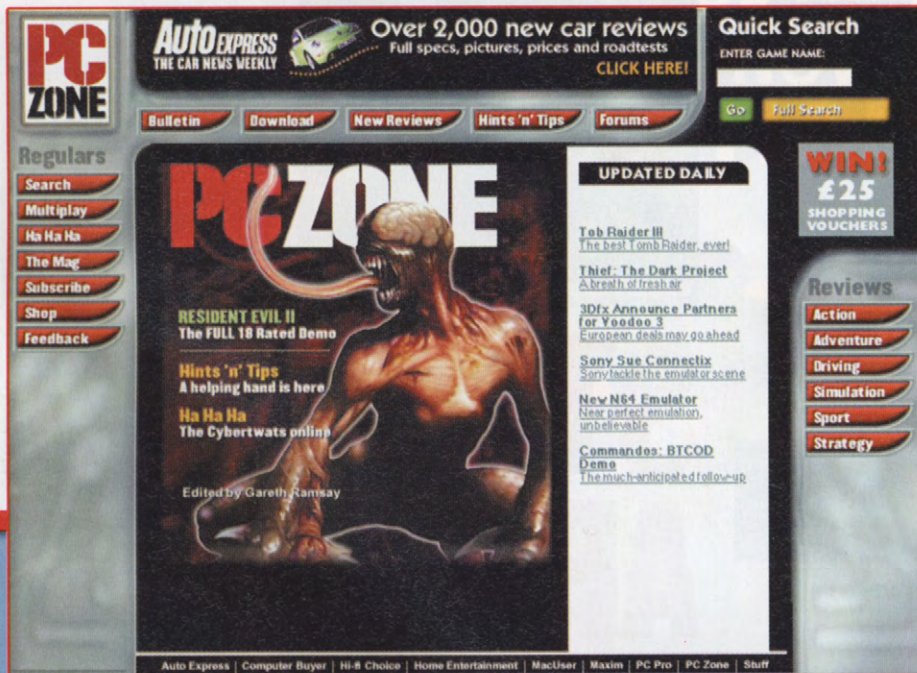


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Never test your fuel level with a match. It's silly.

DIE HARD TRILOGY 2

Fox Interactive

Three games in one, *Die Hard Trilogy 2* is a game that tries to satisfy everyone. There are three modes of play available here, driving, first-person shooter and third-person shooter. The first of these pits you in a race to intercept enemy vehicles while destroying the bombs they've dropped. The second is a simple point-and-shoot affair, reminiscent of those rip-off arcade machines which you had to keep pumping with pound coins every 20 seconds if you wanted to get anywhere. Finally, the third-person shooter section is like the FPS one, only this time you play in, er, third-person mode. You actually have to move your hero John McClane around as well. Basically, if you want some mindless action, you won't be disappointed with this demo.

Controls: Keyboard and mouse

ON THE CD PATCHES

Install these and your favourite games will work a lot better

Die Hard Trilogy 2 ver 2.1
Fading Suns: Noble Armada
Final Fantasy VIII
Flying Heroes
Imperium Galactica 2
Kawasaki ATV PowerSports
Messiah v0.2
NASCAR 2000 v1.01
Quake III Arena
Revenant v1.22
The Sims

Sim Theme Park v2.0
Soldier Of Fortune v1.04B
Star Trek: Armada
StarSiege: TRIBES v1.0 to v1.11
StarSiege: TRIBES v1.10.5 to v1.11
StarSiege: TRIBES v1.8 to v1.11
Tachyon: The Fringe
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2000 v1.1
Trophy Bass 4 v1.0.0.2 Patch
Unreal Tournament v420
Wheel Of Time v333b Patch

ON THE CD EDITORIAL

If you're stuck on a game, you may well find the answer right here. Also, some more *Champ Manager* updates for your personal enjoyment

Tips and Solutions

Handy hints and top tips on all your fave games. Well, most of them.

Championship Manager 99/00 Update

Latest transfers, updates and the rest.

ON THE CD EXTENDED PLAY

Turn to page 154, where our very own Phil Wand will lead you through all of our great *GTA 2* and *TA Kingdoms* add ons.



An accurate pool simulation without bar room brawls? Can't be that realistic then.

CUE CLUB

Midas Interactive

If you can't be bothered to go down your local for a couple of games of pool, then *Cue Club* could be the answer to your prayers. On this month's CD you can play the US version of eight-ball pool or try out your skill on the Speed ball game, where you must try to pot all the balls in the shortest possible time. A bit like on *Big Break*... When the pressure's on, the shots are much harder to execute. If you fancy chatting to someone, there's a virtual chat room in which you can converse with or insult other pool players. Just remember, these people aren't real, so trying to get them to have cybersex with you won't work, and when they ask you to rack 'em up, they're asking you for a game of pool. OK?

Controls: Mouse



Turn based strategy in real time. That makes a nice change.

COMBAT MISSION - BEYOND OVERLORD

Big Time Software

Combat Mission is a turn-based 3D accelerated WWII strategy game. This demo offers two missions for you to show off your command ability, or inability if you're a bit crap. Due to it being a turn-based affair, strategy and tactics are paramount to achieving victory, and although it's quite slow paced, there's plenty of enjoyment to be had. Check out www.battlefront.com for more details.

Controls: Mouse

EXTENDED PLAY

The long awaited speed fix for *TA: Kingdoms* has finally arrived plus a truckload of new units. Not forgetting some handy tools for your *Grand Theft Auto 2* garage

✦ WORDS Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF



ON THE CD

On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 148.

engine will now automatically adjust the level of shadow detail and animation updating to maintain a decent frame rate. You also don't get that annoying pause when you click on units, plus the Dirigibles are rendered quickly and are more potent in battle. Get this installed *now!*

✦ V3.0 UPDATE

(TAK30BBUpdate.exe)

Description: Updates *TA: Kingdoms v1* to version 3.0. New units include the Aramon Ark and Grenadier, the Veruna Merwarrior, Ballista and Centaur, the Zhon Swamp Beast, Barracuda and Giant Orm, and the Taros Dark Hand and Fallen Angel. For full details, see the README file. Again, a must install for all *Kingdoms* owners.

OFFICIAL UNITS

✦ New Cavedog units for *TA: Kingdoms*.

✦ THE LIGHTHOUSE (VlightHs.exe)



☛ The Lighthouse is an expensive but worthy addition to Veruna defence.

Race: Veruna

Description: Summoned by the

Lihir Priestesses of Veruna, the new Lighthouse is a tall and imposing structure that can be built either inland or on rocky shallows. Its range is far greater than any other building, its height giving it a huge field of vision. Its weapon causes temporary paralysis, which allows patrolling ships or other defensive units to move in for the kill.

Rating: ★★☆☆

✦ KAMIKAZE RAT

(TKamRat.exe)

Race: Taros

Description: Since Veruna and Aramon units harnessed the destructive power of gunpowder, Lokken has been slaving over a hot test tube refining a volatile derivative of Mogrium. Trouble is that it's a bit *too* volatile, meaning no bugger will touch it – let alone carry it with them into the middle of a battle. So the chief Taros Necromancer has recruited a squadron of kamikaze rats who run squeaking at their enemies before exploding.

Rating: ★★☆☆

✦ ROLLING THUNDER

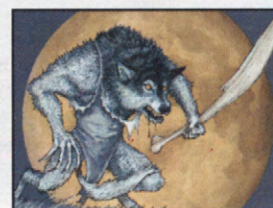
(ASiege.exe)

Race: Aramon

Description: Essentially a defensive tower sat atop a wheeled chassis, the Aramon Rolling Thunder is a particularly impressive bit of kit when used in threes and fours. Twin archers provide the attack strength, picking off land, sea and air targets with ease, and its solid mahogany construction prevents inbound arrows from doing any real damage.

Rating: ★★☆☆

✦ SPIRIT WOLF (ZSwolf.exe)



☛ Nice doggy.

NET ADDRESSES

BOOKMARKS

TA: KINGDOMS HOME PAGE www.cavedog.com/ta-kingdoms

TA: KINGDOMS.COM www.takingdoms.com

GRAND THEFT AUTO HOME PAGE www.take2games.com/modules/gta

STOMPED GTA gta.stomped.com



A giant wicker washing basket on wheels.

Race: Zhon

Description: The Spirit Wolf is actually quite real; it takes its name from its ability to raise spirits from inside fallen warriors – spectres that rise from the grave and join battle once again, albeit with half the power and strength. In many ways this is akin to the Undead soldiers of Taros, and indeed the Spirit Wolves of Zhon harbour a ferocious dislike for their Taronian enemies, attacking them in battle with a disturbing fervency.

Rating: ★★☆☆

TABDD UNITS

✦ New units for *TA: Kingdoms* from popular unit makers TABDD.

✦ NAUTILUS (TABDD-VNautilus.zip)



☛ The Nautilus is a small but deadly submersible craft.

Race: Veruna

Description: With the arrival of the Creon faction in Cavedog's Iron Plague expansion pack, Verunian units were no longer

kings of the sea. Advanced Creon technology was far superior and their armour far stronger. With the Nautilus, a fast and highly manoeuvrable steel submersible, Verunas are now able to retake the oceans as their own.

Rating: ★★☆☆

✦ MOBILE MORTAR (TABDD-VMobileMortar.zip)

Race: Veruna

Description: Designed to replace the ageing catapult, the Verunian Mobile Mortar is an impressive weapon able to decimate advancing legions with a single shot. Use them in large numbers and *nobody* gets through.

Rating: ★★☆☆

✦ BALLOONIST (TABDD-VBalloonist.zip)



☛ Helium filled death from above.

Race: Veruna

Description: Pumped up with an inert gas, balloonists are less likely to explode than their hydrogen filled counterparts the Dirigibles. Like the Dirigible they need to mass in large



Exploding rodents: proof that Necromancers have a sense of humour.

numbers to be effective, and they need lots of protection as two hits brings them crashing down to earth.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **MIND WHIPER** (TABDD-VMindWhiper.zip)



Ⓜ Anyone for a flogging?

Race: Veruna

Description: Mind Whipers are flagellating female mercenaries armed with long magical bondage whips. Each flick of the supernatural quirt causes instant paralysis, giving heavier units the chance to wade in and finish the job off.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **MANA VAULT** (TABDD-VManaVault.zip)



Ⓜ A magical piggy bank.

Race: Veruna

Description: An exceptionally useful structure that enables you to store mana for a rainy day. Defence wise it's not exactly Fort Knox, so you'll need at least one guard unit to keep an eye on things while you're away.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **HARPOON TOWER** (TABDD-VHarpoonTower.zip)



Ⓜ A medieval version of the C&C Tesla Coil.

Race: Veruna

Description: A land based version of the Harpoon Tower, this particular structure is almost unassailable when built in groups of three or four, and a considered attack strategy is needed if you ever come up against them.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **UNDEAD MASTER** (TABDD-TZombieMaster.zip)



Ⓜ Not very nice overlord of the not living.

Race: Taros

Description: Also known as the Zombie Master, this unit is a reincarnation of Lokken's evil mentor. Useful when raw magical power is needed in abundance.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **MANA VAULT** (TABDD-TManaVault.zip)



Ⓜ A place to store magic for a rainy day.

Race: Taros

Description: Identical to the Verunian Mana Vault, this structure allows you to store mana for use at a later time.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **SCORPION** (TABDD-Tscorpion.zip)



Ⓜ You don't want to find one of these in your boots.

Race: Taros

Description: With the same paralyzing powers of the Verunian Mind Whiper, the Taros Scorpions are an effective fighting force when used in large numbers. We found them to be most useful when left guarding base structures.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **PIKEMAN** (TABDD-ApikemanV2.zip)



Ⓜ They're all called Magnus. No, really.

Race: Aramon

Description: Similar in appearance to the Pikemen of Bungee's *Myth*, these fellows are effectively swordsmen armed with super sized spears. Summon them in large numbers and put them right at the front of any advancing army and you'll be sure to wade through unhindered.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **MARTYR** (TABDD-AMartyr.zip)



Ⓜ Throwaway units for large scale battles.

Race: Aramon

Description: Martyrs are traitors and prisoners given a second chance by the leader of the Aramon, Elsin. A sort of old world member of the Dirty Dozen. Great as cheap, quick cannon fodder, but not a lot else.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **AIRSHIP** (TABDD-Aairship.zip)



Ⓜ Aramon's version of the Good Year Blimp.

Race: Aramon

Description: An alliance between the Aramons and Veruna has resulted in a share of technology and a glut of new weapons, one of which is the Airship, based extensively on the Verunian Dirigible.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **WEATHERSEED** (TABDD-ZWeatherseed.zip)



Ⓜ Straight from a certain John Wyndham novel.

Race: Zhon

Description: A walking plant,

much like a Triffid, Weatherseed Treefolk are friendly things trained by Zhon beast masters to do their bidding. As you might imagine, camouflage is not a problem.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **ELVISH ARCHER** (TABDD-ZElvishArcher.zip)



Ⓜ Aramon's version of the Good Year Blimp.

Race: Zhon

Description: A breakaway faction of Aramon Archers, the Elvish Archer of Zhon is just as useful for picking off long-range targets and bringing down Dirigibles and Balloonists. Useful in any force.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

OFFICIAL MAPS

★ **New Cavedog maps for TA: Kingdoms.**

★ **NEW TERRITORIES**

(BonusMP1.exe)

Description: A total of six new territories, including four of the most sacred sites in the land of Darien: Hillspire Vista, Iobar's Theatre, Oldhenge, Oracle at Pentu, Path of Pardu and Twisted Grove.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

CARS

★ **New vehicles for GTA2.**

UTILITIES

★ **Tools and utilities for hacking your way into GTA2.**

★ **CAR STAT EDITOR**

(csefull.zip)

Description: Edit the vital statistics of all 83 cars, including speed, weight, gear ratios, braking power and more.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **DEVELOPMENT SUITE**

(ds.zip)

Description: From the same capable author of Car Stat Editor comes Development Suite, a sort of Visual Studio for *Grand Theft Auto*. It effectively works as a launchpad application for all other GTA hacks and mods.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **OFFICIAL GTA2 EDITOR**

(editor.exe)

Description: Comprehensive *GTA2* level editor from game creators DMA Design. Recommended for all map designers out there.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **POWERMANAGER UTILITY**

(gta2_pwrmgr.zip)

Description: An add-on that extends the regular *GTA2* loader program's interface to include a complete car physics editor and debugging settings. This allows you to use a switch on various cheat modes (eg invulnerability) before you kick off the game. Simple but useful.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **SAVED GAME EDITOR**

(gta2_svge.zip)

Description: Hack away at any existing *GTA2* saved game file. Tweaks include the ability to set your bank balance, health, lives, ammo and more. The author's main motivation for writing it was the \$50,000 cost of saving a game. Invaluable.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **FORMATS INFORMATION**

(gta2formats.zip)

Description: Two official DMA Design documents outlining the technical specifications of the GBH graphics engine. Not for the faint-hearted, and not particularly useful for most people.

★ **SCRIPTS EDITOR**

(gta2script.zip)

Description: Another official application from those friendly people at DMA. It gives you deep and meaningful understanding of how *GTA2* missions work; for example, what triggers certain events, how to set goals and so on. Read it to understand just how much effort game developers put into modern titles.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **GXTED** (gxted11.zip)

Description: Fiddle around with *GTA2*'s countless messages ("You have been arrested!" is probably the one you're most familiar with).

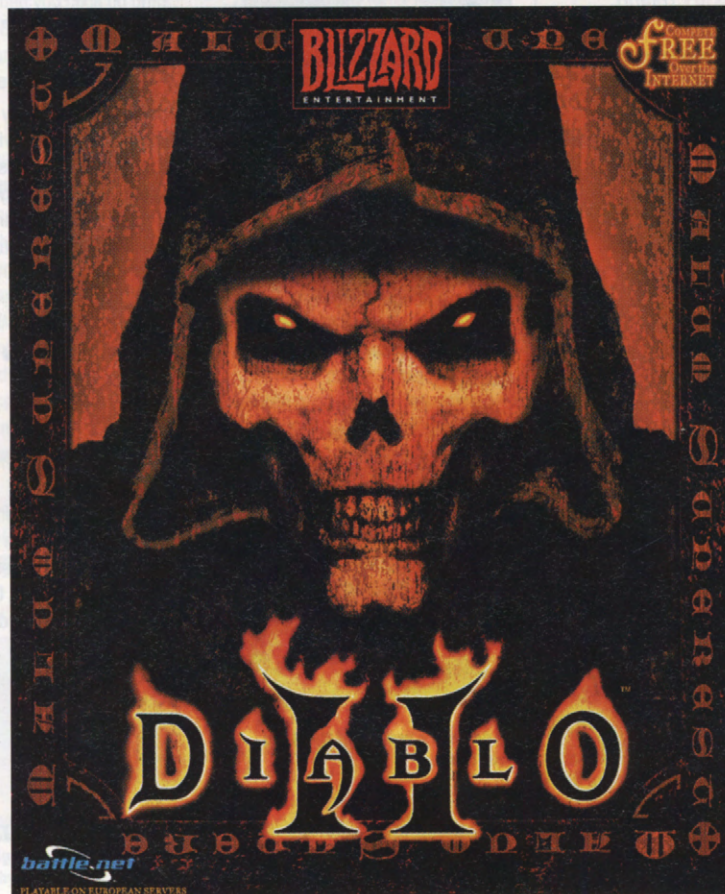
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ **STYED** (styed13.zip)

Description: View the sprites and tiled textures from the *GTA* graphics engine. You can also export what you see to a Windows Bitmap file for editing in any regular paint package.

Rating: ★★☆☆☆

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THE LIONHEAD DIARIES



Black & White is almost upon us, but before its release there's just a few little bugs to be ironed out. And the game's makers have the last laugh...

✦ WORDS Steve Jackson

👁️ Ape has a...
ahem, poo.



MIRACLE WORKERS

Aaargh! Bugs! Programming errors are a reality that confronts the coders every day. And the closer *Black & White* gets to completion, the more complex the bugs become. Serious bugs cause the game to hang or crash. But there are also bugs that have us all in hysterics. I was looking over artist Andy Bass's shoulder when he first discovered the 'Eat like a pig' bug. He had been working on facial expression animations for the ape and was testing how they worked in the game. He called up his ape and watched as it wandered around the local village. The ape was hungry and began looking around for food. There was a pig snuffling away in the mud. He bent over, picked up the pig and was about to eat it. Then, amazingly, the ape disappeared completely.

This distressed the programmers, although, in the end, Jonty Barnes came up with an explanation. The hungry ape had picked up a pig, itself hungry, in the middle of eating its meal. Just before the ape could swallow its bite-sized porky, the pig took its next mouthful and the nearest food was... the ape. This tiny pig had eaten King Kong in a single bite!

The villagers can also develop strange eating disorders. Jamie Durrant noticed a villager in a loop, walking from his home towards the local storage pit. Halfway there, he would turn around and go home. But as soon as he got there, he would leave and head back towards the storage pit, only to get halfway and return home. It was an odd loop which could not be broken. It turned out that this villager, who was working in the fields, became hungry and set off home for his dinner. But when he came home, he found there wasn't any food there. This prompted a trip to the food store. But on his way there, a 'status check' revealed he was hungry. The game sent him home for his dinner. When he got there, he found no food and set off again to the storage pit only to be status checked again and sent home.

A huge amount of work has been done on the creature AI, which is designed to give the creatures 'realistic' lives of their own without the player having to constantly direct their actions. As a result, their behaviour and the interactions between them cause endless hours of entertainment at Lionhead. In a previous article, I mentioned the creature that arrived into the world hungry, looked around for the nearest food and promptly ate itself.

On another occasion, Andy Robson discovered one of his tortoise creatures had Messianic delusions. After a hard day's tramping around the world, it felt tired and settled down to sleep. But, unfortunately, it happened to be standing in a lake. Andy's tortoise drowned - quite peacefully, though.

Readers who have been following the *Black & White* story will know that at some point your pet will discover another creature controlled by the computer player. The two can interact in a number of different ways.

The first two creature routines to be completed were combat animations. But at this stage no damage system had been implemented. The creatures could bash each other for hours without being weakened. The fight scenes were always interesting to watch and you often found groups gathered around animator Eric Bailey's computer as he tested his fight sequences. On this particular day, there was a

gang around Eric's PC and, suddenly, everyone burst out laughing. On-screen, a giant cow had been fighting a giant tiger, throwing each other across the landscape. Then, they stopped fighting and started dancing with each other! The cow was performing a funky *Saturday Night Fever* routine, while the tiger was breakdancing. Eric had, he admitted, secretly been working on these dancing routines to amuse us, but no one knew why a bug in the program had determined that the two enemies should suddenly decide to become dancing partners. There was a creature behaviour bug which scared us. Those who saw it were more than a little disturbed. The creatures, apparently, are intended to be as realistic as possible. But the programmers and artists sometimes get carried away with the 'realism'. Sometimes, when no one was watching, they would build, erm... sexual and excretory functions into the creatures' behaviours. Obviously, few, if any, of these make it into the final version of the game. But when you spend more than two years working on a game, you do create a few follies for a bit of amusement. This disgusting behaviour was observed on an ape creature. Feeling 'the urge', the ape had squatted over some lush green fruit bushes and relieved himself. With the job done, the ape realised he was hungry and the nearest food was, you guessed it, the fruit bushes. Undeterred, he scoffed the filthy fruit. Richard Evans, who had programmed most of the creature's AI, screamed. Everyone assumed it was because he had failed to program the creature to avoid eating its own mess. But no. Richard had written in appropriate AI in case the creature should eat something unpalatable. But it didn't seem to be working. Moments later, the ape was doubled over, retching. And Richard was smiling. That's what was supposed to happen. [E]



Two giant creatures fight in the serene village green.



The ape creature about to eat a tiny pig.



A giant tortoise creature prior to his tragic drowning incident in the lake.

✦ As well as being a director of start-up games developer Lionhead, Steve Jackson is co-founder of Games Workshop, author of Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks, and a columnist for The Daily Telegraph.

✦ The next instalment follows in our September issue, on sale Thursday 27 July.

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO...

DARKWORKS

The *Alone In The Dark* trilogy is one of the most illustrious and influential series in the PC games industry. Now French developer Darkworks has been handed the mammoth task of updating the well-loved classic and can feel the eyes of the world upon them. Mark Hill chats with Antoine Villette, co-founder of the company, to find out what it feels like to be under such intense scrutiny

Long before Fox Mulder started to stick his nose into little fluorescent men out of space, vampires, governmental experiments and other miscellaneous paranormal phenomena, there was Edward Carnby, the oblong hero from *Alone In The Dark*. The game, which appeared in 1993, radically transformed computer games. It was the first truly movie-like game experience, with a multitude of

camera angles and what was then revolutionary animation. It was also the first of the now common-as-muck genre of action/adventure: you moved around in a 3D environment, solving puzzles and talking to people, but also kicking and hacking legions of nightmarish creatures.

It used the same 1920s America look that *Nocturne* fed on and drew heavily from both HP Lovecraft's *Cthulu* myths and artists' interpretations of the

monsters he described. Until then people had no idea of the power a game could have to scare and amaze you at the same time. The atmosphere was palpable as you explored the house in search of clues, while fighting zombies and other monsters from beyond.

After venturing into the realm of pirates and gunslingers in the second and third instalments, *Alone In The Dark 4* goes back to its roots, the main setting being a dark house on a sinister island. With the creator of the series, Hubert Chardot, having moved on to make the original, if unacclaimed, *Devil Inside*, Darkworks has now stepped in to fill some pretty big shoes. We asked Antoine how he felt about taking on a game with such a significant past.

A name as well recognised as *Alone In The Dark* comes with a lot of background baggage, preconceptions and things that people expect to see. How much does *Alone In The Dark 4* feel like your baby?

Antoine: It definitely felt like our baby. We wanted to re-invent the game from the first series, so we kept true to its spirit, which was having an everyday environment, like the mansion, and we also kept Carnby's character.

Did you go back to the original *Alone* to try and recapture some of the essence of the game or did you want to start from scratch?

Antoine: We started from scratch and redesigned the characters and the story to make them more contemporary and fit in with modern times. We

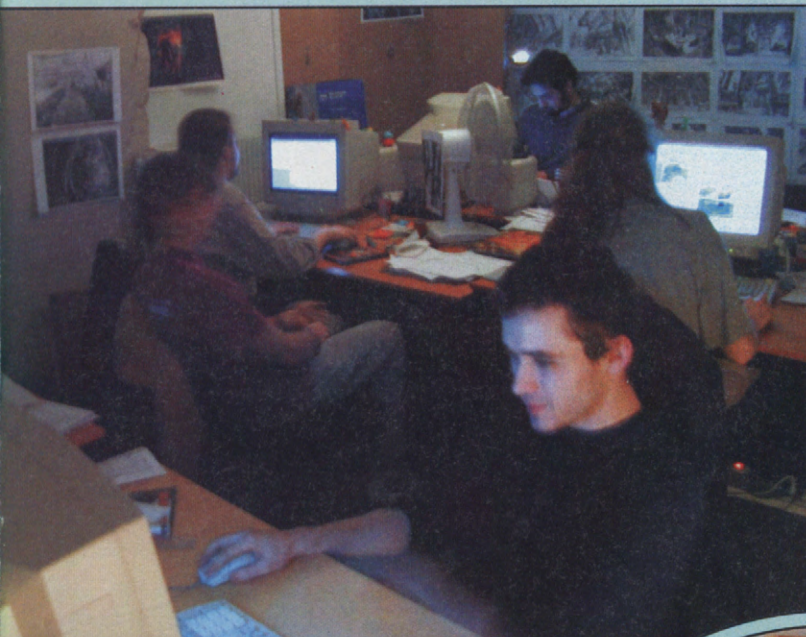


G Moreels is alone, but all the lights are on.

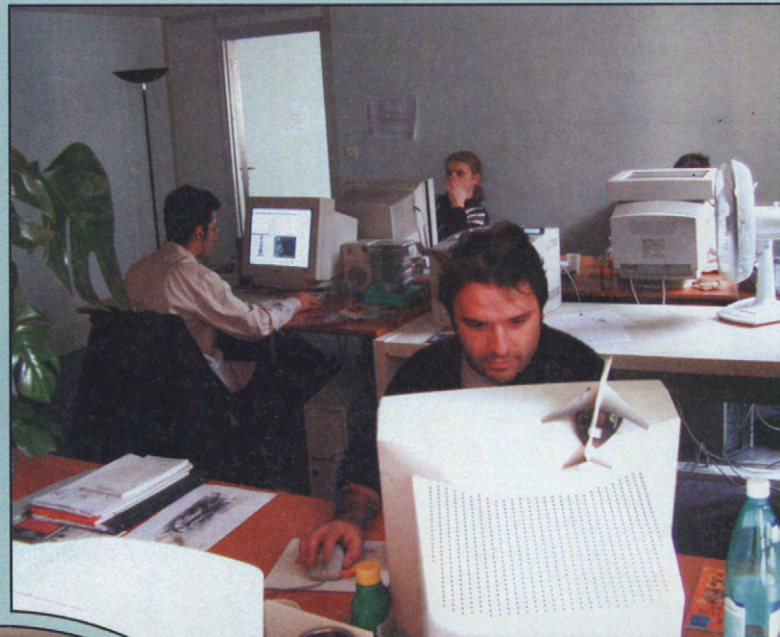
Antoine Villette proves that all you need is a pen, a mobile and a whole lot of cigarettes to make a successful company.

“We think the use of atmosphere in the original *Alone* is much better than *Resident Evil*”

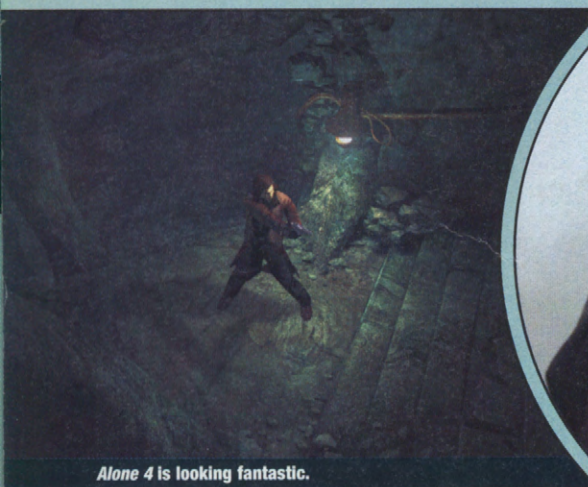
ANTOINE VILLETTE, CO-FOUNDER OF DARKWORKS



Here is the room where the backgrounds are pre-rendered...



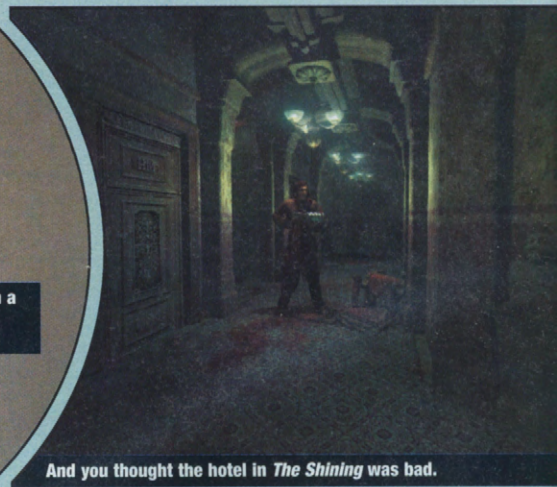
...and this is the room where the characters are animated.



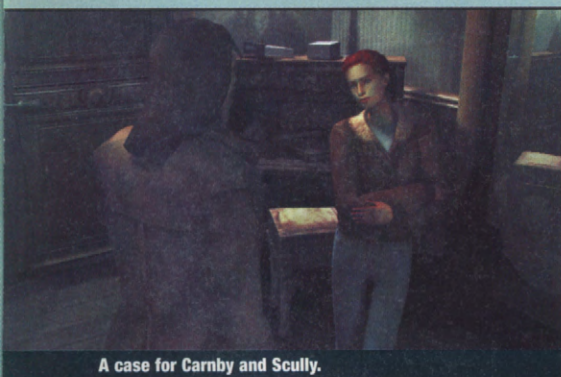
Alone 4 is looking fantastic.



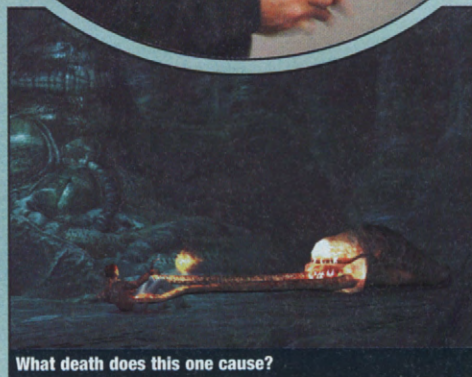
Mr Rochedeux in a dramatic French existentialist pose.



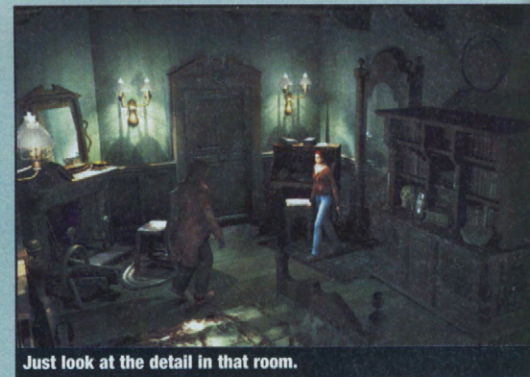
And you thought the hotel in *The Shining* was bad.



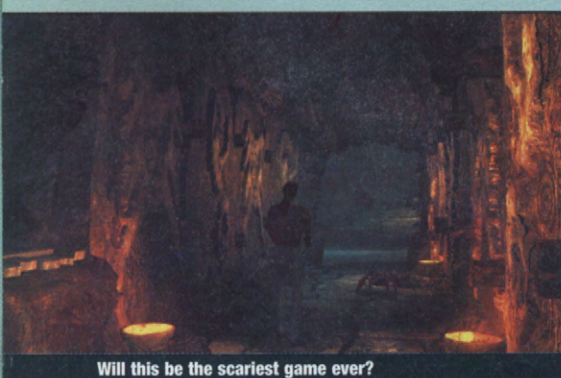
A case for Carnby and Scully.



What death does this one cause?



Just look at the detail in that room.



Will this be the scariest game ever?



A haunted library.



A perfectly framed pose.

were very interested in the movie effects of the first *Alone* so we have been working for two years to keep that kind of feeling alive. Today's technology allows you to recreate the feeling that you are in a movie and this is what we have tried to do. We want you to feel like you are not only in the movie, but that you're actually the hero.

The *Alone* series influenced many games, most notably the phenomenally successful *Resident Evil* series. How much influence does *Resident Evil* have on *Alone In The Dark 4*?

Antoine: *Resident Evil* was actually a negative influence, so we didn't want to draw any inspiration from it. Although there were things that did influence us like the perfect camera angles and camera switches.

There seem to be two types of horror games: the ones that rely on shocks and gore (such as *Resident Evil*) and the ones that attempt more of an atmosphere and try to scare you through psychological fear (*Silent Hill* on console or *System Shock 2* on PC). Which ones do you think work best and where would you place *Alone In The Dark 4*?

Antoine: *Alone In The Dark 4* situates itself in the middle with 50 per cent action and 75 per cent adventure (no prizes for mathematical genius, then - Ed). We focused on the characters and the links they have with the player, especially the psychological links. We think the use of atmosphere in the original *Alone* is much better than in *Resident Evil* or *Silent Hill*. I believe that's because the game came from nowhere and I don't think anyone understood the story.

What do you think is the fascination with extreme violence in games, with limbs that blow apart spilling blood everywhere? This is not necessarily just in horror games, you can see it in *Soldier Of Fortune* or *Quake III*.

Antoine: As human beings we have a huge range of emotions, two of which are fear and a sense of power. With fear you need to have danger around you. We don't feel we need to add litres of blood to a game sequence, just one image is enough to cause fear. The power of the player is perhaps a danger, as they have a different psychology of total power. With *Alone* you can be completely lost and feel weakness.

The impact of horror films on games is probably greater than any other kind, making horror games probably the most cinematic genre. Why do you think this is?

Antoine: It's because it's simple. At the moment we can't recreate emotions like crying or love, because it is a complex series of subtle features that allow those feelings. It's no coincidence that a high per cent of the gaming public are 15 to 25, either, and that this is also the same for the public attending horror movies. In *Alone* we wanted to add that little bit of real-life story.

How do you compare the European (*Alone*) and the Japanese (*Resident Evil*) games development industries? Dark European games seem to borrow from film noir as much as they do from horror films.

Antoine: I think it is very different with Japan, because they are nearly two years ahead of us. The

Japanese market is so big that the 20 per cent of it that arrives in Europe is some of the best available. We have to be better. We need to innovate the content of our games, without trying to be the most innovative in technology.

The inspiration for many of the monsters in the *Alone* series has been drawn from the HP Lovecraft *Cthulu* myths. Was this the case with you? What other sources of inspiration did you have?

Antoine: The Lovecraft *Cthulu* myths did not really inspire us at all. We sat down and thought about the different kinds of deaths there could be in the game, in the end we came up with about 15 to 20 and built a monster that could be capable of inflicting each death. We worked with a famous illustrator called Claire Welding, and with her talent we were able to tell her what deaths we wanted and she would build the monster around each death, from slightly creepy ones to truly frightening ones.

Edward Carnby was around long before Fox Mulder, but has the *X-Files* influenced you at all? I notice that part of the plot involves a governmental organisation called the Bureau 713...

Antoine: In fact, the inspiration for Bureau 713 came from a personal interest in governmental

“The next big step is movie-quality animations, for the next games we'll be focussing on that”

ANTOINE ON THE FUTURE OF DARKWORKS

organisations, although I am a big fan of the *X-Files* and I can't deny that there is some of its influence in the story.

How do you think video games fit in with other media, such as films or books. Do you think games are progressing independently from films into a completely different art form? Can you see games being widely recognised as art in the near future?

Antoine: I am not an art guru, but what I'd like to see is the video games industry going down its own route. For instance, at E3 I found a lot of adaptations of television programmes. If possible, I would like us to have our own rules of directing and animation. For example, *The Matrix* was heavily influenced by computer games. If we want to be mass market in five or six years then we have to be careful that computer games do not become a derivative product.

How important for you is the story in a game? How do you deal with the problem between telling a good story, with good twists in the plot and plenty of depth, all of which necessarily implies linearity with the interactivity necessary to make a good game?

Antoine: A story is extremely important. In *Alone In The Dark 4* there are around 200 dialogues, which we can use to really tell a story well. There are two very important things to keep in mind in the distribution of the information: where to put it and how.

Do you think the adventure genre is almost dead? Or do you think it's just evolved into another form?

Antoine: I don't think the adventure genre is dead. A typical adventure game is *Monkey Island*. In movies you have action, romance etc... and in games you have to have adventure.

How important are the puzzles in *Alone In The Dark 4*? How many other human characters are there, and how much will you be able to talk with them?

Antoine: The puzzles are not pen and paper puzzles, they are analogical puzzles. You will solve a puzzle without even knowing it was there. There are about ten characters, but there will only be contextual dialogue between you and them. When you meet them it is in order to gather clues.

How much have you felt the limitations of doing a PlayStation game at the same time as making it for the more powerful PC when you know the capabilities of the imminent PS2?

Antoine: For the developers it is very difficult, especially in terms of the quality of content. We tried to get an improvement on each platform, but on each platform, gamers are different.

Putting emotion into games and creating characters that seem real, and are capable of provoking the same kind of responses that good films do seems one of the main objectives for the future (it's no coincidence that the PS2 brain is called the emotion chip). Are you tackling that issue or don't you think games are capable of doing that just yet? Do you think psychological horror will become more common than visceral horror?

Antoine: The next big step is movie-quality animation and for the next games we'll really be focusing on this aspect.

At the moment *Alone In The Dark 4* falls neatly into the category of action/adventure, and people can immediately relate it to games they already know, such as *Tomb Raider*, *Dino Crisis* etc. Do you think there'll come a time when games don't need to define themselves in relation to other games?

Antoine: Video games are sold in shops and if you don't categorise them you will get nowhere and sell nothing. I would like to do a personal game such as *Grim Fandango*, but it's very difficult to make a personal game when it has to be marketed in order to be sold, and it's very difficult to market a game without references.

We'll be able to see for ourselves whether *Alone In The Dark 4* can live up to the legacy and the massive expectations old-time gamers have. Look out for more information on the game in next month's issue, when we visit Darkworks once again to bring you a massive preview. In the meantime, we are left pondering where horror action/adventures are heading. Will they go down the *System Shock* route so brilliantly established by *Realms Of The Haunting* or will they continue to take their cue from the console-orientated Japanese scene? As games get more sophisticated, will we be able to experience emotions other than fear? Like Antoine Villette says, games need to be accepted as an art-form in their own right, independent from other visual forms of entertainment, if they are to progress. [E]

TEAM TALK



It all appears to be falling apart rapidly as injuries, drinking and gambling inflict their toll and take hold of the PC ZONE office

★ REHABILITATED Richie Shoemaker

You'll be unsurprised to hear that *Quake III Arena* is still top of our lunchtime playlist, despite Dan Emery's (our disk editor) insistence that the game is tiresome in the extreme. (This from a man who thinks *Panzer General* is the height of sophistication.) Once famous for his appearances in the Timotei commercials back in the '80s, accident-prone Dan is currently to be seen hobbling around the office with a

spread like wildfire through its victims. One mention of the 'w' word is enough to shut down PCs and Macs alike, and come six o'clock, the office is deserted. However, it was only recently when Chris took his double tumble that we came to realise what an insidious force the wheato truly is. As addictive as crack and just as dangerous, much training is required to master its ways. Don't do it kids. Wheatos will screw you up. Lesson over.

So with intemperance curtailed for the moment, the

“The blame for the current gambling frenzy in the office can be squarely laid at Chris Anderson's feet”

bloated foot and broken fingers, he also came home from E3 fluorescent purple, after, we're told, just one hour in the sun. So we reckon a starring role in the next series of Ribena ads is assured.

Goblin King Chris Anderson has also been stress-testing his physical structure: one too many pints of wheat beer (The Official Beer of the PC ZONE team) and a Baileys was enough to see him fall out of his seat on two occasions on our latest mid-week 'wheato night'. He claims he was pushed and indeed it did look to be the case, but on reflection, his wild gesticulations prior to his fall could attest to the fact that one of his *EverQuest* incantations had gone awry. Either that or he was pissed...

Apart from its effect on body and mind after ludicrous amounts, the glorious cloudy brew known as 'wheato' has had an amazing effect within the PC ZONE offices. From an inglorious introduction six months ago, wheato fever has

evils of another vice have gripped our hovel, thanks in part to the impending Euro 2000. While I must take sole responsibility for introducing the evils of the wheato to our ranks, the blame for the current gambling frenzy in the office can be squarely laid at Chris Anderson's feet, for it is he who suggested we should bid for teams, winner takes all. Currently the bids for England, Spain, Italy and Holland have gone through the roof, while I shall content myself with the bargain of the century - Turkey at 50p. Well, you never know and if the Turks do manage to pull off their second footballing fluke in as many months, I shall probably be the only Brit toasting their glory. National pride is one thing. Money quite another.



PC ZONE staff working their fingers to the bone at E3 in Los Angeles.



Our esteemed dep ed, Dave Woods, after just one too many...

Which brings me neatly back to *Quake III*. Yes it seems football isn't the only thing we're prepared to waste money on. Dave 'Daikatana' Woods and Martin 'coffee

please, no sugar' Korda have wagered a week's lunch that Dave can or can't beat Martin by 20 frags on any map of Martin's choice. Considering Martin's meteoric rise up the PC ZONE rankings, Dave may well have to shell out for quite a few kebabs (yet another recent vice).

All good things must come to an end, however, and with our lunchtime *Quake III* sessions seemingly peaking, we turn more increasingly to what I find as the most bizarre choice for a replacement - *Open Tennis 2000*. Not since

Actua Soccer 2 has a sports game taken over the office, I certainly hope its popularity takes a dive in the very near future. At the moment I'm trying to indoctrinate the chaps into *Counter-Strike*, but it seems my calls for reinforcements are falling on deaf ears. Hopefully, when we move offices in a couple of months this situation will change. By then we will have fast connections for games (we only have a 56K modem to link us with the outside world at the moment) and while the others play *Tennis*, *Tetris* or some other rubbish, I shall be tasting the delights of online *Counter-Strike*, eating my large doner, hopefully with a wedge of notes in my pocket - courtesy of Turkey - and the promise of a wheato at the end of it. [E]



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