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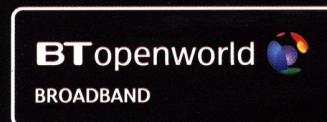


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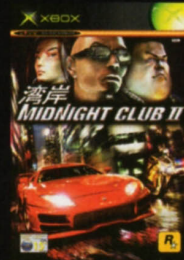
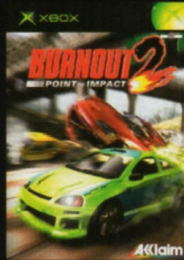
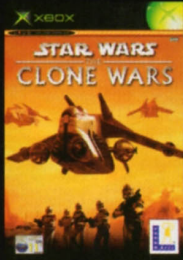
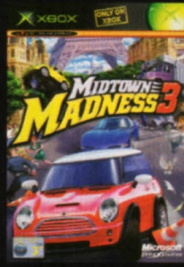
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# E3 2003: PART 2 P30

The conclusion of ZONE's E3 adventure, including *Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy*, *Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time* and *Republic: The Revolution*

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## Three Wise Men



There's no snow on the ground, I'm not lying in a manger and they didn't come bearing gifts, but I'd like to introduce you to the three wise men who've travelled from afar

to join the ZONE ranks this month.

First off is our brand new editorial assistant, Will Porter, a man for whom writing breezy copy comes as easily as whacking a tea-bag in a pot and brewing the perfect cuppa. Our lives have been enriched already.

Also joining us this month is Paul Presley, a ZONE stalwart for almost 10 years. Since his arrival he's been locked away working on the brand new Online section we're introducing next month. If there's anything you think we should be covering, or if you're in a guild or a clan and you fancy a bit of exposure, email us at [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk) and we'll see if we can oblige.

Then there's Max Payne. Formerly a man with nothing to lose, Max was only too happy to meet up with ZONE to discuss his blockbuster sequel, *The Fall Of Max Payne*. As someone who lets his gun do the talking, Max might not appear the wisest on the surface, but if you check out our exclusive preview, starting on page 34, you'll see there's method in his madness.

And talking of wise men, how about this... id's next retail release was due to be *Enemy Territory*, a shooter set in the *Wolfenstein* universe. But when the single-player campaign wasn't strong enough, they decided to release the multiplayer component free, making it the biggest and best giveaway in the history of PC games. True wisdom indeed, as was the decision to make it available only on the coverdiscs of PC ZONE, the longest running dedicated PC games mag in Britain. Good work fellas.

Dave Woods  
Editor



## MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE P34

Essential six-page expose of the game nobody was allowed to see. Except for us. Yes, Max is back, and he's really pissed off... again.

## COVER DISKS P128



### FREE FULL GAME!

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Seven demos not on the CDs, including *Civilization III: Game Of The Year Edition*, *Fightbox*, *Port Royale*, *Laser Squad Nemesis*, *Uplink*, *Star Wraith 3* and *Robocop*.

Exclusive DVD-Video feature covering the making of *Ghost Master* together with exclusive broadcast-quality footage of *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. Also on the DVD this month, an E3 Special - a collection of screenshots from the biggest games at the show.

Plus all the other latest and essential patches, movies and more.



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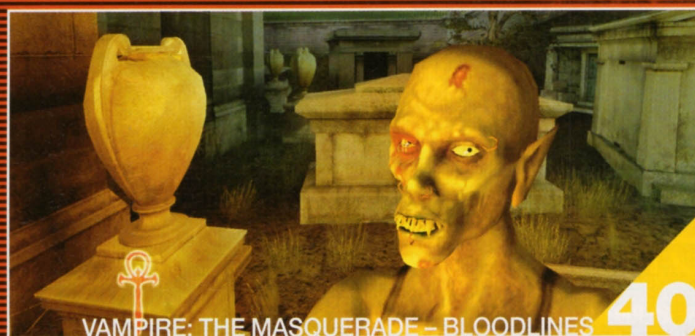
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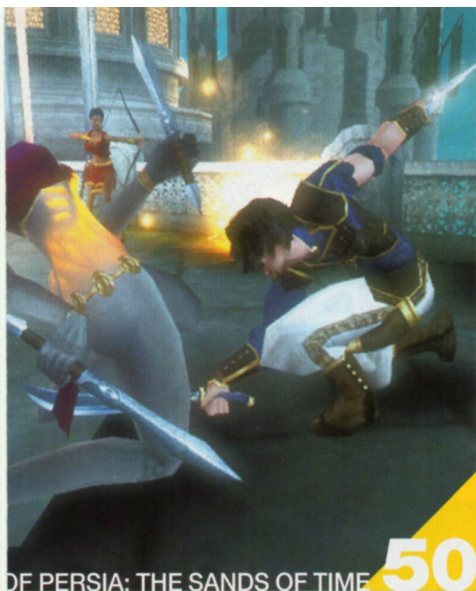
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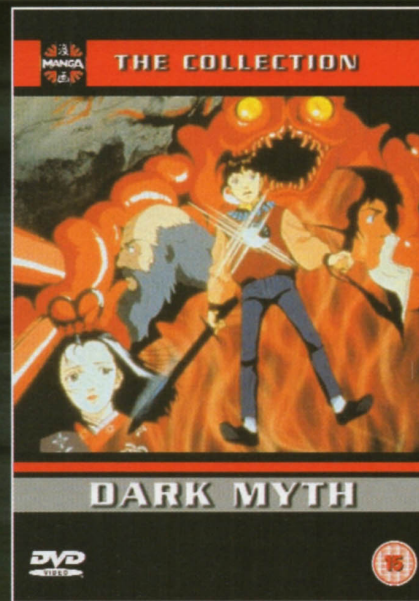
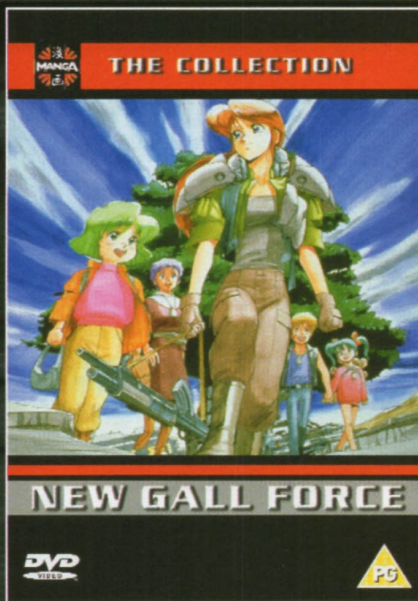
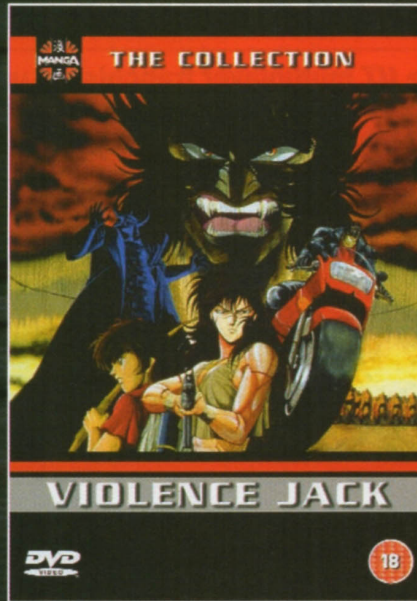
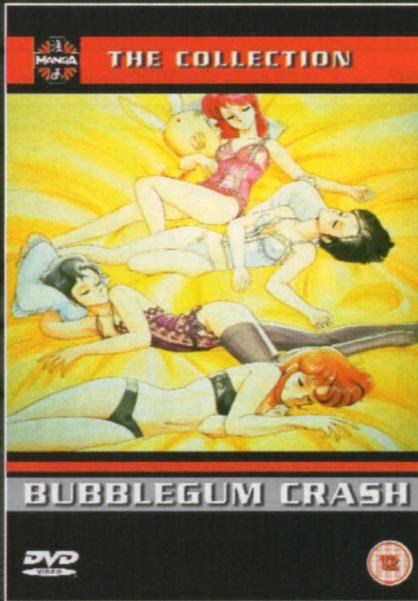




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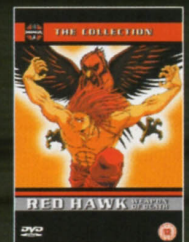


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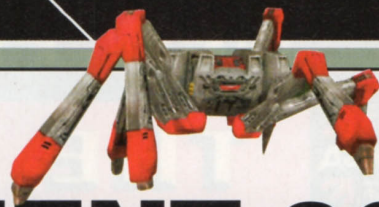
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# FIRST Look!

## Head shots

# UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2004



2003  
expo  
PART TWO

Exclusive! The next instalment in the *UT* multiplayer franchise is unleashed

■ SKAARJ WARRIOR Jamie Sefton

### ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

**DEVELOPER** Epic Games  
**PUBLISHER** Atari  
**EXPECTED RELEASE DATE** October  
**WEBSITE** www.atari.com

### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Proper sequel to *UT 2003*
- New Assault and Onslaught modes
- New air and ground vehicles
- More than 30 new maps
- Backwards-compatible with *UT 2003*



"THIS IS A major upgrade to *UT 2003* and not a Gold Edition or whatever," said Steve Polge, programmer at Epic Games at E3 – the words we all wanted to hear. "We're adding more new content to *Unreal Tournament 2004* than the total amount of maps and modes in *UT 2003*."

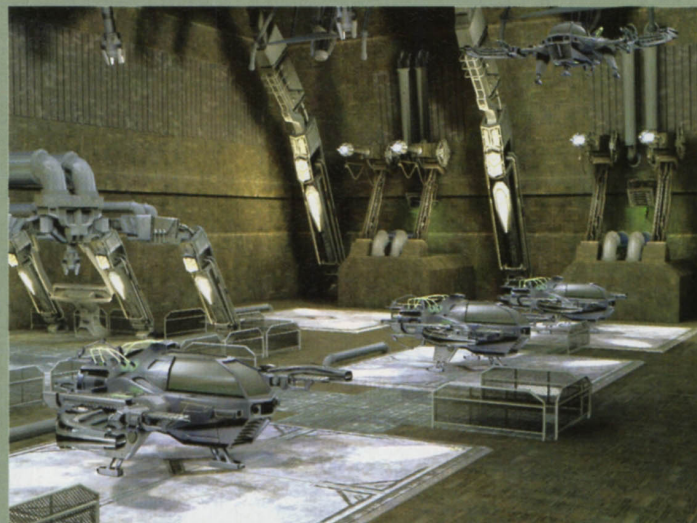
*Unreal Tournament 2004* is the latest in the violent first-person shooter series and introduces a truckload of new maps, weapons, characters, voice-over Internet support and most importantly, two additional multiplayer modes – Assault and Onslaught – complete with airborne and ground vehicles. Polge demonstrated the new modes to us recently at E3, which although are looking very nice indeed, were still very much a work-in-progress.

First up is Assault, similar to the very popular mode from the original *UT*, featuring single and multiplayer mission-based objectives played from the point of view of both the attacker and the defender. We were shown a map featuring humans laying siege to a Skaarj mothership – the scaly monstrosities from the *Unreal* universe are a new playable team and join other new character additions, including a clan of killer robots.

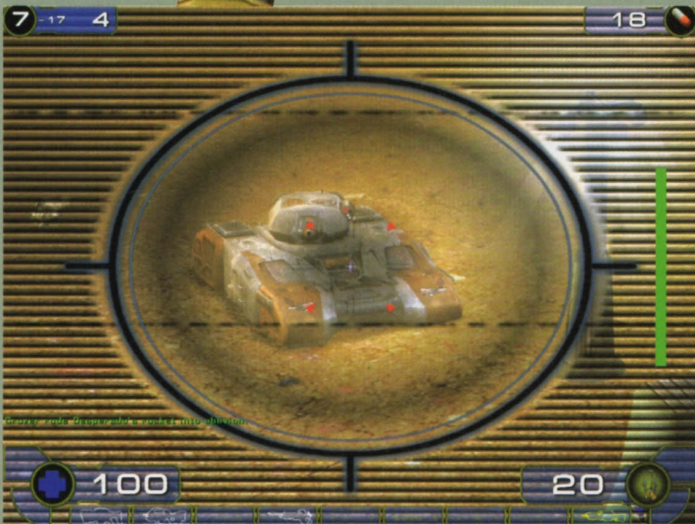
Using a new one-man spaceship, Polge blasted the large alien craft, destroying the shield generators to allow him to dock, while the Skaarj fired from fixed turrets and joined human fighters in frantic dogfights. Continuing on foot after docking his ship, Polge stormed into the Skaarj vessel, blasting anything that moved, and destroyed the engine core to complete the mission. The level then kicked off again (almost instantaneously, unlike the long loading times in *UT*) with the teams' roles reversed.



A Skaarj warrior leaps from the new buggy vehicle to attack.



Inside the Skaarj mothership. *UT 2004* has one-man ships to fly.



An enemy tank has just spotted you – best run like hell.

### HUG MY FACE

Onslaught mode is much more vehicle-focused, uses bigger maps and involves players conquering bases by storming in and destroying their power core. The vehicles include fast skimmer hovercraft, buggies that can take up to three players, a slow-moving but powerful tank, a fighter bomber and the 'Raptor' – a flying craft which manoeuvres like a helicopter.

Gameplay-wise, we were struck by the similarities to *Halo*'s wide-open levels and vehicle combat, and *Tribes*' feeling of multiplayer battles. But the game still retains the unique *UT* feel – never more than when using one of the three new multiplayer weapons, the Spider Mine. These robotic arachnids, once fired at vehicles, will scuttle underneath and explode to devastating effect, but they

can also be hidden in long grass where they hide until an enemy vehicle stumbles upon them. They are also lethal to players on foot – get too near and they jump onto your face and drill a hole into your brain.

### UNREAL ONLINE

There'll be at least nine maps for Onslaught and Assault modes – supporting a maximum of 32 players – plus over 20 new maps for the original game modes. However, *UT 2004* will be completely backwards-compatible with *UT 2003*, with new players able to use old servers and any maps and mods created for the older game. "We want to grow the community, not split it," assured Polge. Altogether, *UT 2004* is shaping up to be an unmissable addition to the *UT* universe. We'll have a full preview very soon. [E]



A human warrior aboard the new skimmer vehicle available in *UT 2004*'s Onslaught mode.

#### VEHICLES

There are seven new vehicles available in the multiplayer modes – two flying craft (the bomber and the Raptor), a tank, a skimmer hovercraft, a one-man spaceship and this buggy, available in one-man and three-man versions.

#### GRAPHICS ENGINE

The engine's been tweaked for smoother performance and produces enhanced effects and models.

#### BACKWARDS-COMPATIBLE

*UT 2004* will be backwards-compatible with *UT 2003*, so you'll be able to join in *UT 2003* servers, and import maps, skins and mods.

#### ONSLAUGHT MODE

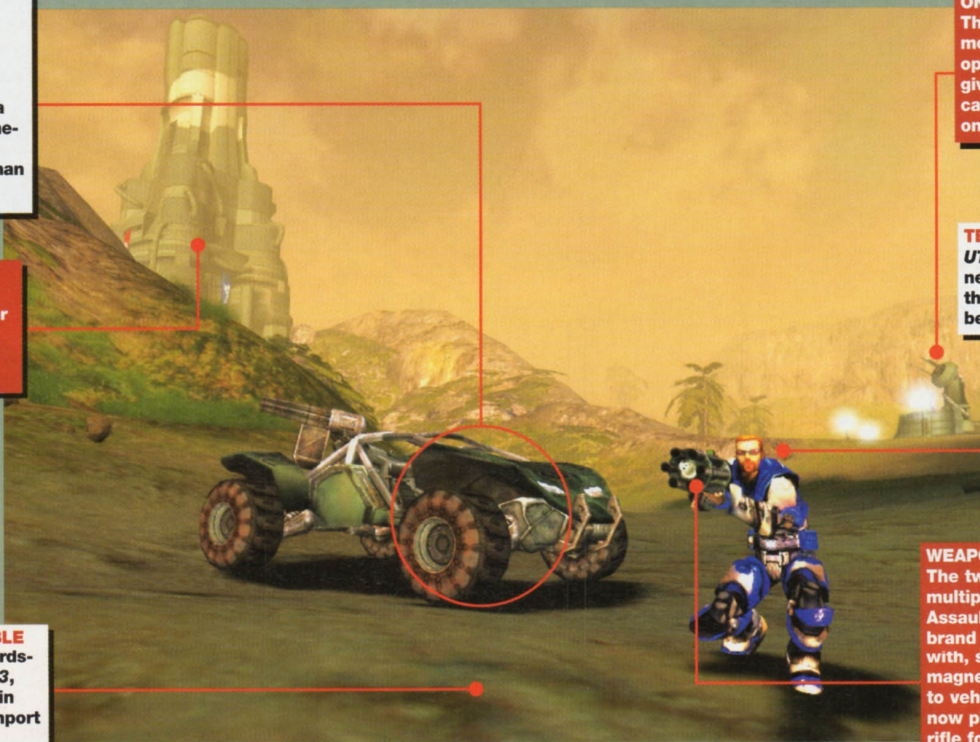
This new multiplayer mode features huge open levels, with teams given the objective to capture all these bases on the map.

#### TEAMS

*UT 2004* includes three new player teams, including the imposing scaly alien beasties, the Skaarj.

#### WEAPONS

The two additional multiplayer modes of Assault and Onslaught have brand new weapons to play with, such as throwable magnetic mines that stick to vehicles. You can also now pick up another assault rifle for dual-fire.



Groovy baby!

FIRST Look!

3 2003 expo PART TWO

# EVIL GENIUS

Indulge your megalomaniac fantasies in Elixir's tongue-in-cheek strategy romp

SECRET AGENT: Jamie Sefton

## ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

**DEVELOPER** Elixir Studios  
**PUBLISHER** VJ Games  
**EXPECTED RELEASE DATE** Autumn 2004  
**WEBSITE** www.howevillareyou.com

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- An RTS from the makers of *Republic: The Revolution*
- Original 1960s/1970s spy setting
- Fabulous Q-like gadgets, weapons and horrible henchmen
- Silly humour throughout

**IN HIS** hidden, top-secret lair at E3 surrounded by piranha-infested pools, Demis Hassabis was expecting *PC ZONE*. The boss of Elixir Studios flashed us a devilish smile, ushered away his brown-coated bodyguards with a nonchalant flick off his finger and offered us a seat. "Welcome," he said, "to a presentation of my new game, *Evil Genius*." With a flourish, Hassabis spun round in his chair, laughed maniacally and pulled a large, ominous-looking lever. Metal bands suddenly sprung from our seat and snapped over our legs and hands, the nuclear-powered PC sparked into life and the demonstration began...

*Evil Genius* is an isometric 3D strategy game set in a mythical 1960s/1970s world of secret agents, superweapons, nasty henchmen, underground bases and sinister organisations, prevalent in *James Bond* movies, cult programmes such as *The Avengers* and more recently the *Austin Powers* series.

As one of five competing evil geniuses, you begin the game on a tropical island with \$100 million in your back pocket and a simple task: take over the world. To succeed in this dastardly plot, you must build up your base's technology to create the ultimate doomsday weapon and a crafty escape device, then leave a message to the governments of the world to give in to your demands.

"Your base-building happens both above and below ground," said Hassabis. "Above you can have golf courses and hotels to camouflage the fact that what you're really doing underneath is hollowing out a volcano and putting in a huge base of operations."

You have access to two types of character in addition to your



Technology trees aren't linear. You can experiment to yield new equipment.

evil genius – minions are expendable grunts that you can train up to be engineers, security guards, research assistants and perform other menial tasks, while henchmen are your odd-job-type right-hand men with special abilities, like Papa Lazaru who can use voodoo attacks against foes.

To expand your evil empire you have to earn gold by sending your loyal private army to complete missions around the world (à la *X-Com*), including a daring raid to shrink the Eiffel Tower and the kidnapping of a famous pop star. Success unlocks new missions and technology, but as your notoriety increases, it will alert the goodie-two-shoes Forces of Justice agents, who will attempt to infiltrate and destroy your secret base.

Luckily you can lay fiendish traps for invaders and send your henchmen to kill – or for more fun – capture and torture foes

in various sick ways, such as watching them spin around helplessly in giant food mixers, or crushing them between moving bookcases in the library – all complete with suitably comic sound effects.

"I always wondered why evil geniuses left the good agents dangling above the shark pool rather than just killing them," added Hassabis, pacing the room. "It's because it's cooler to do that. So we reward the player with increased notoriety for gloating and doing the same sort of thing, as well as giving agents a chance to escape..."

As he spoke, Hassabis suddenly turned his back on us – a fatal mistake. Using the cord on our ageing dictaphone, we lassoed the lever, leapt from the chair and dashed for the exit. "We'll meet again *PC ZONE!*" Hassabis cackled as the alarm sounded and we sped away on a monorail to the safety of the E3 press room... [E3]



Gloating in front of captured agents increases your notoriety.



Lunchtime at the secret base's canteen – even evil geniuses have to eat.



Elixir is currently finalising the five distinct evil geniuses for you to choose from, including this Blofeld clone called Maximillion.

**TRAINING**  
A construction worker being trained-up at the shooting range to be a security guard. There are dozens of branching abilities for the four different types of minions, including kung-fu expert, valet and scientist.

**ROOM BUILDING**  
You construct your base by plonking down pre-fab research facilities, armouries and other essential facilities. Your control room is the most important building, so make sure it's well protected.

**FORCES OF JUSTICE**  
The organisation hell-bent on spoiling your plans for world domination. Enemy agents turn up as teams or individuals such as the British Bond-a-like, John Steele. You'll also have to look out for double-agents in your midst.



**TORTURE**  
Players can discover amusing ways to torture enemies, such as this shooting range, which pins poor victims to the cardboard target.

**GRAPHICS**  
Elixir has gone for a kitsch 1960s/70s spy setting, with horribly cheesy decor, naff clothes and silly haircuts - all in a bright and breezy cartoon style.

**HEADS-UP DISPLAY**  
Shows a mini-map of your base, gold reserves, staff numbers, base status and a world map showing the five territories. There's also icons for room-building, object placement and the setting of traps.



ALL THE NEWS, VIEWS AND RUMOURS FROM THE WORLD OF PC GAMING

# BULLETIN



## THE PC STRIKES BACK

■ ASSOCIATE EDITOR Jamie Sefton

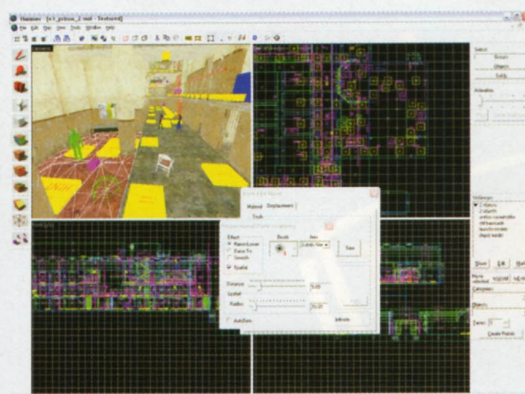
▲ Hi there. If there's one thing I'll take from E3 2003, it's the fact that the PC is once again the hottest gaming machine out there. I remember hearing time and again last year that Xbox, PlayStation 2 and GameCube would signal the death knell of the PC, a view borne out by a distinct lack of triple-A titles on PC at the time. This year has changed all that, and the fact that *Half-Life 2* will be a PC first has signalled the dawn of this new golden age.

Think I'm just burbling hyperbole? Well, just consider the stunning titles coming out over the next 12 months that will lead on PC: *Doom III*, *Call Of Duty*, *Deus Ex: Invisible War*, *Rome: Total War*, *EverQuest 2*, *Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy*, *Sam & Max 2*, *Black & White II*, *Unreal Tournament 2004*, *Star Wars Galaxies: An Empire Divided* – the list goes on. As the gaming and graphics technology of the PC accelerates away from the current crop of consoles (which were recently celebrating the fact they're now online – well done guys...) you can be sure that ZONE will always be first with the biggest and best games. For proof, look no further than page 34 for our eye-sizzling preview of *Max Payne 2: The Fall Of Max Payne*.

In Bulletin, we continue the exclusives with an interview with Valve on this page, new shots on *Battle Engine Aquila* (page 15), *Sid Meier's Pirates!* (page 16), a report on the companies attempting to put your PC in front of the TV (page 18), and EA's new *The Lord Of The Rings* title (page 20). Also, don't forget to check out *Emulation Zone* (page 23), *The Man Who Knows* (page 20), *Charts* (page 26) and some beautiful *Far Cry* Hot Shots (page 28). Enjoy.

# Half-Life 2 Racing?!

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH VALVE REVEALS NEW GAME DETAILS!



Mod-makers will have full access to HL2's Source engine. The Xen production of West Side Story was a hit.

**HALF-LIFE 2** was, without doubt, the game of E3. As the very first PC title we saw at the show, Valve's immense sci-fi first-person shooter sequel just destroyed almost everything else in a manner similar to one of Gordon Freeman's ill-advised and explosive experiments. *PC ZONE* brought you the world exclusive in issue 129, and now we've scooped more details on the PC's most eagerly-awaited game from Valve's Greg Coomer, including info on the physics weapon, City 17, the alien takeover of earth and the vehicles – which could result in a *Half-Life* driving title! Read on...

**PC ZONE: Can you tell us about the new physics-based weapon?**

Greg Coomer: Sure. That's a special weapon that takes advantage of the Havok physics system in the game, because we've built a world that has such a high level of interactivity. All the objects you see lying around – such as barrels or even bodies – you can pick up or interact with in some way. So this physics weapon has several functions such as pushing things, pulling things, throwing things – it really is unique.

**PCZ: Did the weapon come out of playing with objects in a physics engine demo for Half-Life 2 and thinking "Hey, this is really good fun"?**

GC: Definitely. We needed some way of letting the player learn and have fun with the new physics system, so we developed the weapon around it.

**PCZ: We've seen glimpses of the new aliens, some of which seem to combine human and alien technology. Can you tell us about this?**

GC: We're not revealing a whole lot about the story still, but what's happening is that

alien technology is working its way into City 17 – where part of *Half-Life 2* takes place in – and some other areas. You'll start to see people or machines or other things that are earthly start to take on alien characteristics. So that's why you're seeing some of the 'melding' there.

**PCZ: So that's what's happening with the giant metal alien Citadel in City 17?**

GC: Yes, that is the centre of the alien installation on Earth. City 17 is slowly being eaten and taken over by that installation.

**PCZ: How big is the city?**

GC: I couldn't say exactly, but the scale of it is comparable to a medium European city.

**PCZ: Is it the same as in Half-Life, where levels are split into loading sections?**

GC: Yes, there aren't really discreet levels, it'll be a seamless transition between sections that get loaded as you play them.

**"We're working really hard to make HL2 even more accessible to modders than previous games"**

GREG COOMER  
VALVE SOFTWARE

**PCZ: How about the new vehicles – is the buggy you've demonstrated just one example of many?**

GC: Oh yes. There'll be more vehicles in the game, but we're leaving them as a surprise at the moment. Personally the buggy is my favourite, 'cos it's so much fun to drive.



Know your enemy: A Combine soldier.

**PCZ: And mod-makers will have full access to them, so we could see a Half-Life 2 racing game eventually?**

GC: Absolutely. Even though the complexity of engine and game code has risen, we're working really hard to make it just as accessible to the mod-making community – in fact, even more so than previous games.

• Don't forget to check out the amazing *Half-Life 2* movies on your *PC ZONE* discs!





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**LORD OF THE RINGS**  
EA's movie franchise hits the PC



18

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
A PC that sits under the TV?



20

**ALPHA BLACK ZERO**  
Dark future team-based action



26

**PC ZONE CHARTS**  
Latest charts and release dates



Shoot the little people and watch them die.



Boom! Kapow! Neeow! Zap! Ahem.



Check the shimmering new water effects.

## AQUILA SLAMMERS

EXCLUSIVE! NEW SCREENS FROM LOST TOYS' ACTION-PACKED BLASTER *BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA*

**BACK IN ISSUE** 125 we broke the news that Lost Toys is bringing its well-received 3D action-shooter *Battle Engine Aquila* to the PC – and now we're bringing you the first hi-res screenshots.

"We've had a working PC version all the way through the development of the console versions," says managing director Jeremy Longley. "So in the last few months we've massively increased the visual detail for different spec PCs and added in specific features for the latest graphic cards, such as a cool new reflective water effect."

*BEA* is set in a future post-apocalyptic society, where two armies are waging war using the latest, highly destructive weaponry. Your *Battle Engine Aquila* craft is a lethal machine with two distinct modes – a fighter

than can fly and join in aerial dogfights, and a robot that can walk about, stomp and shoot at enemy troops and vehicles.

The non-stop action involves protecting your cargo ships by storming into an area teeming with tanks, ships and soldiers and blowing shit up, which results in spectacular explosions and scenes of technicolour carnage. *Battle Engine Aquila* is currently without a publisher, but we don't reckon it'll be long before it's snapped up. Watch out for our exclusive playable demo in the coming months.

- Publisher: TBA
- Developer: Lost Toys
- ETA: TBA
- Website: [www.losttoys.com](http://www.losttoys.com)

## BOOGIE KNIGHTS

BIOWARE'S JEDI ROLE-PLAYER IS NEARLY UPON US – GORGEOUS NEW SHOTS

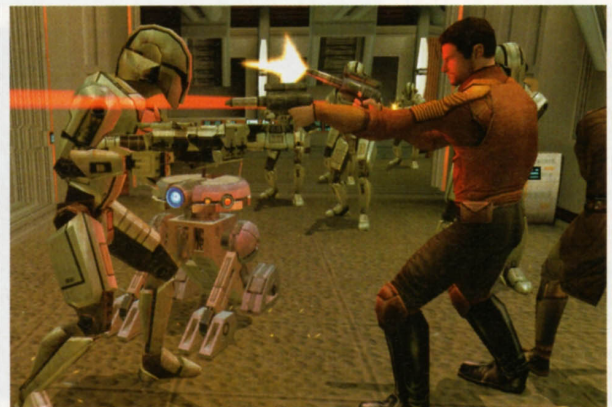
Of all the *Star Wars* games currently in development, it is perhaps *Knights of the Old Republic* that's looking the most impressive. Essentially a traditional party-based RPG, the game nonetheless boasts some of the most stunning *Star Wars* action ever seen. We caught up with RPG masters Bioware at E3 and asked them how they manage to make role-playing look so damn good.

"Every good RPG has a great combat system," says producer Michael Gallo. "One of the things we think is unique about ours is that it's rules-based but real-time. We want the real-time aspect of it to look as cinematic as possible, and a lot of the

animations have been designed specifically to flow together. You can also pause the action if you want to get into the strategy of combat. You can change characters and cue up up to three attacks for each, whether force powers, feats, or normal attacks, before cutting back to the action."

The results are wonderful to behold. Feast your eyes on these screens and hold out for a full preview soon.

- Publisher: Activision
- Developer: BioWare
- ETA: Autumn 2003
- Website: [www.lucasarts.com/products/swkotor](http://www.lucasarts.com/products/swkotor)



*KOTOR* may be set 4,000 years earlier, but it's still *Star Wars*.



Bite my shiny metal ass.

DO ANYTHING  
FOR POWER

SHORTS

RETURN TO THE DUNGEON



Microsoft confirmed at E3 that it will be publishing the sequel to the seminal RPG *Dungeon Siege*, currently in development by Gas Powered Games, the company set up by original creator Chris Taylor. *Dungeon Siege II* promises vastly-improved graphics, a revamped spell system and a menagerie of powerful beasts and creatures to encounter. The release date is currently only a vague "2004" - check [www.dungeonsiege.com](http://www.dungeonsiege.com).

I WANT MY MTV



*Celebrity Deathmatch*, the cult animated series from MTV, is being developed as a game for release in the autumn by Big Ape. Gamers will be able to enjoy brutal battles in the wrestling ring between such celebrities as Marilyn Manson, Jerry Springer, Ron Jeremy, and Mr T - with each participant having their own unique fighting style and death move.

JOHN WOO-STYLE



World-famous action movie director John Woo has set up a new studio to produce videogames. Tiger Hill will develop "interactive entertainment" in conjunction with renowned games company Sega using original and existing licenses and properties from both companies. Woo's new project could also expand into new movies, comic books and toys - but don't expect a *Face/Off* MMORPG any time soon.

WIN WHEN YOU'RE SIMMING

Here are the winners of *The Sims* competition back in issue 126. First prize of a tip-top PC with copies of *The Sims*, plus add-on packs goes to Jonathon Stapleton, Ilkey. The runners-up, who all receive the games include: Tony Wade, Stockport; MW Dunn, Mitcham; Sean Graham, Stockton-on-Tees; Rob Laidler, Plymouth. Congratulations to everyone.



# UP AT THE CRACK OF DOOM

## EXCLUSIVE! MAGICAL SHOTS FROM EA'S THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING

**ELECTRONIC ARTS IS** bringing its next hack 'n' slash *The Lord Of The Rings* game to the PC and we've grabbed these exclusive screenshots to celebrate. The third-person action adventure *The Return Of The King* is fully-licensed from the last fantasy movie in the series (due out in the cinemas on December 17) and features exclusive footage and voice-overs from actors in the film, including Ian McKellen and Viggo Mortensen.

As one of eight playable characters including wizard Gandalf the White, Legolas the elf and Gimli the dwarf, you have to fight your way through 12 levels recreated from the film, such as the battle against Dark Lord Sauron's forces at the Crack of Doom. Environments are interactive, so as well as your magic attacks and weapons you can utilise nearby catapults, loose boulders and other objects to see off orcs and boss characters and avoid trouble by swinging down ramparts on a nifty grappling hook.

*The Return Of The King* also includes the neat movie-to-game transitions, which looked terrific at E3, and a multiplayer co-op mode where you can play through the game with your own Fellowship. Look out for a full preview coming to a ZONE near you soon - check the website below for cool movies and other movie-related gubbins.

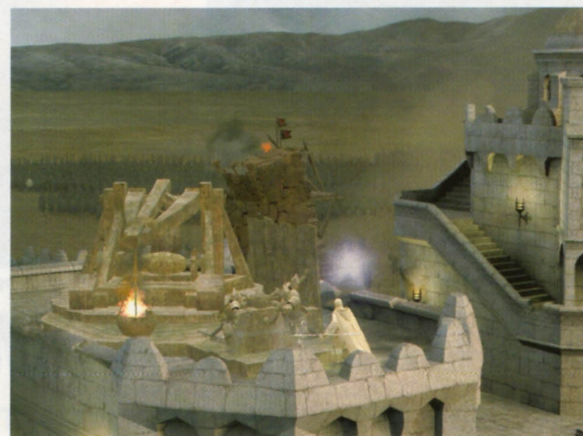
■ **Publisher:** Electronic Arts 
 ■ **Developer:** EA Redwood Shores  
■ **ETA:** 4 November 
 ■ **Website:** [www.lordoftherings.eagames.com](http://www.lordoftherings.eagames.com)



Gandalf prepares an orc kebap.



LOTR: TROTK is the first PC game in the series from EA.



Visuals take advantage of the latest graphics cards.

# Parrot Fashion

## SID MEIER SAILS THE SEVEN SEAS ONCE AGAIN WITH PIRATES!

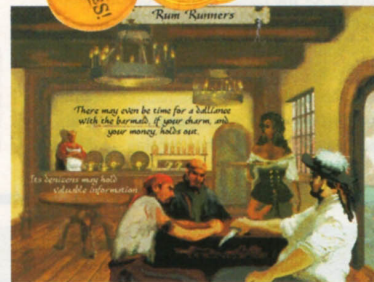
**TIME TO RAISE** the skull and crossbones - legendary *Civilization*-creator Sid Meier is to revisit his incredibly popular swashbuckling 1987 game *Pirates!* for a next-gen remake. The original title saw gamers sailing the seven seas as their own unique pirate character, in a blend of RPG, strategy and action, with a revolutionary cross-genre style that was very much a precursor to the likes of *GTA: Vice City*. "There are a lot of great new things that we're going to be able to put into *Pirates!*," said Meier to *PC ZONE*, "but we still want to be true to the classic gameplay that people have responded to for 15 years."

*Pirates!* will have a "movie-style approach", with a story told in an adventure-like fashion, as well as sword-fighting, ship battles and the hunt

for buried treasure - all wrapped up in the latest 3D visuals. "We want the idea of a wide-open world where you can go anywhere and choose your path: are you going to be a noble pirate that upholds the honour of the king, or are you going to be a scurvy pirate and grab any ship that sails by?"

As part of the same deal recently inked between his company Firaxis and Atari (formerly Infogrames) Sid Meier will also be releasing more *Civilization* products, with the first being an expansion pack for *Conquests* later this year.

■ **Publisher:** Atari  
■ **Developer:** Firaxis  
■ **ETA:** 2004  
■ **Website:** [www.firaxis.com](http://www.firaxis.com)



Let's hope Sid Meier's new *Pirates!* game won't need a patch. (Sorry.)



# HOLY WAR

NEW MULTIPLAYER LEVELS CONFIRMED AT E3 FOR HALO: COMBAT EVOLVED

**THANKS BE TO GATES** – Microsoft has confirmed a whole package of extra multiplayer features for Bungie's magnificent futuristic first-person shooter *Halo: Combat Evolved*. Currently being ported to the PC from the Xbox by Gearbox (creator of the *Half-Life* expansion packs), *Halo* will include more than six new maps supporting up to 16 players online and all the Xbox game types such as Slayer (for deathmatches) and CTF.

We played two of the new maps at E3 using the new mouse/keyboard controls – Timberland, a huge sprawling outdoor forest battlefield dense with plants, trees and rippling water, plus Gephyrophobia (meaning "fear of bridges"), which features a giant bridge spanning a chasm between two fortresses.

Gearbox is also introducing the Covenant's Banshee and the Shade craft into multiplayer games, plus a brand new vehicle – a superb three-barrelled Rocket Launcher Banshee, which can be used to blast the alien religious sect to smithereens. There'll also be two new multiplayer weapons – a brutal Flamethrower for close-up



Halo will keep all the single-player missions intact for PC.

kills and a Fuel Rod Gun which fires plasma shells like a grenade-launcher.

"We've also added tons of options to manipulate the game rules," said Randy Pitchford, president of Gearbox. "If you like *Counter-Strike*, for example, you can quickly set up a server that only gives each player one life per round."

Gearbox is doubtful at this stage about whether a co-op mode will be included for

the single-player campaign, but there'll definitely be mod-maker tools so you can create your own custom multiplayer levels. We'll have more *Halo: Combat Evolved* info next month.

- Publisher: Microsoft
- Developer: Bungie/Gearbox
- ETA: Q3 2003
- Website: [www.gearboxsoftware.com](http://www.gearboxsoftware.com)



**"Just remember, it's our time and our money we are spending on the game. So either we're absolutely stupid and clueless, or we believe in what we are working on. In the end, you guys will judge the final results. For now, all we want to do is keep quiet and work."**

3D Realms' George Broussard on Duke Nukem Forever.

**"We are not yet talking specifically about our two titles under development, but I will hint that fans of GTA and next-generation racing games will not be disappointed..."**

Ian Hetherington, former Psygnosis boss on the new games company Real Time Worlds, set up with ex-Nintendo director Tony Harman and DMA Design founder David Jones. The company believes the future of gaming lies in MMOGS.

**"Why would a regime that regarded non-Aryans as less than human, create zombies?"**

Reuters' Gene Emery with a philosophical conundrum arising from id's *Wolfenstein*.

# CELL MUTATION

SPLINTER CELL SEQUEL REVEALED, WITH MULTIPLAYER!

**UBI SOFT HAS** just announced the follow-up to our favourite stealth game – *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow*. True to the covert nature of the game, information is in short supply, but the exciting news is that the game will feature a fully-fledged multiplayer component on top of the single-player missions – something of a first in stealth-based games.

While billed as a sequel, we've been informed that this is not in fact *Splinter Cell 2*, which is also in development, but more of a stand-alone expansion/semi-sequel type of deal, using the same basic technology as the original game.

Clearly, many burning questions remain. How will the multiplayer work? What new weapons and gadgets will be available? Does Sam Fisher have to take on an army of evil yet remarkably persuasive women...? Only time will tell, so stay tuned to *PC ZONE* for more details.



- Publisher: Ubi Soft ■ Developer: Ubi Soft Montreal
- ETA: Q1 2004 ■ Website: [www.splintercell.com](http://www.splintercell.com)

# LIBERATE

SPECIAL REPORT

# GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE

A NEW CONSOLE THAT PLAYS UNMODIFIED PC GAMES WAS REVEALED AT E3. A SCEPTICAL PAVEL BARTER ASKS, WHAT'S THE CATCH?



**PC AND CONSOLE** gaming are both a breed and a location apart. *EverQuest* business is conducted a few inches from the monitor (preferably somewhere far from annoying kid brothers or nagging partners) with a keyboard and mouse connecting you to the virtual world.

But kicking back with a console normally takes place sprawled on the couch in front of the biggest TV your cash can buy, often accompanied by friends and numerous control pads. But have you ever wondered what *IL-2 Sturmovik* would look like on the family box? How about scaring your folks with *Half-Life 2* before it graces console shores? Sure, it

can be done once you learn how to convert the VGA signal to composite or S-Video and your hard drive is squeezed into the dog basket, but all that technical wizardry requires too many headaches and too little subsequent pleasure.

Face facts – your desktop's not going anywhere. However, this year's E3 Expo saw the beginning of a potential courtship between your PC and the family box with the launch of a hardware bridge called DISCover. This technology – forged by US and Israeli company Digital Interactive Systems Corporation – will apparently allow gamers to play existing and newly released PC gaming software on TV. Less

your run-of-the-mill console and more of a whiz-kid invention to be harnessed by various companies, the new platform is attempting to take advantage of the PC's vast game catalogue.

**CHICKEN AND EGG**

"DISCover will launch with more titles than any platform before it," says its creator, Avi Dorell. "3500 games were released for PC alone last year. A console needs games to succeed. There has to be enough decent titles to satisfy the consumer and a large enough installed base to attract developers. This is a 'chicken and egg' problem, which we don't concern ourselves with. Plus, we hold the patent on the technology to play PC games on your television set through a set-top box."

In a corner of E3's mammoth convention space, DISC is holding a *Need For Speed* racing competition. The simulators are powered by two networked

ABS DISCover gaming consoles, each playing a PC version of the game on large televisions. Couches are scattered around DISC's booth, as if to prove the point that PC gaming can be removed from its natural habitat quite comfortably. Ian Baverstock, business development director of Kuju Entertainment (creators of forthcoming *Train Simulator 2* and *Fire Warrior*) believes that this "is a genuinely interesting development", adding that "although PC games aren't traditionally made for the same audience and playing styles as console games, there clearly are some console and PC game genres that overlap."

DISCover's emergence hasn't even succeeded in unnerving Bill's troops, according to Microsoft PR, Marie-Claire Suter. "As a PC Games publisher, Microsoft would fully support a PC Console for the living room," she says. DISC plan to launch two set-top box style consoles in September 2003, "first in the US then in the UK and internationally", according to Dorell. A proposed £180 option will include a 40Gb hard drive and



(Above) Codemasters' titles should work but Ensemble isn't interested. (Right)



512Mb of RAM – a higher-end console will retail for £425 with a 2.4GHz Pentium 4 processor, 120Gb hard drive and 512Mb of RAM.

"The majority of Codemasters titles will work on this machine," says Codies games designer James Brown after looking at the stats. "The lower priced version would run many (but not all) of our current and past games to a passable standard. The higher priced version would run the majority of our games very well and would run future titles such as *WWII: Battlefield Command* to an acceptable standard."

Can DISCover eliminate the hassle of software installation? Dorell reckons so, saying that Windows XP is imbedded in the unit along with preloaded installation files for a colossal list of existing PC games, allowing you to "drop and play" the games rather than manually installing them. A list of games compatible with each DISCover platform will be available online, all of which will be updated as new titles are released.

Once you've installed from the website, PC games will be primed for post-pub enjoyment. So where is the catch? Loss of control may well be DISCover's major flaw because playing *Cossacks: European Wars* on a joypad simply won't cut the mustard. "Well, remote keyboards are popular these days," retorts Dorell. "Also, because we develop technology, we can create gamepad controllers and joysticks which suit games."

#### THE PHANTOM MENACE

However, DISCover is not the only platform seeking to drag PC games from the desktop to the television. The mysterious Phantom console is rumoured to play PC games as well as ported console titles. Although we found no sign of the Phantom at E3, the company sent us this email: "There is a lot going on at Infinium Labs that will be announced when we are ready to let the public know. We are not currently conducting interviews and will not until some larger announcements this August. Keep an eye out for the upcoming news and we look forward to speaking with you this summer."

And when it comes to creating first party games for a new console, publishers seem to be quite sceptical. "As a Microsoft Game Studio, we would probably only support an Xbox version of our games," says Bruce Shelley of Ensemble Studios. "Certainly, no first party Microsoft games are going to appear on competitor consoles, otherwise we would be happy to find more platforms for our games."

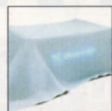
Mike Gamble, director of European Product Development at THQ, adds that the Phantom sounds similar to Xbox's original concept. "It soon became apparent [with Xbox] that in order to regulate the quality of content and create a viable business, the normal checks and balances of the console business had to be instigated. If these new platforms play unmodified PC titles then THQ will support them by default. If titles have to be ported then it becomes a question of economics and I can't see the systems getting a big enough install base to justify the expense."

DISCover's Avi Dorell also discounts the idea of competitors. "Dozens of Phantoms have come and gone, but the fact of the matter is that we have the patent for this technology." Round one to DISCover, then. A number of firms displayed DISC technology at

## PC OR NOT PC...

**PC GAMES ARE NOW SPRINGING UP ON WHATEVER PLATFORM WILL HAVE THEM. HERE ARE A FEW OF ITS ALLEGED CONQUESTS TO DATE...**

### THE PHANTOM



This ghostly apparition has yet to show its face in public, but rumour has it the Phantom will support PC games, interactive content, and ported console titles. An elaborate hoax or the future of gaming as we know it? Only time will tell – check out [www.infiniumlabs.com](http://www.infiniumlabs.com) for further announcements.

### XBOX



OK, so this is illegal and we wouldn't touch it with a tramp's arm, but the Xbox has been hacked by a certain, um, underground fraternity who use Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator (MAME) and other emus to faithfully reproduce coin-op and old PC games on Bill's box. You just didn't hear it here, right?

### DISCOVER



If all the hype surrounding the DISCover is true, then tedious game installation might just be a thing of the past if this technology takes off, as will hiding out in your attic and playing *Age Of Mythology*. With this little box, the big bad world of the living room beckons...

### SHUTTLE SS51 XPC



If you turn your back on this lil' fella then you will probably never see it again, yes, it really is that wee. But the shuttle SS51 XPC features free PCI and AGP slots, so you can arm it with the latest graphics card for some truly spectacular gaming performance.

E3, including SVA (one of Asia's largest consumer electronics firm) and Hyundai Electronics. Manufacturers such as Gateway are also set to assemble their own consoles, which use DISCover technology, according to Dorell. But until we see polished results, gamers are likely to remain sceptical about the emergence of PC pleasure in the living room. As an appliance, DISCover must work seamlessly before we invest our hard-earned cash. As a platform, this technology must deliver everything our PCs can and consoles can't. **177**

**"Dozens of Phantoms have come and gone, but the fact of the matter is we have the patent"**

**AVI DORELL**  
Digital Interactive Systems Corporation



Kuju's Warhammer 40K-based shooter *Fire Warrior* could turn up on the DISCover.



**MANIPULATE**



# THE MAN WHO KNOWS

## GAMES ARE GOOD FOR YOU

**B**offins in America have discovered that playing **v**iolent videogames turns you into a super-human. The **e**ggheads found that regular players of shoot-them-ups such as **H**alf-Life and **M**edal Of Honor have better visual awareness than those who do not indulge in virtual worlds of **m**urder and **p**ain. Researchers forced a group of gamers to endure a series of psychological tests that measure basic visual skills. The rigorous task involved matching shapes appearing in a series of circles with others displayed at the side of the screen. Compared with a control group who performed the same test, the gamers were "miles quicker".

In their report, the **b**rainboxes claimed: "Videogame playing enhances the capacity of visual attention and its spatial distribution." In a further experiment, participants were split into two groups and made to play either **M**edal Of Honor or **T**etris for ten days. Those who grappled with the World War II simulation showed a significant improvement in visual and attentional skills, whereas those playing the abstract **R**ussian puzzle game came away with little more than basic motor neurone functions. The **b**offins concluded: "Although videogame playing may seem to be rather **m**indless, it is capable of radically altering visual attentional processing."

**M**etallica have penned a deal with Vivendi to work together on a 'third-person vehicle combat game', it will include **v**oice-overs from band members, background music and other **M**etallica content. Vivendi's Luc Vanhals **b**elched: "We are excited to bring gamers an interactive entertainment experience that delivers intense vehicular combat along with the **p**owerful music and energy of **M**etallica." The band is planning an original song and video for the game. **M**uck.

**T**omb Raider star **A**ngelina Jolie has branded Lara Croft a little slut. The pneumatic-lipped actress meowed: "I hated Lara Croft. She was just a cute girl in tiny shorts - that's all." Performing an astonishing **v**olte face, she later cooed: "Nowadays Lara really is alright, she is like a special friend."

**"I hated Lara Croft. She was just a cute girl in tight shorts - that's all."**

# TRIAL OF THE 24TH CENTURY

YOU STAND ACCUSED OF MASS MURDER. PREPARE TO DEFEND YOURSELF IN ALPHA BLACK ZERO: INTREPID PROTOCOL



The terrain between settlements is pretty rough.



ABZ is set in a bleak future society.

**AS PART OF PC ZONE'S** never-ending search to bring you the freshest and most original games first, we would like to introduce a game we spotted in a dark corner of E3 - *Alpha Black Zero: Intrepid Protocol*. Developed by Khaeon, a company set up in the Netherlands in 1999, ABZ is a futuristic team-based tactical shooter with an intriguing sci-fi plot set in the year 2366, when humans have expanded in the solar system and taken all their political strife and cultural tensions with them.

As part of an anti-terrorist unit called Alpha Black Zero, your character of Lieutenant Kyle Hardlaw and his team are on trial for crimes against humanity - a crime we expect he didn't commit. You play the game in flashback as he recounts the stories of his Intrepid Protocol mission to a military tribunal. In-between the action, the judges will evaluate the evidence the player has gathered by playing each level of the game, with the ultimate objective to prove you - as Hardlaw - innocent of the count of mass murder.



## SNAKE IN THE GRASS

"We have huge indoor and outdoor levels, populated with masses of enemies and dangerous tactical obstacles," says lead designer Yesse America. "You'll be able to completely decide on your own how you want to approach any given situation and how to achieve your mission objectives."



Kyle leads a team of four hard space marines.

We've developed an accomplished and realistic AI system for the enemies and team members alike, with bots ducking and rolling away, taking advantage of cover such as long grass, through which enemies crawl on their stomachs, stalking the player undetected."

ABZ is played in third-person, with the ability to switch into an over-the-shoulder view, and a first-person view when needed. Your five-strong team of specialists is made up of Kyle, plus four ETI (External Tactics Initiative) marines, all equipped with state-of-the-art armour and weapons - including assault rifles, grenade launchers and machine-guns - but their specialisation depends on what you fit them out with at HQ before each mission begins. You can switch between different members with one key press and control them directly or give them orders. But Khaeon wanted to avoid cumbersome micro-management of squad members, so they will "request" actions and also take care of themselves of their own accord.

## THE ENEMY WITHIN

Team members are pretty tough cookies. Each wears heavy duty armour that's meshed to their own nano-blood impregnated veins which cauterise and seal off wounds - advanced technology that Yesse insists is currently being developed by military apparel manufacturers. Unless a soldier is hit by a rocket or large heavy weapon, he will likely survive most gunshot wounds, but even when the health of a team member (including Kyle) is zero, players won't lose them - they'll be incapacitated, and will join the rest of the company during the next mission beginning at low health. If they were dead, they couldn't be at the tribunal in the future, y'see?

"The player will face both irregulars and highly trained troops, from colonist guerrillas to corporate death squads," continues Yesse. "The main enemy is the group stirring up anti-government sentiments on remote planet colonies - but you will have to play the game to find out who you're up against ultimately!" From what we've played, ABZ certainly has bags of potential, so expect more exclusive details soon.

■ Publisher: Playlogic ■ Developer: Khaeon  
 ■ ETA: Q4 2003 ■ Website: www.khaeon.com

# SET TOP BOXING

MOVE OVER *ROBOT WARS*, THE *WARRIORS* AND THE *SENTIENTS* ARE ABOUT TO GO HEAD-TO-HEAD IN BBC THREE'S *FIGHTBOX*



## Design your own warrior.

BBC TV'S videogame/programme cross-over *FightBox*, revealed in our issue 124, is now fully up-and-running, with PC gamers creating hard-as-nails Warriors for virtual combat in a TV studio tournament, beginning this autumn on BBC Three. Once you've installed the *FightKit* game software (available at [bbc.co.uk/fightbox](http://bbc.co.uk/fightbox) and on this month's *PC ZONE* DVD) you can create your own unique Warrior, adding body parts, creating custom textures and naming your finished fighter, although no "offensive" Warriors will be allowed. Once you've built up your Warrior, you can begin training them up in various beat 'em up mini-

games to hone their agility, special moves and general hardness, as well as earning Trading points that you can use to buy special bits and pieces for your character in the online *FightShop*. When you're ready to enter the contest, you play a live qualification game, with a score that is posted on the website. If you're invited onto the TV show, you'll get an opportunity to take on other Warriors and the Sentients – extremely tough fighters, that work in a similar way to the House Robots in *Robot Wars* – to hopefully become *FightBox* champion. If you want to qualify for the first BBC Three series of *FightBox*, you'll have to get cracking as the closing date is June 30. If you've missed it, no worries – install the *FightKit*, bide your time and build yourself a deadly Warrior ready for the next series tentatively scheduled for 2004.



## Good Cop. Bad Cop

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF A MONTH ON *PC ZONE*

### GOOD COP

**Max Payne 2: The Fall Of Max Payne.** Another storming *PC ZONE* exclusive. But where's Max's constipated expression?



**Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory** – a complete standalone multiplayer game from id and Splash Damage given away FREE with this issue. Oh, how we do spoil you all.

**Paul "Prezzer" Presley and Will "QPR Forever" Porter** joining *ZONE*. Good lads, but they haven't managed to fit into the *PVC* gear left behind by Rhianna just yet.

The Great Wandy expanding his *ZONE* empire into the hardware section. Is there nothing this man can't do?



### BAD COP

**Rhianna Pratchett** leaving *PC ZONE*. She'll be missed in the office, but Rhianna will still be writing for us on a semi-regular basis – if we pay her enough in *Chupa-chups*.

Agonising aches and pains from the Dennis Publishing seven-a-side footy tournament. Full report on how the *PC ZONE* team got on next month...

The Bugbear virus picking on one of our regulars, Pavel Barter, wiping his hard drive clean and sending out dozens of email viruses to the industry in the name of Jamie Sefton. You have to laugh.

Good Cop (**Sam**), Bad Cop (**Max**) from *Sam & Max II* – suggested by Adam Raphael, Edinburgh. Send in your suggestions for next month's Good Cop and Bad Cop to win a *PC ZONE* goodie-bag!

# The Matrix is real

A VIRTUAL LIFE AWAITS IN *THE MATRIX ONLINE*

**WHILE DEBATE CONTINUES** to rage in the *Zone* offices over the merits of *The Matrix Reloaded*, the needlessly complicated Matrix back story is extending itself in yet another direction with *The Matrix Online*, a massively multiplayer RPG set after the third film.

We had a look at the game at E3, where the developer was revealed as Monolith, of *AVP2* and *NOLF2* fame. There wasn't a great deal the lads could tell us (for fear of giving too much of the third film away), but we did have a good look at the environments, characters and PvP combat.

Set entirely inside dense urban locales of the Matrix, the game follows a standard RPG formula, allowing you to develop a character with an increasingly spectacular library of martial arts and skill plug-ins. Hand-to-hand combat, gunplay and Bullet-Time are of course in attendance, though fighting is a largely automated affair and your level of interaction is limited to selecting an overall tactical style and triggering the occasional special move.

"It's not primarily about PvP," says Monolith's creative director, Tony Ragaini. "A lot of the gameplay is about the player versus the environment – you don't have to engage in PvP at all if you don't want to." What you'll be doing the rest of the time is anyone's guess, but we'll wager it's not crawling around in dungeons killing rats until you can afford a new pair of chain-mail leggings.



Bullet dodging is a nifty trick if you can pull it off.



You can enter any building in the game.

- Publisher: Ubi Soft
- Developer: Monolith
- ETA: Q4 2004
- Website: [thematrixonline.warnerbros.com](http://thematrixonline.warnerbros.com)

OR  
DICTATE

"Perhaps the most ambitious  
game in development at the  
moment, if not ever"

**PCZONE**

"One thing's for certain:  
we can't wait  
for the revolution"

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# REPUBLIC™

## THE REVOLUTION

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EIDOS  
INTERACTIVE

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The NVIDIA logo and "The way it's meant to be played" logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation



# EMULATION ZONE

Breaking news from the world of emulation, with retro reanimator *Stuart Campbell*

## EMULATION - WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

There are occasions, viewers, when emulation transcends the mere replication of existing forms and creates something entirely new and wonderful. Simple examples include altering bad control layouts, adding the ability to cheat in arcade games with MAME, permanently saving high scores so that you've always got a goal to aim for even when you're just sitting down for a quick blast, or the fact that PCs don't (usually) die like the save battery on game carts, rendering your 'real' copy of *Super Mario 64* worthless after about four years, while the emulated one lives on forever. But now and again emulation really pulls something fancy out of its sleeve and adds whole new functionalities to already-great games. And now is such a time.

Turn-based strategy games are somewhat out of favour on the PC these days, usurped by their real-time comrades. But the form is a timelessly beautiful one (anyone bored of chess yet?), and it's currently enjoying a whole new lease of life in the shape of the mighty *Advance Wars* on Nintendo's



Air, sea and land units in one big rumble.

Game Boy Advance. Strongly reminiscent in style of PC classic *Battle Isle* (though *AW*'s lineage in fact stretches back much further), it's widely regarded as the GBA's greatest original title, and one of the finest games on any format in recent memory. But now, thanks to the wonders of emulation (in the shape of top GBA emu Visual Boy

## WHAT IS EMULATION?



By installing an emulator, you can run games that were programmed for different platforms - such as coin-ops - in their original form.

The games come in the form of a ROM (Read Only Memory) which you load into the emulator to run. There are legal issues though, and unless you own the original game, it's often against the law to download a ROM. For that reason, we can't give you links to ROMs, though we can to the emulators themselves.

Advance), you can enjoy it in a way that no mere GBA owner can do - by playing multiplayer *Advance Wars* online.

Well, in fact it's something more akin to Hasbro's much-lamented and brainlessly-killed *Email Games* series - which included the awesome *Email X-COM*, which *Advance Wars* quite strongly resembles.

All you have to do is set up your game using the myriad of maps, levels and options, and select from two to four players. Then each player makes their move, and uses VBA's "Save State" facility to save out a game state file, which will be no more than 70Kb or so. Then you simply email the state file to your opponent, who loads it in, makes their own move, and sends the new state file back to you.

Just one warning: checking your email at work while you've got an *Advance Wars* game going on may be hazardous to your career.



We don't have much hope for the guys on the left.

## EMULATION OF THE MONTH

*SPACE FANTASY ZONE* (PC ENGINE CD, SEGA, 1992)

The other special thing about emulation, and one particularly close to Emu Zone's heart, is the chance to play the games that never made it to release and would, without emulation, have been lost to history forever. One such curio is *Space Fantasy Zone*, a title created for NEC's flop PC Engine CD add-on, a format that died before the company had a chance to actually get the finished game out. (Though depending on which story you believe, legal complications between NEC and Sega were the real reason.) It's a hybrid of two other popular Sega games, taking the characters and visual style of *Defender*-like scrolling shooter *Fantasy Zone* and melding them with the surreal

3D gameplay of the classic *Space Harrier*. It's a lovely little game, with the beautiful music you'd expect from its bloodline, but until now only a tiny handful of people who had a promotional version that was given out with a Japanese games magazine could enjoy it.

To play it, you'll need David Michel's superb Magic Engine emulator, and you'll also need to find the ISO file of the game and actually burn it onto a CD, but it's worth the effort.

### LINKS

[www.magicengine.com](http://www.magicengine.com) - Magic Engine homepage (free full-function demo, registered version is commercial)



That's you just left of centre. Your arse, anyway.

# MOVE OVER RAYMAN

FRENCH PLATFORM CREATOR REVEALS ITS NEW PROJECT *BEYOND GOOD & EVIL*



The land is under assault by a malicious alien race called the DomZ.

AMONG THE franchise-happy sequelific dross choking the floors at E3, developing/publishing giant Ubi Soft stood out as a bastion of fresh concepts and pleasant surprises. You can check out *Far Cry* and *Prince Of Persia* on pages 28 and 50, but another title that floated our boat was genre-crossing romp *Beyond Good & Evil*.

Billed as "Zelda meets *Shenmue*", *BG&E* is the new product from *Rayman* creator Michel Ancel. This didn't give us a huge amount of confidence at first we must admit, but we soon found our

cynical hearts warming to the sheer charm and exuberance of it all.

The game casts you as Jade, a young photojournalist in the quaintly futuristic realm of Hillys, a world of hovercars, robot monsters and giant talking pigs (one of which is your sidekick of sorts).

Gameplay is an eclectic mix of *Zelda*-style dungeons and boss battles, hovercraft racing, stealthy incursions and on-rails, cinematic set-pieces. Between all this you're free to wander – exploring, gambling, taking photos and talking to locals – while later upgrades allow you to get airborne and into

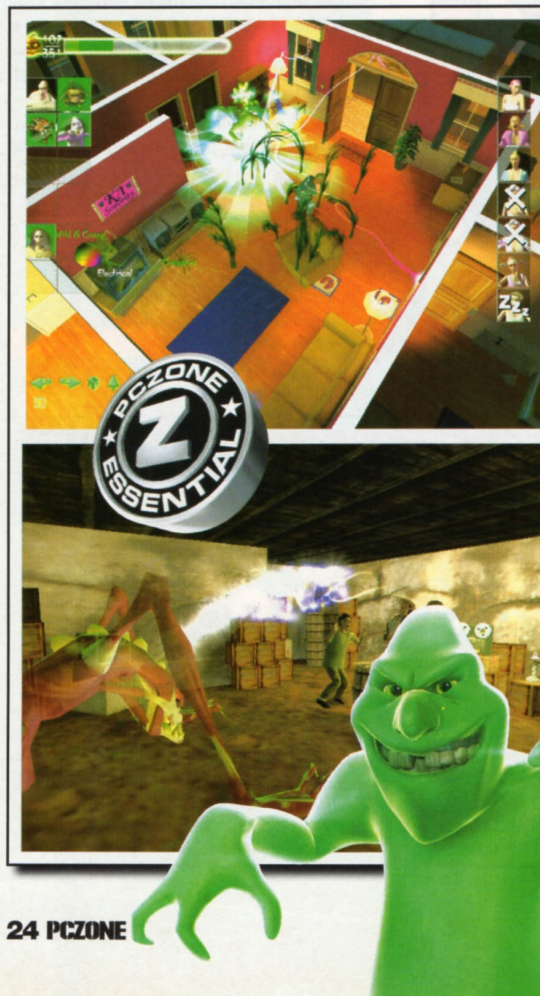


Ses pantalons sont merde.

space, opening up vast new game areas in the process.

While decidedly console-oriented in design, *BG&E* is looking like remarkably good fun, offering an unusually rich and varied account of action/adventure gaming, and we'll be keeping an eye on it over the coming months.

- Publisher: Ubi Soft
- Developer: Ubi Soft Montpellier
- ETA: October
- Website: [beyondgoodevil.com/uk](http://beyondgoodevil.com/uk)



## COMPETITION

# Win Ghost Master!



10 COPIES OF EMPIRE'S GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS SIM MUST BE WON!

**WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT** that playing with the departed souls of dead people could be so enjoyable? Well, Sick Puppies' latest game *Ghost Master*, which received a terrifying 87 per cent and a *PC ZONE* Essential Award last issue, is just that – scarily good fun. Featuring a superb blend of puzzler, strategy game, sim and RPG, you have to use a bizarre selection of spooks, ghouls and poltergeists to complete fiendish objectives in various haunted locations.

In a similar move to *The Sims*, you can view the poor, innocent human beings you have to manipulate in the game in full 3D – just rattle your chains and frighten them with ease for huge "scare points". Each of the 47 apparitions has unique powers too, including the ability to read mortal's minds and conjure nexts of spiders. If you fancy a visit to the afterlife before your time, the friendly ghosts at Empire have given us 10 copies of the game and 10 exclusive T-shirts for you to spirit away. All you have to do for a chance to win is answer the question on the right, scribble it on a postcard and send it to the *PC ZONE* address.

### WHO SANG THE THEME TUNE TO THE 1984 HIT MOVIE GHOSTBUSTERS?

- A: Ray Parker Jr
- B: Justin Timberlake
- C: Luciano Pavarotti

Send your answer on a postcard, along with all of the information requested, to the address below:

■ Please include your name, address, daytime phone number and email address (and age if under 18).

■ Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers from companies other than Dennis Publishing Ltd.

■ Please indicate whether or not you are a current subscriber to *PC ZONE*.

Send your entry to:

*Ghost Master* competition, *PC ZONE*, 30 Cleveland St, London W1T 4JD. (Closing date: Thursday, July 24, 2003).

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



# Battlefield Star Wars

## EXCLUSIVE! THE LATEST ON BATTLEFIELD 1942 MOD GALACTIC CONQUEST

**HAVE A CLOSE** look at these cool screenshots. They're not, as you might think, taken from the latest big-budget LucasArts-licensed *Star Wars* game – they are in fact from a stunning home-made *Battlefield 1942* multiplayer mod *Galactic Conquest*.

Currently in development by a hardcore group of fans for non-profit purposes, *Battlefield: Galactic Conquest* puts you in the fatigues of a soldier fighting in famous battles on the side of the Rebel Alliance or the Galactic Empire.

"At the moment you can only control Snowtroopers and Stormtroopers, but eventually we hope there'll be TIE pilots and Imperial Officers and more," says the mod's producer, Jon "Wrafe" Boland.

Due to the lack of a coherent class system in *Star Wars* and the huge variety of weapons, balancing has been difficult but Boland is confident the finished mod will be spot on. "As for vehicles, we've included pretty much the main ones from the film – TIE fighters and Bombers, X-wings, A-wings, Snow Speeders, Millennium Falcons, AT-STs and more."

*Battlefield: Galactic Conquest* should support up to 64 online players on

release later this year – head to [www.swbattlefield.jolt.co.uk](http://www.swbattlefield.jolt.co.uk) for more info. Also, another impressive *Star Wars* mod currently in development is *Troopers for UT 2003* – [www.troopers.jolt.co.uk](http://www.troopers.jolt.co.uk).



No *Star Wars* characters will be included for copyright reasons.

## FULL FORCE

### NOVALOGIC ANNOUNCES BRAND NEW DELTA FORCE ADD-ON, TEAM SABRE



A US marine fishing mini-game has been mooted.



On the hunt for drugs.

**A NEW EXPANSION** pack will see the under-siege *Delta Force* team take on more dangerous missions around the world. *Delta Force – Black Hawk Down: Team Sabre* has the plucky and violent American troops attacking ruthless drug barons in the Colombian jungle and massacring troublesome terrorists in the oil fields of Iran.

The two new single-player campaigns for the trigger-happy FPS will pack in new weapons, vehicles – including a hovercraft for rapid deployment of troops – as well

as promising improved graphics. *Team Sabre* will also ship with more than 30 new multiplayer maps and code will be available to make mods with all the new vehicles, for battles featuring up to 50 players over LANs. We'll have more top secret info very soon.

- Publisher: NovaLogic
- Developer: NovaLogic
- ETA: Autumn
- Website: [www.novalogic.com](http://www.novalogic.com)



Lennart Sas  
"The Boss" at Triumph Studios

## DEVELOPERS' QUESTION TIME

### What PC games are you playing at the moment?

Mostly strategy games such as *Anno 1503*. I'm also getting my butt kicked in the occasional first-person deathmatches at the office with *UT2003*. There was a time I was the champ... must be getting old.

### What was the last videogame you finished?

I start a lot of games, but finish just a few because of my long work hours. *ICO* was the last videogame, and I'm getting close to finishing *GTA: Vice City*.

### What is your favourite game of all time?

*Civilization*. Its scope is amazing.

### What are you most proud of in your career?

Getting the original *Age Of Wonders* out with a tiny team, it got everything started for us.

### Who do you most admire in the industry and why?

People like Jay Wilbur and Phil Steinmeyer. They have a keen business sense, but keep an eye out for starting developers.

### What has the PC contributed most to videogaming?

A lot of technological innovation starts on PCs: 3D graphics, different forms of multiplayer gaming, user customisation – so much.

### What is your company's philosophy?

Have fun creating fun games.

### What's the best thing about your job?

Never being bored – there are many challenges in the creative process.

### What's the worst thing about your job?

No females at our office! We'll have to make do with guys sporting weird hairdos and leather pants...

### What are you working on at the moment?

Wrapping up *Age Of Wonders: Shadow Magic*. Lots of tweaking to be done so it's all polished-up at release.

### What's the Next Big Thing in PC gaming?

If I knew, I wouldn't tell you and I'd file a patent instead.

# CHARTS

In association with **VIRGIN MEGASTORES**

Your one-stop guide to game releases past, present and future. Whether a game is lost, looming or selling like sim-cakes, this is where you'll find it

ChartTrack

TOP 10





The Sims onslaught continues and beats GTA: Vice City to the top spot. The Sims: Superstar is getting extensive TV advertising, but didn't gamers read our Superstar review last issue? Ho hum. It's enough to make a grown man weep.



Rockstar's blistering 1980s-themed steal 'em up finally ramraids the PC. GTA: Vice City may only be at number two but you can guarantee it won't leave these pages for quite some time or Tommy Vercetti and friends may have to have a quiet word...

	▲	▼	▲	TITLE	PUBLISHER	SCORE
1	NEW			<b>THE SIMS: SUPERSTAR</b>	EA	59%
2	NEW			GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	ROCKSTAR	95%
3		▼		CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 4	EIDOS	90%
4	-			THE SIMS: DELUXE EDITION	EA	N/A
5		▼		THE SIMS: UNLEASHED	EA	78%
6	NEW			ENTER THE MATRIX	ATARI	72%
7	NEW			RISE OF NATIONS	MICROSOFT	90%
8	-			THE SIMS: ON HOLIDAY	EA	62%
9		▲		THE SIMS: HOT DATE	EA	71%
10	NEW			BLITZKRIEG	CDV	84%



The lure of slo-mo running up walls and black leather seems to have been too much for some, as the flawed-yet-cool Enter The Matrix gets in at number six. Featuring tons of extra Wachowski brothers-directed footage, it's a must-buy for fans.



Strategy fiends are rejoicing now that Rise of Nations has become a worthy competitor to the Civilization franchise. And if you don't believe them then you can check out the exclusive playable demo on this month's PC ZONE cover discs.

## YOUR SHOUT

Have your say at [www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk)

I had a fellow come round my house yesterday from EA asking me to hand in my blank CDs. "We've run out of stock and we need more," he said. "Some crazy mother is still buying them by the warehouse load."  
**xlins**

Apart from Rise Of Nations and Blitzkrieg, every single one of those games is selling on hype alone - have all the PlayStation 2 owners gone out and bought a PC?  
**optimus9999**

As George Dubya Bush would say: "The Sims is a menace to our free world. We will impose sanctions upon the Sims until they choose to give up their evil tyranny."  
**metche steele**

## Virgin megastores TOP 10

1	ENTER THE MATRIX	ATARI
2	THE SIMS: SUPERSTAR	EA
3	RISE OF NATIONS	MICROSOFT
4	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	ROCKSTAR GAMES
5	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 4	EIDOS
6	TROPICO 2: PIRATE COVE	GATHERING
7	FREELANCER	MICROSOFT
8	VIETCONG	GATHERING
9	COMMAND & CONQUER: GENERALS	EA
10	SPLINTER CELL	UBI SOFT

## COMPETITION Virgin megastores

### Win the entire Virgin Top 10!

Once again, PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Virgin Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer the following:

**QUESTION: In the original Matrix film, what colour pill does Neo swallow?**

**Answers on a postcard to:** PC ZONE Chart Compo Issue 131, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD. Closing date: July 24, 2003

- Please include your name, address, daytime phone number, email address, job title and company name (and 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.
- Please indicate whether you are a current subscriber to PC ZONE.

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

# INCOMING!

PC ZONE'S RELEASE SCHEDULE FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. ALL APPROXIMATE MONTHLY DATES ARE CORRECT AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS

## JULY

CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS	DIGITAL WORKSHOP
CHARM OF WAR	OXYGEN
COMMANDOS 3: DESTINATION BERLIN	EIDOS
COUNTER-STRIKE: CONDITION ZERO	VU GAMES
DRAGON'S LAIR 3D	UBI SOFT
FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2004	MICROSOFT
MOON TYCOON	GMX MEDIA
NORTHLAND	GMX MEDIA
REPUBLIC: THE REVOLUTION	EIDOS
WARCRAFT III: THE FROZEN THRONE	VU GAMES

## AUGUST

BREED	CDV
EMPIRE OF MAGIC	MOBILIS
HOMEWORLD 2	VU GAMES
LINE OF SIGHT: VIETNAM	ATARI
MADDEN NFL 2004	EA
SILENT STORM	BIG BEN
THE GREAT ESCAPE	SCI
TRON 2.0	DISNEY

## SEPTEMBER

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY: THE TITANS	MICROSOFT
APOCALYPTICA	KONAMI
CONFLICT: DESERT STORM II	SCI
CRUSADERS - BATTLE FOR OUTREMER	WANADOO
FAR CRY	UBI SOFT
FIFA 2004	EA
FIRE WARRIOR	THQ
FREEDOM: SOLDIERS OF LIBERTY	EA
GALAXY ANDROMEDA	CDV
GREYHAWK: THE TEMPLE OF ELEMENTAL EVIL	ATARI
HALF-LIFE 2	VU GAMES
PAINKILLER	DREAMCATCHER
PSYCHOTOXIC	CDV
RAINBOW SIX 3: ATHENA SWORD	UBI SOFT
SOLDNER - SECRET WARS	BIG BEN
THE SIMS ONLINE	EA
VEGAS: MAKE IT BIG	EMPIRE

## OCTOBER

AGE OF WONDERS: SHADOW MAGIC	GATHERING
BATTLEFIELD 1942: SECRET WEAPONS OF WWII	EA
BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON	THQ
DELTA FORCE - BLACK HAWK DOWN: TEAM SABRE	NOVALOGIC
DEUS EX: INVISIBLE WAR	EIDOS
JEDI KNIGHT: JEDI ACADEMY	ACTIVISION
LOCK ON	UBI SOFT
POP IDOL	CODEMASTERS
SACRED	ASCARON
SILENT HILL 3	KONAMI
STAR WARS GALAXIES: AN EMPIRE DIVIDED	ACTIVISION
THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TROTK	EA
XIII	UBI SOFT

## NOVEMBER

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL	UBI SOFT
EMPIRES: DAWN OF THE MODERN WORLD	ACTIVISION
GROUND CONTROL 2: OPERATION EXODUS	VU GAMES
HALO	MICROSOFT
HOMEWORLD 2	VU GAMES
JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH	VU GAMES
KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE	TDK
PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME	UBI SOFT
STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC	ACTIVISION
TERMINATOR 3: WAR OF THE MACHINES	ATARI
WORMS 3	SEGA

## DECEMBER

CALL OF DUTY	ACTIVISION
FULL THROTTLE: HELL ON WHEELS	ACTIVISION
HARRY POTTER: QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP	EA
HIDDEN & DANGEROUS 2	GATHERING
MORTYR 2	TBA
SPACE COLONY	GATHERING

## 2004

EVIL GENIUS	VU GAMES
MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE	ROCKSTAR GAMES
OPERATION FLASHPOINT 2	CODEMASTERS
SAM & MAX II	ACTIVISION

# MISSING IN ACTION

The war's not over until the last game comes home...

## SHADE: WRATH OF ANGELS

**ORIGINALLY SLATED FOR** an autumn launch, the release of *Shade: Wrath of Angels* has fallen into 2004. This third-person action-horror was in a playable form at E3 and was looking smart - watch out for the exclusive preview soon.

- **Publisher:** Cenega
- **Developer:** Black Element Software
- **ETA:** 2004
- **Website:** www.shade-game.com



## DUALITY



**DISASTER HAS** struck cyberpunk action/RPG *Duality*. After publisher Phantagram was acquired by NC Soft, the game was put under 'evaluation'. This month the verdict came in, saying the game was to be 'put on hold' until 2004. Assume the worst.

- **Publisher:** NC Soft
- **Developer:** Trilobite
- **ETA:** 2004?
- **Website:** www.trilobitegraphics.com

## QUAKE IV

**ONE OF THE BIG NO-SHOWS** at E3 was *Quake IV*. Currently being developed by Raven (also working on *Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy* for LucasArts) there's no word on a release date - although the website says they're looking for a *Quake IV* "high-poly modeller". Apply now.

- **Publisher:** Activision
- **Developer:** Raven
- **ETA:** TBA
- **Website:** www.ravensoft.com



# US TOP 10

1	THE SIMS: SUPERSTAR	EA
2	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	ROCKSTAR GAMES
3	RISE OF NATIONS	MICROSOFT
4	ENTER THE MATRIX	ATARI
5	PLANETSIDE	SONY
6	THE SIMS: DELUXE EDITION	EA
7	SIM CITY 4	EA
8	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON 2: WACKY WORLDS	ATARI
9	THE SIMS: UNLEASHED	EA
10	WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS	VU GAMES

SOURCE: NPD Techworld



# FAR CRY

Brand new screenshots from Crytek's violent island paradise shooter

**E3 ALLOWED** us to have another hands-on play of Crytek's ambitious blaster, set on various tropical islands populated by heavily-armed, genetically-engineered goons. *Far Cry* gives players huge, open levels to explore, leaving you to decide whether you complete the various mission objectives in stealth mode or with guns-a-pumping.

To achieve this, Crytek has spent considerable effort beavering away on the AI of the enemies, who respond in real-time to events that happen in the game. Nothing is pre-scripted, producing a "live" multiplayer feeling in a single-player game, which never plays the same way twice. Hence when we stormed into a base, we witnessed soldiers calling for assistance on radios, using nearby buildings and objects for cover, hunting us down in packs across the map and using vehicles to flee the scene.

And because there's no "cheating" from the AI troops, you can use this to your advantage by shooting from one position, then sneaking around to flank them using the beautifully-realised foliage as cover and unleashing a barrage of hot lead into their backs.

Speaking of which, the ragdoll physics in *Far Cry* is quite unnerving, with splashes of ultra-violence throughout. Realistically-modelled bullet-holes remain on bodies and at one point we even managed to machine-gun a soldier's corpse off the end of a building into the water, where it bobbed disconcertingly in the shallow depths. Yep, *Far Cry* is definitely one to keep an eye on for when Santa comes-a-calling this December.

- Publisher: Ubi Soft
- Developer: Crytek
- ETA: Christmas
- Website: [www.crytek.com](http://www.crytek.com)





# E3 2003

## HOME OF THE BIG BOYS

The biggest games show in the world took place in LA again this May. Last month, we pulled out all stops to rush the first batch of E3 goodies to you, but we saved some of the biggest and best surprises until now, starting with the super-cool *Max Payne 2*. But before we get to that, we thought we'd take a few moments to share some of the joys, pains and sheer drunken insanity of the show with you, 'cos we wouldn't want you to feel left out...



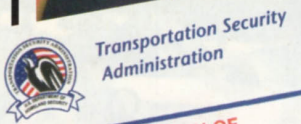
Steve Hill leads you by the hand through the mean streets of LA



He's hideous. And as for the zombie...



The big boys were out in force. God bless America



NOTIFICATION OF BAGGAGE INSPECTION

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**ANOTHER** year, another E3, and another opportunity for PC ZONE to decamp to Los Angeles and rub shoulders with the good, the bad and the ugly of the games industry. Now in its ninth year, E3 has become more than a mere games exhibition.

A truly global occasion, it's the closest a lot of the pikeys in this business get to a holiday, providing a great chance to catch up with old faces while shaming the name of the British nation.

The flight over is predictably lively, with those not heading for the show in a bewildered minority. Sporadic incidences of plane rage break out, and one games editor informs a flight steward that he "will sit down when you talk to me like an adult" before swaying violently, spilling his beer and falling against the door handle, prompting a terrified American to scream "We're all going to die!"

True to form, the plane is drunk dry within six hours, and the captain even comes on the PA to offer his congratulations, adding,

"I hope you're as good at your jobs as you are at drinking. Have a great E3." With the remainder of the flight to sober up/drool on unsuspecting passengers, it's a bedraggled contingent that stumbles out at LAX airport. However, for a select few, the hell is yet to begin.

### RETURN TO SENDER

Entering America is a curious business at the best of times, with temporary visas awarded on the basis that you tick boxes to deny such random crimes as Nazi activity or bringing snails into the country. But if there's one thing that worries America more than octogenarian war criminals or gastropod smugglers, it's journalists. Technically, to enter the States as a member of the press, a special visa is required. However, the vast majority (of British journos at least) don't bother with one, preferring to mutter something about "software consultant" when asked to state their business.

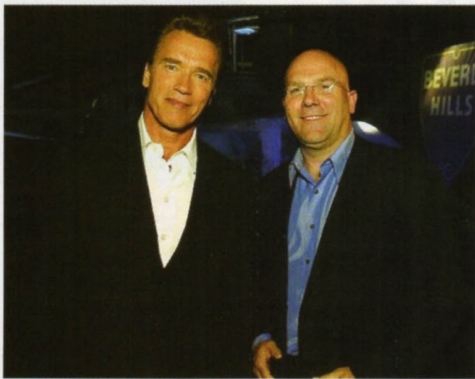
It's a mainly foolproof system that was only really tested a few years ago in Atlanta when me and Charlie Brooker were hauled into an interrogation room

and furiously barked at by a budding sergeant major. I walked away scot-free after reciting a tissue of lies - repeating almost verbatim the story of a Dutch bloke in front - whereas Brooker buckled like a belt and had to stump up \$100 for a temporary visa.

Things would appear to have changed a fair deal since then. Back to this year, and the four UK journalists who naively volunteer their true status - perhaps expecting some kind of red carpet treatment - are led away, handcuffed, locked in a cell for 28 hours and stuck on the next flight home. Seems they are part of the 'Foreign Information Media', which seemingly equates to being a card-carrying member of Al Qaeda. To add career-threatening insult to gruel-eating injury, being deported carries a five-year ban from the country. Sadly, one of our own Internet lads is among the victims. While we appreciate the need for airport security, we fail to see how a man wishing to enter the country to write about *Mario Kart* can be said to constitute a threat. Perhaps that's what they mean by freedom of speech.



**"DOA: Magnificent. Not coming out on PC you say... Who cares?"**



**For those who have never been, E3 is mighty hard work.**



**The new Metal Gear drew a massive crowd.**



**Holden tries his luck against Crazylegs Crane.**

**GET YOUR ARSE TO MARS**

It's therefore a somewhat shell-shocked ZONE posse that rocks up at West Hollywood's Ramada Plaza Hotel, affectionately known as the Rama-lama-ding-dong. With a swift toast to absent friends, we reacquaint ourselves with the surroundings, and proceed to deal with our grief by ridding the local shops of CDs, DVDs and ill-advised T-shirts.

Although the show doesn't actually begin until Wednesday, preliminary events take place in the preceding days and Monday's big draw is Atari's (formerly Infogrames) Terminator 3 party, to be attended by none other than the Austrian Oak himself, Arnold Schwarzenegger. Despite assurances that tickets were rarer than rocking horse shit, and that even the

bulk of Atari staff would be unable to attend, it proves to be a half empty and largely dismal affair. Arnie does show up briefly, but is protected by so many layers of PR that you'd be better off looking at a poster. Otherwise, the party consist of a series of impromptu corporate speeches by Atarigrames' French boss Bruno Bonnel, enough to send even the most resolute of stragglers back to their hotels.

The day before the show sees LA full to bursting with games industry professionals, including an estimated 4,000 Brits. Together, we effectively take over the bars of Santa Monica and Sunset Strip, including the infamous Body Shop, where a facial scrub means something very different to what you might expect. Anyone who isn't here by now probably

isn't coming. That said, Woods is still missing in action, having taken a detour to Las Vegas for some pre-show relaxation, tragically without his luggage, which has been mislaid by airport staff, forcing him to endure three days of searing heat in little more than the Elvis T-shirts he picked up for \$4.99 a pop. Although had his party not spent \$350 on bringing strippers to a marketing bod's room (in return for "absolutely nothing"), he could have splashed out on something better.

**JAZZ CLUB**

The night before the show sees the rest of the team head for the Dresden Rooms, an allegedly trendy bar as featured in the film Swingers. If a glorified working men's club featuring excruciating live jazz is trendy,

**"In the infamous Body Shop bar, a facial scrub means something quite different to what you might expect"**

then consider us unfashionable. An unfortunately placed booth next to the stage makes for three hours of tortuous "shaba-dawap-bop-dob" performed by a sinister pairing of ageing crooner and hunchbacked female pianist. Grrreat.

With the team all present and correct for the Wednesday morning start, fear is in the air, with stories circulating that the previous evening's Nintendo press event had been infiltrated by the Feds, who were interrogating people over their journalistic intentions. Facing a five-year ban if rumbled, I genuinely consider knocking the show on the head and taking in some beach.

With some cunning stealth manoeuvres though, we manage get into the Convention Center unhindered, and we're suddenly back at E3 in all its ear-splitting, mind-boggling vulgarity. Huge Americans with names like Randy Weinhopper III peruse the wares, declaring virtually everything to be awesome. PC ZONE's first appointment is with *Half-Life 2*, and for once the word is appropriate, the early look at the trailer practically rendering the rest of the show nigh-on redundant.

**NAZI PUNKS GO HOME**

On the celebrity front, it's a mixed bag, with Microsoft touting such stars as Christina Aguilera, Anna Nicole Smith and Snoop Dogg, the latter predictably accompanied by a 15-strong posse, replete with hand-rolled cigarettes. Disgusting. Elsewhere, Paula Abdul shows up to plug Codemasters' *American Idol*, and none other than Lance Bass from \*NSYNC presents some wretched award. As for filth, the magnificent Dead Or Alive girls border on soft porn, and numerous 'booth babes' pose with large men in *World Of Warcraft* shirts.

Otherwise, the usual spectacle of actors in absurd costumes is the order of the day, with one such participant getting more than he bargained for. With WWII games in the ascendancy, it's apparently fair game to mock our grandfathers by having stooges wander around in full Nazi regalia, occasionally bating show-goers with token cries of "Achtung!" or "Gott in himmel!" This proves too much for one aged American, who responds with "We had enough of you guys in the war" and promptly lamps his aggressor, felling him with one well-placed punch. Security immediately pounces on the have-a-go-hero, leaving the crumpled Nazi nursing a bloodied nose and a shattered ego.

**CRAZYLEGS CRANE**

Less violent combat is provided by Capcom's superb ArcadePC, a stand-up cabinet boasting a pixel perfect version of *StreetFighter II*. For what seems like the entire three days, the cabinet is monopolised by a freakish character who takes on all-comers, including our own

Anthony Holden, the fiery Antipodean missing several minor appointments in an unsuccessful attempt to dislodge him.

Back in the world of proper games, I take on USA international footballer Landon Donovan at *FIFA 2004*, the twist being that the latter is sat in San Francisco. Using the new online feature, it's like a scene from a terrifying future world, with the pair able to see each other on monitors and communicate via headsets. In the pre-match baiting, I steal shamelessly from classic gangster film *Get Carter*, informing Donovan that "You're a big man, but you're out of shape. With me it's a full time job." It seems to unsettle the American, but he soon settles into his rhythm, and it's largely one way traffic, with Donovan denied two stick-on penalties, the game ending in an ill-tempered 0-0 draw. An EA representative later confirms that the referees aren't quite ready yet.

Only marginally more entertaining is the FA Cup Final, with a hardcore of Brits – including lone ZONE representative, me, – finding their way to Santa Monica's Cock & Bull pub for the 7am kick-off, preceded by the first pint of the day and a hearty chorus of Abide With Me. A few hardy souls have actually stayed up all night, obviously employing some kind of superhero powers, although one tragically gives up ten minutes into the game.

**E3S ARE GOOD**

Something of a classic E3 then, the only remaining hiccup coming when Jamie Sefton is taken aside at the airport and given the full-on rubber glove treatment. Fortunately, only the contents of his bulging luggage are probed, and he is allowed to board the plane along with such luminaries as David Hasselhoff and Tony Hawk.

A lot of people moan about E3, to which we say, "Well don't bloody well go then." We at ZONE can't get enough of it. As Holden sums up while cruising down Miracle Mile in a hire car with bubblegum pop blasting out: "I love E3. Same again next year." [E]



Dave Woods: "Up in a minute love."



When in Rome...



"You're a big man, but you're out of shape."

**"The usual spectacle of actors in absurd costumes is the order of the day."**



## PC ZONE E3 AWARDS

### BEST COCKTAIL

The Warp Core Breach, which comes in a glass the size of a goldfish bowl. "The best cocktail in the world," claims Dave Woods. "There's something in there that makes the whole thing bubble and dry ice pour out of the top. It tastes like cherryade but is the only drink I've had in my life that takes you through all the stages of being pissed - by the time you get to the bottom you're smashed. It makes going to the *Star Trek* theme restaurant in Vegas almost credible."

### WORST COCKTAIL

The Jagerbomb, an unholy mixture of Jagermeister and Red Bull. According to resident expert Woods, "One of the most disgusting drinks ever, I only got it because some stunning blonde model type ordered them in front of me at the bar."

### MOST INCONSIDERATE ROOMMATE

The member of the press who brought a woman back to the hotel room he was sharing with a fellow journalist: "I didn't know he was there, honest." His surname has now become a verb to describe such an act.

### BEST ATTEMPTED ESCAPE BY SEAFOOD

"One day, feeling really hungover and sorry for myself, I went to a really nice Japanese restaurant with another journalist," says Woods. "We paid for the \$50 sampler meal as we couldn't be bothered to go through the menu, but were met with an alarmed look from the waitress, who remarked 'most people don't like that.' Failing to heed the warning, we watched as she brought things to our table that, while sliced and diced, were still noticeably mobile. She looked really offended when we told her it was impossible, and quite possibly illegal, for us to eat what she'd just served us. 'Crunchy, crunchy, very nice,' she responded, while holding a shrimp's head that had just been separated from its body, both parts making a last dash bid for freedom." Sushi doesn't come any fresher than that.

### BEST MEAL AT 3.30AM

Staggering around Sunset Strip, pissing in people's gardens, Hill and Sefton miraculously stumbled across the bastion of quality eating that is Mel's Diner, as featured in George Lucas' *American Graffiti*. Immaculate service, root beer, burgers and curly fries: "We'll eat like kings." You can't buy class.

### WORST GAME PRESENTATION

Unnamed Eastern European action game (Name withheld to protect our own asses). A stifling room and a full four-ball of Woods, Sefton, Holden and Hill, the latter suffering from the inevitable effects of a pre-match meal of chicken 'n' beans. Throw in a pair of comedy Ukrainians, whom we'll call Bobby and Andriy, the latter with no English, the former speaking in a subvocal mumble, and an incomprehensible game that seemed to involve rummaging through a tip for fridges. Eyeing up our Levis and arguing with each other in their native tongue, it seemed that they had simply thrown together a tech demo as a front for escaping to the West. Further confusion reigned when Bobby seemingly asked us if we "know what is an animal?" Ten minutes later it turned out he was saying "anomaly", but only after Holden had flipped and barked "I still can't hear you!" to our dithering host. The final straw came when Woods was spotted nodding off in the intense heat. We woke him up, made our excuses and left.

### MOST IMPRESSIVE THING EVER

The Eidos party at the Sky Bar. Standard industry bollocks, but with the key exception of three exotic dancers performing in the windows of rooms bathed in red, blue and green light respectively. Magnificent. Topped off by a flabby English bloke performing a tribute dance in an adjacent window, to a hearty round of applause from the punters below.



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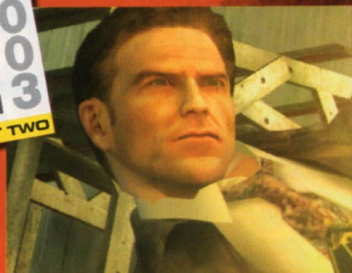
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2003  
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PART TWO



Stop! Bullet-Time!

# MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE

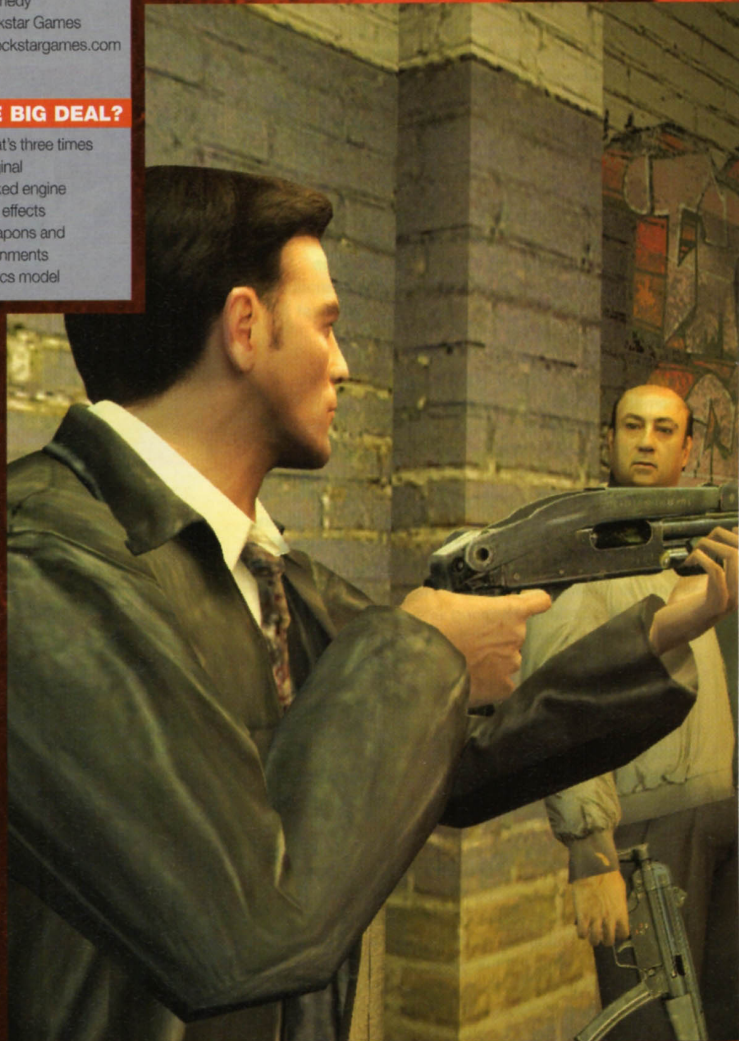
Max Payne, a cop with nothing to lose. *Dave Woods*, a man who never had anything in the first place. It's perfect symmetry

#### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Remedy  
**PUBLISHER** Rockstar Games  
**WEBSITE** [www.rockstargames.com](http://www.rockstargames.com)  
**ETA** Autumn 2003

#### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Deeper script that's three times as big as the original
- Massively reworked engine
- New Bullet-Time effects
- New moves, weapons and interactive environments
- Brand new physics model



"That'll teach you not to be so hot-headed."

Max's new look. Is it just us or has he aged a hell of a lot?



The last time Max smiled was back in 1983...



Expect new moves and smoother animation in the new Bullet-Time.

**FROM ALL THE** talk post-E3 you might be forgiven for thinking that there's only one game worth talking about. In fact, one magazine went as far as to wipe out the entire catalogue of PC games past and future with the brilliantly misinformed tagline "*Half-Life 2 - The Only Game That Matters...*" We weren't prepared to accept that and searched high and low for another PC gem, even delving into the lower depths of Kentia Hall to brave the portaloo stands staffed by troubled individuals who hadn't seen another human since the show had begun. It took us until the last day though to see a game that could quite happily hang out and drink with Gordon Freeman

and it took lengthy negotiations before we were allowed past the security cordon that had been set-up to protect Rockstar's latest release, the sequel to one of the coolest games of all time, *Max Payne 2: The Fall Of Max Payne*.

Led away from the main show, privileged with the knowledge that I was the only journo from the UK to get to see the game, I was dragged through a labyrinth of corridors, stairs and escalators, to end up blinking in a huge room draped with white sheets, facing the sort of air conditioning that would keep milk fresh for a week, and a panel of top-end representatives from Remedy and Rockstar. As I started to open my mouth,



2003  
expo  
PART TWO

CV



## REMEDY

Aside from Nokia and a tourist business built around the Northern lights, Remedy is the only decent thing to spring from Finland. The team formed in 1995 and still reside in the delightfully named town of Espoo.

**1996** *Death Rally* – Remedy's first game was a pretty cool top-down *MicroMachines*-style drive 'em up. You can still download a shareware version from the Remedy site [www.remedy.fi/dr/](http://www.remedy.fi/dr/).

**2001** *Max Payne* – Remedy hit the payload with the original *Max Payne*. *Bullet-Time* is the new buzzword and developers everywhere hastily incorporate an inferior version into their own games.



Now that's some serious recoil.

I was shushed, the lights dimmed, a huge cinema screen dropped into place and the sequel was unveiled.

## WOO!

And what a demonstration. The new engine is staggering, bursting with detail and a sense of realism that borders on the photo-realistic. When the original *Max Payne* was released the visuals were a cut above everything else but they look horribly ragged now compared to the sequel. Forget the look of a man who

the whiskers on that" Max was fighting for his life in a ballet of slow-motion bullets.

*Bullet-Time* is the innovation that Max Payne hung his coat on and despite being so obvious you wonder why no one thought of it before, it worked like a dream. Most of you would agree that without it *Max Payne* would have been just another bog-standard third-person action game, albeit an extremely good-looking one. *Bullet-Time* transformed it into a massive hit, introducing a piece of gaming vocabulary that has been copied

**"Bullet-Time is the innovation that Max Payne hung his coat on and it worked like a dream"**

hasn't eaten a piece of fresh fruit in weeks, the new Max can blink, is lip-synched and can express emotions by altering his expression. Likewise, the rest of the characters you brush up against look totally realistic and behave in a more lifelike way, with totally rewritten AI routines in place. Just look at the screenshots. These aren't doctored images, but actual shots from the game, but before I got a chance to say "look at

many times but never equalled and creating a unique experience that, for most people, turned the game into one of the most enjoyable games ever. And, before any of you write in, I know that *Bullet-Time* wasn't for everyone. For every ten people that wanted carnal relations with the game there was one naysayer that was left cold. Take the ZONE office. *Payne* fans down to a man, apart from our very own man-mountain, Martin Korda,

## Why Don't You?...

## GUNS ARE GOOD BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WAY OF THE FIST?

*Max Payne* is all about guns. In fact, he's the sort of bloke who sleeps with a couple under his pillow, but this stops him from getting into hand-to-hand combat and, after witnessing the delights of the *Max Payne Kung Fu* mod, we'd like to see Max in a no-weapons situation, forced to rely on his bare hands to save him. In a slight nod to this, Remedy has enabled Max Payne to do more than just shoot his weapons, so if you run out of ammo (which happened a fair bit in the first game), you'll be able to use your gun as a melee weapon. Definitely a step in the right direction, but we're British and we would still like to see the Queensberry rules adopted.



You'll have to rely on mods for unarmed combat.



Five, six, seven, eight, who do we appreciate?

### Take that you punk!

who was just nonplussed by the whole thing – strange seeing as he rates *The Matrix* as one of his favourite films of all time, but there you go.

### MC HAMMER

In *The Fall Of Max Payne* Bullet-Time is back, something which has just been made explicit on the screen before me. A second ago Max was running along a New York street minding his own business, now he's dodging bullets like raindrops. I'd been expecting it but the subtle, almost imperceptible changes, caught me completely off guard. Even more cinematic than before, Bullet-Time in *The Fall Of Max Payne* is a thing of beauty, the gaming equivalent of Kelly Hu.

Trying to get the changes across in words is almost impossible, but seeing as looking at the screenshots is even more futile I'll give it a bash. Think smooth. Think as smooth as *The Matrix*. Think bullet traces brushing past your face, empty shells flying over your shoulder, sound effects that have been stretched to perfection, amazing ragdoll effects courtesy of the latest Havok 2 physics engine and a 'time-twist' at the end when you pull out of Bullet-Time and back into the land of the normal. Think the Bullet-



Time in *Max Payne* but honed and chiselled to perfection and you're some way towards the truth. (See, I told you it was going to be impossible.)

Maybe Petri Jarvilehto, lead game designer from Remedy, can help. Petri, what's the deal with your new, improved Bullet-Time. "We've improved the concept of Bullet-Time immeasurably. The gunfights are more intense this time around and much more epic in scale. We've made a lot of changes to the gunplay animations – polishing, tweaking and adding new features. It's too early to go into much detail but, for example, if you do a shoot-dodge dive you can stay on the ground and keep shooting..." Saying this, he dived into a room and demonstrated said move, discharging weapons from both hands, and taking out about six people simultaneously.

"We've made a lot of changes to Bullet-Time but a lot of the new features are still work in progress so I can't tell you much about them, but what I can say is that we're incorporating a lot of new, different moves and we're also doing a lot of new stuff with time scaling, moving Max into a different time scale to his opponents, giving you a much greater feeling of power than before."

Admittedly I was watching the game on a huge screen, but I was sucked straight in, watching every empty shell arcing and every bullet exploding from the barrel and



He didn't stand a chance.

**"The script for *The Fall Of Max Payne* is three times as big as the original. It's going to be a much deeper game"**

tracing towards its intended victim. It might still be called Bullet-Time but it's definitely an evolution from the first game, and the overall effect warped my features into a look somewhere between Max in the original game and vinegar strokes.

Recovering in a New York second I asked about clipping problems. You see

the original Bullet-Time was cool, but the cool was ever-so-slightly lost when, attempting a dive, you ended up shoulder-deep in a wall, legs wiggling and bullets lost in plaster. Throughout the whole demonstration I didn't see one example of that and Remedy was convincing in its assertion that "clipping

won't be a problem in *Max Payne 2*." OK already, I only asked...

But Bullet-Time is but one half of the *Max Payne* legacy. The film noir theme and the story told in flashback through panels of graphic art lent the game an adult feel and a distinctive style, but the game had a feel of two halves that never gelled into a whole. The story was told through the graphic art and the voiceover, and the game itself was a series of action sequences that didn't involve interacting with anything apart from the most ferocious firepower.

**THREE IS THE MAGIC NUMBER**

This is going to change, according to Sam Lake, lead writer on both *Max Payne* and the sequel. "The script for the sequel is three times as big as the original. It's going to be a much deeper game and we're taking a big risk by putting him in a love story this time around. In the original we kept the story separate so that you could blast through the game even if you didn't want to spend time with the graphic novel but this time around we're working hard to incorporate the story into the game."

Subtitled *The Fall Of Max Payne*, the title hints at another playful feel-good romp through the streets of New York, although it's also set in New York in the fall (read autumn), so the title isn't necessarily as dark as it sounds. Set a year after the end of the first game (all the characters that were lucky enough to survive the

**GROW UP!**

**ADULT GAMES FOR ADULT PEOPLE**

One of the big debates in the ZONE office is about adult games. Why, when the industry is more than 20 years old and gamers have grown up from pubescents to 30-somethings aren't there many games for adults. *Max Payne* was one of the first, *Mafia* was an admirable second, and *The Fall Of Max Payne* is continuing the tradition. Like a lot of Rockstar's recent output, *The Fall Of Max Payne* is going to ship with an 18 certificate, but that doesn't mean a load of fart gags and gratuitous tit shots. Instead you're going to get an adult experience that you get to star in. In one of the scenes I played through, Max is approaching a room with one of his lady friends in a chair being held hostage with a gun to her head. As you burst in, expecting to nail the baddie with a single bullet to the head and saving the damsel in distress, your lady mate is shot dead, leaving Max bellowing a big New York 'Noooooo!!!!' It sent a shiver down my spine (although bear in mind that the air conditioning in the room was set to Freeze).



No children allowed past this point.



"Who you callin' a mook? You can't call me a mook..."



All these moves and not a single hair out of place.

## SO, YOU WANNA BE A PORN STAR?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SURVIVE IN THIS BUSINESS KID YOU'RE GOING TO NEED A NEW NAME...

Everyone knows that the classic way to come up with your porn name is to take your first pet's name and your mother's maiden name and stick them together. It works every time – mine's Bramble Washington, which might not immediately cause a stirring in the loin, but does at least point in some obscure way to the male genitalia. Sometimes though it unearths some real gems, like Mona Sax. A name that works on almost every level imaginable (come on... moaning, playing the human saxophone, etc), Mona is Max's love interest, which in itself marks a huge departure from the first game. If you haven't played it, Max's wife and daughter are killed at the start, leaving him with his immortal 'nothing to lose' tagline. This time around it looks like he's got everything to lose, including his modesty, if Mona lives up to her promise.

### PC ZONE PORNSTARS HALL OF FAME

Dave Woods: Bramble Washington  
 Jamie Sefton: Oscar Bird  
 Anthony Holden: Tommy Day  
 Paul Presley: Coco Simpkins  
 Martin Korda: Miffy Brna  
 Will Porter: Herbie Ream



Mona Sax. She's a woman who knows how to handle a smoking gun.

original are back for the sequel), the story starts with Max back in uniform, but once again standing accused of killing his former partner. Instead of shrugging it off, he confesses to the murder, which sets-up the whole film-noir love angle. But don't worry, Remedy hasn't gone soft on you. According to Sam Lake, *The Fall Of Max Payne* is "dark, tragic and violent, and mostly in Bullet-Time of course. Love hurts, and you just know there isn't going to be a happy ending? Or is there?"

### A NEW YORK MINUTE

But a script that's three times the size doesn't mean the game is going to take three times as long to complete. Some of you felt that, at around 10 hours, the original *Max Payne*, was too short. It's a debate that we're willing to entertain but most of us at ZONE thought the game was the perfect length – it told the story, let you shoot as many guns as you wanted to and left you with a fitting finale on top of the skyscraper. The relatively short length also meant pretty much everyone who played it completed it, a concept that's dear to Remedy's heart and especially the lead writer Sam Lake. "It's really bad for me if people don't finish the game as they don't get to finish my story." Petri Jarvilehto agrees: "We feel strongly that it's better to have a compressed amount of excellence, rather than diluting it across 26 hours. We want to keep people playing until the end."

And he's got a point. How many games feel like they've been padded out to

provide the seemingly obligatory 20+ hours of gameplay? Sure there's a place in this world for games like *Morrowind* that require life after death to complete but surely there's also room for the tightly structured cinematic piece like *Max Payne*? From research we've done it's obvious that a high percentage of you don't finish every game you play and if you take an analogy it's like watching a brilliant film but deciding that you've had enough halfway through and walking. It just doesn't happen. So yes, *The Fall Of Max Payne 2* is going to be a compact experience but that's no bad thing. Hey, I've spent my whole life convincing people that size isn't everything and I'm not about to have a change of heart now.

And, in what seemed like no more than a New York minute, the demo was over. As I was being led away I had time to throw in one last question. There's going to be no multiplayer element to the proceedings – like watching a film it will be a single-player experience. There's only one Max Payne and there's only one of you – how you spend your time together is down to you, but don't expect an anodyne relationship. From what I've seen of the game, the ride is going to be rockier than the original and, if you shed a tear along the way, deal with it like a man. Brush it away on your sleeve, reach for your holster, hit the button marked Bullet-Time and take out all of your frustrations on the people around you. That's what they're there for. **PC**



It might be a love story, but *The Fall Of Max Payne* isn't going soft on you.

2003  
expo  
PART TWO



Cutting edge Havok 2 physics make for a far more immersive and coherent game world.



The dazzling lighting system in full effect.



1. Sounds fun. Now what do you need me to do?
2. Whatever. Just tell me what you want so I can get the hell out of here.

Cheap titillation aside, we're hoping to see a genuinely adult tone.

#### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Troika Games  
**PUBLISHER** Activision  
**WEBSITE** www.troikagames.com  
**ETA** 2004

#### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Built on the incredible Source (*Half-Life 2*) technology – the first game to license the new engine
- Sequel to 2000's excellent *V:TM – Redemption*
- Deep dialogue system with thousands of fully voiced lines
- Seven clans of vampire to choose from, each with very different gameplay
- Willfully dirty in design and promisingly adult in tone

CV

TROIKA

#### TROIKA GAMES

Recently celebrating its fifth birthday, Southern California's Troika Games is a bunch of guys dedicated to making deep and involving RPGs

**1998** Troika formed by Jason Anderson, Leonard Boyarsky and Tim Cain, three chaps who had previously combined their talents to create classic post-apocalyptic role-players *Fallout 1* and *2*.

**2001** Troika's first game, *Arcanum: Of Steamworks And Magick Obscura* is released – an ugly yet epic RPG blending magic and technology to excellent effect.

**2003** Troika unveils both *Vampires* and a second game – D&D Third Edition role-player *Greyhawk: The Temple of Elemental Evil*.

## Like a bat outta hell...

# VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE – BLOODLINES

Sequel to a minor classic using the finest shooter engine on the planet – this could be the only RPG you need. *Anthony Holden* gets it in the neck

**FOR A WHOLE** two issues now we've been living under a cloud. Food hasn't tasted quite the same, the sun hasn't shone quite so brightly, and games certainly haven't looked as good. That's because two issues ago we first laid eyes on *Half-Life 2*. And it changed our perceptions forever.

But if Valve's bombshell has relegated everything else to second best, what about a game that uses the same technology, but for very different ends. An RPG, let's say, from a developer known for making deep, innovative gaming experiences. Surely that would be worth a look?

As it happens, that game is *Vampire: The Masquerade 2 – Bloodlines*, sequel to Nihilistic's fantastic *Vampire: The Masquerade – Redemption* (development duties have now shifted to Troika Games). For those with fond memories of that title, the concept is basically the same – it's a deep, story-based RPG with strong action elements,

supernatural powers and gothic-punk atmosphere. Once again it's set within the World Of Darkness, the alternate reality created by White Wolf in its popular paper RPG, and once again it's all about being a badass bloodsucker fighting in a vampiric clan war.

However, the merest glance at these screenshots should tell you that something very different is going on. For a start, the party-based aspect and isometric perspective are gone. In their place we have a first-person perspective and far stronger shooting element, complete with knives, guns, flamethrowers and even a stake gun. And with Valve's Source engine under the hood, it looks bloody amazing. Not quite as polished as *Half-Life 2*, perhaps, but gorgeous nonetheless.

"We're taking a first-class shooter engine and marrying it with what we think is an equally first-class RPG experience," explains Troika co-founder Leonard Boyarsky. "As opposed to

watering down either of those aspects, we've tried to keep them as intact as possible. That doesn't mean you have to play the game as a first-person shooter, but if you choose to do so you can get that kind of effect."

#### EMOTION ENGINE

Clearly, part of this decision has been inspired by the technology itself, but the results speak for themselves. Take the facial animation system for example. Incredible in *Half-Life 2*, it acquires even more significance in an RPG context, allowing NPCs to react to you more convincingly, emotively and meaningfully than ever before. The impact this has on a game driven by dialogue simply cannot be underestimated.

"The Source technology provides the opportunity for a more dynamic type of gameplay than seen in traditional RPGs," continues Leonard. "We've got a world that responds to who you are and the choices you make. The level of detail





## BLOODLINE ONLINE

### WHAT'S IN STORE FOR MULTIPLAYER THEN?

When the original *Vampire* came out three years ago, one of its biggest draws promised to be the unique Storyteller multiplayer mode, which mirrored the style of tabletop role-playing by putting one player in charge of events in story-based online quests. Great idea in theory, rubbish in practice; though the concept was later reworked with some success in *Neverwinter Nights*. With that disappointment in mind, we were interested to see what multiplayer innovations Troika could come up with for the sequel. So far, all that's been announced is an objective-based teamplay mode, pitting vampires against vampire hunters in "the ultimate battle of good vs evil". Full details are yet to be released, but on paper it sounds like *Counter-Strike* with vampires, which hardly spells a revolution. Of course, if it beats *Counter-Strike 2* (and *Team Fortress 2*) to our screens, we'll all be sharpening our teeth in no time...



De dust to dust?

we're able to include, and the whole attitude we're able to bring across through the characters has allowed us to evolve the RPG and fully capture the World Of Darkness experience."

The choice of setting is also different this time round. While supernatural and mythical elements abound, *Bloodlines* abandons all medieval swords 'n' sorcery malarkey in favour of a gritty vision of contemporary Los Angeles. The levels we played at E3 were grimy back-streets

## "The shadow-hugging Nosferatu is a kind of twisted Solid Snake, hiding in the darkness"

and Hollywood strip clubs, replete with pimps, hookers and street trash. It's a deliberately grungy, sleazy environment that suggests a genuinely mature tone – something we welcome wholeheartedly.

### CLAN MENTALITY

Another key facet of *Bloodlines* is the expanded character system, designed to increase both variety and replayability. At the outset you have to choose one of seven different clans, each representing a distinct type of vampire from classic mythology. "We've got everything from the suave, sensitive and romantic vamp, to the stealthy hunter hidden in the shadows, or the powerful and inhuman fighting machine," says Leonard. "Each

brings its own unique style and its own powers, and makes each clan a radically different experience."

As a shadow-hugging Nosferatu for example, you're a kind of twisted, bloodsucking Solid Snake, with the ability to hide in darkness, snap necks stealthily and turn temporarily invisible (or partially invisible, depending on your stats.) The pimp-clad Malkavians, on the other hand, are simply nuts, employing such skills as Dementation, which makes NPCs go temporarily insane, and Insight, which detects when someone is lying.

The variety of character types and vampiric powers offers a huge amount of choice in how to deal with any given obstacle. Faced with an unhelpful NPC,



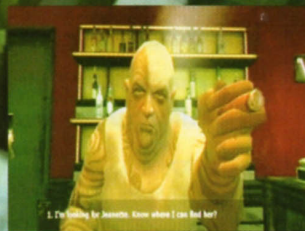
Dave Woods reconsiders his choice of facial piercing.

do you attempt to charm them, overpower and drain them, summon a plague of rats, or just blow their heads clean off? "There's a nearly limitless variety of ways to play, because your stats directly affect gameplay," agrees Leonard. "For instance, if you put all your points into charisma you'll get more dialogue choices and be more effective when conversing with NPCs. But if you do it at the expense of putting points into your firearms skills, your combat ability will definitely suffer."

At the same time as this, you have to carefully manage your blood pool. Blood powers your disciplines, requiring a steady supply of unprotected necks.

### BLEEDING EDGE

For an RPG fan who's become tired with role-playing conventions, *Bloodlines'* gameplay possibilities are hugely exciting. The depth of atmosphere and immersion enabled by the technology, the blend of shooting and RPG elements, the genuinely open-ended gameplay – we could be looking at a true blood-guzzling, night-stalking, stake-impaling successor to *Deus Ex* here. And that's a beautiful thing. [A+]



2003  
expo  
PART TWO



Your choice of single saber, double saber or saber staff will determine your range of combat moves.

#### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Raven  
**PUBLISHER** Activision  
**WEBSITE** [www.lucasarts.com/products/jediacademy](http://www.lucasarts.com/products/jediacademy)  
**ETA** Autumn 2003

#### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Loads of new force powers in single-player
- More emphasis on saber combat
- Force powers can be combined
- Ride Tauntauns and AT-STs!
- New siege mode and handicap duel matches in multiplayer

## School days again...

# JEDI KNIGHT: JEDI ACADEMY

That's no moon, it's a space station! No, hang on, it's **Anthony Holden**, playing a fully operational version of the latest Jedi slice 'em up



## CV

RAVEN  
SOFTWARE

### RAVEN

One of the world's premier FPS developers, Raven is currently busy with *Jedi Academy* and a little game called *Quake IV*. Here's a few more choice moments from their illustrious back-catalogue.

- 1995** *Heretic* – Classic first-person outing takes *Doom* into fantasy-land.
- 1995** *HeXen* – More spell-casting in the excellent follow-up to *Heretic*.
- 1998** *Heretic II* – Yet more fantasy smiting, now in third-person.
- 1999** *Soldier Of Fortune* – Raised the bar for bad taste.
- 2001** *Elite Force* – Solid FPS action in *Trek*-land.
- 2002** *Jedi Knight II* and *Soldier Of Fortune II* – where do they find the time?

**IT'S BARELY** a year since we last flexed our force powers in *Jedi Knight 2: Jedi Outcast*, but we're not far off getting another chance to worship hokey religions in Raven's newest saber-slinger, *Jedi Academy*.

And, we're pleased to report, it's a much more focussed affair that greets us this time around. As much as we enjoyed *Jedi Outcast*, it was something of a mixed bag of first-person shooting and third-person swordplay that didn't really take off until the saber-combat (eventually) kicked in. This time, the sabers are drawn from the off, with new saber moves, many more force powers and a fast and furious new combat system. The result is a more action-adventure weighted affair with more third-person action that's sure to have every aspiring Jedi in a sweat.

Charting your journey from wet-behind-the-ears Padawan to stick-in-the-mud Jedi Knight, the new game is set

directly after *Jedi Outcast*, and casts you as student in Luke Skywalker's Jedi Academy on Yavin 4. After a brief spell in training, you'll be sent out on a variety of missions to fight crime and defeat a troublesome new faction in the galaxy.

In a shock move, the game drops Kyle Katarn (the poncy bearded Jedi from previous outings) as star of the show, opting for a customisable character creation system instead. LucasArts' Lynn Taylor elaborates: "Kyle Katarn is now your mentor. So the first thing you'll do in

downloading mods to customise their character in multiplayer, so we've put all that in the game."

#### CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

You can also tailor your saber to your tastes with a choice of handle styles and blade colours, as well as choosing between a single blade, dual wielding or the Darth Maul-style double-ender. "A lot of people ask if the single saber is less powerful," cautions Lynn, "but it depends on your style. On the single, you can use

## "There are more force powers and a fast and furious new combat system"

the game is choose who you're going to be playing. You've got a choice of multiple species, such as Human, Zabrak, Twi'lek, and Rodian, as well as fully customisable appearance. A lot of people were

force powers while fighting, as well as throwing it. On two swords, you can throw one and be fighting with the other one. With the double-saber, you can't throw it at all, but you can kick enemies."



A stint as a Sarlacc dental nurse will test your Jedi resolve.

This emphasis on choice also carries into the structure of the game itself. In an effort to provide a bit of that fabled 'non-linear gameplay', each mission is made up of five separate levels. In each case you only have to complete four of them to progress, though you end up gaining more force powers if you complete all five.

Being a trainee Jedi also means plenty of mission variety. One of the levels we played at E3 required us to raid a criminal gang that had been capturing civilians and feeding them to Rancors. The primary aim was to free the civilians, but there was also the option to take on the Rancor itself – an impressive beast that gives testament to the enhancements made to the 3D engine (originally *Quake III*).

Somewhat less impressive was a level set on Hoth, in which you ride Tauntauns through a familiar icy wasteland. While it's good to see the hairy brutes getting an outing in a game, it seems the jerky animation from the film has been reproduced a little too accurately.

Other more promising modes of transport include an AT-ST (as in *Jedi Outcast*), an X-Wing and maybe even a land speeder. Classic characters such as Chewbacca are also set to appear.

**LET GO...**

However, the most promising enhancements appear to be in the area of combat. For starters, all the conventional weapons and force powers that existed only in multiplayer in *Jedi Outcast* are now in the single-player game, and some old favourites from earlier games are also set to reappear. Weapons now include the Concussion Rifle, Wookiee Bowcaster, Imperial Repeater and Han Solo's Heavy Blaster. Force Sight will make a return, as will, it seems, every other force power ever seen in the Jedi Knight series (though the final list is still under wraps).

Much more thought has also gone into the way force powers work. Not only can

you combine your force powers like never before, you often have to use specific forces in combat to counter enemy attacks. If you get caught in a force grip, for example, the only way to counter is to use force push. To make it over a large gap, you may have to combine force jump with force speed. Similar examples abound.

**QUICKER, MORE SEDUCTIVE...**

While all this adds a measure of fun to the proceedings, Lynn is keen to stress that it's not a reinvention of the series. "It's not a radical departure from *Outcast*, it's very similar. If you know how to play *Outcast* you can pick this up really quickly."

Still, it definitely seems that the *Jedi Knight* series is giving up any pretensions of carrying on the first-person tradition of the classic *Dark Forces*, to focus instead on a more crowd-pleasing mixture of elements. This is all well and good, providing LucasArts has the wisdom to give us a proper, hardcore *Star Wars* shooter to sit alongside it. A true *Dark Forces 3* with Source (*Half-Life 2*) tech? Now that would be something. [E]



Sadly, you can't take their heads clean off.



The graphics have been tweaked but the Q3 engine is showing signs of age.



Force powers are far more visually satisfying than before.

**SIEGE MENTALITY**



Teampay: it's the new deathmatch!

**STAR WARS MEETS TEAM FORTRESS? WHERE DO I SIGN?**

While they never really took off online, the multiplayer modes for *Jedi Outcast* did contain some hugely enjoyable force-powered action. They were, however, pretty basic in scope, with vanilla deathmatch being the pick of the bunch and one-on-one saber duels the only real novelty. *Jedi Academy*, on the other hand, is a whole other story. Not only is there a new 2-on-1 handicap duelling mode for those that fancy themselves as Jedi masters, but there's also a brand new teampay mode dubbed Siege. Based around multiple objectives and player classes in the vein of *Wolfenstein* or *Team Fortress*, the new game will let you play as a demolitionist, medic, infantry, Rebel trooper, or, of course, a Jedi. The exact nature of the gameplay is yet to be revealed, but the mere idea of a *Star Wars* version of *Enemy Territory* is enough to convince us.


 E3 2003  
expo  
PART TWO


Working squads in trenches is the way out of trouble spots.



"Just a little closer and we're gonna be eating vulture pie tonight."



The US army operates a much more hardcore version of the game in training.

## Chasing rainbows...

# FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Pandemic Studios  
**PUBLISHER** THQ  
**WEBSITE** www.fullspectrumwarrior.com  
**ETA** Q1 2004

### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Developed as a cutting edge training tool for the US Army
- Solidly realistic graphics
- Intriguing blend of action and strategy elements
- Rock-solid AI

**Don't reach for that Sinclair ZX! It's a course in real-time tactics developed for the US army that may whip even Russ Fischer into shape**

**GIVEN** the current political climate it should come as no surprise that the military was out in force at E3 2003. Truth be told, it became quite tiring; I'm all for realism, but do we really need soldiers showing off the tools of their trade at a games show? But I may have to eat my words dressed with Marmite, as one of the most promising titles of the expo was originally developed as a training tool for the US Army. Developed by *Battlezone II*

veterans Pandemic Studios, *Full Spectrum Warrior* melds urban combat and battlefield tactics into a real-time squad-based 3D combat simulator.

At first glance, *FSW* appears to be a shooter. But don't be deceived – it's not. You play a virtual commander in control of two small squads of troops. Your role is simply to give them orders which they will carry out intelligently. You can look through the eyes of any of your troops and check their line of sight, but you can never directly control them as in *Rainbow Six* or its army of clones. It's a relatively untried way to present a game, and could be loosely described as *Laser Squad* meets *Ghost Recon*.

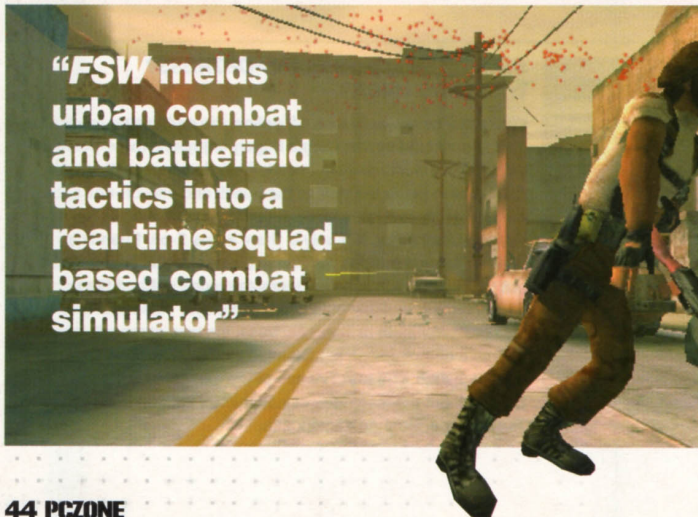
The emphasis on accuracy in the military equipment and tactics is complemented by a high standard of realism in the graphics. While *FSW* isn't *Half-Life 2*, the textures and models do a fine job. We witnessed a battle in the maze-like streets of a middle-eastern city infested with guerrilla fighters. Cars, doorways and every other landscape feature offer a tactical choice to the commander. Fail to make the correct one and it's Black Hawk Down all over again.

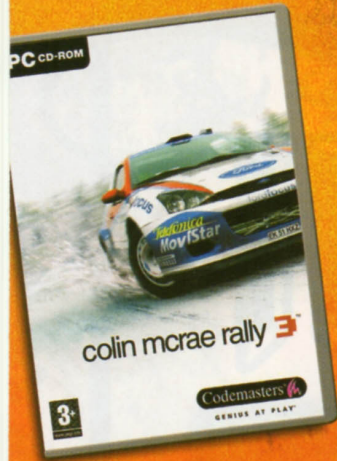
The biggest potential for failure in this setup lies with the AI code. But a few minutes toying with the game revealed cracking brainpower under the helmets of friend and foe alike. Not only are orders heeded, they remain in force. Tell a rifeman to focus suppressing fire on a single window and he'll do so until told otherwise. But he'll be vulnerable from other angles, so you'd best assign someone to cover him. Soldiers will pursue enemies if given leeway to do so, or will hold positions and cover each other where necessary. Despite the lack of first-person action, it's incredibly immersive.

### RAINBOW WARRIOR

Most startling is that you are left with a feeling of real loss whenever a squad-mate goes down. This is perhaps the most intriguing aspect of *FSW* – it manages to discard the detachment that plagues so many wargames. Accordingly, the game was the dark horse of E3 2003, scooping major honours in the official Best Of E3 awards. Our only slight concern is that the existence of multiple console versions might water things down a tad, but on present form *FSW* is looking mighty fine indeed. **EW**

**"FSW melds urban combat and battlefield tactics into a real-time squad-based combat simulator"**





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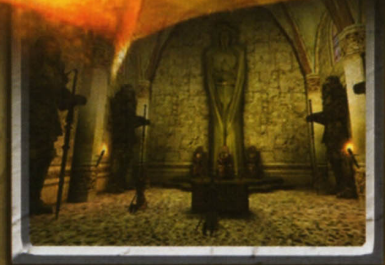
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# GOthic II

"Watch out Blizzard,  
Bioware and Black Isle!

The competition  
is about to hot up  
with the release of  
this surprisingly  
remarkable sequel."

PC Gaming World - Apr. 03



"Think of this as a sort of  
Morrowind in shiny PVC trousers  
and big swooshing velvet cloak."

CVG - Feb. 03



©JoWood Productions Software AG. Developed by Piranha Bytes. Distributed by Infogrames.

## Hit them hard!

# SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY

One of the most-loved names in flight combat is back in the skies. Anthony Holden is at twelve o'clock high

### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Totally Games

**PUBLISHER** Activision

**WEBSITE**

www.lucasarts.com/products/normandy

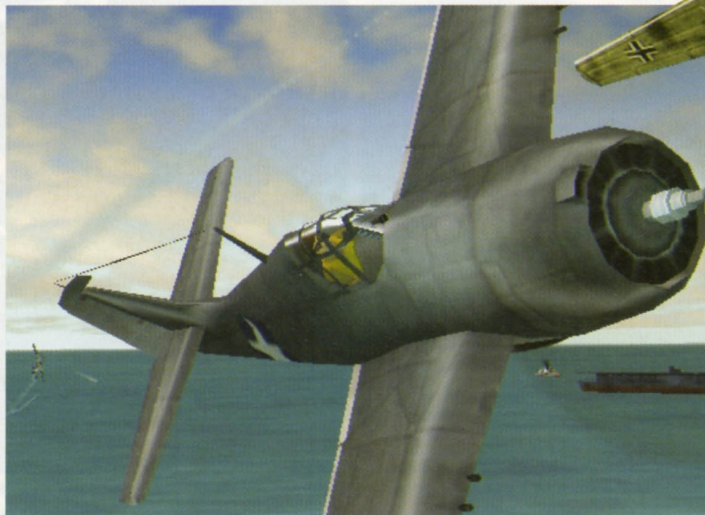
**ETA** November 2003

### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's the new combat flight game from Larry Holland, creator of *X-Wing*
- Emphasis on fun and explosive action
- Covers all of the most celebrated air battles of WWII
- Over 20 aircraft to pilot, including many bizarre experimental and prototype craft
- 30 hectic missions

**IF THERE ARE** any true auteurs left in the games business, Larry Holland would have to rank among them. Creator of space combat gems like *X-Wing* and *Tie Fighter*, not to mention classic WWII flyer *Secret Weapons Of The Luftwaffe*, Larry and his team have an enviable reputation for marrying depth of gameplay with a jolly good bit of high-flying biff, and all that.

As you'll know if you've been paying attention, Larry's new game takes him back to his old playground, World War II, reprising some familiar themes with *Secret Weapons Over Normandy*. E3 gave us our first look at the game in action, and it's coming together rather nicely, blending the storytelling aspects of the likes of *Tie Fighter* with the simple pleasures of blowing stuff up, using an



The cinematic camera uses over two dozen different angles and lenses.

increasingly powerful and bizarre selection of aircraft.

"We're trying to build a very accessible, fun flight game here," boasts Peter Hirschmann, producer on the game. "Larry's games have always been very easy to get into, and we're not trying to make a hardcore sim that scares anyone off." Indeed, as Larry's first game to head to a console as well as PC, *SWON* is a thoroughly action-oriented affair. It's not quite arcade twitchy, but think *Rogue Squadron*'s thrills more so than *Combat Flight Sim*'s realism.

The control system is very simple and intuitive, using a system called padlock camera to help temper the chaos of dogfighting (allowing you to always look at your target no matter which way you're flying). You can also slow down the game at any time if things get too hectic, or press a key to highlight every live target on screen. "We want to focus on the player's experience," explains Peter. "On the tactical relationship between you and the bad guys."

### CHOCKS AWAY

Your character in the game is crack American pilot James Chase, who joins up with the RAF to work with the Special Operations Executive. Over the course of 30 missions, you'll fly in all the major theatres of war (culminating in Normandy), snatching a bunch of Axis R&D in the process. This includes fun stuff like the Messerschmidt 262 – the first jet ever used in combat – and the experimental Wasserfall guided rocket that you can pilot to its target in first-person. As you complete missions your hangar gradually fills up with more than 20 secret and not-so-secret aircraft of both German and Allied design. Liberties have been taken with history, so you also get things like the



Man turrets and give Jerry hell.

XF5U Flying Pancake, an American prototype that never saw combat.

Strangely, the multiplayer options in the console versions will be absent on PC, though by way of compensation we get the mission builder, the same editing tool used by the designers, and we're told the game has an open architecture to encourage tinkering.

So, aside from the unfortunate coincidence that the new *Battlefield 1942* add-on is based on a very similar premise, things are looking good for *SWON*. As an entertaining alternative to serious flight simmetry, it should be most welcome. **PCZ**



It's not all Flying Flapjacks and experimental rockets – you fly Spitfires too.



At least one sequel is already planned.

**"You also get things like the XF5U Flying Pancake, an American prototype that never saw combat"**

## Re-Militarized Zone...

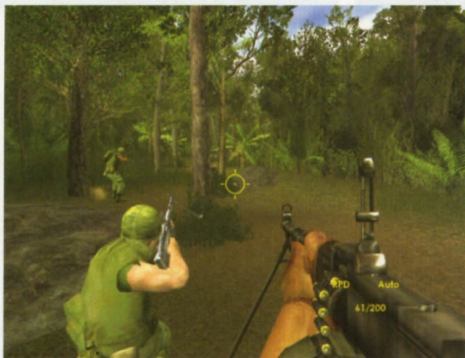
MEN OF VALOR:  
VIETNAM

## THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER 2015  
PUBLISHER Vivendi  
WEBSITE  
www.2015.com/games/games\_mov.html  
ETA Q4 2004

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Like *Allied Assault*, only darker
- Better handling of teammates
- Co-op multiplayer for the entire game
- Wide array of combat locations

A proposed sequel, *Men Of Velour*, takes place in the bars of West Hollywood.Unlike in *Allied Assault* the blood will flow generously.

Bloody ambushes are the order of the day.



Camouflage should add a new gameply angle.



Will moral issues be touched? Unlikely.

IN THE 30 years since hostilities ceased, the war in Vietnam has come to be regarded as the most psychologically damaging conflict in Western history. But that hasn't stopped anyone from drinking in the psychotic oddities of *Apocalypse Now* or, heaven forbid, *Rambo: First Blood Part Two*. Until recently, game developers largely veered away from the potential political pitfalls inherent with Vietnam, steering towards the more classic confrontations. Then, about nine months ago, the floodgates suddenly and dramatically burst open, and now you can barely see for games set in 'Nam.

Take for instance the lads at 2015, whose Spielbergian success with *Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault* crowned them kings of realistic combat. But with the upcoming *Men Of Valor: Vietnam*, the company (or what's left of them after 22 key developers left to make *Call Of Duty*) is heading into sweeter territory.

The game's timeline begins with the American insertion in 1965 and culminates appropriately with the 1968 Tet Offensive, and each game level is rigorously based on documented encounters. Players begin as a US Marine private, but survival leads to a series of transfers and promotions that offer a veritable buffet of war experience. The scripted sequences that etched *MOH* permanently into players' memories will return, though with a darker tone appropriate to Vietnam.

More so than in *Medal Of Honor*, the emphasis is on ordinary people in extraordinary situations. While the inspired cinematic style of *Allied Assault* left more than a few players with combat shock, there wasn't much to identify with among the rank and file. *Men Of Valor* addresses that by relying more on squad tactics, with a simple command system in place to guide your mates. Dashing

through the game commando-like won't be a viable option, but this isn't quite a tactical shooter either. Rather, *MOV* hopes you'll care enough about your compadres to keep each other alive.

## JUNGLE TECH

To create the dense jungle environments a highly modified version of the *Unreal* engine has been cranked up, and the result is already impressive. Seeing the

real test, however, will be how the engine handles nighttime firefights, which have not yet been demonstrated.

On the multiplayer front, a co-op mode covering the entire single-player campaign promises to be smashing, as does the selection of drivable vehicles. But perhaps the most difficult task faced by *Men Of Valor* will be competing with the likes of *Call Of Duty*, *Medal Of Honor: Pacific Assault* and

## "Plenty of visceral, unflinching action and a darker, bloodier atmosphere"

game at E3, we were particularly struck by a scene in which a dense jungle, buzzing with helicopters, was rent asunder by an eruption of napalm-fuelled flame from an air strike. Character models boast finer detail than in *MOH*, and meticulous period gear maintains the sense of realism. The

300 or so other Vietnam games. The E3 demos showed a promising start, with plenty of visceral, unflinching action and a darker, bloodier atmosphere than *Medal Of Honor*. The only downside is the wait – *Men Of Valor* won't appear until late 2004. [E]




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**EXTRAS:** Mates a bunch of pacifist losers? Play the whup-ass single player game.

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If I could turn back time...

# PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

**Anthony Holden straps on a turban and discovers one of the biggest surprise hits of this year's E3**

**TIME HEALS** all wounds, so they say, and while my three-legged dog might have something to say about that, it's an aphorism that Ubi Soft is taking very seriously with its new 3D adventure, *Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time*.

For a start, the French developer is hoping the figurative sands of time have settled sufficiently over the shambles that was *Prince Of Persia 3D* (Red Orb's misguided attempt to update the game in 1999), trusting we'll forget that betrayal and remember only why we loved the series in the first place.

But beyond this, time – always an important factor in the *Prince Of Persia*

games – is simply key to survival in *The Sands Of Time*. We're not talking about a time limit to complete the thing (as in the original), but a slew of cool ways in which you can manipulate, stretch and turn back time, giving you an all-important edge in the game's pitfall-strewn environments. Level designer Jean-Christophe explains.

"In the beginning of the game you break a magical hourglass and unleash the sands of time, and your quest will be to undo what you've done. Collecting the sands of time will allow you to do different kinds of special acts like rewinding time, which is useful if you die or fall off an edge – you just rewind to a few seconds earlier

and keep playing. You can also slow down time, freeze your enemies during combat – they'll be put in another time dimension and you'll be able to kill them more easily, as well as sometimes see the near future, which lets us give the players some hints about what's coming up."

#### IF I COULD FIND A WAY...

It's a simple device to be sure, but one that has a huge impact on the action. Apart from looking cool when you kick it in, the rewind function alone makes the frustration of falling off a difficult platform at the tiniest of missteps virtually disappear, and also allows the designers to make the platforming action much more complex and interesting. Of course, your time powers are not infinite – you only collect sand and therefore temporal powers by slaying enemies with a special dagger – so you still need to watch your step.

As cool as the temporal abilities are, however, it's not just about playing with time. As in any *Prince Of Persia* game, the acrobatic capacities of your character are paramount, and luckily in this case you're a veritable Jackie Chan. Not only can you do all the things you'd expect from a modern platform adventure – climbing, jumping, hanging, rolling, etc – but you have one or two brilliant and novel moves,

#### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Ubi Soft Montreal  
**PUBLISHER** Ubi Soft  
**WEBSITE** www.prince-of-persia.com  
**ETA** October 2003

#### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Innovative time-manipulation
- Spectacular combat system
- Loads of acrobatic special moves
- It's what *Prince Of Persia 3D* should have been!

**CV**

**Ubi Soft**  
ENTERTAINMENT

#### UBI SOFT MONTREAL

*Sands Of Time* is in development at Ubi Soft Montreal, a sprawling labyrinth of game talent with more than 400 permanent staff

**1996** Rapidly expanding French publisher Ubi Soft forms a new studio in chilly Montreal, Canada. The early years of the studio are spent making cartoony kids games for Disney and Warner.

**2001** The Montreal studio pretty much takes over the Tom Clancy licence, knocking out *Rogue Spear: Black Thorn* and getting to work on *Splinter Cell* and *Raven Shield*.

**2003** Flush with the success of the new Clancy games, the studio announces *The Sands Of Time*, with a veteran team who've variously worked on *Rayman 1* and *2*, *Splinter Cell*, and, er, the *Playmobil* licence.



Don't worry – if you fall down here you can just rewind a bit and have another shot.



The combat is kinetic and intuitive, allowing for some brilliantly acrobatic executions.

**"The game has a certain logic and beauty to it that left us truly impressed"**



The sands of time have spread through the palace and transformed every living creature into monsters.



The ability to run along walls gives you a sense of command over environments.

such as running on walls, vertically and horizontally. All you have to do is get up a bit of steam, run at a wall and press an action key, and the prince will traverse a shallow arc across a stretch of wall, or even run straight up a few steps and grab an otherwise inaccessible lip. You can even spring off the wall at any point, making for some interesting leaps of faith to reach new areas.

Combat is even more impressive. Special fighting moves allow the prince to dodge and roll like *Zelda's* Link, or

do a handspring off an enemy's head, stabbing them in the back on the way down. In combination with the *Matrix*-like slo-mo effects and the ability to freeze enemies, it makes for some spectacular results.

"We tried to find an interesting combat system," says Jean-Christophe. "It's centred around multi-enemy fights – you just pick one enemy, push in that direction and you lock on to them. Push in another direction and you'll switch – it's very simple."



The team has worked hard with Jordan Mechner to capture the essence of the original game.



The level design is strongly reminiscent of the PS2's beautiful *Ico*.

Another intriguing part of the game that wasn't shown at E3 is the existence of a secondary character – and love interest – who helps the prince perform different actions throughout the game. Jean-Christophe elaborates: "The story is much more complex than just collecting sand or saving a princess. You have to find the hourglass that you broke and restore the sands of time, but you will be helped in this duty, during puzzles for example, by an Indian princess. But in fact you stole her father's treasure, so she's also an antagonist."

**WHERE YOU GO, ICO**

Impressively, almost the whole game is set within one single, consistent palace environment. Much like the sublime *Ico* (the innovative PS2 platformer), you can see the entire palace if you get the right angle, and note areas you've already been to or are yet to visit. It's all dynamically loading, with no levels, and offers a brilliant sense of scale and grandeur.

Indeed, the entire game has a certain logic and beauty to it that left us truly impressed at E3. It's definitely more a console game than a PC one, but one that's so articulate and inventive, and so effectively recalls its classic predecessor, that it really can't be overlooked. We were even inspired to take a journey back to the original game for a Games That Changed The World, which you can find on page 140. [\[E\]](#)



**Q&A**

**JORDAN MECHNER**



Steve Hill catches up with the man who invented the *Prince Of Persia* and forces him through a maze of verbal pitfalls and leaps of logic that we like to call an interview.

**PCZ So, Jordan, what is your role on the new game?**

**JORDAN** At this point I'm the writer, of course, and I directed the voice recordings, and as a consequence my ongoing role is overseeing the implementation of the dialogues and all the story-telling aspects of the game.

**PCZ Is it the same team that worked on *Splinter Cell*?**

**JORDAN** Not the same team, the same studio. The Montreal studio has several teams. The *Prince Of Persia* team was working alongside the *Splinter Cell* team and actually there was some sharing of resources. For example, the curtains in *Prince Of Persia*. The *Prince Of Persia* team did the physics for the ropes, gave that to the *Splinter Cell* team who then wove a lot of ropes together into a curtain and gave it back to *Prince Of Persia*. So now we've got all these beautiful curtains on the palace.

**PCZ How did the gameplay develop?**

**JORDAN** The team went back to basics – what can this character do? Why is it fun? Forget the story, don't tell me about monsters or genies, just what is the gameplay and why is it fun? Because being lost and opening doors and killing people is not a recipe in itself. So they built up the character's move set first and one of the early things that the team settled on that was really cool was the rewind, so you don't have the frustration of dying and restarting. Because the acrobatics in this game are so hair-raising we wanted to make it so you would miss a ledge, but now you can rewind and keep playing. And this is where the story came in, once we had the game. That's when we came up with the sands of time. We constructed the story that would give us exactly the kind of gameplay that the Prince is so good at.

**PCZ What is the story, then?**

**JORDAN** It takes place in a beautiful palace, which has been devastated by the sands of time. The villain tricks the Prince into opening the hourglass with his dagger and it's like opening Pandora's box. The sands of time spread throughout the palace and they consume everybody that they touch and transform them into these horrible monsters. So the guards, the harem girls, everybody is transformed into a sand beast, they retain their human form but they're super-human and very aggressive. And the palace is crumbling, there have been earthquakes and the sands of time are progressively devastating this once-beautiful palace. So it's the perfect environment for acrobatic gameplay.

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Rebellion  
**PUBLISHER** NDA Games  
**WEBSITE** www.rebellion.co.uk  
**ETA** September 2003

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Arrest people or shoot them, whatever you fancy
- Unique new 3D engine created for that just-so 2000AD look
- Multiplayer modes ahoj
- At the very least it'll give you something to do until *Half-Life 2* comes out



**IT'S BEEN A** while since we last saw *Dredd Vs Death*. At the time, it wasn't exactly a game as such, more a few wonderfully detailed levels littered almost at random with static people. Things have changed. Now nearing completion, the transformation is quite staggering, with Mega City One having been brought to life like never before. Holographic advertisements for Grot Pots spin in the streets outside the huge Justice Dept building, while deep in the bowels of the city, illicit raves throb and pulse to intense lightshows.

But it's the citizens that make the city, and while Rebellion would be hard-pressed to include all MC1's 400 million inhabitants, they seem to have had a damn good try at squeezing them into the game's 12 massive chapters. Potential perps and budding crazies are literally everywhere, most of them keen to avoid your gaze let alone



The newly announced teampay modes should be a laugh.

## Good cop, bad cop...

# JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH

LAST  
 PREVIEWED  
 PCZONE  
 ISSUE  
 126

**Richie Shoemaker meets the futuristic plod who makes D.I. Burnside look like The Laughing Policeman**

your Lawgiver. Discover a crime in progress, however and the law-abiding among them will scarp, leaving you to deal with the scum of the streets. Lone criminals – those guilty of illegal dancing or daubing walls with graffiti – will probably come quietly. But gangs of crims are sure to put up a fight, forcing you to either cap their leader and make some arrests, or slaughter them all mercilessly and risk the attention of the SJS, the Judiciary's internal affairs dept.

## JUSTICE FOR ALL

But the real criminals behind the game are the four immortal Dark Judges and their hordes of Cultists. Despite being so close to release however, Rebellion is keeping Death and his three drinking companions under wraps. For now (I'm promised a squint at a future meeting – keep an eye out for a full hands-on preview next month). What the boys were willing to talk about at long last was the game's many multiplayer modes, one of which is a full co-operative mode for the main 12-chapter campaign. Deathmatch modes will be fitted as standard of course, but we can also expect teampay variations like Block War (a capture-and-hold style mode), Informant – where the Judges must escort an unarmed squealer to safety – and the intriguingly-titled Umpty Raid, which sounds like a kind of Mega City footy game.

In terms of the visual style, the mix of weapons and sheer faithfulness to the 25-year history of the Dredd universe, the game seems to be heading in the right direction. Whether it will attract the non-believers remains to be seen, but 2000AD fans appear to finally be getting an interactive story worthy of the name. **EW**



There's no mistaking the stylised look of the game.



So these are the faceless masses.

**"2000AD fans appear to finally be getting an interactive story worthy of the name"**



The amount of ground detail is greater than ever.



Las Vegas, home of taste and decorum.



Hunter S. Thompson in plane shocker.



The virtual cockpits are now in every plane.

## Up-diddly-up-up-up!

# MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2004: A CENTURY OF FLIGHT

### THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Microsoft Games Studios

**PUBLISHER** Microsoft

**WEBSITE** [www.microsoft.com/games/flightsimulator](http://www.microsoft.com/games/flightsimulator)

**ETA** July 2003

### WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Historical planes
- Real-life flights from throughout the past
- Greatly improved weather effects
- A virtual cockpit for every plane
- The comedy stylings of John and Martha King!

**One hundred years in the making and finally ready for departure. Paul Presley books his seat in Microsoft's first class lounge**

**2003 IS A BIG** year for the world of flight. Exactly 100 years ago today (providing you read this on December 17), mankind finally told Mother Nature and her physical constraints to kiss his hairy, fat arse as the Wright brothers took to the skies in a rickety wooden death trap for a magnificent 12 seconds. To celebrate this momentous occasion in man's idiotic legacy, Microsoft is dedicating its latest version of the popular *Flight Simulator* range to a history of the last century of unnatural soaring.

Glossing over the fact that strictly speaking, calling the game *2004* makes it 101 years of flight, Microsoft's

original flyer, through such legends as Charles Lindbergh's record-breaking Spirit Of St Louis, Amelia Earhart's Vega 5B and more recent long-haulers such as the DC-3, right up to modern jumbos and choppers.

What's more, all of the famous flights made by these pioneers are included. We were lucky enough to get behind the stick on the Wright's Flyer and not only equalled their 12 seconds but went so far beyond, we were about to pull off a barrel roll until it was pointed out that collision detection was switched off and we were playing in simpleton mode. Still, all the shakes, shimmies and seat-of-your-pants tension in the moments before take-off were there in full.

Aside from the history, Microsoft has upped the bar with the technical elements. Weather has had a complete overhaul, with stunning storm and cloud effects, plus brand new weather 'themes' – letting novices bypass the complicated dewpoint level and barometric pressure screens. You can even continually download real-world weather conditions as you fly for added realism.

### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Scenery has had a major revamp, with more ground detail than ever before and more than 24,000 airports now modelled in painstaking detail. Even Blighty's various runways look half decent for a change. One issue addressed since the last version is that of virtual cockpits, with every plane in the pack now including fully 3D real-time flight decks, even when they amount to little more than some sticks of balsa wood tied together with horse hair.

Add updated navigation, radio and GPS systems, better front end menus, a multimedia reference library and the return of the unintentionally hilarious John and Martha King (guiding you through the features like you were a lobotomised two-year old), and Microsoft's unassailable stranglehold on the flight sim market looks set to continue for another century. [E3]

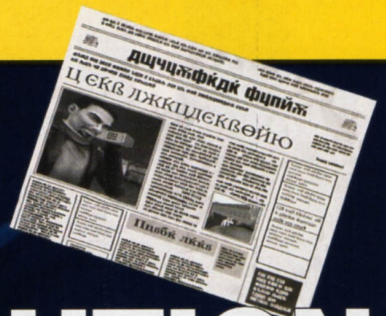
**"All the shakes, shimmy and seat-of-your-pants tension in the moments before take off were there in full"**



E3 presentation stressed that as much of the last 100 years of aviation is represented as possible. Taking *FS2002* as a starting point, *FS2004* contains recreations of everything from the Wright's

Backs to the wall

# REPUBLIC: THE REVOLUTION



The revolution is here! Or the beta version anyway... Keith Pullin sharpens his propaganda

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Elixir Studios  
**PUBLISHER** Eidos  
**WEBSITE** [www.novistrana.com](http://www.novistrana.com)  
**ETA** July 2003

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- One of the most ambitious games ever, and it's almost finished
- Surprisingly easy to get into
- Three massive cities with more than 180,000 inhabitants
- Multiple paths to success
- More than 100 different actions
- Lovely 3D graphics with full day/night cycle and real-time shadows

**OVER THE LAST** four years we've written a lot of stuff about *Republic: The Revolution*. It seems to be one of those games that's always on the verge of being released, yet somehow, inexplicably, at the very last moment it's delayed by another year or so.

Well, this time the news is good – in fact, the news is fantastic. For starters, get this – we've actually played the game, feature-complete, working and almost bug-free. And after being given some beta code to take away and pore over, we've been assured by Eidos and Elixir Studios that *Republic* is now going through final testing and will be released in July. So, you can put down your John Le Carré, Robert Ludlum and Graham Greene novels, stop watching old John Frankenheimer spy films, and instead prepare yourself for some Eastern bloc cold war paranoia, PC style.

## SUSPICIOUS MINDS

*Republic* is without question a unique game. As soon as you spend any time with it, you begin to feel

itchy, dirty, nervous and really quite scared. There's a definite grim edge to it that makes you suspicious of everyone. Every person walking down the street is a spy. That car slowly driving along on the opposite side of the road is full of rival faction members. The waiter in the café is about to shoot you. The finger points in all directions and never do you completely trust anyone, including your own faction members – all of which makes for a truly nerve-wracking gaming experience.

Traditionally, games are supposed to entertain you. But *Republic* looks to do something else too – it teases you, messes with your mind, and ultimately leads you to question your own ideology and political standpoint. From what we've seen, it's not enough to say that *Republic* is merely entertainment. The atmosphere it produces is sometimes

akin to watching a news story about the Moscow theatre siege or Mayday rioting on Oxford Street, such is the hard-hitting impact of the plot and gameplay.

## THE EYES HAVE IT

The graphics help enormously when it comes to creating this dark atmosphere, yet you can play through the entire game (and that's three cities as opposed to the originally mooted six) without seeing a single 3D brick of any of the towns. All key decisions are made on an overhead 2D view of the city divided into territories (very much like *Risk*) and it's from here that your quest to oust the Presidency of Novistrana is planned. Sure, any actions or event you organise can be viewed via the game's immaculate 3D engine, but ultimately it's this 2D map that's the real hub of the whole thing.



"Short arms and legs will be a thing of the past."



In communist states, some people are more equal than others.

## CV



### ELIXIR STUDIOS

*Republic* is Elixir's first game, as you well know. Will it bomb? Or will it be the foundation for many years of success? Guess we'll find out soon enough.

**1998** Clever clogs Demis Hassabis quits Lionhead to establish Elixir Studios. Work begins on *Republic*.

**2003** After five years in development *Republic* is released. Elixir's second game, *Evil Genius* is announced.

**2008** *Republic 2: Devolution* is released after five years of AI tweaking. Probably.



Basically you never need to venture away from this screen.



Kicking some sense into your enemies is great politics.



Even close-up, the faces are incredible.

## YU-GI-OH, COMRADE

### REPUBLIC USES AN INGENUOUS CARD GAME TO DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF CONVERSATIONS

Conversations with other people are highly important in *Republic*, as they tend to revolve around either convincing somebody to join you, or trying to get them to do something for you. In order to simulate this 'argument' the developer has come up with a little something called the 'conversation system'.

At the start of the conversation you have a certain amount of points (depending on a combination of factors such as your charisma rating) to allocate to four cards. What you then do is play these cards blind against your opponent and the person with the highest score wins the round and a certain amount of points for doing so. Cards can only be played once and so keeping your best card for the end is often a good strategy. Ultimately, the person who wins the most points bosses the conversation.

It sounds confusing, and well, it is. To be perfectly honest it's about the most baffling part of the game, but who knows, it may also prove to be one of the most compelling. You have been warned.

Conversations: not a battle of wits.



Each day is split into morning, afternoon and night, and you can choose from around 100 different actions for you and your cronies to occupy yourselves with during this time. Different characters have different skills, and deciding when and where to use these abilities is crucial. If you want a rival to be roughed up for distributing defamatory leaflets about your organisation then order your 'hood' to beat them up at night, in a dark alleyway. Trying something like that during the day will more than likely lead to someone spotting your strong-arm tactics, leading to headlines in the local paper that won't do you any favours.

Alternatively, you might want one of your more eloquent members to drum up support. Sending them off to the local park, soap-box underfoot, at the height of the rush-hour to evangelise the merits of your righteous cause should just about do the trick.

**"We can report that *Republic* is actually very, very simple and easy to get into"**

After playing the preview code to death we now feel we've got a pretty good idea of what *Republic* is all about. We also feel pretty confident that we can dispel one myth about the game right now: it is NOT too complex – in fact, in what is probably one of the biggest shocks in gaming history, we can report that *Republic* is actually very, very simple and easy to get into.

### SIMPLE POLITICS

After a mere half an hour of play we were merrily organising rallies, discrediting opponents, bribing officials and generally having the most corrupt time of our lives. The interface is a doddle to get to grips with and the fact of the matter is any RTS or turn-based strategy fan will have absolutely nothing to worry about.

The beauty of it, though, is that there is much, much more going on below the surface. It's another one of these chess situations insofar as you have to keep thinking ahead. What seems like a good move in the short term is actually suicide in the long run. And the open-ended nature of the game (there are various different paths to take to the presidency) means there's scope for the player to try a multitude of different tactics.

*Republic* is a remarkable game and will no doubt stimulate enormous debate among the gaming community. In its current pre-release guise it's already both fascinating to play and deeply atmospheric – whether this can be matched by equal measures of actual fun we're not yet sure. Look out for our definitive verdict next month. [E]



Once again, the lost stag covers his shame.



The decadences, the excess, the waste. Don't you just love it?

No pervy, you can't go inside strip clubs. That's what the Internet's for.

Bright lights, big wallet...

# VEGA\$: MAKE IT BIG

Everybody else heads to the City of Angels for E3. Keith Pullin heads to Milton Keynes for... Las Vegas?

## THE DETAILS

**DEVELOPER** Deep Red Games  
**PUBLISHER** Empire Interactive  
**WEBSITE** www.deepred.co.uk  
**ETA** September 2003

## WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- You can rebuild Las Vegas the way you like it
- Graphically it's very nice indeed
- 100 different buildings
- Up to 5,000 people and 200 cars on the streets



**WHAT'S** the easiest way to win a million quid? Play the football pools? Enter the lottery? Cheat on *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*? Nah. The odds of hitting the jackpot on any of those are about the same as pulling a supermodel at bingo. The only true way to get seriously wedged is to head into the Nevada desert. We're talking showgirls. We're talking Elvis. We're talking gangsters. We're talking heavyweight boxing championships and

heavyweight wads. We are of course talking Vegas.

But there's a twist. If you think the millionaires are the ones gambling – you're wrong. The only way to earn a cool million (and much, much more) here is to physically own the town. The only winners in Las Vegas are the people who run the place. And that means you.

## A HUMAN ZOO

*Vega\$: Make It Big* is the tycoon game to end all tycoon games. By actually giving players the opportunity to rebuild the planet's most gaudy goldmine, developer Deep Red Games (*Monopoly Tycoon*) and publisher Empire Interactive feel they have something that's a little bit more than your average casino simulator.

"I think we offer the whole Vegas experience," muses producer Ben Wilkins, "I don't think there's another casino game that's gone outside the casino and onto The Strip the way we have. There are rollercoasters, dolphin shows, swimming pools, hugely detailed shopping malls – and all of these things are side by side, competing with each other."

Fact is, *Vega\$* is clearly more than just chips, slots and neon lights.

## CV



## DEEP RED GAMES

Established in 1998 in Milton Keynes, Deep Red Games has three successful games under its belt that are a lot more exciting than the town from whence they came (only kidding Miltonians).

**2000** *Risk II*. Territorial tantrums.

**2001** *Monopoly Tycoon*. No packing away needed.

**2002** *Beach Life*. Hot stuff.





**America - home of the shameless.**

"There certainly isn't another tycoon game that has everything so close together," continues Wilkins, "in Zoo Tycoon for example you wouldn't get three zoos lined up next to each other shouting 'we've got more penguins! Come over here!' You might see some kind of



**"A family of four will not appreciate staying in a hotel boasting strippers on tap"**

**The middle of the road is about the only place you won't find a slot machine.**

message saying that New York Zoo has a new tiger - but you'll never physically see it. In Vega\$ you can see the competition right there and you can see exactly how many people are going through the door."

There can be no doubt that Vega\$ looks like being an incredibly audacious attempt at empire building. With more than 100 different upgradeable buildings including hotels, casinos, strip clubs, restaurants and the aforementioned shopping malls - where you can even specify the type of boutique and the prices on offer - the game allows you to mess round with virtually everything that you'll find in the real vegas.



**Hotel themes are suitably far-fetched.**

Equally you'll find the same type of people. There are 22 different kinds of punters in all, ranging from the absolute down-and-out pond life who do nothing but feed the slots with their buckets of quarters, to the Texan whales marking their territory at the poker table.

Each guest has needs of course. If you are familiar with games like *RollerCoaster Tycoon*, *Theme Park* and the rest, it will come as no surprise to discover that what Cledus from West Virginia wants is not necessarily the same as what Madame



← Richebiche from Paris wants. Whether your delightful guests feel the urge to eat, drink (large amounts of alcohol), gamble, sleep or piss in a pot, you have to provide them with the means to do so. And from what we've seen it looks like part of the strategy is ensuring that certain types of people circulate and remain in specific areas so that they and the entertainment they seek doesn't offend guests of a different class.

A family of four for example will not appreciate staying in a hotel boasting strippers on tap. A dinosaur-themed locale with wave pools and burger bars will suit them much better – apart from dad of course who's likely to sneak off into 'Massage Mahal' the moment the kids and the missus are in bed. Meanwhile, an excitable gaggle of Japanese businessmen would have no qualms in diving straight into the

**"To keep players on their toes and to add a touch of glamour to the proceedings, there's a host of Vegas-type celebrities"**

local jazz bars and jazz parlours. What's petty cash for after all?

To keep players on their toes and to add a touch of glamour to the seedy proceedings, there's also a host of Vegas-type celebrities. Famous boy bands, crooners with more than a passing resemblance to Tom Jones, heavy-weight boxing champions and suave British secret agents can all be found pounding The Strip.

**INSIDER TRADING**

The nightmare/fantasy world (depending on your point of view) of the real Vegas is a fairly difficult atmosphere to mimic – but it hasn't stopped the developer having a bloody good try. And with the capacity to accommodate up to 5,000 people and 200 cars, it's no wonder there's a certain energetic buzz about the game. As you scan around the full 3D landscape, zooming down to watch weddings conducted by Elvis and pan through spectacular fountains, you really cannot help but be impressed at the effort that's been put in.

All this and we haven't even stepped into a casino yet. In fairness this is the one area of the game that didn't impress as much as we'd hoped. But that's not because there's anything particularly wrong with it as far as we can tell. It's just that with *Casino Inc* and *Casino Empire* both offering an internal gameplay perspective; the impact is not particularly new or exciting. From a gameplay point



The perfect place for a stag weekend.

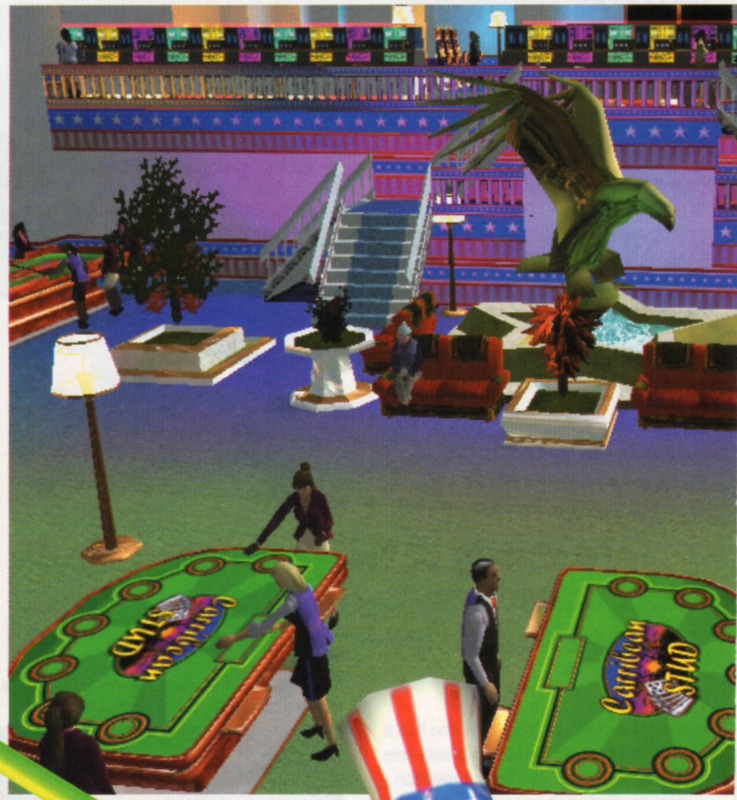
of view it's a complete contrast to the exterior part of the game, which is wholly unique.

Nonetheless there are elements here that aim to improve upon what we've already seen in both *Empire* and *Inc*. For a start, the level of micro-management is nowhere near as intense. All the blackjack tables, bars, security guards and everything associated with the day-to-day operations of

the casino will manage themselves if you leave them alone.

"We give the player a choice," says Wilkins, "if you want to go into intricate depths of micromanagement and adjust payout ratios, decide who you want to eject and all the other stuff then you can. But if you don't want to, the place won't grind to a halt without you. We want the player to have fun. For some people that means paying a

There are 10 themes, giving you more decorating potential than Carol Smillie.



In the finished version you'll be able to ride the rollercoasters.

croupier a certain wage, for others it means building stuff."

Creating the perfect gambling environment will be an integral part of the game. You will have to choose where to put the poker tables, the roulette wheels and everything else that you find in a casino. You can even decide which kind of car you want to have as a star prize on the slot machines. Again, it all depends what type of punter you want in your casino.

**A BIT WHIFFY**

One interesting tool used in the design process is the 'aura' – a kind of visual depiction of invisible elements that will affect your punters. So, if you want to create a pleasant place for a bit of poker then you'll need to check your noise aura chart and build a nice quiet corner to give your players a chance to think. If you want to get people to stick around the roulette table then it might be an idea to move it away from the toilets; checking your smell aura can quickly replace the aroma of sewage with the reek of cash.

Ambience is also important if you want to attract high-rollers into your casino. By installing expensive marble floors and ostentatious walls and ceilings you can make the place fit for a king.

The ability to save your casino should also prove highly popular. If you've spent the best part of a day creating what you believe is the best gambling den in Vegas, you can save it and use it later in the game. It's a bit like saving your roller-coaster designs on *Rollercoaster Tycoon*, and you don't need us to tell you what a godsend that is. You can also trade your casinos on the Internet if you so desire – admittedly, not everyone takes it so seriously, but you just know some smart arse will actually construct an identical replica of Caesar's Palace.

**DISASTER STRIKES**

Disasters are another feature that are part and parcel of tycoon games, and *Vega\$* is no different. Droughts, torrential rain, lightning, earthquakes and more form just some of the difficulties you will encounter.

Ultimately though, the question is, will this type of game prove to be a disaster in Britain? If the success of *Casino Empire* and *Casino Inc* are anything to go by, the odds are *Vega\$*'s neon lights may struggle to shine. The truth is us Brits are a bit less inclined to embrace the whole gambling thing in the same way the Americans do. Sticking a couple of quid on the dogs and the nags is more our style.

From what we've seen so far, *Vega\$* deserves more respect. It is more than just a casino simulator – that much is obvious. If you mixed up *SimCity*, *Rollercoaster Tycoon*, *Monopoly Tycoon* and *Casino Empire* in a big pot you'll be much closer to what *Vega\$* is all about. Needless to say, we were extremely surprised by the scope of the game. Clearly, the ante is about to be seriously raised on the tycoon management genre. **PCZ**

**Q&A**

**JON LAW**



There's no time to gamble when you're the lead designer of a PC game

**PCZ** What's the most money you've ever won gambling? How did you do it?

**JL** I've never won anything. Sob.

**PCZ** What about bingo? You must have won something at bingo... Have you been?

**JL** Never – not even after the recent attempt to make it appear young and vibrant. Are they allowed to lie like that in advertising? Well, I'm guessing that they're lying, as I've never been. Honestly.

**PCZ** Have you been to the real Las Vegas? What, in your opinion, is the best thing about it – and the worst?

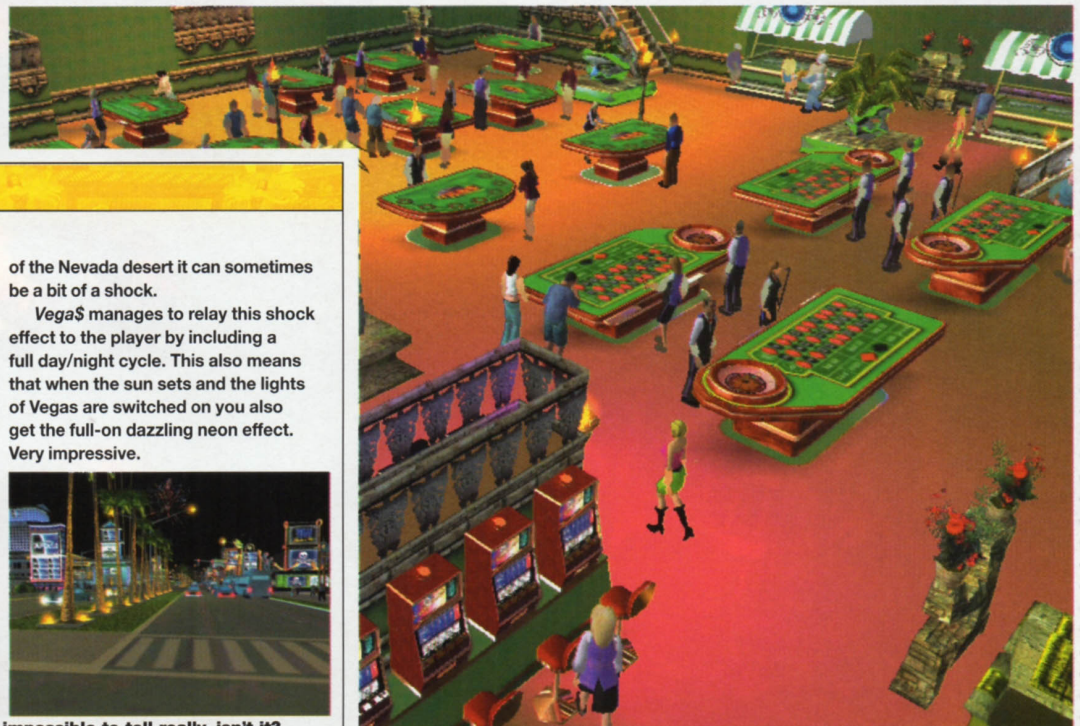
**JL** Oh yes. The whole team went – purely research of course. I love the Bellagio fountains. I spent ages just standing and watching. On the negative side, I guess it was the haggard looking souls drifting by, wondering how they could scrape together enough cash for another losing session at the tables.

**PCZ** What's the British equivalent of Las Vegas? Is it Milton Keynes?

**JL** Err, no. We have a grid system in place of normal roads, but I think that's where the similarity ends. Concrete cows can't really compete with the attractions of Vegas. To experience Vegas, you have to nip to the States – nothing on this side of the pond comes anywhere remotely close!



A wonderful cross-section of life on the streets of Vegas.



Many a poor man's grave...



**LIGHTS ALIVE**

**GAMBLING IS NOT A TURN OFF...**

One of the weirdest things about Las Vegas is the lack of clocks. Casino managers don't want you to know what the time is in the hope that you'll forget about the world around you and just keep throwing away your cash. So, when you think it's just gone midnight and you walk out of the casino to find the sun rising over the red mountains

of the Nevada desert it can sometimes be a bit of a shock.

*Vega\$* manages to relay this shock effect to the player by including a full day/night cycle. This also means that when the sun sets and the lights of Vegas are switched on you also get the full-on dazzling neon effect. Very impressive.




Is it a game, or is it real? Well, it's just impossible to tell really, isn't it?

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**Blood Mage** - The Blood Mage is quick to take vengeance upon any who threaten his brethren.



8 New Units

9 New Heroes

26 New Missions

Infinite Strategy



**Crypt Lord** - The ancient spider kings rise again to defend the Scourge.



4<sup>th</sup> July

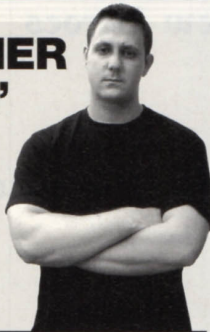


blizzard.com

# REVIEWS

THE DEFINITIVE LOWDOWN ON ALL THE LATEST PC GAMES

## SUMMER LOVIN'



■ SENIOR REVIEWS ED Martin Korda

▲ In the world of PC gaming, summer is the new Christmas, and by that I don't mean the game shops are full of generally unemployable drunks taken on for a week to wear a red suit and white beard while screeching, "Merry Christmash" at terrified children. No, what I actually mean, is that it's rapidly becoming the time of year when shedloads of big-name games are unleashed on the public.

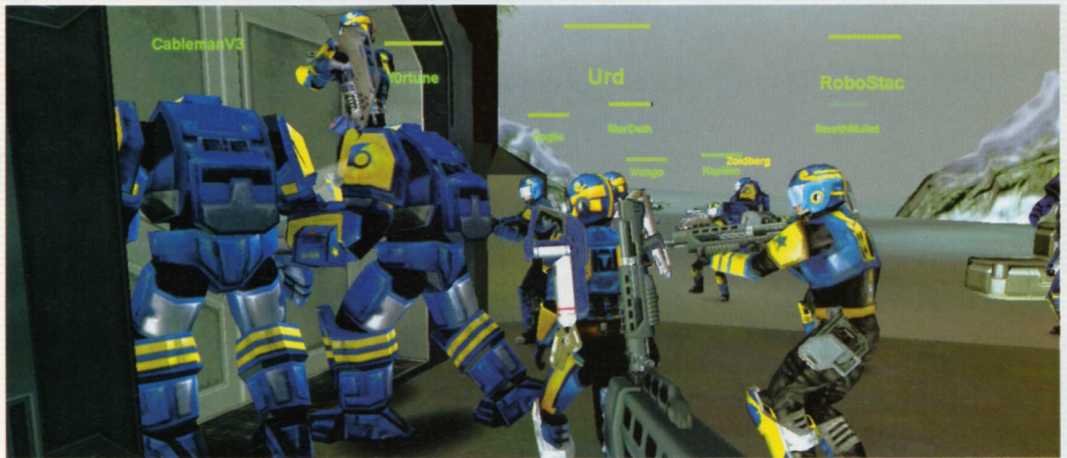
However, as is often the case with such things, some of the most hotly (sorry) awaited titles prove to be a let down.

Take *Star Trek: Elite Force II* as a prime example. Mark Hill was so frustrated at the fact that it was extremely similar to the original game, that we had to lock him in the ZONE storage room to cool off (oops, sorry again), where he single-handedly massacred a collection of bug-eyed stuffed sheep (feeble marketing ploys for a long-forgotten game) with a metal ruler before calming down.

Richie was even more disappointed with *Red Faction II*, although reviewing *Planetside*, the world's first ever massively multiplayer online shooter, calmed him down considerably before he got too nasty.

Meanwhile, new full-time staff member Paul Presley, has been getting to grips with *Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory*, which you can find, in full, on this month's cover discs.

Finally, Jamie's been giving us cause for concern after reviewing *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. Having spent a week playing it, he was spotted kicking a three-year-old girl off her tricycle, before tearing up a pensioner at breakneck speed (approx 6Mph). I would tell him to stop, but I'm scared he might kill me, especially with the heat fraying tempers like a knife cutting old rope. Maybe I'll ask new boys Will or Paul to have a word with him instead. Heh-heh...



The world's first massively multiplayer shooter finally goes live, but will it blow you away? Find out on page 64.

## THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

Some people (mainly game publishers) say that our scoring system is harsh. It's not. It's honest and built around the seemingly outdated idea that 50 per cent is an average score. Likewise, 70 per cent is a good score, anything above 80 per cent is excellent, and 90 per cent and above is a Classic. Talking of Classic awards, don't expect to see one every issue as we don't chuck them around like confetti.

## OUR REVIEWERS

We think our reviewers are the best in the business. Each one is a specialist in numerous genres and will have played every major release so no game is judged in isolation. We also make sure the right game gets

reviewed by the right person, which means you won't see Steve Hill reviewing an RPG and we won't let Rhianna loose on *FIFA 2003*. You can have your say on the games and our reviews as well. If you have a comment to make then please email your views to [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk) and entitle your email 'Feedback'.

## ONLINE REVIEWS AND REVIEW UPDATES

We review a lot of games before they go on sale, and if there are no public servers running before we go to print we won't second guess how the game's going to play online. Instead you'll find dedicated online reviews of all the major releases in our regular Update section. This is also the place where we take a fresh look at games we think have changed significantly – as is the case with persistent online games or through major patch releases.

## OUR PCS

We test games on a variety of systems so we can report how they perform in the real world. All our reviewed games are played on the manufacturer's minimum specification, as well as our top-end rig, the Area-51 from Alienware.



Only games that score 90 per cent or more receive the coveted Classic award. The best of the best.



The second tier award for games scoring between 80 and 89 per cent. Essential purchases.

## MEET THE TEAM



DAVE WOODS

Max Payne

What are you currently playing?

What would you use Bullet-Time for in real life?



JAMIE SEFTON

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City and Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory

To enhance my silky skills on the football pitch.

Getting to the bar before last orders.



64

**PLANETSIDE**  
The FPS goes global



94

**RE-RELEASES**  
Older games get a re-release



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Where you air your opinions



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Live role-playing vs PC RPGs

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*STEVE HILL* AND *MARTIN KORDA* COMPARE LIVE ROLE-PLAYING TO PC RPGs



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**MARTIN KORDA**  
*ISS3* and *Medieval: Total War: Viking Invasion*  
Dodging enemy bullets as I avenge the death of a loved one.



**ANTHONY HOLDEN**  
*Soldier Of Fortune II* and *Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory*  
To simultaneously dodge bullets, toast bread and boil the perfect runny egg.



**PAUL PRESLEY**  
*Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory*  
Timing bullets.



**WILL PORTER**  
*Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*  
Not sure, but there'd probably be some form of cheap pornography involved.



**STEVE HILL**  
*Colin McRae Rally 3*  
Eating more.



**RICHI SHOEMAKER**  
*Eve Online*  
Diving for the closing doors on the last train home.



An enemy AMS is found and promptly dealt with.

# PLANETSIDE

ONLINE ONLY

■ £34.99 (plus \$12.99 per month, first month 'free') | Pub: Ubi Soft | Dev: Sony Online Entertainment  
ETA: Out Now | [www.planetside.com](http://www.planetside.com)

**REQUIRES** PIII 1GHz, 256Mb RAM, 64Mb 3D card and a 56K modem

**DESIRES** P4 1.4GHz, 512Mb RAM, 128Mb 3D card, 3Gb storage and broadband Internet connection

**The walls have all come down as the online shooter takes on global proportions! Richie Shoemaker gets kitted out and dives into this massively multiplayer frag-fest to see if it really is the next big thing in online gaming**



## INPERSPECTIVE

### BATTLEFIELD 1942

Reviewed Issue 123, Score 91%  
(multiplayer review)

*BF1942* is essentially *Planetside* on a smaller scale, set of course during WWII. Though the game features much the same sort of gameplay, with tanks to drive, planes to fly and extensive battlefields to march across, there is no character progression and a distinct lack of a command structure.

### TRIBES 2

Reviewed Issue 103, Score 87%

The original *Starsiege Tribes* was very much the template for *Planetside*, and *Tribes 2* was the bigger and better sequel. Though superseded by *Battlefield 1942*, *Tribes 2* is now available as a budget release, and with the promise of *Tribes: Vengeance* on the horizon, it's still worth a play.

**I HAVE** just received a message from the leader of my Outfit (*Planetside*'s version of a guild) telling me my services are required as a matter of urgency. It seems the Vanu Sovereignty are sweeping across the continent of Hossin in force, having taken the stations of Voltan and Bitol in quick succession. A well-balanced and organised foe, they seem poised to surround the NC Sanctuary warpgate, which if successful would mean our armoured reinforcements will be effectively cut off and the pink armour-wearing motherlovers could be controlling the entire continent within a couple of hours. The question is, do I log into this massively multiplayer online shooter and do my bit for kith

and kin, or shall I make my excuses and ensure I get my review in on time? (*Don't break the habit of a lifetime on our account - Ed.*)

### DRIVEN...

It is of course an easy choice to make. As any freelancer for *PC ZONE* will tell you, lateness is a virtue secretly admired (as the

trusty alter-ego, a specialist combat engineer, I re-emerge at my faction's Sanctuary.

Back in the warm confines of the game, my reviewing duties are the furthest thing from my mind. Even so, it occurs to me that the graphics are somewhat underwhelming, with garish uniforms and a rather generic range of vehicles. However,

So back to the game, and a quick message to my Outfit finds most of those online are already engaging the enemy under different squad leaders across three different continents. Now, I could immediately take the HART shuttle and drop down into the thick of the action in a pod, *Rogue Trooper*-style, but seeing as I'm not much good in

**"The only way to play is with a temporary squad, or better still an Outfit"**

great Paul Mallinson once said, "You can't rush genius".

Armed with the necessary ammo to stall my baying editor, I make my return to the war-torn planet of Auraxis. Once again slipping into the guise of my

criticising the visuals would be a little harsh, given that the number of players and the size of the environments are both huge. And being both a little chunky and generic myself, who am I to judge?

a one-on-one firefight (HART pods have a knack of inviting local patrols towards them), I decide to hitch along with a gang who might be going in my general direction. Within minutes I've found a likely bunch.





The Galaxy is a huge transport plane.

Squad Leaders, if they have the necessary skills, can set waypoints for their team to follow.

Now the thing about *Planetside* that will undoubtedly frustrate a great many people is, that while playing alone as a soldier either side of the lines is possible, it is largely pointless, utterly frustrating and terminally boring. The only way to play is with a temporary squad (or better still an Outfit), and there are always a few in need of semi-experienced players. Unfortunately a fair percentage of them are either led by

dimwits, or are made up of a poor selection of player classes. Or both, meaning it can be somewhat of a lottery who you end up fighting alongside, a fact that has a massive influence on how much or how little you'll enjoy the game.

#### SQUAD BIKES

Sadly, my new squad seem pretty clueless. Without the foresight to have enlisted anyone with the necessary skills to pilot

any sort of transport vehicle, my new squad mates are consigned to trudge to the front line. More worryingly, our squad leader has neglected to recruit any MAX units (heavily-armoured walking tanks), which are absolutely essential for assaulting and holding capture points for the necessary 15 minutes before a facility comes under the control of your faction.

We do however have three guys in stealth suits, which

means we could easily capture one of the more lightly defended installations, we just probably wouldn't be able to hold it for long once the enemy found out. And the enemy does find out, usually very quickly.

#### FLYING AWAY

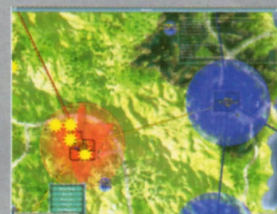
Luckily, one altruistic squad member hops off to trade in his stealth skills for the skill of flying a Galaxy transport plane, and, since we already have a Reaver

ground assault pilot hovering in his machine overhead, it is decided after 10 minutes of squabbling that we should take off and, as one squad member succinctly puts it, 'crack sum skullz'. Quite.

Unfortunately, two people bail out en route (another regular and annoying problem), and our team, lacking the skills or indeed numbers, limps heavily towards the Hossin warpgate. Had we not sorted out a proper form of

## WALKTHROUGH →

### YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW The orders of the day are as follows...



**1** After you've chosen which of the three sides you wish to join, what bits do or don't hang between your legs and a server to play on (there were four in the US and one in Holland at the time of writing), you begin at your side's Sanctuary, a safe haven away from the fighting.

**2** First of all you should find the VR training areas and try out all the vehicles and aircraft, then visit the firing range and mess about with the various weapon configurations. Training is invaluable, since you should gain a couple of Battle Rank (experience) points there.

**3** Finding a fight is easy: you can quickly choose 'Instant Action', jump into the nearest Warpgate or take the HART shuttle. Before you get stuck in, however, try and find a friendly well-rounded squad to join, which shouldn't be too difficult.

**4** Keep an eye on the map screen, it will tell you where all the hotspots are, where your squad members are and which buildings are under which side's control, not to mention the power levels of all the stations.

**5** Most importantly of all, if you see someone who isn't wearing the same colour uniform as you, do remember to shoot them in the face as many times as you possibly can to do your bit to help the cause, there's a good chap.

transport though, this would have been one of the most tedious endeavours in the whole of gaming history.

However, it was all for nothing, as we didn't even manage to get to our target area. Minutes after warping in we attracted the attentions of two enemy Reavers and since our own escort had peeled away to deal with an advancing infantry column below, it was left to our trio of hapless door gunners to vainly prod the enemy (rocket-firing) craft with bullets. Minutes later, my whole team was dead. I only survived because I bailed out in time.

Disillusioned, I started looking for another squad and promptly found one which was clearly far more organised than my previous Outfit. It was at this point that *Planetside* started to improve significantly.

**SUITS YOU, SIR**

After a disorientating few minutes checking the map for nearby friendly outposts, my new squad leader put out a call and assembled a new team. This time, the squad consisted of a wide variety of class types, meaning our skills would complement each other well. Our leader, for instance, could pilot a Galaxy, drive a massive Sunderer APC, and act as an effective sniper. We would also have a hacker who would sneak in and scout ahead, two MAX units, myself, who would patch them up and set up a perimeter

of mines once we'd hacked into the base, two Reaver pilots (one also a medic, the other a fine soldier), plus a driver for the invaluable AMS, the Advanced Mobile Station – a vehicle that once deployed acts as a secret respawn point, invisible to the enemy, which would allow us to spring back into battle without having to take a ten-minute hike. All we needed was a couple of grunts and our assault squad would be ready, a squad capable of taking and holding a base against a far superior force, so long as the element of surprise (another essential factor when launching an offensive in *Planetside*) was on our side.

**THE WAITING GAME**

Which it was. We entered the base of Nuam without incident, found the Command Console and began hacking it without meeting a single enemy. Five minutes into the process the enemy poured in to the area to resecure it. Our Reaver pilots were quickly overwhelmed, but respawned and crept back into the base to join our defensive perimeter of mines and motion sensors, while the rest of us camped behind crates in the hall that guarded access to the console chamber. Both corridors that led to the hall were guarded by our MAXs, while the medic and I occasionally flitted around waiting to heal wounds and repair armour. While we waited for the assault to come, our leader, having hidden the



Hundreds can play across the same map.

**"I realised my arms were shaking and my cursor was jumping, such was the tension"**



"Nothing to see here. Move along."

transport among some trees outside the camp, had taken up a position overlooking the base, occasionally picking them off and giving us reports as to the enemy numbers. This guy was playing his role to perfection, and it was then that it became apparent just how important it is to stick to your role if you want your squad to be successful. His quick thinking had given us a vital edge.

As the battle raged and the enemy assault began in earnest, I realised my arms were shaking and my cursor was jumping across the screen, such was the tension – something I hadn't experienced in a game since the early days of *Counter-Strike*.

**KICKING OFF**

An enemy suddenly flicked into view, a scout wearing an Infiltration suit, invisible to certain classes not equipped with the implant necessary to spot his movement. Fortunately I was properly equipped and cut him down in a second. Behind him pounded an enemy MAX, its chain gun spitting bullets into the hallway around us, and from behind him I saw a dozen soldiers eager to get past his

bulk, some with grenade launchers, others with shotguns and laser rifles.

**TICK...TICK...**

Over the next few minutes we must have wasted more than 100 enemies. Some tripped on mines, others were cut down by gunfire and rockets. But ammunition was running low and our AMS had been found and destroyed – if any of us were to die now we wouldn't be able to make it back in time to defend the base before the hack had been completed.

Two minutes remained and one MAX was destroyed – I couldn't get to him to repair him in time – and my health was dangerously low too. I looked around and saw our Medic had gone, marooned elsewhere in the base. Our Hacker was still guarding the command console and the enemy were still attacking in numbers.

Then came a message from the leader outside: at least a dozen friendly tanks and APCs were rushing along the road from the south. Better still, two AMSs had deployed inside the base perimeter, which meant allied soldiers would soon be pouring

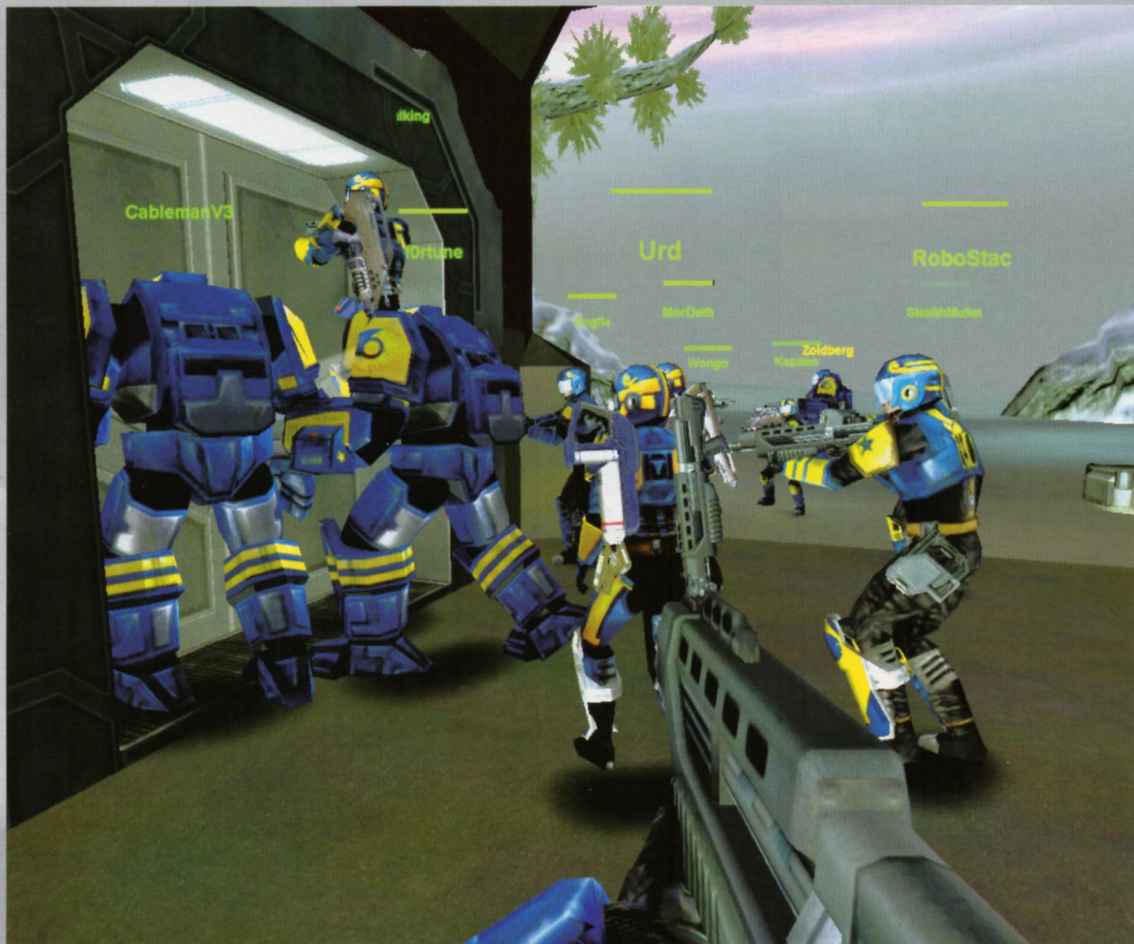
**MISSED OPPORTUNITY**



Hopefully we'll get more scope for character development.

**ONE WEEK VETERAN**

Unlike online RPGs, where the thrill of improving your character keeps you hooked, *Planetside* offers no such structure. In fact, progression through the ranks is so swift you can reach veteran status in a couple of days. For this reason we'd suggest that if you're having second thoughts, it might be wise holding off to see how Sony develops the world and structure of the game. After all, as there's no penalty for joining the fray later, why rush in? Hopefully we'll soon see far more scope for the individual player to develop their character, with a wider variety of skills, traits and weapons to pick from and enhance. Hopefully.



"Last one in is a big wet smelly poo."



The HART shuttle arrives at your sanctuary periodically, hop aboard and you can make an appearance anywhere on the planet.



**SECOND OPINION**  
CHRIS ANDERSON

As long as you approach *Planetside* with no expectations regarding the depth and complexity of character development you may have experienced in other massively multiplayer titles, you probably won't be disappointed. It's a no-frills shooter, similar to *Counter-Strike* but on a bigger scale, and as such it works pretty well. It's easy to progress, it's easy to find a team to fight with (a very good thing) and aside from the weapons on offer, driving vehicles and flying planes have an attraction of their own.

However, there's a 'but' and it's a big one. Gameplay is extremely repetitive. Log on, join a squad, capture a base, watch the enemy take it back, etc to infinity. This isn't a good sign for a persistent world, and I have serious doubts how big the player base will be six months into release unless huge variations on gameplay are introduced. The jury then, at least for me, is very much still out on this one.

in. The cavalry was well and truly on their way and the base was all but won – a glorious moment.

This is what *Planetside* is all about: fighting against the odds, holding out while praying for reinforcements. And when they arrive the feeling of euphoria is indescribable. Add to this the feeling of smugness as you're awarded points to spend on new skills, and you'll be buying for more of the same. At least, for a short while anyway.

The real problem is the value inherent in the game. Had *Planetside* been released as a regular retail game without the

need for people to pay a monthly subscription we would have seriously considered awarding it a Classic score. Expansion packs will add new vehicles, weapons, items and skills and people will buy them and probably be very happy with them. But will it be too little too late? Only time will tell.

Oh, and in case you were wondering, I was hooked for long enough to get my review in late. And when I logged in the day after my side's great victory to try out my character's newly acquired skill for stomping about in MAX armour, I discovered the

Hossin continent had been lost, along with half the planet, not to the alien-loving Vanu Sovereignty and their poncy gravity tanks, but to the repressive Terran Republic. All that work was for nothing.

It's clear that despite the persistent way in which people develop their characters, there is no real progression to the game world: front lines shift on the whim of players, but the landscape doesn't fundamentally change over time. The side you join can neither win nor be overthrown and there is no real compulsion to go back to the game once you've taken a

couple of days away from it, since you eventually work out that one battle is fundamentally the same as any other.

And that's the thing with *Planetside*; great fun though it usually is, despite the incredible sense of camaraderie you feel with your allies and especially your squad, and the urgency, tension and incredible scale of some of the battles, there is no real sense of drive to the game, as there is no way any side can really win.

At the moment, *Planetside* is a fantastically enjoyable experience unique from virtually

any other FPS, but one that many people will have trouble justifying subscribing to after the 30-day free period expires.

Though your character advances in skill, a hard won gain today will always be followed by a defeat the next that will be out of your hands. It's a bitter pill to swallow and it's sad that there are no campaign medals to earn, only yet another titanic battle over the next hill. But what a battle it will be... **PCZ**

**PCZONE VERDICT**

- ✓ First-person combat on an unprecedented scale
- ✓ Squad-level battles are unsurpassed
- ✓ Finely balanced units and weapons
- ✓ Persistent skills and experience systems that complement the action
- ✗ Soon becomes a tad repetitive
- ✗ For team-players only – soloing is deathly dull

**82**

The mother of all online battles



Vice City has new vehicles for you to play with.



# GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

■ £29.99 | Pub: Rockstar Games | Dev: Rockstar North | ETA: Out Now | [www.rockstargames.com](http://www.rockstargames.com)

REQUIRES PIII 800MHz, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card DESIRES P4 1.5GHz, 256Mb RAM and a 64Mb 3D card

**Jamie Sefton grows a mullet and slips into a pastel shirt and chinos to cruise the crime-ridden, neon-splashed streets of Vice City. But can the PC version upstage its PS2 cousin?**

## INPERSPECTIVE

### GTA III

Reviewed issue 117, Score 95%  
Rockstar's original 3D, freeform-but-linear driving/shooting lawbreaking title is still an astonishing achievement. Not as polished as Vice City, but packed full of great action sequences, beautiful car handling, corking visuals, hilarious radio stations, great weaponry and inventive missions. Essential.

### MAFIA

Reviewed issue 119, Score 92%  
Authentic, atmospheric GTA III-style game from Illusion Softworks, set in the gangster-ridden era of 1930s prohibition America. Less emphasis on fast vehicle racing, but packed with a great story, excellent AI and the ability to steal period cars and spray baddies with Tommy gun fire.

### MR MISTER'S

rock anthem *Broken Wings* is currently playing on an eternal loop inside my brain as I write this review. That's the effect that Rockstar's awesome 18-rated crim-sim has when you play it – total immersion in a believable city, set to a soundtrack of the best 1980s chart hits and cult classics. Put simply, *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* is one of the greatest videogames ever made, and now in another celebration of that decade of excess, us lucky PC gamers can play the definitive 12-inch remix version.

*Vice City* basically takes what was so good about last year's action blockbuster *GTA III* and improves it even more, doubling

the size of the Liberty City playing area, introducing fantastic new vehicles that all handle differently, offering a greater variety of missions and allowing you to buy and enter property and businesses. Rockstar has truly pushed the boat out with the production values of its latest game too, with an A-list cast of Hollywood talent such as Dennis Hopper and Burt Reynolds providing voices for the well-directed cut-scenes, plus an exceptional music line-up made up of nine themed radio stations playing more than 90 tracks from artists as varied as Blondie, Luther Vandross, Anthrax and Herbie Hancock.

OK, we know some of you will have played the PlayStation 2 version (the game has sold six million copies already after all) but Rockstar North has now delivered the ultimate *Vice City* experience with vastly improved graphics and frame-rate, the addition of mouse-look, shorter load times and the ability to import home-made skins and MP3/WAV music files.

### A MAFIA HIT

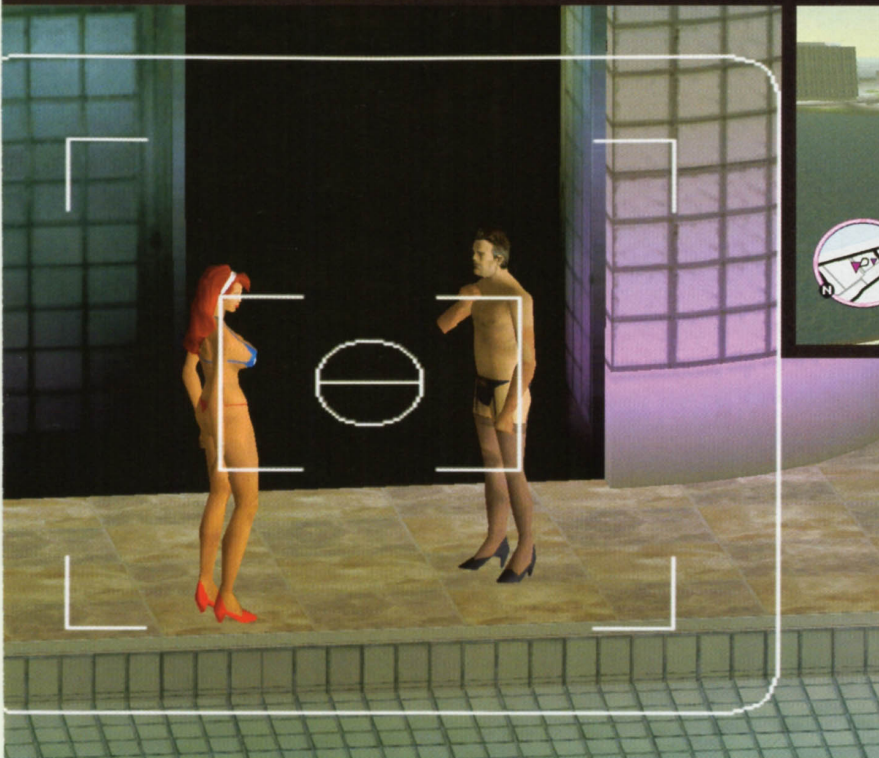
Set in 1986, you play through the game as Tommy Vercetti (voiced by *Goodfellas* star Ray Liotta), a no-good scumbag who's sent to the sun-kissed Miami-flavoured Vice City by his Mafia boss to watch over a drugs deal that

unfortunately goes badly awry. Tommy decides to stay in town to recover his boss's wares, but also finds himself doing jobs for other nefarious local characters, and is soon on the way to becoming the most powerful and feared figure in Vice City.

Moving Tommy around the PC *Vice City* can be done in various user-definable ways, but our preferred mode was one that uses a gamepad for driving, and a mouse for when our anti-hero's on foot. Unlike the PS2 version, in which targeting using automatic lock-on and the analogue sticks was often awkward and rather clunky, mouse-look again returns to the series on PC and immediately



Vice City is populated with strange and fearsome characters.



Vice City has real-time day/night changes. Different, er, 'characters' come out after dark.



A Tommy Vercetti boob job.

makes it easier and more satisfying during gun battles, as you can home in on your intended targets instantly and accurately.

Much has been discussed already about *Grand Theft Auto III*'s open-plan design that offers players the freedom to express themselves in whatever violent/funny/nasty/silly ways they want, as well as completing missions for clients – *Vice City* expands on that tradition with even more mad stuff to do.

Carjacking – dragging innocent people out of their vehicle and stealing it – was always the backbone of the series and now in addition to the new types of cars, tanks, buses, trucks, boats

and planes, budding thieves can also take control of helicopters and motorbikes.

**BIG CHOPPERS**

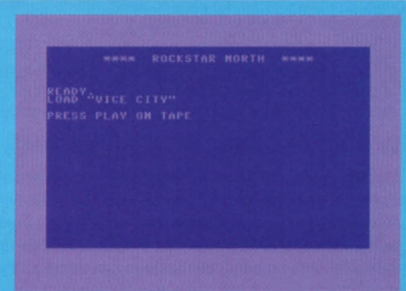
Helicopters are opened up to you after completing certain missions and are a real treat, allowing you to take off from your private helipad on the roof of your newly-acquired mansion and enjoy spectacular views of Vice City from the air. However, it's more fun of course, to cause absolute mayhem, so we can highly recommend smashing them into random vehicles or landing them clumsily in the middle of crowded shopping centres, and watch as the fast-moving blades chop innocent shoppers into human

**“Watch as the fast-moving blades chop innocent shoppers into human pâté”**

**BACK TO THE OLD-SKOOL**

**THE RETURN OF THE COMMODORE 64**

We don't often mention the intro sequence of games, but *Vice City* has a great homage to the golden era of home computing. As *Video Killed The Radio Star* by The Buggles plays in the background you see an instantly recognisable Commodore 64 screen with someone tapping LOAD “VICE CITY” and pressing play on a tape. You then see a great pixelated Rockstar North logo and a bleepy theme tune as the border flashes in colour to indicate loading. It's a brilliant moment, but also apt – *Vice City* is a game made by and for the grown-up generation of 1980s computer kids.



Those were the days. Blocky graphics rool.

pâté. Hilarious.

Yep, the handling of all the vehicles is superb, but special mention has to be made of the new motorbikes and scooters, which feel just perfect when you're screeching around corners and zig-zagging between other road users at frightening speed. You can cleverly move Tommy's bodyweight on any two-wheeler, so leaning back while accelerating pulls wheelies

causing health damage when you and your passenger tumble along the tarmac and smack into buildings and vehicles.

**MISSION INCREDIBLE**

As with *GTA III*, the way you earn more cash to buy ever more exotic and lethal weaponry – and now in *Vice City*, businesses and property – is to complete missions for various clients. Missions are triggered by looking at your map in the



Tommy practices his swing at the golf club.

and tipping forward stands him up, plus you can also carry a weapon and shoot at people around you as well as carry passengers on the

bottom left-hand corner of the screen, deciding which person you wish to work for and searching them out – a shimmering pinkish glow on-

**“New weapons include a samurai sword that can lop heads off with one sharp swish”**

back during jobs – very cool. However, you now have to be wary of hitting anything, as you can be thrown violently off the bike and into the air,

screen at a location signifying a cut-scene and a commission for a job. Missions begin with basic hoodlum stuff, such as



Bulletproof seamen.

roughing up jury members, but eventually lead onto jobs that include tricky multiple tasks such as luring policemen into a garage, stealing their



Vice City comes alive with colour after dark.

extravagant bachelor pads, and businesses such as the strip joint Pole Position.

Some properties – such as the Cherry Popper Ice Cream Company – end up being a front for a drugs business, where you can earn dosh by selling your special 99s to the public or by dropping by and collecting profits from the premises every few days. Other businesses, such as InterGlobal Films, unlock new missions and ways to increase your grip on the town – and include people such as “movie actress” Candy Suxxx, played in the game by real-life porn lady Jenna Jameson.

**TOMMY'S GUNS**

And that's not all. Tommy can also enjoy the myriad of other side-missions and objectives in *Vice City*, including pizza delivery boy, taxi driver, ambulance driver,

fireman and vigilante. To help achieve all these objectives, *Vice City* is packing more heat than ever, with a host of weaponry organised into categories, so you can only carry one of each type in your total cache of nine.

New weapons include the horrible chainsaw that rips through people splashing the screen with blood, and a samurai sword that can lop heads off with one sharp swish. You can again fire certain guns from vehicles (including bikes) for drive-by shootings, but in addition you can also now tactically hit targets through car windows and blast tyres sending vehicles careering out of control – a technique you can also now

use in the game by police with “stingers”. The *GTA* police force certainly hasn't mellowed since the last game – in fact, you have to be more vigilant of your “Wanted”

**MISSED OPPORTUNITY**



Extra missions or vehicles would have been great.

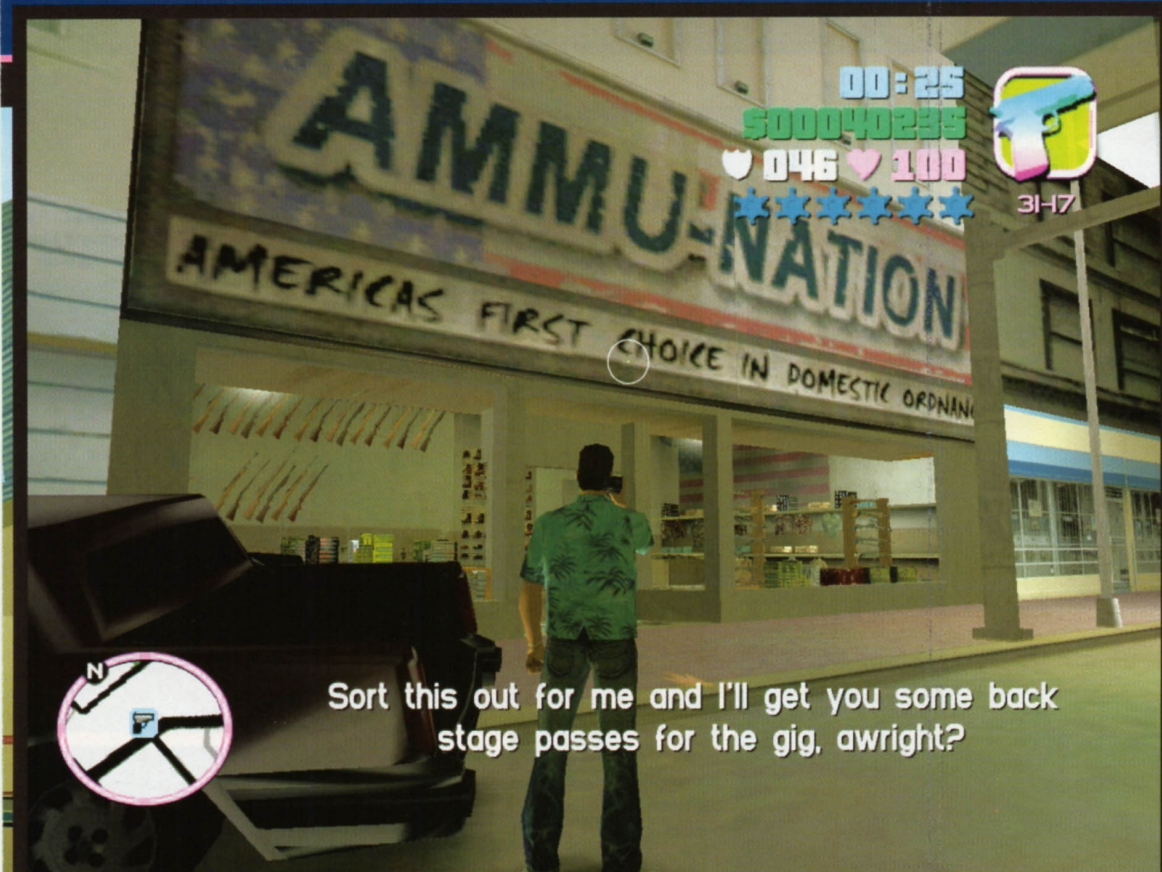
**WOT NO PC BONUS MISSIONS? SHAME!**

The PC version of *Vice City* is the ultimate edition, with better controls, graphics and additional features, such as being able to import your own music and skins. However, the basic game is still the same as it was on the PlayStation 2 six months ago. Rockstar was probably prevented from doing so by its exclusive deal with Sony, but any extra missions/vehicles/weapons for the PC version would have been a fantastic bonus.

clothes and infiltrating a gangland raid to set off explosives. Along the way you'll meet dodgy characters like property magnate Avery Carrington, playboy and smuggler Colonel Juan Cortez, a Scottish rock group called Love Fist and dirty movie producer Steve Scott.

Each of the missions demonstrates *Vice City's* great imagination and creativity when it comes to game design, meaning you really don't know what type of fun you'll be having next. Highlights include a 'Nam-style first-person helicopter raid on an enemy's house, a radio-controlled plane bombing run on some drug dealer's boats, a manic chase around a golf course on golf carts and a Hell's Angel-style motorbike race.

After completing a successful mission you're rewarded with an immensely satisfying music sting and a lump of cash to stick under your mattress. As you increase your money stack, you can eventually start buying up property in *Vice City* for your own crooked little empire, investing in bigger and more



Sort this out for me and I'll get you some back stage passes for the gig, awright?

GTA: Vice City retains the series' brutal satirical humour.



You can fit two people on a bike.

rating, signified again by six stars in the top-right of the screen. As you commit crimes, the more stars you light up, the more aggressive the law enforcement officers will become. Get to three stars and they send the police helicopter after you – six stars, and the army will pay a visit in a tank. As in *GTA III*, if you get busted, you're taken to the nearest police station and have all your weapons confiscated, before your dodgy lawyer has time to spring you from jail.

#### NAUGHTY BUT VICE

Avoiding the authorities is almost a mini-game in itself. If you are frustrated and can't complete a mission, why not go on a good

old-fashioned killing spree around the city for fun? Steal a motorbike, drive it into a crowd of people and smash it up. Buy an Uzi and start indiscriminately spraying the neighbourhoods with bullets, before stealing an ambulance when it arrives and squishing as many innocent roller-skaters as you can.

*Vice City* is literally bursting with laugh-out-loud surprises and genuine great gaming moments. You can search out the many areas for spectacular vehicle jumps again, as in the last *GTA*, complete with slo-mo camera angles and Insane Stunt Bonuses, plus there are 100 hidden packages to discover and psychopathic Rampage

missions. Then there's the dirt bike tracks, the different clothing for Tommy, the lap dances where you can watch girls jiggle about while your money goes down, as well as the old trick of picking up the naughty ladies of the night and heading to a secluded spot for a bit of the other. There's just so much stuff in there – you'll be playing *Vice City* for months as it has at least 50-60 hours of standard gameplay.

The AI of NPCs and other vehicles is sometimes a little suspect, with cops suddenly stopping looking for you and pedestrians jumping into the path of your vehicle in an apparent suicide attempt. However, it's good enough to create a feeling of being in a large city and there are more random events now, so cars will beep at you, people can shout abuse or ask questions, gangland shootouts will suddenly break out and traffic accidents occur.

#### PICTURE POSTCARD

Rockstar has really polished the graphics in the PC version of *Vice City*, and although you'll need a hefty machine for the best results, we had a 1280x960 setting (double the resolution of the PlayStation 2 version) with 50-60fps that looked stunning, with sunlight reflected realistically off cars, and a beautiful neon glow lit up

buildings at night. There was some pop-up (cars appearing out of nowhere etc), and character animation is a little creaky, but this is being very picky – it's akin to criticising The Beatles' *White Album* for having a bit of a plain cover.

*Vice City* provides a rich environment where you can indulge every dark fantasy you've ever had, as well as enjoying some of the best level design and genius mission ideas ever featured in a game. Rockstar obviously knows its pop culture – there are many references to other films and TV shows, especially *Miami Vice* and the classic 1980s movie *Scarface* (the Giorgio Moroder soundtrack of which has already been raided for *GTA III*, trivia fans).

As we've experienced two *GTA* games in two years, you can actually forget how *daring* the whole franchise is: bad language, police murders, prostitution, illegal narcotics, porno movies, bloody chainsaw killings, scathing social criticism, political corruption, the sanctioned destruction of innocent people's property and possessions, and an amoral playable character. But after all that, Rockstar's latest is just damn good fun and a must-buy even if you have *GTA III*. *Vice City* is a title that has defined a generation – a videogame that's hugely entertaining and cool as f\*\*k. [A]



#### SECOND OPINION

MARK HILL

If you're thinking this is some kind of quick-fix rip-off because it isn't a fully fledged sequel, you obviously haven't experienced the glorious thrill of cruising on a chopper (the two-wheeled kind, although rotor-lovers are catered for too), the wind ballooning up your Hawaiian shirt, listening to some Judas Priest and soaking in the palm-tree filtered sunrays. Once you've ridden a motorbike you won't give cars a second look.

The shoulder-padded jackets with rolled up sleeves may be all Don Johnson, but this is as much *Scarface* as it is *Miami Vice*. Unless I missed the episode where Crockett and Tubbs chainsaw a load of drug-traffickers before beating a business man to death with a golf-club. The interiors are great (watch out for the fat version of The Village People in one of the clubs) and the soundtrack is a perfect antidote for those who think '80s music means *I Should Be So Lucky*.

And need I remind you that your character is voiced by Ray Liotta and you're no longer a dumb arsewipe bumming it from one job to the next? Brutally marvellous and an instant Classic.

#### PCZONE VERDICT

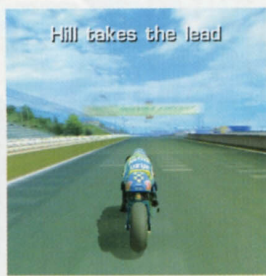
- ✓ Enormous fun to play
- ✓ Superb variety of missions and vehicles
- ✓ Hilariously violent
- ✓ Magnificent 1980s soundtrack and voice-acting
- ✗ No multiplayer
- ✗ Character graphics a little dated

# 95

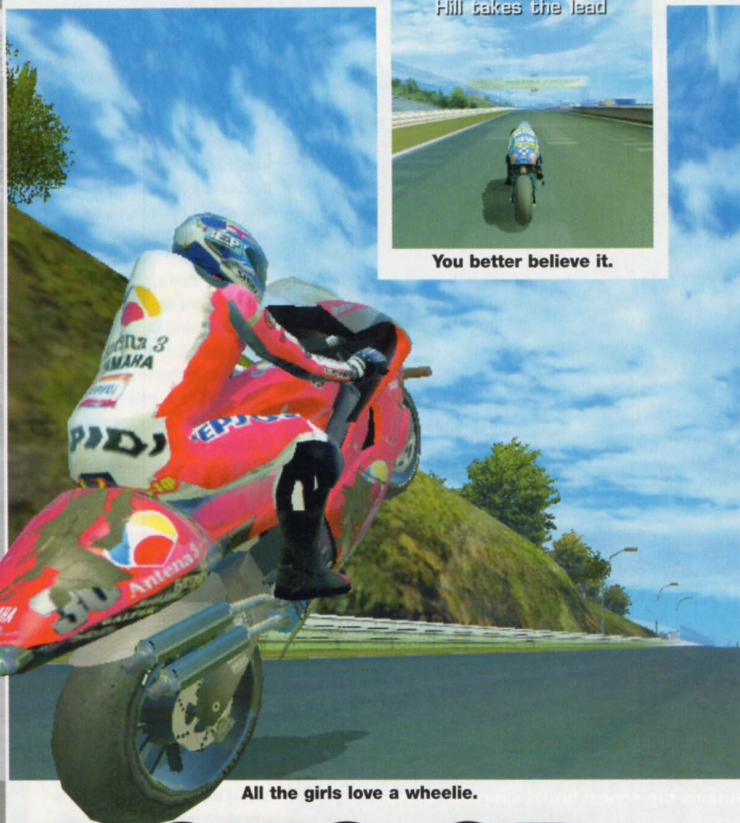
Phenomenal. One of the best PC games ever



Tossed around like a rag doll.



You better believe it.



All the girls love a wheelie.



"Back off!"



It's just like on the telly.

# MOTO GP: ULTIMATE RACING TECHNOLOGY 2

■ £29.99 | Pub: THQ | Dev: Climax | ETA: June 20 | [www.thq.com/games/52016/](http://www.thq.com/games/52016/)

**REQUIRES** PIII 450MHz, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card **DESIRES** 1.5GHz, 512Mb RAM and a 64Mb 3D card

**Steve Hill buffs his helmet and slips into a tight leather outfit for some hot biking action**

**THE** untimely death of the legendary Barry Sheene earlier this year brought home the fact that he was probably the last truly famous motorcycle racer this country has produced. In the days of a mere three television channels, his epic battles with American archrival Kenny Roberts were more than capable of enlivening a dreary Saturday afternoon. As a measure of just how long ago that was, consider that Kenny Roberts Jr appears in this game, along with such other non-household names as Max Biaggi and Valentino Rossi.

The concept of a sports game sequel generally entails giving the graphics a once over and updating any relevant data. That

formula has naturally been applied to *MotoGP 2*, which comes replete with all 20 riders and all 16 tracks (as opposed to last year's ten) of the 2002 Moto GP World Championship. Not exactly up to date, but given the time constraints involved in developing a modern game, probably as close as you'll get.

### DIRTY TRICKS

There's also a host of different modes, including a Stunt option whereby you are actively encouraged to knock other riders off, as well as perform wheelies and 'endos' for points. The

career mode enables you to enter the game as yourself, choose your colours, leathers and helmet, and even have your initials on your back, an option that will inevitably lead to an explosion of four-letter swear words among the terminally puerile (us, for instance).

There's also a pseudo role-playing element, whereby completing certain tests earns points that can be used to improve cornering, braking and acceleration. And they'll often need improving, as complete control isn't easy, with a degree of manual dexterity required to

master such things as leaning backwards or forwards, using the front or back brake, and even double tapping the accelerator to induce a powerslide.

### TWO WHEELS BAD

And? Well, on the surface it's brilliant. The sense of speed can be terrifying, with the sensation exacerbated by some obscene motion blur effects. The courses are authentic, with the obligatory trackside fairgrounds seemingly modelled right down to the toothless simpletons running the waltzers. With stunning graphics, superb replays and immaculate production values, it's clearly a labour of love, with every area polished, even down to the non-bike related mini-games.

However, until someone comes up with a control method that enables you to ride like the AI riders instead of slewing all over the track like a drunk, bike games are always going to lag behind their four-wheeled counterparts. But if it's a bike game you want, this is definitely the one to get. **[X]**

**"It comes with a Stunt option whereby you are actively encouraged to knock other riders off"**



Use the front brake to perform doughnuts. Mmm, doughnuts...

### PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Superb graphics
- ✓ Highly authentic
- ✓ Loads of modes
- ✗ It's not like riding a bike
- ✗ Short races

**76**

On your bike

### INPERSPECTIVE

#### MOTO GP: ULTIMATE RACE TECHNOLOGY

Reviewed Issue 119, Score 72%  
Last year's model, but it's still pretty nifty.

#### COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

Reviewed Issue 131, Score 86%  
The best four-wheeled racer.





Look at that body language. This is gonna be nasty.



Beckham's new grey-haired pensioner look.



# INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER 3

£29.99 | Pub: Konami | Dev: Major A | ETA: Out Now | [www.konami.com](http://www.konami.com)

REQUIRES PIII 600, 96Mb RAM and an 8Mb 3D card DESIRES PIII 800, 128Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card

**The best footy game ever or just another crap conversion?**  
**Martin Korda takes to the pitch to find out**

**FACT. PC** footy games are, for the most part, abysmal. If it's not the control system being more indecipherable than a babbling Frenchman, it's the ball moving with the fluidity of a balloon while mincing players run as though they're trapped in a vat of treacle. There's always something. Always! What's more, for the past 200,000 years (give or take a couple of millennia) the best we simple PC-owning folk could hope for was a couple of cosmetic tweaks from the inevitable six monthly *FIFA* release.

Bloody *FIFA*, it's had more near-identical releases than your average girl band, and still it can't convincingly reproduce the game of football. Why

I ask you? Why are PC footy games generally so bad? Still, let's have a squiz at *ISS3* and see if it can offer anything vaguely enjoyable. Ready? Right, lets go.

**WINNING 11**

Alarm bells started a-ringing when Konami refused to send us a copy of the game. This kind of snub usually signals two things. 1) I have to get off my arse and walk to the shop and actually buy a copy of the game to review. 2) The publisher is so scared their game is a bigger turd than Godzilla's first dump of the day

that they try and delay us reviewing the game for as long as possible. In this case, amazingly, we have an exception.

Because, y'see, *ISS3* is a pretty entertaining footy game. OK, so it lacks polish, and the sloppily converted boxy menu system slaps you round the face with its sheer lack of consideration for the PC user, but once the action kicks off, it's easy to forgive these foibles.

Pull the camera angle out a bit from the default setting, and slow the game down (there are several speed settings ranging from realistic to caffeine-induced hyperactivity), and you'll find

yourself taking part in something resembling a proper game of footy.

The AI reacts intelligently, spreading the play and breaking up your attacks with genuine craft and imagination, while multiplayer games, as ever, provide the greatest amount of enjoyment. There's also a world and European league allowing you to test yourself against the best and worst international teams in the world.

Controls are generally solid, allowing for a wide range of



Spotting his ex in the crowd, Johnny took aim.

passes, crosses, shots and skill moves (strangely, the camera has a habit of zooming into the action for a few seconds as you execute these), while scoring is anything but easy, with goalkeepers reacting intelligently to danger. There are some problems when it comes to selecting players on the pitch however, and you're often left controlling the wrong one at critical moments. Hitting the post is also far too regular an occurrence, with more balls slapping against wood than your average gang-bang movie.

**LOOKING THE PART**

Players vaguely resemble their real-life counterparts, but the blocky graphics trip *ISS3* up in its attempt to storm to the top of the PC footy pile. Low-res in-game graphics stamp it on the back of the calf, while some suspect scrolling dumps it on its arse.

So, better than *FIFA*? Well, yes and no. Noncommittal, I

know, but true. Want polish? Want flashy graphics? Buy *FIFA*. Want a game that manages to provide an entertaining, realistic and challenging representation of football and don't care how it looks? Choose *ISS3*. Overall *FIFA* may just edge it, but this definitely comes close. Penalties it is then. **PCZ**

**PCZONE VERDICT**

- ✓ More life-like than any other PC footy game
- ✓ Superb fun in multiplayer
- ✓ Intelligent AI
- ✗ Visually unpolished and ugly
- ✗ Some control issues
- ✗ Too much hitting the post

**73**

**Like your best female friend. Entertaining, but not that attractive**



**INPERSPECTIVE**

- FIFA FOOTBALL 2003**  
Reviewed Issue 122, Score 80%  
Beautifully presented with luscious graphics that look just like all your footy heroes. This is by far the best *FIFA* game to date, but it still doesn't feel like you're playing real football.
- CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 4**  
Reviewed Issue 128, Score 90%  
Love watching football but don't want to get your shins kicked in? Then check out the finest management game the world has to offer. Absolutely essential.



Time to blast some alien scum.



Another corridor shoot-out.

# STAR TREK: ELITE FORCE II

■ £29.99 | Pub: Activision | Dev: Ritual Entertainment  
ETA: June 20 | www.st-ef2.com

**REQUIRES** P III 600, 128Mb RAM and 32Mb 3D card  
**DESIRES** P III 800 and a faster 3D card for some of the flashier effects

**Mark Hill engages with a slightly lacklustre sequel FPS**

## INPERSPECTIVE

### VOYAGER – ELITE FORCE

Reviewed Issue 94, Score 84%  
Now available at a budget price, and not very different from the sequel. Plus, you get to fight alongside a tightly outfitted Seven Of Nine.

### ALIENS VS PREDATOR 2

Reviewed Issue 110, Score 93%  
Starting to look pretty dated now, but if tension and blasting aliens is your type of thing, then you'll love this little number.

VOYAGER

NCC-74656

## I'M SOMEONE

who watches *Next Generation* repeats on BBC 2, even though I've seen the episode twice, maybe three times before (and am brave enough to admit it). I'm someone who can't wait for the second season of *Enterprise* to go terrestrial. I'm also someone who actually enjoyed the mediocre *Star Trek: Nemesis*. Yes, I am a Trekkie.

But despite this love for all things emanating from anywhere near the final frontier, I still had to try hard to work up some enthusiasm for this one. A sequel to an above average shooter that is identical in almost every way to its predecessor, with formulaic gameplay and dated graphics? Yes, please! Oh boy, am I getting excited!

And true to my fears, while taking a stroll through Picard's ship, gunning through a Borg cube and even visiting Starfleet Academy, it was hard not to feel I'd seen this all before.

Apparently, Ritual's big selling point for its new baby is that it's twice as long as the first game. How anyone could have got to the end of *Voyager: Elite Force* and started crying for

more is beyond me. But then again, I can't really think of many games I'd wished were longer. In fact, I struggle to think of many games that keep you anywhere near gripped right up until its shattering denouement.

## VALUE FOR MONEY

The fact that games are so expensive these days means that us consumers all demand value for money out of them. Hence developers seem to feel pressured to provide more quantity. Sod that, it's quality I'm after. Next time anyone tries to tell you that games are an artform, ask them how come one of the most important aspects people look for in a title is the amount of hours of gameplay there is? It needs to change.

The fact is that if this were a film, most of the levels would only see the light of day on the special edition DVD. Along with them, apart from a stills gallery, would be a director's commentary explaining they were cut because they added nothing except bucketfuls of generic insectoid aliens, and were likely to prove somewhat uninspiring to the audience.



Getting a new alien weapon results in a pointless holodeck mission.

I mentioned in the preview I wrote last issue how the first level, set on a Borg cube, might as well have been cut and pasted from the first game. And the same goes for nearly everything else: the ship's design, the feel of the weapons, the enemies. There's no denying that the sequel does

if better in certain cases (there are no awful attempts at stealth or *Doom*-like screenfuls of critters), but in some ways it's a step back as well. One of the high points of *Voyager: EF* was the choice you made between a female or male character. It might have been only aesthetic, but any break from FPS routine

is always welcome, especially when you get a level where you have to dress in skimpy clothes and you have a full-length mirror handy.

The reasoning for removing this choice is that during *Elite Force II* you interact with the female members of your Hazard Team and there's a sub-



Why is it all sci-fi shooters have a version of these alien things in them?



You can use your tricorder to find your next objective.

**“How come one of the things people look for most in a game is how long it takes to finish?”**





There are a whole host of weapons on offer.



The future has Eurotrash too. Thank God.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY



Elite Force II doesn't boldly go anywhere.

WHERE EVERY OTHER GAME HAS GONE BEFORE

With such a rich universe to draw from, the biggest missed opportunity is Ritual's failure to produce anything other than a standard FPS. At its worst, this is hardly distinguishable from hundreds of others and reduces the whole 'boldly go' agenda to wiping out thousands of aliens. And getting to fight off invaders alongside Picard on the Enterprise bridge doesn't make up for it. Since that is exactly what Ritual was hired to do though, the most glaring missed opportunity is that the Starfleet Academy level (easily the best looking, with an expansive outdoor setting with blue skies surrounded by buildings) is just somewhere to spend a few uneventful minutes. It would have been great to fight off an invasion on those grounds, fighting alongside panicking cadets.



plot where you get involved with one of them. Presumably most *Trek* fans will have enough excitement with the chance of experiencing a heterosexual relationship without throwing them some racy lesbian scenes as well. God forbid that Ritual should have gone to the trouble of making some alternate scenes where, if you play as a girl, you would choose between two guys, thus making it more interesting for female gamers.

It's a moot point anyway, since this kind of plot-branching stuff is hardly more than a gimmick you don't even notice that much between all the shooting.

Although some effort has been made to create proper characters, it's hard to relate to them, especially not the one you play as. Of course, not giving us believable characters we can care for is a failing of games in general, rather than this one in particular. But without them, all we're left with is a bunch of clunky *Quake III* corridors, lots of phaser shooting and the recognisable uniforms. Which is not nearly enough.

WANT FRIES WITH THAT?

The story, too, falls some way short of being highly engaging. The main problem remains that this is essentially just another

run-of-the-mill shooter, where the plot elements and attempts at fitting it all into the *Star Trek* universe hang rather uneasily around the gameplay. Folks may enjoy drinking McDonalds milkshakes out of a *Star Wars* themed container, but the Yoda head doesn't change the contents. It's all just fancy wrapping, is it not?

What's more, not everyone can use the same engine as a three-year old game (tweaked, of course, as these things are wont to be) and expect it to look great. Some developers, like Raven, might be capable of still making the *Quake III* engine look good, but for nearly

everyone else it's just about had its day. And when you're using it to create lots of small corridors and brown alien worlds that fog in the near distance (rather than the blue-skied open settings of *Medal Of Honor*, for example) it's all the more noticeable.

OLD MOTOR

However, being able to walk down the Enterprise, catch a turbolift to sickbay, stop by the holodeck and make your way to the bridge before visiting the captain will give fans something to cheer about, and it's touches like these that lend the game some character. However, the only recognisable characters

are Picard, Barclay and an interloper from *Voyager*, Tuvok. It's nice to see such friendly faces, but it would've been even nicer to see Riker strutting his ridiculous John Wayne gait, Data tilting his head as he fails to understand yet another joke, Troi wearing tight outfits and experimenting with accents, and LaForge banging his fist into the palm of his other hand in a further example of the gee-whiz, Adam 'original Batman' West school of bad acting. But I suppose you can't have everything.

And while it's always good to have some downtime between missions where



And that was just a warning shot.



This is no time to be watching TV.



Go on, I'm all ears.



Bosses are common, though at least they're all fairly manageable.



**SECOND OPINION**

MARTIN KORDA

Another licensed game, another disappointment. *Elite Force II* would have you believe that it's a sophisticated shooter with a true sense of freedom, whereby your choices significantly effect the pathway the plot follows. Rubbish. Half the choices end up leading you down a dead end, while the other half simply take you down variations on a theme in terms of plot development, eg which woman from your squad you end up with.

The characters are for the most part soulless, and there's little emotional connection between you and most of your squad members. The action is as you'd expect it to be – mildly challenging corridor-based blasting interspersed with the occasional larger level. *Star Trek* fans will enjoy it, but not nearly as much as they deserve to, with the whole game feeling somewhat flat and half-hearted. It's not a bad game by any means, it's just not particularly gripping either.

you can just explore and listen to officers chatting, the immersion is cut short by the old trick of making most doors inaccessible and having little to interact with. But at least the effort to provide some freedom has been made, and this effort should be applauded (if quietly). But, of course, creating a game that could rival *Deus Ex* or *Morrowind* in depth is usually well beyond the reach of a licensed title.

**PREPARE TO ENGAGE**

In line with the rest of the game, the enemy AI is solid yet unspectacular. Your most challenging (and most

recognisable) opponents comprise of the Borg, Romulans and Klingons, all of which display an admirable if never overly-challenging level of AI. You'll see them taking cover, popping up and firing off a few rounds, and then taking cover again – or running away when they feel they are outnumbered. The Borg, of course, will simply walk at you, adapting to your weapons and generally scaring all and sundry out of their wits. But we're used to that. What's more, you'll also come across some bosses who, although tough, shouldn't cause you too many problems, and are generally fairly easy to

dispatch with the wide array of weaponry at your disposal.

As in the first game, the best moments here are the occasional big firefights, where a spectacular laser battle ensues against a horde of enemies while members of the Hazard Team fight by your side. These are all-too rare, though. You're either trailing off on your own or sharing a narrow corridor with a couple of teammates (who will irritate you very quickly with their propensity for shouting out "There's another one!" over and over again).

What adventuring there is falls under the usual FPS

hokum equivalent of a puzzle. You find a locked door and then someone explains that you have to find a terminal to restore its power.

At least the tricoder is used often enough, and there's one very interesting mission where you infiltrate a base disguised as a Romulan (with their version of a tricoder). The idea – used to such good effect in several episodes – adds some much-needed variation.

**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED**

Still, there's no denying Ritual has achieved what it set out to do: deliver more of the same

but in bigger doses. And for the most part, there's nothing too wrong with the whole package, as it does provide plenty of action over a series of levels packed with varying *Star Trek* baddies. And if that's what you're after, you'll probably just about walk away satisfied when it's all over. In fact, it's unlikely anyone will feel cheated or too disappointed if they walk into the shop, look on the back of the box and pay their £30 smackers for this game. Unless there are still some people out there who harbour delusions about the integrity, originality and creative power of this industry. [C]

**"The Borg, of course, will simply walk at you, adapting to your weapons and scaring you witless"**

**MODEL DEATHMATCH**



Honey I shrunk the Klingons!

**THE LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE ARE ALWAYS THE BEST**

Although the multiplayer action is pretty unoriginal and not that different from the first game's, there is one excellent level that takes place on the Enterprise bridge. What makes it special is that it's Picard's model of the ship, where all the players are mouse-sized and need to hop on jump-pads just to reach a chair. You can even see a full-sized Picard holding the model through the window. It's ingenious, though more to the point, it's a great laugh too.

**PCZONE VERDICT**

- ✓ Solid shooting action
- ✓ Slightly branching story
- ✓ Good acting
- ✗ Seen it all before
- ✗ Standard FPS fare
- ✗ Slightly too long

**74**

This year's model



Hutch spends half the game hanging out of the passenger window.



The trademark cardboard boxes take a regular battering.

# STARSKY & HUTCH

■ £29.99 | Pub: Empire Interactive | Dev: Mind's Eye | ETA: June 20 | [www.starsky-and-hutch.com](http://www.starsky-and-hutch.com)

**REQUIRES** Pill 500, 128Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card **DESIRES** Pill 700, 256Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card

**Steve Hill lives out his childhood fantasies with a racing game carrying the licence of his favourite childhood cop-series**



You'll believe a car can fly.



Shooting stars triggers elaborate stunts which keep the viewers happy.

**DEPRESSINGLY,** there will be people reading this who weren't even born when *Starsky & Hutch* was being transmitted to a generation of enraptured youngsters. Suffice to say, it was arguably the most exciting thing on earth, and staying up late to watch it was one of the greatest thrills imaginable. These days of course, anyone with Channel

Five can watch the show, which is replete with pimps, hoes, drug dealers and violent shootouts. And while it still has kitsch nostalgic appeal, it's not exactly how we remember it. As a kid, it was all about the car – the mythical Ford Torino aka the Striped Tomato – and it's tempting to remember it as one long action sequence. Watching the programme now, there are episodes where the car barely features, the titular characters more concerned with adopting risible foreign accents and carrying off some ill-advised comic routine.

So why a *Starsky & Hutch* game in 2003, particularly as the 70s revival is so last decade? Well, Channel Five's admirably tireless revival notwithstanding, a bigger clue is offered by the pending release of an all-new

## “Authenticity is added by the voice of Antonio Fargas as Huggy Bear, the jiving grass...”

*Starsky & Hutch* movie, starring comedy duo du jour Ben Stiller and Luke Wilson in the roles made famous by Paul Michael Glaser and David Soul.

### SUPERGRASS

The two key actors in the game, however, are voiced by generic dullards. Some authenticity is added by the sterling work of

Antonio Fargas, who reprises his role of Huggy Bear, the jiving grass with his finger on the pulse of the street. Fargas provides a competent voice-over, relaying the narrative (such as it is) and is just about worth his fee. To be honest, it's nice to know that he's still earning.

As for the action, it is simply a relentless tyre-squealing festival

of automotive destruction, almost exactly like the feverish childhood memories of the show. Split into different seasons, each contains six episodes that typically involve chasing a car, with Starsky driving and Hutch hanging out of the window shooting.

As well as stopping the baddies getting away, you also

### INPERSPECTIVE

#### MIDTOWN MADNESS 2

Reviewed Issue 96, Score 84%

You don't get to shoot anyone, but this crime-based racer has obviously been a big influence.

#### COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

Reviewed Issue 131, Score 86%

If you want a more realistic racer, then this is currently your best bet on the market.



Its time for the old classic under the petrol tanker routine.



Not a particularly undercover vehicle.



Explosive stuff from the game they're all calling Starsky & Hutch.



Looks like they're chasing the A-Team.

have to keep viewers interested by performing stunts, not driving into pedestrians, or simply shooting power-ups. Lose the viewers, and it's game over. A curious concept, with the protagonists aware that they're in a TV show, though whether they know they're in a computer game, we'll leave to the philosophers.

The shooting doesn't really involve any aiming as such; as long as the car is facing the right way, you should hit the target, enabling you to pick off all manner of power-ups such as extra speed and grip. The only modicum of skill is introduced when shooting the inhabitants of the car you are chasing. If you manage to get close enough, the

target will turn red, causing slightly more damage.

**AIMLESS**

The car itself handles pretty much as you'd expect, with unspectacular physics and arcade controls, which means keeping up with fleeing bad guys is a pretty unchallenging task, and the whole game can be

completed in a fairly short amount of time.

And that's about it. (Un)fortunately, we are no longer slack-jawed children (despite occasionally behaving that way), and this kind of unsophisticated approach doesn't really cut it in the current environment. With such buzzwords as 'emergent gameplay' flying about, this is unashamedly old-skool. Largely scripted, repeating sections again and again, it begins to drag, despite the frantic pace.

Graphically, it's no great shakes, showing its console roots, and the PC fraternity have received a further drop-kick in the teeth with the news that the game will not be compatible with

light-guns. On the PS2 version, this is arguably a key point, where two of you can play as Starsky and Hutch, one driving and the other shooting. Here you drive and shoot at the same time using the keyboard.

**RETRO ROCKET**

Ultimately, it's hard to see who the game is aimed at in the PC world. Anyone old enough to care about the series probably won't be duped by a simplistic licensed game, and the majority of gamers born in the last two decades will neither know nor care about either the game or show. That said, for a few days of mindless fun, it might just be worth your 30 quid. **PCZ**

**CARTOON TIME**

**THAT'S ALL FOLKS**

The graphics of the main game may look distinctly bland, but a different approach has been taken with the cut-scenes that appear before and after each episode. Employing a comic book style – a bit like *Max Payne* – it's a nicely stylised approach that successfully captures the late 70s West Coast feel, replete with afro-sporting dudes and bug-eyed hippies, no doubt goofing out on angel dust. Once certain areas of the game are completed, you can go back and watch the clips, turning your PC into some kind of living comic. Throughout the game you can also collect Huggy Bear tokens, enabling you to unlock his biography and even an interview with the great man. Throw in the opportunity to unlock the funky soundtrack, and there's a mild degree of longevity involved, providing you can stomach the utterly simplistic gameplay, that is.



The bald bloke from *Benny Hill* gets nicked.

**PCZONE VERDICT**

- ✓ Starsky, Hutch and Huggy Bear
- ✓ Decent music
- ✗ No light-gun
- ✗ Simplistic
- ✗ Graphically weak

**60**

No gun, no fun



Different roles mean a varied gaming experience.

Watch your comrades' backs and they'll watch yours.

# WOLFENSTEIN: ENEMY TERRITORY



Free (on our cover disc) | Pub: Activision | Dev: id/Splash Damage | ETA: Out Now | [www.castlewolfenstein.com](http://www.castlewolfenstein.com)

**REQUIRES** PIII 600MHz, 128Mb RAM, 32Mb 3D card and a 56K modem or LAN connection  
**DESIRES** PIII 1.2GHz, 256Mb RAM, 64Mb 3D card and an ADSL/Broadband connection

The recent war on Iraq cost something in the region of 1.2 billion dollars. Paul Presley looks at a new war that costs significantly less

They say the best things in life are free – sneaking from one multiplex movie screen to another without buying tickets, watching footie matches by standing on a mate's shoulders and peeking over the wall (that one only works if you live in the 1950s or support Chester, obviously), walking down Oxford Street in the summer and marvelling at how tight female T-shirts have suddenly become. But according to the latest government figures, the best

kind of freebies are those that we were once expected to pay for, but due to corporate shenanigans have now been issued to the public for the princely sum of nought pounds and nought pence, including VAT and delivery.

Enter *Wolfenstein: Enemy Territory*, stage left.

**IT'S FREE!** Originally, *Enemy Territory* was conceived as the add-on pack to end all add-on packs (sorry,

been reading too many press releases). When it turned out that the single-player aspect to these extra missions were as much fun to play as bait-the-Yardie or Pro-Celebrity Dwarf juggling, the executive Ferrari drivers at id Software overseeing the third-party project chucked them in the Recycle Bin of destiny, decided that they'd already made enough money for this year and opted to release the already completed multiplayer maps as a stand-

alone product. For free. W00t! As I believe they say. So what do you get for your (lack of) money? Ostensibly it's six new multiplayer levels and the game engine to run them on. Magnanimously, id has thrown the baby in with the bathwater and eschewed the need for you to already own *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*. Amusingly, most of these new levels have been (cough) inspired (cough) by some of the most popular WWII films of all

time, from a *Guns Of Navarone* assault on German anti-shipping guns, to a *Kelly's Heroes* raid on a gold store in the middle of an occupied town.

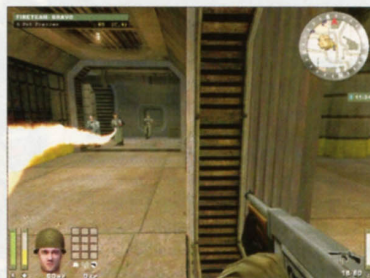
**BAND OF BROTHERS** As you might expect, all this film tribute malarkey means that we're not talking about straight WWII-themed deathmatching here. Objective-based team matches are the way of the future (see *Prezzer's Heroes* for an example), adding tactical

**INPERSPECTIVE**

**DAY OF DEFEAT**  
 Reviewed Issue 130, Score 84%  
*Counter-Strike* does WWII. More limited in scale than *ET* but proving to be very popular online.  
**BATTLEFIELD 1942**  
 Reviewed Issue 123 (Multiplayer Review), Score 91%  
 Currently the WWII online shooter of choice, thanks to the inclusion of vehicles with foot soldiering.



No I insist, after you mate.



Ah, that *Wolfenstein* flamethrower.



There's a time when a medic can save you.



## WALKTHROUGH →

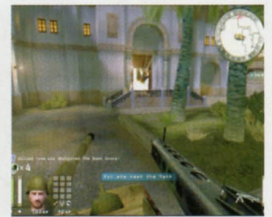
## PREZZER'S HEROES

Or how to steal gold from the nazis and influence people



**1** First up, gather your forces. Clint. Oddball. Kojak, and the less famous actors no one remembers. Make sure you've got at least one engineer or you're screwed before you start.

**2** Get to your forward command post and get it built or you'll be running for miles every time you die. It also gives your side a speed bonus so make sure the Axis forces don't blow it up.



**3** Next, get your busy engineer (or another one) to fix the abandoned Axis tank in the depot. Then make sure you're the first to hop on the back and man the machine gun. Fun!

**4** With Oddball whistling merrily and sending out those positive waves man (were there hippies in WWII?), blow open the doors to the bank and rush the vault before the Axis can regroup.



**5** Gold! Texas Tea! (*That's oil, by the way—Ed.*) Grab one crate at a time and get it outside to the waiting truck. Meanwhile imagine the luxurious new villa in Barbados waiting for you after war.

**6** Once the truck drives off, make sure you escort it back to your base, watching for Axis machine gun posts and rocket launchers around every corner. And mind any cliff edges.



The variety in landscapes keeps things fresh.



You can even play with mortars – not something you see every day.

## “With the pricing issue removed, all that’s left to focus on is how well it plays”

depth and genuine team work (more or less) to your gaming experience – two factors that deserve as much encouragement as possible in my book.

In fact, one of the most encouraging signs for the virtual future of mankind was that there were actually people playing *Enemy Territory* inside the Internet that were willing to help their team mates out. People were volunteering to be medics for goodness sake! I was healed more times by friendly docs than I care to mention. Infantry units were actively shielding me while

my engineer built ramps to get troops off the beach. People were shouting out orders and others were ACTUALLY FOLLOWING THEM. Frankly, I was gobsmacked.

### KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

Can you slag off something that costs nothing? Course you can. *Shit is shit, penny or a pound.* Am I going to slag off *ET*? Course I'm not. It's great. It doesn't have the ambition of something like *BF1942*, but it does the whole squad-based skirmish thing perhaps better than anything else out there.

One of the problems that plagues other games such as *Day Of Defeat*, *Counter-Strike* and the like is that most maps really boil down to just one or two chokepoints, the same ones each time, so very quickly each title starts to lose its appeal. *Enemy Territory* has maps that seem to have been expressly designed to avoid this very flaw.

Playing one map for instance, saw intense fire-fights taking place in different locations each time. The nature of the objectives, many of them mobile in nature (escorting gold-laden trucks, transferring ammo shells

by train and so on), means that the action is always moving, something that eliminates boredom and positively encourages repeated play. It gives an excellent sense of moving battle lines, letting you really feel when your team is making progress or losing ground and encouraging you to push on. Coupled with the encouraging team spirit shown, it makes for a hell of an enjoyable playing experience.

In all honesty, if there's a criticism to level at *Enemy Territory* it's that it is just six multiplayer maps and sod all else. And truth be told, if you were expected to pay for it, it'd be the biggest rip-off since *The Phantom Menace*. But with the

pricing issue removed (you don't even have to download it, it's on our cover disc), all that's left to focus on is how well it plays, and this plays very well indeed. **PCZ**

### PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Freer than Nelson Mandela
- ✓ Intense fire-fights
- ✓ Encourages teamwork
- ✓ Based on WWII movie scenarios
- ✗ Only six maps
- ✗ No 'Where Eagles Dare'

# 89

Swimming in positive waves



"It's so funny, how we don't talk anymore. I feel a barrier between us, we can't go on like this."

# COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

■ £34.99 | Pub: Codemasters | Dev: Codemasters  
ETA: June 13 | [www.codemasters.com](http://www.codemasters.com)

**REQUIRES** PIII 750, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card  
**DESIRES** P4 1.4GHz, 512Mb RAM and a 64Mb 3D card

**"Tonight Matthew, I'm going to be Colin McRae." Steve Hill has cars in his eyes**

**WITH THE** console version of *Colin McRae Rally 04* fully playable at this year's E3, it seems a bit odd to be only now reviewing the third incarnation of the series. Historically though, the PC release has always lagged some way behind its console counterparts, and it's a formula that has thus far proven successful. Better to wait for a decent game than put up with a sloppy conversion. However, the

delay is even more pertinent this time round, as yer man Colin has since parted company with Ford, and indeed his longstanding co-driver, Nicky Grist.

## REALITY CHECK

In the real world, McRae is now in the employ of Citroën, and at the time of writing is still searching for somebody else to sit next to him and bark instructions, presumably desperate for a change after years of listening to Grist's Welsh whine. Said nasal tones are still present in *Colin McRae 3* though, along with the Ford Focus, a fact that is particularly significant given the game's new format.



Losing a wheel causes sparks to fly.

The big deal with *CMR3* is that it enables you to actually be Colin McRae. By that we don't mean you have to transform into a dour Scotsman, joylessly fulfilling contractual obligations while your career draws to an undignified end. Instead, you embark on a three-year contract with Ford, hammering the Focus

around a variety of dangerous roads in an attempt to win a spurious championship against unheard of drivers.

Location-wise, it's a diverse mix, with 56 made-up stages spread over Japan, Spain, USA, Sweden, Finland, Greece, Australia and the UK. There are also a host of different

cars to unlock, but you can't drive them in the championship mode because you are Colin McRae, and you drive a Ford Focus. Get used to it.

## NUMBERS GAME

It's a contentious decision, and one that split the pretend rally community when the game first appeared. You can understand Codemasters feeling the need to attempt something different, as simply updating the graphics and phoning in a 'Colin McRae 2.5' would have probably received equal amounts of criticism. And in fairness, the Focus is upgraded between seasons.

The visuals certainly haven't been ignored, and geometry fans will be pleased to learn that the polygon count for the Ford Focus now hovers around the 14,000 mark, as opposed to the pitiful 800 of the previous game. This is best reflected in the damage model, which is almost too extensive, with doors, windows, bonnets, and even wheels detaching themselves, often leaving you crawling round to

## INPERSPECTIVE

### COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2

Reviewed Issue 110, Score 85%

If you still haven't got this, what are you waiting for? Yours for a fiver.

### GRAND PRIX 4

Reviewed Issue 119, Score 86%

If you prefer F1 racing to rally driving this is your best bet.

**"This is performance gaming at its best, requiring Zen-like levels of concentration"**

## GARAGE LAND

## SPANNER TIME

As part of the new-fangled career mode, a lot of emphasis is placed on tweaking the car. Between rallies, adjustments can be made to tyres, gearbox, chassis, engine and so forth, and the modifications tested over a short stretch of track, with the results shown on a special graph. For those who don't know a camshaft from a camisole, it's not that daunting, and if all else fails, the default set-ups generally work fine. But if you do find a particular set-up that produces a faster time, it can be used in the actual rally at the press of a button.



"Come on lads, put your backs into it."

the checkpoint like some redneck demolition derby driver. And damage is even more crucial than in *CMR2*, as repairs can only be made after three stages (as opposed to two previously), meaning that if you break the car doors early you're looking at a serious setback, although they do at least give you one spare wheel. Various components are also unlocked throughout the season, enabling you to modify your car between rallies.

What *CMR3* gains in looks, it loses in modes, as the circuit racing of *CMR2* is completely gone. You never actually race against another car, the closest being the Super Special Stages, the glorified Scalextric tracks that complete each rally. Plus, there are now only three camera views: external, bonnet and cockpit, the latter boasting some superb rain effects on the windscreen.

The career mode aside, all of the available cars can be driven



There's no time to gaze at the scenery.

on all of the stages, although they are effectively nothing more than time trials, as the only thing to aim for is the fastest record. This is made slightly more exciting by a new-fangled graphical representation of the time and distance remaining, which at least gives you something to race against.

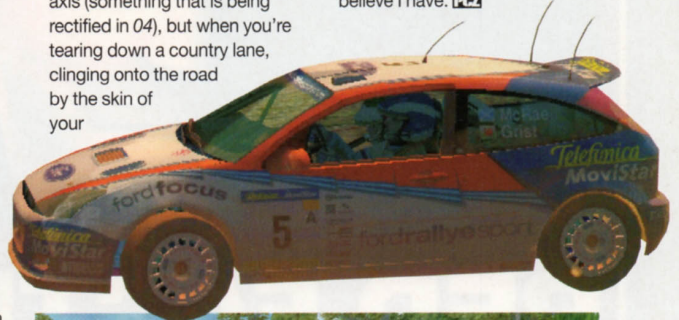
## GET A GRIP

On paper, it may sound like a backward step, but the fact remains that it is still an utterly gripping driving experience, either as Colin in the Focus, or in any of the other featured cars. This is performance gaming at its best, requiring Zen-like levels of concentration to shave crucial seconds off your time. Dullards may complain

about the arcade handling (guess what, it's a game), and yes, you can bounce off the odd tree, but what's the alternative? To have the game over in three seconds? The cars may occasionally feel like they're rotating about a fixed axis (something that is being rectified in *04*), but when you're tearing down a country lane, clinging onto the road by the skin of your

arse, it doesn't really matter, and hours can simply slip away.

So, is it a massive leap forward from *CMR2*? No. But have I got eyes like piss-holes in the snow from playing it non-stop for a week? Yes. Yes I believe I have. **124**



Anti-roll suspension may be adjusted.



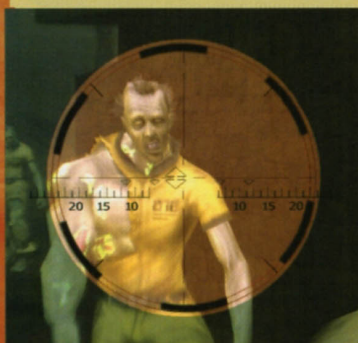
With 14,000 polygons each, the cars are stunningly detailed and increasingly realistic.

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Thrilling action
- ✓ Detailed car model
- ✓ Good engine sounds
- ✓ Decent weather effects
- ✗ Lack of modes
- ✗ Some graphical pop-up

# 86

The best a man can buy



The day after deadline down at PC ZONE.



The time is 4:02, or is that how many bullets I have left?

# RED FACTION II

☆ £19.99 | Pub: THQ | Dev: Outrage/Volition | ETA: Out Now | [www.redfaction2.com](http://www.redfaction2.com)

REQUIRES: PIII 500, 128Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card DESIRES: PIII 1GHz, 256Mb RAM and a 64MB 3D card

With Mars' fight for freedom won, **Richie Shoemaker** comes back down to Earth in Volition's FPS sequel

**THE LAST** shell casing falls to the floor as my final enemy crumples in a bloody heap before me. Clawed hands pull away from mouse and keyboard and I lean back in my chair, sighing with relief as the epilogue to *Red Faction II* begins to play itself out. The

world has been liberated from the clutches of DNA-meddling evil doers once again, tyranny soundly beaten by a genetically-enhanced turncoat of a super soldier, a couple of computer-controlled chums and an arsenal of weapons.

Over the course of the last few hours I've decapitated zombies, blown security guards across collapsing hallways, killed soldiers, more zombies, more soldiers, shot down a couple of aircraft and dispatched hordes of exploding cyber-spiders. And in-between such relentless action I've had the pleasure of navigating a minibus through murky waters, firing missiles from an Aesir Fighter, taking on all-comers in a tank and stomping around in a Battle Armour suit. And you know what? It was all rather uninspired, only occasionally fun and very, very short.

Much was made of Volition's Geo-Mod engine when it debuted in the original game, with its claims of destructible terrain. Largely disappointing it was too. But instead of going all out to make Geo-Mod the unique technology it was intended to be, the engine seems hardly to have progressed while the claims have been generously toned

down. Visually, aside from higher resolution textures, more detailed characters and a few extra effects, there is very little graphical difference between the two *Red Faction* games.

#### MARS ATTACKS

The subterranean Martian locales of game one have been substituted here for levels set closer to home on earth. The

story involves you and your squadmates in a fight – along with the titular terrorists – against the evil tyrant Chancellor Sopot (he's got a big moustache to prove it). Again, it's the well-worn story of the elite soldier made obsolete, starring a bunch of humourless one-dimensional characters. Not that such things as narrative, plot and

#### INPERSPECTIVE

##### UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING

Reviewed Issue 126, Score 94%  
If you're going to make a shortish shooter with a clichéd storyline then at least make it look and play amazingly. *Unreal II* has its faults, but looks and relentless sci-fi action are not among them.

##### HALF-LIFE

Reviewed Issue 71, Score 95%  
There are half a dozen cracking shooters out there, all of them more modern than this creaky classic. However, I played it again recently and was reminded just how mind-blowing it was.

#### MOVIES, GAMES AND STRAIGHT TO VIDEO

##### IF THERE'S A MOVIE TO BE MADE OF THIS SHOOTER, IT'LL BE STRAIGHT TO VIDEO

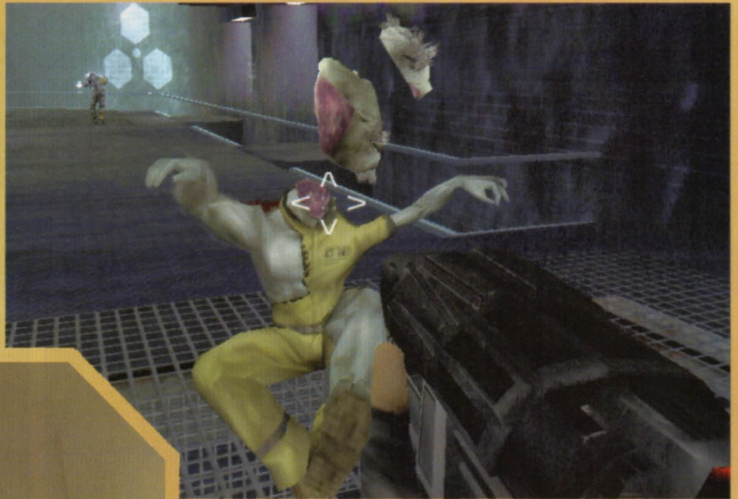
For years we've heard rumours of movies in production that are based on games such as *Doom*, *Quake*, *Half-Life* and *Duke Nukem*. None of them have materialised, which is perhaps something to be thankful for. Imagine, if you will, *Friends* star David Schwimmer as Gordon Freeman, Jim Carrey as Max Payne (who else can pull that face) and for the star of *Red Faction: The Movie...?* It can only be Van Damme, the straight-to-video specialist. You know it makes sense.



JCVD: Born to star in *Red Faction*.



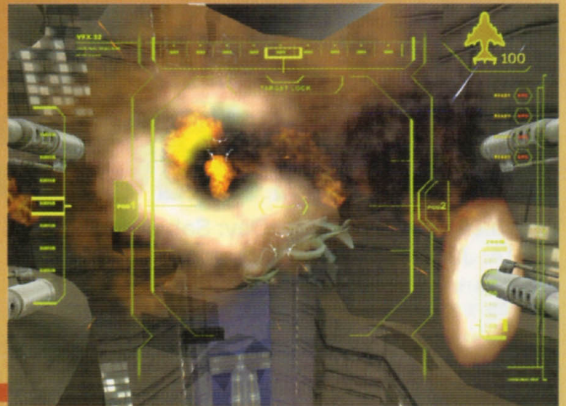
These guys are Red Faction. Hence the red pantaloons.



See that head come apart?



Tangier is one of your squad mates. She's got the hots for you.



Manning heavy artillery like this provides some of the game's best moments.

Better dead than red?

characterisation should ever get in the way of some good old-fashioned bloodletting.

**BEST FOOT FORWARD**

*Red Faction II* is a deeply unsatisfying game to play. Unlike the very worst games in existence, which within seconds you know have nothing to offer, *Red Faction II* teases you to continue with the promise that finding the Rail Driver gun with its patented shoot-through-walls ability will somehow make the business of dispensing with the enemy more pleasing. Or that reaching the bit with the tank will alleviate the drudgery of the on-foot missions.

But when you do reach these moments of fleeting excitement, they don't tend to last long. No sooner have you entered the Battle Armour, let off a few missiles and twirled

its dual chainguns in the general direction of a few zombies, you're forced to abandon it and tread wearily towards the game's conclusion on foot. Fortunately, the end is never very far away.

**"You could conceivably read every word in this magazine in the time it takes to finish *RF2*"**

**BRIEF ENCOUNTER**

You could conceivably read every word in this magazine in the time it takes to finish *RF2*, that's how brief the adventure is. Whether you'd enjoy the game more would depend on how much you like reading the Hardware section. But two things are for sure: you'd be considerably lighter of wallet and you'd certainly miss out on that warm fuzzy reading one of

Martin's editorials gives you [*the cheque's in the post - Ed*]

To give you an idea, from installation to completion, the FPS veteran can expect to run through *Red Faction II* in under six hours on the Medium

difficulty setting, effectively meaning that with no multiplayer options, the game will very probably end up gathering dust before it's seen its first sunset. To make up for this brevity, the developer has included a botmatch mode, which is a decent enough diversion, but hardly a patch on the offline bots of either *UT* or *Quake III*. There are also extra features to unlock for those

who lost the receipt or who bought the game from a shop that doesn't have a returns policy. But even for a relatively low price of £20, *Red Faction II* represents rather poor value.

**BAD COMPANY**

But it can't be all bad, can it? To be honest, apart from its length, there isn't anything particularly wrong with *Red Faction II* as a piece of uninspired and mindless entertainment. Similarly, there isn't anything noteworthy either. It's uncomplicated, easy to get to grips with, simple to follow, and offers some variety in the missions, with truly dull moments being relatively rare. Early on, especially, the AI is pretty good. Had the developer seen the sense to remove some of the bad language, turn the characters into big blobby creatures and the blood into

custard, *Red Faction II* would've been a perfect FPS trainer for three-year-olds. Unfortunately, most of us have had some experience of first-person shooters, and there are better and more rewarding games available at half the price. Don't waste your money on this. **[X]**

**PCZONE VERDICT**

- ✓ AI is pretty good
- ✗ Naff story
- ✗ Far too short
- ✗ Insipid graphics
- ✗ No multiplayer

**56**

A fairly mundane addition to the FPS genre



After a while you stop caring what you're shooting at. You just wish it was over.



For godsake, put some clothes on!



There are some huge enemies, as in *Serious Sam*. This one is kind of medium.



I've seen better skeletons in my closet.

# WILL ROCK

£19.99 | Pub: Ubi Soft | Dev: Saber Interactive |  
ETA: June 13 | [www.will-rock.com](http://www.will-rock.com)

**REQUIRES** Pill 500, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card  
**DESIRES** Pill 800, 256Mb RAM and a 64Mb 3D card

**Mark Hill** is here to say this game will not rock

**ALL YOU** need to know about this game is summed up by the menu song: *I Wanna Rock*, a 1984 single from the ridiculous-looking hard rock band Twisted Sister. As it happens, the song does indeed rock (and takes me right back to my pre-pubescent headbanging days), and is the perfect anthem for such a primitive, irony-free and mindless shooter. In case you need convincing, the title of the game is also the name of the character

you play. Get it? It's like *Max Payne* only even less funny! *Will Rock* really is little more than a *Serious Sam*-clone, with massive environments you run

The ridiculous premise of battling Greek mythological creatures because – get this – a terrorist group known as the Olympian Restoration Army has

*Serious Sam*, it's the most enjoyable of the multiplayer options, which for the most part are pretty poor.

can disguise that this plays like some sort of shareware.

Of course, there are people out there who think *Serious Sam* is the height of sophisticated entertainment (probably the same sort of people who found *The Teletubbies* too complicated to follow), so there's definitely a market for it. The rest of you should be content with a quick bash at the demo. You'll be bored before you finish it. **PCZ**

**“There are a myriad of moronic enemies ramming you from all angles”**

through as if on rollerskates, and a myriad of moronic enemies ramming you from all angles.

freed the mightily pissed off Zeus and co from some mystical prison doesn't do the game any favours either. And the gameplay is so one-dimensional, so relentless and so damn repetitive that you end up not caring how the story unfolds anyway.

The one original touch comes in the form of temporary powers you can buy at scattered shrines using the treasure you collect. There's immortality, Titan Power (Quad damage by another name) and Titan Motion (not a Kylie single, but a pretty useless bullet-time mode). We've only dabbled with the co-op mode but, as with

**TELL ME NOT TO PLAY**  
*Will Rock* is like the Steven Seagal of games – still convinced that the witless action of decades past is in fashion. But not even a low price tag



## INPERSPECTIVE

**SERIOUS SAM 2**  
Reviewed Issue 112, Score 83%  
Better looking, with an amazing engine and great co-op mode, it's rather repetitive, but at least it's well put together. What's more, it's now bundled with the original.  
**ALIENS VS PREDATOR 2**  
Reviewed Issue 110, Score 93%  
If you like lots of action mixed with a terrifying atmosphere this is the game for you, but it's a bit dated now.

**TURN IT DOWN YOU SAY**  
The problem is this, with the two *Serious Sam* titles now bundled together for the same price as *Will Rock*, there's no need for another retroblast. Especially when you consider *SS* is often described as an amazing engine in search of a game, and *Will Rock*'s engine is nowhere near as good as Croteam's (*Serious Sam*'s developer).

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Nice big environments
- ✓ Lots of enemies on screen
- ✓ The song rocks, dude!
- ✗ Annoying and repetitive gameplay
- ✗ Engine not as good as *Sam*'s
- ✗ Pointless

**40**

We're not gonna take it

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## EVERY HERO NEEDS A PARTNER

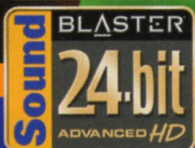
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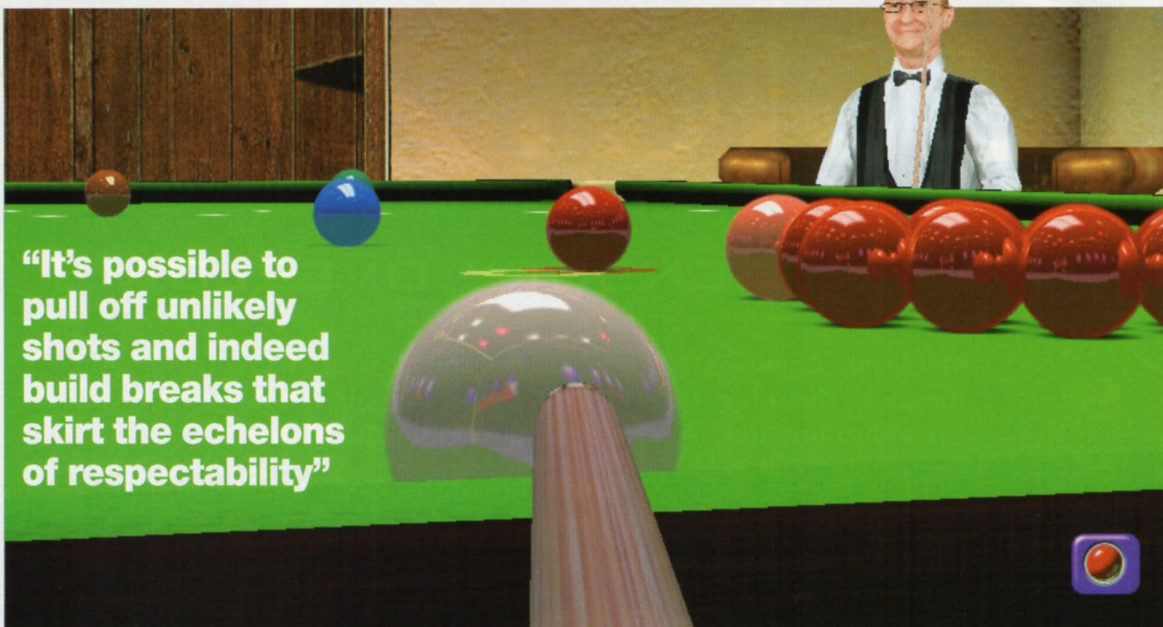
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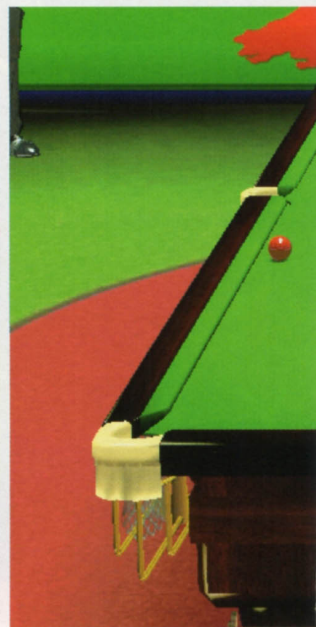
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(s03)



**"It's possible to pull off unlikely shots and indeed build breaks that skirt the echelons of respectability"**

If there's any justice, this'll hit Taylor full in the face.



# WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

£34.99 | Pub: Codemasters | Dev: Blade Interactive | ETA: July 2003 | [www.codemasters.com/snooker2003](http://www.codemasters.com/snooker2003)

REQUIRES PIII 600, 128Mb RAM and a 32Mb 3D card DESIRES PIII 800 and 256Mb RAM

## Steve Hill sees colours and shapes in his head

**CAN** | shock you? I like snooker. There, I've said it. After football and darts, it's probably one of my favourite sports. Of course, I've never

actually been to a live match, and sporadic attempts to master the game have proven fairly fruitless. But faced with an inordinate amount of spare time, the prospect of a televised tournament is a beacon of sanity in a sea of daytime dross. The jewel in the crown is of course the World Championship, 17 glorious days of mind-numbing greenness.

An obvious time to launch the official game, you might think, and you'd be absolutely right. The original plan was to have this game on the shelves in time for

the big break-off, but unspecified setbacks have seen it limp out a few months after the last ball was potted. Not that it really matters. The rules haven't changed, and it does at least offer some respite during the current drought of proper sport, ie summer.

As any man knows, watching snooker and playing snooker are two very different things. The former requires you to slouch on a sofa and stare unthinkingly at the TV. Slightly more taxing, actually playing the game requires superhuman skills that almost justify the

obscene amount of prize money handed out.

### FOUL, FOUR...

*World Championship Snooker 2003* goes some way towards bridging the gap, transporting you into the garish waistcoat of a competent player, without the need to forfeit your education, spend the bulk of your life in a darkened room, or go to Sheffield (none of us wants that). Using a 'special' aiming technique – made up of great big arrows showing you where the balls will go – it's possible to pull

off some unlikely shots, and indeed build breaks that skirt the echelons of respectability.

In time-honoured fashion, this is facilitated by the usual power bar, the ability to add side and spin. You can also play and watch the action from a variety of angles with the customisable camera. What this really means is that you play virtually every shot from the (physically impossible) overhead view, generally hitting the ball full in the face. Any attempt to add ball control seems to initially result in tragic misses, but with practice

### IMPERSPECTIVE

#### JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL WORLD

Reviewed Issue 111, Score 76%  
Provides a solid game of snooker and a great game of darts.

#### VIRTUAL POOL 3

Reviewed Issue 99, Score 85%  
This is the best pool game available on the PC.



Good old-fashioned 8-ball pool.

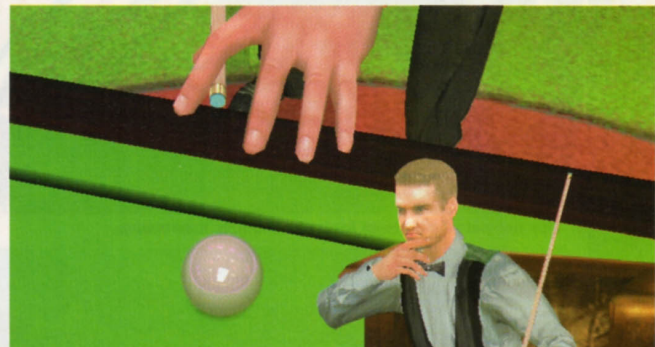
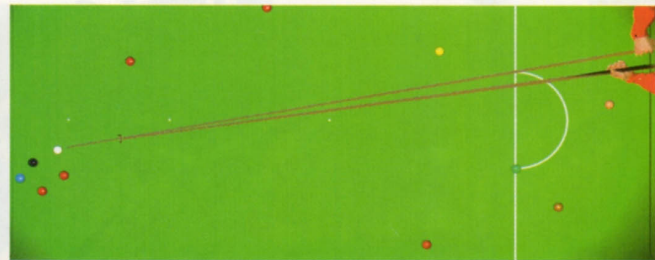


Looks like the crowd buy their clothes at the same place. Millets.





Rocket Ronnie, replete with fashionably tousled hair.



Not a conventional bridging technique.

# SNOOKER 2003

you'll soon be pulling off some great shots.

Fail to master the game though, and you're left to sit on your arse while your opponent cleans up, thus mimicking the frustration and helplessness felt by real players. The difference here is that you can speed up the action, bringing other players up to the pace of Ronnie O'Sullivan or Jimmy White, who sadly isn't featured here. In fact, you can actually switch off the AI opposition's breaks, a welcome respite at first, particularly as it mutes the commentary of Dennis Taylor and John Virgo. That said, you may want to see what your opponent is doing towards the

closing stages of a frame or during a tense bout of safety.

## AND A MISS

As well as snooker, there is proper English 8-ball pool, as well as its bastard 9-ball offspring. There are also a host of so-called Fun Games – as if the main game isn't fun – consisting of such gimmicks as playing against the clock, or having a limited time per shot. The meat of the game comes in the Career Mode though, beginning as a young buck with a pocketful of chalk and a fresh piece of varnished ash. Working your way round the toilet circuit, the idea is to climb up the rankings

and compete in the titular World Championship at Sheffield's famous Crucible Theatre. Any money you earn can be used to 'upgrade' your character, decking him out in a variety of waistcoats, bow ties and shirts.

## BIG BREAK

Get far enough in the tournaments, and you'll come across familiar names, if not quite faces, as the bulk of the star players appear to have been modelled by the Crimewatch artist. The different venues have also been recreated, a process that involves little more than changing the logo and the colour of the carpet, but at least there's

variety. Codemasters also boast of capturing the atmosphere, which is a bit rich considering the average snooker outbreak consists of occasional outbursts of Tecwen Whittock-style coughing, and the rustle of a bag of Werther's Originals.

It's all good stuff though, and it's amazing how many hours you can piss away (and this from someone who annually spends two and a half weeks staring at other people playing on TV). The physics are all present and correct, it looks like the business, and there is plenty of longevity. Ultimately it comes down to whether you give a shit about the sport. **PCZ**

## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Decent physics
- ✓ Balls look good
- ✓ Involving career mode
- ✗ Players are deformed
- ✗ Dennis Taylor

# 78

Makes snooker playable

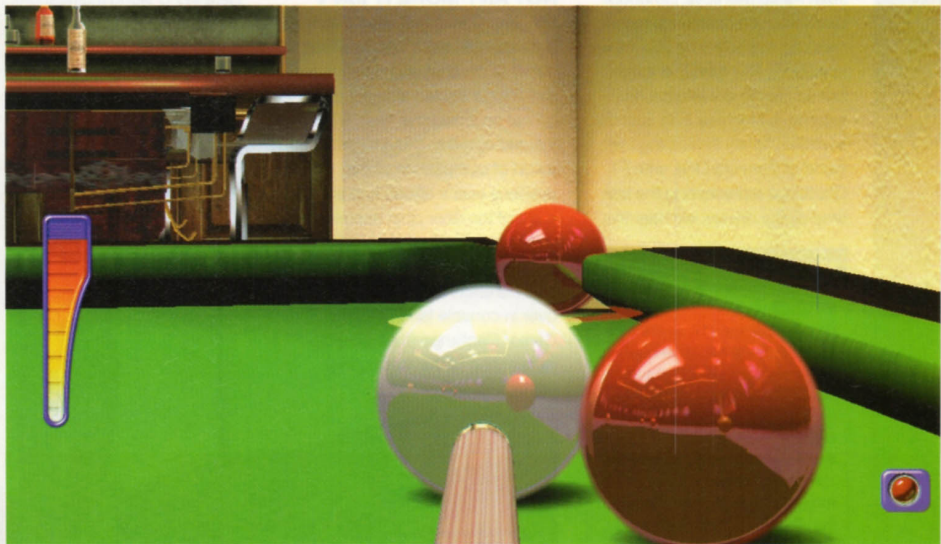
## OLD DOG, NEW TRICKS

### VIRGO'S GOING TO BE SNOOKERING YOU TONIGHT



You'll believe a ball can fly.

As a further gimmick to detract from the action of the main game, this year's version comes with its own dedicated trickshot section. Presented by John Virgo, the venerable ex-pro turned commentator/colleague of Jim Davidson has several tricks up his sleeve, which can be unlocked sequentially. First of all John runs you through the trick, showing you how to do it properly and offering advice in his gruff Salford tones. He then hands the cue over to you, whereby you slew it onto the baize and wander off sheepishly. They're not actually that difficult, and to be honest, not that interesting. In fact, the most striking thing is how much weight Virgo appears to have lost, appearing here as a snakehipped Adonis. At least we are spared his Alex Higgins impression.



Balls so shiny you could shave in them.



"All we get is the same game as seen in the previous four yearly updates"

The animated pit stops look particularly impressive.



On the harder levels, staying on the track is anything but easy.



The engine is superb. Geddit?!

# F1 CHALLENGE 99-02

£29.99 | Pub: EA Sports | Dev: Image Space Incorporated/EA Sports | ETA: June 27 | [www.ea.com](http://www.ea.com)

REQUIRES PIII 450, 128Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D Card DESIRES PIII 1.2GHz, 512Mb+ RAM, 32Mb 3D Card and a steering wheel and pedals

One final F1 outing for EA, one final freelance outing for Paul Presley. Now that's synergy for you

**IRONY CAN** at times be pretty, well, ironic really. Adorning the cover of *F1 Challenge 99-02* is none other than Colombian 'bad boy' racer Juan Pablo Montoya, no doubt decided upon before the recent revoking of his driving licence for speeding. And funnily enough, just as Montoya's licence has expired, so too has EA's licence to make money simulating the world of Formula One, with *F1 Challenge* representing the last time digital drivers will hear the

annoying "E! A! Sports! It's in the game!" sneered at them before they start fiddling with their camshafts.

**NOT ANY MORE IT ISN'T** EA's decision to quit the F1 sim business has left it with one final throw of the dice and rather than make a concerted attempt to go out on a massive high, it has instead opted to bung together a sort of compilation of the previous year's efforts and shove it out of the door post haste so as to get on with other projects.

What's particularly galling is that the effort was actually made over in console land, with *F1 Career Challenge* (the non-PC incarnation of this last outing)

letting you earn your stripes as a rookie driver, progress through the ranks, sign deals with teams and even design your own helmet colours.

Here in PC world (no relation), all we get is the same game as seen in the previous four yearly updates with nothing more than seasonal team and track data,

better engine sounds and updated graphics to appease us. No career mode, no seasonal progression options, nothing. Hardly fair *n'est pas?* Especially since it was the PC community that made EA's F1 series what it was in the first place.

**CALL A DOCTOR**

Being the same game means the actual racing experience hasn't changed, although that's no bad thing as the series has always been good in that department, although you really need a steering wheel and pedals to get the most out of it (not that true racing fans are lacking those).

Yep, the racing side of things is identical to *F1 2002* (it should

be, it's practically the same game engine). The problem is most of you will already have bought one of the previous incarnations and as such, have no reason to buy this one. If you are an F1 virgin then I could probably recommend this to you, but it would be through a mouthful of gritted teeth and with the bile of injustice building up steadily in my liver. **PCZ**

**INPERSPECTIVE**

**F1 2002**  
Reviewed Issue 117, Score 84%  
The same game minus the seasonal adjustments to teams, tracks and paint jobs. If you've already got it, don't get the other.  
**GRAND PRIX 4**  
Reviewed Issue 119, Score 86%  
The other F1 series on the block and while the racing feel is better than EA's range, it also lacks a career mode.



**PCZONE VERDICT**

- ✓ Four seasons' worth of data
- ✓ Solid racing performance
- ✓ Beefed-up cockpit sounds
- ✗ Feels like a rush job
- ✗ No real difference from *F1 2002*
- ✗ Lacks the console version's career options

**73**

End of the road

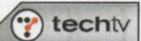
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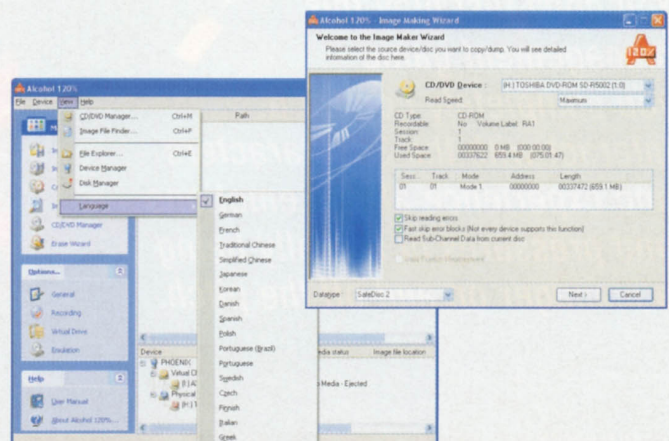
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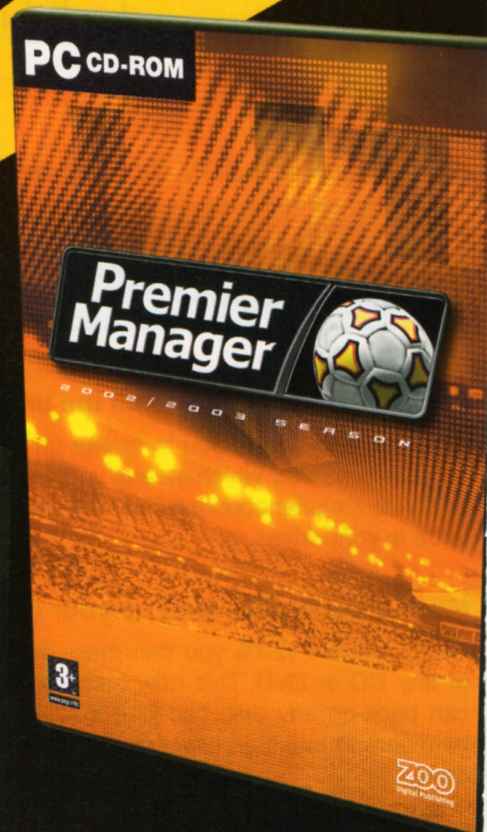
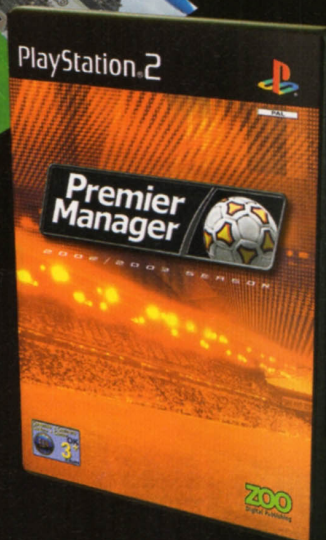


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Premier Manager  
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# RESULTS

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Also available  
on PlayStation 2

# CSI: CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION

■ £19.99 | Pub: Ubi Soft | Dev: 369 Interactive | ETA: Out Now

**REQUIRES** PII 300, 128Mb RAM and a 2Mb graphics card  
**DESIRES** PIII 750, 256Mb RAM and a 16Mb 3D card

## James Lyon analyses the evidence in this heinous crime of licensing

**FROM THE** layout of the victim, it looks like we're dealing with a copycat, one who's managed to competently imitate the atmosphere of the television show in its modus operandi. The episodic nature and plotting of this murder/mystery adventure seem to back this up, and previous audio analysis of victim's conversation reveals proof of genuine actors from the series. However, execution was sometimes sloppy, evident from the pools of bad acting gathered around the victim's peripheral characters.

There were no visible signs of a struggle and it's estimated that it took less than a night before the victim was finished

off. We have proof that our suspect was able to lead the victim willingly by the hand to an early exit and after digging around for clues, we can confirm that limited interaction with the environment was a major accelerant. Furthermore, dusting for prints on objects not relating to direct completion of puzzles also proved pointless. Initial glances showed probable cause for greater application but the suspect only needed to use basic methods of operation to finish off the victim and wipe the whole ordeal out of their memory after a very short while.

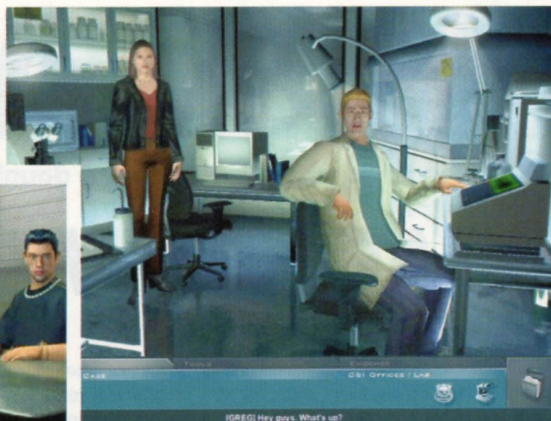
Surveying all the evidence, it's easy to see this is the work of someone attempting to



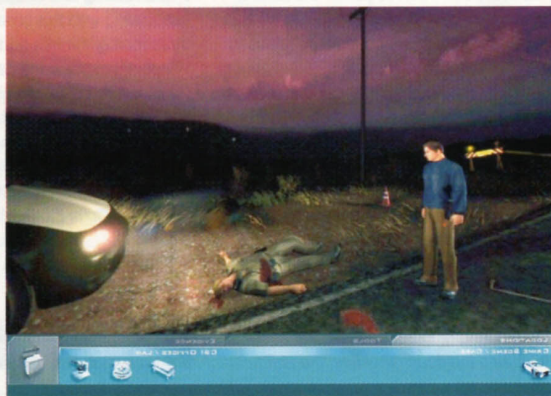
Who's good cop then?

gain notoriety on the back of more well-known cases. However, the execution does show signs of being somewhat intelligent and entertaining. On the basis of this we suggest bringing the quality of the license and the end product in for questioning.

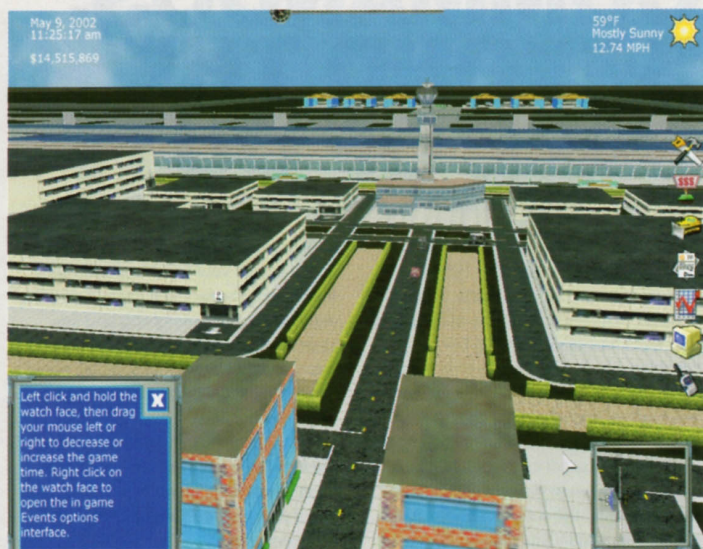
**PCZONE VERDICT** **56**  
 Agreeably close to the source material but way, way too simple



Getting tests done simply means dragging objects over the lab assistant.



"Where were you at the time of the murder. Hello?"



It's not finished yet, but it's never going to look any better than this.

# AIRPORT TYCOON 2

■ £14.99 | Pub: Take 2 Interactive | ETA: Out Now

**AIRPORT Tycoon 2** is one of the worst management games ever. The graphics are atrocious and the interface is an indecipherable quagmire of dozens of identical looking icons. Even two hours slogging through the tutorial makes you none the wiser as to how the whole thing works, or how to master any subtleties of building and running a realistic airport.

If I'd been reviewing this game on April 1 I'd have sworn somebody was having a

laugh. Alas, this is a genuine attempt to simulate the machinations of an airport. Frankly I can't imagine any airport in the world (with the possible exception of a few small ones in Greece) that looks as bad or operate in such a confusing manner.

This is not a game, this is a major air disaster, with its only saving grace being that it's cheap. (KP)

**PCZONE VERDICT** **12**

# NEXT GENERATION TENNIS 2003

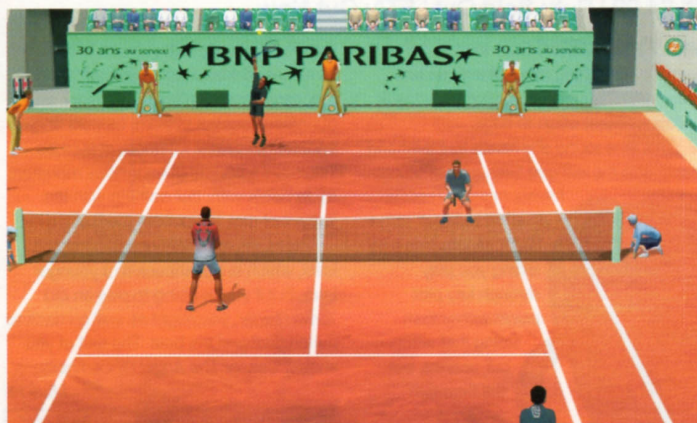
■ £19.99 | Pub: Wanadoo | ETA: Out Now

**SUMMER** is in the air, and the substandard sports games are beginning to trickle in. Shamelessly mimicking the career mode from *Virtua Tennis*, this comes replete with wacky training modes, and a world tour, where you can earn money to buy new kits, courts, and even different coloured balls. Unfortunately, they didn't copy the star players idea, and household names are scarce.

It also fails to capture the sublime action of *Virtua Tennis*, hampered by erratic control, improbable ball physics

and questionable AI. On the plus side, it is possible to play something resembling tennis, which shows how far the series has come in a year. In fairness, it is a considerable improvement on the previous incarnation, but that's not really saying much. (SH)

**PCZONE VERDICT** **50**



Better than last year's version but still not great.

# REPLAY

The place to go when you've got no dough

## BLACK & WHITE

■ £9.99 | Pub: EA | ETA: Out Now

**PETER** Molyneux's controversial god game teaches us many things about PC games and those that play them. On one hand it proves that originality and playability can coexist, yet on the other it exemplifies how thoroughly pissed off and vocal gamers can be if a game is released unfinished and two years late.

Thankfully, these days all is forgiven. *Black & White* is now a fully functional sandpit of good versus evil and at just £10 it's definitely worth a pop for those who have yet to experience this seminal piece of gaming history.

As a mixture of strategy and role-playing there really is nothing that comes close. The whole atmosphere of the game is dependent on whether you choose to rule the land of Eden as a good or evil God. And the *coup de grâce*, the ability to

train a 'pet' creature to act as your second in command, remains to this day one of the best attempts at genuine AI we have ever seen. True, there are some rather embarrassing and unique problems associated with this breakthrough (you try stopping the little sod crapping on villagers' homes once he's got a feel for it), but if you can forgive these little nuances and concentrate on destroying all the other gods and taking over the world, you'll become hopelessly enchanted.

Like *Half-Life*, *GTA III* and *Deus Ex*, *B&W* is one of those games you simply must have. No arguments.

Keith Pullin



PCZONE VERDICT

93



Everyone should own this game.



The creature battles provide some of the game's tensest moments.



As you can see, this one ain't a looker.

## TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

■ £4.99 | Pub: Sold Out | ETA: Out Now

**ALTHOUGH** Core tried to come up with something more cinematic and story-led, *The Last Revelation* is probably Lara's weakest effort to date.

This time round she heads to Egypt and deals with the evil god Seth as well as her former mentor. There's an effort to inject some *Half-Liveness* into it by letting you play through key plot points rather than telling it all with cut-scenes, but the Egyptian setting is unconvincing and

there's an unpolished rawness to the levels. Apart from that it's the same old mechanics with the same old flaws: an obnoxious control system, camera angles from hell and lame attempts at puzzles. There are a couple of enormous monsters to do battle with, but nothing with the impact of that T-Rex from the first game.

Pervs will enjoy the opening training level, which is a flashback to a younger Lara, but if you're going to play an old *Tomb Raider*, you might as well go back to the original and the best. The rest of you should wait for *The Angel Of Darkness*.

Mark Hill

PCZONE VERDICT

65

## COMMANDOS: BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

■ £4.99 | Pub: Sold Out | ETA: Out Now

**THIS STAND-alone** expansion pack to Pyro's surprise hit of 1998 is even harder than the first game, if that's possible. It's very much more of the same, with eight new levels ranging from a bombing mission on the Channel islands and a rescue mission in a Belgrade zoo, although, at least there are quite a few gameplay innovations. Many of you might think that the use of cigarettes or a sexy female operative to distract nazi guards were unique to the superb (and far more accessible) sequel, but they – along with some other ideas – are prefigured here.

The problem is that it's so bloody hard, requiring inhuman amounts of

patience, a will of iron and the self-control not to smash your PC into shards with frustration. The fact that there is no 3D engine, the AI is unforgiving and the interface is a nightmare (all of which was fixed for *Commandos II*) only serve to further surround this with an aura of impenetrability.

Only consider this if you completed the first game with few problems and want more of the same, but don't dream of it if your only acquaintance is with the great sequel.

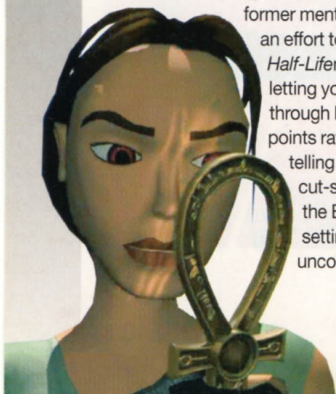
Mark Hill

PCZONE VERDICT

64



There might only be eight missions, but they could take years to complete.



# NEED FOR SPEED: PORSCHE 2000

■ £9.99 | Pub: EA | ETA: Out Now

**TECHNICALLY** the fifth in the long-running *Need For Speed* series, this is among the best, offering an in-depth historical aspect for Porsche fans everywhere. With an extensive collection of 80 models from the 50-year history of the luxury car manufacturer, authenticity is guaranteed, and the handling – and indeed speed – varies wildly throughout the decades. The Porsche Evolution mode explores this thoroughly, enabling you to embark on a career in the 1950s and continue to almost the present day.

Further longevity is added by the excellent Factory Driver Mode, which sees you embark on a career as a test driver.

This involves a series of addictive tests, which even stretch as far as avoiding the police while delivering a car to the other side of town. For the quick fix, a host of customisable races are available, and there is a lively online scene, which is testament to the game's quality.

Graphically, it hasn't dated too badly, and it will at least run on pretty much anything. There are better driving games available, but for a tenner this is probably the closest the vast majority of us will ever come to driving a Porsche.

Steve Hill

**PCZONE VERDICT** **75**



The open road, a vintage car, the sun setting... Great.

# NHL 2002

■ £9.99 | Pub: EA | ETA: Out Now

**HMM, WHAT'S** this? Football on ice? With sticks? It'll never take off. Although they're more like sophisticated versions of *Pong* than accurate representations of real physical sports, there's something quite compelling about playing ice hockey games against friends. Especially if you can get into a fight with them.

Unless you've got the reactions of a snake, *NHL* titles are much less about tactics (stopping to assess the situation and think about your next move is out of the question) than it is about quick-fingers and blind luck. The puck travels round the rink like Flubber on amphetamines and – if you're anything

like me – you spend a lot of time wondering what the hell you're doing and shouting at the screen a lot. When you do start to pull moves off though, there's nothing quite as satisfying as sticking the little sucker into the opponents net.

Graphically this instalment shines, quite literally. The player models are high in detail and their reflections on the ice turn the whole game into a thing of beauty. *NHL 2003* introduces some novel ideas but, as with most of EA's sport titles, it's hard to distinguish one *NHL* game from the next.

Mark Hill

**PCZONE VERDICT** **75**



Blink and you'll miss it.



Skyscrapers are a sign of success.

# SIM CITY 3000

■ £9.99 | Pub: EA | ETA: Out Now

**HAVE YOU** already got *SimCity 4*? Fine, you don't need this. It's the same game just a bit less pretty and with a few less options. Have you already got *SimCity 2000*? Then once again you don't need this, as it's the same game, just a little bit prettier and with a few more options.

The *SimCity* series hasn't changed one jot since it was first invented in, oh let's say, 1854 by Willard Wright. Well a couple of jots (3D graphic rendering was still in its infancy back in pre-Civil War America), but essentially every *SimCity* game has been the same mix of zoning, road laying, power lining and accounts juggling.

This third version had some fancy graphics to add to the mix, but once

you'd gotten past the rotatay-pseudo 3D, it quickly boiled down to exactly the same thing. Fine if you hadn't already played it before, but pointless if you were already an experienced virtual mayor looking for new city planning-related thrills.

The underlying *SimCity* concept is one of the best gaming devices ever to emerge from the cesspit of turgid platformers and identikit shooters. But that doesn't mean you can get away with doing the same thing four times in a row. Buy one chapter only. This one if you're cheap.

Paul Presley

**PCZONE VERDICT** **70**

## LEFTOVERS

### PLEASE SIR, CAN I HAVE SOME MORE SIR?

And so we move from the bargain bin to the leftovers bin, the detritus left swilling at the bottom of the budget pile. OK, maybe that's a bit harsh on our first entry, *Rally Championship Xtreme* (Sold Out, £4.99, Out Now), which is actually one of the best rally games currently on the market. Falling only just short of *Colin McRae 2*, and considerably short of the angry Scot's third outing (reviewed on page 84), this is one racer you'd do well to check out, and at this price deserves a very creditable 77 per cent.

Sadly though, things go rapidly down the shitter after that. *Madden NFL 2002* (EA, £9.99, Out Now), is much like *Madden NFL 2001*, which was much like *Madden NFL 2000*, which was much like *Madden NFL 4BC* (just without the loincloths). That's not to say this isn't an excellent representation of the sport, it's just questionable whether it's worth buying this one if you have any of the last few. 68 per cent.

Continuing the descent into Turdsville we pass *Hooligans: Storm Over Europe* (Sold Out, £4.99, Out Now). You'd be hard pushed to find a more pitiful excuse for an RTS, with you directing a bunch of pixelated skinheads as they rampage over Europe kicking people's heads in after football matches. The game is a prime example of a title so pathetically inadequate that the only way it can generate sales is by tacking on an idiotic gimmick which fools a gullible press into printing furious and disgusted articles about its so-called sick content. It's not shocking, it's shit. 15 per cent.

Saving the worst until last we have *Aquarium* (Sold Out, £4.99, Out Now). Looking less attractive than a mange-ridden one-legged cat, *Aquarium* charges you with building an aquarium, filling it with fish and hopefully enticing enough visitors along for your business to be able to survive and expand. Believe me, being a goldfish would be more interesting, entertaining and diverse than playing this game. 12 per cent.

It really and truly stinks down here, doesn't it?

Martin Korda



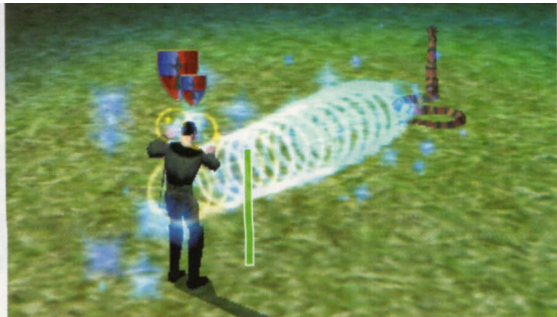
Rally Championship Xtreme



Hooligans: Storm Over Europe

# UPDATES

A place for single-player redemption and multiplayer evolution



One dead snake. Real players won't be so easy.

## MULTIPLE CHANCES

What's all this about then?

Some PC games are exceptionally flaky on release, with bugs and omissions that are subsequently fixed over time with patches. When this happens, we'll take another look and see if the score is worth upping. By the same token, massively multiplayer games are ever-evolving, and because of this, we'll be revisiting major releases to see what's changed over time.

This is also the place where we take a proper look at the multiplayer side of games. As we regularly review titles before they go on sale, often there are no public servers up and running, so instead of telling you how we think the game is going to play, we'll wait and do a proper multiplayer review here, outlining how many servers are up and how the game plays online.

# SHADOWBANE V1.0.5.4

■ £TBA (\$34.99 from US | Pub: Ubi Soft | Dev: Wolfpack | ETA: Out Now | [www.shadowbane.com](http://www.shadowbane.com) | Players: No limit

REQUIRES PIII 700, 128Mb RAM, 32Mb 3D card and a 56K modem DESIRES 256Mb RAM and an ADSL connection

**Shadowbane has just received a new lease of life with updated graphics. Chris Anderson admires the scenery**

PATCHED

ONLINE ONLY

**THE SCORN** and derision that was heaped on *Shadowbane's* awful graphics when it went live have prompted Wolfpack to clean up its act and release a graphical update.

Textures look a lot smoother now and are more detailed, and while it's still no oil painting it looks a lot nicer and a lot more professional than it did pre-patch.

Apart from that, nothing much has changed. If anything, more and more people are reaching the 'endgame' and discovering they have nothing to do outside of PvP and it's difficult to see where *Shadowbane* can go from here unless Wolfpack starts adding



Spell effects no longer look out of place.

some real content. Guild warfare is intensely exciting but it only happens for a comparatively small percentage of the player populace, and people will burn out on this eventually.

The shame of it all is that *Shadowbane* is the first game to get PvP right since the early days of *Ultima Online*. Let's hope Wolfpack get some real meat into the player experience sometime

soon, or *Shadowbane* is destined to be remembered as 'a blast while it lasted' which is not the best premise for the lifespan of a persistent game environment.

The important thing here is the game looks better now but the gameplay has not changed, so if you decided against it on the basis of the original review there is no real reason to change your mind. Conversely, if you were intrigued at the thought of real PvP but hated the graphics now is the time to bite the bullet and give it a shot. **[M]**

## PCZONE VERDICT

ORIGINAL SCORE	70
NEW PATCHED SCORE	74
Looks better, that's it	

# VIETCONG

MULTIPLAYER

■ £29.99 | Pub: Gathering | Dev: Pterodon | ETA: Out Now | [www.vietcong-game.com](http://www.vietcong-game.com) | Players: 2-50

REQUIRES PIII 700, 256Mb RAM, 32Mb 3D card and a 56K modem or LAN connection  
DESIRES PIII 1GHz, 64Mb 3D card and an ADSL connection

**Mark Hill is welcomed to this jungle shooter**



As usual, you'll need to join a clan to get some proper games.

**SINCE IT** was announced, *Vietcong* always seemed like a multiplayer dream, giving you the chance to fight the Vietnam war from the VC side and wipe out a load of stoned farmyard kids. The reality is yet another typical shooter full of Capture the Flags and other multiplayer nonsense that fits perfectly in an artificial *Quake* map, but does little to recreate jungle warfare.

Still, the amount of vegetation makes it more of a hide and seek experience than many and the co-op and Assault Team Game (where you get more realistic goals like protecting a pilot) modes are more than welcome.

Although the servers are very healthy with players, most of them are concentrated in



Death-by-invisible-sniper is all too common.

forbidding clans, so unless you belong to one you'll find the usual lack of team-play that ignores the medic and engineering classes, turning into an all-out shooter. I experienced little slowdown, but a bigger problem is how easy it is for snipers to dominate a game. At least the shoddy single-player AI is not a problem online. **[M]**



## PCZONE VERDICT

FULL REVIEW (ISSUE 127)	81
MULTIPLAYER SCORE	77
Nothing new under the sun	



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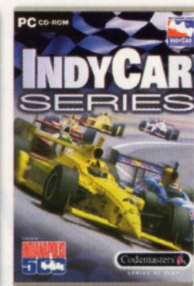
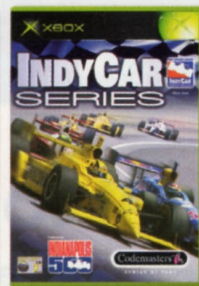
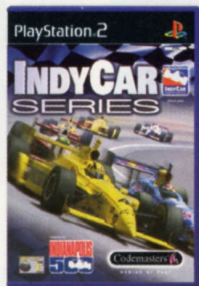
## THE CHALLENGE IS KEEPING UP WITH THEM



*"blisteringly fast...dazzlingly authentic"* OPM2

*"Spectacular unadulterated high speed racing"* PC Gamer

*"Fast, crash-heavy racing  
...the thrill-a-second US motor sport."* Xbox World



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# FEEDBACK

**Martin Korda wades through your views on some of the latest games to hit the shelves**

**IT'S YOUR SHOUT**

Feedback is here to offer you a platform to have your say about games we've reviewed over the past three issues. Whether you totally agree, or utterly disagree with us, we want to hear from you. And all you have to do to get your views in print is send an email to letters@pczone.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line. Please try and keep your views to less than 100 words. Anything longer will either not be considered, or may have to be edited for size.

**Comment**

Well, we don't like it very much. More of a console game than a PC game, we think, and not a great one at that. Roll on Lara.

**FREELANCER**

REVIEWED ISSUE: 128  
SCORE: 84%

**What we thought**

"Those of you that do decide to give it a go will find a game that refines the existing space sim genre rather than radically reshaping it. It's not perfect, but it's good enough."

**What you said**

I was amazed at how poor this game is on every level. From the very limited graphics and pathetic repetitive dialogue, to lack of joystick support and ship/weapon detail. I could go on forever. I do feel that your review was very lenient and the score of 84 per cent was extremely generous. There is clearly no way, with the amount of graphical detail in modern games, that anyone is going to write an open-ended space simulator that will ever compare with *Elite*, in my opinion the closest anyone has come was Chris Roberts when he was the



Five years in the making, but many of you can't help feeling a bit let down by the end product.

inspiration behind *Privateer*, an absorbing well-developed game that was let down by bugs.

Tony Lawrence

Five years of development and what do we get? An entertaining but short-lived space combat sim. Still, I suppose it's fun while it lasts, even if that is only about 12 hours. Yeah I know, I could fly around and pretend to be a pirate, but somehow, it just seems pointless.

Colin Farrell

I've heard a lot of people bad-mouthing this game. Why? It's

combat sim, and you don't see many of those around these days. Oh and keep an eye out for X2, it looks like being a cracker.

**TOCA RACE DRIVER**

REVIEWED ISSUE: 128  
SCORE: 76%

**What we thought**

"Ultimately, for all its revolutionary pretence, it's just a good old-fashioned driving game."

**What you said?**

Last month in Feedback you asked if we thought you were being a bit harsh for giving

TOCA Race Driver 76 per cent. Well here's what I think. No.

XtreMe

TOCA Race Driver is one of the best driving games of the last 12 months. I think you were a little bit harsh on it and should have given it at least 80 per cent. It may not be revolutionary, but it is a great driving game.

J Apps

Storylines have no place in driving games, and TOCA Race Driver is no exception. It's a solid racer, with some decent AI and shiny graphics. That's it. So, what do I reckon, was 76 per cent harsh? Spot on I'd say.

K Young

**Comment**

So the nays have it by 2-1. [v]

**INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB**

REVIEWED ISSUE: 129  
SCORE: 63%

**What we thought**

"One can only assume this was a rush job, an attempt to get to the shelves before the next Lara."

**What you said**

I've never been compelled to write to you to complain about a game before, until now. *Indiana Jones And The Emperor's Tomb* has sullied the Indy license to such an extent that it may never recover. Rarely have I seen a more shoddily presented, hastily contrived and poorly executed game, and to be honest, I think you were over-generous with your score of 64 per cent – 46 per cent would have been closer to the mark. What a waste of £30.

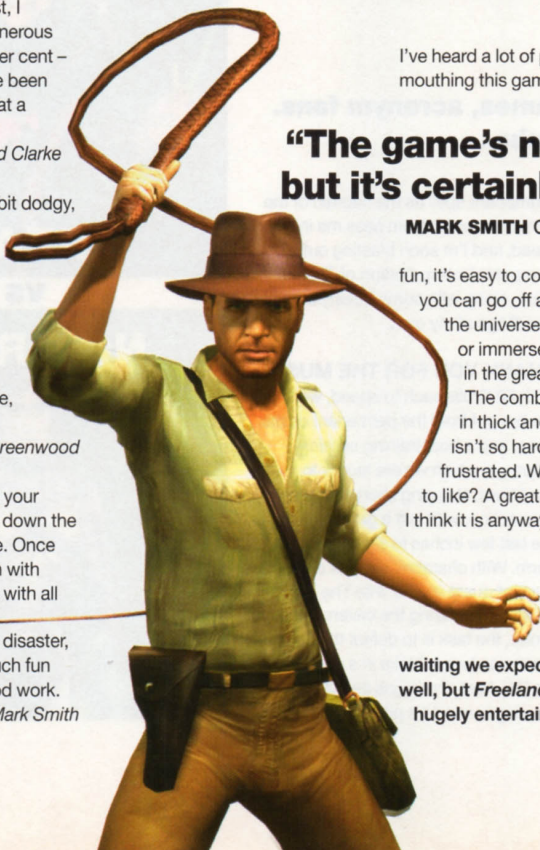
David Clarke

OK, so the camera's a bit dodgy, and the voice actor who plays Indy doesn't sound much like Harrison Ford. But personally I found this to be an entertaining action game. I think it deserved a higher score, perhaps 75 per cent.

J Greenwood

Thank goodness I read your review before charging down the shops to buy this game. Once again you were spot on with your score, and I agree with all your criticisms. The game's not a complete disaster, but it's certainly not much fun either. Keep up the good work.

Mark Smith



**"The game's not a complete disaster, but it's certainly not much fun either"**

MARK SMITH ON INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

fun, it's easy to control your ship, you can go off and explore the universe if you want, or immerse yourself in the great storyline.

The combat comes in thick and fast, but isn't so hard you're left frustrated. What's there not to like? A great game, at least I think it is anyway.

Brian Christie

**Comment**

After five years of waiting we expected more as well, but *Freelancer* is still a hugely entertaining space



TOCA has pretensions to being revolutionary, but is it just a racer with a storyline tacked on?



# REALITY CHECK: MMORPGS

**That's Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games, acronym fans. Steve Hill slips on a tunic and heads for the catacombs...**

**WHAT'S A REALITY CHECK?**

Reality Check is a monthly feature comparing PC Games to their real-life equivalents. Or at least, as close as we can get without risking serious bodily harm.

**WHEN KORDA** first instigated Reality Check, part of the incentive for me going off on the capers he dreamt up was the opportunity to hang out with sports stars, drive fast cars, and, of course, operate heavy machinery. What I didn't envisage was mincing round a cave in a smock, wielding a rubber sword and playing a recorder to a cast of misfits. Tragically, this unlikely scenario has come to pass, as your intrepid reporter unearths the world of live role-playing, supposedly the 'real life' incarnation of online RPGs. Our hosts are Labyrinthe, a group of RPG enthusiasts, and Chislehurst

Caves in Kent is the venue, a fully equipped five-mile cavern system where this activity has continued unchecked for more than a decade.

I at least have some moral support in the shape of ZONE's resident barbarian, Martin Korda, who is to spend the day as a Paladin, some kind of ecclesiastical warrior. Whereas he provides the muscle, I provide the music, thanks to an earlier phone call in which Korda stressed to the organisers my long held – and entirely fictitious – desire to be a Minstrel. Thanks for that.

In the absence of a flute, or indeed a lute, I'm equipped with a standard primary school issue recorder, replete with unsavoury mouthpiece. Not any old saliva-ridden instrument though, but one with the power to heal, enchant and mesmerise, providing I can muster a decent tune. A

triumphant spell as the captain of the school recorder team sees me in good stead, and I'm soon blasting out a competent interpretation of *Three Blind Mice*, along with some freestyle noodlings of my own.

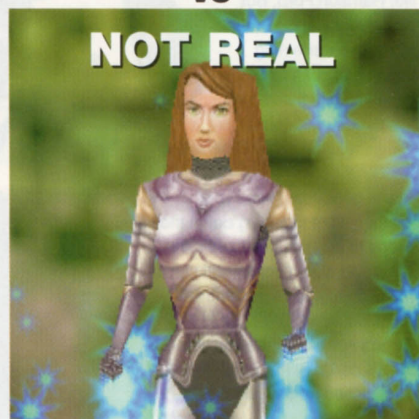
**THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC**

With 50 Grulls each to spend, weapons are bought from the permanent onsite shop, and a brief training session follows in which we are taught to 'pull' our blows, stopping short of actual connection, with just a gentle tap for the last few inches to avoid physical harm. With character classes decided, our first quest awaits: Into The Tomb Of Mithra. Entering the caverns as a group, the task is to defeat the Skeletal Centurian (some bloke in a costume) and his host of minions (teenage boys). Bearing in mind it's pitch dark, I adopt a



**REAL**

**VS**



**NOT REAL**

## HOW REAL IS... EVERQUEST

### WHERE ARE ALL THE RATS?



EverQuest has far less PvP action than live role-playing.

There are a number of similarities with the 'stories' used in live role-playing. However, there's much less player vs player combat than in live role-playing and while we were in the caves fighting for our lives (theoretically speaking) we didn't get to kill any rats.

SCORE



cautious approach, lurking towards the back. The only source of light is a collection of glowsticks, as favoured by early '90s ravers, and by throwing them into the blackness it's possible to forge a path ahead.

When the first attack comes, it's bedlam. Those at the front are slain in a flurry of hit points, with no amount of incantations or rubber maces enough to repel the hostiles. Surveying the carnage on the battlefield, I tend to the sick, nursing them back to health with a baleful lament from the mystical wind instrument. Regrouping, we continue onwards, but danger lurks in the shadows. An unseen foe strikes from behind, catching me on the wrist with a full-strength blow, my assailant barking "two, two, two" as each hit diminishes my health. Resisting the temptation to smack his skull against the

cave wall, I claim to be dead and slope off to respawn.

### LABYRINTHE 1, DIGNITY 0

Lunch is taken on the surface, and it's a bewildered public that witnesses a couple of dozen half-elves, wizards and archmages scoffing burgers and sipping tea, our café visit cruelly coinciding with that of a group of school kids. Back in the bowels



Intrepid adventurers repel an attack.



Korda brandishes the spoils of victory.

of the Earth, people are buying potions, enabling their characters to level up, thus unleashing a new array of skills. It's an absurd business, but the enthusiasm and authenticity can't be faulted, and it's genuinely comical.

The afternoon's quest, Darkness Falls, is a demonic battle against a variety of underworld enemies. Split into groups, attacks come from all sides, and there is even a (misjudged) cameo performance by a pair of camp elves. Deep in the heart of the caves, probably

concern when a grown man is laying into you with a big stick, any notion of 'pulling' blows seemingly left in the briefing.

By this stage, my limited patience is waning. Korda, however, has gone feral, a week of office-bound drudgery clearly being exorcised. Leading daring raids into enemy territory, hacking and slashing his way through the darkness like a man possessed, he is steaming, sweat pouring down his face as he dispatches demons. Facing the end-of-level boss, a Minotaur,

## "The enthusiasm and authenticity can't be faulted"

the scariest thing is the possibility of getting lost, as without help, you would actually die down there. The battles are relentless, and there is some kind of underlying story, although deciphering it is a secondary

it's a fierce contest, but our boy Korda comes good, emerging triumphant with the beast's head, unleashing a primal scream that echoes chillingly throughout the cavern. Afterwards, in the pub, Barry (the man beneath the Minotaur mask) congratulates him as we sink into an alcohol-fuelled haze and fondly recount the day's events. [E]



## SECOND OPINION

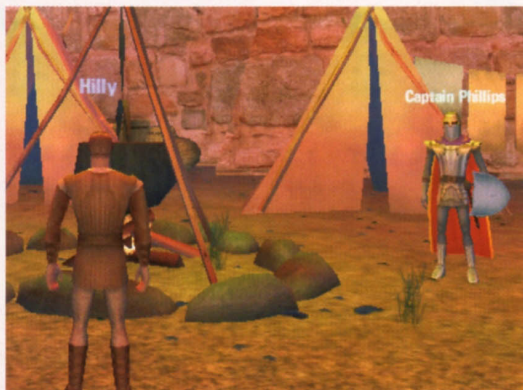
MARTIN KORDA

Geeks. That's what I used to think live role-players were, and to be honest, the idea of dressing up in what can only be described as a Yeti outfit and tapping people gently on the midriff with a foam sword filled me with about as much excitement as watching a *Gardener's World* special on flower pots in the company of train spotting accountants. Not that I'm one for stereotypes you understand.

How wrong I was. Steaming like a boiled vegetable, I emerged from the caves with a real sense of satisfaction. Whether it was the camaraderie I forged with a couple of the other bemused journalists taking part, the de-stressing affect of wading into battle and thwacking (let's just say no one pulled any blows) people with mock weapons, or the satisfaction of seeing Steve Hill playing the recorder while wearing a blue tunic and generally looking like a complete tit is hard to tell. Needless to say, the guys who ran the day weren't geeks, they just enjoy losing themselves in a make-believe world every now and then. So not much different to those of us who like playing computer games, really. [Steady on - Ed.]

## HOW REAL IS... DARK AGE OF CAMELOT: SHROUDED ISLE

### SWORDS AT THE READY



Loads of PvP action. Much like the real thing really.

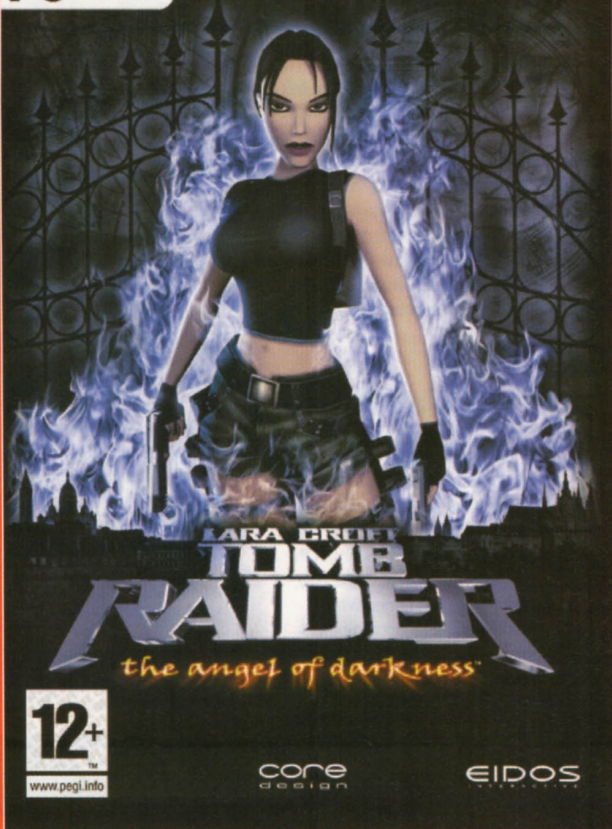
Compared to the murky brownness of *EverQuest*, this is something of a graphical tour de force. The gameplay is also more similar to live role-playing in that there is greater emphasis on PvP action. As Labyrinthine referee Jason says, "There is a little more adrenaline when you're taking on another player because you know it's played by someone else." So there.

SCORE



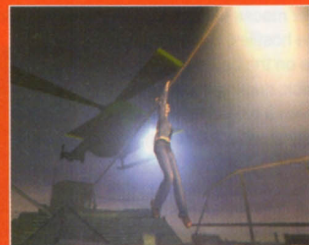
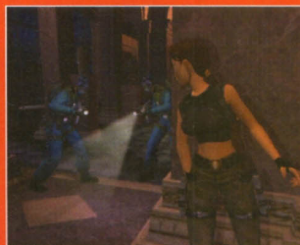
# VIRGIN

PC CD-ROM



## TOMB RAIDER The Angel Of Darkness

This is classic Lara as both hunter and hunted with an edge that has arisen from her dark inner demons. This time she faces more evolved characters and the ability to interact with them. She must traverse an intricately detailed world from the back streets of Paris to the hellish depths of Prague.



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## TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS FOR PC AT VIRGIN MEGASTORES

- This voucher entitles the holder to £5 off Tomb Raider: Angel Of Darkness for PC at Virgin Megastores.
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- Defaced or damaged vouchers will not be accepted.

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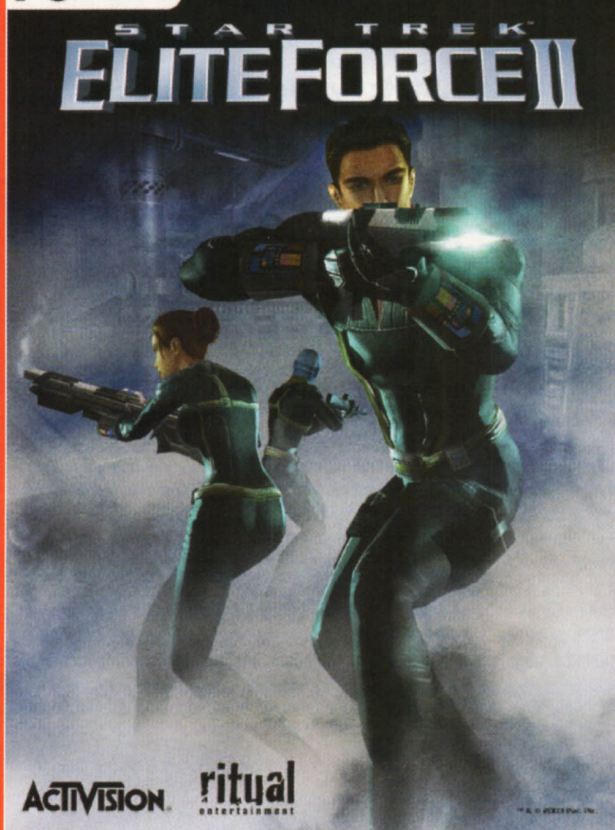
sales asst. initials



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# LOVES

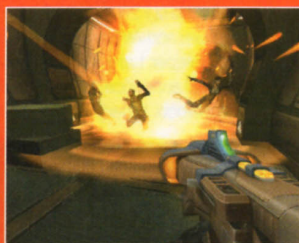
PC CD-ROM



## STAR TREK

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Break out of the confines of ship bulkheads and spacestation corridors to explore all new locations and zero-g environments. Use new and more powerful weapons and branching levels offer a more varied gameplay experience.



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## WHATEVER TURNS YOU ON

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# HARDWARE

ALL THE LATEST NEWS AND REVIEWS FROM THE WORLD OF PC HARDWARE

HERE  
WANDY



■ **HARD WEARING** Phil Wand

▲ No, you're not mistaken, that *is* my ugly mug you are looking at in these very hardware pages. The inimitable Mr Spence has since left to do other things, and it's now up to me to keep you informed of what's going on in the wonderful world of hardware. I shall, of course, make every attempt to keep my finger as firmly on the button as Steve did, but at the same time I'm going to steer away from all the numerical and maddeningly technical aspects, and focus more on how better hardware makes for better gaming.

The video benchmarks will stay, as they're a fine indication of how one range stacks up against another (for example, how the £150 cards compare to the £300 ones), but in all honesty you're splitting hairs when you put two daddies side by side and whip out your tape measure. The difference between a GeForce FX 5900 Ultra and a Radeon 9800 Pro – the Ray Winstone and the Vinnie Jones of video hardware – is simply not apparent when playing today's games, and only a benchmark run at a daunting resolution reveals the differences. Even then, the scores run closer than a kiss.

When technology marches onward at such an incredible rate – compare today's toys with those of just 18 months ago – slight variations in power are neither here nor there. Being old and sensible, I'm far more likely to be swayed by customer support, drivers, build quality, compatibility and stability, and I hope that over time as you continue reading these pages you'll begin to see the wisdom in that.

▼ **“AMD's big hope is the Athlon 64, known as ClawHammer, and due in September”**

## INTEL ALL SET FOR 4GHZ

**New 775-pin chips should be hitting 3.8GHz by this time next year. Can AMD pull anything out of the bag?**

**LOOK AT HOW** chip speeds have doubled over the course of the last 18 months and you'd be forgiven for thinking that processor development has recently hit a brick wall – the big three litre Pentium arrived in November of last year. But to cram in more technology and squeeze out more speed, processor components must first get smaller – because smaller means you can fit more in. Even with the 0.13-micron process now well established, 3GHz or thereabouts seems to be the limit, and 4GHz must surely be a pipe dream?

### DREAM NO MORE

Although this year's Computex exhibition was postponed until September because of SARS, much of the information that would have been handed out at the tradeshow has instead been disseminated online, including a more solid version of Intel's processor roadmap.

First and foremost, the company's 3.2GHz Northwood processor should be in stores towards the end of June. With an 800MHz FSB, expect the performance difference between Pentium and Athlon to widen further, and for AMD's stock to slide deeper. Later in the year, most likely around November, Intel will announce its Prescott core to supersede the current Northwood. Where the Northwood features a 0.13 micron

process, the new Prescott gets smaller still – launching at 3.2GHz and featuring a 0.09-micron process (consider that a single strand of hair is more than 140 microns wide), Intel has promised improved Hyper-Threading, higher-performance, lower-power transistors, high-speed copper interconnects and a new low-k dielectric material. It'll be the first time that all of these technologies have been integrated.

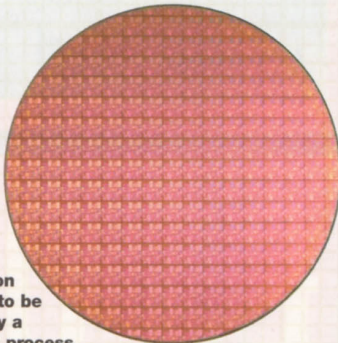
### ALMOST THERE

Towards Christmas we'll see the appearance of a 3.4GHz variant, and early next year the 3.6GHz should tempt people to part with whatever cash that Santa left them. But don't be too hasty. Intel will be launching an all new 775-pin socket for the three Prescott processors in the spring of 2004, and there's a high chance they'll follow it up with a leap at the four gig milestone with a 3.8GHz chip soon after – and just imagine the kind of erection-forming video hardware that will be available to partner it.

To accompany the new chips and new 775-pin sockets, a successor to the Canterwood and Springdale chipsets will appear, known as Grantsdale. With eventual support for a whopping 1.2GHz FSB and Dual DDR2-400/533 SDRAM, the 478-pin 3GHz silicon of today will seem like a distant memory.



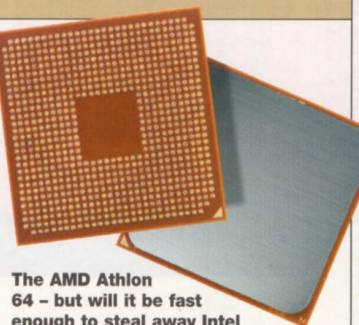
The big Pentium, together with Intel's new 865 chipset. You can expect a great deal more from the company, and from the Pentium 4 brand.



A 0.13-micron wafer, soon to be surpassed by a newer 90nm process.

### AND WHAT OF AMD?

Two years ago, AMD was making bold moves on Intel. Now it seems to be struggling. While high-end Athlon processors are badged 3000+ and 3200+ and are tossed into the same ring as the big Pentium, they clock slower and are outclassed by their hyper-threaded rivals. The company's big hope is the Athlon 64, known internally as ClawHammer, and due for launch in September of this year. Like the 64-bit Opteron processor, expect the chipset to be integrated with the CPU and the bottlenecked data path between them – commonly known as the frontside or system bus – to be eliminated. Crucially, every AMD 64-bit chip will be backwardly compatible with existing x86 32-bit applications. But how it will fare against the new Prescott processors is yet to be seen.



The AMD Athlon 64 – but will it be fast enough to steal away Intel customers?





106

**ZONE BENCHMARKS**  
Check out who's performing



108

**REVIEWS**  
The latest Radeon card



110

**DEAR WANDY**  
Got a problem you can't fix?



114

**BUYER'S GUIDE**  
The best kit, the lowest prices

# DRIVER WATCH

Make a date with your next driver

**FROM THIS MONTH** we'll be including driver release dates to make it easier to spot when you need an update. Driver numbering has always been hopelessly confusing. A link on ATI's site points you to its 'CATALYST RADEON 3.4 (7.88)'. You download 'wxp-w2k-radeon-7-84-030228a1-008040c-efg.exe', and after installing it Windows informs you '6.14.10.6343' is installed.

Okay, so us tech-heads can all work out what it means, but we're simply making the point that version numbering is nigh on totally bewildering for the average user.

## MOTHERBOARDS

MANUFACTURER	NAME	DESC	RELEASED	SIZE	WEB
Intel	INF Update	5.0	14-Mar-03	1.38Mb	support.intel.com
SIS	AGP	1.1.6a	02-Jun-03	5.3Mb	download.sis.com
VIA	Hyperion	4.47	20-May-03	1.31Mb	www.viaarena.com

## GRAPHICS

MANUFACTURER	NAME	DESC	RELEASED	SIZE	WEB
ATI	CATALYST	6.14.10.6343	15-May-03	6.23Mb	www.ati.com
	Control Panels	6.14.10.5006	15-May-03	4.82Mb	www.ati.com
NVIDIA	Detonator FX	44.03	14-May-03	18.8Mb	www.nvidia.com
Matrox	Parhelia	1.04.01.003	05-May-03	8.68Mb	www.matrox.com

## SOUND

MANUFACTURER	NAME	DESC	RELEASED	SIZE	WEB
Creative	Audigy 2 WDM Drivers	DriverPack 3	09-May-03	6.88Mb	uk.europe.creative.com
	Audigy EAX ADVANCED HD Perf	Beta	07-May-03	13.96Mb	uk.europe.creative.com
	SB Live!	AC3 fix	03-Jun-03	2.12Mb	uk.europe.creative.com

# DOUBLE VISION

New Radeon 9800 graphics card has twice the RAM as predecessor

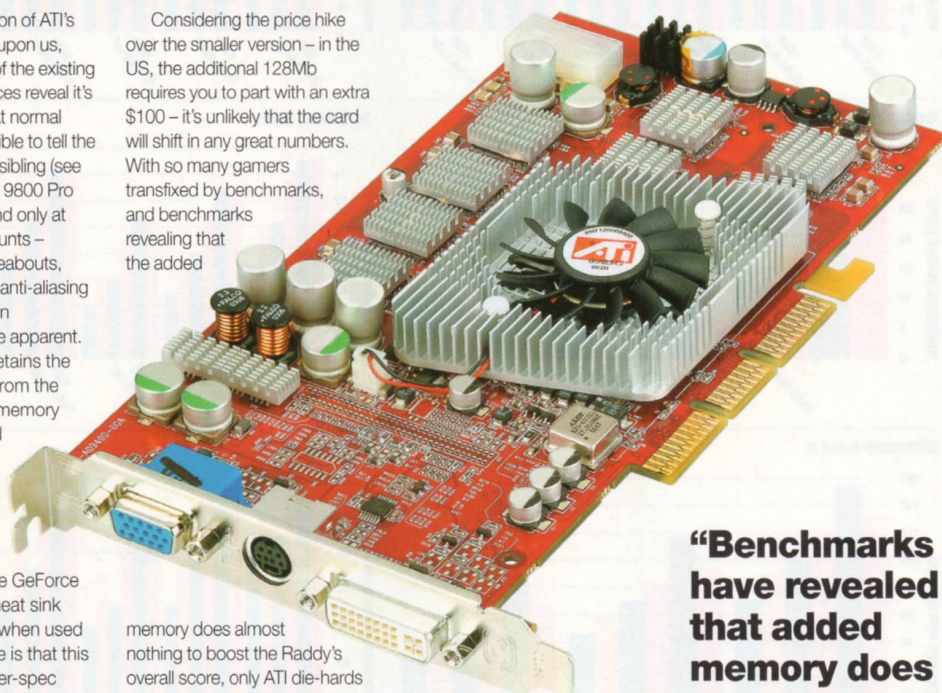
**THE 256MB** version of ATI's Radeon 9800 Pro is upon us, with twice the RAM of the existing model, and first glances reveal it's more fat than phat. At normal resolution it's impossible to tell the card from its 128Mb sibling (see Hercules 3D Prophet 9800 Pro review, page 108), and only at much higher pixel counts – 1600x1200 and thereabouts, with a heavy dose of anti-aliasing – do any differences in performance become apparent.

The newcomer retains the same R350 engine from the 9800, with only the memory clock speed nudged upwards by 10MHz to counter lag from the DDR II RAM (which incidentally suffers the same heat problems as the GeForce FX 5800, the silver heat sink becoming a griddle when used in anger). The upside is that this double dose of higher-spec memory should be ripe for overclockers, with the production card being rev-limited somewhat below its true maximum speed.

Considering the price hike over the smaller version – in the US, the additional 128Mb requires you to part with an extra \$100 – it's unlikely that the card will shift in any great numbers. With so many gamers transfixed by benchmarks, and benchmarks revealing that the added

memory does almost nothing to boost the Raddy's overall score, only ATI die-hards are likely to open their wallets. It's widely known that the company is working on an answer to the GeForce 5900 Ultra, likely to be badged the 9900 Pro, and with

this in mind this latest 9800 should be viewed as a status symbol rather than a symbol of power. Look out for a full review in coming issues.



**“Benchmarks have revealed that added memory does little to boost the Raddy's overall score”**

## SNIPPETS

### RIP-ON BRITAIN

A recent OfTel survey has shown that residential broadband services in the UK are cheaper than equivalent offerings in France, Germany and the US, and that Sweden was the only country on their evaluation chart with a smaller monthly price tag. Where equipment is supplied as part of the package, the UK comes out cheapest – prices have fallen in all countries over recent months bar the US. The full report is available at [www.oftel.gov.uk](http://www.oftel.gov.uk).



### MORE SPEED

If you were sniffing around German overclocking sites last month (and who wasn't?), you'd have noticed several references to the Sapphire Radeon 9600 Pro Fireblade, a special edition card aimed at graphical speed freaks. An increasing number of manufacturers are releasing higher clocking versions of their existing ATI-based products to stay ahead of the equivalent NVIDIA kit. If you're in the market for a Radeon and compare core and memory clock speeds carefully, you could quite literally have yourself a monster deal.



### KEYLESS KEYBOARD

The orbITouch is the world's first combined mouse and keyboard, but without any keys or a mouse. Two domed controllers resembling air hockey paddles are moved in conjunction with one another to produce letters; press the right dome and the cursor moves. The idea is to eliminate finger movement and RSI, and to allow the disabled to get back in front of their PCs. The orbITouch is comfortable and eminently usable



but retails at around £435. More information at [www.keybowl.com](http://www.keybowl.com).

### SUPER HYPER

By the time you read this, Intel will have released its 3.2GHz Pentium 4 and hauled an even bigger lead over rival AMD. The new 0.13 micron, hyper-threaded monster has 512Kb of L2 cache and is 'quad pumped' to an 800MHz system bus speed. Flagship Intel products are prohibitive in their cost compared to the next model down, and although UK prices have yet to be confirmed you can bet that the 3.2 will be reassuringly expensive.

# PCZONE BENCHMARKS

Comprehensive new benchmarks for every new graphics card. Check back each month for updates...

**THE MOST** important aspect of a graphics card is, of course, the chip the board is based around. And the only way to work out if one chip is better than another is to run it through a stringent set of benchmarks. Which is what we've done.

**OUR GUARANTEE**

Because of the subtle differences in today's 3D cards, ensuring we're as accurate as possible is vital if we're going to be able to advise you fairly. Each month we'll update these as and when new cards or drivers are released, to show you which card is the fastest or the best value for money. You'll also be able to see where your card stands in comparison to all the new releases.

**TEST SYSTEM**

There's little point in testing out tomorrow's 3D chips on yesterday's hardware so we've chosen one of the quickest AMD processors out there – the Athlon XP 3000+ with the improved Barton core. By choosing such a cutting-edge chip we can increase the total range of scores and reduce CPU limitation, thus increasing accuracy. The other key area where a GPU can end up bottlenecked by the PC is raw memory bandwidth, to which end we've opted for the ASUS A7N8X, the best nForce2 implementation on the market.

**CONFIGURATION**

The next step is to standardise the method and level to which

boards are tested. Starting at the BIOS, all non-essential hardware is disabled and memory timings are pushed to their limit to maximise bandwidth and give the lowest latencies possible.

Secondly comes the operating system. After installing Windows XP, SP1 is installed, followed by DirectX9. We don't install a graphics driver until the entire system is prepared and imaged, but chipset drivers and USB drivers are rolled on, thus letting us restore a test machine quickly, and more importantly giving us the same software with which to test every new card.

With the OS installed and service packed, optimisations are made, including disabling System Restore, Automatic Updates, sound and networking,

plus little resident programs such as MSN Messenger. Virtual memory is fixed at 2.5x the system's total RAM.

When we're happy the system itself is fully stable and ready for testing, all the benchmark software is installed, patched and prepared for testing with custom ini files and timedemos where necessary.


Finally, the entire windows install plus benchmarks is imaged onto a backup server, providing us with a clean build of our benchmark system as and when we need it.

**BENCHMARKING**

With a system prepared, imaged and tested, it's time to install the first graphics board and driver. As a rule we only use the latest

WHQL certified files as this ensures we're testing with stable and bug-free drivers, though with new kit that isn't always possible. Of course, as soon as WHQL drivers are available we re-test it and adjust scores.

Each benchmark is run at least five times, with each number recorded and the 'spread' or deviation between scores calculated. As long as those five numbers fit within a certain tolerance (1% maximum) then we move onto the next set.

Between tests we restart the benchmark, and we reboot the system between changing resolutions or graphics settings as many games and benchmarks are prone to memory leaking which can throw all the scores askew. 

**BENCHMARKS**

**TEST SYSTEM**

**HARDWARE**

**Processor** AMD Athlon XP 3000+ 'Barton' 2167Mhz with 512Kb L2 cache

**Motherboard** ASUS A7N8X nForce2 Motherboard

**Memory** 512Mb Corsair PC3200 (DDR400 RAM), 2x256Mb DIMM in dual-channel operation

**Hard Drive** Western Digital 120Gb WD1200JB ATA100 hard drive with 8Mb cache, 7200RPM

**Sound** Disabled for all benchmarks

**PLATFORM**

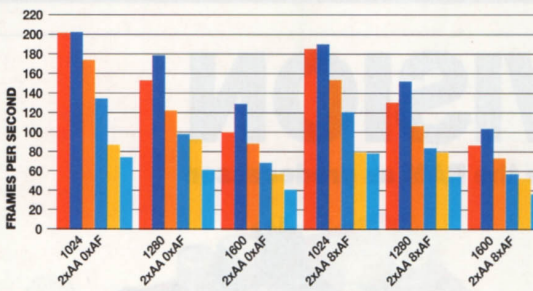
Windows XP Professional Service Pack 1  
DirectX 9

**DRIVERS**

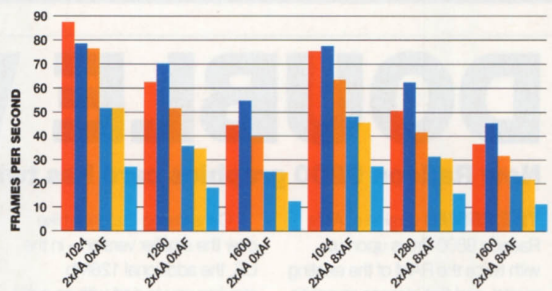
ATI – Catalyst 3.1  
NVIDIA – Detonator 43.45



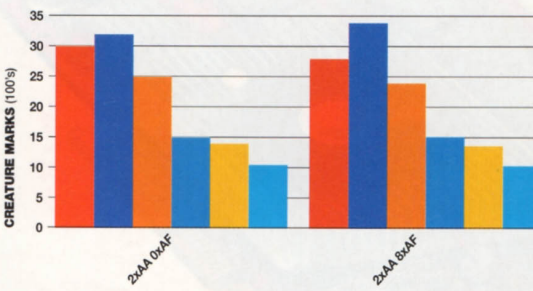
**UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003**



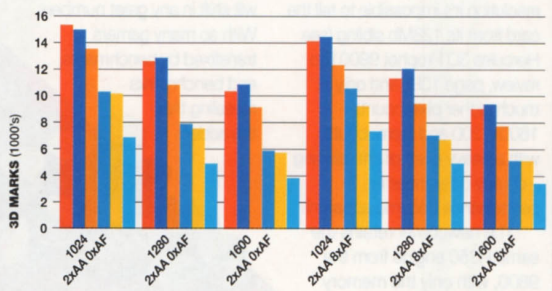
**AQUANOX**



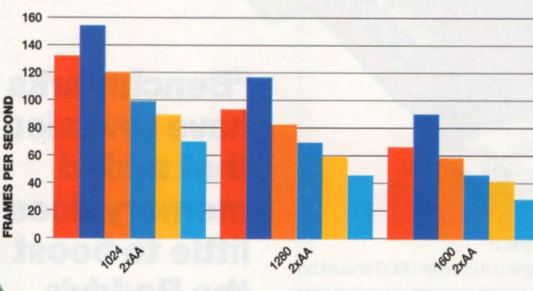
**CODECREATURES**



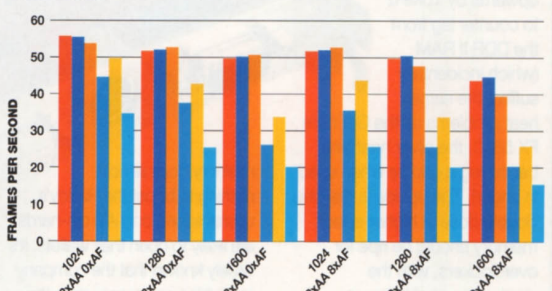
**3DMARK 2001**



**SERIOUS SAM 2**



**COMANCHE 4**



CARD MANUFACTURER	EXPECTED STREET PRICE
Radeon 9800 Pro ATI	£399
GeForce FX 5800 Ultra NVIDIA	£359
Radeon 9700 Pro ATI	£265
GeForce FX 5600 Ultra NVIDIA	£140
Radeon 9500 Pro ATI	£150
GeForce FX 5200 Ultra NVIDIA	£100

(Actual prices could vary on release)



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- ▶ S-ATA, ATX
- ▶ nForce2-SPP/MCP-T, 1394
- ▶ SATA KIT



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#### Gainward GeForce FX 5200

- ▶ 128 MB DDR 5ns
- ▶ AGP, "PRO/660TV-DVI"
- ▶ Tv-Out, Retail



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SONY SKU/Itemnumber: 115689

#### Sony IDE 52x24x52x CD recorder

- ▶ Internal Retail Kit (CRX220A1)
- ▶ Power-Burn for Buffer Underrun Protec.
- ▶ Cache /Buffer Size: 2 MB Input



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Western Digital SKU/Itemnumber: 109593

#### Western Digital Caviar 120 GB IDE

- ▶ Special Edition, 8MB cache WD1200JB
- ▶ Spindle Speed: 7200 RPM
- ▶ Interface type: DMA/ATA-100 (Ultra)

1 GB is defined as 1,000,000,000 bytes with regard to hard drive capacity.



**£325**

Hansol SKU/Itemnumber: 116993

#### Hansol H750 17" LCD

- ▶ Silver version
- ▶ Integrated speakers
- ▶ TCO-99 (standard)



**£129**

Jaz Piper DIGITAL EQUIPMENT SKU/Itemnumber: 115617

#### JazPiper MP3 DVE128U+ player

- ▶ 128 MB, USB
- ▶ MP3 playback, Line-In, id3tag
- ▶ Dig.rec.time: 480min - voice recording



**£450**

Nikon SKU/Itemnumber: 113625

#### Nikon Coolpix 4500 digital camera

- ▶ 4.0 Megapixel, 4x zoom
- ▶ Precise 7,900 step Multi-Area Autofocus
- ▶ Automatic Built-in Pop-up Flash

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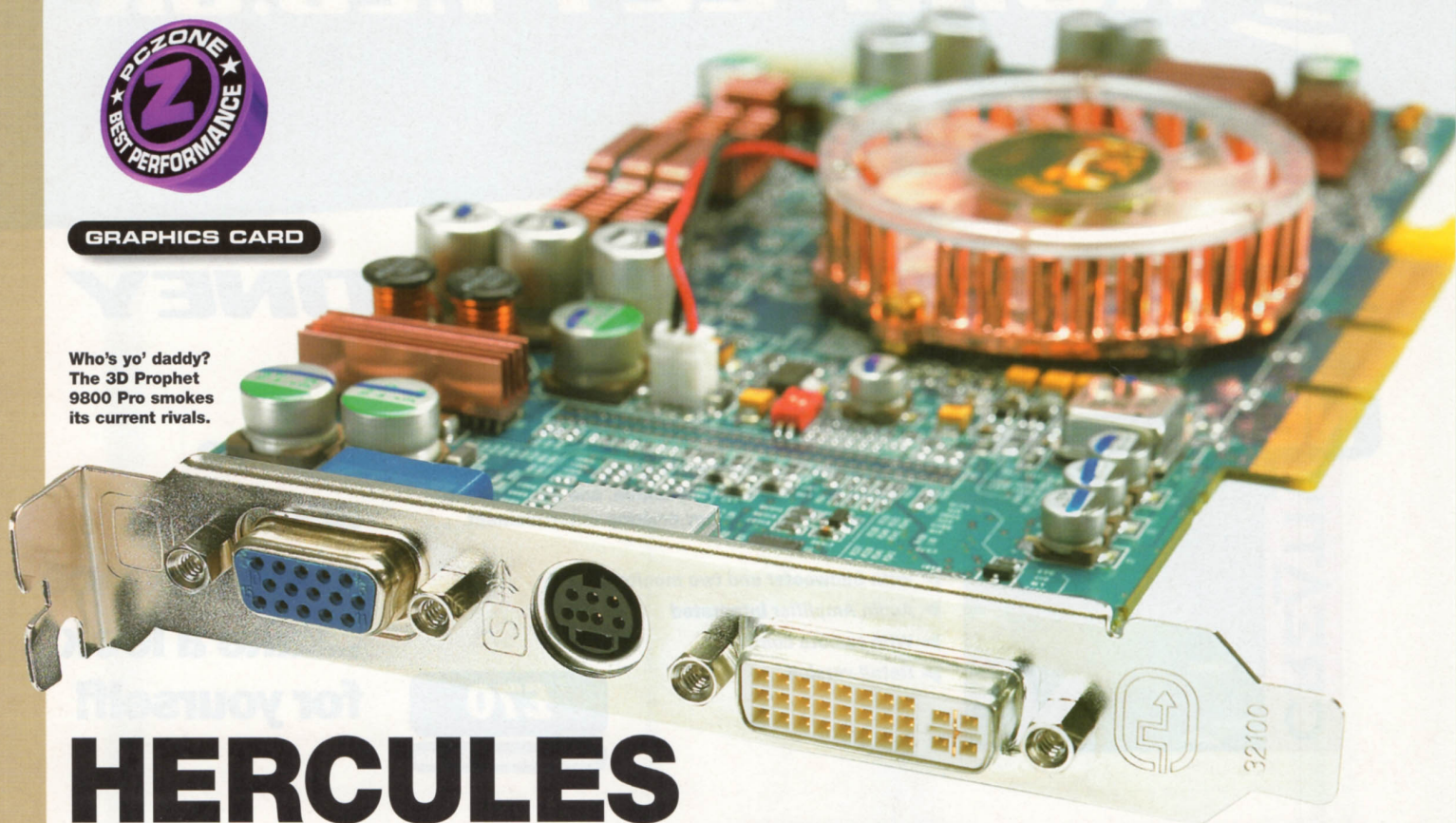
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Prices and specifications are set as estimates at 12:00 GMT 26th May 2003 and will vary.



## GRAPHICS CARD

Who's yo' daddy?  
The 3D Prophet  
9800 Pro smokes  
its current rivals.



# HERCULES 3D PROPHET 9800 PRO

■ Price: £329 | Manufacturer: Hercules | Phone: 0208 665 1881 | [europe.hercules.com](http://europe.hercules.com)

**A powerful card backed up by solid drivers, but how long will it reign supreme?**

**A MILLION** urgent impulses rush around my brain in perilous situations. Dropping a bread knife when naked. Finding wasps inside my crash helmet at 95mph. Installing an ATI card. Until very recently, just a glimpse of that little red logo would make every neurotransmitter in my head short-circuit and overheat. But thanks to a blossoming relationship with a 9700 Pro, I've recently found the same cells now sing lullabies and caress harps. In the same way that a certain Czech company has gone from being the butt of

a million car jokes to one of the more respected manufacturers in the automobile sector, a previously little-known Canadian video chip company (that's ATI, dummass) has wowed everyone with its hardware.

#### HERCULES THE STRONG

The 3D Prophet is one of the more expensive 9800 Pro variants – alternatives from Connect3D and Sapphire are around £15 cheaper – but Hercules furnishes you with *Rainbow Six: Raven Shield* and a copy of PowerDVD. And those of

you with portholes in your cases may be swayed by the fact the copper-laden Prophet comes in a captivating blue, and has an illuminated cooling fan.

ATI's R350 core provides the power behind the 9800 Pro, and is essentially a modified, higher-revving evolution of the R300 which was the heart and soul of the 9700 Pro. The new R350 features a 380MHz core clock and a 340MHz DDR memory clock (compare this with the 325MHz core and 310MHz memory seen in its predecessor) plus tweaked and bumped versions of ATI's key rendering technologies, SMOOTHVISION, HyperZ III and SMARTSHADER.

SMOOTHVISION goes up a notch from 2.0 to 2.1 in the R350, and includes a variety of anti-alias performance improvements. HyperZ III shifts up a gear to HyperZ III+ and boasts time-saving tricks for rendering volume shadows. Finally, SMARTSHADER 2.1 reduces processing times and slims the bandwidth required to render pixels in complex 3D environments.

Put these all together at high resolutions, with the quality

**"ATI has already hinted at releasing new products to coincide with *Half-Life 2* later this year. Why not wait?"**

sliders on maximum, and the naturally faster 9800 Pro will start outperforming its older brother by some margin – our benchmarks suggesting it can be almost a quarter as quick again as the old 9700 Pro.

#### CONCLUSION

If you're in the market for a £300 card, it's likely that you'll scan the competition before making a choice. For the same sort of money you could buy an FX 5800 though the performance hit would be sizable. And assuming you can find a retailer who has the faster-clocking Ultra variant in stock, be prepared to pay a £100 premium for a card that is hotter, bulkier, noisier, yet merely matches rather than beats the pace of the Prophet.

When NVIDIA announced its new 5900, it made every 5800 an instant museum piece – a

card which heralded a new generation of technology for the company, but which ultimately failed to live up to expectations. And so for a brief moment at least, the Radeon 9800 Pro remains the all-round daddy. **PCZ**

#### ANOTHER ANGLE

*Half-Life 2* and *Doom 3* are launched towards the end of the year, and already the PC hardware industry is going damp about the crotch at the thought of the skyrocketing demand for better hardware that these two landmark titles are going to generate. ATI has already hinted at releasing new products to coincide with Gordon Freeman's return. Why not wait?

There's no doubting that this and other 9800s are first-class acts, but early benchmarks from the GeForce FX 5900 Ultra – including our own – have shown that ATI's reign as graphics champ could be over before July. So unless you're building a new PC and need to kick off with a banging card, or have been driven to distraction by low frame rates from antique hardware, there's no point rinsing £300 on the Prophet. Ti4800, 9700 Pro and 9500 Pro owners should certainly hold onto their cash.

Sure, the 9800 Pro is the best buy on the high street right now. But for how long?

#### PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Fast and quiet
- ✓ Cheaper than FX 5800 Ultra
- ✓ Solid driver set
- ✗ FX 5900 Ultra arriving soon
- ✗ Not too expensive, but not cheap either

# 84

**Even if its time at the top is short, it'll still eat your games for dinner**

# AIRSTATION PRO POINT TO POINT

■ Price: £499.99 inc | Manufacturer: Buffalo | Phone: 01753 555000 | [www.buffalo-technology.com](http://www.buffalo-technology.com)

## WIRELESS NETWORKING

**Build a bridge between two networks and share your broadband**

**GOING** wireless with friends and neighbours is a growing trend in the US. Products such as Buffalo's AirStation Pro merge networks in separate buildings by forming a radio 'bridge' between them, thereby allowing users to share files, play games, and connect to a common Internet access point. All you need is one or more PC in each location, the Point-to-Point package, plus an ADSL or cable router for shared broadband.

The Buffalo bundle isn't cheap, but contains everything you need to create a link of up to 11Mbps. It consists of two AirStation units with wallmounts, plus two outdoor YAGI antennae – long, thick and tubular, they look like something from Mrs King Kong's bedside cabinet – together with cables and mounting brackets.

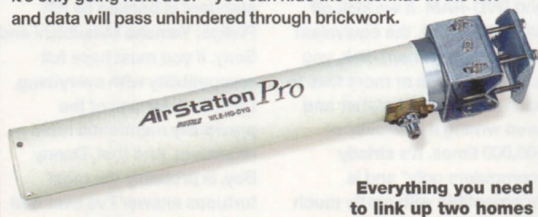
## CONCLUSION

There's not much point going into the complexities of how it works, you just need to know that it does: after messing around with ladders and compasses – the antennae need to be pointed at one another with some accuracy – I now have a wire-free link to someone I know halfway across town. Outside the range of ADSL, he's chuffed that he can use my gateway as though it were his

own. Additionally, anyone with a wireless card and the right encryption key can hop onto my LAN from inside the house or garden – as proof, this article has been brought to you wirelessly from my shed. **PCZ**

## ANOTHER ANGLE

It ain't so expensive. Two broadband connections and you'll be waxing double that number annually and the Point-to-Point kit means you need only one connection to share between a pair of you up to a mile apart. If you don't need the signal to beam far – if it's only going next door – you can hide the antennae in the loft and data will pass unhindered through brickwork.



Everything you need to link up two homes



## PCZONE VERDICT

- ✓ Supreme build quality
- ✓ Comprehensive instructions
- ✓ Works a treat
- ✗ Range drops significantly at higher transfer rates
- ✗ No AP signal meter
- ✗ Quite a big investment

# 83

The future is wireless

# Ghost Master

He has the right equipment to play this game.

Do you?



Look for this seal on the hottest games and NVIDIA® GeForce FX™ hardware: delivering stunning cinematic graphics at blazing speeds.

<http://eu.nvidia.com>



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# DEAR WANDY

Once again it's time for your monthly dose of Wandy's patented Medicinal Compound, refreshing the peripherals other magazines can't reach

■ DOCTOR ON CALL: Phil Wand

## LET IT ALL OUT

Share your techie or gaming-related problems with us, and we, in turn, may well share them with thousands of readers via these very pages in a big communal love-in-type thing. **Write to** Dear Wandy, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD **Email** Address your letters to us at [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk) with the subject heading 'Dear Wandy'. Please note: while we can assure you that we read absolutely every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Sorry.

## LET'S PLAY

**Q** Some friends and I wish to play a number of PC games against each other. However, as we all live in different parts of the UK, it's practically impossible to have any sort of regular LAN party. We all have broadband Internet access and are all using Windows XP. Is it possible for us to set up some sort of network via the Internet so we can have a virtual LAN? If so, how do we do it? If this is not possible on a one on one basis, can we play against each other via broadband modem, or do we need to use dial up modems?

James

**A** You can't connect directly to one another using ADSL and you'll hose a massive amount of time setting up a private network – I'd advise against it for this reason alone. OK, so a VPN does offer some advantages (you'll be able to play older 'LAN only' IPX games, and shared folders means everyone can divvy up their patches and maps) but for home gamers it's really not worth the hassle. Especially as setting up your own Internet server is no big deal. Give your WAN address to your friends, configure your router if you have one, create the game server (in *Half-Life* it's a no-brain, one-click process), and sim sala bim – job done. To find your WAN address, visit [www.whatismyip.com](http://www.whatismyip.com). This is the IP at which your server can be 'seen' and to which friends need to connect in order to play (there are other ways to find it, but this is the quickest). If you're using a router as your gateway to the outside world, you'll need to configure it to forward incoming traffic to whichever machine is running the game (Zyxel owners should set up an SUA Server with default ports). There are

a few caveats here. First, running a server may violate your ISP's Acceptable Use Policy – yes, the odd game can't hurt, but making it a permanent fixture could land you in trouble. Second, whoever hosts the game will need to put in place some hefty security measures – if the game is published to a master list, as is the case by default with *Half-Life*, it'll attract morons to your network like moths to a porch light. Third, even though that 1MB cable service may seem awfully fast, the reality is that the upstream rate is still limited to 256Kbps and so, depending on the game, as few as five people could run you right out of bandwidth. If you want to cater for more players, there are companies who will help you do just that and my advice here would be to rent a server from Jolt – of course. A Jolt Clanserver starts at £50 per month, but split the cost between everyone playing and it suddenly becomes very affordable. Ten quid a month for 24/7 worry-free, private gaming can't be bad. See [www.jolt.co.uk](http://www.jolt.co.uk) for full details.

## DONKEY SANCTUARY

**Q** I have an ageing system that badly needs upgrading. It's a 433MHz Celeron, with 181Mb RAM, an Intel i810 chipset, all running under Windows 98. I also have a Riva TNT2 graphics card which, while updating the drivers, failed on me. Is it worth upgrading and what should I get – or should I just save for a new system?

JB

**A** The easy answer would be to tell you to save for a new system – the hardware you have is working into its retirement where it should really be drawing a pension. But let's get a little inventive here. Replace the TNT2 with

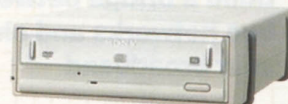
another from eBay – shouldn't cost you more than about £10 – and with a little help from a utility called Tntclk, available from [www.tweak3d.net](http://www.tweak3d.net), you should be able to boost its power output (don't forget to add a cooling fan to the TNT2's heat sink if you feel like going a bit mad). And depending on your motherboard, you may also be able to pump the hertz on that stinking Celeron from 433 up to a nicely stable 550 by using its 6.5 clock multiplier with an 85MHz bus speed. As you may be aware, I don't normally advocate overclocking of this nature and believe in leaving PCs as the maker intended, but in this instance it means that for a mere tenner you have a system that will play games such as *Unreal Tournament* and *Half-Life* at a fairly decent lick. Keep up the saving!

## SECOND DEGREE BURNS

**Q** I have looked about for this information and I hope that you can help me. I'm thinking of buying a DVD-RW burner, but a friend of mine says that there are two formats/standards like VHS and Betamax. First of all is this information correct? And if so, do the DVD burners in PC ZONE's Buyer's Guide cover both formats or just one?

Dan

**A** There are actually six (count 'em) DVD recordable standards, as follows: DVD+R, DVD+RW, DVD-R(A), DVD-R(G), DVD-RW, and DVD-RAM. If we kick off with DVD-RAM, the equivalent of a removable hard disk, you can write 4.7Gb or more files to each side of a £14 platter and keep writing it in excess of 100,000 times. It's strictly "computers only" and is incompatible with pretty much every DVD player out there (eg



The Sony DRX500ULX, one of the so-called DVD+RW multi drives, able to record to different DVD formats.

the one in your lounge). Of all the formats, that is the least confusing to describe and to comprehend; it gets worse hereon in. DVD-R(G), DVD-R(A) and DVD+R, the 'R' standing for 'Record', write data once to £5 disks, which can be read in almost all DVD players. The DVD-RW and DVD+RW alternatives, 'RW meaning 'ReWrite', can burn stuff to £10 disks around 1,000 times (generally speaking, +RW disks are a few shillings less). The 'G' in brackets specifies general usage, and 'A' specifies authoring, with disks around £12 and hardware featuring a higher-grade laser for use by professional types with ponytails and no driving license. The biggest problem is compatibility between all the different formats. Unless you have one of the so-called multi or supermulti recorders, a DVD-R unit won't write a DVD+R disk, and vice versa, and so on and so forth. But in the same way that CD-R compatibility issues have cleared up over the years since its inception, expect to see fewer and fewer problems with DVD. Our Best Buy is a DVD+R/RW writer – the disks it burns should be hot to trot in 90 per cent of DVD players and 70 per cent of DVD drives. It will also read all DVD-R/RW disks and, if you're still unsure, rest assured this most recent standard is backed by HP, Philips, Yamaha Mitsubishi and Sony. If you must have full compatibility with everything DVD, look for one of the previously mentioned multi recorders. And that, Danny Boy, is probably the most tortuous answer I've ever had to give. You bastard.



Wandy reckons he can make an old donkey cool again.

**“Is it worth upgrading and what should I get – or should I just save for a new system?”**

**"I'm tearing my hair out and at this rate I'll be bald in a matter of minutes"**

**AGE OF BOOTING**

**Q** I was reading Dear Wandy issue 129 about Anon who was having problems with his PC, which was taking five minutes to boot up. I too have had problems with XP starting, freezing for ages at the loading screen, then finally getting its act together and getting to the desktop. The problem was caused by a corrupt installation of my NVIDIA GeForce3 Ti200 detonator driver. Once I uninstalled the offending item and reinstalled it, everything was fine. Thought this may be of help.

*Rich*

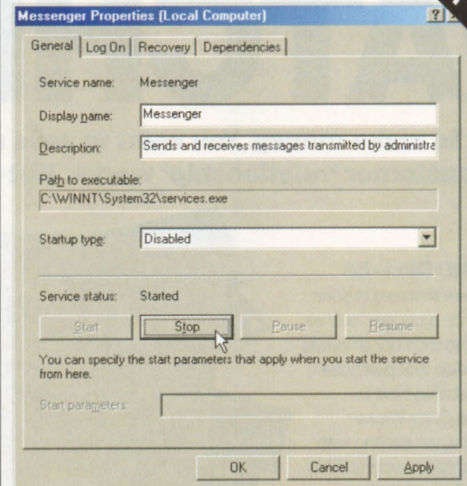
**A** Other people's experiences can often light a bulb over the heads of anyone with a similar problem, so thanks for taking the time to write. You actually reminded me of some grief I had recently when putting together a new PC. Specification wise it's not that exciting, a second-hand 1.5GHz Pentium 4 on an Intel motherboard, 256Mb RAM, and a poeey Matrox G4 video card I found sulking in one of my cupboards (I'm using it right now and, truth be told, it's just dandy as long as you stick to *Revers*). The trouble was that it was stalling at the BIOS POST screen, just after switching on but before

kicking off Windows. Where you'd normally expect a quick beep followed by the Microsoft logo and that crappy-looking progress bar, I was stuck looking at blazing white text on a black screen for longer than was healthy. The impatient among you would have stabbed the reset button, then once more, and again for luck, turned the thing off and back on again, tap, tap, tapped on the keyboard, repeating this loop until your index finger got sore. Being older, uglier and wiser, I sat there and watched it. A barely audible chirp from my hard drive just before it launched into action told me there was something kooky with my IDE chain. Strange, because both hard disks were detected by the BIOS, both were brand spanking new, and Windows – once it appeared – raised no objections while reading and writing to them. I whipped off the lid and, lo and behold, the drives had their master/slave assignments incorrectly set (yes, even Uncle Wandy can be daft every so often). After lifting across a few jumpers and opting for CS – short for Cable Select, where the connection of the drive on the IDE cable determines its status – the machine was whipping through its POST at

**WANDY'S TOP TIP**

**£50 WINNER**

**POP-UP STOPPER**



**Stopping the Messenger service is the simplest to stop pop-up spam. But the problem runs deeper.**

Windows NT, 2000 and XP users have been getting unsolicited pop-up windows displaying spam messages. They look like real Windows error boxes and they really piss me off. I'm sure they really piss a load of people off – especially as they activate when playing games or at any other inconvenient moments! I'd love to slap the person who put them into Windows XP! If this happens, someone has sent a message to your system via the Windows system messenger service (not the same as MSN Messenger). Turning off the messenger service will help prevent this kind of thing from happening. Here is how to disable the messenger service: In Windows 2000 Professional and XP, click the "Start" button and select "Run". Type services.msc and press Enter. When the service dialog appears, right-click the "Messenger" entry and select "Properties" from the menu. Click the "Stop" button to stop it, and set "Startup type" to "Disabled". Bingo! Busted them annoying Ads! I'm sure this will make a lot of people happy if you print it!

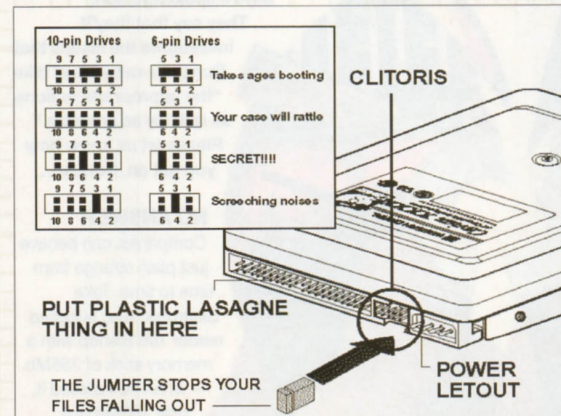
*Paul Knight*

Wandy says: The pop-ups to which Paul is referring are a serious nuisance. But let's not forget the real reason they're there: your Internet connection isn't secure. Stopping the Messenger service will indeed rid your desktop of them for good, and is worthy of this month's £50 note, but you'll need a software or, preferably, a hardware firewall to stop the inbound NetBIOS and UDP broadcasts hitting your machine in the first place. Those of you using Windows XP with Service Pack 1 may not know that you already have a Microsoft firewall available to you, which is known as Internet Connection Firewall or ICF for short. To learn how to set it up, click Start, then Help, and type ICF into the search box. For your reference, the Messenger service uses UDP ports 135, 137, and 138, TCP ports 135, 139, and 445, and a single, short-lived port number higher than 1024. More information is available in the support section of the Microsoft website.

Send in your Top Tip to Dear Wandy and win yourself £50.

a healthy rate. So after looking at his driver install, perhaps the beleaguered Anon from a few issues back may also like to check the jumper settings of his hard drives? CS seems to be the default setting on every new HDD I buy, but it's still worth a look.

Visit Dear Wandy online at [www.dearwandy.com](http://www.dearwandy.com)

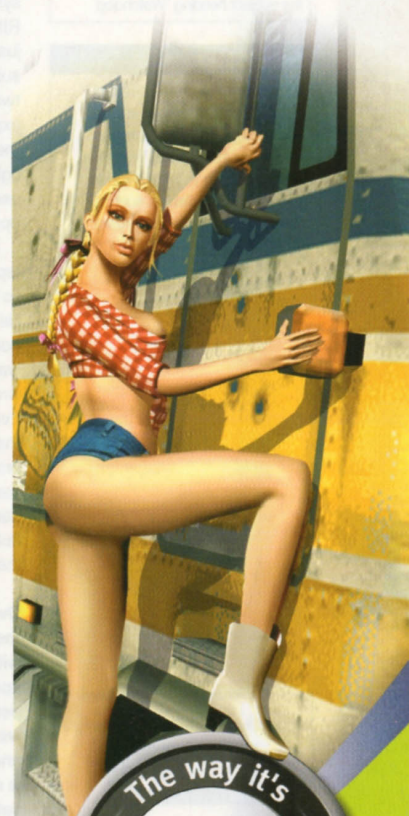


Always read the instructions that accompany your hard disk.



**She has the right equipment to play this game.**

**Do you?**



Look for this seal on the hottest games and NVIDIA® GeForce FX™ hardware: delivering stunning cinematic graphics at blazing speeds.

<http://eu.nvidia.com>



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# WATCHDOG

**They want to make money. You want to save money. And most of the time, this company/customer 'relationship' works. But when it doesn't, best drop us a line...**

■ **WRITING THE WRONGS** Adam Phillips

## ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Don't worry – we're here to help when you've reached the end of your tether. If you have a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line.

**WRITE TO** Watchdog, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 4JD

**EMAIL** Alternatively, email us at [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk) with the subject heading 'Watchdog'

## READ ME!

If you are writing in to complain about a product, please supply us with your full name, address and **contact number**. With PCs, make sure that you also include all **purchasing details** such as reference and invoice numbers.

## DUMB AND DELL-ER

Installing new memory in your laptop can be a bugger. You've got to get the memory amounts spot on or else that purchase can end up being next to useless – as Chris Wicks discovered when dealing with Dell. He wanted to upgrade his Dell laptop from 128Mb to 256Mb to soup things up.

Chris was told by Dell that his system had a single 128Mb RIMM so he'd need another one just like it: "A little later, I was suspicious that I actually had two 64Mb DIMMs in the laptop," explains Chris. "So I opened up the back, and sure enough, I was right. The 128Mb chip would be useless, as I'd only be able to upgrade to 192Mb."

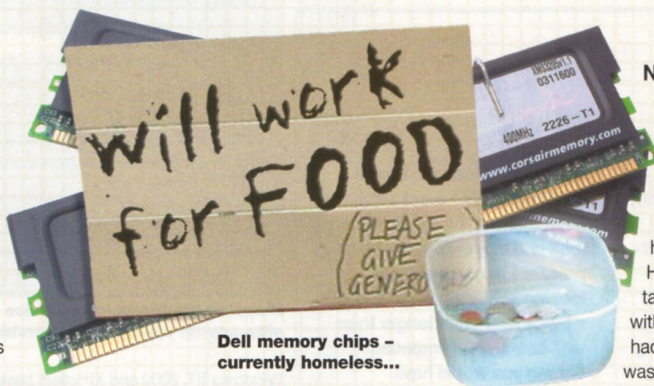
Chris finally got hold of the rep he had originally spoken to so he could explain the situation. He was told that the order couldn't be cancelled and that it was his fault for ordering the wrong stuff in the first place. Eventually though, Dell did say that once Chris had received the order, they would despatch a carrier to pick it up and take it back. The memory duly arrived but now Chris can't get hold of the rep to sort out a pick-up time.

**Over to Dell who told us that they have been in touch with you, Chris, and have apologised for the error: "As per the customer's request, we have arranged a refund and we believe that the issue is now resolved to the full satisfaction of the customer," says a spokesperson for the company.**

**This is all good news but why did our Chris have such hassles getting the issue resolved in the first place? No explanation was forthcoming...**

## ELECTRONIC ASS

Well, as far as company responses go, this is a new one for Watchdog. Let us explain. John D'Arcy dropped us a line about *Battlefield 1942*, which he'd understandably been enjoying for a few weeks before



**Dell memory chips – currently homeless...**

he bought himself a new hard drive. John went to reinstall the game only to notice two small cracks in the centre of the underside of disk two.

He thought he would drop EA a line to get a new replacement disk under warranty. "They told me I would have to pay £7 to replace the CD because they believed it was user damaged," explains John. "I tried to explain to them that I'm 50 years old, have no children and am the only person using the PC so it was in no way user damaged."

But EA was having none of it. So John decided to use disk one to play the game for a further two months but cracks have appeared on that disk as well: "I've checked all my other CDs and find no problems with any of them so I find it hard to believe it's a CD-ROM problem."

John has subsequently found that he needs to reinstall the game but can't because of the CDs and he's given up on EA. Well, it's hardly a massive issue and one

easily resolved – perhaps the disks are dodgy or perhaps they don't like John's CD drive (or vice versa).

**Whatever the case, we thought our buds at EA would make like Logitech (see Saints Not Sinners) and simply offer a replacement as a gesture of goodwill. Instead we received the following from a spokesperson for the company: "I'm sorry to say that we are unable to provide a response on this occasion."**

**That's a first. We know it's a small issue (only £14 worth at most) and not particularly monumental by any stretch of the imagination, but we're genuinely perplexed by EA's lack of response or goodwill gesture. Perhaps after they read this John, their attitude might change. We'll see...**

## NIL-TEL

Ah, good old broadband. It feels like the joys of fast Net access are constantly taking one step forward and two steps back whenever Watchdog hears about it. Take Duncan Hartree, who decided to take the plunge and sign up with BT via One.Tel. "I have had nothing but trouble since I was first connected on March 13," fumes Duncan. "I have only been able to receive service for about seven days."

Over the course of nearly three weeks, he's had three BT engineers checking his home line and the exchange, made more than 20 phone calls, wasted countless hours and still doesn't have proper broadband access. Duncan's formally written twice to One.Tel but both endeavours have gone unanswered. Like his phone calls pretty much: "I feel like I am trapped between the two big corporations – neither one of which is particularly interested in getting my case sorted," rages Duncan.

**Off to One.Tel who got back to us sharpish with the following: "We are extremely sorry to hear of the inconvenience that this customer has experienced, as we pride ourselves on offering a high quality of service across all the products we provide and this extends to that provided by a third party as in this instance," says a spokesperson.**

**They say that they'll investigate the issues that Duncan's raised and take "the appropriate actions as quickly as possible." Please let us know how you get on, Duncan...**

## NO ANSWER

Companies can behave just plain strange from time to time. Take Skytronik, who supplied reader Tim Bishop with a memory stick of 256Mb – when he installed it, only 166Mb of it reported to the



**A great online game – for those with working CDs...**

## THE ACCUSED



**GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT**



## SAINTS NOT SINNERS

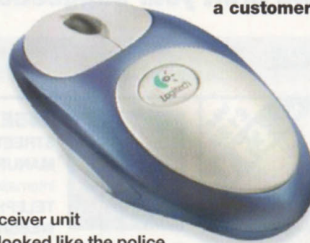
Logitech

### ▲ THEY EXIST. THEY REALLY DO. COMPANIES THAT WANT TO MAKE YOUR CONSUMER LIFE A HAPPIER PLACE. GAWD BLESS 'EM...

Adrian Walton's glowing testimony of Logitech is enough to turn a cynic into an idealist in a single read. He popped along to a police auction and managed to entrap himself a secondhand Logitech Cordless Keyboard and Cordless Mouseman Optical for a mere £8.

**Logitech offers excellent customer support. Even if you're not strictly a customer...**

"There was no receiver unit and I was left with a very large paperweight," explains Adrian. "I contacted Logitech's customer support mentioning my predicament. I mentioned that I was quite willing to buy a receiver unit and software, if they could direct me to a site where I could purchase the aforementioned items."



No, said the company, they couldn't – the receiver unit was not available to buy separately. Oh dear, it looked like the police had pulled a fast one on Adrian. But then came the shock – Logitech offered Adrian a free receiver unit and software... as a gesture of goodwill.

▼ Blimey, Adrian's understandably chuffed. And we're understandably impressed.

BIOS. So our Tim rightly thought something was up with it. He promptly returned the stick to Skytronik who then informed him that there was nought wrong with the memory.

No problem, thought Tim: "I said I wanted a refund anyway as I'd returned the product within the seven day 'cooling off' period from the distance selling regulations. I was then promised a refund. It hasn't arrived."

He's tried phoning the company every month for the past two years but "keeps getting fobbed off. I wrote them a letter threatening legal action but received no response," explains an exasperated Tim. "Please, as a student who has very little money, the £47 I paid for this product – which I don't even have – would come in extremely handy."

Well, fair enough, we thought and we contacted Skytronik who said to pass the complaint on to them via e-mail. We have subsequently heard absolutely nothing back from the company – despite reminding them about the complaint...

So we're hoping that once Skytronik gets round to reading this, they might come back with some positive news. We'll keep you informed.

that the issue is not with the PSU but the supplied sub woofer: "This is because the power supplied with the 6700 is 'intelligent', and the sub woofer can tell it to turn down when not being used," explains Aron. "But a bad batch of sub woofers meant it was being told to do it when they shouldn't be – hence the loud pop."

**Aron has since received a new sub woofer from Creative Labs and everything is now happy with his set-up.**



**Tim just doesn't have the money to burn.**

### TISCALI TEMPER

Sometimes some of you guys and gals like to write in just to get things off your chest. You're not expecting a result or gesture of goodwill from anyone. You just want to

Mike's first thought was 'fair enough' – he'd been expecting a large bill that covered the modem, connection fee and monthly fee but then things are never quite that simple: "What irks me is that just one week prior to receiving the bill, I'd received an e-mail telling me to 'sign up now for broadband and receive a free modem and connection,'" fumes Mike. "I find these offers deeply offensive as they are nothing more than a slap in the face to customers who have shown loyalty and stuck with what they know."

Of course Mike rang Tiscali to let them know of his outrage and was told, as he expected, that it was 'tough luck and these offers come and go.' "I just thought others might like to be aware of my predicament and consider haggling for the best deal, because taking what is on offer will very likely leave you feeling short changed," says Mike.

## "I feel like I am trapped between the two big corporations – neither of which is particularly interested in getting my case sorted"

**DUNCAN HARTREE IS NONE TOO HAPPY WITH BT AND ONE.TEL**

### CREATIVE LABS UPDATE

You may recall the problem some readers were having with their Creative Lab 6700 speaker sets that were making nasty popping sounds from time to time. It was traced back to the power supply, which Creative Labs has subsequently been replacing for all customers affected by the problem.

Reader Aron Mockford though claims to have been told by a tech guy at the company

have your say and have it... now!

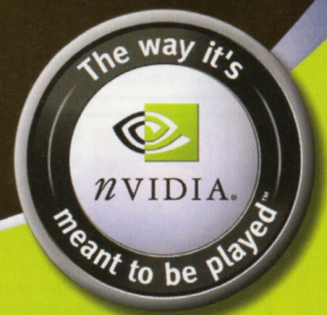
Mike Agar is one such 'chest beater'. He's utterly hacked off at Tiscali who he's been signed up with for the past five years: "At the start of January this year, I took the plunge and went for 500K broadband," Mike explains. "I must say I was up and running within a week of placing my order and have had no problems – until the bill arrived for £111."

We agree with the above – it's always worth making that extra effort to hunt down the best deal possible. And more importantly, companies really do need to reward the long-standing loyalty of their punters. We dropped Tiscali a line but there's been no comment from them so far. Perhaps, Mike, you should change your ISP as soon as those ISP contractual obligations will let you... [X2]

# CHASER

He has the right equipment to play this game.

Do you?



Look for this seal on the hottest games and NVIDIA® GeForce FX™ hardware: delivering stunning cinematic graphics at blazing speeds.

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# BUYER'S GUIDE


We've performed massive surgery on our Buyer's Guide to give you an even clearer picture of what makes up the dream games machine. We've got three categories for each component, giving you the **Best Performer, the Best Buy and the Best Budget.** If you think we've got something wrong, email us at [letters@pczone.co.uk](mailto:letters@pczone.co.uk), and if we print your suggestion we'll give you a GeForce 4 card from Gainward

**BEST PERFORMANCE**

**BEST BUY**

**BEST BUDGET**

INTEL MOTHERBOARD	 <p><b>P4T-533C</b> STREET PRICE £111 MANUFACTURER ASUS TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.asus.com">www.asus.com</a></p> <p>Following the success of its Intel-850-based P4T, ASUS release a revision based on the i850e chipset for the new 533MHz FSB Pentium 4s. With support for PC1066 RAMBUS and AGP4x, the P4T-533 manages to stand head and shoulders above the competition thanks to clever board design and high-quality components. If you have to have the best then you have to have this.</p> <p><b>WAS £123</b> <b>NOW £111</b></p>	 <p><b>845E MAX2-BLR</b> STREET PRICE £98 MANUFACTURER Microstar International TELEPHONE 020 8813 6688 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.msi.com.tw">www.msi.com.tw</a></p> <p>The Max2-BLR from MSI is one of the most rounded Intel 845E packages we've seen. Based on the newest revision of the DDR-supporting chipset for the latest 533MHz FSB chips, MSI has brought in some clever extras including onboard 5.1 sound. The addition of Bluetooth allows wireless connectivity to enabled gadgets, plus readiness for a range of peripherals.</p> <p><b>WAS £112</b> <b>NOW £98</b></p>	 <p><b>GA-8IEX</b> STREET PRICE £91.64 MANUFACTURER Gigabyte TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.gbt-tech.co.uk">www.gbt-tech.co.uk</a></p> <p>Just because you're working to a tight budget, don't think you have to settle for second best. If you're after an entry-level Pentium 4 then you could do worse than check out the excellent GA-8IEX from Gigabyte. Along with support for the new 500MHz FSB chips and DDR memories comes integrated Creative 5.1 sound and 10/100 network plus six USB2.0. For less than £100 you can't do better.</p> <p><b>WAS £98</b> <b>NOW £91</b></p>
	 <p><b>PENTIUM 4 3.06GHZ (WITH HYPERTHREADING)</b> STREET PRICE £338 MANUFACTURER Intel TELEPHONE 01793 403 000 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.intel.co.uk">www.intel.co.uk</a></p> <p>As the first CPU to break the 3GHz barrier we knew this 3066MHz chip from Intel would be fast. Incorporating a new technology - Hyperthreading - these new CPUs are capable of running like a dual-processor set-up, taking multitasking performance and responsiveness to whole new levels.</p> <p><b>WAS £459</b> <b>NOW £338</b></p>	 <p><b>PENTIUM 4 'A' 2GHZ</b> STREET PRICE £149 MANUFACTURER Intel TELEPHONE 01793 403 000 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.intel.co.uk">www.intel.co.uk</a></p> <p>Pentium 4 'A' (or the 'Northwood' core as it's known) has doubled the cache of the previous-generation chips. Based on a 400MHz bus, the 2GHz chip is compatible with any of the i845/e i850/e motherboards and would be more than respectable in any gaming system. Look at the price difference between this and the top-end Intel chip on the left. Frightening isn't it?</p> <p><b>WAS £159</b> <b>NOW £149</b></p>	 <p><b>CELERON 1.8GHZ</b> STREET PRICE £56.99 MANUFACTURER Intel TELEPHONE 01793 403 000 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.intel.co.uk">www.intel.co.uk</a></p> <p>With a quarter the cache of the newest Pentium 4s, the Celeron 1800MHz may not seem like it has the necessary guts for a decent gaming system but nothing could be further from the truth. At entry level these chips are a cost-effective way of getting an i845e/i850e system together, which can be upgraded to P4 later simply by swapping chips. It's a brilliant compromise solution.</p> <p><b>WAS £61</b> <b>NOW £57</b></p>
	 <p><b>ASUS A7N8X</b> STREET PRICE £97.50 MANUFACTURER ASUS TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.asus.com">www.asus.com</a></p> <p>It's been a long time coming but everything good is worth the wait and finally we've got our hands on the nForce 2 in the form of the A7N8X from ASUS. Bringing everything NVIDIA has promised including DualDDR DDR400, AGP8X, dual LAN, Firewire, USB2.0 and other added goodies such as Serial-ATA, this new board sits numero uno thanks to an excellent feature set and blistering performance.</p> <p><b>WAS £118</b> <b>NOW £98</b></p>	 <p><b>K7N420PRO</b> STREET PRICE £83.42 MANUFACTURER Microstar International TELEPHONE 020 8813 6688 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.msi.com.tw">www.msi.com.tw</a></p> <p>As the top nForce board, the K7N420Pro from MSI beat every KT266/266A offering we put it against. Add to the great performance an integrated GeForce2MX graphics chip plus separate AGP 4x slot, 100Mbit LAN, integrated 5.1 sound, and you'll agree it's perfect for seasoned enthusiasts and first-time gamers alike. Watch out for the nForce 2 boards, arriving next month though.</p> <p><b>WAS £98</b> <b>NOW £83</b></p>	 <p><b>GA-7TXH</b> STREET PRICE £83 MANUFACTURER Gigabyte TELEPHONE 01908 362 700 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.gbt-tech.co.uk">www.gbt-tech.co.uk</a></p> <p>Usurps another great Gigabyte board - this one is a fantastic Via KT266A-based DDR solution. Integrated are both 10/100 LAN and four-channel audio from Creative, which is plenty good enough for gamers. In testing it proved stable and among the faster DDR266 boards for Athlon. A complete bargain if you're looking to build a cheap system around an AMD processor.</p> <p><b>WAS £98</b> <b>NOW £83</b></p>
 <p><b>ATHLON XP 3000+ 'BARTON'</b> STREET PRICE £242 MANUFACTURER AMD TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.amd.com">www.amd.com</a></p> <p>Hot on the heels of Intel's top 3GHz part comes the Athlon XP 3000+ 'Barton' from AMD. With an improved core featuring 512Kb of cache, the new chips operate at a slightly lower frequency to the Thoroughbred B stepping. However, with double the L2 memories of their predecessors the new chips are the fastest AMD have produced.</p> <p><b>WAS £458</b> <b>NOW £242</b></p>	 <p><b>ATHLONXP 2200+</b> STREET PRICE £59.60 MANUFACTURER AMD TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.amd.com/gb-uk">www.amd.com/gb-uk</a></p> <p>Running at 1.866GHz, the 2200+ AthlonXP is the quickest of AMD's original AthlonXP chips. Boasting both Quantispeed and 3DNow! Architectures plus fast cache and a 266MHz bus speed, most existing Athlon motherboards will support it out of the box. In terms of bang for your buck this provides the best middle-ground solution for gaming that money can buy.</p> <p><b>WAS £62</b> <b>NOW £60</b></p>	 <p><b>ATHLONXP 2000+</b> STREET PRICE £49.50 MANUFACTURER AMD TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.amd.com/gb-uk">www.amd.com/gb-uk</a></p> <p>Low-end Pentium 4s and AthlonXP are now getting so cheap they rival the Durons and Celerons of this world - and that's exactly what we have here. AMD has traditionally been the cheaper of the two processor giants, and the AthlonXP 2000+ (top-end equipment not so long ago), is still a bargain even though the price has recently gone up.</p> <p><b>WAS £55</b> <b>NOW £50</b></p>	
 <p><b>WD1200JB 120GB</b> STREET PRICE £100 MANUFACTURER Western Digital TELEPHONE N/A WEBSITE <a href="http://www.wdc.com">www.wdc.com</a></p> <p>With your game and media collections growing every day - some game installs use more than 2Gb of your precious storage - what you need is a really big, fast hard drive and that's exactly what Western Digital deliver with the WD1200JB. 8Mb of cache and spin speeds of 7200RPM mean that this 120Gb beast thrashes all competition beating a large proportion of SCSI drives too.</p> <p><b>WAS £115</b> <b>NOW £100</b></p>	 <p><b>BARRACUDA ATA IV 60GB</b> STREET PRICE £67.50 MANUFACTURER Seagate TELEPHONE 01628 890 366 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.seagate.com">www.seagate.com</a></p> <p>An old favourite at PC ZONE, the Barracuda ATA IV is packed full of clever technology, which allows this 60Gb beastie to spin at the heady heights of 7,200RPM while sounding much less obtrusive than many 5,400RPM units. Don't underestimate the difference this can make. If you're still struggling with space this could well be worth a dip.</p> <p><b>WAS £75</b> <b>NOW £67</b></p>	 <p><b>U SERIES 6 40GB</b> STREET PRICE £64 MANUFACTURER Seagate TELEPHONE 01628 890 366 WEBSITE <a href="http://www.seagate.com">www.seagate.com</a></p> <p>The U Series 5 drives are now pretty much unavailable, and find themselves replaced in the hallowed PC ZONE Buyer's Guide pages by its younger brother the Series 6. With the same specs as the Series 5 these new drives run even quieter and cooler than before, and provide what must be considered the minimum amount of storage space for any self-respecting gaming system.</p> <p><b>WAS £70</b> <b>NOW £64</b></p>	

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**DVDRW228**  
**STREET PRICE** £122  
**MANUFACTURER** Philips  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0101  
**WEBSITE** www.philips.co.uk  
 If you're looking for a flexible and future-proof bit of removable storage, this is the box to plump for. It has DVD+RW and DVD+R capabilities, which provide you with up to 4.7Gb of space per disc from a 22 minute burn. It can also handle CDR/RW at 12x and 10x respectively, and the IDE installation is a doddle. It's recently halved in price and as a competent performer and all-rounder, it does the job brilliantly.

**WAS £226**  
**NOW £122**



**CRW3200E-VK**  
**STREET PRICE** £86.94  
**MANUFACTURER** Yamaha  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** www.yamaha-europe.com  
 It might not be as fast as the Plextor drive but this is still a superb buy. Yamaha has consistently been praised for making great long-lasting CD-RW drives, and the 3200 is the companies' current range-topper. The overall bundle is excellent but we particularly love its Audiomaster burning mode for cutting high-quality audio CDs – and we're sure you will too. A veritable bargain if ever we saw one.



**40X12X48 CDRW**  
**STREET PRICE** £45.82  
**MANUFACTURER** LiteOn  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** www.liteonit.com  
 The LiteOn 40x12x48 offers stunning value for money, costing slightly more than many standard CD-ROM drives. While maybe not as feature-packed as the Plextor and Yamaha it does have a few tricks up its sleeve, including Smart-Burn – a technology which assesses media quality and adjusts burn speeds to reduce coaster ratio. The best low-cost drive that money can buy.

**CD REWRITER**



**HERCULES 3D PROPHECY 9800 PRO 128MB**  
**STREET PRICE** £329  
**MANUFACTURER** Hercules  
**TELEPHONE** 020 8665 1881  
**WEBSITE** europe.hercules.com  
 ATI and NVIDIA are constantly pushing new cards and fighting over the top performance slot. This is the latest and although it's the fastest money can buy, supported by solid drivers, it's a serious outlay, especially as new cards are going to be on sale to coincide with the release of *Half-Life 2* in September.

**NEW ENTRY**



**VERTO TI4200 64MB**  
**STREET PRICE** £82  
**MANUFACTURER** PNY  
**TELEPHONE** 01256 338 609  
**WEBSITE** www.pny-europe.com/uk  
 The Verto TI4200 64Mb GeForce4 from PNY is a relatively late arrival. Coming within 20 per cent of TI4600 in many benchmarks, but costing up to half the price, it has all of the features of the quicker GPU without the dent in your wallet. Overall, we think this is the best solution if you're looking to future-proof your system without spending a ridiculous amount of cash along the way.

**WAS £88**  
**NOW £82**



**EXCALIBUR RADEON 9000 PRO**  
**STREET PRICE** £65.99  
**MANUFACTURER** HiTech  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** www.hitech.com.hk  
 The Excalibur Radeon 9000 Pro may not be the fastest DirectX8.1 board but it's certainly the cheapest. Coming in at well under the price of the equivalent Hercules board, it sports ATI's new mainstream GPU and 64Mb of 275Mhz DDR (500Mhz). This HiTech board is a great step-up to playing shader-dominated games for the budget-conscious.

**WAS £83**  
**NOW £66**

**GRAPHICS CARD**



**AUDIGY 2 PLATINUM EX**  
**STREET PRICE** £167  
**MANUFACTURER** Creative  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** www.amd.com  
 The new Audigy 2 Platinum eX is a slight departure for Creative in that it's engineered a new card for its top-end product. With all the features of the mainstream Audigy2 product including 6.1 sound and DVD-Audio, a more extigy-styled breakout box plus a strong composition bundle Creative has created a product which is fantastic for both die-hard audiophiles and gamers.

**WAS £174**  
**NOW £167**




**AUDIGY2**  
**STREET PRICE** £85.50  
**MANUFACTURER** Creative Labs  
**TELEPHONE** N/A  
**WEBSITE** www.europe.creative.com  
 The original Sound Blaster Audigy sat in this slot from the day it arrived, only to be replaced by its next of kin, Audigy2. Delivering further improved audio quality, though this time over 6.1 channels of Dolby Digital EX, Audigy2 is the first soundcard to receive THX certification and deliver the fidelity required to reproduce new formats such as DVD-Audio. Pound-for-pound it's the best gaming soundcard in the world.



**GAMESURROUND FORTISSIMO II DIGITAL EDITION**  
**STREET PRICE** £32  
**MANUFACTURER** Hercules  
**TELEPHONE** 020 8665 1881  
**WEBSITE** www.hercules-uk.com  
 As a frequent offender on the *PC ZONE* Buyer's Guide, the Fortissimo II lived in the Best Bargain slot for many months – only to be replaced by its doppelgänger the Fortissimo II Digital Edition – which adds 5.1 for your DVDs and an even better software bundle.

**SOUNDCARDS**



**INTELLIMOUSE EXPLORER V3.0**  
**STREET PRICE** £30  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/uk  
 Probably the cheapest upgrade you can perform, but if you're playing with a rubbish mouse it could give you the biggest performance increases. Hardcore gamers love the Intellimouse Explorer v3.0, and we have to agree that it's the best ball-less rodent out there. With improved optical sensors, a better shape and even more responsive buttons it's in a word – fragtastic.

**WAS £37**  
**NOW £30**



**MX500**  
**STREET PRICE** £28  
**MANUFACTURER** Logitech  
**TELEPHONE** 020 7309 0127  
**WEBSITE** www.logitech.com  
 Microsoft might dominate the mouse market but it hasn't got everything its own way. The MX500 is one of the most interesting mice we've seen for a while now. The left and right buttons are hidden – being integrated into the upper shell of the body and on top of the fourth and fifth buttons. There are two either side of the wheel to assist scrolling, plus one that emulates Alt-Tab. Very handy.

**WAS £32**  
**NOW £28**



**OPTICAL MOUSE BLUE**  
**STREET PRICE** £27  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/uk  
 For gamers who don't need five buttons and a portable back-scratcher on their mice, we present the Optical Mouse Blue. With all of the high-tech optical wizardry of the other Microsoft mice, this funky blue three-buttoned offering is extremely comfortable to use and is perfect for RPG/RTS titles – or FPS-ers who prefer to keep most of their controls on the keyboard.

**MICE**



**PRO KEYBOARD**  
**STREET PRICE** £50  
**MANUFACTURER** Apple  
**TELEPHONE** 0800 039 1010  
**WEBSITE** www.apple.com/uk  
 While it may seem odd to have a Mac product among all this PC goodness we have good reason. Rather than faff around with 15 multifunction buttons which don't help at all in fast-paced gaming, the Pro Keyboard from Apple is simply the best USB offering out there. Quality components make it one of the most quiet and compact offerings money can buy. Remember, you get what you pay for.




**OFFICE KEYBOARD**  
**STREET PRICE** £27.20  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/uk  
 Microsoft's office keyboard may seem more focused at the professional market with the MS Office buttons across the top, but we found the scroll wheel and remappable keys brilliant in many games – in some situations acting like an additional mouse wheel, one for weapons, the other for items. Handy shortcuts abound and brilliant all-round performance make this our new Best Buy.



**MULTIMEDIA KEYBOARD**  
**STREET PRICE** £21.14  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/uk  
 The Multimedia Keyboard can only be described as the geek's friend. With support for many of the Windows XP customisations plus dedicated buttons for the instant messenger app of your choice and a central console of buttons to drive media player, life doesn't get much simpler, and, at under £25, not much cheaper either. If you're struggling with a poor keyboard give the pub a miss for one night and get this.

**KEYBOARDS**



**WINGMAN CORDLESS**  
**STREET PRICE** £34.07  
**MANUFACTURER** Logitech  
**TELEPHONE** 020 7309 0127  
**WEBSITE** www.logitech.com  
 The PC might not have a definitive gamepad just yet, but this is as close as it gets for the moment. The infra-red interface doesn't hinder your input. On the contrary, the fact it's wireless means your desktop is less cluttered and the discreet receiver is almost invisible. Comfortable to use and a doddle to set up, it makes the grade as best performance but only by a short distance.



**FIRESTORM DUAL-POWER GAMEPAD**  
**STREET PRICE** £24.99  
**MANUFACTURER** Thrustmaster  
**TELEPHONE** 020 8665 1881  
**WEBSITE** www.thrustmaster.co.uk  
 This wired, force-feedback version of the Firestorm wireless might not win any awards for looks, but its ergonomics are great. Decent soft grips with superbly placed buttons and a decent d-pad make precision control a breeze. Set-up couldn't be simpler and the rumble ain't bad either. A no-nonsense pad for no-nonsense gamers.



**SIDEWINDER PLUG 'N' PLAY**  
**STREET PRICE** £12.92  
**MANUFACTURER** Microsoft  
**TELEPHONE** 0870 601 0100  
**WEBSITE** www.microsoft.com/sidewinder  
 Four buttons, two triggers, directional pad and USB. Dead simple, dead effective and at under £13 really rather cheap. The Plug 'n' Play gamepad is the new basic controller from the Seattle sidewinders and comes in funky transparent plastic, in contrast to the gloomy black pads of yesteryear. We've used them in the office for years and we've never heard a word against them.

**JOYPAD**



◀ **BEST PERFORMANCE** ▶    ▶ **BEST BUY** ◀    ▶ **BEST BUDGET** ▶

**JOYSTICK**

**HOTAS COUGAR**  
STREET PRICE £249  
MANUFACTURER Thrustmaster  
TELEPHONE 020 8665 1881  
WEBSITE www.thrustmaster.co.uk

Have we finally snapped? £249 for a joystick? You could get a brand new GeForce 4 for that and still have enough change to go out on the razz for a couple of weeks. Ah, but the HOTAS is probably the finest flight stick in the world, complete with tome-like manual. For those that have everything this is the closest you'll get to sitting in a plane... If you're strong enough to lift it out of the box.

**SIDEWINDER FORCE FEEDBACK 2**  
STREET PRICE £52.87  
MANUFACTURER Microsoft  
TELEPHONE 0870 601 0100  
WEBSITE www.microsoft.com/sidewinder

The Sidewinder Force Feedback 2 is a fine stick with perhaps the best, most refined force-feedback settings around. Performance is great overall, with the infra-red activation sensors in the handle. Its huge base will keep it planted on your desk and as long as you don't mind the extra wiring for the external power supply, it makes a great enhancement for any airbound frolics.

**CYBORG 3D GOLD**  
STREET PRICE £21  
MANUFACTURER Saitek  
TELEPHONE 01454 451 900  
WEBSITE www.saitek.co.uk

Saitek's current generation of sticks are fabulous. The Cyborg Gold is a top-line, former Best Buy, USB stick that excels across the board. The design is superb, both durable and adjustable – even the left-handed are catered for with response and accuracy both unequalled. If you're not interested in force-feedback effects (and to be honest who is these days?) this is the stick to go for.

**WAS £30 NOW £21**

**SPEAKERS**

**MEGAWORKS 510D**  
STREET PRICE £269  
MANUFACTURER Creative Labs  
TELEPHONE N/A  
WEBSITE www.uk.europe.creative.com

The Megaworks 510D is the Daddy of gaming speakers – five 70W satellites and one 150W digitally amplified subwoofer together deliver 500W of power to recreate subtle sounds and devastating explosions alike. Want to know how those soldiers on Omaha Beach in *Medal Of Honour* really felt? Now's your chance. Just make sure your neighbours are away first.

**WAS £299 NOW £269**

**PROMEDIA 4.1**  
STREET PRICE £299  
MANUFACTURER Klipsch  
TELEPHONE N/A  
WEBSITE www.klipsch.com

Klipsch's Promedia 4.1 took Best Buy many months ago with their TXH-Approval and great sound reproduction. They're beautifully made, sound amazing and are the first speakers to split your ears as well as the Crossfires from VideoLogic did. Whether you're a gamer or an audiophile looking for your PC to make sweet music, these are the business, as long as you can find an outlet willing to serve them up.

**XPS210**  
STREET PRICE £40  
MANUFACTURER Hercules  
TELEPHONE 020 8665 1881  
WEBSITE www.hercules-uk.com

Who needs surround sound? Answer: everyone who can afford it. For everyone else, this small but perfectly formed 2.1 speaker set-up is cheap – but doesn't sound it. With tone controls and stereo enhancement, it's an ideal solution for desktop gaming. The satellites and subwoofer are well matched, giving decent overall sound. And adorned in royal blue it looks the part too...

**HEADPHONES**

**HD600**  
STREET PRICE £159.95  
MANUFACTURER Sennheiser  
TELEPHONE 01494 551 551  
WEBSITE www.sennheiser.co.uk

The HD600 are Audiophile-level headphones, and unless used with a soundcard like the Audigy Platinum/EX are total overkill for most gamers. That doesn't stop their fantastic response range from reproducing every gunshot and explosion perfectly with bass so deep and strong you'll be convinced your speakers are running too. They won't obviously – you'll have sold them to finance these.

**WAS £200 NOW £160**

**HD497**  
STREET PRICE £47  
MANUFACTURER Sennheiser  
TELEPHONE 01494 551 551  
WEBSITE www.sennheiser.co.uk

Replacing the HD200 Masters, which used to occupy our Best Buy slot comes the HD497, also from Sennheiser. These new headphones have an enhanced frequency response range which might not come close to the HD600, but is still pretty damn good. Their extremely comfortable design coupled with easily replaceable parts, mean these headphones could well outlast your PC.

**GAMEVOICE USB**  
STREET PRICE £34.07  
MANUFACTURER Microsoft  
TELEPHONE 0870 601 0100  
WEBSITE www.microsoft.com

When are headphones more than just headphones? Simple – when they're the Microsoft Gamevoice USB. The Gamevoice allows you to talk to your mates online as you play clan games with a handy control panel which lets you switch between comms channels. Adding a new dimension to your online gaming, and doubling as a decent set of headphones they're a bit of a bargain.

**TFT**

**180MT**  
STREET PRICE £939  
MANUFACTURER Philips  
TELEPHONE N/A  
WEBSITE www.philips.co.uk

The 180MT from Philips is more than just a flat panel. An 18in fourth-generation screen with VGA connectivity plus inputs for Scart, S-Video and an RF tuner mean that you can ditch your telly and pipe all manner of consoles, TV and video kit through the one screen. You can even use picture-in-picture to watch the latest *Futurama* while you die repeatedly in *BF1942*. Classic.

**SYNCMASTER 181T**  
STREET PRICE £599  
MANUFACTURER Samsung  
TELEPHONE N/A  
WEBSITE www.samsung.com

What do you need to be heralded as our Best Buy in the TFT category? You need to boast top specs, which the 181T provides with a response time of 25ms, a contrast ratio of 500:1 and rated brightness of 250 cd/m2. This results in a cleaner, crisper picture than our previous award-winner. A good start but the 181T is also cheaper and bigger (a whole inch diagonally) which completes the perfect package.

**T1620B**  
STREET PRICE £522.87  
MANUFACTURER Sharp  
TELEPHONE 0800 262 958  
WEBSITE www.sharp.co.uk

Sharp's 16in T1620B is more than £100 cheaper than the iyama and delivers all the visual goodies albeit on a smaller display area. Delivering 1280x1024 on a digital 75Hz, this screen will make your games look great while allowing you to reclaim some desktop real estate from large lumbering CRTs. If TFTs aren't quite affordable yet, this proves that the day isn't far away.

**MONITOR**

**GDM-FW900**  
STREET PRICE £1,139  
MANUFACTURER Sony  
TELEPHONE N/A  
WEBSITE www.sony.co.uk

Do you remember the day when PCs used to ship with 14in screens? Pah. The gigantic 24in GDM-FW900 from Sony has to be seen to be believed. Costing almost double that of the iyama Vision Master Pro 512, you'd expect something special and that's exactly what you get. Supporting nutty resolutions such as 2304x1440 at 80Hz, you can be sure this ultra-flat screen will deliver a rock-solid picture at all times.

**VISION MASTER PRO 512**  
STREET PRICE £410  
MANUFACTURER iyama  
TELEPHONE 01438 745 482  
WEBSITE www.iyama.co.uk

Equipped with the latest Mitsubishi aperture grille Diamondtron screen, it has a smaller viewable area than suggested – 20in instead of 22in – but gives outstanding results at resolutions up to 2048x1536 at 85Hz – something many graphics cards can't even support. There's also a four-port USB hub and integrated speakers, though these are a little tinnny.

**WAS £527 NOW £410**

**720P 17-INCH CRT**  
STREET PRICE £116.32  
MANUFACTURER Hansol  
TELEPHONE 01252 360 400  
WEBSITE www.hansol-uk.com

For the budget-conscious gamer Hansol is a company well worth a look. With a fabulously low price, it does 1280x1024 at an excellent 85Hz (and for those mad enough, 1600x1200 at 75Hz). Focus is tight and the picture sharp, and considering you're paying a little over £100 there's not a lot that will touch this for the money. If you've still got a 15in monitor, consider yourself rebuked.

**MP3 PLAYER**

**APPLE IPOD**  
STREET PRICE £347  
MANUFACTURER Apple  
TELEPHONE 020 8210 1000  
WEBSITE www.apple.com/ipod

With all of the styling of their desktop systems, the iPod caused a few dropped jaws for looks alone. Packing a 20Gb hard disk and speedy Firewire interface, the new models are finally Windows-compatible and come with excellent headphones and a tiny little inline remote control that means you don't have to keep fishing it out of your pocket to change tracks or up the volume.

**WAS £388 NOW £347**

**ARCHOS JUKEBOX MULTIMEDIA**  
STREET PRICE £330 inc VAT  
MANUFACTURER Archos  
TELEPHONE N/A  
WEBSITE www.archos.com

While it may never win any awards for aesthetics, the Jukebox Multimedia from Archos is the Swiss Army knife of media players. Handling one of the widest selections of file types the player can even play back a selection of video formats including DIVX. Sound is fantastic but the bundled headphones are shite.

**WAS £330 NOW £300**

**MUVO**  
STREET PRICE £67  
MANUFACTURER Creative Labs  
TELEPHONE N/A  
WEBSITE www.europe.creative.com

The MuVo is one of the smartest gadgets we've seen. It comes in two parts, a USB key that plugs into any system running XP (without drivers), and a battery housing. Plug it into your PC and you can back up your documents. Drag a few MP3s onto the drive and when you snap the two halves together and plug in some headphones you've got one of the smallest MP3 players on the market.

MSI  
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon  
The Elder Scrolls III Morrowind  
Duke Nukem: Manhattan Project  
7 in 1 Games Collection  
3D DeskTop  
FarStone VirtualDrive + FarStone RestoreIT!  
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- Dual VGA Output
- Microsoft® DirectX® 9.0 and OpenGL® 1.4 Optimization and Support



### FX5600-VTDR128

AGP 8X / Video In/Out / DVI-I  
128MB DDR

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MSI Media Center Deluxe II



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"...MSI is the No. 1 VGA card maker in terms of unit shipments in Taiwan..." -from "Goldman Sachs Global Equity Research - March 6, 2003

For more Information please refer to [www.msi.com.tw](http://www.msi.com.tw)



8xtreme.com

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Dabs  
[www.dabs.com](http://www.dabs.com)  
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Microstar Computer Services  
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MPC  
[www.mpc-direct.co.uk](http://www.mpc-direct.co.uk)  
Novatech  
[www.novatech.co.uk](http://www.novatech.co.uk)

Online Distribution  
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Refresh  
[www.refreshcomputers.com](http://www.refreshcomputers.com)  
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Tekheads  
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THX Trade  
[www.thx-trade.com](http://www.thx-trade.com)

VGI Computers  
[www.vgicomputers.com](http://www.vgicomputers.com)  
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HAVE YOU HIT YET?

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**BE THE FIRST TO KNOW** the hottest news in the world of gaming. Every hour of every day, we update our site: read it as it breaks.



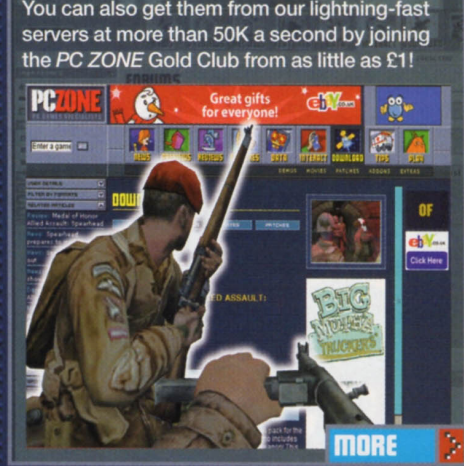
### FORUMS

**GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?** Dedicated PC ZONE and general PC forums are here to give you a voice: join the party now.




### DOWNLOADS

**GET THE LATEST DEMOS,** patches, mods, add-ons and movies as soon as they're released from our vast library of downloads. You can also get them from our lightning-fast servers at more than 50K a second by joining the PC ZONE Gold Club from as little as £1!




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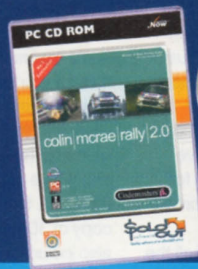
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## 1 DEUS EX

Arguably the best PC game ever, scoring a massive 94% in PCZONE, Deus Ex is an RPG of complex beauty. The twisting sci-fi plot and unparalleled player freedom are two of the reasons why this is a true classic.



## 2 COLIN MCRAE RALLY 2.0

Still PCZONE's benchmark rally title, with a massive 85% rating, simply because there's no other game that comes close to replicating the experience. With amazing visuals and cars that handle superbly, this is a must for car-nuts.



## 3 GROUND CONTROL

Still considered an essential purchase (87%, PCZONE March 2003), Ground Control is a stunning real-time strategy game that gets everything right. Go in all-guns blazing, right from the start.

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# EXTENDED PLAY

Finishing a game is only the beginning in Extended Play. Maps, mods, add-ons and extras are all here to help you get the most out of the games you play

## END OF AN ERA



### GOODBYE GIRL Rhianna Pratchett

▲ This is it. End of the road. D-Day. I'm about to eat my last supper while whistling *The Last Post*. That's right, today, as I write this very column, is my last day as Section Editor on *PC ZONE*. This evening I shall be celebrating two and a half years of working as a staffer on the mag with copious amounts of alcohol and much girlish giggling.

It's hard to believe it's been that long and that I'm actually leaving *ZONE* with 30 issues under my belt. It's even harder for the rest of the team to believe that they can actually see my desk properly, since it was widely rumoured that the amount of stuff piled up on it (yes, I was by far and away the messiest member of the team) had actually eaten through the wood and what was in fact holding up the crap, was more crap.

But, like I said in my last column, I'm not going far (half an hour up the road in fact) and I'll still be contributing as much as possible to the good ship *ZONE* and hell, maybe even still dropping by the forums and *PC ZONE*'s IRC channel. But for now I leave you with my last lot of Extended Play, but you'll have to find out just what's in it yourself as I've had one too many gin and tonics to remember, or even care for that matter. People, it's been fun.

Stay frosty,  
Rhi

# Foreverwinter

ON THE CD DVD **More *Neverwinter Nights* goodies than you can shake a beard at**  
[nwn.bioware.com](http://nwn.bioware.com)

**FOLLOWING** the release of the *Shadows Of Undrentide* expansion last month, the Bioware team has been busy updating its website with more and more useful files for those of a *Neverwinter* persuasion. As well as modules for those who want to extend the game, they've also updated all their modding tools for those of you out there who want to create adventures using the *NWN* engine.

First up are the latest versions of all the *NWN* modules so far released including the *Dance Club* for those wanting to boogie, and *Neverwinter Chess* for those who can't afford a set of travel chess next to their keyboard. There's also *Blackjack Inn* for those with a taste for gambling, and *Chicguins*, the deadly strategy game where Bioware Designer Derrick Collins answers the eternal question: "Who would win in a fight, chickens or penguins?" Let the flightless feathered fiends fight it out to the death.

For those who are more into building their own quests on which to embark with some mates, we've got a whole bunch of files for you too. If you're looking at building a mod completely from scratch, you'll find the 3DS Max files extremely useful for rendering your environments, and we've managed to stick gmax in there too, for those who don't have a copy of 3DS Max themselves. We've also included tutorials provided by the Bioware team so that you don't get flummoxed from the outset.

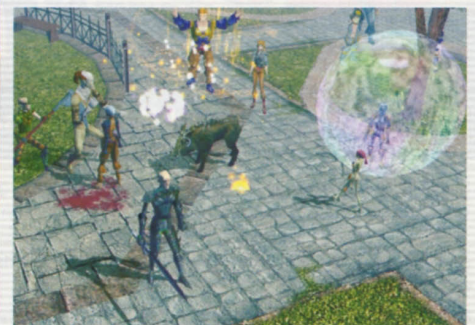
To complement the 3DS Max files, we've also included five texture bundles to add essential colour to the flesh of your world. Once you've put together your world and started modelling, you'll be able to preview your designs using the model viewer also included on our discs. All in all, quite a package for those looking to build their own *NWN* quest.



**"Chicguins answers the question: Who would win in a fight, chickens or penguins?"**



The five texture bundles included should liven up your world.



Try unleashing some devastating custom spells.

## CHEATS AHOY!



The old Cheat Master section of these pages may be dead, but we haven't buried it completely. Check out our cover discs where the art of cheating is still very much alive and kicking. You can find all the latest cheats for your favourite games under CheatStation in the Extended Play section of the discs.

This month we've got everything you need to cheat your way through *Freelancer*, *Master Of Orion 3*, *Enter the Matrix*, *Blitzkrieg*, *Empire Earth* and *Postal 2* in Extended Play on the discs. So anyone having problems with any of these gaming behemoths, just remember: those who can, do... those who can't, cheat. It's the only way.





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 Wandy does broadband



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 The best new mods reviewed



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**DISC PAGES**  
 Play *Enemy Territory* for free



**133**  
**FIGHT CLUB**  
 Once more into the breach

**MOMENTS** after the first *Half-Life 2* footage was shown at this year's E3 to the public, mutterings had already begun of *HL2* being the biggest thing to hit the mod community since its predecessor. And guess what? The Internet is hotting up with news of mods in development as we speak. First up is *Fall Of Sicyon*, an RPG mod using the *Half-Life 2* engine, which sounds promising even in these early stages.

In the mod, you play the role of a freelancer who picks up objectives from various NPCs and aims to create a world featuring 100s of other characters across the huge city of Sicyon. At the moment, the team is still looking for members to join them working on the mod, so if you fancy yourself as a developer, go and check out their site.

# The New Class

**Half-Life 2 is coming – let the modding begin...**

■ [www.hemp-blog.com/FOS](http://www.hemp-blog.com/FOS)



With looks like this, who will be modding anything else?

## E3 SNAPSHOTS



**ON THE DVD** With so much going on at this year's E3, it's impossible to fit all the screenshots of the big titles into the magazine. So this month we bring you a special selection of E3 shot packs on the discs including *Half-Life 2*, *Halo* and everything else we could cram in without the duplicator exploding!

## TROPICO 2 TIPS



**ON THE CD DVD** If you're finding the second *Tropico* game a bit tough to get to grips with, check out this handy official tips guide which should help make your fleet seaworthy and your trading profitable again. It also includes a list of shortcuts to memorise in order to achieve proper 1337 status with this Take 2 title.

## ANNO 1503 SCENARIO PACK



**ON THE CD DVD** *Anno 1503* has been widely hailed as a great thing online, and it's getting better still with this official scenario pack. This pack contains the *Metropolis* scenario, which you play alongside the Venetians who have set up a number of trading routes in the region. The map is huge and full of resources if you are up for a big gaming session.

## GHOST MASTER



**ON THE CD DVD** To celebrate the wonderful *Ghost Master's* release last month, we've put a load of goodies on our DVD for fans of the title. There are music files to listen to, wallpaper packs to adorn your desktop, artwork to have a gander at, and a fan site kit for those who fancy knocking up their very own ghoulish corner of the web.



Crocket and bugs in a game near you.

## GTA: Vice City

**ON THE CD DVD** ■ [www.vicocity.com](http://www.vicocity.com)

**GRAND THEFT AUTO 3** wasn't entirely bug free upon its release and it was with some hesitation that we installed our review copy of *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* this month. Thankfully all seemed well, and luckily for us the version 1.1 patch was released in time for us to enjoy smoother framerates and other

such bug fixes. There isn't actually any documentation included with the patch release but from our experience with the game it should leave you with few complaints, which means you'll be free to commit atrocious crimes all in the name of light entertainment. For more info check out our definitive review, starting on page 68.



Eat meteor, heathen scum!

## Age Of Mythology

**ON THE CD DVD** ■ [www.microsoft.com/games/ageofmythology/greek\\_home.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/games/ageofmythology/greek_home.asp)

**A GOLDEN** gift comes our way from Ensemble Studios this month with a new campaign for its superb mythological RTS. It follows the adventures of brothers Brokk and Eitri as they have their first encounter with the trickster god, Loki. With four full-sized scenarios and a new story to play through,

you should be smiting unbelieving mortals for a little while yet. It's good to see another developer supporting one of its games after release, following in the footsteps of companies like Bethesda Softworks and Bioware with *Morrowind* and *Neverwinter Nights* respectively. More please, sir.



One big, happy community.

## Raven Shield

**ON THE CD DVD** ■ [www.theplatoon.com/ravenshield](http://www.theplatoon.com/ravenshield)

**THE RAVEN** *Shield* community has been working like no other the last two months and already hundreds of maps are available for Red Storm's classic. The latest pick of the crop is the *Raven Shield Community Map Pack* from the Raven Shield Platoon, a nine-strong team first formed back in 2001. It combines all the top maps available currently

into one pack. Single-player and co-op modes are available on the full range. The RS Platoon's site also contains a wealth of utilities, from server tools to intro movie skippers. There's also a selection of international arm badges for those of you miffed there were no Sri Lankan commandos included in the original *Rainbow* line up.

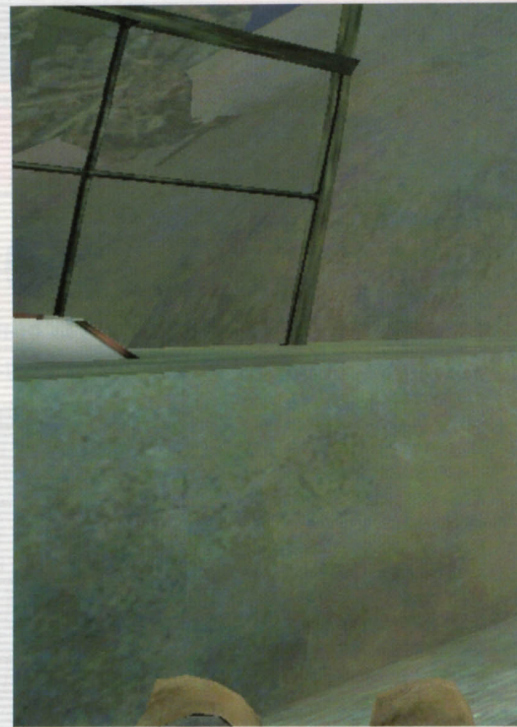
# THE GUIDE: ALL ABOUT BROADBAND

**Confused by connections? Don't know which way onto the Internet is best? Phil Wand does his best to make things clearer**

**IT'S STRANGE**, but most folks aren't interested in how things work. When buying a car, nobody's interested in how the engine converts heat into kinetic energy. And when you visit Currys, you don't see

people with earnest faces asking how fridges keep their milk cold. When it comes to computers, however, everyone's a little more inquisitive. What's inside my mouse? How does a hard drive remember so much stuff?

So to satisfy any such cravings for scientific enlightenment, let's start by having a look at the two competing technologies at the core of this month's Guide, DSL and cable.



## TALE OF THE TAPE

**It's the heavyweight contest of the year: DSL Vs cable. Which one should you spend your money on?**

### IN THE RED CORNER: DSL

Short for Digital Subscriber Line, DSL comes in a number of different flavours but like ice cream\* only two are of real interest to UK consumers. The first, ADSL, is Asymmetric, meaning the downstream and upstream rates differ – downloading stuff is faster than uploading it. The second, SDSL, is Symmetric, meaning they're the same both up and down. ADSL is widely available and is aimed at web-browsing home users who tend to suck a lot more than they blow; SDSL has been aimed at businesses who want a cheaper alternative to leased lines (a 2Mbps E1 can cost more than £10,000 per year).

\* Wall's Muddy Pigs and Nestlé Strawberry & Cream Mivi

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Using a regular copper telephone wire, data from your PC is transmitted across a frequency range much higher than that used for voice – hence you can order a pizza in the lower frequencies while downloading patches and sending email in the upper.

### WHAT DO YOU NEED?

The physical wire that connects the master socket in your home to the BT exchange mustn't be more than 5.5Km in length – it's a misconception that it's the distance of your house to the exchange – and the exchange in question must be enabled for ADSL. If your line has DACS on it, you'll need to ask for it to be removed, and if you're one of the country's 30,000 homes connected via fibre, you're bugged. DSL simply doesn't work over optical wires.

### WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

Entry-level ADSL products provide 512Kbps downstream and 256Kbps upstream bandwidth, although BT has recently announced a lesser package that should be able to reach a much wider area of eager users. Most ISPs resell BT links of up to 2Mbps downstream, with upped prices to match the upped bandwidth, but because of asymmetry you'll remain limited to 256Kbps when sending files.

### WHAT'S THE DOWNSIDE?

You need to live within range of a DSL enabled exchange and pass stringent line tests (see box, Five Steps to Disheartenment). You also need a BT phone – although there are a large number of resellers offering a large range of products, BT still levers its position as a phone company and has 52 per cent of the UK ADSL market. Uptake is huge, with 25,000 orders per week in March 2003, and delivery times will vary.



**Demon**  
 DSL FROM £24.99 MONTHLY

**plusnet**  
 The smarter way to Internet  
 DSL FROM £18.99 MONTHLY

**freedom2surf f2s**  
 DSL FROM £22.50 MONTHLY

**PIPEX**  
 DSL FROM £23.44 MONTHLY

**ZEN**  
 INTERNET LIMITED  
 DSL FROM £27.99 MONTHLY

**BT openworld**  
 DSL FROM £29.99 MONTHLY



If you think broadband is essential now, wait until you see the next generation of online shooters.

## BT Broadband

DSL  
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MONTHLY



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**£24.99**  
MONTHLY



DSL  
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**£24.99**  
MONTHLY



DSL  
FROM  
**£22.99**  
MONTHLY

### IN THE BLUE CORNER: CABLE

On the face of things there's precious little to differentiate a cable connection from a DSL one. Both carry data over a wire; both let you hop onto the Internet whenever you want; neither need cost more than about £30 a month. In the case of cable, a fibre optic or coaxial wire is run from the street into your house – it doesn't piggyback on your existing phone line, and it has a much higher theoretical maximum data rate than DSL.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

As with ADSL, cable is asymmetric – you can pull a lot more than you can push. The signal on the wire is split into two channels to service downstream and upstream requirements. Unlike ADSL, the connection runs into the road and joins connections from all your neighbours. At peak times, rates can vary wildly depending on what the people in your street are doing.

### WHAT DO YOU NEED?

You need to live in a cabled area. There are two main suppliers, NTL and Telewest, and a quick visit to availability checkers on their websites will confirm whether there's a wire running close enough.

### WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?

NTL offer access services from 150Kbps up to 1Mbps. The entry level is low speed and not worth bothering with – it appears as though it was set up to sit above Ofcom's original definition of broadband (128Kbps downstream), and allowed NTL to promote it as such. Telewest's Blueyonder service offers 512Kbps, 1Mbps and recently 2Mbps downstream rates.

### WHAT'S THE DOWNSIDE?

Unlike DSL, you can find yourself competing for connections with everyone in your street – cable modems are nodes on a LAN with shared bandwidth. Added to which, there are several security implications associated with this type of setup. The cable industry is also in a financial mess – Telewest announced a net loss for the first three months of 2003 of £187m, 13 per cent worse than the previous year – and in many areas investment in cable infrastructure has just stopped.



**WHAT IS BROADBAND?**

Broadband describes any fast, 24/7 Internet access – you'll find it used most often to refer to ADSL and cable connections capable of downloading at 512Kbps or higher. OfTel's definition has recently changed and now identifies any connection providing in excess of 256Kbps downstream capacity – a move that frustrated ISPs such as NTL who'd been advertising low-cost 150Kbps products as broadband.

OfTel was right to update its definition, but even so it remains on the conservative side – the Internet's most popular radio stations transmit 128Kbps streams, and high-quality videos are encoded for broadband at 300Kbps, often going as high as 450Kbps. Unless you have a

connection able to suck data from these sources and still have breathing room for surfing and games, you're not enjoying life online to the full. That's what broadband is all about.

**IT'S ALL IN THE MATHS**

To understand broadband products, you need to understand how the numbers work. When choosing a product, you need to know the upstream and downstream bits per second (bps) data rates together with installation costs, recurring costs, and hidden costs – every ADSL product requires that you have an existing BT line, which itself has installation and recurring quarterly charges.

In the table below, we look at theoretical maximum download speeds for 56Kbps, 512Kbps,

1Mbps and 2Mbps connections. Just remember that a lowercase 'b' means bit, and an uppercase 'B' means byte – there are eight bits in a byte – and while this may seem terminologically pedantic, you'll see there's a huge difference.

Take the humble 56Kb modem we've been using all these years. 56Kb per second equates to 7KB per second (note the capital B), seven being 56 divided by eight – eight bits in a byte, remember. While this information is not strictly necessary, it saves you confusing Megabytes as in 256MB RAM, and Megabits as in a 2Mb broadband connection. Anyway, we've listed the download rates for each kind of connection on the left, with the time it would take for a typical download, which is very useful information. Don't forget that these are theoretical maximum figures – alas, in the real world, it can only take much longer!

Connection	Max Download Rate	3MB MP3	100MB EXE	650MB CD
56Kbps	7KB/sec	7-8 mins	4 hrs	> 1 day
512Kbps	64KB/sec	48 secs	28 mins	3 hrs
1Mbps	128KB/sec	24 secs	14 mins	1.5 hrs
2Mbps	256KB/sec	12 secs	7 mins	45 mins

**SHOW ME THE SPEED**

The chart on the next page shows key details for the ten fastest ADSL providers (as determined by ADSLguide) and for cable providers NTL and Telewest. When choosing, don't be too swayed by speed – there's little more than 30Kbps separating the fastest and the slowest listed – and pay more attention to customer service. Email providers with a question and then clock the time it takes for them to respond. Phone them and see if you get lost in their telephone system.

When you've chosen, place your order online as many ISPs advertise discounts on their website – you can also check out their latest offers and waived fees. If you don't have any DSL hardware, shop around before buying from your ISP – sites such as [www.dsl-warehouse.co.uk](http://www.dsl-warehouse.co.uk) and [www.dslsource.co.uk](http://www.dslsource.co.uk) have a huge range of kit. Modems are ideal for single PCs, whereas routers are used

**USEFUL LINKS**

- ADSLGUIDE**  
[ADSLguide.org.uk](http://ADSLguide.org.uk)  
Invaluable ISP ratings, and home of UK ADSL speed comparisons
- BROADBAND 4 BRITAIN**  
[www.broadband4britain.co.uk](http://www.broadband4britain.co.uk)  
Key broadband facts, news and information
- BROADBAND MAP**  
[www.broadbandmap.co.uk](http://www.broadbandmap.co.uk)  
Pictorial overview of ADSL in the UK
- ISP REVIEW**  
[www.ispreview.co.uk](http://www.ispreview.co.uk)  
Reviews and news on all UK ISPs
- NET4NOWT**  
[www.net4nowt.co.uk](http://www.net4nowt.co.uk)  
ISP listings and comparisons. Long established, worthy bookmark
- WORLD OF ADSL**  
[www.world-of-adsl.com](http://www.world-of-adsl.com)  
Reviews, features and information for all ADSL users
- UK ADSL FAQ**  
[www.multithread.co.uk/adsl](http://www.multithread.co.uk/adsl)  
ADSL Frequently Asked Questions



Hosting games is cool, but you'll need more bytes per second than broadband can offer.

**“Broadband is all about enjoying life online to the full”**



On a 56k modem, gaming is as slow as this screenshot.

**FIVE STEPS TO DISHEARTENMENT**

**YOU WANT ADSL, BUT DO YOU PASS THE TESTS?**

Drag a bunch of football fans down the pub and, for the two or so minutes they remain sober, they'll talk incessantly about referees, free kicks and penalties. Personally speaking, I'd rather nail my nuts to the mast of a sinking ship than even look at a football. Take me and a bunch of nerds down the pub and within 30 seconds we'll be talking broadband – who has it, who's getting it next week, which poor sod will never get it.

Yes, one of the hottest topics of recent years is the availability – or, rather, the unavailability – of ADSL.

**EXCHANGE TEST**

After contacting your ISP, the first thing they'll do before taking your order is ensure that your local exchange is DSL enabled. Here you're at the mercy of BT – no provider has any involvement in the installation of exchange equipment, and you'll need to apply pressure elsewhere to get the kit put in. Once your local exchange reaches its so-called 'trigger' level, BT will fix a date for upgrading it – see [www.bt.com/broadband](http://www.bt.com/broadband) for more details.

**LINE LENGTH TEST**

If you're in a DSL-enabled area but have been refused an ADSL product, this is almost certainly the test that got you. While an increasing number of people are able to receive DSL services, and while equipment is being upgraded every day, the fact remains that the UK has a large number of phone users living outside a 5.5km radius of their local exchange (this radius shrinks if you want higher bandwidth).

**NOISE TEST**

ADSL won't work if your line is all hisses, pops and fizzing, and this test is to ensure that you fall within the 55dB limit. Again, for a higher bandwidth, you'll need a quieter line.

**CAPACITANCE TEST**

This refers to the ability of your line to hold an electrical charge, and is another measure of its quality. It needs to show a reading of less than 180nF, but should ideally be less than 160nF.

**WHOOSH TEST**

The final test involves signal loss. You need to register a loss of no more than 45dB between the master socket and the exchange.

If you fail these tests, take heart – read Wandy Rants on the next page to find out why there's still a chance for you and broadband.

for shared connections supporting multiple users.


Broadband connections are getting much easier to come by. And once you've got into the Internet's outside lane, it'll feel like your first mobile phone – you'll wonder how on earth you got on without it.

## THE BROADBAND GAMES HOST

I've been asked this one 100 times: if I get broadband, how many players will my games server support?

Well, running a permanent server may well break the Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) of your provider. There's also the fact that different games have different requirements: a *Counter-Strike* server, for

example, isn't as hungry as *Battlefield 1942*. In general, you should assume that a player will need around 56Kbps for a decent game, and with this as a guide, a 2Mbps connection would support 40 players. Trouble is, this ignores the fact that upstream bandwidth is cut short at 256Kbps, reducing the headcount to just five. And while it's true that most games servers can be configured to limit the data rate of connected players, you need a hefty amount of bandwidth before anyone gets a decent game in.

If you really want to play host, your best bet is to visit Jolt.co.uk and sign up for a clan server – with the cost split between regulars, it's not that costly, and it's more reliable. 

### Broadband Availability Checker

Results for **BRENTWOOD** on **Brentwood** Exchange

Your exchange has been enabled but unfortunately initial tests indicated that the length of line between you and the exchange is too long for you to receive Broadband. If you would like information on our flat rate dial internet access solution please visit <http://www.lobsterpot.net.uk/> for more details. Thank you for your interest.

**Online availability checkers keep telling Wandy that he can't have ADSL. Funny thing is, he's had it for ages. If you get the same response, phone BT and blow raspberries.**

Provider	Product	Type	Kbps Up/Down	Contention Ratio	Web	POP3 Mail	Static IP	Setup	Modem	Monthly	Contract
Blueyonder www.blueyonder.co.uk	Standard Broadband	Cable	256/512	Shared	30MB	Yes	No	£50.00	Included	£29.99	12 months
	1MB Broadband	Cable	256/1024	Shared	30MB	Yes	No	£50.00	Included	£39.99	12 months
	2MB Broadband	Cable	256/2048	Shared	30MB	Yes	No	£50.00	Included	£54.99	12 months
BT Broadband www.bt.com/btbroadband	BT Broadband	ADSL	256/512	50:1	No	No	No	Free	£40.00	£27.00	12 months
BT Openworld www.btopenworld.com	Home 500 Plug & Go	ADSL	256/512	50:1	50MB	Yes	No	Free	£50.00	£29.99	12 months
	Home 500 Plug & Go Line Only	ADSL	256/512	50:1	50MB	Yes	No	Free	N/A	£29.99	12 months
Demon www.demon.net	Demon Express Solo	ADSL	256/512	50:1	20MB	Yes	Yes	£50.00	N/A	£24.99	12 months
	Demon Express Total	ADSL	256/512	50:1	20MB	Yes	Yes	Free	£59.99	£24.99	12 months
Eclipse Internet www.eclipse.net.uk	ADSL Connect 500 Lite	ADSL	256/512	50:1	20MB	Yes	Option	£58.75	£58.74	£23.95	1 month
	ADSL Connect 500	ADSL	256/512	20:1	20MB	Yes	Option	£58.75	£58.74	£37.60	1 month
Freedom 2 Surf www.freedom2surf.net	512K Home	ADSL	256/512	50:1	20MB	Yes	Yes	Free	£82.24	£22.50	12 months
	1024K Power User	ADSL	256/1024	50:1	20MB	Yes	Yes	Free	£82.24	£49.98	12 months
	2048K Power User	ADSL	256/2048	20:1	20MB	Yes	Yes	Free	£82.24	£70.49	12 months
Nildram www.nildram.co.uk	Home500 Lite	ADSL	256/512	50:1	No	Yes	No	£58.75	£41.12	£22.99	12 months
	Home500	ADSL	256/512	50:1	100MB	Yes	Yes	£58.75	£41.12	£29.99	3 months
	dsIXtra1000	ADSL	256/1024	50:1	100MB	Yes	Yes	£58.75	£41.12	£39.99	1 month
	dsIXtra2000	ADSL	256/2048	50:1	100MB	Yes	Yes	£58.75	£41.12	£58.00	1 month
NTL www.ntl.co.uk	150K Broadband Internet	Cable	64/150	Shared	55MB	Yes	No	Free	Included	£17.99	12 months
	600K Broadband Internet	Cable	128/600	Shared	55MB	Yes	No	Free	Included	£24.99	12 months
	Mb Broadband Internet	Cable	256/1024	Shared	55MB	Yes	No	Free	Included	£34.99	12 months
PIPEX Internet www.pipex.net	Solo	ADSL	256/512	50:1	50MB	Yes	No	£29.38	£79.95	£23.44	1 month
	Solo2Go	ADSL	256/512	50:1	50MB	Yes	No	£69.35	Included	£23.44	1 month
PlusNet www.plus.net	ADSL Home Surf	ADSL	256/512	50:1	25MB	Yes	Yes	£70.50	N/A	£18.99	1 month
	ADSL Home	ADSL	256/512	50:1	250MB	Yes	Yes	£70.50	N/A	£21.99	1 month
	ADSL Home Worker Standard	ADSL	256/512	20:1	250MB	Yes	Yes	£70.50	N/A	£29.99	1 month
	ADSL Home Worker 1Mb	ADSL	256/1024	20:1	250MB	Yes	Yes	£70.50	N/A	£44.99	1 month
	ADSL Home Worker 2Mb	ADSL	256/2048	20:1	250MB	Yes	Yes	£70.50	N/A	£59.99	1 month
Virgin.net www.virgin.net	Broadband	ADSL	256/512	50:1	10MB	Yes	No	Free	£59.99	£24.99	1 month
Zen Internet www.zen.co.uk	Zen ADSL Home	ADSL	256/512	50:1	50MB	Yes	Yes	Free	£49.95	£27.99	1 month

## WANDY RANTS

### INSTALLING BROADBAND CAN BE A WORLD OF PAIN. HERE'S MY EXPERIENCE

The reality about broadband is that even if you want it, you may not be eligible to get it. For starters, BT's coverage database is inaccurate. People who could pee on their local exchange from their front door are being told their lines are too long, and folks who pass the distance check are falling foul of other tests (see boxout, Five Steps to Disheartenment). And once you've got a black mark against your name, it's easier said than done to get yourself reassessed.

### CASE IN POINT

Wandy Towers is 4.7Km from the exchange in Brentwood, Essex, and I've had BT Broadband since I moved in. Despite a few glitches in January, it's worked speedily and faultlessly. So I was happy to return to the telecom giants for another ADSL install for my second line.

To order, I entered my phone number into the availability checker on BT's website, and straight away got told that I was too far from the exchange. Bullshit – I'm using BT Broadband to fill in the form. So I telephoned their helpdesk and, after verbal altercations, proceeded to place an

order. But no! Because there's an outstanding fault on my second line, the order is cut short and an engineer scheduled to come and fix it.

Two holes in the ground later (one dug at 8am in the wrong place, smack in the middle of my driveway) and all is well again. Or so it seems. When the order is completed, and the confirmation email from BT shows they are providing me with the wrong product, I'm forced to cancel – and am told that I have to wait 30 days before ordering again. I give up.

### HERE STARTETH THE LESSON

The lessons here are obvious. First, check with friends and neighbours in the vicinity who have ADSL and ask BT for the exact length of your line if you fail the test. Second, always make sure your line is fault-free before arranging an install. Last, visit an alternative provider and explain the grief you've endured – the folks at Nildram have proved exceedingly helpful in this respect.

Remember, you are spending money, not receiving it. If you believe you've got a good case, don't be ashamed to pester and complain, and never be afraid try the competition.

## GLOSSARY

### CONTENTION RATIO

The number of users with whom you are allotted bandwidth, so 20:1 means 19 other people are on the same 'allotment' as you.

### POP3 MAILBOX

An independent, fully functioning mailbox where you can use an e-mail client of your choice (Eudora, Outlook, etc.) to log-in and download your mail.

### STATIC IP

An IP that is permanently assigned to your line and does not change. More useful for businesses, but also useful for 'power' home users too.

# THE MODSQUAD

Tony Lamb finds more tasty mods to graze on

## EXPERIENCE WWII + ROAD TO ROME TEXTURE PACK

ON THE DVD SIZE 145Mb + 46Mb REQUIRES Full version of *Battlefield 1942* and *Road To Rome* expansion pack  
[s9rm.nucleardays.com](http://s9rm.nucleardays.com)



Aircraft cannons are now truly awesome.



Even tanks are all too vulnerable now.

"Your bum looks big in that, mate."

**FORMERLY** known as *Solder9's Realism Mod*, *Experience WWII* aims to take some of the fluffiness out of *Battlefield 1942* and replace it with the hard-edged realities of what combat is really like. After all, while most firefights involve a lot of ammo getting expended without hitting anything, people

that do stop a bullet tend to go down pretty quickly. This is true in *EW2* and although it gives the mod more than a hint of the Instagib one-hit-one-kill gametype often seen in other shooters, that isn't really the intention. What the developer is aiming to promote is teamplay, as the individual glory-hunter

who sticks his head above the parapet is liable to get it shot off. Work as part of a team and you might survive. Act the hero and you're likely to get killed. Harsh perhaps, but fair, and it certainly discourages unnecessary risks.

That said, however, *EW2* doesn't just tweak the weapons so that one decent shot kills a

man and tanks don't last forever. With new weapons including the M1 Garand, G43 Rifle, Panzerfaust, new vehicles such as the Firefly and Panzer IVH tanks, more realistic and effective aircraft weapon systems (in particular making cannons more deadly, though with less ammo), rehashed

physics, some great new maps and a distinctly 'edgy' atmosphere, *EW2* is a mod that's greater than the sum of its parts. Each tweak on its own would barely warrant a glance, but as part of a wide-ranging review of the game where even the player skins have been changed to identify the specific divisions that were in combat at the time, the cumulative effect is to create a great mod that's a worthy inclusion in anyone's *BF1942* library.

**PCZONE VERDICT** **90**  
Tweaks galore

## THIEVERY UT BETA 1.4

ON THE DVD SIZE 154Mb REQUIRES Full version of *Unreal Tournament*  
[www.thieveryut.com](http://www.thieveryut.com)

**WHEN THE** *Thievery* mod for *UT* first appeared it caused a few chins to drop. Here was a mod that eschewed the conventional in-yr-face blood 'n' guts style of most other add-ons. Instead it paid homage to the classic sneak 'em ups *Thief* and *Thief II* from Looking

Glass Studios – games that were riding high in the top ten games lists of the day. The stealth gameplay might not be revolutionary any more, but the *Thievery UT* mod has continued to develop and now features yet more (brilliant) maps, even better AI, more objects and weapons, and just as much addictive gameplay as ever. The main objective remains the same as

before. As a thief, your task is to sneak in, steal whatever you can or complete whatever task your paymasters set you, and get back out again without arousing suspicion or getting yourself chopped to ribbons by angry guards. As a guard your role is reversed and your task is one of detection – you have to catch the thief and kill him.

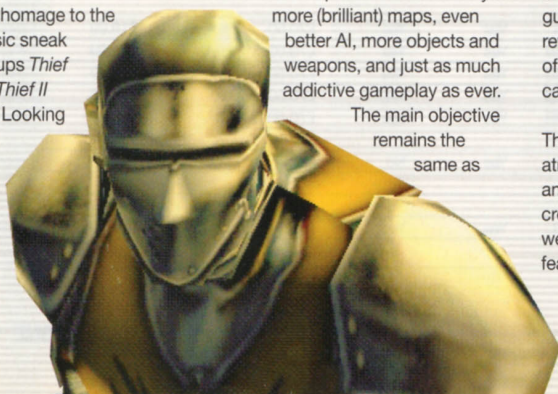
The maps are top class. They're dark, foreboding and atmospheric. Full of hidey-holes and ideal for the sneaky thief to creep around in. Skins, sounds, weapons and indeed every other feature of the mod are likewise



Keep to the shadows to survive when you're the thief.

excellent, contributing to a very different but highly addictive game. Instant gratification FPS fans might not like it, but the rest of us will be hooked. Brilliant.

**PCZONE VERDICT** **89**  
A real stunner



# POINT OF VIEW

SINGLE-PLAYER

ON THE DVD **SIZE** 51Mb **REQUIRES** Full version of *Half-Life*  
[halflife.multiplayer.it/pov](http://halflife.multiplayer.it/pov)

**FANS OF** *Half-Life* mods will know that single-player outings are the rarest of the bunch, and *Point Of View* takes this to the extreme as you take on not human but Xen alien form to revisit some of the original game maps, as well as a bunch of whole new environments. This is a pretty radical departure from what we've seen before, but it works very well despite the alien lack of fingers and thumbs making the use of human weaponry or health-packs a complete non-starter. In fact, facing the human forces without being able to sling any serious firepower back at them is a frightening

experience and not for the faint-hearted. Your character, a slave called Xonxt, does have the familiar electrical discharge attack (and a hit improves your health), snarks, hornet guns and a couple of other goodies, but no armour so you'll have to be careful. Other Xen life forms will leave you alone, but humans will attack. There is little real storyline to *POV*, other than to join the other aliens in their assault on mankind, but that should keep you busy enough.

**PCZONE VERDICT** **76**  
**A refreshing alternative**



Use your electrical attack to recharge your health.



Airfight just gets better and better.

# AIRFIGHT UT 3.0 + 3.1 PATCH

ON THE DVD **SIZE** 25Mb + 6Mb **REQUIRES** Full version of *Unreal Tournament*  
[www.planetunreal.com/airfight](http://www.planetunreal.com/airfight)

**AT THE** other end of the scale from *Thievery UT* (in size of file and playing approach, at least) we find the evergreen *Airfight*, whose comparatively diminutive stature hides a really fun mod. We've enjoyed this one since it first appeared and relish its simple, no-frills attitude towards flying and shooting down enemies. You just jump into the plane of your choice, hit the afterburners and go fragging.

After early wobbles, *Airfight* came alive with version 3 and the inclusion of ground vehicles. Graphical glitches were still a problem, but the mod was much improved. Version 3.1 adds yet more, with a list of available hardware that reads like the keenest armchair general's shopping list. Planes, tanks, helicopters... they're all here. It's not the last word in realism, but it's easy to play, neat looking and

TOTAL CONVERSION

damned good fun. Admittedly, aiming with the tanks still isn't easy, and the planes are much easier in this regard, but the HUDs carry all the information you'll need and it's just a matter of practice. Online support is still shaky, but LAN play is a treat.

**PCZONE VERDICT** **81**  
**Chocks away!**

# CONFLICT IN SOMALIA 0.2

ON THE DVD **SIZE** 16Mb **REQUIRES** Full version of *Battlefield 1942*  
[www.cismod.com](http://www.cismod.com)



CIS has potential. Check the website for an update.

**ANYONE** who has seen *Black Hawk Down* will recognise the background to this mod, as it depicts the now infamous events that occurred when a detachment of US Special Forces soldiers found big trouble in downtown Mogadishu, Somalia. Despite superior training and firepower, a prolonged firefight left the Americans vastly outnumbered and trapped in a shantytown maze.

*CIS* plans to recreate the horror of that battle, with gritty, close-quarter scrapping and fast reactions taking over from the ability to drive a tank or plane. These are early days and 0.2 is just a demo, but *CIS* already

provides suitably re-skinned characters, theatre-accurate weapons and sounds, and a couple of new vehicles. There are no big guns though – teamwork is the key here – and without the artillery backup you need to rely on your buddies. At this stage, *CIS* is lacking in maps, playing instead on the already-included *BF1942* regulars, and the skins need refinement, but with some work it has the potential to be a white-knuckle ride nonetheless.

**PCZONE VERDICT** **68**  
**Showing promise**

# DISC PAGES

WORDS Paul Presley, Dave Woods and Will Porter

DISCS Mark Eveleigh

**HELP!**

**CD trouble?** Don't worry – phone our helpline on **08700 711 482**. The line is open weekdays between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email [pc\\_zone@interchange.co.uk](mailto:pc_zone@interchange.co.uk)

**BEFORE YOU DIAL...** If you are calling the helpline:

- 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, soundcard, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- Have a pen and paper to hand, so you can jot down the relevant info.

**MINIMUM SPECIFICATION**

■ You need at least a PIII 600MHz or equivalent, with a GeForce 2MX 32Mb graphics card and 128Mb RAM (256Mb recommended for Windows XP users) to run the software on these discs.

**DISCLAIMER**

■ This disc has been thoroughly tested at all stages of its production. However, it is always wise to use a virus checker on any software before running it.  
 ■ Dennis Publishing Limited cannot accept any responsibility for any loss, disruption or damage to your data or your computer system (including hardware) that may occur while using either the disc or programs and data on it.

## GHOST MASTER

CD2/DVD Pub: Empire Interactive Dev: Sick Puppies Reviewed: Issue 130 (87%)



Karen's arachnophobia needs to be exploited.



Here's your chance to play the game that's scaring *The Sims* shitless: a unique puzzle/management/fright 'em up that sees you scaring people out of their homes and businesses.

Sick Puppies clearly knows its target audience and as such it's your duty to scare a bunch of preppy, half-naked American

sorority girls out of their bra-laden, girl-only digs. When you kick off, make sure you have the tutorial turned on and that on your first attempt you select the recommended array of spectres. To learn the ways of the *Ghost Master*, just listen to the spooky voiceover that greets you as you start playing. The game is pretty intuitive, but it'll take a few minutes before you work out exactly how to be scary. Stick with it and you'll soon learn there

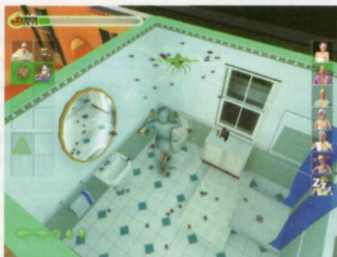
are many ways to skin this particularly undead cat. You've got four ghouls available in the demo, and each can only be assigned to certain areas (Gremlins to electrical items, Spooks to interior rooms, etc). As the screaming girlies get more spooked, your power to scare increases, enabling you to give your ghosts ever-more terrifying powers. Your eventual aim is to get the Kappa Alpha lassies screaming in terror and bailing out of the house. Watching their movements and reading their biographies will give you clues. We gave *Ghost Master* a glowing review last month, and once you get to grips with it we reckon you'll be hooked too. This level's unique mix of sim-perv voyeurism and ghoulish control is unlike any other game on the market and we like it. We like it a lot.

**WALKTHROUGH →**

**FOUR DISEMBOodied STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL HAUNTING**



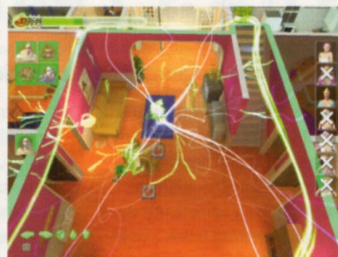
**1** Getting to know your territory is the first task for any aspiring Ghost Master. Work out places where you can spook a solitary Kappa Alpha, as well as main thoroughfares where you can scare loads at the same time.



**2** Start off slow and steady. To get your power bar up a good idea is to read the girls' bios and find out their weak points. Karen, for example, has an acute fear of spiders that you can exploit mercilessly.



**3** Trapped in the house along with the unsuspecting girlies is a Weather Witch, who you can add to your register of ghouls. If you can work out how to free her from that pesky vacuum cleaner, that is.



**4** The final chapter in your haunting is absolutely letting rip. When you've scared the girls enough to get your power up, crank the ghosts up to eleven and watch the mortals flee in terror. Bwahahaha!



# WOLFENSTEIN: ENEMY TERRITORY

CD1/DVD Pub: Activision Dev: id/Splash Damage Reviewed: Issue131 (89%)

A. Free. Game. From. id Software. Have six words ever sounded so sweet? *Enemy Territory* began life as a full-on expansion pack for the awesome *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*, only to turn into id's Christmas gift to the gaming world. And it's only June. That's how generous they are.

And how generous are we? Generous enough to have the whole damn thing exclusively on our cover discs, that's how generous! With *Enemy Territory* you get six superb multiplayer maps and all the code you need to play them online. From stealing Nazi gold in Libya to blowing up giant radar installations in Sweden, it's quickly becoming the online team shooter of choice.

Whether you fight for the Allied or Axis forces, whether you opt to be an engineer, medic, covert ops specialist or plain old infantryman, whether you rush for the front lines or



Was there ever a more handsome soldier? (Yes - ed).

hold back and defend, *Enemy Territory* provides all your WWII online fighting needs.

So, will this mayhem-filled multiplayer marvel be the climatic klaxon for the killing kids of *Counter-Strike*? Will the strategic squads and movie-based missions make an

attractive alternative for the battling boys bravely bashing the bally Bosch in *Battlefield 1942*? Will the team-based tactical tomfoolery prove a fitting foil for the focused finesse of the fighting folks of, er, *Funreal Tournament*? (Careful - Ed.) Only time... will tell...

## WALKTHROUGH →

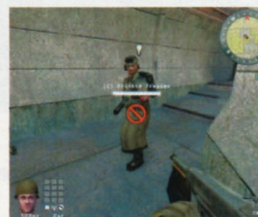
We provide a few useful pointers for getting ahead in *Enemy Territory*...



**1** Engineers are vital to just about every level. Allied forces need them to build bridges, plant dynamite and fix tanks. Axis units need them to do the opposite. Defend your DIY specialists at all costs.



**2** Mission-specific vehicles generally won't move unless someone is standing beside (or on top of) them. Tanks not only provide useful cover, but also sport a snazzy machine gun on top.



**3** Covert Ops units have one particularly nice trick up their sleeve - the ability to disguise as the enemy. If you see a big red symbol when you aim at an enemy soldier, hold fire. He's one of yours.



**4** Medics and Field Ops units are more than just window dressing. Ammo is always in short supply for heavy weapon users, while a quick morphine injection and a field dressing can bring players back from the dead.

# RISE OF NATIONS

CD1/DVD Pub: Microsoft Dev: Big Huge Games Reviewed Issue 129 (90%)



The best strategy game of the year?

Another massive exclusive this month, with an epic demo of the strategic phenomenon that is *Rise of Nations*: the game that perfectly binds the RTS genre with *Civilization*-like society growth and diplomacy.

Rather than lead you gently by the hand through the niceties of city development, this demo encourages you to explore the

interface system on your own with its 'Quick Learn' option. A knowing American voice helps you along if it sees you struggling, but generally the order of the day is the usual *Civ*-style 'build this', 'research that' approach. The more your nation learns, the faster it can move from age to age, Ancient to Classical being the first leap,

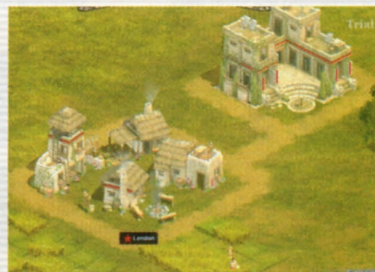


Radical progress is the key.

and the further advanced you are, the greater threat you are to your enemies.

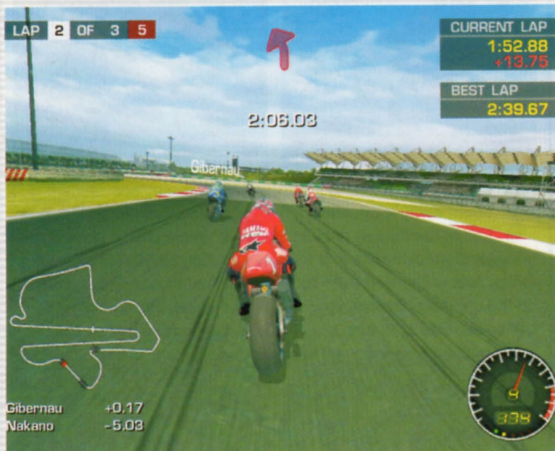
Should you tire with ordering peasants about then a 'Quick Battle' mode is also on offer, providing you with four different nations to skirmish against on one of three maps. Even in the confines of the demo there are loads of game settings, speeds

and society traits to play with as you strive for world domination. *Rise Of Nations* is one of the best strategy games of recent years (hence the Classic award), and here's your chance to have a gander.



# MOTO GP 2

CD1/DVD Pub: THQ Dev: Climax Studios  
Reviewed Issue 131 (76%)



Take the corners slowly or try to use rivals as a buffer.

Forget McRae and his metal box with stabilisers, real men hurtle around tracks at ridiculous speeds, coated in leather and perched precariously on two wheels. That's the feeling you get after trying out the sample race in the *Moto GP 2* demo.

If you're anything like us you'll spend the first ten minutes attempting wheelies and shooting off corners at top speeds into the sand trap.

Careful use of the brake, though, and you could end up on top of the podium before the afternoon's out. As a bonus, on top of the single-player mode you can set up a multiplayer game and play with bike freaks anywhere in the world.

The game looks stunning and as our review said: "the sense of speed can be terrifying, with the sensation exacerbated by some obscene motion blur effects."



The attention to detail is immense. Check out that suspension work.

# COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

CD2/DVD Pub: Codemasters Dev: Codemasters Reviewed Issue 131 (86%)

Gear up for the latest *Colin McRae* offering from the Codemasters stable. You know the score by now, drive over inhospitable terrain as fast as you can without winding up at the bottom of a ditch. This demo offers you control over a Ford

Focus RS WRX 02 over three courses from Japan, Sweden and the UK. As could be expected, the UK offering involves our trademark rolling hills and general wetness while Japan provides oodles of hairpins and Sweden overloads

on snow and ice. A Welsh co-driver highlighting upcoming corners adds authenticity, but the real treat of this demo is the superb way the car handles. It's a must-play for driving game fans, and worth close scrutiny from everybody else.

# STAR TREK: ELITE FORCE 2

CD1/DVD Pub: Activision Dev: Ritual Entertainment Reviewed Issue 131 (74%)

*Elite Force 2* has landed, and on the disc this week you'll find this doozy of a demo. It's long, it's fun and it's bastard hard in places as you and your Hazard Team battle against evil bug aliens to save the hapless Atraxians. The combination of all the staples of the FPS tradition (air-ducts, locked doors, barrels that explode) with all the gadgets of the Trek-Universe (Tricorders, Phasers, dodgy science) all make for an entertaining sci-fi jaunt. The demo starts off cranked up in fifth gear, with you sparring against a collection of critters that seem to have jet engines instead of arses, and gets more and more mental from then on. The demo is well worth a spin whether you're a Trekkie, a Trekker or simply someone who likes shooting stuff in the face.



A step up from the standard Trek phaser.

# TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4

CD2/DVD Pub: Activision Dev: Neversoft

The *Tony Hawk* franchise rumbles on into its fourth incarnation, providing even more fuel for the generation who see a town-centre as merely a collection of straight-edges to grind upon. This demo gives you three skaters to play with, including Mr Hawk himself, and one giant map of an American college town. It's not far removed from the usual Tony Hawk blueprint, but objectives

are now given to you by people you talk to in-game. The demo allows you to deal out justice to keg-drinking frat-boys, play tennis with your board and even do an impromptu street-luge; but if you simply want to hone your tricks then there are a multitude of ramps to throw yourself off. Newbies may have a few problems with the control system, but the various missions give this demo a lot of mileage.



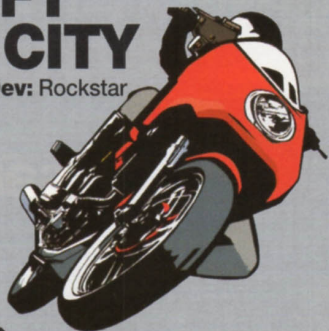
Excessive drinking is an obvious boon to balance control.

## EXCLUSIVE MOVIES

### GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

CD1/DVD Pub: Rockstar Games Dev: Rockstar North Reviewed Issue 131 (95%)

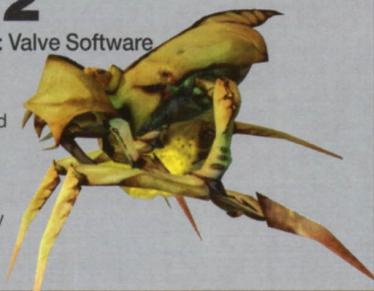
Currently tearing its way through the PC charts, *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* is, to put it simply, one of the best games that money can buy. If you haven't succumbed to temptation yet, check out this exclusive movie, kindly donated for your viewing pleasure by Rockstar.



### HALF-LIFE 2

CD1/DVD Pub: VU Games Dev: Valve Software

This is the game that shocked the world at the recent E3 show in LA. You've probably seen the static shots we printed along with our exclusive scoop in issue 129 but they don't do the game justice. Fire up this movie showing exclusive game footage and you'll understand why we, and the rest of the world, is setting this up to be the best game of all time.



## OTHER DEMOS ON THE CD/DVD

THE HULK (CD 2) VIETCONG SINGLE-PLAYER DEMO (CD 2) AND NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL (CD 2)

## DVD EXCLUSIVES

ONLY AVAILABLE ON PC ZONE'S DVD EDITION. TO SUBSCRIBE TURN TO PAGE 132

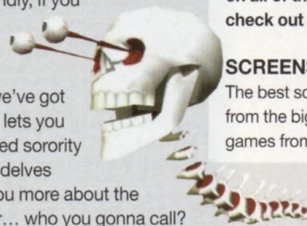
### THE MAKING OF **DVD VIDEO** GHOST MASTER



There are two reasons why you should go and buy *Ghost Master* immediately. Firstly, it's a brilliant and original strategic spook 'em up that puts one up *The Sims* with its humour

and chief objective: it's your job to scare the bejesus out of anyone that moves. Secondly, if you don't Empire is going to send a horde of Clatterclaws to personally sort you out.

If you still need convincing, we've got an exclusive playable demo that lets you loose on a gaggle of underdressed sorority girls, and also this movie, which delves behind the scenes and shows you more about the making of the game. All together... who you gonna call?



#### MODWATCH

Experience WWII  
Thievery UT Beta 1.4  
Point Of View  
Airfight UT  
Conflict In Somalia 2.0

For more information on all of these mods, check out page 126.

#### SCREENSHOTS

The best screenshots from the biggest games from E3 2003.

## OTHER DEMOS ON THE DVD

CIVILIZATION III: GAME OF THE YEAR EDITION, PORT ROYALE, FIRE CHIEF, AND FIGHTBOX

# THE REAL POWER BEHIND EUROPEAN ONLINE GAMING



### JOLT PUBLIC SERVERS

Join the action and spill some blood on 600 of Europe's fastest and most popular FREE servers. Games and mods include:

Counter-Strike, BF1942, Day of Defeat, Delta Force:BHD, Firearms, Jedi Knight II, MoH: Allied Assault, NASCAR 2002, Quake2, Quake2jump, Quake3, Quake3:Urban Terror, Quake3:Rocket Arena3, RTCW, Soldier Of Fortune I & II, Tour Of Duty, UT:Strike Force, UT:Tactical Operations, Unreal, Unreal Tournament, Unreal Tournament2003

### JOLT ADSL

#### THE GAMERS CHOICE OF BROADBAND

From 256k up & 512k down to 256k up & 2Mb down. With only 4 hops to Europe's fastest online gaming service and a ping of only 19ms\* all for £22.99\*\* per month, jolt ADSL is your route to electrifying online gaming

### JOLT CLANSERVERS

Jolt is the World leader in high performance servers available for rent on a month to month basis

### JOLT ÜBERSERVERS™

Dedicated 24 - 48 player high performance servers for serious clans

### JOLT FORUMS AND COMMUNITY

Join the UK's most vibrant and welcoming online gaming community

### JOLT CORPORATE

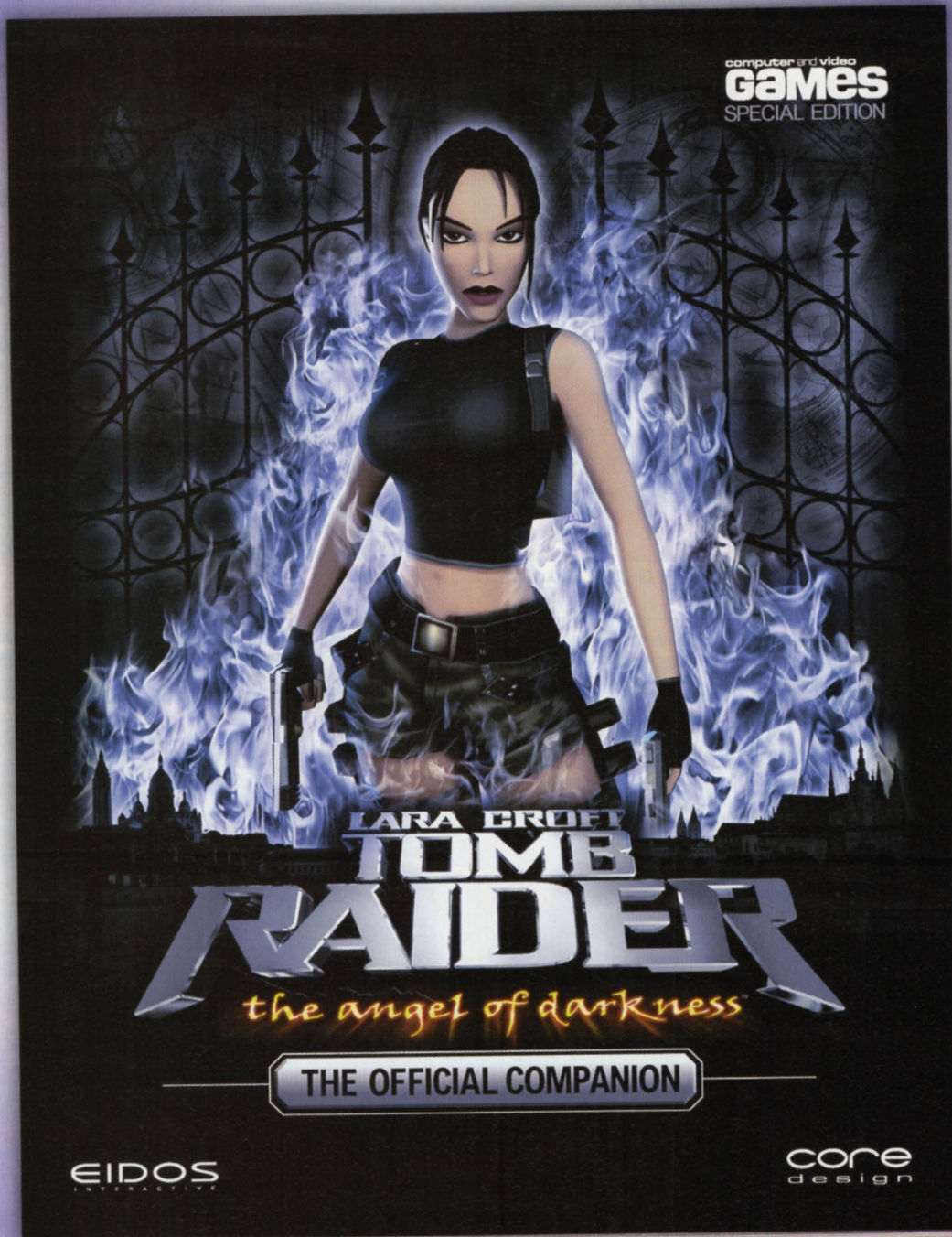
From a few managed gameservers to a 24/7 fully admined game server farm. Demo file hosting, Bandwidth, Leased lines, Specialist games webhosting solutions

\*19ms ping time taken as an average from a selection of JOLTADSL users

\*\*Home500 Lite option with £58.75 set-up fee.

[www.jolt.co.uk](http://www.jolt.co.uk)

# GO BEHIND THE SCENES OF LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS



**THE ESSENTIAL BOOK  
FOR ALL TRUE FANS**

**OUT NOW**

**AT ALL GOOD NEWSAGENTS**

# FIGHT CLUB



**One last time. One final battle. One more Fight Club. Yes, they said it would never end, but here is *Martin Korda* to call you to arms one final time**

**FELLOW** Fight Clubbers. It has been my pleasure – no, my honour – to run the monthly *PC ZONE* Readers Challenge, affectionately known as Fight Club, for the past two and a half years. During this time, we have fought many battles, together and in competition with one another. For the most part, you've killed me before I've even seen you, but I'm not bitter (you bastards).

During this time, I have seen many of you flourish and grow into bloodthirsty killers, and watched with fatherly joy as you've shot out each other's eyeballs, cut smiley faces across each other's throats and blown each other's limbs off with fragmentation grenades.

But alas, all good things must come to an end. Yes, I am sad to say that Fight Club, in its current form, will cease to exist after June 26. But before that day passes, come and join me one last time, for one final battle in celebration of two and a half years of brutality. After that, the reins will pass over to a baboon, not a brainless chimp with a penchant for bananas though, but to one Paul 'I R Baboon'



**Come and face us online on Thursday, June 26.**

Presley (I believe some of you may have heard of him over the past ten years), who will bring a new, revamped Readers Challenge to you in spectacular

Goreovision every month. So farewell my friends, thanks for the memories, one shot kills and endless humiliating defeats. It's been barbaric...

**FREE-FOR-ALL**

**THURSDAY  
JUNE 26**

6.30pm – 9.00pm

**Counter-Strike**

**HALL OF FAME**

Earn five mentions and you'll have your name immortalised. Our three star players are...

**K.I.T  
logix  
Mas.ter**

**KNOW YOUR ENEMY**

Dave Woods	Kid Unknown
Richie Shoemaker	Zapatero
Martin Korda	Nameless One
Anthony Holden	Shokupan
Mark Hill	Leatherface
Paul Presley	I R Baboon
Lee Cocker	Viper
Phil Clark	ShitKicker
Danny King-Smith	Ronin
Colin Mackleworth	M.A.C.H.I.N.E.
Jamie Malcolm	BraveArt



## PC ZONE GAME SERVERS POWERED BY JOLT.CO.UK

**OUR SERVERS ARE OPEN 24/7 AND FREE OF CHARGE. WHY PLAY ANYWHERE ELSE?**

We've switched our game servers to the ultra-fast Jolt service, which means lag should now be a thing of the past. We've also changed the way you find them, and from now on, we'll refer to them by their name rather than by their address. The easiest way to connect is to load the game you wish

PC Zone Game Servers Powered By Jolt.co.uk

PC Zone CS #1 [Popular] – [pczone1.jolt.co.uk:27015](http://pczone1.jolt.co.uk:27015)

PC Zone CS #2 [Dusty] – [pczone1.jolt.co.uk:27025](http://pczone1.jolt.co.uk:27025)

PC Zone CS #3 [Custom] – [pczone1.jolt.co.uk:27035](http://pczone1.jolt.co.uk:27035)

Team Fortress Classic Public Server [24hr 2fort]:  
[pczone1.jolt.co.uk:27045](http://pczone1.jolt.co.uk:27045)

Natural Selection [1.04]: [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27025](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27025)

to play, go to the multiplayer connection screen, and instead of typing in an IP address, enter the name of the server from the list below. They can also be accessed from a server browser such as The All-Seeing Eye or GameSpy. Remember to use the password below, which is updated each month.

PC Zone Q3 [OSP] – [pczone1.jolt.co.uk:27960](http://pczone1.jolt.co.uk:27960)

PC Zone BF1942 [CTF] – [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:14567](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:14567)

PC Zone UT2003 [Team] – [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:7777](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:7777)

PC Zone RTCW [1.4] – [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27960](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27960)

FreeForAll Server – [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27015](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27015)

**PASSWORD: farewell**

## LAN ROVER

**LAN LORD STEVE 'SCALPER' RANDALL SAYS IT'S TIME TO GET THE PARTY STARTED**

LAN parties are going on around the country every weekend, and I have tried to show you a decent spread from North to South. For those of you yet to try out a LAN event, what's wrong, are you scared of getting your arse whipped, or have you just forgotten how to be sociable? Why not give one a go?

■ In no particular order I'm starting with the Andover LAN Party which is our southernmost LAN, being held in Hampshire. It's running from 9:30pm July 11 to 6pm July 13. Expect to see around 60 people competing for a cash prize in a 3v3 *Counter-Strike* tournament. It will

cost £30 for three days, more info at [www.eyeballpaul.co.uk/alp](http://www.eyeballpaul.co.uk/alp).

■ Regular readers will know I started running LANs with the HGLan guys, and while I now rove around, they are still running successful LANs in the Queen Mary College Conference Room in Mile End. You can get info about their next event from June 27 to 29 at [www.HallowedGround.co.uk](http://www.HallowedGround.co.uk)

■ High Wycombe, Bucks will see an influx of 50 odd gamers from July 4 to 6 for the 16th LAN South East. It will set you back £20 to be among them. Details as ever from [www.lanse.co.uk](http://www.lanse.co.uk)

■ No time on your hands, but itching to learn how to play a game properly? Visit [www.lanpartyzone.co.uk](http://www.lanpartyzone.co.uk) for details of a one day event on July 15 in Winsford, Cheshire. Twenty spots at £15 a head sounds like it could be a good day out. ■ Let's hope the organisers of the next event don't live up to their name as they host the second [www.bodgedlan.co.uk](http://www.bodgedlan.co.uk) with 20 seats at £20 each. It's a three-day gathering from July 12 to 14 in Aldershot. *That's all I've got space for this month; more next time. Whatever you play, wherever you play, remember: play to win. Scalper out.*

## FREE-FOR-ALL CONNECTION DETAILS

Connecting to our server has always been simple. And to make things even easier, we've given it a permanent home. To hook up from within the game, open the *Half-Life* console and type 'password pczone' and then press enter. After this, type 'connect pczone2.jolt.co.uk' and press enter. You'll be taken right there. You can also add the server to popular game browsers such as The All-Seeing Eye or GameSpy 3D by entering [pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27015](http://pczone2.jolt.co.uk:27015) where you would normally provide an IP address. Check our forum ([www.pczone.co.uk](http://www.pczone.co.uk)) for any information updates.



# MAILBOX

Everybody needs a good rant every now and again, and we're here to listen...

■ KEEPING IT REAL Dave Woods



## BULLET CRIME

Running over your splendid magazine the other day, I noticed it sported FOUR games that had incorporated Bullet-Time (even if it's not called that) or *Matrix*-style moves, and to be honest with you, I'm kind of tired of seeing development companies sit around and sap the ideas of others.

Don't get me wrong here guys, I love Bullet-Time. I love diving around, trying to nail several baddies without touching the ground, but it's time to stop overusing it because the

more and more it gets used, the less exciting it's going to be. *Enter The Matrix* might well have had the perfect excuse to incorporate it, but as this was the game's only gimmick it was old news.

Adam Hall

I was lucky enough to see *Max Payne 2* in action at E3 and mentioned the very same thing to the developers. The trouble is once a gimmick's proved successful, people are going to copy it - it's the way of the world. Used in moderation (ie as long as it's not the only hook of the game) then I don't see a problem. Oh, and before you ask, the developers of *Max Payne* also said they "were working on the concept before *The Matrix* was released". Uhuh.

## BREEDING

I'd just like to thank all at PC ZONE for putting the demo of *Breed* on last month's cover disc - it's an excellent game and one which I'll be buying when it's released. However, while I have no objection to liberating the world from hordes of aliens, I certainly wouldn't choose to do so under the flag of the EU. So, why is there a European flag on the dropship in the demo mission? A sign of things to come, or just some programmer having a laugh?

James Bromige

We reckon it's probably the programmers having a bit of a laugh, but that won't stop the *Daily Mail* from making a front-page campaign out of it.

## ADAPTATION

I've just bought *Vice City* and can't play it with my keyboard, and all the dedicated PC gamepads are crap. I've heard you can get adapters that allow you to use PlayStation 2 or GameCube pads on your PC, can you tell me where I can buy them from?

Michael Barmby

The PS2 gamepad is the best in the world, but Sony



*Eve Online*: If you want to play in a persistent world, you're going to have to pay a persistent price.

doesn't want you to use it on your PC, so you won't find an adapter in any stores in the UK. Luckily [www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk) has hundreds for sale - just type in 'PS2 PC adapter' into the search engine.

## UNDERTROUSERS

What's all this about Rhianna upping and leaving the mag? What did you lot do to her? Actually, don't answer that, I can guess. It seems a shame to lose her and her valuable input, as it seems she was the lone voice of women in the industry. Couldn't you have tied her up and refused to let her leave, or is that the sort of

thing that led to her resigning in the first place?

Meg Turner

It was great having a female on the team, although we were forced to talk about knitting and washing-up down the pub. The good news is that she'll still be writing for us regularly from her own house in her undertrousers.

## PEEVED ONLINE

I was reading your *Eve Online* review and was interested in playing it until I glanced at the blurb at the start of the review. ARE YOU CRAZY! £34.99 and a subscription fee? Admittedly, this is only around £7 or £8 when you convert it, but you still have to pay this for a year up front.

Other online game like *Counter-Strike*, *Day Of Defeat* and *Tribes 2* are completely free once you've got the software and don't charge you anything to play on the servers. I enjoy online gaming



Enter *The Matrix*? Give it up and go home, *Max Payne* was here years ago.

## GOT SOMETHING YOU NEED TO GET OFF YOUR CHEST? WRITE TO...

MAILBOX, PC ZONE, 30 CLEVELAND ST, LONDON W1T 4JD, OR EMAIL [LETTERS@PCZONE.CO.UK](mailto:LETTERS@PCZONE.CO.UK)

WIN!  
A TOP  
SOUND  
CARD

■ The Letter of the Month wins a spanking new soundcard courtesy of the lovely people at Creative Labs. The Audigy 2 Platinum has been firmly ensconced in our Buyer's Guide since its release, and is the best gaming card you can currently buy.



Get an adapter and you can use one of these on your PC.

# TELL-A-MO

**"When you see the game in action, you feel special, you feel you're part of something that will change everything"**

**SAM SEDGMAN, A MAN WITH HIGH HOPES INDEED FOR HALF-LIFE 2**



Half-Life 2? Just some generic shooter... it'll never amount to anything.

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### BORKED

Let me start off by saying this wasn't your fault. My school recently bought about 17 new 1.7GHz PCs – fast enough you might think, but you'd tempted me with your piece on overclocking. So, while everyone else was typing in 'nude Britney' in the search engine I rebooted and went into the system's BIOS. I fiddled around with it for a while and then overclocked the CPU from 1.7 to 2.3, saved it, and rebooted. Would it work? Let's just say that it made a noise not dissimilar to a lawnmower as you're yanking the chain to get the thing working. I've never heard a PC make that noise before nor do I want to again. The result was a busted PC which made me feel bad for the rest of the day. Luckily nobody knows I botched it up and since school's out for the summer I'm off the hook.

Brian Kirwan

Unless your headmaster's a fan of PC ZONE of course. Everyone else take note – if you're going to overclock something and you don't know what you're doing, make sure it's not yours. Brian, you can try and overclock the soundcard we're going to send you.



Make sure you know what you're doing if you're overclocking something.

and I think it's a shame that this genre may become too expensive for me to fund. I am still a student, and as such am working off a very, very limited budget.

Phil W

The reason games like *Eve Online*, *EverQuest* and the other persistent gameworlds charge a subscription is that they have a dedicated professional team working on them constantly, moderating the way you play and also providing the servers for you to play on. *Counter-Strike* and other shooters or strategy games don't, or are worked on by enthusiasts who do it as a hobby. That's the truth, but it doesn't make it any cheaper I'm afraid.

### HALF-LIFE COO

In Issue 129 you featured a preview of a small title called *Half-Life 2*. Ten fantastic pages later and my stomach was fluttering, and it wasn't the gammy half-soggy sandwich I'd just shoved in my gob, but an insight into what could be the next big leap in gaming. It makes me warm inside to think that the

## BACKCHAT

### ▲ THE BEST OF THE CHAT FROM THE PCZONE FORUM THIS MONTH. GET INVOLVED AT WWW.PCZONE.CO.UK

With one member of staff leaving and two joining, all talk on the forum was aimed at the PC ZONE staff this month. Rhianna set up a thread about her departure and received 75 replies, mostly highly complimentary: "Well, we will miss you and I hope you get on well freelancing" (**Dagotha**); "Ah well at least you're not leaving us completely, you've been my favourite PCZ writer for aaaaages and I'm sure you'll stay that way." (**Dandy-Flugle**); "Nooo! I will now have to take my own life." "Slits throat" (**coolbromk2**); "You brought a welcome ray of sunshine, and a fresh breeze to the male masses. NO! Not like that, in a good, clean way!" (**G-Man-007**). Sickening stuff, and only one of you actually hit the nail on the head. "Freelancer? One step above student." Well said **slackdog**.

In a bid to ingratiate himself with the in-crowd Prezzer started a thread about his entrance to the fold but only received 25 replies. One of which was from **Wildpods**, "Who r u? Prezzer?!? Looks in mag for a Prezzer?????" and another from **Original Aceman**, "Prezzer in the mag? Ah well, beggars can't be choosers!" Rumours that Prez is considering dressing up in leather for a new photo in ZONE haven't been scotched completely.

Carrying on the theme of competition, **Gangster15** came up a thread guaranteed to cause a ruckus in the ZONE office – Best PC ZONE Staff Member. It was a poll listing just about every name he could think of from the annals (or should that be anals) of ZONE writers. Early votes went to Rhianna, which didn't please the boy from the hood. "OK, who didn't vote for Wandy? I've seen two votes, not for Wandy! I want answers!" **Vsvsvs** strangely decided to ignore this plea and asked a question of his own: "Is Steve Spence's forehead really that large?" Allegations of cheating followed and amid rumours of ZONE staff going on and voting for themselves the results have been declared null and void. It matters not as it's obvious that the Editor is/knows best.

Hmmm! doesn't quite have the same appeal does he? Come back Rhianna, all is forgiven!



same people who made the first title are back, with a game that feels as if the best minds on the planet have spent 50 years developing it.

You did say in the preview, though, that the screenshots didn't do it justice so I downloaded the demo shown at E3, which took about three hours. It starts and like a smack in the face you realise the enormity and magnificence of

the game. When you see the game in action you feel special, you feel you're part of something that will change everything.

Sam Sedgman

We may have been guilty in the past of hyping games that eventually don't live up to their promise but we're convinced this one will. Check the movie out for yourself on this month's DVD if you're still a non-believer. [X]

# THE PCZONE A-LIST

◀ SHOOTERS ▶

## MEDAL OF HONOR



### MEDAL OF HONOR

They say the line between films and games is blurring, and after you've clawed your way through the maelstrom of the Omaha beach landings here, you'll have forgotten on which side you're standing. It may not be the best looking shooter around, but for sheer immersion and intensity you can't beat the brilliant level design, the challenging AI, the lavish period detail, and those beautifully scripted set-pieces.

**PUB EA DEV 2015**  
PCZ ISSUE 112



### NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2

Style, stealth and magnificent set-pieces are the order of the day in this excellent spy sequel. It looks brilliant, it's well designed and genuinely funny – and it doesn't treat you like an idiot.

**PUB Black Label Games DEV Monolith**  
PCZ ISSUE 122



### HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS

Unchallenged for three years, *Half-Life* redefined its genre with a cracking atmosphere and a compelling plot. It now comes bundled with the excellent *Opposing Force* add-on pack and the world's favourite mod, *Counter-Strike*.

**PUB Vivendi DEV Valve Software**  
PCZ ISSUE 71



### UNREAL II

In terms of visuals, this is the absolute pinnacle in the world of the FPS. What's more, the arsenal of weaponry at your disposal is imaginative and satisfying to wield, while the sound effects, music and voice acting all exude quality too.

**PUB Atari DEV Legend Entertainment**  
PCZ ISSUE 126



### UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003

Not a million miles away from the last *UT* title, *UT2003* does however make leaps and bounds graphically. With finely balanced weapons, smart bots and diverse maps it's the reigning king of speed fragging.

**PUB Infogrames DEV Digital Extremes**  
PCZ ISSUE 122



### MAFIA

From the makers of *Hidden & Dangerous* and just as compelling, this game borrows from every great gangster film ever made. Tense missions, superb atmosphere and great AI – it's a classic in every respect. Badabing!

**PUB Take 2 DEV Illusion**  
PCZ ISSUE 119



### JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST

The first *Star Wars* game to be awarded a *PC ZONE* Classic award since the original *Jedi Knight* back in 1997. This is more than just a simple FPS, it's frustrating, rewarding and extremely good fun. A new hope has come.

**PUB Activision DEV Raven**  
PCZ ISSUE 115



### SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II

The bloodiest game in the world is back, but this time there's a brilliant game covering beneath the carnage. Sublime AI is the chief culprit and if you can stomach the violence this is a must buy.

**PUB Activision DEV Raven**  
PCZ ISSUE 118



### ALIENS VS PREDATOR 2

If we rated games on atmosphere and tension *AvP2* would've been the highest-scoring game ever. The multiplayer game and 3D engine brought the score down, but for scares nothing can touch this three-way fragfest.

**PUB Vivendi DEV Monolith**  
PCZ ISSUE 110



### BATTLEFIELD 1942

Even though it features a disappointing and heavily bugged single-player campaign, *Battlefield* is one of the most compelling team-based multiplayer games ever. A must have for any online shooter fan.

**PUB EA DEV Digital Illusions**  
PCZ ISSUE 121

◀ STRATEGY ▶

## MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR



A sequel to the stunning *Shogun: Total War* (now available on budget), *Medieval* offers everything its predecessor did and a whole lot more. Adding to the massive 3D battles and turn-based *Risk*-style strategy map are a multitude of new options, both diplomatic and military. Breathtaking in every way, strategy games just don't come any better than this.

**PUB Activision DEV Creative Assembly**  
PCZ ISSUE 120



### RISE OF NATIONS

One of the most addictive and satisfying strategy games to land on our desks in ages. Its unique perspective, great gameplay and all round freshness make *Rise of Nations* a title worthy of our prestigious Classic award.

**PUB Microsoft DEV Big Huge Games**  
PCZ ISSUE 129



### AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

The *Age Of* series goes 3D in Ensemble Studios' best strategy outing to date. Great gameplay, superb attention to detail throughout and a strong storyline give this an unparalleled sense of atmosphere, plus it includes a decent map editor.

**PUB Microsoft DEV Ensemble Studios**  
PCZ ISSUE 123



### WARRIOR KINGS: BATTLES

*Warrior Kings* was one of the most compelling and diverse RTS games we'd seen. This second chapter, which focuses around skirmish play, offers more units, varied tech trees and challenging AI generals.

**PUB Empire Interactive DEV Black Cactus**  
PCZ ISSUE 128



### COMMAND & CONQUER: GENERALS

The *C&C* series comes of age in this 3D orgy of scud missiles, daisy-cutter bombs and nuclear strikes. *Generals* is a superb looking game with well designed sides that offers fun in spades.

**PUB EA DEV EA Pacific/Westwood**  
PCZ ISSUE 127



### COMMANDOS 2

There have been a few imitators of the squad-based strategy of *Commandos* but none have come close to this sequel. If, like us, you loved the first game, you'll love this massive, preposterously detailed follow-up even more.

**PUB Eidos DEV Pyro Studio**  
PCZ ISSUE 108



### WARCRAFT III

While not a huge departure from the original, *Warcraft III* is an extremely enjoyable and polished package. The storyline is brilliant and the multiplayer action dangerously addictive. Simple, solid entertainment.

**PUB VU Games DEV Blizzard**  
PCZ ISSUE 119



### COSSACKS: EUROPEAN WARS

There are 8,000 troops at your disposal in this historically accurate RTS. Smooth unit movement, a 3D landscape with real physics modelling and great graphics and sound make it truly absorbing. An essential purchase.

**PUB CDV DEV GSC GameWorld**  
PCZ ISSUE 101



### Z: STEEL SOLDIERS

*Z* will re-ignite your passion for strategy games with its fast-paced in-ner-face action that allows you to get down and dirty from the off. The AI is superb and, as it's entirely mouse-driven, it's simple and easy to get into.

**PUB EON DEV Bitmap Brothers**  
PCZ ISSUE 101



### ETHERLORDS

This unexpected gem might just be good enough to convert those who immediately associate 'turn-based' with the word 'geek'. The visuals and sound are stunning, the tactical variety truly staggering – fantastic stuff.

**PUB JoWooD DEV Nival Interactive**  
PCZ ISSUE 112



Welcome to the **PC ZONE A-List**, the definitive buyer's guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages aren't just good, they're the best of the best in their respective genres, and our list is continually updated to show how each game stands in relation to its peers.

## ◀ ROLE-PLAYING GAMES ▶

### DEUS EX



Warren Spector is one of the true visionaries of the computer game medium, and this is his magnum opus. Combining the finer elements of *Half-Life*, *System Shock 2* and *Thief*, *Deus Ex* is an RPG of complex beauty and a true revolution in computer gaming. The fascinating sci-fi plot and amazing attention to detail, combined with unparalleled player freedom are just some of the reasons why *Deus Ex* is a landmark in gaming.

PUB Eidos DEV Ion Storm  
PCZ ISSUE 93



#### THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

One of the most impressive RPGs we've seen in years. A massively open-ended world full of beautiful visuals, superb depth of gameplay and innovative character development make this a classic that will keep you totally absorbed.

PUB Ubi Soft DEV Bethesda Softworks  
PCZ ISSUE 117



#### NEVERWINTER NIGHTS

The makers of the epic *Baldur's Gate* series prove they are still a leading force in the world of RPGs with this glorious hardcore 3D adventure. It features great single and multiplayer options, along with a very accessible toolkit.

PUB Infogrames DEV Bioware  
PCZ ISSUE 118



#### PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

An incredible game from Black Isle, using the *Baldur's Gate* engine. With a compelling story, well-scripted dialogue and the best character development we've seen in any game of its kind, this is a dark, adult scorcher of an RPG.

PUB Interplay DEV Black Isle Studio  
PCZ ISSUE 87



#### DUNGEON SIEGE

Graphically brilliant, massively enjoyable and highly immersive, *Dungeon Siege* is one of the best RPGs to date and only misses out on a Classic because of the shortcomings in the narrative.

PUB Microsoft DEV Gas Powered Games  
PCZ ISSUE 115



#### SYSTEM SHOCK 2

Definitely one of the most 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 with the lights off if you're hard enough.

PUB EA DEV Irrational Games  
PCZ ISSUE 80



#### BALDUR'S GATE II

The original *Baldur's Gate* was hailed as one of the best story-driven role-playing games ever. The sequel isn't vastly different, but it's bigger, better and still extremely addictive. An essential for anyone interested in PC role-playing.

PUB Interplay DEV Bioware  
PCZ ISSUE 96



#### DIVINE DIVINITY

This epic RPG contains the action of *Diablo II* combined with the storyline of the *Baldur's Gate* series, not to mention about 200 hours of gameplay in a huge fantasy world. The name may be a bit silly, but the gameplay certainly isn't.

PUB CDV DEV Larian Studios  
PCZ ISSUE 121



#### FREEDOM FORCE

Control your own group of superheroes in this immersive and fully destructible comic book world. It may not be the most sophisticated and bearded of RPGs, but *Freedom Force* is unadulterated bubble-gum fun at its best.

PUB EA DEV Irrational Games  
PCZ ISSUE 115



#### ARX FATALIS

This is a graphically beautiful role-playing game with more than a few hints of *Ultima Underworld*. Its hugely detailed and realistic environment made this a PC ZONE Essential.

PUB VU Games DEV Monolith  
PCZ ISSUE 122

## ◀ ACTION/ADVENTURE ▶

### SPLINTER CELL



At long last we've got a new king of the action adventures with the Tom Clancy influenced *Splinter Cell*, and a new crown prince of stealth in the form of the über flexible Sam Fisher. *Splinter Cell* features the perfect blend of action, structure and pace, combined with some of the best visuals and set pieces around. No self-respecting gamer should miss out on this.

PUB Ubi Soft  
DEV Ubi Soft Montreal  
PCZ ISSUE 125



#### GRIM FANDANGO

If you've followed LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must. The scripting is impeccable, while sublime graphics and brilliant humour ensure it's top of its genre.

PUB Activision DEV LucasArts  
PCZ ISSUE 71



#### SILENT HILL 2: DIRECTOR'S CUT

Survival horror games have truly come of age with this superbly creepy and atmospheric offering from Japan. From the lovingly-smear blood and grime to the terrifying use of ambient sound, it's a class act.

PUB Konami DEV Konami  
PCZ ISSUE 126



#### METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE

A convincing PC conversion that adds tankerloads of side-missions, training stages and unlockable characters to the PS2 original. There's too much waffle, but it's still an excellent third-person sneakfest.

PUB Konami DEV Konami  
PCZ ISSUE 127



#### SOUL REAVER 2

While this latest episode in the saga of Raziel takes few risks with the action/adventure formula, it's a consummately constructed example of the genre, with a compelling storyline, satisfying combat and excellent puzzle dynamics.

PUB Eidos DEV Crystal Dynamics  
PCZ ISSUE 111



#### DISCWORLD NOIR

Although the point-and-click adventure game is dying, *Discworld Noir* is still very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games and all the better for it in our opinion.

PUB Infogrames DEV Perfect Entertainment  
PCZ ISSUE 79



#### THE THING

Drawing on some brilliant raw material from John Carpenter's classic horror movie, this survival action horror picks up the story where the film left off. It's one of the best film spin-offs around, with tense atmosphere and good gameplay.

PUB Black Label Games DEV Computer Artworks  
PCZ ISSUE 121



#### PRISONER OF WAR

One of the most original games available with a light-hearted setting and an atmospheric soundtrack, which makes it more of an adventure than an action title. *POW* makes a refreshing change from the usual mass slaughter fare.

PUB Codemasters DEV Wide Games  
PCZ ISSUE 121



#### HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

The revamped *Hitman* engine is nothing short of breathtaking, blessing the sequel with gorgeous graphics that fit well with the refined controls and superbly realistic AI. *Hitman 2* is solid and enjoyable with a great sense of gameplay freedom.

PUB Eidos DEV IO  
PCZ ISSUE 121



#### SEVERANCE: BLADE OF DARKNESS

Anyone who doesn't mind being splattered with the kind of gore rarely seen outside *Soldier Of Fortune* will find much to like in *Severance*. But it stands out from the usual hack 'n' slasher with its amazing engine and combo system.

PUB Codemasters DEV Rebel Act Studios  
PCZ ISSUE 98

◀ GOD GAMES ▶

## BLACK & WHITE



Although it had its critics we still stand by our original verdict. Peter Molyneux's vision is pure and the design of the game both breaks boundaries and serves as a blueprint for the future. The add-on *Creature Isle* is also available, which cuts down on micro-management and lets you guide your creature through a variety of mini-games. Overall we think it's pure genius in a box.  
**PUB EA DEV** Lionhead Studios  
**PCZ ISSUE 100**



### CIVILIZATION III

*Civilization III* sticks to the same compulsive gameplay that made the first two games so popular. Die-hard *Civ* fans will relish the improved visuals and animation, while the new user-friendly interface makes the game accessible to the first-timer. Brings to mind the maxim 'if it ain't broke...'  
**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Firaxis Games  
**PCZ ISSUE 111**



### GHOST MASTER NEW ENTRY

Take your team of ghosts into the town of Gravenille and solve some otherworldly problems, scare a few mortals and bag yourself some new team mates in this innovative spook 'em up that's one of the freshest and funniest games we've seen for a long time.  
**PUB** Empire Interactive **DEV** Sick Puppies  
**PCZ ISSUE 130**



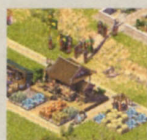
### THE SIMS

Revolutionary at birth, the concept has since been diluted through numerous add-ons and an unhealthy long stay in the charts. It's now little more than a cash cow for Electronic Arts, but you can't help but admire the strength of community and the fact that it's still selling by the bucketload.  
**PUB EA DEV** Maxis/EA  
**PCZ ISSUE 87**



### CAESAR III

Starting from scratch, you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens by balancing their work, health and entertainment needs. So what? So it's probably one of the most utterly absorbing and addictive god sims in existence. Hail Caesar.  
**PUB VJ Games DEV** Impressions  
**PCZ ISSUE 70**



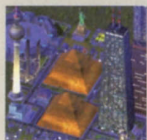
### EMPEROR: RISE OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

This intricate game comes from the same stable as *Zeus* and *Caesar* – and they know a thing or two about city building. There's a massive amount of gameplay and more than 50 missions spanning seven historical campaigns. As well as the economic considerations, you'll have to follow feng shui and the Chinese zodiac.  
**PUB VJ Games DEV** Breakaway Games  
**PCZ ISSUE 121**



### ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON 2

As utterly absorbing as its predecessor, *RollerCoaster Tycoon 2* once again revolves around designing and managing your own theme park. This version also allows you to design individual rides as well as including a handful of real-life coasters. Detailed and addictive.  
**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Chris Sawyer  
**PCZ ISSUE 123**



### SIMCITY 4

The latest outing of the best-selling city building sim goes 3D. Unfortunately there are no huge leaps forwards in gameplay, but there are plenty of features such as regional cities, imported characters from *The Sims* and a terrain editor to keep you occupied.  
**PUB EA DEV** Maxis  
**PCZ ISSUE 125**



### MONOPOLY TYCOON

This mixture of the classic board game and a *Theme Park/SimCity*-style building sim is an admirable attempt at something a little different. Played in real-time, the aim is to make as much money as possible. Great fun for a while, but it quickly becomes repetitive.  
**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Deep Red  
**PCZ ISSUE 110**



### DUNGEON KEEPER 2

The ultimate 'it's good to be bad' game, *Dungeon Keeper* was a great idea and *DK2* takes the essence and humour of the original, corrects all the mistakes, vastly improves the graphics, and adds a myriad of new features that build wisely on the original concept.  
**PUB EA DEV** Bullfrog  
**PCZ ISSUE 79**

◀ SPACE COMBAT ▶

## FREELANCER



The first game in years to actually make an effort to refine the space simulation genre, even if it doesn't manage to radically re-shape it. *Freelancer* combines the epic open-endedness of the classic *Elite* world with the combat immediacy of the *Wing Commander* series. It also mixes in a well played out (if somewhat short) story and gorgeous graphics to create a thoroughly engaging and very atmospheric experience.  
**PUB** Microsoft **DEV** Digital Anvil  
**PCZ ISSUE 128**



### X - GOLD

The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic, in which you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. It rewards patience with variety and months of absorbing gameplay. Deeply hypnotic and beautiful rather than tense and frenetic.  
**PUB** THQ **DEV** Egosoft  
**PCZ ISSUE 82**



### TERMINUS

Who says the days of bedroom programming are over? *Terminus* proves you can make a great game on your own if you have the talent and passion, and we reckon it just edges out the mighty *FreeSpace 2*.  
**PUB** www.macgames.co.uk **DEV** Vicarious Visions  
**PCZ ISSUE 93**



### FREESPACE 2

Following in the footsteps of *Wing Commander* and *X-Wing*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. With an epic story and amazing graphics, it suffers from being a bit short-lived if you don't play online.  
**PUB** Interplay **DEV** Volition Inc  
**PCZ ISSUE 84**



### EDGE OF CHAOS: INDEPENDENCE WAR 2

This title is likely to appeal more to the die-hard space simmers, but *Edge of Chaos* still goes some way towards advancing the genre. Its graphics and absorbing, freeform gameplay are inspirational.  
**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Particle Systems  
**PCZ ISSUE 104**

◀ ONLINE RPGS ▶

## EVERQUEST



*EverQuest* keeps going from strength to strength and now has a total of four expansion packs. The latest, *Planes Of Power* provides a multitude of simplifications to help newcomers, while adding lots of new worlds for high-level characters to explore. It's a truly beautiful and captivating game that has claimed the souls and social lives of thousands of people the world over.  
**PUB** Ubi Soft **DEV** Sony Online Entertainment  
**PCZ ISSUE 117**



### EVE ONLINE

**NEW ENTRY** *Eve Online* is as beautiful as it is complex, oozing style from every pixel. Choose from four unique races, and explore the *Eve* universe with its unparalleled scope for adventure, interaction and trade.  
**PUB** CDV **DEV** Reakktor  
**PCZ ISSUE 130**



### NEOCRON

It's a much smaller world than the epic *EverQuest*, but there's a lot crammed into this *Matrix* meets *Blade Runner*-style MMORPG. The atmosphere is fresh, exciting and extremely engrossing. We see big things ahead for *Neocron*.  
**PUB** CDV **DEV** Reakktor  
**PCZ ISSUE 124**



### ANARCHY ONLINE

A beautiful MMORPG with detailed environments and a huge selection of armour and weapons, which all add up to make an immersive title. Many of the bugs have been ironed out and the latest update offers a slick gaming experience.  
**PUB** Funcom **DEV** Funcom  
**PCZ ISSUE 114**



### ASHERON'S CALL II

One of the smoothest, most graphically lush MMORPGs around, *ACII* is also extremely easy to pick up. It's still in need of work but hopefully Turbine will be providing the community with regular updates.  
**PUB** Microsoft **DEV** Turbine Entertainment  
**PCZ ISSUE 126**

## FLIGHT SIMS

### IL-2: FORGOTTEN BATTLES



Much of what has been improved with this sequel to *IL-2 Sturmovik* has been done under the virtual bonnet of the game. *IL-2: Forgotten Battles* features improved AI, more accurate flight models and more of a realistic overall experience, plus more campaigns and even more planes. All of this adds up to make a truly exhilarating flying experience. Put simply, we think *IL-2: Forgotten Battles* is one of the finest flight sims ever to grace our screens.

**PUB** Ubi Soft **DEV** 1C; Maddox Games **PCZ** ISSUE 128



#### MS FLIGHT SIM 2002

With more polish than previous versions, this professional edition offers players more planes, extra flight loggings and improved graphics. It might not be able to teach you how to fly, but it's the closest you'll get without paying for lessons.

**PUB** Microsoft **DEV** BAO

**PCZ** ISSUE 111



#### BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Allow yourself to be immersed in one of the most exciting and realistic combat flight sims around. The action is non-stop, the skies are crowded and the flight models actually feel 'right'. Tally ho!

**PUB** Empire Interactive **DEV** Rowan Software

**PCZ** ISSUE 103



#### FALCON 4

We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that, for once, we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* features incredible 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure.

**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Microprose

**PCZ** ISSUE 72



#### B-17: THE MIGHTY 8TH

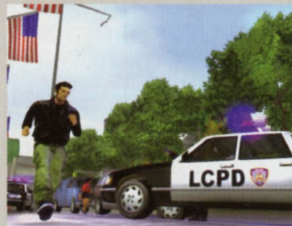
*B-17* reproduces the experience of piloting a World War II bomber. Just about everything is covered, from planning missions to dropping bombs. A must for WWII and realism freaks everywhere.

**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Wayward Simulations

**PCZ** ISSUE 96

## DRIVING GAMES

### GRAND THEFT AUTO III



It may have taken its time getting onto the PC, but *Grand Theft Auto III* was definitely worth the wait. Offering you both traditional linear missions and a wonderfully freeform world ripe for exploring, the game boasts stunning graphics and superb attention to detail. It's a great spin on both the driving and shooting genres and we can assure you that you'll love this noisy orgy of violence and speed. Crime really does pay.

**PUB** Take 2 **DEV** Rockstar

**PCZ** ISSUE 117



#### TOCA RACE DRIVER

A storyline mode and one of the most realistic damage models we've ever seen, are just some of the added knobs on this *TOCA* game. The huge selection of tracks and cars available makes for a superb driving experience.

**PUB** Codemasters **DEV** Codemasters

**PCZ** ISSUE 119



#### GRAND PRIX 4

You won't find a more accurate racing sim. Graphically lush and full of anal detail, Geoff Crammond's latest effort offers in-depth telemetry and a staggering number of options. *Grand Prix 4* is leading the grid in the world of racing sims.

**PUB** Infogrames **DEV** Simergy

**PCZ** ISSUE 119



#### COLIN MCRAE 2.0

This is still the benchmark rally title and looks set to remain so until *Colin McRae 3.0* appears. The graphics are fantastic, the detail is overwhelming and the cars handle beautifully. So if you are on the look-out for the definitive rally game, this is it.

**PUB** Codemasters **DEV** Codemasters

**PCZ** ISSUE 110



#### CRAZY TAXI

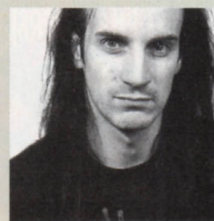
One of the best arcade conversions to the PC that we've seen for a long time. *Crazy Taxi* is a bright, colourful and in-your-face driving experience that's built on solid arcade values and good old-fashioned insanity.

**PUB** Empire Interactive **DEV** Hitmaker/Strangelite

**PCZ** ISSUE 119

## ALL-TIME CLASSICS

### LES ELLIS, EX PC ZONE FREELANCER AND PRODUCER AT POCKET STUDIOS RECALLS HIS TEN FAVOURITE GAMES OF ALL TIME



#### SYSTEM SHOCK 2 (PC)

Plain and simple, one of the most intense gaming experiences you could wish for. This action RPG will leave your nerves shredded and your mouse hand quivering. The best example of how imaginative use of sound can lift a game and make it something special. I remember hiding behind a desk too scared to leave a room because I could hear creatures searching for me.



#### MARIO 64 (N64)

Just as everyone remembers where they saw England stick five past Germany, every gamer will remember the moment they first witnessed the 3D magic of *Mario*. Still rightly remembered as the greatest console game of all time. It's a fantastic platformer with some great level design and it still kicks the crap out of the new generation of console platformers.



#### MERCENARY (C64)

One of the first games to give you complete freedom to explore a huge 3D environment and pretty much do whatever you want while taking on missions given to you by the two warring factions. Wireframe graphics look dated now, but so many games nowadays use this same formula and it still plays as well as most of them. An absolute classic.



#### ADVANCE WARS (GBA)

How many times has this handheld turn-based war game made me miss tube and train stops? I think it was a legitimate excuse for being late to the office, "Sorry I'm late I was playing *Advance Wars*" was greeted with understanding nods. One of the first games to show that a handheld game can be as deep and make you think as much as any PC or console game.



#### AGE OF MYTHOLOGY (PC)

Forget the likes of *C&C*, this has everything an RTS needs and much more. Apart from the fact it looks amazing, the sheer variety of ways you can tackle the missions and the awesome multiplayer and random scenarios gives this endless playability. Not many games come close to the feeling of watching your massed forces blitzkriegen the enemy. Great fun.



#### DUNGEON KEEPER 2 (PC)

The perfect game to let your dark side come out in the open. A little strategy and the kind of mindless violence that would make even *GTA3* think it was a bit over the top. Designing dungeons is fun, but torturing the enemy and watching your dark mistresses do their thing says more about you than any psychology test ever could.



#### CIVILIZATION III (PC)

I've lost track of the number of times I thought I'd have a quick game of this in the evening and next thing I know daylight is streaming through the windows and I've been on it all night. Surely the biggest and best God game ever to sap your life away. There are just so many different ways to achieve goals, which reminds me, I must try the peaceful route sometime.



#### HALF-LIFE (PC)

Still one of the best FPS games ever and the sequel is already making me drool. A shooter with a great story and unbelievably atmospheric setting is the closest we have come yet to a movie-like game. This game has so many "Holy shit" moments and is still not really showing its age. They should make it illegal for PC gamers not to have played this.



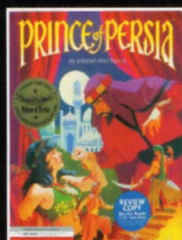
#### METAL GEAR SOLID (PSONE)

An epic, if a little short, PSone action adventure. Introduced a whole generation of console gamers to the idea of stealth (PC gamers had *Thief*, PSone guys had this). So much better than the massively overhyped PS2 follow-up, with more varied gameplay and plenty of opportunities to try out different ways of killing, mugging, hiding and achieving goals.



#### SYNDICATE (AMIGA)

Pure carnage. Take a team of cyborgs, tool 'em up and unleash hell on the streets of an unsuspecting city. Whether it's using flame-throwers on unsuspecting pedestrians or brainwashing enemy guards and turning them on their own troops, it's one of those games that gives you a mission and lets you achieve whatever you choose. Stealth or carnage, it's your choice.



## GAMES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

## PRINCE OF PERSIA

Steve Hill steps back in time to when Prince was still called Prince and Persia was still called Iran. And he thought he was going to meet Jordan...



**GAME** *Prince Of Persia*  
**DEVELOPER** Jordan Mechner  
**PUBLISHER** Broderbund  
**RELEASED** 1989

**INFLUENCED** Despite ostensibly being a 2D platformer, the dynamic style of gameplay set the template for the 3D action of *Tomb Raider* and its countless imitators. The realistic animation of the lead character, based on actual human movements, can also be regarded as a pioneering step towards the motion capture now considered standard in modern games.

“Platform games were as much a part of the 1980s as big hair and pending nuclear Armageddon”

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**SAVING** a princess from the evil clutches of a despotic captor may not sound like the most innovative of game scenarios, but the original *Prince Of Persia* broke new ground in ways that could not have been apparent at the time. As much a part of the 1980s as big hair and pending nuclear Armageddon, platform games were firmly entrenched in the public psyche by the time the Prince showed up at the arse end of the decade. However, by adding such innovations as pressure plates, grabbing ledges and sword-fighting, along with a coherent storyline, *Prince Of Persia* revolutionised the genre and opened the door for a new style of gameplay.

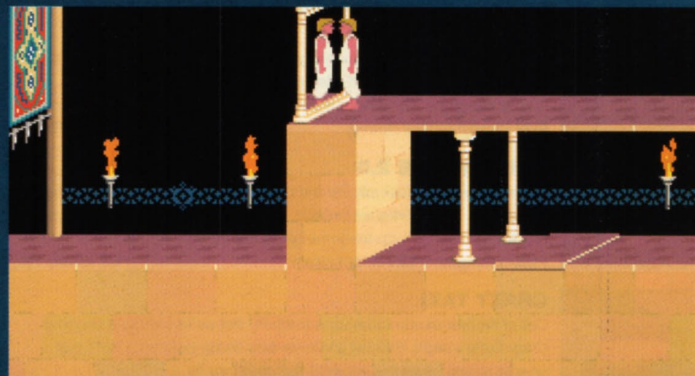
As was commonplace back in the day, the game was the work of a solo visionary, namely Yale graduate Jordan Mechner, whose first foray into programming came at the tender age of 15.

“When I was in high school I got my first Apple II computer and was so captivated by it that it’s pretty much what

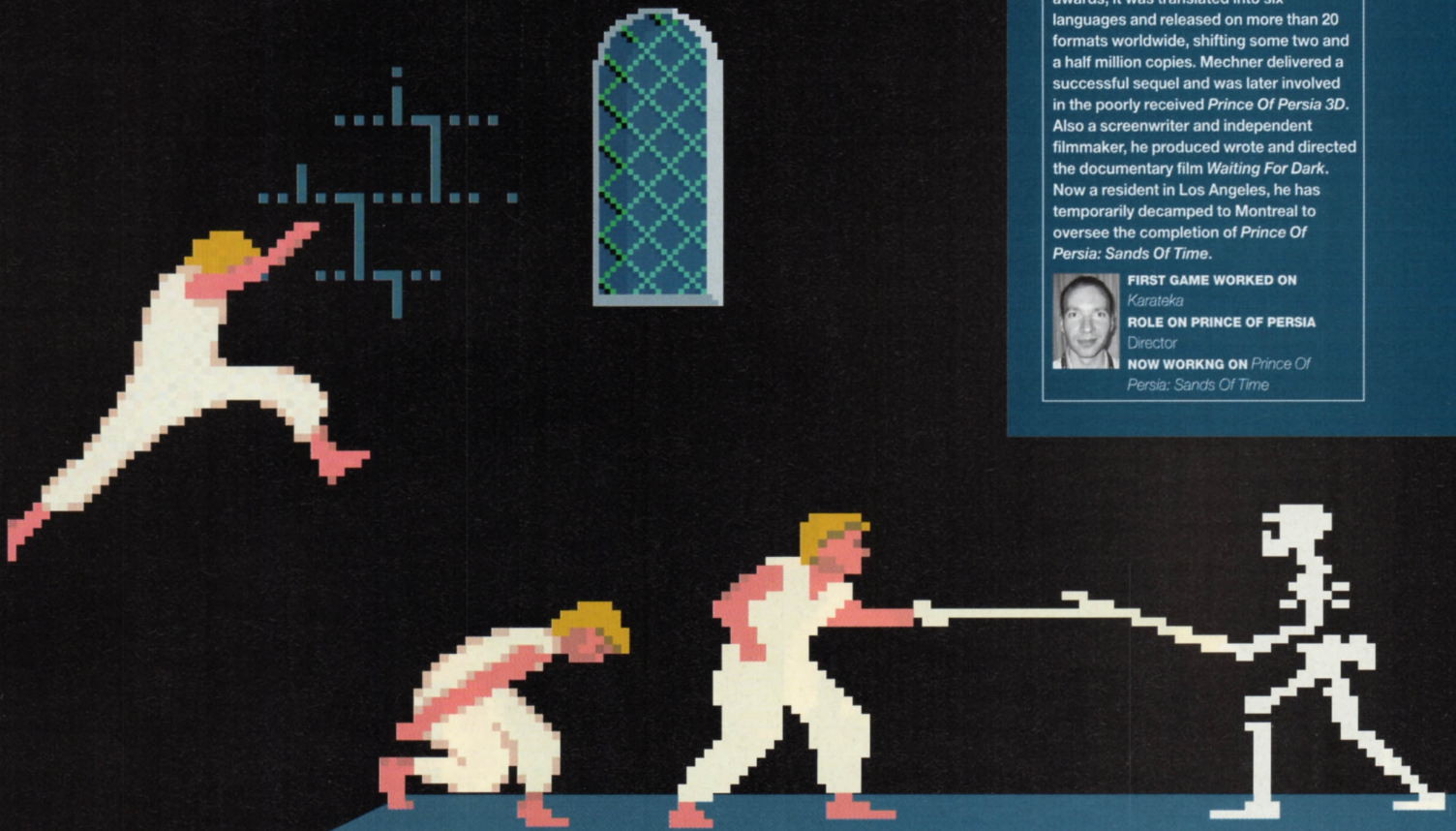
I did for the next few years, including, unfortunately, my first two years of college,” Jordan manfully admits. “Instead of going to the classes and taking advantage of all the great learning I could have been doing, I programmed a game called *Karateka*. My ambition was to create a game that would be good enough to get published, and *Karataka* was, and had some success [selling half a million copies]. Because of that, when I graduated from college, rather than look for a job as most of my classmates were doing, I thought ‘Well, I’ll just program another computer game and maybe that one will work too.’ I don’t know if I was naïve or what – maybe I was too young when I started – but I wasn’t thinking in terms of careers, I was just thinking this is really cool, so you know, I’ll do this.”

**BACK IN THE DAY**

Work began on *Prince of Persia* in 1986 and continued at a leisurely pace, appearing on the Apple II at the end of



A classic moment: jumping through the mirror released your reflection, who ran off, only to challenge you to a fight later in the game.



## PROFILE

Born in New York City, Jordan Mechner graduated from Yale University in 1985 and began work on *Prince Of Persia* the following year. The winner of numerous awards, it was translated into six languages and released on more than 20 formats worldwide, shifting some two and a half million copies. Mechner delivered a successful sequel and was later involved in the poorly received *Prince Of Persia 3D*. Also a screenwriter and independent filmmaker, he produced and directed the documentary film *Waiting For Dark*. Now a resident in Los Angeles, he has temporarily decamped to Montreal to oversee the completion of *Prince Of Persia: Sands Of Time*.



### FIRST GAME WORKED ON

*Karateka*

### ROLE ON PRINCE OF PERSIA

Director

NOW WORKING ON *Prince Of Persia: Sands Of Time*

1989. As Jordan says: "Those were the good days, you know, no release date, no budgets, no timetables. Just the peace and quiet to fiddle around with the game. The industry was so different then."

It certainly was, but it's also an industry that Jordan may never have entered had he been more successful in pursuing his initial dream. As he recalls, "I think I got into computer games to begin with because I was kind of a frustrated comic book artist. If computers hadn't been invented I think my life ambition would have been to be a Disney animator. But I couldn't draw very well, so the computer, for me, first and foremost was just a great way to make a little animated story that you could play. So with *Karateka* and *Prince Of Persia*, part of the kick for me was telling a story through the game."

Jordan's cack-handedness with a pencil was Disney's loss and gaming's gain, as he set to work on *Prince Of Persia*. And as a filmmaker himself (see "Profile", above), it's fitting that the inspiration came from the movies.

"It's interesting how things come full circle," Jordan recalls. "*Prince of Persia* really started not with a story but with a particular type of gameplay. A movie I had seen recently was *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, which was – oh my God! – 23 years ago. It made a big impression on me, the whole movie, but especially the first

sequence where he's running, jumping and things are chasing him and there are spikes. You know, that's so cool – wouldn't it be cool to do a game that had that kind of feel to it? So I knew I was going to do a game with a character who could run and jump and dodge traps, but then I was just worried – OK, well what's it going to be? Can't do *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* because that's been done and I don't have the rights to do that. *Dungeons & Dragons*? No, there was a *Dungeons & Dragons* game this year. Egyptian pyramids? No, there's been too many of those. What hadn't been done as a computer game at that time, going down the list of the great touchstones of Western civilisation? The Arabian Nights. It was this incredibly rich mother lode of stories and villains and genies and magic,



The star of the show, Jordan's brother.

and it had its own particular style of architecture. One of the things I thought had made *Karateka* work so well was the fact that it was set in medieval Japan and had that graphic of Mount Fuji. As a player you had to bring a lot of imagination to the games you played back in those days – one picture of Mount Fuji, that's Japan! So it needs something that's immediately identifiable so that people will bring to it everything else that will make them believe in the story. So, *The Arabian Nights* was the perfect choice."

## VIDEO NASTY

With the setting in place and the story envisaged, Jordan dwelled upon the idea of making the main character move in a realistic fashion, an area that hadn't really been explored before. Using the comparatively meagre resources of the time, and keeping it in the family – Jordan's dad provided the game's music – the experimental animation technique initially involved a video camera and a willing younger brother.

As Jordan explains, "Yes, I brought my brother to the local parking lot and had him run and jump and turn around while running and do all of the things that the Prince would have to do in the game."

Albeit without the obligatory ping-pong balls attached to his extremities, this was surely the first instance of



FUTURES AND PASTS

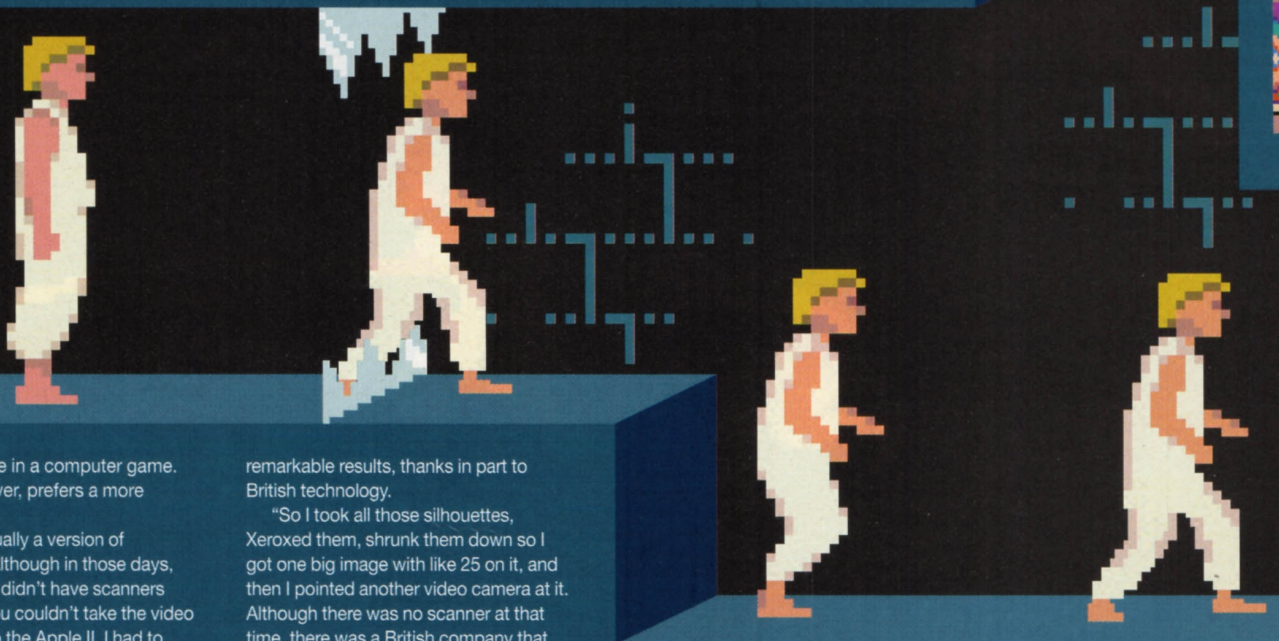


Sands Of Time could restore the Prince's glories.

SANDS OF TIME RUNNING OUT FOR PRINCE OF PERSIA

Undeterred by the failure of *Prince Of Persia 3D*, Jordan is now screenwriter of the forthcoming *Prince of Persia: Sands Of Time*, for which a very different approach is being adopted.

As Jordan says: "Basically, the team went back to scratch: what was so much fun about the original *PoP*? What did it feel like to play that game? You know, you picked up the joystick and you felt like you were that guy. You were running, jumping, doing this and that, you could get a rhythm going. The spikes would spring out, you'd jump over them – there was a fluid movement to it, and in the transition to 3D, that sense of fluidity was lost. So the idea behind *Sands Of Time* was to bring back that fluid gameplay in a beautiful next-generation 3D world. And the way that we did that was by making the Prince a guy who could run on the walls, jump off the walls, anything in the environment whether it's vertical or horizontal, whether it's a pole sticking out of the wall – if you can see it you can grab onto it, you can interact with it."



motion capture in a computer game. Jordan, however, prefers a more arcane term.

"It was actually a version of rotoscoping. Although in those days, remember, we didn't have scanners and stuff so you couldn't take the video and feed it into the Apple II. I had to go through a number of intermediate stages. I filmed my brother on video, in fact, and popped the cassette into the VCR – which was a new technology at that time – pressed play, freeze-frame, set up a 35mm camera on a tripod and took a photograph of each frame. Frame advance, take a picture, frame advance, take a picture. I sent the film to the Photomart, came back with all the prints, laid them out, and with each frame I coloured in the outlines in black and white so that I got a black and white silhouette, getting rid of the background. Again, we didn't have blue-screening available."

A laborious process, but one that Jordan persevered with doggedly, with

remarkable results, thanks in part to British technology.

"So I took all those silhouettes, Xeroxed them, shrunk them down so I got one big image with like 25 on it, and then I pointed another video camera at it. Although there was no scanner at that time, there was a British company that was manufacturing a device that let you do a single frame capture with a video camera, just black and white, no shades of grey. So I put that Xeroxed piece of paper on an animation stand, pointed the camera at it, took a frame, digitised it in the computer and ended up with all the frames on the computer. So I just went around, captured each one, you know, again using proprietary software written by myself the night before, and got all those frames and played them in order like a flipbook. And lo and behold, to my astonishment there was this silhouette of this kid running and jumping."

Sounds like motion capture to us, but no – Jordan is adamant.

"I would say the correct term is really rotoscoping because that is something that had been done since the 20s and 30s, the early days of animation. Disney for *Snow White* would film the actors and then the animators would take those frames and trace them, redraw them, change them a little bit, but really they traced them. So I think it's a descendent of rotoscoping."

MIND THE TRAP

Call it what you like, the results are clearly visible when playing the game now. Whether jumping, climbing, running or skidding to a halt, despite the rudimentary graphics, the Prince's movements still look wholly convincing, a testament to Jordan's pioneering work.

With 60 minutes to save the princess, the action involves negotiating a series of catacombs set in a Persian palace, riddled with such hazards as the famous spikes, upon which the Prince is regularly impaled with a satisfying splash of blood.

It was by no means an overnight hit, but this can largely be attributed to the disparate state of the gaming platforms

of the time. According to Jordan, "I think the Apple II being at the end of its life, most people who played *Prince Of Persia* probably played one of the ports that came out in the few years following that. From 1990 to '93, it came out on the PC, Mac, and all the consoles, 8-bit Nintendo, 16-bit Nintendo, Sega, Game Boy..."

A lot of people in the games industry clearly played it, as the influences are sign-posted throughout the last decade. As Jordan says, "The first time it really sunk in to me that *PoP* had not gone away was when I saw *Tomb Raider* and *Super Mario 64* on PlayStation and Nintendo 64. They were two very different games but still there was a character running, jumping, grabbing onto edges, pulling themselves up. And of course in *Tomb Raider* there were spikes and pressure plates, which was pretty cool."

In the mainstream at least, it's generally *Tomb Raider* that takes the credit for pioneering that style of game, something that Jordan concedes. "*Tomb Raider* deserves a lot of credit for having been the first game to bring that *Prince Of Persia* move-set into a 3D world. Just how



Prince Of Persia 2. More of the same.



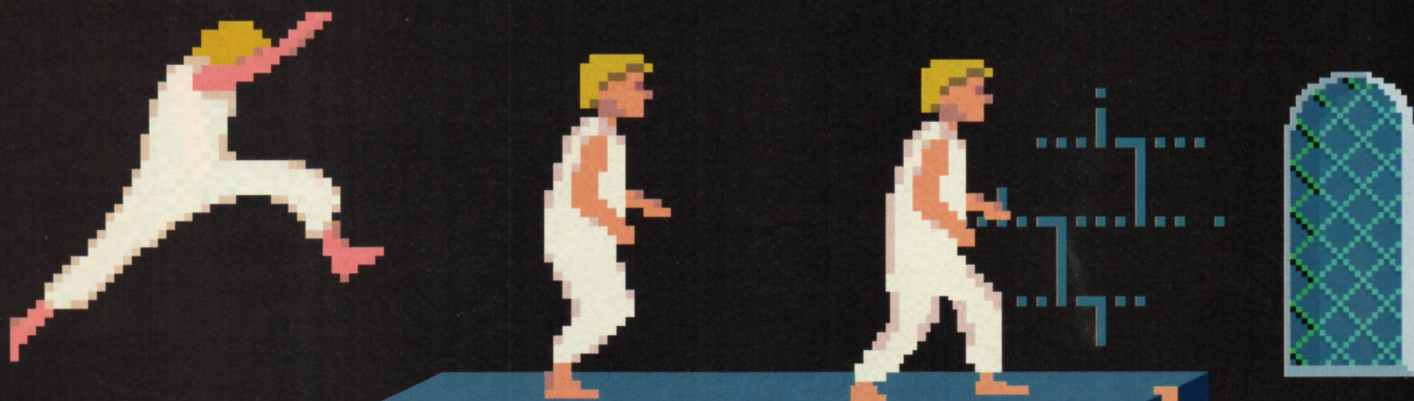
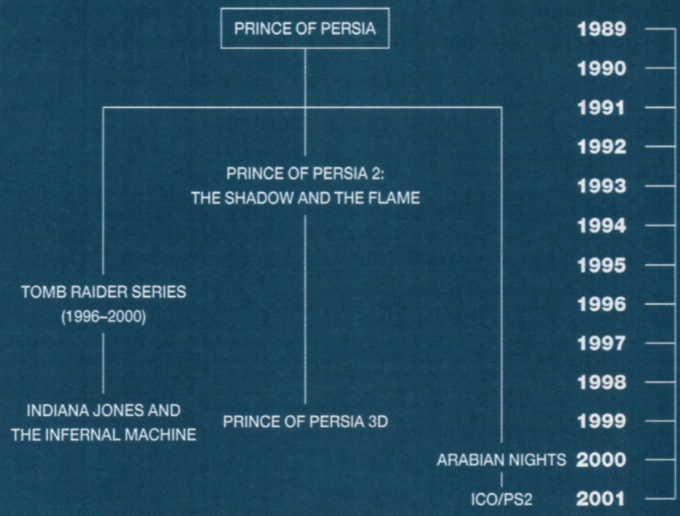
Prince Of Persia 3D. Muck.



Dodge all the obstacles and this will be your reward at the end.

## THE PRINCE OF PERSIA FAMILY TREE

A DIRECT INFLUENCE ON *TOMB RAIDER* AND ITS ILK, THE GAMES THAT OWE A DEBT TO *PRINCE OF PERSIA* COULD FEASIBLY SPREAD TO A TREE FAR LARGER THAN THIS PAGE COULD ACCOMMODATE. HERE ARE A FEW SELECT DESCENDENTS



good an idea that was is shown just by walking round the E3 show and seeing the number of games that are in some sense variations on *Tomb Raider*."

### TEN YEARS AFTER

A highly influential game it may have been, but Jordan didn't stop there, turning out a sequel, *Prince Of Persia 2: The Shadow And The Flame*, which was released in 1993. A further variation on the classic gameplay, it was well received and again lifted a slew of awards, as well as shifting a hefty number of copies.

That could have been the end of the road for the Prince, but in the wake of the phenomenal success of the *Tomb Raider* series, work began on *Prince Of Persia 3D*, an attempt to regain the plaudits from its bastard offspring. Development was notionally overseen by Jordan, and the game was released in 1999. Looking back on it now, he is prepared to admit that mistakes were made.

"*Prince 3D* was a good example of the wrong way to take the *Prince Of Persia* moves set into 3D. That is, it was a literal mapping of what you could do in *Prince Of Persia* – running and jumping,

drinking a potion – into a 3D world. There were two problems with that. One was that *Tomb Raider* has already done that, and the other was that once you get over the novelty factor of being able to do all that stuff in 3D, it's just not that much fun. *Tomb Raider* is not that much fun if you play it now. It was fun when it was new, but now we've had that, we know how to run and jump and explore big 3D worlds; those are not reasons to play a game."

The press largely concurred, and following some damning reviews it disappeared without trace, a tawdry footnote to a classic game. In timeless Hollywood fashion though, the story doesn't end there, and the Prince looks set to regain his crown with the highly promising *PoP: Sands Of Time*, currently in the latter stages of development at Ubi Soft's Montreal studio, and a nominee for best game at this year's E3. We've played it, and came away extremely impressed, as you can see from the preview on page 50. Whether it changes the world in the same way as the original remains to be seen, but it looks like there's life in the old Prince yet. Providing he can avoid those spikes. [X]

**"It sank in that *Prince Of Persia* had not gone away when I saw *Tomb Raider* for the first time"**

**JORDAN MECHNER**  
DIRECTOR, PRINCE OF PERSIA



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“It remained one of the PC’s finest games for years”



Office furniture of the future. Comfort not included.

## SYSTEM SHOCK

Yet another classic Warren Spector production

**HERE'S AN** interesting but ultimately useless fact for you: The *System Shock* series holds the record for the highest average score within these hallowed pages, a pretty heavyweight 95 per cent for both the 1994 original and the 1999 sequel, a score that trounces *Quake I, II and III's* mean of 93.5 per cent into the ground. A fine record to hold I reckon, and one that probably won't stand for much longer if *Deus Ex 2* has its way.

The spiritual sci-fi successor to Origin's own and much-missed *Ultima*

*Underworld* series, *System Shock* had you playing a hacker, caught and press ganged into purging a distant station of its security systems, only to awake from months of induced sleep (necessary after some hefty cybernetic implant surgery) to find everyone either dead or mutated. The aim was to survive, while saving mankind and destroying the nefarious entity of Shadon, the self-aware security system behind all the hoo-hah.

Aside from being absolutely gorgeous to look at (even in a now unthinkable 320x200 resolution), *System Shock*

RETRO ZONE OCTOBER 1994

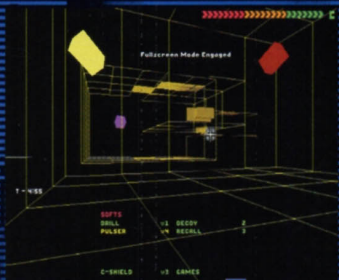
Chaka Demus & Pliers, Whigfield and the Man Utd FA Cup Squad all filled the charts. Luckily for *Richie Shoemaker* the games were worth living for



Zombies In Space, the musical.

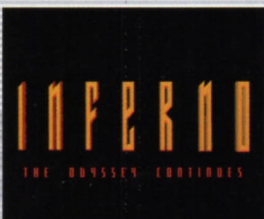
melded the concepts of first-person shooter and role-playing game with near perfection. The story fell apart towards the end, as is always the case, and it required some serious hardware to run (8Mb RAM no less), but in terms of atmosphere and tension it remained the PC's finest game for years.

Unfortunately, Looking Glass Studios – who of course oversaw the sequel as well as the original – are no more and *System Shock 3* remains alive only as a faint hope.



Jacking into the Matrix. Neo would be so proud.

### THE BEST OF THE REST



**INFERNO** (PC)  
The space combat 'extravaganza' *Inferno*, along with predecessor, *Epic*, must both rank among the most hyped games of all time. Created by now-defunct flight sim maestros DID, *Inferno* was unjustly criticised for not being the *Elite* beater everyone hoped for. Still, it was a grand and exciting game, with a novel interface, fantastic storyline and it came with a free comic – always a winner in my book.



**ALIENS VS PREDATOR** (Jaguar)  
The Jaguar console was Atari's last stand and *AvP* the last hope to save what could have been a classic machine. Unfortunately, although it was technologically impressive, the games weren't all that and *AvP* was no exception. It had all the right elements but they were hacked together to fit the in-vogue *Doom* template – so it was bye-bye Atari. Luckily, *AvP's* transition to PC five years later was a masterstroke.



**DOOM II: HELL ON EARTH** (PC)  
Probably one of the most eagerly awaited games of all time, id's FPS sequel was brilliant. More cunning than its predecessor, just as visceral, full of variety (comparatively speaking) and packed with new monsters. It was also a bit disappointing in that it only featured one new weapon. “£50 for one new weapon!” I remember shouting to a stupefied shop assistant. Ah, but what a weapon, I can hear it now...



**CHAOS ENGINE** (Amiga, PC)  
The 1993 Amiga top-down classic finally gets an airing on PC, and a decent conversion it was too, apart from the music of course. Very much a direct descendant of *Alien Breed* (or, for our older readers, *Gauntlet*), *Chaos Engine* was notable for its Steampunk storyline and upgradeable characters. Up against the likes of *Doom II* and *System Shock* however, *Chaos Engine* was very much yesterday's game.

### NEWS

#### GAMING NEWS FROM OCTOBER 1994

- **PC ZONE** appoints Editor number three, the hairy John Davison, who goes on to lead the motley **ZONE** crew until 1997. Now head of *Official PlayStation Magazine* (US), rootin' tootin' John Davison was last seen on the *Star Wars: Phantom Menace* DVD.
- The latest round of the console war kicks off as the Neo-Geo hits Japan, while the UK braces itself for Sega's 32-bit Saturn. Meanwhile, Sony unveils its no-hoper to a select few UK journo.
- Would you believe it, someone has gone and written a program for the PC that allows you to play old Spectrum games without the need for a tape recorder, or indeed an old Spectrum. Emulators they're called. Though why anyone would want to play *Manic Miner* when they can play *Megarace* sure beats us.

## PREVIOUSLY ON MR CURSOR...

En-route from Tristan da Cunha to Sierra Leone, pau-pau boat captain N'gango attempted to overclock his ship's PC with disastrous results: mid-Atlantic, and in the middle of a violent storm, the engines stopped working. The race was on to free them from their reliance on the ship's computer before the vessel was lost at sea...



# MR CURSOR

(He's afraid of massively multiplayer role-playing games)

"Have no fear, my friend," said N'gango. "Kouso is a master mechanic. He will have the engines back to operation before the sun is down."

"A whole day?" As I said, this ship was hit broadside by a wall of water and we were knocked probably 45 degrees to starboard. It was like a giant sledgehammer blow.

"The ship has a deep draught, my friend, that was as nothing to her, believe me," said N'gango. I suppose I didn't look that convinced, so he continued: "And besides, to worry will not alter the course of fate. You believe in fate my friend?"

"I don't know. I suppose so," I said.

"So, as I say, Kouso is a master with the engines, and the storm will clear. Storms always clear. It is, I think, a good idea that we relax as best we can as we wait. I have some ganja and some rum in my storm-cabin. Do you like ganja and rum my friend?"

## OF COURSE I DO

Getting to N'gango's special storm-cabin was no easy task given the pounding the boat was taking, but get there we did – a few bruises and a suspected broken collarbone (mine) notwithstanding. Once there, though, I could see the logic behind our location. Everything inside was battened down, the walls were cushioned, and the furniture was made up of bean-bags and inflatable chairs. N'gango handed me a plastic beaker of rum and began to roll a joint.

"I was amused at your amazement when I showed to you the state of current computer technology," he said (referring to when he'd attempted to overclock the ship's PC).

"I've been away a long time," I said. "Living on Tristan da Cunha was like being on Pluto."

"Then it is my duty to bring you helpfully into the 21st century," he said. He first of all told me about the Trade Towers incident (amazing). Then he told me about the Bush family finally disabling NATO and continuing the push for an American World Empire. "But that is politics," he added, "and politics anger me. Why do you not ask me some questions, my friend?"

"OK. What's the Internet like these days?" I said.

"Ho ho ho," he boomed, handing me the joint. "I presume you talk of games."

"Well, yeah," I said.

"So how were the games when you last saw the Internet, my friend?"

"Well, there weren't any really. Not proper ones, anyway. There were just chat rooms. My favourite was Lesbian Lifestyles. There were about 30 blokes pretending to be lesbians and probably two real ones."

"Then things have changed a lot and also a little," said N'gango. "The speed of access allows now for what you would consider to be 'proper' games, but the mentality of the players will be sadly familiar to you... led in the main by the cursed Americans."

"What sort of proper games?" I passed him the joint.

"All types are catered for," said N'gango, "but the largest communities can be found within the role-playing groups. You are familiar with RPGs?"

"Going on poncey quests for the Sword of K'kanda and shit like that?" I said.

N'gango slapped my shoulder and bellowed. "My friend, she is still the same! She is still the same! But you must imagine 100,000 players, or more."

"All searching for the R'roll of S'sellotape," I said.

"And building statues in their own image," said N'gango. "It is truly a sadness."

At this there was a bang from way below, followed by a deep and steady thrump, thrump, thrump.

"Come, my friend," said N'gango. "Kouso has the engines working sooner than expected."

## ON THE BRIDGE

Back on course for Sierra Leone, with the storm abating, I asked N'gango about multiplayer versions of my favourite genre, the first-person shooter.

"She is my favourite also, my friend," said N'gango. He looked annoyed about something. I asked what it was.

"It is the Yankee," he said. "They behave online as they behave in life. They are taught their infidel ways from an early age. To me the shooting and killing of others is a skill to be enjoyed and rewarded. It is a challenge to yourself to do well. Do you understand me, my friend?"

"I think so," I said. "You're saying the Americans are arrogant in victory?"

"This is a small part only," said N'gango. "Before leaving on this voyage I was playing a fast and very enjoyable shooting game in which sound was enabled..."

"What? You can talk to people in realtime?"

"Yes my friend, but more of importance is that you can hear them," he said. "I was in an area I knew well, and the gun I had was supreme. I saw an opponent, moved faster than he, and shot him dead. But he did not fall. I shot again. Again he did not fall. Then he shot me, and, as I fell, I heard him shout – this from a 12-year-old American boy – 'Take that you cocksucker'. You understand my anger. If my own son spoke words such as that he would be severely reprimanded. And this Yankee boy was, of course, cheating."

"What, some kind of invulnerability patch?"

"Pah! They all have them. They shoot through walls. They insult you as they kill you with no honour. But they are in for a surprise my friend. You will understand when we reach Sierra Leone. If my son Dabola has done his work, a new online shooting game will be soon underway."

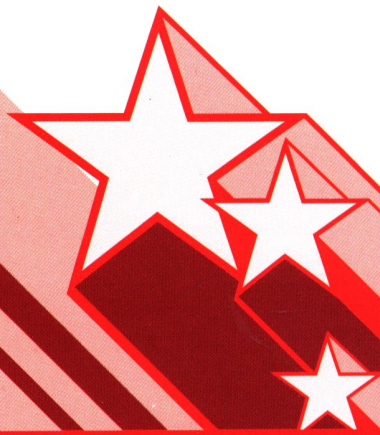
"And you're going to rig it so these kids can't cheat?"

N'gango shared a glance with Kouso. They both grinned widely. Kouso then laughed.

"So much more than that my friend," said N'gango, looking back at me. "So much more!"

To be continued... [E]

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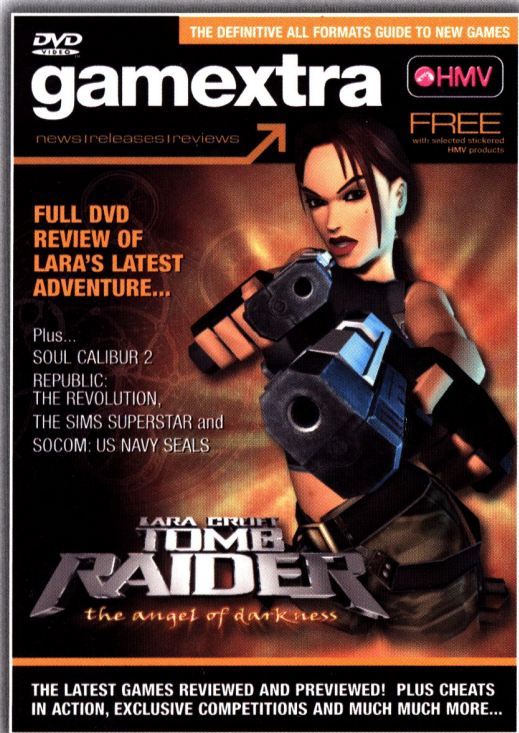
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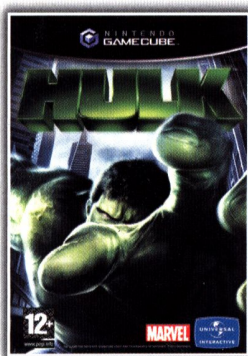
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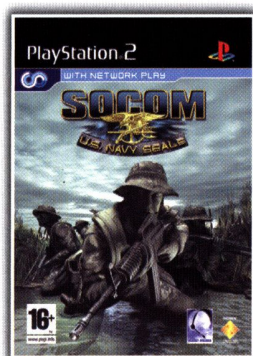
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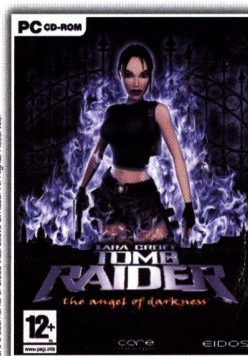
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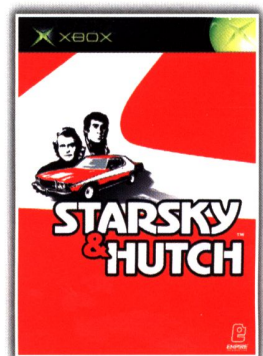
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