

**SICK! EVIL DEAD REGENERATION**  
ASH IS BACK AND WE'VE GOT THE WORLD'S FIRST REVIEW. GROOVY!

There's an  
insane undead  
midget in it!

# XBOXWORLD

ALWAYS FIRST FOR XBOX AND XBOX 360

SEPTEMBER 2005 ISSUE 29

Future  
MEDIA WITH PASSION



## THE INCREDIBLE HULK

Don't make him angry.  
Read the **EXCLUSIVE** review.

### PLUS:

- THE SUFFERING 2
- SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR
- BURNOUT REVENGE
- SSX ON TOUR
- SERIOUS SAM 2

**27** PAGES OF PIPING HOT  
XBOX 360 PREVIEWS!

**CONDEMNED**  
Evil arrives! Get inside the  
mind of 360's twisted thriller.



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Further evidence that  
squirrels should not be  
allowed to have guns.



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it's good to play together



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WHAT'S ON YOUR

# XBOX WORLD DVD

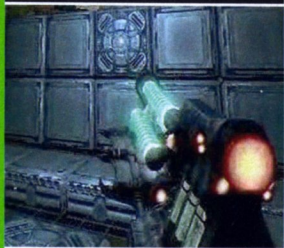
IT'S THE BEST DVD IN THE BUSINESS WITH THE BEST FEATURES AND THE BEST FOOTAGE. SIMPLE AS THAT, REALLY. DON'T FORGET – WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF THE DVD SO EMAIL US AT [XBW@FUTURENET.CO.UK](mailto:XBW@FUTURENET.CO.UK) NOW!

**360 MELTDOWN!**

## GHOST RECON 3

WHET YOUR APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION WITH THIS GHOST-BUSTING TRAILER.

SO YOU'RE THINKING "YEAH, YEAH. IT'S ANOTHER BLEEDING Tom Clancy title, who gives a five knuckle shuffle?" To be honest so were we until we actually saw the game in action a few months back and had to pick our jaws up off the floor, such was the realism of the game Ubisoft is now calling 'Advanced Warfighter'. We've seen it a few more times since then and it just keeps looking better and better. Check it out right now. You'll think you're watching breaking news on CNN.



**360 MELTDOWN!**

## PREY

IMAGINE MASTER CHIEF SUCKING ON A CRACKPIPE AND YOU'RE HALF WAY THERE...

YOU MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE NOTICED THAT WE'RE GOING A BIT crazy for this tripped-out sci fi shooter, covering it in the mag for the past three issues. There's a damn good reason for our infatuation: *Prey* is shaping up to be the next great blaster-based space opera and this month's DVD gives you not one but two chunks of footage to gawp over. In the News section we've got the first cinematic trailer and then in our Special Features section there's a super-sized portion of *Prey* in action. AND if you head to our dedicated 360 section in the back of the mag you'll find the very latest details and gameplay impressions in our four-page special feature. Prey tell us what you think of it all.

**HotShot MOAN!**  
THERE'S A NEW BLOKE LOOKING AFTER OUR DVD. ANY COMPLAINTS, SPEAK TO MIKE!

XBOX WORLD

15

**360 EXCLUSIVE #2!**

## SAINT'S ROW

GOODY

**HotShot NEXT!**

MORE 360 FOOTAGE NEXT ISSUE PLUS EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO *BROTHERS IN ARMS 2*!

**360 EXCLUSIVE #1!**

## GH RE

INCRE

MORE 360 GAM

**FAULTY DISC?**

RETURN IT TO THE FUTURE DISC DEPARTMENT: 3B ATHENA AVENUE,



## SEE IT ON THE DVD

>> If you see this logo stamped on a game it means that there's footage of it to watch on the DVD.



**XBW EXCLUSIVE!**

# FAR CRY INSTINCTS

**BRAND NEW GAME-PLAY FOOTAGE AND TEAM INTERVIEW.**

NOW ONLY ON XBOX, *INSTINCTS* IS set to become one of *THE* games of our console's twilight years. It's big, brash and beautiful to behold and that's why we're not only bringing you a tasty chunk of rolling footage to prepare you for the game's September release, but also a specially filmed interview with the developers. Luvverly.

**HotShot 360!**

WE'RE SIMPLY THE BEST MAG FOR XBOX 360 COVERAGE – JUST LOOK AT THIS DISC!

**360 EXCLUSIVE #1**

**PREY**  
ON DRUGS – SEE IT NOW!

**EXCLUSIVE #3!**

**GHOST CON 3**

LE FOOTAGE.

**ES IN ACTION!**

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STRYKE FORCE EPISODE 5  
BIG MOTHER TRUCKERS 2

**PLUS LOTS,  
LOTS MORE ON  
THE ONLY XBOX  
DISC YOU EVER  
NEED TO BOTHER  
ABOUT!**

**360 MELTDOWN!**

## SAINT'S ROW

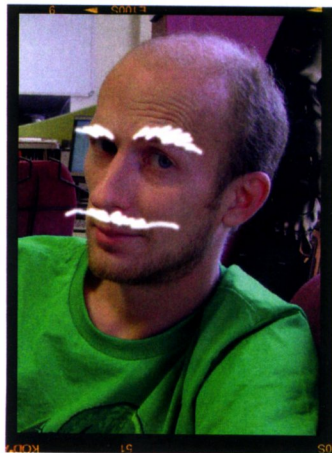
THERE'S NOTHING SAINTLY ABOUT THIS STONE COLD KILLER OF A TITLE...

WHEN TIM CAME BACK FROM HIS SWANKY HOLIDAY IN LOS Angeles (he said he was working, which was utter pony) and ran through all the 360 games he'd seen, *Saint's Row* was singled out as the most disturbing of the lot. "It's just like *GTA*," he piped up, "but far more violent." Okaaaaaay! So yes, it's a *GTA*-like game with plenty of gang warfare, criminal goings-on and driving around hoods waving your Uzi out of the window like a homicidal maniac. Which is fine by us and you can see for yourself what's in store by getting an eyeful of the game's very first trailer, found in the News bit of the DVD menu. Watch it right now, but don't show it to your mother – she is most certainly not going to like it.

ELGIN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, SWINDON, SN2 8HF. THEY'LL GET IT SORTED. S-O-R-T-E-D.

## Editor's letter

The lunatics have taken over...



“Alright then folks? Tim's off doing something 'important' for a couple of months so that's why you've got my shiny forehead gleaming at you in this space instead of his trendy spiked affair. Sorry for any temporary blindness this may have caused you.

Having been let off Weaver's tight leash, we've been getting out and about seeing and playing as many games as we possibly can. Paris, Lyon, Copenhagen, London, Windsor, Guildford, Ipswich... we're more than happy to suffer hour upon hour of mind-numbing train and flight delays if it means we can bring you the very latest hands-on reports on all the Xbox and Xbox 360 games that matter. We've got some corkers for you in the front of the mag, including *Burnout Revenge*, *Black, Spartan, Fahrenheit*, *The Suffering 2* and *Gun*, the first shooter from *Tony Hawks Pro Skater* developers Neversoft.

In the back of the mag in our dedicated Xbox 360 section we're absolutely stuffed with playtests. I've been off to see SEGA for a butchers at the sicko scare-fest that is *Condemned* and then bagged a go on *Full Auto* while I was there before nipping in to Take 2's offices for a few sets with *Top Spin 2*. Dunc's been to France to see the new *Test Drive* and our other roving scribes have likewise been engaged in viewing and playing various 360 titles.

All of which has left us more excited than ever about not only the 360 games coming in November and beyond but also the wide and varied selection of excellent games that are still to arrive on the good old Xbox. After you've read the issue, we hope you are too. Nellis out. ”

Nick Ellis  
Deputy Editor

## Meet the team

In a parallel dimension, they're all dating supermodels.



**Pete Webber**  
Staff Writer

Regular readers will be familiar with Pete and his propensity for illness-induced days off. He eked out another week on the sick this issue, having yet again caught tonsillitis (making it four times in two months) and then had the cheek to come in and book a long holiday! His P45 is imminent.

**NOW PLAYING: GUN**



**Duncan Leigh**  
Staff Writer

We like Dunc because he's the youngest and we can pick on him, so we couldn't help but shed a collective tear when he told us he's leaving to go to university. Or somewhere else. This means we're on the lookout for a new writer. Check page 13 for details if you fancy applying.

**NOW PLAYING: TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED**



**Jem Roberts**  
Production Editor

"I'm working on a script for a serial killer movie," Jem informed us while we were at the pub one evening. "It's set in Bath and this psycho starts bumping off students before slaughtering the staff of a locally produced magazine in a most horrific fashion." Please help us. Please.

**NOW PLAYING: MADAGASCAR**



**Mike Oldman**  
Disc Editor

Dave McCaffrey is out of here (thanks for all your hard work, Dave) so we bid a warm welcome to his replacement, saxophone-playing, tattoo-sporting wild rocker Mr Mike Oldman. Mike's responsible for the *Stryke Force* series gracing the DVD in the last few months.

**NOW PLAYING: THE NEW KID**



**TIM WEAVER**  
Junior Tea Maker

"I'm off to do some special stuff that I can't talk about – tell the readers to check page 112 of this issue," barked Weaver before he unplugged his computer and lugged it to a darkened room in the basement. Mercifully, he's taken his stinking attitude and crap jokes with him too.

**NOW PLAYING: ON THE INTERNET**



**RICHARD HOOD**  
Assistant Biscuit Buyer

Hoody's already fragile sanity showed more signs of cracking this month. Unless you consider it normal to wear a black evening dress, stilettos and a fake mullet wig to work on a baking hot day, in which case all is just fine and dandy with our AWOL Art Editor.

**NOW PLAYING: WITH HIS CRAYONS**

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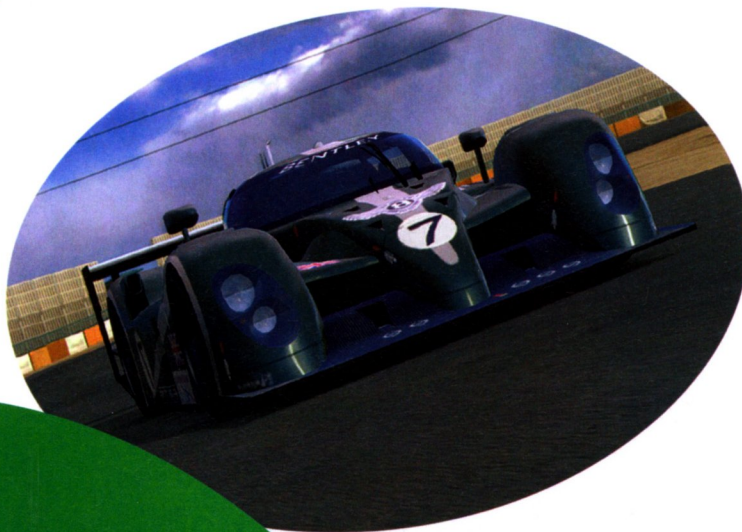


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if you sign up online.



## 100 PREY

Never has a nightmarish survival horror title looked so damn.... Freudian. Find out what the hell these weird cock-with-jagged-fangs-things are all about inside...



32 **THE SUFFERING 2** Ties That Bind or Lies That Wind You Right Up? Or what?

58 **SPARTAN TOTAL: WARRIOR** Way way back many centuries ago...



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The whole office stopped in awe when the playable version of this staggering, intelligent adventure turned up. Now it's your turn to get excited...
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Live your *Troy*-related fantasies (we know you have them) by becoming a part of Achilles' army. Oiled up and ready to go...

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## 64 THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

Hulk back in Hulk's sequel to Hulk's not very good first Xbox game. Hulk hopes for decent score this time. Or Hulk will get MAD.



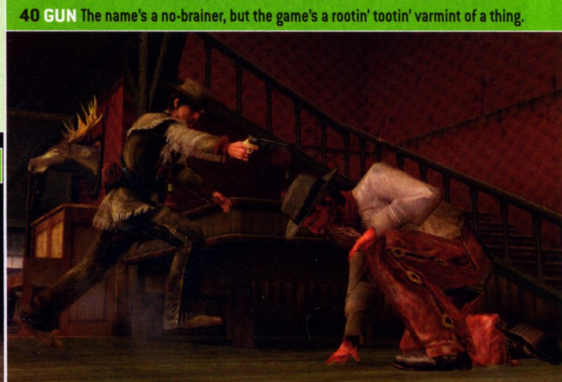
## ON YOUR DVD



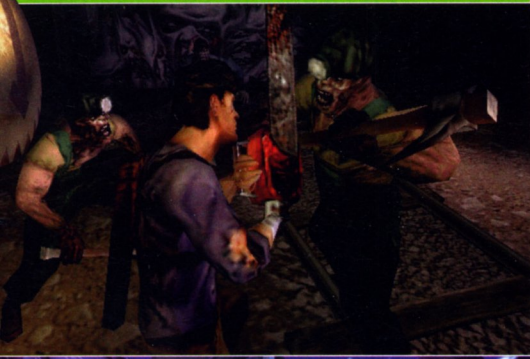
EXPECT A SERIOUS SLAB OF 360 MAGIC THIS MONTH – GHOST RECON 3, PREY, SAINT'S ROW, HUXLEY... PLUS FAHRENHEIT! PLUS POP3! PLUS PLUS PLUS!



92 CONDEMNED More guts & ghouls guaranteed to ruin your sofa's warranty.



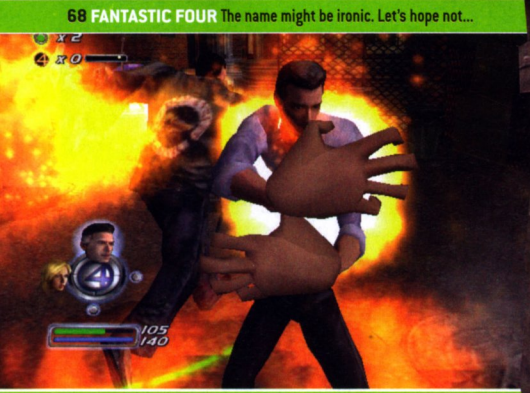
40 GUN The name's a no-brainer, but the game's a rootin' tootin' varmint of a thing.



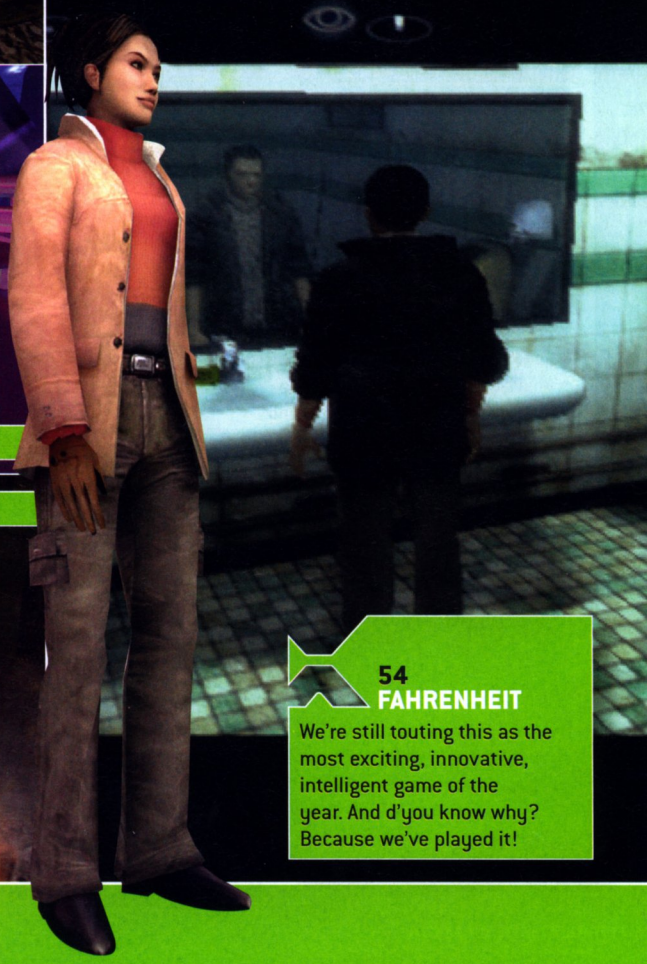
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68 FANTASTIC FOUR The name might be ironic. Let's hope not...



**54 FAHRENHEIT**  
We're still touting this as the most exciting, innovative, intelligent game of the year. And d'you know why? Because we've played it!

## QUICKFIX

DESIGNED EXCLUSIVELY FOR YOUR BROWSING PLEASURE

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### "THE TROUBLE WITH HALO"

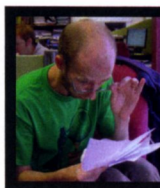
There's no doubt about it, *Halo 2* was an excellent game - truly worth 10/10. However, could it be too good? Time and time again I find myself thinking the following about almost every shooter: "Its Okay... but it's not *Halo 2*." Then I thought to myself, is *Halo* destroying the First-Person Shooter genre, creating some sort of FPS monopoly? The thing what we must accept is that a game equal to or better than *Halo 2* could be quite a long way off, even on the Xbox 360 (for example *Gears Of War* looks great but I doubt it will hold its own against a next generation *Halo*). Therefore we must stop comparing every FPS to *Halo*: Maybe *Black Hawk Down* deserved an 8/10? *Area 51* a 7/10? Or *Pariah* a 9/10?



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# INBOX ▶

"Is *Halo* destroying the first person shooter genre?"



### ★ MAN OF LETTERS

With Tim sunning himself on his private island in the Maldives for the next few months, Nellis steps into the mail-opening breach. Ouch.

and... er... *Medal of Honor: European Assault* a 5/10? No, probably not. The thing is, *Halo 2* is just too good and if we use it in comparison to every new FPS, then are any of them really going to be any good?

Paul Griffin, Newcastle

Once you've driven a Ferrari, pootling around in a Ford Fiesta just doesn't cut it. If you see what we mean. It may be unfair to judge all shooters against *Halo* but it's the benchmark for the genre so comparisons are inevitable, dontchya think?

### "THE TROUBLE WITH FIDDY"

Why is everyone talking about this new game, *50 Cent: Bulletproof*? I mean yeah, his songs are good but that's no reason to make a game about him. In your issue a couple of months back you wrote loads about him, including a bit on his shoes! What the hell is happening? For a start the game version of Fiddy looks nothing like the real thing. He's not as stocky as he is in the game and his teeth are goofy in real life too! If



you're going to make a game about a rapper, it should be about 2Pac. He's the obvious choice because he was killed (?!?! - Ed) and also because his songs are better.

Darin Bell, Liverpool

We're just looking forward to the day they announce *Tom Clancy's McFly: Chart Strike*.

### "SCHMO JOKE"

In regards to Steef Smith's e-mail last month (see XBW 28), the schmos in this case are firstly himself and secondly the Judas developer *Oddworld Inhabitants*. They have taken the original and creative *Oddworld*, which had totally unique gameplay, and soiled its good name by shoe-horning the game into an FPS framework. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying the gameplay is crap, I'm just saying that it is now just another title in a horribly bloated genre. Every other Xbox game is a damn FPS. Me and my girlfriend loved the first Xbox *Oddworld*

## ★ LETTER OF THE MONTH

### "WHO'S THE RANKER?"

Xbox LIVE is clearly the best thing since chocolate-coated lady bumps, but the ranking tables are a joke. I got *Conker: Live And Reloaded* a week after release and already found that the tables were crazy. I'll never reach the top spot on the tables, because I don't have as much time as these top rankers obviously have. Do these people have a job? They can't have, with the rankings on *Conker*, and any other Xbox LIVE game for that matter. Game rankings aren't for people with expertise,

they're for people who have loads of time on their hands, people who probably only go out once every week to sign on and maybe again to claim their dole money. I think if the rankings are going to be taken seriously by gamers with a job, Microsoft need to make sure each Xbox LIVE game has division rankings, a bit like Boxing or football.

King T, via email

A bloody good point, yer majesty. Another classic example - the ranking system in *PES*. It's all but meaningless. Publishers - sort it for 360 LIVE. Ta.



# Win!

### ★ 3 X GAMES FOR LETTER OF THE MONTH!

That's right, 3 whole games are yours if your letter or email bags the Letter Of The Month award. Make us laugh, make us barf in disgust, make us stroke our chins and go 'hmmmm, interesting' - whatever, just write to us with views,

opinions, anecdotes or, well, anything really. We get lonely. Your correspondence makes us feel wanted. And we'll reward you with whatever games are taking up valuable drawer space. For his email, King T nabs a Limited Edition copy of *Jade Empire* plus *Juiced* and *Close Combat*. Schweet!



**PRESENT DAY** Leek's Tim Hampson sent us this lot in a big plastic bag. How kind! Makes a change from mouldy socks.



## WORLD WIDE WEBBER

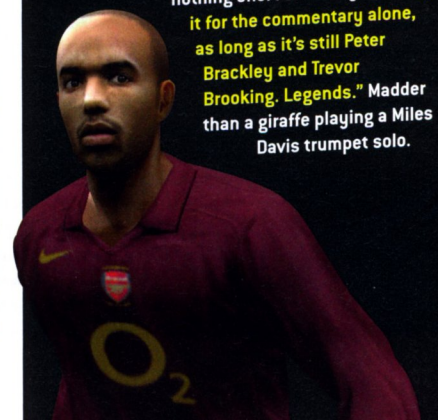
Pete struggles from his sickbed to bring you the latest 'Net noises.

**ALL THAT JAZZ**  
Everybody knows the Internet is the jazz of the new millennium – a stream of consciousness dancing on circuitry, breaking out with ingenious, soulful and creative moments before leaping to the next. Unfortunately, from time to time a bum note slips out. Sadly, Fidrocket comes in flat on a thread discussing "A great game idea." "You get to do anything you want whenever you want. GTA like in a sense that it's free roaming... but you have to build a house and pay bills and suchlike." Why not have a washing and ironing simulator in there too? Go wild.

**NOT THE SPIRIT**  
Elsewhere, some Xboxers were exposed as a right bunch of miserable sods. After Bill Gates, the world's greatest philanthropist (according to Geldof himself), appeared at Live 8, did gamers come out and praise the great man for imploring justice for the developing world? Er, no. "He seems to wear the same things every time I see him," griped one. "Rich Man = Boring clothes." "Well he should start giving back to the world by 1) Giving us fully functional Windows operating systems. 2) Cheaper priced Windows and Office software 3) Free Xbox 360s," sniped another. Perhaps taking the biscuit was this unnamed fella "we get nailed for high prices so he can give to charity??? What??? It's our money!!" Good grief. Thankfully, the voice of reason, compassion and humanity emerges with consensus on the maxim. "Buying 360 = giving money to charity and Bill Gates." Enjoy unrivalled graphics, the most advanced games and indirectly make poverty history? Why not?

**ADMIT HIM NOW**  
We adore the Pro Evo Soccer games, just like the most of the gaming public, and as the world reacted with a collective "pffft" to the new PES screenshots (see page 12 to be utterly underwhelmed), forum chatter turned to what features the new version should include. Most suggestions were admirable (the Premiership licence to name just one) but utterances from Gamesradar forumite Lotus were

nothing short of lunacy: "I'll buy it for the commentary alone, as long as it's still Peter Brackley and Trevor Brooking. Legends." Madder than a giraffe playing a Miles Davis trumpet solo.



because it was fantastic and different to the rest of the games. We were gagging for more of the same in the sequel, and if it had been in the same style as Munch's gaming gem I would have followed its production and bought it the day it came out, no marketing needed to convince me. However, it's just another FPS with a few gimmicks bolted on and while it may well be a good game, no amount of EA's advertising money can inspire me to pick this game up for £30.

Thomas Jordan, Ludlow

Come, come, Thomas. You were making a decent (but somewhat flawed – half the game is third-person) argument there about the new *Oddworld* conforming to an already overcrowded genre and then you go and torpedo yourself by saying you've not even played it! Go and rent it tonight, you'll be pleasantly surprised, we think.

### "FLATTERY PLUS PRESENTS = :-)"

Not only are you the best Xbox mag, you're the best videogame mag by far. In fact I would go so far as to say you're the best mag ever, but there are some mags on the top shelf that I can't reach yet that look more interesting than yours. Anyway, you're always giving us readers so much, I thought I'd give you something in return (see the above photo).

Tim Hampson, Leek

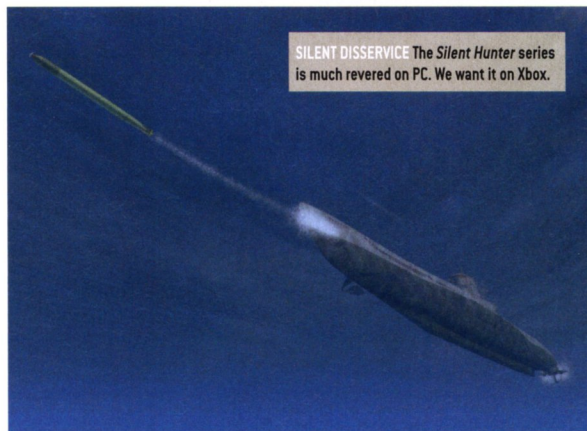
Wow. Shower gel, ear plugs, a Mis-Teq CD single, some breakfast cereal freebies, two Michael Caine films and a copy of *Double Dragon II* for the Commodore 64. It's like all our birthdays have come at once. Cheers! (Burn it all – Ed.)

### "HIM AGAIN"

Please tell me why such a great game as *Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory* has such a crap ending?

Tim Hampson, Leek

Two words: Tom and Clancy. Actually that's not fair, *The Hunt For The Red October* is the best



**SILENT DISSERVICE** The *Silent Hunter* series is much revered on PC. We want it on Xbox.

book, ever. Clearly it's the lack of submarines in *Chaos Theory* that makes the ending such drivel.

### "WHICH LEADS US ONTO..."

My mate has been playing *Silent Hunter 3* on his PC and it looks awesome! Do you reckon it'll be coming to Xbox or 360 any time soon because I really fancy a bit of underwater action and there's nothing like it in the shops for consoles. I'd buy *Silent Hunter* for my PC, but the machine is so old you can barely get *Minesweeper* to run on it without it crashing.

Arnold Morgan, Norfolk

Ah, a man after my own heart. We asked Ubisoft months ago if there's any chance of the *Silent Hunter* series appearing on either Xbox but alas the answer came that there were 'no plans at the moment' for a console release. For shame.

## SHORT CUTS

### "SPACE INVADERS"

I have seen the brilliant *War Of The Worlds* three times and I reckon that it could be made into one hell of an alien invasion game. Do you think it's in development and will it come to Xbox or perhaps the Xbox 360?

K. Tattersall, Nottingham  
Our enquiries reveal nothing on this, K, but it wouldn't surprise us if there was a WOTW game on the cards. And if there is, it'll be shite. So there.

### "PREMATURE"

When the 360 is released, will the Xbox become the new PS1, with outdated graphics and rubbish games?  
Anon, Richmond  
In the end, probably. But there are plenty of great Xbox games still to come and it'll be a long while before we're reduced to Master Chief Kart Racing.

## ★ WRITE ON...

SEND IN LETTERS. BEST WIN PRIZES. EASY.  
DON'T FORGET WE ALSO WANT TO SEE YOUR PICS!  
EMAIL: xbw@futurenet.co.uk  
POST: INBOX, Xbox World, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

# Explorer

Cop a load of the latest Xbox news.

## The highlights

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FIRST PICS AND INFO!

# PES GETS KIT ON!

## FULL PREMIERSHIP LICENSE LIKELY FOR NUMBER 5?

STORY BY: PETE WEBBER

**NEW SCREENS OF PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5 IN** action surfaced this month that seemed to suggest Konami had finally secured the elusive Premiership license. Celebrating the announcement that Thierry Henry had signed on to help promote the game for a second successive season, Konami posted screens of Mr Va-Va-Voom sporting the horrible new maroon Arsenal kit, complete with club badge, Nike branding and sponsor's logo. This led us to believe that, after years and years of waiting, the world's greatest soccer sim was finally going to include all the authentic kits, players and stadiums for top flight English footie. Get in!

However, when we spoke to our man at Konami he told us that while the company had indeed signed up the Arse and 'a couple' of other teams, he wouldn't confirm that the whole division will be present and correct in official form. So while we're pretty confident Konami will pull out all the stops to get a fully-licensed-up Premiership in the game, there are certainly no guarantees at this stage.

If you're new to all this 'licensing' business, *PES 4* boasted a significant number of licenses, with Dutch, Spanish and Italian clubs featuring official players and kits. However, EA's *FIFA Football* series has always been

home to all the expensive Premiership licenses. And while it may not seem like the most important issue, *PES* is considered to be the most realistic football game in every department other than its presentation, so the extra caché of having the official teams playing in their official kits and competing in the official tournaments shouldn't be underestimated. Especially when you're trying to cater for anally-retentive football obsessives like us.

As for how *PES 5* is looking, you can see for yourself that the visual quality doesn't appear to be too different from *Pro Evo 4*. Although this isn't necessarily a big deal, it would've been good for Konami to at least bump up the



detail level a tad. These new screens are just a bit, well, underwhelming. There are specific differences – some players wear their shirts outside their shorts and players' breath shows up in the cold – but they're hardly re-inventing the wheel.

Konami remain tight-lipped about actual gameplay details but, after bamboozling them with a string of lollipops, we did manage to eke out some hard facts. Once again the player animation has been overhauled to achieve even greater levels of realism – for instance, aerial battles have improved considerably with players clambering all over each

other to win headers. There's greater emphasis on the physical nature of the game with falls, fouls and collisions (momentum plays a bigger part for heavier players). There are also new tricks, dummies and free kicks plus a less forgiving passing system. Off the pitch we get more control over player development in the Master League along with the introduction of wingbacks and new training sessions. So even if, as it seems, Konami are saving the next evolutionary PES leap for the next-gen machines, there's still more than enough to look forward to in *Pro Evo 5* when it kicks off in October.

# XBW NEEDS YOU!

## PASSIONATE ABOUT GAMES? AMAZING WRITER? ALRIGHT THEN, COME AND WORK FOR US...

Finally fed up with lunchtime whuppings at PES, man-child Staff Writer Duncan Leigh has decided to trade an honest day's graft for the lure of cheap booze and cheaper women at University. While he's scabbing off our taxes, causing queues in supermarkets by paying via cheque and sleeping in until midday, we need someone to fill his not inconsiderable shoes.

Do you laugh in the face of pressure? Could you put up with an almost constant stream of abuse from Editor Tim? Is your writing informed, passionate, and funny? Are you over 18, willing to travel, and have a burning desire to work in the beautiful city of Bath? Then you could be just the person we're after.

Log onto <http://www.futurenet.co.uk/futureonline/jobs/> where you'll find an outline of what the job entails (it's more than just playing games, y'know), what requirements you'll need to fulfill and how to apply.



Do you absolutely love Xbox and everything it stands for? Can't wait for the next generation?

**JOIN US!**



Can you handle Tim's constructive criticism and creative name-calling, on the hour, every hour?

**JOIN US!**



Can you write like a maniac in the face of a looming deadline and still make the copy *any good*?

**JOIN US!**



Can you charm ruthless PR types into doing your nefarious bidding via the medium of telephone?

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**JOIN US!**

## GLOBAL BRIEFS

THINGS HAVE HAPPENED, WE KNOW ABOUT THEM, AND NOW SO DO YOU. THAT'S NEWS.



### JUMPING THE GAT

Vivendi Universal is already hoping that forthcoming titles *Scarface* and *50 Cent: Bulletproof* will turn into franchises, copying the eternal market trend of annual sequels in the manner of *Splinter Cell* or *FIFA Football*. In an interview with trade website gamesindustry.biz Company President Phil O'Neal said "we're hopeful that candidly, both *Scarface* and *50*, while not 'original' IP, become sustainable franchise brands for us" despite both titles still being in development. Could we just focus on making these brilliant first, Phil? After all, no-one's going to remember *50 Cent* in a few years' time. But don't tell him we said that. Please. [Stop being so pathetic. He's a big girl's blouse - Ed]

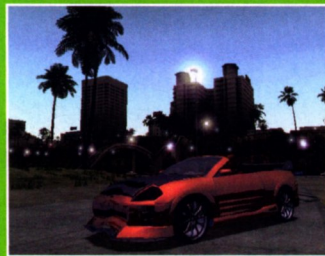
### MODDER CONVICTED

A 22 year old Cambridge graduate has become the first ever individual in the UK to be convicted for the illegal modification of videogames consoles at Caerphilly Magistrates Court.

The offender modified Xbox consoles by fitting them with a hard-drive of 200GB and 80 pre-installed games. He flogged them for £380 quid a pop via his website. Each package would retail for about £3000 if genuine. The court dished out 140 hours of community service, £750 costs and the forfeiture of all his equipment including three tower PCs and 38 hard drives. Who said all Oxbridge types were bright?

### GAMERS CLINIC OPENS

A new clinic has opened in China to care for young people addicted to online gaming and the Internet. The Beijing clinic mostly treats patients aged between 14 and 24, who are looked after by a team of 23 nurses and doctors. Many say that their addiction to gaming grew out of a wish to relieve everyday stress and pressure from parents to perform well at school or college. Treatment includes therapy sessions, medication, acupuncture, exercise – and unbelievably – electric shocks. A stay at the clinic costs just under 50 bucks a day. Sounds a bit rubbish to us. But then we're not dangerously addicted. We just like online gaming. A lot.



A LADY IN HER KNICKERS OVER THERE

# CAR GAMES INCLUDE BABES AND ADVERTS

Blatant branding and big boobs characterise new urban racers.

**NEW DETAILS ON ROAMING CAR** racers *LA Rush* and *187 Ride Or Die* surfaced this month. Midway's *LA Rush*, a revival of the classic arcade title of the same name, will include MTV branding throughout the game world and the crew from MTV show *Pimp My Ride*, *West Coast Customs*, will also feature. It's another step on a path of adverts littering games that while we're not keen on, could help cover spiralling developments costs, particularly for smaller outfits.

Meanwhile, Ubisoft's gangster racer

*187 Ride or Die* will be fronted by UK glamour model Thekla Roth and she'll also be a virtual character in the game. 32D stunner Roth has been crowned Miss Hot Import Nights for two years running and said "I'm a huge fan of cars and regularly model at all the big car shows. So when Ubisoft approached me to appear in *187 Ride Or Die*, it seemed like a great opportunity to try something new that incorporating my favourite things, fast cars and fast driving!" Of course it does, dear. Now get 'em out.

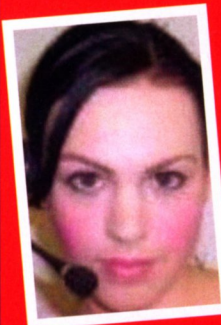


### CHICK FRIENDLY

## PUSSY ACTION ON BLADES

Girls like it, apparently.

**IF YOU'VE NOT CONVINCED THE** lady in your life to share in your main passion yet, here's something that might just sway her. Explosive Games is releasing *Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue* in early September. Featuring the incomprehensibly popular *Hello Kitty* cat, this very pink platformer trusts you with saving Sanrio Town from the evil King Block with the help of over 20 characters, including Cinnamoroll, Melody and, of course, Keroppi. Ideally, *Hello Kitty* will act as a gateway game so you can lead your lady on to stronger stuff like *Halo 2*, *Pro-Evo* and finally *Manhunt*.



AW, BLESS 'EM

## IT'S GIRLS VS BOYS!

ALL-FEMALE PMS CLAN TO TOUR UK.

### GIRLIE GAMING CLAN PSYCHOTIC

Men Slayers (PMS for short) are taking on the public in Gamestation stores across the country. The girls will be caressing Xbox controllers from 1pm to 5pm in stores each Saturday until September, taking on all-comers. The UK arm of this global clan is home to 40 of the best female gamers in the country and they will be playing the likes of *Burnout Revenge* live instore. They'll also be happy to chat about "what it means to be a PMS gamer," encouraging new

members and, presumably, outlining exactly how they're going to kick sorry male ass. More information on the clan and their members can be found by surfing over to [www.pmsclan.com/uk](http://www.pmsclan.com/uk). Wade into the battle of the sexes at the following stores, on the following dates: Newport 06/08/05 Stockport 13/08/05 Liverpool, Lord St 20/08/05 Southampton 27/08/05 London at Camden 03/09/05 Bring your own humility.



MOVIE CHIEF

# HALO FOR HOLLYWOOD



The 'Videogame Movies Suck' rule is ignored again.

**HISTORY HAS CLEARLY TAUGHT HOLLYWOOD** nothing. Despite nigh-on every film based on a videogame being to cinema what Jonathan King is to child care, studio bosses have green-lighted films based on *Halo*, *Hitman* and *Max Payne* and there's a *Doom* movie in production too, fronted by none other than The Rock. Jeez.

*Halo* sounds the most promising of the lot, with a script penned by Alex '28 days Later' Garland and worked on in conjunction with Bungie. The final draft was delivered to studios by Master Chief himself! Well, a bloke in a Master Chief outfit. The deal will see Microsoft rake in \$5 million up front plus 10 per cent of the first-dollar box-office gross. Universal is overseeing production.

Famous bald hard man and devout gamer Vin Diesel will take the role of Agent 47 in the *Hitman*

film and he's apparently gunning to be in the next game too. Finally, according to the Hollywood reporter, 20th Century Fox has signed up *Max Payne* for a celluloid outing but there are no casting details as yet. Let's hope they're not all too shit.



ALMOST AS GOOD AS BUFFY

## WIN ANGEL: THE VAMPIRE ANTHOLOGY DVDS!

SINK YOUR TEETH INTO OUR AWESOME GIVEAWAY.

**CULT VAMPIRE SERIES ANGEL IS GETTING**

more DVD treatment thanks to 20th Century Fox. Series creator Joss Whedon has handpicked episodes revolving around the fang-tastic gang, with each DVD dedicated to a particular member. Naturally, we recommend fitty Cordelia's superbly chronicled journey from cheerleader to half-demon, although you can also check out DVDs dedicated to ex-watcher Wesley, Vampire hunter Gunn and the gorgeous genius 'Fred'. Who is a woman, apparently. Each DVD packs four episodes plus a specially selected character profile. And we've got three complete sets to give away! Want it? 'Course you do. Answer this simple question:

What locale is famous for its vampire lore?

- A) Transylvania
- B) Telford
- C) The Vampire Town That Doesn't Exist

Answers on a postcard marked 'Angel Delight' to Xbox World magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and a whole host of Vampiric goodness could be yours. To watch. On a DVD player.

The *Vampire Anthology* is available to buy on DVD on 1 August 2005 from 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment.

**WIN**



## DVD REVIEW



©Universal Pictures

### JAWS: SPECIAL EDITION

Director Steven Spielberg Starring Roy Scheider Price £19.99

Well, perhaps it's time to dust down the old man-eater, now that we're all gearing up for the *Ecco The Dolphin*-style Xbox incarnation. Some of the less adventurous readers might already be shrieking "Jaws? But that's already come out! I've seen it on my telly and everything!" But as we never listen to unadventurous people, who cares? And apart from anything else, this is the THIRTIETH anniversary special edition... Okay, we're being a bit sarcastic here – the fact that Universal brought out a 25th anniversary special edition does make this a pretty obvious piss-taking attempt to grab YOUR cash. The difference this time is that you get a two-hour documentary (which has all the hallmarks of a rather old TV feature) some slick menus, and a hilariously unnecessary section on sharks, complete with 3D model of a Great White... *Jaws* is one of those few films that seems to be constantly repeated on TV, but improves with every viewing. And this indeed a great package to own. But there's no shame in saving your cash and plumping for the 25th Anniversary special. Universal are rich enough. Bunch of sharks.

★★★★★ Jem Roberts

THE BEST OF THE REST...

ALEXANDER ★★★★★ is out on DVD! Remember it? That Oliver Stone movie that's going to be the star of this year's Golden Raspberry Awards? As well as a commentary and the usual features, you also get the Director's Cut. Which seemed to be making the world of difference... at the time that we switched off. WONDER WOMAN SEASON 1 ★★★★★ though, is a tremendous boxset, well worth its thirty-ish quid even without the accompanying pilot and feature-length episode. Especially if, like us, you're a die-hard perv. As the inevitable Hollywood remake will remind you, Wonder Woman is actually the Goddess Diana who flies to the USA in an invisible plane and kicks Nazi ass while dressed in a crucially revealing costume. Volume Two is out in a month, with a massive new documentary as well. But we're not sure we want to see that – Lynda Carter should forever remain the brain-fizzingly drop-dead-gorgeous sexpot that she was in the '70s. BLACKPOOL ★★★★★ is released at the start of the month as well, on a no-frills disc, but the BBC series is so extravagantly entertaining anyway – mystery, intrigue and song and dance – [and the disc is pretty cheap] that you'd be mad, boring or both to pass it up. And finally, a brand new adaptation of FRANKENSTEIN ★★★★★ stumbles onto disc, starring William Hurt, Donald Sutherland, and as the monster... Luke Goss. Worth checking out for the creature's acapella version of 'Drop the Boy'.



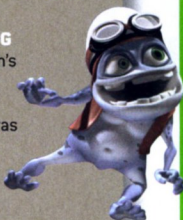
©Warner Home Video

## GLOBAL BRIEFS

LOOK AT WHAT OUR COOL JIVE-TALKING DUDE ON THE STREET JUST COUGHED UP.

### XBOX SPARED FROG

Following last month's announcement that the licence to make Crazy Frog games was up for grabs comes news that made us wee our pants. Digital Jesters has secured the rights to the most Irritating Character Of All Time and at this very moment Crazy Frog Racer is in development for PlayStation 2. This is why you bought your Xbox, people, so you don't have to suffer the ignominy of seeing shite like this sitting in the Xbox section of your local game store. This is why PS2 gamers are going to realise that their console is in its death throes and the future belongs to you, and you'll be parading down the street slapping all the Sony fanboys around the face with a copy of Halo 2 shouting 'told you so, muppet!' Maybe.



### PINBALL WIZARD

A rarity on Xbox, Explosiv is bringing out a pinball game. Ultimate Pro-Pinball might only feature three differently themed tables but they are gorgeously detailed, feature realistic ball physics and you can tilt the table if things aren't going your way (woo-hoo! Ed). As you'd expect, you can unlock multiballs as you flip your way to racking up the points. It's not going to change the face of gaming as we know it, but at a tanner, pinball wizards will fancy a punt. Out in Autumn.



### FLATOUT 2

Slow-burning success FlatOut has a sequel in production. Developed by Bugbear, the second helping will again feature fully destructible environments, gigantic pile-ups and awesome physics. And taking a leaf out of the current modding trend, this time out there will be 16 fully customisable cars to choose from. Hopefully the 'driver tossing' events will be continued too.



ALRIGHT, LA?

# LOST ANGELES

California comes under fire in *Bad Day In LA*. Arnie won't be happy.



### AMERICAN MCGEE PRESENTS BAD

*Day In LA* satirises modern day Los Angeles and takes a swipe at US 'fear culture' in what is claimed to be one of the funniest, most original and surreal games to hit your Xbox. It's McGee's



second Xbox offering - average at best robot adventure *American McGee's Scrapland* was his first - and we still don't know why he insists on putting his name in front of the game title but there you go.

Assuming the role of cynical down-and-out Anthony Williams, you'll turn from hobo to hero as LA comes under attack from zombies, terrorists, earthquakes and all manner of other disasters man-made and natural. With the city facing total annihilation Anthony is reluctantly forced to save the very city he loathes and help its citizens who he detests to escape the

under-siege streets. This third-person action/adventure hybrid promises a wild storyline and unique, cartoony style. With ten levels based on real life neighbourhoods from Venice Beach to Beverly Hills, you'll have to fight your way through the carnage with weapons from the usual pistols to spraycan flamethrowers.

"*Bad Day LA* is sure to offend half of America while giving the other half a much-needed escape from their everyday fears", McGee mutters hopefully. The game is being developed and published by Enlight Software and is slated for an early 2006 release."



### CAPE CARNIVAL

## DEMAND JUSTICE!

MORE LICENSED LYCRA ACTION ON THE WAY, CITIZENS. CALL FOR THE JUSTICE LEAGUE!

### THE HAPPY MARRIAGE OF GAMES

and comics continues as DC and Midway announce that a long-rumoured *Justice League* game is definitely in the works. Based on the monthly comic book, *Justice League* is pitched as an RPG adventure featuring Superman, Batman, The Flash, Wonder Woman, The Green Lantern, Martian Manhunter, Zatanna and Hawkgirl in a mammoth superhero catch all! Each will have unique super powers and a variety of fighting styles

with which to kick baddy ass. Your skills are customisable and two-player co-operative play is promised in interactive and destructible environments.

According to Paul Levitz, President & Publisher of DC Comics "The joy of the *Justice League* as a game is the chance to be your favorite characters and to interact with the rest of the team in the rich fantasy world of the DC universe." Expect joyous *Justice League* interaction in Autumn 2006.

### STARTER'S ORDERS

## FUN TIME FRANKIE

Saddle up for Horse Racer.

### DESPITE BARBIE'S HORSE WORLD

seemingly cornering the market, equestrian Xbox fun is back with the news that Frankie Dettori has signed for a self-titled horse racing game. Developed in New Zealand by Sidhe Interactive, *Frankie Dettori Racing* will feature an in-depth career mode taking you from stable boy to superstar jockey. There'll also be online play and multiple game modes including 'Betting Party' and official licenses include Royal Ascot, The Emirates Melbourne Cup and The Caulfield cup. With motion captured horse and jockey animation by the VFX wizards behind the *Lord of the Rings* movies and commentary, we reckon that it sounds rather ace. As long as John McCririck doesn't get in on the act. It's November for the off.





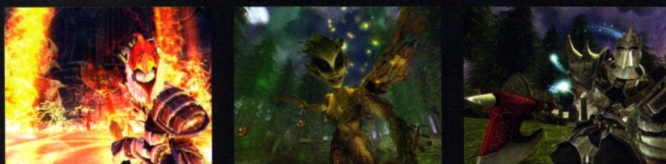
NOT WEST BROM

# RETURN TO ALBION

*Fable set for update at bargain price.*

*Fable: The Lost Chapters* is set for a cut-price release of twenty notes on your Xbox this autumn. One of the few criticisms of the superb RPG was that it was a bit short and Peter Molyneux's Lionhead Studios were forced to scale back their ambitious plans at the start of development. Don't expect major changes in gameplay but there will be loads of new content. For example The Northern Wastes are now open for you to explore and it's reported that *The Lost Chapters* will be a whole third bigger than the original. Grander, weirder monsters are included for your battling pleasure and you'll get your

hands on bucket-loads of new spells and slicier, hurtier weapons. There is also a range of new moves to entertain, intimidate and baffle Albion's denizens with, including a chicken dance, the Flamenco and a bit of air guitar. And it seems, after Lionhead took notice of Nellis' weekly avalanche of letters, you'll now get to 'interact' with Albion's very own brothel full of 'fallen women'. Righteous hero, or malevolent pimp daddy – the choice is yours. Unfortunately, game saves will not be interchangeable between the original and revamped title so you'll have to start your fantasy all over again...



GLAND THEFT PORNO

# GTA SANS CLOTHES

HACK CAUSES STORM IN COFFEE CUP.

## A DUTCH PC GEEK WHO HACKED

his copy of *GTA San Andreas* to produce a sex mini-game has provoked huge controversy. Patrick Wildenborg claims to have unlocked the game nicknamed *Hot Coffee*, in which CJ 'enjoys' a wide variety of sex-acts, after completing the girlfriend missions. Hacks are already available on the 'net for both the Xbox and PS2 versions of the game.

David Walsh, founder of the stateside National Institute on the Media said "While *San Andreas* is already full of sex and violence, the pornographic sex scenes push it over the edge. This is about kids. Can you imagine the impact of 15 year old boys literally enacting this scene?" said the spokesman, blankly ignoring the game's American Mature, 17+ rating.

Although Walsh and his supporters are calling for the game to be re-classified A0 (adults only) by the ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board), Rockstar spokesman Rodney Walker said that the company are "complying fully with their enquiries" and "remain confident the investigation will uphold the original rating." The company also currently denies responsibility for

the *Hot Coffee* game saying that "the work of the mod community is beyond the scope of either publishers or the ESRB." The Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification, which rated *San Andreas* MA15+ has also begun its own investigation into the title, although its UK BBFC rating of 18 means such an enquiry is unlikely over here. Quite a lot of fuss over a bit of crap shagging.



# Explorer **EXTRA**



On the wire: updates and first looks from around the gaming globe.



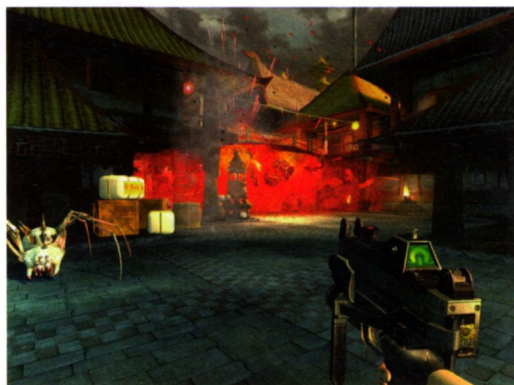
## SERIOUS SAM 2

'It's all fun and games until somebody loses an eye'

- ★ **PUBLISHER** 2K Games
- ★ **GENRE** Croteam
- ★ **OUT** Autumn 2005
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** Co-op adversarial
- ★ **LIVE EXTRAS** TBC, but we expect plenty

The sequel to the most outrageously over the top shooter of all time is approaching fast, and from this distance it's looking very, very sexy. *Sam 2* is a whole new game that plunges you back into Sam's world of incessant gunfire, dreadful-but-funny one liners and seriously high enemy counts. Many shooters say they

will exercise your trigger finger like no other. Sam lobbs a grenade in the direction of such pitiful claims, then fills them with 3'000'000 rounds of machine gun fire. *Sam 2* doesn't exercise your trigger finger at all, simply because it will be jammed permanently down as you fight against enemies so numerous they block out the very light of the sun. Sam slays monsters for what is, ostensibly, no good reason at all. Which as we all know, is one of the better reasons for virtually shooting stuff anyway. Conclusion: Sam's long overdue return is a mightily welcome one.



**EYE SOAR** The visuals are stunning. Often sick and twisted and gross. But stunning.



**THE DARK LEGION** There's a sight to make you wish you'd stayed in bed.



**PARIS MATCH** The Hilton sisters make an appearance.



**SHARD TIMES** That glass won't be around for long.



**FIRE 'N' ICE** A breathing space — a rare event for Sam.



## BE SERIOUS

Fans will be pleased to hear that the core ethic of massacring multitudes of monsters has not altered, but big changes are still afoot...



## VARIED ARENAS

Sam's second adventure goes beyond previous samey-sandy Egyptian locations into new and exciting territory. From leafy forests to choking cities, boredom will never set in. And although it's an action game, Croteam have promised to throw in the odd brain-teasing puzzle now and then.



## WARM WHEELS

From what our eyes have ingested, the most innovative new, um, innovation will be the vehicles — there are flippin' mountains of them. So once you've finished using your could-supply-an-army arsenal of weaponry, you'll be able to jump into a jeep and splatter monsters all over your bumper. Which is what you've always wanted to do.



## BIG BAD BOSS

The developers are going for two world records — most enemies on screen (current estimates are circa 350!) and 'biggest boss in a videogame.' *Serious Sam 1* had a boss over 700 feet tall, and it was gargantuan. Croteam expect their new boss to be able to crush him under its foot... May as well cancel all calls for a year, then.



## IT TAKES TWO, BABY

Best of all, Sam's world famous co-op mode is returning, allowing players to take on an *even greater* number of enemies than in the single player game. A souped up version of the last game's maniac deathmatch is sure to impress also. Seriously, let's have it.



## GEORGE A. ROMERO'S CITY OF THE DEAD

Ravaged remote islands, a shambling squad of flesh eaters salivating on your heels, guns aplenty to dice them with – it's *Resident Evil*, but not as we know it. This is *Resident Romero*!

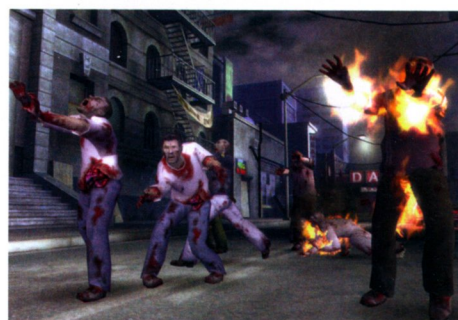
- ★ **PUBLISHER** Hip Games
- ★ **GENRE** First-person shooter
- ★ **OUT** Spring 2006
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** Yes
- ★ **LIVE EXTRAS** TBC

Seeing as videogamedom has been stealing his scenes, settings and squelchy content for long enough, cult sick-flick director, George Romero is finally getting in on the action himself by lending his creative input to a series of games based upon his hordes of decaying brain-eaters.

*City Of The Dead*, the first title released as part of Romero's game-based renaissance, puts four desperate survivors of a zombie-infested city onto the remote island of Isla Mortal. This island is home to a top secret military installation (as well as thousands of moaning ex-mortals) and players must utilise the feast of firearms at their disposal to fend off the festering hordes and find a route off of the rock. The fact that the action is set in and around a stricken military base means that the arsenal available to the survivors consists of familiar firearms and more futuristic devices and they'll need everything they can grab to slow down the shambling hell-spawn, who flatly refuse to pass peacefully over to the other side.

Every part of a zombie's torso can be specifically targeted and one cool mode even invites you to take down as many undeads as possible with a single shot [by shooting strategically-placed combustible barrels and overhanging crates]. Best of all though, multiplayer aspects will support split-screen co-op modes and four-player online, with some players assuming the role of the groaning grave-dodgers themselves!

The violence, while graphic and in abundance, is comical rather than disturbing and is given the Romero director's treatment thanks to all manner of slow-mo's and camera swoops. More Romero influence comes in the form of Tom Savini. The actor (perhaps best known as 'Sex Machine' in *From Dusk Till Dawn*) has been a long-time Romero collaborator, both as an actor and an acclaimed make-up artist, and he has signed up for this project to lend his voice and likeness to William 'Red' McLean, a battle-worn ex-law enforcement officer and one of the four core survivors. Developer Kuju Entertainment is certainly treating Romero's involvement as more than just a name to shift copies and even recently held a competition in which Romero fans could send in digital pics in the hope of getting their own mugs masked onto the in-game zombies. And at face value, this game is looking sweet.



**BE A ZOMBIE!** We finally get to be undead! Bags not that one though.



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## PAINKILLER

Super-strength, fast-acting FPS that saves your soul via the medium of gunplay. Do not attempt to buy if you are allergic to large explosions and nasty death. Or if you are breastfeeding.

- ★ **PUBLISHER** Dreamcatcher
- ★ **GENRE** FPS
- ★ **OUT** Winter
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** Yes
- ★ **LIVE EXTRAS** TBC

Out for a year on PC, developer People Can Fly is pulling out all the stops to create the definitive console version of this well-respected all-action shooter. Many levels are being redesigned and the control system is being

tweaked extensively. Which is a bloody good job as we don't have a keyboard and mouse! *Painkiller* is set in a world "somewhere between heaven and hell." Some people call it purgatory. Some call it marriage. But we won't waste time with the story, this all about the shootin', the shootin' and the shootin'.

With a distinct horror feel, *Painkiller* features 19 levels including swamps, cemeteries and snowy mountain complexes. The whole freaking thing is populated with irate monsters, each with their own behavioural patterns and attacks. You'll come across crazy monks, skeletal soldiers and Samurais and, helpfully, when you slay an enemy you can increase your health by devouring its soul. You can also rob carcasses of gold and spend the cash on upgrading abilities and weapons. Primary and secondary boomsticks can be combined to create spectacularly lethal attacks and while there aren't a huge amount of weapons, there is plenty of ammo lying about.

Pleasingly, the Havoc 2.0 physics engine has been employed for limb-twisting deaths. You'll see plenty of those as hordes of enemies come ploughing at you in levels packed with chaotic set-pieces. This isn't one for those looking for a believable backstory – this is all about moving fast and shooting fast. Should be a belter.



**EXTREME SPURTS** There used to be a baddie standing there, you know.



**STREET SPIRIT** The roads seem strangely empty. Are they avoiding you?





**STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN** Unleash hell on your way up!



**DOUBLE WHAMMY** Two barrels equals double the fun.



**DOOM MONGER** Show him who worships the true God. Convert him with bullets.

## MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS

**FINISH HIM! AND HIM! AND HIM!** And, er, yes. And him.

★ **PUBLISHER** Midway

★ **GENRE** Action

★ **OUT** Autumn

★ **LIVE PLAY** No

★ **LIVE EXTRAS** No

*Mortal Kombat* has come a long long way since the MegaDrive days but this definitely marks a change of direction for the franchise. No longer confined to your traditional 'beat-'em-up constraints, this single player or two player co-op roamer revisits the worlds of *Mortal Kombat* Past (specifically II and III) with a whole new range of beats to dole out.

Obviously influenced by the likes of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, a new combat system lets you take the fight to the skies, pulling off incredible jump combos right in enemies' faces. Playing with either Liu Kang or Kang Lao, as you battle your way through levels you'll

build up experience points to unlock extra characters and abilities. You'll also gain access to loads more fatalities. Our favourite? At level two, unleash the multitality, a room-clearing wave of destruction that takes out anyone dumb enough to stand in front of you.

The levels are also filled with context-sensitive areas. Fancy throwing enemies into acid pits? Perhaps you want to impale them on hooks? Maybe you want to chuck them onto spikes? It's all good, and all up to you.

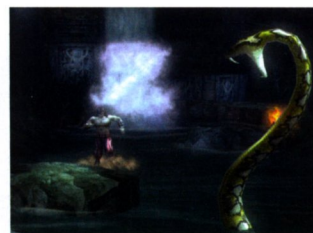
If you can't be bothered to think that hard, you can pick yourself up any of a massive variety of weapons to slice and dice your way to unlocking Outworld's secrets. Inevitably you'll come across some of your old faves like Sub-Zero, Scorpion, and Goror. Well, that's what friends are for.



**TAG TEAM** Carnage is much more fun when you share with a friend.



**BIG BOSS** You'd better be feeling relatively psycho.



**SNAKES ALIVE** Indiana Jones would be rubbish at this.

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PlayStation 2



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# NO MERCY



TOM CLANCY'S

# RAINBOW SIX LOCKDOWN

### LIVE WIRE

Oh dear - looks like his string has finally snapped, eh?



“Well, it's been fun. Getting thrashed by readers and dealing out a few beatings of my own. Striking embarrassing poses with big plastic guns and shades on the piss-poor grounds that we secured the newest shots of *Far Cry Instincts* ahead of everyone else. Making sure that Xbox World is the only magazine you can trust when it comes to LIVE gaming—it's been fantastic.

But all good things must come to a bend (or something), and I'm away to pastures new.

However...I'm the only member of the team who can troubleshoot Xbox LIVE (“here's an idea Tim, why not try putting the network cable in the only slot it fits in, instead of trying to jam it into the controller port?”), so, fear not – myself and the XBW team will continue striving to bring you the definitive truth on the best Xbox and LIVE have to offer. It's like they always say – live LIVE to the full! Ahem.

**DUNCAN LEIGH**  
Staff Writer

### INSIDE>

LIVE-ING IT UP! HA. HA.

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## FAR CRY: INSTINCTS

With *Far Cry Instincts* imminent, we got the lowdown on *FCI* LIVE with MP Game Designer Alexandre Mandryka.

PUBLISHER UBISOFT ■ PLAYERS 2-16 ■ OUT SEPTEMBER ■ WEBSITE [WWW.FARCRYGAME.COM/UK/](http://WWW.FARCRYGAME.COM/UK/)

■ First, hiya. What can you tell us about the game modes – anything we haven't seen before?

We took all multiplayer classics and gave them a very distinctive twist. 'Chaos' is similar to deathmatch but the leading player bears an icon that draws everyone to him, giving him a greater challenge, while 'Team Chaos' can support two, three or four teams. Steal the Sample is our version of Capture the Flag, but you can throw the sample to team-mates, allowing for some more complex strategies.

We also added the exclusive Predator mode that really captures the *Instincts* essence from single player. Here, mercenaries will be facing one or more predators that revive if killed. The only

way for them to beat the predator player is to reach a sonic alarm and defend it long enough to turn it on. Only trouble is that mercs only respawn if a predator is killed, putting more pressure on them as they move forth. All modes will feature a Predator pickup that will let you unleash all your feral abilities for a limited time, but the main core of the predator experience lies in the Predator mode.

■ Are the maps game-mode-specific or are they available in all modes? Ooh, and how big are they?

*Far Cry Instincts* features 15 new maps covering all game sizes from small duels to 16 player mayhem. Most maps will support all modes, but many of them were designed with a mode in

mind. The size of game you want to play is not a problem though, we offer LIVE or system link play for up to 16 players. *Instincts* also features a four-player split screen mode. Size-wise, we of course took great advantage of *Far Cry*'s long view distance and created vast maps. Our biggest challenge was keeping them balanced for both vehicles and grunts – our largest map takes around two minutes to cross by foot! You can be sure that you won't be disappointed by the size of our maps.

■ How big a part will vehicles play?

Vehicles play a big part in *Instincts* multiplayer, chiefly because they encourage team play. They all play from a first-person perspective [which we



FCI'S MP Game Designer Alexandre Mandryka. Hard at work, apparently.

always wanted in *Halo 2*, so kudos] and have quite an arcade feel as they feature handbrakes, jumping and the ability to aim and shoot while driving. All vehicles can be occupied by multiple players and you can hijack them by jumping onto the passenger's seat, shooting the driver and grabbing the wheel!

■ **The dual-wielding – pretty please tell us it will be less stupidly fiddly than *Halo 2*'s offering...**

In *Instincts*, you can carry up to three weapons at a time. If you have two weapons of a kind, you can draw both, or holster one back at will without having

to drop it. [Hooray!] Of course, shooting dual weapons will increase recoil and lower accuracy, making it... a little harder to master.

■ **We like a challenge. What can you tell us about the fantastic looking map editor? Do you feel you have surpassed *Pariah*'s offering?**

The map editor in *Far Cry Instincts* is an adapted version of our actual production tool, except tweaked for the Xbox controller. It allows you to shape terrain using a wide set of raise/lower tools, lay down any pickup or vehicle available in the game and choose

environment settings such as time of day, lighting or fog.

The coolest feature is that you can instantly jump in to test it from the first-person perspective then switch back to editing by pressing a button, so you can easily and painlessly tune your map.

There are three different templates (Beach, Swamp and Jungle), and three topics (Military, Ancient and Research). Each template and topic will come with their specific brushes allowing a vast combination of sets.

[Competition wise] *Instincts* has the easiest and deepest map editor we know of. It supports all game modes, features

and maps, for up to 16 players. We fully intend to put good mapmakers in the spotlight by advertising their maps on our dedicated servers and through our community websites.

■ **Just one last question then...**

**Knowing what an amazing looking game *Far Cry Instincts* is, are you not tempted to release it for Xbox 360 as well?**

Well, I can't really comment on that as I'm committed to polishing the game on the Xbox 1...

Which, all things considered, quite probably means 'yes', doesn't it? You heard it here first, people.

# XBOX ARCADE

Not exactly reinventing the wheel, more... re-invigorating it. Here's what premium content to buy and which to ditch.



## ALIEN SKY

### TRADITIONAL VERTICAL 2D

shooting action ahoy, here. It's power-ups, shifting side to side, avoiding bullets, bombs and aliens all the way. It'd be nice to be able to have a bit more space movement but the backgrounds are easier on the eye than you might expect. Overall, average. Mobile phone-standard.

★★★★★

£7.49



## ASTRO POP DELUXE

### INGENIOUS CLASSIC PUZZLE

game, you take control of one of four pilots and clamber into your spaceships to start humping bricks about the place. You can suck up bricks of whatever colour, then fire them back into place – connect three or more and they'll blow up, saving you from the advancing line.

★★★★★

£7.49



## BANKSHOT BILLIARDS

### A COMPREHENSIVE LITTLE

pool game this. Containing all the gameplay features you'd expect, from spin and angled shots to power settings, *Bankshot Billiards* boasts 1-3 players and nine different game modes. Our favourites are the fiendishly difficult golf shots.

★★★★★

£11.49



## BEJEWELLED

### A CRAFTY VERSION OF THE

classic puzzler. Your aim – to swap adjacent gems to link three or more together and thus eliminate them from the grid, only for more to arrive. Combos and cascades score extra. Simple yet seductive, one of those where you're not sure why you're still playing. But you are.

★★★★★

£11.50



## RUCKUS BUCK'S DANGEROUS MINES

### WE'VE NO IDEA WHO RUCKUS

Buck is, and frankly with a name like that we don't wanna know. Most will be familiar with 'Dangerous Mines' in its *Minesweeper* form, as shipped on a billion, kazillion PCs world wide. We've never especially liked any version of this tedious little game.

★★★★★

£7.49



## FUZZEE FEVER

### WEIRD STORYLINE INVOLVING

saving television reception and preventing the radiaiton that causes fuzzee fever. Basically it's a case of linking blocks by shoving them or picking them up to connect four in the fewest number of moves possible. A bit pedestrian in single-player, better in multiplayer.

★★★★★

£7.49



## GUARDIAN

### SIDE-SCROLLING ALIEN-HUNTIN'

action is this. Pile into your little spaceship and protect earth from waves of inconsiderate extra terrestrials over 30 missions. Perfectly competent although your ship can feel slightly sluggish and multiplayer options would have added value here. Still, not a bad little effort.

★★★★★

£7.49



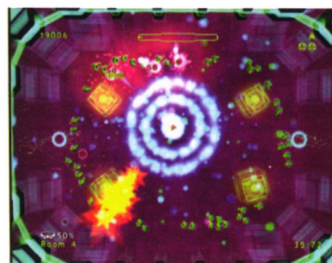
## HARDWOOD SOLITAIRE III

### PACKING OVER 100 VERSIONS

of solitaire, this is as comprehensive a suite of the billy-no-mates card game as you're ever likely to get. Game types are split into difficulty and time limits, so whenever you get the itch there's a version to suit. A deck of cards is cheaper, mind.

★★★★★

£7.49



## MUTANT STORM

### SIMPLE AS YOU LIKE, WIPE OUT

all the, er, things that spin around at you by moving with the left analogue and shooting with the right. This control system is as pure as you'll get and you'll play this for as long as your eyes can take the psychedelic backdrops. Many hours... Ouch.

★★★★★

£7.49



## RICOCHET: LOST WORLDS

### PINBALL MEETS BREAKOUT.

Use your ships to bounce the ball around increasingly tricky, blocky terrain. There are also plenty of power-ups to help you negotiate a whopping 160 levels. Enjoyable, if a little slow-paced when you start out.

★★★★★

£7.49



## THINK TANKS

### THIS IS A GROOVY LITTLE

multiplayer game. Just get in your tank and shoot everyone else! Simple, stripped down combat gameplay with plenty of power-ups to be had, it's a bit of a free-for-all but in a decidedly smile-inducing way. A no-nonsense, pick up and play gem.

★★★★★

£7.49



## ZUMA

### THIS AWESOME PUZZLER

features a rotating frog in a temple and a whole lot of balls. Basically, you have to break the chain by firing coloured balls out of your mouth before the chain reaches the 'cursed' golden skull. Requiring quick wits and reflexes, this is supremely addictive.

★★★★★

£11.50



# KINGDOM UNDER FIRE: HEROES

Ahead of next month's review we preview the biggest battlefields.

PUBLISHER KOCH MEDIA ■ PLAYERS 2-6 ■ OUT SEPTEMBER ■ WEBSITE [WWW.KUFHEROES.COM](http://WWW.KUFHEROES.COM)

## WE'VE BEEN HAMMERING OUR

*KUF:Heroes* preview build, and with good reason – it's an absolute blast in multiplayer. *KUF:H* is an action strategy title, so you can elect to direct your huge, multi-faceted army around while still actively participating in the hack-'n-slash action yourself.

Making decisions in *KUF:H* is a lovable nightmare. Picture the scene; you're moving cautiously across open land when from over a hill appears a horde of enemy archers.

Your men pull together and put their shields up to deflect the arrows, but they're flanking you with infantrymen. Do you let your archers return fire? You have the sun behind you, so you'll be more accurate than them, but they have the height advantage. You could retreat into the forest, but it hasn't rained in a

few virtual hours so they could easily set fire to it and cook your entire army!

If thinking like that sounds like a real ball-ache to you, think twice.

This game is *action-strategy*. That means it can be harsh but always fun – even those of us who didn't catch the original were laying the law down on the battlefield in minutes.

But there's another reason why this mixture of accessible swordplay and deep tactics is utterly inspired. By creating so many factors that it's exceptionally difficult – but not impossible – to bear them all in mind in a given instant, *KUF:H* offers what seems to be the most mentally taxing and, on those grounds, most rewarding LIVE title ever seen. After all, why would you want to play a game where you shoot at your mate when you could be



CHAAARGE! That's a hell of a lot of heroes, there.

demolishing his entire army? The best news is that the scale of the combat is far beyond what we'd been led to expect; we previously told you that the on-screen unit count would be capped at 200, but in the version we've been playing, there's officially more than half as many again! You've never seen mayhem so glorious. Review next issue.

## CONTENT REVIEW

# CHAOS THEORY: STEEL SQUAT

Balls of steel or diddy squat? Or what? What?

PUBLISHER UBISOFT ■ PLAYERS 2-4 ■ FREE OR PREMIUM? FREE ■ WEBSITE [WWW.SPLINTERCELL.COM/UK](http://WWW.SPLINTERCELL.COM/UK)



UTTER CHAOS Sam the man's even better on LIVE...

**WE'RE EXCITED. THERE ARE FOUR** new *SC:CT* maps out this summer and *all* of them are free. And here's the best news – two are versus maps, while two are full, story-driven co-operative missions. Blimey. Anyway, what we have here is the first of those versus maps, Steel Squat, an intense fight across an urban courtyard, surrounded by dingy apartment blocks, each containing a

couple of objectives for the spies. On the one hand, it's an absolute bitch to get around for the mercs, but on the other there's a frightening number of windows they can stick their guns out of, gaining full coverage of the maps with good teamwork. It doesn't make for advances, but intriguing *changes* to the usual *Splinter* MP experience – and is definitely well worth your time.



## DEFENESTRATOR X

THE CHAMPION AND CURSE OF ONLINE GAMING GETS HIS COMEUPPANCE. AND FOR THE VERY LAST TIME...

Attention friends; Defenestrator X would like to draw your attention to an incredible revolution in online gaming. It

all started this month when Def man jetted off to Lyon, France (economy class – I like to stay in touch with My Public) to see Eden Games' 360 title *Test Drive Unlimited*.

If you've read the feature on page 110, you'll already know it's going to change online gaming, with over 25,000 players per server. This creates a problem – a potential 24,999 complete twats you could be playing with. Luckily, Eden foresaw this, and have a cunning plan...

In *Halo 2*, if a player receives incontrovertible levels of negative feedback, he earns himself a temporary ban. Not fair, say Eden, he may be a nob-master of the first order, but he's paid for his game.

So, in *Test Drive Unlimited*, the gobby cussing loudmouths, the race-ruiners, (and probably the entire American youth, just to be on the safe side), earn themselves a little 'special treatment' (not the rubber glove kind, sadly). The game's clever server starts bunching together gamers with certain amounts of negative feedback, only allowing asshole-players to see and race other assholes in the gameworld. At worst, they'll be consigned to their own private server for Complete Tits, and – here's the genius part – will still be able to play, but not be accepted back into normal gaming society until they can play nicely, stop receiving bad feedback and quit arsing up the game for the rest of us. The treatment, cleverly, will *also* apply to cynical gits who throw bad feedback left right and centre... Touché! And away! Er...

Having played on the test servers, Def can conclude that it works mighty well. It was after a couple of hours play that I'd left negative feedback for all the twats that kept overtaking me when I wasn't ready, and pretty soon, they weren't in the game any more – bonus! Things *have* got a little lonely out here recently though...

Um... Would anybody like to play with me? Please? (No - Ed)

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# PREVIEWS

SHOPPING LISTS AT THE READY – IT'S TIME TO START SAVING UP...

## COMING UP!

Back from near-death like a kind of ginger messiah.



“This month, wannabe soldier Duncan has been prefacing almost every sentence with ‘The thing about being a sniper is...’ Not only did he scope out the frankly fantastic rifle offering *Sniper Elite*, he got to cover himself in mud, wear camouflage and pretend he was Jude Law in *Enemy at the Gate*. Except without live rounds, no large-scale human suffering and ‘operations’ being carried out in a field near Ipswich. Lucky fella. If it’s suffering you’re after though (and who could blame you?) there’s plenty of it in Midway’s sequel, *Ties That Bind*. Nasty stuff – we approve. And sneaking up on the blindside, we uncover what could be the surprise hit of the year, the western epic *Gun*, and there’s an awesome return to form for *SSX*. Turned out nice again. ”

Pete Webber  
Staff Writer



### ★ FREUD SLICE

*Ties That Bind* takes you once again on a long, lonely, and pants-soilingly creepy journey into the psyche of the ‘hero’, Torque. The morality system is back, which allows you to control just how mental your character will become...

## 32 THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND

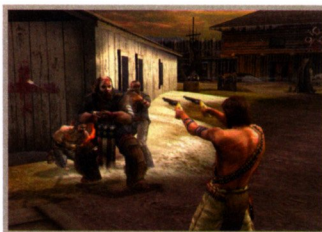
Are you ready for another visit from things that go ‘Bump, slash, scream, eviscerate, slice, torture, kill’ in the night? Hell yeah!

### THE HIGHLIGHTS...

BOARDS, BULLETS, AND... BULLETS AGAIN.



36 SSX ON TOUR



40 GUN



44 SNIPER ELITE



## 48 CRASH TEAM RACING

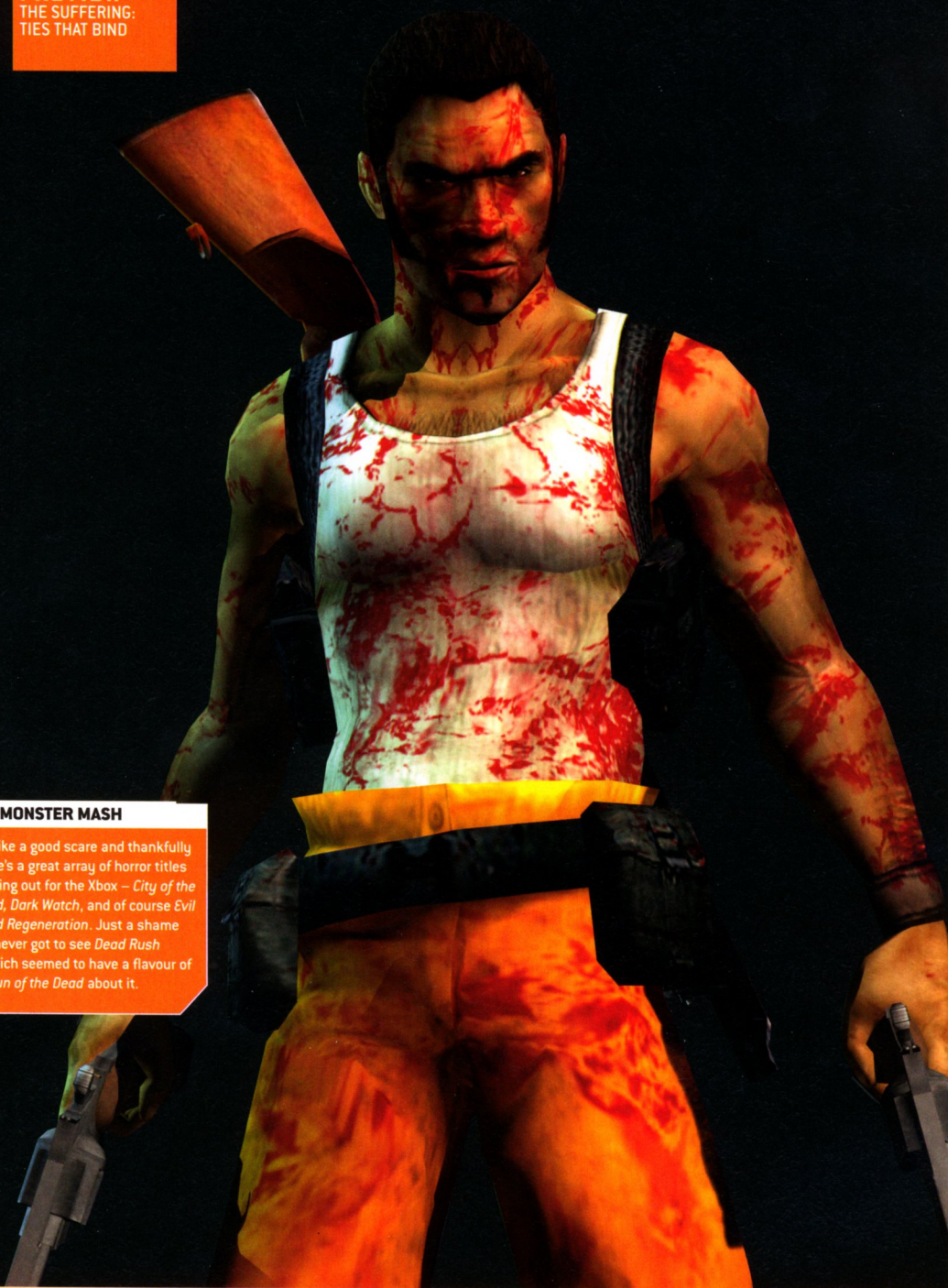
## PREVIEWED THIS MONTH

BE FIRST TO KNOW THE FACTS, RIGHT HERE...

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★ **GENRE** Survival horror  
★ **DEVELOPER** Surreal Software  
★ **PUBLISHER** Midway

★ **LIVE FEATURES** None announced

**PRISON SUCKS. SQUALID CONFINES,** appalling food and brutal men stroking hard-ons while eyeing up your 'sweet-cheeks'. We're glad we're not Torque. A cross between Ash from *Evil Dead* and Henry: *Portrait Of A Serial Killer*, he had a tough time dealing with incarceration in *The Suffering*. Convicted of butchering his own family (a crime he only did or didn't do depending on your actions throughout the game), Torque had to survive many devilish entities in his bid for freedom.

Taking place just a day after the first game, *The Suffering 2* continues Torque's journey as he saunters back to Baltimore, only to find that the streets – dim of light and awash with strung-out junkies stuck in their own unrelenting nightmares – are no closer to freedom than the hell back in chokey.

This month we've had the unnerving pleasure of playing a chilling new demo of the second *Suffering* and can categorically state that the game advances like a jet of steaming projectile vomit, hitting targets beyond the boundaries of the first game while coating the path there with fizzing stomach content.

#### WHISTLESTOP OF HORRORS

We pick up the action in a devastated cinema. The place is decimated – gaping holes where sturdy floors should be, dismembered bodies where smiling usherettes should be and, as is the staple in survival horror, no lights whatsoever. Some casual searching gleans some weapons. A sawn-off shotgun and a piece of lead piping completes your initial arsenal – that's right, you can now carry two weapons at once and switch between them at will – but better stuff comes soon. Then it's into the main theatre and an unexpected double-bill of Dr Killjoy (your moustachioed nemesis) taunting you on the big screen and the appearance of your dead wife. She has been a constant throughout the series, appearing at key points and behaving in accordance to your actions (like whether you chose to show empathy with the mixed-up, mainlining inmates or bludgeoned them into pulp). She is anything but friendly this time.

What then follows is a behind-locked-doors ambush with hell-spawn dropping down from the ceiling and intimidating you with all manner of sharp implements. This encounter reveals some telling features from the new game. Like how intelligent the monsters now are – attacking with panache and precision before scurrying away, crouching down to alter their shape and then scuttling up the walls in spider-form to vanish from your viewpoint on the ceiling. The seamless switch between third and first-person viewpoints is as effective as in the first game. With more expansive environments to survey, you'll no doubt play more of this in first-person to get the better scope of your surrounds and the best vantage points to view your vile enemies – with things scurrying all over the ceilings, you never quite know when and where they'll drop down.

The 'Insanity' mode is also better implemented. Give and receive punishment and your 'Insanity' meter will rise until it glows, indicating that your inner demons are ready to be tagged into the action. Hit the

“ADVANCES,  
LIKE A JET  
OF STEAMING  
VOMIT...”

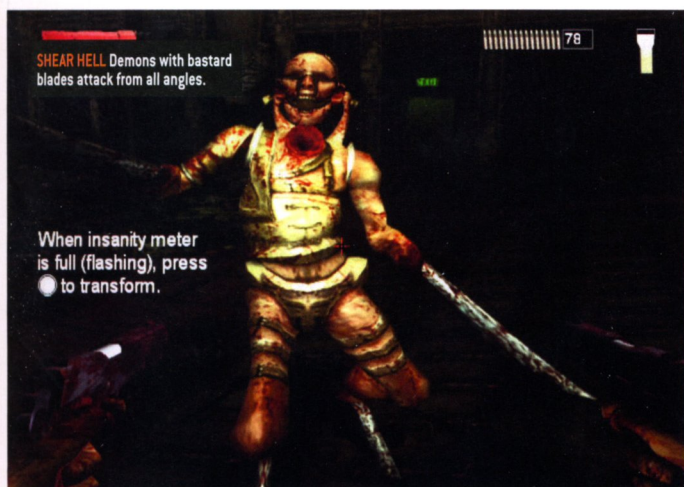
## THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND

ETA OCTOBER 2005

Having messily survived a living nightmare and escaped from prison, going straight is proving harder than Torque could have imagined...

#### ★ MONSTER MASH

We like a good scare and thankfully there's a great array of horror titles coming out for the Xbox – *City of the Dead*, *Dark Watch*, and of course *Evil Dead Regeneration*. Just a shame we never got to see *Dead Rush* – which seemed to have a flavour of *Shaun of the Dead* about it.



**SHEAR HELL** Demons with bastard blades attack from all angles.

When insanity meter is full (flashing), press to transform.



**SPLATTER HOUSE** You're showered with gore as the battle rages.



**BIG MOMMA** Some baddies take more punishment than others...



**DR KILLJOY** This Vincent Price wannabe pops up on TV a lot.



**LOST LOVE** Your dead wife returns to nag from beyond the grave.



When insanity meter is full (flashing), press to transform.

**BADDA-BOOM** You can carry two weapons at once and switch at will.

## DEMON DAYS

In times of extreme strife, unleash Torque's own avenging angel...



1. Carve your way through Beelzebub's battalion of nasties and your 'Insanity' meter will rise as you both slice and suffer. When it flashes, hit the white button and Torque will go mental in ways Doctor David Banner could only imagine, culminating in him transforming into a crotchety creature of awesome ability. The look of this demon depends on what moral stance you hold throughout the game.



2. Although your inner demon cannot utilise weaponry, it has an impressive arsenal of moves up its scaly sleeve. The one we saw in the demo came into effect by pressing the abutton, upon which the creature crouched and a ring of razor-sharp blades shot up through the ground in a protective ring, instantly reducing anything close into chunks of fleshy offal. We can't wait to see what other moves are available...



3. Being a super-strength demon has other advantages, the most notable being how you can rip through walls to reach new areas. Taking a walk on the wild side has its disadvantages though – keep an eye on your health meter as this gradually depletes as you enjoy your new-found skills – and if you don't reverse the transformation process in time to stop the rot, you'll be served a death sentence.

## THE SUFFERING 2 FACT!

### ★ BLAST FROM THE PAST

Fans of the first game can use their completed game saves to continue their favoured path in the sequel.

### ★ GOT GUNS?

There will be over 15 weapons to acquire, including sawn-offs, machine-guns and bowie knives.

### ★ OLD FACES...

A wealth of unholy new adversaries will fry your mind, as well as four old 'favourites' from the first game.


### ★ ...NEW TRICKS

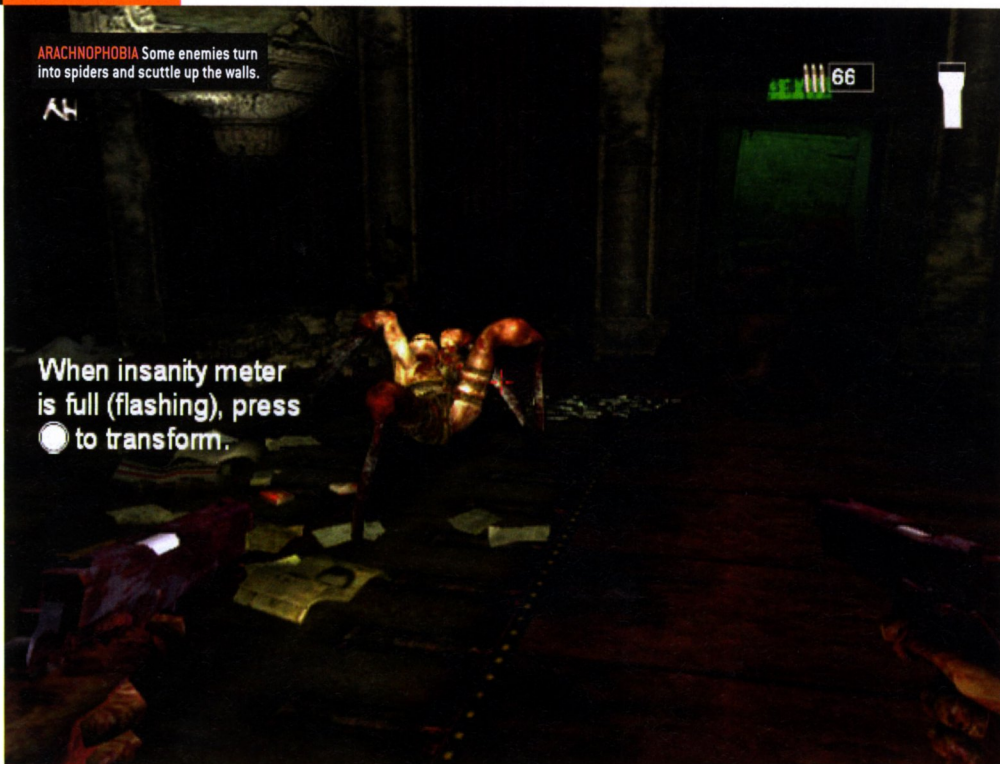
Surreal Software has inserted pace-heightening sequences, like manning cannons in transit.



**ARACHNOPHOBIA** Some enemies turn into spiders and scuttle up the walls.

AA

When insanity meter is full (flashing), press  to transform.



**JUNK FAN** You can protect or kill the spaced-out wreck-heads. Be a devil...



**NAGGING HEADACHE?** Keep a clear head, when all around are losing theirs...

>> white button and Torque morphs into a dark angel complete with brutal and grotesque moves with which to rip the monstrous hordes new assholes. How your inner demon manifests itself also depends on your actions. A brutal path yields a hideous, hunched beast, whereas a sympathetic approach summons a more angelic-looking beast. The attacks it is capable of are in direct relation to its appearance and, although its power was somewhat limited in the demo, it was able to cause a ring of blades to slice up through the ground surrounding it, instantly dicing anything within, er, dicing distance. But with such power comes a twist, and by using the heightened force of your inner demon, your life bar will diminish, causing you to keep one eye on the meter at all times to ensure you change back before it's too late. What also works well about your altered beast form is how you must use it to advance beyond certain points. We came across one weakened wall that needed the demon's might to smash through in order to leave the cinema.

### HELL RAZOR

Torque has a surprising amount of moves to help traverse his surroundings. The *Resident Evil* games, for example, never incorporated a simple 'jump' command, nor the ability to defend yourself using plenty of evasive moves. Here you have a much-appreciated level of freedom to roam the fragmented city and you'll be surprised how many doors you can kick-in and cubby-holes you can infiltrate, most of which usually house a rotting corpse (complete with hovering fly ensemble) and a handy weapon or energy boost.

Then there are the baddies. Imagine Clive Barker playing *Silent Hill* while listening to Marilyn Manson and you'll get some idea of their disgusting nature. Each major boss represents all that is wrong with where it dwells – Suppressor is your worst prison nightmares incarnate and Triggerman represents street violence. The latter is a multi-armed, General Grievous-a-like, who brandishes Uzis instead of lightsabers. Brrr. Other creatures make a (un)welcome return from the first game, albeit in a restyled form – and we just can't wait to stumble across those down a typically dark alley!

Early niggles are scarce, although the control set-up did seem a little disjointed. The main problem is that both of the principle attack buttons are at opposite poles of the pad and in times of frantic fighting, it's easy to lose track of what you're hitting, which is usually a wrong 'un. The voice acting is also on the suspect side, although amusingly, the demo version had all the expletives bleeped out, giving the game a Satanic *South Park* feel. But the mix of frenetic gunplay, intelligent puzzle-solving, blood and extreme brutality will undoubtedly win more fans over this time round. After all, it's good to Torque.

### FIRST OPINION

Not massively different from the last game, although the more diverse surrounds keep things pretty fresh and... interesting. The new weaponry and combination of new and old phantasmagorical freaks all kindly offering their dissecting skills will delight long-term Sufferers. The demo certainly had us grossed and engrossed in equal measure and it promises to be one hell of a carve-up this Autumn. More Torque next issue.

// RYAN BUTT



## BATTLING ONE'S DEMONS

So much evil in this world, and so many massive weapons with which you can exorcise it...

### 1. SAWN-OFFS

Traditionally slow to reload, this weapon is quite clunky and inaccurate as a long-range shootah, but get in as close as your nerves can stand – you can reduce enormous, salivating entities to fleshy fillets in a couple of shots.

### 2. MACHINE GUNS

Oh yeah! The magazines of these babies are spent quicker than a virgin boy's load at the Hefner Playboy mansion, but there's so much satisfaction to be had cocking your head and shredding one of Satan's spawn into squelch.

### 3. BASEBALL BAT

For quick, effective brutality, no mellee weapon is as satisfying as this. The dull thud as wood and head connect, the amusing leg twitches as you pulp their floored skulls still further. Are you sure these were made for batting balls?

### 4. ROCKET LAUNCHER

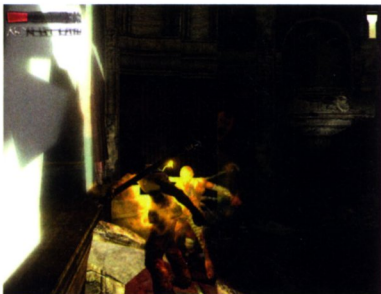
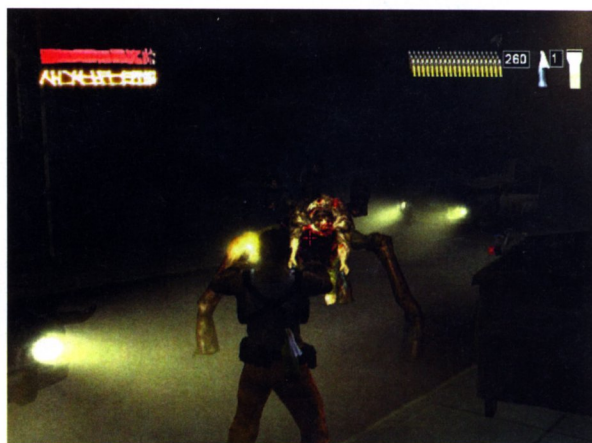
This wasn't in the demo, but we're counting every minute of relentless demon-destroying gameplay until we get our sweaty mitts on it. Another survival horror staple, although it is cool that you don't have to complete the game to get it!



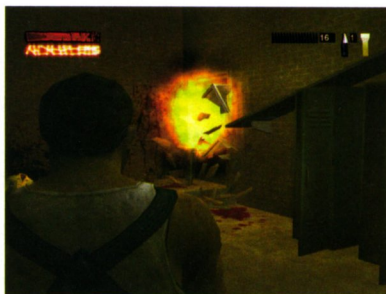
**BLOOD LUST** He only popped out for a pack of fags. Aw.



**COP IT** It's not long before the first boss makes his presence known.



**FIGHT CLUB** When ammo runs out, grab a pipe and start beating.



**BANGED UP** Explosives can be tossed to clear barricades.



**UZI THINK HE IS** Keep peppering the dastardly undead sods with shots when they're vulnerable.

## THE SUFFERING 2 FACTS!

### ★ DEMON SEED

As before, Torque carries around within him an inner-demon, which can grow ever more powerful and deadly – it's up to you.

### ★ WE ARE THE MONSTER! AHFFF!

Come creatures are "designed to depict tough societal problems like street crimes and riots that prosper in poverty stricken slums." Fun!

### ★ BACK AND FORTH

In order to unknot this latest escapade, you're going to have to delve into Torque's past as well as his (rather unpleasant) present.

### ★ FURTHER SUFFERING?

Rumours that a third nightmarish episode from Torque's less than comfy life is a definite for 360... are just that at the moment.

00:25.56

- ★ **GENRE** Extreme Sports
- ★ **DEVELOPER** EA Canada
- ★ **PUBLISHER** EA
- ★ **LIVE FEATURES** No. Grrr.

#### YOU EXPERIENCE A 'LOVE AT FIRST

sight' moment when you see *SSX On Tour* running. It's a simply stunning game – a hallucinogenic trip down the sides of mountains pulling off outrageous moves that are somehow just within the bounds of plausibility (a feature from the Tony Hawk games that reached its pinnacle in *THPS2* and has never been quite so perfectly replicated since). If other games in its annual sports sequel portfolio seem to be resting on their laurels, the EA team behind *SSX* are pushing the envelope in every area. Most noticeably, skiing gets a long-awaited cultural revamp, with a whole host of spectacular trickery you can pull off on two planks of wood. Boarding is still there and now *SSX* effectively delivers two games in one, promising plenty of replay value and unless specific challenges are selected the two disciplines should be compete with each other. Broadly speaking, choosing to ski makes you faster while boarding enables a quicker recovery time and allows for sharper turning.

Put simply, the skiing is amazing. As the skies and the legs go flying, mid-air grabs, flips and spins look awesome, if a little perplexing. Pulling tricks is again mostly executed with the left stick but there are a rage of new moves, the 'Monster Tricks', mapped to the right stick too.

#### SLIPPERY SLOPE

Whichever discipline you choose, you'll notice the runs are more cluttered than ever. As you pull off sick tricks you'll have to avoid other ski-bunnies who don't take too kindly to you chopping up their powder. A brand new physics engine means that you'll have to read the slopes to build up speed for jumps. Catching huge air never felt more satisfying.

Strangely, this tour only takes in one mountain and the title says more about the future direction of *SSX* than indicating any *THUG*-style globe-trotting. Nonetheless, they've still packed the content in with four distinct resorts, each with 13 different runs, with several routes for each track. Once you've unlocked the All Areas Lift Pass you'll be able to ski anywhere on the mountain and it'll take you half an hour of streamed gaming action to get to the bottom – if you don't get too distracted on the way down.

The flavour of *SSX* has shifted too – gone is Oakenfold, glowsticks and techno and in comes a mix of rock from the likes of The Hives. The presentation gets a face-lift too. Skull-and-cross-bones-type insignia comes in, as does the rough and ready graphical style that populates most 'boarding magazines'. This new attitude is manifested in your ultimate aim – becoming a mountain Black Diamond run rockstar with all the glamour and 'respect' that goes with it.

#### FIRST OPINION

Looks stunning, plays even better. We've only had a brief taste of *On Tour* but we're gagging for more. Busier, bolder, and better slopes coupled with more shortcuts, tons of jumps and rails, *SSX On Tour* delivers the best winter playground since Santa's grotto.

// PETE WEBBER

- 64,697

#### ★ EGO-CENTRIC

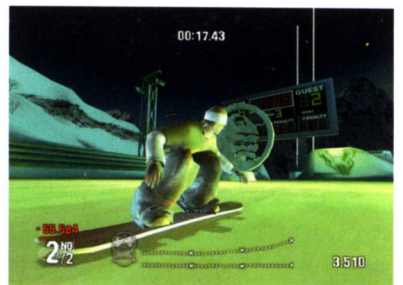
*SSX OT* puts more customisation options in your hands. You'll create your own alter-ego and 'define your style with branded equipment, hairstyles and accessories.' *Sims Ski*, then.

“BECOME A  
BLACK  
DIAMOND RUN  
ROCKSTAR...”

## SSX ON TOUR

ETA AUTUMN

It's fourth time out for EA's snowboarding extravaganza and this time they've introduced something called 'skis.' Isn't that a yoghurt? XBW investigates.



## TRICKY SITUATIONS

Three more aspects of the game which have us shivering with anticipation...



### SHRED OR DEAD

Progress through the game depends on you completing a number of 'shred' challenges. These are specific mini-games such as beating another wannabe in a race, or grinding 500 yards of rail. Complete shreds and you'll enhance your rep on the mount.



### SPEED THRILLS

SSX is faster than ever, especially on super-slippery, specially designed speed skis. You'll now have to take more notice of various tilts and gradients in the runs to build up pace. And when you hit top-whack, new blurry effects add a thrilling feeling of nausea.



### TWIN TIP KINGS

Freestyle, acrobatic skiing is now a major draw at the Winter Olympics and SSX On Tour takes this explosive discipline and multiplies its effects. You can pull off some incredible moves, some involving taking off skis and twirling them round you. Wick!

## SSX ON TOUR FACT!

### ★ CHOOSE YOUR PATH

You have to play as either a skier or a boarder as embark on the tour. Being a welder is not an option.

### ★ BOARDING BLACKOUT

You can hit the slopes day or night on the new mountain. We don't recommend doing this in real life.

### ★ HYPED UP

Completing shreds raises your hype. The more hype you get, the bigger your legend grows.

### ★ STYLE IT OUT

Whether your competing in races or freestyling, pulling off tricks will continue to improve your rep. Man.



★ FLASH IN THE PAN?

*Flashpoint* follows the story of a small-scale war set across a series of islands off mainland Russia. It's one of the best selling PC games of all time. Expectations set to 'outstanding.'

“STARTLED,  
GRIPPED AND  
GRATIFIED FROM  
THE OFF...”

# FLASHPOINT

ETA. OCTOBER 2005

Are we looking at one of the greatest war games made, on any platform, ever? Well let's not jump the gun...

★ **GENRE** WAR  
★ **DEVELOPER** Bohemia Interactive  
★ **PUBLISHER** TBC

★ **LIVE FEATURES** 32 players across a range of modes, with co-operative play. Result.

**YOU'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE, OF** course: 'anyone who runs in all-guns-blazing will die, you have to take things slowly to succeed, blah, blah, blah.' But *Flashpoint* is one of few games where this stuff is actually true. Try to run, or even walk and shoot at the same time, and your bullets could easily end up at opposite ends of the planet.

So much combat takes place at extreme long-range that going prone is usually essential. That's for when you actually spot a target; often the fear induced by the sound of bullets puncturing the ground and the men around you will have you spraying fire at ghosts, man-shaped bushes and half-seen muzzle flashes. The enemy doesn't noticeably miss you on purpose either, as is so often the case. If an enemy misses, it's usually the wind blowing the bullets off course. This game is *that* detailed. So much so that the sky and cloud patterns move and change above your head, the night sky has accurate constellations (you can literally navigate via them) and on the harder difficulties, with no waypoints or targeting aids, you literally navigate by map and compass.

The levels are not only huge, you can see for several kilometres and the level of detail remains amazing. The trees have a bark effect to rival *Halo's*, the soldiers' uniforms are mapped and wrinkled to an incredible degree and the particle effects that accompany an explosion are overwhelming.

## FLASH — AAHHH!

One of *Flashpoint's* main strengths is the variety — you'll get to see the war from four convincing (and sometimes even moving) perspectives — a grunt, a special ops agent, a tank commander and a pilot — making it really feel like you are part of a total war machine. Despite the war being a fictional take on how the Cold War could have escalated into direct hostility, the actual conflict is still highly credible.

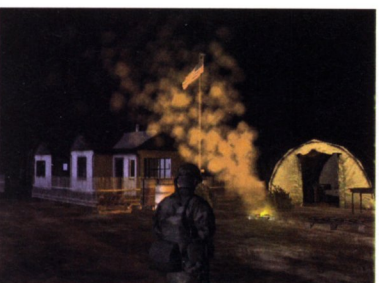
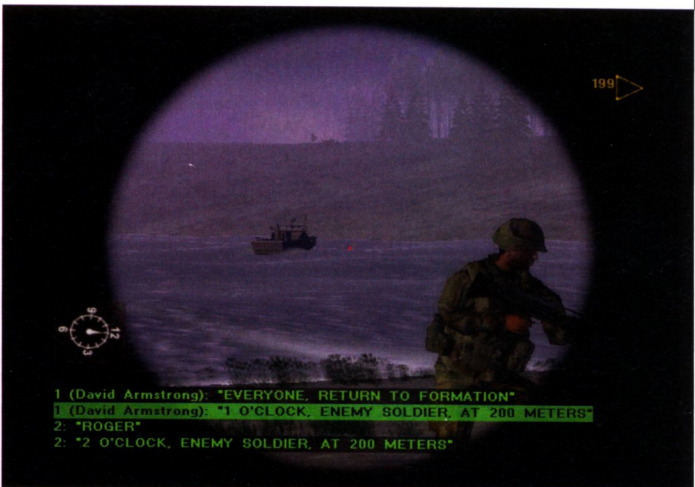
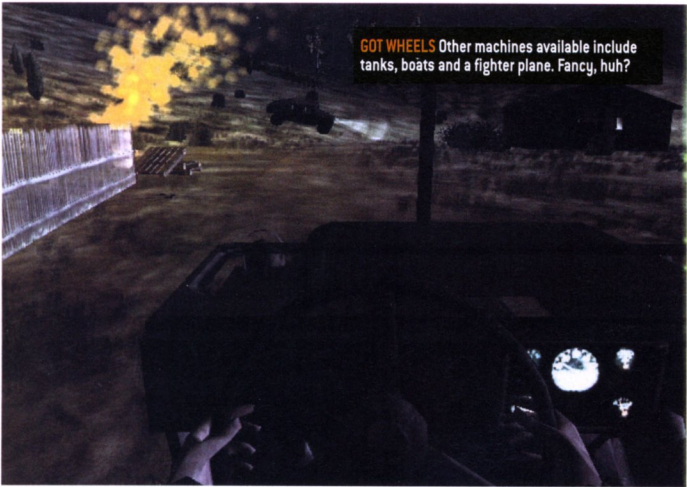
The combat is terrifying, hard-hitting, frequently explosive and never dull for even an instant. If you've ever enjoyed a war game you'll be startled, gripped and gratified from the off. If you've never enjoyed a war game, perhaps you have the wrong console.

A couple of minor criticisms that you could wring out of us include the vehicle handling, which could perhaps have a bit of depth added to it, and the sound levels which occasionally make voices wildly loud and gunfire far too quiet. Also, the draw distance, although spectacular, would be yet more amazing if it was even greater. Obviously.

## FIRST OPINION

With 32 player online warfare and full squad commanding action by the end of the game, *Flashpoint* looks like it simply cannot fail. It has basically the most convincing, large scale and epic virtual combat we've ever seen and although there are some minor issues, we're confident these will be ironed out in time for release in October, leaving this destined to go down in history as one of the finest war games of all time.

// DUNCAN LEIGH



### MODIFIED MENTALITY

New thinking, and, er, less drinking. *Flashpoint* redefines how we play war games.



## FLASHPOINT FACT!

★ **DRIVE BY**  
You can drive boats, tanks, cars, helicopters and fighter planes. And shoot the snot out of stuff with 'em.

★ **'BOX IS BEST**  
This version has superior graphics and AI and more missions than the PC original. They need to catch up.

★ **MOSCOW MANIAC**  
The main bad guy is called General Guba. He's Russian, a nasty piece of work, and you have to stop him...

★ **COLD HEARTS**  
...War is one option, but we suggest sending him a consignment of poisoned vodka first. Worth a shot!



**BEAT DA BOSS**  
a game that strangely  
rides itself on creating a  
historically viable Wicky Wild  
West, Neversoft is including  
boss battles. We're really hoping  
they're not so ridiculous as to  
be in the rest of the good work.



“IF IT WAS IN  
THE OLD  
WEST, IT’S IN  
THE GAME...”

## GUN

ETA AUTUMN

After thousands of entries the World's Most Original Game Title compo has a winner! Yee-haw!

- ★ **GENRE** Action
- ★ **DEVELOPER** Neversoft
- ★ **PUBLISHER** Activision
- ★ **LIVE FEATURES** Nope

### IT MIGHT HAVE A RUBBISH NAME AND

it might be rather reminiscent of *Red Dead Revolver* but we reckon that *Gun* will be massive. Neversoft has kept this 'San Andreas meets the Wild West' shooter under its ten-gallon hat for three years. Now they've lifted it, we can't help but be impressed.

*Gun* follows the story of Colton, a peace-loving hunter forced to exact his own vengeance at a time when there was no law. After buying a steamboat with his father, a small private army takes the boat, massacring all on board, including Paw. Before he dies he tells you he's not your real dad and that you should take a small medallion to a (rather fit) prostitute named Jenny. And of course, in addition to solving these riddles, you're going to exact your very personal, very bloody revenge upon those who ruined your life in such emphatic style.

Thankfully, your chosen vocation of hunter-meets-ferry-operator means that you're both nifty and rather creative with weapons. In addition to pistols and rifles, you'll chuck Molotov cocktails, fire arrows and sticks of dynamite from bows and operate cannons and early machine guns.

### GUN HO!

After consulting with real-world Texan sharpshooters, Neversoft has included a power bar that allows you to unleash multiple shots in pseudo Bullet Time. The *Gun* engine lets you zoom in and shoot off enemies' individual fingers, which pulp horrifically. You can even release your inner Clint by shooting weapons out of hands and juggling them with bullets.

In this story-driven epic you're pulled from your life of peaceful tranquillity in the Montana mountains across the West to New Mexico, encountering all of 19th century American life along the way. Neversoft has adopted the maxim 'If it was in the old West, it's in the game.' You'll come across villages, vagabonds, sheriffs, 'injuns', forts, huge plains, towns, cities and roaming animals. The story is delivered through tons of missions – robbing banks, derailing trains, escorting stage-coaches, taking enemy forts and defending towns and bridges against invasions are all on the agenda. Side quests will have you hunting for wares to sell in towns, competing in horse races and crawling into bars to drink, gamble and fight.

One stunning section has Colton invading a renegade fort alongside Indians. You'll have to infiltrate the fort and use a cannon to blow open the gates, letting your Braves In Arms bum rush them pesky varmints. The result is a huge battle with you bang in the middle of it. Enemies take cover, recover weapons and move intelligently around their environment. It's unforgiving, chaotic and bloody. Saddle up cowboy, this is gonna be huge.

### FIRST OPINIONS

*Gun* has taken the huge go-anywhere spirit of *GTA* and combined it with what is shaping up to be a half-decent shooting engine. If the story lives up to the hype, this will be a sure-fire winner. Frankly, we can't wait to roll into the wild Wild West with *Gun*.

// PETE WEBBER





**DOUBLE TROUBLE** Fire your way to vengeance and riches.



**SUBHUMAN SHIELD** Enemies prove surprisingly bulletproof.

## FRONTIER PSYCHIATRY

Go anywhere, shooting anything. Just remember your six shooters.



### 1. ON FOOT!

*Gun's* almost disgustingly realistic physics model lets you leave a claret-stained trail of blood right through the west. Shoot off someone's leg, arms, head – and even fingers – and you'll have them screaming and spraying the red stuff all over the screen. Helping you do so is the ability to carry up to six pistols, which cuts down on reloading times, and dual-wielding.



### 2. ON HORSEBACK!

You may know that they didn't have cars back in the 1800s. Thankfully, horses will provide all your transport needs. You can fire from them, run people over on them and even perform 'skids' to take out numerous enemies or more nimble, sidestepping foes. And if you're chasing a bad dude on a fast horse, if you take out dobbin, the enemy will come tumbling off. Nasty.



### 3. IN THE WILD!

You're a hunter born and bred. Hunting is both for subsistence and to make a few quid by selling bits of dead animals to hungry and fashion-conscious American settlers. You'll find packs of wolves roaming the mountains and bison meandering across the huge open plains. They're an economic necessity but also help create the feeling of a huge, western landscape.



**RUNNING MAN** Pissed-up bandits are so much easier to cap. Hic!



**LONG SHOT** You're so damn hard you can fight against ridiculous odds.



**HORSE PLAY** The 19th century equivalent of a drive-by.



**WAGON WHEELS** There's trouble on the 4.15 from Paddington.



## GUN FACT!

### ★ TRUE CRIMES

Neversoft has based its vision of the Wild West on the nasty novel *Blood Meridian* by Cormac McCarthy.

### ★ WHISKY IN THE BAR

Whisky makes us go, well, a bit mental. But in *Gun* it actually increases your health, bizarrely.

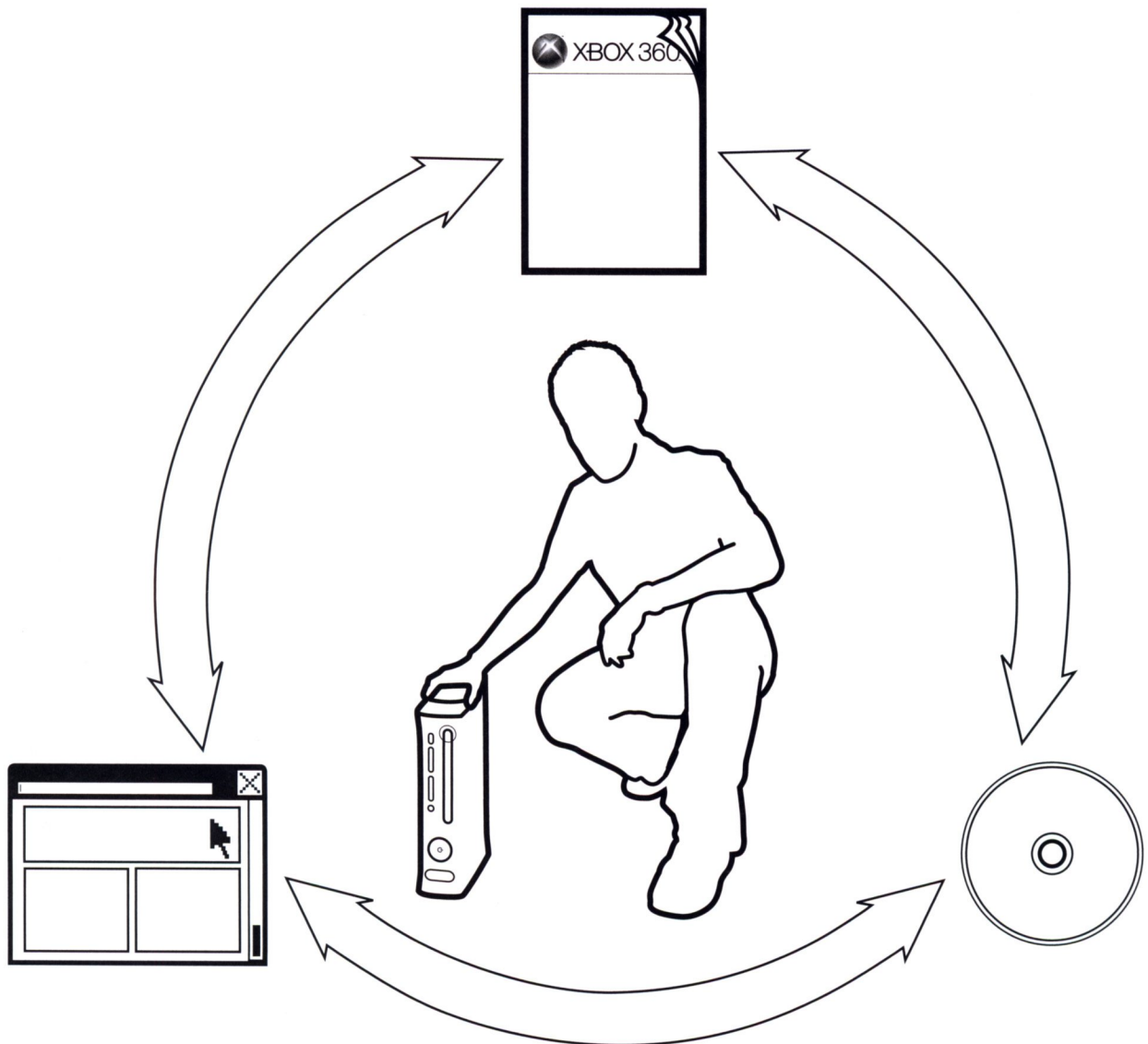
### ★ LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Real time dramas are played out as you continue on your quest, with folk living out their own lives.

### ★ RAISE YOUR POSSE

You'll fight against and alongside other groups, including Indians, private armies and townsmen.

# You've changed. So have we...



## NEW MAG, NEW EXPERIENCE SEPTEMBER 15

Order issue 01 of *Xbox 360: The Official Xbox Magazine* by calling the order hotline **0870 837 4722** (lines open weekdays 8am-9.30pm, Saturdays 8am-4pm). UK £6.99, Europe £7.99, rest of the world £8.99 (all prices include postage and packaging).

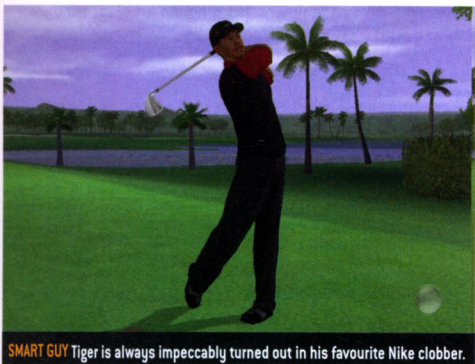


"ALL THE BELLS AND WHISTLES ANYONE – FROM SCRATCH GOLFER TO CASUAL GAMER – COULD EVER POSSIBLY EXPECT."

## TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006

ETA AUTUMN 2006

Can a revamped swing help Tiger regain his roar? At least he doesn't have a virtual Vijay standing in his way.



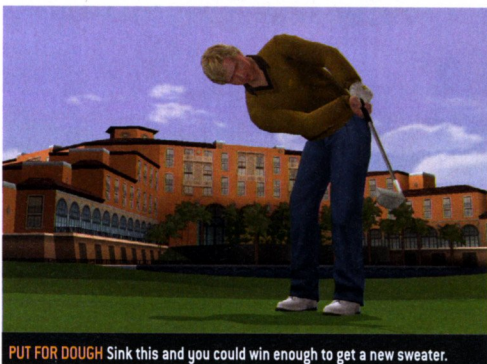
**SMART GUY** Tiger is always impeccably turned out in his favourite Nike clobber.

★ **GENRE** Golf Sim  
★ **PUBLISHER** EA  
★ **DEVELOPER** EA  
★ **LIVE FEATURES** Yes

### THE MONUMENTAL TIGER WOODS SERIES HAS

obliterated its golfing competition, creating a franchise so eminently playable, with a control system bordering on perfection plus all the bells and whistles that anyone – from scratch golfer to casual gamer – could ever possibly want.

The main complaint with last year's *Tiger* was that this stroll in a park became rather too quickly, well, a stroll in the park. Putting became too simple, hitting shots became predictable while the ill-conceived *Tiger Vision* was exposed as, well, ill-conceived. EA has attempted to address those areas, namely by bringing the right-analogue stick into play. You'll now use this to position where exactly you want to hit the ball – trajectory, spin, fades, draws and distance are all affected by having a steady right thumb.



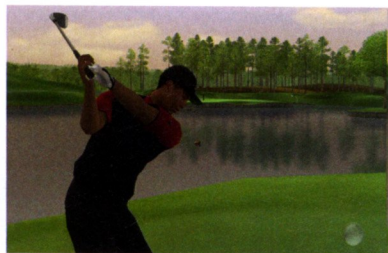
**PUT FOR DOUGH** Sink this and you could win enough to get a new sweater.

On the green, EA has shut your caddy's trap. Previously it'd be a simple case of following his instructions to achieve almost guaranteed pots from all areas of the green. By providing a more difficult grid and less insider info, some of the hardest and fastest greens in the world claw back the respect and awe they deserve. Again, the right stick comes into play, offering the opportunity to regulate shot power as an optional fine-tuning device. Noticeably tougher putting and an extra swinging stick advance a system that has been previously perfected by many gamers out there. However, it remains to be seen how easy these new mechanisms are to master.

// PETE WEBBER

### ★ FIRST OPINIONS

In a case of games imitating life, Tiger has wisely invested in some adjustment on his swing to get back on top of his game. It's the right diagnosis, although time will tell if this is the much-needed shot in the arm that Tiger deserves.



**WATER HAZARD** Think this looks daunting? Not for Tiger Woods.



**OLD ENEMY** The 18th green at St Andrews - beautiful yet brutal.



**GOLFING HOLIDAY** Play the most exotic courses in the world.

### IT'S IN THE GAME

*Tiger Woods 2006* gets some serious spit and polish...



#### NEW STUFF!

There are a host of new courses – nine new ones out of the fifteen on offer, a revamped Create A Player mode, plus new golfers including US Masters runner-up Chris diMarco and 2003 Masters winner, Canadian Mike Weir. Yes, him.

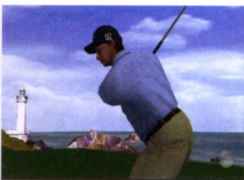
#### GAMEBREAKER IN!

By playing spankingly good shots, you can build up a power bar to earn a gamebreaker that nails your shot. This replaces *Tiger Vision* and you get two per round or you can just turn it off. Did we say 'here's another rubbishy EA Sports gimmick'? Yes we did.



#### WHUP THE WORLD ONLINE!

LIVE options should add significant value for the online fraternity. Four-balls can now be played around the globe, and there'll be the possibility to set up Ryder Cup style events against irritating American teenagers.



## TIGER WOODS 2006 FACT!

#### ★ VOICE COMMAND

In Create A Player mode you can now assign your chosen voice. We hope we can have Sean Connery's.

#### ★ LONGER CAREER

Your PGA Career mode now lasts a whopping thirty years and you can return to events in your calendar.

#### ★ NEW BALLS PLEASE

Loads of new sponsored gear is available for your unlocking pleasure. And pleasure it is.

#### ★ RECORD BREAKER

Tiger Woods was the Number One ranked player in the world in 2004 for a record 334 weeks.



★ **TRAINED KILLERS**

Us Xbox World types got taken out for a day of trained sniping to see just how realistic *SE* is when compared to the real thing. We'll share the startling truth with you alongside our forthcoming review.

“FORGET  
EVERYTHING  
YOU THINK  
YOU KNOW”

# SNIPER ELITE

ETA OCTOBER 2005

At last! Camping is no longer a crime!

- ★ **GENRE** War shooter
- ★ **DEVELOPER** Rebellion
- ★ **PUBLISHER** Ubisoft
- ★ **LIVE FEATURES** Yeah.

## SNIPER ELITE WAS ALWAYS GOING TO

be a challenging game, but we never quite envisaged it being as realistic or as gripping as our early play seems to suggest. The idea that Rebellion could take an aspect of gaming traditionally used as either a format breaker or 'gift' to the player and turn it into the foundations of a self contained shooter seemed faintly absurd at first. Just taking one-off shots – how good could it be?

Having now spent days lying deadly still, unshaven and stinking (both in the game and in the living room where we were playing it), engrossed by every second of the action, we can safely say that this has the potential to start a revolution. Forget pretty much everything you know – or think you know – about sniping. The game has multiple difficulty modes, but not in the traditional sense. Lung capacity, the realism of gravity and wind, the speed at which you can find your target in the scope – these are the slightly less traditional features you'll find in the difficulty customisation, along with the ability to tweak settings of the razor-sharp AI.

And believe us, you'll want to – the sense of skill and achievement in nailing every target and watching as their comrades panic, having no idea where you are, is quite unlike any other. This game trains you brilliantly – there's almost too much advice popping up to remind you of what your role is. Mastering concealment, learning the art of creating depth between your cover and your weapon – there really is a lot to take on board.

## ELITIST SNIPING

But it's all worth it when you're finally up to speed, lost in the game, aware of factors you would never have even dreamed of considering when playing a game in the past.

In real life, snipers are rarely assigned specific targets – such a plan tends to go horribly awry when on the ground – instead their job is to assess the scene in front of them and think very carefully before opening fire. Much of the same rules apply here. Once your first shot has gone off, that's it – everyone will be on alert until you're either dead or triumphant and gone – so making sure your first shot takes out the highest priority target is always essential. While the game does have objectives, the battlefields from the first few levels we've seen are nice and open, giving you the chance to choose your own approach routes.

All of this probably makes it sound like not a lot actually happens, but that's the genius of *Sniper Elite* – it controls its own pace with a mixture of fixed and random encounters, making this easily as exciting as any other shooter out there.

## FIRST OPINION

Crawling through the bushes, the beauty of spying on completely oblivious enemies, tensing up for the moment of the final shot (this game is so damn accurate that it even seems to respond to how violently you pull the trigger) – it really is a heart stopping experience. For you and for your intended victims. We can't see this being anything other than essential gaming.

// DUNCAN LEIGH



**MAN FRIENDS** Socially, war torn Berlin was ahead of its time



**ON YOUR BELLY** Finding the right vantage point is crucial.



**IS HE MISERABLE?** Go on then, put him out of his misery.



**ENEMY AT THE GATES** And you get to be Jude Law! Er, great.



## SNIPER ELITE FACT!

### ★ DEADLY SHADOWS

The game includes an as yet unseen online section – with massive, tense sniper matches.

### ★ THE WAITING GAME

Rebellion reckon this will be like nothing you've even seen online, with games lasting hours...

### ★ THE FOGHORN OF WAR

There's lots of background battle noise, creating the illusion that you're avoiding major conflict.

### ★ BAD LUCK, KIDS

The violent nature of the headshots mean this is guaranteed to come with a minimum of an 18 cert.

## THE MONEY SHOT

Perhaps killing shouldn't be glorified. Perhaps it is wrong. But all we know is this: The Kill-Cam rocks!



### 1. LAYING LOW

With your unsuspecting (well, obviously) target in sight, you have to follow his movements, breathe out, and gently squeeze the trigger at the end of the breath for maximum accuracy with minimum weapon sway. Fail to take into account the wind or the distance to the target and it's a shot wasted.



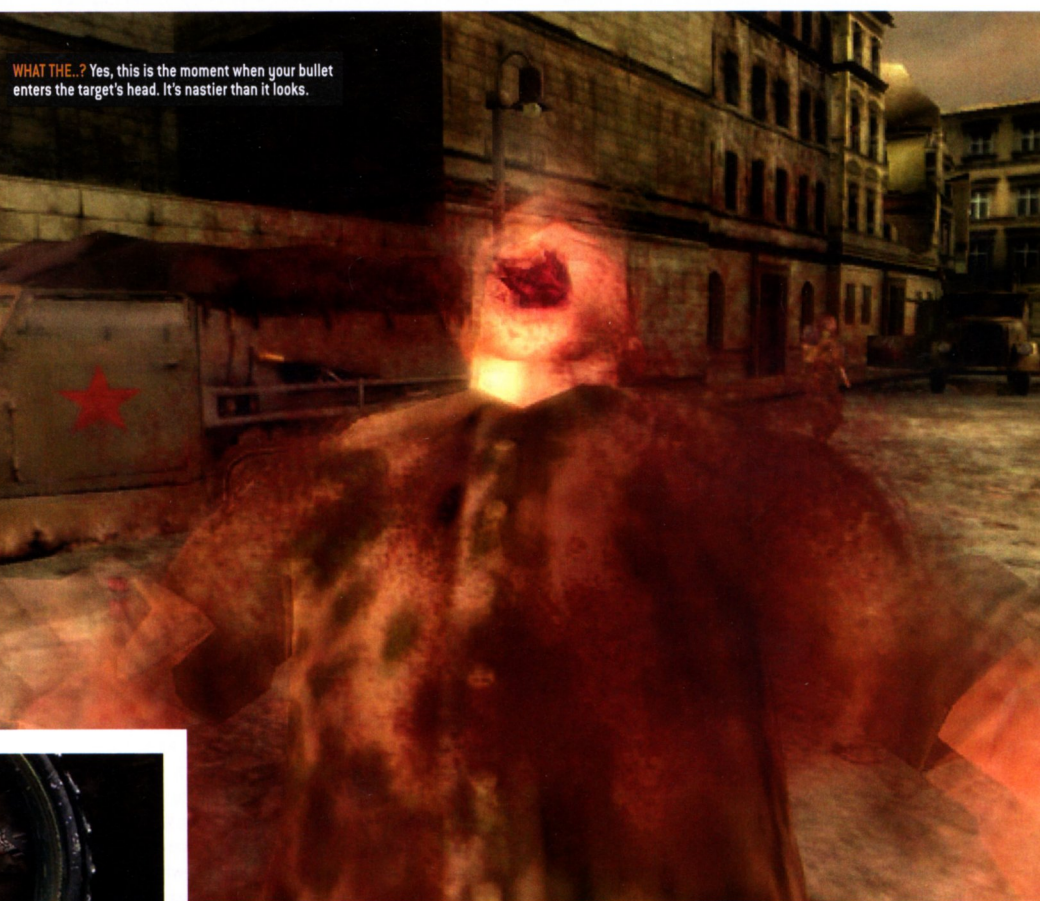
### 2. BULLETCAM

If your aim is true, the camera whips out of first person and focuses on the end of the bullet, just in time to see it *explode* out of the end of the gun and, in glorious slow motion, accelerate towards the target. If you see this camera angle you already know you've hit the mark. Thankfully.



### 3. OUCH. SERIOUSLY.

As the bullet gets closer, the action speeds up, the bullet soars into the target, and the camera captures the full horror of both the wound (they're not just particle clouds of blood, but are disturbingly chunky) and the look of agonising suffering on your victims ex-face. Er, job's a good 'un.



**WHAT THE...?** Yes, this is the moment when your bullet enters the target's head. It's nastier than it looks.



**FODDER TIME** Get the main target first, then deal with the goons.



**ZOOM IN** It's very much a 'shoot or be shot' deal here.

# PREVIEWS ROUND-UP

All the games that we're so excited about we've put them in their own special section!



**BURTON SUITS** Is this a warm-up for a tie-in *Corpse Bride* game?

**TIM BURTON'S NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS OOGIE'S REVENGE**  
ETA SEPTEMBER

What's this? What's this? Why, it's an unusual platformer...

★ **GENRE** Action Adventure ★ **DEVELOPER** Capcom  
★ **PUBLISHER** Capcom ★ **LIVE FEATURES** None

## TIM BURTON'S CHRISTMAS CLASSIC CERTAINLY

had a sinister side to it but this kid-worrying sequel takes the scary factor to another level. Stuff your plasma rifles and rocket launchers – in the wide-world of gaming, is there a more terrifying weapon than the 'soul robber'?

Thankfully, this rubbery green Stretch Armstrong-style attachment is on your side. And you'll need it to make your way through Halloween Town destroying ghouls and thwarting Oogie Bookie's attempts to seize control. You'll do this mainly by hacking and slashing away with a weird bunch of weapons and exploring the seriously warped town. It's another distinctive-looking and great sounding adventure that pays homage to the movie – with the original film voice talent behind Jack, Oogie Bookie and The Mayor all expertly delivering lines. But – as ever – despite being able to shape-shift into Santa Jack and the Pumpkin King, it remains as simple as Simon and this quirky and imaginative world is hardly shown off by the insistence on a dated, creaking, fixed camera. **PW**

### ★ FIRST OPINIONS

Well it's got rather more charm than your average aimed-at-the-kiddiwinks title but we'll be honest, we're not sure that it's mastered the trick of the film – that of appealing equally to both adults and young 'uns.



**JACK'S BACK!** If one tenth of the movie's magic is captured, we're happy.



**SLAM DUNK DA FUNK** And other groovy young kids' phrases...

**NBA LIVE 06**  
ETA OCTOBER

Your mission: to become the true Lord of the Ring.

★ **GENRE** Basketball Sim ★ **DEVELOPER** EA Canada  
★ **PUBLISHER** EA ★ **LIVE FEATURES** Yes

## NBA LIVE CELEBRATES ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY

with its slickest incarnation yet. An improved control system and overhauled animation finally lets you execute exactly the sort of pass you want and perform moves on the run. The main focus now is the superstar ratings that give certain players a range of dunks. The new animation system means that on your run to the net, you'll charge players out of your way as you head skywards, rather than simply bump into them halting the move in previous iterations. It makes the action feel far more real and far more prestigious. Taking Shaq from deep, running up court and watching your opponent sprawl under the net as you slam the ball home is undeniably satisfying. However, we were concerned that it was fairly simple to pull off – in fact, it's practically guaranteed points. We reckon this could lead to playground style 'pass it to the best kid' tactics that would ruin good work elsewhere. If this is sorted – and the sluggish camera switch when the ball is turned over – this could be King of the courts. **PW**

### ★ FIRST OPINIONS

Top-looking and far more fluid, this license-tastic baller game is rammed with the fly-moves and trick-shots you'd expect. Looks like it'll be as good as basketball is gonna get on the Xbox. We're dribbling already.



**B-BALL BOYS** Basketball videogames are hard to get wrong. Usually.



**KART BEAT** The Xbox has suffered from the absence of a karting title.

**CRASH TEAM RACING**  
ETA AUTUMN 2005

The character Crash, not the verb. That'd just be sick.

★ **GENRE** Racing ★ **DEVELOPER** Radical Entertainment  
★ **PUBLISHER** Vivendi ★ **LIVE FEATURES** Online for up to four

## FOR THE UNEDUCATED, CTR WAS A GAME FROM

legendary developers Naughty Dog, who, to our intense disappointment, refuse to make games for anything but Sony's machines. It was a spin-off from their celebrated *Crash* platforming titles, but here's the thing – those who weren't Nintendo fanboys and/or weren't engulfed by their own cynicism toward the *Crash* licence discovered that *CTR* was one of the best kart racing games ever, and – gasp – superior to *Mario Kart* in almost every conceivable way (says you – Ed). But this is *not* the sequel to that game. It's a far more kid-friendly racer from the guys who made *Simpsons Hit And Run*, with simple handling and lots of cartoon comedy action. The key feature of the racing is 'Clash' mode, which lets you latch onto a passing racer and they do the driving while you take out the competition with more powerful weapons. It's an interesting take on the genre as the situation is mutually symbiotic, until you reach the front of the race and disengage to start battling again. We really can't wait. **DL**

### ★ FIRST OPINIONS

Bright colours, slapstick humour and a still-lovable main character stand Crash's latest outing in good stead. This should be highly entertaining for the kids, but don't go expecting anything to rival the genius of its predecessor.



**WHO HE?** Crash lacks Mario's recognisable characters, but never mind.



YOU ARE GOD And you have the power to trash America! Get in!

## SHATTERED UNION

ETA AUTUMN 2005

Strategically demolishing the USA? Oh well, if you insist...

★ **GENRE** Strategy ★ **DEVELOPER** PopTop  
★ **PUBLISHER** 2K Games ★ **LIVE FEATURES** Eight-way sys-link

### IN THIS VISION OF THE FUTURE, ALL THOSE

countries Bush has bombed have got a bit peeved and nuked Washington. The good news is that America descends into civil war. The bad news is that your job is to reunite it. But there's more good news. You're going to blow merry hell out of American soil as one of six US coalitions or the (inappropriately named) European Expeditionary Force. The game is turn-based, but after planning your moves, you'll be able to watch the results in real time – that means large scale destruction, including deformable terrain. We're promised it'll be so violent most levels will be unrecognisable by the time you 'restore peace'. Brilliantly, the turn-based nature of the game means it'll be easy to have an epic game with mates in multiplayer, with one TV, one console and one joypad. *Union* features all manner of armoured and infantry units, which are oversized compared to the world around them, presumably to dispel any fears that this will somehow give the USA-hating terrorists of the world funny ideas. **DL**

#### ★ FIRST OPINIONS

There's not enough of this sort of things on consoles. We're all for bossing hordes of tanks, planes and bombs about the place and if Americans can be the targets instead of the heroes then hell, we're not complaining.



LAND OF THE FREE If you're rebuilding the US, please make it different.



## BEAT DOWN: FISTS OF VENGEANCE

ETA SEPTEMBER

Welcome to Las Sombras – dark, moody and full of loading screens.

★ **GENRE** Action Adventure ★ **DEVELOPER** Cavia  
★ **PUBLISHER** Capcom ★ **LIVE FEATURES** No

### CAPCOM OFFERS YOU YET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY

to use your Xbox to get into some Gangsta Sheed, this time via a *Streets-of-Rage*-meets-*Narc* actioner shot through a film noir lens. At its core, this PS2 port revolves around its arcade beat-'em-up engine but, to be fair, developers Cavia are adding value in the world around it.

The action takes place in the extremely violent city of Las Sombras, a place where everyone has turned their back on you. Playing as one of five mercenaries working for crime overlord Zanetti, you turn up to bust a drug deal only to find yourself double-crossed and surrounded by your own cartel. After punching and kicking your way out you'll find the city to be extremely hostile to your very existence, from bent coppers wanting to sling your sorry ass into jail to rival gangs and cocky street punks who fancy taking a pop at you. Sorting this fine mess out involves meeting up with the other four members of your crew, growing your own posse, collecting information and taking the streets back before executing your revenge.

### THE REVENGER'S ADVENTURE

Roaming the streets is a dangerous thing in Las Sombras. You'll have to keep your police and rival gang ratings low either by behaving yourself (rarely an option, and wouldn't make for a great game all in all) or frequently changing



NICE RACK? Some ladies just don't take kindly to compliments I suppose.



DA STREETS Gang meetings suck when everyone's in such a huff.

your outfit and hairdo. The best option is to get handy with the relatively straightforward combat system and recruit members for your own gang. This is done by beating the unsuspecting hoodlums to within an inch of their pathetic lives and asking them if they'd like to join you (a bit like yer average interview for a job on XBW). This technique tends to work a treat. When your mob's behind you, taking on larger groups of enemies is easier and contributes to breaking their spirit. Making your way through the city also requires you to pick up cash by running errands (or robbing fools) and pressing the flesh around the various 'hoods, including residential districts and police stations.

It's all looking rather promising from this angle. Yet we have to admit it's all a bit underwhelming in a way. As we're on the cusp of the next gen, graphically *Beat Down* is a bit stinky. The city districts are far too small and you'll have to put up with a loading screen practically every time you cross a block. There are plenty of shops, bars, basketball courts and various seedy areas in which to recruit and grow your street gang but on these seemingly mean streets, periodic makeovers are absolutely necessary and we're not sure we're entirely comfortable with this fusion of ultra-violence and *The Urbz*. **PW**

#### ★ FIRST OPINIONS

Grandiose ideas are let down by small-town thinking. A beat-'em-up rover with gang-warfare built in plus a suitably sinister Mafia-infused plot promises much but on this showing will flatter to deceive. Review next ish.


# BEST OF BRITISH

We like guns. We like fast cars. We like visiting one of the UK's finest developers to see both these things in two separate bundles of joy.

WORDS MARK WALBANK

**PLAYTEST!**

**BLACK  
AND BURNOUT REVENGE**



**F**ive years ago few gamers knew the name Criterion. Now it's a global success story with an impeccable international reputation. You've heard of *Burnout* and you've heard of its two sequels, but what's interesting is that Criterion's rise to prominence is not due to these blisteringly good racers. It's down to the middleware programming toolset that built them.

Middleware. The very word is enough to put anyone unfamiliar with C++ to sleep. But consider this: not only is Criterion's RenderWare responsible for arguably three modern day racing classics, it's also authored some of the greatest titles of the current generation. Whether it's *Pro Evo Soccer*, *Call of Duty* or *GTA III*, Criterion has its thumbprint on over a thousand gameworlds. Pretty good for a software tools company started in 1993 as a subsidiary of Cannon.

Simple but deep is the Criterion development philosophy – taking one central idea and exploiting it to the max. This is a company capable of generating fun more successfully than a hermaphrodite exhibitionist in the *Big Brother* house. So when Criterion announces that it's working on a FPS you'd better sit up. Because with RenderWare behind it and the same simple but deep game philosophy, you know *Black* might do for shooters what *Burnout* did for racing. And from what we've seen there's absolutely nothing out there like it.

"We looked at shooting in movies and why it's always way better than anything in a videogame," enthuses Alex Ward, Criterion's Creative Manager. "The thing about shooting in videogames is that you nearly always feel invincible. You can hear bullets all around you but they rarely have any impact in the gameworld. If someone came into this room now," he gestures at the door to a large demo room, "and started firing an AK47, that screen would rip to shreds, all those wooden panels would splinter and glass from the windows would start flying everywhere. You always get that in the Hollywood movies but never in a videogame."

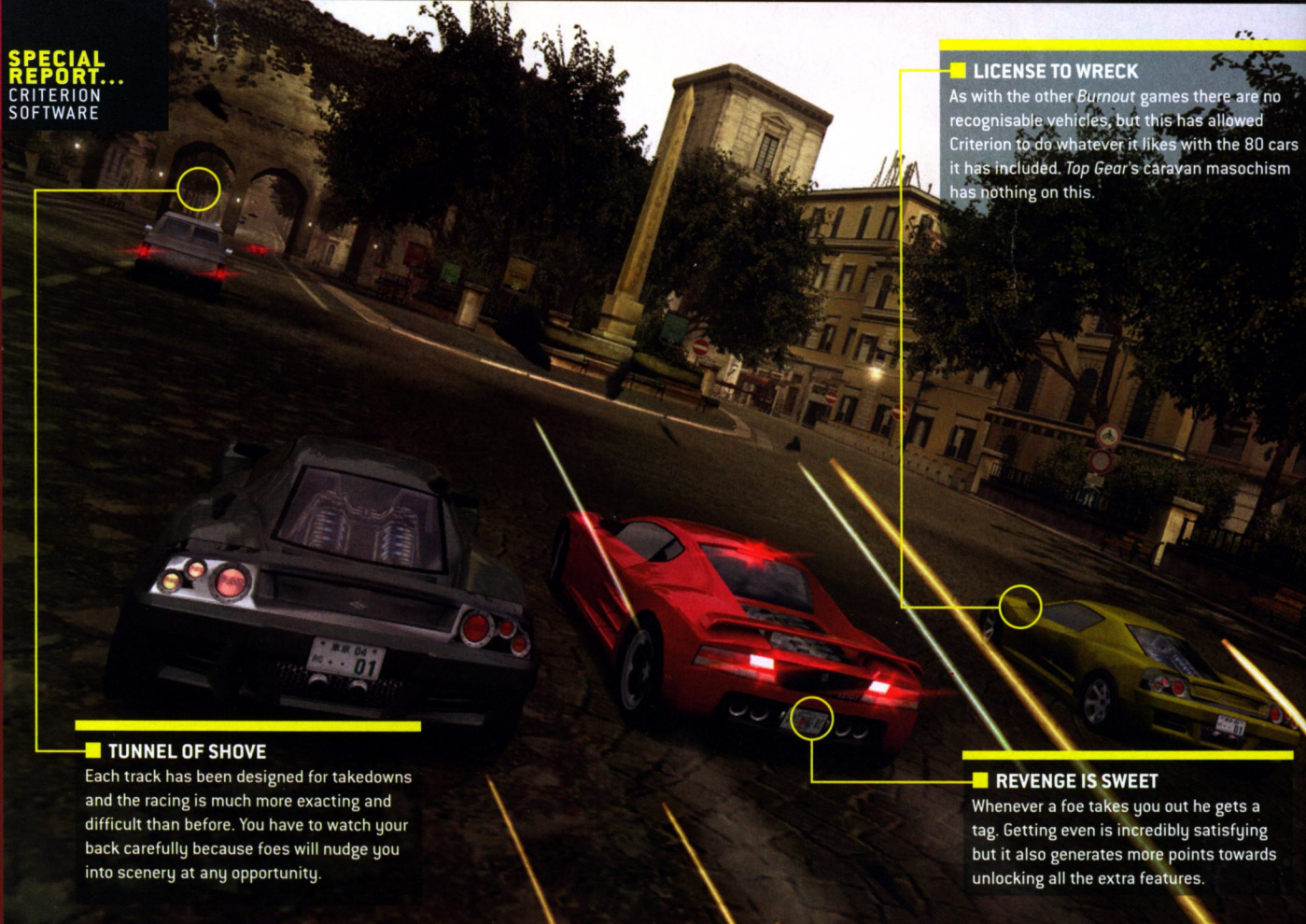
#### GUN PORN

With that, a playable demo of Level Five from *Black* is fired up on a huge screen (Ominously, the speakers in the room are very large). What follows is the most deafening, exhilarating and distinctive demo of a shooter we've experienced. *Black* is to bullets what *Ron Jeremy* is to adult movies. This is gun porn writ large.

So what's so revolutionary? It's the sheer destructive capabilities of the weapons you wield. While most FPSs do a decent job of handling the impact of bullets on enemies, there's rarely the same consequent impact on the environment. Think of the lobby scene in *The Matrix* and you have a perfect model of what *Black* is about. The drama from that scene is derived from the balletic majesty of someone avoiding bullets, but there's also an orgiastic beauty in the peripheral carnage and destruction. Similarly, when you shoot a gun at something in *Black* it damn well knows about it.

"We built a prototype for E3 two years ago," continues Ward. "It was just an empty room and a gun. We felt that if the shooting wasn't exciting





#### ■ LICENSE TO WRECK

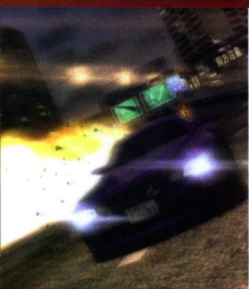
As with the other *Burnout* games there are no recognisable vehicles, but this has allowed Criterion to do whatever it likes with the 80 cars it has included. *Top Gear*'s caravan masochism has nothing on this.

#### ■ TUNNEL OF SHOVE

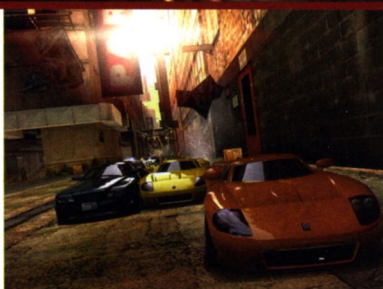
Each track has been designed for takedowns and the racing is much more exacting and difficult than before. You have to watch your back carefully because foes will nudge you into scenery at any opportunity.

#### ■ REVENGE IS SWEET

Whenever a foe takes you out he gets a tag. Getting even is incredibly satisfying but it also generates more points towards unlocking all the extra features.



**HOLY THEFT!** The *Batman Begins* chases were nicked from this.



**TIGHT FIT** Expect more narrow tunnels this time round.



**PIPE DREAM** The online servers will be stable this time. For a

## "EVEN IN AN EARLY PROTOTYPE PEOPLE COULD SEE THAT *BLACK* WAS A BIT SPECIAL..."

➤ then developers wouldn't have the guts to show such an early build at E3, especially when up against titles like *Metal Gear Solid 3* and *Halo 2*. But even in this early prototype people could see *Black* was a bit special."

The demo sees you committing carnage in the streets of an Eastern European city (Criterion is still keeping plot details under wraps). What's instantly noticeable is that enemies give as good as they get. It's just as promised: glass shards fly everywhere when windows shatter, wood chips splutter from panelling, street signs take a battering then totter forlornly to the ground. If you see enemies taking cover behind vehicles you have two options: sneak around and try to take them out by conventional means, or plough bullets into the car until windscreens shatter, tyres burst and the gas tank explodes in a spectacular fireball taking out anything in the vicinity. And we like mess.

The visuals are hugely impressive, with a variety of lush particle effects accompanying all the wanton destruction. Along with the brilliantly cacophonous audio there are a number of key features to keep gamers enthralled. The most

obvious is the dynamic scenery that can be used to take out several enemies simultaneously. Concrete columns, shop fronts, balconies and towers can all be destroyed if you have enough fire power. This adds a layer of strategy to the combat and it's refreshing to see a FPS that encourages you to think before you shoot.

#### FLAMING WEAPONS

Can *Black* really take the first-person shooter in a new direction? "Journalists keep asking why we're not going online or why there are no vehicles in the game," says Ward. "But we wanted to make a game purely about the shooting. If you fire an AK47 for real, it's terrifying. There are flames coming out of the end and the noise is deafening. *Black* is loud and big. Hit an enemy and he falls like a stunt man." You can see his point, when you see the game's Uzi 9mm tearing through bodies and plaster alike it's a revelation. Not even *Red Faction* comes close to this. Just like *Burnout*, we expect an attack of the clones almost as soon as it's released.

Which brings us to the game that made Criterion: *Burnout*. The next in the series, *Burnout*

*Revenge*, is only 20 days from alpha on the day we visit. As the title implies, this fourth iteration focuses on aggressive driving, something that, surprisingly, only blossomed in *Burnout 3: Takedown* towards the end of its development. As a result, most of the courses in the last game were not even designed for aggressive racing. It's been fixed. Oh, how it's been fixed.

We took a spin around a picturesque alpine mountainside and the number of barriers, bridges, alternate routes and Takedown hot spots has increased tenfold. *Burnout Revenge* is likely to be a more exacting, demanding game than its predecessors but it should also be more satisfying. If you see what we mean. Added to the intricacy of the courses are locations where you can score vertical takedowns. As the phrase suggests, these are jumps, ramps and ledges that you can use to literally drop on your opponent from a great height.

There are two key gameplay enhancements that already make the experience more thrilling and balanced. The first is that rivalries quickly emerge between you and your competitors. Take down an enemy and he's going to be madder than a guest on *Trisha* after a positive DNA test. Aggressive isn't the word; these guys become rabid if you agitate them. Equally, if someone takes you out then they become your target. Keep the takedowns accumulating and your



**BOTH BARRELS** The effects of your weapons on both enemies and environments is staggering.

"TAKE DOWN AN ENEMY AND HE'S GOING TO BE MADDER THAN A GUEST ON *TRISHA* AFTER A POSITIVE DNA TEST..."



Revenge rating increases, allowing more exciting cars and tracks to be unlocked...

#### VEHICLE SHUNTS

The second major improvement is that other road users can be used as missile weapons. Shunt a slow moving vehicle from behind and it goes careening up the road causing damage to anything that gets in its way. It's a simple,

or lose height by pushing up or down on the analogue stick) before you land in the middle of a busy junction. Then the delicious chain reactions begin. Your 'crashbreaker' can be triggered, but the explosion only occurs if you tap the a button repeatedly. Aftertouch is also possible, of course, and if all this wasn't enough there's also a 'mystery' car in each level that, if hit, will earn you massive bonus points.

## "SEEING *BLACK* AND *BURNOUT REVENGE*, IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY EA ACQUIRED CRITERION...."

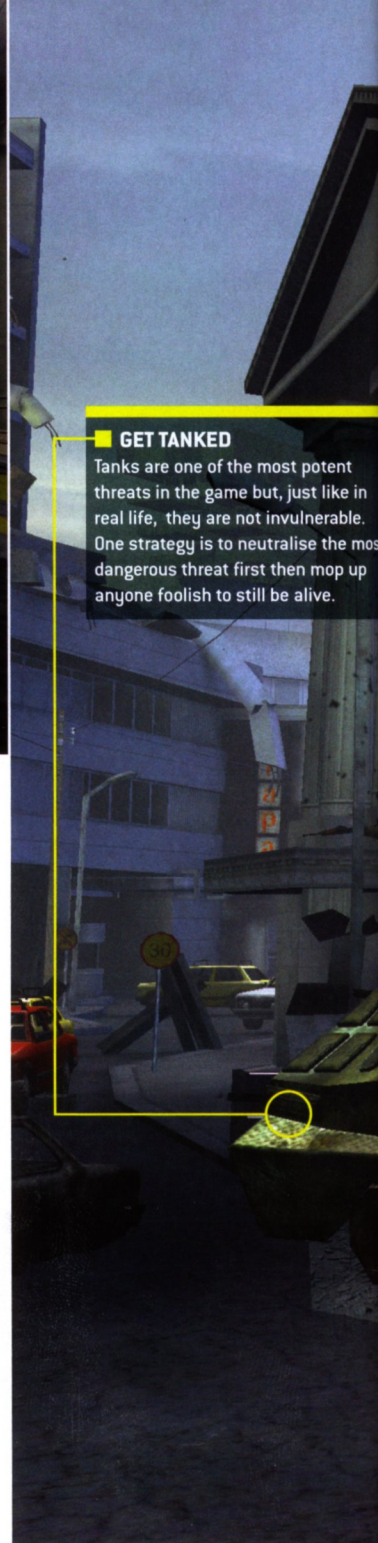
though beautifully judged addition. This feature is taken to extremes by the Traffic Attack mode that sees you hitting as many vehicles as you can in a minute. Get down to 20 seconds and vehicles trashed from behind will add a small amount onto your clock.

Crash mode also returns but has been completely overhauled. Imagine golf but with cars. Sounds bizarre, but it's the best way to describe Criterion's new take on its own bonus game. There are now four distinct skill-based 'moments'. First you choose a car, then set it on its way by triggering the boost on a meter, just like in a traditional golf title. Once in the air you have to fight crosswinds (you can even gain

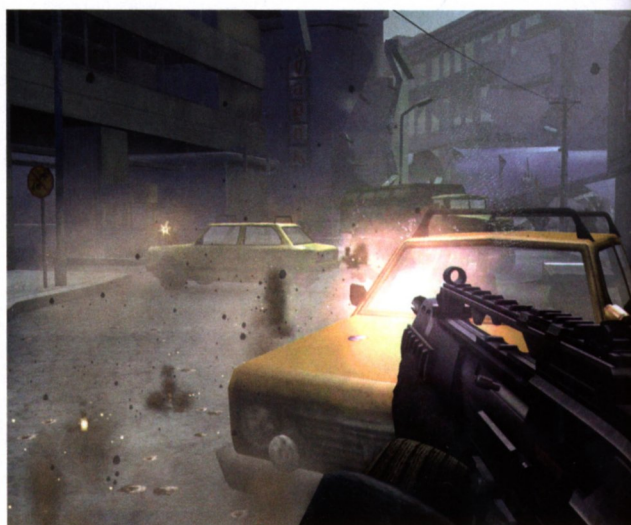
After seeing two pretty bloody amazing titles like *Black* and *Burnout Revenge* within just a few hours of each other, it's easy to see why EA acquired the company in 2004. With RenderWare powering such vibrant, accessible and potentially genre-defining titles the company may as well have a permanent rainbow arching down over its offices in Guildford. It's the kind of software that leaves your fingers tingling after a brief go, the sort of games you can give to friends who've never touched a joypad and provoke them into grinning like loons. When *Burnout Revenge* is released in September we'll be sure to have our hands on it first. Agonisingly, however, *Black* won't be out until early next year. Patience.

#### ■ GET TANKED

Tanks are one of the most potent threats in the game but, just like in real life, they are not invulnerable. One strategy is to neutralise the most dangerous threat first then mop up anyone foolish to still be alive.



**SHARD TIMES** If the bullets don't down your foes, the flying shards of lethally sharp glass might do the trick.



**GUNS ARE BAD...** M'kay? And nothing is going to prove that fact quite as strongly as *Black*'s sadistic realism.

#### ■ PILLORIED

*Black's* greatest feature is that much of the scenery crumbles and falls under heavy attack – which is perfect if you want to take out a number of troops with just one rocket. Nothing is sacred in this game.

#### ■ GUNDAMNI!

Not only do the weapons create havoc on the environments but they shake like bastards 'n' all. When you unleash the fury of the Uzi 9mm or the minigun you may as well be holding a pneumatic drill. Earplugs in...

## BLACKOUT

After two years of media speculation Criterion is finally talking about its next big thing. The game's creative director, Alex Ward, almost convinces us that visiting gun ranges every few months is purely for the research.

#### COULD YOU SAY A LITTLE ABOUT THE ORIGINAL CONCEPT FOR *BLACK*, AND WHAT INSPIRED YOU IN THE EARLY MONTHS OF THE GAME'S DEVELOPMENT?

The desire to enter the genre was made back in 2000 when we were working on the first *Burnout* game. We were passionate about the *Medal of Honor* games on the PlayStation, and the second title in particular. The software had a big effect on many players and it really took you to another place. We felt strongly about trying to achieve this feeling but on Xbox. The main inspiration for me, personally speaking, was visiting a gun range in Las Vegas, Nevada and finally getting to experience the sensation and excitement of firing modern weapons. It's one thing to talk about it or try and write about it but it's another to actually do it. We've been going there for five years now. Our last visit was last month when we fired fifteen different machine guns. It is this experience we are trying to convey in our software.

#### DISTURBING. DOES *BLACK* SHARE ANY BROAD GAME PHILOSOPHY WITH *BURNOUT*, AND IF SO WHAT IS IT?

Yes, in the sense that we want all of our titles to be enjoyed by the widest possible audience. Also we like to do things a little differently. Above all, our strongest philosophy is to make games that are accessible and exciting to play.

#### THE DEMO SHOWCASES *BLACK'S* ABILITY TO EMPOWER THE PLAYER THROUGH WEAPONS, BUT WHAT ARE YOU PUTTING IN PLACE TO ENSURE IT ISN'T JUST A 'SHOOTING GALLERY'? WILL THERE BE OPEN-LEVELS THAT STRETCH THE ENEMY AI?



Yes there are. We are currently only revealing to press a short section of level five from the game. It features a lot of heavy action. We figured this was suitable to get across a lot of what the game is about very quickly. There are a variety of different levels both in atmosphere and environment and in terms of the shooting experience in the game. The AI team on this game is very strong. I'm not going to say much else on this subject as the team always finds it boring when other developers talk for hours about the AI systems. We'd much rather put the controller in your hands and let you experience the game for yourself.

#### US TOO. BUT WHY HAVE YOU DECIDED TO REMAIN SILENT ABOUT THE BACKGROUND AND PLOT TO THE GAME – IS THIS TO GET THE PRESS TALKING ABOUT GAMEPLAY ELEMENTS RATHER THAN BACKSTORY?

In a way, but also so that we can be the ones in control of what we say and when. There is a standard set of questions that you get asked during any game development... Just because a question gets asked a lot doesn't mean you have to answer it. You have to remember we're still relatively early into our development cycle and really early in terms of the promotional cycle of the game so it's just too early to say.

# Fahrenheit

Is this really a bright new dawn for the adventure game or another chapter in dullsville? The next few pages should help you decide.



Anyone over the age of thirty will remember the dawn of electronic entertainment, an era in which two dots moving across a screen constituted a game and something called MUD (Multi-User Dungeon) sprung up on University mainframes the world over. You see, back in the day, adventure games were all the rage. In the '80s typing 'N,' 'N,' 'E,' 'S,' 'Poke Goblin With Sharp Stick' (or just 'Willy') was pushing the boundaries of virtual reality. And in the '90s? The good old point-and-click adventure dominated the charts. How things have changed. In the last five years the humble adventure game has been about as fashionable as Jeremy Clarkson's jeans. So it's refreshing to see a developer blending exploration, deep characterisation and mystery solving with 21st century action. From what we've seen so far *Fahrenheit* has all the hallmarks of a game that will kick-start the genre in the next generation and take videogame storytelling to new, exciting places.

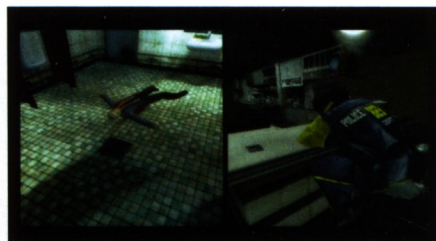
## DECISIONS DECISIONS

One of the things we love about *Fahrenheit* is that it's very focussed with cleverly constructed, self-contained scenarios. There's none of that adventure game staple - wandering endlessly around with only loading screens to keep you entertained. In



**SIMON SAYS** They've got the design of the '70s game down to a T.

each episode you have a main goal to achieve but the manner in which you complete it could have a profound impact on later scenarios. You initially begin in the shoes of murderer Lucas Kane, a man who wakes up in a diner restroom with blood on his hands and a body at his feet. After cleaning up the mess, the clues you leave behind impact on the investigations of NY cops Carla Valenti and Tyler Miles (both playable



**I DIDN'T DO IT!** Or did you? Either way, you'd better start mopping up.

characters). If you talk to the waitress before leaving, or sit back down at your table, for instance, clues will be left for the investigation team to follow up. Although these nuances don't alter the overarching narrative it deepens your involvement with the game world. Knowing that all the actions you take will have a consequence, whether large or small, is an intoxicating proposition.

**"FROM WHAT WE'VE SEEN, *FAHRENHEIT* HAS ALL THE HALLMARKS OF A GAME THAT WILL TAKE VIDEOGAME STORYTELLING TO NEW, EXCITING PLACES."**

### TAP LEFT

Simply push left on the right analogue stick to turn on the left tap. Or in this instance, not, as it's out of order. Nearly every functional object in the environment will have some significance attached to it, so do try everything..

### TAP RIGHT

It doesn't take a genius to work out that pressing right operates the remaining tap. Just what you need to remove all that evidence.

### PUSH UP

Any icon in the shape of an eye allows you to examine something closer. Push up and Lucas sees he's covered in blood. There's never a toilet attendant when you need one.



**1. DOUBLE TROUBLE** *Fahrenheit* does a terrific job of creating tension with its 24-style presentation. As the cop wanders over to the bathroom you know you've got to act quickly. Tell him his doughnuts have been stolen.



**2. BUM FLUSH** The body is the most obvious place to start. Quickly press the left and right triggers to drag it into the cubicle for safe keeping. The stain on the floor can be attributed to the powerful chilli con carne.



**3. RELIEF WORK** Get all your jobs done and you can even take a whizz in one of the cubicles. It's completely unnecessary but indicative of the incidental detail placed into every location. Toilets are great.



**A FAIR COP** Well, that's what you get for trying to save someone's life. Now you can go back and learn that heroism never pays... er...



**ANOTHER DAY** Via the most seemingly humdrum of locations, *Fahrenheit* takes you places you've never seen in gaming before – the real world.



**I NEED AN ANTI-HERO** This poor tot needs saving, even if you do risk recognition and arrest by doing so.



**UNCLE MATT** It comes to something that they let Fraggles into the US Police force these days... Or is it Waldorf?

## "FAHRENHEIT HAS ATMOSPHERE THICKER THAN THE CONTENTS OF A HEAVY SMOKER'S HANDKERCHIEF. BUT MORE COMPELLING."

> Game designers always bang on about delivering cinematic moments, but *Fahrenheit* really does achieve this. The viewpoint can pan dramatically around to reveal the expressions on characters' faces, or the screen will split into three sections to reveal off-screen action. The voice work and facial animation is top notch too. There's a glorious and poignant moment early in the game when you have a moral choice to make: save a drowning boy and risk capture by the same police officer who saw you in the diner or ignore his plight and flee to safety. Go for the heroic option and the look on the cop's face is a peach – a mixture of awful recognition and dumbfounded respect. It really is that subtle.

### NOT SO SIMPLE SIMON

*Fahrenheit* also has atmosphere thicker than the contents of a heavy smoker's handkerchief. But more compelling. In one scene you have to frantically clean up your apartment before a cop breaks the door down. The tension is orchestrated beautifully. First there's the banging on the door, then the multiple

viewpoints – including the cop's perspective through the fish-eye lens – then the music on the stereo builds to a crescendo culminating in relief (if you completed your tasks) or failure (if you're standing naked in the living room covered with blood). The demo only has four scenarios but they are varied, combining intelligent puzzles with captivating storytelling.

No matter how much you enjoy giving the kiss of life to minors and lurking in public



**BAD HEADACHE?** You could use those hands as a set-square.

toilets (well you're only human) *Fahrenheit* could start to pall if it didn't have an extra injection of pace. Variety is something Quantic Dream has clearly thought about and along with the labyrinthine adventuring there are some superb action sequences to snap you out of investigation mode. Like a sophisticated Simon game (strange circular reflex fun from the 1970s), the idea is to repeat a sequence of colours by pressing both analogue sticks in the corresponding directions.

These events see you dodging bullets *Matrix*-style, jumping onto choppers and leaping from vehicle to vehicle across a freeway. Hang on – that is *The Matrix*. Okay, so the action sequence we've played on the demo is a blatant Wachowski rip-off, but at least it's energetic, exciting and fun. The production values are incredibly high and *Fahrenheit* is both intellectually stimulating and accessible. It's the sort of game you could happily give to your dad without getting the usual response of, "oh, it's all bloody guns and swearing nowadays. Why can't I just poke a goblin with a sharp stick?"

Bottom line: we've only had a teaser of *Fahrenheit*'s potential but it's already left us with a sense of bereavement. Sure, it might not have mass-market appeal but come October this is going to be high on our most wanted list.

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# SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR

Rome – the greatest Empire the world has ever known and home to the most feared army in all four corners of the world... Give over. It's time to wield your sword and bring the toga-wearing, grape-munching, metrosexual Nancy-boys to their knees. ATTAAACK!!!

**T**hink you've seen carnage? A huge-scale shoot-out in *GTA: San Andreas* maybe? Or how about a gore-tastic *Doom 3* massacre? Forget about it. No matter what game you've played, and no matter how much blood, sweat and violence it's inflicted on you, it wouldn't come close to the level of carnage in *Spartan: Total Warrior*.

We're talking battles with over 100 characters on screen at once, hacking away with their weapons, blood spurting everywhere, limbs being lopped off, shields smashed in faces, boots in the chest. It's relentless slaughter on the grandest of scales. And in the middle of all this glorious carnage is you, the Spartan, a hairy warrior with the gods on his side and bloodlust running through his veins.

The first console game from Creative Assembly, developers of mega-successful PC series *Total War*, *Spartan* takes those games' epic scale and spices it up with the kind of frenetic, pick-up-and-play, hack-'n'-slash action that will have gamers chomping at the bit to be unleashed with four feet of very sharp steel.

## ROMAN HOLIDAY

Mixing *Dynasty Warriors*-style gameplay (but vastly more entertaining, deep and varied) with the relentless enemy-slaying nature of the original, classic *Gauntlet* coin-op and setting all the chaos around a story that borrows elements from sword and sandal movies like *Spartacus*, *Gladiator*, *Jason And The Argonauts* and *Troy*, this is a welcome slice of originality among all the war games and racers out there – and it has the potential to be one of the very best games ever on Xbox. In *Spartan: Total Warrior* all roads lead to Rome, so let's find out what we'll encounter on the way there...

## SPARTA

The adventure begins in your beloved homeland, under siege from the dastardly Roman legions...



### I'M SPARTANI!

You start the game as a lowly warrior with a big sword and even bigger dreadlocks. Called upon to help save Sparta from the invading forces, it's straight into the thick of battle, while keeping half an eye on protecting Spartan leader King Leonidas.



### CARRY ON CAMPING

Having tasted victory in the first battle you decide to infiltrate the Roman encampment, under cover of night, to rescue the Spartan prisoners. Of course, you're soon discovered and scores of battalions have to be harshly dealt with.



### STONE ME!

Rocked by Sparta's heroic resistance, the Romans unleash their secret weapon – a huge gun that channels Medusa's power and turns men into stone! It's up to you to destroy the device and kill the Roman general who wields its terrible force.

## THE BADLANDS

After leaving Sparta you must cross this perilous territory...



### BAD TO THE BONE

You leave Sparta in order to save the city by taking the fight to Rome itself. Unfortunately, the journey there involves crossing the Badlands – a hostile wasteland where barbarians lie in wait for unsuspecting travellers...



### THE VILLAGE PEOPLE

Sure enough your party is ambushed by hundreds of barbaric Scandinavians and not only do you have to see them off but there are lots of innocent villagers to protect, too. Being barbarians this lot fight dirty – expect lots of kicks and butts.



### HAMMER BLOW

Your encounter with the barbarians culminates in a brutal mano-e-mano battle between their Goliath-like champion Beowulf and the Spartan. Tactical use of the shield is a must as Beowulf wields his huge Death Biter hammer.

## ATHENS

A detour through the ruins of Troy then it's off to the Greek capital.



### TROYS R US

Before heading off to free Athens you must enter the ruins of Troy to recover the Spear Of Achilles. As you'd probably guess, this ain't easy, as the Catacombs are crawling with skeletons and zombies along with hordes of Roman legionaries.



### ARCH ENEMY

Famous Greek brainbox Archimedes is plotting and preaching against the Roman invaders. They're desperate to assassinate him so you'll have to watch his back and take out all the spies and hitmen lurking in the city streets.



### THE ALPS

A trek across the mountain range lies between you and Rome.



### GATES OF HELL

The only pass through the mountains is blocked by the massive Roman fortress The Gates Of Saturn. The priority is to take out the archers positioned on the mountain ledges or you and your men will be sitting ducks.

### GENERAL CHAOS

The main bad guy here is General Sejanus who inflicts powerful magic attacks, has a pet dragon and can summon zombie henchmen to stop you going in for the kill. Sounds tough, but those are the kind of odds the Spartan likes.

### ROME

The journey's end and time for the fall of the Roman Empire.



### ZERO TO HERO

He began this quest as a scruffy no-mark but now the mighty golden-armoured hero. You've boosted his health, power and damage levels with the Favor of the Gods, now he's ready for the final push...



### GOING UNDERGROUND

To breach the heart of Rome you must first travel through the city's underground aqueducts. Alone. Unsurprisingly, this route is heavily guarded and there are one or two nasty shocks along the way — along with Spartan prisoners to rescue.



### ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY...

... But you can bring it crashing to its knees in much less than that. You launch an assault on the Colosseum where Emperor Tiberius is watching the games, but there's a far more divine power to overcome before the final victory is yours.

# CLASH OF THE TITANS

Meet the game's cast of mythical monsters and the weapons you'll be using to slay them good.

## THE POWER AND THE GLORY

The weapons and abilities that will see you through the battles ahead.



### BY THE SWORD

Spartan's trusty blade is his main weapon and he wields it with deadly power and accuracy. Besides one-one-one killing blows you can also unleash sweeps that injure and knock over loads of enemies at once – ideal for buying a bit of time.



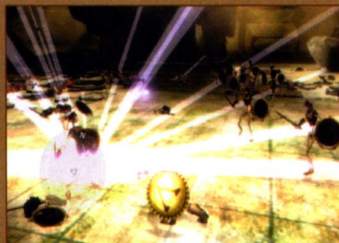
### BOW SELECTA

If the sword is your *mélée* weapon the crossbow is perfect for long-range attacks. The game is so frenetic that there's barely the time and space to pick off enemies from distance, so when you do get the chance take a step back and aim true.



### THE SPOILS OF WAR

After defeating certain boss characters their weapon of choice will be added to your armoury. Double swords and Achilles' spear are two examples, but we especially love Beowulf's hammer which caves skulls in with a satisfying THUNK!



### THAT'S MAGIC!

By collecting the souls of vanquished enemies you'll fill up your 'God Power' gauge and this lets you raise your sword aloft He-Man style and bring down the power of the gods on every enemy on screen – turning them into stone.



## GODS AND MONSTERS

Besides slaughtering thousands of Roman soldiers you'll have to overcome some slightly more unusual enemies...



### TALOS

This giant mechanical soldier requires a giant-sized solution – huge catapults aimed straight at his head.



### GIANT

If this big fella gets his hands on you he'll toss you away like a gnat. Keep your distance and arrow him to death.



### ZOMBIES

These undead freaks lurk in the underground ruins of Troy. Smash their portals to stop 'em respawning.



### SKELETON CREW

Straight out of *Jason And The Argonauts*, these bony pests are fast, elusive and come at you in groups.



### HYDRA

Cut off one head and this mythical beast simply grows another. So don't just chop, use your exploding arrows, too.



### PRIESTESS

Powerful witches who float above the ground doing naughty things to you. Sounds quite enticing. But isn't.



### DRAGON

Very large flying beastie attempting to fry your ass. Luckily, Archimedes builds a device to take the mutha down.



### MINOTAUR

Comes at you like a bull in a china shop. Except with a man's body. Dodge his charges and stop him with your magic.

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# GAMES MASTER

September 2005 Issue 163  
Mag + Book £3.25

**REVIEWED!**  
**THE INCREDIBLE HULK**  
ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

Hulk smashes every console!



**PLAYED!**  
**KING KONG**  
Go ape for it!

**CONSOLE WAR!**  
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INFO!



## SMACKDOWN! vs RAW 2006

Everything you need to know  
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- NEW SSH
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# REVIEWS

GIVE YOUR XBOX SOME SWEET SUMMER LOVIN'...



## 64 THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

Old green ass is back and guess what? He's rather cheesed off. Watch out, someone's gonna get hurt.

### ★ JOLLY GREEN GIANT

Okay, so maybe not 'jolly'. The Hulk's latest adventure sees him crashing his way around a huge free-roaming cityscape in much the same way that Spidey swings around Manhattan in *Spider-Man 2*. So will this be another comic book cut above the rest? Flip the page to see!

### ALSO RELEASED... MIDGETS, MARVEL AND MUTHAS.



72 EVIL DEAD REGENERATION



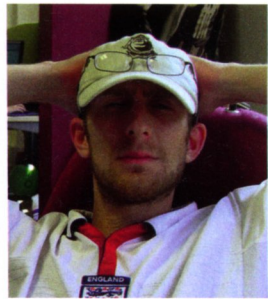
68 FANTASTIC FOUR



76 BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS 2

## OPINIONS!

At least he's not banging on about *Cricket 2005* this time.



“Gah! Having returned from holiday in sunny Spain to find myself holding the XBW baby while our Dear Leader sits by the riverbank waving from his deckchair, I've not had the time to review one single game this issue. Not one. And I was really looking forward to seeing if *The Incredible Hulk* folk could ape *Spider-Man 2* in taking a comic book licence and turning it into a bloody good videogame. Sniff. Oh well. *The Hulk* is the first of our two exclusive reviews. The second is the new *Evil Dead* game, another licence that's stunk the place out in recent years but looks to have to turned the corner under its new charge, the exquisitely named Cranky Pants Games. I'd have given *Regeneration* an 8 just for that. If I'd had the chance.”

Nick Ellis  
Deputy Editor

### GAME OF THE MONTH

Because it's got a giraffe who talks with the voice of Ross from *Friends* and rides on top of buses, we award *Madagascar* GOTM!



### XBOX WORLD RATINGS

It's holiday season! So this month's ratings system is based on what holiday we'd give to each game we've reviewed. Crazy stuff, huh?

<b>10/10</b> Round the world cruise	<b>5/10</b> A trip to Alton Towers
<b>9/10</b> A month's safari in Africa	<b>4/10</b> A day out in Minehead
<b>8/10</b> Two weeks in California	<b>3/10</b> The afternoon off
<b>7/10</b> Ibiza for seven days	<b>2/10</b> Normal working day
<b>6/10</b> Weekend on the Broads	<b>1/10</b> Doing unpaid overtime

## REVIEWED THIS MONTH

THE HEAT IS ON FOR THESE SUMMER OFFERINGS.

- 64 **THE INCREDIBLE HULK**  
Bruce Banner's alter ego smashes onto Xbox again.
- 68 **FANTASTIC FOUR**  
Comic book licence plus movie tie-in = oh dear.
- 70 **KING OF FIGHTERS 2002**  
Yet another retro scrapper.
- 71 **MADAGASCAR**  
You're 'aving a giraffe!
- 72 **EVIL DEAD REGENERATION**  
Is Ash worth the cash?
- 76 **BIG MOTHER TRUCKERS 2**  
18 wheels better than four?
- 78 **FORD MUSTANG**  
An easily af-Ford-able racer.
- 79 **CONSPIRACY: WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION**  
Cheapo topical shooter.



# THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

Back and angrier than ever, the not-so-jolly green giant returns for his most explosive game yet.

- ★ **GENRE**  
Action adventure
- ★ **DEVELOPER**  
Radical
- ★ **PUBLISHER**  
Vivendi
- ★ **PLAYERS** 1
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** No
- ★ **OUT** August
- ★ **PRICE** £39.99

- ★ **LIVE FEATURES**  
Grrr, none!

## CELLULOID KILLED THE COMIC BOOK

star. As soon as you take a crime fighter of ink origins, then stuff in real actors and loads of explosions, the experience starts to challenge our imagination. Take that Hulk film of yesteryear. He was abominable alright, but for all the wrong reasons. The ghoulish sight of an actor's face digitally mapped onto a green condom stuffed with walnuts, which then proceeded to hop around like a flea on speed, was just, well, stoopid. But many of the newsstand's most hallowed heroes have suffered as a result of style over substance on the big screen – thank god for videogames then. Games are the perfect pitch for gamers to share in the exploits of their favourite super heroes and *The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction* is a belter.

The title is a heavy hint as to the game's content. There's destruction, you see, and on the evidence here it seems that the only thing the Hulk cares about less than his wardrobe is tax payer's money as he rattles through The Big Apple hell-bent on carnage. It sounds bloody great doesn't it? Say it does. Good.

So why is the start of the game akin to stepping into a cold bath? Firstly, the camera (set to the right stick, as is now standard) rotates the wrong way. Granted, you can fix this, but a negative barely seconds into the experience does not bode well. You are then locked, without parole, into a tedious training level that not only showcases *Hulk*, the game, as a poor spectacle of barren scenery, crude objects and cardboard people, but also Hulk, the character as big of muscle, small of ability. He just jumps about battering beings into submission with a standard issue, club-fisted combo. We could feel our thighs swelling and the seams straining as Banner-like anger coursed through our veins. But mercifully, it gets better.



**COW DULL** The initial training stage isn't the best of starts...

## GREEN GENIE

Once you're let loose in The City, one of the game's two main environments, enjoyment comes haring up behind you in a juggernaut as you stand, open-mouthed and drooling, and hits you so hard that you turn into a gibbering, senseless mass of raw energy. Your first instinct screams 'smash!' and so you do, thundering through the streets filled with screaming civilians, randomly snatching anything in sight and hurling it forcefully into the scenery. Pedestrians, public transport, trees, lampposts, bus shelters – seemingly anything that's there can be trashed and bashed and you'll spend a good hour just free roaming and causing widespread panic on the streets. We loved the



**TANKED UP** Some objects make great makeshift baseball bats.

**"ENJOYMENT COMES HARING UP BEHIND YOU AND HITS YOU SO HARD THAT YOU TURN INTO A SENSELESS MASS OF RAW ENERGY..."**



## BANNER BONUSES

Collect the green (what else?) tokens and you'll unlock some great extras...

### ★ ARTWORK

Feast your eyes on these classic comic covers, character renders and more. Okay, maybe for the real comic addicts.



### ★ MOVIES

Plenty of 'making of' features to enjoy, although there are far too many bearded programmers on show.



### ★ CHEATS

This is more like it! The stuff we've seen so far includes fancy new shorts for Hulk and an attack of gorilla balloons.



way that ordinary folk stop in their tracks, cower a bit and then run away, and the way vehicles swerve and smack into walls as the drivers rubber-neck to get a good gawp at the snarling jade giant in front of them. And why wouldn't they? Because in the blink of an eye, Hulk is gone, soaring up into the air and bounding across skyscrapers like Spider-Man, only without the webs. And bigger. And green. By charging up another jump and releasing the x button the second you land, you're able to string jump combos together and gain speed and height – handy for traversing blocks in a few mighty bounds and, when your alarming appearance and penchant for wanton destruction inevitably attracts the attention of the local armed forces,

a quick getaway is essential for taking stock and replenishing your energy reserves.

Although there are only two main areas – the City and the Badlands – they're huge and

**"BOULDERS CAN BE CRAFTED INTO BOWLING BALLS, BUSES ARE USED AS SHIELDS AND THE TURRETS OF TANKS AS ROCKET LAUNCHERS."**

### SECOND OPINION

DUNCAN LEIGH

Too much thoughtless destruction, not enough variety – both in the missions and the graphics. Sure, it's easy to get into and addictive for a while, but after stomping on the 1000th tank and bating the zillionth soldier into orbit, things get somewhat dull and repetitive. Angry ain't the word!

house all kinds of hidden secrets; Energy-giving spheres are common and revitalise a flagging Hulk, green tokens unlock treats from the extras menu (cheats, artwork and movies), '?' icons give hints (although you'll have found out most of said hints yourself before you actually find



ROBOT WARS The enemies get more extreme in time...

these icons) and yellow tokens award you bonus 'Smash Points'. Smash Points are the currency of the game and you can earn them quickly by collecting the aforementioned yellow tokens or by the more enjoyable means of obliterating anything in sight. They soon rack up, which is just as well because you use them to buy new moves for your (initially limited) warrior.

This is where the game really comes alive. There are 150 moves to learn (bloody hell!) and although some are simple, like additional kicks, slams and butts to extend existing combo attacks, others are devastating ground-breakers which will sock the screws out of any marauding mechanical nuisance the army feels like springing on you. As well as your more conventional attacks, extra-special 'weaponization' moves can also be bought – usually at a hefty price – which will shape the conflicts in more ways than one. These moves, assigned to the y button, come into effect when you pick up a particular vehicle or object and allow you to manipulate it in a particular way to turn on your tormentors. Boulders can be crafted into bowling balls, buses are used as shields and the turrets of tanks ripped off and used as on-the-shoulder rocket launchers. It all helps to keep the combat feeling fresh and high-tempo – and, boy, does it get high-tempo.



HULK! Why run around buildings when you can run up them?

**Jump Marker Select**

**Tatooine Grand Hand**

- Midtown Tower
- Infinity Cove
- The Dayne
- Coliseum Terrace
- Mandarin Gate Mews
- Gunnery Island

**Select** **Back**

### Jump Marker Select

Tibet Grand Hotel

 Select  Back

**PLANE CRAZY** You'll need air-combo attacks to take down the top guns.

**BLACK HAWK DOWN** The targeting system works well for picking off troublesome tormentors quickly.

**BLACK HAWK DOWN** The targeting system works well for picking off troublesome tormentors quickly.

As the enemy threat intensifies, Hulk's anger boils and swells to Gordon Ramsey-esque proportions. Overdose on energy pods and he'll go into critical mass, whereby his strength is heightened still further for a limited time. Take too many missiles in the mush and his health will get dangerously low, at which point adrenaline will kick in and his speed will be increased for just long enough to flea the conflict and get a much-needed injection of life juice.

## SMASH & GRAB

After buying 'weaponization' moves, Hulk can fashion new weapons out of anything. This big green freak's just asking for a hail of ASBOs, really...



### ★ GLOVES ON

Picking up a nearby car and nonchalantly snapping it in half, the Incredible Hulk fashions himself two steel gauntlets with which to enhance his punching power. We just hope he's proud of himself.



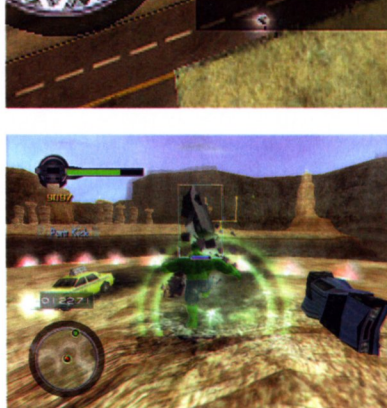
### ★ GIMME SHELTER

Brandishing a bus, that ol' green ogre called Hulk coolly crumples it into a shield-like shape with which to deflect incoming missiles. Revolting behaviour, you'll agree.



### ★ STRIKE 'EM DOWN

Rolling a simply enormous boulder as casually as a bogey, Hulk transforms it into a bloody huge bowling ball with which to 'strike' down entire towns! Get a job!



GREEN PUNT Just one of the many bizarre Challenge missions.



**"IT'S A SHAME THAT ANY DAMAGE YOU CAUSE IS SOON REPAIRED BY THE F\*CK-UP FAIRIES, WE'D HAVE PREFERRED TO LEAVE A TRAIL OF MESS."**

you can try the many 'Challenge Missions', which include timed assault courses, punting cars through goal posts, hangliding, fending off armed forces and many more light-hearted distractions. Unfortunately, these 'filler' missions are our main annoyance with the game. There's just too many

of these and not enough actual Story Missions. Sure, you don't *have* to complete them, but doing so makes you feel as though you've long out-stayed your welcome in a particular area and they're mostly repetitive, mostly dull and have been done to death in other games. It's also a shame that any damage you cause is soon automatically repaired by the f\*ck-up fairies, whereas we would have preferred to leave a longer-lasting trail of mess in our wake. Ho-hum.

However, there's no denying that *Ultimate Destruction* is a solid and addictive game and that the developer has actually listened to the criticisms of the last *Hulk* game and tackled them head-on. As such, Banner has been

relegated to cut-scenes only (no more tedious stealthy levels – yay!) and the camera has been greatly improved to give you complete freedom over all you survey. It's great to see a game that makes such effective use of the subject matter and with Hulk's fuse, which is shorter than a midget's digits, he has the perfect playground in which to vent his anger on anything and everything. As such, *Incredible Hulk Ultimate Destruction* is an absolute must-have for fans and proves bloody good fun for any gamers with a wealth of rage to spend. Hulk do good!

// RYAN BUTT

VERDICT		XBOXWORLD
<b>UPPERS</b>		<b>DOWNERS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Huge areas to smash</li><li>- Masses of moves</li><li>- Very challenging</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Can get confusing</li><li>- Not enough locations</li><li>- Repetitive missions</li></ul>
<b>GRAPHICS</b> - Slightly basic but pleasing enough.		7
<b>SOUND</b> - Things breaking noisily, mainly.		6
<b>LIFESPAN</b> - Loads of missions and extras.		8
<b>★ OVERALL SCORE</b>		8
Mister Incredible Hulk's latest is an explosive orgy of crushing carnage and boisterous battles that's bound to test you to the limit. Smashing.		



JAV-A-LANCE Flagpoles make great spears to launch at enemies.



# FANTASTIC FOUR

Seen the movie trailer? The game might actually be *worse...*

- ★ **GENRE**  
Action Adventure
- ★ **PUBLISHER**  
Activision
- ★ **PLAYERS** 1-2
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** No
- ★ **OUT** Now
- ★ **PRICE** £39.99

- ★ **LIVE FEATURES**  
Zip.

**ACCORDING TO COMIC BOOK LORE, THE** Fantastic Four's bendy leader Reed Richards can extend his body to about 1500ft without the onset of pain – which is ironic, because after a short stretch with *Fantastic Four*, we're mashing the buttons in agony. Okay, so we're exaggerating slightly, but it would take an act of deception worthy of the Invisible Girl to disguise Activision's latest movie conversion as anything other than a vaguely depressing, sort-of-competent, but ultimately disappointing waste of a strong license. Movie fans may disagree – and, in fairness, we're old school comic geeks who'd rather be battling classic baddies like Annihilus in the Negative Zone than street punks, giant spiders and robots – but think about what could have been: an action adventure with free-roaming city sections where you fly around

as the Human Torch (like *Spider-Man 2*) and smash up scenery with orange behemoth The Thing. Bendy Reed Richard's limbs could've been mapped to the right analogue stick, and the whole world could've been blessed with Havoc physics like in *Psi-Ops* (perfect for Sue Richards' force field powers). But no, what we've got is a linear, glitch-addled, scrolling beat-'em-up with a frustrating camera and laughable AI.

## FOUR GOD'S SAKE

It's not *all* bad. You can swap between the team members at will to harness their relatively unique abilities – scientist Reed Richards is a good *melée* scrapper with stretchy range attacks, The Thing is the token 'strong but slow' brawler, Sue Richards uses long distance force shields for more tactical play and The Human

Torch is, well, shit. But the fire effect is nice. Better yet, you can combine their powers to fight larger foes. For example, against the Moleman's monster, you can use The Invisible Girl's force-fields to hold its arms in place while Mr Fantastic punches its throat with his extendable limbs. In other neat touches, you use Sue to protect other team members, or the Thing to lift obstacles.

Sadly, this is where things get messy. The special set pieces or character powers are activated using patronizing mini-games – you just stand in a pre-designated interaction circle and follow the simple instructions. For example, The Thing lifts fire trucks by simply mashing **X** against an impossibly generous time limit, while Reed Richards unlocks doors via an embarrassingly simple rotating puzzle (despite their aesthetic complexity, we managed to



**HANDY MAN** Think of what you can achieve with that ability...



**ZOOM ZOOM** That hat and coat disguise is fooling no-one, is it?



**FASHION VICTIM** Why do all videogame punks wear denim?

## WHO ARE THE FANTASTIC FOUR?

Sadly, the attractive one spends most of her time invisible.



### ★ REED RICHARDS

Name: Mr Fantastic.  
Played by: Ioan Gruffudd.  
Special Attacks: Stretch Punch, Spinning Fists.  
Reed is a scientist who convinces his girlfriend, her brother and his best pal to join him on a space mission investigating cosmic rays. It all goes bendy and they acquire super powers – Reed's is being able to stretch his body up to 1500ft or through the eye of a needle.



### ★ SUE STORM

Name: Invisible Woman.  
Played by: Jessica Alba.  
Special Attacks: Force Wall, Force Bind, etcetera.  
Sue can turn herself invisible or use her powers to generate impenetrable force fields – which she often uses in the comic to control her brother Johnny Storm by starving him of oxygen so he can't 'Flame on'. She's probably the game's most useful character.



### ★ BEN GRIMM

Name: The Thing.  
Played by: Michael Chiklis.  
Special Attacks: Bull Rush, Elbow Drop, Being big.  
The most tragic character, since Ben hates his permanently deformed orange exterior and super strength. The majority of the game – and comics – is spent trying to find a way to 'cure' him. He's like a poor man's Hulk, but made of molten rock.



### ★ JOHNNY STORM

Name: The Human Torch.  
Played by: Chris Evans. (No, not that one...)  
Special Attacks: Fireball, Fire Vortex, Firey stuff.  
Sue's brother is a (literally) hot-headed 17-year-old who acts first and never thinks later. Johnny can turn his entire body into flame, allowing him to fly and shoot fireballs. In the 70s cartoon, he was replaced by Herbie the robot. Kids and fire don't mix.



STRETCH ARMS STRONG At least, we think that's his arm.



complete 90% of them by just mashing the pad). The teamwork bits and explosive set pieces are effectively scripted, leaving the bulk of the action to a competent-yet-unsatisfying mash-'em-up. Kill drones. Proceed. Fight boss using scripted set pieces... you get the picture. The pattern is as entrenched as it is uninspiring.

Worse still, the camera is too close-up (especially when using the impossibly chunky Thing) so sometimes all you can see is your character's torso, or worse, the *inside* of their torso. The lock-on picks bizarre angles and the free-roaming camera is too flat to see into the distance. Even fully zoomed out, with all four heroes on screen it's hard to tell who's who. The boss battle with Diablo is like watching an



WILD THING He may look all tough, but his punches are puny.

## "EVEN THOUGH THE THING CAN LIFT 85 TONS, IT TAKES HIM THREE HITS TO STOP THE SCRAWNIEST OF STREET PUNKS..."

exploding sweet shop on CCTV – it's all you can do to just mash the buttons, keep switching characters and hope you can inflict damage.

### THE THING IS...

It doesn't end there. AI-controlled characters will happily stand on spiked floors, but since they (sort-of-sensibly) can't die when you're not controlling them, they just keep shouting in infinite pain. The Mayan temple jumping bits are brief, but marred by chronically unresponsive controls (who puts the jump button on the **O** button?). Even though The Thing can lift 85 tons, it takes him three hits to stop the scrawniest of street punks. The Human Torch can't fly, but hovers, with near-useless close attacks and initially puny fireballs. In contrast, Sue Richards' force shield makes her effectively indestructible, so boss battles can be cheaply won by blocking until your special bar builds up, unleashing an attack and repeating the process.

The co-op mode is an undeniably welcome addition, with some great team-up moves (much easier to perform than in single-player), but

where's the four-player mode? And why are both players allowed to control the camera? It's all so uninspiring, with unsatisfying collision detection, limp difficulty, barely-average cut scenes, 'minimal' menu screens, an implausible plot (adapted from the film for extra action), zero emotional attachment, barely-acceptable graphics, repetitive gameplay, token unlockable concept art and a boring Arena mode. It's just all so underwhelming, everyday and unpolished – in other words, everything a superhero game shouldn't be. *Fantastic Four?* We'll settle for a depressingly average five.

// DAN DAWKINS

### SECOND OPINION

#### JEM ROBERTS

Much though we love them, Activision's comic book licenses are a mixed bag at best – for every *Spider-Man 2*, there's a long list of cheap knock-offs with no thought put into them. *Fantastic Four* is by no means the worst of them though, and fans of the movie should check it out.

VERDICT		XBOXWORLD
<b>UPPERS</b>	<b>DOWNERS</b>	
- Faithful characters	- Sloppy graphics	
- Neat special attacks	- Awkward camera	
- Co-op play	- Linear and repetitive	
<b>GRAPHICS</b>	- Nice spot effects but blocky and dull	5
<b>SOUND</b>	- Some decent voice acting	5
<b>LIFESPAN</b>	- Short with only token replay value	6
<b>★ OVERALL SCORE</b>		<b>5</b>
Like the worst superhero movies – confusing, unbelievable and visually awkward with minimal emotional impact. Depressing.		



**BALLS OF STEEL** Now that's hardly fair, is it? Where's the bleedin' referee? The cheek of it.



# KING OF FIGHTERS 2002

Just when you thought it was safe to forget 2D fighters...

- ★ **GENRE**  
Fighting
- ★ **PUBLISHER**  
SNK
- ★ **PLAYERS** 1-2
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** Yes
- ★ **OUT** Now
- ★ **PRICE** £19.99

- ★ **LIVE FEATURES**  
Online single and team matches, leaderboards

IT SEEMED THAT *KING OF FIGHTERS* HAD finally progressed from 2D last month when we reviewed the needlessly long-named *KOF Maximum Impact – Maniax*, the first 3D entry in the series. But for some reason SNK has decided to 'treat' Xbox gamers with a LIVE-enabled version of a three-year-old 2D game and stuck on an even longer (not to mention grammatically flawed) title. Fair enough.

Despite the length of time it's taken for this to arrive on the Xbox since its arcade inception in (you guessed it) 2002, very little has been added. The backgrounds have been updated a fair bit (with the option to fight using the old arcade mode's backgrounds there if you crave retro magic), but apart from the option to fight one-on-one or in the classic *KOF* three-on-three style and the usual Challenge (aka Survival) mode, there's not much else here for your twenty nicker.

The single largest feature SNK has added, however, is Xbox LIVE support, allowing you to

kick the poo out of all-comers across the globe in a hand-drawn, two-dimensional bloodfest, if that's the kind of thing that fills your sandwich.

## LOST IN TRANSLATION

In true Japstastic style, the translations are hilariously bad (as if the title hadn't suggested that already). This leads to victory screen words of wisdom like "Done your packing? Your life's journey is over" and the worryingly homoerotic "You're pretty good. How about you and me..." (as uttered by Seth, a Colossus of a man).

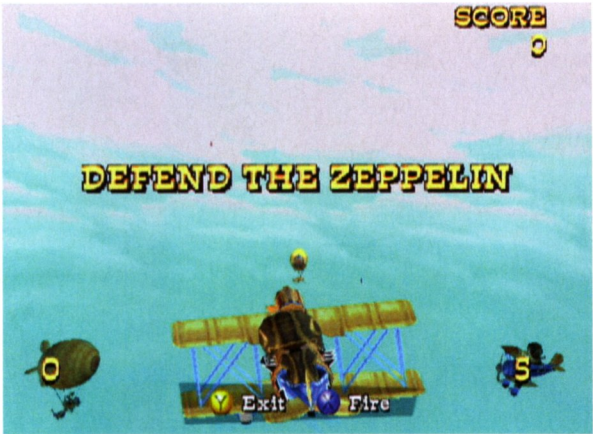
Of course, when it comes to 2D fighters the most important thing is gameplay and in that area *King of Fighters 2002* does the job as well as fans of the series could expect. Combos flow together seamlessly and landing a blow on your opponent feels genuinely solid, just as it should in a good beat-'em-up.

All in all, this isn't exactly groundbreaking stuff but should please 2D fans. SNK's fighter

has long been the only real rival to Capcom's *Street Fighter* series and with the big C currently churning out piles of arse like *Capcom Fighting Jam*, it looks like *KOF 2002* is the one to go for if you fancy a bit of online 2D scrapping.

✓ **CHRIS SCULLION**

VERDICT		XBOXWORLD
<b>UPPERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Great 2D graphics</li><li>- Solid gameplay</li><li>- Online scraps</li></ul>	<b>DOWNERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Too few modes</li><li>- Rubbish music</li><li>- Three years old</li></ul>	
<b>GRAPHICS</b>	- Nice hand-drawn sprites and animation	7
<b>SOUND</b>	- Music's a bit dodgy but FX are top-notch	6
<b>LIFESPAN</b>	- Online should keep it fresh for a while	6
★ <b>OVERALL SCORE</b>		6
As a single-player game <i>KOF 2002</i> rapidly gets boring, but if you're a fan of 2D beat-'em-ups then it's worth it for the LIVE play alone.		



**MAKE LIKE A HEDGEHOG** Now that's a piece of roadkill you really don't want stuck to your tyres.



**MEET THE GANG** From the left: Gloria, Alex, Melman and Marty. Don't fancy yours much.



**HAPPY SLAPPER** The penguins really are vicious bastards – official.

# MADAGASCAR

Lions and zebras and hippos – Oh Christ...

- ★ **GENRE**  
Platform
- ★ **PUBLISHER**  
Activision
- ★ **PLAYERS** 1
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** No
- ★ **OUT** Now
- ★ **PRICE** £34.99?!?
- ★ **LIVE FEATURES**  
Be serious now

## THE FOLLOWING CAN BE TAKEN AS READ:

Xbox platform games are almost inevitably the laziest, blueprint-following developers' skives that you can ever have the blistering misfortune of playing. Time and again we've railed against the cliché-ridden pap that's been dished up in the name of platform adventuring, pointing out that there are hundreds of ways of injecting some new excitement into the genre and breaking out of the endless round of cut-'n'-paste titles which are clearly the product of about as much creative investment as the average round of Marmite on toast. Phew. With all that out of the way, let's take a gander at the latest expensive and cheerful movie tie-in...

From the pixel-fiddlers who brought you *Shrek*, then, here's the tale of a nice-guy lion, a cool zebra, a bootilicious hippo and a paranoid giraffe (Ben Stiller, Chris Rock, Jada Pinkett and David Schwimmer respectively –not that any of their actual voices are in this game...) who

decide to escape from Central Park Zoo and make their way to the island of Madagascar – in all honesty, the effect given by the game suggests that it's a fun movie, but has that translated even vaguely successfully to the Xbox?

## GIRAFFE-BAKED

Well, given that the 'play different characters and collect moves as you slowly make your way through the movie's plot with endless continues' schtick (with all the clichéd knobs on – there's a great bit where you have to collect keys to open doors) isn't going to set your gaming world on fire, what is there to be said for it all?

One boon is that the action flows surprisingly neatly – the transition between cutscene and gameplay is smooth, and the script's still pretty funny. Another undeniable plus is the inclusion of some simple but diverting mini-games – Space Invaders at the zoo, an airborne shoot-'em-up and so on, plus the option to buy more with your

Zoo tokens. Of course, you can complete the adventure itself in a couple of hours, which for thirty quid is laughably bad. But if you know a sprog who loved the movie, they'll probably get plenty out of this. At a reduced price, of course.

// JEM ROBERTS

VERDICT	XBOXWORLD
<b>UPPERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proper funny movie tie-in</li> <li>- Fun mini-games</li> <li>- Brilliant for kiddies!</li> </ul>	<b>DOWNERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A stranger to innovation</li> <li>- Awful scenery clipping</li> <li>- You just walk through it...</li> </ul>
<b>GRAPHICS</b> - Fun, but appallingly glitchy, with clipping	3
<b>SOUND</b> - Good soundalikes, but not good enough!	4
<b>LIFESPAN</b> - Mini-games, but a two-hour adventure	6
★ <b>OVERALL SCORE</b>	
Know a kiddie who loved the movie? Buy this in the sales for them. Everyone else, don't just avoid it – sneer at it, and then pity it.	
5	



# EVIL DEAD: REGENERATION

Decaying action that will swallow your soul.

- ★ **GENRE**  
Horror
- ★ **PUBLISHER**  
THQ
- ★ **PLAYERS** 1
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** No
- ★ **OUT** September
- ★ **PRICE** £39.99

## MOTHER ALWAYS SAID, "IF YOU CAN'T

think of anything nice to say, then don't say anything at all." Which is an unfortunate thing to remember for two reasons: 1) It reminds us of the bit in *Evil Dead 2* where the evil mother thing attacks Ash in the basement – which is about a million times scarier than anything that happens in this game – and 2) Because we're journalists, and saying nasty things is our job. Still, eh? Let's give it a go, shall we?

So: this is the third *Evil Dead* game, coming after the awful *Fistful Of Boomstick* and the only-slightly-less awful *Hail To The King*, and THQ have sensibly shifted development duties over to newly-formed Cranky Pants studios. And the good news is: Bruce Campbell is still as funny as the 'f' word that we can't print in Xbox World without putting an asterisk in it. There's a bit where he pretends a severed head's talking to him (and that doesn't count as spoiling it, because we're not recommending that you go anywhere near this game) that *genuinely* made us spill tea down our front in merriment. There's another bit where he calls his gun 'sugar' that

reminded us of the films and temporarily put us off the rest of the game, and that was good too. His laconic delivery's spot on – as are his facial expressions in the cut-scenes – and although he repeats himself a bit too often, he's the best thing about the game. Second best (vocally, anyway) is Sam Raimi's brother Ted – you might possibly remember him as Joxer from *Xena: Warrior Princess*, or the bloke who gets tongued to death in *The Grudge* – who puts in a swearily bearable turn as Bruce's midget sidekick Sam. Third best are all the other voices, which are pleasingly reminiscent of the film, mostly squawks and vaguely lewd suggestions from maggot-faced crones in rot-revealing nightgowns. Fourth best is... ah. Um.

## SIZE DOES MATTER

Back up a second, though – *midget sidekick*? Ah, yes. Blithely ignoring the tradition of Ash going it alone with only an occasional soon-to-be-dead hillbilly or girlfriend for company, Bruce/Ash is now accompanied by a four-foot Mafia Deadite who can't be killed (well, he *can*, but only temporarily) and talks a helluva lot. This has obviously been done for a couple of reasons. Firstly, it gives Ash someone to riff off – and to be fair, the pair's exchanges are fairly entertaining, although the 'joke' where Sam goes on and on about how he hates talkative people quickly starts to grate. Secondly, though, it's been designed to prop up the shambolic combat system – and it doesn't even do that properly.

**"BRUCE CAMPBELL IS STILL AS FUNNY AS THE 'F' WORD THAT WE CAN'T PRINT IN XBW WITHOUT PUTTING AN ASTERISK IN IT."**



**BACK TO BASICS** There's a handy *Splinter Cell* style wall-press.



**MOSTLY ARMLESS** The lack of hand doesn't affect his tastiness.



**FLAME GRILLED** Sam doesn't even seem that upset if you set him on fire.



## FINISH IT!

We'll give Ash one thing – he knows how to look cool as he kills...

### ★ BAM

The most basic finisher's a headshot. Shame about the slight pause that makes you think you haven't done anything.



### ★ THE COOL ONE

Ash often tends to do a behind-the-back shot for no reason apart from it looking cool. You've got to respect that sort of calm.



### ★ WHERE IT HURTS

Alternatively, there's the old hoof in the gentlemen's agreements, followed by a takedown and shotgun blast.



### ★ GANG UP

And then, of course, there's the classic 'You hold him, I'll hit him' tactic – here perfected via the use of a tiny man.



It's almost as if developers Cranky Pants were making the game up as they went along, zig-zagging from problem to problem and digging themselves deeper into a hole. Problem: the game isn't long enough, and the levels aren't very big. Solution: implement a slightly nonsensical system where Sam has to be loaded up with spirits and kicked into a big tree-monster's mouth to unlock the level exit, thereby forcing you to backtrack over the same ground, killing swarms of identical enemies, three or four times. Problem: this is annoying and difficult, since bad level design makes getting lost and losing Sam annoyingly easy. Solution: Sam's got magic footprints that Ash can follow. Problem: now it's too easy again, so... Solution: put in an unkillable

Necromancer thing that fires lightning bolts, then make Sam run around in little circles rather than heading straight for the objective. Problem: this

## "IT'S AS IF THE DEVELOPERS WERE ZIG-ZAGGING FROM PROBLEM TO PROBLEM AND DIGGING THEMSELVES DEEPER INTO A HOLE."

### SECOND OPINION

JEM ROBERTS

What is it with the *Evil Dead* license? How does it fail, and so often? There's nothing worse than an adventure that covers up its simplicity by adding annoying extra challenges – Joel's right, unfortunately. Still, for movie fans, it's part of the franchise, and has to be tried.

means every level's full of ridiculous, tedious busywork that doesn't relate to the films in any way whatsoever. Solution: sorry, there isn't one. There are bits where Ash can possess Sam, using his tiny stature to crawl through gaps, but they're just more annoying, because you have to charge up his 'magic hands' to kill every enemy.



**HINT 2** Don't turn your back on green zombie things. Idiot.

For a game that occasionally relies on precision jumping (as in all the bits where electrocution means instant death) the characters hop awkwardly and distances can be hard to judge.

### BETTER OFF DEAD

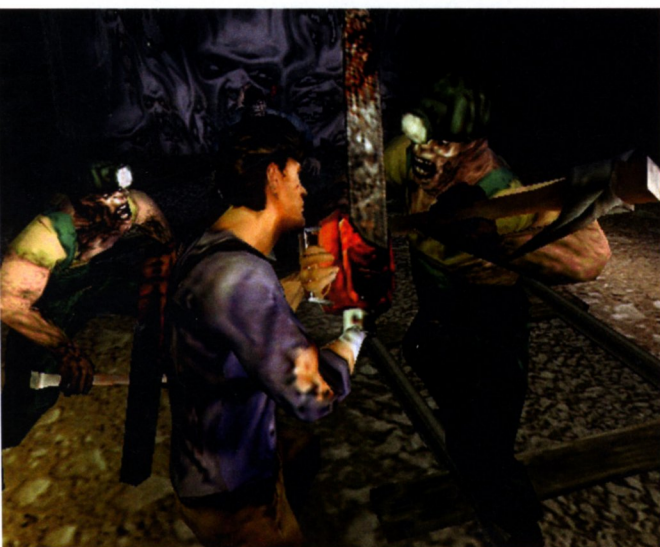
Worse, though, every mistake stems from the fact that, fundamentally, the combat system's rubbish. It's basic like *Lego* – there's a chainsaw swing and a shotgun blast, an automatic lock-on and an awful lot of skeletons. Most enemies can be dealt with simply by dancing around them in a big, strafing circle – the others require the more complex system of kicking Sam onto their head to stop them from blocking your shots. Once they've been shot up a bit, they start to give off green smoke, signalling that it's time to finish them off by dashing up and pressing the Fatality button until Ash does something clever. Again, though, this feels haphazard – there's no given range where it works, and no precision to it. There are half a dozen death animations, but you're forced to use the fatalities on virtually every enemy – it takes them too long to die otherwise – so you'll see each one literally dozens of times. And, of course, the game's obsessed with showing you them, slowing down the action every time Ash casually twists a shotgun over his shoulder to decapitate a Deadite. As



**HINT 1** Don't walk through electricity. Hope that's some help.



**SHOCK TACTICS** This is a 'puzzle'.  
Clue: shoot things. With gun.



**FLOATY LIGHT** Ah, now the possessed tables  
bit's actually quite good. First level, see.



>> things progress, there *are* combos to discover, including a nice chainsaw-shotgun juggle, but using them's more difficult and dangerous than simply shooting, and carries absolutely no reward. Ash can store up evil energy to unlock his evil side, but that just makes him faster and stronger – there's no tactical element to it. Later weapons encourage more experimentation – for instance, once you pick up the flamethrower, it's possible to set Sam on fire before you kick him, and the harpoon gun's used to drag enemies up close for a slashing. Again, though, this is cosmetic. The best tactic's invariably the strafe-n-shoot, with occasional midget-bootings for variety. The enemy attack patterns simply aren't varied enough to encourage anything else, and most aren't even a threat. To be fair, the boss battles are reasonably entertaining – especially because they usually come with plenty of Brucey badinage – but there's still nothing here you haven't seen before.

#### MAMA TOLD ME NOT TO COME

Aaargh. Okay. There *are* one or two nice things about *Evil Dead*. They've clearly tried hard, and it shows in some places, which are easily the best in the game. The opening level, a run through a mental hospital, feels like it took longer than

SATAN'S LITTLE HELPER

Midgets – not just for riding tiny bicycles and dressing as traffic cones. They're also useful in a fight. Look...



★ **ATTACK**  
Hoof Sam and he'll land on Deadites' heads, clinging on until A) He can pull their head off, B) You chainsaw their legs off or C) They rip him to bits. There's no problem with chasing him, either – he teleports to your boot tip as soon as you rear back.



★ **STORAGE**  
In each level, there are three or four 'spirit pods' that need to be opened so that Sam can absorb the soul and run back to the level boss. Unfortunately, this always triggers off a shedload of bad guys, and it's the only time that his death matters.



★ **SMALLNESS**  
Sam is small, so whenever there's a narrow gap, he's used to crawl through and clear the way for Ash. Unfortunately, he's also afraid of rats, so there's always a slew of tedious comic dialogue to plough through whenever he sees one.



★ **FUN**  
Arguably better than anything else is kicking the little shit into bad things. This is invariably the solution to any puzzle, however illogical – so kicking him into a chimney might blow it up after a quick Tex Avery style sequence.



anything else, with ghost-train effects, pitch-black humour and sudden scares that almost capture the feel of the films. Doors slam and bolt themselves as Ash explores, our hero's literally hosed with blood and the 'evil' gets a nice comedy bit with a lift. Apparently Sam Raimi had a hand in the direction and it's here that it shows, with the trademark wobbly-cam footage getting the first of its many outings. After this, though, things run out of steam, and the set-pieces are few and far between. Enemies, chunks of scenery and puzzles are used again and again, until by level five you're gripped

with a crippling sense of deja vu. Nice ideas – like Sam's ability to 'ride' giant Deadites – are overused until they're just part of the general tedium. Other ideas, nicked from better games, are badly implemented – the ability to 'grapple' Deadites by hammering the buttons is a nice

“THE PUKING DEADITES ARE A NICE TOUCH, BUT DO WE REALLY NEED TO FIGHT ABOUT 70 OF THEM IN THE SAME 20-FOOT AREA?”

touch, but considering how often it happens, we'd rather it be a quick burst of frantic activity rather than a thumb-taxing war of attrition. The Puking Deadites are a nice touch, but do we really need to fight about seventy of them in the same twenty-foot area? The whole game feels like one or two clever bits stretched to breaking point, and massively outstays its welcome.

Look: we wanted this to be good, honestly we did. We saw Cranky Pants working on it, hitting meat with bats to get the noises right and coming up with clever ideas for Deadites, and we were actually impressed. But the problem is, however much you love *Evil Dead* the film, this really hasn't got anything to do with it – it's just a flimsy beat-'em-up with a few dumb puzzles.

The film has genius sequences where Ash chases his own hand around or gets in a nail-biting scrap with his girlfriend – this doesn't. Bits from *Army Of Darkness* – the unofficial third film – can't be used because of copyright issues. The film's stuffed with invention, packed with laughs and genuine scares, and doesn't outstay its welcome. This isn't, and does. Bruce Campbell's still funny, but we'd rather he spent the rest of his career doing cameos in Coen brothers pics than get involved with this sort of thing. We hate it. We really, really hate it. Sorry, mother.

// JOEL SNAPE



DEAD EYE DICK This is evil Ash. You can tell by his dead eyes.

VERDICT		XBOXWORLD
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
- Bruce Campbell	- Super-repetitive	
- Sick humour	- Clumsy controls	
- The deer-monster	- Irritating midget	
GRAPHICS	- Shoddy animation, lazy design	4
SOUND	- Bruce is always good	8
LIFESPAN	- About eight hours, if you stick with it	6
★ OVERALL SCORE		
Cranky Pants do the impossible by making blasting zombies in the face with a shotgun feel like a chore. Buy the films and watch them instead.		4



## BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS 2: TRUCK ME HARDER

Has the whole trucking world gone mad?

- ★ **GENRE**  
Racing
- ★ **DEVELOPER**  
Eutechnyx
- ★ **PUBLISHER**  
Empire Interactive
- ★ **PLAYERS** 1
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** No
- ★ **OUT** Now
- ★ **PRICE** £29.99

- ★ **LIVE FEATURES**  
Truck all

**ROYAL FLUSH! 800-1! THIRTY GRAND IN A** single deal for this buck-toothed in-bred! Ah, if only all of this game was as good as two hours spunked in one of the seedy in-game bar casinos. Sadly, it isn't and due to the unfathomable fact that the first *Big Mutha Truckers* game shifted a whopping million copies – which seemed to suggest a winning formula – we're now being trucked even harder by the rednecks. We now know how Ned Beatty felt in the film *Deliverance*. Ouch.

Once again, four siblings of questionable gene-pool have to race from town to truck-stop, wheeling and dealing in all manner of goods – some kosher, some contraband – but this time they're doing it to raise cash to bribe Ma Jackson's jurors in order to get her off a tax evasion charge. So what's

different? Well, instead of racing fellow truckers to the destinations, you now do it against the clock; there are more shortcuts to root out and utilise; there are more hindrances on the highways to overcome (like UFO attacks) and more towns and trading posts to exploit. Hmm, well if you liked the first game, it all sounds rather good doesn't it?

### SOUNDS A BIT LIKE F\*CK

Alas not. Alarmingly, some of the canny elements of the first game have been stripped out for no good reason. There are no loan sharks to bail you out when you dump your 'dead presidents' on duff deals, no reputation-building to determine who you'll meet on your travels and no significant damage sustained to your rig – which means you

can now happily hump it from one invisible track constraint to another without fear of shelling out valuable sponds on repairs.

Worse still, the whole timed structure of the trucking means that you have no real time to explore and appreciate the surrounds – even though most of them are inexplicably out of bounds (strange, you can ram your rig through cast iron gates to access a short-cut, but you can't dent a small wooden barrier barring access to an airport). By choosing a destination, you can then set a timed difficulty level in which to get there and are financially rewarded upon successful arrival accordingly. However, the bonuses for all the fun stuff you do en route – like causing pile-ups, ramming biker gangs and picking up hobos (slow



**BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY** One mission has you dropping off kiddies...



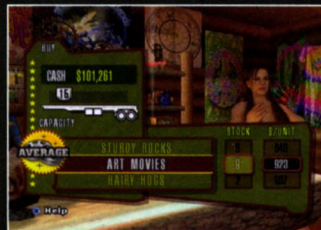
**RED CROSS** All the special missions involve checkpoints. Grrr.



**CRASH COURSE** Bother fellow motorists for bonus cash.

## SHOW ME THE TRUCKIN' MONEY!

There are many ways to make money in *BMT2*...



### ★ TRADE

Buy goods (the range depends on the trailer you're towing) from one outlet and shift them for a profit at another. The demand for a particular product at a particular outlet changes though, just to keep you on your toes.



### ★ RACE

Pick a destination and a difficulty level and you'll be set to time to get your goods delivered. We recommend Clearview to Trapper Labeau's Diner on the 'Truck Me Harder' level for easy money every time. Either that or sell your ass.



### ★ BONUSES

Swerve to avoid UFOs, slow down to pick up hobos, break speed limits, crash into other vehicles and destroy biker gangs. But if you fail to arrive within the time limit, you'll get scant reward for doing any of it. Why, those horn-swogging varmint!



### ★ GAMBLE

Okay, so the brunt of the game may be truckin' rubbish but at least you can escape it by visiting one of the in-game casinos and playing an assortment of card games for a slow but steady buck. Not worth thirty quid, but deal us in...

**TRUCKING HELL** The map is bigger with more stops and shortcuts to exploit...



down, get a poorly-animated bum to board your trailer and then keep him balanced for the required distance, for some reason) – you get only upon delivering your load on time. Take too long and you'll run out of time and all additional bonuses will be cruelly snatched away which, for the most part, means that any route 'A' to 'B' deviation is a complete waste of time.

Seeing as the vehicles you drive in the game are strictly of the 18-wheel variety, manoeuvring isn't exactly easy – especially if you jack-knife in a moment of indecision over which fork in the road to take and must endure the laborious task of straightening up. However, some upgrades are available to make life easier. Engine enhancements to increase your top speed will improve your

journey times, as will nitro boosts (which make you go faster without actually making you look like you're going faster – impressive) and special brake pads will make you stop more promptly,

## "THE FIRST GAME MANAGED TO DISGUISE MANY OF ITS SHORTCOMINGS UNDERNEATH THE ODD CRUMB OF ORIGINALITY AND HUMOUR, BUT..."

### SECOND OPINION

NICK ELLIS

I didn't play the original game like Ryan did so that's probably why I found this to be a fairly decent and enjoyable affair, although it certainly loses its charm after an hour or so of sitting in the cab and I couldn't see myself staying up all night at the wheel. So not too bad, really.

thus eradicating painful reverse manoeuvres. But these all cost lots of money and will set you back on the juror-bribing job in hand. And then there are the Yorkies to buy, and all the pornography that trucking requires. It's not cheap.

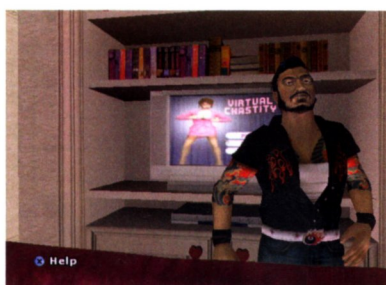
### I LIKE TRUCKING

There are additional dollars to be made carrying out special missions. These become available sporadically at the various bars, but there are only ten in the whole game and all involve racing around the terrain in a vehicle (be it your rig or a school bus, ambulance or car) hitting various themed checkpoints within a certain time. Any hope that the additional 'Mission Mode' may provide extra substance to this shallow shambles is soon scuppered by the realisation that these missions are merely the ten we just mentioned, but played all over again. As if you'd want to.

The first game managed to disguise many of its shortcomings underneath the odd crumb of originality and plenty of backwater humour, but as much of said originality has been stripped out and the humour now feels forced and about as funny as the Crazy Frog on helium tap-dancing on your hung-over head, this game becomes exposed like a weeping bum-sore on a trucker's behind. What was great the first time round now just grates and with so many hours required for so soulless a return we can but hope that there aren't enough truck-related puns left in the world to warrant a third instalment. Now, if you'll pardon the HILARIOUS pun, truck off!

RYAN BUTT

VERDICT	XBOXWORLD
<b>UPPERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slightly faster than <i>BMT1</i></li> <li>More to explore</li> <li>Plenty of card games</li> </ul>	<b>DOWNERS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bloody boring</li> <li>Not enough variety</li> <li>No freedom for fun</li> </ul>
<b>GRAPHICS</b> - Would suit a smoky, dingy arcade	3
<b>SOUND</b> - Good, if you like <i>Alright Now</i> by Free	5
<b>LIFESPAN</b> - It's just a big load of trucking about	5
<b>★ OVERALL SCORE</b>	
A painfully pointless sequel that doesn't so much add to the original as take away from it. Steer well clear of it, good buddies!	4



**EVIL OFFSPRING** The last juror will look familiar to *BMT* fans.



**TEASING US** Look, a car that isn't a Mustang! Shame you can't drive it. Smash into it instead.



# FORD MUSTANG: THE LEGEND LIVES

The car may be a legend, but the game's a bit of a banger.

- ★ **GENRE** Racing sim
- ★ **PUBLISHER** 2K Games
- ★ **PLAYERS** 1-2
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** None
- ★ **OUT** Now
- ★ **PRICE** £19.99

- ★ **LIVE FEATURES** Seems not.

**2K GAMES HAS SEEN FIT TO TAKE A STEP** backwards in almost every category compared to the last budget Ford-branded racer. There are less cars than in *Ford Racing 3* [35 compared to 56], you can only drive Mustangs instead of numerous Ford models and the tracks are based around seven visually similar US cities instead of the worldwide tracks of its cousin.

*Ford Mustang* borrows the best bits from other racers – the Kudos system of *PGR2*, the visuals from *NFS:U*, the blur effect from *Burnout* – and makes a half-cocked job of reproducing them, which is no real surprise given the price.

Annoyingly, the cars don't take damage. Such is the legendary status of the Ford Mustang that slamming it into a wall at 160mph still leaves it sparkling new. This probably fits in well with the arcade-style racing, but it'd still be nice to see your battered car trundling over the finish line on its arse. If the real car was this safe, we'd all be driving Mustangs through cities at well over

100mph and there'd be no need for this game.

The biggest problem is simply the limitation 2K Games has put on itself with the license. Basing a game solely on one make of car is a huge mistake, no matter how many models and classic versions you add. Ultimately, unless you're a Ford junkie and the mere sight of a 1965 Mustang Coupé is enough to moisten your jock, the most powerful car is the one you're going to opt for time and time again.

## MUSTANG SAMEY

Gaming novices will probably enjoy the difficulty curve, which starts off pretty easy. However, if you've played more than a couple of racing games in your time, you should be able to race through this and unlock everything within a day or two on its hardest level. It's entertaining as an arcade-type racer but it's all just so short.

While you'd expect the game to be missing a little something when you look at the price, for

the same or less money you should be able to find a second hand copy of *PGR2* and you'll be at that for weeks before even touching the online side of things, an area in which *Ford Mustang* is sorely lacking. Among others.

**// CHRIS SCULLION**

VERDICT		XBOXWORLD
<b>UPPERS</b>	<b>DOWNERS</b>	
- Nice sense of speed	- Little car variety	
- Budget price	- Unforgivably short	
- PGR2-style cone races	- No car damage	
<b>GRAPHICS</b> - Smooth frame-rate but dull cities		7
<b>SOUND</b> - Terrible announcer but decent music		6
<b>LIFESPAN</b> - Very little to do and no online play		4
★ <b>OVERALL SCORE</b>		6
It's fun enough while it lasts but that's only a couple of days. If ever there was a game that screamed "JUST RENT ME!" it's this one.		



**ENDURANCE FIGHTER** You get points for staying alive. We'd prefer a suicide button to be honest.

00007101



**SILENT SCOPE** Even the sniper rifle is bereft of, y'know, fun.



**RED MIST** Playing this'll make you want to go on a killing spree.



# CONSPIRACY: WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

We've searched high and low but we simply can't find any gameplay here.

- ★ **GENRE**  
Shooter
- ★ **PUBLISHER**  
Oxygen
- ★ **PLAYERS** 1
- ★ **LIVE PLAY** No
- ★ **OUT** Now
- ★ **PRICE** £29.99
- ★ **LIVE FEATURES**  
None

## WE CAN REVEAL THE ONLY CONSPIRACY

here. You might read the title and think 'well, that sounds alright.' Trust us, it's *not*. This bland identikit shooter is nothing but a shameless attempt to hoodwink you out of thirty quid by disguising an achingly average shooter under a vaguely topical title. Five levels set in offices, a jungle, the arctic, a secret lab and – wait for it – on a tanker unravel in a hackneyed plot about a rogue American Agency called Hydra planning to auction chemical weapons off to the highest terrorist bidder. As Cole Justice (seriously) you're dropped into the various trouble spots to snoop about and annihilate legions of rogue troopers contracted to destabilise the world.

Frankly, the best aspect of the title is the voiceover from the 'M' style guide who sounds just like Judi Dench. Other than that, you're offered a dismally standard set of weaponry and progress through lifeless environments. Another constant irritation is the gun perspective. You

seem to possess some sort of weird, elongated arm that serves as a constant reminder of the sub-par gaming on offer.

## WOEFUL MINDLESS DROSS

Flat presentation, lifeless and glitchy AI and seen-it-all-before objectives further compound your misery. Resources such as sniper rifles and bazookas are seemingly placed randomly and serve no other purpose than to offer a very brief, very cheap thrill. Otherwise it's a simple case of following your nose and blasting anything that comes up in your sights as you follow the orders barked back at you from HQ. Outside of the story mode, there are no multiplayer or LIVE options. The 'Special Features' mode invites you to replay levels and undertake endurance battles with a *Weakest Link* style system of banking points but frankly we'd rather eat glass than return to this.

*Conspiracy: WMD* is a staggeringly joyless shooter-by-numbers. Lacking in tension, length

and ambition, this mess underachieves in almost every area. When there's so much great shooting action to be had on the Xbox, like your local park's fat and old pervert flasher, *Conspiracy* is grossly exposed. Avoid, avoid, avoid.

///PETE WEBBER

VERDICT		XBOXWORLD
<b>UPPERS</b> - Ah - Er - Hmm	<b>DOWNERS</b> - Bad graphics - Bad story - Bad gameplay	
<b>GRAPHICS</b> -You may have guessed by now it's bad		3
<b>SOUND</b> - Let's be positive. It's not diabolical		5
<b>LIFESPAN</b> -Each second is a waste of YOUR lifespan		2
★ <b>OVERALL SCORE</b>		3
Crass, cheap and nasty, <i>Conspiracy</i> is a thoughtless shooter with tired graphics, flat presentation and a dull story. It should be nuked.		



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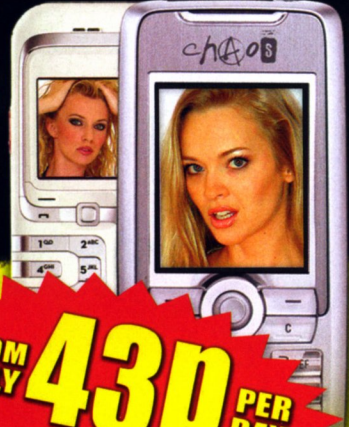
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**LISTEN TO ME**  
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**0909 771 2965**  
**Girl on Girl -action-**

**Shhh...**  
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# XBOXWORLD

ALWAYS FIRST FOR XBOX AND XBOX 360

ISSUE #3 SEPTEMBER 2005

**360  
EDITION**

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**BE AFRAID. SOMETHING NASTY IS COMING  
FOR YOU THIS NOVEMBER.**

**ALSO INSIDE...**

HANDS ON WITH: PREY ■ TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED ■ TOP SPIN 2 ■ FULL AUTO ■ QUAKE IV ■ PLUS ALL THE LATEST XBOX 360 NEWS



**TOO GOOD  
TO BE  
TRUE?**

## DEV KITS ARRIVE!

**FULL POWER OF 360 TO BE  
UNLEASHED AS MICROSOFT  
DELIVER BETA DEV KITS.**



Rejoice dear reader, for we are soon to see what the Xbox 360 is truly capable of! Developers and publishers have finally received dedicated beta development kits. After the mixed reception to Microsoft's presentation at E3, both 360 Execs and developers were keen to stress that all the games being shown were running considerably short of final power – in fact a mere thirty percent of capacity. Nonetheless, titles like *PGR3*, *Gears of War* and *Kameo* still wowed the world's media and emerged as stars of the show.

Until now 360 games have been run on two linked G5 Apple Macs. With the new kits developers are finally able to exploit the powerful new graphics and processing power of the 360. Soon after reports of dev kit delivery came to light, the above picture was leaked onto the internet showing the new black dev kit alongside the current Xbox development kit with the new controller on top. The development kits contain IBM's three-core PowerPC processor and a custom GPU developed by ATI.

Developers and publishers we've spoken to have been excited about the technical specifications of 360 and are chomping at the bit to get hold of the finished hardware. From what we've been told, expect some very impressive results, very soon.

Meanwhile, Taiwanese component manufacturer Foxlink has announced that it has established a new multi-million dollar production line for Xbox 360 connectors, ready for mass production in August, and Ji-Haw, a current Xbox component supplier will start delivering Xbox 360 connectors this month as well. The news suggests that Microsoft is set to begin production of retail Xbox 360's right now. As the first console company to attempt a simultaneous global console launch, this should be early enough to ensure enough stock to supply stores in time for Christmas. And if it isn't, we're going to be very, very angry.



**SEXY IN THE CITY!**

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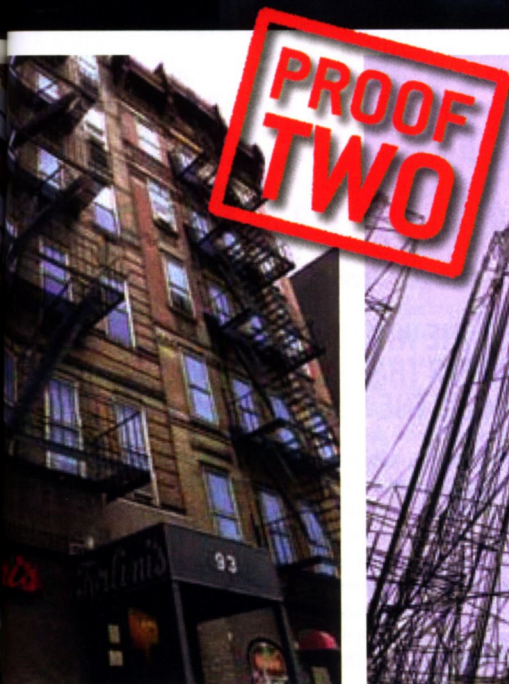


As Bizarre Creations continue to feed tantalising information about the most highly-anticipated racer in the world via its website, there was widespread scepticism about a stunning screenshot released in its studio update blog. The above shot of NYC, published on [www.bizarreonline.net](http://www.bizarreonline.net), provoked amazement and incredulity in equal measures, some staggered at the detail and others sceptically claiming

that it was pre-rendered or even a digital photo. Bizarre responded by posting the wire-frame model of the shot to show that it was an image created in the studio and then posted a second screenshot, taken at random and also with its wire frame model (see above).

Reacting to speculation that the shot was a fraud, Bizarre's representative Ben had this to say: "This is what people can genuinely expect from the next generation of videogames. Bizarre Creations are proud to be one of the





developers leading the charge toward High Definition, and we're very pleased with the results. It is possible to get all areas of the game that need it up to this level of detail – that's what you get for two years' work with up to 35 artists here at Bizarre, plus help from outsourcing companies! Some areas (ie those with simple buildings in real life) won't be as detailed, but where buildings are that complex, the game will be that complex too."

According to blogger Ben things are set to get even better. "Please bear in mind, however, that you're still looking at a work in progress videogame, and that the final in-game effects

and lighting aren't even in place yet."

Bizarre also revealed details of *PGR3*'s online tournaments. Every month, several tournaments will be hosted with specific objectives, from hot laps to cone challenges and all out races. Qualifying takes place at the start of the month, will be open to as many gamers as want to compete and successful drivers will be split into seeded groups before knockout races decide the champs. Gotham TV will also broadcast the races so you can show off your mad skillz to the world, and in addition to winning respect, they're also hinting at some very special prizes. *PGR3* is just getting better...

**STEEL & GLASS** It's a real mind-shagger, isn't it? Even grizzled videogame hacks like us had to stare at the pic on the left for a long while before we accepted that it was a screenshot. Welcome to the near future, people.

## HOT 360 NEWS

OFF THE PRESSES. IN HERE.



### SECRET SEGA DEAL –SSSH!

Sega has signed up San Francisco-based developers Secret Level to recreate a classic SEGA franchise for Xbox 360. The developer is best known for creating America's Army: Rise of a Soldier and Star Wars Jedi Star Fighter on Xbox and more recently converting Capcom's Final Fight franchise. Although neither company has announced a time-scale or which title it would be, Sega showed off House of the Dead, Sonic, Virtua Fighter and Afterburner at E3 and given the background of Jedi Star Fighter, Afterburner is most likely. As soon as we know, you'll know.



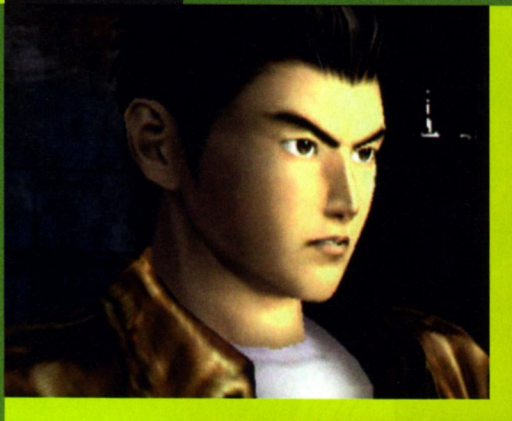
### SADDLE UP WITH THE JOYS OF GUN

Neversoft's ace new Wild West shooter is set to get the Xbox 360 treatment. We saw a stunning 360 CGI that, frankly, looked like a movie – although in-game footage was being kept under wraps for the time being. Gun is a brutal action game that combines GTA roaming with a shooting engine and follows the story of a hunter who avenges his father's murder in stupendously violent style. One to watch.



### FORCE-FEEDBACK WHEELS

Good news for race nuts comes from a Microsoft representative who recently said "We believe force-feedback is very interesting, and we plan on launching force-feedback peripherals after the console launch." Shame it's not at launch. Still, several third-party manufacturers are already working on force-feedback stuff for the Xbox 360. As official products traditionally outsell third-party peripherals, the opportunity to take pole position is not one companies will want to miss. Fingers crossed, eh?



**KNIGHT MOVES** *Final Fantasy XI* will be just one of many big hitters at the Tokyo event.



**THE FULL PACK** The characters on offer in *FFXI*. Bags we're the dude with the massive sword!

#### JAPAN UPDATE

# TOKYO'S 360 SHOWDOWN

**THEY ARGUABLY INVENTED THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF VIDEOGAMING, AND YET SO FAR THEY'VE MISSED ALL THE XBOX FUN. JAPAN WON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE TWICE...**

Microsoft Japan is to host the eagerly awaited Xbox Summit 2005 in Tokyo on 25 July. With Microsoft intent on cracking the Japanese market – something they singularly failed to do with Xbox 1 – we can expect some pretty big announcements. It is thought that several Japanese publishers will confirm their Xbox 360 line up with some new Intellectual Properties and Japanese developed Xbox 360 exclusives. Xbox division head Yoshiro Maruyama has already promised a “product unveiling on the scale of E3” and the impact of the event will be both an attempt to wow the public and send out a statement of intent that Microsoft is taking the console war to Sony and Nintendo's back yard. Murayama also revealed that the first time the Japanese public will get its hands on the hardware will be at the Tokyo Games Show in September (we'll be there covering it for you), followed by demo units being sent to Japanese retailers in September ahead of the console's December launch.

*Shenmue 3* could be one of the surprise

unveilings. Several Japanese websites have reported that Gargoyle Mechanics has signed to develop games for Xbox 360. The studio is in part made up of employees who worked on games for the excellent but doomed Sega Dreamcast, including the magnificent *Shenmue* series. As such they would be one of the best-placed developers to take the franchise forward. If the *Shenmue 3* rumours prove to be founded, it's further indication that legendary publisher Sega will be one of the biggest third party players in the Xbox 360 park, with a line up of new and old franchises that, naturally, includes *Sonic The Hedgehog*.

Elsewhere, Square Enix has already signed up to release the Massively Multiplayer Persistent Online RPG *Final Fantasy XI* plus another yet-to-be-announced title and we also know that ex-Square head honcho Hironobu Sakaguchi's Mistwalker studio is developing two original RPGs. In perhaps the biggest surprise of all, EA looks set to develop some titles exclusively for the Japanese market. Strewth! We'll have all the news from the Tokyo Xbox summit next issue. ■



## NEW SCREENS

# BEAUTIFUL OBLIVION

DUST OFF YOUR ELF EARS AND ARMOUR – NEW SCREENS AND DETAILS EMERGE FOR BETHESDA'S GIGANTIC RPG EPIC!

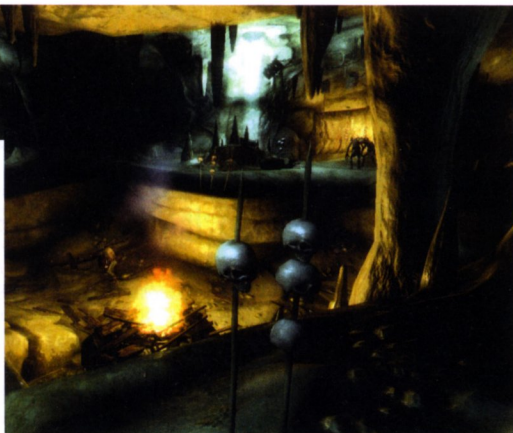
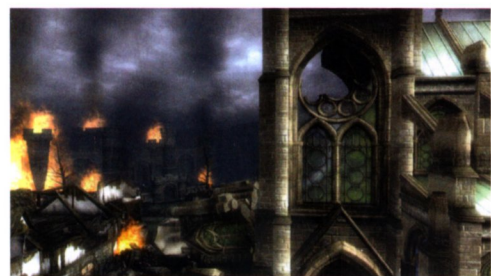
*Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* is sounding better and better. Development on the sequel to one of the finest console RPGs of all time has been cranked up to overdrive and these new screens show the fruits of Bethesda's labour. But it's not just new imagery...

Patrick Stewart has signed up to voice the King, although this could be a short cameo as the character and his sons cop it early on (er, spoilers!), assassinated by dark forces who then open the gates to Hell. It's up to you to find the heir to the throne and save the land from complete destruction. And it'll be tough – *Morrowind* provided 16 square miles of gorgeous game-world to navigate and *Oblivion* is delivering even more.

If you're worried about wandering about blindly on foot, fear not, young Quester. A teleporting mechanic and dynamic compass that highlights objectives and places of potential interest ensure that it doesn't feel like you're wandering around some demon-infested version of Dartmoor without a map or flask of tea.

Once again you can expect *Oblivion* to deliver big time on constructing the backstory to a huge fantasy world. There are over 400 books to be found in the game that outline the lore of Tamriel, although if you can't be arsed scrolling through the sheaves you'll pick up bits and bobs by talking to and eavesdropping on townsfolk. There are only just over a thousand of 'em, y'know.

And in a rare move for an RPG, Bethesda is putting a lot of stock into a realistic physics engine. Why? According to dev boffins it'll make the world more believable and make triggering traps or stealing items easier. From all accounts it'll most benefit those who adopt a stealthier approach. We're heading to the States for a hands-on playtest next issue. Until then, gorge yourself on these bootiful screenshots. ■



GREMLINS? Expect to encounter many weird and the wonderful creatures.



## HOT 360 NEWS

OFF THE PRESSES. IN HERE.



## SONY TO MAKE 360 MACHINES?

Xbox 360 may be licensed out for use by third parties, according to Bill Gates as he spoke in Japan. Using a similar model to the way they license Windows out to PC manufacturers, it was suggested that the software - which provides games, content download, Xbox LIVE communications, music, movie and photo playback plus interfacing with other portable devices via USB - could be used for all sorts of hardware from phones to TVs. Curious.



## NO XBOX CONTROLLER COMPATIBILITY

Microsoft has confirmed that Xbox controllers will not be compatible with Xbox 360. It seems that the new 360 controller, with additional shoulder buttons replacing the black and white buttons on the current controller, is considered the pinnacle of controller style by Microsoft BigWigs and nothing else will do. Or rather, they can make a few more quid by flogging you new pads.



## MARVEL-OUS

Microsoft has signed a deal with comic publishing giant Marvel that will bring some 5,000 comic book characters from the Marvel universe to MMOGs (Massive Multiplayer Online Games) developed by Microsoft Game Studios for the 360. Blimey! Announced at the super-geek fest that is the San Francisco Comic Convention (we secretly wish we could have been there), the deal will not only see familiar Super Heroes such as Spidey and the X-Men appearing as playable characters in 360 titles but also a massive selection of ridiculously named baddies and monsters too. As yet there are no details as to what the games will be (fighters and RPGs appear the most likely) or indeed if games are actually in development but the news will certainly delight comic fans. More when we get it.



## NINE TENTHS OF THE LAW

28 DAYS AND ONE NEW CONSOLE  
LATER... *POSSESSION*.

**P**ossession was gruesomely good fun when we had an early playtest at E3. As chief zombie, you're able not only to take the hapless human race for every nutritious ounce of grey matter you can dig your maggot-infested teeth into, but then to command them as they come back from the grave, slowly building up your own undead army with which to rampage through the city, adding a tactical side to the game.

But this is not enough for Blitz entertainment. Since showing the game at E3, a new layer to the game engine has been that would put *Possession* far ahead of its shuffling, groaning competitors, if there were any competitors in such a strange genre.

The new 'Flame' technology has allowed the outfit to fully exploit the potential of 360 and really ramp up the gritty zombie feel. Usually when you play a game, characters feel solid – which is good – but it's not enough. They need to feel *organic*. And although that might seem an ironic term to use given the fact that our heroes are all well past their sell by date, the results are amazing. Animation is subtle, with even minor movements simulated impressively. More importantly, the skin of the actual characters is dynamic; it slides, it moves, it stretches, and even degrades. By using multiple layers of textures Blitz has managed to successfully create the illusion that when you rip at a zombies skin, you're cutting through more than just a single polygon layer. Combine this with the latest in physics affecting every individual limb and you've got a game that is going to make *Soldier Of Fortune 2* look like a Barbie Playset in the gore and gross-out stakes. This is one you definitely won't want the little ones to cast their innocent eyes on... ■



WWW IN UNION

# BROAD HORIZONS

TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO DEVELOPER HAS GONE BEFORE? IT'S EASY, IF YOU EMBRACE BROADBAND, RECKON WEBZEN.

**D**espite the fact that its games are just a blip on Xbox 360's still fairly distant horizon, Korean developer Webzen has already established itself as one of the console's key developers. Even before the announcement of the console, the

studio embraced Microsoft's vision of a combined online interface and made this the bedrock of their next-gen games *Huxley* and *Crackdown* (formerly known as *All Points Bulletin*).

*Huxley*, announced exclusively back in XBW26, is an MMO (massively multiplayer



## HOT 360 NEWS

OFF THE PRESSES. IN HERE.



### DEATH TO MASTER LEAGUE?

Our eagle-eyed, cat-like, stealthy undercover journo (alright, Nellis) has discovered (whisper) that Sega are bringing the acclaimed *Football Manager* to 360. Don't be put off by the bland title, this is the best footy management sim bar none; developed by the best brains in the business – chiefly the heroes who used to make *Championship Manager* (before it went shit, obviously). 360's hard drive can cope with the masses of data, and USB support means a mouse to make navigation easier would be a welcome addition.



### ICE ICE BABY

EA and 2K Sports are set for a right royal rumble as both publishers begin dishing out details on their respective American sports titles. Official ice hockey, basketball and American football titles are on the way from both parties and there's presumably a big enough market in the States for the both of them. Presumably. What do we know, it's not cricket or footie! Joke. Heh. We were lucky enough to see 2K's *NHL 2K6* in action during a recent visit to the publisher's offices and it's looking very fine indeed. Of particular note was the way in which the ice would become roughed up by the skaters as the game went on. It's the little things...



### GHOST SIGHTING CONFIRMED

The amazing looking *Ghost Recon 3* has a new name. And it's so completely different that it's almost unrecognisable! It's, um, *Ghost Recon 3: Advanced Warfighter*. Hmm. Granted, it's good to make it clear what your game is all about – warfare relying primarily on cutting edge battlefield technology – but it's a bit uninspiring. We would have called it *Ghost Recon 3: Death Of The Nefarious Dr. McPsycho*. Well maybe not, but cripes, would you publishers at least attempt to let a little artistic direction into game branding? Please?

online) shooter, the like of which has never before been seen on consoles, while *Crackdown* is giving us what we've always wanted – gunfights and car chases in an open city with hundreds of other players. If that sounds a little like multiplayer *Grand Theft Auto*, that's not a bad thing – the game comes from David Jones, the man behind the original *GTA* series, so make no bones about 'the risks that come with ambition' – this man has a vision and the team to help him realise it are Webzen. In Korea, MMO gaming is a national pastime, so we can presume that the titles are in safe hands.

Both of these games have grasped Microsoft's vision for a branch of gaming that brings gamers together through the magic of the interweb. Ours is a pastime that is already divided across multiple formats, so anything that reunites us is theoretically a good thing. Don't feel short-changed that the games are

going to appear on PC as well as 360. Shame you won't be able to slap the PC gamers online...

Or will you? Our source told us that Webzen is planning to lobby Microsoft to allow Xbox LIVE to communicate with the PC-based servers – in this they would be all but guaranteed to have the largest number of MMO gamers on any game ever, potentially doubling the number of players and ensuring that we will never be short of thousands of gamers to play, day or night. Good news for 360 owners; they'd have the best looking, most powerful version of the game and a broader selection of arsensals to whip on it. This is the future, you know.

You can now get broadband for less than the price of your missus' monthly haircut, so if she kicks up a fuss, don't take no for an answer. 360 is going to redefine gaming. The least you can do is not get caught with your internet trousers down when it arrives. ■

### PRICE IS RIGHT

With this type of gaming, developers have to continue working hard on the product long after its release to update the gameworld and provide a stream of fresh content, which, in the PC gaming world, means a nominal monthly subscription fee is required. Nothing has been confirmed, but we'd certainly expect that to be the case with games of this magnitude. And it's worth it to see a game you love continually getting better and better, agreed?



# CONDE

**Bloody Hell! As Sega's serial killer thriller steps out from the shadows, we brave a trip to the dark side and get our hands very, very dirty.**

WORDS **NICK ELLIS**



# MINTED

**I**

n the flickering half-light of a grimy corridor in a run down tube station, a crazed maniac jumps out from behind a corner and hits our hero full in the face with a length of lead piping, the weapon meeting flesh with a sickening and horribly realistic squelchy thud. In the demo room of Sega's London office, mercifully tepid coffee flies upwards from a mug before gravity takes hold and a videogame hack of somewhat nervous disposition watches helplessly as a once crisp and bright white shirt develops an unpleasant brown stain all across its front. Why oh why didn't we ask to see the new *Sonic The Hedgehog* game instead?

Why? Because *Condemned* is one of the many titles that will be competing for your attention (and cash) come 360 launch day, and you need to know if it's

worth sticking in the list marked 'must play' or if it should be filed under 'check the bargain bins in January'. Despite the game causing us to ruin some perfectly good linen, on current evidence we're pencilling it in for the 'must play' category. And we'll remember to wear a scruffy black sweatshirt the next time we get our hands on it.

## PRIME SUSPECT

The start of *Condemned* could have been lifted from any one of a dozen paperback thrillers. The hero, Agent Thomas of the FBI's Serial Crimes Unit, suffers a blackout while out investigating a case with two partners. When he comes to, the other two agents are dead and he's holding the smoking gun that killed them. Yep, it's his gun. The call is put out that Thomas needs to be captured and charged with their murder but not

everyone at the bureau believes he's guilty and communicating by phone, faithful colleagues conspire to help Thomas evade his pursuers and hunt down the real culprit.

And that's going to be real easy, right? Of course it isn't, because standing in your way are the Condemned of the title – a collection of junkies, hoodlums, hobos and downright nasty bastards intent on tearing holes in your flesh and cracking your bones. While for the most part the Condemned retain a human appearance, there's something distinctly otherworldly about them. Could it be that they're under the control of something... demonic? Yes, it probably could. Anyway, of this world or not, the Condemned are fast, relentless and utterly savage.

Although played from a first-person perspective, a shooter



# Killer Instinct

Not that you'd guess it from the generally horrific looking screens, but a large chunk of *Condemned* involves seeking out clues in order to progress through the game and discover who or what is behind the series of killings you were investigating before you got stitched up for the murder of two fellow agents. You'll get some outside help from mates back at the FBI and they'll sometimes point you in the right direction or give out handy advice. But in the

main you'll have to rely on your cop instincts and a handy piece of techie forensic kit that will record and analyse the clues you locate, as can be seen below.



> this most certainly is not. Yes there are firearms in the game – shotguns, pistols, etc – but ammo is very, very scarce and in the main it's melee weapons that you'll be using to fight off the attentions of your pursuers. Likewise, it's melee weapons that the Condemned will be trying to beat your brains out with. From table legs and piping to spades and length of wood with nails sticking out the end, whatever comes to hand can be used. And if you haven't got a head-mashing implement you'll have to use your hands (time it right when an enemy is in shock and you can use your mitts to snap his/its neck in a 'finishing' move which, as you might have guessed, is pretty gruesome to behold).

The more fragile of these handheld weapons will degrade over time and ultimately break, but when they're in full working order the effects are, well, gruesome. Connect with an enemy face and you'll see them reel back in pain as blood spurts from the wound and the worryingly convincing sound effects make you

recoil in a fit of nausea. Lovely. As we're finding with many 360 games, the character models are incredibly lifelike in their movements and this further adds to *Condemned's* tabloid-baiting grimness.

## GIVE US A CLUE

But it's not all about the violence, there's a mystery that needs unravelling in order to clear Thomas' good name – and where there's a mystery there are clues to solve it. The game leads you through a series of suitably eerie and unpleasant locations, most of which are run down, poorly lit and full of shadowy nooks and crannies where anything could be lying in wait for you. And usually is.

You'll need to search each area to harvest the clues and move on, and to aid you you've got your natural detective instincts (a 'hot and cold' bar will appear when you're near a clue, shifting according to how close you are) and also a piece of FBI kit that will scan and analyse the clue, be it a fingerprint, blood or

tissue sample, or a document.

And this is where things get interesting. As you go deeper into the game and stack up these clues, Thomas begins to get flashbacks and visions. You'll notice some of the more disturbing screens on these pages are in black and white. They're not examples of concept artwork, they're in-game shots of when Thomas is having a vision – reliving a past moment when a particularly nasty killing occurred in the area he's currently exploring. Was the person or being responsible for the killings also responsible for setting you up for the murder of your colleagues? Well that's the mystery, and we wouldn't want to spoil the surprise even if we knew the answer.

## SMOOTH CRIMINALS

What *Condemned* doesn't offer is a revolution in gameplay. The third-person perspective and melee combat has been a staple of gaming forever and the clue gathering is, ostensibly, just a single step on from the usual 'key card



## ROGUES GALLERY

Sick, twisted and wrong. We loves it!



**FRIENDS LIKE THESE** Handily, your enemies are so out of control that they'll frequently start scrapping with each other, leaving you to watch and laugh.



**OH DEAR** *Condemned* has already been, er, condemned by the tabloid press for gratuitously violent and frighteningly realistic images like this. Pussies.



**NAIL POLISH** All of the weapons are brutal in their own way but nothing quite hits the spot like a plank of wood with nails wedged in the end. Sorry, love.

and rusty crank' collecting that has been a staple of the survival horror genre since *Resident Evil* on the PS1. However, what *Condemned* DOES offer by the body bag full is atmosphere and ring-tightening tension.

When we were creeping through a disused tube station with just a plank of wood for protection, water dripping from the partially working light fittings in the ceiling while half-glimpsed figures scurried past filthy windows on their way to greet us in the worst possible fashion, and seconds later we were flinging coffee skywards and trying not to look too embarrassed about it in front of the giggling Sega types in the room, that's when it struck us that *Condemned* is shaping up to be something a little bit special.

The graphical detail, the lighting effects, the character models, the sound, the level design; they all combine to make for a game that begs to be played after hours with the lights off, the Dolby system cranked up to max and a good stock of clean clothing nearby. **XEW**





## GRAVEYARD SMASH

# MONSTER MADNESS

IT'S PARTY TIME IN THIS FOUR-PLAYER CORPSE BOTHERER.

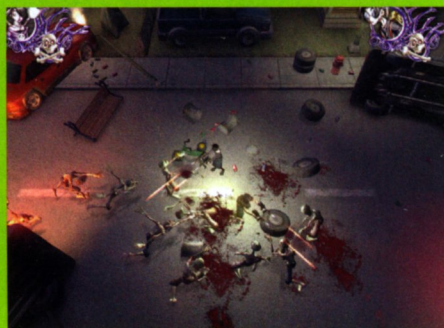
■ **DEVELOPER** Artificial Studios  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** TBC  
 ■ **ETA** Spring 2006

Plausibility and zombies are not utterances you could make in the same breath, so the plot of Artificial Studios' forthcoming four-player mash-'em-up – involving parents out of town, planned teeny parties and uninvited guests – is as throwaway as a free ringtone leaflet. There's no apology forthcoming for the silly circumstances as to how, from this, you come to be blasting merry hell out of Satan's undead underlings, but that's what this game is about. Shooting. Lots of shooting.

*Monster Madness* is like a next-gen *Robotron* – the main difference being that it's 3D and you can shoot unsavoury hell-spawn above and below you, as well as all around. The big hit is the four-player co-operative

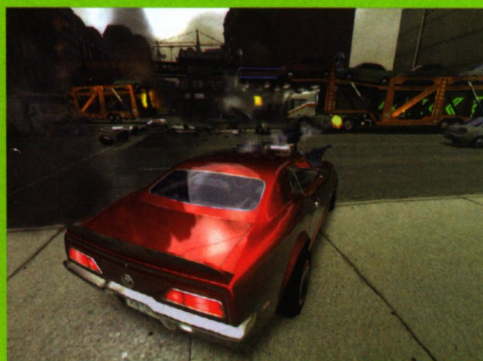
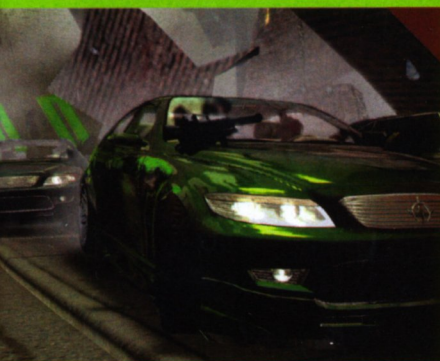
online play, allowing you to mix it up with the monsters with team-mates based locally or online, or both. With the onus on shooting, you are able to customise your weapons using additional parts flung out from defeated bosses. These can then be stored and carried across in subsequent games on higher difficulty levels to glean better, rarer parts to construct the ultimate zombie-wasting weapon.

There are five themed areas to forcefully reclaim from the nasties, including suburban streets, high schools and shopping malls, with each one hiding a beastly boss lurking with intent at the end. It's not all foot-based fighting either because you can commandeer abandoned vehicles, attach pointy spears and ram them at speed into salivating scum that probably ate the Green Cross Code Man rather than heed his advice. All



this anarchic action will be brought to us in full Shader Model 3.0-o-vision, which translates as dynamically-lit, dingy worlds shrouded in shadowy eeriness. But with a palette of intestinal goriness with which to paint the walls a vivid shade of red, the future's certainly looking bright for this next-gen party piece.





## BANGERS AND CRASH


# FULL AUTO

WE THRASH THE WHEELS OFF SEGA'S OPERA OF AUTO DESTRUCTION.

DEVELOPER SEGA  
PUBLISHER SEGA  
ETA November

You'd be forgiven for thinking that this 'cars with guns' number looks like a typically shallow launch title with little substance or originality and only fancy new graphics to distinguish it from an old Xbox game. And if you did think this, you'd be right. It is indeed shallow and there is indeed little substance or originality. The thing is though, it's incredibly good fun.

Featuring a range of motors from pseudo Hummers to pseudo Cadillacs, all of which come equipped with body-mounted machine guns and various types of explosive projectile, the aim of the game is simple: race very quickly around a city, attempt to beat your rival racers by outdriving and outgunning them and while you're about it, cause as much destruction to the environment as possible. And of course it's fully online enabled for up to eight players in a variety of race types. Lovely job, itthankyouverymuch.

The vehicles handle in an unashamedly arcade fashion – *Forza* it ain't – and negotiating corners is no more challenging than feathering the brakes, power-sliding then jumping back on the gas. Which is grand because it lets you focus on the real matter at hand – blowing stuff up to earn points. You fire your machine guns with  but it's a little trickier with the projectile weapons. The right analogue stick is used to direct your cursor to the desired target, be it a building, another racer or a train you happen to spot crossing a bridge in front of you, and as it stands at the moment you actually unleash your fury by clicking in the stick, although this is likely to be mapped to the new second trigger buttons in the final version. Good job too because it's a little fiddly.

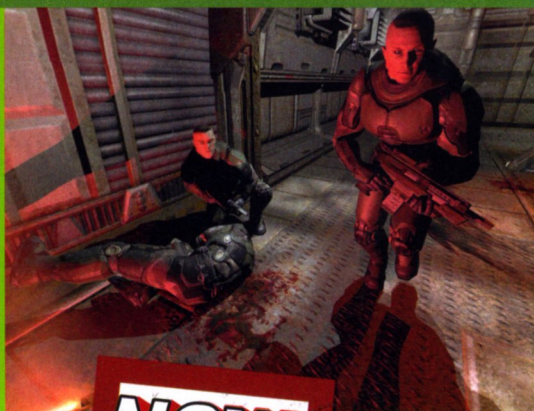
So, simple stuff, but we thoroughly enjoyed whiling away a few hours with *Full Auto*. The single player career mode may prove to be but a passing distraction but this has the potential to be a multiplayer and online mini-classic. Cars + guns + mates = good.

ADDED EXTRAS This one comes with an H-bomb. Oh, okay, we made that up.



ROAD WARRIOR You could do with one of these tool-up beauties on the M25.





The latest video for *Quake 4* reveals every aspect of the game's full gory glory. It's full of split-screen flashes of disquieting horror. Naturally, we've captured them all for your enjoyment...

QUAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL

# QUAKE 4

NEW  
PICS!

CAN ID'S MASTERPIECE STILL MAKE THE EARTH QUAKE?

■ DEVELOPER RAVEN/ID  
■ PUBLISHER ACTIVISION  
■ ETA 2006

While Epic's *Gears of War* has skipped happily on over to the third-person side of things, Id's showpiece FPS series has only ever wanted to do one thing – create mountains of first person action, explosions and gore then keep you as close to it all as (in)humanly possible. That mission hasn't changed. Things have just gotten a whole lot darker, louder, and more violent. But are we complaining? Are we hell.

So, how do things stand? We already know that you're a bad-ass marine caught up in the battle between the psycho-cyborg Strogg and the forces of planet Earth. Which is all well and good, but many people criticised aspects of the game's first showing. By using Id's own *Doom 3* engine,

developers Raven implied that its title would suffer from the same shortcomings; an onscreen enemy count capped at three, tiny corridor based levels and no squad or vehicle dynamics.

What we've now seen certainly quashes all of these rumours. For starters, the outdoor locations are stunning – think of that outdoor monorail section from *Doom 3* on a massive scale – and with such open environments comes an equally impressive enemy count to fill them. Details are sketchy, but since we know the game will feature a squad dynamic, and the number of enemies seen in the trailers already released are said to be less than half the final number, we're expecting more than 20 enemies knocking around in the bigger fights.

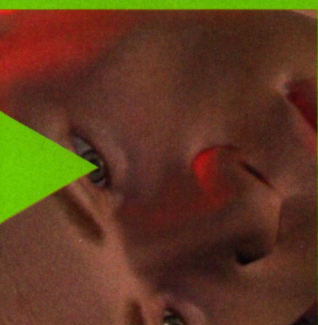
The squad combat is excellent, serving chiefly not to confuse you by adding layers of command, but to ratchet up the terror with a group of men going into rooms ahead of you, and

possibly dying in front of your eyes. This serves two functions – by putting the typical solo action in context, it makes your isolation when fighting alone feel that much more complete, and it also allows you to see how horrifying the Strogg executions are from a third-person view, increasing your fear of being killed and hence bumping the dread levels to the five star mark.

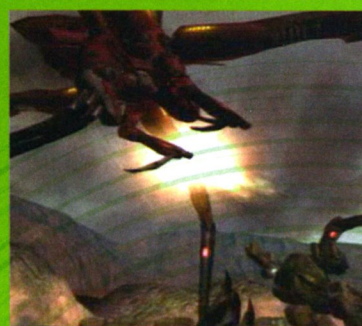
Also shown are controllable vehicles [including a *MechAssault* style walker] and the return of *Quake*'s trademarks gibbs, where foes vanish into chunky clouds instead of being physically dismembered.

We've also learned that the multiplayer will be a new version of that first seen in *Quake 3* – in other words frighteningly fast, solo-orientated, lethal deathmatch action. *Gears of War* might be hogging the top of your most wanted list but *Quake 4* certainly looks like it's biding its time for an overtaking manoeuvre.

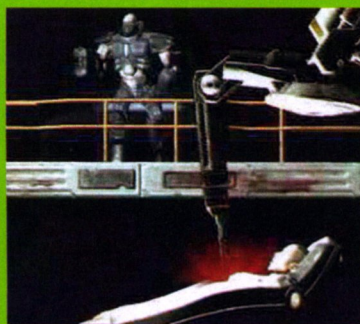




Things kick off with our man pensively waiting for war. He doesn't have to wait long before things get violent in a big way, and his squad are caught in battle after battle.



A few scenes of tortured human faces and the horrible Strogg Implant surgery are interspersed with continued mayhem on a gruesome scale.



The best is saved until last; controllable vehicles, massive battlefields and one spooky Strogg freak who looks like Sam Fisher having a very, very, very bad day.





# PREY

Having roamed the wilderness for nearly a decade, *Prey* is being pounced upon and devoured by the snarling beast that is 360.

WORDS RYAN BUTT



7

here is satisfaction to be gleaned from any job, no matter how soul-destroying. Why, only the other month we spied one happy chappie merrily emptying the Glastonbury port-a-loos of all their junk-food-congested dung, gleefully explaining that, "It's a tough job, but someone's gotta do it" and "you get to meet all kinds of interesting people..." But some folk aren't content to fester at the bottom rung of the employment ladder. They want more...

Tommy, a garage mechanic of Cherokee descent and the pivotal figure in 2K Games's forthcoming 360 opus, *Prey*, is just such a person, snail-like in the 'going nowhere fast' stakes. But then with a sudden flip of fate – admittedly quite a big one in the form of a marauding alien mothership – his life is turned around and he has new incentive, fresh purpose and a league of life-sapping space demons behind him to force him into a dramatic career change – that of Earth saviour.

Languishing in development hell for nearly a decade, *Prey* began life as an ambitious new project for *Duke Nukem* creator 3D Realms way back in 1997. Since then, changes in personnel and limitations of existing hardware meant that the seeds of promise couldn't come to fruition. But now, with Human Head Studios [of *Dead Man's Hand* fame] handling the development and with 3D Realms overseeing the project, technology has caught up with the creative demands and the 360 is the platform of choice to deliver *Prey* to a predatory audience that expects.

Taking the *Doom III* engine and bouncing it around like a tennis ball, *Prey* enables giddy gamers to traverse ground, walls, whatever (the line of sight reverts to an even plane, but then you look back and





see where you've just been, which is now directly above your right shoulder] thanks to 'gravity paths' which are inherent in the technology of the alien vessel Tommy's trapped within. Walking into one of these devices creates instant disorientation, you could be walking normally into a gravity path and just as you hit it, the orientation shifts and it's like the ship is doing an almighty forward roll. You never quite know which way is up and which is down, which conveys the sense that you are rattling around in surrounds not of this world perfectly.

### MORTALS AND PORTALS

Another key aspect of *Prey*'s gameplay are the portals. You are initially fooled into thinking that these are mere space rips that alien adversaries emerge from to hunt you down. While this is true – and they could appear any



time, any place, anywhere – closer inspection reveals them to be gateways to other areas within the ship. However, what lies beyond may not necessarily share the same perspective as the area you're in and you could be looking at a new, completely upside-down domain. Walk *through* the portal and it's like you've just dropped down into a manhole. Confused? Imagine how Tommy feels!

The ship itself is a Dyson Sphere, essentially a hollow ball with a small sun in the centre. It is also totally organic – pulsating, swelling and growing around the various structures created by the inhabitants within. Inhabitants who have a symbiotic relationship with the ship, providing it with food in return for sanctuary. Inhabitants who would kill on a whim to protect it. It's good news for no one then when a certain tasty morsel abducted for evelenses decides to fight back and bounce the ball back into outer orbit.

### ETHEREAL THE EVER-READY

Before Tommy can set about saving his people and mankind itself, he must get reacquainted with his spiritual powers – those from his long-forgotten birthright that have become as rusty as the wrenches he wields. It is these

**"What Spielberg would have liked for Close Encounters – if he'd had the budget..."**

# Eagle eyes

In a slight shift from the original 1997 concept for *Prey*, when the central character was called Talon, Human Head Studios has now assigned this handle to Tommy's totem animal sidekick. Well, perhaps 'sidekick' is too buddy a term because Talon is essentially the spirit of a hawk who is on hand to guide you through the spacecraft and help decipher the alien-speak scrawled around your surrounds, in which the

messages conveyed may hold vital clues as to how a tricky puzzle to inaccessible gateways may be overcome.



such powers – drawn from authentic Cherokee mythology – that put another spin on *Prey*.

When Tommy inevitably reaches a seemingly non-passable point, his 'hoya-ha-ha-hoya' heritage comes into play. With access denied to his physical form, Tommy can unleash an ethereal spirit form to breach the barrier and find a means beyond of bypassing the obstacle. While it's true to say that the game's eight-odd years in development hell have stifled the impact of such innovations (soul-casting puzzle-solving certainly couldn't be construed as being cutting-edge now, as games like *Second Sight* have done it effectively enough), it is the style and panache with which such feats are executed that makes it seem fresh.

Momentarily leaving his physical form (preferably not out in the open where his body is still susceptible to enemy bombardment), Tommy's spirit can ghost, stealth-like, behind camped-out enemies and take them down with a well-aimed arrow from his longbow. While in this spookily see-through state he can also trigger switches to make alternate escape routes accessible. But as his physical body is constantly at risk from alien beings that pop out from anywhere in seemingly random fashion, you're forced to constantly weigh up the risks of going all-out in the open

or shadow-dance stealthily in the spirit world. Further reaffirmation of your native American roots comes when Tommy falls in combat. Rather than simply reloading your last saved game, Human Head has cleverly incorporated a 'Deathwalk' sequence whereby you must shoot down similarly lost spirits in order to replenish your physical health. A nice touch, although we suspect you'll be visiting the groaning ghoul land rather a lot.

So, eight years in the making, can *Prey*, this singular, topsy-turvy adventure, really deliver nearly a decade's worth of expectations? Absolutely. The locations, weaponry (most of which is living) and fusion of frenetic firing action and puzzle-solving all set at a pulsating pace with an ever-present accompanying sense of paranoia, make this game the ideal vehicle to showcase the 360's all-encompassing might.

You only have to watch the game's disorientating pivotal abduction sequence to know that the developer, Human Head Studios, means business. It's big scale, high drama and undoubtedly what Mister Stevie Spielberg himself would have liked to have done in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* had his budget stretched further than a wind machine, some mashed potato and a few dozen torches. And that's just the start of it. Believe! **X&W**

## CHILD'S PLAY.

Kids not playing nicely. At all.



**THE KID APPEARS** Hello there little lady! Lost your mum, have you? Oh. Oh God. It's going to be like that bit in the school in the first *Silent Hill*, isn't it? Shit.



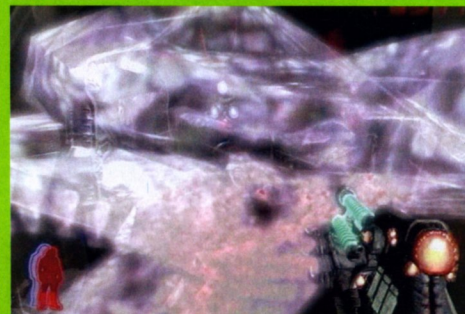
**GLOW FOR IT** How unfortunate, you appear to have been possessed by some kind of ghostly demon thing. Must be all that Sunny Delight you drink.



**A FRIEND IN NEED** Hmm, your eyes have started to glow. But that's sweet, you've gone over to help the little lad who was knocked down by the ghost.



**NOT THAT FRIENDLY AFTER ALL** Oh Christ, you've gone and thrown him onto a long spike. That is, like, really gross, the way his guts are leaking out.



**PLEASE LEAVE** Brilliant. Now you've actually turned into one of these demon ghost things and are trying to suck my soul out. The youth of today. Tsk.

## NEED FOR SEED

The most comprehensive tennis sim ever takes to the 360 court on launch day with all the real pros, all the proper arenas and enough gameplay options to fill Henman Hill. Create a player and take them to Grand Slam glory in the spectacular single player tour or smash it out with your mates in the marvellously addictive multiplayer mode.





## COURT SUMMONS

# TOP SPIN 2

XBW goes hands-on with the big hitting sequel.

- **DEVELOPER** PAM
- **PUBLISHER** 2K Sports
- **ETA THIS WINTER**

Truth be told, we have trouble caring about tennis outside of the Wimbledon fortnight, and even then the numerous dickheads in the SW1 crowd render the games unwatchable with the sound on. Give us old fashioned, tuneless football chants over the nauseating "C'mon Tim!" brigade any day of the week. But we do care about *Top Spin 2*, follow-up to the acclaimed Xbox title of the same name which became something of a cult classic and still endures today. Unlike Henman and Rusedski.

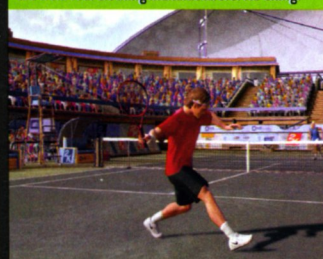
At Take 2's offices in sunny Windsor we had our first chance to take the game for a – heh – spin and found that, like Maria Sharapova, it's all looking very desirable. Perhaps most noteworthy at this stage is the detail which has gone into creating the player models. All of the pros from Andy Roddick to Serena Williams have been built from the inside outwards, with

the developers creating a skeleton, then adding muscle (which flexes realistically as the player moves around the court) and finally laying the skin over the top (which likewise stretches as the muscles flex). Up close, the texture detail in the incredibly accurate faces – scars, spots, stubble 'n all – is enough to make you spill your strawberries and cream.

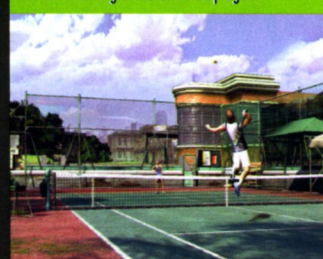
It's the ability to realise this level of detail in a game that's setting 360 apart from previous consoles but of course that's not the even half the battle. The game's got to play well! Unsurprisingly, that's exactly what *Top Spin 2* is doing at the moment. There's no revolution here (it's tennis, after all), instead all the things that characterised the original as a must-play title have been upgraded and enhanced, both on and off court. Risk shots and advanced moves such as diving for a ball are now all in your hands rather than being activated in context by the CPU and the scope for creating your own player or setting up tournaments, both on and offline, is huge. Like young Andy Murray, it's looking very promising.



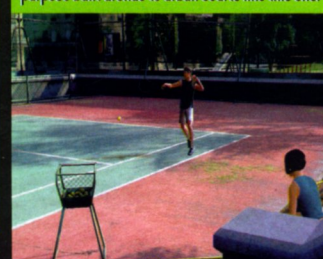
**VEST IN SHOW** All the pro's sport togs and shoes are from real clothing manufacturers. Ka-ching!



**FEDERER EXPRESS** The Swiss tennis robot featured heavily in the demo we played.



**GHETTO BLASTER** Settings vary from imposing, purpose built arenas to urban courts like this one.



**HELLO SAILOR** The 2K Sports PR executive let slip that Graham Norton is a playable character.





**LOOKS LIKE TROUBLE** In true *HOTD* style, bosses are as big as they are ugly.

**DEAD SHOT**

# THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD 4

WHO LIVES IN A HOUSE LIKE THIS? RAVENOUS ZOMBIES, THAT'S WHO.

■ **DEVELOPER** Sega  
■ **PUBLISHER** Sega  
■ **ETA** TBC

Instead of simply moving home – or better yet, catching the first plane out of Zombieland and renting a nice, safe little des-res cave in *The Middle Of Nowhere* – Sega has once again knocked on the house marked 'Cannibal Holocausts R Us' and unleashed hordes of evil undead freaks on our asses. Run for the hills!

Yep, the classic lightgun shoot-'em-up is back for a fourth round of carnage, and our trigger finger is already starting to twitch and jerk like a footballer's groin in a Newcastle nightclub. For what it's worth, the 'story'

involves hero James Taylor (not the MOR '70s music legend) and his female sidekick blasting every undead monster that staggers, crawls and flies their way as they attempt to escape a post-apocalyptic wasteland.

Not exactly Chekhov then, but why fart about with a plot when all we're interested in is unloading relentless bullet-death on wave after wave of monsters? You know the score by now: rising tension, sweaty desperation, ultra-satisfying gore-splashing head shots and a finger that throbs with violent glee. Sega is promising beautifully sick visuals and the biggest variety of branching paths the series has ever offered. Looks like the king of lightgun games is coming back with a bang.

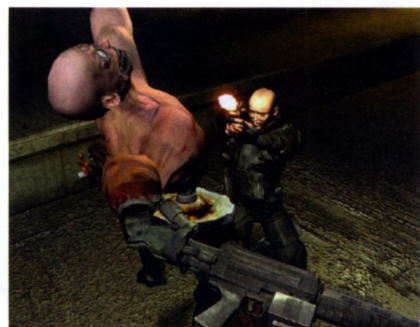
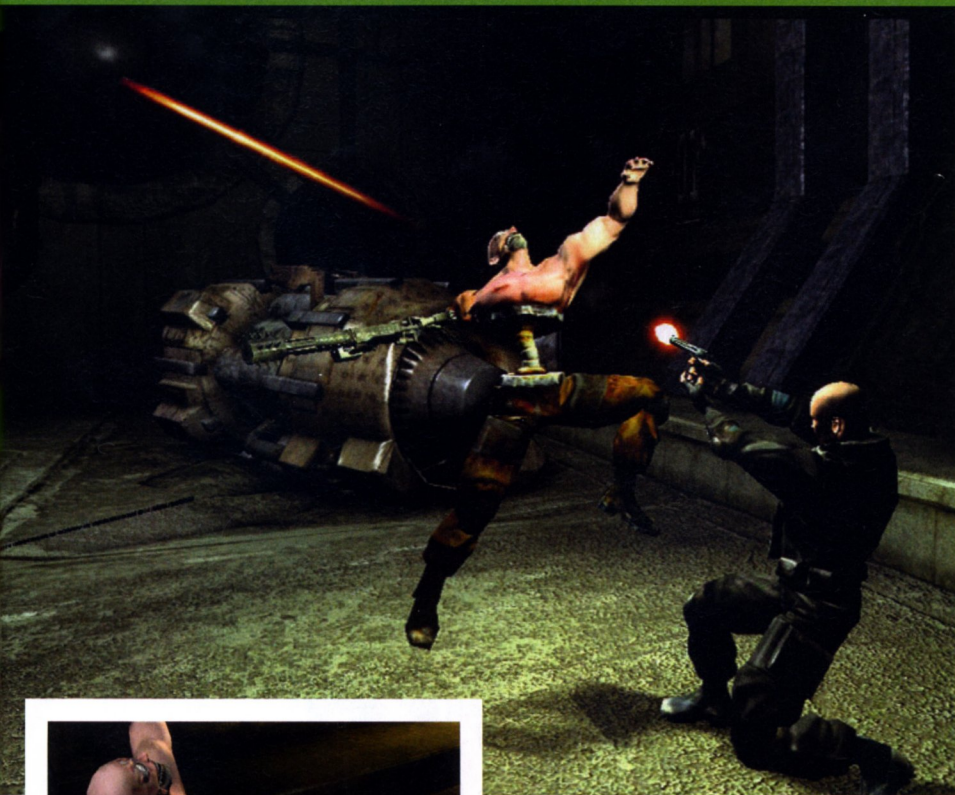


**BUMP 'N' GRIND** Zombie pole dancing – very wrong yet strangely erotic.



**SHOOT TO THRILL** Follow the old porno maxim and "aim for the face."





#### THE HARD CELL

# CELLFACTOR

THE GRITTIEST FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER SINCE THE LAST ONE.

■ **DEVELOPER** Immersion Software & Graphics  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** TBA  
 ■ **ETA** 2007

Not due for release until the space year 2007 – when we'll all be teleporting to work of a morning and downloading perfect organic replicas of Kristin Kreuk (as naked as the day she was born) – *CellFactor* is a first-person shooter with epithets like 'dark', 'gritty' and 'brutal' coming out of its keister.

The plot sees LIMBO corp, the world's biggest (and shadiest) military contractor, gathering all of its

members for a meeting in a remote island base. The Global Unit Of Armed Response (GUARD) sends a commando unit to investigate. But after losing all contact with the team GUARD call on the main man, Major Dante Aligheiri – a commando with expertise in tactical warfare, infiltration, hand to hand combat and the use of all kinds of weapons and explosives.

What happens next is shrouded in mystery (either that or the developers haven't finalised the plot yet). But judging from the screens we can expect a heady mix of stealth, blasting action and battles with rifle-armed freaks. *Splinter Cell* meets *Half-Life*? Possibly.



#### THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

# DIABOLIQUE: LICENSE TO SIN

IT'S BETTER THE DEVIL YOU KNOW...

■ **DEVELOPER** Metropolis  
 ■ **PUBLISHER** Schanz  
 ■ **ETA** TBC

"In *Diabolique* you're Dark Eaville, the best Special Agent in the service of His Majesty – the Devil." This quote from the *Diabolique* press release may be as garbled as a John Prescott speech but it ain't half an attention grabber. You play a character with the subtlety-slapping name Dark Eaville! You're some kind of Special Agent! And you serve the angel of the bottomless pit himself, Mr Satan! That's genius right there, we don't even care what the gameplay's like, the mere fact that – finally – we have a game that advocates devil worship is enough for us.

In case you're interested, though, the game is set around a battle for human souls between the forces of heaven and hell. Representing the hellboys, Dark Eaville gets to chase enemies in his bloody roadster and visit expensive restaurants, medieval castles and Alpine villages all in the name of evil. This demonic James Bond also has hi-tech gadgets, deadly weapons and supernatural powers at his disposal. Yeah, yeah, whatever. Pass us those runes and let's start the incantations right now – those virgins aren't going to sacrifice themselves.



HOLY MOLEY! Typically, this monk's gone straight for the knackers.





# TEST DRIVE UN





# LIMITED

HERE AT LAST: HANDS-ON, NO BULLSHIT EVIDENCE THAT 360 IS ABOUT SO MUCH MORE THAN GRAPHICAL POMPOSITIVITY. IT'S ABOUT CHANGING THE VERY WAY THAT WE PLAY GAMES.

WORDS DUNCAN LEIGH



W

e could call it any number of things. A dramatic break from tradition. A revolution, a point in gaming history that we'll look back on and say 'that was it, that was where it all changed.'

But we'll do none of these things. Instead, we'll just tell you what we said upon playing the game, which was one word, whispered quietly, in awe and in wide-eyed wonder. Blimey.

## HERE'S WHY

The cars look nigh-on real. The metallic paint on the bonnet of our Lamborghini Murcielago gleams. The wooden panels inside the car have a grain that seems to run inches deep. Hell, you can practically smell the leather. Using the right analogue stick, we can't help but glance around the absurdly detailed interior of our car as we cruise along a main road at a cool 80mph. We lower the window and the sound inside *actually changes* – that's thanks to engineers who have overlapped countless recorded noises for every function of every engine of every car in the game, as developer Eden Games' CEO Stephen Baudet very proudly tells us.

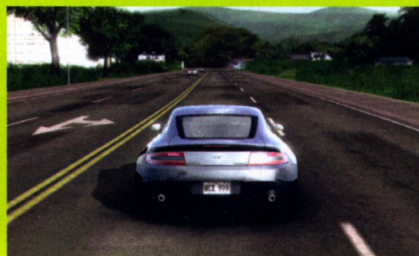
Since driving sims (far more than out-and-out racers) are really all about the cars, the importance of this can't be overestimated. In *Test Drive Unlimited*, the sounds are initially recorded on the road, and then are integrated with the game physics engine to ensure there's a noise for every possible type of car and road interaction. Put simply, these are



# Gaming By Numbers

**DON'T WANT YOUR MIND BLOWING? THEN LOOK AWAY NOW.**

- Over 1,100 miles of road
- 60km by 60km island
- Three hours to drive from end to end of the island
- Five hours to drive round the perimeter
- Around 25,000 players per server at once
- 16 players in a race (plus traffic!)
- 500+ member car-clubs
- Infinite race parameter combinations
- SIMS like technology architecture for massive expansion of the game using LIVE downloads
- Draw distance is nine-freaking-miles! That's only three short of what it is in the REAL-FREAKING-WORLD!
- What does it all mean? That on Xbox 1080 we'll see *all* of Britain rendered in our games? What next? The world? A few years ago such ideas would have seemed like the silly daydreaming of the technologically ignorant, but now? The sky's the limit, friends.



surely going to be the most convincing automobiles ever seen in gaming.

In more pertinent gameplay terms, the revolution starts at moment one; the game is set across the *entire* Hawaiian island of Oahu, painstakingly recreated from available satellite and topographical data, right down to road names and accurate, articulated trees. You buy yourself a house and a car and what you do from there on in is entirely up to you.

Buy clothes for your fully customisable avatar, go exploring to find shops selling car upgrades, reupholster or paint your machine, or accept a single-player driving mission to hone your skills for race day. Whatever.

## HELL FOR LEATHER

Whether you choose to race against AI drivers or against humans, if you have LIVE then you'll always be online because the actual gameworld is your lobby. Seriously.

The game keeps only the human players nearest to your position connected to you to make for a smooth experience, letting you drive around and issue on the spot challenges to any racer you wish.

From this juncture, you can either set an end point and race from where you are, or make a more personalised race with as many

checkpoints as you care to have, and manage the parameters until the racing experience is absolutely perfect for your specific motoring needs. The challenges let you customise just about any parameter of which you can possibly conceive. Opponents might have to have a certain type of car, be of a certain nationality, and not be allowed to leave the road on penalty of being cast out of the race. There are over a hundred more parameters, not to mention a slew of preset race modes for the lazy, like cat and mouse and capture the flag. It truly beggars belief.

For those wanting to do a bit more than just race one on one, you can view a list of all the challenges on the island, and teleport over to get to the race meet – read 'Gaming By Numbers' (just up there, look) and you'll see why this is a rather crucial feature. You can also cement your place in the multiplayer world and develop a real sense of belonging by joining a car club. They have their own clubhouse that only members can enter, a logo which members can proudly plaster on their ride and an overall team standing for the rankings tables. Club members can trade with each other at reduced prices, and race to contribute to the team ranking.

Despite all these layers of depth, *Test*

*Drive Unlimited* has already succeeded at a more basic level by achieving what no other driving game has ever managed – creating the thrill, the roar, the *freedom* of the open road. Every race, whether a global cup-defending title race or a throwaway challenge is a buzz. You might never want to leave this island.

## SPEED BUMPS AHEAD

Criticisms? The handling definitely needs a little more meat. It's great fun, but some cars aren't responsive enough for last minute traffic dodging, and the cars definitely, definitely need more differentiation in their handling (some of the more powerful motors need to be a little more unforgiving too) to make sure that there are suitable styles of car for everybody in the game.

That might sound like a biggie, but with five months to go until release, there's plenty of time to tweak the handling for the perfect balance of fun and difficulty.

We really, really want this to succeed. It's the most ambitious multiplayer console game ever attempted, and with a game of such scope, plenty could go wrong. But before you go wishing Eden Studios luck, bear in mind that we've seen the game and we're quietly confident that they won't need any...



# Game to Fame

**TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED IS GOING TO DEMOLISH CURRENT CONCEPTIONS OF GAME RANKINGS AND THE WAY WE SEE GAMES IN POP CULTURE. AND IT MIGHT JUST BE YOUR TICKET TO STARDOM... NOT BAD, EH?**



The 'one worldwide leader board' system is gone here. There are all kinds of divisions for different people, different abilities, private and locally set up competitions, international tournaments – the list goes on. Choice is good, y'see.



Remember how last issue we said you could stream live radio? Well, with the inclusion of a spectator mode, Eden reckon they can also broadcast to your television, letting the *TDU* community view important races.



The upshot of all this? *TDU* is going to feature dynamic, ever-changing in-game advertising for radio and TV stations, in exchange for which these companies will give updates on champions in, and changes to, the *TDU* scene.

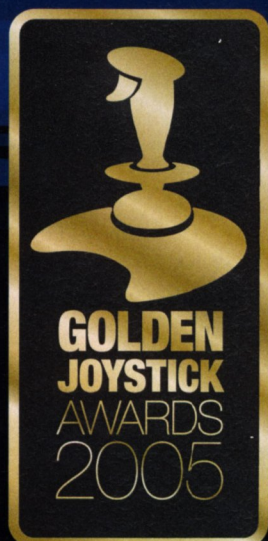


That's right. Your driving could honestly, genuinely earn you some kind of acclaim in the national media. Best make sure your car has had a wash and nip off to the virtual mall to make sure your avatar is looking his best then.

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It's easy! Simply text the two letter code which corresponds to the category you want to vote for, plus your chosen favourite to 80889. Don't forget to put a space between the code and your choice.

**EXAMPLE:** If you think Tekken 5 was the best PlayStation 2 game of the year, then text : **VA Tekken 5** to **80889** – don't forget to leave a space before you put in your favourite!

**PLAYSTATION 2 GAME OF THE YEAR**

TEXT: VA & THEN YOUR FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION 2 GAME TO 80889

**GAMECUBE GAME OF THE YEAR**

TEXT: VB & THEN YOUR FAVOURITE GAMECUBE GAME TO 80889

**HANDHELD GAME OF THE YEAR**

TEXT: VC & THEN YOUR FAVOURITE HANDHELD GAME TO 80889

**XBOX GAME OF THE YEAR**

TEXT: VD & THEN YOUR FAVOURITE XBOX GAME TO 80889

**PC GAME OF THE YEAR**

TEXT: VE & THEN YOUR FAVOURITE PC GAME TO 80889

**ONLINE GAME OF THE YEAR**

TEXT: VF & THEN YOUR FAVOURITE ONLINE GAME TO 80889

**BEST FILM-BASED GAME OF 2005**

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**BEST GAME SOUNDTRACK OF 2005**

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**PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR**

TEXT: VI & THEN YOUR FAVOURITE PUBLISHER TO 80889

**RETAILER OF THE YEAR**

TEXT: VJ & THEN YOUR FAVOURITE RETAILER TO 80889

**INNOVATION OF THE YEAR**

TEXT: VK & THEN YOUR FAVOURITE INNOVATION TO 80889

**THE ONE TO WATCH FOR XMAS 2005**

TEXT: VL & THEN YOUR ONE TO WATCH FOR XMAS TO 80889

**THE ONE TO WATCH FOR 2006**

TEXT: VM & THEN YOUR ONE TO WATCH FOR 2006 TO 80889

**ULTIMATE GAME OF 2005**

TEXT: VN & THEN YOUR ULTIMATE GAME OF 2005 TO 80889

**HERO OF 2005**

TEXT: VO & THEN YOUR HERO OF 2005 TO 80889

**VILLAIN OF 2005**

TEXT: VP & THEN YOUR FAVOURITE VILLAIN TO 80889

**THE GIRL'S CHOICE FOR 2005**

TEXT: VQ & THEN YOUR GIRLS CHOICE TO 80889



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# THE FASCIA

SONY-BAITING STYLE FOR THE 360 GENERATION

ISSUE 01



## YOUR DESIGNS WANTED!

Have you got a great idea for a 360 fascia? Of course you have! Do you want to see it on our back page? Of course you do! Whether you're a Photoshop wizard or handy with a pencil and paper, we want to see your creations. Send them to us at

either The Fascia, Xbox World, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW or email them to [xbw@futurenet.co.uk](mailto:xbw@futurenet.co.uk). Each month we'll pick our three fave designs, hand them to our art folks and splash them across this page. Prizes to be won!



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Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance  
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Batman Vengeance  
Blinx: The Time Sweeper  
Blood Omen 2  
BloodRayne  
Broken Sword 3: S. Dragon  
Brothers in Arms  
Bruce Lee: Quest Dragon  
Brute Force  
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds  
Buffy The Vampire Slayer  
Burnout 3: Takedown  
**C = 03**  
Call of Duty: Finest Hour  
Championship Manager '02  
Chronicles of Riddick  
Conflict: Vietnam  
Conker: Live & Reloaded  
Constantine  
Counterstrike  
Crimson Sea  
Crimson Skies  
Crouching Tiger, H. Dragon  
**D = 04**  
Dark Angel, J. Cameron's  
Dawn of Fate

Dead or Alive 3  
Dead or Alive Ultimate  
Dead to Rights  
Def Jam: Fight for New York  
Destroy All Humans  
Dino Crisis 3  
Doom III  
Dredd vs Death  
Driv3R  
Dungeon & Dragons: Heroes  
Elder Scrolls: Morrowind  
Enclave  
Enter the Matrix  
**F = 06**  
Fable  
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel  
Fantastic 4\*  
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FIFA Street Soccer  
Fight Night Round 2  
Finest Hour - Call of Duty  
**Forza Motorsport**  
Full Spectrum Warrior  
**G = 07**  
Ghost Master  
Ghost Recon  
Ghost Recon 2  
Ghost Recon: Island Thunder  
Goblin Commander  
Goldeneye: Rogue Agent  
**GTA: San Andreas**  
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City  
**H = 08**  
H. Potter & Chamber of Sec.  
H. Potter & Philosopher's St.

Halo  
**Halo 2**  
Headhunter: Redemption  
High Roller, Crazy Taxi 3  
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin  
Hitman 3: Contracts  
House of the Dead 3  
Hunter: The Reckoning  
**I = 09**  
Indiana Jones: Emp.'s Tomb  
**J = 10**  
Jade Empire  
James Bond 007: Nightfire  
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