



EXCLUSIVE **Playable Xbox** GAME DISC INSIDE!

COLIN McRAE RALLY 3

■ The best off-road racing on Xbox, play it for yourself!

PRO RACE DRIVER ■ A racing game with a story... check it out!

MOTOGP 2 ■ Get yer motor runnin' with this unbelievable demo.

TAO FENG ■ Bruise through this stunning fighter!



Official Xbox Magazine

**4 NEW
PLAYABLE
DEMOS**



HALO 2

THE WORLD EXCLUSIVE



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06

June 03 / Issue #19



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Only on Xbox

06 XBOX MUSIC MIXER

More than a game, this is an actual upgrade to your Xbox!

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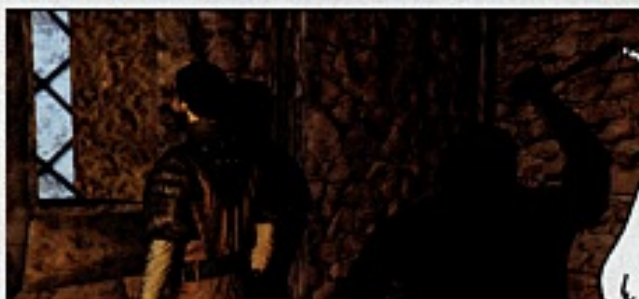
Ever wanted to fight a giant, drooling Rancor with two different-colored lightsabers? LucasArts is happy to oblige!

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E3 VIRTUAL TOUR

Brought to you in smell-o-vision. **Pg. 42**



MISS ME?

HALO 2 - THE WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

Get ready for a 14-page ride to the center of *Halo 2*. Uncover all the details, see the pictures, and dream the dream. **Page 22**



WAR GAMES

MEN OF VALOR

'Nam comes to life. **Pg. 56**



OW, MY FACE

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE II

Double Helix: Reviewed. **Pg. 76**



VROOM VROOM

MOTGP 2

Live and between your legs. **Pg. 80**



Inconceivable!

I do not think that word means what you think it does...

Prior to my visit to Bungie, it was inconceivable to me that anything in the world could be better than fried cheese dipped in cheese sauce. Now I realize that my wholly unhealthy snack dream is just food... not Halo 2. Much like every other game on Earth is just a game... not Halo 2.

For weeks prior to our visit, my dreams were haunted with the shiny images presented in the first trailer and fanatical visions of new Warthogs dancing in my head. Finally we arrived at the home of Halo... the labs where extremely talented people were spending night and day in an effort to give birth to the best game ever made. The date: April 1st. A fitting date, since the whole time I was taking in the brilliance of Halo 2, I felt like a fool. I couldn't ask any questions, I couldn't take my eyes off of the screen, and I actually had trouble doing anything other than having that stupid "I can't believe what I'm seeing" look on my face. Quickly after the awe came the unexplainable perma-smile. No matter how late my flight was or how many times I got searched going through airport security, I couldn't stop smiling. Halo 2 is everything I dreamt of and more. It is the most ambitious, best-looking, and legitimately stunning game that this world has ever seen. It is the pinnacle of first-person shooters and when it releases it will be the game that realizes the full potential of the Xbox and Xbox Live. I will play it every single day. I will dream about it at night. And somehow, some way, it will actually make my life better.

Meet The Team

What about the rest of the staff that didn't get to go to Bungie for our Halo 2 story? Here's what they say...

Mike Salmon editor in chief



If I made Halo 2: The first thing I would want to add is some kind of replay mode where you could watch multiplayer games over and over again to show off how cool you were. I got this idea from Frank, who always turns off the host Halo box when his team loses. That way, we can't walk over to his TV and crow about how many more kills we had.

The other game I care about is: None. All Halo 2 at the time. Not true, I love ALL the games this issue. It's a great issue for games. Did ya see the E3 story?

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Frank O'Connor executive editor



If I made Halo 2: I would definitely make it possible to let new players join in on the fly, and a subset of that idea is the ability to change your controller config pretty dramatically from the pause menu. I hate starting a game with a default player and not being able to invert controls, or taking over from someone who's going on a pee break.

The other game I care about is: Still BC. I swear, that game looks better every day. I just want to crouch and maybe even frolic in the dinosaur-filled meadows.

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Sarah Ellerman managing editor



If I made Halo 2: I would add some kind of internet-based remote control system for the game. That way, I could automatically adjust the volume on the much-too-loud-after-work System Link games, or pause them to make errand editors do my bidding, or simply kick them out of games altogether. We have a magazine to make!

The other game I care about is: Xbox Music Mixer. I am planning on hosting mad-wicked karaoke parties at my house, where I will perform "Brandy (You're a Fine Girl)." You know, because I am.

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Francesca Reyes senior editor



If I made Halo 2: There would be some kind of exhilarating turbo mode that could only be enabled by me. I would be all Maxis plus The Flash, and running around decapitating looks like it was the end of the world. All they'd see is a red flash as their head fell off their body. It would be accompanied by a computer voice that yelled "ENKILLNATING!"

The other game I care about is: Onigiri. I was very disappointed with Shinobi recently, and so I feel like new-generation ninja death has yet to be done right.

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Holden Hume art director



If I made Halo 2: What if the invisibility power up could extend to any vehicle you got into? Like your suit was conducting it or something? It would be a little unbalanced, but you'd have to be stupid to miss a giant shimmering tank-shaped blur, so it could still work. And it could also accelerate the timer on the power up for more balance.

The other game I care about is: Soul Calibur 2 looks so freaking cool. Not technically great, but just plain old beautiful.

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Juliann Brown associate art director



If I made Halo 2: Honestly? I think it's pretty much perfect as is, so all I can think about is new weapons. I want to try out the battle rifle and the SMG, but I also want to see if the fellas over at Bungie are going to include the flamethrower. That would be perfect. Run into a base, flame everything, take off! I hope the flag is fireproof, though...

The other game I care about is: I've played so much Ghos Arcos recently, all I can think about is the bland Wunder add-on. Gotta love the add-ons.

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Dave Rees disc editor



If I made Halo 2: I'd add a global positioning satellite to your radar thing in the Spartan armor, that way I could call in airstrikes on any position in the battlefield! Yeah! Huge swarms of Marines dropping some nasty space-ordnance on Covenant suckers! All right!

The other game I care about is: Like Frank, I can't wait to play BC. I got a brief peek at it and it just looks incredible. I'm a sucker for water and grass. And inventing stuff, like fire and catapults and spears. Oh my!

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Ryan McCaffrey assistant editor



If I made Halo 2: I'm a sucker for good weather effects, so how about rain and snow in multiplayer, where both conditions adversely affect your visibility and the handling of vehicles? That and an added layer of graphical loveliness just for good measure. There's a bit of ice in the first game, but that's all.

The other game I care about is: Thief II. There are two things I love: sneaking around and stealing stuff. Especially power ups.

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Grandma Dixie Um... oh never mind



If I made Halo 2: Oh, you mean that movie about the angels that visit the baseball team? I love that movie. That Christopher Lloyd such a sweetheart. But a sequel? Heck, he's as old as I am by now. Let the sleeping Halo lie.

The other game I care about is: Shuffleboard. There's nothing I enjoy more than a sunny afternoon filled with shuffleboard, a pitcher of prune juice, and reeks and reeks of Jimmy Stewart movies. He's such a lovely young man.

Write a letter on paper.



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San Francisco, London, Bath, Milan, Paris



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First Look Official Xbox
magazine

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Xbox Music Mixer

The first Xbox "game" that actually upgrades your Xbox

We're proud to bring you the exclusive unveiling of a product that will undoubtedly change every single gamer's experience on Xbox. Even more than *Halo 2*, *Xbox Music Mixer* is destined to make life with your Xbox better... for just about every game you own or will buy. This is much more than a karaoke game and is better classified as an upgrade to your Xbox multimedia functionality. The product offers five unique capabilities that provide everything from a bit of mindless fun to some serious audio/visual upgrades. Here is what you get:

IN THE BOX Xbox Music Mixer

- Price: 39.99
- Xbox Music Mixer CD (with 12 karaoke songs, downloadable upgrades to the music manager, and all of the trimmings mentioned in this article)
- 1 consumer grade Karaoke microphone
- 1 1/4 inch to Xbox controller port connector



I'VE GOT WHAT YOU
WANT YOU'VE GOT
WHAT I NEED

■ "I don't know dawg, I'm just not feeling it."



KARAOKE

WHAT IT IS: For the *American Idol* wannabes of the world, *Xbox Music Mixer* packs a powerful singing punch. You can test out your vocal stylings on any of the 12 included songs (with lyrics onscreen) or you can use the digital vocal-stripping technology and remove the lyrics from your favorite CD, MP3, or WMA and then cut your own vocal rendition. And you can record them on your Xbox, bring to a friend's house, and horrify them with your haunting melodies.

COOLEST USE: You could record yourself singing over your favorite songs and then you could listen to your greatest hits while racing down the street in your snazzy Corvette in *Project Gotham Racing* (or any game that supports custom soundtracks).

SCARIEST USE: Have you ever heard yourself sing? Probably isn't a pretty thing.

MANAGE YOUR MUSIC

WHAT IT IS: Essentially, *Music Mixer* gives you a huge upgrade on all of your audio functionality. First off, it gives you access to a database of songs so that every time you pop a CD into your Xbox it'll display the artist, length of song, and song title. You can alter any CD, MP3, or WMA with effects like flange, distortion, chorus, etc. And you can continually update the database and even add new effects through Xbox Live.

COOLEST USE: This alone will save you hours of typing in song names when making soundtracks. Plus you can now create transitions from song to song.

SCARIEST USE: Now you can't hide what music you ripped to your Xbox... people will now know that "m2" was just a codename for Michael Jackson's *Thriller*. Shame on you!

LIVE ON YOUR PC

WHAT IT IS: *Music Mixer* allows you to connect your Xbox to your PC so you can easily transfer all of your MP3s (legal ones we assume... right?) and WMAs to your Xbox. Finally, a way to get that huge MP3 collection straight to your Xbox. Plus the product is Live-enabled and will give you access to tons of songs, visualizers, and even all-new karaoke tracks. They have yet to reveal how much of this stuff will be free to Live users and how much of it will require additional fees.

COOLEST USE: Finally, an easy way to play MP3s through your booming home stereo. No need to burn CDs that only work occasionally.

SCARIEST USE: Now that your wife/girlfriend has a reason to use your Xbox, it might cut down on game time. Ah well, it's a good excuse to buy two of 'em.

ONLY ON
XBOX

DANCE, DANCE EVOLUTION

WHAT IT IS: Your Xbox comes with one standard 2D "visualizer" (the light show that happens when you play audio on Xbox) this product gives you another 10 to switch between and 10 3D visualizers (3D scenes that include up to eight characters who actually dance to YOUR music and can be customized by you). Even better, you can edit the visualizers, place in your own photos (see photo album), put in a series of audio and video effects, and essentially make your own music video.

COOLEST USE: This thing is easily powerful enough to do your own VJing at raves. So you can make some bucks with your Xbox.

SCARIEST USE: Mike Salmon and his wife singing "I Got You Babe" while a video wall presents touching photos of their daughter Ava... then we put it on the disc to torture the rest of you with its sappiness.



These little people will dance to anything you put in your Xbox... even country.



■ A huge improvement over the standard Xbox light show... and there is a ton of variety.

PICTURE THIS

WHAT IT IS: An enhanced photo viewer that allows you to download photos to the hard-drive and create stunning slide shows that you can show on your big-screen TV, rather than that dinky computer monitor. It also allows you to use customized soundtracks, visual effects, captions, narratives, and voice-overs. And you can use these slideshows on a video screen within one of the 3D visualizers. Just another great use that simply isn't possible on any other system. With Xbox Music Mixer the Xbox is quickly becoming the epicenter of your entertainment center.

COOLEST USE: Jazzing up your business presentation with some gangsta rap and an Xbox.

SCARIEST USE: Just don't let Gary Glitter or Pete Townsend near this thing...

■ Splice together family pictures and speed metal, then narrate it all in your best Darth Vader voice.



Following the events of the blockbuster Universal Pictures film, troubled scientist Dr. Bruce Banner and his enraged alter ego, **The Hulk**, battle The Leader - a terrifying villain intent on unleashing a relentless army of gamma creatures on the world.

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Violence



PlayStation 2



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All Access

Xbox news straight from the source

XBOX LIVE 2.0

Your Live's just got better...

Sooner or later, Sony is going to realize that the only way to beat Microsoft's brilliant Xbox Live service is to join it, but Xbox Live is already upping the ante. Introducing Xbox Live 2.0, (not the real name, it'll still just be called Xbox Live) a new, completely redesigned way to enjoy high-speed Internet gaming.

The first and most dramatic change will be the introduction of a new interface for Live. When you power up your Xbox sometime this fall, your Live experience will take on a whole new front end. A new graphic interface will replace the Xbox Dashboard with a more personalized look that makes accessing friends lists and downloadable content much clearer and easier.

This interface will be keyed to your Gamertag, so when you boot up, your Xbox will recognize you and present relevant information in a much more logical fashion.

Better yet, this interface will also serve as a "lobby" allowing you to communicate directly with other players using the Communicator headset, without going through a specific game. Microsoft is intent on ramping up the already solid community feel of the service, and with the advent of more games and more disparate game styles, a central hub is a much-needed advance.

David Hufford, Microsoft's Xbox Group Product Manager, says, "In the first year, we were really trying to lay the foundations for the service, and get voice communication out there in a really big way. In year two, we want to go above and beyond all that to enhance the community and deliver more competition and content."

And they will. Games like *Citizen Zero* and *Xbox Music Mixer* will evolve your Xbox into more than a gaming console, they'll stretch it further into your everyday life. You can read more about how *Xbox Music Mixer* will become a hub for all your music

needs in our exclusive First Look on page 66, but rest assured, the new interface will make downloads easier, and much more exciting. Just imagine moving your digital music and photos from your PC to your Xbox to interact with them in new ways.

Another huge change is the introduction of an Internet "face" for the service. You'll be able to go to a personalized web page from your browser, and as your friends log onto the service, you may even be notified on your PC or cell phone via MSN Messenger. This keeps you connected to Xbox Live anywhere, anytime.

The improved service inspires game designers to include other ways

for players to compete too: *Project Gotham Racing 2*, for example, is slated to include uploadable challenge races. Basically you can upload your "ghost" so that other players can literally race against your best performance. This type of interaction is likely to become a big part of Xbox Live's competitive aspect.

Dance, dance. Microsoft's evolution of Live includes support for *Xbox Music Mixer*.



Citizen Zero: The Future is Massive

One of the bigger online surprises from Microsoft is its unveiling of *Citizen Zero*, a massively multiplayer online action adventure. Not an RPG in the true sense of the term, this is a sprawling (it takes place on at least three fully realized planets) sci-fi adventure, with guns, vehicles, and technology. More *Deus Ex* than *EverQuest*, it can be played in any number of ways.

Using BigWorld Technology from BigWorld Games, this is

designed to be free of the graphic and gameplay constraints suffered by other massively multiplayer games. As a result, the action looks more like the stuff you've come to expect from your Xbox, and less like a badly implemented LEGO fantasy.

The richly detailed world is designed by Micro Forte, the Australian outfit that brought us *Fallout Tactics: Brotherhood of Steel*, and features the isolated

former penal colony Neo-Eden and two neighboring worlds. A fourth planet is rumored to be habitable too. Most of the survivors on this penal colony have had their minds erased, which of course is a great device for designing your character from the ground up.

The worlds will provide challenges and exploration for adventure-minded individuals, but this game has many hooks built in to encourage community, including

different species with different skill sets, automated and user-controlled political organizations and (of course) local flora and fauna. The community will be further enhanced thanks to the constant use of the Xbox Communicator. All in all, the game sounds pretty darned ambitious, and if these early development shots are anything to go by, it could be a worthy online successor to *Fable*.



■ Imagine a massively multiplayer sci-fi universe with three explorable planets and full voice communication!



■ Will *Fable*'s first competitor come from within the Microsoft stable?



■ Since your character is a "Zero" citizen, you can design, name, and define him or her to suit yourself.



■ Grass, trees, weather, and lighting effects bring all three planets to life.

COLOR CONTROL

Microsoft conducted a survey on Xbox.com where you got a chance to choose an Xbox controller color. The big question concerned which hue most deserved to be released as a special edition. Choices? Orange, clear, blue, green, and red. We can only hope that you didn't choose green... haven't we all had enough green? It also looks like Microsoft might play around with other colors for future special editions. And UK players will get the chance to buy a limited edition translucent green Xbox console later this year.

■ A cavalcade of controller colors.



HULK BUTTON-MASH!

Naki has unveiled a suitably garish special edition Hulk controller to coincide with the release of the movie. The controller is a redesigned version of Naki's perfectly capable Xbox controller and should prove irresistible to fans of gigantic green mutants.



■ Although Naki's controller is svelte, you'd think the Hulk would want to use the original "Duke" controller.

Microsoft's Got Game

New sports label will expand and unify Xbox virtual athletes

At E3 Microsoft will announce a new sports brand. All of the company's sports and "extreme" sports games, from *NFL Fever* to *Amped*, will fall under the domain of this new label. Packaging will reflect the change, but more importantly, players will be able to organize leagues, scan statistics, league rankings, and team standings at a centralized web site that pulls data from Xbox Live. The goal: set up your league

once, play through a season, and let the service update all standings and statistics on the web.

More than a marketing ploy, this service is basically the Holy Grail for sports fans. You will now be able to compete in leagues and tournaments with a huge amount of stat-tracking. This means that every single game to come out of this brand will support Xbox Live in a big way. Imagine playing with

30 other gamers through a full 16-game NFL season... maybe with you at the helm, the Vikings will finally win it all. Or picture hanging out at the top of a run in *Amped 2* chatting with other boarders before beating their best run. And now

you can see where you stand from Xbox Live or via your PC.

MS hasn't revealed the exact details of the plan, but it's sounding more and more like the Xbox is the only place to get a real sports gaming experience. More, next issue!



■ Sweaty men. Online. All the time.

Rare Where?

At E3, Microsoft will show off three massive Rare games for Xbox. Two of 'em, we know about: *Perfect Dark Zero* and *Kameo*. The third is a blockbuster that will be kept secret until the day of E3. But we have a pretty good idea of what it will be...



■ Joanna's new look is courtesy of Will Overton, who used to work for this very magazine company! Genius! This stunning shooter is rumored to be the second Rare game on Xbox. And we expect it to be one of the best Xbox games around.



■ She's got plenty of magic, some of it taken directly from the Xbox. This is the only Rare game we've seen a bunch of stuff on, but according to our sources it'll be the last of the three to actually come home to your loving hands.



■ Sources say it's called *Grabbed by the Ghoulies* and we've heard that the gameplay is unique. So unique, in fact, that nobody could describe it to us. Sources also say this title will be the first Rare game to release on Xbox.

Uppers and Downers

How this month's news affects the world of videogames.



Xbox Live

Microsoft's online strategy goes from strength to strength. Expect competitors to follow and copy next year, while Microsoft ramps up the service with new features and hot new games like *Citizen Zero* and *Counterstrike*.



Namco

Soul Calibur 2 is astonishing. *Ridge Racer* is on the way, and *Breakdown* promises to be one of the prettiest Xbox games ever made. And rumor has it that the next *Tekken* may make an appearance on the fabulous box.



Tork

Tork is gone! The awesome platform game (we played it and loved it) from Microsoft has been shelved, as the company devotes its platform space to *Voodoo Vince* and the Rare titles. However, the near-finished and polished platformer may see a release from another publisher yet.



Media

From CNN to TNN, mass media tries to "blame" the war on videogames, claiming that titles like *Conflict: Desert Storm* and *Ghost Recon* desensitize players to the horrors of war. Meanwhile, the logo'd media coverage of war, with thundering music and fancy catchphrases, is desensitizing everyone to television.



Spawn campers, inside kickers, and quitters

Xbox Live players (who for the most part are like young gods): please remember that you have a permanent online identity, and eventually any crap you pull will come back to haunt you. Be polite, play the game, and don't cheat. The next iteration of Xbox Live will make scumbags very visible, too.

Dead or Alive goes to the movies



Hopefully not following in the footsteps of such celluloid atrocities as *Street Fighter: the Movie* and *Double Dragon: The Movie*, the girls of *DOA* are headed to Hollywood.

The Hollywood Reporter broke the news, reporting that the script, penned by J.F. Lawton of *Pretty Women* and *Under Siege* fame, would bring the game to the big screen for a 2004 release. Impact Pictures is producing the movie, along with *Driver* and *Resident Evil 2* flicks. Having previously produced *Mortal Kombat* movies, the company seems to be specializing in game-to-movie deals.

Director Paul W.S. Anderson broke down a little of the plot, saying, "The four voluptuous girls in the movie are invited by Fame Douglas to partake in the 'Dead or Alive' world fighting tournament on an exotic island," Bolt said. "Like we did with *Resident Evil*, we will remain faithful to the essence of the game franchise but create an original story that will play to a broader audience."

With a \$30 million budget and as yet no cast announcement, we can tell you that the movie will focus primarily on four female fighters and that production will begin later this year. And, sadly, that it's destined to be a PG-13 rated experience.

Ghost Recon fans mold content

Fans of the most popular game on Xbox Live, Tom Clancy's *Ghost Recon*, have voted (via Ubisoft's website) to include the Embassy, Battlefield, Castle, and Wilderness maps from the original *Ghost Recon* in the upcoming standalone Xbox campaign disk, *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Island Thunder*. Gamers who purchase the campaign disk will have future access to exclusive downloadable content featuring new missions and maps from the PC versions of *Ghost Recon: Island Thunder* and popular maps from *Ghost Recon: Desert Siege*. At \$29.99, the game is actually starting to look like a better value than the original! The new disc does NOT require the original *Ghost Recon*, and has the following features:

- Xbox Live compatible
- Downloadable content
- 8 mission single-player campaign set in Cuba
- 8 multiplayer maps ranging from desert to city to jungle
- 4 fan-favorite maps from the original Tom Clancy's *Ghost Recon* (Xbox) for additional Xbox Live play
- New types of multiplayer gameplay



■ New locations take the *Ghost Recon* squad to hotter, more pleasant climes. But you know, still with the shooting...

Enter the Matrix – in HD

A last-minute announcement from Infogrames (you'll be able to buy the game by the time you read this) reveals that *Enter the Matrix* on Xbox will support 720p – one of two "true" HD modes supported by the Xbox. 480p, while sharp and crisp, is not considered a High Definition mode in the true sense. The number of games supporting the detailed, rich widescreen modes of 720p is increasing, with such big-name titles as *True Crime*, *Soul Calibur II*, and *World Series Baseball 2K3* all supporting the improved resolution. Rumor has it that *Halo 2* will at least attempt the mode, although performance issues may affect any such decision.

■ The *Enter the Matrix* game is intertwined with the *The Matrix Reloaded* movie via a series of Wachowski-directed in-game movies.



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What to do in MAY

There are only two things that truly matter this month: Mother's Day and *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*. Forget the former and your mother will never, ever forgive you. Forget the second, and you'll never, ever forgive yourself. Remember, your mother did suffer through hours of labor to bring you into this world. At least get her some flowers. And an Xbox. As for *Wolfenstein*, well, that one's easy - Nazis need shootin'.

MAY CALENDAR

5/1 Star Wars: KOTOR
No way. The Magic 8 Ball says, "Ask again next month... again."

5/5 Finding Nemo
Memories of Ecco the Dolphin. Or is that echoes of Memory the Dolphin?

5/6 George Clooney turns 42
Sam Fisher gets new grey hair rendered onto head to honor his human clone and loads of women scream "George" for no real reason.

5/11 Mother's Day
For some treally weird people, it's Valentine's Day 2.

5/15 The Matrix Reloaded
We'll be at the theater using bullet time to get in a pee just before the big finale.

5/17 Armed Forces Day
While we shoot virtual bad guys, they shoot the real ones. We salute you.

5/27 Brute Force
Nah. Probably a lot closer to June 27.

5/31 No Tobacco Day
Don't worry, there are still another 364 days in the year.

1

5

10

15

20

25

31

5/1 Burnout 2
Property damage rewarded? Yes!

5/2 X2
The second X-Men flick looks X-cellent.

5/6 Return To Castle Wolfenstein
You know it rules - you played our demo and read our review last month. Now get the full game and we'll see your corpse on Live.

5/14 George Lucas turns 59
Finds out his wife is his sister and his dad was Hitler... another example of life imitating art.

5/16 Pierce Brosnan turns 50
Double-oh seven has the big five-oh.

5/22 Inside Pitch 2003
See our review on page 82.

5/26 Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick
Good? Bad? We'll find out soon.

5/27 The Hulk
The Hulk and Xbox share the same primary color and they weigh about the same too.

5/26 Memorial Day
How did a holiday about remembering something turn into a BBQ?

GameWatch

Magic and potions and voodoo, oh my!



MAGIC: THE GATHERING

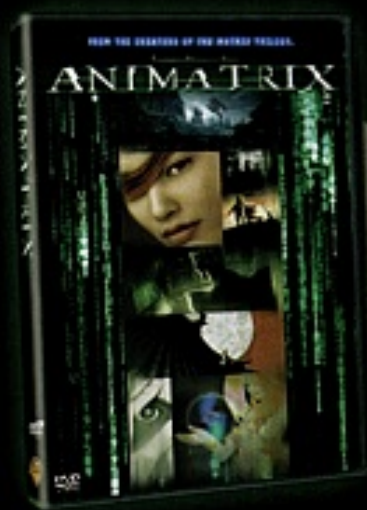
Projected release: Summer 2003
The good stuff: Crisp, colorful graphics show off the Magic universe like no game before it. Eschewing the card system found in previous interactive conversions, this game features nothing but fighting. Falling somewhere weirdly between *Street Fighter* and *Final Fantasy* in terms of action, it's at least very original. The scary stuff: Magic fans may be frightened and confused by terms like "action" and "graphics."



VOODOO VINCE

Projected release: Fall 2003
The good stuff: Beep Industries brings us the strangest character we've ever seen on Xbox. Voodoo Vince is, as his name implies, a voodoo doll. The beautiful platformer will be published by Microsoft, perhaps in lieu of the cancelled *Turk*. The graphics are spectacular and the gameplay is innovative. The scary stuff: Well, *Turk* was also gorgeous and fine, and look what happened to him.

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The Rumor Mole

PC oldies become Xbox goldies

With E3 almost upon us, the rumoring is reaching an all-time high. Here is just a small sampling of things the Mole has picked up on in recent weeks.

Half-Life 2 confirmed... then denied

Valve Software is the developer of *Half-Life* (and now *Half-Life 2*), and we have reports from deep inside their office that *Half-Life 2* is definitely headed to Xbox. Official calls to Valve and Microsoft resulted in complete denials of the rumor, but my source said he actually saw an Xbox version up and running... and while it was mostly a tech demo, it apparently and allegedly already looked sweet.



On the debug

Every time a developer shows us a game, they bring their own Xbox debug... and the first screen you see on an Xbox debug is a list of all of the installed files (i.e. games). Being the sneaky folk that we are, we tend to focus in on this screen quickly. In a recent viewing of *Jedi Academy* (see exclusive preview, page 68), we noticed a line called... "apodemophobia." This word means fear of people with amputations... we still don't know what kind of game it is... but remember that you heard it here first and that it isn't *Rayman 4*.



Doom III – Only on Xbox

The PC mega-shooter is still coming out on the PC this holiday as planned but my spies tell me that the next stop for this stunner is on the Xbox... exclusively. Word has it that Microsoft is in negotiations with the game's publisher Activision on securing this title for Xbox and Xbox alone. According to reports, Microsoft is offering marketing dollars in exchange for a minimum of six months exclusivity and new multiplayer features that didn't make it into the PC version. My spies tell me that this deal could be done by E3 and that the game is already playable on our super system. It doesn't hurt that apparently the game tech isn't awfully compatible with the aging PS2 hardware.



What elements should be fixed in Halo 2?

Control redefine in the pause mode?

11%

Human Pistol?

7%

The ability to "hot swap" new player arrivals?

21%

Dave Rees

3%

A duck and roll move!

57%

Total votes: 2480

Thank you, Team Xbox!



Xbox in Japan Hello, X Gamers!



Koji will also respond to voice commands.



N.U.D.E. is weird, but den you knew dat....

There is a developing section of Xbox games in Microsoft Japan and they have about one hundred developing staff. They have localized and released six foreign titles such as *Halo* and *Project Gotham*. They released Xbox Live with two pack-in games: Sega's *Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II* and Success' *Zuno Jaisen Live* (four table games including Mah-jongg). Also they have developed five titles with Japanese developing companies: *Nemesis* (Sneakers), *Maximum Chase*, *Jockey's Road*, *Blitz*, and the ill-fated *Kokuto Chojin*.

In April, they will release their two latest Japanese titles, *The Wild Rings* and *N.U.D.E. @ Natural Ultimate Digital Experiment*. *The Wild Rings* is an action game with multi combative sports such as wrestling, boxings, sumo, and karate.

N.U.D.E. @ is really strange software. Do you remember *Seaman*, which released on Dreamcast? *Seaman* was the game where you communicated using real voice with the fish that has that ugly human face! *N.U.D.E. @* is same kind of game with a prettier face. The player will talk with a virtual character – a robot in the style of a young girl called P.A.S.S. by Xbox Voice Communicator. Xbox can understand your words, and replies to you with realtime composite computer voices. The first time that I was playing it, I fell short of my expectations. At first, I had to repeat the same words over and over. Why? Because P.A.S.S. isn't so clever. It feels almost experimental, more of a software tool than a game, especially at the opening. This doesn't mean it isn't interesting, though. And

although my first impression of the character design was not so good, the later P.A.S.S. will become so cute and pretty for players. The reason is secret, sorry.

To tell the truth, *N.U.D.E. @* is really strange game, even for the Japanese. But it has something new definitely, and the meaning for Xbox is the challenge, I think.

Maybe *N.U.D.E. @* is a kind of test work, so the common game companies can't make it because there is a lot of risk. Then I admire the challenges of Microsoft Game Studio Japan, and look forward to play another big challenge: *True Fantasy Live Online*.

Koji Alzawa
Editor in chief
Famitsu Xbox

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Your direct line to the gaming gods. You ask the questions, we print the answers.

PETER MOLYNEUX

Head of Lionhead and industry figurehead Peter Molyneux is way ahead of the competition. Head head heady head head. Anyway, he was delighted to answer reader questions about sim-life, an artificial universe, and virtually everything else.

How have you found the Xbox technology to work with? Can you still achieve those insanely great-looking screenshots that you have been releasing on the Internet with a consistent framerate, or did the developers have to rethink their approach?

Mark (God's Hitman)

PETER SAYS: Well, the cool thing about the Xbox is its cutting-edge graphics technology, and this has enabled us to take some incredible screenshots. I think the recent ones we've released are even more impressive. However, if it comes to it, the 30 frames a second maxim will always win over graphics.

Where do you see game AI in the next 10 years?

The Confidence Man

PETER SAYS: Game AI is most certainly the big challenge in game development simply because it is the heart and soul of every computer game. It is the one thing which will produce new games that attract people who have never played games before. It will give game creators the ability to create games which mold themselves to the way a player plays a game. It is my (maybe foolishly held) belief that the first truly artificial life will come from games development rather than academic research.

What are Nintendo's chances at winning this round of the console war?

Michael Stribling

PETER SAYS: Nintendo's great strength has to be its ability to create amazing games. For them to continue to be a contender, they are going to have to come up with some incredible game concepts.

There are many new platforms and existing platforms being continually advanced for the purpose of videogames, including consoles, cell phones, PDAs, computers, and arcade Virtual Reality booths – even future entertainment centers such as PS3 and Xbox2 have been hinted at. Where do you see the future of videogames in terms of the platform – do you see a convergence or continued divergence, and what is required for videogames to reach a broader audience overall?

Russ Pastorchik
Calgary, Canada

PETER SAYS: I would say that history has shown that competition produces the best, and for this reason we're in the ideal situation right now – where we have huge companies pushing and competing with each other to produce the best systems at the most reasonable price. Inevitably, as our consoles get more powerful, we will be able to do more with them. Currently there seems to be a battle for the center of home

entertainment. Whether this will be won by a console, TV, set-top box, or even your fridge remains to be seen, but one thing is for certain: we are in for some really amazing new products.

Under what conditions could you see *BC* or *Fable* being made for other platforms besides Xbox?

TheDewitts1253

PETER SAYS: Technologically it would very difficult to achieve the same quality on other consoles – however, this level of quality could be achieved on a PC, so without committing ourselves in any way, it seems obvious that a PC version would be possible.

Who is doing the musical score for *Fable*?

Geese

PETER SAYS: Russell Shaw, who is head of Sound and Audio at Lionhead Studios, will be doing the musical score for *Fable*. Russell has done the sound and music on no fewer than 22 games, including every game I've worked on since *Syndicate* – he's incredibly talented and I know he'll do a fantastic job with *Fable*.

Who's next: Ed Fries, the ultimate decision maker at Microsoft Game Studios and the only man on Earth with the power to put fruit pickups in *Halo 2*. Send your demands for pineapple and cherries to xboxmag@futurenetworkusa.com. Other topics are also okay.

Counterstrike on Xbox is Condition Zero



The News: Although officially confirmed a number of times by Microsoft, details on the impending Xbox *Counterstrike* conversion are thin on the ground. What has emerged, however – thanks to an interview

with the popular UK website ComputerandVideoGames.com – is that the Xbox version will in fact be a "version" of *Condition Zero*, rather than a remake of the original (and ancient) *Counterstrike*, according to Erik Johnson of Valve.

Why it's important: The new game is built on much more visually impressive technology, and that's good news since the original *Counterstrike* looked old and ugly when it first came out

years ago. The Xbox version is Live-enabled for multiplayer and will feature voice support and downloadable content.

The Official Xbox Magazine Take: Expect *Counterstrike* on Xbox to have a slightly different name, and lots of elements of the original PC *Counterstrike* edition, including the mind-numbingly addictive multiplayer modes. It should be a bastard-mutant amalgam of both games, with vastly updated Xbox-style graphics.

TrashTalk

Things overheard on Xbox Live... that we can print.

"If I download the Kola Cell maps for this game, can I use heat vision with the Cougar?"

A MECHASSAULT PLAYER FAILING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT FOR *SPLINTER CELL* ACTUALLY IS.



*eckō unltd.



DEEP IN CUBA, THE GHOSTS



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WE ARE SWIFT, SILENT, AND INVISIBLE.
WE WILL NEVER SURRENDER.
WE FIGHT, SO THAT PEACE MAY REIGN.
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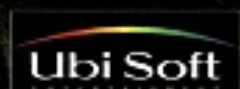


SQUAD-BASED BATTLEFIELD COMBAT

With a new single-player campaign, 12 new multiplayer maps, and downloadable missions, the TOTAL BATTLEFIELD EXPERIENCE just got a whole lot steamier. In the wake of Castro's death, the Ghosts battle a drug-funded warlord threatening Cuba's first free elections in decades. It's up to you and your team to take the fight to the enemy in the streets, beaches and jungles of Cuba. Take on rebels, irregulars and mercenary troops to face the Ghosts' greatest challenge yet.



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RECON**
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HALO 2

THE WORLD EXCLUSIVE

HALO



BEST. GAME. EVER.

Bungie employees speak almost entirely in drawn-out superlative metaphors. Seriously. You've heard the "Ninjas on fire" speech, and the "wrapped in bacon and fried in butter" soliloquy. But not until you see *Halo 2* in action, until you hear it surround you with noise and havoc, can you understand why. Simply put, drawn-out superlative metaphors are the only way to describe the next *Halo*.

It's *Halo* all right, but it's *Halo* bloated with rocket fuel, wearing a gelnite blouse, and chewing fireworks as it plunges into a sea of liquid hydrogen. No that's not right, it's *Halo* armed with nuclear-powered space-octopi, blasting razor-filled poisonous laser gas from every orifice. Yes! That's it! For the sake of brevity, however, we're going to simply refer to it as *Halo 2*.

WELCOME TO EARTHCITY

Outside of the developers at Bungie, we are the only people in the world to have gotten up-close and personal with *Halo 2*. The rest of the world will get a chance to witness (but not actually play) its greatness at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3... which is happening right about when you read this). What we saw in our visit to Bungie was the E3 demo of *Halo 2*. The demo is being created to showcase the game to the world, and even though it is only a small part of a level, it gives a great indication of the type of stunning experience *Halo 2* will be. Currently called Earthcity, this level is a towering megalopolis, utopian in design, but rendered dystopian by Covenant occupation. Glittering stratoscrapers beggar any ideas you ever had about tall buildings. And this scale, height, and grandeur is more than just eye candy – it's part of the gameplay.

In the demo, we see Master

Chief, presumably having survived his zero-G freefall into the maw of a Covenant invasion force. He's now backed up by Marines, soaring over a seemingly doomed Earth, and heading for trouble on the streets below. What follows is a Bungie employee, playing real code, on a real Xbox for several minutes. He fights, he drives, he runs and jumps through some stunning locations and finally ends the demo with an in-engine cutscene that will leave you astonished and slaving for more.

That's the story so far, but how do you follow up something like *Halo*? "When I started planning the E3 demo I found myself watching the *Halo 2* announcement trailer over and over again," says Joseph Staten,

Cinematic Director. "I find it's really helpful to look back on things we've done, and remind ourselves where we set the bar. We wrote ourselves a pretty big check with the announcement trailer – E3 will be our desperate attempt to cash it."

The designers of *Halo 2* did indeed write themselves a pretty big check for E3. They wanted to do much more than simply show off some new level geometry, or lighting techniques – they wanted to incorporate aspects of new gameplay, from AI-driven vehicle combat to even more aggressive and intelligent infantry, from rooftop sniping

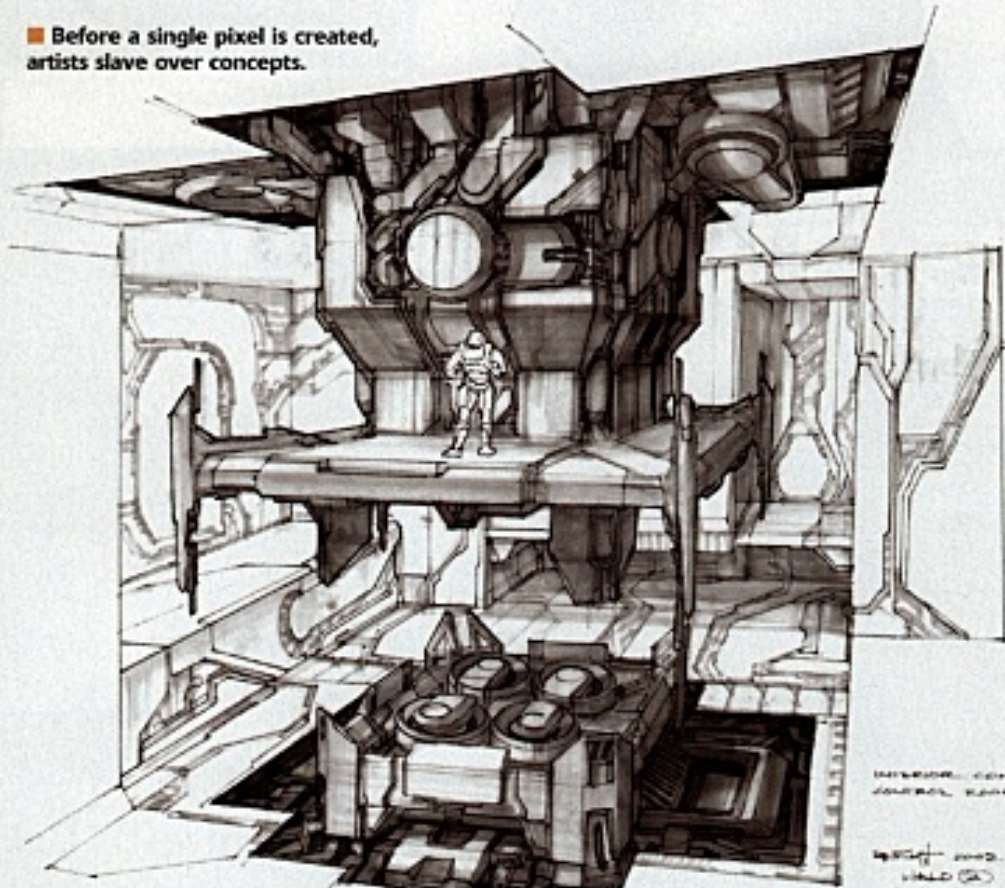
■ The new Covenant models help create a better sense of their truly alien ferocity and, well, alien-ness.

to up-close melee combos. It's all there; it's all a sampling of what the final game will eventually be.

Staten explains how and why Bungie chose the location: "We asked ourselves which of the levels we're working on right now would

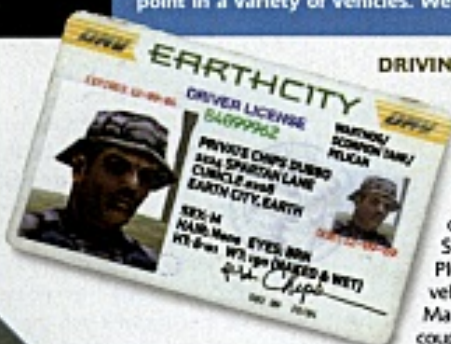
■ See that sweet futuristic city in the background? You'll be driving around it and engaging in mass battles against the Covenant. Wow!

■ Before a single pixel is created, artists slave over concepts.



LICENSE TO DRIVE

Let's face it, in *Halo* you were basically a well-armored chauffeur. You spent much of the game driving Marines from point to point in a variety of vehicles. Well, in *Halo 2* the Marines and Aliens have learned to drive.



DRIVING ABILITY: According to the developers at Bungie, the Marines drive a bit like a 16-year-old kid. Utterly reckless and completely without fear.

WHAT IT MEANS TO THE GAME: Now you can man the gun on the Warthog and ride on the Scorpion Tank with a Sniper Rifle. Plus this allows for larger-scale vehicular battles. Just imagine two Marines in tanks, another four in a couple of Warthogs, while you are flying above with a stolen Banshee. Suh-weet.



DRIVING ABILITY: A bit more controlled than the Marines, but still plenty wild.

WHAT IT MEANS TO THE GAME: The dropships are now piloted by the AI, which means that they react to the battle and can be shot down... just another dimension of complete immersion.



■ The new structures show off more human technology and architecture.

quite a jolt from the almost pastoral scenes on *Halo*. It actually feels like you've been dropped into an entirely new, living, and breathing world.

This demo, depending on who's playing though it and how they perform, should last about eight minutes. But those are eight intense minutes. "The opening sequence has the Master Chief in a Pelican with a squad of Marines. It's an homage, really. Remember when we first showed you the Master Chief flying into the beach level on *Halo*? We wanted to revisit that moment, but up the stakes to match the intensity of *Halo 2*'s combat experience. This is an urban environment crawling with Covenant. The demo begins in a part of the city where the Marines are in particularly dire straits, and really need the Chief to drop in and liberally apply boot to ass," says Staten.

That attention to drama is emblematic of the team's decision to incorporate in-engine movies with the gameplay, no small feat given that those require finessed, perfect aspects of every game engine element, from sound to graphics. But

pretty final state, but we'd conceived, and in some cases built, a lot of the models and vehicles we'd be using there as well," explains Staten. "Events like E3 have the potential to become huge resource bonfires, so I decided early on that whatever intro cinematic we used for the demo, it would be the actual cinematic we'd use in the final game."

Our first glimpse of Earthcity shows off one of Bungie's most common and admirable traits—continuity. The geometric shapes, imposing edifices, and mixed materials share design philosophy with the human structures, vehicles, and locations found in the original *Halo*. The mixture of plastic, glass, parkland, and metal melds perfectly with how we have come to imagine the imperiled future Earth. It also clashes jarringly with the Covenant's ascetic, sparse, and almost organic technology.

The demo shows off beautifully how the buildings and locations work in gameplay. AI snipers take out unwitting targets, Warthogs and other vehicles drive through city streets, while Covenant swoop and soar among the aeries of Earth City. It's astonishing, to say the least, and

■ This close-up shows off dynamic lighting, the detailed new models, and bump-mapping.

■ The new Ghost is much more detailed, and way noisier!

be the best test bed? Which would show off as many features as possible in an E3 timeframe? Which would tie in with the announcement trailer's storyline? Which would allow for combat with Marines, one of the best-received elements of *Halo* gameplay? Based on all these considerations, we decided that Earthcity was the place to set up shop."

Luckily for *Halo* fans, Bungie's choice also makes for a nice timeline. At the end of the first *Halo*, Master Chief and Cortana

are headed back to Earth knowing it might be besieged by Covenant troops. At the trailer shown last year at X02, we saw a massive fleet of Covenant starships laying waste to the planet before Master Chief heroically launches himself into space. It seems apparent to us that some action will take place before he makes it to Earth, but the battle in Earthcity certainly won't ruin any plot points.

But there were practical considerations, too. "Not only was the Earthcity level-geometry in a



■ **Animation is important, too. Bet you never saw an Elite jump before.**

Bungie has always taken this extra step, feeling that in-game cinematics do more to maintain the pace and flow of the action.

Lead Producer Hamilton Chu isn't worried about the drag on resources: "One of the things we've done a great job — or at least a better job — for this E3 is planning. So at this point in time, there are a lot of things that are much further along in *Halo 2* than they were at this point in *Halo 1*. The story is much further along, and a lot of the gameplay design is really far along, and inclusive in the planning for E3."

Wasted effort was a big concern for a game this far into development, this ambitious,

and with less than a year of development time left.

Chu continues, "We had an opportunity to take this strategy of thinking of E3 as two things we need to accomplish: One, to whip things up into a frenzy, and two, make this a drive to achieve something that would help the rest of the

project. We're using E3 as a red-hot poker jabbing into the enormous mountain of newspaper, kerosene, and sawdust that is the rest of the project."

It's no small worry — lots of effort has proven futile at previous events, as Staten reveals: "For

Halo 1's first appearance at E3, we made this ten-minute movie full of cool stuff, but everything that was in it we ended up throwing away."

INTO THE LABYRINTH

The E3 demo is likely to be the talk of the show, in part because it takes place in massive enclosed theater, not unlike the one Id demoed *Doom III* in at last year's event, only much bigger and open to anyone who goes to the show and is willing to stand in line.

A state-of-the-art sound system and high-definition

screen should hopefully drown out the surrounding bedlam of the year's biggest gaming event. Picture comfy seats and helpful ushers, but (sadly) no hot dogs.

The booth itself is a work of art, taking center stage at Microsoft's huge E3 area. But the E3 demo was built to show off gameplay, not graphics. When skeptics see this demo they will claim that it isn't real and



**PARTIAL LIST OF COMPOUNDS IN CIGARETTE SMOKE
ALSO IDENTIFIED AS CARCINOGENS**

Arsenic	Dibenz(a, h)acridine +
Benzo(a)pyrene ++++	Dibenzo(a, h)pyrene ++
Benzo(e)pyrene +	9, 10-Dimethylbenzo(a)anthracene ++++
Benzo(c)pyrene +	Diethylene glycol
Benzo(a)anthracene +	a-Dimethylchrysene
Benzo(k)fluoranthene +	Dibenzo(a, i)pyrene
Benzo(b)fluoranthene ++	Dibenzo(a, j)pyrene
Benzene	Ethyl alcohol
p-Benzoquinone	Fructose
n-Butyric acid	Glucose
Benzo(g, h, i)perylene +	Lactic acid
Chrysene +	3-Methyl-1, 2-benzanthracene +
Chromium	2-Methyl-3, 4-benzophenanthrene
Cobalt	Nickel
5, 6-Cyclopenteno- 1, 2-benzanthracene	2-Naphthol
6, 7-Cyclopenteno- 1, 2-benzanthracene	Oleic acid
Dibenz(a, h)anthracene +++	l-Proline
Dibenz(a, j)acridine ++	Pyrrole
7H-Dibenzo(c, q)carbazole ++	Xylene
	Indeno [1, 2, 3-cd]pyrene
	3-Methylpyrene

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A photograph of a beach scene. In the background, a long pier extends into the ocean under a cloudy sky. Several people are walking on the pier. In the foreground, a large red sign is placed on the sand. To the left of the sign, a couple is walking. To the right, a person is walking a dog. A yellow taxi is parked near the water's edge. A surfboard lies on the sand in the bottom left corner.

That there is a real confidential tobacco document. Only it's not exactly confidential anymore. It shows they knew what was in cigarette smoke and that these chemicals are cancer-causing. So stay away from 9,10-Dimethylbenzo(a)anthracene if you're making bean dip. To see more documents, visit thetruth.com

THIS IS WHAT WE KNOW. IMAGINE WHAT WE DON'T.

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truth

that it simply isn't possible... but it is real, and with Bungie at the helm, it is possible.

THE GOLDEN ENDEAVOR

Game developers continually insist that gameplay's the thing, or that they really wanted to up the ante

this time, or any number of florid pleonasms. Bungie, however, has an uncanny ability to make its point succinctly and immediately, as Lead Designer Jaime Griesemer demonstrates: "It's on your cover of course, but now the Chief can use two weapons

simultaneously. It's been done before, but what we're doing is letting you use two different types of weapon. For instance, you can be carrying the SMG and the plasma pistol."

And it's not just for show. This new feature is an intrinsic part of

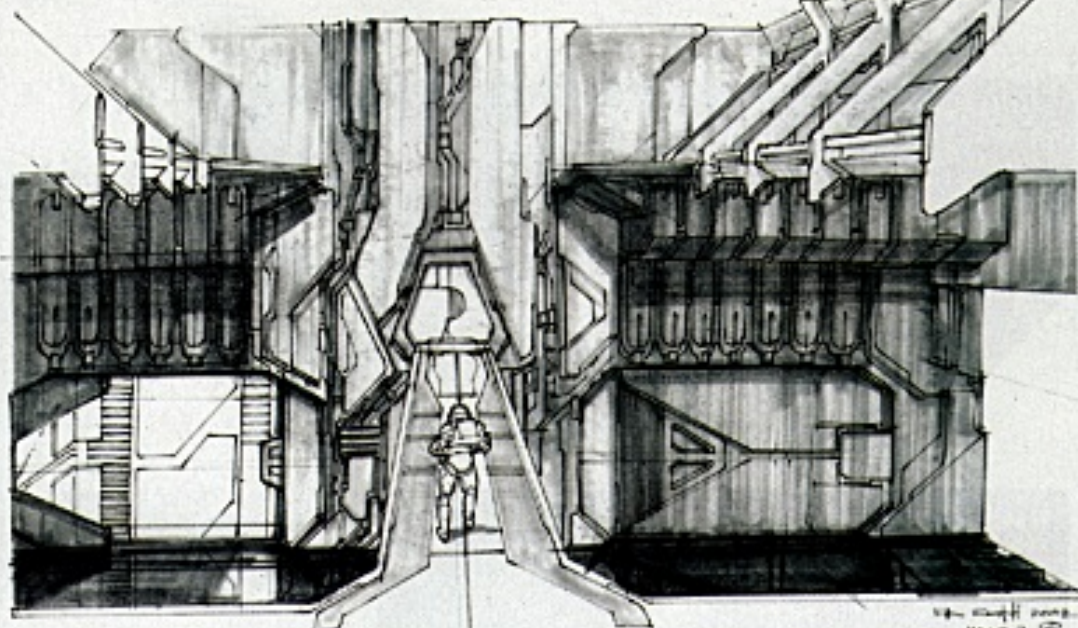
play in the new *Halo* universe. "You could use an overcharge blast from a plasma pistol to blast an Elite and after his shields are knocked out, use the SMG to finish him. Instead of simply doing twice as much damage, you get to use the weapons in

■ The graphical difference between the first game and the new one is generational, maybe even exponential.



true combo style. You use the left and right triggers for the respective weapon, the second weapon takes the place of your grenades," explains Griesemer.

New gameplay could be a mixed blessing. *Halo* players are creatures of habit. They like to



■ Some of the concept art is to relate cutscene elements.

play the same maps, with the same game modes, and using the same weapons. Griesemer is not worried about throwing them curveballs: "We're taking some of the old weapons and making them a little more nuanced, we're introducing new weapons of course, but we're really adding layers of use to all these weapons. And most of the stuff you use, you'll see Marines using too."

Weapons, at least the ones we saw, are an interesting mix (and of course, they may change by the time you get to play *Halo 2*). We saw the new SMG, a stubby, noisy little thing with a pronounced

"walk" (the involuntary raising of the gun caused by heat and recoil). The battle rifle behaves a little like the pistol, but it's a bit more flexible.

SUNRISE ON EARTHCITY

Like any sequel, the first due players get about a game's content comes from graphics. *Halo* was a tour de force in the department, and to this day, we still gasp as sunlight filters through trees, or stop to marvel at the bump-mapped textures on a bulkhead. This time around, Bungie wants to turn everything up to 11.

The first thing you'll notice about the game is how much better everything looks. It's not simply a case of upping polygon models and increasing the use of bump-mapping (although that's pretty prevalent throughout), it's making things better through design, rather than the brute force of "bigger" graphics.

As Development Lead Chris Butcher insists, "The biggest single improvement graphically is not something you can point out with bullet points. It's the fact that we've allowed and enabled our artists to take the love and care that they want to."



■ This is a Prophet – a Covenant priest/leader. Scary, huh?

As a result, new techniques have been applied cleverly and judiciously. "Many companies do an amazing job by rendering incredibly high polygon models of 3D surfaces, then rasterizing those graphics down so they can make a bump-mapped texture that looks like the high poly model," explains Art Lead Marcus Lehto. "We

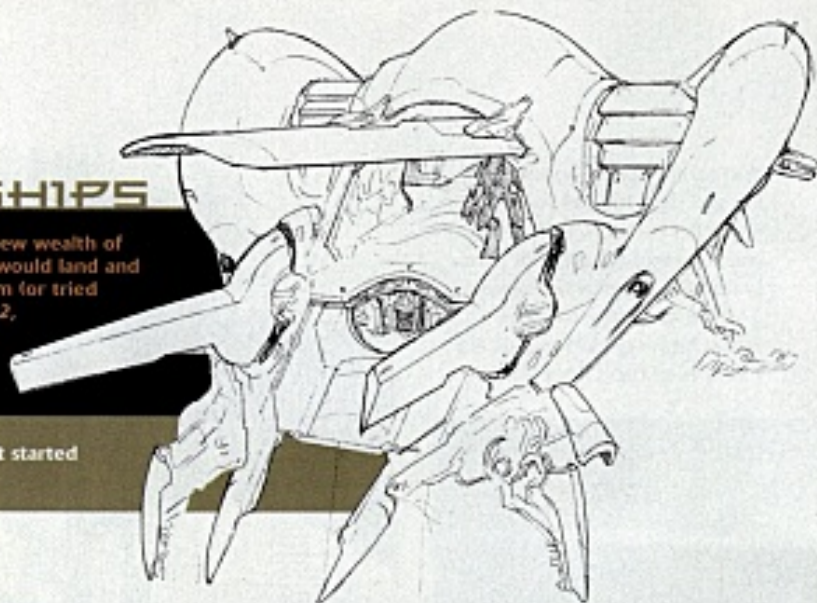


■ The lighting in *Halo 2* is absurdly detailed.

DROPPING THE DROPSHIPS

Now that the AI bots have earned their driver's licenses, a whole new wealth of gameplay possibilities has opened up. In *Halo*, the alien dropships would land and drop off their troops, and no matter how many times you shot them for tried to jump on them they would just go about their business. In *Halo 2*, the dropships are in play. Shoot 'em down, stick 'em with plasma grenades, and try to take each one down before it drops off another wave of Covenant scum.

■ We've been dying to take down a dropship since we first started playing *Halo*... with *Halo 2* it may finally be possible.



■ Lights did exist on vehicles in the first game, just nowhere near as impressive as here.



quickly discovered that our artists could simply paint those textures, accurately and convincingly, which saves you from an incredibly time-consuming process."

We noticed immediately that a Covenant Elite looked less like a big purple armored blob and more like a living, breathing, and fearsome creature. Animated mandibles and mouthparts are exposed under its armor, adding an ironically human touch to this gruesome beast. Similar techniques have been applied to humans.

New facial textures and accurate lip-synching are a far cry from the square-jawed parade of Marines in the original *Halo*. They look (and act) more like real people, and of course this detail adds to the overwhelming sense of immersion. The new facial textures even include bump-mapped lines and dimples.

But Butcher is wholly concerned with what Bungie's technology enables artists to do. "Everything in *Halo 1* was detailed, but that's going to be so much

more true in *Halo 2* because of the tools we've given our artists, so that they can lavish attention on the stuff they want to. They can spend time on cool things, they're spending time on bump-mapped details, or stenciling tiny letters on weapons, because they don't have to worry about stuff like how to get this graphic to work in the damn BSP importer."

Sympathy for artistic temperament aside for a moment, we should express some awe at the technological revolution Bungie has wrought this time around. "I don't want to talk too much about this, but one of the things our new lighting engine will let us do is destructible environments. We couldn't really do that before because scenes weren't dynamically lit. If we'd blown something up or moved it, its 'shadow' would still be there," says Lehto.

Chris Butcher apologetically adds, "And the lightmaps looked all wrong. We're going to have a lot more infantry combat that revolves around destroying and creating cover. And it looks a lot cooler after a battle because you

have all this destruction and chaos." The brand-new AI also plays a part in this new destructible world. Covenant troops will hide behind vehicles or other geometry (rocks, buildings, etc.), but if you destroy their cover they won't just stand out in the open, they will actually run to find new cover. The AI from the original *Halo* is arguably the best of any game of its type... but in *Halo 2* they are completely upping everything. Enemies will communicate with each other, call in search parties and even deploy troops to specific locations depending on the actions you do. Of course your Marine buddies have also gotten smarter and can now even drive vehicles. The result is a battlefield rife with variable gameplay, realistic responses, and one incredibly immersive experience.

That realism, interaction, and flexibility is just one of thousands of elements incorporated into *Halo 2*'s driving narrative. Story, as ever, is the prime motivating factor.

Bungie demonstrates this new lighting engine with a simple but immensely effective tech



MC EVOLUTION



Through the miracle of hand-painted bump-maps, Bungie has managed to dramatically improve the look of Master Chief while not throwing a ton more polygons on the character. Here's a look at the new MC, from wireframe to game.

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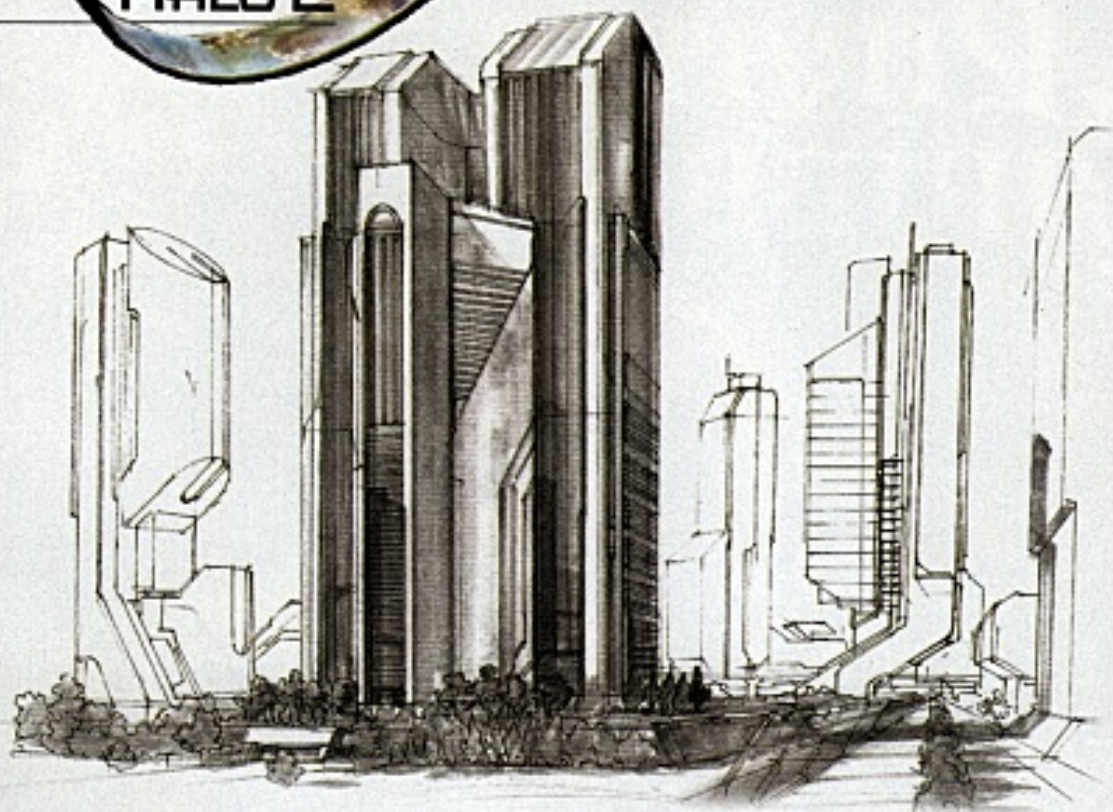


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HALO 2



■ These illustrations... uhh... illustrate the insane amount of detail planned for the final game.

■ Master Chief heads back to Earth. A storm is coming...



HALO COMMUNITY

Bungie is one of the rare developers in the world that actually has a real relationship with its audience. Ever since the company premiered its debut first-person shooter (*Marathon*, on the Mac), it's had a huge following. The release of *Halo* on Xbox meant a huge infusion of new fans. The developers are always putting in extra touches, hidden references, and other red herrings that are there for the true Bungie aficionado. Bungie.net plays host to the fanatics with a huge community of fan clubs... but it's more than a community of fans, these people also contribute to the community. From bizarre gameplay videos showcasing the extraordinary physics to translating the Gruntspeak, this community actually adds to the experience of playing the game. And we actually saw something at Bungie that indicates an even greater attention to community is in the works.



BUNGIE.NET

The home to all things Bungie. But unlike most developer websites, this is a great read, is constantly updated, and doesn't take itself too seriously. Highly recommended for any fan of *Halo*. You'll find info on LAN parties, tournaments, and the like. These are two of the areas on the site.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

The home to *Halo*. There are outtakes, screenshots, and updated news pieces for the biggest fans.

SEVENTH COLUMN

Official Bungie fan club and underground army. With over 3,600 chapters across the US, this is a growing and powerful force. Join up today!



■ The new Marines don't just look better, they're much smarter too. Better AI throughout makes for more intense experiences.

test – Master Chief and a couple of Marines sharing a plain with a Warthog, an Elite, and a building. Everything is dynamically lit and shadows are hard, cold, and real. *Halo 1* never looked anything like this... nor does anything else. Again, the purpose isn't to simply make your jaw open wider, but rather to more fully immerse you in the world and the story.

UNSILENT CARTOGRAPHER

The sound and fury found in the game is largely the work of Marty O'Donnell, the game's Audio Director, and Jay Weinland, the Audio Lead. Sound usually merits

a blasé, passing mention in other game features, where we might acknowledge that some game has a redefinable soundtrack, or some bad voice acting. Neither accusation is applicable here.

The original *Halo* was one of the first games to feature Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound as part of gameplay. That kind of trailblazing was not without peril. "There were a lot of multiplayer moments that we just didn't expect. We had to tune the surround effects to work for a four-player split screen. This time around, Dolby is really involved," says Jay Weinland. "We can do a

TICKET TO RIDE

Anyone who has played *Halo* knows that the vehicles are what really make this game great. In *Halo 2*, there will be more vehicles, there will be more vehicles in use at one time, and every vehicle will have an expanded role in single- and multiplayer. They didn't spill the beans on all of the vehicles but we had a chance to see a few of the new ones and get the goods on some old faves.

ATV



THE RIDE: The human answer to the Ghost. This single-manned machine is faster than a Warthog but just as capable at climbing hills and flipping insanely about.
THE WEAPONS: Doesn't have any onboard weapons, but the driver can use the pistol or any one-handed weapon to fire straight ahead. Essentially, you lean forward and rest your gun on the windshield. So at least you aren't completely defenseless like the driver of the Warthog.
HOW IT'S USED IN HALO 2: Useful for negotiating tight alleys that bigger vehicles can't make it through and great for getting somewhere especially hilly in a hurry. In multiplayer this could replace the Ghost as the primary "escape with the flag" vehicle.

WARTHOG



WHAT'S NEW: They've shown four new Warthogs and three of them should handle very similarly to the original. The fourth (with the snow treads) will likely handle somewhere between a Scorpion Tank and a Warthog. These variations aren't confirmed for *Halo 2*, but we suspect all of them will make it in.
HOW IT'S USED IN HALO 2: Now that AI players can drive the vehicles you can man the gun. Plus the new vehicles seem equipped for getting mass amounts of soldiers to your next battle, unlike the original, where you could only take two people with you.

SCORPION TANK



WHAT'S NEW: The big difference is the weapons now in place to go against the tank. More turrets and weapons designed to take out tanks will be part of the larger battles.
HOW IT'S USED IN HALO 2: A lot more. Bungie admitted that the limited appearance of the Scorpion Tank was one of the concessions they had to make to get the first game out on time. This time the vehicle will be driven by you or your AI buddies, but the Covenant will always be ready to take it out.

GHOST



WHAT'S NEW: The instrument panel now lights up with a nice glow, dust particles come out from underneath, the lasers look sleeker, and the new noise of the engine is creepy and likely to be the last thing many of you hear in multiplayer matches.
HOW IT'S USED IN HALO 2: Bungie claims that there will be more vehicles in use everywhere. We're guessing that this will be a very common vehicle often accompanied by bigger, more destructive alien machinery.

BANSHEE



WHAT'S NEW: Again, the sound and look have been upgraded, but as far as we know the handling and weaponry remain the same.
HOW IT'S USED IN HALO 2: An employee at Bungie has a sign that says, "Banshees are for multiplayer too!" This isn't a guarantee that you'll be able to fly over Blood Gulch on Xbox Live, but it certainly points to the possibility. Our little minds can't even fathom the brilliance that will be *Halo 2* on Xbox Live.

TURRETS



WHAT'S NEW: A ton. The humans will now have turrets and the enemies will have a greater variety. There will be surface-to-air turrets and surface-to-surface turrets.
HOW IT'S USED IN HALO 2: The idea is that the turrets can be the great balancer that allows you to spend a greater deal of time in huge destructive vehicles like the tank. Also there is a high degree of likelihood that these will make an appearance in multiplayer... the ultimate defensive weapon. WE CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER...
MUST PLAY HALO 2!

lot of things now we simply didn't know how to before."

We were treated to an example of *Halo 2* surround sound as Marty demonstrated the new Ghost. A tremulous bassy whine accompanies the sleeker, sharper Ghost model, and the studio's cluster of Bose speakers showed off the surround impact to dramatic effect. And a startling grenade explosion literally made us jump out of our chairs.

New weapons will introduce new sounds, from the staccato "BRAP!" of the SMG to the telling "POP" of the new Battle Rifle. You can almost "feel" the weapon fire.

Showing off the almost incestuous teamwork prevalent at Bungie was the sound team's in-engine texture lab. A vast "warehouse" of identical rooms, rendered in the *Halo 2* engine, lets the designers make suitable sounds for every texture, vehicle, weapon, and circumstance in *Halo 2*. How should the echo of a Warthog sound in an icy cavern? What noise does an MGC ricochet make in a narrow alley? "This environment they've created for us makes everything easier and better," notes Weinland.

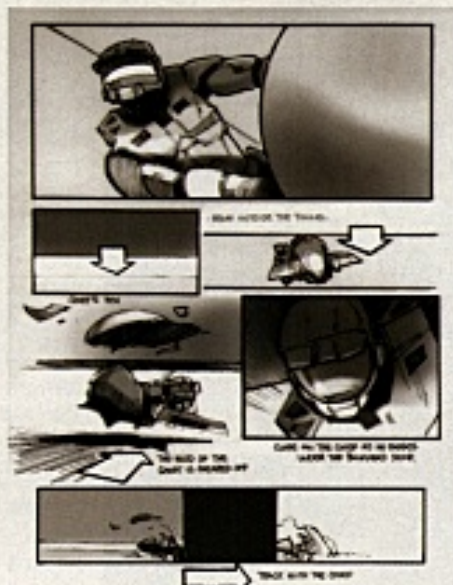
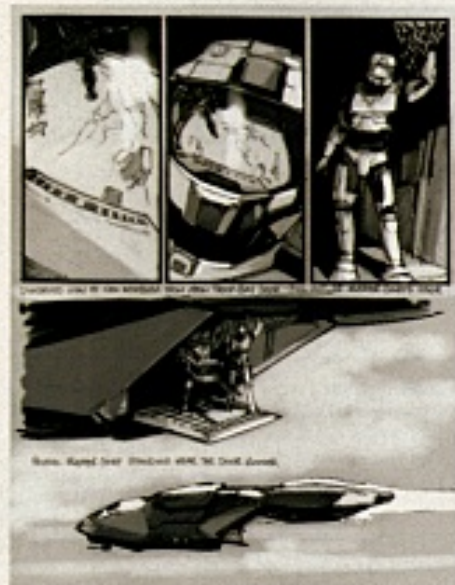
Music in the game will build on themes found in the original

game, as O'Donnell laughingly explains the exponential improvement: "You see, in *Halo*, we just had monks. But now we have monks and nuns!" Joking aside, *Halo*'s mix of linear and freeform gameplay makes music design an imposing challenge. "You have all these triggers and cues that change how music behaves, and it takes a lot of work to blend it seamlessly."

Suitably cloistered in a soundproof lab, the sound guys have a multitude of tools. A recording studio on site is used for voiceovers and Foley recording, but a real orchestra will record the

score. "We're making decisions about that now," says O'Donnell. "In the past we have used both the Chicago and Seattle Symphonies."

Halo 2, thanks to Xbox Live support, will take on a challenge already faced by titles like *Ghost Recon*, *MechAssault*, and *Unreal Championship*—how to integrate surround sound with an online multiplayer experience. Certainly System Link gamers on the original got a taste of this, but the sheer numbers expected to be playing *Halo 2* in a rarefied environment of Dolby surround, Xbox Live, and maybe HDTV



■ Pay careful attention to these storyboards. They show you play-by-play moments from the E3 demo.

means that the sound designers will be tuning for every eventuality. Marty and Jay are on it.

YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS

There's a good reason that *Halo* is still the best game on Xbox, and

the reason is Bungie. We visited the offices until 10 p.m., and no one had gone home yet. But it's not just their hard work and dedication that will make *Halo 2* brilliant, it's an almost-unheard-of understanding of what makes a

great game. Every single member of this team is focused on creating memorable moments in the game, and it's a team that truly works as a team. As an example, they are creating a new AI – not to be more

ALL NEW A.I.!

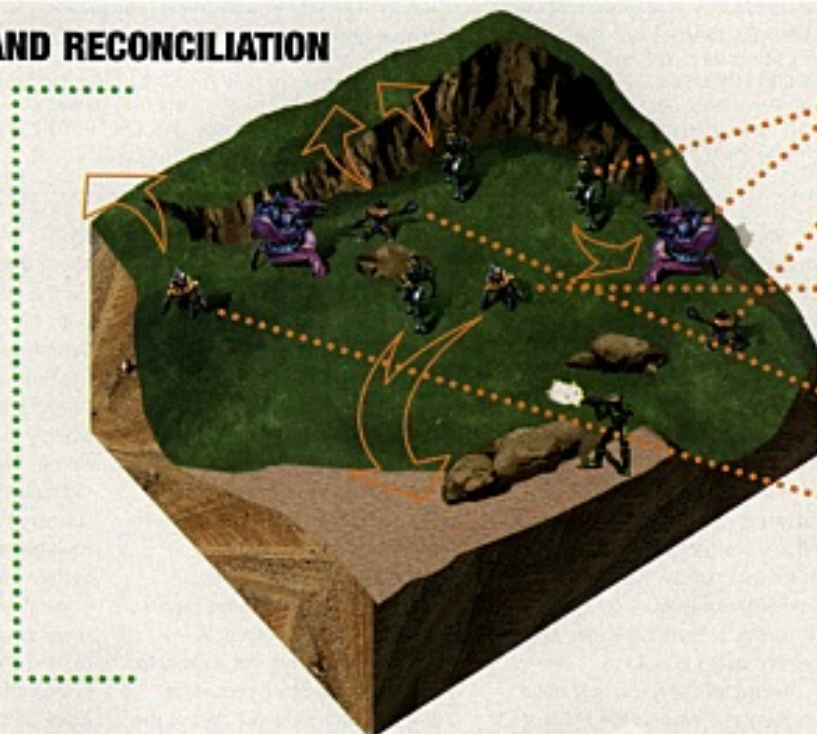
HALO 2-IT'S LIKE TWICE AS SMART AS HALO

Halo features what is arguably the best AI of any game ever made... so in making *Halo 2*, what did the developers do? Threw out everything to create an AI that is at least twice as smart. As Bungie's Jaime Griesemer so rightly pointed out, "Good AI isn't harder AI... just smarter." Below we've diagrammed an example of how the AI worked in *Halo* and how it will work in *Halo 2*.

HALO: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

MC: You land your Marines if you resisted killing them all with a grenade as they got off the Pelican! are up in the hills overlooking a valley full of Covenant baddies.

■ In *Halo*, you could hide behind the rocks and pick off the Covenant one by one. And unless they actually saw you, you could kill all 10 of them this way. Furthermore, when they did spot you, they would just run frantically around in the valley occasionally hiding behind rocks. It's going to get a lot tougher this time around.



HALO 2: AI EXAMPLE

AWARE

If you shoot this guy out, then any Covenant nearby will realize it.

COMMUNICATING

This guy will look around, then run, shout out, and move to notify others.

SEARCHING

These two guys will go out on a search party up the hill to try to flush you out.

REACTING

These guys will run into the hills across the way to sniping positions.

HUNTING

If it takes you long enough and the grunt gets away then he will bring back another group of aliens to join in the fray. In *Halo* enemies never left their area... this time they will be able to go anywhere you go and will actually coordinate from area to area throughout the game.

NOT ALL WEAPONS ARE CREATED EQUAL

**"Jessica Alba is kicking
butt and taking names."**
-New York Post



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difficult or even more intelligent (though that is the eventual outcome), but to be more entertaining and immersive – to

provide a better gameplay experience. Bungie is a bunch of smart guys working with each other to create the best game

ever made. It's a stunning thing to see first-hand, and if there were some bizarre decree that allowed only one development house in

the world to work on games that we played, we'd pick Bungie.

THE LAST SPARTAN

So what did we bring away from this privileged unveiling? Well, this time around, *Halo* is much more iconic. When we first set eyes of *Halo* a couple of years ago, it simply didn't have the legacy that it has built in popular imagination

■ The Warthog will be a firm returning favorite.



■ The new ATV is a high-speed single-player ride.



■ Again – this is the in-game model of the Pelican, not a pre-rendered stand-in. The graphics really look this good.



since. So in a way, our expectations were ratcheted absurdly high. Did we like it, though? Were we impressed?

Let's just say that all our expectations were smashed into their component atoms by an army of flying barking bat-spiders, spewing diamond bullets from their brain-mounted space-cannons. And leave it at that. **XBOX**



■ Somewhere between *Logan's Run* and *Judge Dredd*, Earthcity is futuristic, but still pretty and clean. No *Blade Runner* nightmares here.

**THINGS TO DO WHILE YOU WAIT FOR HALO 2:
GET YOUR OWN WARTHOG!**

ACTION FIGURE CONTEST

An exclusive bonus to the fine readers of this magazine is a chance to win a collection of *Halo* (Y... not Z) action figures. JoyRide Studios (www.joyridestudios.com) has created these high-quality, painstakingly detailed, insanely accurate representations of the characters from *Halo*, and they can be yours for the taking. The people at Bungie Studios and Microsoft were very involved in the creation of the figures to ensure their accuracy. We will give away 25 complete sets of three figures (Cortana, Master Chief, and Warthog) to 25 lucky winners. All you have to do is send an email to xboxmag@futurenetworkusa.com with your name, address, email, and phone number and we'll randomly pick 25 winners from the bunch. You can also send in your entries via regular mail by sending them to:

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No purchase is necessary to win. Entries must be received no later than June 15, 2003. The winner will be chosen on or about July 1, 2003, and will be notified by e-mail or regular mail. The odds of winning depend upon the number of entries received. The contest sponsor cannot be responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or incomplete entries. The prize is nontransferable and no substitutions will be allowed. Winners will be determined by a single random drawing of all valid entries and the decision of the contest sponsor shall be final. You may obtain the name of the winners by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the address above. This contest is open to residents of the United States only. Return of any prize or prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. The winner may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within seven days of receipt; failure to do so upon request will result in forfeiture of the prize. By acceptance of the prize, the winner agrees to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Neither JoyRide Studios nor Future Network USA, Inc. (publisher of the Official Xbox Magazine) shall be responsible for any damages or expenses that winners might incur as a result of this contest or the receipt of any prize. Winners are responsible for paying any income taxes on the value of the prize received. Void in Rhode Island, Puerto Rico and where prohibited by law.

Special thanks to everyone at Bungie – and especially the following, without whom this piece couldn't have happened.

Hamilton Chu – Lead Producer
Joanne Griesemer – Lead Designer
Joseph Staden – Cinematic Director
Marty O'Donnell – Audio Director
Joy Weiland – Audio Lead

Marcus Lehto – Art Lead
Pete Parsons – Studio Manager
Michael Evans – Development Manager
Brian Jamard – Community Development Manager

Matt Seel – Community Lead
Chris Butcher – Development Lead
Tom Gocondo – Web Development Manager
Lorraine R. McLees – Artist

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Official Xbox Magazine's Virtual E3

START HERE

Do you feel that tingling? It's the sensation that comes whenever the Electronic Entertainment Exposition (or E3, as we call it for obvious reasons) rolls around. It's like Christmas, but way better. Instead of one fat guy in a red blazer wiggling down your chimney with a bag full of presents, you've got thousands of fat guys in free t-shirts wiggling through convention doors with bags full of tchotchkes. They're all looking for a chance to see the latest and greatest games from every game company in the world.

Since many of you will never get the opportunity to see this show for yourself, we've re-created the sights, sounds, and smells of the show. Just kick back in the comfort of your own home, follow the dotted line and experience the grandeur that is E3.



NERDS

They're everywhere... and they're in their element. Be very, very careful. Remember, though... we have seen the nerds, and they is we.



Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance

COMPANY: Acclaim

This game not only allows you to fight to the death against other gladiators in complex skirmishes, but you can also tap into the power of the gods for some effects-laden gameplay glory... like raising the dead to come and fight at your side.

WATCH FOR: Engaging story elements.



FREEBIES

Game companies use these to promote games. And while most are valued at less than \$5, many E3 attendees are still willing to risk arms, legs, and backpacks to secure them.



True Crime: Streets of LA

COMPANY: Activision

Some (including us!) are calling this game the GTA III killer. And while that's a pretty tall order, True Crime has some serious street cred with a bigger environment, more intense hand-to-hand combat, deeper driving models, and more two-fisted shooting than the PS2 blockbuster.

WATCH FOR: Branching missions and other non-linear gameplay elements.



BOOTH BOYS

Only lads in tight shirts are used to lure female attendees to booths, or perhaps to offset the impression of sexism. They generally have a serious look on their face.



Pitfall Harry

COMPANY: Activision

Pitfall Harry is back and he's got a bunch of new stuff to swing over. Thankfully, he's also got a bunch of new special items, including a sling, dynamite, ice axes, and a pogo stick, as well as upgradeable special abilities like a quick dash. Take that, Sonic!

WATCH FOR: New enemies such as piranhas, bush ninjas, and, wait for it... mega monkeys.



NERDS HITTING ON BOOTH BABES

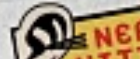
One of the purest sights you'll see at E3. Nothing beats a 79-pound website editor who lives in his mother's basement trying to chat up a Maxim cover girl.

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004

COMPANY: EA

Like the golfer this game's named after, it's easy to take for granted just how good this series has become in recent years. This year's improvements include a season mode, five new PGA courses, two new fantasy courses, and five new PGA pros. The smooth-sailing gameplay and alluring mix of arcade and tournament challenges make for tons of variety.

WATCH FOR: No wait, listen for: Commentary by Gary McCord and David Feherty.



NERDS HITTING ON BOOTH BABES

"I'd butt stomp anyone to rescue you, Princess!"

The sights, smells, and sounds of E3 or... the agony and the ecstasy, without the airfare.

SPECIAL NOTE: Check page 10 for all of the big Microsoft first-party games and announcements... we actually had to stop the presses to get this stuff in. We love stopping the presses, it makes us feel so journalistic and whatnot.

NERDS

Nerds smell kind of like a combination of hair gel, nutmeg, and Mr. Pibb. It can be extremely dangerous in large concentrations.



WWE Raw 2

COMPANY: THQ
This sequel to the depth-challenged WWE Raw fixes many of the problems that we complained about a year ago. New match types have been added, new wrestlers introduced, and a multiplayer season mode has been included to let you and up to three friends play through a season of Raw.

WATCH FOR: A new feature that will allow you to rip tracks from your favorite CDs and use them as entrance music for your created wrestler.



Madden NFL 2004

COMPANY: EA
E3 just wouldn't be E3 without the latest Madden game. This edition introduces a new feature that enables players to make adjustments before or after the snap of the ball to exploit opponents' weaknesses.

WATCH FOR: The new Owner mode. EA's Franchise features have been getting better and better, and this one looks to set the bar even higher.

COMMON THIEVERY

By the last day, almost everything in the booths that isn't nailed down has been stolen by crazed gamers. Things that are nailed down are often unnailed - and then stolen.



Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

COMPANY: Ubisoft
Before Ang Lee made a certain movie about a green guy in purple pants, he also created one of the finest martial arts films ever made. Three years later, a game based on the movie will make its debut at E3 and finally give players the chance to try out the martial arts mastery of

Li Mu Bai, Yu Shu Lien, Jen Yu, and "Dark Cloud" Lo.
WATCH FOR: Tons of special stages, extra costumes, and other secrets. And no wires!

BOOTH BABES

Buxom lasses in tight shirts are used to lure male attendees to booths. They generally have a seriously embarrassed look on their face.



NERDS HITTING ON BOOTH BABES

"I have ascertained that you enjoy and Zelda hotpants that you enjoy videogames... by a strange quirk of fate, so do I. Perhaps you'd like to come over to my place and Dance, Dance the Revolution - IN BED."



NERDS STILL HITTING ON BOOTH BABES

"Hey baby, videogame journalists do it in 300 words or less."



NBA Jam 2004

COMPANY: Acclaim
By this stage in the game, you probably think that you know what the latest edition of NBA Jam is all about... well, you're probably right. But make sure to add to your expectations 60 of the NBA's greatest all-time players.

WATCH FOR: Player-specific dunks and special moves like Bob Cousy's around-the-back layup.

Otogi

COMPANY: Sega
This game has been described as a samurai GunValkyrie because of how it plays, but there's more to it than that. Gorgeous graphics, interactive environments, and

Dynasty Warrior-style strategy elements all make us glad that someone in America is paying attention to the growing Japanese Xbox community.
WATCH FOR: The main character actually slows down when you overload him with heavy weapons and power-ups. Check page 60 for all the details.



CHEAP EUROPEAN CIGARETTES

True fact: E3 attendees from Europe spend approximately 90 percent of their time at the show smoking cigarettes outside.



Ninja Gaiden

COMPANY: Tecmo
Put this on your must-see list. Tecmo and Team Ninja have nailed their first two Xbox games, and judging by what we've seen so far, by third is right on track. Gamers have been waiting years for, and at E3, they'll get their first chance to see this game in glorious motion.
WATCH FOR: Revolutionary graphics.



Hunter: The Reckoning - Redeemer

COMPANY: Vivendi
Hunter: The Reckoning was one of the most pleasant surprises on the Xbox last year, and this sequel brings over 40 weapons and 21 different types of monsters to slay.
WATCH FOR: Downloadable content on Xbox Live, including new skins, weapons, cheats, and characters.



FIFA 2004

COMPANY: EA
The FIFA series continues its movement towards more authentic gameplay with this new addition to the series. And with the first decent U.S. showing in the World Cup in decades you could actually play the game as the U.S. and have a chance.
WATCH FOR: More realistic control and graphics, and an improved Career mode.

A-LIST CELEBRITY

You'll inevitably hear rumors that a big-time celebrity like Steven Spielberg or Dick Van Dyke has brought their kids to the show. Under no circumstances will you actually see them.



Operation Flashpoint

COMPANY: Codemasters
Welcome to the role of a NATO peacekeeper... only this time, you're keeping the peace with a little thing called an automatic rifle. This squad-based shooter was loved by the critics on the PC, and the Xbox version has plenty of new stuff, including the complete Resistance add-on pack.
WATCH FOR: The stars. Flashpoint even includes accurate star constellations for navigation.

EUROPEAN DESCRIPTIONS OF GAMES

They're split evenly between three options. Brilliant = good, bollocks = bad, the dog's bollocks = good, and \$#!@&%ing unbelievable = either good or bad.

C-LIST CELEBRITY

You can't take a step at E3 without tripping over Will Wheaton or Gary Coleman.



Unnamed Planet Moon Game

COMPANY: LucasArts
LucasArts is keeping tight-lipped about this humorous action title, but the company couldn't have picked a better developer for it. Planet Moon's Giant: Citizen Kobuto had some of the funniest laugh-out-loud moments we've ever experienced in a game.
WATCH FOR: More action than you might expect.



Dead Man's Hand

COMPANY: Infogrames
The Western genre has been almost totally ignored even though it's just begging to be made into a game. After all, cowboys, cowgirls, cowpokes, cow rustling, cow pies, and even some non-cow-related stuff. Here's hoping that Dead Man's Hand gets it right.
WATCH FOR: The full horn-swooglin' details in our preview on page 66.

MASCOTS

These are apparently great, unless you have an unhealthy fear of mascots (as this writer does). If you do, E3 can be a frightening, frightening place.



Andy McNab Team SAS

COMPANY: Interplay
Andy McNab Team SAS should stand out from the crowd thanks to its cooperative gameplay, unique mission design, and the use of Andy McNab - who's apparently very popular in the special ops community.
WATCH FOR: Andy McNab. He could be behind you RIGHT NOW!

GUYS WHO TALK TO YOU IN THE BATHROOM

Gamers get a little excited at E3 and forget the standard rules of male restroom decorum.



GUYS IN SUITS

They're at the show too. However, they look frightened and uncomfortable amongst the larger groupings of roaming nerds.



ANXIOUS ONLINE JOURNALISTS

Our friends at IGN.com spend the entire show running around in frantic chaos trying to write 6,000 E3 articles in a bid to top Gamespot.com's 5,900 E3 articles while we kick it in the Eidos booth getting free drinks from 98% naked bartendresses.



Full Throttle II

COMPANY: LucasArts
If this sequel manages to capture even half the humor, excitement, and challenge of the original, it may just revive the land we're betting it will, an adventure game genre.
WATCH FOR: Snappy one-liners. This game will be full of them.



THOMSON
COMPANY: EA

WATCH FOR: *Over-the-top*



Sega
We've been
waiting for this
to go GT into



**Medal of Honor:
Rising Sun**

Rising
COMPANY: EA

WATCH FOR: A
alongside a friend.



X2: Wolverine's Revenge
COMPANY: Activision

Revenge
COMPANY: Activision

WATCH FOR: Special guest voice appearances by Patrick Stewart and Princess Leia's brother/makeout partner Mark Hamill.



Bionicle
COMPANY: EA

COMPANY: EA

WATCH FOR: Brain-teasing puzzle



MotoGP 2

COMPANY: THQ

WATCH FOR: Real-world physics... if you're not careful, you'll be eating asphalt. Also, be sure to play the demo on our disc included with this very issue.



XIII

XIII
COMPANY: Ubisoft

WATCH FOR: The storytelling usage of pop-up windows. It's like AOL, but with more shooting.



Gladius

Gladius
COMPANY: LucasArts

WATCH FOR: The four-player cooperative mode. Also, watch for a demo of this game on our next disc.



**NEADS
FIGHTING OVER
WHO'S "WINNING"
THE SHOW**



The Italian Job

COMPANY: Eidos
the upcoming

key car in the placement deal.



THE
#1

WATCH FOR: Enemies with equally spooky mind powers.



THE BIG LIE #3

Booth Babe: "That is such an interesting story."

VIDEO WALLS

Nerds tend to congregate under these and spontaneously whoop.



Alias

COMPANY: Acclaim
Jennifer Garner fans rejoice... many, many polygons were enlisted in order to render the star of ABC's cult-hit television program in all her glory. Oh yeah, the game could be the next Buffy.

WATCH FOR: Cool state-of-the-art gadgetry designed by Marshall from Alias.

LONG LINES

Each year, Squaresoft features a viewing booth that seats about six people. The 250 others who want to see their latest game stand in lines that snake around the convention center and end somewhere on Pico.



NCAA Football 2004

COMPANY: EA
This year the Tabor college guys are continuing to push their Madden coworkers by featuring a new mode that lets you replay some of history's greatest college football games.

WATCH FOR: A new feature that lets your fans tear down the goalposts after a big rivalry win.

THE HUNGOVER

The ultimate torture plan... Huge, drunken parties followed the next day by mandatory 9 a.m. appointments inches away from a four-foot-high speaker blasting techno music.



Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu

COMPANY: Ubisoft
So, you think that you've fought every possible villain in a videogame? Think again. This latest adventure pits you against a villain that makes his debut appearance in a videogame: Sin Tzu. This new bad guy was created by the Dark Knight has ever faced. Don't worry, though, you can get some help from Nightwing, Robin, or Batgirl.

WATCH FOR: First game appearances of Bane, Clayface, and Scarecrow.

NINTENDO FAITHFUL

Sometimes break into uncontrollable fits of cheering and crying when presented with the latest Miyamoto game. Swears that this is "Nintendo's big year."

UNDERAGE FOLKS

Despite the fact they are not supposed to be at the show... they're everywhere. And by everywhere, we mean the Pokemon booth.



NBA Live 2004

COMPANY: EA
Last year NBA Live redefined videogame basketball with its cool analog-stick control scheme that let players create their own moves on the fly. This year's version tweaks that control even further with new moves and an improved passing game.

WATCH FOR: A player career mode that lets you create a hoops star and build his skills over time.

MONKEYS

But not nearly as many as we'd like.



THE BIG LIE #2

PR Person: "What you see in this cinematic is indicative of what the final gameplay will look like."



Freedom: Soldiers of Liberty

COMPANY: EA
The Soviet Union has won the Cold War, a nuclear missile has hit Washington D.C., the President has been killed, and the Russians are invading. It's your job as an urban guerrilla (not the Clint Fosse kind) to take on the Soviets in the city of New York. Build weapons, learn fighting styles, and recruit fighters.

WATCH FOR: Our extended coverage on page 70.



Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix

COMPANY: Activision
One of the bloodiest and most intense first-person shooters ever made is on its way to the Xbox. With 25 weapons, 55 single-player missions, 20 multiplayer maps, and a random mission generator, you'll find almost limitless experiences in this game.

WATCH FOR: Our world-exclusive review in this issue. It's on page 76.



Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance 2

COMPANY: Interplay
The original Dark Alliance wowed us with gorgeous graphics and memorable dungeon crawls. This sequel should be even more beautiful, more memorable, and more packed with mystical creatures guarding mystical treasures for mystical reasons.

WATCH FOR: A skeleton strike... after years of serving as RPG hero fodder, these guys need either a raise or a new career.

KLINGONS

Even when there are no Star Trek games at the show, they still show up with their platform boots and their "K'raj D'Jar!"





Shrek 2

COMPANY: Activision/TDK

Since the original looked so good on the Xbox, it would be a shame if the flatulent green guy didn't make a return trip. And the original had some

WATCH FOR: Improved gameplay. The developers were listening.



BAD THIEF

Watch a husky nerd get run down by three security guards as he tries to bolt out of the show hefting a gas-plasma monitor and a Seven of Nine standee.



Pirates of the Caribbean

COMPANY: Bethesda

Those of you who keep an eye on pirate games will immediately recognize this title as *Sea Dogs* if with a Disney license. This RPG-at-sea gives players a chance to live the life of a pirate, a sea captain, a bounty hunter, or a stripping merchant as you board ships, master sea trade, and handle delicate international relations. And you'll do it all in a delicate international manner.

WATCH FOR: Improved quests, expanded land gameplay, and enhanced graphics over the original *Sea Dogs*.



NCAA March Madness 2004

COMPANY: EA
We love the Freestyle Control fit's back; we just hope that it's not quite as

easy to flummox the easily fooled computer players using it this time around.
WATCH FOR: Dickie V, he's all over this basketball game, BABY!



THE EAGER FLYER-HANDER-OUTERS

"Excuse me, would you like some info about an exciting game called..."

Never, ever look them in the eyes. Ever.



Secret Weapons Over Normandy

COMPANY: LucasArts

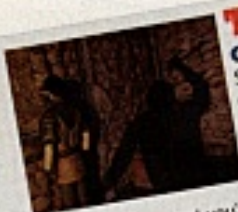
Totally Games' flight sim will be memorable because it seems like an awfully long time since a company made a good old-fashioned WWII

combat simulator for a console.
WATCH FOR: Enemies at 12 o'clock. It's so weird, you can almost set your watch by them...



ABUSIVE BOOTH ATTENDEES

In the EverQuest booth, gamers actually come up to the developers and harangue them for weird and very specific problems they experienced while playing the original.



Thief III

COMPANY: Eidos

So, you like sneaking around, do ya? Well, don't sneak around E3 without checking out the latest in the series that helped make stealth an important part of the modern gaming landscape. Add to this the amazing graphics and lighting engine used in *Deus*

WATCH FOR: Total integration of shadows into gameplay. Check out our world-exclusive preview on page 52.



Wrath (working title)

COMPANY: LucasArts

After playing *Buffy* and *Indiana Jones*, we became big fans of *The Collective* and we're eagerly awaiting their new title *Wrath*. The game is a unique

blend of arcade action and turn-based strategy. And while this may seem like an odd mix, it seems as if they're actually going to pull it off. And there's nothing like it on the Xbox.
WATCH FOR: Mythological creatures duking it out old-school.



Alter Echo

COMPANY: THQ

Players can switch between three distinct forms while playing this game. The first is a regular hand-to-hand combat mode, the second is heavy weaponry gun mode, and the third is a sneaky, agile

stealth mode. Using these modes properly is the key to victory.
WATCH FOR: Matrix-style time-warping effects. Not to mention some of the most surreal backdrops ever seen in a game.



PARTY GHOULS

These poor souls haunt the show floor looking for people with an extra ticket to whatever big industry party is taking place that night.



Backyard Wrestling

COMPANY: Eidos

Eidos has tapped into the growing movement of knuckleheaded teenagers who ape the wrestling moves they see on television... without any training at all. Honestly, these are the exact kind of idiots that belong in videogames. And we

deserve the right to cause them great virtual pain... ain't America great?
WATCH FOR: The Insane Clown Posse... it's good to see that lunatic clowns can still get work in this day and age.



IndyCar Series

COMPANY: Codemasters

NASCAR may have won the hearts of American racing fans, but there's still no race in this country that's bigger than the Indy 500. And this is the only Xbox racer that's got it.

WATCH FOR: Individual AI based on the real IndyCar driver personalities.



FREAKISHLY FAT GUYS AND FREAKISHLY SKINNY GUYS

You'll find surprisingly few guys in between these two extremes at the show... and most of them are freakishly short or freakishly tall. Sadly, this includes us.



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THE HALL OF THE DEAD

No matter where E3 is, some companies get stuck in a hall far away from the action. This is where you'll find all the crazy peripherals, B-grade booth "babes," and German phone companies trying to rebound from bad years.



Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel

COMPANY: Interplay

The tactical strategy in this game is tempered with cool RPG elements and more weapons and objects than you can shake a Level 6 RPG stick at.

WATCH FOR: Special missions that challenge every aspect of your tactical strategic skills.



OVERLY SERIOUS GUYS IN CARTOON SHIRTS

Dude, you're wearing a shirt with a Smurf on it. Lighten up a little.



Deus Ex: Invisible War

COMPANY: Eidos

This game has all the earmarks of a classic RPG, plus the technical prowess to back up an incredibly advanced gameplay engine. If Warren Spector and Splinter Cell look so... last year.

WATCH FOR: Amazing use of light and shadows that make the bigger-named titles for game of show.



ABUSIVE BOOTH ATTENDEES

"And then my level 40 Mythril Breastplate wouldn't stop level 50 Iksar magical attacks in the cave of Drulenden whenever I grouped with a Half Elf Bard - you moron!"



Spy Hunter 2

COMPANY: Midway

Spy Hunter is back with more of the high-speed gameplay that made the original a success. This sequel offers dynamically generated levels, new vehicle transformations, and upgradeable weapons. Naturally the theme from Peter Gunn has been revamped to include thrash metal guitars. Again.

WATCH FOR: A sexy new female Spy Hunter.



Wakeboarding Unleashed Featuring Shaun Murray

COMPANY: Activision

This game's nine massive levels are packed with enough level objectives (including water balloon fights) and hidden goodies to keep players busy for hours on end.

WATCH FOR: The water... Activision claims it's the most impressive water ever seen in a videogame.



VIDEOGAME TV NETWORK CREWS

They yell a lot during interviews and then use this footage over and over for an entire year of programming.



Aliens versus Predator: Extinction

COMPANY: EA

Aliens, Predators, and Humans lock horns in a bloody war to determine the survival of their respective species. In this Xbox realtime strategy game, you can look forward to loads of deadly combat as any one of the three competing species.

WATCH FOR: Plenty of frightening surprises.



XGRA

COMPANY: Acclaim

This game, the latest in Acclaim's Extreme G racing series, adds new tracks, new race types, improved crashes, and new hovering spacebike and character models.

WATCH FOR: If this is Future NASCAR, will there be a bike sponsored by Future Hookers? And why do we keep calling these Wipeout clones when, in fact, they're more correctly F-Zero clones?



MAINSTREAM TV NETWORK CREWS

They're always, always searching for the Pac-Man booth.



MX Unleashed

COMPANY: THQ

Rainbow Studios, the developer of the spectacular Splatsdown and Mot Hoffman's Pro BMX 2, is working on an Xbox Motocross racer. Apparently it will include mud, jumps and extreme stunts. More interestingly, it'll have HUGE draw distances.

WATCH FOR: The back flip... it's the biggest thing on the XGames and it better be in this game.



NFL Blitz Pro

COMPANY: Midway

Say goodbye to over-the-top gameplay in NFL Blitz. Now that Midway Sports is focusing on delivering a deeper experience in all of its games, Blitz is now a straight-ahead football simulation with 11-on-11 gameplay and realistic rules... but still a bit over the top.

WATCH FOR: Online play. This will be the first Blitz that you can play on Xbox Live.



FRAN

Seriously, our own Francesca Reyes is a bit of an E3 celebrity. We can't get enough of watching fanboys melt down when they meet her. (And this happens every year.)



THE EXIT DOOR

By the end of E3 this will be a beautiful sight to you... we hope you enjoyed the virtual tour. At this point, people at the real show have to pay \$40 for a cab ride to LAX, but you can just turn the page and go.

EXIT



"There's no doubt about its greatness, from start to finish, it's a gripping, epic, cinematic adventure."

—Official Xbox Magazine

"Five out of Five Stars"



—Maxim

"It is the definitive
Xbox *Live* experience."

—Official Xbox Magazine



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You are B.J. Blazkowicz, a US Army Ranger recruited by the OSA and the Allies' top specialist in covert operations, heavy weapons and assassination. Hitler's head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, is twisting science and the occult into an army capable of annihilating the Allies. The balance of victory is in your hands.

RETURN TO CASTLE Wolfenstein TIRES OF WAR



Engage in an epic, story-driven single-player campaign across over 30 levels.



Shred a host of enemies into oblivion with a brutal arsenal of authentic and experimental weapons.



Battle through the entire single-player campaign in split-screen co-op mode.



Take on up to 15 others via Xbox Live, fighting as 1 of 4 interdependent characters, each relying on the others to survive.



Clear bunkers with heavy weaponry, dynamite structures and call in air strikes in the definitive squad-based multiplayer experience.



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Previews

Sweet Xbox goodness on the way...



■ If this screenshot doesn't get you excited about *Thief III*, then you probably don't really love videogames. You can even see your own shadow!



■ Two guards and a priest convene, probably to discuss where all of the communion money went.



■ We're not sure yet who the guy on the wall is, but we're guessing he's evil.

WORLD EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!

Thief III

Stealing and pillaging isn't just encouraged, it's required!

■ Stop drooling for a second, then imagine the gameplay possibilities opened up by Garrett casting his own dynamic shadow. Now resume drooling.

Xbox owners not familiar with the *Thief* series will soon have their pockets of expectation picked. Born on the PC in 1998, *Thief* and its sequel literally invented a sub-genre of first-person shooter gaming, earning the moniker of "first-person sneaker." Five years later, the series is now headed for the Xbox, looking exponentially better than ever.

Set in a medieval fantasy town known as The City (clever name, that is), *Thief's* gameplay revolves around avoiding combat, the polar opposite of a traditional FPS. Forgoing attention and (literally) the spotlight in favor of sticking to the shadows and clubbing those who obstruct your path with your trusty Blackjack, *Thief* brings the pace to a crawl while upping tension by a factor of ten. If you found yourself sweating during some of *Splinter Cell's* better stealthy moments, then you ain't seen nothin' yet.

Obviously, when the hero of the game is a master thief, he can't exactly be a "hero" in the traditional sense. The avatar in question, Garrett, is the very definition of a reluctant anti-hero.

He's out to rob the rich and keep the booty for himself, staying out of the rest of the world's way whenever possible. He's only interested in the payday. Think of him as a selfish Robin Hood. Of course, Garrett manages to find trouble – or trouble finds him – and the resulting plot twists keep the intriguing storyline moving.

Since Garrett's out to avoid everyone, he has an arsenal of tools rather than weapons. There's the aforementioned Blackjack for subduing guards, rope arrows for accessing hard-to-reach places, water arrows for dousing pesky light-giving torches, flashbomb grenades for distracting foes, and a sword as a last line of defense. Don't think Garrett can't kill anyone, because he is certainly capable, but it should always be his last option.

Technologically, the screenshots of *Thief III* speak for themselves. What you can't see, however, are the physics and art style, which deserve special mention. The former is the same Havoc system used in ION Storm's other title, *Deus Ex: Invisible War*. Toss a chair down a flight of stairs to distract a guard and it will bounce and flip accordingly. The

Complex environments

Thief III sports some pretty sweet and detailed environments. To get an idea of all of the good stuff crammed into an area, check out the Cathedral. Just imagine all of the gears moving, and you get the idea.



TRACK RECORD

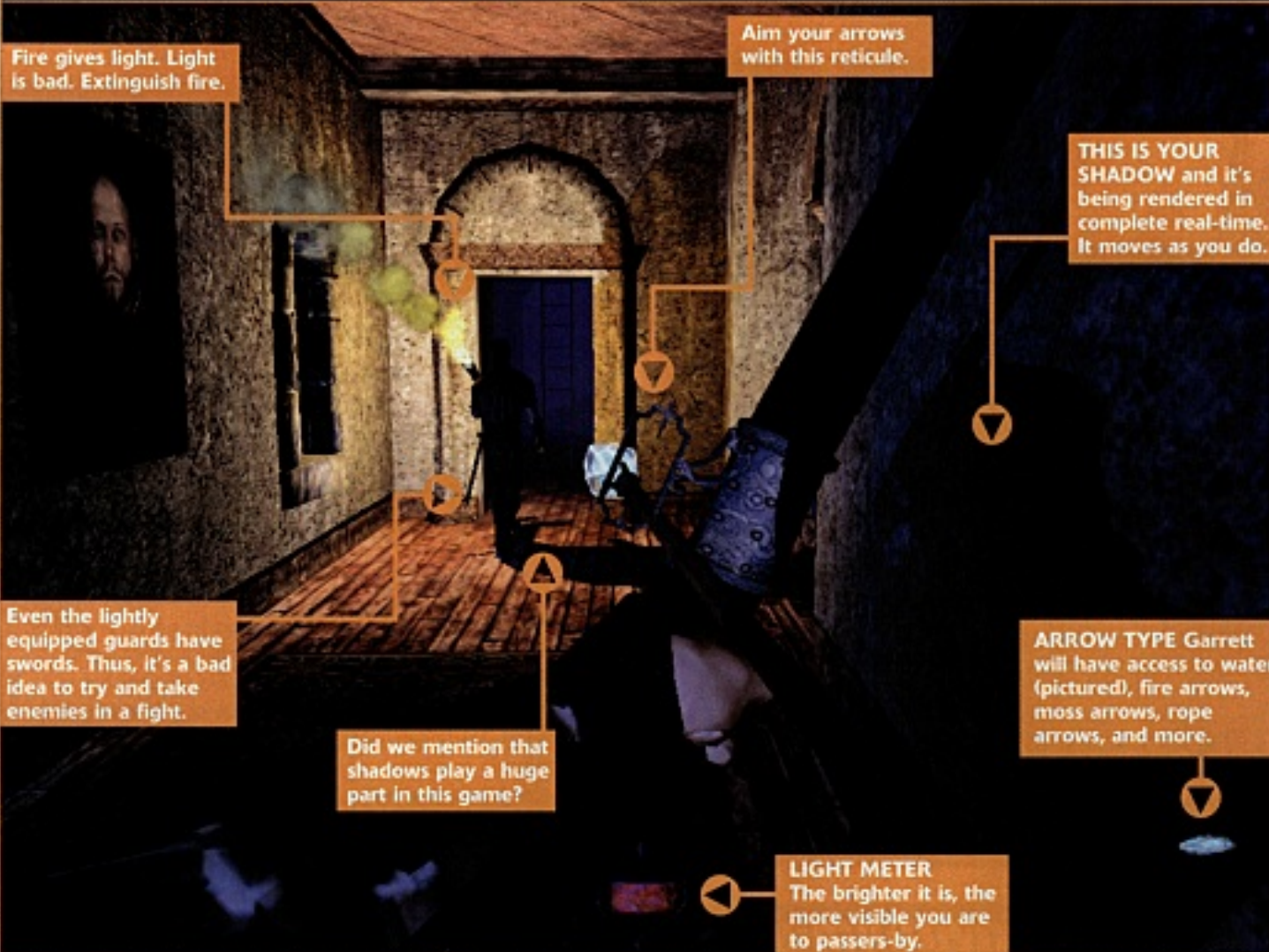
DEVELOPER: ION STORM | PUBLISHER: EIDOS | RELEASE: 2004

WHO ARE THEY? The ION team working on *Thief III* is composed of much of the talent responsible for creating the first two *Thief* games at Looking Glass before that developer folded a few years ago. The other half of the company is currently hard at work on the upcoming *Deus Ex: Invisible War*, which we featured in our April issue.

Freeze-Frame

LOCATION: A huge mansion

MISSION: Find and, uh, "borrow" a precious artifact



Fire gives light. Light is bad. Extinguish fire.

Aim your arrows with this reticle.

THIS IS YOUR SHADOW and it's being rendered in complete real-time. It moves as you do.

Even the lightly equipped guards have swords. Thus, it's a bad idea to try and take enemies in a fight.

Did we mention that shadows play a huge part in this game?

ARROW TYPE Garrett will have access to water (pictured), fire arrows, moss arrows, rope arrows, and more.

LIGHT METER The brighter it is, the more visible you are to passers-by.

latter is best described as a macabre oil painting come to life. Cutscenes feature not a glorious display of flashy CG, but instead an understated image with minimal movement and impacting imagery. Cool.

But what about the locales Garrett will pilfer from? A number of interesting areas are

planned, including a cathedral, a museum, and the dark, eerie streets of The City. And it'll all be rendered using state-of-the-art technology, as *Thief III* is utilizing the same modified *Unreal* tech that *Deus Ex: Invisible War* is

packing – but with an even bigger emphasis on lighting.

There's far more to *Thief III* than ION is willing to talk about right now. We'll be sneaking our way into the ION Storm offices again for more information on

this incredible title soon, but for now we managed to score the first-ever Xbox screenshots of the game to whet your appetite. Check 'em out and drool. Garrett's next payday is coming.

– Ryan Mc Caffrey

■ Garrett (see shadow in lower right) waits for a guard to exit.



■ Flashbombs can be thrown down to blind a room full of enemies.

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- Dynamic lighting is phenomenal.
- The tension is palpable.
- Art direction is gorgeous.

NEEDS WORK

- May be too slow-paced for some gamers.
- Probably won't ship in 2003.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is nothing like *Thief III* on the Xbox. *Splinter Cell* has stealth elements that involve the use of light and darkness, but not on a level this high. Patience will not only aid players in *Thief III* but will be a necessity. If you can not only enjoy but also thrive on the deliberate pace, the rush of tension the game delivers will hook you.



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■ Huge expanses of lush jungles rendered in a detail that has never been equalled. Mmm...

Men of Valor: The Vietnam War

An ugly war... a beautiful game

The spiritual sequel to *Medal of Honor*, *Men of Valor: The Vietnam War* is a revolutionary Xbox shooter from 2015, the creator of the award-

winning *MOH*. And from what we've seen it is a serious upgrade that could very well be one of the most promising Xbox games on the horizon. It's like *Ghost Recon*, but perhaps better in every way.

The game utilizes the latest *Unreal* technology (*Unreal Warfare*) to re-create the humid jungles of Vietnam with a level of detail that wasn't possible until now. You start off as an American Marine and you fight your way through the early stages of the conflict all the way to the Tet Offensive. You'll recognize locations and battles from the many movies that have been done on Vietnam... but what really makes this game different is that you have a battalion of

soldiers who fight alongside you. You get to know them, maybe even care for them, and like any war, not all of your friends are going to make it through. And you and up to three friends can play cooperatively through the entire single-player campaign over Xbox Live. The competitive multiplayer will also be based around historically accurate scenarios. You compete in squads to set up an ambush on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, or to take a key bunker or bridge. You'll actually get a chance to play from the perspective of the Viet Cong, and it will all be playable over Xbox



■ The game (like the war) is all about sneaking through jungles and taking cover.

TRACK RECORD

DEVELOPER: 2015 | PUBLISHER: SIERRA ENTERTAINMENT | RELEASE: Q4 2003

WHO ARE THEY? The creators of *Medal of Honor* and possibly the finest developer of our time... okay, maybe that was a bit dramatic, but they are a damn fine outfit that has plenty of experience delivering games that really drop you in the middle of historic battles. We like 'em and we can't wait for this game.



Preview
Unreal graphics

HISTORICALLY ACCURATE

The storyline takes the player through the major actions in the conflict, from search and destroy missions around Da Nang Airbase to the Tet Offensive and the counterattack on Hue. Many missions in the game are based on actual events, and all uniforms, weapons, and vehicles look and play accurately.



You're actually a part of the Vietnam War. Here some Marines report in after contact with an NVA scout northwest of Khe Sanh, a strategic base near the border of Laos and just south of the demilitarized zone. You take this information and proceed into battle with your team.



Fight your way out of an ambush as camouflaged NVA position to ambush your U.S. forces near Khe Sanh.

Just like in *Medal of Honor*, there will be a ton of scripted events to deliver a truly immersive experience. Here you get a chance to spy on a group of VC working in the ordinance room in the tunnels near Cu Chi.

Live with the Communicator put to great use.

The historically based missions are presented with the same flair found in the infamous beach storming scene in *Medal of Honor*... with scripted events creating a level of immersion that no other game has matched until this one. Just imagine the sun

being blocked out by an incoming helicopter raid while you are going from tree to tree trying to figure who is the enemy and who is your friend. All the while you have a mission to assault a fanatically defended enemy emplacement, and the air is filled with constant chatter between squad members and the

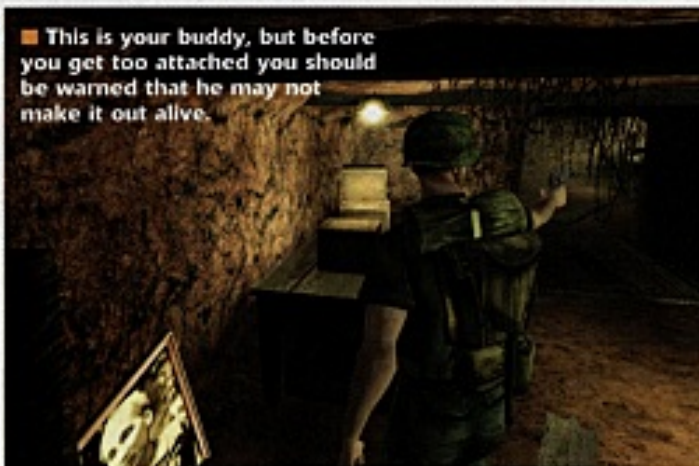
reality of casualties. The plans for AI are nothing short of intense, with squad members and enemies that truly assess your actions and respond with real-world tactical intelligence.

And while much of the game is played from the standard foot soldier's perspective, you do get a chance to man the door gun on

a Huey helicopter, steer a riverboat along enemy-infested shores, call in air strikes, and drive or man the gun in a Jeep a la *Halo*. If this sounds like the most realistic, diverse, and exciting war game coming to the Xbox or any system, then you are getting the picture.

— Mike Salmon

■ This is your buddy, but before you get too attached you should be warned that he may not make it out alive.



GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- The graphics are superb and definitely up to Xbox standards.
- We love the idea of getting to know your squad mates before they bite it. We like tear-jerkers.
- A variety of vehicles to drive is just what the *Halo*-addicts ordered.

NEEDS WORK

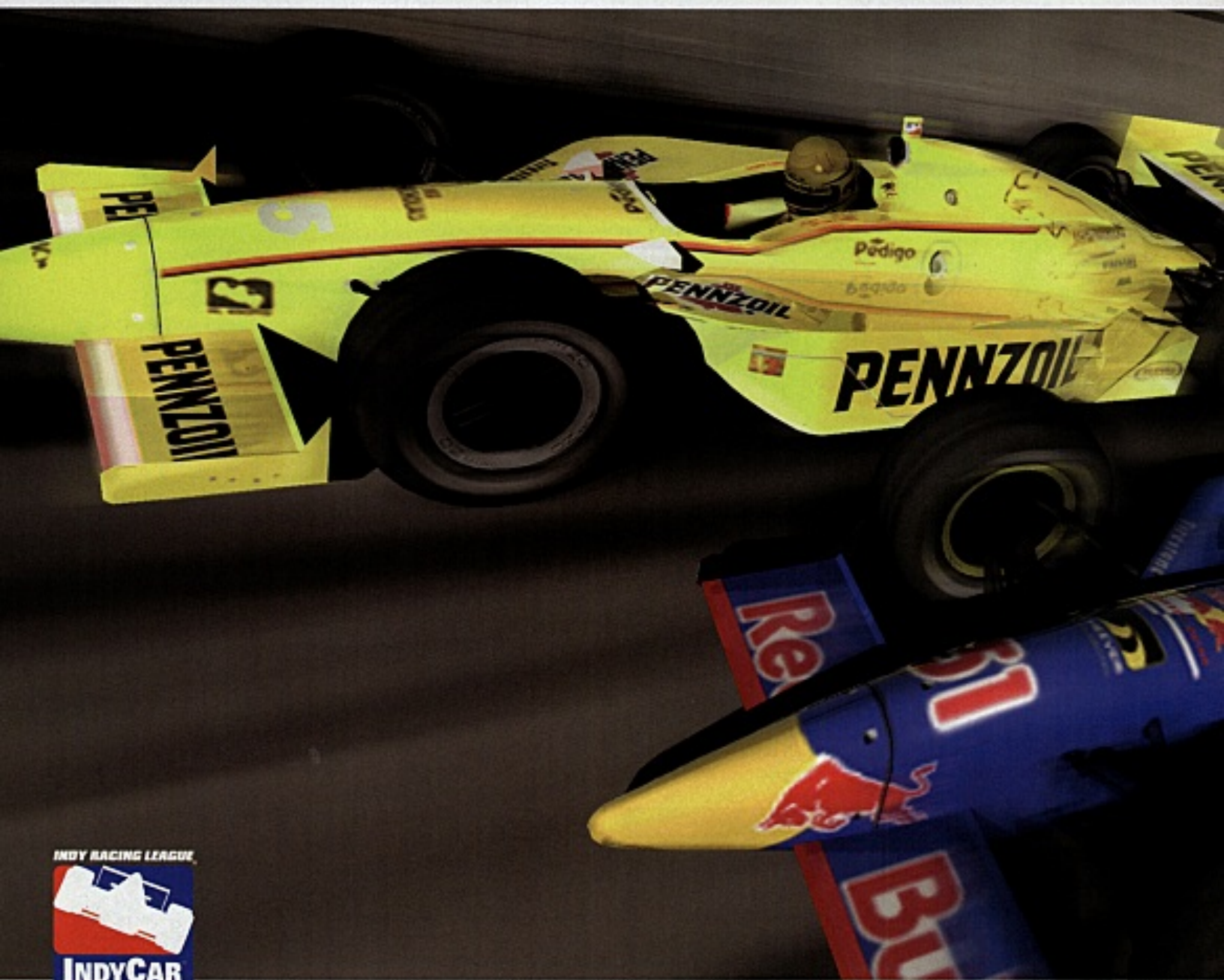
- It'd be even cooler if this was an Xbox exclusive.
- We'd kinda like to play this game RIGHT NOW! Hurry up!
- What is the Vietnam War's equivalent to WWII's storming the beaches in Normandy?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Honestly, this all seems too good to be true. Realistic visuals, historic battles, vehicles, Xbox Live play, incredible co-op. Oh, and let's not forget that these are the developers who delivered *Medal of Honor*. We're confident that *MOV* will really up the ante.



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THE CHALLENGE IS KEEPING UP WITH THEM.



PlayStation.2



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■ The bosses and many of the stock monsters are just so impressive in scale, style, and size. It's like *Panzer* on the ground.

A fairy, eh?

We think Raikou looks more like a space ninja than a purported demon-smashing fairy. You be the judge.

Does he look more like a space ninja? Yoshimitsu (above) - *Tekken 4*, PS2

Or a demon-smashing fairy? Petal (left) - *Napple Tale*, Dreamcast

Yeah, we thought so.

Otogi – Myth of Demons

Leave your jaw at the door or on the floor

PUBLISHER **SEGA** | DEVELOPER **FROM SOFTWARE** | RELEASE DATE **SEPTEMBER 2003**

Since the game's unveiling last year in Japan, there's been a lot of interest in *Otogi* – despite the lack of actual contact. From its dreamy fantasy veneer to the promise of RPG-style elements mixed in with high-level action to its decidedly dark futuristic gothic flavor, *Otogi* seems to have it all. But no one on this side of the international gaming pond has had a single word to say on it. Until now, that is.

Sega has announced that it will bring *Otogi*'s special brand of deliberately spooky and atmospheric 3D hack-'n'-slash flying action to Xbox in the U.S., and we couldn't be happier.

The game is spectacular, but simple. You control Raikou (character names will most likely change for the US release), an "otogi" or fairy who is called forth by a mysterious female to abolish the influx of demons into the world. Raikou does this by force or magic and by freeing trapped

spirits from various objects. The two methods combined means that you'll not only be kicking serious demon ass, but you'll also be destroying environmental objects in order to unlock goodies and liberate imprisoned spirits.

The action is fairly straightforward with Raikou's ability to use spells or physical attacks depending on what weapons and accessories you have equipped. Most of your actions take place on the ground, where you can dash and slash to your heart's content. But if you press a two-button combo, you'll be able to suspend Raikou in the air for maximum damage. Every level in the game requires you to use all of your moves in order to defeat all the demons, and to a lesser degree, free the spirits (it's not necessary to do this to beat a stage, though).

RPG elements come into play between missions with the ability to buy items, spells, weapons, and other goodies that will make your progress a little easier

throughout the game. But you'll also be able to revisit past stages to perfect your skills, earn extra cash, or complete unfinished business – a nice touch that was sorely missing from the initial playthrough of Sega's other Xbox games, *Gunvarkyrie* and *Panzer Dragoon Orta*.

But it'll be *Otogi*'s style and graphics that will really impact players. With an almost dreamy

layer smoothed over the game's environments and the fact that seemingly EVERYTHING in every stage is destructible – there's plenty to tempt gamers into *Otogi*'s world. With a release date scheduled for fall, we'll give you more info on what Sega's U.S. treatment of the game might entail in an upcoming issue.

– Francesca Reyes

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

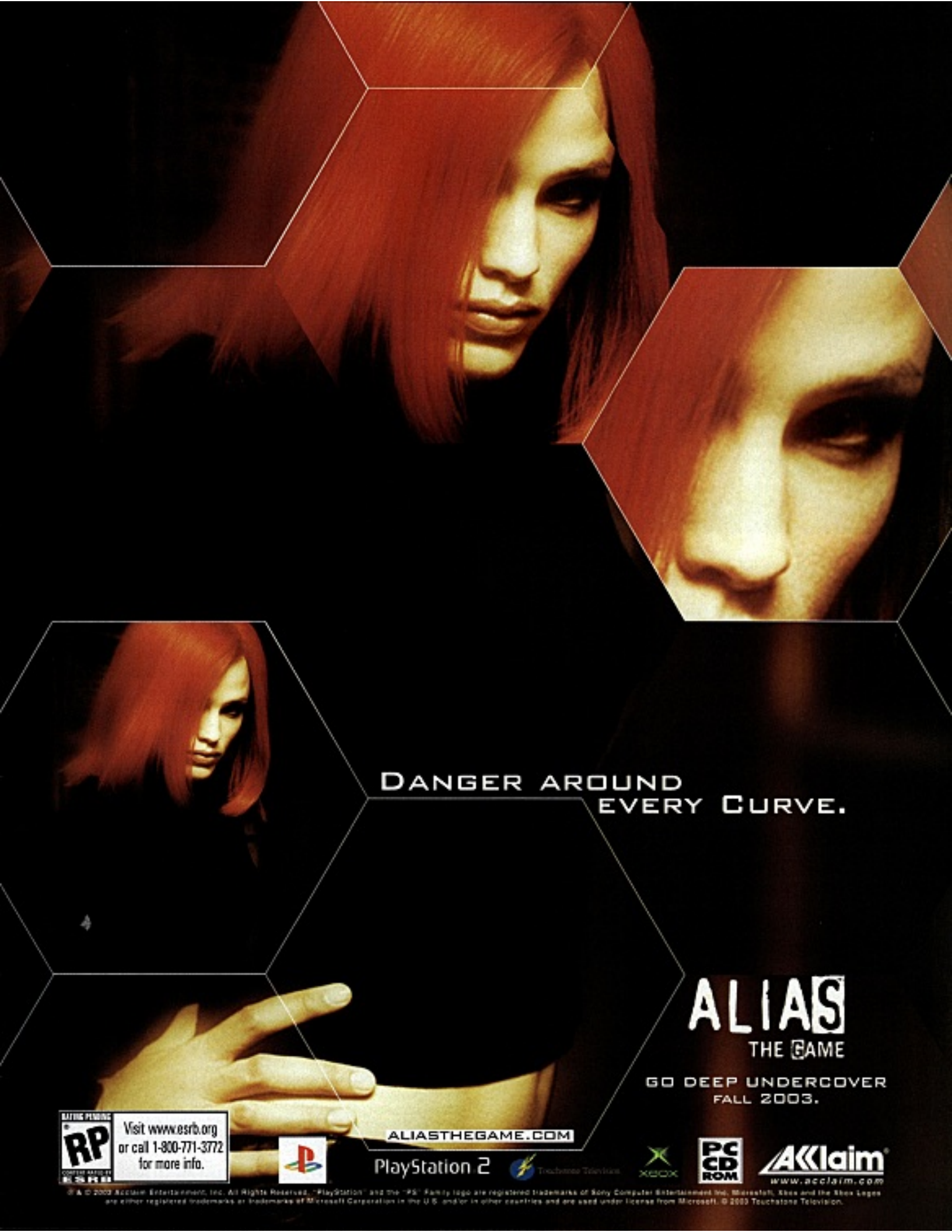
- It looks freakin' amazing. From the gorgeous backdrops to the fluid character animations, *Otogi* is a complete visual package, as usual from Sega.
- Plenty of character interaction in the form of being able to upgrade spells, skills, and other stuff.
- Great atmosphere.

NEEDS WORK

- Import version moved a little slowly, but it didn't seem like it was actual slowdown, just sorta slow.
- Will gamers invest the time to get the most out of *Otogi*?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Though some gamers may brush off *Otogi* as nothing more than a *Gunvarkyrie*-style action game with demons added, there's much, much more to it and the atmospheric gameplay and luscious visuals are enough to please those who've been waiting for a new action game with a twist.



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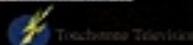


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PlayStation 2

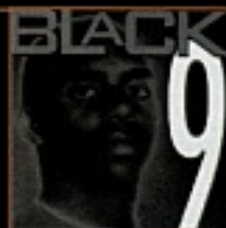


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Detailed environments and the quasi-use of the Unreal engine help make the backside of our heroine more "real."

Music for game playas

Way back in 1995, the name Black 9 meant what amazon.com labels "Gangsta/Hardcore" rather than mercenaries chasing down rival Illuminati. In fact, Black 9 was a hip-hop act consisting of a father and son with a self-titled album some may not remember for such non-hits as "Pimpin' Ain't Easy" and "Life of a D.O.G." The catch is that none of the songs on the album contained expletives of any type – unless you disagree with the usage of "pimp."



Black 9

Always bet on black

PUBLISHER MAJESCO | DEVELOPER TALDREN | RELEASE DATE FALL 2003

Talk about deep storylines. *Black 9* has a backstory as complex and packed with characters as any good pen-and-paper RPG. An RPG that takes place far in the future when mankind has conquered the various planets in our solar system for survival and profit – but mainly for profit. In 2080, power over the Earth and other planets has fallen into the hands of nine wealthy and secretive groups for more appropriately, "the Black 9", all vying for complete control over mankind. The nine "Illuminati" each have their own greedy motives and visions – and the game will outline them all.

You enter the picture as one of four skillful and playable mercenary characters hired by the various groups in order to exact their different goals. At the outset you'll have four "body types" to choose from, ranging

from two human characters (male and female), to a nimble cat girl (meow), to the obligatory less agile, smash-happy juggernaut creature. And with each of their specific attributes, you'll also be able to level up each of their four different stat parameters: constitution, dexterity, strength, and agility. Each of the stats will affect your attack power, health gauge, quickness, and skill with the game's brand of futuristic magic.

Depending on how you build up your character's skills, your missions will vary, and the game features multiple approaches to problem solving. For instance, you won't be able to complete some tasks that involve hacking if your hacker skills aren't built up as strong as your fighting techniques. But never fear, Taldren has designed the game to allow for different solutions and multiple paths with your choice of firearm or magic at the

ready. Each character has a few slots for weapons and a range of spells to choose from – whichever way you decide to shake rival Illuminati off your tail is up to you.

Taldren is also planning extensive cooperative and head-to-head split-screen action for *Black 9*, with full Xbox Live

support in tow. Downloadable content is something also being planned for the game, but online modes have yet to be announced. With a release date set for this fall, *Black 9* already looks to have an action/RPG hook that's sorely lacking in the Xbox library. Expect more information on the game as it surfaces.

— Francesca Reyes

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

■ Multiple playable characters "level up" as you progress = a nice alternative to regular action.
■ The premise of the game is interesting, though unproven, and should draw in those attracted to strong story elements.

NEEDS WORK

■ With their experience on *Star Command* titles, Taldren's work on 3D action/adventure/RPGs is still unproven, but with their track record, we have high hopes.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The potential for a deep, complex, story-driven action/adventure game on Xbox is vast. We need more of these games for the system, and we need them done well.



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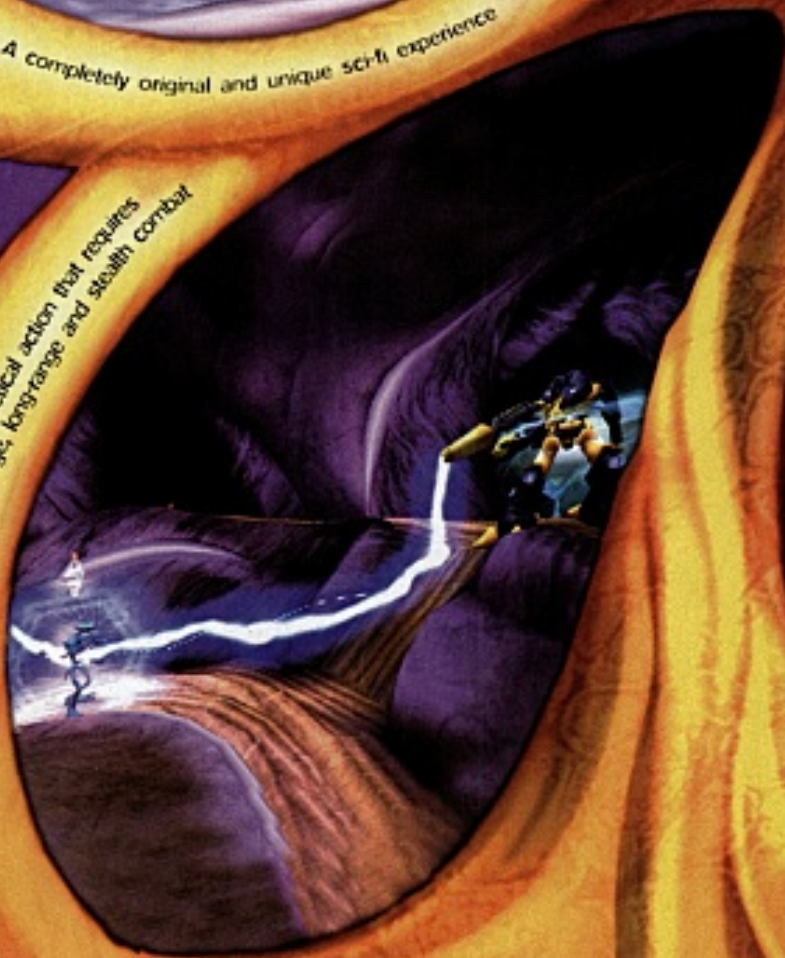


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PlayStation 2



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■ *Dead Man's Hand* hits all the right videogame notes: it not only has a minecart in this screenshot, but also snow that hints at a possible later ice level. Not!

ONLY ON
XBOX

Dead Man's Hand

Saddle up, city slickers

PUBLISHER ATARI/INFOGRAAMES | DEVELOPER HUMAN HEAD | RELEASE DATE FALL 2003

If we had a dime for every time we "revisited" the videogame version of the Middle Ages or some fantastical quasi-feudal-futuristic-past replete with clanging swords and armor to represent our virtual history, we'd be very rich indeed.

The gameplay will be a constant potluck of styles...

It's a much more rare experience to actually revisit a practical and believable passage of American history – the Old West.

So it comes somewhat as a surprise (but a welcome relief too) that Infogrames is bringing gunslinging back to the gaming table with the upcoming release

of *Dead Man's Hand*, a title taken from cowboy folklore involving "Wild Bill" Hickok ("Poker Face" boxout, at right). Powered by the Unreal engine, the game follows the straight-shooting story of El Tejon, a master gunslinger with nothing but revenge on his mind. If this sounds a lot like a Clint

Eastwood movie, right down to the vengeance motif, you aren't wrong. *DMH* draws on a lot of iconic imagery and Old West clichés to cut out a slice of old school Americana in virtual form.

As El Tejon, you'll have a whole world of hurt to inflict on the bad guys (who coincidentally

used to be your old outlaw gang – but we know how betrayal and doublecrossing can force a man to "get even") in a large variety of ways. Developer Human Head has seen to it that you'll have more on your plate than simply shooting down enemies from screen to screen. Instead, the gameplay will be a constant potluck of styles, aside from the main first-person action viewpoint. For instance, you'll have a chance to shoot enemies on the run while on the back of your trusty steed. On the flip side, there will also be instances where you'll be forced to take on horse-riding bad guys while ducking in and out of train windows. Human Head has even seen fit to make players take train tunnels

into account during shootouts – you'll have to duck inside train windows before hitting a tunnel or you'll literally lose your (human) head.

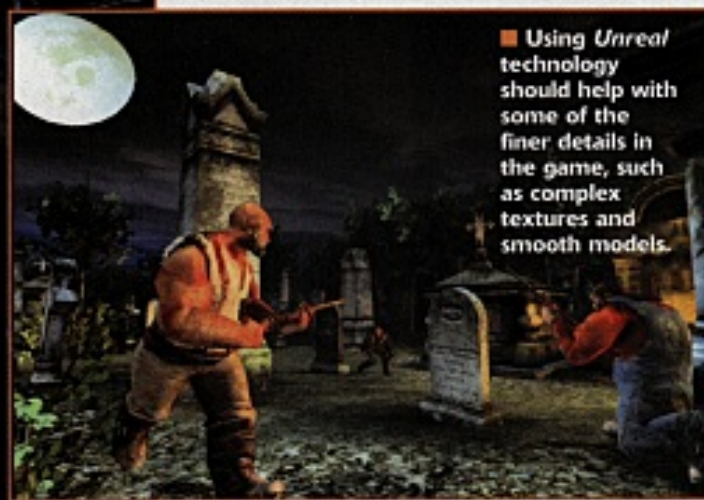
All of your actions will also be completely dependent on which gun you have strapped to your back. *Dead Man's Hand* packs nine authentically styled firearms for your gunslinging pleasure that were all modeled off of genuine rifles, shotguns... you get the idea. The game also throws in a few other lethal goodies like dynamite and stationary cannons to blast enemies away as you see fit. And those who are especially efficient with their weapon will be able to rack up bonuses once the "Legend" system is enabled in the game. Legend



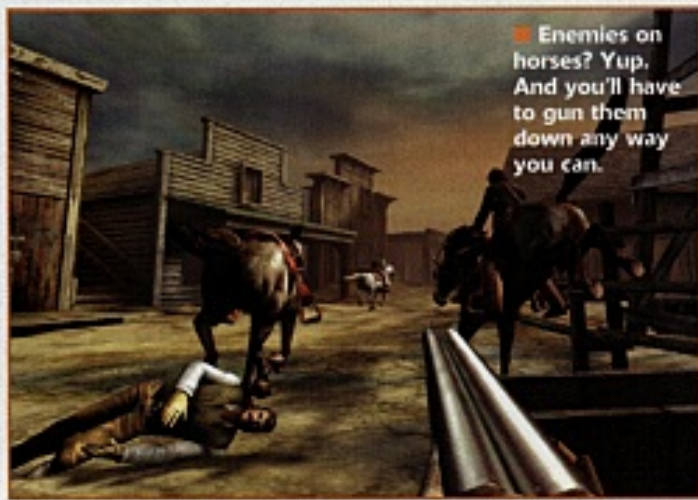


Preview

Dead Man's Hand



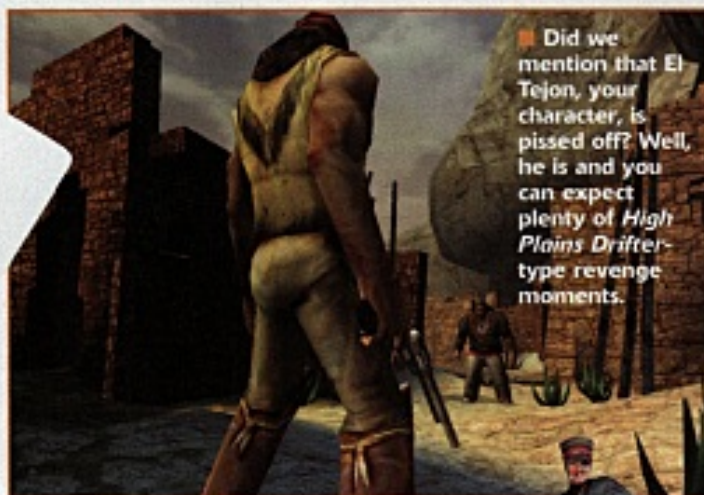
■ Using *Unreal* technology should help with some of the finer details in the game, such as complex textures and smooth models.



■ Enemies on horses? Yup. And you'll have to gun them down any way you can.

Poker Face

Dead Man's Hand is not only the name of the game, but also a phrase taken straight from the Old West legend surrounding Wild Bill Hickok's final moments. According to folklore, Wild Bill died from a single shot to the back of the head during a round of saloon poker. The hand of cards he held at that moment was a pair of black aces and a pair of black eights. Because of this, if you come up with this particular poker hand, it's referred to as a Dead Man's Hand. Now you can impress your friends if it ever comes up on *Jeopardy* or in a poker game.



■ Did we mention that El Tejón, your character, is pissed off? Well, he is and you can expect plenty of *High Plains Drifter*-type revenge moments.

will activate a scoring system in the game which will reward players with the ability to pull off super over-the-top stunts and trick shots to help you through the game with a little more pizzazz.

But your guns aren't the only things that will do the talking. You'll also play impromptu rounds of saloon poker between any of the game's numerous branching missions. Get a good hand and play your cards right and you can then put your earnings towards gameplay goodies like extra health, ammo, or points toward your Legend score. But it's a crap shoot, so you'll have to watch your hand in order to make the most of each round of poker.



As ambitious as the single-player game promises to be, *Dead Man's Hand* is also all about the online gameplay with Xbox Live options that will include both head-to-head Deathmatch as well as Team Deathmatch. But you'll also be able to play "Bounty" mode, which plays sort of like a game of Tag with everyone chasing one person who is the "bounty," which then designates the winner as the next "bounty." The longer you stay the "bounty" without getting smacked gives you more points. There's also a "Posse" online option that works like a team survival mode with you and your friends wiping out wave after wave of AI-controlled bad guys.

An Xbox exclusive, *Dead Man's Hand* is set to release this fall.

— Francesca Reyes



GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- Online play via Xbox Live is always a welcome addition, especially for shooters.
- Wide variety of gameplay styles should definitely keep the action interesting.
- Promises lots of interaction with environmental objects and landscape.

NEEDS WORK

- With the same engine as the one used for *Unreal Championship*, does that mean it'll have lots of framey slowdown? We hope not.
- As such an ambitious title, we hope it doesn't get bogged down anywhere between concept and completion.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There's a lot to love about Wild West cowboy shooters. They have all that imagery and historical context to draw on, and Infogrames is promising lots of innovative touches that should make this not only a really cool shooter, but a very promising game as a whole. We hope everything goes smoothly, because this is definitely looking good so far.

■ Attack of the Rancor. Remember, brute force and ignorance will only go so far in boss fights. Look for another solution.

Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy

Kyle Katarn is the teacher, but you are the master

PUBLISHER **RAVEN SOFTWARE** | DEVELOPER **LUCASARTS** | RELEASE DATE **FALL 2003**

Kyle Katarn has been the protagonist in three *Star Wars* games! That's not quite as many as Luke Skywalker (though he's now tied with the whiny Mark Hamill/Luke Skywalker), but he's certainly getting there. And LucasArts isn't quite willing to retire the troubled Jedi yet. In fact, he reappears immediately in *Jedi Academy*, but as your mentor, rather than as the main combatant.

Like the last games — *Dark Forces*, *Jedi Knight*, and *Jedi Knight*

// — this is ostensibly a first-person shooter, although much of the game takes place in third-person mode, since this game uses even

mojo, or try out Darth Maul's dual-bladed lightsaber staff. You can even dual wield, à la Count Dooku. This wealth of

Multiple sabers and hot blaster fire look visceral and impressive

more Force Powers and lightsaber stuff than the previous titles.

In fact, you can choose a lightsaber in a hue that suits your

sabers reflects another addition to the game — customizable characters. Almost like an RPG, you can name and create your

character from scratch, picking species ranging from human to Twi'lek and adjusting build, color, and facial types to make your perfect Padawan.

And that's what you are — a Jedi apprentice, training under the auspices of Master Kyle Katarn. He'll join you in combat, too, as a complex plot unravels around you. You'll have to master saber techniques (more complex than in the last game) and Force powers, as well as the jumping and blasting that makes up a fair chunk of the action.

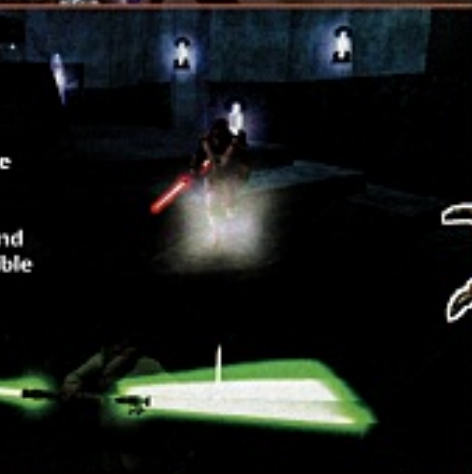
■ The use of different sabers makes for some bloody and brilliant melee sequences.



■ Jedi Academy's many gorgeous environments will get the stage for some epic lightsaber duels.



■ The saber can be used in both defensive and offensive modes and is much more flexible this time around.



Build your own Jedi

Like rival *Star Wars* product *Knights of the Old Republic*, *Jedi Academy* lets you design, name, build, and tweak a Jedi from scratch. You'll be able to choose from a number of different species. You could simply make a human with short brown hair and a robe (boring) or you could make a hot Twi'lek (remember Oola, the ill-fated dancer from *Return of the Jedi*?) with bright blue skin (you can change skin tones and face types too) and any number of different costumes.



GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- Much-improved textures.
- Better animation.
- Custom Jedi editor.

NEEDS WORK

- Same old formula.
- Upgraded, but similar, engine.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The sharper, clearer graphics are backed up by a deep storyline that plays out with as much pomp and drama as the previous games in the series. Multiplayer modes will be more fleshed out, and hopefully include Live support on Xbox. Add all this to a much-improved graphics engine and you have a lovely addition to a strong series.

An improved *Quake III* graphics engine features cleaner, crisper textures than before, but the main difference will be found in the quality of the animation. Motion-captured graphics make a huge difference this time around, and melee combats with multiple sabers and hot blaster fire look visceral and impressive, rather than simply confusing.

Huge new boss characters, including the infamous Rancor from *Return of the Jedi* (and *Jedi Knight II*, show off the scaly detail and sheer size of the new character builds. An early build had boss characters taking bloody, red-hot saber damage in realtime. Hopefully this scarring will make it to the final game.

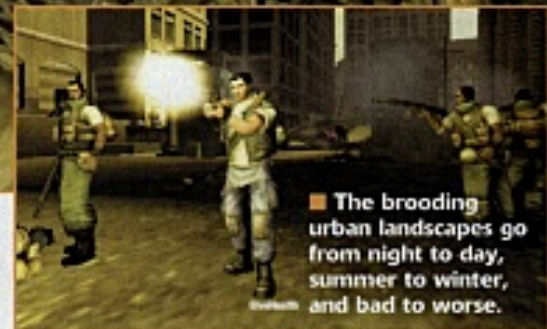
— Frank O'Connor



■ Your squad can operate independently, or follow you around like a bunch of ducklings. Heavily armed, angry ducklings.



■ Anything you find, you can use, and that includes stationary gun emplacements like this one.



■ The brooding urban landscapes go from night to day, summer to winter, and bad to worse.

Freedom: Soldiers of Liberty

More brutal than Brute Force?

PUBLISHER **IO INTERACTIVE** | DEVELOPER **EA** | RELEASE DATE **HOLIDAY 2003**

Game companies LOVE alternate realities. The idea of an alternate universe existing side by side with our own is usually just an excuse to have gladiators fighting dinosaurs, but this time a game creator has put the concept to good use. IO Interactive has imagined a world where Russia beat us to the

Your orders: to repel the Red Menace

bomb, dropped it on Berlin in WWII, and eventually invaded the U.S. Right about now, in fact. Enter you, a civilian pushed to extremes by advancing occupiers. What follows starts as a simple action shooter, but as you gain charisma, and therefore followers, it turns into a squad-based epic.

The fact that the game is set in New York City lends a stark urban familiarity to the proceedings, and

the effortless way that you and your squad can fight on the streets or inside of buildings lends the game a vast set of strategic challenges. A narrow alleyway ambush can take on a whole new twist when you and your squad emerge into an open courtyard and are assailed by banks of mounted machine guns. In the level we played, it was possible to send your squad down the alley while you sniped enemy soldiers from a rooftop. The possibilities seemed endless.

The squad system is basic enough. You simply look at the area where you want to send an individual or a squad, and press the relevant button: scout, guard, or attack. The squad is smart and capable, and will genuinely take care of most problems. They can even man vacated gun emplacements to give cover fire.

A huge range of missions and scenarios are presented in a vastly enhanced version of the *Hitman* graphics engine (IO Interactive created that hit game for Eidos),

and the seamless transition from internal to external locations makes for some frantic and enthralling gameplay. Weapons galore, wildly varying enemy targets, and a huge cityscape that blends seamlessly from summer to winter as you progress through the game are all reasons to keep an eye on this.

Music, recorded by the Budapest Philharmonic orchestra, adds a compelling background to the action. And the stirring themes

are matched with heated conversations and yelling among your squad as you accept your orders to repel the Red Menace.

A split-screen multiplayer mode won't let you play the single-player campaign in co-op, but it does allow you to play a number of other game styles either cooperatively or in adversarial mode. These will include deathmatch, CTF, and more of the usual suspects.

— Frank O'Connor

GAME POTENTIAL

LOOKS GOOD

- Tense urban warfare.
- Impressive squad system.
- All-action gameplay.

NEEDS WORK

- PS2 graphics.
- No Live or System Link.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We didn't spend nearly as much time with *Freedom* as we'd have liked, and that's a compliment aimed squarely at the game's intuitive controls and brilliantly realized squad system. The idea of easily and intuitively controlling a group of up to twelve individual soldiers, while simultaneously battling alone against a marauding helicopter gunship, really tickles our fancy — and our fancies are very, very ticklish.



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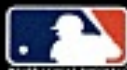
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Quality Time

Still not a review, but no longer a preview, we give you the skinny on how some of the games headed home look, feel, and play before we rate them. Sit back, grab your beverage of choice, and prepare for some Quality Time with the Xbox games coming soon to a store near you.

Brute Force

DEVELOPER DIGITAL ANVIL PUBLISHER MICROSOFT RELEASE DATE JUNE 2003 (REALLY!)

The experience

This oft-delayed, eagerly anticipated third-person shooter is, at long last, almost here. In case you've forgotten what this one's all about (which would be understandable), it goes like this: you control one of four characters in your squad. Each is, more or less, a different class—there's Tex, the leader with firepower, Brutus, the animal (literally) with speed, Hawk, the sniper with stealth, and Flint, the super sniper with auto-targeting—and each can be ordered around or taken control of at any point in time using the friendly interface.

What we liked best

The character models are gorgeous. Nearly everything is bump-mapped. It's obvious that this one's built for the Xbox from the ground up. The pre-rendered cinematics between missions are incredible, with some gorgeous characters, fluid movement and plenty of action. Control is pretty tight, too, though the voices in our heads wonder why this game couldn't have been first-person. Each character is pretty distinct, which should go a long way toward varying the gameplay experience. Also, the implementation of System Link co-op play promises to seriously enrich the experience. We may love our competitive Halo matches around here, but we're even bigger suckers for a good co-op game.

Potential pitfalls

Split-screen co-op got a bit tough to play—not because of the framerate, but just trying to keep up with the frantic action gets a little harried from time to time. It got worse with three players, and we didn't even try four. It's got System Link support, though. The levels we played seemed a bit short and didn't give you enough time to really get into them before the mission ended. The enemies were pretty straightforward and the weapons were kinda run-of-the-mill, too. And even though the environments had some cool stuff going on (fog, raining ash, etc.), they came off a bit bland. But this is all stuff that can be overlooked if the overall experience delivers like we imagine it will.



■ Hawk's Power Blade is a one-hit kill if you can get behind the enemy untouched.



■ Check out the bump-mapping on the terrain.

Midtown Madness 3

DEVELOPER MICROSOFT PUBLISHER MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS RELEASE DATE JUNE 2003

The experience

With so many game modes, it's tough to describe exactly what genre *Midtown* fits into. Suffice to say it's a Live and System Link-enabled drive-'em-up with hints of *Wreckless*, *Runabout*, and obviously the prior *Midtown* games. For those unfamiliar with these classics, imagine an urban-set, mission-based racing game with some strange driving modes and you're halfway there. The main obstacle to success is the dense traffic of either Paris or Washington D.C., as well as the computer- or human-controlled opponents the game flings at you.

What we liked best

The constant smashing, crashing, and wrecking of cars, roadside obstacles, and even store windows gives you a much-needed sense of involvement and peril. A huge lead can be blown in one careless turn in the warren of streets in either city. That makes all races worth finishing, even when you think you're doing atrociously.

Potential pitfalls

The choice of cities strikes us as odd. Your average gamer probably doesn't give a hoot about either. If you want museums, history, and culture, both of these towns are sufficiently radical. If you want jumps, mad crashes, and cunning stunts, give us a town with more ramps, or get creative with these overly-realistic locales.

■ Vehicular madness.



■ F the Police! As in "frontend" the police, of course. What were you thinking?



■ D'oh!



■ The bigger vehicles provide lots of smashy smashy.

Bloody Roar Extreme

DEVELOPER KONAMI PUBLISHER HUDSON RELEASE DATE SUMMER 2003

The experience

A Japanese fighting game with a twist, *Bloody Roar Extreme* is a rather good, somewhat tweaked port of the GameCube version (*Bloody Roar: Primo!* in the U.S.) with some added extras. The twist comes in the form of being able to transform your character into their creature counterpart via a Beast Mode by pressing the B button, or going into something called Hyper Beast Mode courtesy of the Black button. Both the Beast and Hyper modes add a few extra combos to your character's repertoire as well as give your health a gradual increase. The result is sorta like a three-tier fight with the ability to call on your beastly alter-ego to knock your opponent out. And all the old characters from earlier installments are back – plus the game looks silky smooth at 60fps.

What we liked best

Though it's not as polished or smooth as, say, *Soul Calibur II* or *DOA3*, *Extreme* definitely has quickness and quirkiness on its side. Where else can you control bunny-on-catgirl action? Add in the ability to unlock countless goodies for each play through and some added Xbox perks (CG ending movies, extra character, etc.) and Japanese fighting game fans should be satiated until Namco drops *Soul Calibur II* later this year.

Potential pitfalls

This game has received very little fanfare up to its release, so it may slip under most gamers' radar (every gamer comes equipped with "gamedar"). It may not have the brand recognition that some of the bigger series do, which might keep *BR Extreme* a novelty only for the super-hardcore.

■ Catgirls

fighting bunnies! What has the world come to?!



■ You can unlock all sorts of stuff by simply playing through Arcade Mode with different characters, including Kids Mode.



Midnight Club II

DEVELOPER **ROCKSTAR** PUBLISHER **ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO** RELEASE DATE **JUNE 2003**

The experience

For those who played the original on PS2, there have been some subtle but significant changes from other versions, including the addition of motorcycles and different locations. But for the uninitiated, think of *Midnight Club II* as a racing game for urban outlaws. Fast and furious even before *The Fast and the Furious*, we were able to take a couple of sports cars and motorbikes for a spin on several of the game's courses, including Paris and Tokyo.

The inclusion of motorcycles is new to the series, and after taking one for a spin, the physics of controlling one changes gameplay significantly from simply pattering around in a car. The ability to take corners in a two-wheeled slide may not seem too different on paper, but the experience is drastically faster and more intense.

And on top of this, there are a good amount of varied modes and differences in each race. Some areas will force you to race from one end of a track to the other, hitting every checkpoint in order in between the two. But others will be non-linear, giving you a chance to approach the race how you see fit.

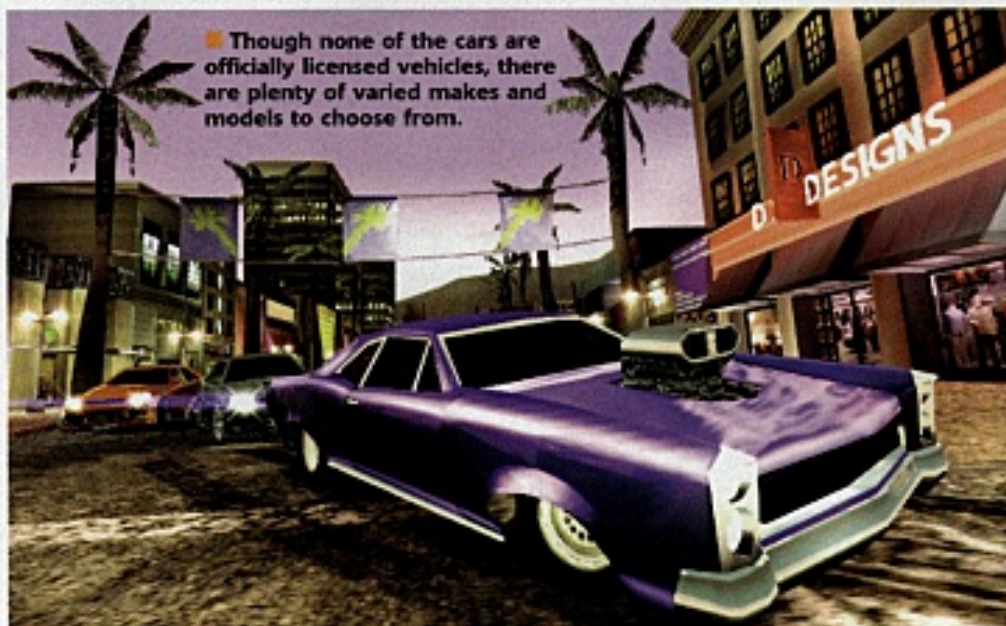
Unfortunately, we weren't able to test out the game's Xbox Live capabilities, but Rockstar promises plenty of modes that will allow up to eight players to compete online.

What we liked best

Branching paths! And lots of them. There are now loads of ways to reach any given checkpoint by paying attention to your surroundings. You can be "tipped off" to a shortcut by a neon-lit parking garage sign labeled "P" or by some construction signs. Once you spot one, you'll find a cleverly disguised shortcut awaiting you. Usually this is the quickest way to cut some time off your race clock or to catch up to the rest of the pack. The inclusion of so many shortcuts really adds dimensions to the environments and gives each course a new level of depth that wasn't present in the original or in many other more traditional racers on Xbox.

Potential pitfalls

The graphics are a bit rough in some places, and the version we played was still early, so it's hard to say what the final product will look like. But Rockstar has pledged 480p and 720p support, as well as better texture resolution and lighting than its PS2 cousin.



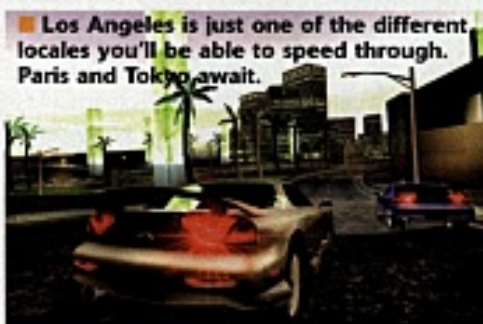
■ Though none of the cars are officially licensed vehicles, there are plenty of varied makes and models to choose from.



■ Clearly, this is a fantasy version of downtown L.A.



■ Motorcycles are selectable and change up the racing physics significantly.



■ Los Angeles is just one of the different locales you'll be able to speed through. Paris and Tokyo await.

Reviews

Honest reviews for discerning gamers

How we score

10 - 8.5 Only the best and the brightest score in this range. If it scores 9.0 or above, then there's no guessing involved. Buy it, love it, and watch as other games follow in its footsteps.

8.4 - 7.0 Just shy of greatness, but still an exceptional experience.

6.9 - 5.0 There's a bit of entertainment to be found, but something's amiss.

4.9 - 2.0 Rushed, poorly executed, or maybe just tired. Only fools dare tread further.

1.9 - 0.0 Craptacular goodness that is proud to call *Fantastic Four* (PSOne) or *Superman* (N64) its superiors.



Editor's Choice Award

Any game that scores 9.0 or higher will be stamped with our Editor's Choice Award.

This designation guarantees a solid game to be had by all fall that have \$50, of course. So buy it already.

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MotoGP 2

The sleeper hit of Xbox Live returns with a nice sequel.



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Inside Pitch '03

Is the only Live-enabled baseball game a hit?



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Marvel Vs. Capcom 2

Xbox's old-school 2D fighter.



■ One down, one to go.

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

Endangered appendages

Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix

DEVELOPER GRATUITOUS GAMES/RAVEN SOFTWARE | PUBLISHER ACTIVISION

MULTIPLAYER 1-10 VIA SYSTEM LINK OR XBOX LIVE | EXTRAS 480P, DOLBY 5.1

WEBSITE WWW.ACTIVISION.COM/GAMES/SOLDIEROFFORTUNE/DOUBLEHELIX.ASP

Rleased on the PC last year to the horror of elected representatives all across our nation's capital, *Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix* featured a shocking level of grisly violence and also happened to be a pretty darn good first-person shooter to boot.

Now it's bled onto the Xbox, and it's an excellent game (in multiplayer) that should've been better (in single player).

As mercenary extraordinaire John Mullins (who is a real guy,

by the way), you'll go globe-hopping under the employ of The Shop, a secret counter-terrorist operation based in Texas (we're not sure if it's real, but it could be) that's out to rid the world of evil scum. Along the way you visit more than half a dozen locales, including the jungles of Colombia, snowy Kamchatka, and urban Hong Kong. Cutscenes are all rendered in engine, powered by the latest incarnation of the *Quake III* technology — the same that powers the outstanding *Return to*

Castle Wolfenstein: Tides of War on Xbox.

Under its *Quake*-powered skin, *SoF II* is a straightforward, run-of-the-mill first-person shooter. What sets it apart from the rest of the pack is the amount of detail in the characters and the utter carnage players can unleash. Featuring proprietary GHOUL II technology created by original developer Raven Software, there are 36 distinct "gore zones" on any given character that can be shot: Head, hands, arms, feet, gut, chest, etc.

■ *SoF II* gets pretty grisly. Just check out the effect of this bullet to the jugular.



■ A smart soldier picks off his enemies from a distance whenever possible.



Arms can be blasted off with a shotgun from the shoulder or from the elbow. Intestines spill out from a gut shot.

...And while this all makes for some brilliant multiplayer madness, the single-player game is definitely lacking. Much of the incredible character detail found in the PC title has been stripped from the Xbox version – and we don't honestly know why. *Wolfenstein* looked just as good on Xbox, so why can't *SoF II*? They've turned what was a sharp-looking PC game into a remarkably mediocre-looking Xbox game. Models are low-poly, fogging is heavy in spots, and the intensity of the carnage has been toned down a bit. Animation, however, is still phenomenal, with fluid movement and a ton of ways for enemies to eat it.

In the end, without all of the shock value of the character detail and the gore, the single player campaign in *SoF II* doesn't

have much lasting appeal. Run, shoot. Get shot. Die. Variety is lacking. The highlight of the entire solo mission set is early on, when you are escaping terrorist pursuers with a defecting scientist and you get to man a gun turret on the back of a fast-moving truck, mowing down foes and vehicles at 60mph. After that, you're stuck in the Colombian jungles for what seems like days and, in total, there are about 20 to 30 hours of gameplay here if you actually feel like completing the story arc.

As disappointing as the single-player game is, however, there's a lot of praise to heap onto the multiplayer component. *SoF II* certainly goes by the motto, "Go big or go home, baby." There are more than 20 guns, 20 maps, a random mission generator (more on that later), and five game types. Like *Wolfenstein* before it, *SoF II* is an bountiful cornucopia of multiplayer madness.

■ The odds don't look so good for the player here.



■ The shotgun is an incredibly devastating weapon. Just ask the three dead guys on the floor.



Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Infiltration, and Demolition. The standards are here, but the Infiltration and Demolition modes are brilliant. Infiltration is *Wolfenstein's* Objective mode under a different moniker. One team tries to storm the others' domain and steal some documents (a briefcase in this game), while the opposition defends the goods.

Demolition is by far the coolest. There are two demolition points on a map. One team defends them, the other attempts to break through and plant explosives to destroy either of the two points. One person on the attacking squad carries the bomb, so if he's killed, another of his teammates must find his body, retrieve the explosives, and carry on. If the bomb is successfully planted, anyone on the defending team can approach and defuse it before the detonator ticks to zero



— if given enough time. Defusing the bomb takes about five seconds. It can get incredibly hairy and makes for some tense, exciting matches.

Xbox Live is put to great use in *SoF II*. Implementation of the Communicator uses a combination of *Ghost Recon*'s walkie-talkie communication and *Unreal Championship*'s open-channel chitchat. Basically, those within close proximity of you will hear you if you just speak. If you want to get in touch with everyone on the team regardless of their position, hold the white button. It's great for coordinating strategy within your team. We have no doubt it will be blatantly and frequently ripped off by future games.

Though there are a whopping 20 multiplayer maps (with five more rumored to be Xbox Live downloads in the future), you will eventually memorize every map. To remedy that, *SoF II* features a unique random mission generator (or RMG), which, literally, spawns a random map layout on a random terrain type. It will even

spawn single-player missions with random objectives, such as "assassinate X terrorist."

Overall, *Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix* is a case of Jekyll and Hyde. Single player isn't bad, but the multiplayer is head and shoulders cooler than the PC version, thanks largely to the clever use of the Xbox Communicator. If you have Xbox Live or partake in a lot of System Link action, then pick this up.

— Ryan McCaffrey

WHERE DO YOU WANNA GET SHOT TODAY?

A sampling of the 36 "gore zones" and 16 "dismemberment zones" in the game.



THE VERDICT

Graphics

Not what they should be, but the animation and weapons look great.

Sound

Hearing a guy choke on his own blood when you shoot him in the throat is sadistically satisfying.

Immersion

The animations and sound draw you in, but eventually you get desensitized.

Design

So-so. The single-player campaign peaks early on but multiplayer is where you'll lose all of your free time.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

- + Oodles of multiplayer goodness.
- + Random mission generator.
- + Original and awesome use of Xbox Live Communicator.
- Sub-par graphics.
- No split-screen multiplayer.
- ? How much does Mullins make as a mercenary? Is it a good gig?

Official Xbox magazine verdict

8.5
10.0

The Human Anatomy

as deconstructed by Tao Feng



FIG. 1. – Considerable Pain

The process of deconstructing the anatomy begins with bruising at the point of contact, leading to bloody contusions and cerebral hemorrhage.



FIG. 2. – Physical Disability

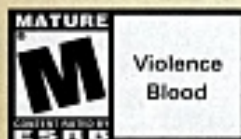
The deconstruction nears completion as limbs weaken and break from continuous physical abuse, finally rendering the enemy useless.



FIG. 3. – Environmental Destruction

Opponents are often hurled into walls and glass situated nearby, resulting in injuries of variable depth and size.

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ONLY ON
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Better, faster, stronger

MotoGP 2

DEVELOPER CLIMAX, PUBLISHER THQ, MULTIPLAYER 1-4 PLAYERS, WEBSITE WWW.THQ.COM
EXTRAS SYSTEM LINK, XBOX LIVE, WIDESCREEN SUPPORT, CUSTOM SOUNDTRACK

When compared to its older brother, about the only thing in *MotoGP 2* that hasn't changed is the spot-on handling. Everything else, from the graphics to the gameplay modes, has been overhauled, and it shows.

The most noticeable difference in *MotoGP 2* is the integration of Live support. If you have an account you login as soon as the game starts. It not only allows for online play, but it also keeps track of your single-player stats and sends your scores to the Live server every time you set a new course record for best time.

Gameplay is just as responsive as the original, with subtle differences between the drivers only becoming apparent after playing for a few hours. *MotoGP 2* offers varying levels of difficulty ranging from arcade style play all the way up to a full-blown simulation.

Weather plays an important part in *MotoGP 2*, as the bikes react differently on a wet track than a dry one. When there is water on the tarmac, cornering becomes a bit more difficult as your traction is noticeably lowered and handling gets tougher. And the graphical effects of the weather are way cool.

The single-player mode is packed with a good deal of replay value. The original 10 tracks return, along with six new ones. More powerful four-stroke bikes can now be raced alongside the two-stroke bikes. The four-stroke bikes are heavier and perform drastically differently than the smaller bikes. You can also tune the performance.

Stunt mode brings a new twist to the game, both in single and multiplayer modes. Stunt mode focuses on score rather than speed and encourages players to go all out when racing. There are no specific stunt tracks – this isn't an "xtreme" motocross

title, after all – instead, you need to learn how to pull tricks such as burnouts and wheelies.

Multiplayer options include split-screen, System Link, and the aforementioned Live support. Online play supports up to 16 players seamlessly. If you have a Live subscription, be prepared to burn hours competing online. It's like crack.

With improvements across the board, excellent Live support, and on-the-nose control, there is little in *MotoGP 2* to complain about. Climax obviously put a good deal of work into polishing this baby to perfection.

– Adam Pavlaka



CHALLENGE pg. 90



■ Different filters can be applied to your replays for a cinematic appeal.



■ Tearing around a corner at high speed.

Custom riders

One of the new features in *MotoGP 2* is an enhanced character creation mode. You build your character's skills by playing the career mode, but you can customize your character's look in the character editor. By changing your outfit and designing a custom logo decal for your bike, you can create a truly unique rider... and when you go online with Live, everyone else will see your creation... even if it's as ugly as this.



THE VERDICT

Graphics

Visually stunning, crystal clear models, detailed tracks, 60 fps display.

Immersion

Detailed career mode allows you to train the ultimate rider.

Sound

Included soundtrack is a little bland, but environmental effects are top notch.

Design

Well-rounded title that provides hours of gameplay.

(+) Good.

(-) Bad.

(?) Perplexing

- + Excellent physics model.
- + Live support fully integrated into the game like no other game before it.
- + Oodles of unlockable content.
- Bikes should allow for more tuning options in the garage.
- There is no specific stunt course. Ramps would have rocked.
- ? Why no track editor option?

Official Xbox Magazine verdict

8.5
10.0

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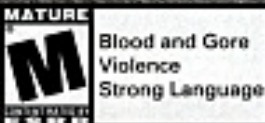


Edge-of-your-seat, movie-style suspense with voice talent of top actors.

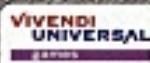


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This Pitch is high and outside Inside Pitch 2003

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MULTIPLAYER 1-2 SINGLE SCREEN, 1-4 SYSTEM LINK OR XBOX LIVE EXTRAS DOWNLOADABLE ROSTER UPDATES



"Makes the team"

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- ✓ **THE BALLPARKS** – They're all absolutely stunning, with fantastic lighting and shadowing.
- ✓ **CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGES** – Pitch the last three innings of Derek Lowe's no-hitter, among other tasks.
- ✓ **JOE BUCK AND TIM MCCARVER** – The pair are actually pretty sharp in the broadcast booth.
- ✓ **PLAYERS' FACES** – They range from good to eerily lifelike.
- ✓ **PITCHER-BATTER INTERFACE** – Not the best but not the worst.
- ✓ **XBOX LIVE** – The only hardball title sporting it this season, complete with downloadable roster updates.
- ✓ **CUSTOM SOUNDTRACKS** – Import all of your faves so you can get some listening done during gameplay.

"Sent down to minors"

- ✓ **IDLE ANIMATIONS** – When the players aren't doing anything, they stand and wiggle as if they're characters in a fighting game.
- ✓ **INSTANT REPLAYS** – There aren't any! There's absolutely no excuse for that... especially on the Xbox.
- ✓ **BATTING STANCES AND WINDUPS** – Many of them are just wrong... really wrong.
- ✓ **THE "CRACK" OF THE BAT** – It sounds like someone took a pair of two-by-fours and smacked them together.
- ✓ **BALLPARK TOURS** – Not present, and it's too bad because the parks look so gorgeous.

*Projected finish for the 2003 season:
Last place, but has potential to improve
next year.*

– Ryan McCaffrey

THE VERDICT

Official Xbox
Magazine
verdict

7.2
10.0

Tomorrow never flies

Batman: Dark Tomorrow

DEVELOPER KEMCO PUBLISHER KEMCO
MULTIPLAYER NONE WEBSITE BATMAN.KEMCOGAMES.COM/HOME.HTML

With a plot faithfully drawn from comics continuity rather than movies or the animated series, this action/adventure adopts a darker tone than previous games based on the Caped Crusader. As Batman, you utilize your superior martial arts abilities, gadgets (night vision, gas pellets, Batcables), and skills to stop the likes of Scarface and the Joker.

Frustratingly, more cash and effort has been pumped into *Dark Tomorrow's* peripheral elements, like the excellent

script, cutscenes, score, and voice acting, than into the gameplay... which is absolute rubbish. This road to hell was paved with good intentions, however; the game mechanics mimic *Metal Gear Solid* – you can peek around corners and stealthily karate-chop enemies from behind – but it's ultimately dragged down by erratic control, sloppy design, and wildly jarring changes in camera angle.



You have two basic attacks: punch and kick. Combos are nonexistent except for a limp whirlwind jump kick, and since enemies are usually back on their feet after a couple of seconds unless Bat-cuffed, facing more than a few at a time is a suicide mission. The abrupt changes in camera perspective add to the frustration.

Clues like e-mail and newspapers can be uncovered, although they apparently have no impact on the action. *Dark Tomorrow* is unusually short, too (it took us about eight hours to complete).

On the plus side, the voices are spot-on, and the sound, especially the soundtrack recorded by the Royal



Handcuff everyone or they'll get right back up.

Philharmonic Orchestra, is solid. Unfortunately, the game it's attached to is one only a hardcore Batman fetishist could possibly enjoy.

– Chuck "Batman fetishist" Osborn

THE VERDICT

Official Xbox
Magazine
verdict

3.5
10.0

LIGHTS.....CAMERA.....ATTACK!!!

Kung Fu CHAOS™

Face Full of Fists!

"There's action! There's suspense! There's no MSG!"

— Chad



— Brian

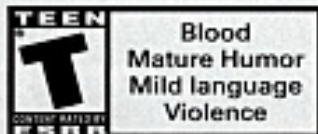
"Imagine a movie where every scene is a fight scene. Now imagine that movie is a video game that you don't have to imagine because it's real and not imaginary."

— Drew



DIRECTED BY SHAO TING

In a world where violence and celebrity go hand in hand, one video game beautifully glorifies both. *Kung Fu Chaos* is the story of director Shao Ting's mad obsession to assemble top 70's martial artists — throw them onto movie sets and have them beat the duck sauce out of each other. With 21 big-budget locations, 8 hot-tempered actors and a cameo by a mystery master, it's never the same movie—er, game twice.



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No need to...

Run Like Hell

DEVELOPER **DIGITAL MAYHEM**, PUBLISHER **VIVENDI UNIVERSAL**
 MULTIPLAYER **NONE**, WEBSITE WWW.INTERPLAY.COM/RLH/
 EXTRAS **DOWNLOADS**

As far as sci-fi-inspired survival horror games go, the concept of aliens hunting you in a derelict space station sure is typical these days, but nonetheless cool. However, as *Run Like Hell* aptly proves, a videogame concept is nothing on its own.

From *RLH*'s onset, an abundance of relentless, slimy aliens with big gnashing teeth are in hot pursuit of you, Captain Nicholas Connor, as you desperately search for your fiancée, Dr. Samantha Reilly.

Initially, it certainly seems like you'll be doing a lot of frantic running, but oddly many of the aliens are so fast that fleeing their attacks is futile. In the end, standing your ground, firing your weapon of choice repeatedly, locking onto the enemy, and jumping out of the way when an alien gets too close for comfort solves nearly every problem.

Although it's not exactly what we expected, *RLH* plays pretty solidly, but still fails to captivate for a number of reasons. From the frequent interruptions by



■ These aliens are big, scary, hungry, and so fast that running is the worst possible thing to do.

uninspired cut scenes and loading screens to the cumbersome interface and abundance of boring puzzles, there just isn't anything to get too excited about.

Even worse, *RLH*'s look is typical of a quick PS2 port. It would have benefited from even the smallest of Xbox upgrades, but with washed-out textures and an overall lack of detail, the visual

impact doesn't match up to Xbox standards – and unfortunately, neither does the rest of the game.

– Dave Rees

THE VERDICT

Official Xbox
Magazine
verdict

6.5
10.0

“New” Age of Heroes

Marvel vs. Capcom 2

DEVELOPER **CAPCOM**, PUBLISHER **CAPCOM**
 MULTIPLAYER **1-2 VIA SINGLE SCREEN**, WEBSITE WWW.CAPCOM.COM

Like its brother in Capcom-2D-versus-fighting-series-that-never-seemed-to-quit-until-three-years-ago-when-they-stopped-cold-turkey, *Marvel vs. Capcom 2* is now on Xbox. Unlike *Capcom vs. SNK 2 EO*, this one is not playable online.

Despite being three years old, the gameplay still holds up well, with three-on-three fighting craziness and a huge cast of characters. Some wild super moves can make you feel like you're in a windstorm, while the solid controls keep you from being helpless. The depth is there with enough complexity to keep you practicing for weeks and enough unlockable characters and

art to keep you from wasting that expensive joystick you bought to play *Capcom vs. SNK 2* online.

Unfortunately, this is a near-exact port of a dated game, and as such is not impressive visually. Character graphics in current games like *Guilty Gear XX* look cleaner and many times better than the ones here, and the 3D backgrounds that used to look nice are no longer anything particularly special.

On top of that, since the Live support fell through, there's nothing new to make this version a more attractive package. But it is a faithful conversion that is just as good as any other version, so have at it if you've been waiting.

– Matt Leone



■ Hayato gives Wolverine a right pummeling.

THE VERDICT

Official Xbox
Magazine
verdict

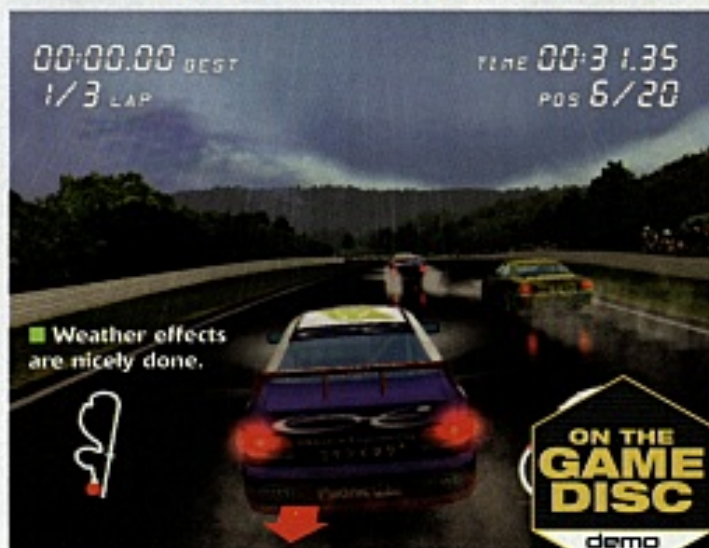
7.8
10.0

CHALLENGE pg. 90

It's a racing game... with a plot.

Pro Race Driver

PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS | DEVELOPER CODEMASTERS
MULTIPLAYER 1-4 PLAYERS | WEBSITE WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM



Pro Race Driver drops players into the role of Ryan McKane, a second-generation race car driver with a heated sibling rivalry and a traumatic past – you watched your father get burned to death during a race as a young boy. Now you have to face demons both on and off the track if you hope to live up to the family name.

Although the game features a finely tuned physics engine, the core gameplay is decidedly arcade style. The focus here is on fun rather than simulation. Even a rank beginner will be able to pass the first few races with no trouble whatsoever as it is nearly impossible to spin out of control.

An extensive damage model has been implemented, but like the physics engine, it is tuned for arcade style play. This means you will see a number of spectacular crashes, however it very rarely affects the handling of your car. It is purely for show.

Players who want utter realism in their game can have it,

but only at a cost. You must purchase a cheat code from Codemasters that is specific to your game (visit www.codemasters.com for details).

With more than 40 cars and almost as many tracks, *Pro Race Driver* has plenty of variety to go around. When you first start, most of the really neat stuff will be locked, but the goodies start to open up rather quickly.

For those of you that like to tinker, you can tweak the gear system, downforce, suspension, anti-roll, tires, and brake bias on the cars.

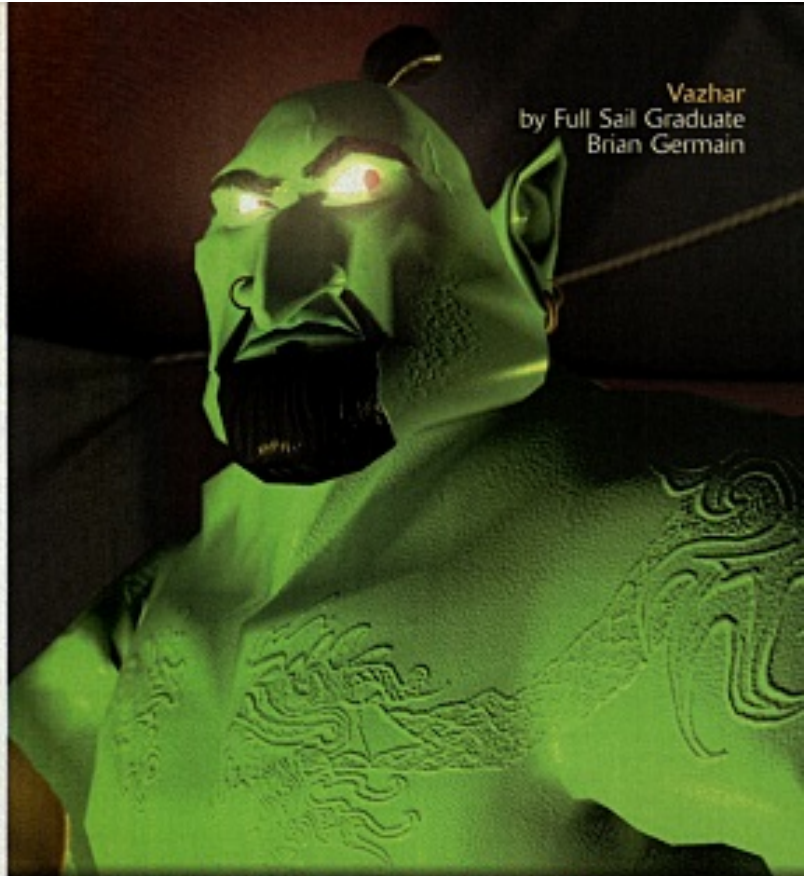
It may not be a hardcore sim, but *Pro Race Driver* is a surprisingly fun arcade romp with a bit of story thrown in.

— Adam Pavlacka



RYAN MCSPEEDY: Ryan McKane has no relation to our very own Ryan McCallrey – although our Ryan does own a DeLorean and can drive a mean go-kart.

Vazhar
by Full Sail Graduate
Brian Germain



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You love 'em, we love 'em, we all love 'em

Reviews Ahoy

For those that score 9.0 or above, list them under "What I did this summer..."

Game/Publisher	Score
2002 FIFA World Cup EA	8.3
4X4 Evo 2 Take Two	5.5
Aggressive Inline Activision	9.1
AirForce Delta Storm Konami	7.1
All-Star Baseball 2004 Activision	7.7
Ampe: Freestyle Snowboarding Microsoft	8.4
Autz Extreme Racing Empire Interactive	3.2
Apex Atari	8.9
Arctic Thunder Midway	5.9
ATV Quad Power Racing 2 Activision	6.9
Azarc: Rise of Perathia Microsoft	3.7
Balder's Gate: Dark Alliance Vivendi	8.8
Barbarian Titus	7.0
Batman: Dark Tomorrow Konami	3.5
Batman Vengeance Ubisoft	4.6
Battle Engine Aquila Infogrames	8.3
Black Stone Xite	5.6
Blade II Activision	6.0
Blitz: The Time Sweeper Microsoft	7.4
Blood Wake Microsoft	7.4
BloodRayne Majesco	6.8
BMX XXX Activision	7.4
Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon Universal	3.0
Buffy the Vampire Slayer EA	9.0
Burnout Activision	8.0
Capcom vs. SNK 2: ED Capcom	8.0
Col Damage EA	6.8
Chase Ben	4.1
Circus Maximus Eidos	6.4
Colin McRae Rally 3 Codemasters	8.8
Commandos 2 Eidos	7.2
Conflict: Desert Storm Gotham Games	6.8
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex Universal	7.1
Crazy Taxi 2: High Roller Sega	8.0
Crimson Sea Konami	8.5
Dark Angel Sega	4.5
Dark Summit THQ	7.0
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2 Activision	8.7
David Beckham Soccer Majesco	4.2
Dead or Alive 3 Tecmo	9.5
Dead to Rights Namco	8.5
Deathrow Ubisoft	7.4
Defender Midway	8.0
DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball Tecmo	8.4
Dr. Halo Midway	7.3
Dragon's Lair 3D Ubisoft	8.1
Dynasty Warriors 3 Koei	7.0
Eggmania: Eggstreme Madness Konami	7.8
Enclave Vivendi Universal	7.4
ESPN MLS ExtraTime 2002 Konami	8.6
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002 Konami	4.2
ESPN NFL Primetime 2002 Konami	7.1
ESPN Int'l Winter Sports 2002 Konami	5.9
ESPN X Games Snowboarding 2002 Konami	7.9
FI 2001 EA	8.7
Fatal Frame Tecmo	8.8
FIFA Soccer 2003 EA	8.6
Furious Karting Infogrames	6.9
Fuzion Frenzy Microsoft	7.8
Ghostlight Dark Legacy Midway	6.2
Gonna Oozevasha Capcom	7.9
Gun Metal Majesco	7.9
Gunslinger Sega	8.2
Kido Microsoft	9.5
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets EA	7.5
High Heat Baseball 2004 3DO	8.2
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin Take	8.9
House of the Dead II Sega	6.9
Hunter: The Rocking Jockey	6.9
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb LucasArts	9.0
Inside Pitch 2003 Microsoft	7.2
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire EA	7.9
James Bond 007: Nightfire EA	8.4
Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast LucasArts	9.0
JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future Sega	9.2
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis Vivendi	6.0

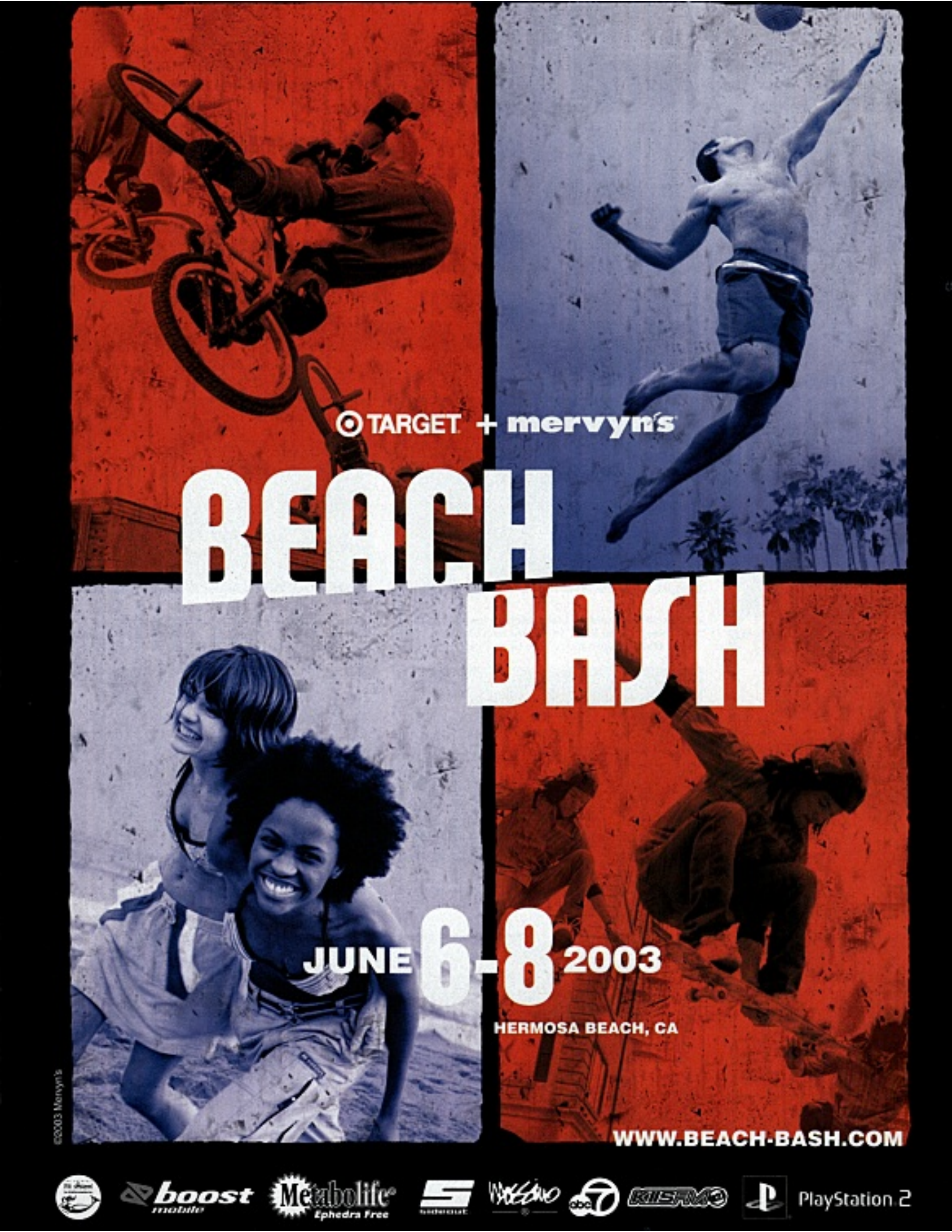
Game/Publisher	Score
Kabuki Warriors Core	5.9
Kakuto Chojin Microsoft	6.2
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer Activision	6.9
Knockout Kings 2002 EA	8.0
Kung Fu Chaos Microsoft	6.9
Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen 2 Eidos	8.5
LOTR: Fellowship of the Ring Back Label Games	7.0
LOTR: The Two Towers EA	8.0
Loose: The Fight for Fame Infogrames	7.3
Mad Dash Racing Eidos	7.3
Madden 2003 EA	8.8
Marvel vs. Capcom 2 Capcom	7.8
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 Activision	8.4
Max Payne Rockstar	8.8
MechAssault Microsoft	9.3
Medal of Honor: Frontline EA	9.0
Metal Dugout Xite	6.1
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance Konami	9.0
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing Codemasters	5.5
Minority Report Activision	7.2
MLB Slugfest 20-03 Midway	8.6
MLB Slugfest 20-04 Midway	8.4
Monopoly Party Infogrames	3.2
Morrowind Bethesda	8.1
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance Midway	8.9
MotoGP THQ	7.9
MotoGP 2 THQ	8.5
Motor Trend Presents Lotus Challenge Xite Interactive	7.3
Murksome: Renegade Mech Pursuit Ubisoft	5.9
MVP Baseball 2003 EA	8.4
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael THQ	6.5
MX Superfly THQ	7.4
Night II: Exile Ubisoft	5.9
Namco Museum Namco	6.4
NASCAR Heat Infogrames	8.2
NASCAR Thunder 2003 EA	8.0
NBA 2K3 Sega	8.7
NBA Inside Drive 2003 Microsoft	7.9
NBA Live 2003 EA	8.8
NBA Starting Five Konami	6.0
NBA Street Vol. 2 EA	8.9
NCAA College Football 2K3 Sega	7.1
NCAA College Basketball 2K3 Sega	8.5
NCAA Football 2003 EA	8.8
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2 EA	7.9
New Legends THQ	4.0
NFL 2K3 Sega	9.1
NFL Blitz 20-03 Midway	6.5
NFL Fever 2003 Microsoft	8.7
NHL 2003 EA	7.9
NHL 2K3 Sega	8.9
NHL Hitz 20-03 Midway	8.8
Nightcrafter: Defeat the Darkness Microsoft	4.9
Nightcrafter II: Equinox Eidos	7.9
Odyssey: Munch's Rhapsody Microsoft	9.0
Outlaw Golf SAS Interactive	7.9
Pac-Man World 2 Namco	7.2
Panzer Dragoon Origin Sega	9.3
Phantom Crash Panagram	7.4
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat EA	7.1
Prisoner of War Codemasters	5.9
Pro Race Driver Codemasters	8.0
Project Gotham Racing Microsoft	9.5
Pulse Racer Jaleco	1.0
Quantum Shift Microsoft	9.0
RallySport Challenge Microsoft	8.6
Rally Fusion: Race Of Champions Activision	7.0
Rayman Arena Ubisoft	7.2
Rayman 3 Hoodlum Havoc Ubisoft	8.8
Red Card 20-03 Midway	8.5
Red Faction II THQ	8.3
Reign of Fire Ben	6.1
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Tales of War Activision	9.2
Robotech: Battlecry TDK Mediaset	8.6
Rocky Ubisoft	7.3
Rise Like Hell Interplay	6.5

Game/Publisher	Score
Seabattle SAS Interactive	4.5
Sega GT 2002 Sega	9.1
Serious Sam Gotham Games	7.5
Shenmue II Microsoft	7.8
Shrek TDK	5.3
Shrek Super Party TDK	3.9
Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams Konami	8.9
Smashing Drive Namco	5.0
Sneakers Microsoft	4.9
Soccer Slam Sega	7.9
Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix Activision	8.5
Spider-Man Activision	7.9
Splatterhouse Infogrames	6.6
SpyHunter Midway	8.1
The Simpsons Road Rage EA	6.2
SSX Tricky EA BQ	8.7
Star Wars: Jedi Starfighter LucasArts	8.1
Star Wars Obi-Wan LucasArts	7.0
Star Wars Starfighter SE LucasArts	7.0
State of Emergency Rockstar	6.5
Steel Battalion Capcom	8.9
Street Hoops Activision	6.9
Super Bubble Pop Jaleco	7.4
Superman: The Man of Steel Infogrames	5.8
Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus Microsoft	7.4
Taz: Wanted Infogrames	5.6
Test Drive Infogrames	7.2
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open Infogrames	5.6
Tetris Worlds THQ	6.8
The Thing Back Label Games	8.0
The Sims EA	8.5
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003 EA	9.2
TimeSplitters 2 GIG	9.0
Tom & Jerry: Mission to Earth Sega	8.2
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Ubisoft	9.0
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Ubisoft	9.0
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 Activision	8.8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 Activision	9.0
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4 Activision	9.0
Total Immersion Racing Empire	3.5
Totaled! Majesco	7.1
Yakuza Gaiden THQ	7.5
TransWorld Snowboarding Infogrames	8.3
TransWorld Surf Infogrames	8.2
Turok: Evolution Activision	7.8
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger EA	6.9
UFC Tapout Core	9.0
UFC Tapout 2 TDK Mediaset	8.0
Universal Championship Infogrames	8.0
Vexx Activision	7.9
Whacked! Microsoft	7.4
Whiteout Konami	6.7
World Series Baseball 2K3 Sega	8.8
WWF Raw THQ	5.7
Wreckless Activision	9.1
X-Men: Next Dimension Activision	7.3
Zapper Infogrames	6.0

Mech'n Love

In its rather short life to date the Xbox has quickly become the mechanized system of choice. To wit:

- **Phantom Crash (7.4)** – It's fast, it's got RPG elements, and it's got a wacky love triangle.
- **GunMetal (7.9)** – It's Euro-flavored, it's got transforming mecha bots, and you can fly.
- **Robotech: Battlecry (8.6)** – It's anime-inspired, it's uber cool, and it's got its own boxset.
- **Steel Battalion (8.9)** – It's slow, it's got a massive controller, and a hefty price tag to go with it.
- **MechAssault (9.3)** – It's online, it's really fast-paced, and it's sort of part 'n' parcel to the MechWarrior universe.



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PlayStation 2

Extended Play

Strategy ■ Reader Interaction ■ The Disc

Contents



90

Challenges

Hit the track in a special racing edition of challenges.



91

The Disc

Feel the need for speed with this month's demos.



92

Letters

Questions, answers, etc.

The dark side of

The Sims Too hot for Xbox

Springer Sims

Lesbian love... extramarital smooches... jealous catfights. *The Sims'* neighborhood is full of new friends and possible lovers, but keeping your crazy dalliances secret from your lover and your other lover and his wife can be a little difficult.



TWO GIRLS IN LOVE

It's not all that hard to make Melissa and Chris, the "Roomies," fall in love. These are liberated times, you know! Not to mention it's cool to see them kissing.



PICK UP ANOTHER LOVER

If she's careful, Chris can work up a second fling with her neighbor Mortimer. Just make sure Melissa is in another room when they're making out.



SLIP OF THE TONGUE

If you keep inviting Mortimer over to the house, you can eventually get him to bring his wife along. Then it's "Springer time."



THAT'S MY MAN!

After Chris and Mortimer share a kiss in front of his wife, Bella, she storms over to slap the poo out of Chris....



THAT'S MY GIRL

You can't be too surprised when Melissa decides to get in a little smackdown on Mortimer as well.



TRASH TALK

Even though Bella's husband just made out with the lesbian tart Chris, she still yells at Melissa for slapping her husband... women!



TALK TO THE HAND

After the neighbors leave, sending Chris in to comfort Melissa will only get her pushed away. Can they rebuild their love?

Kill your lying, cheating husband

Maybe you are feeling neglected, maybe you want to have another love... or maybe he had an affair with the neighbor?! We all know what Mortimer did to his poor wife Bella, so to continue the Springer theme, she (well, we) decided to do him in. Sure, we've tried other methods of killing, and they can take up to five days to accomplish. This is what we recommend to exterminate an unwanted Sim quickly. Evil? Yes, but we learned so much. Thank you, Jerry Springer!



1 RUBBA-DUB-DUB DON'T GET IN THE TUB

When Bella and Mortimer get home from the earlier lesbian lover escapades, put him in the tub to wash all the cheating, lying filth off.



2 MORT TRAP

If you block Mortimer in the tub, all of his health and motives levels will drop over time without him making a fuss. Bad Bella!



3 SPARE THE CHILDREN

Make sure you keep the kid out of the bathroom, you don't want to spend your soon-to-be-single income on therapy for the little brat.



4 CODE RED

After Mortimer's motives are all completely red (except the room motive), let him out. Notice how even his hygiene is gone from being in the tub too long.



5 WAKE UP!

Mortimer will immediately collapse with exhaustion, but don't let him sleep or the death could take days. "Wake up, honey."



6 ADULT DIAPERS

Once awake, Mortimer will become completely overwhelmed with discomforts. He will even pee himself while standing next to the toilet.



7 HELP ME PLEASE

Satisfying one discomfort will only take away from the others so Mortimer will be unable to raise any of his motives. He'll ask you over and over for things he can't even deal with in his terrible state.



8 IT'S RIGHT BEHIND YOU

He's starving to death with a ready-to-eat plate of food right behind him, but it's too big a task at this point. If things turn around and he manages to pick up a plate or fall asleep, just undo the task.



9 DEATH BECOMES HIM

By evening of the second day, Mortimer will collapse and the Grim Reaper will be right over to take him away. Normally Bella would plea for his life - but not this time.



10 BOO!

Mortimer is officially dead but still very much around to continuously haunt Bella. Maybe she should have thought about that before killing him. Or she could just sell his headstone.

Extended Play

Cheats, challenges, gigs of fun

DIRTY CHEATS

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4

Unlock Just About Everything

By entering watch me explode into the Cheats screen you will unlock every level in the game as well as some extra skaters, like Jango Fett, that sexy Daisy found in every Tony game, and Eddie from Iron Maiden. When entering the cheat, be sure to include the underscores between the words. When entered correctly you'll hear the sound of a cash register opening and money falling.

Unlock Daisy

You can unlock Daisy using the above cheat that unlocks everything, but you can also unlock her using the following provocative cheat. When on the Cheats screen, enter lololol. That's right, use the parentheses and lower case o's to create a couple of, um... targets... yeah, targets...

Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast

Still More Cheats

We dropped some codes for this one on you way back in March but we've dug up a few more since then, including a cheat that unlocks all the levels. To enter them, go to the Main Menu and choose the Extras option. From the Extras Menu, select cheats and type away. When you enter a cheat correctly you will hear a "yeehaa!"

Effect

Infinite Ammunition
All Multi-Player Characters
All FMV Sequences
Unlock All Levels
Invulnerability
Have Lightsaber

Cheat

BISCUIT
PEEPS
FLICKY
DINGO
BUBBLE
FUDGE

Deathrow

Unlock Loads of Stuff

All of the following cheats are entered as Player Four's name, using a controller plugged into controller port four. Enter a single player game and advance through all the menus until you get to the team match-up screen where you move your controller over the team you want to play for. Hit the X button to bring up the player controller options, and while highlighting the player's name press the A button and you will bring up a screen that allows you to enter in a new name. Enter one of the following in all caps into this screen. Once a cheat is entered, hit the green checkmark to confirm its entry. Check the Unlocks Menu to see if a code worked.

Effect

Unlock All Arenas
Unlock All Teams and Players
Unlock Extreme Difficulty
Unlock Multidisc Mode

Code

MOREROOM
ALL150
NO FEAR
CONFUSED

Dynasty Warriors 3

More Characters and Make Your Own Movie

Both of the following codes are entered on the Main Menu and you will hear a noise when you enter one correctly. Once you unlock the Opening Movie Edit Mode you can edit together your own opening movie!

Effect

Unlock Opening
Movie Edit Mode

Code

X, BLACK, Y, WHITE, L-Trigger,
R-trigger, WHITE, WHITE

Unlock More
Characters

WHITE, BLACK, X, Y, WHITE,
R-Trigger, L-Trigger, BLACK

RACE-TASTIC!

You read our world exclusive Halo 2 feature word-by-word three times. Then you watched the Halo 2 trailer on our Demo Disc. Guess what? There's still plenty of gaming, and we're calling you out! Put your Xbox skills to the test with the Official Xbox Magazine Challenges - Special Racing Edition. Consider it training for driving the new Warthog in Halo 2... mmm... Halo 2.

THE OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE CHALLENGES DEMO EDITION

Stay Focused



Colin McRae Rally 3.0

ELITE POINTS: 3,000

CHALLENGE: Hop in your ultra-radical Ford Focus and meet or beat a total rally time of 2:55. Then we dare you to tell your friends you just spent time racing a Ford Focus.

PROOF: Your time will be displayed at the end of the race. Take a picture.

Break the Cycle



MotoGP 2

ELITE POINTS: 3,000

CHALLENGE: On the Rio track, using any rider, top a total time of five minutes. Watch out for those hairpin turns!

PROOF: The race results will be prominently displayed once you're done. Snap a picture.

CaRPG



Pro Race Driver

ELITE POINTS: 3,000

CHALLENGE: Crack two minutes on the qualifying lap. You won't have any competition and there aren't any car choices, so it shouldn't be tough. From there you're off to the big race.

PROOF: Your results clipboard shows up after the qualification. Tell it to say "Cheese!" and grab a picture.

Prove it: Send video or pictures (don't forget to include your full name and challenges completed) to:

I'M A LEGEND

c/o Official Xbox Magazine
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Brisbane, CA 94005

Or via e-mail with the subject line "I'm a legend" to:
xboxmag@futurenetworkusa.com. (You must use the subject line "I'm a legend" or your entry will not make it in.)

Ad Index June 2003

The Advertiser Index is provided as a service to our readers, and as such, Future Network USA will not be responsible for any typographical errors found within it.

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NEED TO GET A DISC?

If you don't receive the disc with your copy of Official Xbox Magazine, you might want to consider upgrading! Each monthly disc contains exclusive playable demos, strategies, video previews, add-on content, and more. To get 12 issues of Official Xbox Magazine that include the game disc with your subscription (prorated if necessary) for just \$1 extra per issue, please call (515) 248-7682 and an operator will take care of everything. (Please note that subscriptions purchased through third-party subscription agents do not include the monthly game disc as part of the subscription.)

The Official Xbox Magazine Top 10

NAME	POINTS
Steve Hermann	129,500
Christopher Gerber	69,500
Jason Mitchell	54,500
Kirk Pullen	50,500
Josue Sanchez	48,500
Rick Burge	39,500
Cory Kouts	37,500
Jason Borah	34,500
Tony Manak	31,500
Alex Carroll	31,000

ON THE GAME DISC

That tingling feeling you get in your fingers when you pick up this month's disc isn't a forthcoming heart attack (but it could be... so, umm, call a doctor!), it's the undeniable power of coolness emanating from all of the goodness packed onto our latest DVD extravaganza. Pop it into your Xbox and enjoy.

DON'T JUST READ ABOUT THEM, PLAY THEM!

PLAYABLE DEMOS

■ *Colin McRae Rally 3.0* - Codemasters



Sometimes, a Formula One racecar just won't cut it. Sometimes, you've got to jump in a Ford Focus and just drive. Hence, we have rally racing.

■ *MotoGP 2* - THQ



All the best from the first sleeper Xbox Live hit, with a new layer of graphical polish to boot. After you're done racing, be sure to check out the replays! And remember you are playing this demo before the game is even available.

■ *Pro Race Driver* - Codemasters



When you don't want to get behind the wheel of a Ford Focus and you have the itch to floor it in a Dodge Viper or Mercedes SLK, you need a dose of *Pro Race Driver*.

■ *Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus* - Microsoft

Brutal brawlin' from the co-creator of *Mortal Kombat*. Ever wanted to break someone's arm in a fighting game? Here's your chance. Check out the bloodied up characters... gruesome stuff.

VIDEO CONTENT

Best. Video. Content. Ever. Check it:

- A video introduction to Xbox Live.
- Smooth action from *Apex*.
- An admittedly old but still really cool trailer of *Halo 2*.
- Gameplay footage of *Gladius*.
- First ever video of *Hunter: The Reckoning-Redeemer*.
- An action-packed trailer of the upcoming *Enter the Matrix* game.
- A peek at the upcoming DVD *The Animatrix*.
- And the dramatic, mind-altering return of our Official Xbox Magazine Top 10 Plays.

■ **POPULAR DEMAND:** You wrote letters, e-mails, petitions, and even death threats (you weren't serious...right?). By popular demand, Top 10 Plays are back for good.



IN THE QUEUE

Title	July	August
XIII	NA	I
Brute Force	I	O
Dungeons & Dragons: Heroes	I	I
Deus Ex: Invisible War	NA	I
Dino Crisis 3	NA	I
Ghost Recon: Island Thunder	I	O
Gladius	O	O
Hunter: The Reckoning-Redeemer	NA	I
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	NA	I
Jurassic Park: Oper. Genesis	O	NA
KOTOR Extra Content	I	O
Mace Griffin	I	O
Midtown Madness 3	O	NA
Inside Pitch 2003	I	O
MX Superfly Booster	NA	O
NBA Street Vol. 2	O	NA
Otogl	NA	I
Run Like Hell Extra Content	NA	O
SOF II: Double Helix	I	O
Soul Calibur II	I	O
Splinter Cell: Kola Cell	I	O
SW Clone Wars Extra Content	NA	O
SWAT III: GST	NA	I
The Great Escape	NA	I
TJ&E III Extra Content	NA	O
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	NA	I
Vultures	NA	I

THE KEY	O	I	NA	YR
ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEED				
LOOKING GOOD, LET'S CHOOSE OUR FINGERS				
A POSSIBILITY IF THE STARS COME TOGETHER				
NOT YET RELEASED				
NOT APPLICABLE				
YET TO BE RELEASED				

COMING SOON ON THE DISC

More Splinter Cell? Oui!

Your patience has been rewarded. Sam Fisher returns in the Xbox Live downloadable mission titled "Kola Cell," and we'll have it on our disc very soon. We told you we wouldn't leave you Live-less gamers out in the cold. Our disc is the first place non-Xbox Live users can get this sweet extra Splinter Cell level. You gotta play this one.



Official Xbox Magazine

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Or call us at 515-248-7682



Reader Interaction



Questions? Concerns? Comments? Date requests? We're here to oblige, especially with the date requests (provided you're gender-appropriate to the staff member propositioned and hot). Send an 8x10 color photograph of yourself along with your phone number to: **Official Xbox Magazine**, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA, 94005. You can also e-mail these items to xboxmag@futurenetworkusa.com. We suppose we'll answer your Xbox-related queries, too.

"Other" sports titles

1) Since arena football is now on NBC and thus getting more attention, is there any talk of making a videogame version? 2) Have you heard any news on making a Slamball title? 3) I watch TNN from time to time and I love American Gladiators. How about an Xbox version of it?

We say: All of those sports have an appeal, but it's a limited one. When you think about it in the business sense, none have a great enough appeal to warrant spending millions of dollars developing a game when only a small percentage of potential customers will buy them. Plus, there were some American Gladiators games back on the 16-bit systems, and let's just say that they totally blew.

Don't eat that!

I just finished reading your April 2003 issue. As usual, I flipped to the very back to check out Future Guy and read about next month's issue.

(since he is from the future). I was shocked to see a female who appeared to have some sort of stomach discomfort.

Timothy
Baton Rouge, LA

We say: That's Mrs. Future Guy (or Future Gal, if you prefer), and she made the mistake of eating some of Future Guy's cooking. Remember: if you ever come into contact with a time machine, use it only for time travel, not to hone your hopeless culinary "skill"! Future Burgers become uncooked as they come back in time and can lead to a nasty case of the runs.

More splats in the house?

In the April issue there was a blurb on the bottom of page 14 stating NEC would be publishing for Xbox. Please, please, please tell me you've heard something about whether or not a new Splatterhouse game is in the works.

Anonymous
Via e-mail

We say: The Friday the 13th-meets-Resident Evil side-scrolling action

horror title last appeared on a console back in 1990 when it was one of the most violent offerings on the ill-fated Turbo Grafx 16. Of course, Resident Evil didn't exist back then, but the comparison works. Believe it or not, the very-much-in-business folks at Namco developed the game, and thus any new iteration would come from them (and we know they're more than capable). Unfortunately, a Namco representative told us "it would be nice" but that nothing is planned right now. Of course, you can always start an online petition...

We play, not design

Do you guys have any say in the development or design of games? If so, I think that maybe you, or Microsoft, should think about making some original characters for Xbox like Nintendo has. So far, the only cool original character exclusive to Xbox is the Master Chief. Also, how about a wireless controller? The Wavebird from Nintendo is great, and I wouldn't mind a Microsoft-made, Live-friendly one for the Xbox.

Harrier
Via E-mail

We say: First of all, we definitely DON'T have any input on game design. If we did, it would not only be a conflict of interest, but we'd spend our entire day telling developers to make their games more like Halo.

As for original characters, the Nintendo mascots are cool and all, but from a sales perspective, where has that gotten them? Third place. Sony doesn't really have any recognizable characters, and where are they? First place. So we don't think original characters are necessary for a system's overall success.

And the latest in first-party Microsoft wireless controller rumors is this: a recent survey on Microsoft's official Xbox website featured a few questions that were obviously gauging Xbox owners' interest in wireless peripherals. So they must at least be considering it at this point. Keep your fingers crossed.

The great indoors

I had an absolute blast day in and day out playing Sega Bass Fishing and Sega Marine Fishing using the fishing controller on the Dreamcast. One of my all-time favorite videogame experiences was playing Sega Bass Fishing and hooking the

DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball Gallery of Goofs

We asked to see your favorite Xbox characters in their best DOA Xtreme Beach Volleyball swimwear, and what we saw horrified us. There's a reason most of these dudes never wear bikinis and a reason none of you use Photoshop professionally.

■ "Willy Jack" shows off Cortana's skimpiest ensemble.



■ Even badasses like Sam Fisher need vacations. Thanks, William Hernandez.



■ Scott Phillips lets us see underneath the Master Chief's armor.



Letter of the month

You will believe a Chief can fly

I don't know if this Halo trick is old news or what, but this is the first time that I had ever seen it and I was pretty excited about it. It's Blood Gulch (of course), and I think it's a pretty cool sniper spot. Thanks for the best magazine on the planet.

Nate Thompson
San Diego, CA

We say: Gee Nate, you've actually managed to show us something in Halo that we haven't seen before. Of course, once you run out of sniper rounds up there, you'd be pretty screwed...unless you're our own Dave Rees, in which case you'd switch to your pistol and drop Frank, who only has a single toe sticking out of his base, with one shot.



■ Flyin' high, high above the sky...



■ Halo physics at work. Do NOT try this at home.

big one with the Sega fishing controller from the comfort of my own couch. I didn't have to worry about pesky game wardens taking away my beer, being fined for not having a fishing license, getting rained on, injuring innocent fish, or

drowning. Are there any plans for a similar controller on the Xbox?

Bill
Via email

We say: We're not sure whether to laugh out loud or shamefully agree

with every word you wrote, Bill. To answer your question, there is a fishing title on the way (Top Angler), but no fishing pole controller...yet. We think the next fishing game peripheral should include some sort of USB beer to really capture the essence of the sport.



Cover captions APRIL 2003

Here are some of the best cover captions you sent in for our True Crime issue.

■ "You're gonna listen to my corny one-liner whether you like it or not!"
— Robert Harrington

■ "This is a brand new jacket and look what you've done to it! It's ruined!"
— Michelle Wise

■ "Nothing personal or anything, but I get violent when I feel silky-smooth hair."
— "Bigman1286"

■ "What happens when an Official Xbox Magazine editor fails to meet their deadline."
— Hom Chan

■ "Mike Salmon is forced to lay the smack down on Dave Rees for playing too much Halo CTF instead of working on the demo disc."
— Mark Forsman

■ "Please tell me that's a gun you have jammed against my back."
— Chris Conklin

■ Here's "Entaius" with his Oddworld entry.



■ Nate Scott shows that the Covenant Grunts might not be so bad after all.



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PLAYABLE DEMOS:
All-Star Baseball 2004
APEX
Halo
Kung Fu Chaos
Panzer Dragoon Orta
Splinter Cell
TimeSplitters 2



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb
Kakuto Chojin
MechAssault
MX Superfly
Shenmue II: Chapter 2
Vexx



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
ATV Quad Power Racing 2
Battle Engine Aquila
Mech Assault
NBA Inside Drive
Reign of Fire
Shenmue 2
Superman
Tennis Masters
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon
TransWorld Snowboarding
Whacked!



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Deathrow
Matt Hoffman
BMX, NASCAR Thunder 2003
Quantum Redshift
Rally Fusion
Rocky
Sega GT 2002
Holiday Drive
Splashtown
Tiger Woods
TransWorld Snowboarding
Whacked



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
BloodRayne
Chase Exclusive Level
House of the Dead III
Panzer Dragoon
ToeJam & Earl III
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Aggressive Inline
Madden NFL 2003
NFL Blitz 2003
NFL Fever 2003
Sega GT 2002
TimeSplitters 2

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PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Crash Bandicoot
Halo
Hunter: The Reckoning
Malice
Max Payne
Spider-Man
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter
TimeSplitters 2



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
DOA 3
Booster Disc
Gun Metal
NCAA Football 2003
TimeSplitters 2



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller
Hunter: The Reckoning
Outlaw Golf
Street Hoops



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Crash Bandicoot
MotoGP
Spider-Man
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter
Triple Play 2002
Bonus Demo Pack
Amped
Blood Wake
Project Gotham Racing
RallySport Challenge
Wreckless



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2
Halo
JSRF: Jet Set Radio Future
Max Payne
Test Drive Off-Road
Wide Open



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Dark Summit
GUNVALKYRIE
NBA Inside Drive 2002
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee (Snoozer Labs)
RallySport Challenge

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PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Amped
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2
Dead or Alive 3
Wreckless



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Arctic Thunder
Blood Wake
Project Gotham Racing
Bonus Demo Pack
AirForce Delta Storm
Azurik: Rise of Perathia
Cel Damage™
Fuzion Frenzy
Mad Dash Racing
NASCAR Thunder 2002
NFL Fever 2002
NHL Hitz 20-02
4X4 Evo 2



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
AirForce Delta Storm
Azurik: Rise of Perathia
Mad Dash Racing
NASCAR Thunder 2002
NFL Fever 2002
NHL Hitz 20-02



PLAYABLE DEMOS:
Cel Damage™ (Teen)
Fuzion Frenzy (Everyone)
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee (Teen)
4X4 Evo 2 (RP)
Tony Hawk 2X (RP)



NO PLAYABLE DEMOS



NO GAME DISC

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Master Chief TV Buddy!

Sadly, *Halo 2* isn't going to make it to the Xbox this year, but that doesn't mean you still can't get your Master Chief fix. Thanks to the Official Xbox Magazine's Master Chief TV Buddy, your favorite interstellar soldier can show up in all of the biggest Xbox games, present and future.

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut out the Master Chief TV Buddy and his clothes.
2. Dress the Master Chief TV Buddy in an outfit appropriate to the game.
3. Scotch tape the Master Chief TV Buddy to the television screen.
4. Enjoy!



Next month

SECRET GUY



Shh...

You can't see me. I'm a shadow... a shadow who just uncovered next month's issue. Yes, I've commandeered my way into the top-secret offices of the Official Xbox Magazine. Come join me, if you will, in my clandestine world of espionage and spy-racy.

At this moment, I'm writing from under my desk. I'm wearing dark clothes, I'm typing very quietly, and I'm slurring my S's like Sean Connery. But more importantly, I've discovered what's in the next issue. Just swear you didn't hear this from me, or I'll have to kill you... kill you with a gadget.

Beyond Splinter Cell

From my vantage point under the features editor's desk, I've learned two things. The first is that Frank O'Connor has a strange fungus problem with his feet. The second is that the magazine is working on a new cover feature on the follow-up to *Splinter Cell*. This mysterious new game features multiplayer options that will make the best game of last year even better.

Brute Force Review

Another thing that I've learned from my secret position under Frank O'Connor's desk is that this longtime editor loves his pie. Through a near-constant downpour of cobbler crumbs and pastry particles I was able to spot the desk of the reviews editor. And what did I see? A reviewable copy of *Brute Force*. It looks like it's going into the next issue and judging from the stunning amount of sweat on Frank's feet while playing, it could be good.

Race from the past

Sorry, I think I might have passed out for a while. When Frank gets really excited he kicks his feet, and the last thing I remember is that he heard our next issue would feature a couple of old-school racers born again on Xbox. *Ridge Racer* and *Sega GT Online* look set to re-revolutionize the racing game genre... again. Read it here first!

Demo Disc

Finally, Dave Rees stopped by to talk with Frank about the disc. While he was here, he stole some of Frank's paper clips and told him about July's amazing disc.

NBA Street Vol. 2
Gladius (hopefully)
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis
Inside Pitch 2003

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■ PAPER DOLLS: Did you know that paper dolls are supposed to have their arms in the same position as their clothing? Our cartoonist didn't.



Blood
Violence

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Violence
Mild Lyrics



XBOX
LIVE

PlayStation 2



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PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



Screenshots taken from PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system, Xbox™ video game system and Nintendo GameCube™ gameplay.
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