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WAR 2?**”

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IN ONE MASSIVE FEATURE!

## PREVIEWED INSIDE:

- ☠ GOD OF WAR III
  - ☠ RESISTANCE 2
  - ☠ RESIDENT EVIL 5
  - ☠ KILLZONE 2
  - ☠ FINAL FANTASY XIII
  - ☠ BIOSHOCK 2
  - ☠ FALLOUT 3
  - ☠ CALL OF DUTY 5
- AND MORE!**

↑ ↑ ↓ ↓ ← → ← → B A Start

**PLUS: 33 BEST CHEATS  
OF ALL TIME! P.58**

www.GamePro.com

Issue 235 / APR 08



IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS DARKNESS.

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# GOD OF WAR

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Wii™

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# GAMEPRO

## ★ Features

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*GamePro* analyzes the heavy-hitting games of 2008, dishing up new info for *Resistance 2*, late-breaking details on *Grand Theft Auto IV*, plus new gossip on *Gears of War 2* and *God of War III*.

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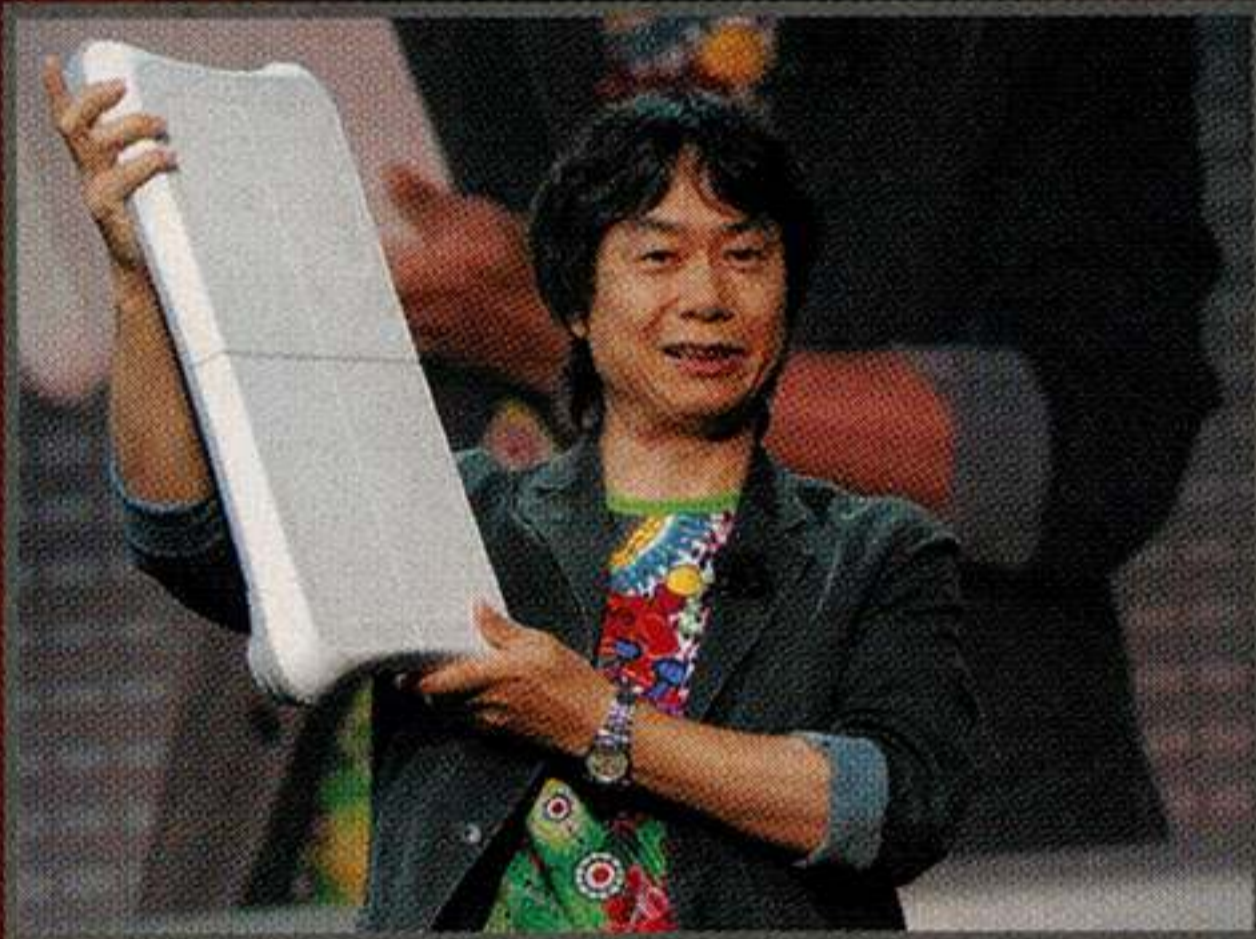
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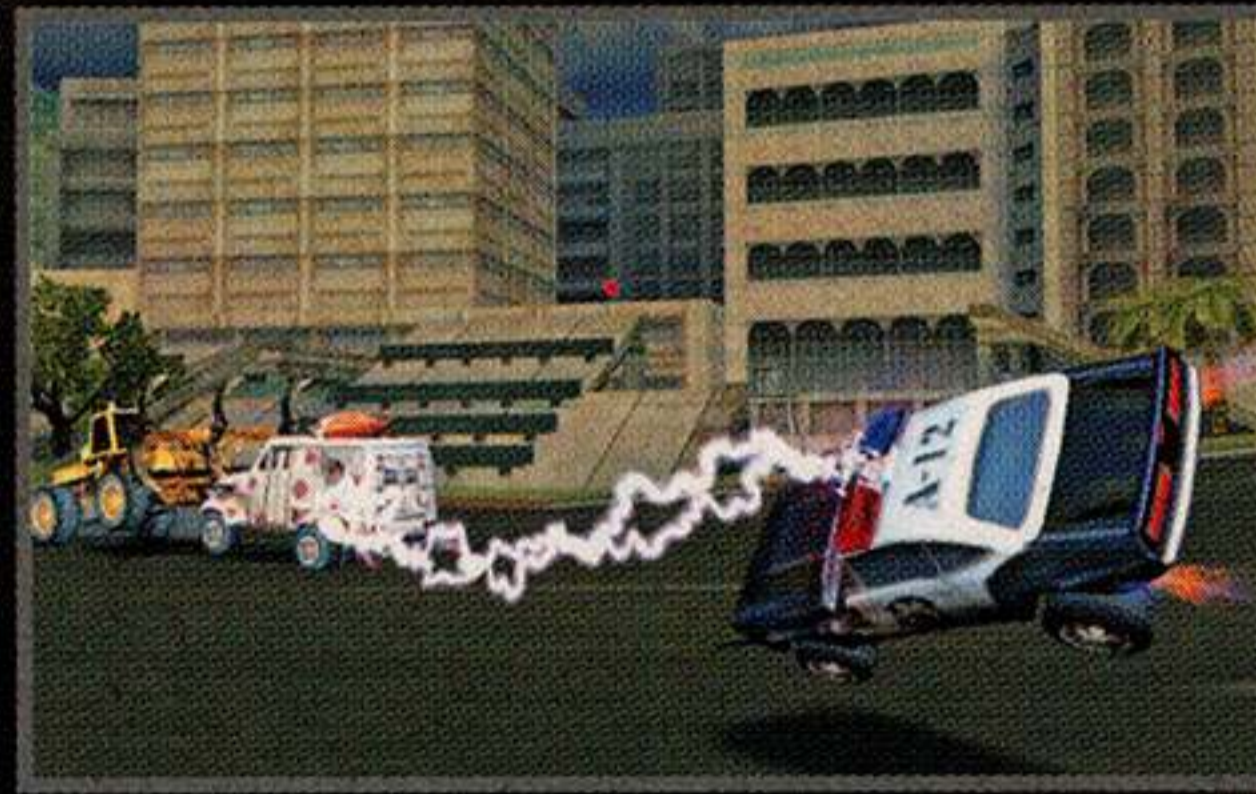


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## A Slightly Different Path

Do you love video games? So do we. Here's our philosophy.

If you've been a longtime *GamePro* reader, you may have noticed that over the past year, *GamePro* has been exploring a slightly different path. A game-centric path. You see, we see ourselves as just like you: not chin-stroking, holier-than-thou industry elitists, but gamers. Like you, we love playing games and talking about games. Rather than follow the game mag norms—locking up an “exclusive” game cover each and every month, for example—we've been busy writing stories about the games you (and we) actually want to play. We're talking heavy-hitters here: Super Smash Bros Brawl. Gears of War 2. Resistance 2. Final Fantasy XIII. Metal Gear Solid 4. You catch our drift. These are the games we're thinking about every single day, and these are the games that make us proud to be gamers. We suspect you feel the same way.

Why waste time on anything else? Every page we spend on puffy industry pieces is one less page we can dedicate to, say, bigger images for Resistance 2. Or more information on Metal Gear Solid 4. These games are the reason we dished out hard-earned money for Xbox 360s, PS3s, and Wiis. Think of us as the guys sitting next to you on the couch. We're gaming “experts,” in a formal sense. But at the end of the day, we're just gamers. Like you.

How's our driving? Send your feedback to [sid\\_shuman@gamepro.com](mailto:sid_shuman@gamepro.com). We'll read every letter and take every suggestion seriously. Because, as always, this is your magazine.

**Sid Shuman and Chris Morell**  
Senior Editors





Now that's a Crazy Taxi!

▼ **PROTOTYPE** PS3, XBOX 360, PC



▼ **COMMAND & CONQUER 3: KANE'S WRATH** XBOX 360, PC

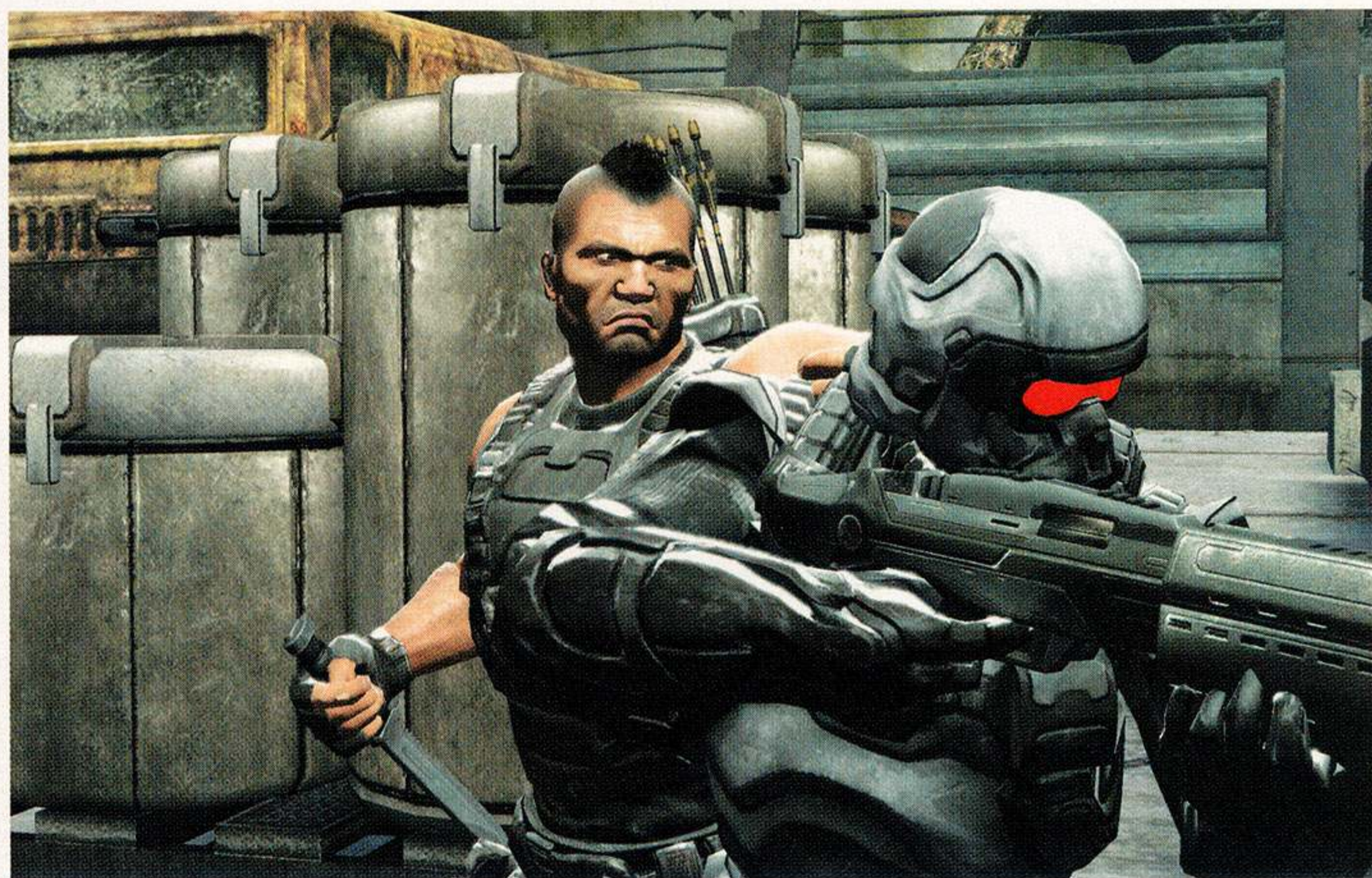


▼ **AGE OF CONAN: HYBORIAN ADVENTURES** XBOX 360, PC





▼ TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX VEGAS 2 PS3, XBOX 360, PC



▼ TUROK PS3, XBOX 360, PC



▼ BIONIC COMMANDO PS3, XBOX 360, PC



▼ THE AGENCY PS3, PC





Believe it or not, this is an actual in-game screenshot of GT5: Prologue.

GRAN TURISMO 5: PROLOGUE PS3



SEGA SUPERSTARS TENNIS PS3, XBOX 360, Wii, PS2, DS



NO MORE HEROES Wii



SONIC RIDERS: ZERO GRAVITY Wii, PS2



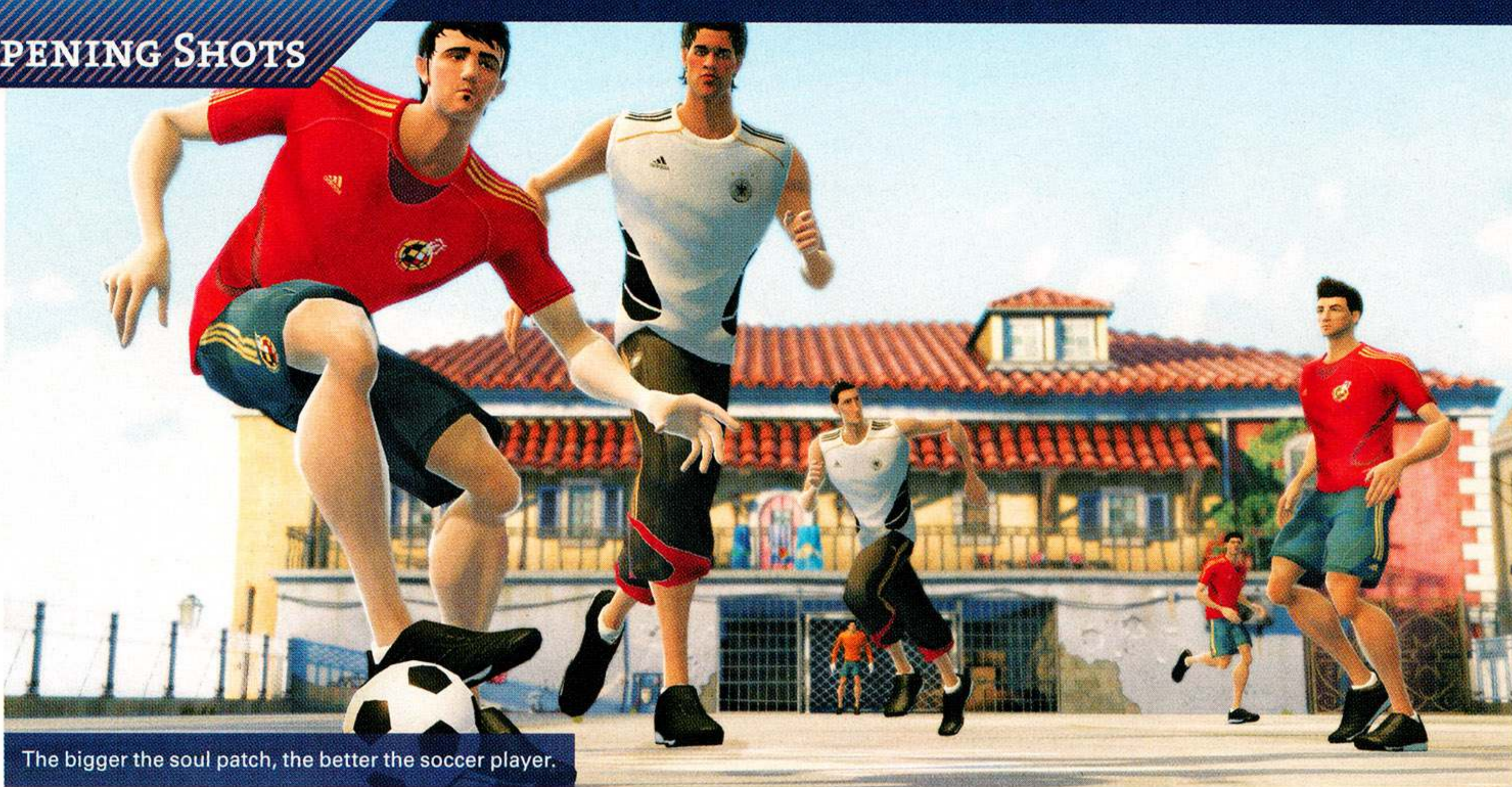
HOT SHOTS GOLF: OUT OF BOUNDS PS3





Welcome to La La Land by anchorblue





The bigger the soul patch, the better the soccer player.

▼ FIFA STREET 3 PS3, XBOX 360, DS



▼ SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL wii



▼ DECA SPORTS wii



They may be humanity's rejected children, but they're still only babies, Eddie.

▼ BRUTAL LEGEND PS3, XBOX 360



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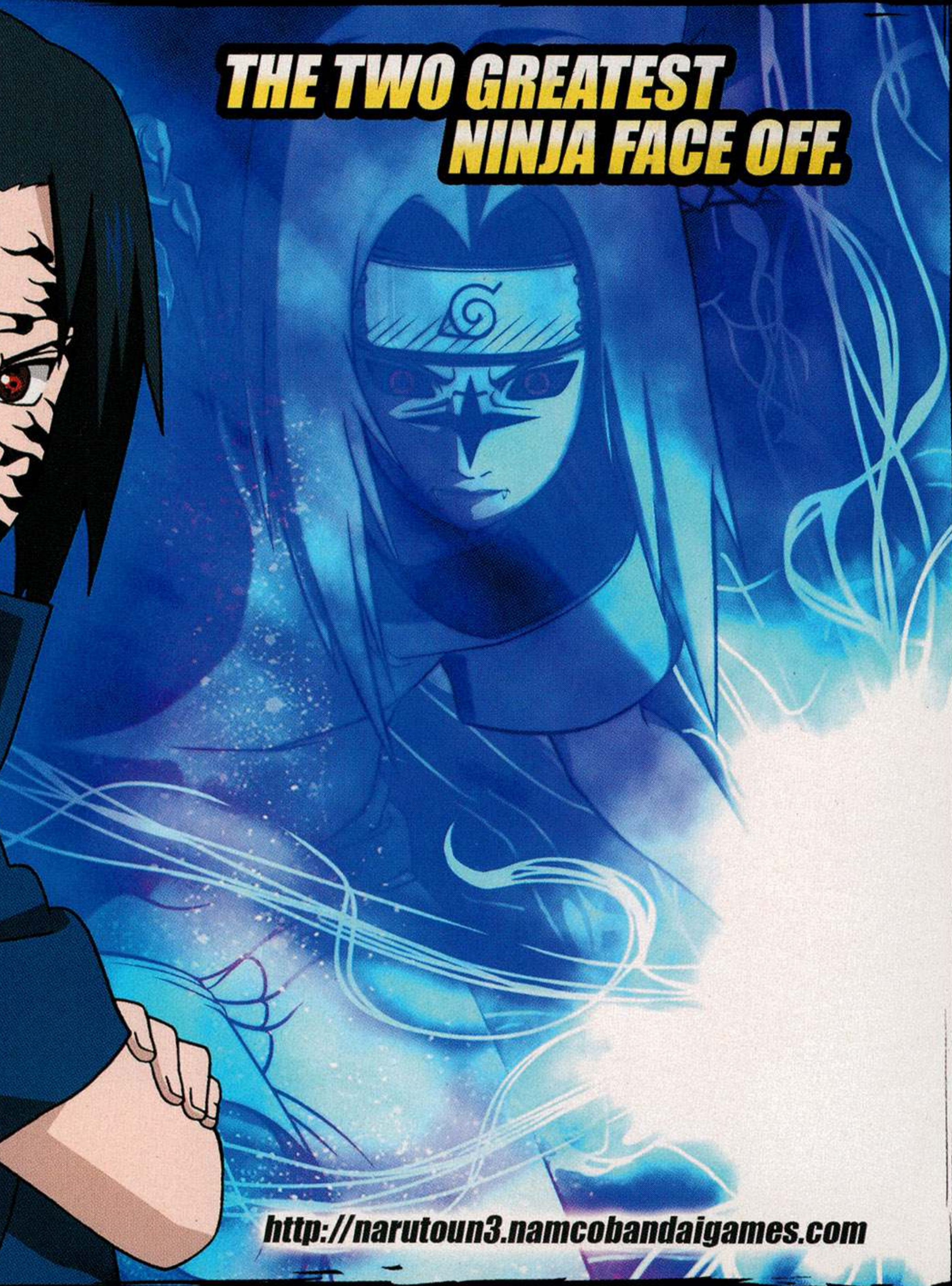
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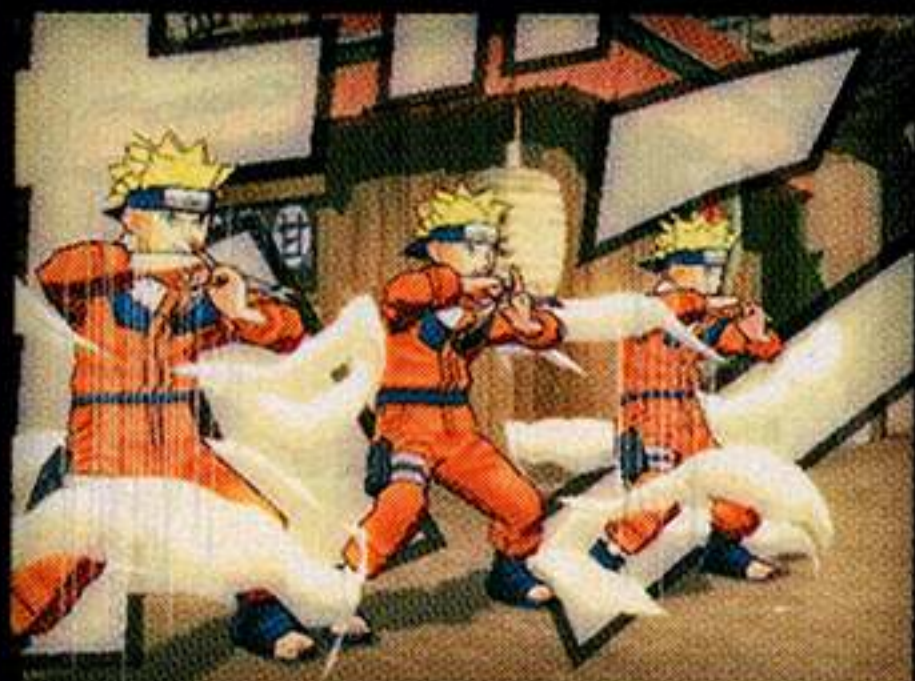




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PlayStation®2



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Dell recommends Windows Vista® Home Premium.

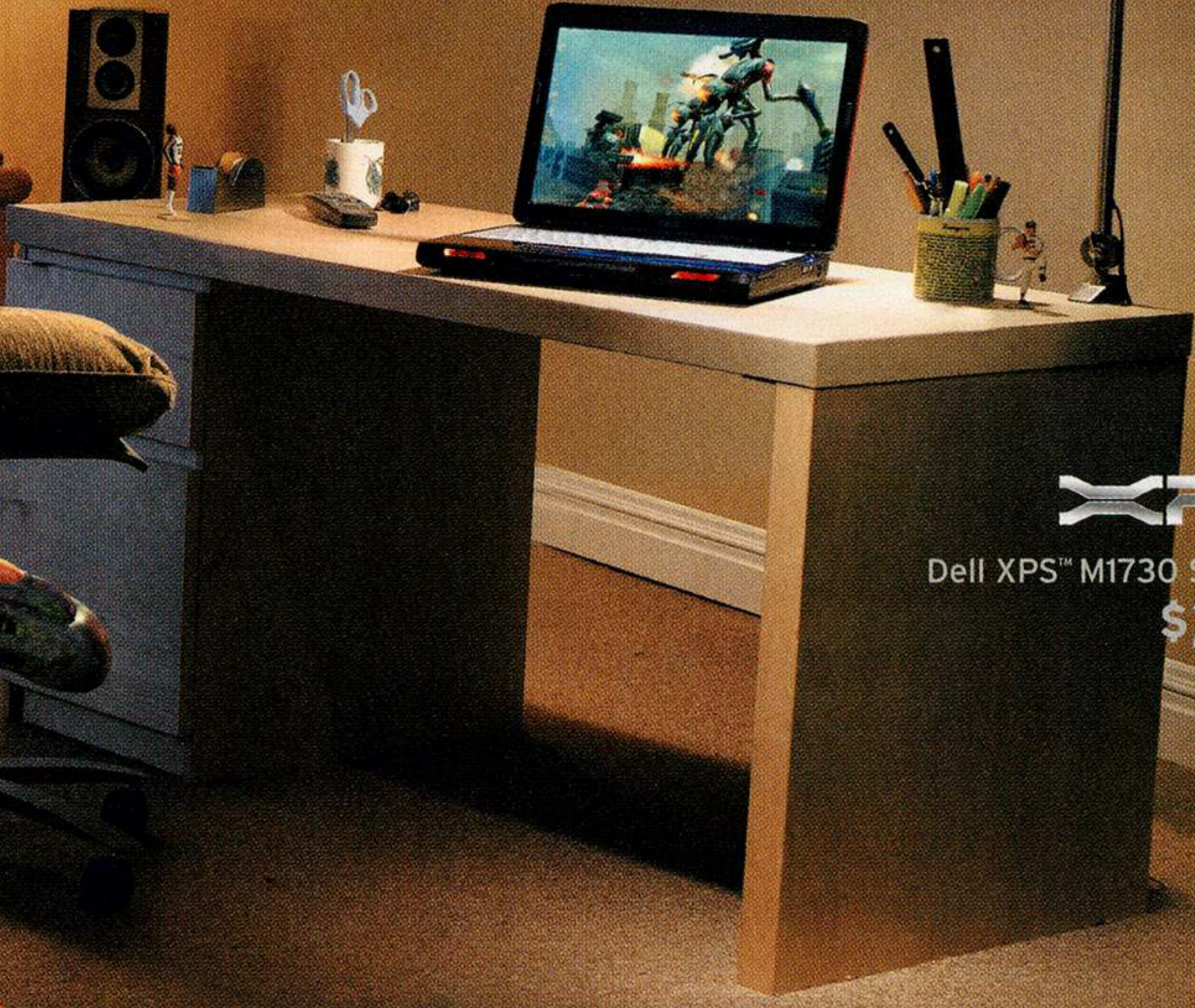


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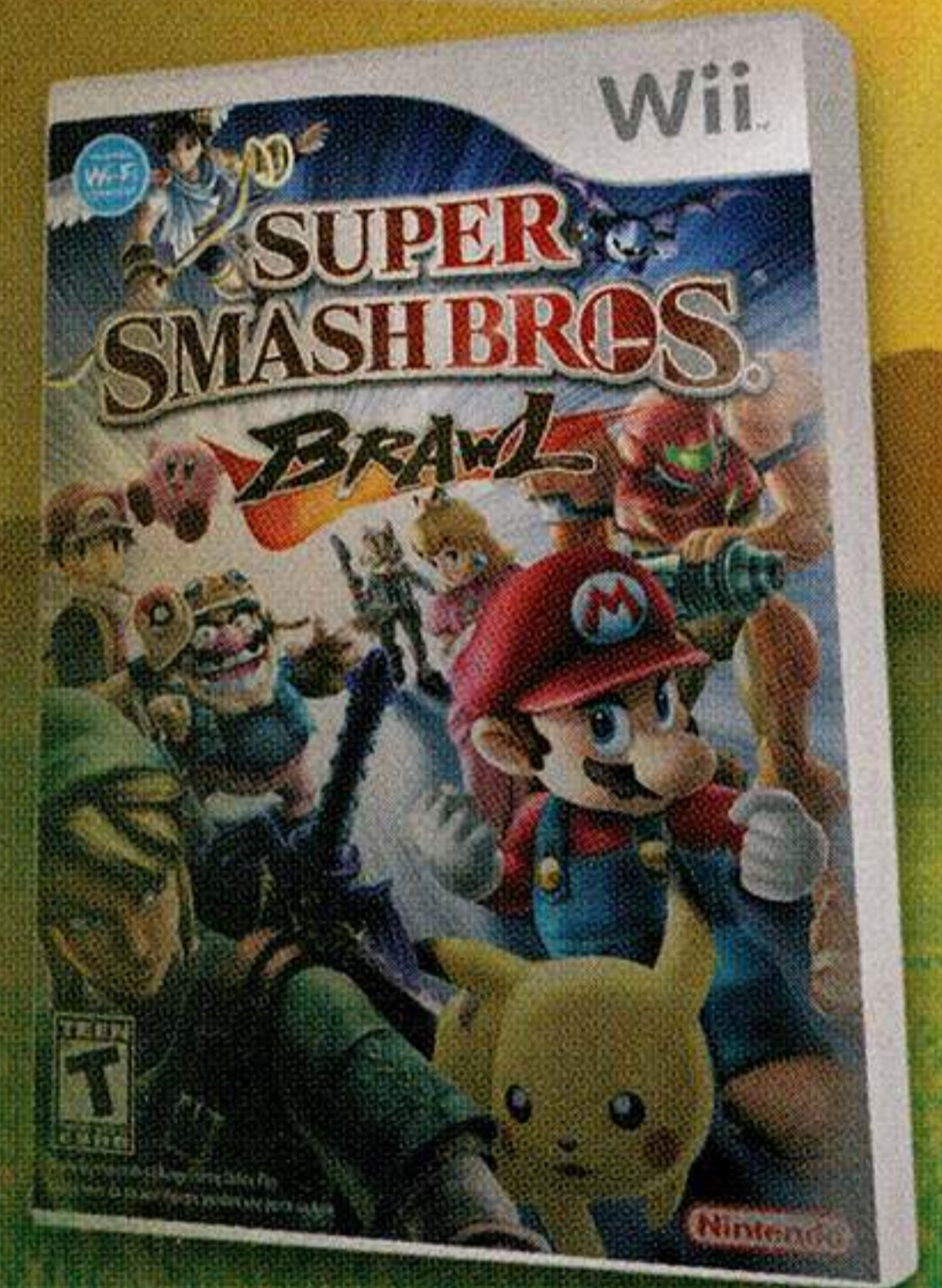
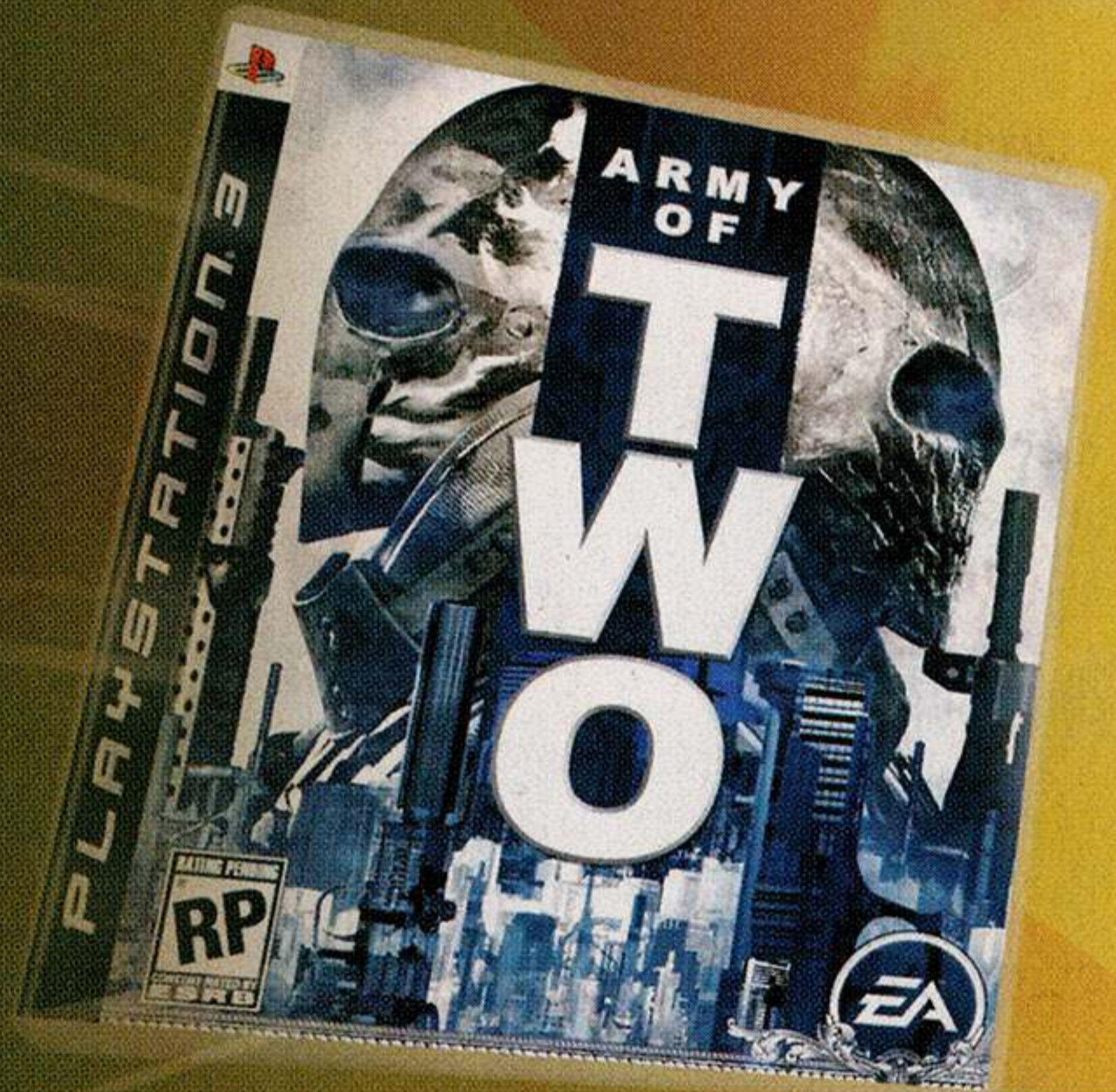
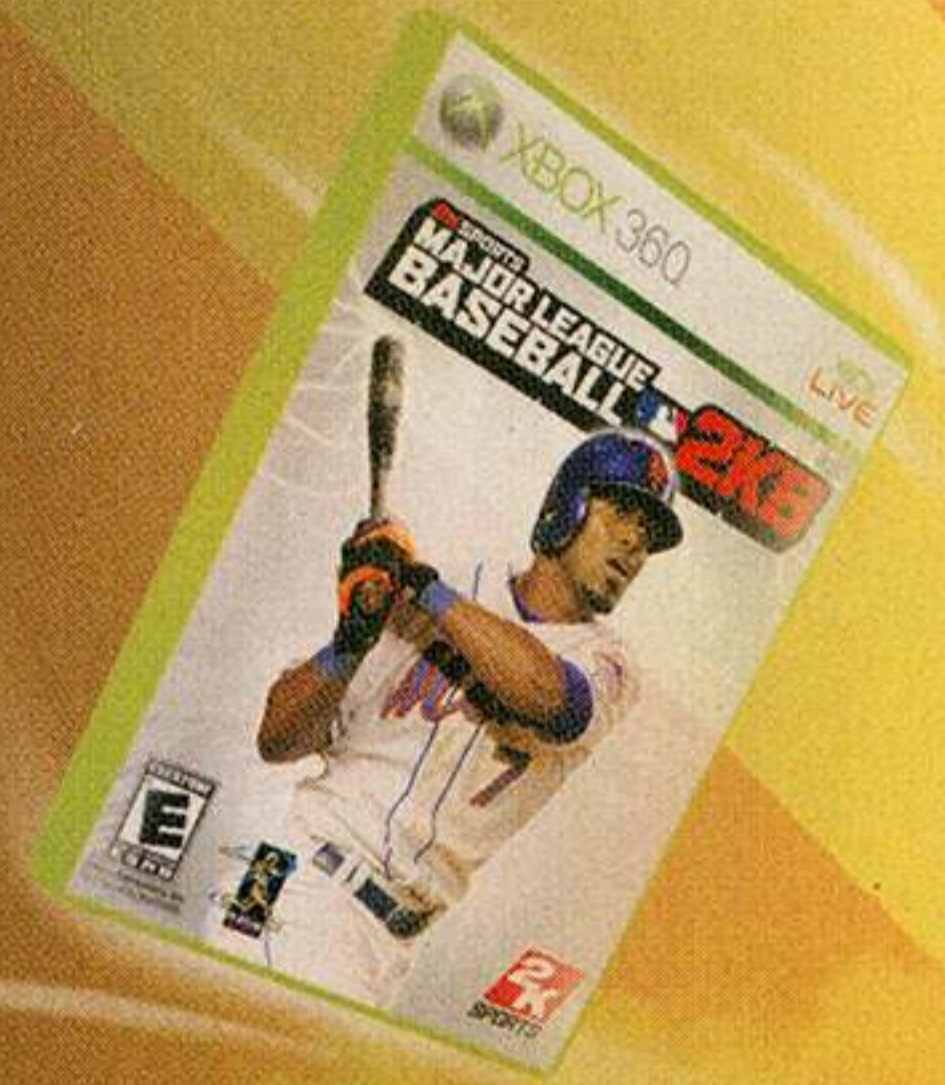


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PLAYSTATION 3

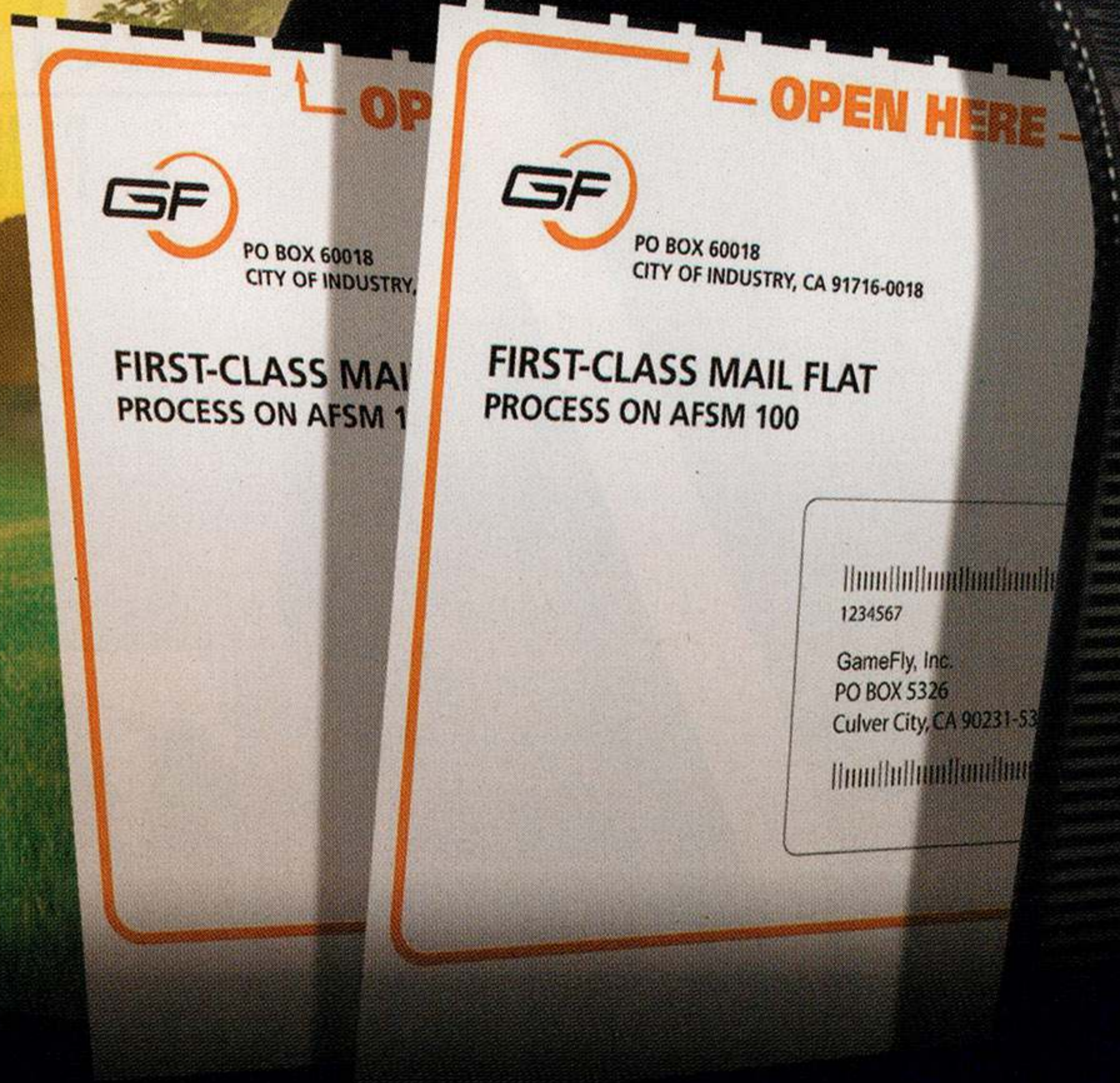
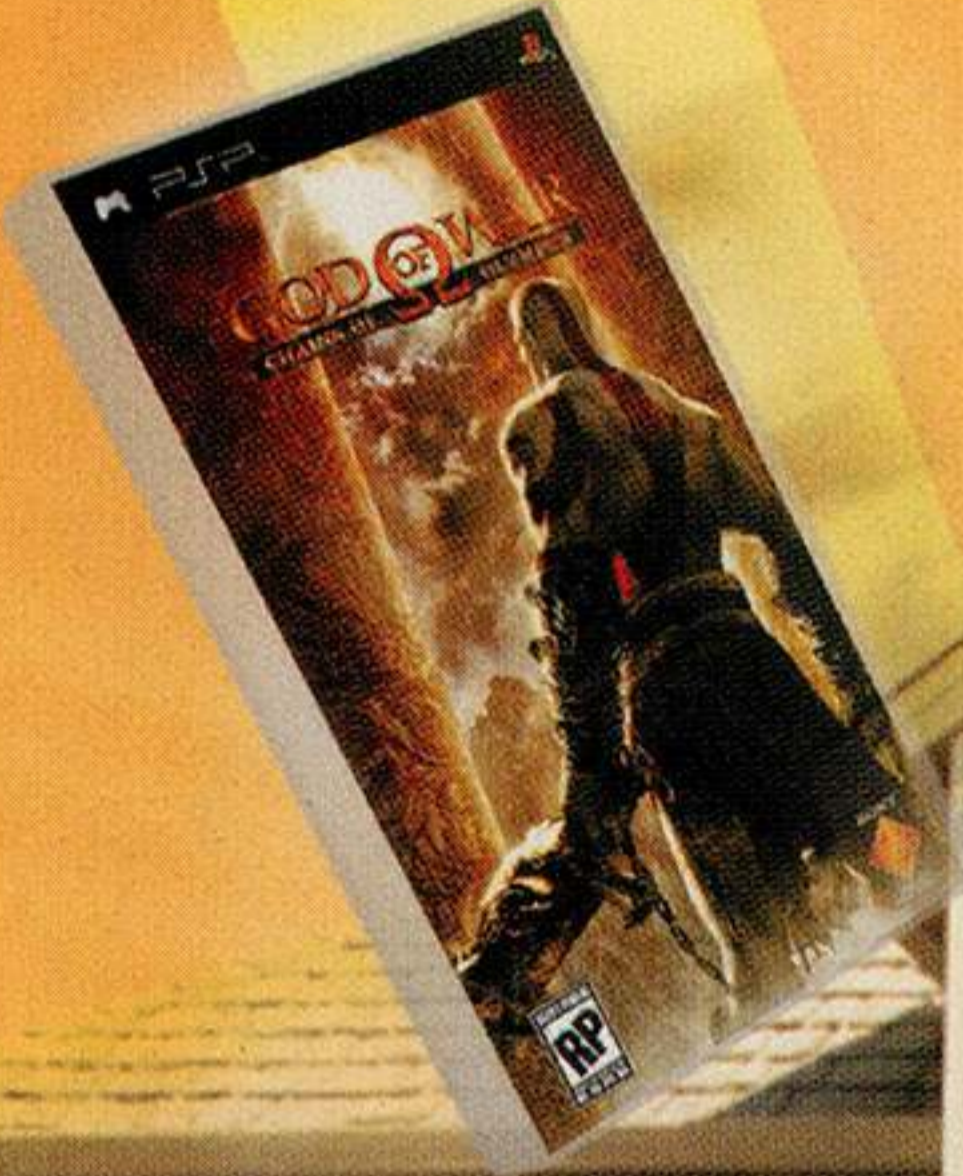
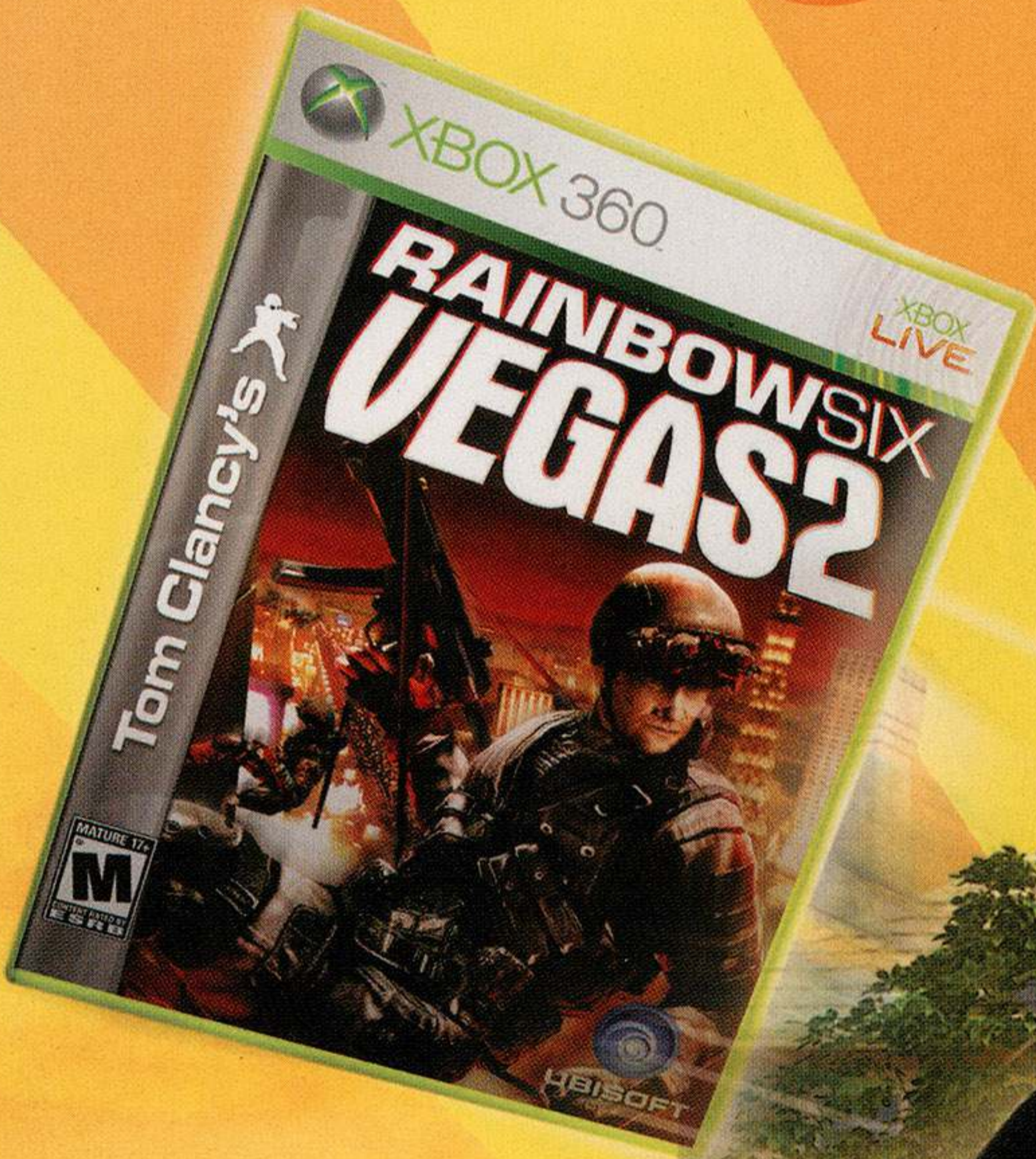
PlayStation 2

PSP  
PlayStation Portable

XBOX 360



# GF GAMEFLY®







THE STORY  
CONTINUES WHERE  
IT ALL BEGAN...

# CRISIS CORE

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## FINAL FANTASY VII

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SQUARE ENIX



# SPAWN POINT

GAMES. GOSSIP. GEAR.

## INSIDE SPAWN POINT

Highlander . . . Page 20  
David Jaffe . . . Page 23  
The Bourne Conspiracy . . . Page 26  
Ghostbusters . . . Page 28

## Wii Fit: Exergaming the World

Wii Fit, in conjunction with the Wii Balance Board peripheral, is a "way to help get families exercising together," says Nintendo's lead game designer Shigeru Miyamoto.

# Wii Fit™

### HOW TO STAY BALANCED

The Wii Balance Board is shaped like any other household body scale and will ship with Wii Fit as the primary peripheral used to play the game. The board contains multiple pressure sensors used to measure the player's center of gravity and Body Mass Index (BMI). Since, the Wii Balance Board is the primary controller used to play the many exergaming activities in Wii Fit, let's take a look at a few examples.

### AEROBIC EXERCISE

The 40 plus activities in Wii Fit are split into four different categories. The first of which is Aerobic Exercise. Real aerobic exercise is defined by any activity that keeps your heart rate up for more than 20 minutes. The Wii Fit Step Aerobics activity is the perfect example of this. Players must step on and off the Wii Balance Board in rhythm to the background music.

### MUSCLE CONDITIONING

The Wii Balance Board is far too light to use as a free weight. But activities such as Push-ups that keep the Wii Balance Board flat on the ground are perfect muscle conditioning exercises. The virtual trainer will tell you when to go up or down, and the sensors in the Balance Board will keep your pushup form balanced and ergonomically correct.

### YOGA POSES

Proper form and balance are crucial components to safely and effectively get the most out of a yoga session. Wii Fit features a virtual yoga instructor to guide you through the many different poses ranging in difficulty from beginner to expert. There's also a cheesy, yet relaxing meditation activity where players sit down cross-legged in front of a burning flame to ease the mind.

### BALANCE GAMES

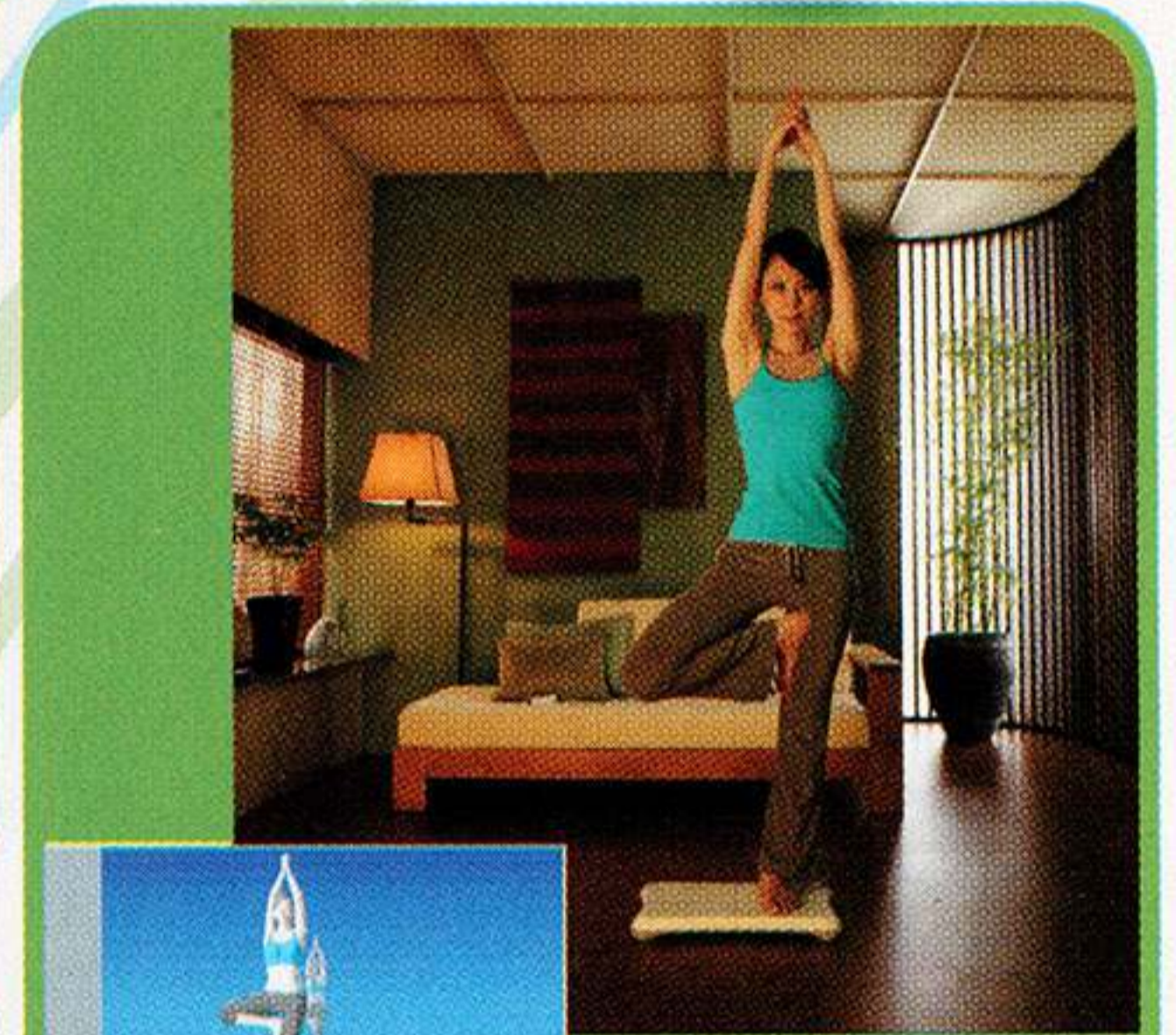
The balance games included in Wii Fit promise to be the most entertaining activities, which play more like Wii Play mini-games rather than fitness exercises. For example, play as a goalie in Wii Fit Soccer and use the Balance Board to head-butt oncoming soccer balls or dodge dangerous cleats.



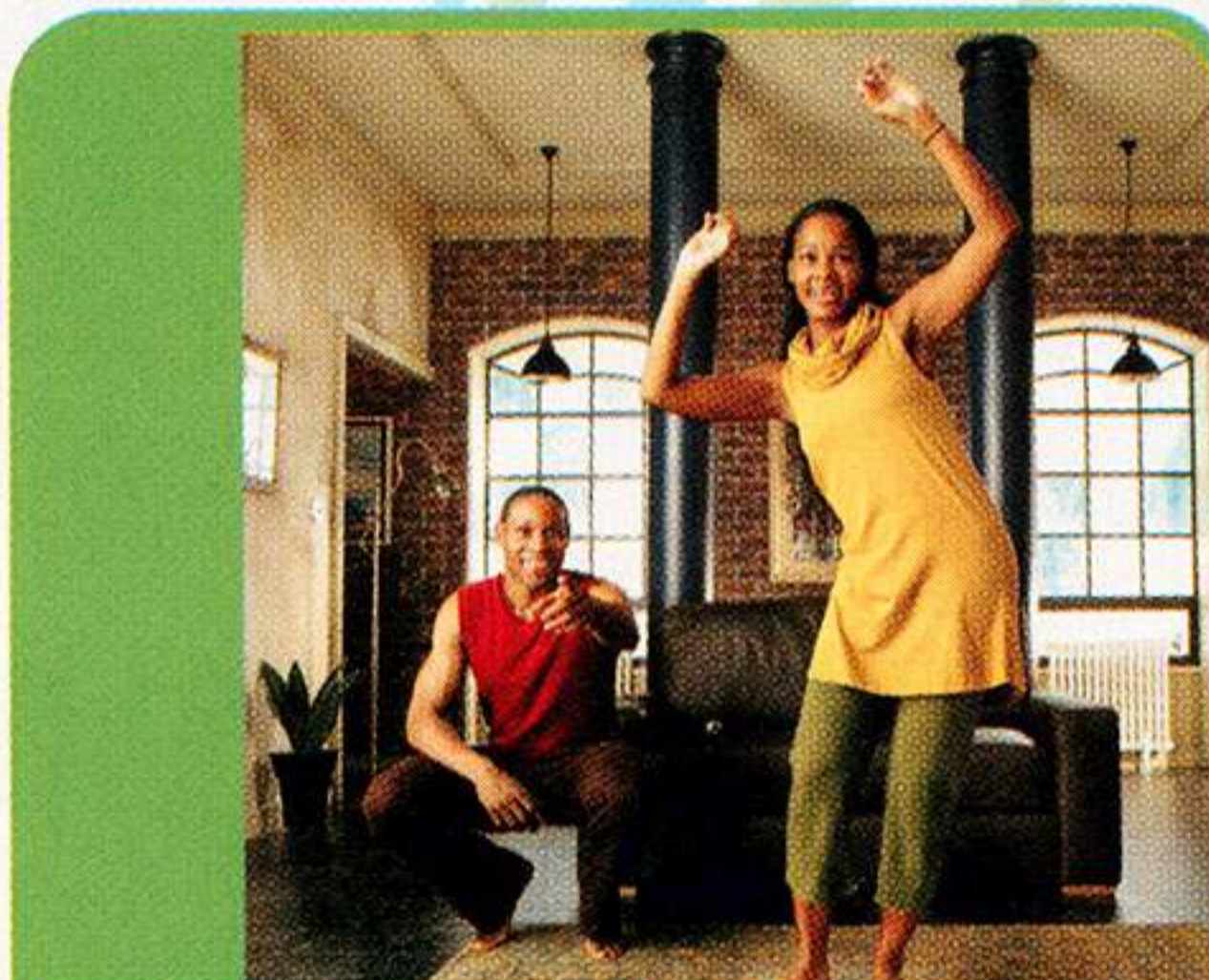
The wireless Wii Balance Board can support up to 300 pounds.



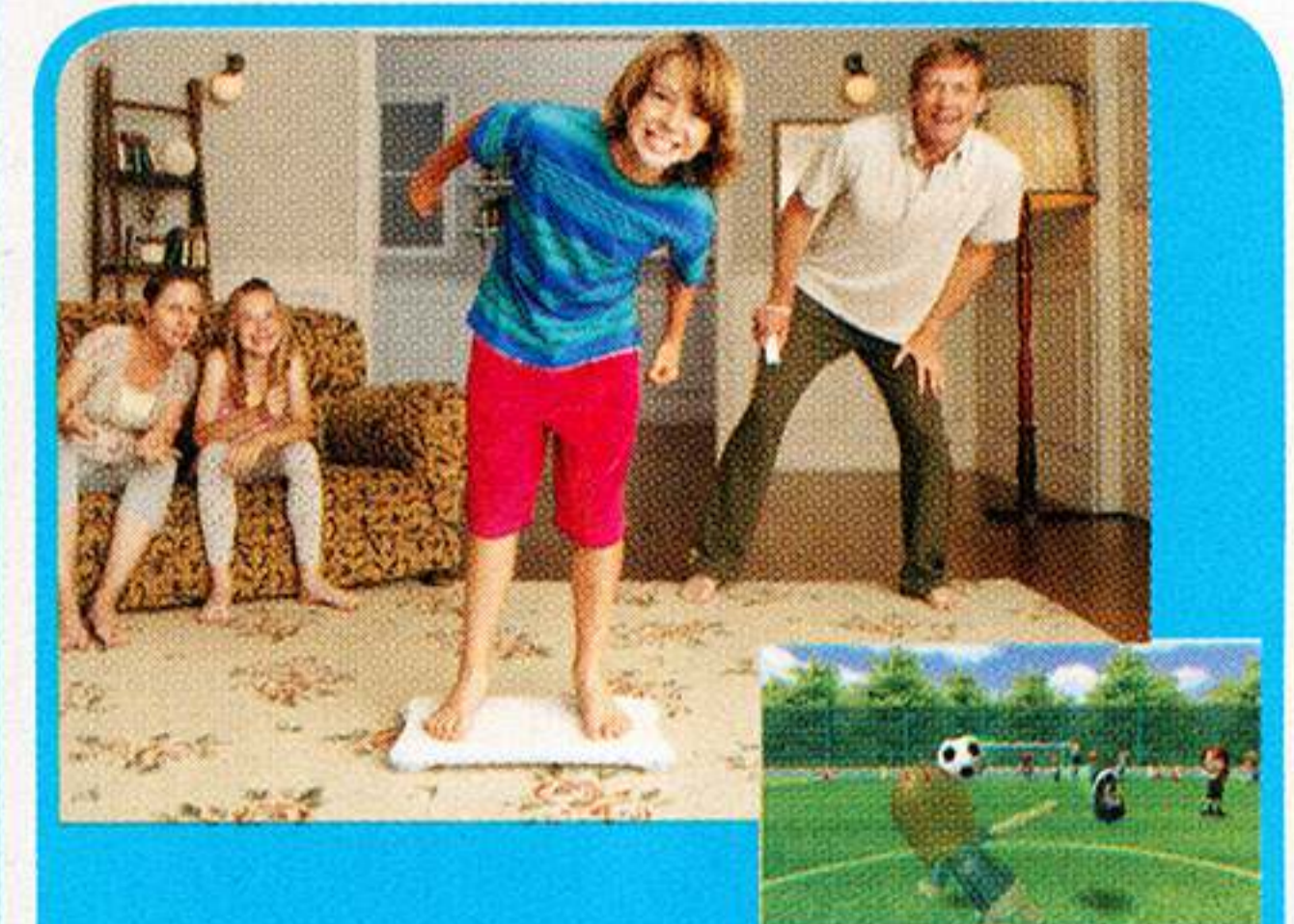
Use the Wii Balance Board to count the number of pushups you do.



Cute yoga model not included.



The Hula Hoop activity is sure to get the heart pumping.



In Wii Fit Soccer, use the Balance Board to sway left and right.



The epic story of immortality and decapitation comes to life on the PS3, Xbox 360, and PC in May.

# HIGH



A character in a dark, futuristic outfit is shown in a dynamic pose, holding a glowing sword. The background is a construction site with scaffolding and a building labeled "NS 1204 S CONSTRUCTION". The scene is lit with dramatic, low-key lighting, emphasizing the character and the glowing sword.

# HIGHLANDER

## HISTORY

The life of an Immortal Highlander is full of peril and mystery. In the end there can only be one Immortal where death comes only by beheading. This particular story is set aside from *Highlander* the movie and *Highlander* the television series, which became popular in the late 1980s and mid-1990s, and follows the long life of Owen MacLeod over 2000 years of ancient history all the way up to a near-future New York.

An enigmatic and powerful figure (another Immortal perhaps?) has unleashed chaos on the Big Apple and is determined to draw Owen into a fight to the death. MacLeod's only chance at survival is to locate three fragments of a mysterious artifact that grants ultimate power to the Immortal who possesses it. Sensing the necessity of the ancient stone, Owen must travel through time to revisit first century Pompeii, to the ninth century Highlands of Scotland, to 14th century Feudal Japan.

## IMMORTAL

## COMBAT

*Highlander* the game uses a third-person action scheme similar to *God of War*. It exploits the immortality of Owen MacLeod to perform moves that would kill a mortal man. For example, impale yourself with enemy weapons, use your immortal body as a conduit for electricity and fire, and walk away unharmed from deadly falls of tremendous heights. Players will master the art of the blade utilizing skills and techniques learned throughout the centuries to defeat other Immortals and absorb their power. Remember, the only way to kill an Immortal is by beheading. So weapons with a sharp edge, such as the claymore broadsword, Japanese katana, and Roman gladius, are an Immortals' best friend, but also his deadliest enemy.

# HIGHLANDER

■ Developer: Widescreen Games ■ Publisher: Eidos Interactive



GAMEPRO  
FORTUNE TELLER

ROUND IV...  
FIGHT!



Polygonus is a bit of a pugilist. Presented below are the year's two biggest fighters, and the all-knowing fight fan's predictions. Let's get ready to prognosticate!



SOULCALIBUR IV

Release Date: Spring 2008 // PS3, Xbox 360

Namco's flagship fighter returns this year, with its first true next-gen iteration. While the majority of coverage thrown at this game of late has dealt with the addition of *Star Wars* characters, it takes more than a pair of Jedi to impress the all-powerful Polygonus. Sure, the graphics have made the appropriate leaps and bounds, but the gameplay hasn't evolved much since the series started. Coming off the awful Wii-exclusive *Soulcalibur Legends*, Namco's got a lot to prove this round. Polygonus hopes the soul still burns.

**VERDICT:** The series may have plenty of acclaim, but Polygonus sees problems ahead for *Soulcalibur IV*. Separating the *Star Wars* fanbase is already a bad move, and in the rough and tumble fighting game market, the first wrong move can be your last.

**CARD:** The Gambler



STREET FIGHTER IV

Release Date: 2009 // Platforms TBD

It may still be a ways from completion, but Polygonus is intrigued by *Street Fighter IV*'s progress. The game has updated the visuals while keeping the gameplay strictly 2D, which is Capcom's strongest suit. Moving away from the complex combo-blocking-parry system, SFIV's fighting system caters equally to the hardcore fighting game aficionado and the frat boy that played *Street Fighter II* at the student union. Personally, Polygonus could wipe the floor with players of any ilk—he is a psychic after all—but Capcom's prized fighter looks to be in top shape.

**VERDICT:** Polygonus is pleased with this title. Its pedigree promises plenty of potential. Prediction? Pleased players.

**CARD:** The Masterpiece



SUCKS OR RULES

Changing the world, one insult at a time

SUCKS

**Wii Scalping.** Enduring ridiculous forced bundles for the privilege of giving a store your money is bad enough, but the Slackers chain was caught putting its stock of the shortage-plagued console on eBay at drastically inflated prices. Lame to the extreme. **SUCKS**

**Xbox Live.** Forcing non-paying Silver members to wait for content like demos and videos doesn't add sparkle to the \$50/year Gold subscription, it just makes Microsoft look greedy, especially as the free Wii and PlayStation 3 online offerings continue to improve. **SUCKS**

**Duke Nukem Forever.** The first trailer in more than six years is but an anachronistic punch line to a franchise stalled in over a decade of development hell. We'd love nothing better than for this game to rock, but such cheesy trash doesn't instill much confidence. **SUCKS**

RULES

**PlayStation 3.** The v2.1 update didn't just add support for enhanced menus via Blu-ray Disc Profile 1.1, it also adds support for DivX and Windows Media Video, bringing the concave box one step closer to being a true living room media center. **RULES**

**Metallica.** The metal monster is in talks to debut a single off their new album as a playable song in MTV Games' popular *Rock Band* game. Here's hoping it can hold a candle to classics from *...And Justice For All*. **RULES**

**Unreal Tournament III.** The inability to download goodies from the web with a browser is a bit baffling, and you'll need a PC to design any content of your own, but playing full-blown mods without paying out the nose for map packs is awesome. **RULES**

What's **your** opinion?  
Vote for yourself on [SucksorRules.com](http://SucksorRules.com)



GAMES TO DIE FOR

Our current obsessions



#1 SUPER MARIO GALAXY (Wii)

Nintendo's plumber might be long in the tooth, but he's lost none of his nerve in this inventive and incredibly fun voyage to the stars.



#2 ROCK BAND (PS3, XBOX 360, PS2)

Leave it to the original developers of *Guitar Hero* to make pretending to play classic tunes fun again. The steep entry cost is worth every penny.

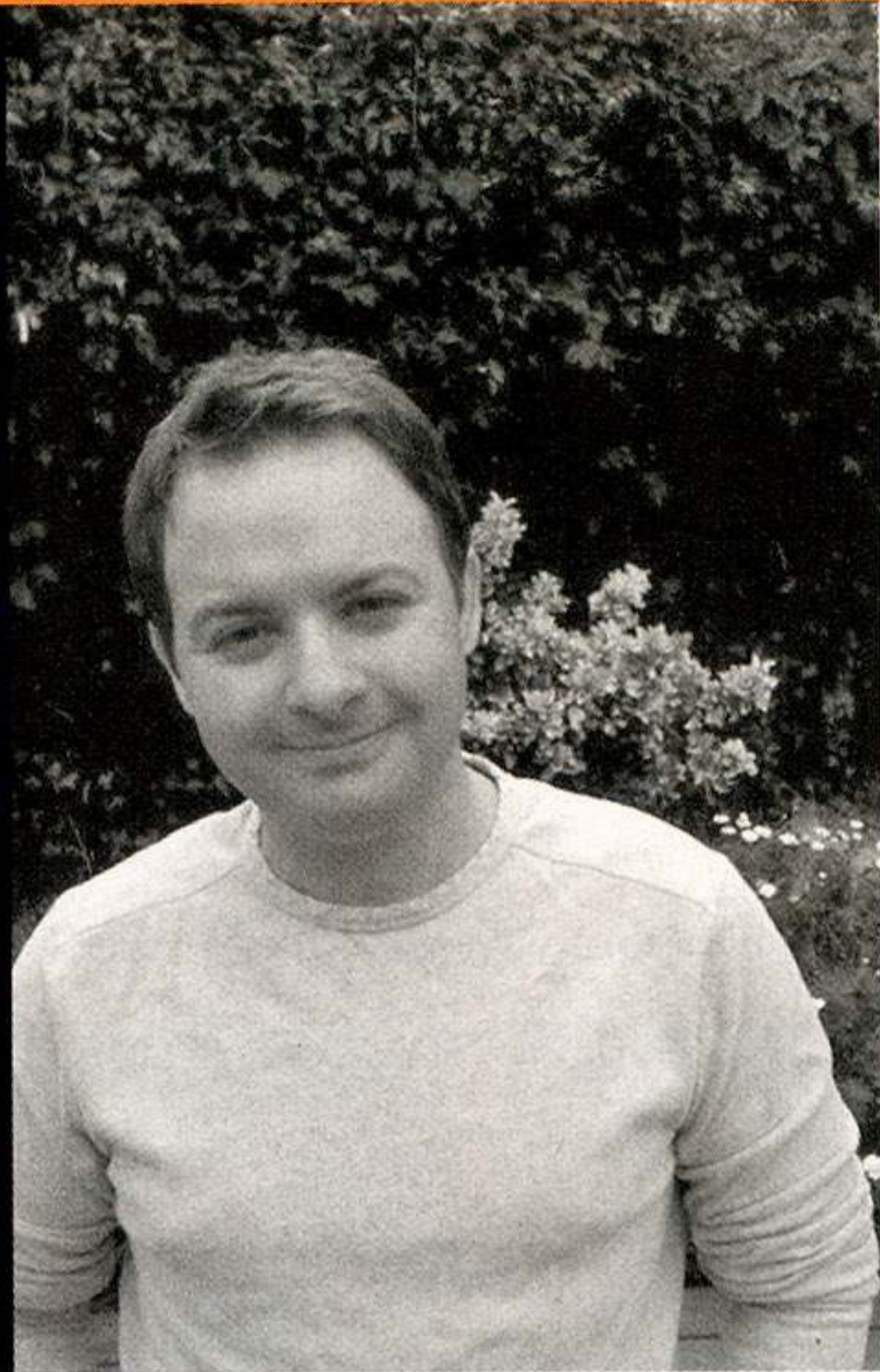


#3 CRYISIS (PC)

The mind-blowing graphics will certainly strain your rig, but *Crysis*' ridiculously detailed and open science-fiction world is thrilling and memorable.



# David Jaffe Opens Up



*GamePro* speaks with Eat Sleep Play co-founder David Jaffe about Twisted Metal and future PS3 plans.

**GamePro:** David, you've said before that you're more interested in smaller, more casual games as opposed to big-budget epics.

**David Jaffe:** Yeah, for our next [unannounced] game we'll branch out significantly compared to Calling All Cars. We're never going to be making God of War-sized games. When we started Eat Sleep Play, we wanted to swim in the waters between small PSN-sized titles and games as big as Twisted Metal: Black. For our next title, you'll see us hanging out on the larger end of that spectrum.



## TWISTED MINUTE UPDATE: TWISTED METAL PS3 CONFIRMED

Shortly after we interviewed David Jaffe, Twisted Metal fans deciphered the riddle hidden in Head-On: Extra Twisted Edition for PS2, revealing that Twisted Metal would in fact be coming to PS3.

Sharp-eyed Extra Twisted Edition players discovered the in-game code that reads: "METAL IS COMING ON PSTHREE." Shortly after the announcement hit the web, Jaffe confirmed the news but had no comment on whether the game would be on Blu-ray or a PSN download.

**GP:** Would Eat Sleep Play ever develop, say, an online-only shooter? Is that a small enough project to fit into your "smaller is better" design approach?

**DJ:** If someone came to us and asked for a game like [online PS3 shooter] Warhawk, that would be towards the far end of our reach. But it's something we'd be comfortable with.

**GP:** Why make Twisted Metal: Head On: Extra Twisted Edition for the PS2 opposed to the PS3?

**DJ:** We have PS3 development kits, and we're actively working on a PS3 game right now. The PS3 is where our studio's future lies. But there were a couple of reasons [we made the new Twisted Metal for PS2]. Sony asked us for it, and there are over 100 million people with PS2s. It brings in a little money to get us on our feet without having to immediately jump into a two-year project...which our new game is going to be.

**GP:** What's up with your next game, after Twisted Metal? Care to drop a hint?

**DJ:** Our next game is absolutely revealed in Twisted Metal Head On: Extra Twisted Edition if you have a sharp eye. And just because it's hidden in Twisted Metal doesn't mean it has anything to do with Twisted Metal. That's why it's so well hidden, possibly. It's a really cryptic riddle we put in there.



# THE BIG 5

We sound off...



## 1 PC PIRACY LEVELS ARE THROUGH THE ROOF

According to Infinity Ward's community manager, an "astounding" number of PC players enjoying Call of Duty 4 online are "playing on stolen copies of the game."

**THE VERDICT:** PC games sales have decreased in recent years, partly due to rampant piracy. Not a good time to be a PC game fan...

## 2 ACTIVISION AND VIVENDI GAMES MERGE

The \$18.9 billion deal will create a new corporate entity, Activision Blizzard, which will be the largest game maker in the world.

**THE VERDICT:** Electronic Arts has been coasting on perennial sports release profits for too long; maybe losing the throne will put their feet to the fire in 2008.

## 3 MTV GAMES AND ACTIVISION BUTT HEADS

MTV Games went into a public snit after Activision obstructed the release of an update enabling the use of Guitar Hero III controllers in Rock Band.

**THE VERDICT:** Activision blocked the patch for the same reason MTV Games developed it: money. Is anyone really surprised?

## 4 NEW BLIZZARD MMO IN DEVELOPMENT

Nope, it's not just an expansion pack: Blizzard's confirmed that they're hard at work on a new "next-gen MMO."

**THE VERDICT:** Only the creators of World of Warcraft could excite so many with so little actual information. World of Diablo? We can only hope.

## 5 XBOX LIVE TAKES A HOLIDAY DIVE

Like a relative after too much eggnog, Microsoft's online service was unstable and unreliable over the Christmas holiday, presumably due to an influx of new players.

**THE VERDICT:** The good news is, affected players got a free copy of Undertow. Well played, Microsoft.



# NINJA GAIDEN II: DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT CONFIRMED?

Tomonobu Itagaki, head samurai at Team Ninja, talks passionately about dismembered characters, exclusive weapons, and downloadable content in *Ninja Gaiden II*.

**GamePro:** We noticed Ryu has blades on his shoes when equipped with claws. Are there any other weapons that will affix to his feet?



**Tomonobu Itagaki:** No. That's really a unique feature exclusive to that weapon. Of course, other weapons will have kick moves as a part of the repertoire, but none with weapons mounted there.

**GP:** Could you provide some detail on the A.I. of the dismembered characters? How many limbs can an enemy character fight with?

**TI:** They can basically keep fighting until they're in pieces. Even a one-armed enemy can still fight.

**GP:** Besides the dismemberment, what other gameplay features in *Ninja Gaiden II* were not possible on the original Xbox?

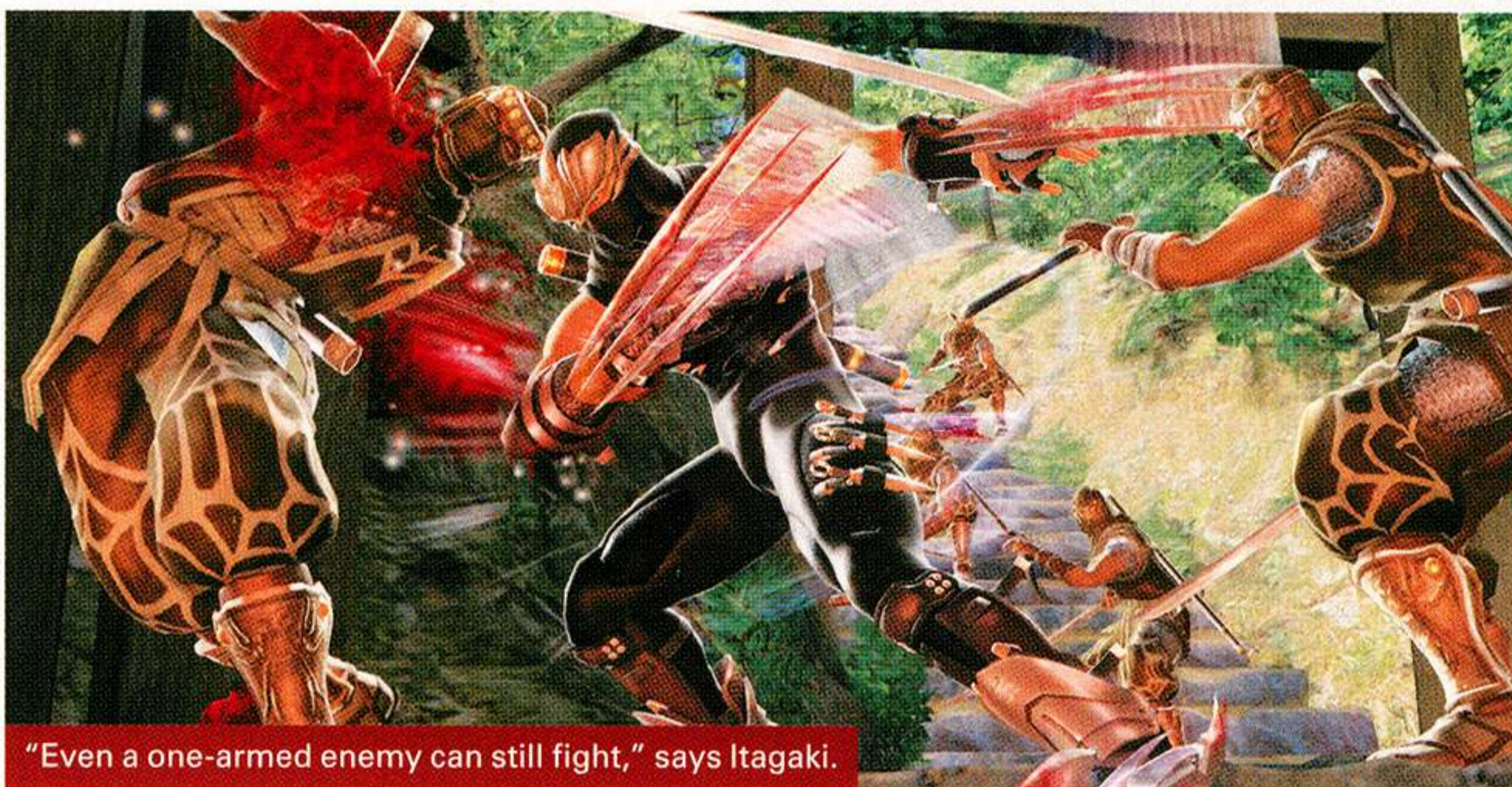
**TI:** There are a lot of things. The tutorial, especially, we wouldn't have been able to do in the first game. We could have had a very rigid, traditional, text-based tutorial, but we couldn't have something that was integrated into the game world as much as this one. It's a tutorial, but you still feel like a bad-ass ninja. Also, the Ninpo magic attacks are much more improved and beautiful. When Ryu throws the fireball, the enemies literally burst into flames.

**GP:** How will *Ninja Gaiden II* improve upon the original's online components?

**TI:** We're definitely thinking of downloadable content. In the past, when I've said I've been thinking about something, there's been times when I didn't follow through. This time, you can rest assured that I will.

**GP:** *Soulcalibur IV* will feature Yoda and Darth Vader as playable characters. What are your thoughts on that? Do you think it's a cash-in?

**TI:** As far as the announcement, I say that people are going to have to be careful not to be eaten up by the *Star Wars* characters [laughs]. On a more serious note, I've heard that each of the *Star Wars* characters will be exclusive to one of the platforms. Speaking as a producer, I don't agree with that approach. I think it's a disservice to the gamers. This is basically like saying "You have to buy both to get everything." They should either have the same content on both or just focus on a single platform.



## Versus Mode

Two classic characters, one classic brawl.



VS

**Optimus Prime**  
(Transformers: The Game)

- True Nature:** 28 foot tall bipedal robot from Cybertron
- Career:** Commander of the Autobots
- Transport:** Peterbilt 379 truck cab form
- Weapons:** Energy rifle and forearm blade
- Weakness:** Bound by a code of honor

**Sweet Tooth**  
(Twisted Metal Series)

- Fire-obsessed human clown named Needles Kane
- Serial killer and purveyor of toxic ice creams
- Warbling ice cream truck
- Napalm cones and homing missiles
- Completely and irrevocably insane

**OUTCOME:**

Mini-Con attachments are out of the question for a one-on-one showdown, so Optimus Prime's metallic sheen takes an early pounding from Sweet Tooth's missiles and napalm, but hubris and unbridled insanity lead Needles Kane to aim straight for the behemoth's thundering truck form. Unfortunately for him, a creaky old van belting out tinny ragtime tunes is no match for Prime's

sheer mass, and the inevitable fiery collision leaves the notorious killer's pancaked debris resembling a particularly nasty can of rancid sardines.

**DECISION:** Optimus Prime >







These four top hats are all the same height, but the length of the brim is different. In other words, the hats are equally tall but vary in width.

One of these four hats has a brim and height that are the same length. Which hat is it?

NINTENDO DS™

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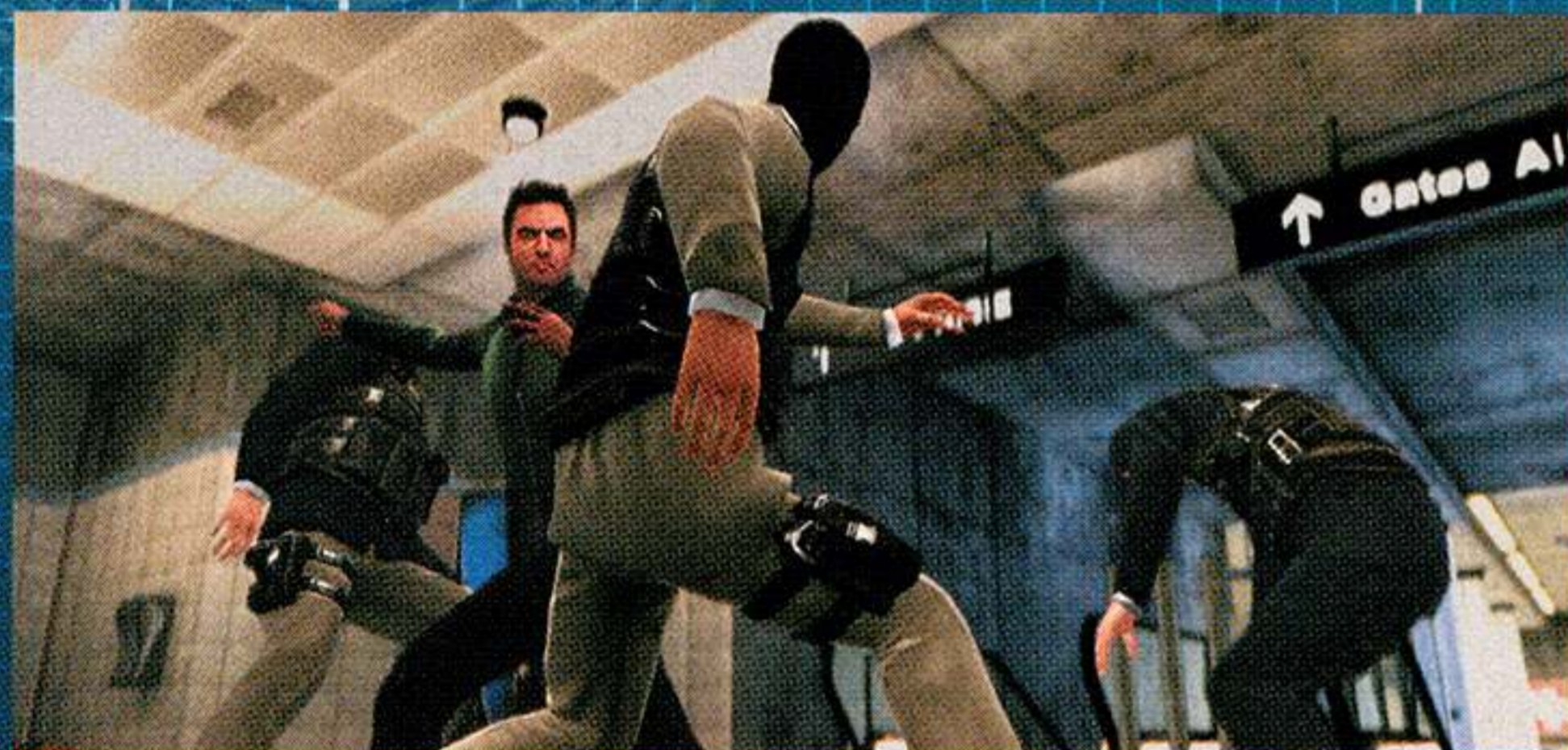
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# THE BOURNE CONSPIRACY

## Up Close and Personal

Movie licensed video games are well known for their craptastic appeal and low review scores, but Robert Ludlum's *The Bourne Conspiracy* is a different breed entirely.



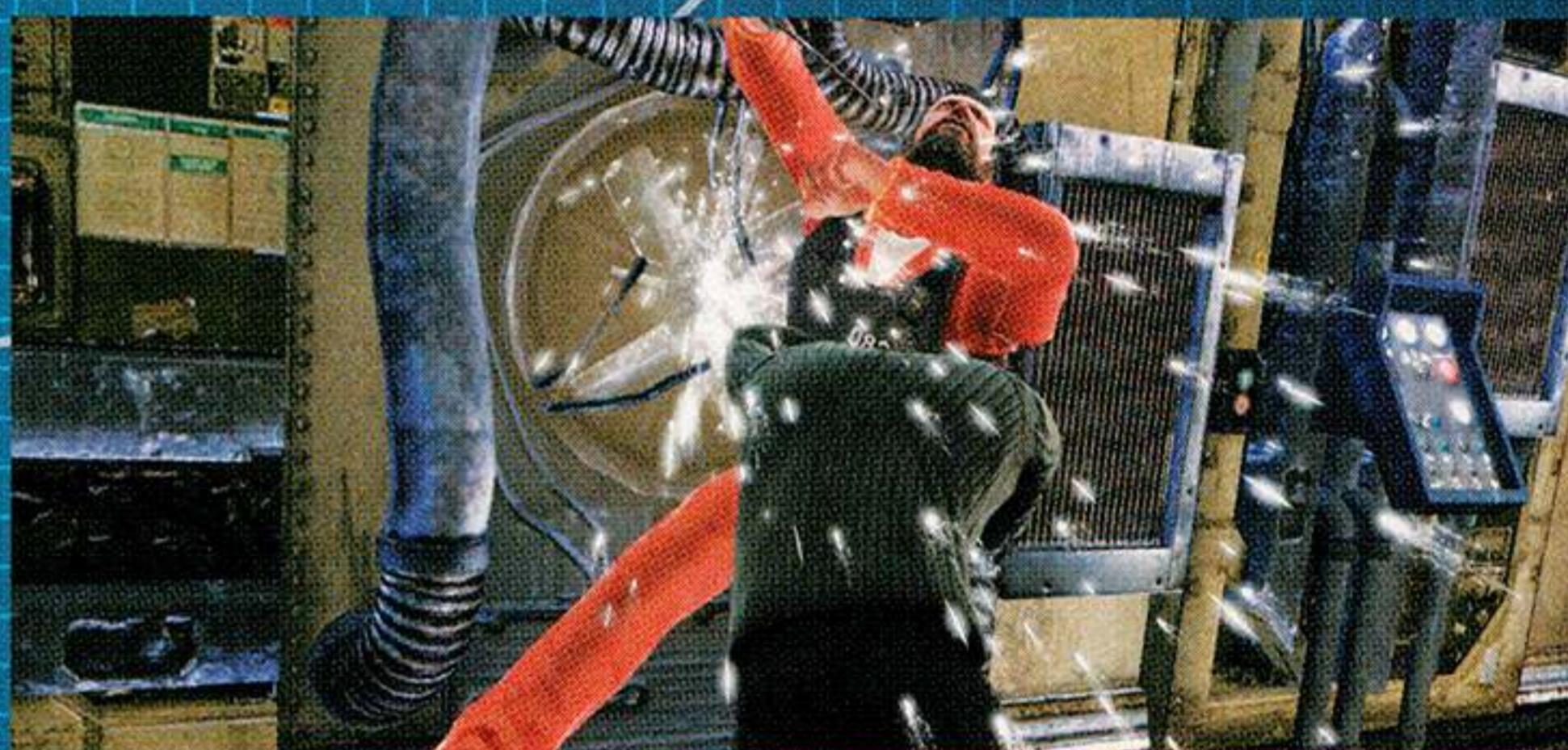
Takedowns can be performed on up to three targets at once. All it takes is a little proximity.



If you've played *Gears of War* you'll feel right at home with *Bourne's* shooting controls. Jason can take cover, aim down sights, and even perform precision takedowns with a gun.



When engaged in hand-to-hand combat, Jason can perform combos of light and heavy attacks with the X and Y buttons. Don't forget to block!



*Bourne's* innate fighting instinct allows him to use nearly any object in the environment in conjunction with a takedown to deal extra damage.



String together attacks to fill Jason's adrenaline meter, and then tap B to unleash a special takedown move.



# ALL FATE BREAKS LOOSE.



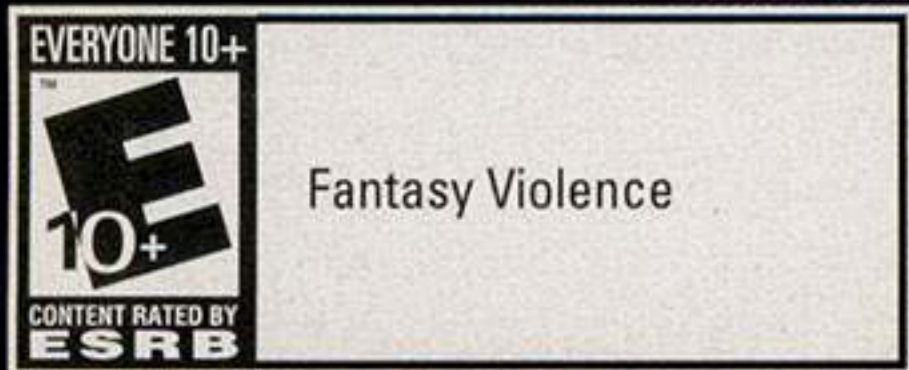
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**MARCH 2008**



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LOOK AT THIS:

# GHOSTBUSTERS

## THE VIDEO GAME

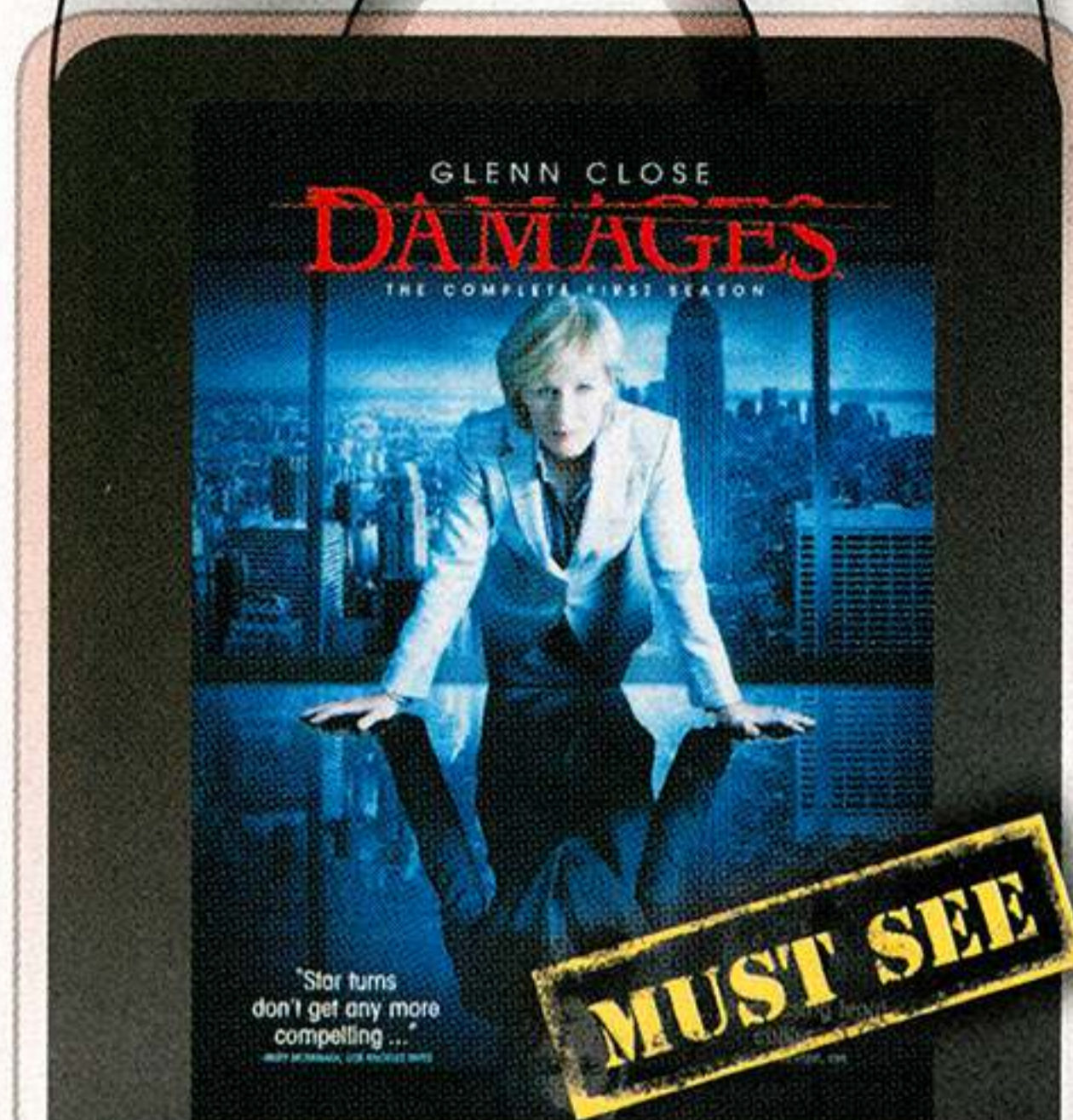
Penned by original screenwriters Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis, Ghostbusters features an original story, the return of Slimer, and all new ecto-plasmic entities.



It's been two years since the Ghostbusters thwarted Vigo, the baby-snatching pig head from *Ghostbusters II*, the movie. Business is booming again, so much in fact it's time for the Ghostbusters to start franchising. And guess what? You play as the first new-hire that gets to "test out" all the experimental equipment. The screenshot above showcases the memorable gut-busting ghost Slimer evading the proton wrangling beam, which once locked on to a ghost, is used to wrestle it into a trap. Ghostbusters: The Video Game utilizes developer Terminal Reality's luscious proprietary engine that features better special effects than the movies, realistic physics, and destructible environments. Look for more Ghostbusters screenshots and news on GamePro.com.

DVD PRO

Movies for gamers.



### DAMAGES: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

A potent journey down a rabbit hole of high stakes litigation, where nothing is sacred, everything is permitted, and morality is weakness. Glenn Close won a Golden Globe Award for her ruthless performance. Also on Blu-ray. [damagstv.com](http://damagstv.com) • \$49.95

### MIDNIGHT EXPRESS: 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

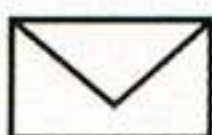
Don't let the age (1978) of this terrifying movie of a young man's incarceration in a Turkish prison prevent you from seeing a genuine classic. An Academy Award winner for adapted screenplay (Oliver Stone) and music score (Giorgio Moroder). [sonypictures.com](http://sonypictures.com) • \$19.94



...nds... Borderlands... Borderlands... • I was shocked (and pleased) to see GamePro.com readers vote *Call of Duty 4* as their Game of the Year. Even more surprising is that GamePro readers also named *Call of Duty 4* as Online Shooter of the Year over early favorite *Halo 3*! Check out the full list at GamePro.com... • Now that HD DVD lost the next-gen disc war, Blu-ray is free to dominate the market... what market there is, at least. But Blu-ray's victory is sure to transfer heat to the PS3. I know several non-gamers who bought a PS3 right after Christmas just for Blu-ray movies. Wouldn't it be funny if the PS3 came from behind to eclipse the Xbox 360 in 2008? Guess we'll find out soon... • Speaking of Blu-ray, new PS3 owners should pick up the *Planet Earth* series immediately. It's a nature documentary that looks simply stunning in 1080p, and it'll erase any lingering doubts you have about the superiority of high-def... • Regular STATIC readers will remember hearing me gush about *Left 4 Dead*, a slick zombie shooter developed by some of the talent behind *Counter-strike*. Well, my raves must have convinced Valve, because they've gone and bought out *Left 4 Dead* developer Turtle Rock and pushed the game to a summer 2008 release. Zombies are a hot item in pop culture right now, and Valve must smell blood... • If you've got a Netflix account and a brain, check out the Showtime series *Dexter*. It's about a serial killer who stalks other serial killers, and it's the most addictive new show I've seen since *Heroes*... • After extensive testing, I can confirm that the PSP extended battery kicks much ass. It's slightly thicker, and bit pricey at \$45, but it's a godsend for battery life. Most games will run for a beefy 10 hours, but others (*Puzzle Quest*, *Beats*) run for far longer. If you've got any PSP, particularly the slim PSP-2000, consider this a must-buy... • Note to Sony: Can we please get an auto-off function for the PS3 controllers? Anyone? Bueller?... • If you ask me, the \$279 Xbox 360 Arcade is the best deal going in gaming right now. Sure, it's missing the hard drive, but you get a 256MB memory card and HDMI support. You can always add a hard drive later, too, especially once Microsoft inevitably drops their ludicrous prices... • Poll time: Will *Grand Theft Auto IV* live up to its illustrious predecessors? I'm a bit conflicted, myself, but I want to hear from you, too. Drop me your two cents at [sid\\_shuman@gamepro.com](mailto:sid_shuman@gamepro.com)... • Prototype... Prototype... Proto...



Pwned this month: *Left 4 Dead*, HD DVD, Sixaxis (again).



e-mail Sid: [sid\\_shuman@gamepro.com](mailto:sid_shuman@gamepro.com)

## GF MOST WANTED

The GameFly Weekly Top 10 is the leading source of online video game rental data—and the only top 10 list that features what gamers actually want to play.

1. Turok	(Touchstone Home Entertainment)	Xbox 360
2. Devil May Cry 4	(Capcom)	Xbox 360
3. Lost Odyssey	(Microsoft)	Xbox 360
4. Burnout Paradise	(EA Games)	Xbox 360
5. Conflict: Denied Ops	(Eidos Interactive)	Xbox 360
6. Turok	(Touchstone Home Entertainment)	PS3
7. The Club	(Sega)	Xbox 360
8. Devil May Cry 4	(Capcom)	PS3
9. Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Vegas 2	(Ubisoft)	Xbox 360
10. Super Smash Bros. Brawl	(Nintendo)	Wii



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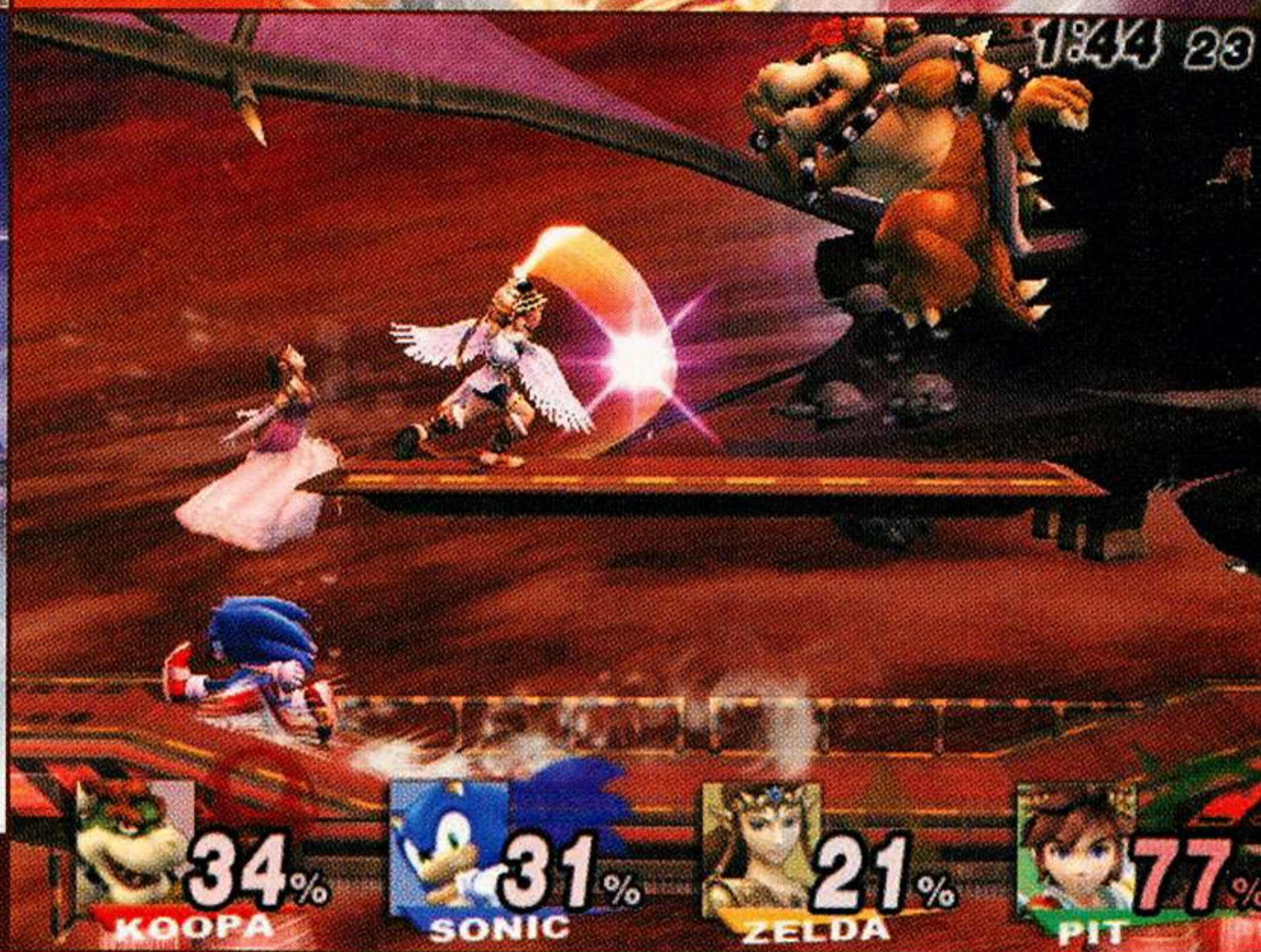
Schick  
**QUATTRO**  
DISPOSABLE







The Ice Climbers's final smash summons a slippery glacier that splits the map in half and sends brawlers sliding to an icy doom.



## SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL

This is it: The final Super Smash Bros. Brawl preview before the game's release in March...and we've got our lucky paws on an early copy.

Wii

■ Developer and Publisher: Nintendo ■ Release Date: March

**S**o what's it like to play Smash Bros. Brawl for the Wii? We haven't had this much fun with a four-player mash up since Mario and company's soccer outing in Super Mario Strikers. SSBB is nearly flawless and features a suite of new characters, a stage creator, and for the first time, online play.

### PRIMER TIME

Like its predecessors, Super Smash Bros. Brawl is a mascot beat-em-up fighting game starring nearly every first- and second-party Nintendo character you can think of as playable characters. And for the first time in Smash Bros. history, two major third-party characters join the lineup—Sonic the Hedgehog and Solid Snake. That puts the total roster count at 35 playable characters.

Smash Bros. is a unique fighting game series well known for its original battle system. Unlike traditional fighting games, such as Soul Calibur and Tekken, dealing damage in SSBB doesn't

guarantee a victory; instead, combatants focus on knocking opposing players beyond the stage's boundaries for a knockout. Attacks inflict damage that raises an opponent's damage meter. The higher the damage meter, the higher percent chance that player will go flying off the stage when smashed.

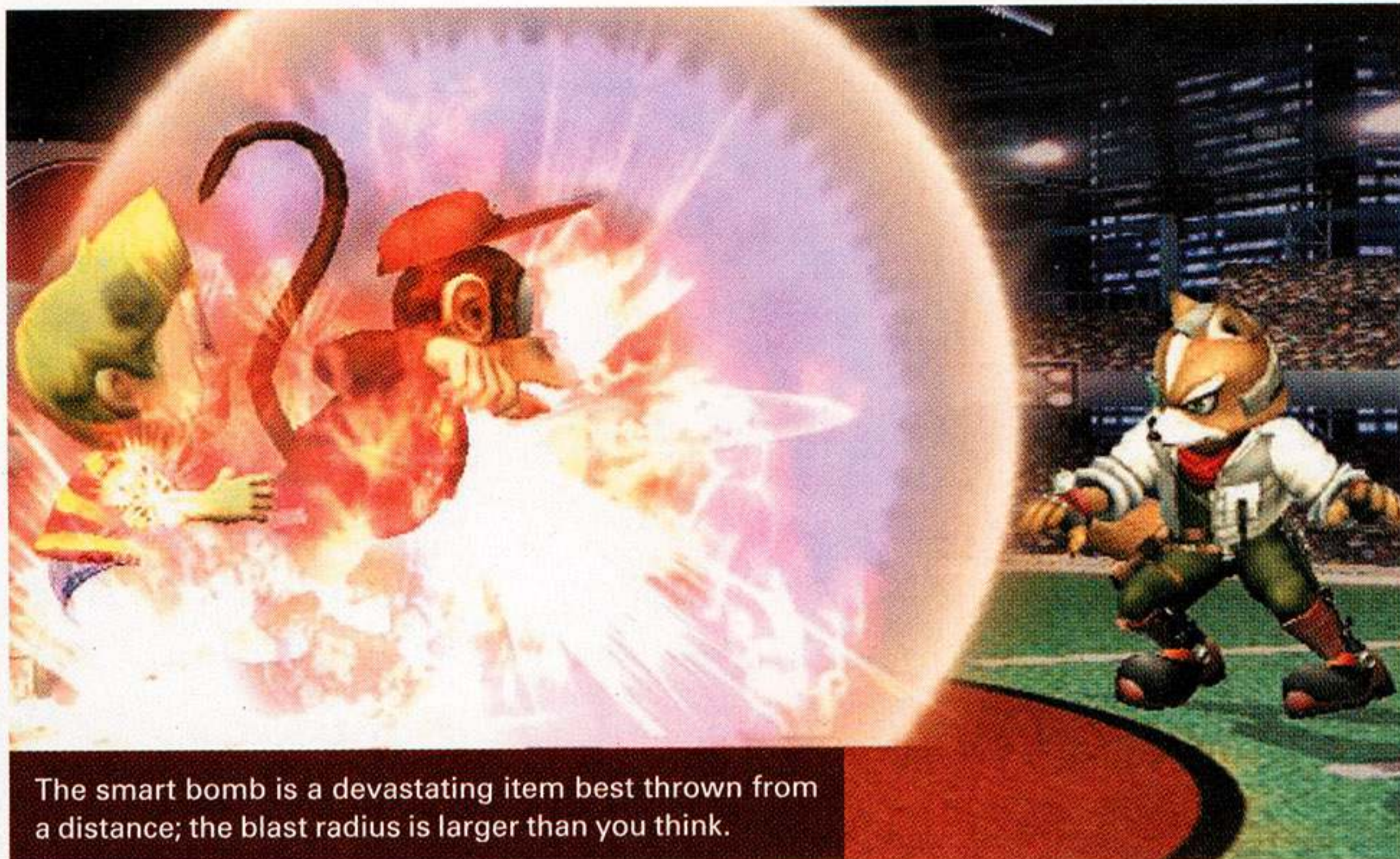
Speaking of stages, all characters have their own stages that contain plenty of in-jokes to their respective franchises. For instance, Solid Snake's stage takes place on Shadow Moses Island, with a Metal Gear Rex waiting in the wings, while the Ice Climbers's Ice Summit takes place on a glacier that sinks and tilts through arctic rapids. Brr! There are also a few stages inspired by other Nintendo properties like Mario Kart (which has you avoiding Shyguys-driven karts) and PictoChat (which constantly shifts between a handful of crudely-designed drawings). Bolstering the stage selection even further, are classic stages from Super Smash Bros. Melee replicated perfectly.

### ITEMS WORTH BRAWLING FOR

During battle, many familiar items from Nintendo properties drop from the sky and can be picked up by any brawler. Items range from beneficial snack foods that restore hit points to risky bombs that require a certain amount of skill to use without getting hit yourself. Assist Trophies are rare items that drop in-game, and when smashed open, unleash at random yet recognizable Nintendo character that is non-playable, but will assist you in battle.

The most coveted item? A new addition to the fight known as Smash Balls. When this glowing, multicolored ball starts floating across the screen, expect the attacks to move away from opponents and towards this mysterious new object. After a few hits, the Smash Ball will break, imbuing the fighter who destroyed it with a maniacal glow, and, more important, the ability to perform a Final Smash—crazy attacks that look amazing.





The smart bomb is a devastating item best thrown from a distance; the blast radius is larger than you think.

## CHARACTER CUSTOMIZATION

From the player select menu, customize your brawler's looks from an array of various color schemes, retro jerseys, and for some, alternate personalities. For example, press the 2 button on the Wii Remote to cycle between green-tunic Link and Shadow Link from *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link*.



And the best-costume award goes to...cheetah-print Solid Snake.

Watch as Samus and Mario toss giant fireballs that would make Ryu and Ken jealous. Sonic and Pikachu dash around the level at mach speed, barreling through any unlucky enemies in their wake. And then there's the completely bizarre attacks like Luigi's seductive dance that causes pain to anyone in its radius, or Wario's transformation into a pink spandex-wearing superhero.

All of these elements add up to create the most frantic four-player fighting game the world has ever seen. The action is so fast, you'll need a sharp eye to keep track of your character onscreen and off.

## NEW HOTNESS

SSBB is so easy to control that anyone can play. And let's not forget that SSBB supports four different controllers—the Wii Remote, Wii Remote and Nunchuk, Wii Classic, and GameCube controllers. Having tried out all of the control methods, we have to say we're pleasantly surprised with how the Wii Remote works alone—it doesn't sacrifice much in the way of control, while keeping things simple for n00bs. The classic controller and GameCube method work well, especially for Smash vets used to *Melee*'s layout. The black sheep of the controller family? The Wii Remote/Nunchuck combo, which takes way too much getting used to, especially since there's absolutely zero Wii Remote pointing, and minimal motion control (you can shake the Wii Remote to perform a Smash Attack).

But adding more characters and new control methods are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to all the new features in SSBB. In addition to the neat versus and stadium modes which have made a return, there's plenty of extra features for fans to sink their teeth into. The Subspace Emissary adventure mode scores deeper than the one in *Melee*, offering up a semblance of a plot, and a unique way for gaming's all-stars to interact.

There's also a handful of neat extras in store for fight fans. Throughout your time playing the game you can unlock trophies (cool statues that provide neat Nintendo trivia), stickers (which can either be tossed into an album or attached to fighters to give them power-ups), and Masterpieces (demo versions of Virtual Console games). There are also plenty of fun things to test your own creativity, like screen shot capturing, video recording, and stage creation. The only limit is your mind...and, in the case of the stage creation, Nintendo's presets.

## SUPER SMASH BROS. BRAWL: SELECT CHARACTER

The complete roster of 35 playable fighters in *Super Smash Bros. Brawl* is long, but did your favorite Nintendo character make the cut?

### NEW TO THE FIGHT

- Diddy Kong (*Donkey Kong Country*)
- Ike (*Fire Emblem*)
- King Dedede (*Kirby*)
- Lucario (*Pokémon*)
- Lucas (*EarthBound2/Mother 3*)
- Meta Knight (*Kirby*)
- Olimar & Pikmin
- Pit (*Kid Icarus*)
- Pokémon Trainer (summons three Pokémon—Charizard, Ivysaur, and Squirtle)
- R.O.B. (*Gyromite & Stack-Up*)
- Solid Snake (*Metal Gear Solid*)
- Sonic the Hedgehog
- Wario (*Super Mario's* nemesis with his own line of games)
- Wolf (*Star Fox*)

### RETURNING CHAMPIONS

- Bowser (*Super Mario*)
- Captain Falcon (*F-Zero*)
- Donkey Kong
- Falco Lombardi (*Star Fox*)
- Fox McCloud (*Star Fox*)
- Ganondorf (*The Legend of Zelda*)
- Ice Climbers
- Jigglypuff (*Pokémon*)
- Kirby
- Link (*The Legend of Zelda*)
- Luigi (*Super Mario*)
- Mario
- Marth (*Fire Emblem*)
- Mr. Game & Watch (*Nintendo Game & Watch* handhelds)
- Ness (*EarthBound*)
- Pikachu (*Pokémon*)
- Princess Peach (*Mario*)
- Princess Zelda/Sheik (*The Legend of Zelda*)
- Samus Aran/Zero Suit Samus (*Metroid*)
- Toon Link (*The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*)
- Yoshi (*Super Mario*)

### MISSING IN ACTION

The following fighters were smashed into submission in *Super Smash Bros. Melee* for the GameCube and will not return in *Brawl* as playable characters.

- Dr. Mario (*Super Mario*)
- Mewtwo (*Pokémon*)
- Pichu (*Pokémon*)
- Roy (*Fire Emblem*, replaced by Ike)
- Young Link (*The Legend of Zelda*, replaced by Toon Link)

## THE FINAL ROUND

While our editors have been gorging themselves full of *Brawl* goodness, we're not quite ready to dish out a score just yet. Will *Brawl* stand among the Wii's elite, or will we soon tire of its crazy fighting exploits? Check back next month, when we'll spotlight the full review of Nintendo's biggest game since *Super Mario Galaxy*.  
—Travis Moses and Dave Rudden





On new consoles, the Destroy All Humans! Path of the Furon lets you wreak absolute havoc on the world via flying saucer.

# DESTROY ALL HUMANS! PATH OF THE FURON

Crypto is back and armed with enough alien firepower to eradicate mankind as we know it.

PS3 Xbox 360

Developer: Sandblast Games Publisher: THQ Release Date: 2008

Once a prime example of original game design at its best, the Destroy All Humans! series has seen three iterations on console systems since its critically acclaimed first game. So how does the first PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 version of this human-killing franchise stay fresh? Sandblast Games creative director Jon Knoles tells all. —Chris Morell



**GamePro:** Destroy All Humans! allows players to fight humans from the alien perspective. How do you keep that concept from getting stale with each iteration?

**John Knoles:** In order to keep the series fresh, it isn't enough to offer new weapons and mental powers, new cities to destroy, a next-gen face lift or a new story. We really had to redefine DAH!'s "sandbox" gameplay with [alien main character] Crypto, and redefine the flying-saucer destruction.

We had to offer more choices, more freedom and more surprises.

We've given the player more choices by providing Crypto with a deeper toolbox with which to manipulate and destroy humans in new and entertaining ways. The controls are streamlined so that Crypto can combine mental powers, weapons, and jet pack flight for the first time. This opens up all kinds of new possibilities such as using PK on a car, jet packing up to a high roof, and then placing an Ion Detonator on the car detonating it in mid-air over a crowded intersection. That's just one of many possible new combinations.

**GP:** Can you talk about some of the new weapons in the game?

**JK:** We developed some far-out new weapons and abilities that produce surprising effects on the world and its unlucky inhabitants. The Venus Human Trap, Black Hole Gun and Tornadotron are some of the new weapons that produce different results every time you use them.

We're really excited about a new feature called Temporal Fist, which Crypto learns from an alien Kung Fu master. Early on, Crypto figures out he can stop time. As he gains "enlightenment" through the use of his mental powers, he can not only stop time, but also use PK to manipulate or throw things and people in the world when time is stopped. He can then start time again and watch the mayhem play out. This encourages experimentation.

Destruction has always been a key ingredient to the Destroy All Humans! series. This time, we wanted players to feel like everything they do has a tangible, visceral effect on the world. The cities are bigger, buildings are 10 times taller, and they are filled with scores of people who swarm the streets in panic when attacked, marking the perfect time to mass abduct like a giant vacuum cleaner. You can leave a permanent mark on the world, literally carving your name into the terrain or buildings.

**GP:** Do you have a favorite new weapon?

**JK:** That's a tough one. Crypto has The Black Hole Gun and Venus Human Trap, but maybe the saucer's Tornadotron is the most impressive. It's the only weapon that can be fired while the saucer is cloaked, so humans think it's an act of God. Even better, once this massive twister touches down on the world, it can carve its own random swath of destruction or you can steer it to take out specific targets.

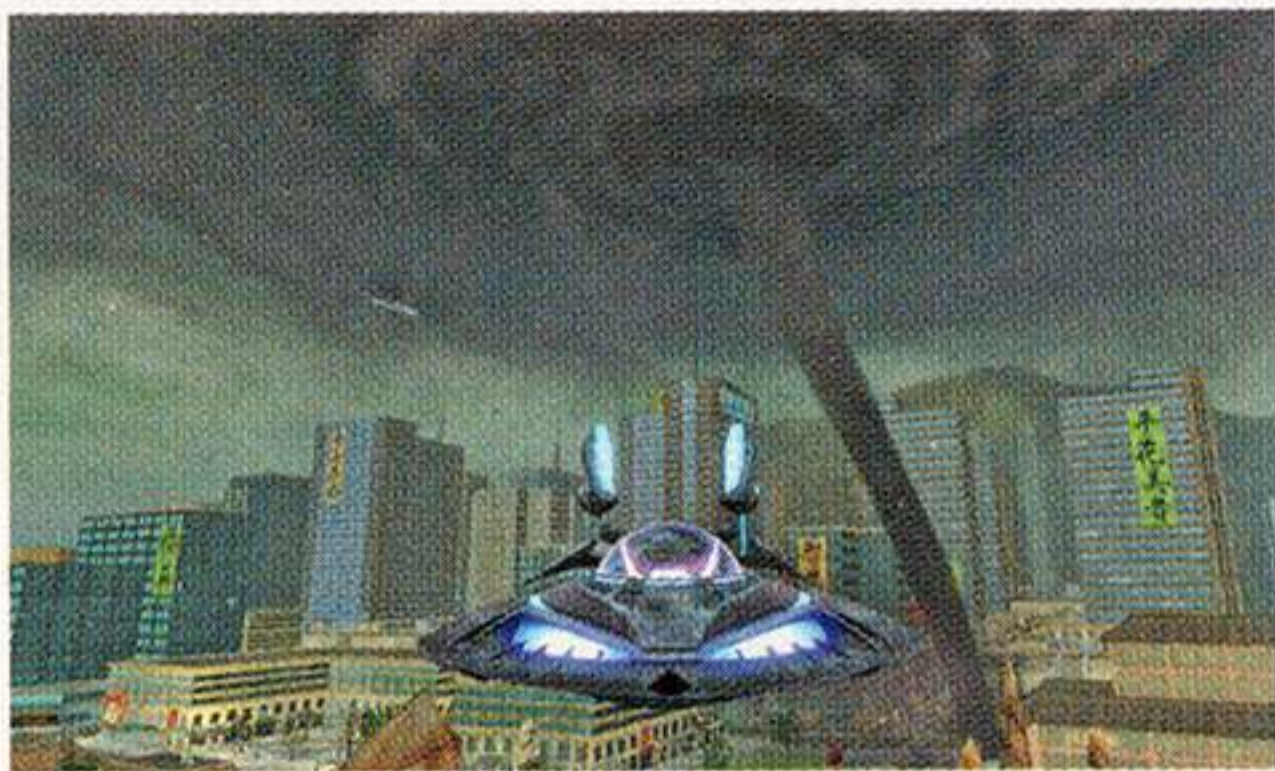




**GP:** Is the same sandbox formula still intact in *Path of the Furon*, and will there be a substantial shift in scope or gameplay?

**JK:** The sandbox formula of the DAH! series is very much intact in PotF and, in fact, has been expanded to allow more freedom and choice in activities. There are story missions that you must play in order to advance through all five Invasion Sites, but much of it can now be played in a non-linear order. As with prior installments, the player chooses when to undertake missions. If they choose to mess around in sandbox mode to upgrade their weapons and abilities, or just to have fun, they are always free to. And, of course, there are numerous optional odd jobs to undertake.

To encourage revisiting Invasion Sites, we've added repeatable challenges (mini-games) that you can return to over and over to better your score. All five Invasion Sites are also peppered with hidden alien artifacts to collect. Some of these can only be found once you've upgraded your abilities.



**GP:** What is the biggest difference series fans will notice in *Path of the Furon*?

**JK:** Definitely the increased scale and density of the world, and the more varied reactions of the world and its inhabitants. The five Invasion Sites in PotF are much more vertical than ever before, comprised of fully destructible skyscrapers that are visible from any part of the world. With this added verticality, we gave the saucer the ability to freely look around and aim in addition to vertical flight, and we added air-to-air combat, filling the sky with attack helicopters.

The streets are packed with vehicles and pedestrians going about their business, and they have more varied reactions to Crypto. Some will freak out at the sight of him, some will think he's cute or even think he's a kid in a space costume. If you use your jet pack, they'll notice that, too. If you attack a car, it will squeal its tires and try to drive away in a panic. If cops or soldiers are attacking and you launch a Venus Human Trap, they recognize the giant man eating plant as the bigger threat and attack it instead.

**GP:** What is the overall direction you're taking with multiplayer?

**JK:** PotF will include several native multiplayer modes, each designed to be fun, short-duration competitive, or co-op matches featuring Crypto, the Saucer or both, that players can quickly get into play again and again.

In *Gladiator*, one player is Crypto, whose mission is to activate a set of safe zones throughout a city. The other, in the Saucer, tries to destroy

## HIGHLIGHTS

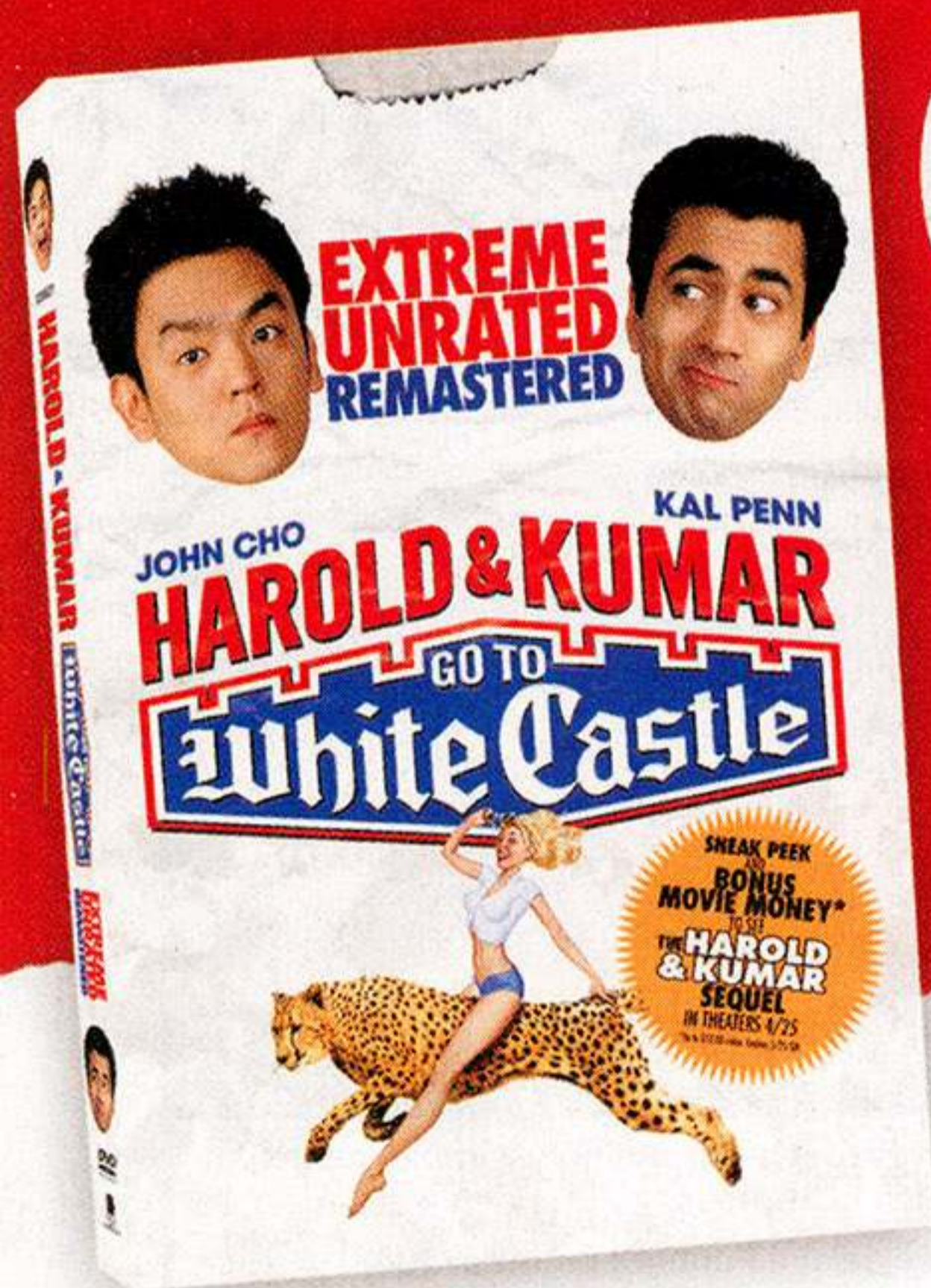
- The first Destroy All Humans! game on the PS3 and Xbox 360 gets a massive upgrade.
- New human-destroying weapons include the Venus Human Trap, Black Hole Gun, and Tornadotron, which whirls up helpless humans.
- "Sandbox" formula is taken to new heights in a fully destructive environment.
- Creative new pick-up-and-play multiplayer modes.



Crypto before he activates all the safe zones. It's like David vs. Goliath, but as fearsome as the Saucer's weapons are, we've given Crypto a few custom tricks to keep things balanced.

In the timed co-op game called "Brain-O-Matic," two Crypto clones work together to try and throw as many humans as possible into a large DNA processor before the clock runs out. Players can use a special bomb to drive humans out of buildings located around the city, and then use their mental abilities to grab as many panicked people as they can and hurl them into the machine. The more they work together, the better they'll do.

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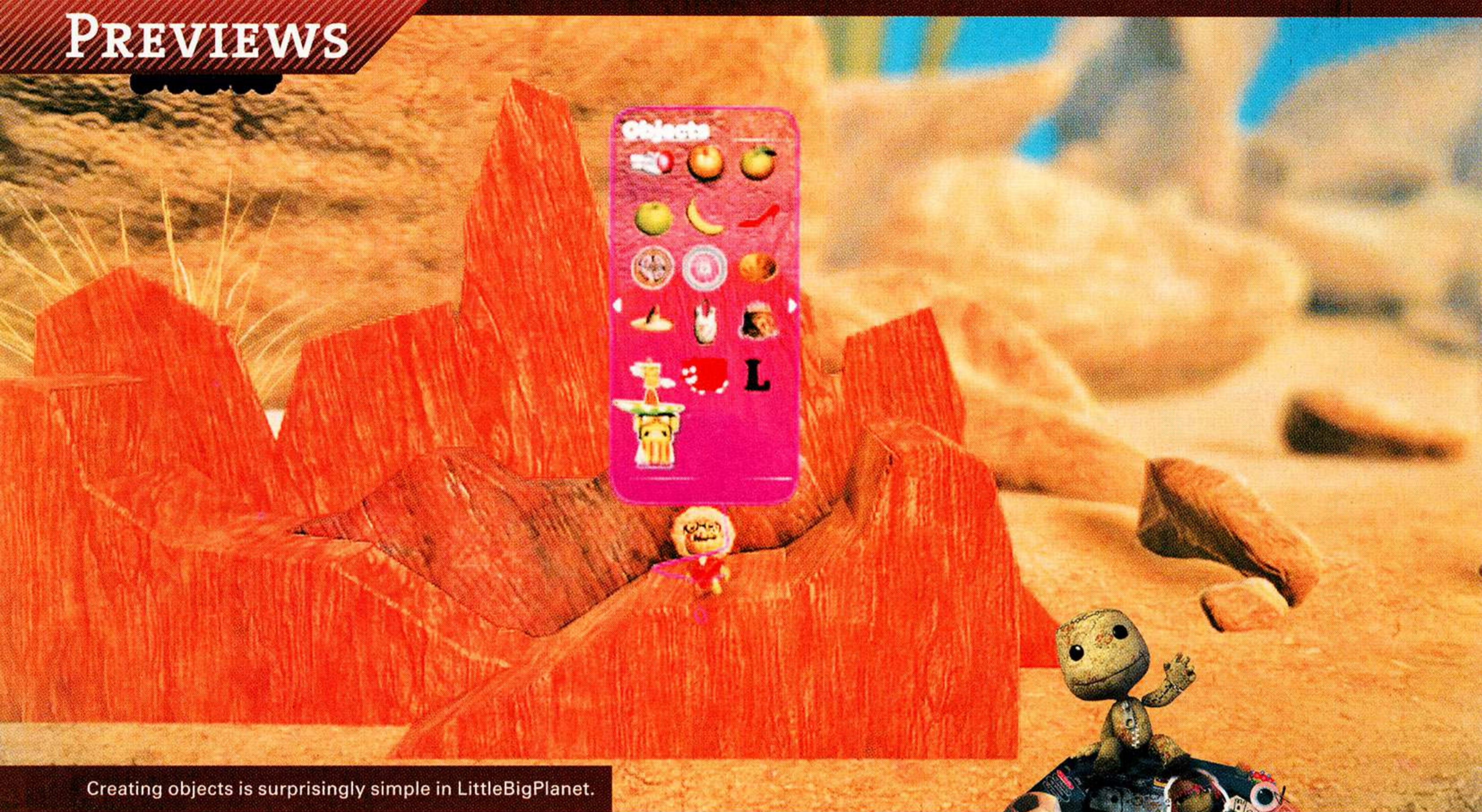
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Creating objects is surprisingly simple in LittleBigPlanet.

## LITTLEBIGPLANET

A PS3 planet you'll want to explore



PS3

Developer: Media Molecule ■ Publisher: Sony ■ Release Date: September

I must admit I'm a little disappointed that LittleBigPlanet, Sony's user-generated, potential masterpiece for the PS3, has been delayed until September 2008 (at least). Maybe if LBP didn't consistently look so cool, I'd be less bitter. Six more months to wait? Sheesh.

Our latest demo began with some live four-player co-op in a New Mexico-themed level. Hot fire pits showcased some new death animations, and most of the level was the same type of LBP gameplay we've already seen: cooperating to push/pull objects, swinging, and jumping in order to progress to the next obstacle.

We saw special colored bubbles to pickup throughout the level, and were told that while a level can be cooperative, there can still be items to pickup that boost individual stats. So it's everyone for themselves with those special goodies.



### ROCKY ROAD

This first level was creative, indeed, but the progression through the level wasn't the smoothest of operations. All four characters fell clumsily into fire pits or got smashed by giant boulders numerous times during the presentation—pretty surprising given that the guys playing designed the game.

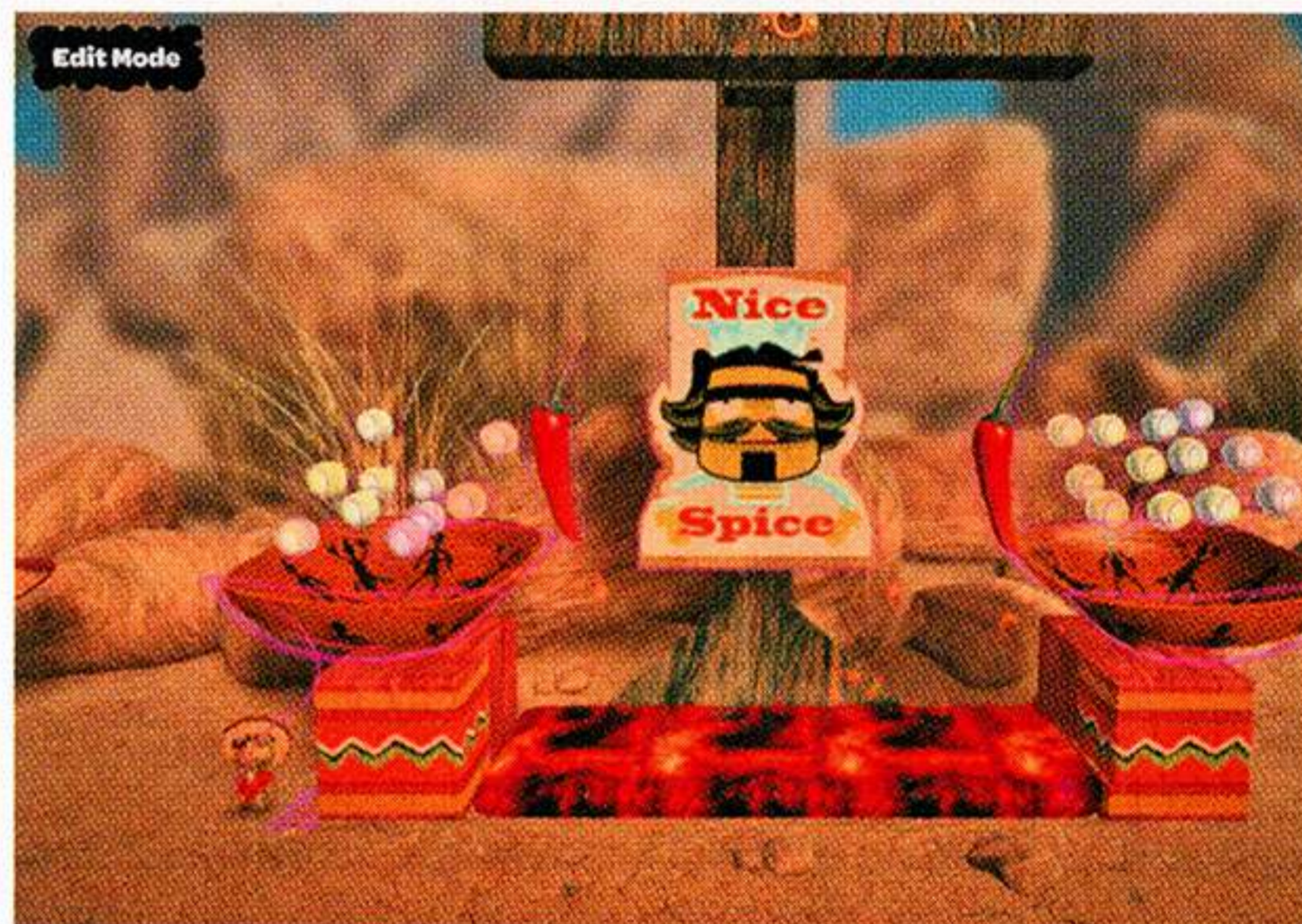
I'm a tad bit worried that this could mean frustrating platforming when the game finally releases, though given that the code was still pre-alpha (super early), we'll cut these guys some slack or simply chalk it up to lack of skills.

### CREATING YOUR MASTERPIECE

After the demo ended, two of the presenters walked us through creating some custom objects in the game, showing just how easy it is to do. They began with a couple of rectangular pieces, and from there, created a pretty cool looking tree, added leaves and even birds that rotated from side-to-side (you can create animated objects in the game). They also demonstrated character facial emotions and loads of customizable clothing and accessories...all very cool and easy to use.

So while Sony continues to tease us with tantalizing treats of LittleBigPlanet, we're even more bummed that this potential PS3 gem keeps getting delayed. Hopefully September is set in stone, because this is one planet we can't wait to explore.

—Chris Morell



### HIGHLIGHTS

- LittleBigPlanet's surprisingly simple gameplay continues to impress.
- Recently delayed until September 2008.
- Creating objects and levels is a snap.

W398

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# ALONE IN THE DARK

PS3 Xbox 360

Developer: Eden Studios Publisher: Atari Release Date: June



Electrocuting pesky creeps is just one environmental challenge you'll encounter in Alone in the Dark.

**C**lenching loosely to its survival-horror roots, the new Alone in the Dark is much more action-oriented than the series' past games. Take, for example, our recent look at the game where protagonist Edward Carnby races a taxicab through the rippling streets of a New York City that's tearing apart at the seams—like *Cloverfield* minus the Godzilla-like beastie.

## A LONG TIME COMING

Alone in the Dark has been a hot topic for years because of its lengthy production schedule and multiple push-backs. But now with the game right around the corner, we finally got to see the fruits of years of development, and its end-result could be a mixed bag.

As an action game, Alone in the Dark might be a smidgen behind the times. With more action-based survival-horror games emerging, games like EA's upcoming *Dead Space* are leading a genre packed with top-notch titles. Had Alone in the Dark been released in the first year of the Xbox 360's life cycle, it might have been a better sell, technologically speaking.



But still, this game is horror-based, and it's a got a great deal of spooky puzzle-solving to go along with its fast-paced action sequences. Let's look at, for instance, a level that takes place in the sewers underneath Central Park. Edward is hindered by a host of environmental obstructions that take a little thinking and a lot of maneuvering to traverse; case in point, carefully clearing away an open electrical wire that's submerged in a sewer stream, or brandishing a flashlight to divert a mysterious oozing liquid that seems to be light-shy. A cool on-the-fly feature also lets you create a virtually endless number of items from goodies found in the game, a distinctly survival-horrorish feature that's presented from a nifty view inside of Edward's trench-coat.

## ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

After the sewer trudge, Edward is pinned in a car on the streets surrounding Central Park, forced to escape before the city crumbles to bits. It's an arcade-like sequence, and you have to get out fast—lag for even a few seconds and you'll plummet beneath the crumbling streets.

It's fun to gander at a collapsing New York City, especially if you make it through the obstacle course of falling buildings and rippled roads. Here's to hoping the rest of Alone in the Dark offers enough variety to keep Edward Carnby's latest adventure fresh. (Also available on the Wii, PS2, PSP, and PC.)—Chris Morell.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The new Alone in the Dark is more action-oriented than ever before.
- It still clings to its survival-horror roots.
- New York City crumbles, and you struggle to survive the aftermath.

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## BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY

PS3 Xbox 360

■ Developer: Digital Illusions CE ■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Release Date: March

Recently we interviewed Karl-Magnus Troedsson, senior producer for Battlefield: Bad Company. Troedsson said that Bad Company is going to be reminiscent of old Battlefield games while also taking the series in brand new directions.

Built on a totally new engine called "Frostbite," it renders explosions and environmental destruction like no other. And on top of that, it features an immersive single-player campaign that draws elements from films like *Jarhead* and *Three Kings*. After a nice chunk of time with the

game, it's easier to see how Battlefield: Bad Company could live up to Troedsson's acclaim.

## BOOM GOES THE DYNAMITE

Once a game has a truly solid gameplay formula, it can do just about anything. If you understand this, then it's easier to understand why I'm excited for Bad Company. Sure the graphics are good and the characters are fun and engaging—lots of games have that. But when I loaded up my grenade launcher and practically blew an abandoned house to bits, I giggled like a little girl.



The game's plot centers on a small group of social misfits who, instead of serving lengthy prison terms, agree to fight in the military's specialized combat force called B-Company. You play as new recruit, Preston Marlowe, as he fights alongside Sarge, Haggard, and Sweetwater.

Each of the game's characters portrays a unique personality that promises to add to the game's depth. During its encounters, B-Company comes across a large stash of gold bullion, à la *Three Kings*, and must subvert both friendly and enemy forces to steal the loot. So far the story looks surprisingly interesting for a franchise that's mostly focused on multiplayer.

## IN GOOD COMPANY

Bad Company claims to render 90 percent destructible environments, and while there are some truly awesome in-game effects, I couldn't help but find myself wanting that extra 10 percent destructibility. As for strategy, the destructibility it does have will definitely add a new dimension to multiplayer shooters. Whether that dimension will stick to the genre is another question. If it's any indication, I don't see Bad Company touching Call of Duty 4's impeccable multiplayer. This may be a case of apples and oranges, however; Bad Company's destructibility may set it apart enough to be considered awesome in its own right.—Ben Karl

## DE BLOB

Wii

■ Developer: Blue Tongue ■ Publisher: THQ ■ Release Date: First Quarter 2008

It's not about de money or de power, de Blob is about bringing color and music together to paint your own unique and vibrant world. Fortunately for you, the canvas is wiped clean. Unfortunately for de Blob, however, de evil INK Corp. has confiscated all de color from de world, which de Blob need to survive. To save Chroma City, where de Blob lives, you will use de Blob's amazing sponge-like abilities to absorb paint and then apply it to anything you touch.

## PAINT THE TOWN

It is easy enough to navigate de Blob through 10 different districts (levels) in Chroma City; but the slow-moving camera system could be a bit more responsive. The Nunchuk's analog stick controls de Blob's movement, a swipe of the Wii Remote up or down makes de Blob jump, and the Z button locks on to targets. For example, de Blob can lock on to a can of red paint, and with one swipe of the Wii Remote de Blob leaps and squishes the paint can, thus becoming red itself. Now you're ready to paint. More complex moves, such as wall running and jumping, are available from the get go, but will take time to master.

As part of the color revolution, it is your duty to bring color and happiness back to Chroma City. Other members of the color revolution are hiding out in each level. They will provide you with goals before you can pass on to the next area of the map. For example, when you are told to color



an entire city block purple, it's super easy to paint a city block in just a few jumps, but to make purple you will first have to find both a blue and red paint container to mix. de Blob contains not only primary colors, but secondary as well. And we can only imagine tertiary colors in the later levels.

## A BOY AND HIS DE BLOB

Now, all of this is cushioned by a funky 1980s jazz soundtrack, which helps lighten de mood. One is preciously reminded of *LocoRoco* and *Patapon*, especially when it comes to the villainous Inkie who patrol the streets like police officers with batons and hover bikes.

At the close of our demo, we were sad to see de Blob go. It's insanely addictive and there's always something to do, which makes for a satisfying experience. de Blob is a game for all ages and all gamers. Casual or hardcore, there's no denying de Blob.—Travis Moses





# DARK SECTOR

PS3 Xbox 360

■ Developer: Digital Extremes ■ Publisher: D3 Publisher ■ Release Date: March



ing, and vaulting obstacles; all worked nicely into the cover system. Control-wise think Resident Evil 4 meets Gears of War.

Hayden himself becomes infected with the virus, mutating his right arm, and giving him the ability to grow a three-pronged projectile blade called the Glaive. Most victims go insane from the immeasurable pain of the mutation, but Hayden suffers from a real-life disease that does not allow him to feel pain. Lucky him.

The game's black market shop allows you to purchase weapon upgrades with money collected from the in-game economy. Imagine the merchants from Resident Evil 4, but in the creepy Dark Sector sewer system.

Look for Dark Sector later this month for both the PS3 and Xbox 360, as we've been impressed each time we've seen it.—Travis Moses

**D**ark Sector takes place in the dilapidated nation of Lasria—a fictional Eastern bloc country in the near future. You play as Hayden Tenno, a clean-up man employed by the CIA, who is sent in to investigate the strange occurrence of a viral outbreak in the region. Sure, it sounds like a typical video game plot, but Dark Sector's approach and atmosphere is excitingly unique.

## DARK & WHITE

The first level of Dark Sector is done entirely in black and white. The infected are being transported to a small island off the coast of Lasria for containment, and Hayden is dropped on the fictional Alcatraz to eliminate an internal informant who has been compromised by the virus.

Hayden is well equipped. He can pick up a range of modern weaponry from submachine guns to shotguns, as well as perform some nimble maneuvers like sprinting, somersault-

## I SPIT ON YOUR GLAIVE

In Dark Sector, there are multiple levels of infection and ability. As the infection grows, Hayden gains the ability to cloak himself, redirect projectiles with a shield, toss the Glaive like Heavenly Sword's bow and arrow mechanic, and steal the properties of electricity, fire, and ice with the Glaive. Hayden's infectious powers are represented as three glowing charges on his infected arm.



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Gritty, stylish gameplay wrapped inside of a mysterious viral outbreak.
- Weapons' combat is topped off with the Glaive, a devastating projectile blade.
- Infection allows for enhanced combat abilities.



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Speed and the Mach 5 race to the Wii at the same time as the upcoming Hollywood flick directed by the Wachowski brothers.

# SPEED RACER

The *Matrix* creators spawn the next Speed Racer game.

Wii

■ Developer: Sidhe Interactive ■ Publisher: Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment ■ Release Date: May

When we found out the *Matrix*-famed, special-effects whizzes the Wachowski brothers had signed on to create a live-action adaptation of *Speed Racer*, it came as no shock that a video-game version was announced shortly thereafter. But what we didn't expect is that the lead version of *Speed Racer* would land on the Nintendo Wii.

## MARIO KART MEETS F-ZERO

Published by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment and pinned to release alongside the movie, the short turnaround probably led to no PS3 or Xbox 360 version, so prepare not to be dazzled

by cutting-edge graphics or realistic racing action. *Speed Racer* follows in the footsteps of *Excite Truck* by producing pick-up-and-play arcade racing that virtually anyone can hop into.

With a *Mario Kart* formula, *Speed Racer* brings authentic characters and cars from the movie, along with enough firepower to blast vehicular foes at will. Mario-like pickups are placed throughout the tracks, so from race to race, anything can happen. Races are designed to emulate the ultra fast-paced nature of the series, so there's rarely a moment's pause during these chaotic events. This is accomplished by allowing players to slide almost 180 degrees while still operating

their vehicles. So if the Mach 5 takes a hit and spins around into almost certain oblivion (like in the cartoon), you'll still be able to plow ahead just like the real *Speed Racer*.

## GO WII RACER, GO!

As you might expect, *Speed Racer* takes advantage of the Wii's motion controls, allocating steering as motion-based. The game is compatible with the Wii Steering Wheel, or just about any circular device you could cram a Wii Remote into, for that matter. The demo we received showcased the Wii Wheel in action, and admittedly it looks a bit easier to control than holding the Wii Remote side-to-side without it. That somewhat goofy steering from *Excite Truck* looks to be curbed a bit simply by giving the motion controls a circular feel, even if it is really just a piece of plastic.

Our first look at the game was an early one, but we saw a few tracks that used loads of loops, jumps and hairpin turns to provide an overall fast and furious style of racer, similar to *F-Zero*. The colorful environments and authentic characters should be enough to draw fans of the series (and the upcoming movie) to check out the game, though this *Speed Racer* experience will probably skew a tad on the younger side. There is also word of a full-feature track editor, though this time we didn't get to see it in action. DS and PS2 versions are also planned.—Chris Morell



One of the tracks in *Speed Racer*.



# FRACTURE

PS3 Xbox 360

■ Developer: Day 1 Studios ■ Publisher: LucasArts ■ Release Date: Summer 2008



One of a handful of interesting titles that LucasArts has slated for 2008, *Fracture* has its own draw: you can “fracture” the earth. That’s the focus of this shooter that’s set in a bizarre futuristic underworld where you can deform the ground beneath your very own feet.

## BREAKING GROUND

It’s 2090 and global warming has led to some rather nasty stuff, particularly genetically engineered humans and California-led tectonic weapons research. The main character in *Fracture*, former seedy gang-banger Jet Brody, is now helping the military fight the good fight against a rogue section of a group called the Pacificans.

Armed with a fancy, high-tech armor suit, Jet looks prepared for battle. In this particular demo, he was dropped under the San Francisco Bay to get to the Pacificans. The developers from Day 1 Studios made sure to use plenty of

terrain-deforming maneuvers to show off the handy feature as often as possible.

The simplest way to mess with the earth is to use the nifty “entrencher” tool that boosts up the ground beneath you. But other guns and explosives can also muddle the ground, including grenades. The entrencher is the most focused and precise way to deform; it’s especially useful in solving environmental puzzles like creating vertical humps to access out-of-reach areas.

## WELL SUITED

Jet’s suit provides a rechargeable shield that looks cool, but other than its protective purposes, LucasArts is tight-lipped about anything else the suit might be able to do, or even how it came about.

In the demo, Jet had to disable some guns, and most of the action showed off the deformation technology. Other than making the ground move up, you can use it to move beneath the surface to create tunnels or holes to work under a physical obstruction. Even cooler is that you can fire your entrencher directly at your feet to do a nifty little hop maneuver—something that wasn’t even intended by the designers. Pulling the ground out beneath enemies’ feet and sending them flying like rag dolls is especially neat.

Other highlights included a grenade-like device that sucked foes right into a vortex, and loads of more traditional gun-power that served the more conventional way to mow people down. —Chris Morell



# TIBERIUM

PS3 Xbox 360 PC

■ Developer: EA LA ■ Publisher: EA Games ■ Release Date: Fall 2008



**T**iberium. Mankind’s final struggle. After decades of rapid growth and universal destruction, the constant monitoring and containment of a mysterious alien crystal known as Tiberium has been the primary focus of the diplomatic Global Defense Initiative (GDI). The reckless Nod faction on the other hand, led by Command & Conquer series mainstay and ultimate bad guy Kane, view the spread of Tiberium as a sign from the heavens capable of unlocking powerful technologies. While the GDI struggle to keep the spread of Tiberium to a minimum and the Nod fight to unleash it, meanwhile, an alien race known as the Scrin descend upon Earth to harvest the green crystals.

## THE FUTURE WARRIOR

If you’re a fan of real-time strategy games, you probably know what game I’m talking about. For those that don’t, *Tiberium* is the next game in the Command & Conquer series. This squad-based

first-person shooter, is a drastic departure from the series’ familiar RTS three-faction gameplay. This is the second game in the series to descend the core RTS gameplay and venture into the realm of first-person shooters; *Command & Conquer: Renegade* being the first, garnering a lukewarm reception, at best.

*Tiberium* puts the player in the combat boots of GDI commander Ricardo Vega. Unlike most first-person shooters, Vega is equipped with one weapon and one weapon only—the GD-10. This super gun can transform into four different weapons on the fly. The GD-10’s Mag Rail setting is equivalent to a standard assault rifle. The Energy Cannon is a high-powered beam rifle useful for taking out enemies from afar. The Multi-Launch System (MLS) let’s you paint multiple targets to unleash a barrage of pseudo homing missiles. And the Grenade Launcher setting is self explanatory.

Although Vega is well equipped to take on the entire Nod rebellion alone, he’ll need a little help from his comrades to tackle the seemingly endless Scrin invasion. At anytime on the battlefield, Commander Vega can issue squad commands to



direct his team’s advancement and even call for reinforcements. In the single-player campaign, Vega must acquire and control Tiberium deposit checkpoints to unlock more squad slots for reinforcements.

And all this is just the tip of the iceberg. *Tiberium* also features an online player vs. player mode that pits opposing sides in a race to collect all of the Tiberium deposit nodes to win, à la *Battlefield*’s conquest mode. *Tiberium* multiplayer applies all of the core gameplay elements from the single-player campaign, such as squad control and calling in reinforcements. From what we’ve seen, the game promises to be a substantial leap over *Renegade*, and possibly one of the biggest shooters of 2008. —Travis Moses



# ASSASSIN'S CREED: ALTAIR'S CHRONICLES

DS

■ Developer: Ubisoft Montreal ■ Publisher: Ubisoft ■ Release Date: February

This handheld *Assassin's Creed* takes place a few months prior to the events of the console title; before Altair must trek across the all-but-familiar plains of the Middle East to acquire a mystical and powerful artifact.

## STAB IN THE DARK

*Chronicles* is played via stationary, 3D isometric camera view, less-restricting than the type of gameplay that we're used to from the console version. Scaling ledges, finding alternate paths to better assassinate targets, and free-running on rooftops are some of the familiar activities you'll be taking advantage of here. Even combat has remained fairly similar, as you're be required to time your swings and hits in order to dispose of enemies; button-mashing gets you nowhere. There



are also a few nifty mini-games that take advantage of the DS's touch screen, such as pick pocketing, where you must move a required object out of the victim's bag without touching any of the other items inside.

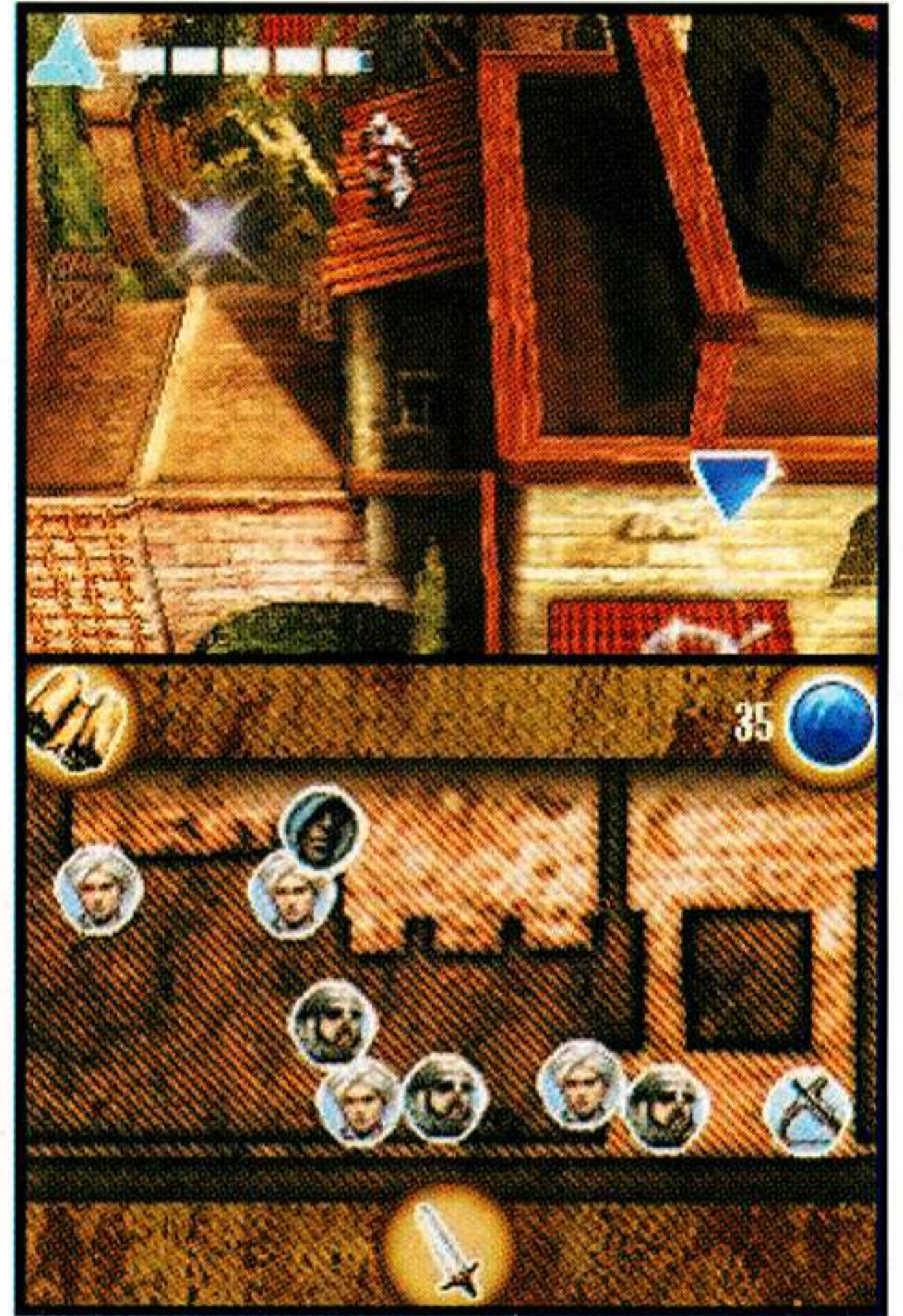
## THE ALTAIR UP THERE

*Chronicles* has a host of DS-exclusive features. Aside from the story and touch-screen elements, the DS version features a few new items and gadgets. The grappling hook, for instance, aids the player in crossing long gaps that Altair typically couldn't jump across.

All of these elements ensure that people who enjoyed the game on consoles will likely have a great time with the handheld version. If anything, *Chronicles* provides a little more depth and back



story to the badass mystery that is Altair, and possibly prep us for any future installments that we can only cross our fingers for.—Ryan Perez



# WIPEOUT PULSE

PSP

■ Developer: Sony Studio Liverpool ■ Publisher: Sony ■ Release Date: February

A franchise that's been racing since the first PlayStation console, the latest iteration, *Wipeout Pulse*, hardly lacks diverse options and features. You'll never play the same game twice. Customizable profiles keep track of the player's stats and records in the 236 events contained within the campaign mode. Racebox mode allows the player to create unique races. Race types include: Single Race, Head-to-Head, Time Trial, Speed Lap, Tournament, Zone, and

Eliminator. There is also varying speed class, A.I. difficulty, and weapons. Add this to the unlimited potential of online sharing and ad-hoc competition and there's enough content to keep the average speed demon satisfied for a very long time.

## CALLING ALL SPEED DEMONS

The graphics are sharp and the levels are as exhilarating as ever. Sony has not missed a beat when it comes to the futuristic, gravity-defying level



design that *Wipeout* is famous for. There are 16 new zone tracks, each featuring a number of challenges like Time Trial or Single Race. Each track also has both a black and white run that vary in size, layout, or direction.

*Pulse's* weapons play a large part. On most levels you can choose to play with or without weapons. There are a total of 13 weapons including Leech, Shuriken, and Repulsor—all somewhat self explanatory. Each weapon is picked up on the track and has a symbol to represent it. The symbols indicate the weapon you've got as well as the weapons your competitors are using.

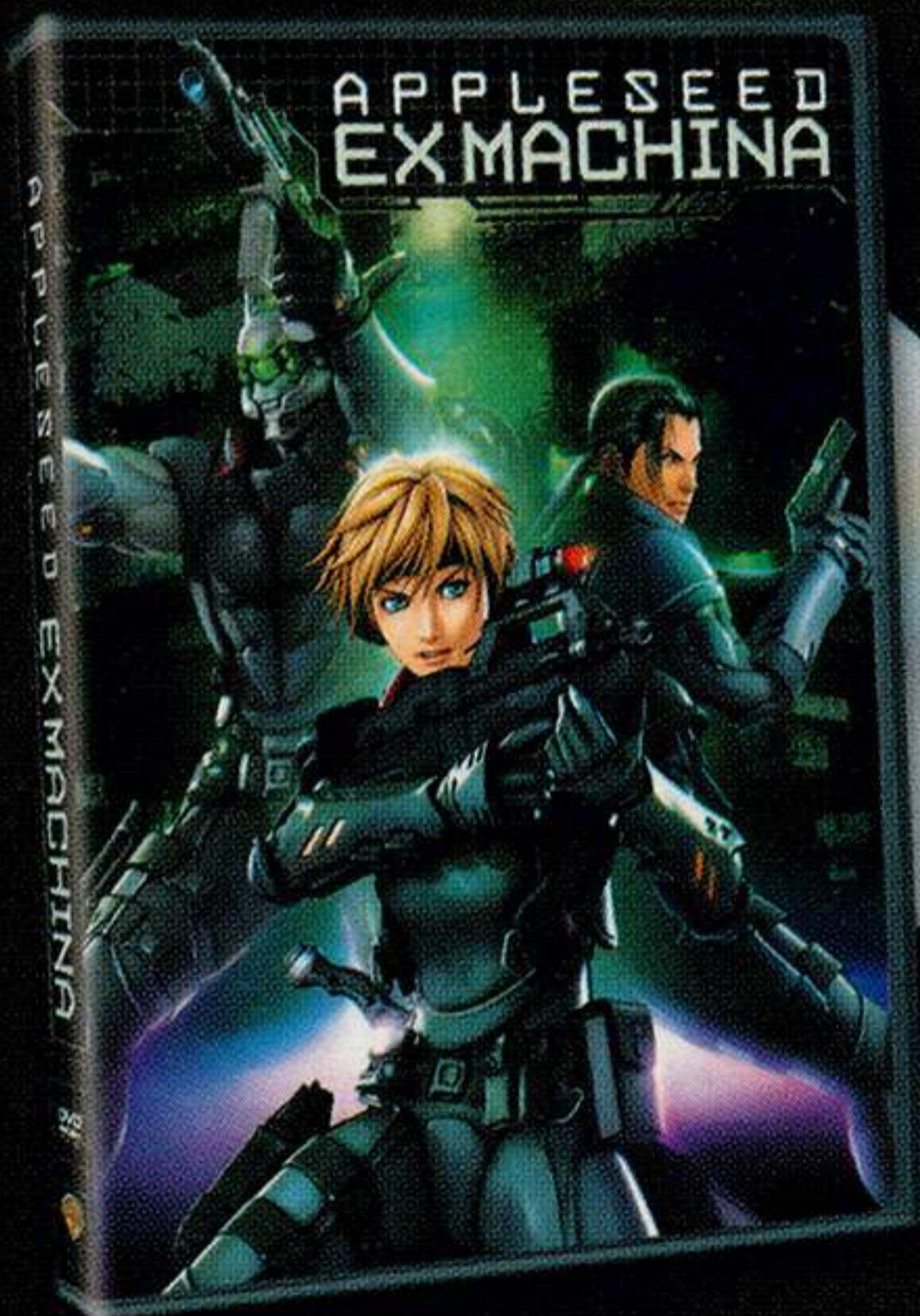
## POUNCE ON PULSE

And we're just getting to the tip of the iceberg. *Wipeout Pulse* is presented with smooth controls and a ton of options. It would take us pages just to reveal every last detail of this game. In other words, PSP owner and racing fans alike should pounce on this antigravity racer.—Ben Karl



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## METAL GEAR SOLID MOBILE

**Mobile** ■ Publisher: Konami ■ Release Date: Available now

**S**olid Snake infiltrates your cell-phone in Metal Gear Solid Mobile, and if you buy one cell-phone game it better be this one. MGS Mobile looks and feels like a full-blown Metal Gear title. It's somewhat simplified and the touchpad controls make it a little difficult at times, but for a cell-phone game it's incredibly good looking and surprisingly deep.

### MOBILE STEALTH

MGS Mobile is a complete surprise and a delight to any Metal Gear fan. Mobile looks very much like MGS on the PlayStation. It plays quite similarly too, except Snake's movement is tied to the cumbersome touchpad. Once you get used to the awkward scheme, you'll find that this game is carefully crafted to maximize the cell phone's limited ability to act as a game controller.

The game isn't a very big. The plot takes place sometime after Shadow Moses and before the Manhattan Incident. Not surprisingly Snake finds himself inside an enemy compound seeking to destroy the unfinished Metal Gear that lies within. You'll be talking mostly with Otacon and a Mysterious Dr. Reed who is Snake's scientist/informant on the inside. Most dialogue takes place on the Codec that features character stills from MGS2. There's no animation or voice acting—probably a virtue considering it's a cell-phone game. The plot doesn't add much at all to the Metal Gear saga, and the game itself is a quick Metal Gear fix at best. Forgettable, but certainly worthy of the Metal Gear moniker.

### SNEAKY SNAKE

Mobile *feels* like a true Metal Gear game. Snake comes equipped with his usual set of techniques: He can hug walls, break necks, shoot guns, throw grenades, and even enter first-person mode. A unique feature added to this title is Snake's camouflage. It changes when you take a color sample using an in-game camera or, if you have a camera phone, you can take samples from real life pictures.

The camouflage allows Snake to blend with his surroundings—a useful tactic considering Snake's limited maneuverability. There are also color-coded check points that require Snake to assume a certain color to proceed. In all, the camouflage feature is interesting, but I didn't really use it that much, I had too much fun killing enemies to think about it.

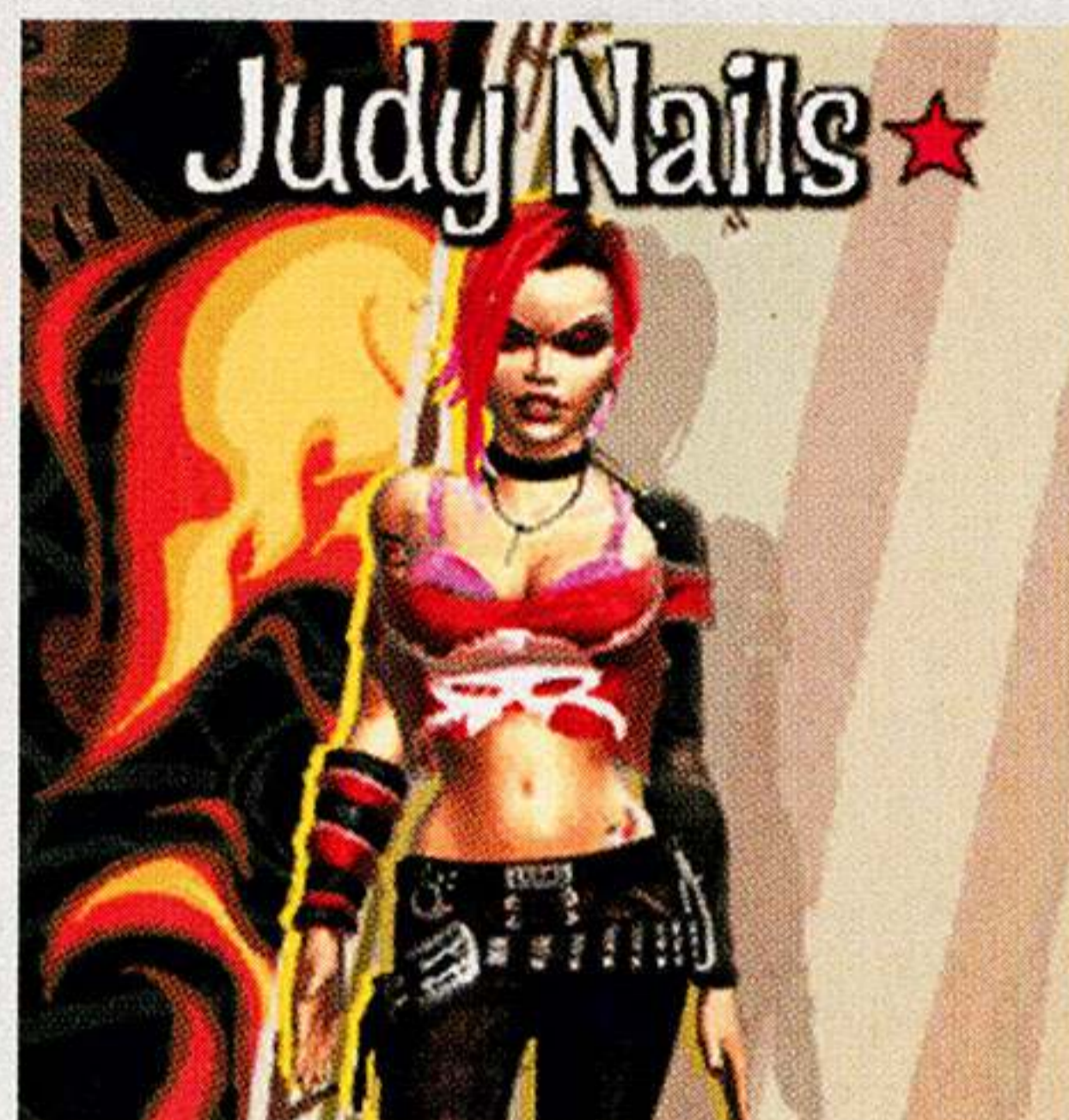
### GUNS ON THE RUN

Metal Gear Mobile doesn't add much to the franchise; it mostly relies on conventions from other titles—such as the mysterious Codec interruptions and uninspired plot twists. As a Metal Gear game, MGS Mobile doesn't stand out, but as a cell-phone game it definitely pushes the envelope. If you've got a phone that can run it, (I used an LG vx9400) and can spare five dollars or so to get it, I recommend it fully. Don't bother waiting for a PSN release, though, because MGS Mobile isn't worth playing at home; it's best for long bus rides or boring meetings.—Ben Karl

## GUITAR HERO III MOBILE

**Mobile**

■ Publisher: Hands-On Mobile  
■ Release Date: Available now



**G**uitar Hero III is coming to your mobile phone, think you can handle it? With 15 of your favorite tracks from the console versions of Guitar Hero II and Guitar Hero III, two different gameplay modes, and three different venues, you are guaranteed to be rocking for a long time. Guitar Hero III Mobile's set list will grow larger with three new songs released every month, meaning the longer you play the more songs you will have.

There are also two different game play modes, Career and Quickplay. Career Mode is for you serious rockers, choose your difficulty mode, then your character and now you are ready to wow that fans. Quickplay Mode is for when you are on the go and only have time for a quick song or two. Also, unlock three new types of guitars as you go, accomplish 16 achievements, and show off your skills to other players across the country. With all the fun and style of Guitar Hero, you are guaranteed a great time.—George Jones







Pictured from left to right: LCDR Mark Simon, ETCM Eric Olis, BMC Dan Ames, BM1 Michael O'Connell,  
\*EN1 Jason Fetterman, EM2 Mark DiPietro, LT Lewis Baker, MM2 Sergio Rodriguez

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# Where Are





# They Now?



Time and time again, *GamePro* readers ask us: "What's happening with *Gears of War 2*? Where is the next *Resistance*?" Well, guys, this story is for you. *GamePro's* editors spent the cold, bleak, post-holiday months scouring our sources for new dirt on the biggest games of 2008. Many of the following games are locked up tighter than Fort Knox, but that didn't stop us from digging up some of the best-kept secrets in the video game industry. Welcome to the next level.

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# Resistance 2



Two campaign modes and 60-player battles—now that's a next-gen shooter!

In an alternate universe where World War II never happened, and the optimism of our own 1950s is replaced with an interstellar invasion and a horrifying virus that recruits new alien troops from humanity itself, it takes a rare breed to make a lasting difference. Luckily, with its huge-scale online modes and two different campaign structures, *Resistance 2* is shaping up to be the PlayStation 3's knockout punch for 2008.

*Resistance 2*'s science fiction picks up right where 2006's PS3 launch title left off. Army Ranger Sgt. Nathan Hale is surrounded, taken into custody, and absorbed into the Sentinels, a group of humans who all possess some form of resistance (get it? "Resistance"?) to the vile Chimeran virus. Though actual play begins in Iceland, the true meat of the single-player campaign gets cooking when you reach San Francisco and witness a massive aerial invasion that attacks both coasts of the United States at once.

## What We Know

Most shooter sequels tear out of the gate with many of the same creature designs and textures that defined the original. But Insomniac claims to be giving damn near everything a makeover, bestowing the kind of fine, up-close detail to creatures and environments that the first game—let's be honest here—sometimes lacked. Expect more than just frightening new versions of Hybrids and Leapers, too. One new enemy is the cloaked Chameleon, a sinister figure who slices humans to ribbons with his vicious claws and remains virtually undetectable until he runs through smoke or water. Insomniac is also putting a new emphasis on the breed of huge-scale boss encounters that were missing in the first game, so you can look forward to craning your head to take in the unearthly sight of hundred-foot-tall Chimeran monsters. Scaling enemy intelligence promises to grant nearby foes formidable tactics without subjecting you to ridiculous insta-kill head shots from miles away.

Huge-scale boss encounters will serve as action set pieces during the single-player campaign, a feature mostly missing from the original *Resistance*.



This new solo adventure across the varied cities, fields, and landmarks of the North American countryside promises to answer many nagging questions about the game's sly backstory, while raising many more in what creative director Ted Price says is "just the beginning of a deeper, more mysterious saga." But your tour of duty doesn't end there. Incredibly, a second full-length engagement puts you and seven comrades through an online co-op campaign that runs parallel to Nathan Hale's cinematic travails. Rather than put you in the shoes of another singular war hero, you'll choose from three class archetypes: the Soldier comes equipped with a fierce chaingun and an energy shield powered by his kill count; Special Ops agents pick off the infected with sniper rifles and stealth; and the Medic redistributes enemy health to deserving allies via a unique "Medicator" gun. As Ted Price puts it, "The character classes have been designed to support each other. Success will depend on players filling all three roles...though some gamers will love the challenge of trying to complete the co-op campaign using a team of eight Medics."

The huge scope and objective-based approach of the online cooperative mode won't place much emphasis on narrative progress as the solo campaign (Price calls this "story lite"), instead testing your squad with the fickle tides of battle, and even changing the world itself in crafty ways from one play-through to the next. Working as a team is always easier with friends, but matchmaking that teams people up based on where they are in the campaign should make putting together pick-up groups a breeze.

This team-centric campaign also serves another purpose: it'll prepare newcomers for the frenzied insanity of manic multiplayer battlefields that let a full 60 people blast the hell out of each other. To put that in perspective, 60 simultaneous players is over *three times* the number of players in a big Halo 3 match. To prevent these ambitious clashes from devolving into a mindless riot of arbitrary gunfire, each grand conflict breaks the masses into more intimate groups of four and eight. Each squad gets its own set of dynamic objectives as it makes its way through enormous battle zones punctuated with natural choke points and vital cover. Interesting, but risky—few games get mass-scale combat right. Will Resistance 2 be the game to finally nail enormous online battles?

CONTINUED ►



## HAVE YOU SEEN ME?

Name: BioShock 2

Last seen: Xbox 360, PC

Like air bubbles rocketing up from some deep sea chasm, rumors of a PS3 BioShock port float on and on. But there may be bigger fish to fry. Word is that BioShock creator Ken Levine stayed in Boston to work on his own mystery project, while his old teammates headed cross-country to handle a new BioShock game at 2K Marin. Oh, and get this: BioShock 2 may be a *prequel*, if industry scuttlebutt is to be believed. We're not entirely convinced, but we've heard crazier rumors. Either way, don't expect to hear anything about a new BioShock until 2009, at the earliest.



As in the first game, Resistance 2 features off-the-wall weapons that fuse alien and human technologies. Or as Insomniac's Ted Price puts it, "we didn't want to just give you five different flavors of the same gun."



### What We Don't Know

As exciting as all the currently available details are, there's no shortage of open questions. Ted Price says the team is "experimenting with significant changes to the health system, targeting, and inventory" that could dramatically alter the moment-to-moment decision to keep fighting, dive for cover, or scavenge for med-kits. Perhaps more troubling is the confirmed inclusion of vehicles, which opens up as many trapdoors as it does possibilities. Done well (see Halo 3), drivable vehicles can grant an appealing second layer of versatility and empowerment to any conflict. Done poorly (see Half-Life 2 and Crysis), vehicles can harm the pace and balance of a game, littering its levels with contrived blockades that exist solely to toss you from your ride and diminish your immersion. We'll have to wait and see how Team Insomniac handles this particular challenge, as vehicle combat wasn't a high point of the original game.

The biggest question marks, however, are saved for the multiplayer experience. Since the developers confirmed on a recent podcast that the class system that defines co-op will *not* carry over into competitive multiplayer, we're left wondering what they have in store for us beyond sheer head count and dynamic objectives. Remember, when it comes to online shooters, bigger isn't necessarily better. And in the wake of ground breakers like Call of Duty 4, gamers have come to expect some serious depth from their online action. All Insomniac's talk about building community into the design from the start will continue to ring a bit hollow until we hear detailed specifics.

### GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

Resistance 2 will be what Resistance 1 should have been.

1. **Two full campaigns and huge multiplayer modes.** It shouldn't be a trade-off of quantity over quality, either, as Insomniac boasts a strong track record of thoughtful, fun-focused game design.
2. **For all its blemishes, the first Resistance was one of the few PS3 launch titles worth playing.** With more time to polish, and no hardware launch deadlines to stress over, Resistance 2 is in the development sweet spot.
3. **A huge, thriving online community.** With a large community still religiously playing the first game, we expect online co-op and team play will be a starring attraction for Resistance 2.



The Chimera launch a surprise pincer attack on a shattered United States in the opening moments of Resistance 2. This new powered armor also suggests that the Chimeran invaders are learning—and fast.



# Gears of War 2



Epic's tactical shooter gears up for round two.

**G**ears of War was a truly epic success for Microsoft and the Xbox 360. Gears enjoyed plenty of early buzz, but it surprised critics by going on to sell some five million copies in just over a year. For a game console that resides in only 16 million homes, that's an impressive, almost Halo-sized achievement. Now Epic and Microsoft are secretly planning to unleash Gears of War 2 for the Xbox 360. And though details are still scarce, *GamePro* has a few early leads.

## What We Know

Well, we know for a fact that it's in development. How do we know? Sorry—that's privileged information. But it's not much of a shocker when you remember that Epic has hinted at a Gears sequel since early 2007. But will it be an Xbox 360 exclusive? Early signs point to "yes." *Newsweek* game columnist N'Gai Croal has done his own investigation on the future Gears of War sequels, coming to the tentative conclusion that "Microsoft's publishing rights to Gears of War extend only through Gears of War 2, so we'd expect Gears of War 3 to ship on the PS3, PC, and 360." We can't confirm those claims, officially at least, but that premise does line up neatly with industry scuttlebutt. Epic is among the most powerful independent developers currently operating, and they can afford to play Sony and Microsoft off one another in order to earn top dollar for their system-selling games.

Another popular theory is that Microsoft may attempt to flat-out buy Epic, netting the Gears franchise and Epic's lucrative Unreal 3.0 technology in one fell swoop. "Well, we're worth at least twice what BioWare and Pandemic are," Epic President Mike Capps told *GamePro*, in a reference to EA's high-profile developer purchase. "I don't think anybody can afford us." Considering that dozens of games are built upon Epic's Unreal 3.0 engine, Capps makes a compelling point. "Right now we have the best of both worlds with Microsoft anyway... They fund our games, give us huge media and marketing." So a deal seeing Microsoft buying Epic is out? "It doesn't make a lot of sense for either side," Capps explained.

## What We Don't Know

The bad news? Don't bet on Gears of War 2 harnessing Epic's next-generation Unreal 4.0 engine, which will be a full generation beyond the graphics in the first Gears. Epic CEO Mark Rein told *The Guardian* that Unreal 4.0 "will require a new generation of hardware to power it"—i.e., not the Xbox 360—and its development is currently in an early one-man research phase. The good news? Rein said that the venerable Unreal 3.0 engine is getting overhauled with new capabilities and graphical upgrades, and it's logical to assume those performance improvements will trickle down to Gears 2. Bigger, better, faster, more? We'll have to wait and see.

## GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

Gears of War 2 will improve upon many of the faults of the first game.

1. **A more fleshed-out online experience.** The matchmaking and lobby system in the first game left much to be desired, and we expect Epic will make drastic improvements.
2. **The story line will finally kick into gear.** Storytelling was not a strong point of the first Gears, and the game ended just when the story started to pick up steam.

CONTINUED ►

## Epic's Secret War

Gears of War was once a very different game. Epic's Cliff Bleszinski shares the secrets with *GamePro*.

"Gears of War actually started off very, very similar to *Enemy Territory: Quake Wars*. Coming off our work on *Unreal Tournament*, Gears of War was planned to be a huge-scale, two-team, war-based multiplayer game with very little single player gameplay. There were two sides: Humans, as well as aliens that looked like pale-faced space mutants. It was vehicle-based, a very-large scale game.

The funny thing was, a lot of what Gears of War began as evolved into the *Onslaught* mode in *Unreal Tournament 2004*. [Early versions of Gears] also had character classes and other crazy ideas. But I think once we saw the first true Unreal 3.0 technology test, we realized that a third-person single-player game made the most sense. A game with smaller combat distances, so you could get up close and see the detail on a character's skin. So Gears of War started on a very, very large scale and ultimately turned into the more intimate game it is today."





# Grand Theft Auto IV

GamePro's the first to play the biggest game of 2008.




**P**laying a Grand Theft Auto game before release is almost unheard of—Rockstar protects it babies closely. So you can imagine how it felt to dive into Grand Theft Auto IV a full three months before it hits the public. It's like Christmas morning all over again!

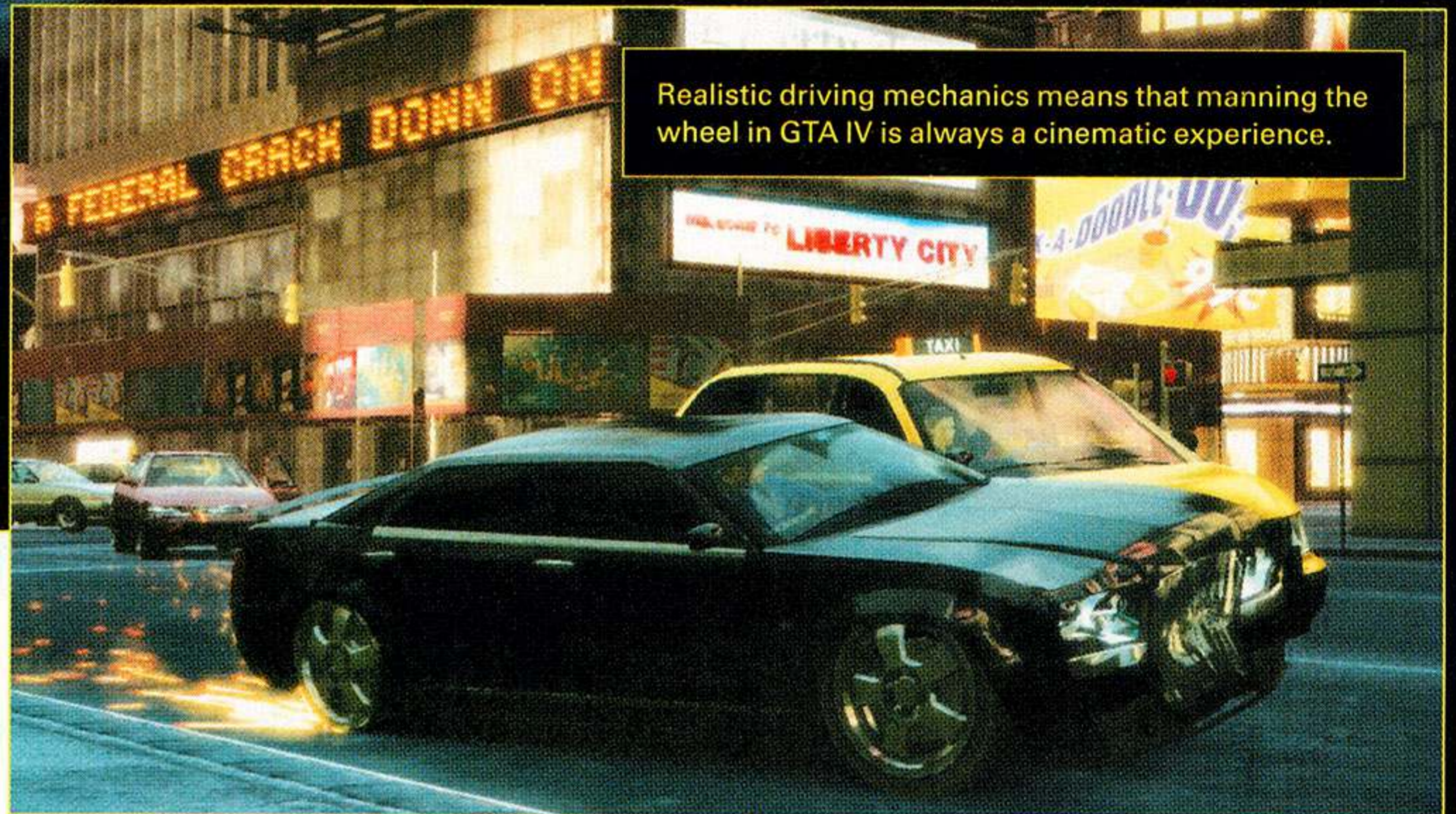
Grand Theft Auto IV's goals are quite ambitious. It seeks to redefine open-world gaming and present Grand Theft Auto in the way we've always wanted. We tolerated the flaws of the GTA series—the gritty graphics, the low-res textures, the clunky character models—for so long simply because the core gameplay was that good.

But with GTA IV, it's a whole different ball game. This is the game that GTA fans have been waiting for, not just in terms of densely detailed graphics, but as a complete video-game package. For an hour and a half, we romped through the high-def streets of Liberty City, plowing through police barricades and mowing down scores of lowlifes. Here's how it all went down.

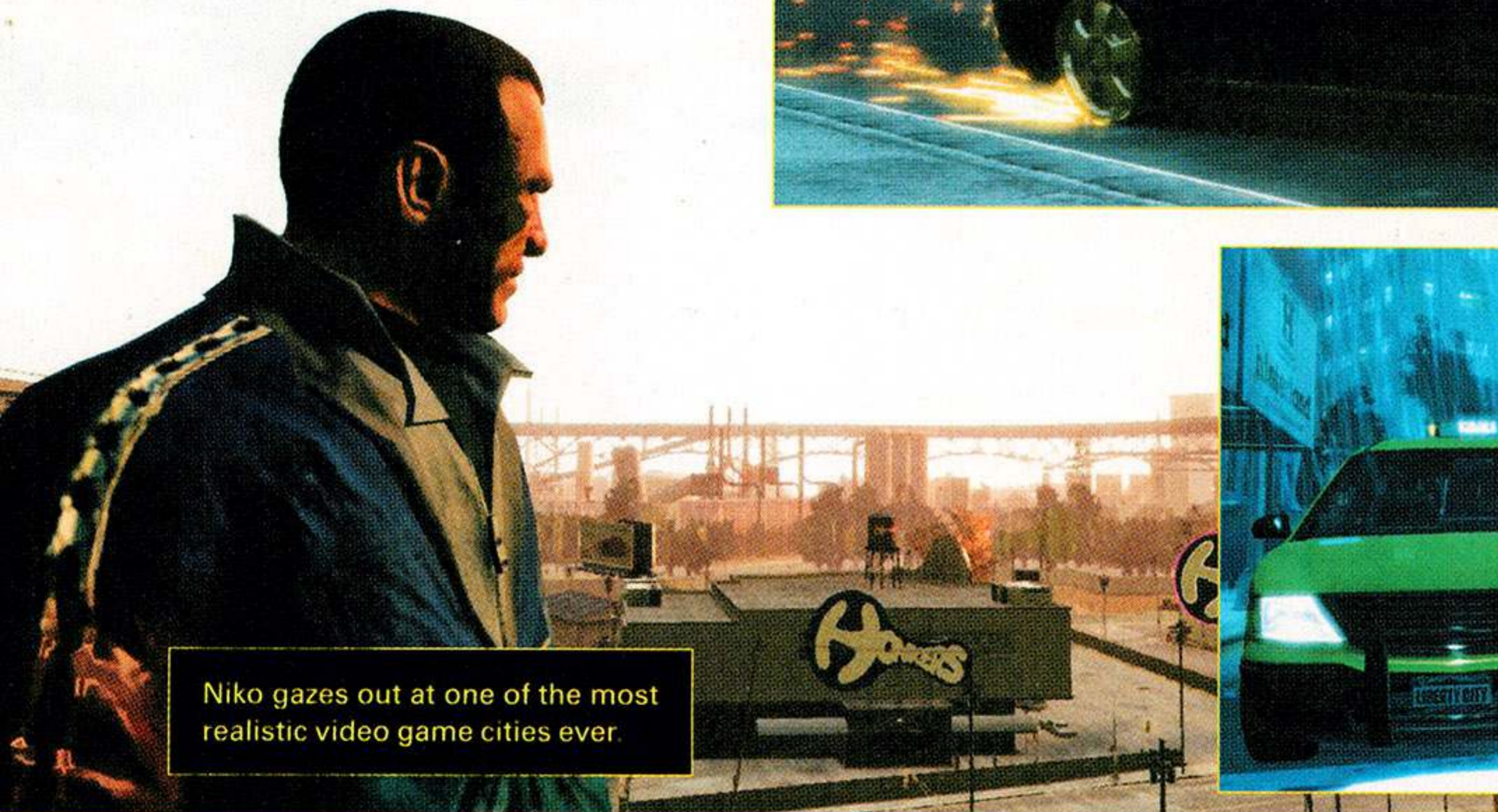
## Let Me Drive!

With controller in hand, I took a moment to take in the sights and sounds of Liberty City. Passing cars, an occasional horn honk, and some rundown New York-style apartments flesh out the decaying atmosphere as I rotate the camera 360 degrees around Niko. OK, enough of that. Time to see what this baby can do.

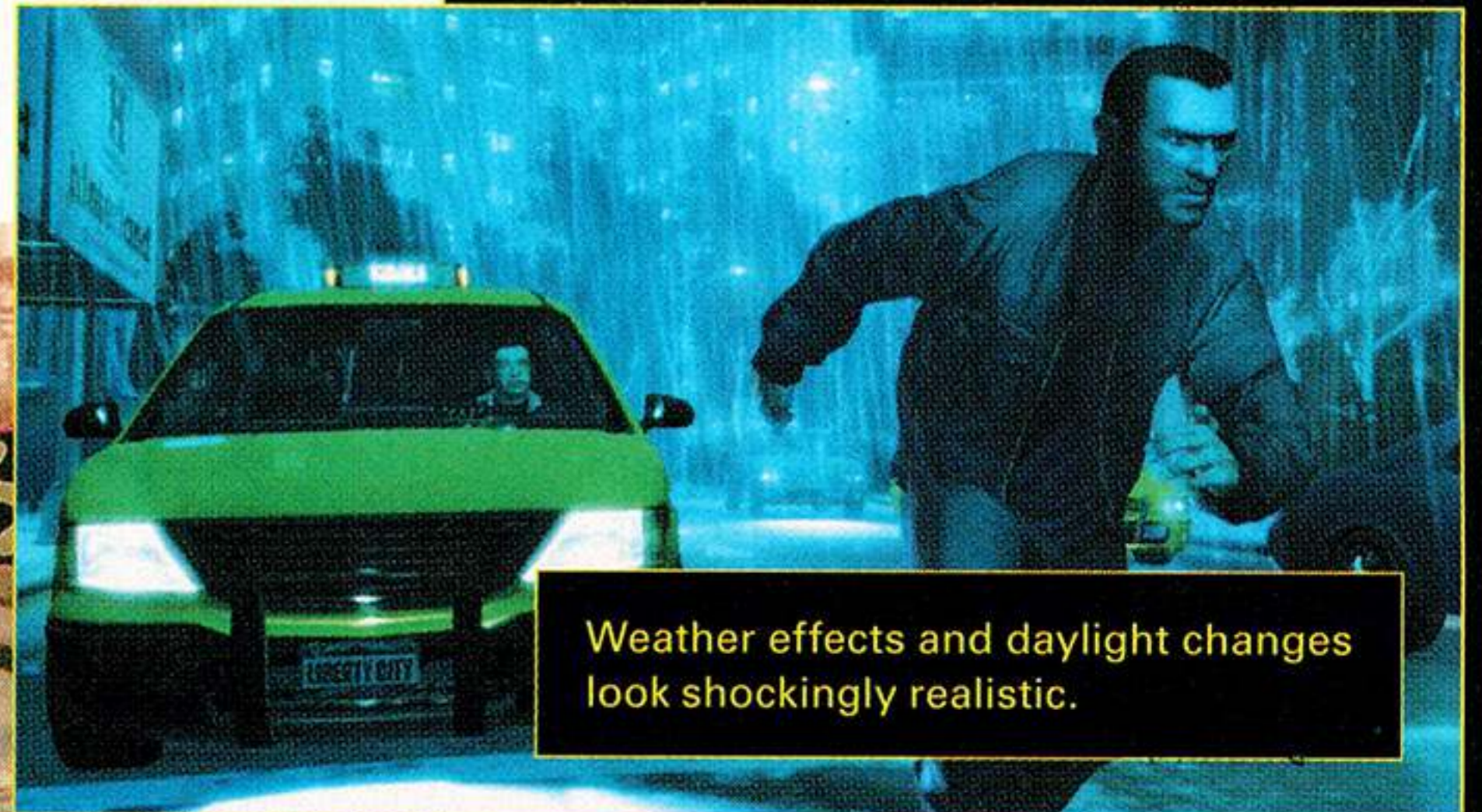
It's time for my first carjack. With a quick tap of the Y button, Niko yanks an unsuspecting driver out of his sedan and hops in. While driving, the car handles differently—noticeably heavier and more realistic than past games. It's a satisfying feeling. When I turn around the first corner, the suspension swings subtly to the left, much like a car in real life. What's more, GTA IV seems to be custom-made for stunt drivers. By holding the B button, you can flip between slick cinematic camera angles, from wheel-cams to long zoom shots. Clicking the left thumbstick triggers a slow-motion camera effect, perfect for reveling in hairpin 90 degree turns and devastating collisions. In-vehicle shooting is vastly better, too: you can aim in any direction, making drive-by shootings far more accurate and effective.



Realistic driving mechanics means that manning the wheel in GTA IV is always a cinematic experience.



Niko gazes out at one of the most realistic video game cities ever.



Weather effects and daylight changes look shockingly realistic.



After five minutes of knocking down street lamps amidst a spray of sparks, it was time to accept a mission. The handy in-car GPS led me to a nearby meet-up. In this instance, I was watching over a deal that quickly heads south. Pulling out a standard 9mm pistol, I tried out the new combat and targeting system for the first time. I crouched (boosting my accuracy) and pulled the left trigger, which locked onto a nearby enemy. A few yanks of the right trigger and the baddie went down for good.

With two remaining foes, I played around with the precision-aiming control via the right analog stick. Once locked on, a slight vertical movement with the stick keys you in for a head shot, and one pull of the trigger dropped him to the ground. The third enemy collapsed after I fired a shot to his leg, and then I finished him off as he tried to crawl for safety. Three scum bags down, none to go.

## The GTA Combat You've Always Wanted

Often criticized for its awkward performance in past games, GTA IV makes some serious strides in its combat interface. Taking subtle cues from games like Gears of War and Rainbow Six Vegas, Niko has a versatile cover system at his disposal. It's a remarkably fluid way to hide behind low walls, couches, and boxes, and Niko will dramatically slide into position if you have a running start. A quick button-tap latches Niko onto a nearby wall. Peering out to the left, you can lock onto an enemy and pull the left trigger to pop out, zoom in a bit further with a click of the right analog stick, and unloaded a burst of Uzi fire. The effect is surprisingly dramatic, with the roaring sound of gun-

fire given the shooting mechanic a meatier, more substantial feel. There's still one thug left standing, so I took him out with a new blind-fire option. Unlike Gears and Vegas, GTA IV's blind fire mode is actually helpful—the bullet spread is loose, but it's usually enough to safely drop a target.

GTA IV's combat is far more versatile and realistic than before, lending some of the firefights an almost epic quality. Take the next mission, where I led Niko to a high-rise building to get a bird's-eye view of a construction area. Using the sniper rifle, I made quick work of a few "workers," then headed down to street level to finish off the rest of the crew. The sniping controls will seem familiar to GTA: San Andreas players, but what happened next was far more impressive. On the ground, under fire from the crooked construction workers, I dashed nimbly from cover to cover, cooking grenades, popping foes with shotgun shells, and even taking down a hovering chopper with the newly redesigned rocket launcher. Once the carnage was over, the ground was littered with glowing, color-coded items representing cash, health, and ammo.

## Taking it All In

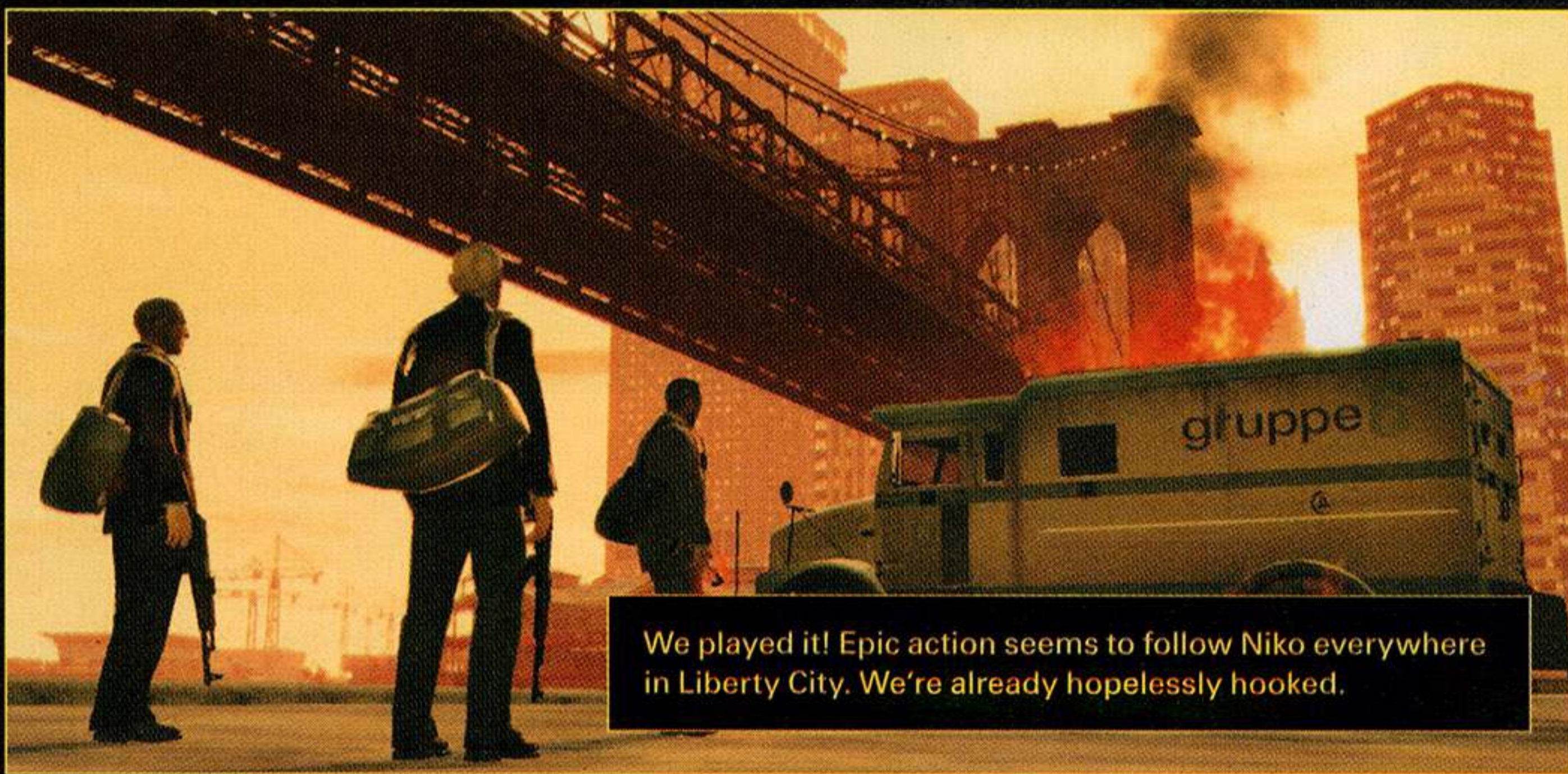
There's nothing like a stroll through Liberty City, and even a quick hour and a half of rummaging through the city was more than enough time to get hooked. There's so much more to the game than I could possibly even attempt to describe here, but rest assured that everything is as you might expect it to be in the evolution of GTA. Next month, you'll see for yourself exactly what we're talking about.

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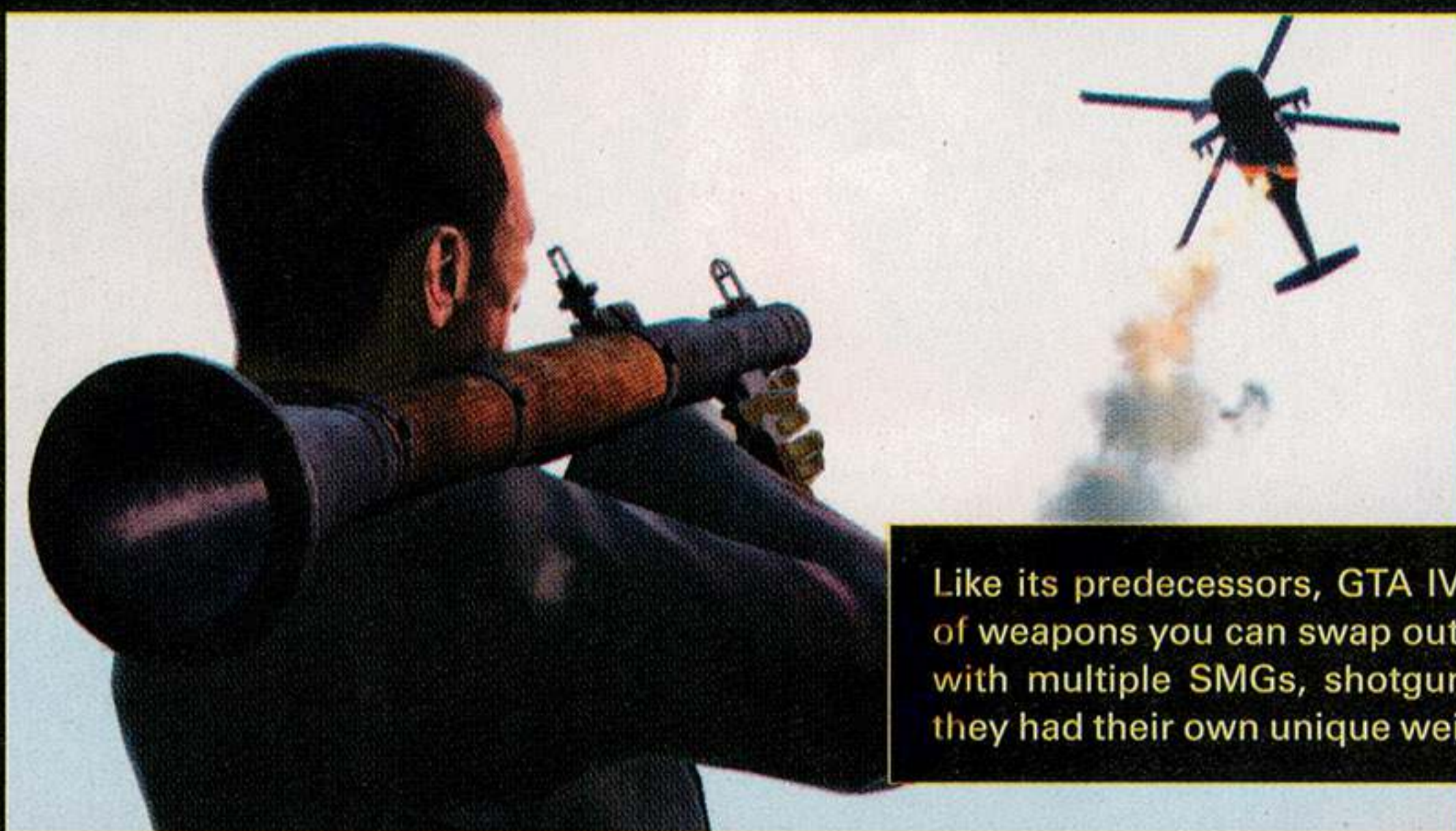
## GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

Grand Theft Auto IV will be the biggest game of 2008.

- 1. Huge multiplayer focus.** Details are locked up in camp Rockstar, but we suspect multiplayer will be bigger and better than the tacked-on modes found in the PSP games.
- 2. Downloadable content is already under way.** Rockstar's promised DLC for the Xbox 360 will help the game grow through 2008 and beyond. No word on PS3 DLC yet, but we're betting on it.



We played it! Epic action seems to follow Niko everywhere in Liberty City. We're already hopelessly hooked.



Like its predecessors, GTA IV includes a whole host of weapons you can swap out at any time. We played with multiple SMGs, shotguns, and auto-rifles, and they had their own unique weight and feel.



## HAVE YOU SEEN ME?

Name: Splinter Cell Conviction  
Last seen: Xbox 360, PC

Well, it's certainly been a bumpy ride for ol' Sammy Fisher these last few months. Ubisoft has been working to make Conviction a real departure from the previous Splinter Cell games, partly due to the success of Assassin's Creed and partly due to so-so response from his last outing. But the Xbox 360-only Conviction has been quietly postponed, likely because of some major changes to the gameplay including a new open-world style. Conviction's goal is to bring this shadow-creeping assassin into the sunlight for the first time, meaning Fisher infiltrates and fights in broad daylight. It's weird to see a bearded Sam Fisher fling chairs and desks at foes Borne Identity-style. Then again, if it worked for Altair...



# God of War III



Will David Jaffe's original vision make the cut?

**W**hen we last saw Kratos, he was scaling Mt. Olympus with an army of skyscraper-tall Titans and a chip on his shoulder. Betrayed by the gods one too many times, Kratos has sworn a blood oath to assassinate the all-powerful Zeus and bring Olympus crashing down. But Kratos's ultimate success may not depend on swords and sorcery, but a mortal game designer known as David Jaffe.

## What We Know

Sony Santa Monica, the studio responsible for the first two God of War games, is working on the third game right now. But with series mastermind David Jaffe leaving Sony, and God of War II creative lead Cory Barlog heading off to Hollywood, we're left wondering who's sharpening old Kratos's blades these days. Both Jaffe and Barlog were widely seen as the key reasons for the games' success; they provided the creative core.

Even though Jaffe has moved on to start his own studio, the Salt Lake City-based Eat Sleep Play, he's not done dreaming about God of War III just yet. "Five months before I left Sony, I wrote what I consider to be a fantastic story for God of War III," Jaffe told *GamePro* in a recent phone interview. "Seriously, it is *awesome*." Fair enough. But with Jaffe out of Sony and God of War III in the hands of other designers, will his vision ever see the light of day? "I expressed to the head of Sony Santa Monica that I would love to see [my] story be the story featured in God of War III," Jaffe explained, "but I don't know where it is right now." Does Jaffe's dream God of War III story line deal with the fall of the gods, as hinted in God of War II's closing scenes? "You don't...uh...I'm not gonna...ahhh, it's just *f\*\*\*ing awesome*," Jaffe offered. Well, you can't blame us for trying.

## What We Don't Know

There are no specifics yet on God of War III's new technology and graphical prowess. But if God of War II was anything to judge by, God of War III should be one of the finest-looking new-gen games available. Fresh details on new gameplay mechanics and weapons are also top-secret at this point. But because God of War III is a Sony-produced game, we're betting that Sixaxis motion controls will factor in somehow.

Fabulous graphics and gameplay are pretty much a given; for most gamers, The Big Question is whether God of War III's story line will measure up. For his part, Jaffe is open to working with Sony to see his original vision through. "If they want to work with Eat Sleep Play, contributing to the God of War III story would be a lot of fun," Jaffe said. Maybe Sony just needs a little divine intervention.

## GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

The triumphant return of Kratos may have to wait until 2009 or—gulp—2010.

- 1. Key details are still being decided.** Jaffe and Barlog made God of War what it is, but they're long gone. The search for a new lead designer begins!
- 2. Even Jaffe doesn't know anything.** If the creator of God of War doesn't know the answers, who does?



The final scenes of God of War II show an Olympus under siege, with an epic battle shaping up between the Titans and the surviving gods.





# Fallout 3

Life after Oblivion rules.

PS3

Xbox 360

PC



This big boy is the Behemoth, an abomination borne of the radioactive filth that now coats every crevice of Washington, D.C. Repeated nuclear blasts may be your only hope for survival.

**B**ethesda Softworks's RPG masterpieces like *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*, captivated a generation of gamers with its sprawling world and lifelike characters. Now the same studio is back to resurrect a genre classic: *Fallout*. Set in the same post-apocalyptic world as its predecessors, *Fallout 3* is setting up to deliver a megaton of black humor and RPG action to the Xbox 360, PS3, and PC this fall.

## What We Know

Where *Oblivion* fumbled a bit in bringing swordplay and magic spells together into a sleek combat system, *Fallout 3* seems to have a key advantage: its combat is naturally simpler, being primarily based around guns. A lot of guns, it would seem. We confirmed submachine guns, assault carbines, pistols, flamethrowers, rifles, lasers, and even a miniature atomic bomb launcher. Despite the first- and third-person combat, *Fallout 3* isn't a formal first-person shooter. It's a hybrid play style, giving you the freedom to take potshots at close-range enemies or queue up targeted attacks that can cripple, disarm, or outright decapitate enemy mutants. Other enemies are less...human, and you'll need to find ways to hamstring them quickly and efficiently. Giant ants, for instance, lose control if you target their antennae.

The combat might be different, but *Oblivion* players will still feel right at home in *Fallout 3*'s dark world. You still have the power to control every aspect of your character's abilities and moral choices, and you're free to explore the vast wastelands of Washington, D.C. as you see fit. Just like *Oblivion*, there is no "right" way to play *Fallout 3*: you can betray friends, start quests in any order you choose, and generally feel free to follow your gut instincts in both combat and questing. We've also finally answered a lingering question we've long had about *Fallout 3*. No, you can't become mutated by the lingering radioactive debris and gain superhuman powers. If you soak up too many gamma rays, you'll just get sick and die. But you can fight the corrosive effects of radiation by slurping up fresh water from puddles, fire hydrants, and—ick—toilets.

## What We Don't Know

One of *Oblivion*'s greatest charms was its teeming, vibrant world—the citizens of Tamriel wandered the streets, went to work, and slept in beds just like normal people. *Fallout 3* is a different beast. Because almost everyone is already dead, the few survivors are left to wallow in their own madness and crepulence. Whether *Fallout 3*'s bleak, almost hopeless setting will turn off *Oblivion* veterans remains an open question, but we're heartened to see that a streak of dark gallows humor runs deep in the game.

Other mysteries include the true nature of Perks, which grant highly specialized abilities but are rarely earned. The original *Fallout* games also featured an elaborate Karma system that tracked your actions and assigned appropriate consequences (killing children, for instance, would signal bounty hunters to pursue you). It's unknown how far Bethesda is willing to push the envelope with *Fallout 3*, but last we heard, they were still debating whether to include children as non-playable characters.

CONTINUED ►

## GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

*Fallout 3* will be the new home for *Oblivion* players.

- 1. Rich production values and a cinematic scope.** *Oblivion* is already one of the better-looking new-gen games, and *Fallout 3* pushes that technology to the bleeding edge. Faster load times are also promised.
- 2. A huge, open world where you can do (almost) anything.** Like its spiritual predecessor, *Oblivion*, *Fallout 3* is so big you could lose yourself in it for months.

**MISSING**

**HAVE YOU SEEN ME?**  
Name: *Mass Effect 2*  
Last seen: Xbox 360

Well, the secret's out—fresh off its acclaimed Xbox 360 debut, *Mass Effect* is definitely heading to the PC. And now that developer BioWare is officially part of the EA conglomerate, we're taking this as a sign that *Mass Effect 2* won't be an Xbox 360 exclusive. The evidence is there: The upcoming PC port, plus the fact that EA typically avoids console exclusives, preferring to launch on all systems at once. But platform status aside, we know for a fact that *Mass Effect 2* is coming. How? Well, BioWare's top talent have described *Mass Effect* as a planned trilogy since day one. And with *Mass Effect*'s climactic ending revealing an entirely new threat to sentient life, we think we'll be hearing more about *Mass Effect 2* sooner as opposed to later.



# Killzone 2

The PS3's answer to Halo 3.



PS3

**G**orgeous. Gritty. Enormously violent. The original Killzone was a modest success story for the PlayStation 2, eeking out a fiercely loyal following despite its clumsy controls and technical glitches. The sooty look of the Killzone universe is extraordinary, and though the first game didn't live up to its stunning art direction, developer Guerilla Games is striving to make Killzone 2 the slam dunk it deserves. Luckily, Killzone 2 shows serious promise.

Taking a lead from games like Call of Duty, Killzone 2 aims to immerse you in the action from a front-lines perspective. The battered, retrofitted rifles look like they were ripped straight out of the new *Battlestar Galactica*—no laser guns or force fields here, folks—and the villainous Helghast make for menacing foes as they defend their toxic home world from a massive airborne invasion by the human ISA forces.

## What We Know

Some of Killzone 2's biggest innovations may lie in its technology. The final version is expected to run at a smooth 30 frames and top out at 720p, and include anti-aliasing and post-processing filters for a nice grungy look. On the gameplay front, we know that environmental hazards play a major role in the minute-to-minute action. These aren't just pretty weather effects, but obstacles that will influence your shooting and strategy, even online. We've already seen enemy lighting turrets, but we've also heard examples such as fast-moving sandstorms that sweep in to briefly obscure enemy troops or interfere with sniper fire.

Developer Guerrilla Games is also known to be working particularly hard on crafting an online mode that will stand toe-to-toe with heavyweights Halo 3 and Call of Duty 4, tying into Killzone.com and possibly Home. On their blog, the developers claim to be working on "rewards and ranking" for online play as well as an online-only multiplayer beta à la Halo 3.

## What We Don't Know

Despite shots of high-tech tanks invading the Helghast home world in conference videos, vehicle combat is still a major question mark. Will vehicles be restricted to the single-player campaign? Will they be included at all? Guerilla Games isn't saying. Story line details are virtually nonexistent, though we do know that a few characters from the past games are likely to return.

## GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

This 'zone may not open in 2008.

- 1. Updates are few and far between.** Despite being in development since the PS3's 2005 announcement, Killzone 2 is more vague and mysterious than Resistance 2. It needs to be good—Sony is struggling for an answer to Halo, and Killzone 2 might be the ticket.
- 2. Guerrilla Games is new to next-gen.** The studio's only other big game is the original Killzone, and that was a cult hit at best. For a game as big as Killzone 2, they'll need plenty of time to tie down all the messy details.

**MISSING**



## HAVE YOU SEEN ME?

Name: Call of Duty 5

Last seen: Xbox 360, PS3, PC

Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare earned its stripes in 2007, winning scores of awards and temporarily unseating Halo 3 as the top dog of online warfare. So what's up with Call of Duty 5? Details are scarce, but we have a few early leads. Treyarch, the developers of the so-so COD3, are back in the saddle as part of a staggered development plan shared with COD4 developer Infinity Ward. Before the holidays, a job posting on Treyarch's website called for a level designer who is "a fan of World War II shooters." That note led some analysts to believe that Call of Duty 5 may head back in time to World War II, a shift from Call of Duty 4's modern setting. Others have speculated that COD5 will hop forward in time to a futuristic setting. We'll just cross our fingers and hope for the best...and pray that Treyarch has the steady hand of Infinity Ward to help guide them into this battle.

Capturing the toxic world of Helghan may be a simple task compared to getting Killzone 2 out in time for 2008. Can Guerrilla Games pull off a Christmas miracle?



# Resident Evil 5

28 Days Later meets Dawn of the Dead.

PS3

Xbox 360

**R**esident Evil was the first game to succeed on the strength of its horrific atmosphere, with gamers battling zombies, skinless dogs, and other bioengineered abominations that were unleashed by a rogue bio-weapons firm. Resident Evil 4, however, re-wrote all the rules by switching to shooter-friendly camera angles, emphasizing marksmanship and weapon modification, and introducing a new organic horror in the form of the body-snatching Las Plagas parasite. Bucking nearly every expectation, RE4 is now widely considered the finest entry in the acclaimed series, despite having little in common with its predecessors. So with Resident Evil 5, stakes and expectations are running understandably high. RE5 will follow RE4's basic gameplay style, but it's the first series entry to premiere on the new-gen PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360.

## What We Know

Set some 10 years after the first Resident Evil, Chris Redfield again takes center stage in what appears to be the modern-day Caribbean. As in RE4, the local natives only *look* human; they're faster than zombies, and seem to attack with crude farming tools. RE5 will retain key play mechanics—a third-person view, the ability to shoot away incoming projectiles, and more refined hand-to-hand combat—from its predecessor, RE4. In an effort to jack up the realism (and the suspense), Capcom is implementing

realistic atmospheric conditions that simulate sunstroke-induced hallucinations, as well as other weather-based afflictions. The realism extends to the lighting scheme; your eyes take time to adjust when moving from bright sunlight to dark interiors, which will leave your vision impaired for several seconds...an eternity when you're surrounded by bloodthirsty killers.

In a 2007 issue of *Famitsu*, a report stated that RE5 "won't be ready for 2008," putting the game's release squarely in 2009...or beyond. Keep in mind RE4 was announced in 2002, but didn't arrive until 2005 as a GameCube exclusive.

## What We Don't Know

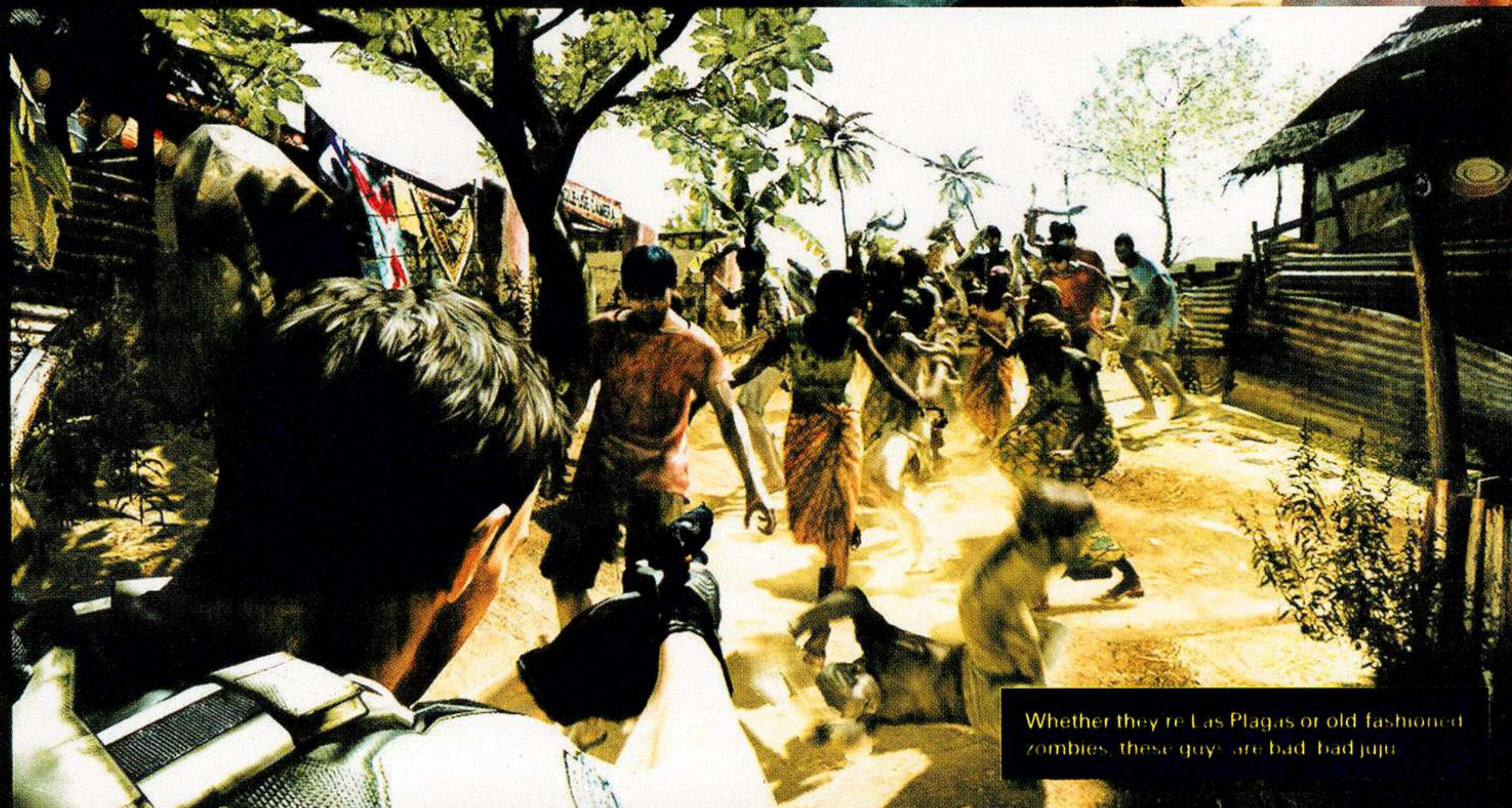
The plot is being kept under air-tight wraps—are these Las Plagas again, or a new form of zombie?—as is the identity of the mysterious character who is quickly shown via close-up at the end of the second trailer. Is it Sherry Birkin, the little girl from Resident Evil 2, whose father created Umbrella's G-Virus? We think so, but other questions from the trailer persist. Who is the big fella with the burlap sack over his head? Who is the guy with the megaphone? Is Umbrella involved? Does Voodoo or mysticism play a part? Then there's the nature of those "online components" that Capcom has hinted at. Online cooperative play would be grand, but we'd settle for some multiplayer-enabled mini games à la RE4's Mercenaries.

CONTINUED ►

## GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

It's looking like a very Evil 2009.

- 1. The lure of tradition.** Most of the official Resident Evil sequels have been released at the start of a new year. That could point to an early 2009 release...if we're lucky.
- 2. All eyes on the 2008 Tokyo Game Show.** Capcom's been all too quiet on this title, which leads us to expect a mind-blowing trailer or playable demo will surface this fall. But no promises!



Whether they're Las Plagas or old-fashioned zombies, these guys are bad, bad juju.





# Mario Kart Wii

Nintendo's combat racer takes its first spin on the Wii.

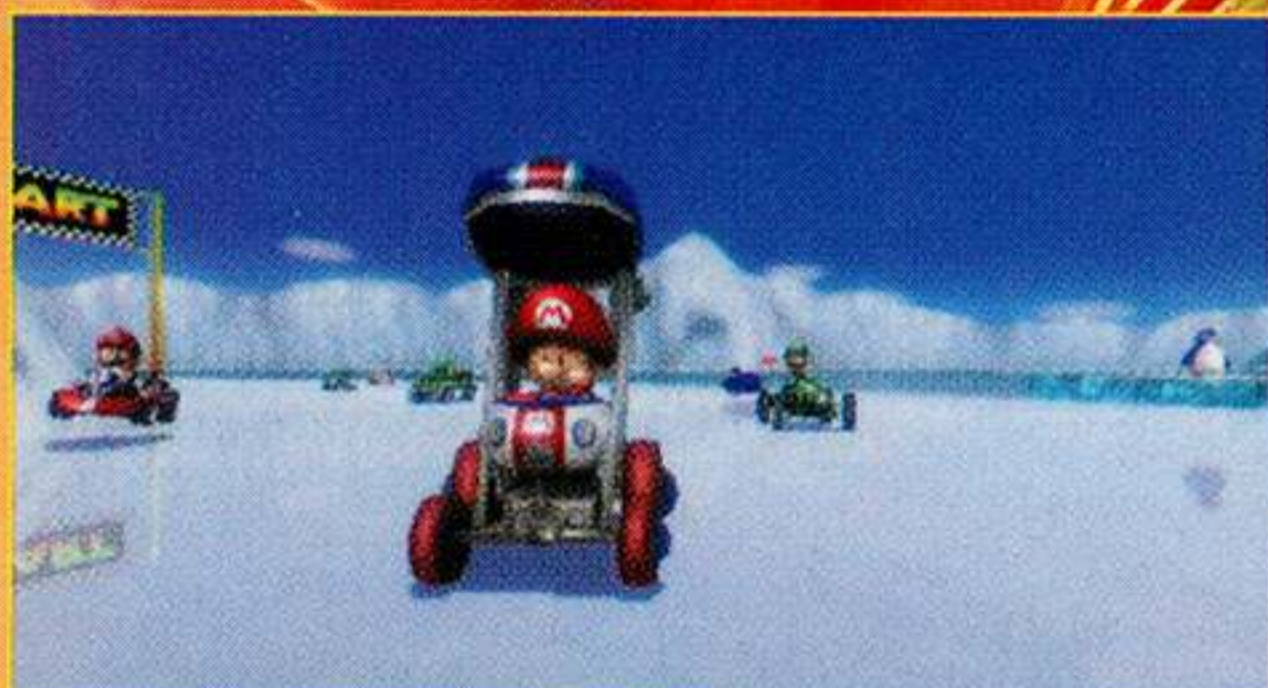
**M**ario Kart is the standard-bearer for mascot-based battle racing. The 16-year old franchise spawned a series of god-awful clones, but if it's got the plumber on the cover, you can be assured of fun multiplayer madness punctuated by flying turtle shells and banana peels.

## What We Know

Mario Kart Wii comes with a wheel peripheral that, like the Wii Zapper, is just a plastic casing designed to house the Wii Remote. The game apparently did away with the tag-team concept last seen in Double Dash on the GameCube, but that doesn't mean Mario Kart Wii won't add a few surprises. Mario and company are now able to ride motorbikes, which should be fun from a design perspective, if not a gameplay one. As with Smash Bros. Brawl, Mario Kart Wii will take advantage of the Wii's Wi-Fi capabilities, allowing for 12 players to race against each other online.

## What We Don't Know

We're not sure quite what to make of the control scheme. Other Wii racers (some even including similar wheel attachments) have struggled to harness the Wii's twitchy motion sensors. Will Mario Kart Wii allow players the option to use a traditional controller à la Super Smash Bros. Brawl? Nintendo's lips are sealed. Online communication is another sticking point. While Nintendo stresses safety in online communication, we're hoping Mario Kart will break the silence by allowing voice chat or text messages.



Can a baby stroller outpace a Harley? You'll find out in a few short months.

## GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

This Kart won't be a lemon.

1. **Nintendo excels at adapting its games for the Wii.** Witness Mario Galaxy and Mario Strikers, two games that embraced motion-sensitive controls with superior results.
2. **At its worst, Mario Kart is reliably fun.** Double Dash was the worst Mario Kart thus far, but was still laps ahead of the competition. We think the Wii version will keep the pace, even if it doesn't race ahead.

# Final Fantasy XIII

Square Enix steps toward action for its first PS3 role-playing game.



Meet Lightning, Final Fantasy XIII's protagonist. Story details are scant, but some believe she's part of a plan to overthrow the utopian world of Cocoon.

**A**s the quintessential Japanese role-playing game, Final Fantasy places an emphasis on elaborate heroes and villains, epic galaxy-saving quests, and persistent themes of light versus darkness. Each new generation of hardware has led to thrilling upgrades to art and gameplay, and lucky number XIII looks poised to extend that pattern.

## What We Know

Final Fantasy XIII is set on a pair of futuristic worlds: the desolate monster-plagued fixtures of Pulse, and the insular and theocratic world of Cocoon, a floating crystalline world created by god-like aliens called Farsi. The futuristic setting is a departure, but the combat is seeing even bigger changes. Real-time gunfights and blade battles evoke a hectic intensity more akin to action brawlers than sedate RPG tradition. You'll queue up commands for each fighter in your party, chaining them together for bonuses, and send opponents crashing into environmental obstacles for even greater damage. Meanwhile, a refillable gauge can be spent on "overclocking," which slows time for far-ranging feats of brutality.

For the moment, Final Fantasy XIII remains a firm PS3 exclusive. Its custom-made White Engine leverages the strengths of the PS3's CPU, making a future Xbox 360 port less likely. On the bright side, Square Enix is promising CGI-quality game visuals.

## What We Don't Know

We've seen a few characters, but their backgrounds, their quests, and the larger mythology remain gigantic blank spots. Meanwhile, particulars of the game's supposed online functionality are nowhere to be found.

## GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

We can't wait to play it when it comes out... in 2009.

1. **Square Enix will spare no expense in polishing their crown jewel.** Delays are nothing new to the Final Fantasy series—they're practically expected.
2. **The company is hesitant to confirm a 2008 release.** We do know that a playable demo will appear on the PlayStation Network before the game is shipped.





# Spore

Spore may not be evolving fast enough to land in 2008.



From swimming in tidal pools to interstellar exploration, you'll experience different phases of evolution in Spore.

**E**volution takes time. That's a lesson well learned with Spore, Will Wright's upcoming PC and DS simulation that pins the player as creator of nearly, well, everything. From swimming in the primordial pool to building intergalactic societies brick by brick, Spore uses an easy-to-use editing system that makes creature and level construction a snap. But its massive scope is a double-edged sword—Spore has been delayed again and again due to the immense challenge of creating what may be the ultimate "god game."

## What We Know

Spore *could* be one of those special games that breaks down age and gender barriers. But for that to happen, its execution must be impeccable. That may be why it keeps getting pushed back. Originally planned for a 2007 release, Spore is now said to launch in the first half of 2008. It is looking promising, though: we've played around with the tide pool and creature phases, and the creature creator is about as simple as it could be for such a mind-blowingly versatile game.

## What We Don't Know

No one has seen much beyond the first three phases of Spore, so until the curtain is raised on the rest of the game (including the civilization and space travel phases), we're not convinced that Spore will be in our hands anytime soon. With so much of the game still under lock and key, it's hard to believe that Spore is approaching completion.

## GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

Spore might not be the "big bang" EA's hoping for.

1. **PC gaming is in a steep decline.** With PC-centric studios now focusing on console projects, a console Spore may be crucial for success.
2. **The Will Wright factor.** Will Wright may be a gaming god, but his track record is hit or miss. The Sims was a mammoth success, but The Sims Online? A Titanic-sized bust.

# StarCraft II

The sequel to the best real-time strategy game ever created.



StarCraft II in 2008? Don't bet on it: Blizzard sets the bar at perfection, and StarCraft is their crown jewel.

**W**ith StarCraft II, Blizzard's goal is to recapture the tightly balanced real-time strategy perfection of the original game. You view the battlefield from a top-down perspective and control every facet of your space-faring army. To build a successful fighting force, you must divide your efforts between acquiring resources and building diverse military units.

## What We Know

It begins with a crucial visual upgrade from simple 2D sprites to striking 3D character models. Blizzard has confirmed that StarCraft II will look and feel similar to the original game, partly due to that game's enormous fan base and competitive following. Major changes to the winning StarCraft formula would be tantamount to changing the scoring system in baseball—it just ain't gonna happen. Though drastic gameplay shifts are out, evolution is most definitely in. StarCraft II will include many new vehicle and troop types, the most striking of which is the Protoss Mothership. The Mothership is the most expensive, powerful unit on the battlefield. It can warp the fabric of space and time to create a *Matrix*-like force field, stopping enemy projectiles dead in their tracks.

## What We Don't Know

All is quiet on the Zergling front. Besides the familiar units from the first game, no new details have been announced regarding the hive-mind Zerg race. Then there's that sticky release date situation. PC gamers want it *now*, but whether Blizzard gets StarCraft II out in 2008 is an open question.



## GAMEPRO'S PREDICTION:

StarCraft II will never appear on game consoles.

1. **Blizzard is first and foremost a PC studio.** Blizzard has a lousy history with console game development: half-hearted ports and cancellations abound. Consoles just aren't their scene.
2. **StarCraft demands the precision of a mouse and keyboard.** Keyboard shortcuts are crucial, and you can't just squeeze them onto a controller.



# THE CHEATER'S HALL OF FAME

GamePro and GamerHelp.com celebrate the cheating spirit with a collection of immortal codes, hacks, and exploits. *By the Editors of GamePro and GamerHelp.com*

**C**heating and video games have gone hand-in-hand since... well, forever. From tilting pinball gamers to prying out hidden data on DVDs, dedicated gamers are always looking for a new challenge to master. And master we will! This ingenuity has gone uncelebrated for far too long. The GamePro editors laboriously researched and recorded the most famous (and infamous!) cheats, exploits, and hacks in gaming history. Some of these bad boys are from the Golden Age of Gaming; others will work on your PS3 or Xbox 360.

RISE OF THE TRIAD

PC



## GOD MODE AND... DOG MODE?

Typing **GOD** in the interface accesses God Mode, which, aside from granting you temporary invulnerability, will also give you enemy-seeking projectiles that vaporize your opponents. Typing **DOG** will turn you into a cute little puppy (also invulnerable), who can charge up a violent bark to obliterate all opponents on the screen.

DOOM

PC



## WALK THROUGH WALLS

Typing **IDSPISPOPD** on the PC version of Doom will allow you to walk through walls, but what many people don't know is that **IDSPISPOPD** isn't just a garbled mess of letters. Legend has it that Doom's developers, id Software, made the code stand for "Smashing Pumpkins Into Small Piles Of Putrid Debris." Now that's what we'd call melancholy.



FINAL FANTASY VII

PS



# 7777 BATTLE DAMAGE

Attack your own character until his HP is somewhere close to, but above, 7777. Then return to a low-level part of the game and allow some low-level enemies to attack that character until he reaches 7777 HP. As long as your character maintains this amount of life, he'll always inflict a colossal 7777 damage on enemies. Win!

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

NES

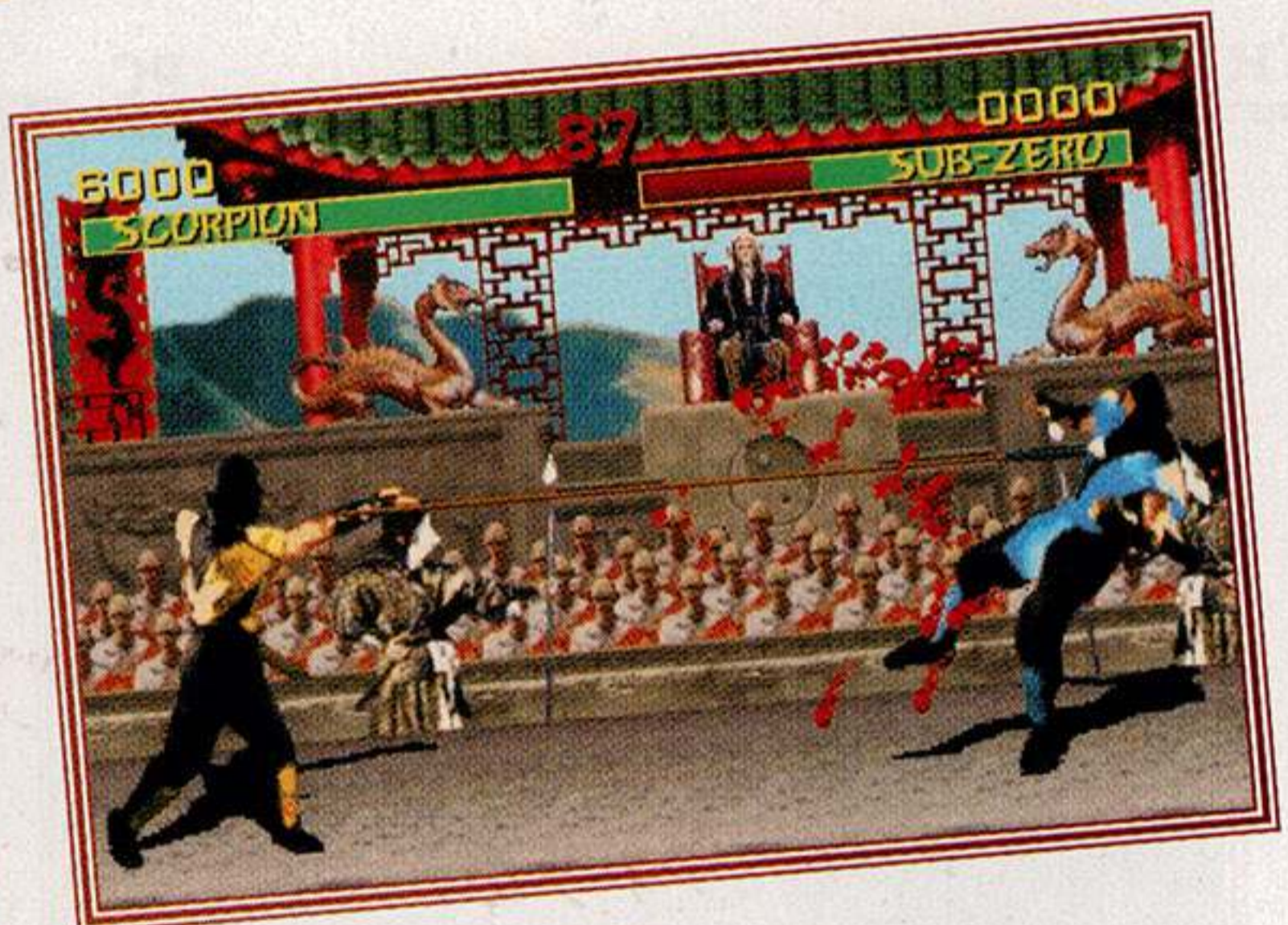


# INSTANT SECOND QUEST ACCESS

Enter *Zelda* as your character name to play the second quest without beating the first. The second quest is more difficult, with tougher enemies and dungeons, and finding access to these dungeons is brain-bashingly difficult.

MORTAL KOMBAT

GENESIS



# THE DULLARD CODE

The bigger, badder brother to the Blood Code, the discovery of this code is (partially) credited to longtime *GamePro* editor Dan Amrich. At the title screen, enter the code Down, Up, Left, Left, A, Right, Down. It unlocks a massive debug menu loaded with goodies: blood mode, infinite continues, and a host of other Easter eggs. Amusingly, the word *dullard* is defined as "a mentally dull person."

GRAND THEFT AUTO SERIES

PS2



# FLYING CARS

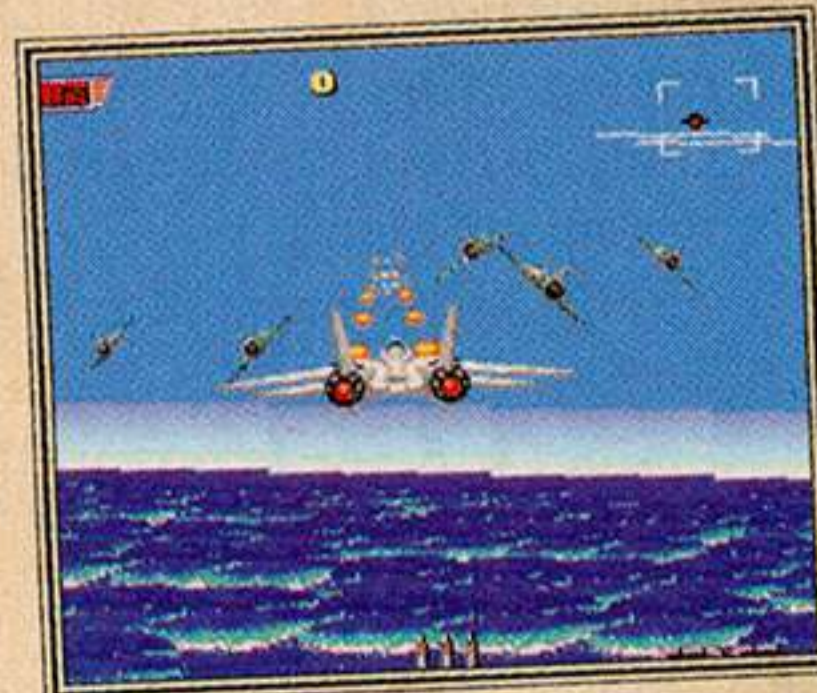
Enabling flying cars makes the madness of *GTA* reach a lofty new level. All codes are entered during normal gameplay.  
**GTAIII:** Press Right, R2, O, R1, L2, Down, L1, R1.  
**GTA Vice City:** Press Right, R2, O, R1, L2, Down, L1, R1.  
**GTA San Andreas:** Press □, Down, L2, Up, L1, O, Up, X, Left.

# THE EASIEST CHEAT EVER?

AFTER BURNER

SEGA MASTER SYSTEM

Without having to enter any sort of code, you can make yourself invincible in *After Burner*. By pressing the directional pad diagonally Up and to the Left, you'll be able to avoid all attacks made on your jet. Aah, the simple pleasures of rudimentary collision detection programming.



CONTINUED ▶



POSTAL 2

PC



## GARY COLEMAN EVERYWHERE

Type `Whatchutalkinbout` and all NPC's mutate into Gary Coleman. Why Gary Coleman? We don't know; all we know is that it's disturbing and a little bit wrong. But hey, isn't that what Postal is all about?

SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE

GAMECUBE



## THE BLACK HOLE GLITCH

Enter an arena where two characters can stand on platforms facing each other, such as Hyrule. You'll need four players: The first three must be Peach, Falco, and Fox, but the fourth can be any character. Set the weapons to Super-scope only.

Position Fox and Falco across from each other. Activate each character's protective shields, then begin firing the Superscopes. Once the beam becomes large enough, have Peach jump right into the middle, which will cause the beam to become bright green. Have Peach throw 15 radishes into the green beam—the game should become super choppy. Now have the fourth character jump into the beam to absorb the shots from the Superscope. Once this is finally done, the radishes should create a strange black hole that deals 999 percent damage to any character but Peach. Complicated, but worth the hassle.

TONY HAWK SERIES

PS, PS2, PS3



## PERFECT BALANCE

The "perfect balance" cheats in Tony Hawk are simple, yet highly enjoyable additions that breathe new life into the game.

**Tony Hawk 2:** In Career mode, start a game then pause it. Then hold L1, and press Right, Up, Left, □, Right, Up, □, △.

**Tony Hawk 3:** Enter `MAGICMISSILE` in the cheats menu.

**Tony Hawk 4:** Enter `MULLENPOWER` then `SSBSTS` in the cheats menu.

**Underground:** Enter `keepitsteady` then `letitslide` in the cheats menu.

**American Wasteland:** Enter `2wheels!` then `grindXpert` in the cheats menu.

**Project 8:** Enter `frontandback` then `balancegalore` in the cheats menu.

**Proving Ground:** Enter `AINTFALLIN` then `STILLAINTFALLIN` in the cheats menu.

THE SIMS

PC



## INFINITE MONEY

Access the cheat menu (simultaneously press Ctrl, Alt, and C) and type `rosebud` to obtain 1000 Simoleons. To get virtually infinite money, add a semicolon followed by an exclamation mark (;!) after the word `rosebud`. For each semicolon and exclamation mark you add, you'll receive an additional 1000 Simoleons.





## GRAND THEFT AUTO SAN ANDREAS PS2



# FULL HEALTH, ARMOR, AND WEAPONS

During gameplay and not while the game is paused, enter the following codes to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered a code correctly, the cheat will take effect immediately.

**\$250,000, Full Health and Armor:** Press R1, R2, L1, X, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up.

**Weapon Set 1:** Press R1, R2, L1, R2, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right, Up.

**Weapon Set 2:** Press R1, R2, L1, R2, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Down, Left.

**Weapon Set 3:** Press R1, R2, L1, R2, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Down, Down.

## FINAL FANTASY VI

SNES, PS, GBA



# INFINITE EXP. EXPLOIT

Once you reach the Lete River with Banon, you'll have to change a few of the battle options. Set your window commands to "Short" and switch Banon's "Health" and "Attack." Finally, switch the commands back to "Window" so you can have Banon's Health as the default command. Now you're ready! When you reach the first point where you have an option to turn or go straight, tape down your attack button (X for the PlayStation, A for the SNES) and let the game do its thing. If you leave it on for a full day your characters will be at level 60 or higher.

# TOP HARDWARE HACKS

Game consoles can be finicky beasts. These hacks might help...or hurt. Try them at your own risk.

## BANISH RED RINGS!



### HOT TOWEL OVERHEATER

Xbox 360

The "Red Ring of Death" is a common hardware failure in the Xbox 360. It sucks, but there's a makeshift solution. To squeeze a bit more life out of your failed Xbox 360, wrap your system in a thick towel. Turn the system on for one hour, and then turn it off and let it rest. Remove the towel and the system should work again, though perhaps only temporarily. If it keeps failing, a) curse the gods, then b) contact Microsoft for a replacement.

## FOR CHEAPSKATES!



### THE PLAYSTATION SWAP TRICK

PlayStation

There are many theories as to the "correct" way to perform this trick, but one in particular works great. Switch on your original PlayStation and count to four, then swap a regular PS game out for the imported disc. You'll want to swap the discs right before the white Sony screen appears. nefarious types can also try burned games, though we don't endorse piracy.

## OLD-SCHOOL HACK



### CLEAN THE NES CARTRIDGE

Nintendo Entertainment System

Aside from simply blowing into the NES cartridge, other variations of this trick include: blowing into the system itself, pressing down the inner cartridge holder of the NES and blowing in there, wiping the cartridge connectors with an alcohol-soaked Q-tip, pressing the game cartridge in so it grazes the plastic bezel, and a dozen other strange rituals. On second thought, using the Wii's Virtual Console is probably just plain easier.

CONTINUED ▶



PARASITE EVE

PS



## REGENERATION GLITCH

The parasite energy regeneration glitch in Parasite Eve is extremely helpful and can mean the difference between life and death during some of the game's extremely hard boss battles. If you're running low on energy, or if it's completely drained, simply switch your armor during the fight. This will restart your parasite energy regeneration immediately.

SAINTS ROW

XBOX 360

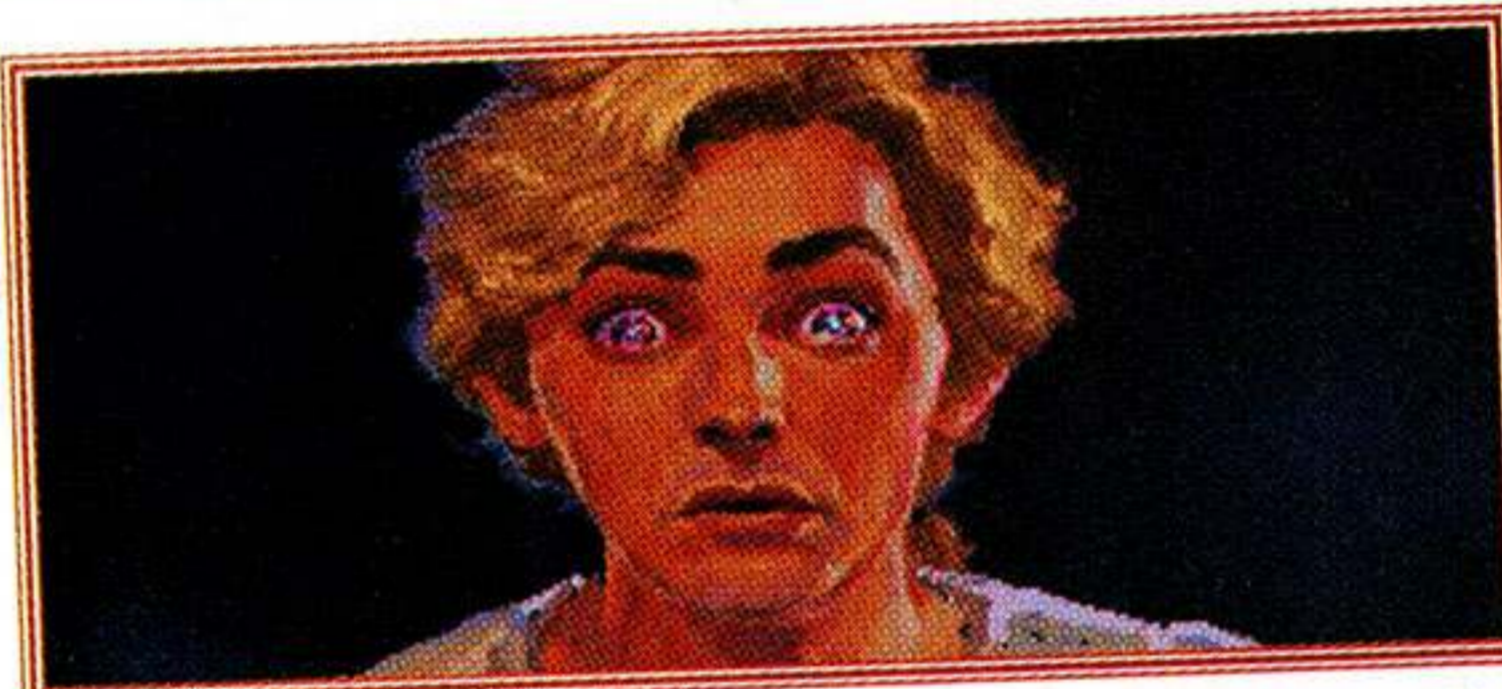


## DRUNKEN PUNCHES

Perform this cheat to make your character stronger after he's had a few cocktails. Pull out your cell phone and dial #BEERMUSCLES. The next time you pop into Brown Bagger's Liquor, it'll be the other guy who walks out with a broken jaw, not you.

THE MONKEY ISLAND SERIES

PC

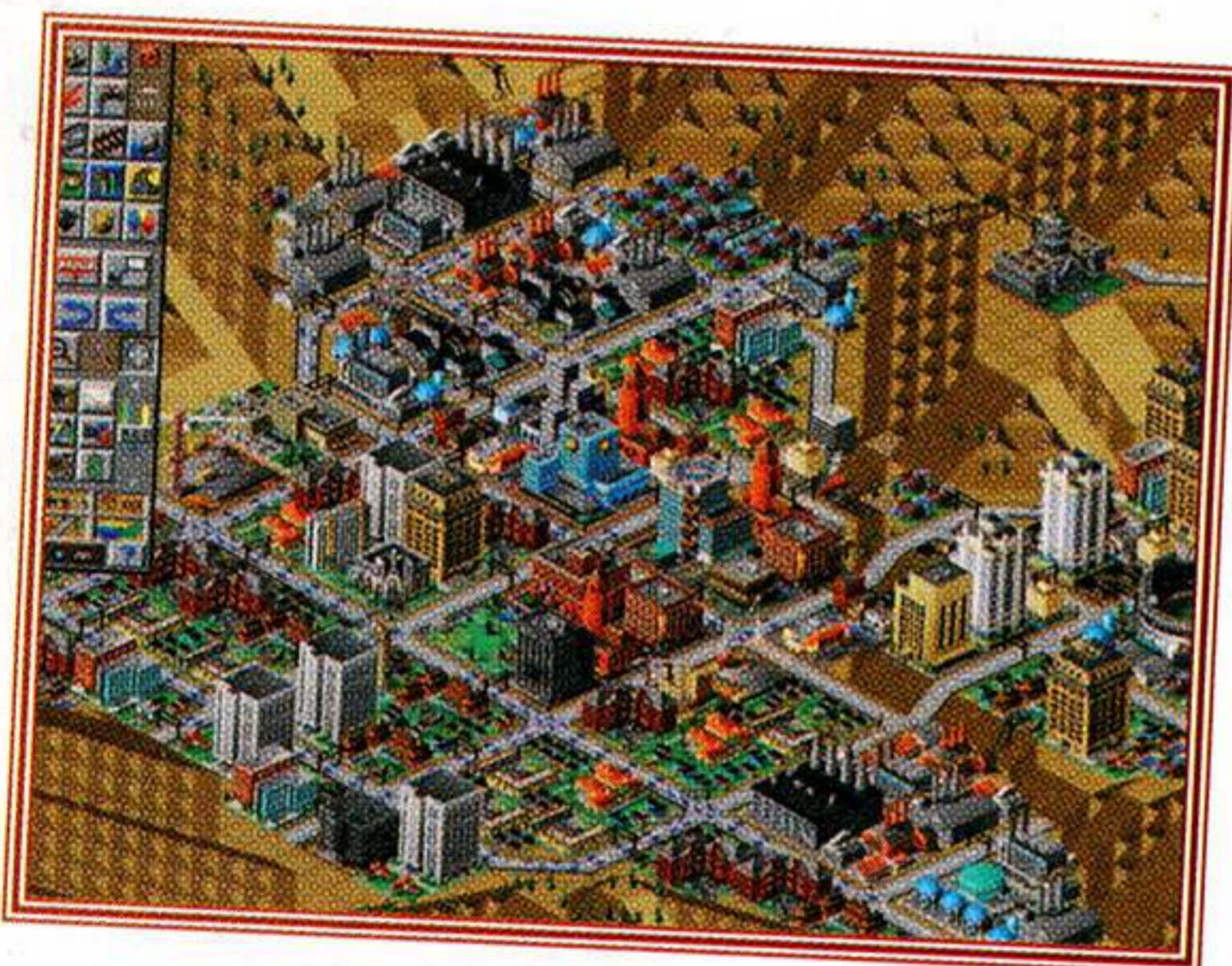


## INSTANTLY BEAT THE GAME

Simultaneously press and hold Ctrl and W to beat any game in the Monkey Island Series. No, it won't transfer you to the final boss or give you infinite lives, you will have simply "beat" the game. Rather anticlimactic, if you ask us.

SIM CITY 2000

PC



## NUCLEAR DISASTER FTW

Enter gomorrah (as in Sodom and Gomorrah, you heathen) to rain down nuclear Hell upon your city. This may upset a few inhabitants, but look on the bright side: once the dust settles, you won't have many citizens complaining about the size of the city stadium.

FABLE

XBOX, PC



## SLEEP FOR FREE

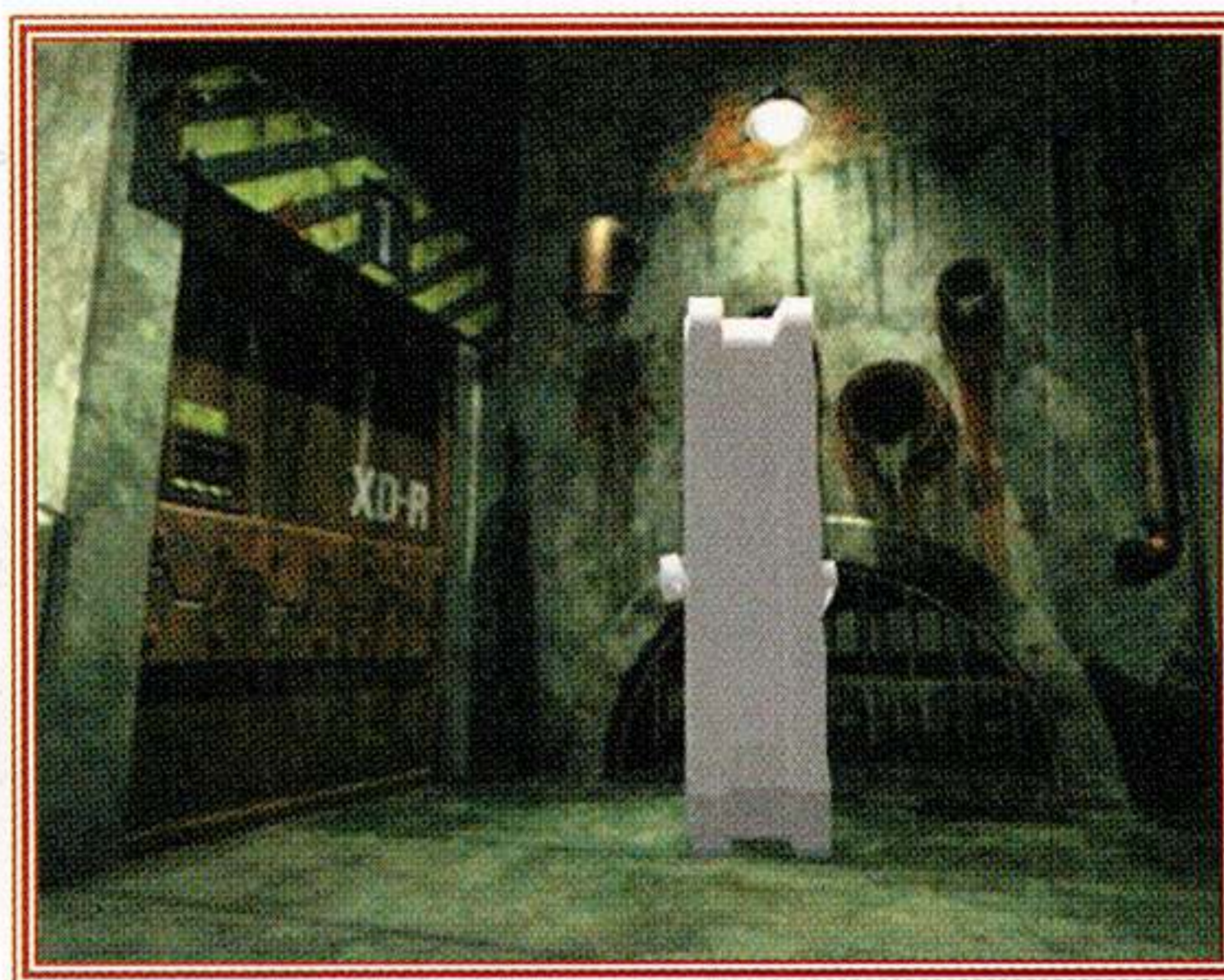
This glitch is for the penny pinchers and time savers. If you find yourself in a town without an Inn, or you just simply don't feel like paying, go inside any house and choose to sleep. The screen will begin to fade to black, but wait! Run back outside before it completely blacks out. If you nail the timing, you'll get your "sleep" but dodge the fine.





## ENTER LEGO CITY

Outside the Cantina in *LEGO Star Wars II*, you may find yourself asking, "What the hell is that giant question mark?" Wonder no more. The question mark hole is actually your key to accessing LEGO City. Collect 60 gold bricks, and begin building the question mark to access it.



## PLAY AS TOFU

To play as the lovable white chunk of soybean curd, you must complete six scenarios (i.e. three each of Claire and Leon's scenarios). Once this is done, save your game and you'll be informed that you've unlocked Tofu...who can only attack with the knife!



## RUBBER BAND EXPERIENCE

You'll need a second player. Start a game with a friend that spans 20 rounds, each at 20 minutes with 15 minutes between matches. Position a rubber band across both analog sticks so that you walk in circles. Once the match is set, you're free to walk away from the game. You will earn 800 points for each game completed, which will gradually decrease over time.

## THE "KONAMI CODE:" WE MUST NEVER FORGET

Stamped indelibly in the mind of all devout gamers, the "Konami Code" is legend: Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A, Start. The code has appeared in dozens of games; here are five of the most memorable.



### THE TOP FIVE "KONAMI CODE" CHEATS:

- 1. Contra (NES):** Famously unlocks 30 lives for this ultra-challenging shooter. Press Select before Start if you've got two players.
- 2. Silent Hill 3 (PS2):** After completing the game, entering the code will show protagonist Douglas Cartland in his underwear in every scene. Ooh la la!
- 3. Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance (PS2):** Entering the code will unlock all secret characters in Missions Mode.
- 4. Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones (PS2):** Entering the code while paused will make the chainsaw available as a secondary weapon. Interestingly, Konami did *not* design this game, so it's an apparent homage by Ubisoft.
- 5. Gradius III (SNES):** The ultimate practical joke—entering the Konami code on this SNES game causes your ship to explode. So much for cheating!

CONTINUED ▶



GOD OF WAR II

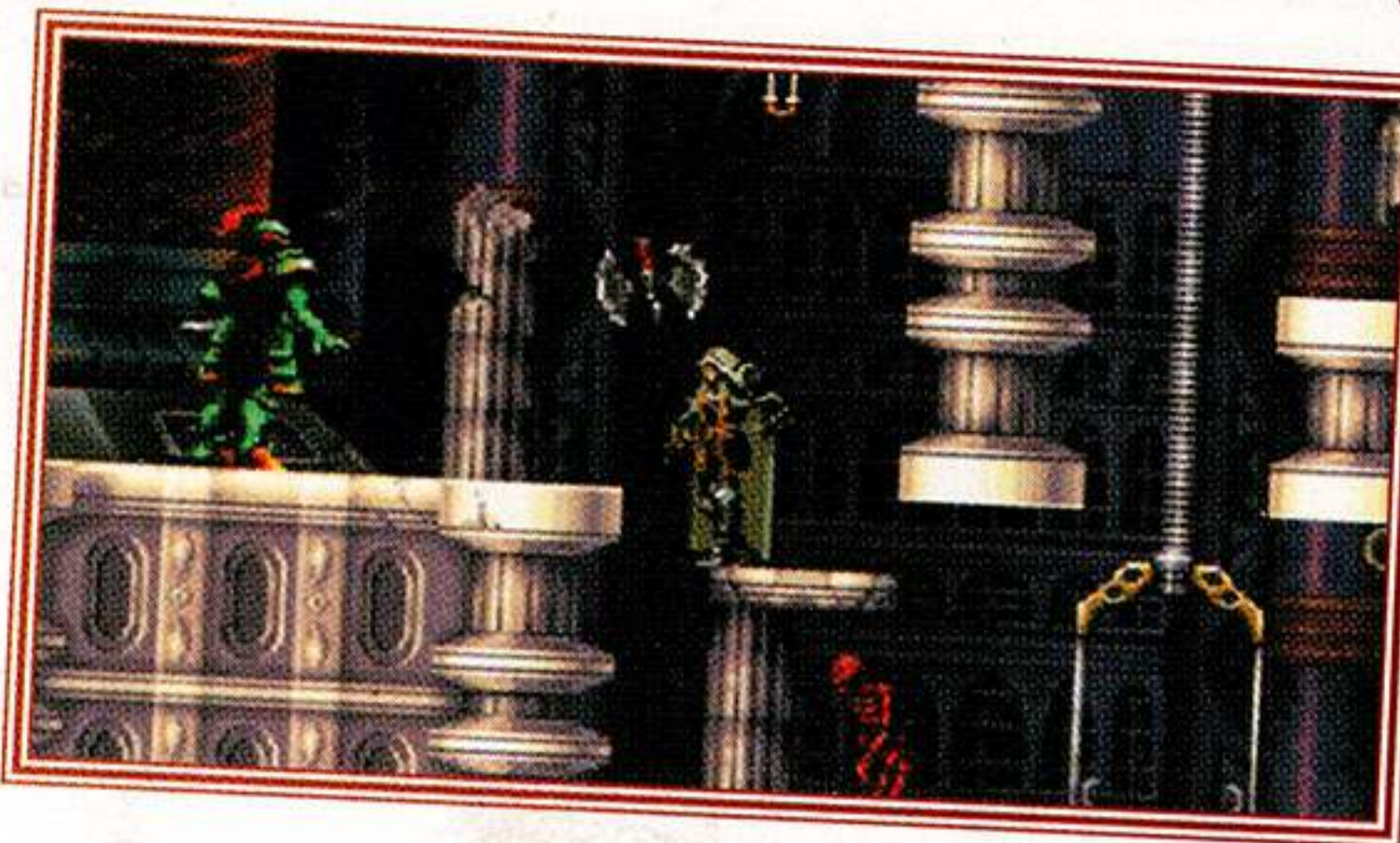
PS2



## ENHANCED 480P MODE

Simultaneously press L1, L2, L3, ○, and □ any time before you see "Sony Computer Entertainment Presents." The letters should turn purple. This will enable a special progressive scan mode that runs at 640 by 448 with full frame buffers—a cleaner, crisper resolution than standard 480p. Though the graphics will look nicer, you'll need an HDTV and you may encounter minor slowdown from time to time.

CASTLEVANIA: SOTN PS, PSP, PS3, XBOX 360



## DRACULA'S SECOND CASTLE

In order to transport to the second castle, you must enter the final battle with Richter Belmont while wearing the Holy Glasses. You'll get these from Maria if you return to the big clock (located in the Marble Gallery) while wearing the Gold and Silver Rings. Equip the Holy Glasses and you will see an evil green orb floating above Richter's head—concentrate all of your attacks on the orb and you'll save Richter, unlock the "good" ending, and open the second castle for exploration. This new, upside-down castle is loaded with high-level enemies, rare items, and new boss encounters. It's the best part of the game—don't miss it!

HALO 2

XBOX

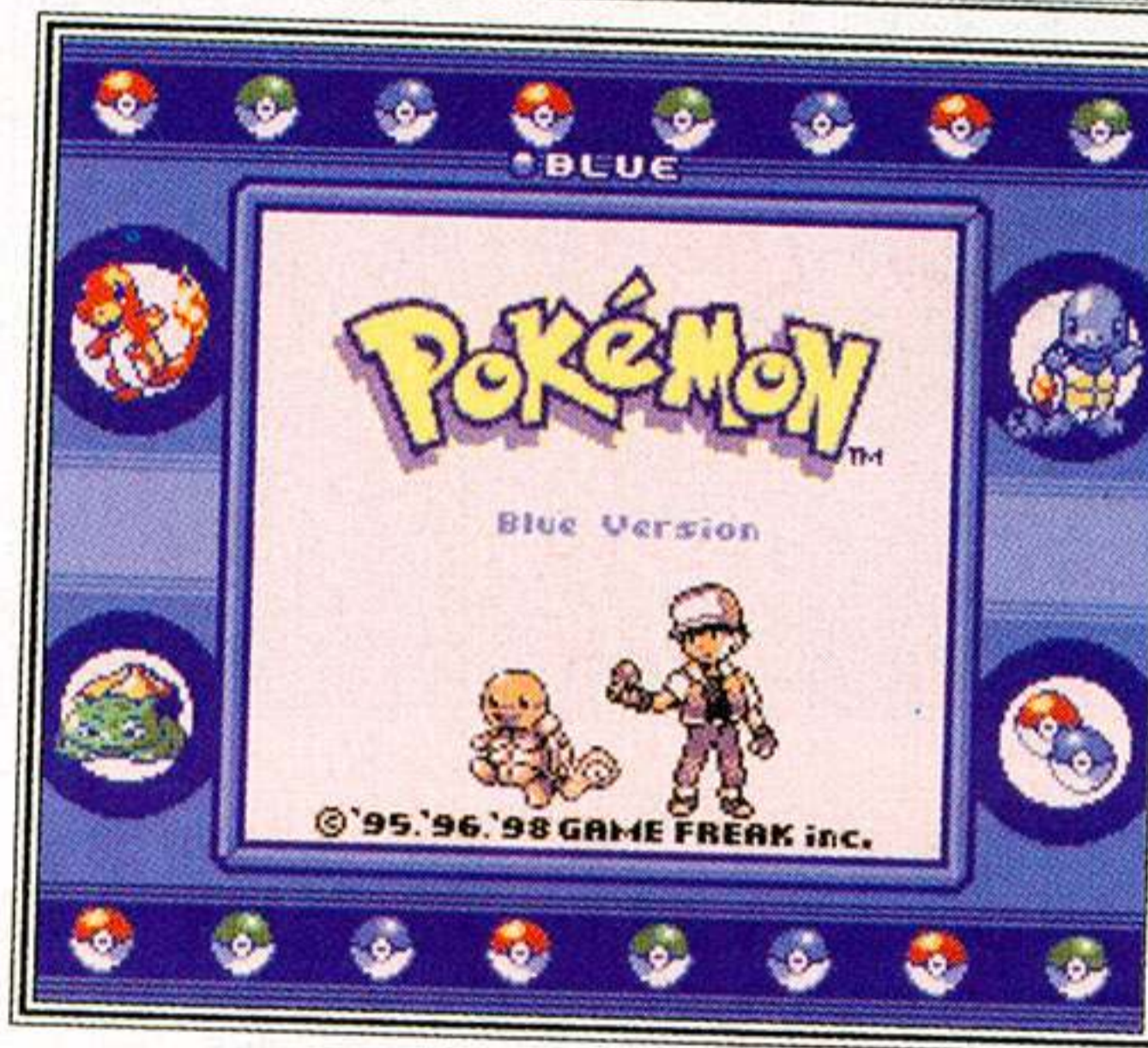


## SUPER JUMPING

There are hidden "super jump" locations scattered through Halo 2's online maps. Part one: find a location where you can crouch down and let go of the crouch button without standing up. Part two: Once you find this tiny spot, you need to find a way to jump down onto it while facing down. If done correctly, you should launch Master Chief into the air like a bottle rocket soaring to the heavens. Luckily, Bungie stripped this exploit out for Halo 3, but it's still in Halo 2 if you want to risk the wrath of the Ban Hammer.

POKÉMON RED/BLUE

GAME BOY



## THE FORGOTTEN POKÉMON

Travel to Cinnabar Island and use a Pokémon that has learned Surf. Go up and down the island until you run into a fuzzy graphic Pokémon that will either have no name or it will be called "Missingno," a hint that it was forgotten during development. Catching this mystery Pokémon will corrupt your save file—don't do it! Instead, run away and the item in your sixth slot will have magically multiplied itself to well over one hundred units. The best things you can have in this slot are Rare Candy and Master Balls.



DIABLO II

PC



## HIDDEN COW LEVEL

This trick is popular online and off. First, complete the game on any difficulty. You'll need several items: Wirt's Leg (found in Tristram, where you rescue Deckard Cain), the Horadric Cube (found in Act 2), and a Tome of Town Portal. Travel back to the Rogue Encampment (Act 1) on your original difficulty level. Once there, place Wirt's Leg and the Tome into the Horadric Cube, and transmute it. A red-colored portal to the Cow Level should appear, and it's loaded with tough combat and tons of godly items. But don't kill the Cow King boss, or you'll be banned from ever returning!



SUPER MARIO BROS.

NES



## MINUS WORLD

To enter stage -1, make your way towards the pipe that leads to the flag in level 1-2. Jump on the edge of the pipe and break the brick 2nd to the left of the pipe that leads up to the surface. Once you shatter the brick, crouch and jump to the right and you should walk right through the pipe and the wall of bricks, leading to a few secret pipes. Jump down the first pipe and you'll find that Mario has entered a swimming level known simply as level "-1".



# GAMING PEEPSHOW

This is what happens when you combine horny teenagers, video games, and way too much free time.



### METAL GEAR SOLID'S NUDIE CAMERA

PlayStation, PC

Once you've beaten the game (you must have submitted to Ocelot's torture) you can start a new game with the camera already in your possession. Near the beginning, after meeting the DARPA Chief, you'll find the naked body of a guard Meryl disabled. If you lay down directly behind the guard's blurred-out behind and equip the camera, you'll be able to see the guard's backside in its full non-blurred glory.



### THE SIMS'S NUDE" GLITCH

PC

Ah, Jack Thompson's favorite. Simultaneously press Ctrl, Shift, and C, then type `move _ objects on` which lets you move every object in or out of the house. Now get a Sim into a bed or a shower. Once he's "naked," move the object they are in... and you'll see what's really hiding under those mosaic blurs: *nothing!* It's actually a little creepy.

### GTA'S HOT COFFEE HACK

PC

The controversy may have died down, but the curiosity hasn't. There are many web sites that still offer the infamous Hot Coffee patch for download, though you must have the original PC version of GTA:



San Andreas (not the neutered "second edition"). We'll save you the trouble and spoil the secret: the unlocked "Hot Coffee" scenes are actually pretty silly, barely providing a peek of skin amidst all the PG-13-rated moaning and dry humping. But hey, if it winds up corrupting your mind, don't blame us.

### THE TOMB RAIDER "NUDE CODE"

PlayStation, PC

It doesn't exist and it never, ever did. Seriously. Will you please stop asking us about it? **GP**

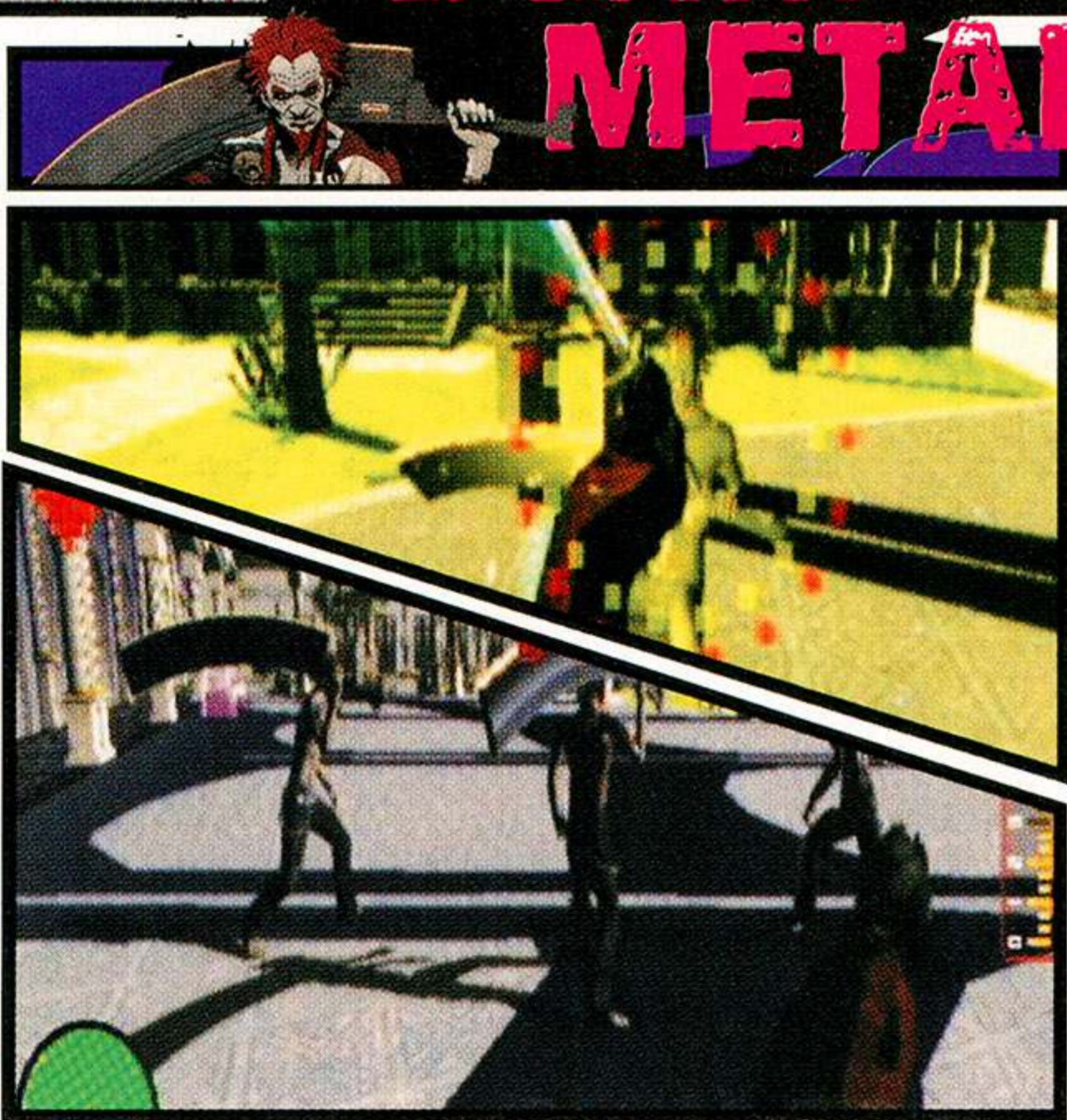


Elaborate boss battles are the key attraction of the gory new Wii game, *No More Heroes*. Here's how to beat every boss in the game! *By Andy Burt*

# NO MORE HEROES: The Killer BOSS Guide

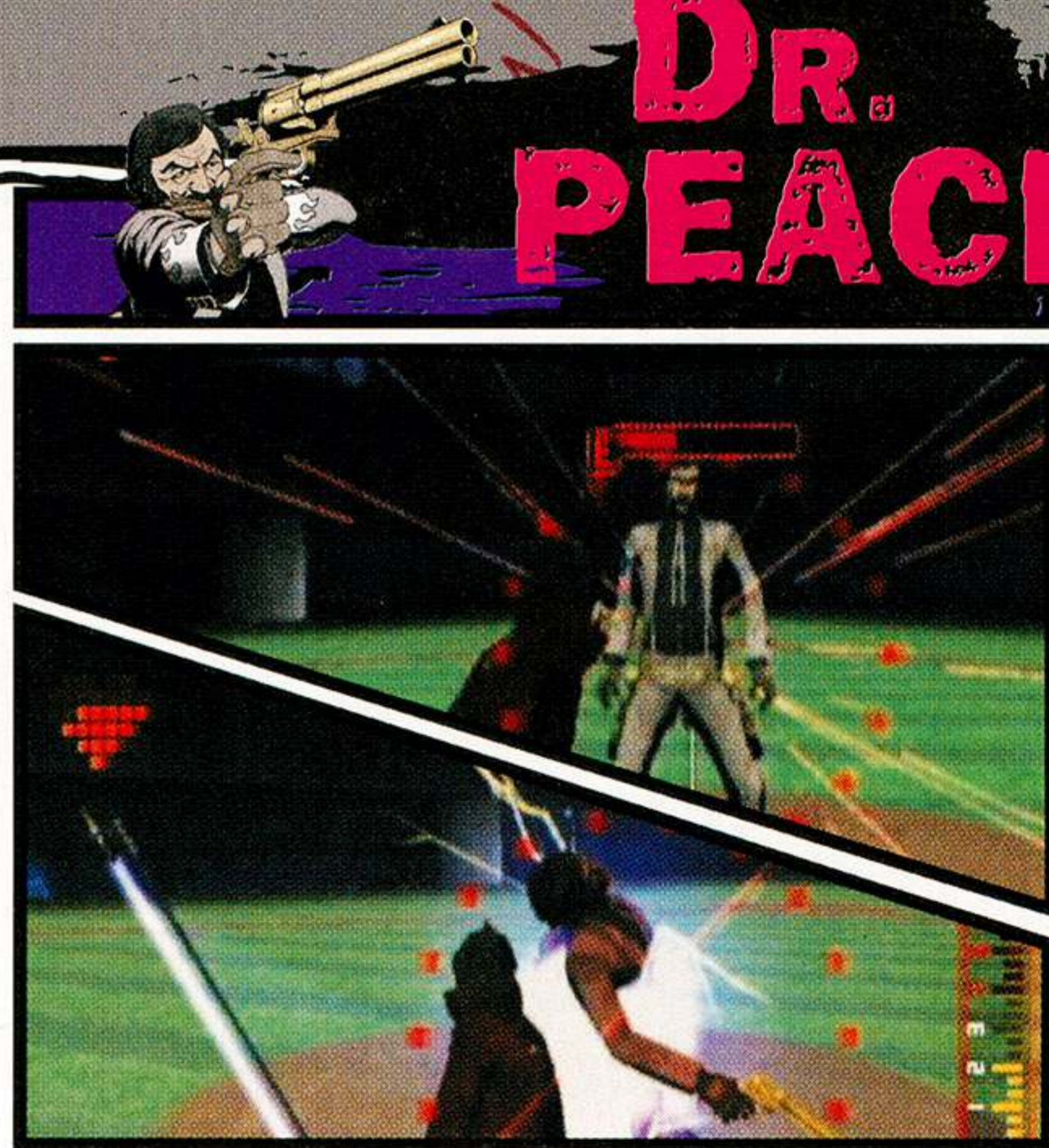
**N**o More Heroes is low on tedium and high on epic fight scenes, and it contains the coolest (and most difficult) bosses the Wii has seen to date. You'll need wits and fast finger-work to overcome these opponents. Get your beam katana ready—you're about to smash Santa Destroy into oblivion!

## DEATH METAL



**D**eath Metal is the first boss you'll encounter, and he's fairly predictable. Death Metal usually guards high, so attack low and then dodge after a few hits to avoid his attacks. Occasionally he'll string together a furious combo, so just dodge these and then stun him when he finishes the string. Follow that with a charged-up attack. Eventually, Death Metal will split into three, which gives you a good opportunity to test out your charged attacks. Continue dodging or blocking his attacks and striking at the end of his combo strings and Death Metal will lose his head in no time.

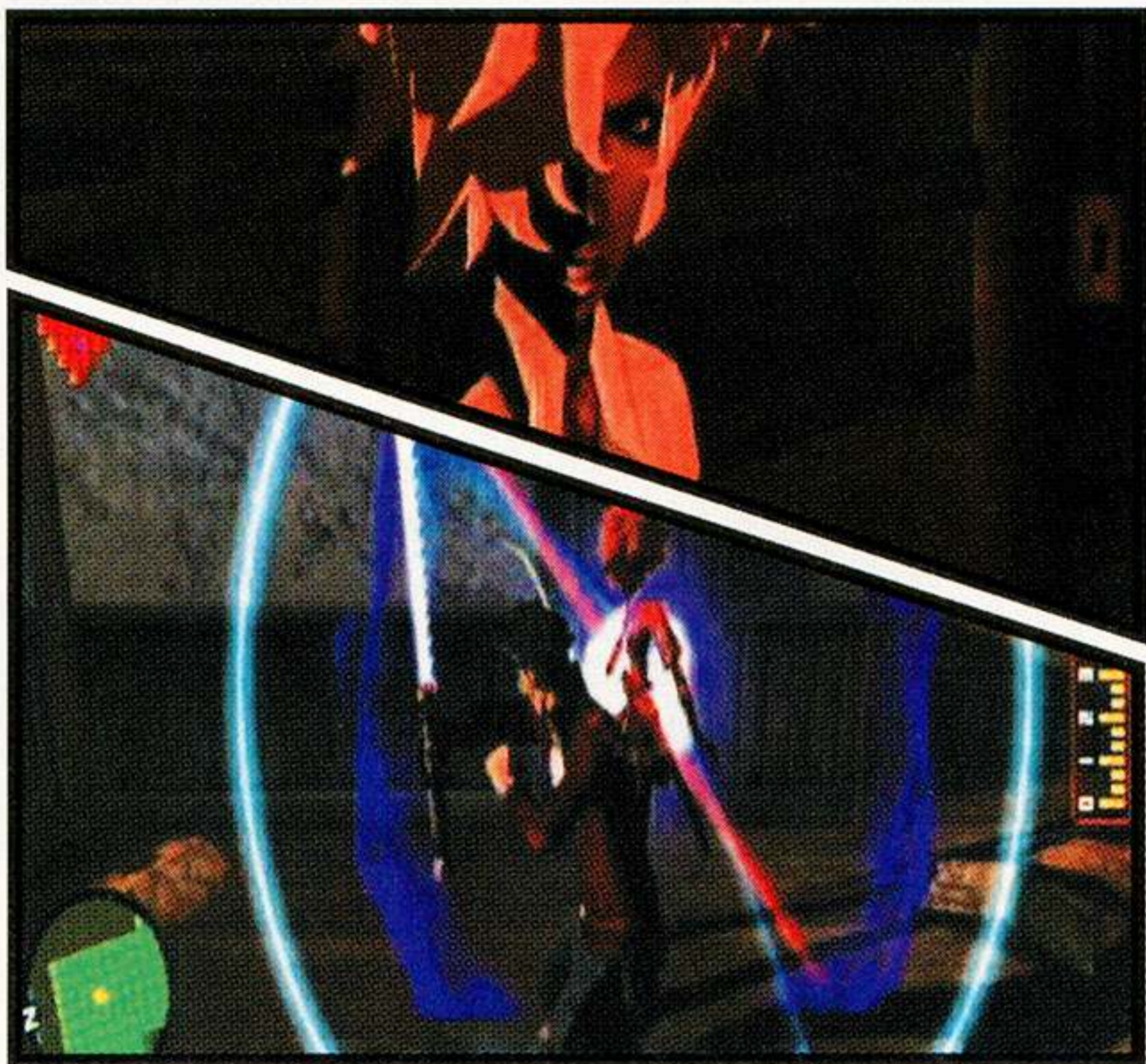
## DR. PEACE



**A**fter the good doctor finishes belting out his lovely aria, it's time to fight. This encounter is tricky for two reasons: first, you have to gain the distance across the baseball field while Dr. Peace shoots at you; second, you have to stand still during his massive onslaught. Occasionally, Peace will charge up a mega shot that will send you flying, and you'll have to make up the distance all over again. Once you get close, unleash on him, and make sure to hit the B button when he's stunned to initiate Travis's new wrestling move. Even at close range, Dr. Peace will continue to fire his mega blast, so the best strategy is to strafe around him while locked on, or lock on and dodge repeatedly. The best way to block his shots is to simply stand still. Eventually you'll force Dr. Peace to give up the ghost, splattering him all over the field.

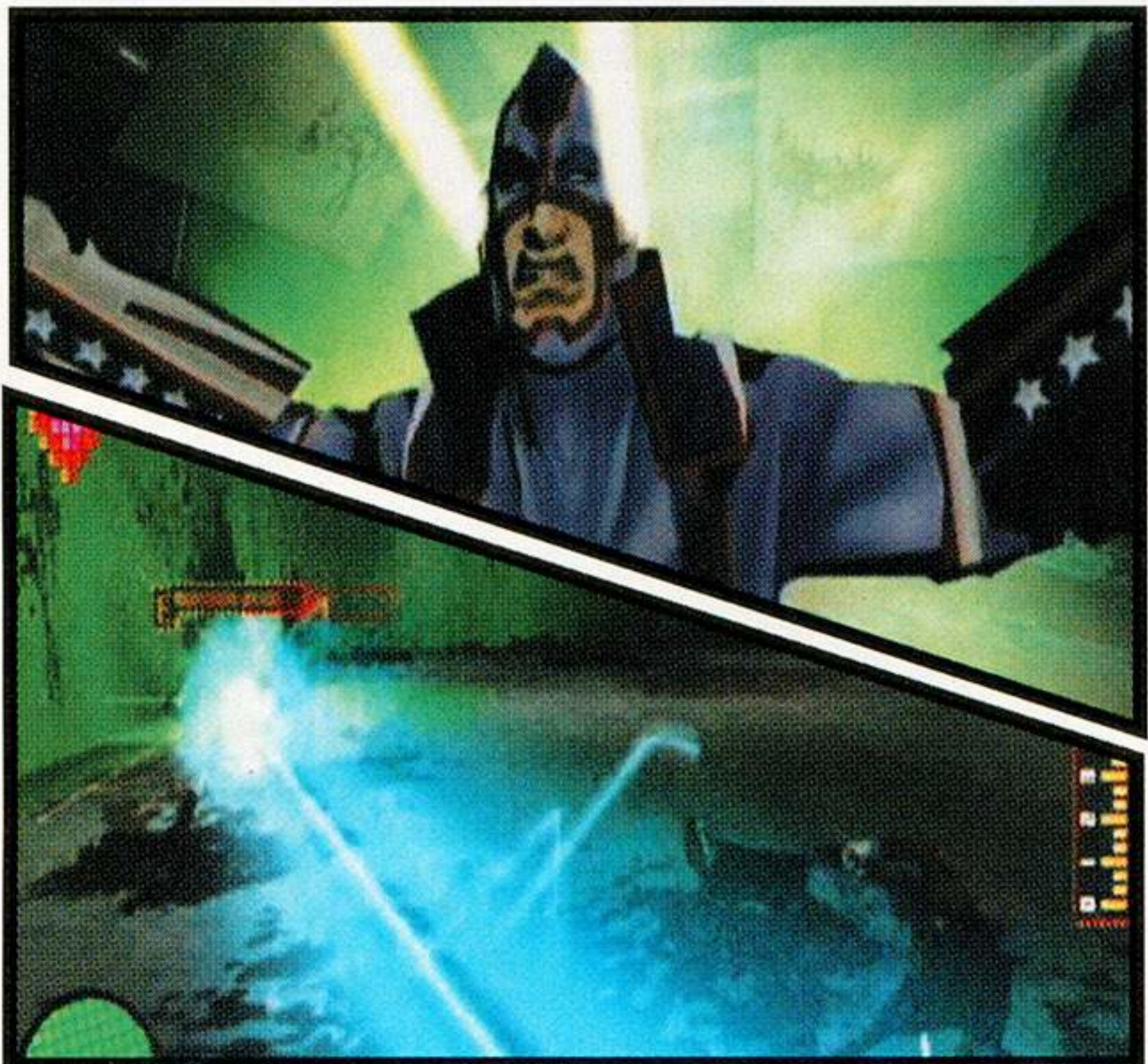


# SHINOBU



**T**his little vixen is more bark than bite; you shouldn't have any trouble with her. She's quick and has a few decent attacks, but she's just no match for your new wrestling moves...particularly when she's dazed. If you're having trouble with her speedy sword-play, dodge the attacks and circle around her, using a charged-up kick to daze her. Then wrestle her to the ground and she'll fall hard.

# DESTROYMAN



**H**e's annoying, but overall Destroyman isn't too bad. He'll announce each move before he performs it, so you'll have plenty of time to prepare. Aside from his shock move and a ground strike, Destroyman fires dangerous projectiles. Dodge them and follow up with combos, then body slams. The beam attack is different; don't bother dodging it, simply lock onto Destroyman and strafe around him. Destroyman tends to block frequently, so switch between high and low attacks frequently.

# SMASH LAB

We came, we saw, we smashed. Here are the secret strategies for Nintendo's hot Wii brawler Super Smash Bros. Brawl!

## PICK THE RIGHT CHARACTER



Selecting the best fighter for your playing style requires some thought. Mario, a balanced character, is a popular choice among novice players and is a good character to start off with. Once you develop your own fighting style, you can start experimenting with other characters who master in power, speed, close-range attacks or long-range attacks.

## MASTER THE FINAL SMASH



Remember that drawing on the destructive power of your characters' Final Smash makes a huge difference in gaining the upper hand on an enemy. Just break open a Smash Ball and wait for the right moment to unleash your character's Final Smash move.

## HORDE THE WEAPONS



When you see a weapon that you can use to your advantage, act fast. Projectile-based weapons are ideal for long range fighting, while melee weapons are more appropriate for close-range brawling.

CONTINUED ►



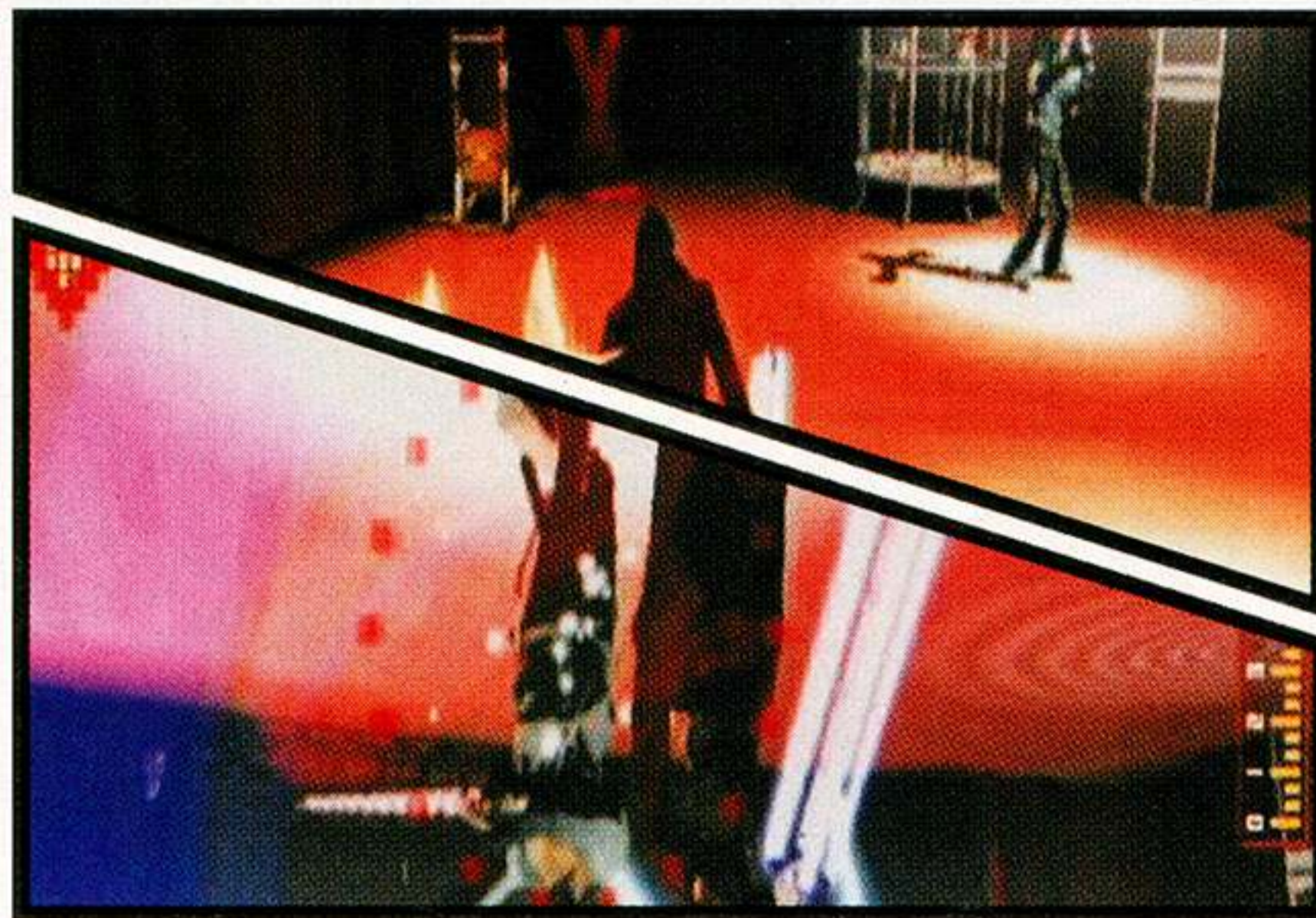
# HOLLY SUMMERS



**E**asily one of the most difficult boss battles in the game. Holly packs powerful regular attacks and grenade traps, and can also fire a barrage of homing missiles. Put simply, this won't be a fun battle. First, know that getting stuck in a trap is often preferable to taking a hit from a close-range missile. Secondly, when Holly unleashes those missiles, carefully strafe around her and begin to attack. Always remember to end your combo with a stun kick—you need every possible chance to use your ultra-damaging wrestling moves.

Ultimately, this will be a battle of patience. Concentrate on wearing her down slowly, while taking time to avoid her missiles and traps—don't try to take her head on. Your reward is one of the best assassination deaths in the game.

# HARVEY MOISEWITSCH VOLODARSKII



**Y**eah, his name's a mouthful, but he's not much of an assassin. The one thing Harvey does best is confuse you. Many times throughout this fight he'll flip the screen upside down, and then attack you with a flock of birds. This isn't too bad, as you can dodge them fairly easily by jumping to either side. Watch out for Harvey's spears, as he tends to string together long attack combos. Harvey can be a bit unpredictable because he always seems to throw one extra slash in, right when you're preparing to attack. Stick to basic attacks and grabs to inflict damage quickly. You'll have to go through a few "magic trick" cut-scenes, but these are also nothing to worry about. Before you know it, Harvey will be getting a taste of his own medicine.

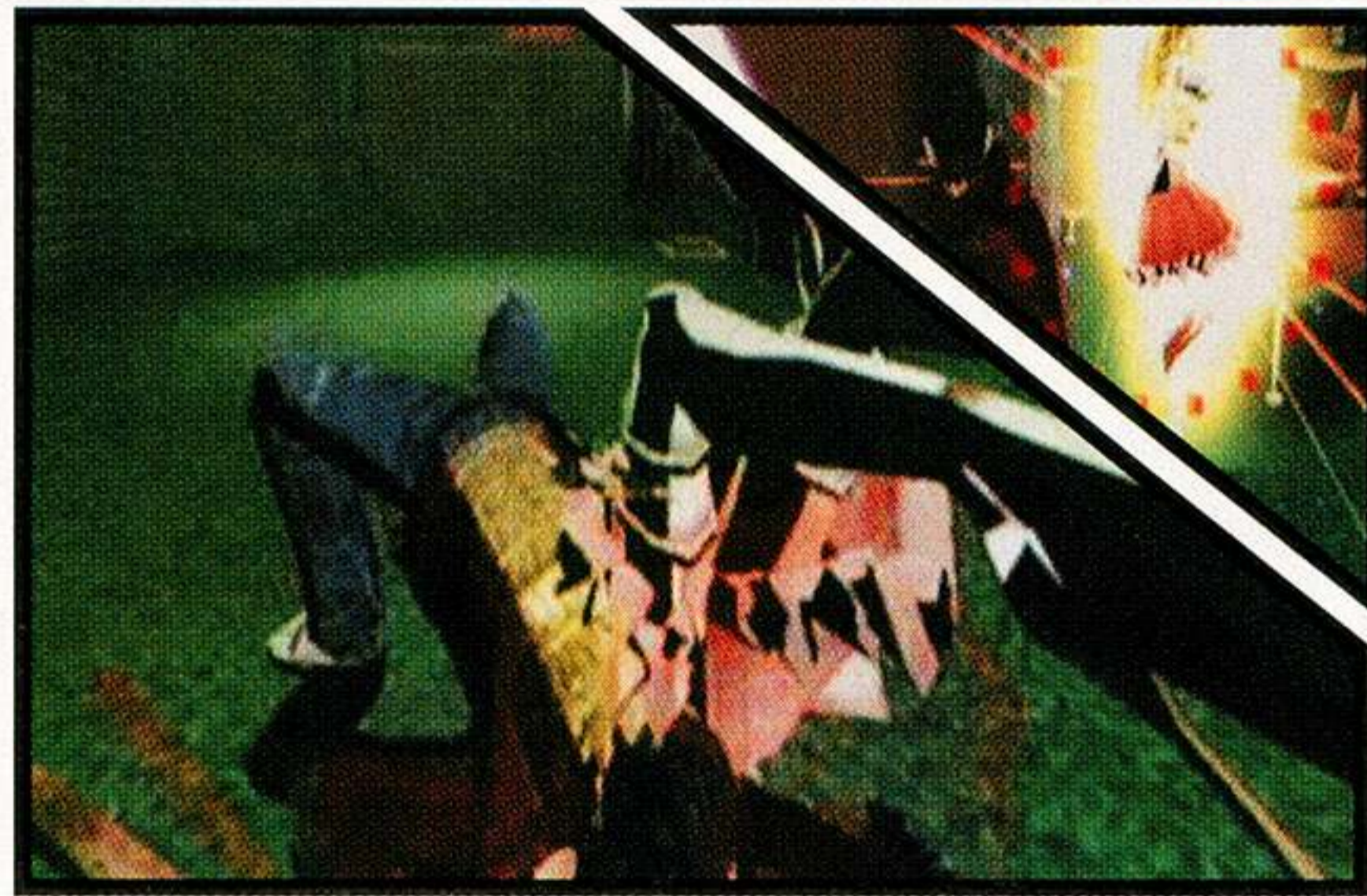
# SPEED BUSTER



**B**eating this old hag is closer to a puzzle than a boss fight. Make your way down the wide street, ducking into alleyways in a zigzag pattern. You'll encounter some of Speed Buster's cronies, but they're a mere distraction. Your focus should be on avoiding Speed Buster's gargantuan cannon blasts, which will nail you while you're running in the middle of the street. Taking a hit inflicts big damage, drains your beam katana, and blasts you backwards. If you get hit while your beam katana has no charge, you'll be in big trouble.

Once you get to the last alleyway on the left-hand side, look for a tall beam that separates the cracked wall of the alley. It's located towards the direction Speed Buster is shooting from. Slash the beam to trigger a domino effect, which in turn destroys Speed Buster's cannon. Win!

# BAD GIRL

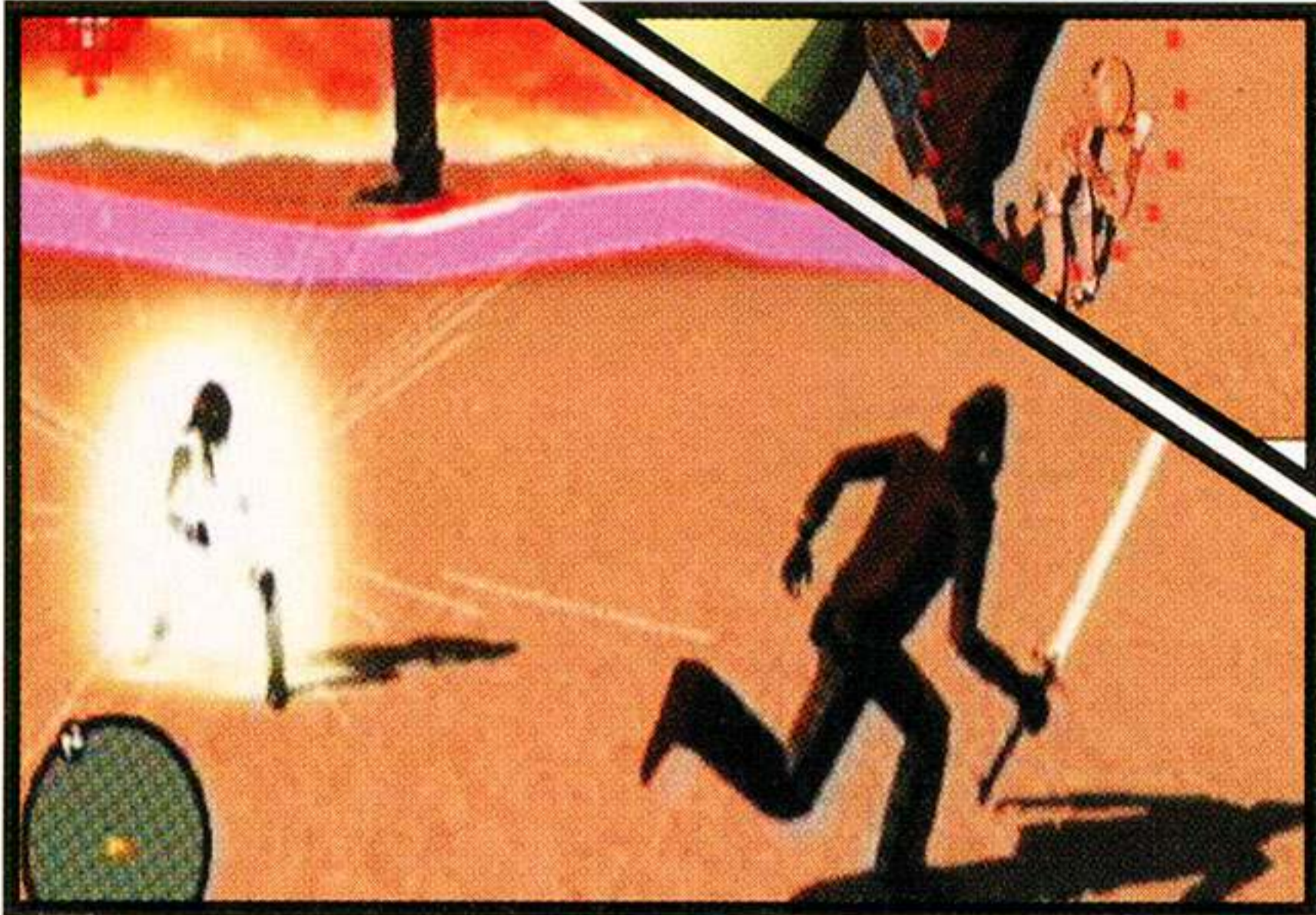


**T**his chick can swing a mean bat. Bad Girl is fairly predictable, so guard high when she does her standard attacks, and then dodge her last, strong attack. Before she recovers, quickly unleash on her, ending each combo with a kick to daze her. Now perform a wrestling move for maximum damage. At certain points, Bad Girl will run up to the conveyor belt and start belting goons towards you, which will cause a good amount of damage if they hit. Dodge them, and quickly kill them before turning your attention back to Bad Girl.

The most integral part of this battle is to remember NOT to approach her when she swoons to the ground. If you get too close, you'll lose. Wait for her to get back up, and repeat the previous strategy, relying on stuns and mega-damaging wrestling moves. She'll go down.



# JEANE



**W**hat can we say? Jeane is the hardest boss of the game. Jeane will make your head spin with her lightning-fast speed and her varied, unblockable attacks. You'll find only very brief windows of opportunity to strike Jeane: one is after her charged-up palm attack, and another is after she does a high-flying kick. Focus on nailing her hard during those two opportunities, though occasionally you'll be able to squeeze in a few strikes after her combos.

Crucially, don't attempt any grab moves because Jeane will automatically counter them. Patience is key: You have to whittle away at Jeane slowly but surely. As the battle rages on, she'll shift between different phases of attack, getting progressively harder and faster. Stick with it, and don't let her land those palm attacks!

# HENRY



**S**illy gamer! You thought the game was over, didn't you? Well, if you choose the "real" ending, you'll face off with Henry and gain more insight into the story. Henry is challenging, but after Jeane's punishing blows he feels pretty simple. He relies on one combo, using it over and over again, and ends with a flying somersault. This somersault is the best time to attack him, and often it'll end with a big, directional-specific hit.

Henry also loves to clash blades, and he's pretty good at winning, so get your spinning hand ready. One advantage is that Henry doesn't do big damage with his normal attacks, giving you an edge in overall power. Just be sure to dodge, and things should tilt in your favor.

# SMASH LAB

Mastering Super Smash Bros. Brawl!

## FIGHT ON THE EDGE



While it's true that exchanging beatings with your opponent near edges is dangerous, you can often lure an enemy towards a stage's boundary and then knock him off before he has time to react.

## RUN-N-GUN



Previous Smash Bros. games forced you to stand still and fire blindly while shooting. But not Brawl! When wielding a projectile weapon, move around the arena and aim to get the best shot of your enemy.

## PERCENTAGE COUNTS



Veteran Smash Bros. players will agree that trying to keep your damage percentage low is the key to victory—the higher your percentage reads, the easier it is for your foes to knock you off the screen.



## GAME OF THE MONTH

# PATAPON

What exactly qualifies a game for Game of the Month status? That's a question that we here at *GamePro* grapple with month in and month out. Sometimes, we know if a game is worthy within five minutes of playing it; other times, it isn't until the reviewer has played it for a number of hours before we can make a determination.

And where does this month's Game of the Month, *Patapon*, fall on the spectrum? Somewhere towards the middle. From the moment we started playing, we knew we had something special on our hands. The unique art direction, ridiculously cute characters, and addictive rhythm-based gameplay screamed potential, but we weren't sure that the game would survive an extended play through.

How wrong we were! Like zombies getting their first taste of delicious brains, we soon found that we could not get enough of *Patapon*. Entire work days passed where the only sounds emanating from our cubes were the chants of "Pata pata pata pon!" It's a good thing we had to send off our copy to reviewer Cameron Lewis; otherwise, you might not be holding a copy of our magazine in your hands right now.

So what is it about *Patapon* that won us over so completely? Turn the page to read Cameron's in-depth review and you will find out. Now, if you'll excuse us, we have to get back to "work." (Pata pata pata pon!)





## GAME REVIEWS:

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## GAMEPRO LABS

Think it's all just fun and games here at *GamePro*? Nope, we get to test out some awesome hardware too. This month, we take a look at the Drumshhh, a Rock Band drum kit noise reducer. And if that's not enough to scratch your gadget itch, be sure to check *GamePro.com* for more reviews of the latest toys and gear!

### DRUMSHHH

drumshhh.com \$8.99-\$29.99



We love Rock Band but we hate that the drum kit is so freaking loud—especially played by ham-handed members of the *GamePro* staff. We tried everything, including wrapping the drum sticks in paper towels to try and dull the noise but nothing proved successful.

So we were pretty excited when the Drumshhh pads came in for testing. They're basically felt pads with adhesive backings that you put over your Rock Band drum kit to insulate against the noise. Installation's a snap—you just take off the backing, place them on the four pads and push down—and you can easily peel them off later if you want to.

We put the Drumshhh through some marathon sessions and found that, while they don't completely eliminate the noise, they lessen the ruckus noticeably. We also didn't notice any negative impact on performance, which would have rendered the product useless. The basic pads are only about \$15, and while you could go to a fabric store and roll your own, the Drumshhh pads are still a worthy investment if you are a hardcore Rock Band player.

**PROS:** Easy installation; pads do an adequate job of reducing drum kit noise; can be removed later if needed.

**CONS:** They don't completely eliminate the noise; the fancier sets are pricey.

## FUN FACTOR: 4.25

### GAMEPRO'S RATING SCALE

Behind the numbers:

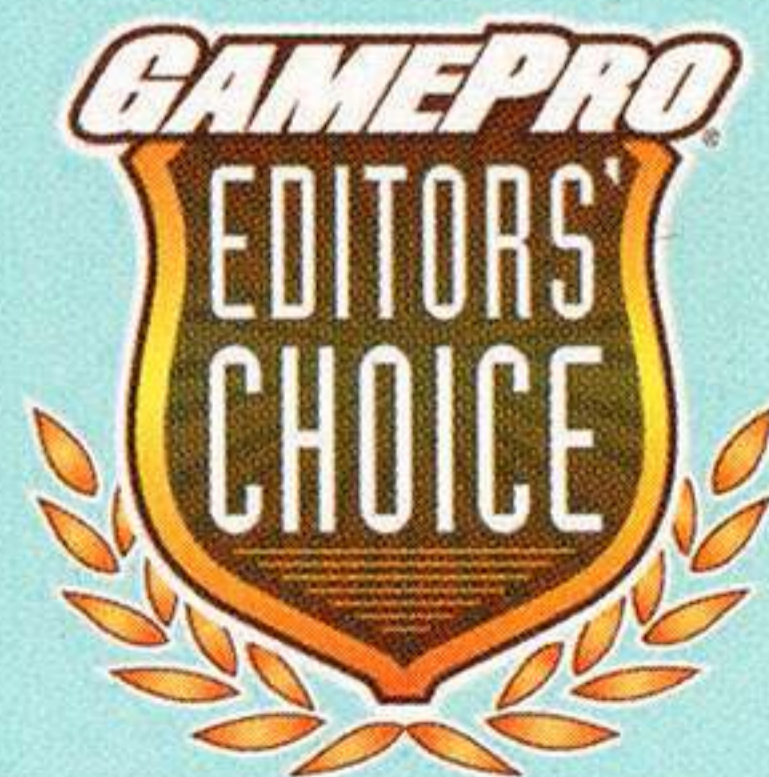
**5.00–4.50** The best of the best. If you don't own this game, you should. Think Halo, Zelda, Resident Evil, and Metal Gear Solid.

**4.25–3.50** Highly enjoyable, but falls short of true greatness. The Fight Nights and Tony Hawks of the world.

**3.25–2.50** Approach with caution—try before you buy. Enter the Matrix and the Dynasty Warriors games fall squarely in this category.

**2.25–1.50** Should come with a sticker: "Warning, contains poisonous amounts of suckage." Remember Backyard Wrestling?

**1.25–0.00** An absolute insult to humanity. Kill it with fire and holy water.



Games that score **4.50 or higher** are awarded our coveted Editors' Choice Award.





Your acolytes will sometimes give you verbal tips on when to attack or withdraw.



## PATAPON

An all-singing, all-dancing traveling troupe suffused with strange beauty and infectious spirit.

PSP ESRB:E

Developer: Pyramid Publisher: Sony

**L**ocoRoco's bright and sunny outlook hit the PSP like a ton of Nerf bricks, and drilled home the point that you don't have to be constantly mashing buttons to have fun. The creators have since moved on from what's been called the world's happiest game and developed Patapon, a unique and charming game that takes its minimalist control scheme and captivating essence in a much more combative direction.

### DIVINE INTERVENTION

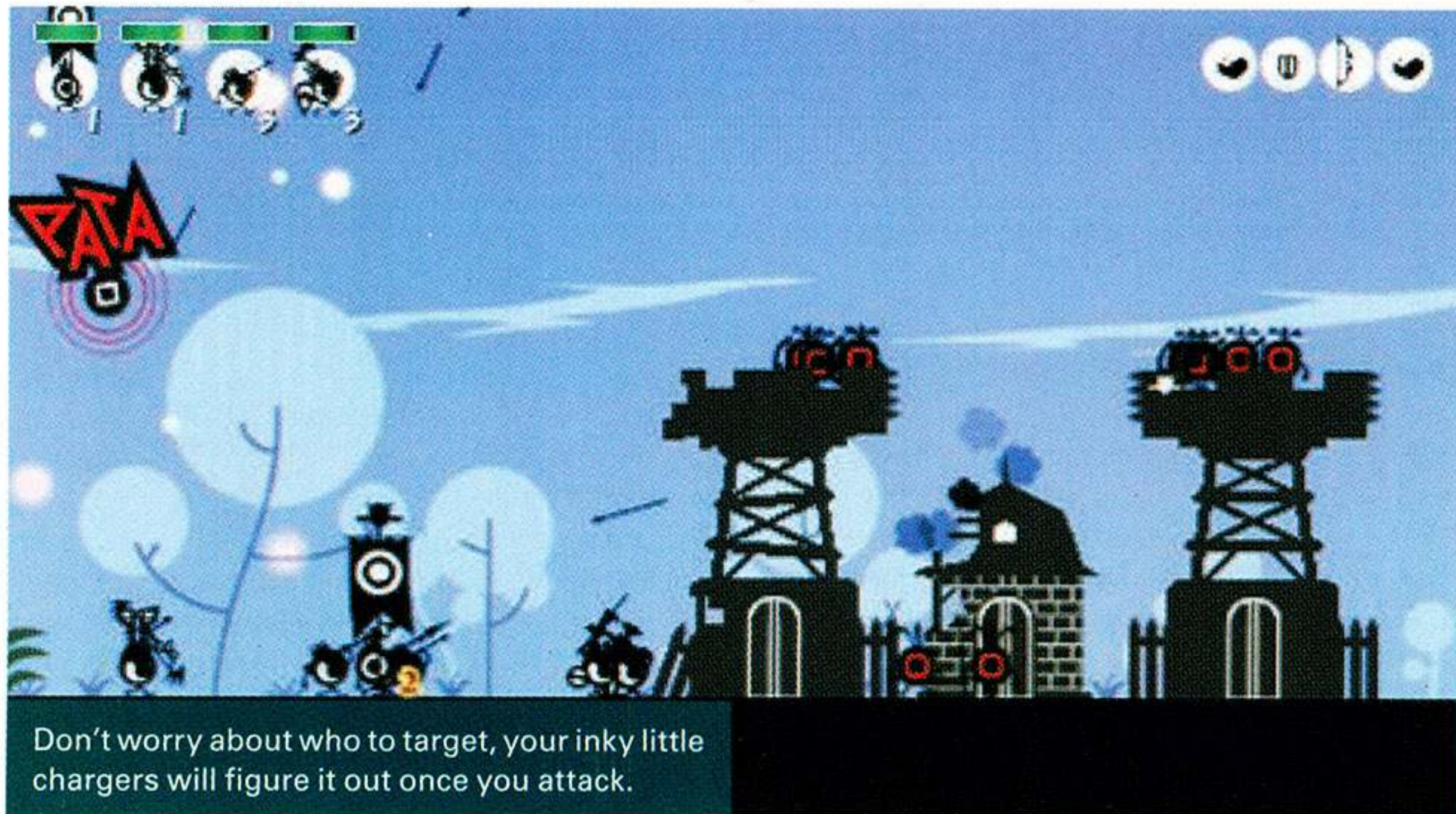
The Patapons are a tribe of two-dimensional warriors on their way to Earthend, but all manner of enemies and obstacles lie between them and their goal, and only their deity—that would be you—can lead them to their destiny. The basic setup might seem broad and familiar, but the execution of it is anything but, and your first clue to Patapon's unique nature is its eye-catching art direction. The three spear-throwers

you start with are just hollow circles on legs, with a single inky dot for an eye rolling around the interior, and yet they're filled with personality, from the way they twirl their weapons in the air to the fierce expressions they don when they enter combat.

The word "idiosyncratic" doesn't begin to cover it. From the ever-changing palette of the landscapes you'll traverse to battles with fire-breathing bosses and rival Zigoton forces, Patapon bursts with shadow puppetry theatrics and visual charm. Screen shots can give you a good feeling for the character designs and scenery, but to see the whole affair in motion is a minor revelation, like a child prodigy's drawing come to life, brimming with imagination. This display of inspired aesthetics might not do much to tax the hardware, but no other game looks anything like it.

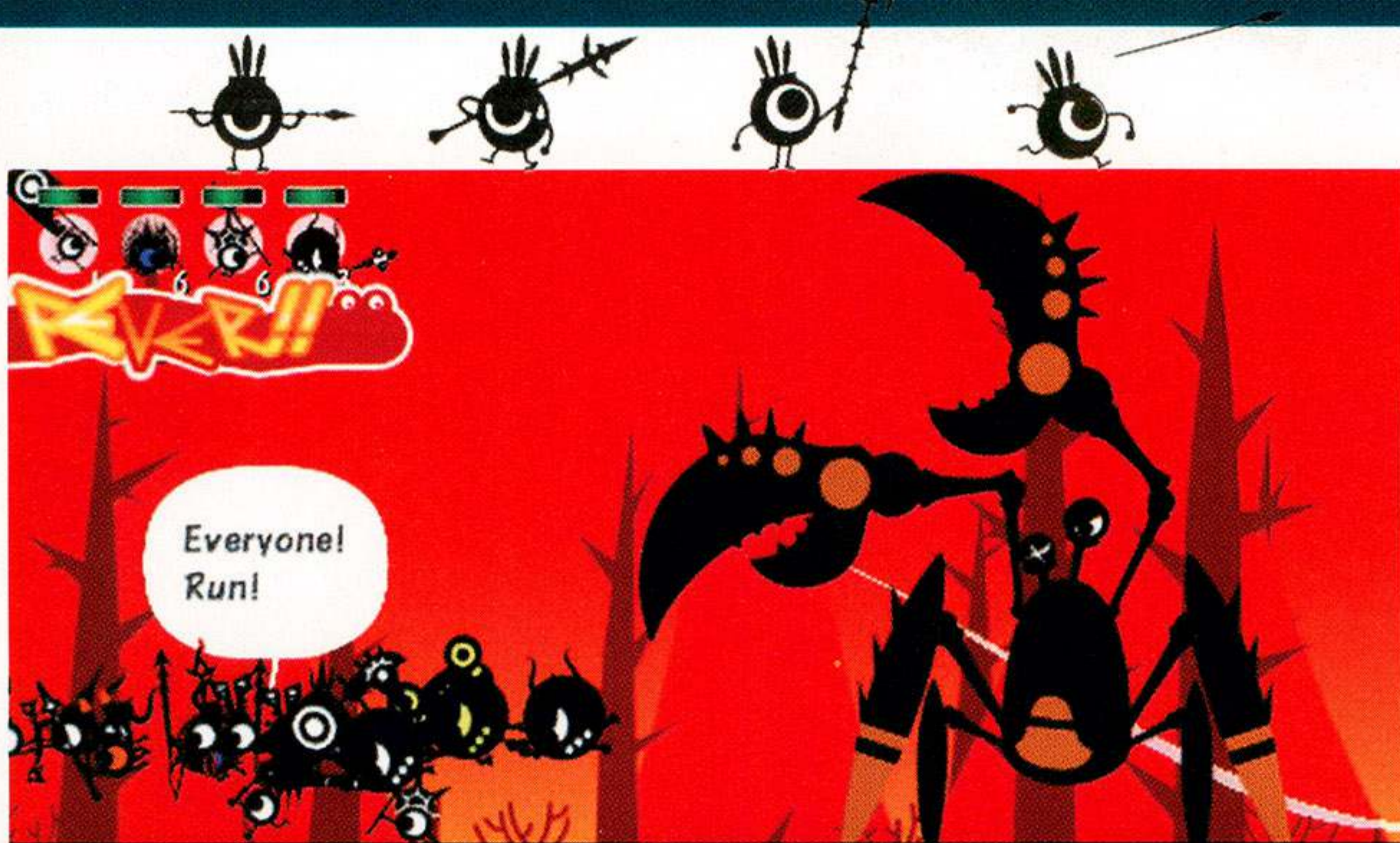
### HUMAN BEAT BOX

Mind you, you don't so much command these quirky abstract misfits as guide them. Your control over this crew is strictly indirect, relying entirely on their shared love of diverse music. Rather than fiddle with the directional pad or analog nub to maneuver them around, or issue orders to individual soldiers like a traditional real-time strategy general, you rally your entire crew by drumming out four-beat tattoos on the drums you acquire over the first few hours, and listen to their

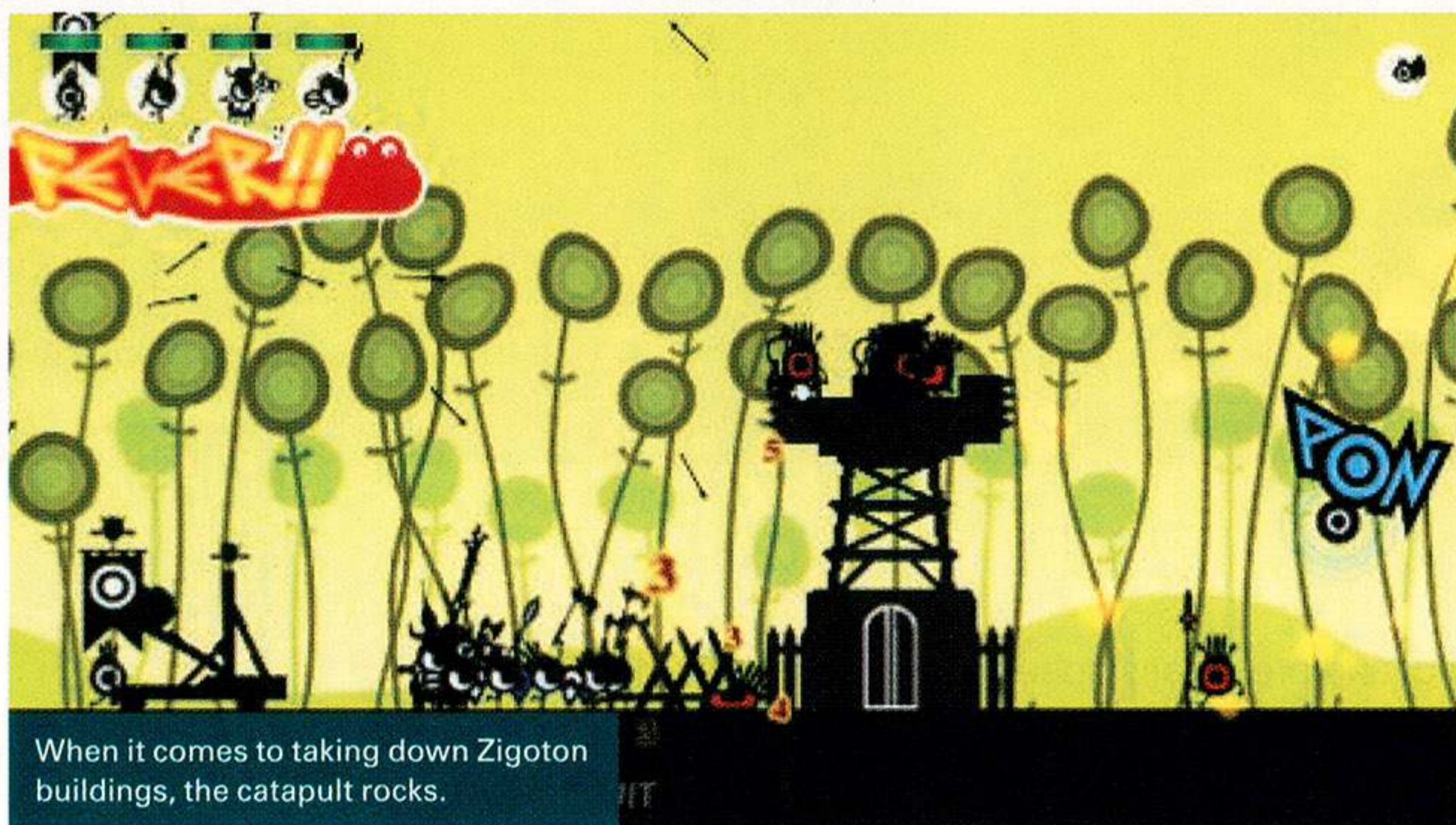


Don't worry about who to target, your inky little chargers will figure it out once you attack.





Each time you fight a boss it increases in level the next time around, so there's always a new challenge for your squad to overcome.



When it comes to taking down Zigoton buildings, the catapult rocks.

enthusiastic performance while mulling over your next move. Each drum makes a unique sound—pon, pata, chaka, and don—and you string them together into short songs that tell the troops to attack, defend, march, and so on.

Though the tempo is forever constant, the music becomes more and more elaborate as your forces get into the groove, simultaneously helping you with staccato chants and hindering you with off-beat embellishments and free-form vocal breaks. How well you stay on the beat determines the quality of sound you get from each drum hit, which in turn influences the strength of your squad's actions. Scoring successive combos can mean the difference between your troops tossing out a handful of ineffectual arrows versus a powerful shower of pointy death.

## HIDDEN DEPTHS

It's easy to get the impression from its early levels that Patapon is a simple game, but there's considerable complexity lurking beneath the minimalism of the controls. What keeps the endless tapping of patterns from devolving into a mind-numbingly repetitive chore isn't just the overwhelming charm of the presentation, but the variety of obstacles and enemies that fill the world. This is where all that amazing art direction reveals a surprisingly practical purpose.

The strands of wind that spin the air in the background? Pay attention to those to get a better idea how close you should get to a monster before launching your initial fusillade of projectiles. Screen bright with the desert sun? Might be a good time to unleash a rain-triggering miracle to cool the sands, lest the scorching heat dissolve your herd. Studying the graphics for subtle markers and hidden objects becomes vital not just to your success in battle, but to finding the tools you need to open new scenarios and solve tricky puzzles. Even the mightiest foe can be toppled if you take the time to study his movements and timing, and insurmountable obstacles become a breeze if you can just find the right approach.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

There's a lot to sink your teeth into from a management perspective, as well. First there's the variety of unit types that come under your command over the course of the game, from melee experts who do damage up close or adopt a shielding stance to spear-throwers, long-range bowmen, cavalry, and more. Then you have to decide which of these types are best suited to the particular mission you're tackling. For instance, melee goons are great for combat, but they'll keep you from getting close enough to your quarry on hunting excursions.

What's more, not all soldiers of a particular stripe are created equal. Conjuring reinforcements out of the Tree of Life requires not only currency, but raw materials of varying rarity, and the quality of your buried offering drastically affects the quality and appearance of the new recruit. On top of all that, each and every individual member of your army can be outfitted with over a hundred pieces of stat-improving equipment you'll occasionally grab off fallen enemies, from halberds and axes to helmets and shields, though an instant "optimize" function can handle such wardrobe supervision in a pinch.

## THE UPGRADE GRIND

Of course, what gives Patapon much of its depth also adds another layer of repetition, because building a well-equipped army of the caliber required to conquer all 30 or so missions demands. For example, constantly farming the same material-dropping dance of the Patapon's sacred tree again and again, and triggering *that* means visiting hunting levels over and over for the requisite food. This pattern is enforced by some powerful foes that you won't otherwise be able to defeat without superhuman timing and beat control, which can throw the pace of progress off enough to let frustration take root, however temporarily.

Because making it through all 30 missions—many of them more than once—rests largely in your ability to enter an almost hypnotic state where finger-tap timing and flat-land tactics blend together, not everyone will be taken in by Patapon's unique blend of rhythm-based combat and RPG loot lust. But those who are willing to buy into the game's inherent charms will be rewarded with a memorable gaming experience that will stay with them for a long time to come. Just try and get the catchy "pata pata pata pon!" chant out of your head once you've given this game a try. You won't be able to do it.—Cameron Lewis



**GNQ9** Get the link to **Patapon** screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text **GNQ9** to **59479**  
Only standard text messaging rates apply

## FUN FACTOR

**4.50**

OUT OF 5.00



**PROS:** Brilliant and unique art direction; gripping mix of elements; goofy lighthearted music; short levels are perfect for portable play.

**PROS:** Repetitive core will turn some players off; forced farming; no pause button.





Knowing when to pop into aim mode with the left trigger is vital to scoring decent hits on distant enemies.

## THE CLUB

A surprising mix of gunplay, arcade scoring, and breathless speed drops an anvil on the ordinary.



Xbox 360 ESRB: M

Developer: Bizarre Creations Publisher: Sega

Just when you think there's no way to make men shooting guns at each other feel new again, Bizarre Creations conjures up *The Club*, a sick new blend of elements that makes your trigger finger twitch uncontrollably.

### CRUEL CABAL

If you're looking for a riveting story, skill progression, or a final confrontation with a larger-than-life

villain from *The Club*, you're pretty much out of luck. What little narrative there is resembles that of a fighting game.

Basically, it goes down like this: A wealthy group of powerful figures grew bored with what passes for modern blood sport, and turned their influence toward nurturing an underground club that replaces knuckles and judges with live rounds and grenades. Eight balanced fighters, each with

varying attributes, are plucked from their everyday lives and thrust into the most dangerous game any will ever play. Participation is compulsory, and breaking what few rules there are will cause the micro-explosives circulating in their blood to detonate.

A touch of back-story and a short-ending video for each are as close as you get to digging into the psyches of intriguing characters like Detective Renwick and the mysterious Nemo. In most other games, such a lack of context might make the attached gameplay feel at least vaguely hollow; *The Club*, however, is most decidedly not like most games.

### DEATH RACE

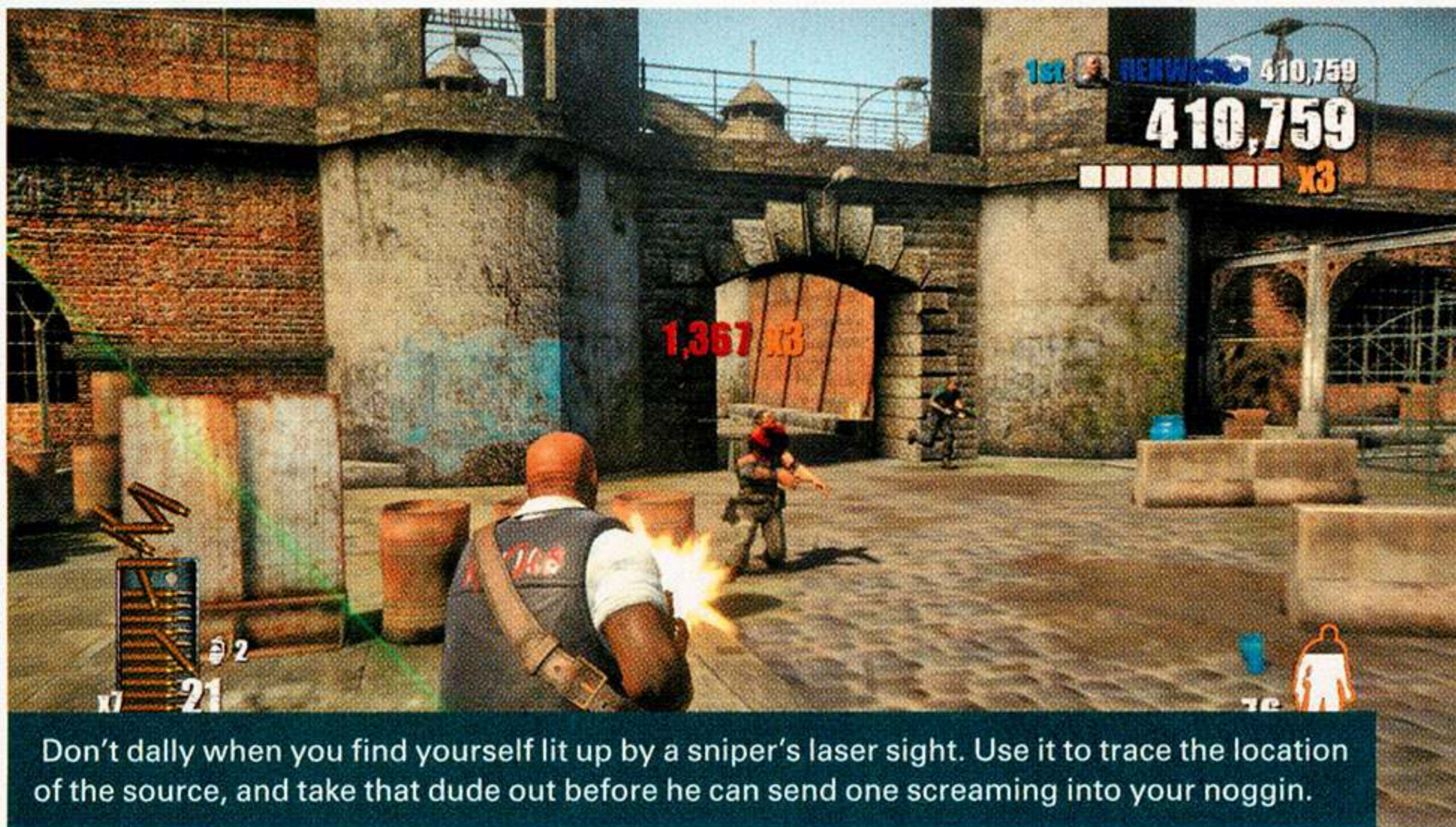
If you stripped Marcus Fenix of his armor, forced him enough amphetamines to kill an Angus bull, and told him to quit hiding all the time, you'd be able to approximate the blistering experience that *The Club* offers its protagonists. Each of the detailed and somewhat deformable environments are split into six courses, and there are 17 weapons scattered about for your use; everything from shotguns and pistols to assault rifles and a rocket launcher are present and it all helps make the levels feel like a high-octane shooting gallery where timed reloads and ricocheting bullets are the law of the land.

The overall experience also begins to mimic a racing game in that sheer speed is absolutely mandatory for survival, whether you're taking



Even when there's a lot going on at once, *The Club's* engine maintains a smooth and steady frame rate.





Don't dally when you find yourself lit up by a sniper's laser sight. Use it to trace the location of the source, and take that dude out before he can send one screaming into your noggin.



Head shots are worth lots more points, so get used to aiming for unprotected skulls whenever possible.



The Club is terribly gory most of the time, but it isn't bloodless either.

laps on a predetermined route, or tearing toward the heavily guarded finish line. The reason for this is the scoring system that drives every encounter. Rather than simply chalking up frags, every kill is rated based on shot placement, distance, fancy footwork, and more. That figure gets multiplied by your current combination count, which you add to by racking up kills before your killbar meter bleeds out.

### STYLE POINTS

It's a masterful system, because flair and timing count for so much more than brute force. The more you play it, the better you get, until you're comfortable throwing in the embellishments that truly make it your own, whether they involve frequent bullet-dodging rolls, or stitching head shots together with spins for additional points. The arrows that guide your path aren't always common

enough when you're starting out, and enemies tend to blend into the shadows a little too well, but repeated play dulls such minor rough edges.

The killbar that makes ludicrous scores possible is constantly ticking down, which keeps your right index finger forever dancing between the trigger button that drops thugs to the bumper that lets you haul ass to your next victim. Breakable "skullshot" targets are sprinkled all over the place to help maintain your streak between firefights, but pumping bullets into flesh is the best way to go. Siege and Survivor events give you a break from the manic pace, since they plant you in a cordoned space you can only venture from for a few seconds at a time, but they're really just the pit-stops between laps, even if the option to blink once in a while is a relief.

### INTERNET TOUGH GUYS

While it is a pleasure to finesse your way through the eight environments solo, taking the action online is almost as satisfying. You earn points by capturing objectives, shooting enemy skullshot collections, capping the opposing leader, or surviving as long as possible in the virtual tag of Hunter/Hunted. Even old standards like vanilla deathmatch are measurably improved when linked with such a beautifully crafted scoring system, and serviced by controls that are virtually perfect once you crank up the aim sensitivity a notch or two.

What might be most impressive about The Club is that despite the many disparate elements that it cherry-picks from (genres as diverse as racing, skateboarding, and first-person shooters), the whole never bears the disjointed feel of a Frankenstein creation, instead ebbing and flowing with a satisfying smoothness that's accessible without being overly simplistic, and action-packed without being nerve-deadening. It's like watching an action movie with the stereo cranked up to eleven except you're the maestro dictating every movement of the bullet ballet.—Cameron Lewis



**9GSW** Get the link to **The Club** screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text **9GSW** to **59479**  
Only standard text messaging rates apply

**FUN FACTOR**  
**4.50**  
OUT OF 5.00

**PROS:** Fantastic scoring system; exhausting pace; instinctive controls; large courses.  
**CONS:** Level paths not always clear; disposable story; minimalist sound design.





We know you still haven't forgiven Sephiroth for what he did to Aeris but get over it: In Crisis Core, you'll be spending a lot of time working alongside him.

## CRISIS CORE: FFXVII

The next best thing to a new-gen Final Fantasy VII remake.

PSP ESRB: T

Developer and Publisher: Square Enix

With fan expectations running rampant, the stakes were high for Square Enix when they decided to revisit the world of Final Fantasy VII. Fortunately, they've managed to pull off a minor miracle with Crisis Core, a terrific handheld title that maintains the essence of what made the original title such a beloved classic.

### SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

Crisis Core takes place seven years prior to the events of FFXVII and follows Zack, a member of SOLDIER. Don't remember him? He had a cameo in FFXVII where he fought Sephiroth with Cloud and Tifa in Nibelheim's Mako reactor before getting imprisoned, experimented on, and then shot by Shinra. In Crisis Core, you'll control Zack as he fights alongside Genesis and Sephiroth while working for the evil power company. I'll admit that it initially felt wrong to work alongside Sephiroth, but after a while I started to see the bigger picture of how everything fits together in the world of FFXVII, which really helped flesh out the world and the characters that were involved.

The battle mechanics of the game are a little different: they felt similar to FFXII's Active Battle System, but without Gambits or party members to follow them. There is a delay between when a command is issued and when it is executed, allowing for a chain of orders to be input. It works well but I really missed having party members for support, especially as I got further into the game and met some familiar faces.



### ONE-ARMED BANDIT

Another new feature in Crisis Core is the Digital Mind Wave system, which introduces an element of luck to battles. As you engage enemies, a reel begins spinning. Depending on which pictures and numbers match up, pre-set conditions take effect. This is also how Limit Breaks, Summons, and Leveling occur. While it's nice to see a departure from Experience Points, not being able to directly control my Summons became a little frustrating. Luckily, the DMW is based on emotions, so in frantic battles the reels spin faster and more limit breaks occur, giving the system a sense of balance.

Unfortunately, despite the deep story and an addictive battle system, there is no sprawling world to explore. You're mostly confined to the halls of Shinra and the streets of Midgar. These areas are interconnected, but there's little reason to do things outside of your primary missions. While you'll visit the slums and a handful of other familiar areas, getting from point A to point B just happens. The game is definitely about the story, which isn't such a bad thing but there is no sense that you are part of a larger world.

### FAR FROM FINAL

Thankfully, the game retains an epic feel thanks to some of the most breathtaking cut-scenes I've ever seen. And not only are they brilliant, but the Summons and Limit Breaks are some of the best in the series. Even outside of the cinemas the game looks better than any PSP title around. The audio is less successful but thankfully the controls are smooth and responsive.

It's hard not to like Crisis Core because it does so many things right. From the over-the-top graphics to the addictive battling system, this is a solid entry in the series. Crisis Core does a fine job of revisiting the world of FFXVII while giving hardcore vets a sense that they're doing something new. Factor in the 300 side missions and a new difficulty mode exclusive to the U.S. release and you have a title that will keep players busy until the next major Final Fantasy game is released. —Todd Melick

### FUN FACTOR

**4.75**  
OUT OF 5.00



**PROS:** Best-looking PSP title; wraps up the story of FFXVII; invigorating battle system.

**CONS:** Controlling only one character is disappointing; music can get repetitive.



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- Nerdcore (?) Anime Style  
The King of Kong
- A Fistful of Quarters  
Movie Review
- Jack Thompson's Cool?  
No Effing Way....

**OMG Nintendo**

- Nintendo Shares  
Fall 10%..
- Disney "Magic  
Connection" DS

**Gran Turismo 5**



Sony on Tuesday said the precursor to Gran Turismo 5 will be available on Blu-ray and as a download from the PlayStation Store.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**Video Game News**

- Nintendo reveals its top selling Wii, DS games
- Gran Turismo 5 Prologue coming April 17 to PS3
- Guinness World Records: Gamer's Edition comes Mar. 11
- Rumors suggest new 120GB, DualShock 3 PS3; Sony declines comment
- Nintendo to introduce Virtual Console demos on Wii
- In stores this week: Turok, Bomberman Land

Xbox 360	PS3	Xbox 360
		
Soul Calibur IV	Street Fighter IV	Iron Man

**SCREEN FINDER**

game title  platform

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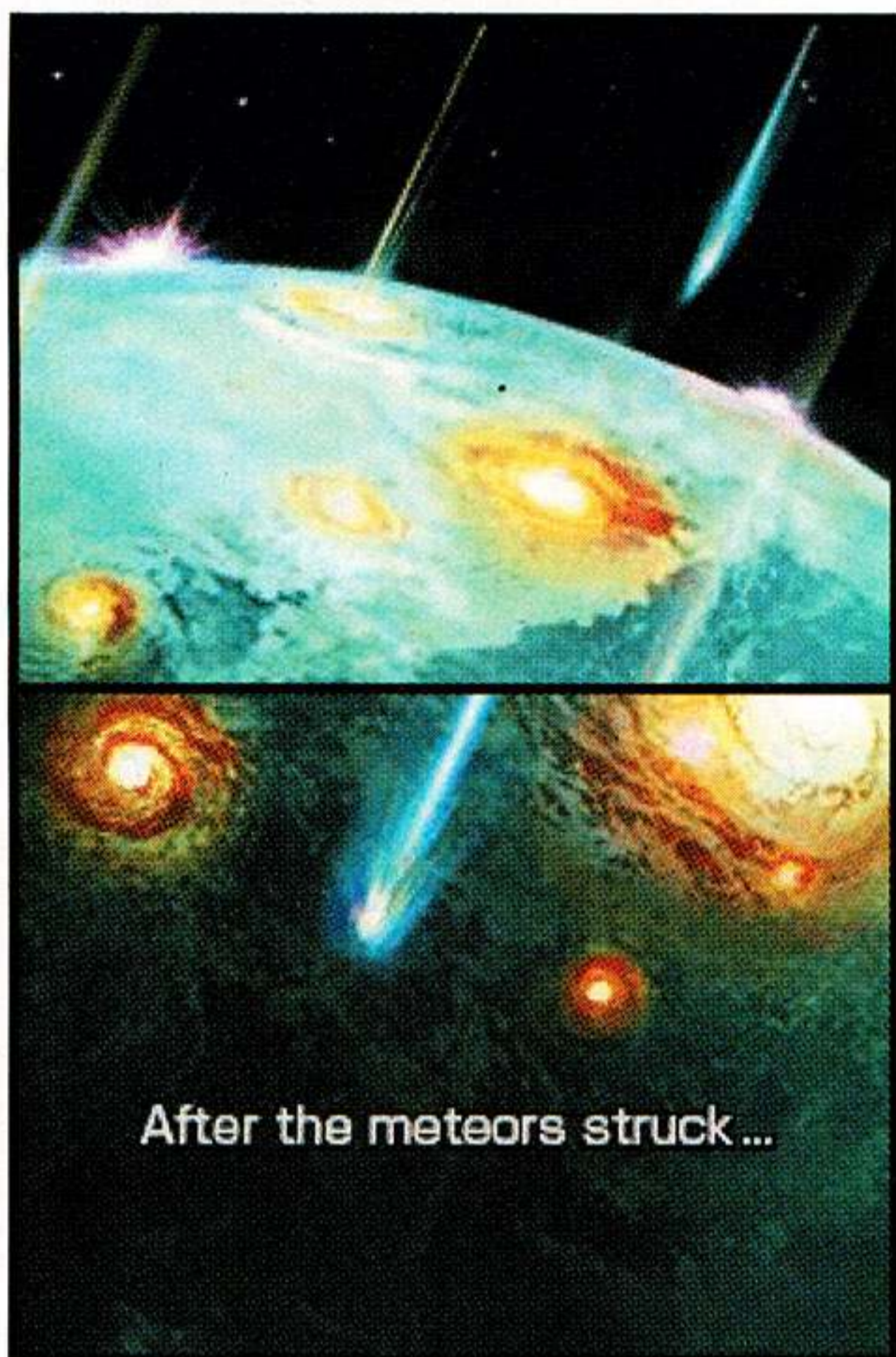


# ADVANCE WARS: DAYS OF RUIN

New features, multiplayer, and a dark story line make this sequel shine.

DS ESRB: E10+

Developer: Intelligent System Publisher: Nintendo



After the meteors struck...

For the uninitiated, *Advance Wars: Days of Ruin* is a turn-based strategy game that features cartoon-style graphics but possesses a surprising amount of strategic depth. *Days of Ruin*, the fourth game in the series and the second for the DS, continues this fine tradition and will entertain gamers of all types.

## DARK TIMES = DARK FICTION

Previous *Advance Wars* games have treated war with a swashbuckling, Saturday morning cartoon approach. *Days of Ruin*, on the other hand, stands in dark, stark contrast: the story takes place in the aftermath of a catastrophic meteor strike that has killed most of the world's population and destroyed the world's atmosphere.

Throughout the course of the game's 26 campaign missions, you will fight with and against various military factions that survived the catastrophe in repeated attempts to rescue and protect as many survivors as possible. There are also 30 "trial" missions which are accessible from the campaign map and can be played at any time. Despite the sinister overtones of the narrative, the gameplay remains faithful to the *Advance Wars* series. Short cut-scenes provide context and narrative before and after each battle and the battles themselves are fairly straightforward affairs.

During each turn, you maneuver your air, ground, and naval units into offensive or defensive positions and then attack. By securing neutral and enemy buildings, you can earn money which can be spent at factories to produce more units. Objectives range from securing specific locations to destroying all enemy units.

## POWERS OF REDUCTION

There are also six new units available in the game, which adds a nice touch of welcome variety. The Motorbike is similar to the Recon unit, but allows you to capture buildings. The Flare is a new armored vehicle that can fire a flare into an area to eliminate the fog of war. The Anti-Tank is a powerful artillery-style unit that can counter-attack from a distance. The War Tank is a massively powerful armored vehicle. The Duster is a multi-purpose plane that can attack both air and ground targets. The Ship Plane is a multi-purpose unit that can be built by Carriers.

In a subtle shift that increases strategic depth, *Days of Ruin* also reduces the impact and effect of special attacks. Tag powers—game-changing specials that allowed commanders to make two moves in one turn—have been eliminated, and while CO special attacks remain, they are less likely to turn the tide of battle.

## THE MORE THE MERRIER

And of course, the greatest addition that *Days of Ruin* brings to the table is Wi-Fi multiplayer. This is a first for the series, and allows you to play against other DS gamers. Over 100 multiplayer maps are included with the game, and *Days of Ruin* even allows you to build and share your own custom-made maps, which adds a tremendous amount of variety and depth.

All told, *Days of Ruin* is a great return to the classic turn-based franchise. The additions and refinements to the formula are stellar and it's yet another gem in the DS's already impressive library.—George Jones





**Z53T** Get the link to *Advance Wars* screens and news sent to your e-mail. Text Z53T to 59479  
Only standard text messaging rates apply

**FUN FACTOR**

4.50

OUT OF 5.00

**PROS:** Shockingly fun; non-nerdy strategy gaming; addition of multiplayer is welcome.

**CONS:** Battles late in the game can take a long, long time to resolve.





Dragon Sword's comic book style makes me want to polybag my DS.

# NINJA GAIDEN: DRAGON SWORD

It's not the size of the ninja in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the ninja.

DS ESRB: T

Developer: Team Ninja Publisher: Tecmo

**Y**ou poor, hungry Ninja Gaiden fans. While a faint memory of a magnificent feast remains in your head of 2004's amazing Xbox version, you've had to make do with reheated leftovers for quite a few years with the slightly updated Ninja Gaiden Black and Sigma. Now, your first new taste in quite some time has arrived in the form of Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword. While it is indeed delicious, we think it's better if you think of this portable treat as an appetizer before the big meal that is Ninja Gaiden II.

## RYU RYURNS

Dragon Sword picks up a few months after the conclusion of the Xbox version of Ninja Gaiden. With the powerful Dragon Blade in hand, Ryu is able to protect the rebuilding Hayabusa village. When the village maiden Momiji is kidnapped, Ryu learns that the Greater Fiends that destroyed his village years before are plotting to return, with the aid of another of Ryu's rivals, the Black Spider Clan.

Appropriately enough for a handheld, the story in Dragon Sword is less intense and more lighthearted than the Xbox version. In fact, his village is the only place you'll encounter NPCs, and it's also the hub world, so the scope of the narrative is a bit narrower. Still, it fits well within the series canon, and you'll enjoy seeing some familiar faces return.

## DRAGGIN' STYLUS

Dragon Swords also makes good use of the DS's unique hardware, requiring you to hold the DS vertically (or "book style") the entire time. The game unfolds on the right screen, with the left screen used for information. All of the movement and combat is stylus-based, with only two buttons necessary—one for blocking and another for menu access. The game actually includes some neat microphone-based elements, too!

The combat, for the most part is pretty enjoyable, though not quite up to par with its bigger console brother. Chaining combos via essence-fueled Ultimate Techniques plays out wonderfully, just like the Xbox version, and the Ninpo attacks are handled in a neat and unique manner: you actually trace a Sanskrit letter to perform the action and then guide the elemental attack.

The biggest discrepancy in gameplay comes during the boss battles. While the Xbox version featured epic boss battles that were true wars of attrition, the fights in Dragon Sword usually boil down to unleashing your strongest Ninpo attack at the outset, and then whittling away the rest of the boss' energy by finding openings after it attacks.

## NINJA MASTERS

Team Ninja is known for making games that really test the limits of a system's hardware, and Dragon Sword is no exception. Ninja Gaiden simply looks amazing. The comic-book style cut-scenes are awesome, and really help engage the gamer in the story. The sound effects and music are near-console quality, and the game actually includes a handful of voice clips to slightly perk up the text-based conversations in the game.

As a standalone DS game, Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword is an amazing adventure almost at the level of Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass. While Dragon Sword's light is diminished by the shadow of its near-perfect console counterparts, it's still a perfect way to help pass the time until Ninja Gaiden II arrives.—**Dave Rudden**

## FUN FACTOR

4.00

OUT OF 5.00

**PROS:** Really takes advantage of the DS hardware; looks fantastic for a portable title.

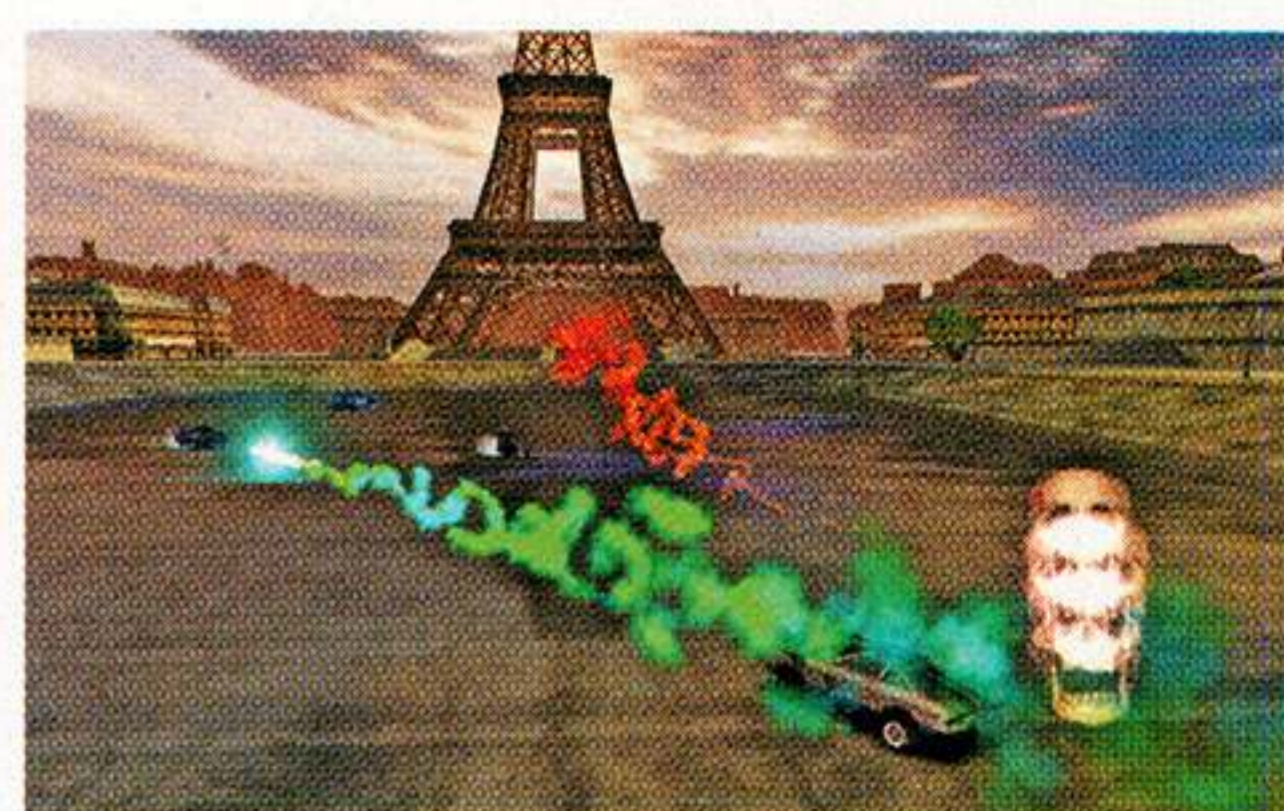
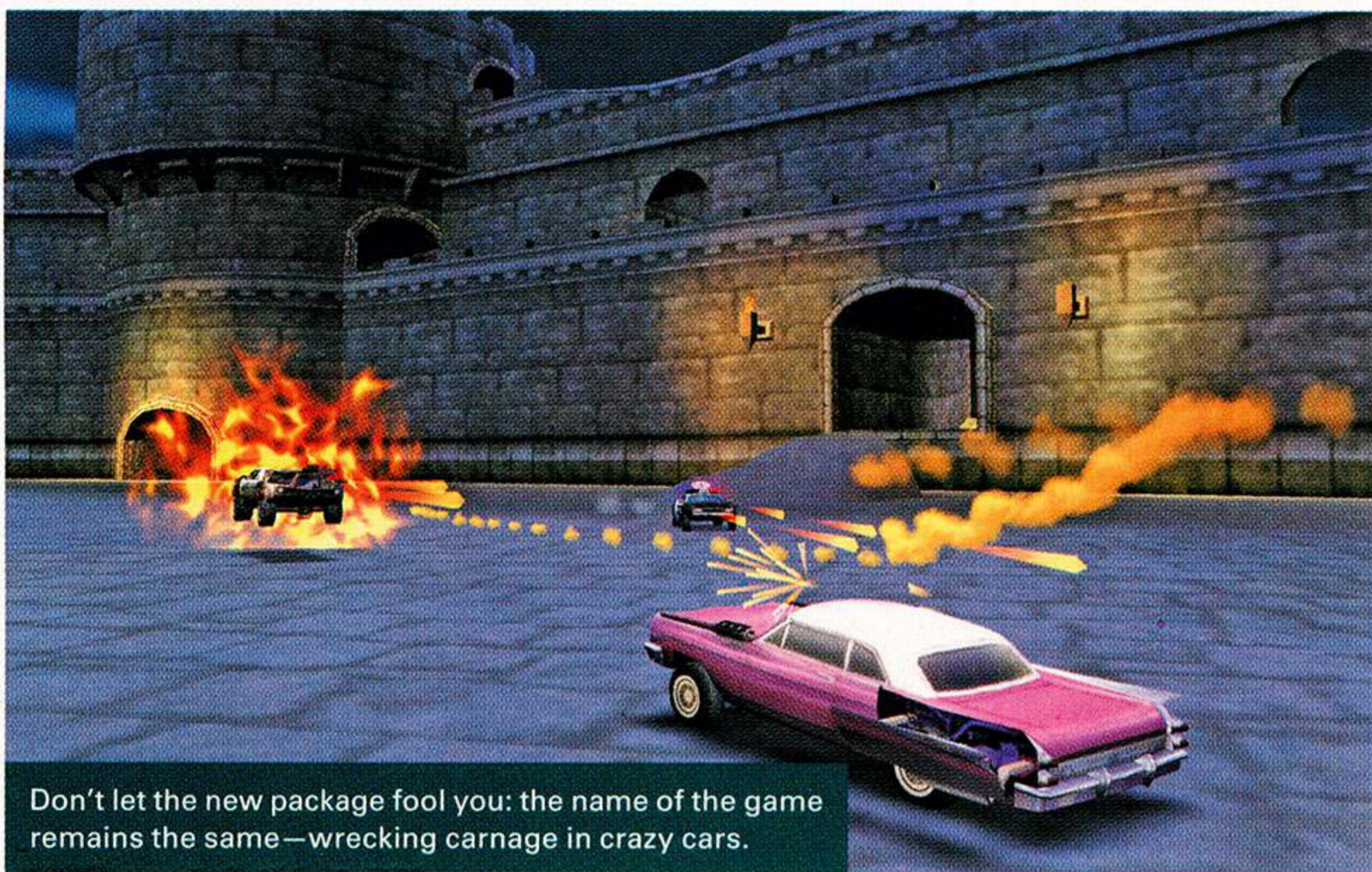
**CONS:** Combat can get chaotic; boss battles lack the intensity of console Ninja Gaiden titles.



## TWISTED METAL: HEAD ON: EXTRA TWISTED EDITION

PS2 ESRB: T

Developer: Eat Sleep Play Publisher: Sony



Even though the graphics aren't the greatest and there's nothing new about the actual gameplay, Twisted Metal: Head On: Extra Twisted Edition is still incredibly fun to play. Playing through both very brief story modes made me really jones for a PS3 Twisted Metal, so go out and buy this title, if only to encourage Sony to do up a proper new-gen Twisted Metal title!—Casey Lynch

Don't let the new package fool you: the name of the game remains the same—wrecking carnage in crazy cars.

**T**wisted Metal: Head On: Extra Twisted Edition features a revved up port of the 2005 PSP game along with a bevy of extra goodies, making it quite a deal for \$20. Still, it's no Twisted Metal Black 2.

### TWISTED COURT TV

We trust that you've probably heard of the Twisted Metal series. If not, it's a demo-derby with guns, rockets and teleporters; think of your morning commute but with more mayhem. The Extra Twisted Edition is broken down into two parts: the direct port of the PSP title Head On and Twisted Metal: Lost, which contains three levels that were originally created for the cancelled Twisted Metal: Black 2.

Both Head On and Lost feature split-screen multiplayer—sadly, online play is not an option—and two extra modes called Challenge and Endurance. While some ports are straight down and dirty carry-overs, the revamped version of Head

On has been touched up graphically. It's still a bit muddled and "dirty" looking but it's an upgrade from the PSP nonetheless. Veterans to the series will find all the game mechanics in place, with crazy jumps, weapons upgrades and special weapons attacks throughout. The same 12 arenas appear from the PSP version and are still fun to jam through, though you can definitely tell the original code was intended for a handheld.

### I CAN HAS SWEET TOOTH?

There are also bonus materials aplenty included like a behind-the-scenes documentary and a previously unseen on-foot mission for Sweet Tooth driver Needles Kane. Though there's no actual gameplay, there are 29 glowing Sweet Tooth heads spread around two levels (Asylum and Impound Lot) that contain interesting factoids detailing everything from the origins of Sweet Tooth to prototypes of a never-produced Twisted Metal toy line.



### FUN FACTOR

4.00

OUT OF 5.00



**PROS:** Nice update; same great Twisted Metal action; tons of hidden goodies to discover.

**CONS:** Graphics are better than the PSP but that's not saying much; no online modes.



MATURE 17+  
**M** Blood  
 Intense Violence  
 Strong Language  
 CONTENT RATED BY  
 ESRB



## APOLLO JUSTICE: ACE ATTORNEY

DS ESRB: T

■ Developer and Publisher: Capcom



I was a big fan of the Phoenix Wright series. When I first got my taste of the kooky, over-the-top court room drama, it was pretty much love at first "Objection!" But after playing through Apollo Justice: Ace Attorney, I've now lost my taste for the antics of spiky-haired lawyers.

The biggest culprit here is the lack of innovation and change. Apollo features some cool DS-specific twists, but the game is such a rehash of past titles that I ended up feeling a little jaded by the whole thing. Plus, it recycles a lot of old content. The art style hasn't changed a lick and I even noticed that certain pieces of dialogue were being reused.

The storytelling in Apollo is also rather subpar. Past cases were predicated on convoluted premises but they still managed to contribute to the game's overall charm; in other words, the zany stories were all a part of the fun. But I had a hard time buying into the twists and turns that infest the cases presented in Apollo Justice; they're silly but not always in the good sense of the word. Phoenix Wright fans who loved the past games and want nothing more than another docket of crazy cases to tackle will no doubt love Apollo Justice. It's a solid distillation of the franchise formula and if you haven't yet had your fill, I wholly recommend the game, because you will no doubt enjoy it.

But I personally couldn't get over how derivative Apollo felt. There were moments when I enjoyed myself, but for me, the magic of the series has slowly worn off and I truly hope Capcom takes the franchise in a bold new direction. Otherwise, I might have to consider turning in my badge and leaving the courtroom for good.—Tae K. Kim

### FUN FACTOR

3.75

OUT OF 5.00



**PROS:** Clever use of the DS hardware; a solid take on the familiar Phoenix Wright formula.

**CONS:** It's a little too derivative of the past games; cases are a little too silly sometimes.

## SONIC RIDERS: ZERO GRAVITY

Wii ESRB: E

■ Developer: Sonic Team UGA ■ Publisher: Sega

Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity doesn't gain anything on the Wii. It's best if played like its predecessor, Sonic Riders for the GameCube—with a GameCube controller. If you have a couple of those purple peripherals, it's possible to have a fair amount of fun zooming around with Sonic and his pals. But due to some wonky controls, playing with Wii Remotes cuts into the enjoyment.

Despite colorful cut-scenes, don't worry much about the who's and the why's. The racing itself plays out similarly to Sonic Riders, while adding in some new twists. Gravity points are awarded for getting a good running start (which entails crossing the line at the exact moment an electric barrier is removed) and pulling off tricks. Once accumulated, you can use them to turn on Gravity Control which is basically drifting with a little bullet-time slo-mo thrown in for fun. There is also a boost move that somehow makes running into things a strategy for going faster.

The tracks themselves can be exciting, especially once you get a handle on exploiting the potential of your vehicles. Vehicles come with three Gear Parts that you can unlock during a race by collecting rings. At first, it seemed like it might be a hassle to upgrade while navigating, but you don't have to think about what you're upgrading since it only requires a single button press. Finding the best route through each course lends replayability, and so does playing with friends or racing ghosts downloaded off the World Rankings. Unfortunately, downloading ghosts of the leading times is the closest you'll get to online multiplayer, but local options are available for both races and rather pointless Survival Mode sporting events.

Though the tracks and gravity gimmicks are fun to experiment with, Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity isn't likely to be something you'll come back to as a competitive racing staple. If you can suffer the controls or have GameCube controllers lying around, it's not a bad kickback-n-relax option for some speedy cartoon laps.—Emily Balistrieri



### FUN FACTOR

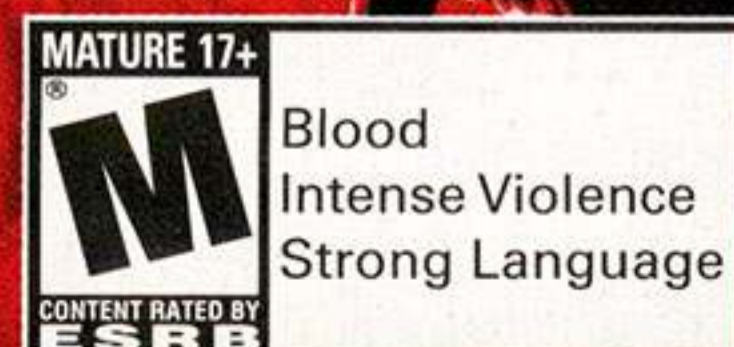
3.00

OUT OF 5.00



**PROS:** Races full of alternate routes; fun Gravity Control mechanic; catchy menu music

**CONS:** Control could be tighter; no online multiplayer; no mix-n-match controller options.



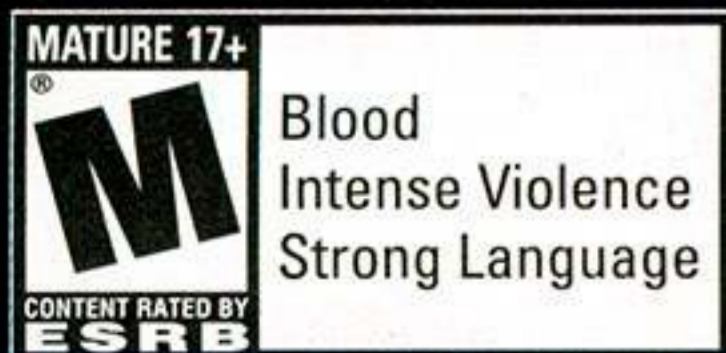


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# BEAT THE ODDS

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XBOX 360 LIVE



PLAYSTATION 3

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\* Best First-Person Shooter, IGN.com, 2006





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## REVIEWS

HARVEY BIRDMAN,  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

PSP ESRB: T

■ Developer: High Voltage Software  
■ Publisher: Capcom

If you're a fan of the Adult Swim show Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law then you're in luck because the video game plays out exactly like an episode of the TV show. You'll see an appearance from Peanut, Birdgirl, and X the Eliminator with their original voices intact, though Stephen Colbert isn't present as president Phil Ken Sebben.

The gameplay consists of investigations and court room dramas; basically, it plays out like a dumbed down version of the Phoenix Wright series except the cases are even zanier this time around. The plot lines includes: changing sides between prosecution and defense, Judge Mentok the Mind-Taker swapping people's minds, potato-powered jail break attempts, and an army of litigating clones.

The production values are also surprisingly high. The voices, music, and art all make it feel like you're watching a UMD video series instead of playing a game. Honestly, sometimes you may wish that were true. One thing I do want to mention is that you can skip the cinematic clips. It might seem like a small thing but you don't have to watch anything that feels like a waste of time, especially considering the fact that some clips do get replayed quite often.

The game is fun because you're advancing the plot and usually laughing, not because of any amazing gameplay mechanics. Gravitas points, i.e. Birdman's lawyer powers, are used up if you "present the wrong piece of evidence like a boob," but certain clever, non-essential actions will be rewarded with an extra one. You can also unlock bonus videos, including out-takes, which is the real incentive for me to play through the game.

All in all, Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law is a pretty short game and it's not terribly challenging, but for those who appreciate the humor of the series it's likely to be an enjoyable romp. Just be sure you know what you're getting into before you invest in the game. —Emily Balistrieri



## FUN FACTOR

3.75

OUT OF 5.00

PROS: High production value; retains the animated show's quirky sense of humor.

CONS: Game is rather short overall; gameplay isn't particularly deep or challenging.

DOWNSTREAM  
PANIC!

PSP ESRB: E10+

■ Developer: Eko Software  
■ Publisher: Atari



At first glance, Downstream Panic! seems like just another rehashed puzzler, but it's surprisingly fresh and engaging; enough so that it'll keep you entertained throughout its lengthy single player modes.

Here's a quick summary of the game's story: a school of fish gets caught in a cyclone, launched into the air, and happens to be rescued by some floating bubble devices. The fish are released from these bubbles at the beginning of each level at which point you are tasked with guiding them downstream to safety.

The most interesting gameplay mechanic at work involves controlling the flow of water that contains your fish. You are provided with a very limited number of tools at the beginning of each level that help you see your fish safely to the bottom of the level. You have to prevent them from spilling over the edge where they'll be eaten by Giant Piranha, keep them safe from the other creature who lurk about the stage, and make sure they don't get stuck in a pool of water that won't flow to the bottom. You will also find seashells placed at various choke points in the environment that act as drains. Sometimes a level requires you to juggle turning several of these on and off at once and can make for some truly hectic action.

New tools and enemies are introduced throughout the adventure mode's more than 80 levels, which helps keep things interesting. The level of challenge can be uneven at times, but for the most part the game provides a good blend of frantic action, strategy, and of course clever puzzle solving. Downstream Panic! certainly isn't the best puzzle game out for the PSP, but that shouldn't stop you from trying out this fun addition to the system's library.

—Spenser Hall

## FUN FACTOR

3.75

OUT OF 5.00

PROS: An interesting and unique puzzle game; cartoonish art style fits right in with the action.

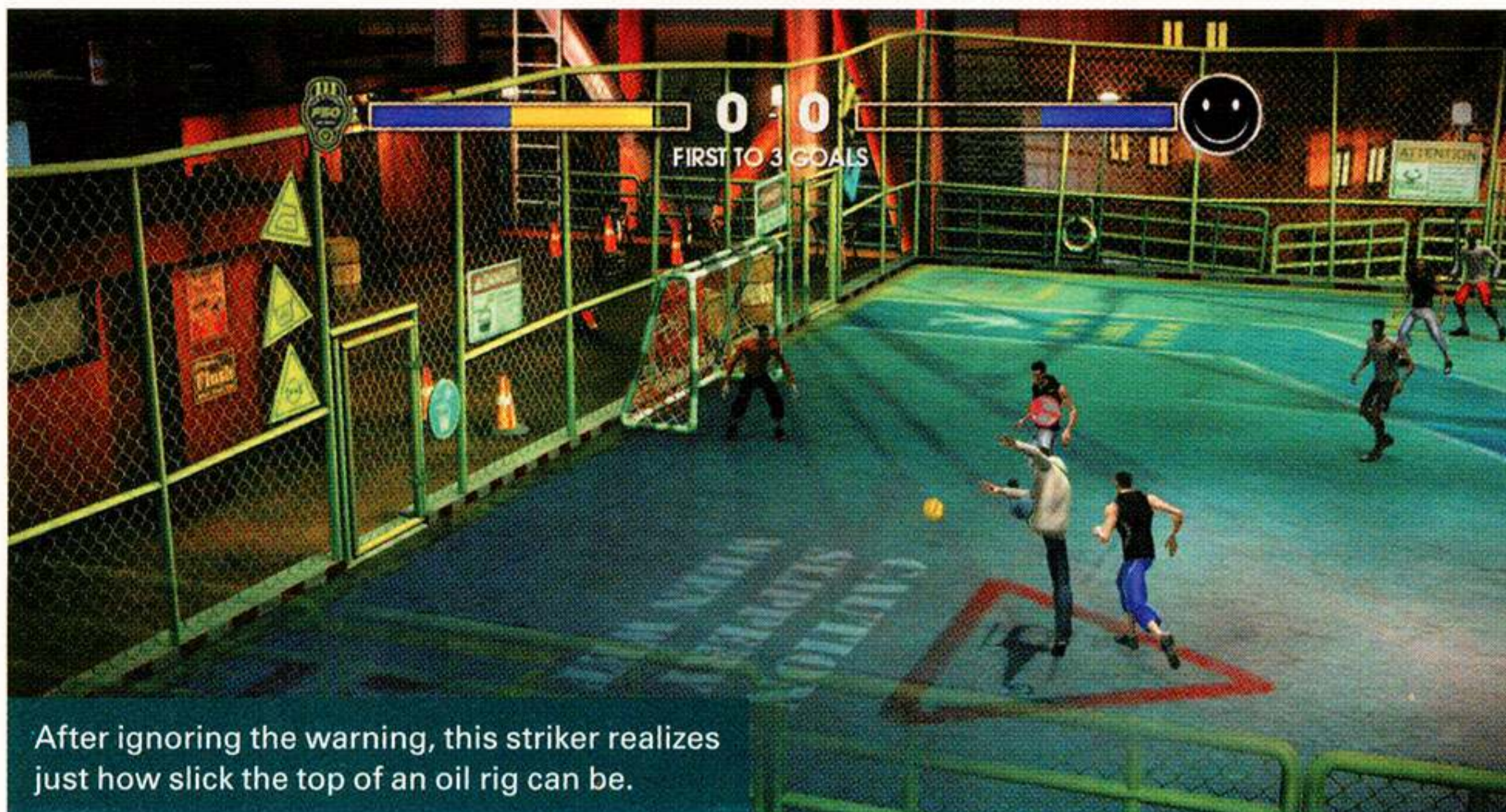
CONS: The difficulty is uneven. It won't make you forget about classic puzzlers like Tetris.



# FIFA STREET 3

Xbox 360 ESRB: E

Developer: EA Canada Publisher: EA Sports Big



After ignoring the warning, this striker realizes just how slick the top of an oil rig can be.

The third installment in the FIFA Street series is an interesting take on the world's most popular sport. It finds the back of the net with incremental gameplay improvements and a handful of assorted additions. Accessible controls and long-awaited online play help make FIFA Street the best entry in series, even if it's still a long ways from perfection.

## STYLE OVER SUBSTANCE

FIFA Street 3 isn't soccer so much as it is an extremely simplified distillation of the sport. The action centers on a casual vibe that definitely emphasizes style over substance. The distinction is immediately apparent in the colorful graphics and tight soundtrack. Both are awesome, particularly the tunes which have been collected from some of the world's most progressive artists. The audio and visuals perfectly match the arcade-style gameplay, which is equally as entertaining and accessible.

Teams of five hit the pitch in a range of single and multiplayer modes. FIFA Street Challenge heads up solo play with a series of nine tournaments comprised of various events. Timed Matches, for example, ask you to score the most goals in the allotted time whereas a Headers and Volleys game only counts those goals made accordingly. Ultimately, the objective is always the same: score as often as possible to win.

## HANDS-ON

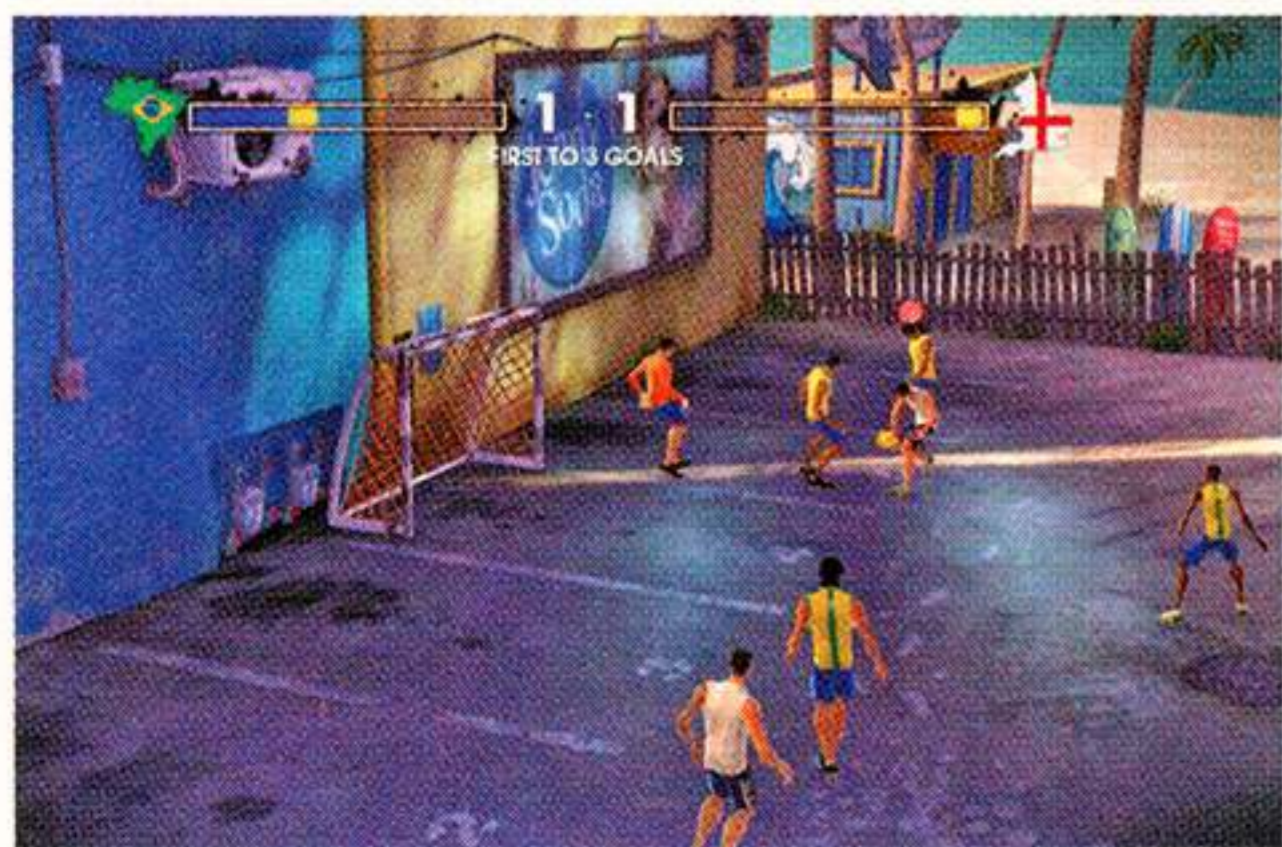
Intuitive controls make that goal easy to accomplish. Essential maneuvers such as passing, shooting, and tackling are all done with the A and B buttons. Fancier footwork demands a bit more from your fingers, but even the hardest tricks are

easy to pull off. FIFA Street 3 brings back the trick stick, which lets you toy with the right thumbstick to effortlessly execute advanced maneuvers. Pulling off tricks isn't just for show, however: Each contributes to your momentum meter and leads up to a game breaker. These super-charged moments open up a whole new set of abilities that boost your scoring chances.

The fluid controls also help compensate for your brain-dead teammates. Passive defenders allow the ball to slip through easily, meaning the only way to mount a successful defense is to constantly switch among players and direct each one manually. Online matches do away with this problem, offering matches for up to eight players in any of the arenas and modes featured in the single player game. Given the lack of a true career mode, a new online-only World Challenge mode provides much-needed depth through large ranked tournaments. Other than local head-to-head matches, it's the best mode FIFA Street 3 has to offer.

## OFFSIDES

A fantastic sense of style puts the series' best foot forward, but it's at a cost of losing the relative depth found in the previous two installments. FIFA Street 3 ditches their dense gameplay and sprints forward with fewer modes and options. This trade off is for the best because it makes the game more accessible and more entertaining than ever before but it won't make you forget about hardcore sims like Winning Eleven either. While you won't want to sit with it for hours on end, FIFA Street 3 is fun for a few stylish rounds of pretend footsie.—Tracy Erickson



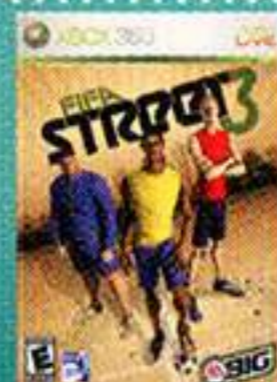
## FUN FACTOR

3.50

OUT OF 5.00

**PROS:** Accessible controls; fantastic soundtrack; new online play.

**CONS:** Lamé A.I. forces you to switch players on defense; unimpressive list of modes.



# MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

DS

Developer and Publisher: Sega



Even though it's shrunken down to fit the DS, Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games is almost as fun as the Wii version. But just like its bigger brother, it's best if you have a bunch of friends to play with you.

The DS game contains 16 characters pulled from the Sonic and Mario universes, but it obviously lacks the ability to play with user-created Miis. There are 24 events in all, ranging from the 100m dash to skeet shooting and as you can imagine, some are better than others. I was also surprised to see that the developers tweaked the controls to take advantage of the DS. For instance, when airborne tricks off the trampoline, you draw on the touch screen with the stylus, which was a nice touch.

There is also the Mission mode which offers unique goals for each character in five events. They can be as simple as not missing a single shot in a round of skeet, or as frustrating as not getting hit at all during the Dream Race. There is a nice sense of whimsy that is injected into some of the events, such as the use of Mario Kart items like red shells during the hurdle event. There is also a mini-game collection that features some random time wasters like a weird Breakout-type game with moving targets, a conveyor belt sorting activity, and an airship that ascends as you blow into the DS's mic but they're minor distractions at best.

Longevity is also an issue: even with the gameplay variety, you can whip through it all fairly quick. If you get together with a group of friends for some DS action regularly, this is one title you should consider adding to the rotation; if you're obsessed with the upcoming Olympics then that's another reason to look into the game. But if you're a lone-wolf type who only has a passing interest in the Olympics then you'll probably be better off looking elsewhere.—Emily Balistrer

## FUN FACTOR

3.25

OUT OF 5.00

**PROS:** Good variety of events; four-player circuit competitions are a blast.

**CONS:** Longevity is an issue; you need multiple carts for true multiplayer action.





# ASK THE PROS

You ask, we answer.

### QUESTION OF THE MONTH



#### WHICH SYSTEM?

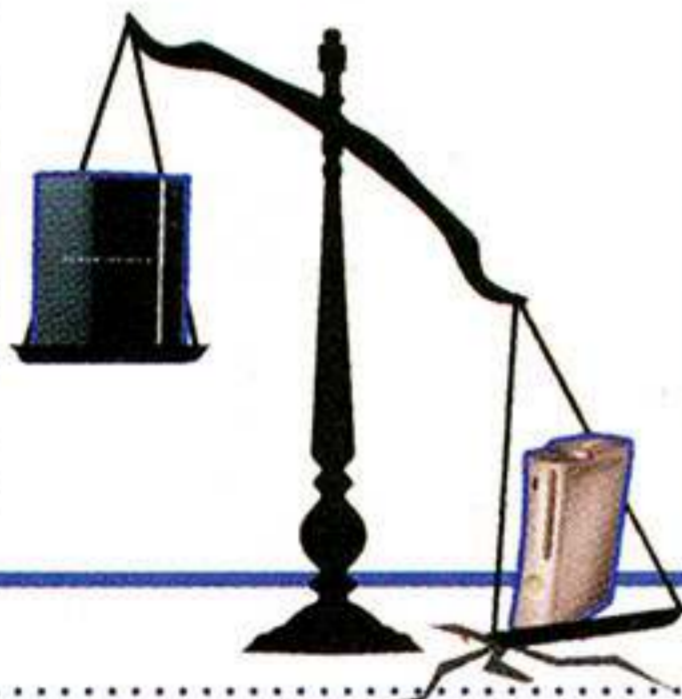
**Q:** I'm an 11-year-old kid who is into games, and I'm putting together some cash to buy a console. Halo is my favorite game, but I'm afraid the Xbox 360 will only work for a couple of months as I hear it overheats and scratches the disc if it's in a bad position. But then I want the PS3 because I hear it works better than the Xbox 360. What should I do?—Freakishman



**Travis Moses says:** The 360 does have overheating issues that cause the "Red Ring of Death," and there are reports of scratched CDs. The PS3, however, doesn't overheat and runs particularly well. The only PS3 issue we've come across in the office is intermittent Sixaxis controller disconnection when playing certain games (such as Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection).

As to which console you should purchase, I'd still go with the Xbox 360 because of the phenomenal game library and Xbox Live. We recently interviewed Shane Kim of Microsoft and he said newer Xbox 360s are getting much better performance and fewer crashes than earlier models.

You could go with PS3 if you don't mind spending a bit more on the console. The PS3 exclusives are great games, but not as great as the Xbox 360 exclusives—so far. It really comes down to the games. They are video game consoles after all, and if the games aren't there then there is no reason to play, right, Freakishman?



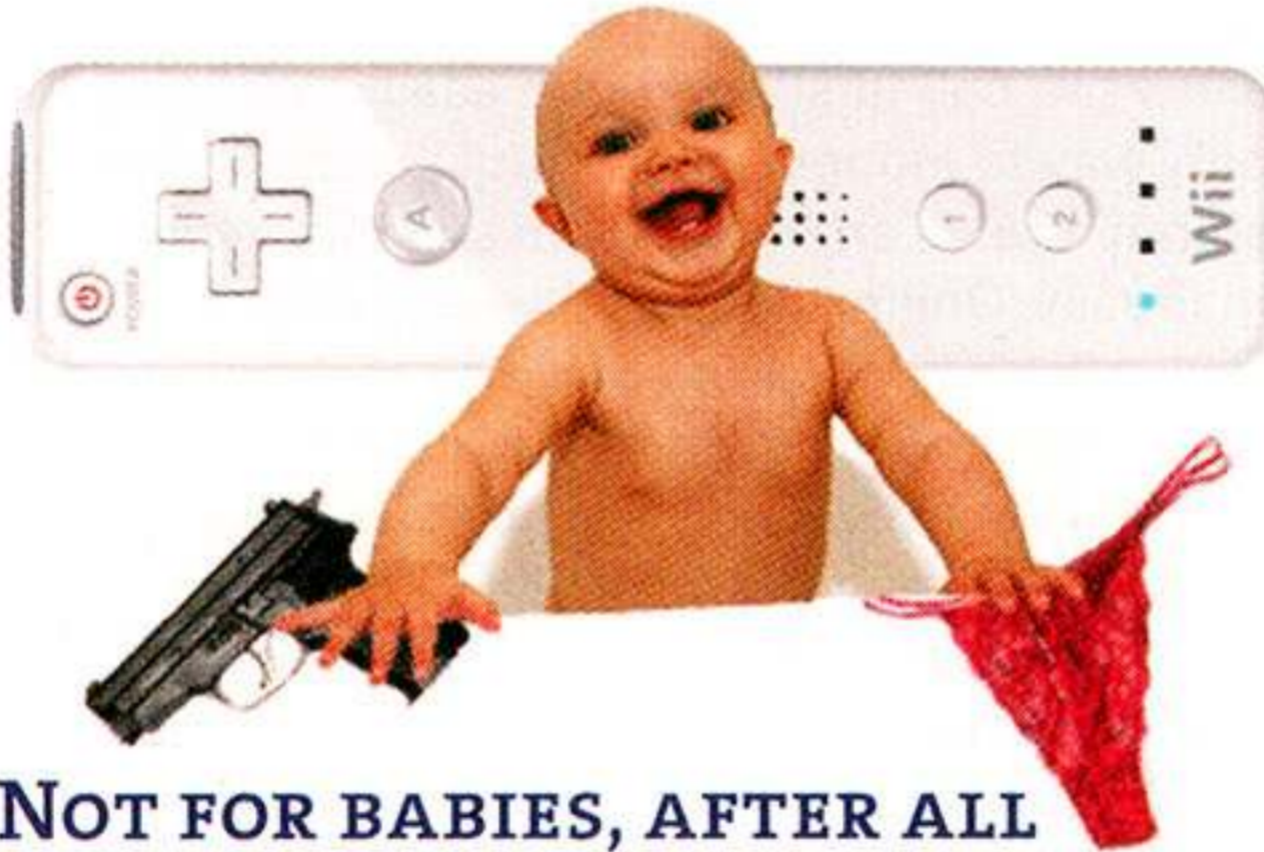
#### LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

**Q:** I just bought a Wii last week and I am very curious if it's ever going to have games with sexual content; all I see in stores are baby games. —titomister10

**Tae Kim says:** I'm confused, titomister10. Why do you want games that have sex in them? Just because a game has sex in it, doesn't mean it's going to be good. Besides, having sex in a video game would only make sense if it was presented in the right context. If it was just sex for the sake of sex, it would just be gratuitous and unnecessary. Think about for it a second: imagine someone created a game where all you did was run around a room killing people. Would that be fun? For some people, sure, but ultimately, without some form of narrative context to give the violence meaning, the game would just be looked at as a joke.

And a game that featured sex just to have it would just be the same thing. You also seem to be operating under the assumption that a game needs to have sex in it to appeal to older gamers. It doesn't. Also, if you're disappointed by the "baby games" that populate the Wii, why did you buy the console in the first place? The Xbox 360 and PS3 have far more mature-themed games that are probably right up your alley.

If you want to experience something with lots of sex in it, video games are probably the wrong way to go. There are other forms of entertainment, but I won't mention them because this is a family show.



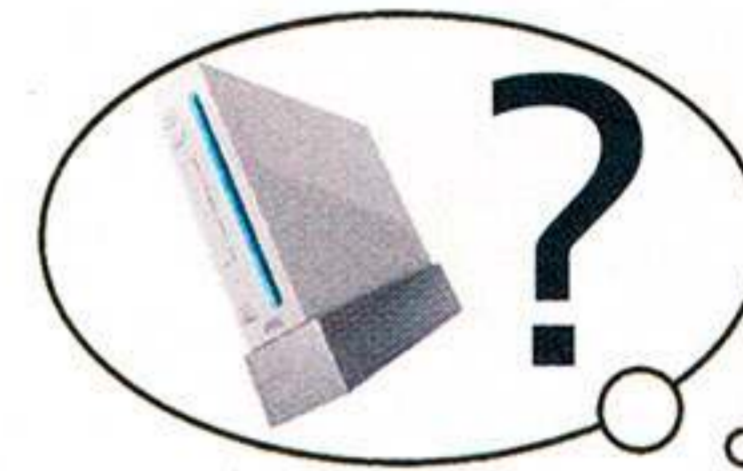
#### NOT FOR BABIES, AFTER ALL

**Q:** Why doesn't the Wii have more violent games like the PS3 and the Xbox 360? For example, I think that Mario Bros. is for babies. —pkmaniac

**Tae Kim says:** You know what's sort of childish? The idea that a video game has to be violent in order to appeal to adults—that's just plain silly. I don't think the Wii needs violent games like the PlayStation and Xbox. The Wii, and the entire industry, needs good games; whether they have violence in them or not.

A game can contain violence and be awesome. Titles like Halo 3, Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare, and Grand Theft Auto use violent themes in a context that makes sense, and as a result, they were awesome. But there are plenty of amazing games where violence isn't even present. Is Tetris violent? What about Katamari Damacy? Guitar Hero or Rock Band? These games are amazing and just prove you don't need to kill and maim in order to have fun.

I'm not going to take away your right to like violent video games, pkmaniac. But I am going to encourage you to try and understand that it isn't just the violence that makes a game great. Try to appreciate all of the elements that go into a good product and you'll see that games like Mario aren't just for babies after all.



#### NEEDING TO GET IN SYNCH

**Q:** I finally got a second Remote for the Wii, but I've been having some problems. Sometimes only one will register at startup, sometimes neither, sometimes the order is tough to control, and from time to time I'll lose one mid-game. Am I doing something wrong, is this a systemic problem, or just something overlooked? What is the proper way to set up multiple Wii Remotes and do you have to do it every time you start the system?—BrakUF

**Tae Kim says:** If there's one thing I can't stand about the Wii, it's this exact problem. Speaking from personal experience, I've had my own fair share of problems with Wii Remote syncing issues. Remotes will drop out mysteriously, or they won't sync at all. A Remote will work fine one day, and act up the next. While it's a minor annoyance at best, it can be pretty aggravating.

The way we deal with it in the office is to use the re-syncing feature in the Wii menu. Boot up your game and hit the Home button: this takes you to a Wii submenu. Hit the Wii Remote Settings, activate the re-syncing feature, and then just press the 1 and 2 buttons on your Remotes and they should both sync up without much fuss. Make sure you invest in a good set of rechargeable batteries or a battery pack for each Remote, to ensure they have adequate juice.

## GAMEPRO CHALLENGE

We asked you to review your favorite game of 2007 in 10 words or less.

"Great RPG with tons of re-playability and an epic story."  
—Iacurra (on Mass Effect), **Status: Ninja**

"Land was too easy for him, time to conquer space."  
—Wiifreak33 (on Super Mario Galaxy), **Status: Hero**

"Like playing a great horror novel."  
—vivaLeResistance (on BioShock), **Status: Hero**

"It's Halo. Buy It."  
—KingOfTwilight (on Halo 3), **Status: End Boss**

Take the *GamePro* Challenge at [GamePro.com/community](http://GamePro.com/community)





ASK THE

# GAME GIRL

I don't have a lot of friends. Like, I really only have one friend and she lives an hour away which makes hanging out with her hard. One of the main things I do for fun is play video games, mostly RPGs since I don't have anyone to play with. The other day my Dad told me that he wants me to "get rid of all my video game junk." He is threatening to donate my games and consoles too if I don't get rid of them. And I'm starting to literally freak out. He thinks it's making me less social, but it totally doesn't in any way. I was shy before I even got my first console, a PS2 which I've only had for two years. So what should I do? How do I convince him that it's not hurting my life? He is threatening to make me get rid of it. He's been taking the whole "video games are not for girls" approach.—Christina

FemmeFatale's Response:



I've been through this before. I can't tell you how many times my mom has disconnected my Internet on me during a raid. We've gotten into terrible fights over my long gaming hours. I just sort of ignored her, no matter how much she threatened to get rid of the internet completely; she never had the heart to.

There was a time when I was playing way too much though, and I didn't want to hang out with anyone and made excuses to my friends on why I wanted to stay in for the day. Eventually I realized that I didn't want to live my life that way and cut down my game time a bit. I rarely pass an offer to go out with friends now, but I still have plenty of gaming time.

Try to compromise with your dad. Perhaps figure out together a reasonable amount of hours a day you can put towards playing your PS2; maybe have a Friday game night with your dad if you do find some games he enjoys playing with you. Your daddy is just worried about you, remember our parents come from a loving place.

Send your questions to the Game Girls at [GameGirl.com](http://GameGirl.com)

It can be a hassle, but doing that every time you go to play with your Wii should ensure that all of your Remotes are synced up and remain so throughout the duration of your playtime.



### WHOSE NAME IS IT ANYWAY?

**Q:** Can I legally change my name to Link and my sister's to Zelda? I think that would rock!—link3343

**Tae Kim says:** You most certainly can change your name legally to Link, link3343. And if your sister so chooses, she can legally change her name to Zelda.

However, I am going to just go ahead and suggest you not to do that. Seriously, getting your name changed isn't some easy peasy deal where you walk into some office and go, "From now on, my name is Link." There is a ton of paperwork to deal with and you have to shift all of your accounts over, etc. But really, the biggest thing you have to contend with is the fact that you are now named after a video game character, which carries all kinds of connotations.

I don't think there's anything wrong with people adopting nicknames or altering their names in some fashion. Heck, I've done it myself. But legally changing your name to Link is a lot like getting a tattoo—you better be good and sure that you will want it five, 10, 15 years from now. Sure, it's easier to reverse a name change than it is a tattoo but it's a hassle nonetheless. I encourage you to really think about it before you make any decisions.

**PROS**

Ask the Pros and read more tips online.

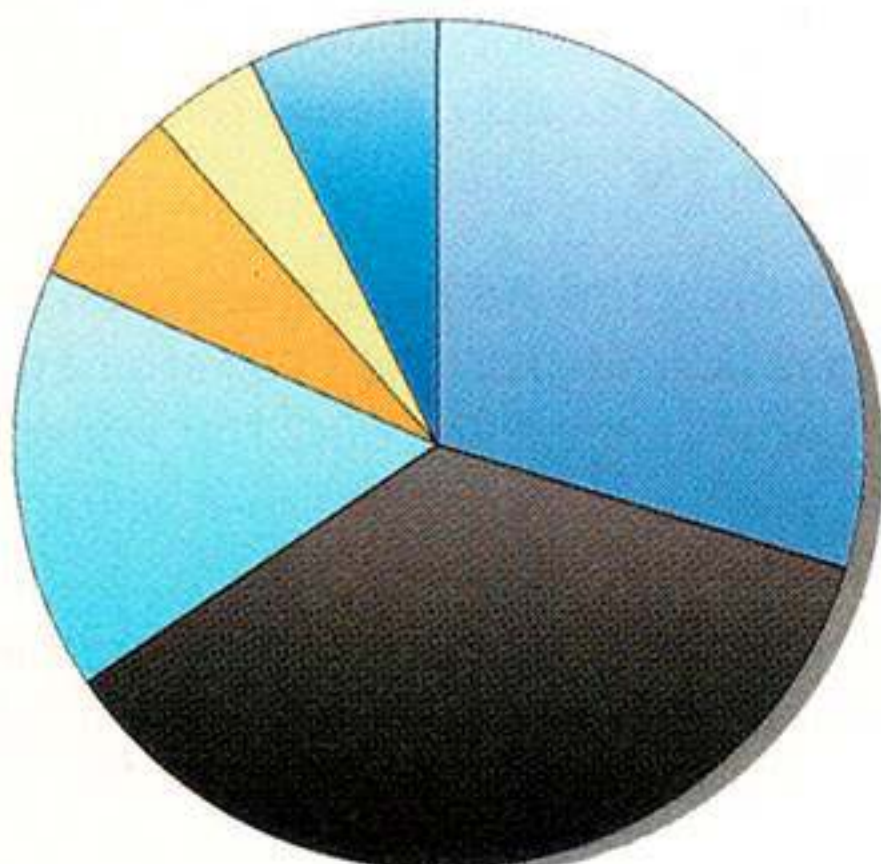
Text **PROS** to **59479**

Only standard text messaging rates apply

## GAMEPRO POLL

Results as of February 12, 2008

What did you get for your holiday haul?



- Xbox 360: 30%
- PS3: 36%
- Wii: 16%
- PSP: 7%
- DS: 4%
- New PC: 7%



## AWESOME THREADS

Overheard on the [GamePro.com](http://GamePro.com) message boards...

### Member of the Month



**nadohawk**

Rank: GamePro Hall of Fame  
Sex: F  
Age: 21  
Expertise: Star Trek  
Hometown: Washington, DC

"I think Dracula is pretty cool and sexually appealing. Yeah, I went there."



**LuckyLemonita**  
Status: n00b

On who's prettier, Jessica Alba or Jessica Simpson

"I don't even know these people."



**TheTeacher**  
Status: End Boss

On people over 21 and grad school.

"Yeah, I'm in grad school right now. Papers suck, but I'm not doing it to learn (even though that happens). I'm doing it so I can one day change my account name here to TheSuperintendent."



**We\_Eat\_Tires**  
Status: n00b

On if the Nintendo 64 was a failure.

"It wasn't the best-selling console but it was hardly a failure."



**Smokeyedsteve**  
Status: End Boss

What goes on in the locker room in Super Smash Bros. Brawl.

"I was about to...but then I thought of Princess Peach in Super Mario Galaxy... that disturbed me deeply."

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# H2H

HEAD TO HEAD

You write, we respond.

ZOMG  
SPOILARZ!



## GLAD TO LEND A VOICE

I never write to video game magazines, but after reading your *GamePro* Editors' Choice 2007 Awards, I just couldn't resist. For "Most Memorable Villain," you gave the award to Portal's "The Voice." A good choice, but seriously, "The Voice?" Her/its name is GLaDOS (Genetic Life form and Disk Operating System). Even if you didn't get that from playing the game, anyone with an internet connection could figure that out in a two-second Google search.

**F0xHunt**—Lake Forest Park, WA



## AN IMPARTIAL JURY

After reading through some of your past issues, I noticed a fairly constant pattern involving consoles. Whenever someone writes you a letter asking which console to buy, you seem to always just give them the specs for each console and never give them a definite answer. Why is this? Is it because you have to sign some sort of contract with Sony, Nintendo, and Microsoft to remain impartial? Or do you just want the readers to make their own choice?

**Bill McDonald**—Shrewsbury, MA

There's no contract; it all boils down to journalistic integrity, an issue that surfaced recently in the gaming community. Everyone here at *GamePro* has their list of favorite games based on personal taste. Hopefully we've done a good job with our reviews and previews so gamers can make the most informed decision when they're spending their hard-earned cash. You want us to take a stand? Look at our "Question of the Month" in the "Ask the Pros" section in this issue.

## LETTER OF THE MONTH CONTEST

### GUITAR HERO II XBOX 360 BUNDLE

The Letter of the Month winner will receive the Guitar Hero II bundle for the Xbox 360. Rock on!



Casual versus hardcore: the battle rages on...

## ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE OPEN MIND

A very interesting aspect of 2007 was the sudden interest in games that didn't cater to the hardcore crowd. Casual, softcore, "non-gamers"—whatever you want to call it—boils down to one thing: the market we all know and love is expanding. Those who never played games before are now picking up such titles as *Scenelt!*, *Buzz!*, and *Endless Ocean*. But while this is great for the industry, I do have one concern. A majority of video game journalists consider themselves hardcore, and I feel this mindset can actually hinder their reviews of casual games. It's almost as if the game's final rating is lower just because the title didn't cater to the hardcore gamer, when that isn't the game's target audience. This letter is a plea to those working for gaming publications: have an open mind. Write a review not as a *hardcore gamer*, but as a *gamer*. If you're reviewing a casual game, keep in mind the type of person who would play it, and write the review for them. Just because you prefer *Call of Duty* over *Carnival Games* doesn't mean everyone else does. Remember: whether you're a hardcore or casual gamer, the point of playing video games is to have fun.

**Mike R.**—Lockport, IL

## RAISING THE BAR

I can't wait for many of the games to be released in 2008. Of course, the year will have its ups and downs, but what year doesn't? Last year saw so many great games like *Halo 3*, *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*, and *Super Mario Galaxy* that this year's games are going to have to step it up. There are already plenty of games set for a 2008 release that look promising like *Grand Theft Auto 4*, *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots*, *Devil May Cry 4*, *Iron Man*, *Too Human*, *Frontlines: Fuel of War*, *Ninja Gaiden II*, *Super Smash Bros. Brawl*, *Killzone 2*, *Tom Clancy's EndWar*, *Halo Wars*, and *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* (to name a few). With a list like that I don't see how anyone can wait.

**P.dizz**—Goshen, OH

## DECIDING WHAT TO BUY

I just got a Wii not too long ago for my birthday. But I also have a PS2 and I am so confused on what to do. I have money saved to buy a new game, but there are many different choices. Should I buy *Drawn to Life* (I seriously need a new DS game), wait for *CoD4* to come out for the PS2, or wait for *Super Smash Bros. Brawl*? Since I just recently bought *Rock Band* I'm thinking about buying the drum kit or microphone for that. Please help me!

**Eli Cross**—Nashville, TN

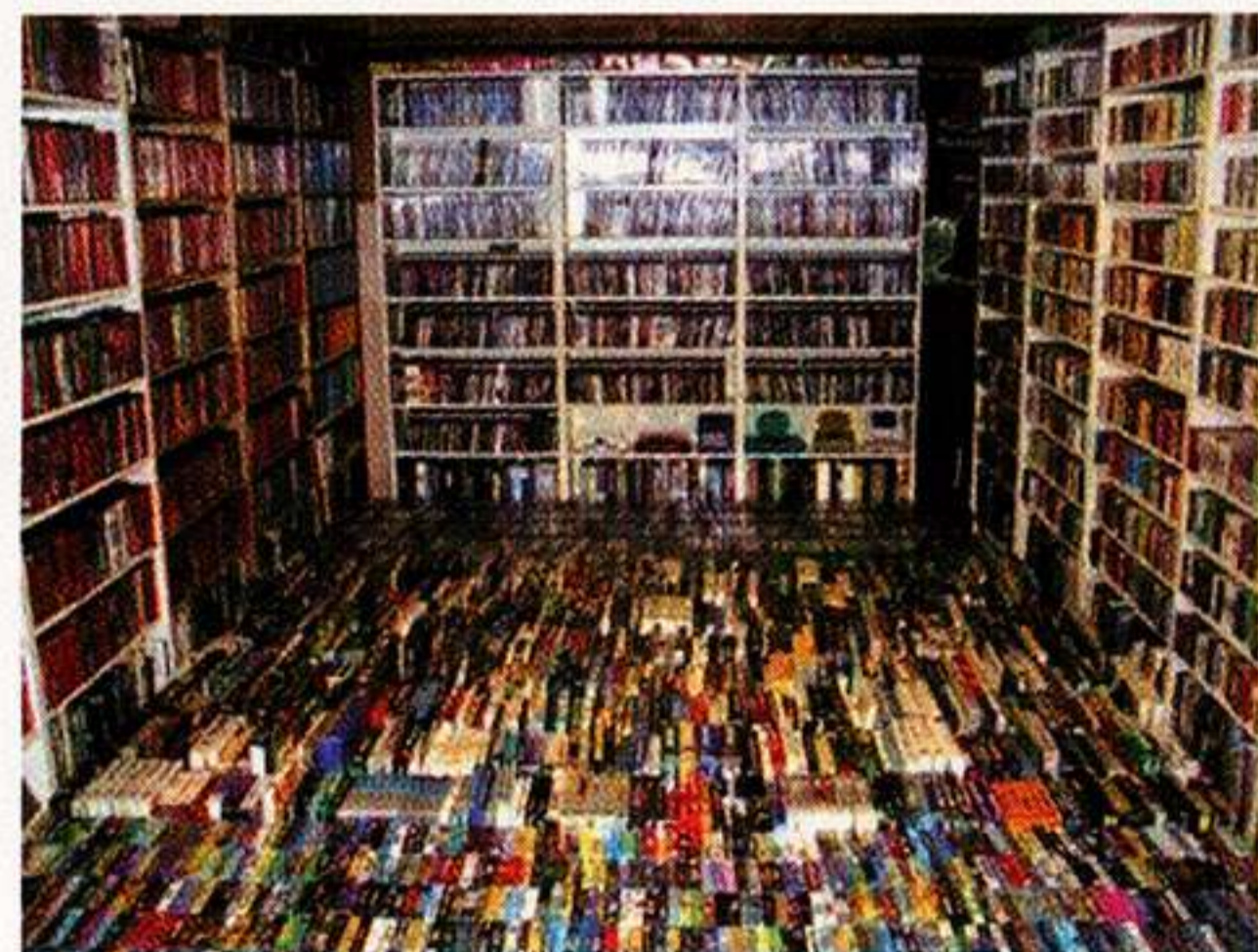
It sounds like you have some hard choices ahead of you. When it comes down to it we can't all afford to purchase every game that comes out. The important thing to remember is the games will always be there. Whatever games you don't get with the money you've saved you'll be able to pick up at a later date (and probably at a cheaper price, too).



## SHOULD A GREAT GAME BE FLAWLESS?

I really can't understand why Mass Effect got December's Game of the Month Award. Within that same month, Super Mario Galaxy, Call of Duty 4, Assassin's Creed, and Rock Band all got perfect scores of 5.00, where Mass Effect got a 4.75. I even recall the CoD4 list of Cons: "There is really nothing bad I can say about this game. Seriously." Why would you award a game that has a few notable flaws over a game that apparently has none?

Kevin Cain—Olympia, WA



## ROOM FOR EVERYONE

This is to the people who accuse *GamePro* of having a so-called Wii bias. I can answer this as a person who has owned three systems since day one. I am a 43-year-old gamer so I think I have knowledge of this ludicrous question. I own one Wii game, two PS3 games, and as of now over 50 Xbox 360 games. I play the Wii when my nieces are over and mostly use the PS3 to watch Blu-ray movies. I live and breathe 360 and Xbox Live. It's where the serious gamers are and will remain. I play over 25 hours a week on 360 and maybe one on Wii. That should explain that there are good reasons to own every system.

Don Barefoot—Raleigh, NC



## MORE TO VIDEO GAMES THAN LOOKING GOOD

It drives me insane when people completely rip on great games just because they've "seen better." Why is it so many people rate games based on graphics, not gameplay? In a world where games are rated based on looks, awesome old-school releases like Mario Bros. and Metroid would completely fail. My opinion is good graphics are nice, but do not alone make a great game.

Jeff Campbell—Pittsburgh, PA

## THE STATE OF INFLATION

Being a longtime subscriber, and recently turning 47, I consider myself an old-school gamer on a rather limited gaming budget. I've owned close to a dozen game machines and computers over the years. To all those who complain about high game and console prices, I remind you that the Atari 2600 started out at \$250 and the Panasonic 3DO a whopping \$800. Do what I do: Wait a year, keep playing your old systems, and snag up the great bargain-priced games for them. You can get many of them for under \$10.

I got a new 3DO back in the day for \$150 and I still occasionally play it with my friends (the light-gun games are still popular party games). Look how much the Xbox 360 and the PS3 have dropped in price over the last year. Also consider when a console launches it often has many bugs that, over time, are corrected and fixed. I've been waiting for HDTVs to come down in price, and after reading *GamePro's* excellent reviews of Mass Effect and CoD4, I think I'm just about ready to take that next-gen plunge. To all gamers everywhere, "Play on till you're gone!"

Robert Elmore—Medford, OR

## LET'S CONNECT!

Got a question or comment? Write to us at: [letters@gamepro.com](mailto:letters@gamepro.com) or *GamePro*, Head2Head, 501 2nd St., Ste. 114, San Francisco, CA 94107. Be sure to tell us your city and state, too.



# ART ATTACK!

This month's winner receives

**Dance Dance Revolution Universe**



Name: Harry Vargas

Age: 29

Feedback: [Havajojo@yahoo.com](mailto:Havajojo@yahoo.com)

Favorite Game: Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock

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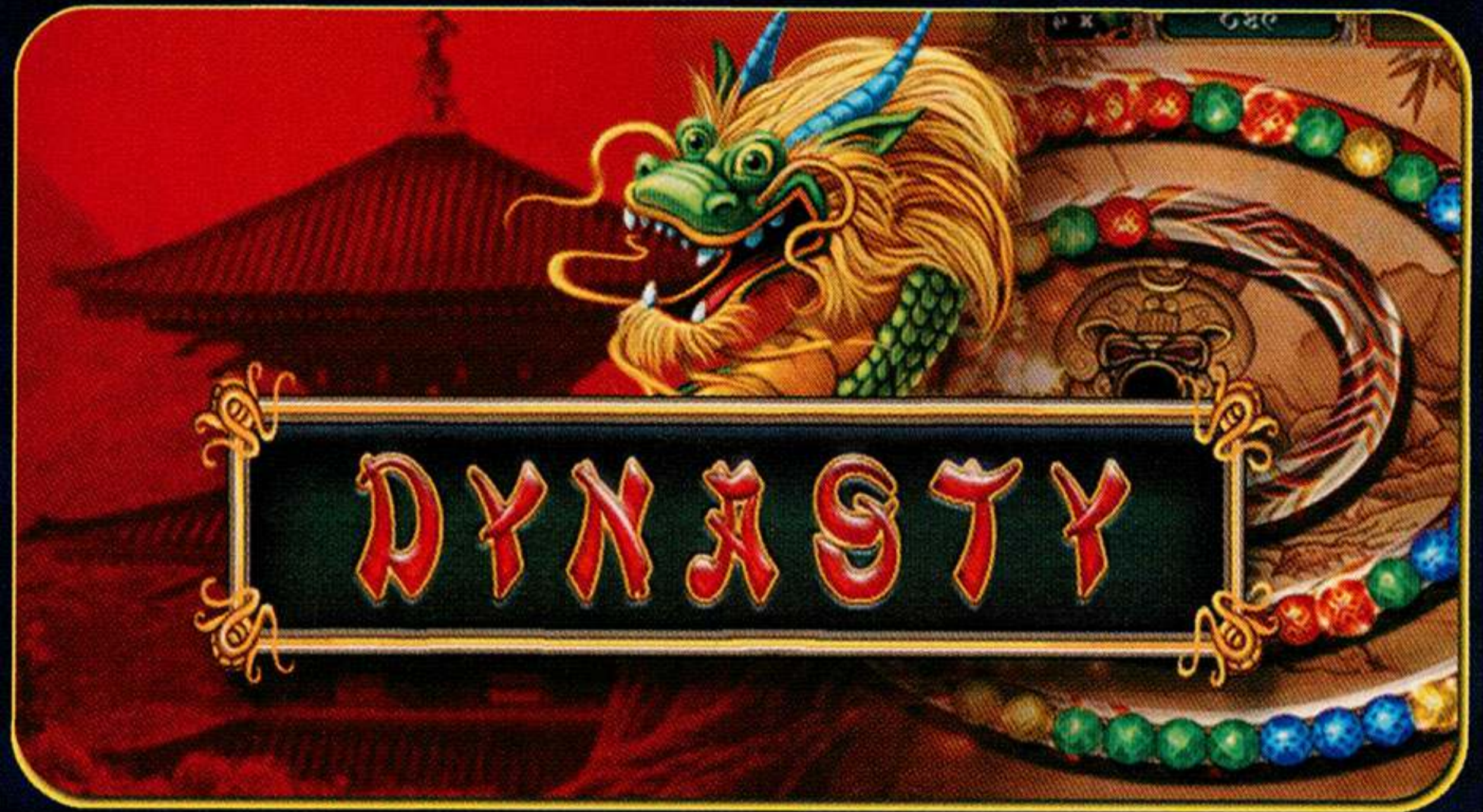


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# TOMB RAIDER: UNDERWORLD

PS3, XBOX 360, PC

Tomb Raider: Underworld features a new level of interactivity between Lara and the environment. For example, this in-game screenshot showcases our favorite Tomb Raider practicing her balance-beam routine in the rain, 20 feet above a deadly panther den. Lara can also perform cartwheels and handstands from this position, not to mention her ability to independently aim at two different targets at once.





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