OXM 53

REVIEWS: BLACK, COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE, STUBBS THE ZOMBIE, MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP, GAUNTLET: SEVEN SORROWS, RUGBY 2006 GUIDE: CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS

XBOX

Official Xbox Magazine

# Official XBOX Magazine

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- TOCA Race Driver 3
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- Black

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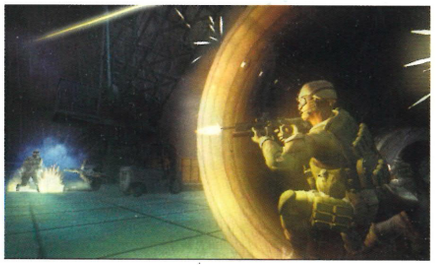
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***OFFICIAL Xbox Magazine*** **is written by experienced gamers who've spent their lives playing games. We believe that games are the most exciting form of entertainment and the magazine will reflect that at all times.**

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http://xbox.oxm.co.uk



# Back in Black

IT'S HERE! Exclusively playable on the disc and exclusively reviewed on page 068. A bundle better than anything you'll find down your local games shop, we think. Criterion's attempt to throttle the fiercely overcrowded first-person shooter genre is going to send shockwaves to other developers who may have forgotten about fun in favour of stealth, physics and cutting-edge technology. Or at least that what the acclaimed *Burnout* developer hopes. Does *Black* reinvent the rules of first-person shooting or is it just another FPS stripped of all its stealth and puzzles? I suggest you play the game, read the review and make up your own mind.

After a quiet few issues on the review front, it's good to see quality and quantity back in the review section. Especially as January and February are traditionally quiet months (I've been counting down the days until payday since 03 January!). And not a moment too soon, either. What would we have done with recently employed reviews editor Michael Jackson otherwise? Make him sing? Nah, he's no good at that. So if you've got some Christmas cash still lying around, or are expecting a fat bonus any time soon, check out what's about to land on Xbox from page 067.

Something else that surprised us this month was the number of announcements for new Xbox games. Titles coming to a big, black console near you in 2006 include *Medal of Honor: Airborne*, *Far Cry Instincts Evolution*, *Rainbow Six: Critical Hour* and *X3: The Game*. And if I weren't scared of upsetting some of the hardest and biggest PR ladies and gentlemen in the business, I could tell you a whole load more games that are due for Xbox over 2006 and into 2007. Keep yours eyes glued to the UK's only dedicated Xbox magazine over the coming months for all the Xbox scoops!

Enjoy the issue,
**GAVIN OGDEN**
EDITOR, *OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE*

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Surprise! Ubisoft coughs up first details on shooting sequel. 012

**Splinter Cell Double Agent**
More info than you can shake a pair of green goggles at! 026

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Catch the latest updates from the *Official Xbox 360* team 060

**Scarface: The World is Yours**
Shocking plot revelations revealed! Don't miss a word. 054

**Castlevania: COD Guide**
Complete walkthrough for your dungeon-busting pleasure 120

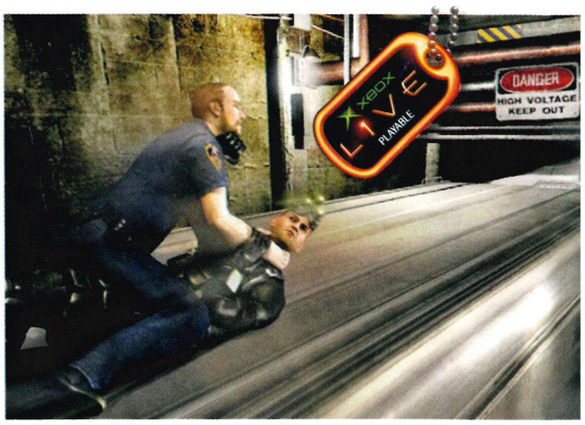




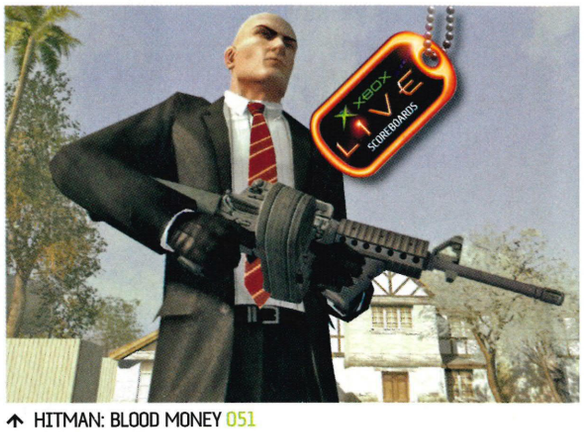
## XBOX 360 ACCESS

Phase two of the unstoppable Xbox 360 games assault, and lifting the lid on the 360 version of *Fight Night Round 3* – you can practically taste the blood!

060




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↑ HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY 051

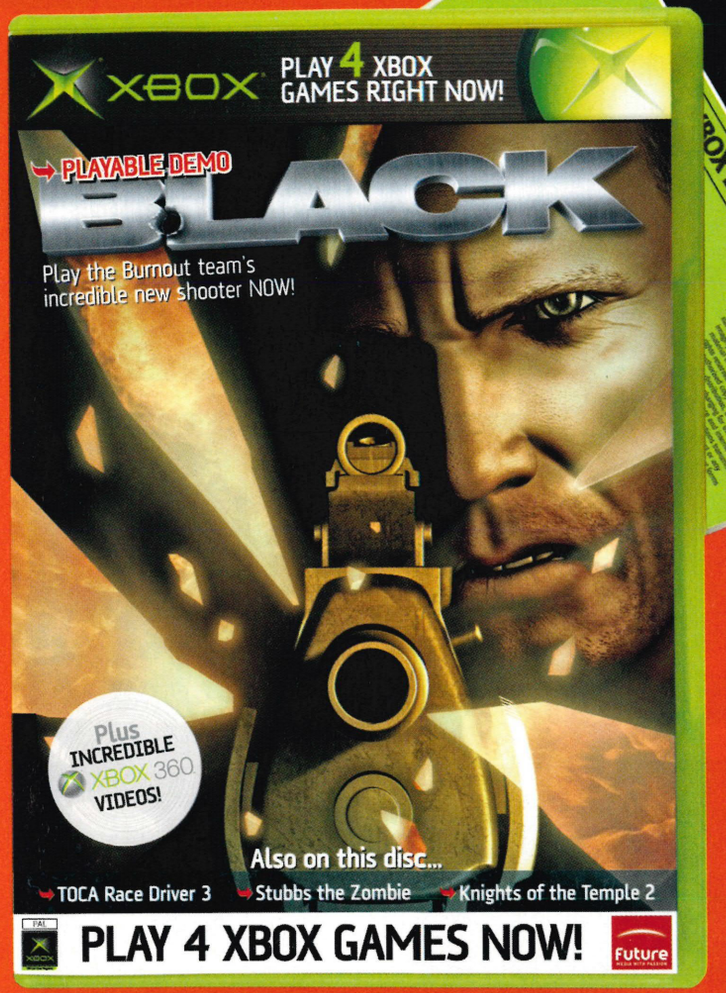
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## SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS

Wondering whatever happened to that *Scarface* game? We head off to Canada for a showdown with developer Radical Entertainment and a long-awaited update.

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# Play:More On the Disc 53

## On The Disc: Playable

Black, TOCA Race Driver 3, Knights of the Temple 2 and Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse

**Xbox Movies:**

New brutal footage from The Godfather, TOCA Race Driver 3, Commandos Strike Force and some ludicrously violent gun-based action from Black, to show you how it's done

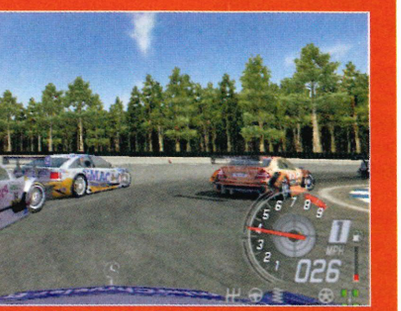
**Xbox 360 Movies:**

The latest movies from Xbox 360, including action from Full Auto, NBA 2K6 and its close cousin NHL 2K6, and some pant-shredding, knee-breaking Amped 3 footage

YOUR DISC GUIDE STARTS ON PAGE 104



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↑ TOCA RACE DRIVER 3 105




↑ GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER 046




↑ FAR CRY INSTINCTS EVOLUTION 012



## BLACK

Your exclusive review and playable demo of the loudest shooter ever created are only moments and pages away. What'll you do? Play it first or read the review? Hmm... 068

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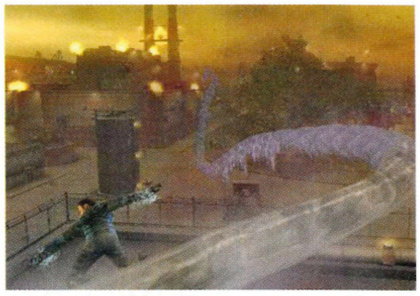
↑ With Wolverine's new arm-spin, X-Men fans will be going nuts. Wait until he hooks up with Colossus too.



↑ Let's hope that's not Jean Gray up there.



↑ Nightcrawler is in charge of stealth tasks.



↑ Iceman will be able to swoop around levels.

# X3: The Game

## The mutants join forces to fight a giant worm of fiery death!

Official Xbox Magazine EXCLUSIVE SCREENS

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Z-Axis | Pub: Activision |
| Release: Spring 2006 | Live: None |
| Players: 1 | |

HOLD YOUR HORSES, before you start foaming at the mouth over the pictures of the strange fiery creature. We've got it on good authority that this isn't Jean Gray in her 'Dark Phoenix' form, but an entirely new bad guy. What it's doing wrapped around the cooling tower of a nuclear power plant is anyone's guess, but we've a feeling *X3: The Game* will enlighten us along the way.

Based on the third and 'final' X-Men film, this is an excuse for the X-boys to stretch their X-muscles against the evil Magneto and his cohorts. Wolverine, Nightcrawler (who won't appear in the movie) and Iceman will be the three interchangeable main characters, and it's by using the combination of all three that you'll progress through the game.

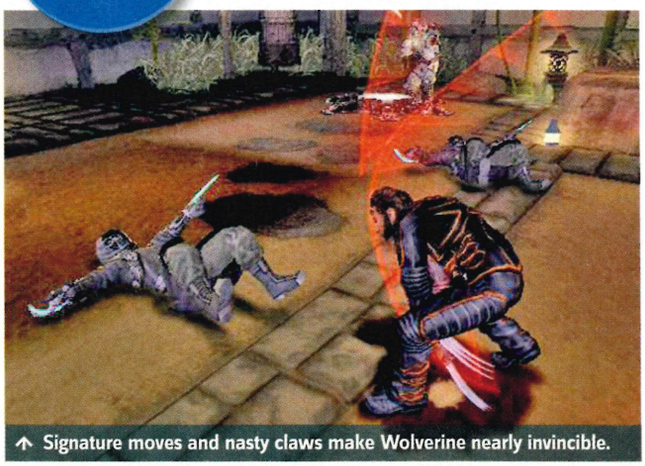
Wolverine is obviously the brawn, able to unleash his combat rage during battles (movie director Brett Ratner promises a heap of previously unseen Wolverine moves), while Nightcrawler will be able to bypass security systems and tripwires, effectively opening up the game as you progress. Iceman will also come in handy, especially with that big old fire-beast on the loose, and you'll be able to use his abilities to create ice slides to move around levels. These three main players won't be the only X-Men around though – each level will feature a 'guest' X-Man who'll complement your team. Having Colossus about, for example, means that he'll be able to throw Wolverine high into the air to perform the famous 'Fastball Special' move, something fans have been aching to see.

Activision is keeping schtum about the X-Men who'll be joining the three lead characters, but with the likes of Kitty Pride, Storm, and Beast playing major parts in the movie, we'd expect to see them in some capacity. And yes, we reckon a little Dark Phoenix action could be on the cards too.

Levels announced also give a sneaky peek into what we can expect from *X3*. The dam returns from the previous movie, as does the Statue of Liberty, and the Dark Cerebro from *X2*, but precisely why the old levels are back has yet to be announced.

Because there are so many different types of X-Man appearing in the game, each with distinctive moves, developer Z-Axis is being careful not to recreate the mess (not theirs) that was *Marvel Nemesis*. Each character will have their own set of moves, rather than, say, just making Colossus the same as Wolverine but without the claws. So *X3* should feature intuitive, simple commands for each mutant, but it also means other features will need to be introduced to stop the action turning stale.

This is where the Mutant Evolution system comes into play. Throughout the game you'll evolve depending on how well you perform. If you always play as Nightcrawler, for instance, his strengths will begin to outshine the others, whereas the more you use Iceman, the greater amount of the frosty stuff he'll be able to spout from his fingers. You'll also be rewarded by looking out for hidden mutant bonuses and artefacts throughout the game. By finding them you'll be given stat cards for each mutant and unlock back stories and even classic X-Men wardrobes, ideal for anyone who yearns to see their heroes in yellow and blue. Due for release in the spring, we'll have a hands-on with *X3: The Game* in the very near future.



↑ Signature moves and nasty claws make Wolverine nearly invincible.



↑ It's going to take more than a little chill to put that thing out.



↑ Hmm. Could that be some kind of mutant robot?

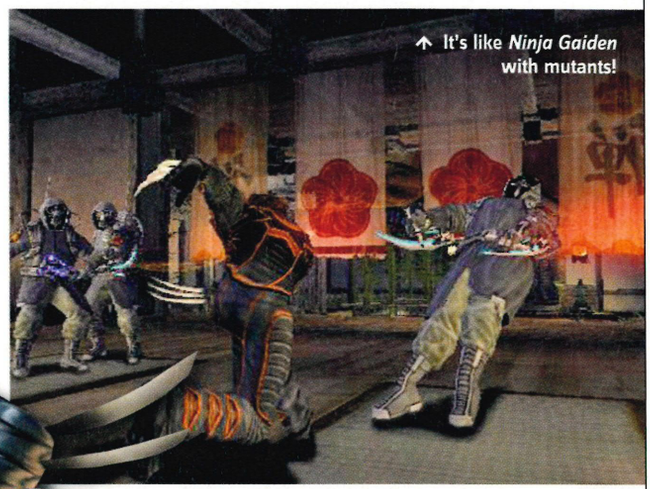


↑ Your mutant skills increase as you use them.

### Bonus info

**SWEATY BETTY**

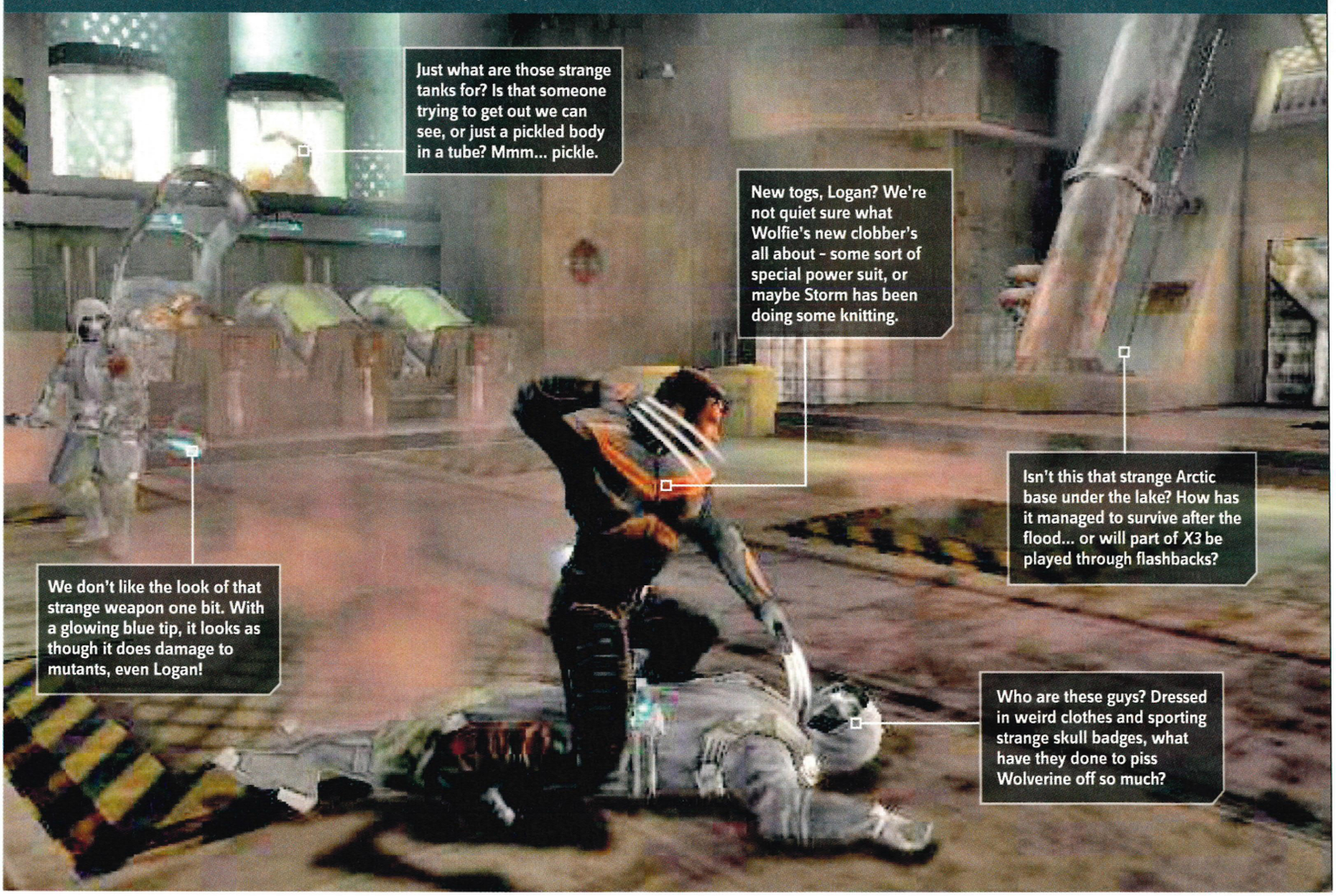
It looks like that strange wiggly fire-worm won't be the only mystery surrounding *X3*. British mutant Psylocke will be joining the game, but mutant fans may be gutted to hear that she's... a BADDIE! By Magneto's beard, can this really be true?



↑ It's like *Ninja Gaiden* with mutants!

## Mean, Lean Wolverine

Unexplained goings-on shroud X3 in mutant mystery




X-HARDMAN: VINNIE JONES HAS SAID THAT HE'S NOT IN THE MOVIE THAT MUCH (GOOD), BUT HE HAS SIGNED UP TO BE IN X4 AND X5 WHEN THEY'RE MADE (BAD)




↑ Just because Jack is now feral doesn't mean things will be easier!

Official Xbox Magazine EXCLUSIVE SCREENS

Official Xbox Magazine PLAYED IT

# Far Cry Instincts Evolution

## New abilities, new weapons, new islands, same old trouble...

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Ubisoft Montreal | Pub: Ubisoft |
| Release: March 2006 | Live: 2-16 players |
| Players: 1-4 | |

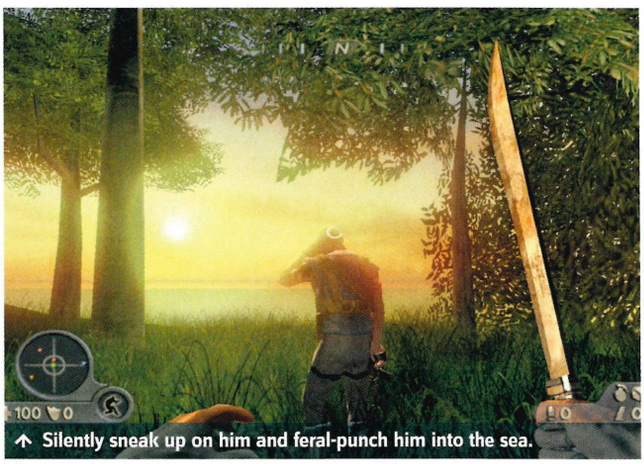
THIS ISN'T just an expansion pack. *Far Cry Instincts Evolution* is a whole new story, set on new islands, and rich with new weapons and abilities. Plus, you can import your homemade maps from the first game.

Jack Carver, voiced again by Stephen Dorff, has settled down. He's living back on the islands, he's got himself a girlfriend, and he's doing a little less-than-legal work on the side to earn a crust. He's still 'feral', though, and soon comes a cropper when a strange bunch of other ferals show up and murder his boss. Hunted by these mysterious 'others', it's not long before Jack's on the run again.

Because enemies will also have feral powers, *Evolution* picks up the action at its peak, and runs with it. Battles will be more intense, levels will be larger, but to compensate for the crash 'n' burn gameplay being a little too intense, Ubisoft is throwing in a handful of sweet touches.

Gameplay is now completely free-roaming, allowing you to island-hop at will. Added to the catalogue of animal instincts, Jack Carver will now be able to climb vertically up objects such as trees and cliffs. Bertrand Hélias, the game's senior producer, told us that he fully intends for Jack to have battles high in the treetops with other ferals. It's hardly surprising, then, that there are a few new weapons to help deal with these pesky feral soldiers scampering about the place. The pipe bomb is one such delight - leave it under any vehicle or watchtower, and with a click of a button the whole lot goes sky high. But the single most important new weapon has to be the blowdart - basically a drinking straw capable of firing darts tipped with feral antidote. Stick an enemy with one of these and he's reduced to being a normal human. Likewise, if you get jabbed by a dart, all Carver's abilities will wear off for a short time, leaving you open to some hideous deaths.

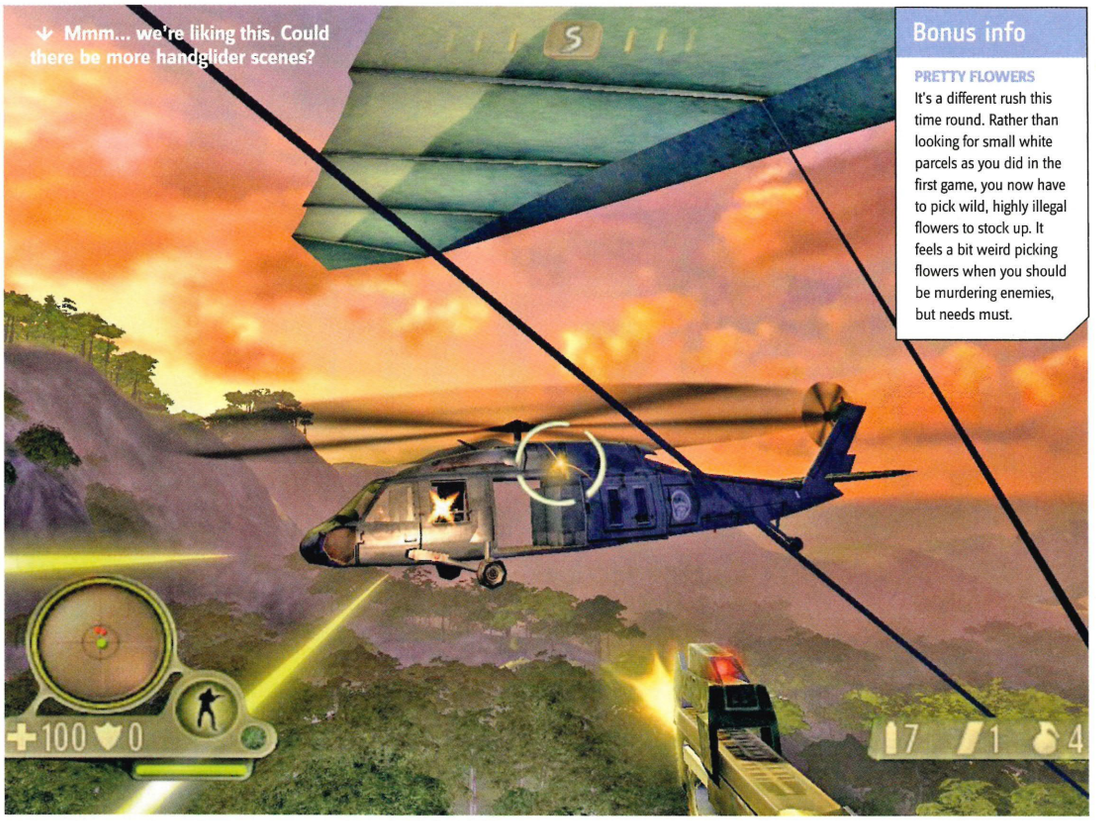
With all the new abilities and plans Ubisoft has for this next chapter, it's clear Xbox Live play is in the forefront of the developer's mind. The map editor has been refined, making it easier to create watchtowers and outposts (Hélias tells us some people likened the mapmaking to climbing a mountain), while vehicles have been tinkered with to enable eight-man teams to use a single craft. Pickup trucks and canoes will all be able to carry huge amounts of clan members as well, making *Evolution* primed for multiplayer action. We can't wait to get our claws round this one.




↑ Silently sneak up on him and feral-punch him into the sea.




↑ Feral rebels will be deadly - take them out with maximum force.

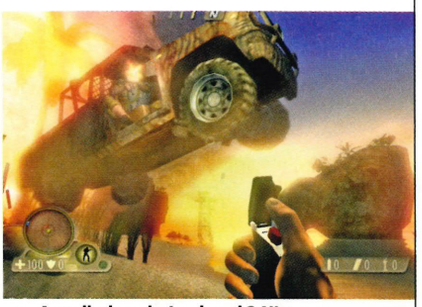



### Bonus info

**PRETTY FLOWERS**

It's a different rush this time round. Rather than looking for small white parcels as you did in the first game, you now have to pick wild, highly illegal flowers to stock up. It feels a bit weird picking flowers when you should be murdering enemies, but needs must.

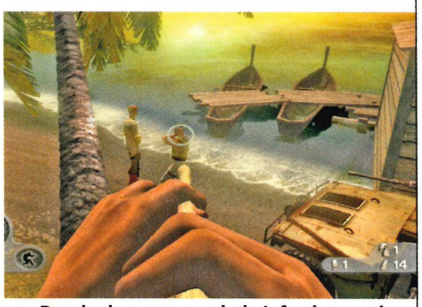
"The single most important new weapon will be the blowdart - a drinking straw capable of firing darts tipped with feral antidote"



↑ A well-placed pipe bomb? Nice one.



↑ He may be feral but a rifle always helps.



↑ Dart bad guys to numb their feral strength.

## Branching Out

Jack Carver isn't limited to fighting on the ground - now he can take to the trees! But so can his enemies...




STEPHEN DORFFED: APPARENTLY STEPHEN DORFF WAS SO IMPRESSED WITH THE ORIGINAL GAME HE JUMPED AT THE CHANCE TO COME BACK AND DO VOICE WORK AGAIN. HOW HE MANAGED TO PLAY IT THOUGH, WE'VE NO IDEA. HE TOLD US HE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE AN XBOX

# Incoming

All the essential news, exclusive previews and latest screenshots from the wonderful world of Xbox


P16 REACH FOR THE SKY!
EA unleashes the latest crazy *Medal of Honor*.

P17 BACK TO THE RAINBOW
The new *Rainbow Six* game goes back to its roots.

P17 SPRAY MY FACE!
Graffiti artists defend Mark Ecko's spraycan antics.

P18 SPLINTERED CELL
New *Splinter Cell* maps finally arrive... six months late.

P19 GET YOUR WARSOME BOOSTER... FREE!
Swishy new *Battlefield* content - and it's free at that!

P19 WOOKIEE WHAT WE'VE GOT!
*Star Wars Battlefront II* - it's a stellar superbrawl.


# Midway Kills Off Mortal Kombat

## Europe seethes as New Mortal Kombat to be released in the US only



MIDWAY ANNOUNCED this month that both *Mortal Kombat: Armageddon* and *Spy Hunter* will not be coming to the UK on Xbox, despite last year's announcement that the company was aiming to produce a new *Mortal Kombat* game each year. A case of stretching itself too thin with too many obligations, or a glimpse of things to come?

David F Zucker, president and chief executive officer of Midway, said during the release of 2005's *Shaolin Monks* that the game was "[our] first step towards delivering something that *Mortal Kombat* fans have been calling for - a new game set in the *Mortal Kombat* universe every year. We are planning our *Mortal Kombat* release schedule with the expectation that we will deliver a new *Mortal Kombat* title annually." So, did that apply only to the US, then? It would appear so, judging by what we've been told by Midway.

We spoke to our source close to Midway UK who told us there were several reasons why Midway wasn't releasing a European *MK* on Xbox, one of which concerned "poor unit sales" in Europe. Presumably we don't buy enough. But this doesn't explain the reason not to pursue *Spy Hunter*. With the movie starring The Rock coming out soon, it's almost certainly going to be a seller, and for that not to be scheduled for a UK release suggests there are other, non-sales-related problems.

*Mortal Kombat* fans in Europe are clearly less than thrilled about the news, saying a decision not to bring *Mortal Kombat: Armageddon* to the UK could deter people from the series altogether - especially when *Armageddon* is the first *Mortal Kombat* title to feature every single *Mortal Kombat* character ever featured in the series. Are we gutted? You bet.

We contacted the decision-makers at Midway US to see whether they could shed any light on the matter. While they maintained the idea to bring out annual *MK* games still existed, they still didn't state whether the Xbox would actually get to see any of them - preferring instead to tell us that the "strategy is detached from specific hardware platforms". In effect, this ambiguous statement could mean that the PS2 or GameCube get all the *MK* games from now on.

But there is a ray of hope. Nintendo missed out on getting *MK: Deception* a while back, while both PS2 and Xbox saw versions released, so could it just be our turn to 'miss a game'? Fingers crossed that's all it is. Midway is continuing to release the likes of *Gauntlet* on Xbox, after all, though beyond that the picture looks fairly bleak.

We reckon something can be done about it, though. If enough UK and European *Mortal Kombat* fans petition Midway US, who knows what could happen? The email is pr@midway.com if you want to fight for the right to play the most comprehensive *Mortal Kombat* to date on Xbox. We'll let you know how it goes in a later issue.




**Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance**
Issue 13 Score 7.8
**What we said:** Multiple fighting styles and a high blood volume make this a worthy purchase!



**Mortal Kombat: Deception**
Issue 36 Score 8.9
**What we said:** The most complete fighting title on Xbox. A credit to the franchise.



**Mortal Kombat: Shaolin Monks**
Issue 47 Score 8.6
**What we said:** Eye-wateringly, finger-blisteringly good. A fresh change in direction.

**P22 COOL RUNNING**
As in, how cool is *Driver Parallel Lines*?

**P24 BORED OF THE RINGS?**
A new *LOTR* game is on its way!

**P24 ROBOTS IN DE SKIES**
New flying *Transformers* game in development?

**P24 DISASTER CHIEF**
Master Chief in *Metroid Prime*? What were they thinking?

**P26 PRISON BREAK**
We go behind bars in Sam Fisher's latest outing.

**P30 GRAPPLING HOOKED**
Lara shows off her latest moves - and they're fancy ones.

**P32 THE COAST IS CLEAR**
More Sega delight in the hugest *OutRun* game ever!

**P33 CONSPIRACY THEORY**
First shots of the much-anticipated *Da Vinci Code* game.

**P38 WIN A MOTORBIKE**
Okay, it's a little motorbike, but you can still win it!




*MK* has been given the chop. Will it make it back onto Xbox?



## THE INSIDE VIEW

**MARTIN SPIESS**
MD, MIDWAY EUROPE

"Midway will ensure the further evolution of the *Mortal Kombat* series as it is one of the best-known and most successful game franchises of all time. Therefore we aim at introducing a new *Mortal Kombat* title annually. This strategy is detached from specific hardware platforms.

As for the time being, *Mortal Kombat: Armageddon* will only be published on Xbox in the United States. Nonetheless, we will continue to support Xbox in 2006. *Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows*, the reincarnation of another Midway classic franchise, is about to hit the streets very soon."



## THE EXPERT VIEW

**ATANAS DIMITROV**
WEBMASTER, *MK* BIBLE WWW.MKSECRETS.NET

"This is very sad news for all European fans, but it comes as no surprise to me. Midway already cancelled the European release of the GameCube version of *Mortal Kombat: Deception*, but I never thought it would do something like this with *Mortal Kombat: Armageddon*. A decision like this may cause a lot of fans to lose interest in the franchise. To be honest, I wasn't aware of the decision not to release *Mortal Kombat: Armageddon* on the Xbox in the UK, and if I'm not aware of it, then the whole *MK* Community is not aware of it. I really hope that this is just a misleading rumour made simply to get the attention of the fans."

## OUR VIEW

**OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE**
CUTTING TO THE CHASE AND TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

We're really disappointed. Two of the three *Mortal Kombat* titles to hit Xbox have gained Elite scores, and with the release of *Shaolin Monks* last year, it looked as though the series was embarking in a new and exciting direction. What a pity, then, to learn that, as far as the UK is concerned, it could well be the last *MK* game we'll see in a while. If *Armageddon* was coming to Xbox 360 we could almost understand the decision, but it isn't. Show your disappointment! If enough *Mortal Kombat* fans make a stand, something might be done about it. Here's the email you need: pr@midway.com. Get writing.

CANNY GIRL: CAMERON DIAZ TURNED DOWN A ROLE IN THE FIRST MK MOVIE. GOOD JOB TOO - IT WAS CRAP

## News Wire.....

**Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information**

### Shut That Gate!

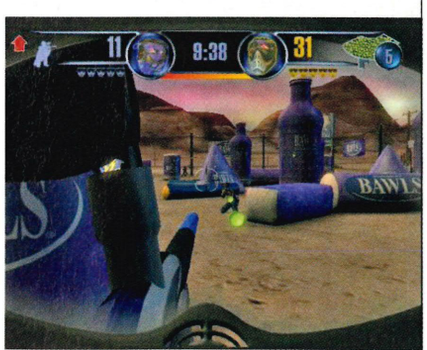
Well, we all thought the worst, but it was confirmed this month that *Stargate* has been finally thrown to the dogs. After the publisher and developer got into a nasty spat about which direction the game was headed in, the developer still promised it would carry on and release the game. Fat chance. Just this month though, it announced that the game was dead in the water and any chance of it coming back is as slim as finding an actual Stargate. Rest in peace bloke from MacGyver, you'll be sadly missed.

### Crash Test Dummy

There was a bit of a craze for crash test dummies about ten years ago. You could buy action figures and everything. And they even had a game, which means the forthcoming *Crash Dummy* is a sequel of sorts. You won't be surprised to hear that the antics of a plastic man getting tossed about hasn't been snapped up by a publisher just yet, but developer Twelve Interactive is remaining hopeful. We'll let you know if and when this, er, idea, comes to the UK. Lord help us.

### Killer Kojima

*Metal Gear*'s creator Hideo Kojima is supposedly teaming up with *Killer 7* creator Gouichi Suda to create a brand new current-gen title. *Killer 7*, perhaps one of the most baffling, unusual games to be released in recent years (on GameCube, not Xbox, sadly) was praised by Kojima after Suda said he also loved the *Metal Gear Solid* games. The pair haven't released any details yet, but we can be pretty certain it'll be an eye-catcher. We'll be keeping our noses snuffling around for further news!




# Splat! It's a Paintball Sequel!

## Bizarre corporate sport gets 'maxed' follow-up

WE CAN'T believe this sold enough in the first place to warrant a sequel, but here it is, the first glimpse of *Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball MAX'D*. Apparently *MAX'D* will feature 213 combinations of file layouts to muck about in, as well as a few new tracks laid down by the likes of DJ Lethal from Limp Bizkit and B-Real from Cypress Hill. With a Live mode that's going to support 32 players online, we're positively itching to play this. Oh yes, oh yes indeed.

# MOH Takes To The Air

## Jump out of a plane and into the next 'open-ended' chapter of MOH...

THE *MEDAL OF Honor* series has been running almost as long as the actual war, but hey, that doesn't mean we're going to be denied our yearly dose of Nazi-bashing goodness. Enter *Medal of Honor: Airborne*, an aerial assault on the senses which will concentrate on the various air drops that took place over Europe. It's another step by EA to bury the spectre of *Rising Sun*, and meet the increasing demands placed on the series by the likes of *Brothers in Arms* and *Call of Duty*.

The most spectacular part of *Airborne* is the fact that each mission begins with increasingly intense parachute drops. You'll get chucked out of an aeroplane, from where you have to guide your man (Private First Class Boyd Travers) into the battlefield. You'll be able to see the entire map before you as you descend, then land when you want to begin the mission. This effectively means that *Airborne* will be a complete sandbox experience, allowing us to go where we want, when we want, as long as the mission objectives are met.

Once you're on the ground, other changes will be apparent as well. You'll be able to customise weapons (bang goes the realism), but EA has gone to great lengths to make all the characters photorealistic. As you can see by some of the goofy facial expressions of Private Travers here, it looks as though there'll be a special 'constipation mini-game' included too. Rapid-fire turds, perhaps? Contorted gobs aside, everything EA is doing on *Airborne* has got 'realism', and 'intensity' in mind. If you're plunged into a real battle scenario, lacking rails and filled with realistic enemies, the hope is you'll be sucked into the experience more.

Spanning classic battles such as Operation Husky in Sicily right through to the crossing of the Rhine, this isn't so much going undercover with the OSS anymore as meeting rival wargames head-on. We'll reserve judgement on the 'open-ended' gameplay, but it's good to see the franchise that started it all pushing new boundaries. We still haven't forgiven EA for putting helicopters in *Rising Sun*, but maybe this will redress the balance...




↑ See the battlefield, then decide where to start from the sky!



↑ They won't see you up here in the trees. Hopefully.



↑ It seems height will give you the edge, so try to land on rooftops if you can.



# Rainbow's Beginning

## The Latest Clancy effort takes us back to the origins of Ding Chavez and co

IT'S BACK TO basics for Ding and the boys, as Ubisoft announced the arrival of *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Critical Hour* this month. Featuring fully rebuilt levels hand-picked by *Rainbow Six* fans from an internet poll, Ubisoft promises this will be a return to the more deliberate, thought-out shooter that was the hallmark of the original PC game.

There is going to be a seven-mission single-player mode built around levels from the likes of *Rogue Spear* and *Black Arrow*, while a juicy 16-map multiplayer mode will also be included. In these multiplayer modes, we'll be introduced to the new Assassin mode (one man has to take the rest out by stealth, one by one), and the Free-For-All mode on the other end of the killing spectrum, the *Rainbow Six* equivalent of a schoolyard bundle.

Because it's 'going back to its roots', *Critical Hour* can get away with being a prequel, and for most of the game we'll see how John Clark passes the torch on to his successor Ding Chavez. There'll also be a return to weapons based more on reality than any *Rainbow Six* game before it. That said, our source at Ubisoft tells us there will be a crunching 23 weapons to use during the game. From Idaho to Venice, and Mexico City to Siberia, we're promised that this time *Rainbow Six* will be more about using your brains than using the R-trigger. With the reinvention of *Splinter Cell* and the new *Far Cry Instincts Evolution*, we're loving what Ubisoft is doing for Xbox at the moment.




The rumour that *GTA4* would be set in London has, this month, bitten the bullet. It's complete tosh apparently

# Ecko Under Pressure

## Graffiti game causes storm in US: "Ban this filth!" demand US senators

*MARK ECKO'S Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure* is causing outrage in the United States, as senators in Florida voted recently to urge Atari not to release the game, stating, "We don't believe a game that glorifies criminal activity through graffiti or violence needs to be perpetrated on the kids of America." The senators' position has been slammed by many graffiti artists, who say this censorship is precisely the kind of thing the Ecko game is standing up against.

"Graffiti reclaims the streets from the town planners and hoardings that make our streets bland and insulting places to live," the team at graffiti and punk site artofthestate.co.uk told us. "Sure, not all graffiti is great - but then, is a poster of Trinny and Susannah cocking a snook at your inadequate brand of coffee really what you want to see in its place?"

Atari spokesman Ryan Barr defended the game, calling it "a fun, innovative title that takes place in a fictional city." "Atari is not encouraging vandalism or criminal acts," he said.




↑ Hitting people with paint buckets. It's a form of artistic expression, man!

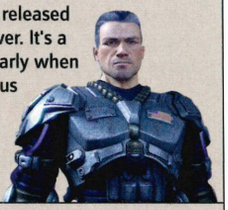



## News Wire.....

**Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information**

### Time Called On TimeShift

Bad news came in from the people at Atari just as we were going to press - the publisher has canned *TimeShift*. We spoke to Atari about the game being dropped, and it couldn't (or wouldn't) give us a solid reason for the decision. The title will still be released on Xbox 360, however. It's a real shame, particularly when the developers told us how pleased they were with the Xbox version when we last spoke to them.



### Crash, Burn, Swap

What do you do when your car is smashed to a limping pulp halfway round a racetrack? Quit out? Restart? Cheat? No, you park up, centre lane, wait for your rivals to slow to a halt (and/or smash into each other), then steal their car instead. That's what you do in the recently announced *Fuel*, coming later this year at any rate - you'll be able to steal anything from quad bikes to jet skis. Bring it on.

### Ubi-Movies

Ah, the blessed *Beyond Good & Evil* - it's done wonders for Ubisoft. Since the *BG&E* team worked on *King Kong*, the company has announced that it is openly looking for other films and franchises to develop. With over a quarter of its games based on licences, Ubisoft sees movies as the way to slap EA's sticky fingers away from its portfolio. So which Peter Jackson movies will be up for the game treatment next? *Logan's Run*, perhaps?

# You Cancelling Me?

## Travis Bickle meets his maker

We're not sure how to feel about this, but *Taxi Driver* was cancelled this month. Based on the classic Robert De Niro movie, it could either have been a ground-breaking companion piece to the Scorsese flick or an unadulterated mess. Have a look at the screenshot below and judge for yourself. Still, with *The Godfather* and *Scarface* both in the pipeline, we're not going to be too dismissive of 'classic film to game' conversions. In case either turn out to be rather good.



↑ We see the back of Travis Bickle. Nice ass.

VIOLENT GAMES: DON'T WORRY ABOUT TAXI DRIVER NOT SEEING THE LIGHT OF DAY ON XBOX - WE'LL SOON HAVE RESERVOIR DOGS TO KEEP US ENTERTAINED. EAR-CHOPPINGLY GOOD NEWS, THAT IS!

# Quotes of the month...

"We don't know when Sony will ship PS3. They've said spring... What we do know is that the way our portfolio lines up we're going to have great exclusive content. *Halo 3* is something we'll ship when it's ready."

**Microsoft's Robbie Bach drops the dangling carrot of gaming goodness under our noses and makes us beg.**

"We are shipping faster than any videogame has ever shipped. The thing is just hot, and I spent over 100 hours playing with it over Christmas."

**Oh course you did Bill Gates, that and swimming in your Scrooge McDuck vat of gold coins, eh?**

"The movie in the works has been Hollywood coming to Ubisoft and saying we want to make a movie based on *Splinter Cell*. But we're kind of protective about it. We don't want Uwe Boll coming along and making a movie out of it."

***Splinter Cell*'s co-producer Julien Gerighty pokes fun at the 'talents' of 'director' Uwe 'The Master of Error' Boll.**

"We would like to make a more meaningful *Metal Gear Online* after hearing the opinions of people who've played the online battles in *Subsistence*. Years from now, we'd like to realise this on the PlayStation 3, on the Xbox 360, or maybe on the PC."

**Get in! Hideo Kojima says Xbox 360 will be home to the future of the *Metal Gear Solid* franchise. In a round about way...**

"I'll warn you right now, if you want to become the don of the entire city, you better be ready to put in some time, because it's a big world to conquer."

**David DeMartini, executive producer of *The Godfather* lets it be known that becoming a Don ain't easy.**

"A great game can survive with an average story, but an average game will die on the vine even if the story is great. To be honest, if I am really into the way a game plays I may be inclined to skip over the story entirely."

**Matthew Karch, CEO of Saber Interactive. We hope *TimeShift* has a good story!**

"We're looking at new directions in which to take our striped little mate."

**Krome Studios' Steve Stamatiadis on the *Ty the Tasmanian Tiger* franchise. Can we suggest the abattoir?**




↑ "Why won't the maps work? WHY?"

# Splintered Cell

## Six months late, Splinter Cell maps finally arrive...

REMEMBER THAT story we ran about six months ago heralding the arrival of new *Chaos Theory* maps? Well, it turns out Ubisoft has only just released the much-longed-for content, having addressed some 'serious issues' which meant the maps were pulled almost as soon as they were posted.

Included in the update are two new co-operative maps, one set in the UN Headquarters and the other a Nuclear Plant. There's also a new standard multiplayer map called 'Polar Base', which is now available for download on Xbox Live, but it's not all good news we're afraid.

The official *Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory* forum has been bombarded with complaints from Xbox 360 users having problems playing the maps on the next-gen console. According to reports the game either crashes a lot or doesn't actually load when played in the Xbox 360, despite *Chaos Theory* being on the list of backwards-compatible games released last month. Just one more reason to keep hold of the beautiful black box then.

Ape game Curious George has just gone gold! Fetch the hats and streamers, there's a party in our pants!

# BIZARRE Weird goings-on from the world of Xbox

## Are You A Gaymer?

Ah, it's good to know that as the gaming world grows it becomes more encompassing and accepting. We're not quite sure what benefits a site dedicated to gay gamers would actually have over, oh, say, any other site, but here it is, gaymer.org, home to gay gamers everywhere. Ben has been on already and given it his seal of approval. He did look a little confused afterwards, though.




↑ Like games? Are gay? Go here!

## Chilly Box

Following hot on the heels of the 'rope method' of cooling the Xbox 360 last issue, some smart arse has built the world's first water-cooling device, that apparently reduces the temperature by some 50°F (10°C). Screwdrivers, pliers and nerves of steel are required, though, as is a willingness to say goodbye to your warranty. To find out more, visit www.hardocp.com.



↑ Fun with water and electricity!

# Got Your Warsome Booster?

## EA splurges out a whole lorra Live love... for free!

IN A FRENZY of New Year's goodwill, EA released a free expansion pack for *Battlefield 2: Modern Combat* this month. Fresh off the back of the Special Forces pack (which was only for Davros-like PC gamers), we humble Xbox owners have been given our very own content called the Warsome Booster Pack.

Included in the Warsome Booster Pack are new character and weapon skins, plus an arctic camouflage which will come in very handy for the snow-covered new battlefield that has been introduced in the north of China. Two other maps are included in the line-up, one of which is the classic Wake Island map from the original *Battlefield 1942*, while there's also a topical Middle Eastern battlefield in there as well, so you can stage re-enactments of the invasion of Baghdad from the safety of your own home!

The new vehicles are more than just token gestures too, with each of them packing a well-armed punch. The new snowmobile has mounted twin machine-guns on each side (which come in handy), while new pick-up trucks can be found fitted with juicy .50 calibre machine-guns. Then there's the RIB boat, ideal for moving players around, or the minigun-decked vans - naff on the outside, deadly on the inside. All of this is available free if you have a copy of *Battlefield 2* already, which isn't bad considering EA tells us it's worth about six quid in total.

Official Xbox Magazine PLAYED IT

Xbox LIVE PLAYABLE



↑ Gav's been hogging this for two weeks solid ("for research").



↑ Things we want in the next update: skateboards with lasers!

Love Splinter Cell? Whispers on the grape vine say SC5: Essential is already in development. Stay tuned...

# Battlefront Goes Heroic

## New game mode announced for Wookiee world

WE LOVED playing as the *Star Wars* heroes in *Star Wars Battlefront II* so we were pretty darn chuffed when we discovered this month that the new update will allow us to trample Wookiee world Kashyyyk in the massive Hero Free For All assault mode.

Previously available only on Tattooine city Mos Eisley, the Hero Free For All mode throws all 17 Jedi, Sith, and various other lead characters into an arena and lets them get on with it. Now taking it to Kashyyyk means that Yoda will become an incredible force (and character of choice, surely) as he is able to hide in the long grass, and naturally blends in with the surroundings, whereas the likes of Mr Vader and company will likely stand out from afar in the woods thanks to the coloured lightsabers they'll be waving around giving them away.

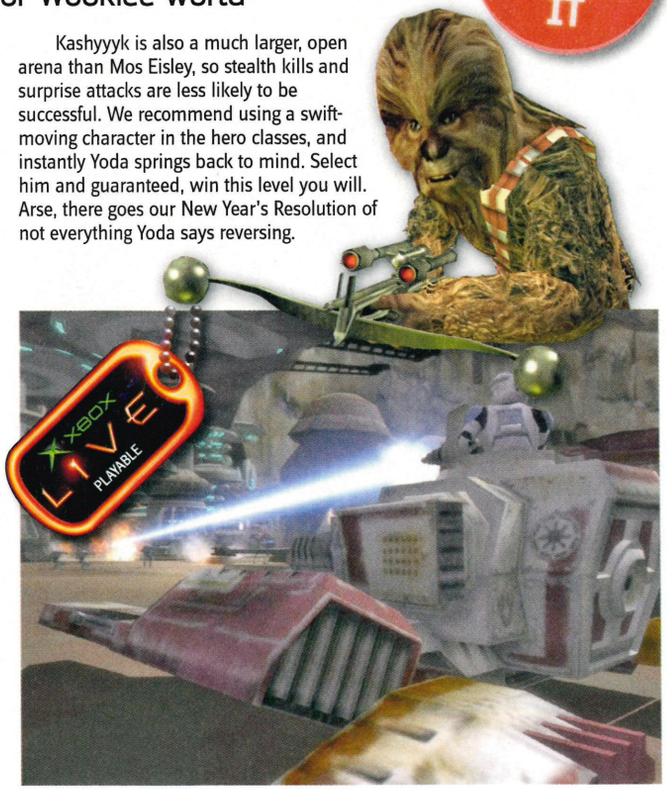
Kashyyyk is also a much larger, open arena than Mos Eisley, so stealth kills and surprise attacks are less likely to be successful. We recommend using a swift-moving character in the hero classes, and instantly Yoda springs back to mind. Select him and guaranteed, win this level you will. Arse, there goes our New Year's Resolution of not everything Yoda says reversing.

Official Xbox Magazine PLAYED IT

Xbox LIVE PLAYABLE



↑ Play as annoying wrinkly goblin Yoda you can.



↑ Smack the crap out of all-comers in *Battlefront*'s new Free For All mode.

# News Wire.....

**Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information**



### Metal Gear Boll

Ye Gods, what is Hollywood playing at? Uwe Boll was recently quoted as saying he had been approached by Hollywood types seeking a helmer for their new *Metal Gear Solid* movie. Worse still, the inept 'director' actually thinks he's up to the job. Erm, we're sorry, but didn't *BloodRayne* just take $1.2M in its opening week? Your call Hollywood!

### You're Ours, Mr Bond!

So, Daniel Craig has been announced as the new Bond, which means EA's giant games machine has been put into full throttle to develop the game of *Casino Royale* (get those roulette ball physics right, or there'll be hell to pay EA!). Best of all, though, is that EA has announced it will only produce *Casino Royale* for current-gen machines. Get in!

### Jacking Up Cash

Okay, so we kind of slagged it off in our review, but we've changed our mind - we want you to buy *Jacked*. For every copy of the game sold, Xplosiv has pledged to donate 30p to the Everyman Male Cancer campaign, with the aim of raising £10,000 for the charity. It may be a slightly rubbish game, but it's going to a good cause. For more *Jacked* goodness, turn to page 037 for the chance to win a *Jacked* motorbike.

# And the winners were...

## 2005's ten best-selling games revealed...

THE *FIFA* vs *Pro Evo 5* debate was settled this month with the release of the top ten best-selling games for 2005. And although *Pro Evolution* came a respectable second, that dratted *FIFA* piped it at the post. So, in descending order, here are the best ten games of last year. *FIFA 06*; *Pro Evolution Soccer 5*; *Need For Speed: Most Wanted*; *Gran Turismo 4*; *Star Wars EP III: Revenge of the Sith*; *FIFA Street*; *Star Wars Battlefront II*; *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*; *Peter Jackson's King Kong* and *The Sims 2*. Better luck this year, *Pro Evolution*!



RISE & SHINE: GAVIN IS SUCH A HUGE FAN OF BATTLEFIELD 2 HE'S BEEN KNOWN TO PLAY IT UNTIL THE SUN RISES, SETS, THEN RISES AGAIN. WHAT A GUY!




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XBOX 360™

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# Painkiller: Hell Wars

DEVELOPER: **DREAMCATCHER** PUBLISHER: **KOCH MEDIA** RELEASE DATE: **APRIL 2006**




↑ To combat the forces of hell, you're provided with ethereal weapons to redress the balance between good and evil.




↑ There will be several of Satan's commanders who control each realm you walk through. This is one of them.



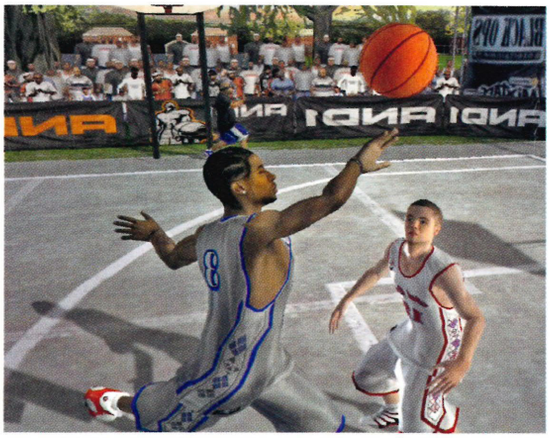

↑ Legions of foes are unleashed on Earth as hell decides it's time to take over. God, naturally, is having none of it.

# AND 1 Streetball

DEVELOPER: **BLACK OPS** PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT** RELEASE DATE: **MARCH 2006**



↑ A more 'urban', rough 'n' ready version of basketball, anything goes in *AND 1*, which makes it ideal for Xbox!



↑ Streetball is full of dummy moves and fake shots to confuse your rivals. Once you've got a shot, then slam it home.




↑ Ubisoft has licensed professional streetball champs to not only appear in the game, but to lend their mo-cap to it too.

# Fight Night Round 3

DEVELOPER: **EA SPORTS** PUBLISHER: **EA** RELEASE DATE: **MARCH 2006**



↑ Cuts remain on a boxer's face until you clean him up during time out. The firmer you press, the quicker they'll heal.



↑ The new 'EA Super Punch'. It's slow-moving but can knock a man to the canvas with a single blow.



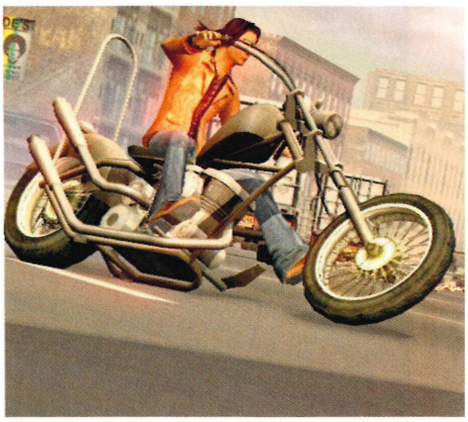
↑ Showing off the new damage models, this year's *Fight Night* comes with extra sweat spray and contorted faces.

# Driver Parallel Lines

DEVELOPER: **REFLECTIONS** PUBLISHER: **ATARI** RELEASE DATE: **APRIL 2006**



↑ Has the *Driver* series rediscovered its sense of fun? Smash through brick walls in a clapped out banger, like you're in *Die Hard 3*!



↑ The 70s weren't just about big cars and bigger hair – it was about daft motorcycles too. Dude!



↑ They'll no longer just nudge you off the road, they'll be firing rounds from SMGs into you too.

## Freeze Frame

### It's Sonic, but even faster than ever before!

What's blue, spiky, and flies through the sky unlocking bonus secrets? It's those *Sonic Riders* of course! Check out the full trailer at www.gametrailers.com...



↑ Sonic can smash through the environment to find hidden routes and paths. One up for Sega, there!



↑ The true Lord of the Rings! And as will become clear next, you can see why you need them...



↑ They protect you from attacks as usual, but this time it's your fellow riders who'll be trying to smack you!



↑ Tracks are filled with giant machines that can catapult you through the race. Find one and you're laughing!



↑ Race over the track, and race under it too. Look out for rails that let you zip-line from one end to the other!

# AGENT X

Delving into enemy territory to bring you all the gossip from the world of games

### IN-GAME COUNSELLING

Mmm... word from the depths of Mordor have suggested something is afoot at EA towers. A great force known as 'The White Council' is rumoured to be in development. Apparently it's the follow-up to *Lord of the Rings: The Third Age*. Of course, the elders at EA have given me a 'no commenteth', but wise old wizard Agent X knoweth better. Trusteth me!



↑ Turn occasionally on the grill, otherwise your Balrog will be raw on the inside.

### SHOCK HORROR?

Remember classic shooter *System Shock*? No? Well, it was really good. An RPG set in space, it still spawns fan sites and love on the internet more than some Xbox games. After a little deep space recon I've learned that EA, of all companies, could be bringing the title back to life, and we could all playing one of the best little gaming numbers in history.

### ROBOTS IN DE SKIES!

With Activision saying lately that it was interested in sealing a deal to produce more film tie-ins, it looks as though it was setting its sights high. Having eavesdropped on a few industry people, I overheard the words 'Optimus Prime', and 'Decepticon' being mumbled. Could we be looking at a *Transformers* game to tie in with the forthcoming film, courtesy of the makers of the *Spider-Man* titles?



### XBOX BLUE?

Mmm... could the Xbox 360 actually end up supporting Sony's evil Blu-Ray technology after all? It seems blabbermouth Peter Moore has been hinting perhaps a little too heavily about how flexible the Xbox 360 is. Here's what he said: "Since we're using external drives [for next-gen media], we can change as the market changes." This was quickly interpreted as meaning 360 is or will be Blu-Ray compatible. Regardless, Microsoft has gagged Moore after his 'little episode' and thrown him into the specially built slave pit at Bill's evil lair.

Oh crikey, rumour has it that tank game Panzer Elite Action is due to be canned soon. More news next month!

## AND FINALLY...

# Chief On Nintendo?

### Master Chief pays a visit to Metroid-land!




OUR FAITH IN all things green and armoured was dented this month when we saw this horrible little hack being buzzed about the internet. Someone, somehow has managed to perfectly splice together *Halo* and *Metroid Prime* to create a death match where Master Chief goes head to head with *Prime*'s heroine Samus Aran. In the movie, Master Chief can be seen taking a walloping from the lovely Ms Aran with various rocket launchers, before taking his revenge by turning into her trademark Morphball and giving her a right good squashing. Then he rolls around the environment, where you can see the gentle curve of the Halo disappearing into the distance. It sure is purdy. This leaves us with a puzzle though - we're simply unable to figure out whether the hack was made by an Xbox or a Nintendo fan. And is it a *Metroid Prime* level that's been hacked or a *Halo* level? One thing is for certain - we'd love to know who made it. If you want to see the movie for yourself, and gawp at Samus Aran having the guts to invade *Halo*, just go to Google video search and type in the words 'Halo', 'Metroid', and 'Hack' to witness this bizarre crossbreed of a game for yourself. Who knows, perhaps it is actually a trailer for *Halo 3* after all? Yeah, right.



"IF YOU ARE GOING THROUGH HELL, KEEP GOING"

Winston Churchill

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UBISOFT




↑ Take his head off! Or chuck him off the train? It's not easy working for two different employers...

# Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Double Agent

## A look at the most amazing Splinter Cell mission we've ever seen

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Ubisoft | Pub: Ubisoft |
| Release: September 06 | Live: 2-6 players |
| Players: 1-2 | |

0 Percentage Complete 90

TREK TO Ubisoft's offices to see more of *Splinter Cell Double Agent*? "Hell, yeah!" we said. Then we were there like a shot, and sat in front of a huge projector screen on which Mathieu Ferland, senior producer of *Splinter Cell*, was about to unleash the biggest *Double Agent* level ever created. We paid attention.

The level he showed us was the first of two missions inside the JBA HQ (the base of the John Brown's Army terrorist organisation). Just in case you missed the last few issues, Sam went to prison as part of an undercover mission to become a part of the JBA. Once he earns the trust of the terrorist society, he is allowed entry into their base, where he can get to work on bringing down the organisation... from the inside!

The HQ level is special - it's basically like a open arena with literally no linearity whatsoever. Within the massive HQ building there are multiple floors, each consisting of a number of rooms. This is not like *Chaos Theory* with its multiple-choice paths that essentially lead to the same place, and mission objectives that have to be completed in a certain order. And when we say you're free, we mean totally. You enter the building through a choice of many different routes. Once inside, you're off the leash, free to go through any door, room, corridor or air-vent you find, and complete your objectives in whichever order you please. Mathieu likes to call it a 'playground'.

It's a stealth fan's heaven. Every room presents its own challenge - security cameras, motion sensors, trip lasers and gun turrets join the numerous patrolling guards in making your life difficult. Just like previous games in the series, it's really tough to stay completely hidden throughout a mission. But Ubisoft knows how much hair you lost to the previous games in the series. It knows hellish Retry screens have been the direct reason for the death of so many Xbox controllers. And so Mathieu demonstrated two awesome new features in *Double Agent*, designed to cut players some slack.

The first was the Arrest mode. Mathieu walked Sam into a lit area deliberately in the view of a guard. Usually, he'd spray you with bullets instantly. But instead he shouted "FREEZE!" and Sam stopped in his tracks. With his gun pointed directly at Sam's head, the guard tells him to stand up out of his crouched position and raise his hands. You have no choice but to do as he asks. He then begins approaching slowly, while warning Sam not to move. As he approaches, a timer bar appears at the top of the screen, along with a series of button icons. When the timer bar depletes you'll be arrested and it's game over. But hit the buttons in the right order before he slaps on the handcuffs and Sam will grab his gun and smash him in the face with super-fast moves like Bruce Lee, giving you a chance to escape.

*Double Agent*'s second act of forgiveness is a new feature that allows you to lower the state of alert. Yes - alarm levels are still in there, and will still cause you a world of pain when upped, activating all kinds of extra security measures throughout the facility. But in *Double Agent* you can force a guard to speak through an intercom and tell his pals to lower the alert status. This obviously requires you to grab a patrolling guard from





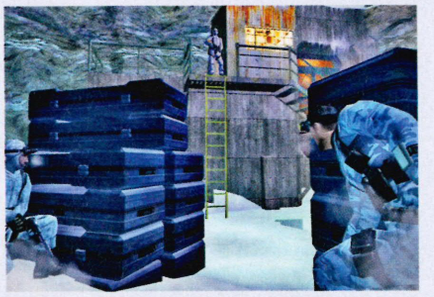
↑ "Hmm... maybe I'll take a taxi after all."



↑ More train-surfing, *Chaos Theory* style.



↑ Earlier episodes see Sam busting out of Jail with a JBA dude.



↑ The goggles are back (in later missions)!

behind, which is no easy task. But at least it allows you to repair the damage caused by your carelessness, instead of struggling through the rest of the level with hyper, trigger-happy guards and gun turrets on high alert.

Obviously, with the complete freedom of the HQ levels, you'll also have to added option of running away from a messy situation and attempting another mission objective. You can always return for another go later, from a different angle if you so wish. But fans of the traditional style of *Splinter Cell* will be pleased to know that along with the huge open HQ levels, *Double Agent* will feature old-school linear missions as well. With a set path from start to finish, these missions will give you nothing but hardcore stealth to worry about.

Unfortunately, Mathieu was also the deliverer of bad news - there will be no daytime levels in current-gen versions of *Double Agent*. According to Mathieu, casting light over an entire level requires a huge amount of processing power - the kind of power you have in a next-generation console such as Xbox 360. Getting them to run smoothly on Xbox would require them to be shrunk down considerably. So, instead of giving Xbox players heavily shrunk levels, Ubisoft made the wise decision to scrap the daylight and keep mission environments as expansive and as detailed as they should be, under the cover of night.

We're not crying about it. *Splinter Cell Double Agent* is easily looking like the best game in the series so far, and now we've seen the awesome JBA HQ levels we're even more eager to get stuck into the final game. It's unfortunate that we'll now have to hang around until September for *Double Agent*, but we're sure the wait will be worth it.

# LOVE STORY

Could Sam be getting all soppy in his old age?

**SAM'S SWEETHEART?**
Mathieu revealed that Sam would become emotionally attached to a female he meets. Could this be her? He also revealed that the plot that unfolds will force the player to make a difficult decision regarding Sam's new girlfriend.

**THE GOGGLES RETURN**
These are the first shots of Sam wearing his trusty goggles in *Double Agent*, which he will have in later missions. Even in missions working for the JBA, Sam will still carry goggles into the field. Clearly, JBA are a no-messing bunch of guys.

**NO PORTS**
Even though *Double Agent* is on multiple formats, they won't just be ported versions. There are 165 people on the Xbox team dedicated to making the game the best it can be, which is why you're seeing detailed worlds like these.

**CONFLICTING INTERESTS**
The JBA will be expecting Sam to be as ruthless as a terrorist. This means killing this innocent officer without a second thought. But Third Echelon will want Sam to spare innocents. Pleasing them both is tough, so you have to be careful.

**A HAPPY ENDING:** YOUR ACTIONS THROUGHOUT WILL AFFECT THE OUTCOME FOR SAM AT THE END OF THE GAME. THIS MEANS THAT THERE'LL BE MULTIPLE ENDINGS FOR YOU TO EXPLORE...




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XBOX 360

# Tomb Raider: Legend

## From tombs to cocktail parties, Lara's latest is a jaunt of global proportions

Exclusive review next month! See page 129 for more

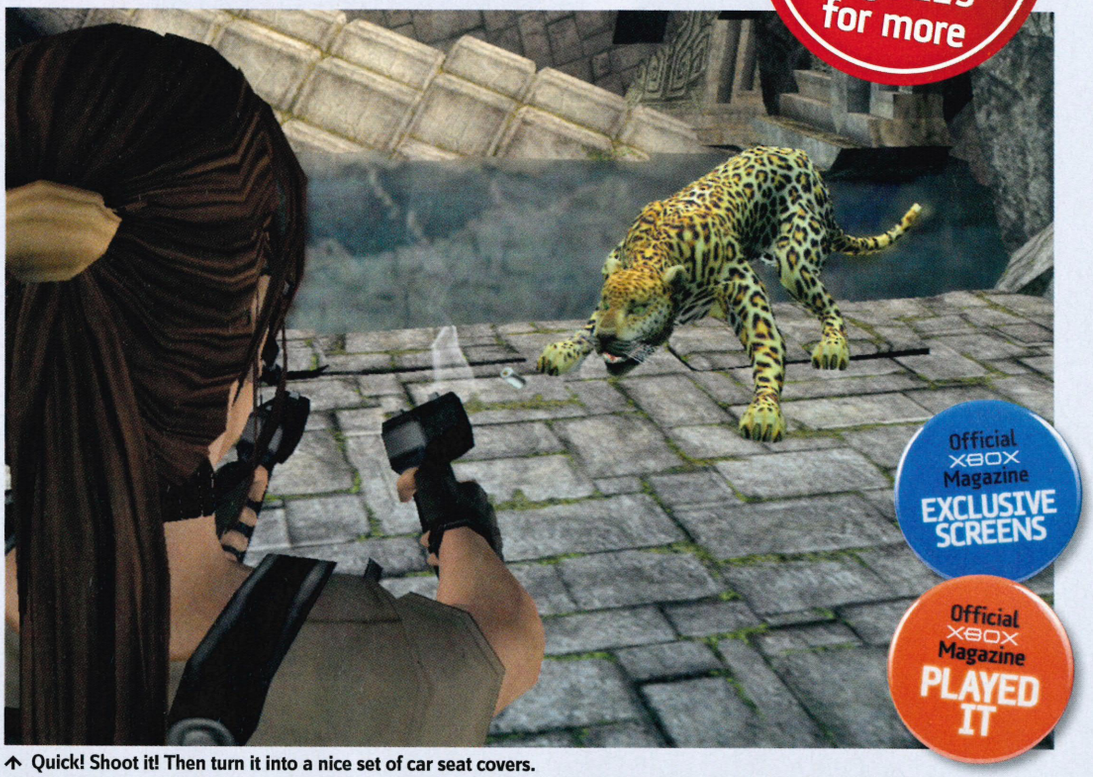
Dev: Crystal Dynamics | Pub: Eidos
Release: April 2006 | Live: None
Players: 1
0 Percentage Complete 80 100

WITH LARA CROFT'S triumphant rebirth as the queen of gaming heroines all but a few months away, it's with a palpable sense of fatherly pride that Eidos has been showing off its most prized set of assets. And while the story behind Lara's latest adventure is still a better guarded secret than Prince William's mobile number (apparently Lara is searching for a mysterious artefact that is somehow tied in with the death of her parents – why, we have no idea), we did get to witness several surprising new features in our latest hands-on session with the game.

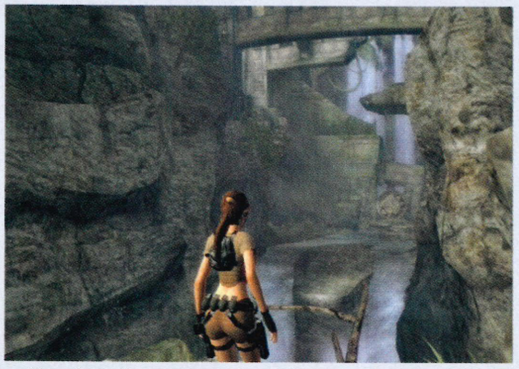
Revelations such as surprising new feature number one: despite the very public effort to bring Lara back to her roots – that is, crawling around sites of significant archaeological interest while wearing a Barbie doll T-shirt and shorts combo – don't expect every level to be set in a crumbling old tomb. When she's not dodging Inca deathtraps and keeping the local leopard population under control with her trademark twin pistols, Lara can be found running around South American shanty towns and chic Tokyo cocktail parties, not to mention other, even more exotic and dangerous locales.

And that's not forgetting surprising new feature number two; that being the return of Lara's penchant for speed in the form of a souped-up motorbike with tyres the thickness of elephant legs. Needless to say, plenty of tense moments can be expected on the back of this mechanical beast.

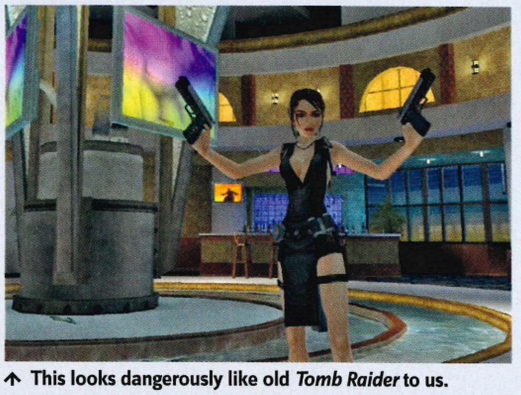
But more importantly still, now that we've had the chance to sit down and properly, erm, grapple with the new-and-improved Lara Croft for ourselves, we can confidently state that *Tomb Raider: Legend* bears all the hallmarks of a classic piece of third-person action-adventure. You can forget the franchise's chequered legacy straight off – the development team certainly has, pretty much wiping the entire *Tomb Raider* slate clean, in favour of a completely new back-story and cast of characters, and settle down for what promises to be a good old-fashioned treasure-hunt.




↑ Quick! Shoot it! Then turn it into a nice set of car seat covers.



↑ Now how do we get up there, do you suppose?



↑ This looks dangerously like old *Tomb Raider* to us.



↑ There's no doubting that Lara's never looked better.



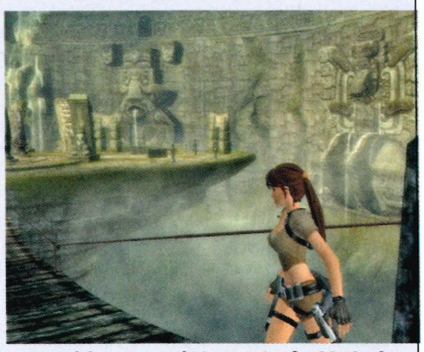
↑ We're loving Lara's new grappling hook thing.



↑ It's not his fault. Of course he's going to stare if she goes round dressed like that.



↑ We bet that rope bridge collapses.



↑ One false step and it's curtains for Ms Croft.

What's really impressed us about Lara is the way she handles in the new game (steady, gents). With much of the challenge coming from simply navigating the convoluted tombs and natural obstacles before you, getting Lara to go and do exactly what you want is vital, and *Tomb Raider: Legend* seems to have this down to a fine art. It sounds obvious, but getting Lara to jump from one precarious ledge to another really is as simple as tapping a button.

Likewise, getting her out of heavier scrapes (read 'gunfights with dodgy relic-smuggling types') is equally straightforward. Gunplay has always been central to the *Tomb Raider* ethos, but *Legend* has really gone to town on the experience. At its simplest, Lara can run, leap, dodge and roll about, squeezing off round after round of ammunition, but get up close to an enemy and she can vault off their shoulders, turning mid-air to target them in a stream of slow-motion bullets. Alternatively, target one of the special context-sensitive areas that litter each level and you can set off a chain-reaction of events that will ultimately cause much bad guy pain and death – shoot down a particularly shaky looking stone column, for instance, and you can crush a crowd of no-goods in deadly falling masonry.

But there's so much more to *Tomb Raider: Legend* than just running around and shooting. It's also a damn fine puzzler in its own right. The majority of the mental challenge in the *Prince of Persia* games came from figuring out how to get from one point in the environment to another. *Tomb Raider: Legend* has that and a whole range of devilish object-manipulation teasers as well. Using a combination of moveable items (rocks, pressure pads, pulleys and pivots, to pluck a few at random), Lara's useful new grappling hook and some very clever physics effects, Crystal Dynamics has created the ultimate combination of looks, action and problem solving. To play *Tomb Raider: Legend* is to be a true modern day Indiana Jones (with boobs).

In fact, *Tomb Raider: Legend* is about as epic as we could possibly have hoped for. With the controls, the actions and the puzzles perfectly locked down, Crystal Dynamics has been free to create a sweeping epic. The scenery is awesome, the scope huge (seriously – the levels are GIGANTIC) and the story, we're hoping, is proper rollercoaster stuff. We'll have the exclusive review next month and the playable demo soon after, so you'll be able to sample the experience for yourself. Now does that sound like the kind of date with a 34-DD aristocratic relic hunter you'd want to miss? Thought not.

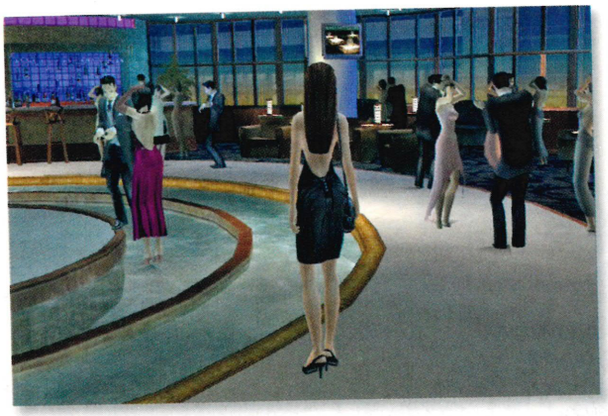


↑ "No-one will see my concealed pistols."

## SEPARATED AT BIRTH?

### Has Tomb Raider been taking hints from Sydney Bristow?

The first time we saw Lara in her cocktail dress there was only one word (well, three actually, but only one we can print) that sprang to mind: *Alias*. As in, the game of the Jennifer Garner TV show (Issue 27, 6.9). Take a look at these and see if you can spot the very subtle differences.



**ALIAS: It's a lithe girl in a sexy dress at a cocktail party. Could that be Sydney's shapely bottom? Someone shout CIA and see if she whips a badge out of her handbag (or somewhere else).**



**TOMB RAIDER? It's a lithe girl in a sexy dress at a casino. Could that be Lara in a ginger wig? It's so hard to tell. Maybe if we saw her neck down from the front we'd recognise her better.**

TOMB STALKER: DUTCH MENTALIST NIELS BERNDSEN IS OFFICIALLY LARA CROFT'S BIGGEST FAN, HAVING ONCE CYCLED ALL THE WAY FROM HOLLAND TO ENGLAND JUST TO MEET 'HER'. HE ALSO USED TO REGULARLY WRITE HER LETTERS. WE'RE GUESSING HE'S STILL UP FOR GRABS, LADIES!

# OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast

## Sega hopes it's second time lucky for OutRun on Xbox

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Sumo Digital | Pub: Sega |
| Release: March | Live: 2-6 players |
| Players: 1 | |

0 Percentage Complete 80 100

IT'S NO SECRET we're all fans of the original Xbox version of *OutRun2* (Issue 34, 8.5). To us it's arcade racer perfection – even if it did fail to spawn a sales rush with the Great British games-buying public. If this special 'remix' edition doesn't hit at least the top three spot in the sales chart, then we can't even begin to explain the trouble that's going to kick off.

Why? Because *OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast* is the perfect blending of two of the greatest arcade games of recent years (*OutRun2* and *OutRun2 SP*), together with simply dozens and dozens of brand new challenges and race modes. More than that, *Coast 2 Coast* uses the subtly refined handling system from *SP*, so those who had difficulty with the original Xbox game (and let's be fair, some of the later challenges were insanely hard) can now benefit from the addition of slipstreaming, better drift cornering, more forgiving car collisions, and the entertaining addition of rival Ferraris that dodge and weave through the traffic just like you. In fact, if you simply want to play a carbon copy port of *OutRun2 SP*, you can – it's there as an additional option.

But mainly *Coast 2 Coast* is about the tons of super-slick, modified Ferraris, loads of unlockable classic *OutRun* music tracks and a big fat pile of missions where you have to please your totally unreasonable other half ("Count all the green cars we pass or I'm LEAVING YOU!!!"). That, and the endless variation of Live multiplayer modes – because what's the point of enjoying Sega's finest if you're not enjoying it with friends?

And the best news? Although it's yet to be confirmed, it's likely that Sega will release *Coast 2 Coast* at the wallet-friendly price of £30. So now you really don't have an excuse for not owning Sega's seminal classic. Full review next issue.




↑ The Italian Stallion has never looked so lush.




↑ We can't wait to play this on Live. Let's hope we'll find a game this time.





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# The Da Vinci Code

## It's Dan Brown's blockbuster on Xbox! Down, Silas, down!

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: The Collective | Pub: Take 2 |
| Players: 1 | Live: None |
| Release: May | |

0 Percentage Complete 90 100

WITH THE *BUFFY* titles and *Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb* (Issue 14, 9.0) safely under its belt, what better developer to bring Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* to Xbox than The Collective? It's a dab hand at producing chunky, instantly playable titles, and anyone who's read *The Da Vinci Code* knows this is precisely the kind of treatment the book needs.

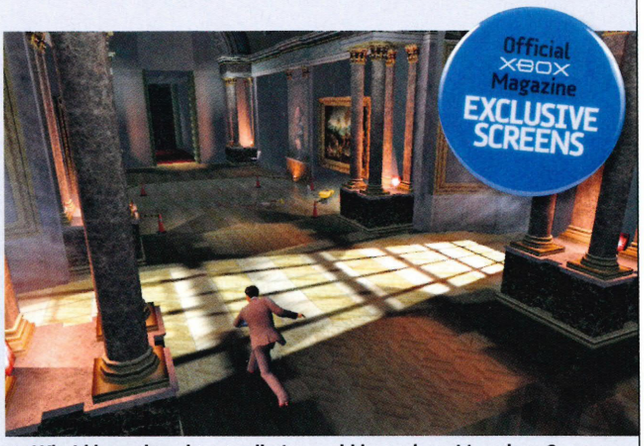
We won't go into the whys and wherefores of the plot, mainly because most of you will already know it, and those who don't should really discover its secrets for yourself – but it's going to be a corker. Set in a single day, you'll be thrown from combat to puzzle-solving and back again faster than any Xbox game you can imagine. The entire game will play out like a giant game of cat and mouse, and developer The Collective is being careful to tread the line between action and puzzling. One minute you'll have to decipher strange locks and combination codes, the next you'll be beating evil monks away with a pointy stick. We love these screens as well, because they hint at a far more in-depth puzzler then we could imagine.



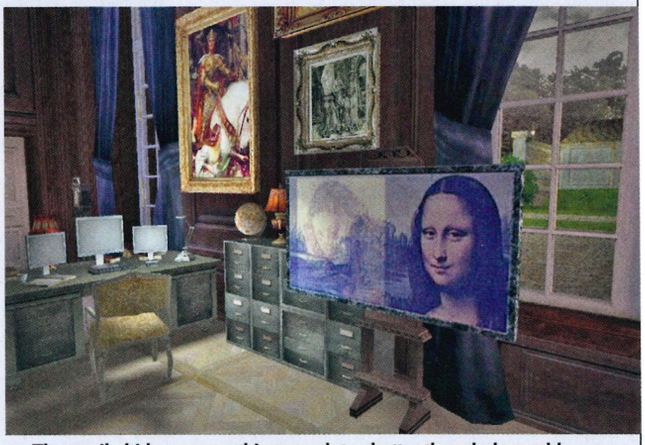
↑ There's a clue around here somewhere...

"We've been very careful not to deface the world of *The Da Vinci Code*," states The Collective. "We have, however, expanded upon it, having locations and scenarios that go beyond the book and the film to give the player a full and rich experience. There's plenty of action to be had in this game – it will be up to the player how they choose to play it. But, as in the book and the film, though springing into action may save time, investigation, careful study and exploration are just as important in advancing."

Judging by these early screens, we're reminded of *The Emperor's Tomb*, and just for the record, that scored a very respectable 9.0. Could this be the unofficial sequel?




↑ Who'd have thought art galleries could be such exciting places?



↑ That smile hides a secret big enough to shatter the whole world.

HOLY WAR: WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DA VINCI CODE? READ HOLY BLOOD, HOLY GRAIL – THE BOOK THAT GAVE BROWN HIS IDEA!




# Dancing Stage Unleashed 3

Official Xbox Magazine PLAYED IT

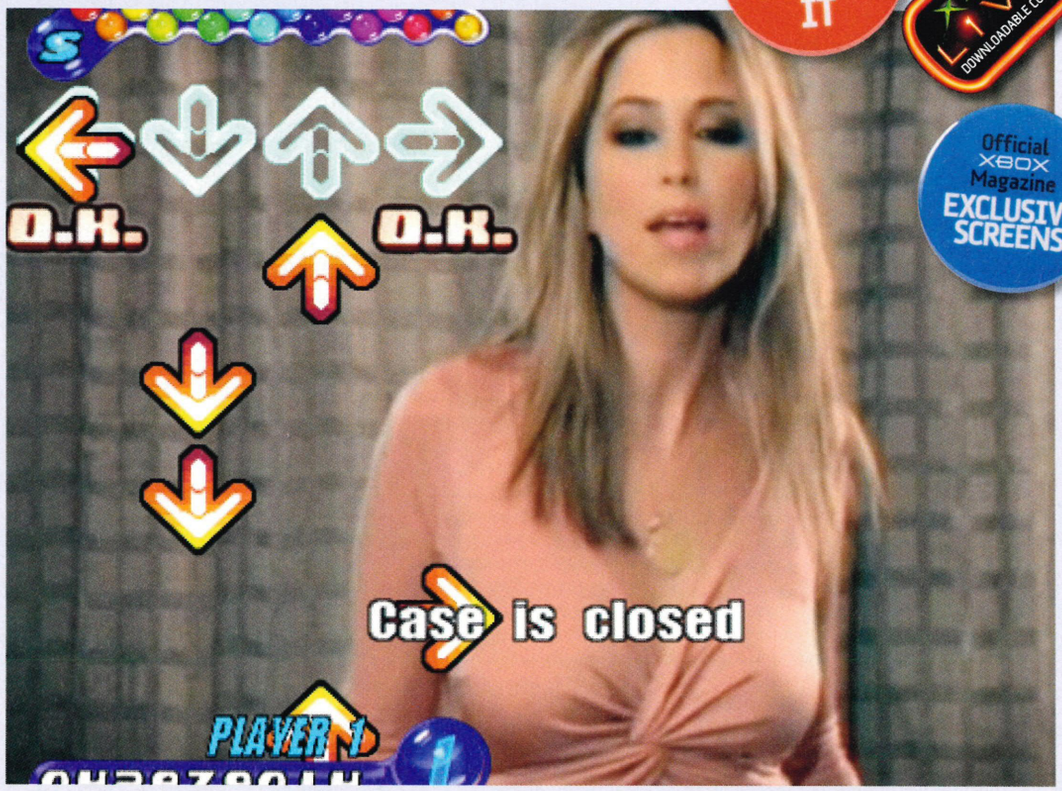
Xbox LIVE DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT

Official Xbox Magazine EXCLUSIVE SCREENS

## Break out the moves or gawp at the girls. Great for everyone

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Konami | Pub: Konami |
| Players: 1-4 | Live: 2-8 players |
| Release: March 2006 | |

0 Percentage Complete 80 100




↑ There's even subtitles that display the words to the songs. But you've got Rachel Ste... we mean arrows, to concentrate on.

WE'RE NORMALLY great at these dancing games. Honest. We've got more rhythm than Bob Marley. Except for when Cheryl Tweedy or Rachel Stevens are shaking their asses all over our telly. That's when our skills are comparable to those of a one-legged hippo.

But we're not complaining. Konami has chosen a decent line-up of licensed tracks for its latest dance extravaganza. Whether you're a rocker, love your pop, chill to R&B or are just a pervert, there's something in there to get you working up a sweat. And they've packed in even more varieties of gameplay, with a modes list as long as your arm. New to the list are the Quest and Freestyle modes.

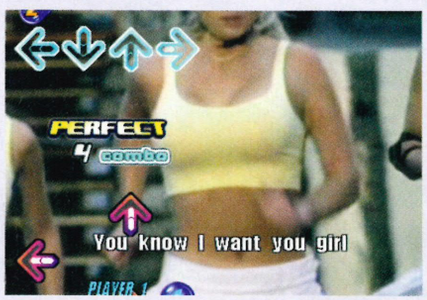
Quest mode takes you on a musical journey across the US, busting out your crazy skills in each state to prove you're the best dancer around. You can use points to buy items that help you out, but we're not going to spoil that for you just yet.

In Freestyle mode, you're left to stamp on whatever arrows your heart desires - there are no steps to follow. The game monitors the variety of steps, your timing and speed. If you over-exert yourself, the game tells you to chill out a bit. If you're neglecting to do any jumps or hold an arrow down, it'll nag you for lack of variety. At the end of each song, you will be rated for effort, accuracy and style. It's where you prove to your mates that you don't need stupid arrows to tell you how to dance.

As usual, you'll also be powering your way through a full arcade-style mode, and Workout, Challenge, Training and Edit modes are all back for another dance. Fire up Xbox Live to download new songs and characters, chat with other *Dancing Stage* nutters and take part in rapid-stepping face-offs in games of up to eight players. If you're into the rising arrows already, this is good stuff. And if you've never had a go at making yourself look like a sweaty twerp in front of everyone, now's a good time to give it a go.




↑ So do we, but we wouldn't be running away.




↑ Yes, we took this screenshot intentionally.




↑ That's girl-speak, guys. Don't even bother trying to make sense of it.

## LICENSED TRACKS OF GLORY

### ...with videos, including RACHEL STEVENS

Block Rockin' Beats - Chemical Bros
Burn Baby Burn - Ash
Crashed the Wedding - Busted
Dancing in the Moonlight - Toploader
DJ - Jamelia
Feels Just Like it Should - Jamiroquai
Flowers - Sweet Female Attitude
Hole in the Head - Sugababes
House of Fun - Madness
I Like the Way - Bodyrockers
I See Girls - Studio B
Insomnia 2005 - Faithless
Ladies Night - Atomic Kitten
Movin' Too Fast - Artful Dodger & Romina Johnson
Negotiate With Love - Rachel Stevens
Oh My Gosh - Basement Jaxx
Pumpin' on Your Stereo - Supergrass
Push the Button - Sugababes
The Rockafella Skank - Fatboy Slim
Wake Me Up - Girls Aloud






↑ Sorry miss, your erm... top is, sort of... ahem. Where are the toilets?

# FIFA Street 2

Official Xbox Magazine EXCLUSIVE SCREENS

Official Xbox Magazine PLAYED IT

## Football as played by a race of intelligent super-monkeys!

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: EA | Pub: EA |
| Players: 1-4 | Live: None |
| Release: 03 March | |
| 0 Percentage Complete 90 100 | |

CAN YOU FLICK a football up behind you, catch it on your neck, then flick it up again and scissor-kick it into the top-right corner of the goal? Chances are you can't. But you can at least pretend you're that cool while playing *FIFA Street 2*.

Just as in the original *FIFA Street* (Issue 40, 3.5), tricks are performed with a simple tug on the analogue stick, and for the update EA has added a few new moves to the list. You can volley the ball from one player to another in a series of crazy back-heels and flips that see your players bounce around the pitch like a bunch of suicidal circus clowns. You can brush off defenders with overhead flicks and nutmegs that never fail to make your opponent look like a complete clown in front of everyone. And if you really want to show off, you can do some kick-ups during a game, then slam the Shoot button and watch your player volley the ball past a bemused keeper. With the new Trick Beat system, you can pull all these skills in slow motion and smash the ball into the net, with a trail of flames behind it.

We thought all this stunting madness made for a pretty sloppy game of footy in our review of the original. But the surprisingly high sales figures clearly showed that many of you were into it. Luckily for you crazy fans, *FIFA Street 2* comes with a whole new Rule the Street mode, with a huge variety of crazy challenges that will push your ninja skills to the limit. You will get to make your own player and head to locations around the world, beating the best footballers to build your reputation. Your player will improve as you go, learning new tricks and gaining stat points. Once you've raised your player rating enough you become a team captain and can build your own squad. Get a name for your team and you'll progress to the major underground tournaments and, eventually, represent your country in a world championship.

The Rule the Streets mode will keep you busy for weeks but the true long-term appeal will be with the multiplayer. It's all about making your mate look like a complete berk, and with the seriously manic new stunts in the sequel, that's something you'll have no problem doing. But if, like us, the original didn't float your boat, *FIFA Street 2* will do little to pull you in. Disappointingly, there's still no Live support either. Full review next issue.




↗ Little Wayne learns his deadly football skills in the ghettos of Liverpool.

## CHECK ME OUT
### Trick your way to victory




BEFORE YOU GET onto the pitch, you need to get yourself some skills. The Skill Challenge mode will teach you all you need to know. The commands for the tricks are displayed at the top of the screen. All you have to do is enter them with precise timing and the dude on the screen will go nuts with the ball. Simple. Memorise them before you take your king skills to the pitch, and you'll be well on your way to glory.




↗ Franz Beckenbauer's looking good for 102!




↗ 'Score' as many 'goals' as you can to win.




↗ Dinho's Elvis impersonation. He's a snaggle-toothed hunka burnin' love.




↗ A rare appearance from Scotland, playing in the car park at Ibrox.

A REAL TRICKSTER THE WORLD RECORD FOR MOST TOUCHES OF A FOOTBALL IN 30 SECONDS, WHILE KEEPING IT IN THE AIR, IS HELD BY FERDIE ADOBOE FROM THE USA, WHO MANAGED 141

# Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII




## It's actually Nazis you'll be blazing away at, which is always fun

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Ubisoft | Pub: Ubisoft |
| Release: 31 March | Live: 2-16 players |
| Players: 1 | |

0 Percentage Complete 90 100

*BLAZING ANGELS: Squadrons of WWII* is not your average flight sim. It boasts a level of intensity and illusion that most games in the genre lack completely. It pulls your mind into the hell of combat, absorbing you in the same way *Call of Duty 2: Big Red One* (Issue 50, 9.0) does.

The first time you're launched into the air above war-torn London, it will take your breath away. The first thing you'll notice is the shockingly detailed scenery below. Most flying games usually keep the detail down below to a bare minimum. City environments tend to be flat, blurry grey textures. But *Blazing Angels* isn't having any of that, boasting a level of detail on the ground that you wouldn't have expected to see on a current-generation console. An insane number of buildings sprawled out across the landscape stretch as far as you can see. This is easily the most convincing city environment we've ever seen in a flight sim, and one that demands to be played on a really big telly.

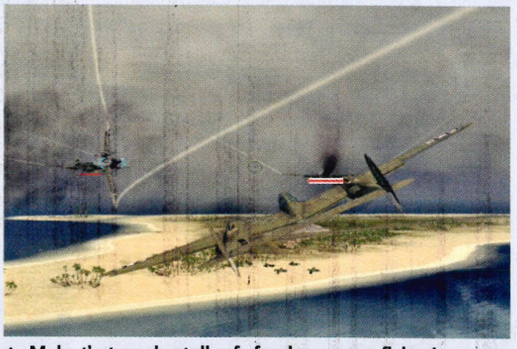
The hugely detailed landscape is brought to life by plumes of smoke gushing from buildings hit by bombs and downed planes, tanks in the streets, anti-aircraft turrets and even boats on the water. There's plenty going on in the skies too. You'll be tackling dozens of planes that fill your screen like a swarm of flies, all with their own objectives. The fighters buzz around frantically as they do their best to get in a good position to blast your ass out of the sky. Bombers cruise slowly and menacingly towards their targets on the ground, waiting for the right moment to unleash their devastating explosives. All of this comes together to make for some truly spectacular scenes on your TV.

With all the different types of enemies you'll encounter comes the various birds you'll pilot to tackle them in. *Blazing Angels* gives you the controls to 38 planes throughout the game, each one tailored to specific mission objectives. You'll

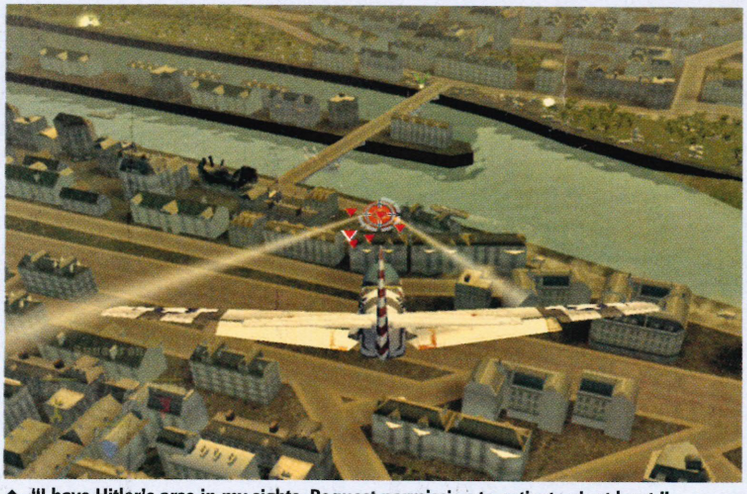




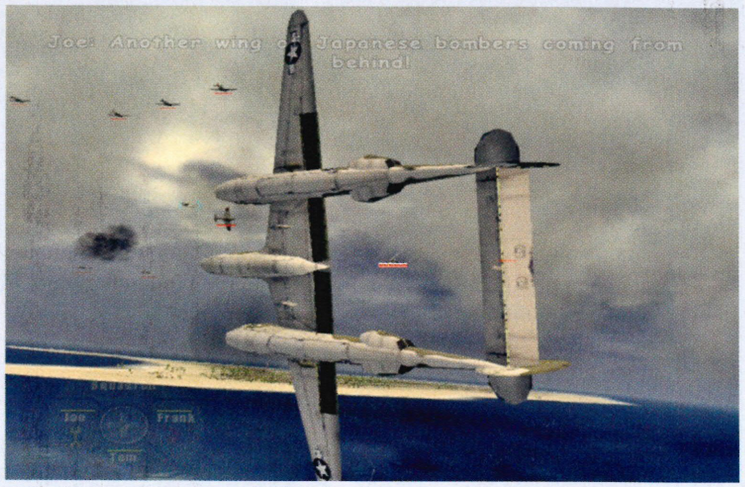
↑ It gets tricky later on when the Nazi AT-ATs turn up.



↑ Make that sandy atoll safe for democracy, flyboy!



↑ "I have Hitler's arse in my sights. Request permission to activate giant boot."




↑ The Japanese menace needs a bit of a talking to as well, albeit with crap US planes.



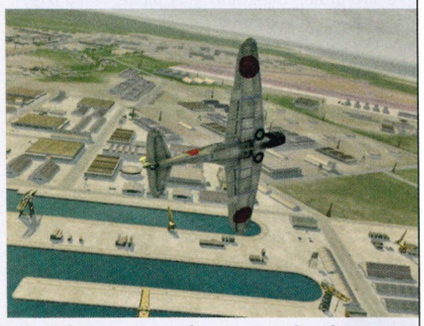
↑ All your favourite wartime locations are lovingly rendered. We're commencing a bombing run on the office, here (ho ho).




↑ The US Navy's BIGGEST INSURANCE SCAM!



↑ The boring land-based war continues below.



↑ Hit the R-trigger to home in on the objective.

## "It pulls your mind into the hell of combat, much like Call of Duty 2"

pilot nimble fighters to take on enemy planes in ferocious dogfights, performing acrobatic evasive manoeuvres as you avoid enemy fire and pull up behind foes to let your guns rip.

You'll jump into the cockpit of missile-armed fighters, taking out tanks and concentrated military positions to help ground troops in their missions. Or you can deal some major damage with a bomber, dropping packets of death and watching as they hit home and wreck everything. It's hugely satisfying each and every time.

You're not alone in your missions either, with three wingmen on hand to assist you. You can communicate with them individually or as a group, giving the order to attack your targets, watch your back or regroup. Even cooler, each wingman has a unique skill that you can call on at any time. One can attack a specific group of targets with exceptional devastation. Another can taunt enemies, flying nearby to lure enemies from your tail. The third and most useful wingman can help you repair your plane during a mission. If you call him for help, he'll tell you what damage he thinks your plane has sustained and how to treat it. While this is happening, a button combo appears at the top of the screen. Complete the combo quickly enough and your plane is repaired.

Your wingmen are more than just useful – they cannot be ignored. As we found out very quickly, there are far too many enemies for you to take out on your own. Shooting down huge squadrons of bombers before they blow up the Houses of Parliament is nearly impossible without the help of your wingmen, no matter how good you are.

The missions may be tough, but controlling the planes isn't. Steering, climbing and diving is all done with the left thumbstick, while the right stick lets you bank and control your speed by pushing left/right and up/down respectively. But the most intuitive function is the ability to focus the camera on your objectives with the right trigger. Not only does this guide you easily to your targets, but also makes it much easier to track the movements of enemy aircraft. It certainly feels more intuitive to the very similar *Heroes of the Pacific* (Issue 47, 7.7).

With such accessible controls flight sim noobs will have no problems getting to grips. And the spectacular visuals and hectic action will keep anyone hooked. If it runs as smoothly online as it does in single-player, the 16-player dogfights are sure to be awesome. You'll also be able to battle through ten co-operative team-play missions. And we can tell you now, the experience lives up to the stunning graphics. Full review next issue.

### Bonus info



**VIEW TO A KILL**

You will do battle over a number of easily recognisable locations including Germany, Morocco, Paris, Pearl Harbour, Midway, Tokyo and good old London Taahn. Take a good look, admire the scenery, and then blow the crap out of everything.

## Strike Three Three ways to put an end to the dastardly Nazis




With four guns on each wing, this Spitfire showers anything in its path with red-hot metal. Nothing lasts for long once you have it in your crosshairs.



Get some ground units in your sights and fly up high. Then swoop down and unleash killer missiles of death. You can take out entire platoons with two passes.




Bombing takes particular patience and skill. A circle icon shows where the bombs will land. Drop your giant fun-snaps and look back on the wreckage they cause.

ANNOYING DIALOGUE: "THOSE PLANES COST MONEY. TRY NOT TO LET HIM SHOOT YOU ANYMORE!" GET USED TO THESE ANNOYING WORDS. YOU'LL HEAR THEM EVERY TIME YOU TAKE A FACE FULL OF HOT LEAD FROM JERRY.

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

# WIN! A Mini Moto!

## Shrinky-sized motorbike action up for grabs thanks to racing game Jacked!

WE'VE ALL WANTED to feel the wind in our hair, the thrill of the open road, and to get gawped at by busty ladies in red stilettos as we rush past like the two-wheeled studs we are. We've all wanted it, haven't we? Well, tough luck, it's not going to happen. Or is it? Have a little peek at this miniature beauty, a neighbourhood-terrorising piece of kit if ever we saw one. It may not be able to take you across the open roads of America, but it sure makes nipping about in the back garden more fun than cutting the grass.

Thanks to the guys behind motorbike racing speed-a-thon *Jacked*, we're giving away one of these cute-as-a-button mini machines, along with a copy of the game. Nine runners-up will also receive a copy of *Jacked* as well, so they can enjoy the thrill of the ride too (in videogame form).

Now pay attention here, because we're talking about a hot piece of kit, and as anyone knows, hot pieces of kit such as mini motos come with all sorts of boxes that need ticking. If you can say yes to all the following points, you'll be eligible to enter, so read 'em and weep!

Mini motos are not roadworthy and cannot be ridden on public routes such as road and pavements. The only place you can take full advantage of the mini moto is on private land, such as a back garden. So no beaches, parks, or kindly Farmer Giles's field - unless you've got permission first! And it almost goes without saying, but you'd be wise to invest in a crash helmet - these things move with some speed. Oh, and make sure you're over 16: they may be cute, but they're not for kids.

If you're happy you'd be able to make the most of your mini moto without getting tangled up in legal red tape, have a peek at the question below, then get your thinking crash helmet on and text us your answer.

**In no more than 20 words, what would you do with your mini moto, given half the chance?**

We'd jump through burning hoops, but we're not allowed to enter. And anyway, we want to know what you'd do! Text the word **OXMMOTO** followed by a space, then your answer to **80889**. The closing date is 16 March, so get thinking!

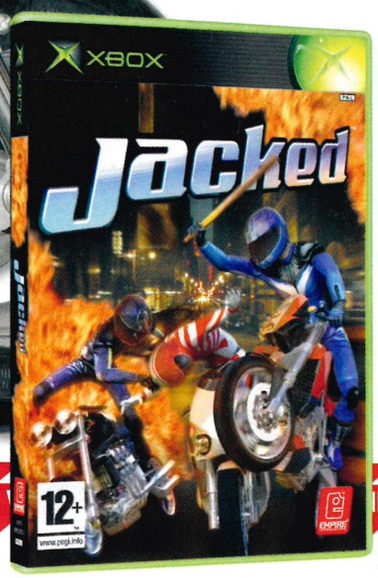
Text messaging will cost you 50p including VAT per text message recieved, plus your usual text message cost. Please source all necessary permissions. Thie service is available to all networks. If you have problems sending your message, please contact your service provider. See page 44 for full terms and conditions.







"Yes please, I'll have one of those. I'm over 16, honest guv."

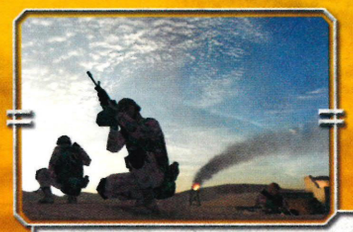



WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

# AMERICA'S ARMY

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# Charts

## The ten best-selling games in the UK



**1 NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED**
Dev: **EA** Pub: **EA**
No change at the top as the biggest game this Christmas becomes the biggest game this winter. Outrunning cop cars is clearly the number one pastime of today's modern 'yoof'. And wearing hoodies.



**2 POP THE TWO THRONES**
Dev: **Ubisoft** Pub: **Ubisoft**
No time wasted here – it's a rapid ascent to the top of the charts for the final part of the popular *Prince of Persia* trilogy.



**3 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5**
Dev: **Konami** Pub: **Konami**
Holding on doggedly to a Champions League spot at least, it's the greatest football game known to man.



**4 GUN**
Dev: **Neversoft** Pub: **Activision**
Activision's cowboy and injuns epic continues to sell well. We reckon John Wayne would have been proud.



**5 PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG**
Dev: **Ubisoft** Pub: **Ubisoft**
As Kong continues to play to packed multiplexes, his digital counterpart maintains his vice-like grip on the Xbox sales chart.



**6 TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY**
Dev: **Luxoflux** Pub: **Activision**
The far superior *True Crime* sequel gives the lamentable *50 Cent: Bulletproof* a proper hiding in the charts.



**7 FIFA 06**
Dev: **EA** Pub: **EA**
Back to playing second fiddle to *PES* in the charts again, but EA's football game is still doing the business sales-wise.



**8 STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II**
Dev: **Pandemic** Pub: **Activision**
It's one of the biggest Xbox Live games of the last year, and continues to prove that *Star Wars* + online + shooting = quality guaranteed.



**9 CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE**
Dev: **Treyarch/Grey Matter** Pub: **Activision**
Our favouritest WWII shooter in ages starts to lose some steam in the sales stakes. Surely you're not sick of kicking Nazis yet?

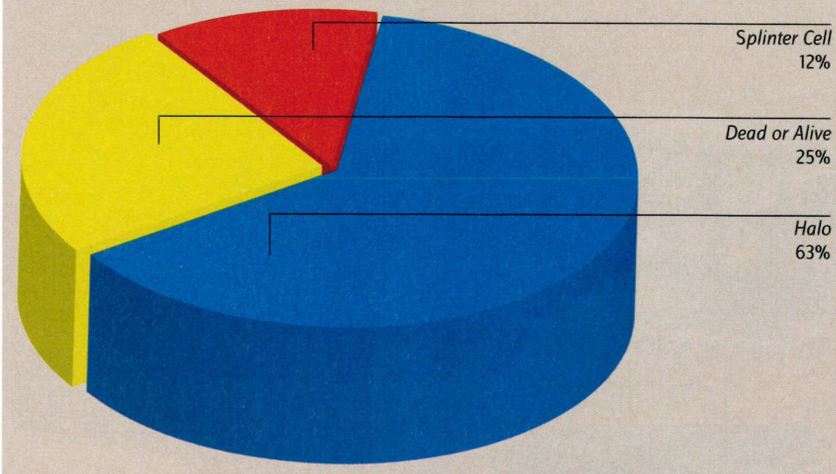


**10 HALF-LIFE 2**
Dev: **Valve** Pub: **EA**
Have you played Gordon Freeman's dazzling adventure yet? If not, go out there and buy this game and help it back up the charts.

Virgin megastores Virgin Megastores sponsors the charts

# The hot topic You answer the burning question...

Which film adaptation are you most looking forward to?

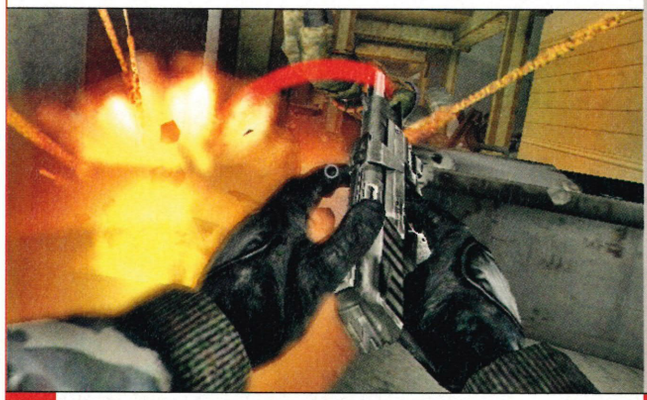



After the so-so *Doom* movie, is there a game you can't wait to see up on the silver screen?
Throw in your own two cents by logging onto our forums at http://xbox.oxm.co.uk

# Your most wanted

sms @

**THIS CHART IS composed entirely from the entries you send in and shows the upcoming games you're most excited by. We can then fill the mag with the news, previews and features you most want to see!**



↑ TO VOTE FOR your favourite upcoming game, text 'MW: Game Name' to 80889 (see page 038 for details), or email us at staff@futurenet.co.uk with the subject line 'MW'.

← By now you'll have read our exclusive review and played the demo to the death, so you'll know exactly why *Black* has been top of the Most Wanted chart for so long. Because it's explosive shooting perfection, that's why.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **BLACK** | **Dev:** Criterion **Pub:** EA **Release:** February 2006 |
| 2 | **LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND** | **Dev:** Crystal Dynamics **Pub:** Eidos **Release:** March 2006 |
| 3 | **DRIVER PARALLEL LINES** | **Dev:** Reflections **Pub:** Atari **Release:** March 2006 |
| 4 | **HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY** | **Dev:** IO Interactive **Pub:** Eidos **Release:** March 2006 |
| 5 | **TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL DOUBLE AGENT** | **Dev:** Ubisoft **Pub:** Ubisoft **Release:** September 2006 |
| 6 | **TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER** | **Dev:** Ubisoft **Pub:** Ubisoft **Release:** March 2006 |
| 7 | **THE GODFATHER** | **Dev:** EA **Pub:** EA **Release:** March 2006 |
| 8 | **TOCA RACE DRIVER 3** | **Dev:** Codemasters **Pub:** Codemasters **Release:** February 2006 |
| 9 | **JUST CAUSE** | **Dev:** Avalanche **Pub:** Eidos **Release:** Summer 2006 |
| 10 | **SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS** | **Dev:** Radical Entertainment **Pub:** Vivendi **Release:** September 2006 |

## OUR SHOUT



After all the furore over the last *Driver* game not being quite the technical marvel it should have, not much has been made of its sequel, *Parallel Lines*. But we reckon it's going to be great. It works for a start, and the focus has been put firmly back on the driving bits. Need convincing? Check out our exclusive review and demo next issue.

# Xbox Game Releases

Detailing every Xbox game from now until eternity

| DATE | GAME | DEVELOPER | PUBLISHER | ISSUE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| FEBRUARY | Advent Rising | GlyphX | THQ | 41 |
| | Black | Criterion | EA | 53 |
| | BloodRayne 2 | Terminal Reality | THQ | 53 |
| | Castlevania: Curse of Darkness | Konami | Konami | 52 |
| | Chicken Little | Buena Vista Games | Buena Vista Games | N/A |
| | Ford Street Racing | Eutechnyx | Xplosiv | 53 |
| | Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers | Pandemic | THQ | 52 |
| | Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows | Midway | Midway | 53 |
| | Greg Hastings' Tourn. Paintball MAX'D | WXP Inc | Activision | N/A |
| | Jacked | Xplosiv | Sproing | 50 |
| | King of Fighters 2003 | SNK Playmore | Ignition | 52 |
| | Marc Ecko's Getting Up: CUP | The Collective | Atari | 53 |
| | Psychonauts | Double Fine | THQ | 50 |
| | Raze's Hell | Artech | THQ | 53 |
| | Rugby 06 | EA | EA | 53 |
| | Rugby Challenge 2006 | Swordfish Studios | Ubisoft | 53 |
| | Samurai Shodown 5 | SNK Playmore | Ignition | 52 |
| | Seaworld Adventure Parks: SDSA | Activision | Activision | N/A |
| | Stubbs the Zombie in RWAP | Wideload Games | THQ | 53 |
| | TOCA Race Driver 3 | Codemasters | Codemasters | 52 |
| | World Series of Poker | Activision | Activision | N/A |
| MARCH | America's Army: Rise of a Soldier | Secret Level | Ubisoft | 53 |
| | American Chopper: Full Throttle | Creat Studio | Zoo Digital | N/A |
| | And 1 Streetball | Black Ops | Ubisoft | 50 |
| | Blazing Angels: Squadrons of World War II | Ubisoft | Ubisoft | 53 |
| | Cabela's Outdoor Adventures | Sand Grain Studios | Zoo Digital | N/A |
| | Combat: Task Force 121 | Direct Action Games | Zoo Digital | 42 |
| | Commandos Strike Force | Pyro Studios | Eidos | 53 |
| | Dancing Stage Unleashed 3 | Konami | Konami | 53 |
| | Driver Parallel Lines | Reflections Int. | Atari | 51 |
| | Far Cry Instincts Evolution | Ubisoft | Ubisoft | 53 |
| | FIFA Street 2 | EA | EA | 53 |
| | Fight Night Round 3 | EA | EA | 53 |
| | Final Fight: Streetwise | Capcom | Capcom | 44 |
| | Hitman: Blood Money | IO Interactive | Eidos | 51 |
| | Ice Age 2: The Meltdown | TBA | Vivendi | N/A |
| | Jaws Unleashed | Appaloosa Int. | THQ | 43 |
| | Namco Museum 50th Anniversary | Namco | EA | N/A |
| | NBA 2K6 | Visual Concepts | 2K Sports | 50 |
| | NHL 2K6 | Kush Games | 2K Sports | 50 |
| | OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast | Sega | Sumo Interactive | 52 |
| | Pac-Man World 3 | Namco | EA | 53 |
| | Painkiller: Hell Wars | People Can Fly | DreamCatcher/Koch | 51 |
| | Panzer Elite Action | Zootfly | JoWood/Frazer | 41 |
| | Sonic Riders | Sega | Sega | 51 |
| | Tak: The Great Juju Challenge | Avalanche Software | THQ | 53 |
| | The Godfather | EA | EA | 52 |
| | Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon AW | Ubisoft | Ubisoft | 53 |
| | Tomb Raider: Legend | Crystal Dynamics | Eidos | 52 |
| APRIL | 6GUN | BattleBorne Ent. | TBA | 42 |
| | Bully | Rockstar | Rockstar | N/A |
| | Championship Manager 06 | Beautiful Game | Eidos | N/A |
| | Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers | Battleborne Ent. | Deep Silver | 32 |
| | El Matador | Plastic Reality Tech. | Ascaron | N/A |
| | Frankie Dettori Racing | Sidhe Interactive | Player One | N/A |
| | Just Cause | Avalanche | Eidos | 46 |
| | Reservoir Dogs | Eidos | Eidos | N/A |
| | Sensible Soccer | Kuju Entertainment | Codemasters | N/A |
| | Taito Legends 2 | Taito | Xplosiv | N/A |
| | The Chronicles of Narnia | Traveller's Tales | Buena Vista Games | 42 |
| | Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Critical Hour | Ubisoft | Ubisoft | 53 |
| | UFO: Aftershock | Altar Interactive | Ascaron | N/A |
| | World Championship Poker 2 | Point of View | Oxygen Interactive | N/A |
| | World Poker Tour | Core Soft | Take 2 | 50 |
| MAY | The Da Vinci Code | The Collective | Take 2 | 53 |
| | City of the Dead | Kuju Entertainment | TBA | 45 |
| | StarCraft: Ghost | Swingin' Ape Studios | Vivendi | 51 |
| | Urban Chaos: Riot Response | Rocksteady Studios | Eidos | 52 |
| | Winback 2: Project Poseidon | Omega Force | Koei | N/A |
| JUNE | American McGee Presents Bad Day LA | Enlight Software | TBA | N/A |
| | Dreamfall: The Longest Journey | Funcom | TBA | 52 |
| | Rogue Trooper | Rebellion | Eidos | 39 |
| | World Tour Golf | Gusto Games | Oxygen Interactive | N/A |
| SUMMER 2006 AND BEYOND | | | | |
| | Beijing 2008 Olympic Games | TBA | Sega | N/A |
| | Close Combat: Red Phoenix | Destineer | Take 2 | N/A |
| | Family Guy | TBA | Take 2 | N/A |
| | FlatOut 2 | Bugbear Ent. | Empire | N/A |
| | Highlander | Eidos | Eidos | N/A |
| | Interview With a Made Man | SilverBack Studios | TBA | 30 |
| | Johnny Whatever | Warthog | TBA | N/A |
| | Justice League of America | TBA | Warner Bros. Int. | N/A |
| | Medal of Honor: Airborne | EA | EA | 53 |
| | Pac-Man World Rally | Namco | TBA | N/A |
| | Pirates of the Caribbean: TLOJS | 7 Studios | Buena Vista Games | N/A |
| | Pro Evolution Soccer 6 | Konami | Konami | 50 |
| | Scarface: The World is Yours | Radical Ent. | Vivendi | 43 |
| | Shuriken School | Zinkia Entertainment | TBA | N/A |
| | Snoopy vs The Red Baron | Namco | Namco | N/A |
| | Snow | Frog City Software | Take 2 | 44 |
| | Stacked With Daniel Negreanu | TBA | 5000ft | N/A |
| | Stargate SG1: The Alliance | Perception | TBA | 43 |
| | Superman Returns | Tiburon | EA | 50 |
| | The Movies | Lionhead Studios | Activision | 16 |
| | Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Double Agent | Ubisoft | Ubisoft | 53 |
| | Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: NOTQ | Krome Studios | Activision | N/A |
| | X3: Reunion | Egosoft | Deep Silver | N/A |
| | Xyanide | Playlogic | Playlogic | N/A |
| | Zombies | Krysalide | TBA | 41 |

## THE WISH LIST

*OFFICIAL XBOX Magazine* may provide the most comprehensive release list on the planet, but as we all know, game release dates can change quicker than a catwalk model backstage at a fashion show. Why not drop us a line and tell us what you're waiting for? Send your top five to staff@futurenet.co.uk



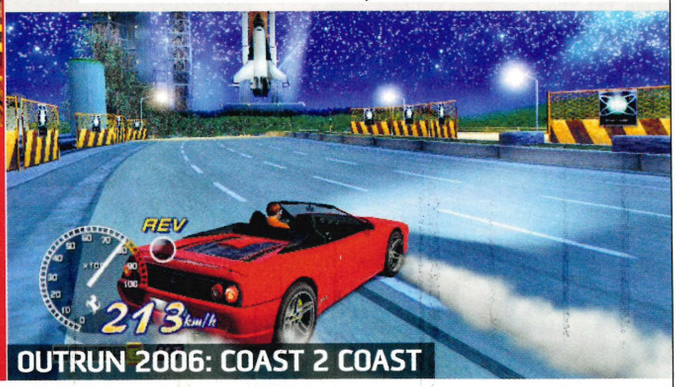
FORGET *50 CENT: Bulletproof*. Capcom's *Final Fight: Streetwise* is a comical, chaotic brawler that lets you smash people about with all manner of weapons. We could do without more 'street respect' games, but we've no doubt *Streetwise* will be a laugh.



SEGA SHOWED off two utterly insane-looking courses in *Sonic Riders* this month. If the other tracks are anything like the two we've seen, it's going to be a crazy ride. We can't wait.




PAINKILLER: HELL WARS




OUTRUN 2006: COAST 2 COAST

# XBOX CLASSICS

The latest and best of the £19.99 value range



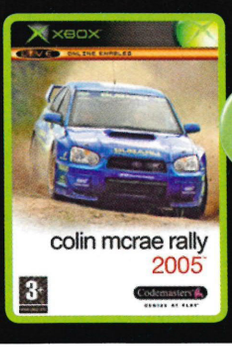

Jade Empire
Issue 41
Score 9.3




Halo 2
Issue 36
Score 10.0



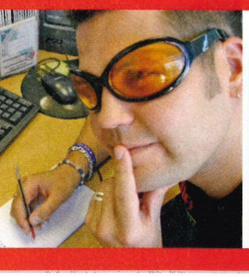

Fable: The Lost Chapters
Issue 34
Score 9.4




Colin McRae Rally 2005
Issue 34
Score 8.5

THE 360 REVOLUTION CONTINUES! FOR ALL THE LATEST XBOX 360 NEWS AND GOSSIP, TURN TO PAGE 060 FOR A SIX-PAGE EXPLOSION OF MEATY INFO GIBLETS

# Inbox



## Letters 53 Editor

**BEN LAWRENCE**
NOW PLAYING: **TAITO LEGENDS**

WE'VE MOVED again! Gav broke the toilets the night after winning the local Indian's 'Madras Madness' challenge, and when the HAZMAT team declared the building unsafe we had to move next door. New, new address above!

**YOUR OPINIONS COUNT!** Your input here has a direct effect on the content of your *Official Xbox Magazine*, so let us know which games you like or don't like, what you want to see more of or less of in the mag, or just rant by text, mail, forum or email!

**TEXT US! Text 'OXM' then YR MSG to 80889* (standard network rates), or picture message to 07921 889345***

**WRITE TO US at *Official Xbox Magazine*, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW**

**POST ON THE FORUM! Get it off your chest at http://xbox.oxm.co.uk. Be nice now, y'all!**

**EMAIL US WITH your rants, hopes and opinions at staff@futurenet.co.uk**



↑ "Some lovely shading on the armour, nice pencil work there," Tony Hart would probably say.

### HALO UNDERRATED!

I think the *Halo* franchise is really underestimated. The reason for this is because Microsoft launched their very first console, the Xbox, only in 2001, and with basically no experience in the gaming world they have already produced two of the best ever games, *Halo*, and *Halo 2*. So, if Microsoft's first two games in the *Halo* franchise have already been huge, imagine what the rest of the franchise is going to be like. Also, with *Halo 3* already hugely anticipated, I think it's going to be even bigger and better than its predecessors. Because the *Halo* franchise is growing in popularity and is becoming more and more advanced I'm confident that in a decade or so it will be known as the greatest of all time.

*Josh Webster, Ripon*

**Ah, Sir Josh Webster of Riponshire! Well, fancy that, you've made the letters page again, mostly thanks to yet another sterling piece of artwork – we're thinking of getting Tony Hart in to judge them. Is he still alive? We're not sure about your comment of 'no experience', though. There was life before *Halo*, and Microsoft is quite an established company you know, but we quietly agree. The Xbox and Xbox 360 have quite a gem in the *Halo* deal, and being the unbiased lot we are, we tend to agree – *Halo* probably will be seen as the best franchise ever, although we reckon it's the best already. Any other readers want to pitch in with their favourite franchise ever created? Let us know. Ben is screwing his eyes up tightly and crossing his fingers for the *Dizzy* series. It's always 1989 in Ben's world.**

↓ It's green. It's got an 'X' on. What more do you need?



### HE'S GOT THE KEY!

I am just writing to show you this key fob I made in school and engraved an 'X' on the back of. I am also going to be on a TV show about games and I am going to support Xbox all the way!

*Nick Black, Glasgow*

**Nick, you have made our day. At least, you've made Adam's day. Just this week the young scamp forgot his keys and cursed loudly that he wished he had a giant green fob upon which to hook them. Then lo, your incredibly useful creation turned up in the post. If you could make one for each of us that'd be great. Phil will have a blue 'Spurs' one if it's not too much hassle.**

### XBOX ATE MY JOANNA!

Please give everyone the following message – Don't buy Xbox 360! It's a disc murderer! I bought

## ☆STAR LETTER☆

**THE WRITER of the Star Letter wins an Xbox game of their choice! Just state the title you'd like, and if you win, we'll spin Ben round 100 times, poke him hard in the eyes then shove him in the general direction of the nearest games shop with 40 pound coins sellotaped to his face. If you're lucky, he might even come back with the game you asked for!**

### RIGHTS FOR LEFTIES!

As an avid FPS fan and honorary left-hander (I'm married to one), I must say how disgraceful the discrimination against cackhanders shown by some games developers is. I have always played *Halo*, *R63* and others in the southpaw style, a throwback to the bygone era of *GoldenEye* (Solitaire-style) on N64. I am right-handed but have neither the time nor inclination to relearn the 'default' setup on the majority of games. In the past week I have purchased *Battlefield 2* and *Far Cry Instincts*, and returned them both in disgust as I could not alter the configuration. I had the same trouble with *XIII* after waiting patiently for it for months.



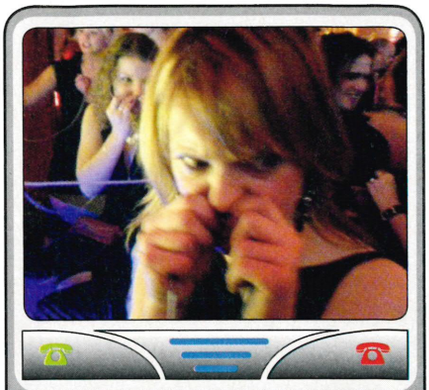
Is it too much to ask that developers consider the southpaws among us? How can Ubisoft produce a cracker like *Rainbow Six 3*, where you can adjust the setup, then give us great games like *XIII* and *Far Cry* where you can't? At the very least they could put a check box on the packaging that warns you. The average shop is clueless about this, and when I question the staff before a purchase they look at me as if I am mad. Please use your considerable influence to right this wrong.

*Rob Fletcher, Hayton*

**We know what you mean! We've got at least three brainwrongs in the office who have to play games with the television turned upside-down. At least, we think it's because they're left-handed. Whereas you, sir, are not! Still, your stubborn insistence on making life unnecessarily hard for yourself has touched our cold, bitter hearts, so much so that we're awarding you the Xbox game of your choice* (*game may not be suitable for left-handed people). Not bad, considering they'd have just drowned you for being a witch in olden times.**



↑ Jack Carver doesn't care which hand he uses to pull the trigger.



## SEND US YOUR PICS!

Standing out from the usual crap pictures of games cases came this sterling effort from 'Ms L' of picturesque Birmingham, taken during the Christmas work 'do'. She was "drunk and pretending to be an evil robot by pushing pipes up up my nose!" TXT YR pics to 07921 889345 (starting with 'OXM') to win an Xbox game!

# The Church of Xbox

## Join the Xbox evangelists!

This month's convert to the flock is a gamer in dog's clothing. Quite literally! Say hello to young Molly the Lurcher/German Shepherd Cross. Molly says that when she's not playing Xbox games she can be found snuffling around for treats and taking all the bed up at night. Well done Molly!



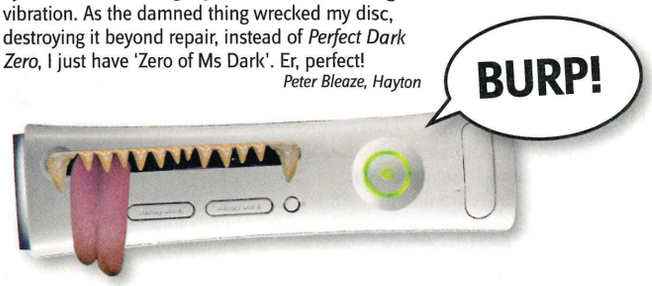
↓ "I'm not being funny, but we had a dog last month too."

↑ Who's a good boy? YES YOU ARE!

my Xbox 360 on 02 December along with *Perfect Dark Zero*. I played the game as normal, right to the end, and then stuck myself on multiplayer for a week. It was shortly after that I started noticing 'technical difficulties'.

The game refused to start up properly. It became a case of 'will it, won't it', then during Campaign mode, it started crashing. Yes, CRASHING! Eventually it refused to read the disc altogether. When I took out the disc it had a ring, a perfect circle apparently scratched into it. I rang the shop I bought it from and they said it was a 'burn' caused by the Xbox 360 being exposed to a knock or slight vibration. As the damned thing wrecked my disc, destroying it beyond repair, instead of *Perfect Dark Zero*, I just have 'Zero of Ms Dark'. Er, perfect!

*Peter Bleaze, Hayton*




**Crikey, that doesn't sound too good. We saw the footnote on your letter about your handwriting being so bad because you were shaking with rage. If your Xbox 360 is faulty and you have a receipt you are well within your rights to return it for either an exchange or a full refund. This is the first case of 'burning' we've heard about so hopefully this is a one-off. Let us know how you go about getting another Xbox 360. If you have no luck, make sure not to get angry, wedge the shop assistant into the disc drawer and burn a nice circle into their cheek WITH THE LASER.**

### BACK OF BEYOND

I hear loads about *Beyond Good & Evil* being one of the best games which sold around a dozen copies. Also, I saw it in this month's copy of *Official Xbox Magazine* saying "About ten people played this. What a WASTE!".

Well for starters no one (apart from the few who bought it) knows what it's about, and in the directory section of the mag it says that the game is "NOT about violence but story, subterfuge and character." Plus, there is a picture of a girl wearing a headband and holding a camera on the cover of the case. What's that all about? So can someone tell me what the game is about and if its worth buying?

*Dr Zoid, via email*

**Well, you could start by reading the back of the box, or even our review on the disc. "*Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* done by the Muppets," we said then. It is a little confusing to describe, but '*KOTOR* with Muppets' is pretty accurate. You're a young photographer who just happens to stumble across a sinister conspiracy – and using your camera you have to sneak into secret bases, take photos of evil schemes, then spread the word to the repressed peoples of the galaxy. Honestly, it's really, really good. If you want a stunningly told, beautifully designed and immensely playable game for under a tenner, you won't do any better than *Beyond Good & Evil*. Now off you pop down to the shops!**

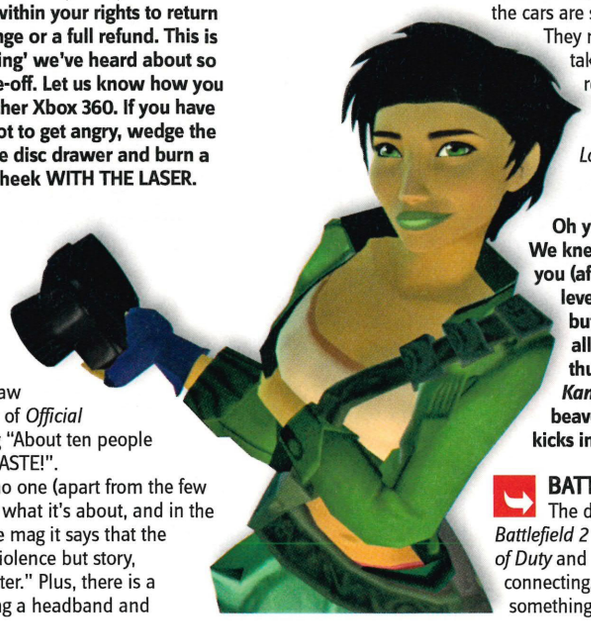
### BURNING MUSIC!

Could *Burnout: Revenge* be the most intelligent game ever? Seriously! The game knows everything. It knows what music to play when I'm battling a rival at 200mph down a motorway (fast-paced guitars), and when I'm sliding around mountain corners it gives me long notes the exact length of my skids. How does it do it?

The game knows when you're struggling or zooming through too. No matter how hard I try I never manage to pull away from the pack entirely. If I buy a faster car, my rivals buy faster cars! If I use a slower car, I'd swear they were too! And it seems the cars are super-intelligent. And indestructible.

They never sustain damage until they're taken down but even then they always respawn as good as new. Are they ghosts or something? If they are, let's rename it *Burnout: Revenge of Satan's Lowrider*! Am I totally bonkers?

*Tomek Nawrocki, East Sussex*



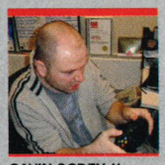
**Oh yes Tomek, you are totally bonkers! We knew about rival racers keeping up with you (after all, what good would harder levels be without some competition?), but we missed the timed music. If only all games did the same thing. Imagine a thumping great soundtrack to *Kao the Kangaroo*, and every time those pesky beavers arrive on screen the *Psycho* music kicks in. Bliss.**

### BATTLEFIELD BLUES

The day after Boxing Day, I booted up *Battlefield 2* online. I got *Battlefield, Call of Duty* and *Half-Life 2* for Christmas. While connecting, a box came up on the screen saying something like "Could not connect to EA »»

## The OXM team

The bit no one reads. For good reason...



**GAVIN OGDEN // EDITOR**

AS IF being 'off sick' wasn't bad enough, Gav's hard man image was further tarnished after a rifle through his desk revealed THREE tubes of lip balm, some FACE CREAM and a BIG GIRL'S BLOUSE (size 18). How we laughed!

**NOW PLAYING:** *Halo 2*, for 24 days straight now



**PHIL MADGE // ART EDITOR**

PHIL'S OFF to Dubai to visit *OXM* old-timer Mike Francis, who's had his entire mouth fitted with gold teeth (they're cheaper out there). They'll just stay indoors to play *PES5* and watch porno (both punishable by death).

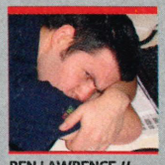
**NOW PLAYING:** Take a wild, random guess



**MARK ROBINS // DEPUTY EDITOR**

ANOTHER reputation was ruined when *OXM*'s 'sports expert' made the classic faux pas of uttering "which one am I?" in the office of a games magazine, while 'reviewing' *EA Rugby*. You just can't get the staff these days.

**NOW PLAYING:** *The Sun*'s Birthday Game!



**BEN LAWRENCE // HAIRDRESSING EDITOR**

BEN MERELY upheld his reputation as Most In Touch With His Feminine Side (after Gav) this month by having lunch with the female cast of *Family Affairs*, presumably to talk about 'shoes' and 'relationships'.

**NOW PLAYING:** *Black*, oddly enough



**DAN GEARY // PRODUCTION EDITOR**

FUNNY how the Xbox 360 magazine has started talking to us again now that they need us to do some of their work for them. It'll be okay though – we'll just get the spare Dan out of the basement. Yeah, that'll do.

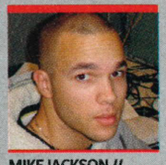
**NOW PLAYING:** *Adobe InDesign CS 2.0*



**ADAM KULESZA // DEPUTY ART EDITOR**

ADAM'S getting married! To a lady! His dad (King Juan Carlos II of Spain) would like to invite you all to the reception on his private island resort. There will be WINE, SONG and LUSTY WOMEN, and also a MOBILE DISCO.

**NOW PLAYING:** Away. The naughty boy.



**MIKE JACKSON // REVIEWS EDITOR**

CONTROVERSIALLY, Mike's stopped playing games altogether this month, due to them "all being rubbish, apart from *Super Monkey Ball*". He's also decided to change his name by deed poll (to 'Janet' apparently).

**NOW PLAYING:** *Super Monkey Ball*, as stated



**DAN GEARY 2.0 // SPARE WHEEL**

IN THE same way there are two Rikers in *Star Trek: TNG*, an amusing time machine mishap means there are two Dans in the office. This month, the spare one is helping the Xbox 360 people make a 'magazine'.

**NOW PLAYING:** *Blinx*, hilariously

PHOTOS: ADAM KULESZA

POLISHING HIS HALO: GAV REALLY HAS BEEN PLAYING HALO 2 FOR 24 DAYS WITHOUT INTERRUPTION! IT'S ALL FOR CHARITY, AND HE'S NOT EVEN ALLOWED TO STOP PLAYING TO EAT, PICK HIS NOSE OR GO TO THE TOILET! SEND YOUR DONATIONS TO THE USUAL ADDRESS PLEASE!

# Shorts

sms TEXT US questions and comment on 80889* ('OXM' followed by your message).

WRITE TO US at *Official Xbox Magazine*, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW

www POST ON THE FORUM Get it off your chest at http://xbox.oxm.co.uk (no swearing, please)

@ EMAIL US WITH your rants, hopes and opinions at staff@futurenet.co.uk

sms I'm so depressed. I just found out my best mate was cheating with my girlfriend. Is there a game I could buy to shift my thoughts?

*Anon, SMS*

**How about a nice game of *Ninja Gaiden Black*? Just take your frustrations out on a giant T-Rex skeleton. Problem solved!**

sms The Xbox 360 is a noisy sod. You can hear its asthma inhaler even when Quake 4 is playing!

*Anon, SMS*

**With the Xbox 360's complicated innards you need a powerful fan to stop it from blowing up or melting.**

www What the hell happened to Resi 4? i waited until october to see any news on Resident evil 4 on xbox until i finally gave in and bought it on Gamecube instead. First people say its comin out on xbox then nothing happens, what the hell?

*Charlie, forum*

**Alas Charlie, it isn't coming out and no matter how much we pester Capcom, it looks unlikely that it ever will. Still, at least *Resident Evil 5* is coming to Xbox 360, and judging by the screens of that doing the rounds, it'll be worth the wait.**




↑ **Maybe they'll put it in anyway!**

www Is the Halo movie meant to be like animation or cartoon or a real movie?

*Soapy77, forum*

**Interesting question. Things could either go down the *Final Fantasy* route, or just consist of The Rock wearing fibreglass battle armour and firing massive guns for 90 minutes. Just thank your lucky stars Peter Jackson is producing it, because that will pretty much wipe out any involvement from Dr Uwe Boll. He'll be busy ruining *Far Cry* (weeps).**

www Rastan is definitely the best game on the Taitio Legends collection. You've gotta love those flame-pits! Can't believe great Taito games like Double Dragon and Renegade were left out.

*Lizardking, forum*

**Hopefully the next instalment of *Taito Legends* will prove to be just as good. But, erm, *Double Dragon* and *Renegade* aren't actually Taito games, unfortunately.**

@ I think my girlfriend fancies Adam. She's never been into games before but now his picture is in your mag she reads it before I do. Help!

*Tom Rath, email*

**Don't worry Tom, your girlfriend isn't alone. The ladies in the office jumped on the poor boy at the Xmas party and he's been walking with a limp ever since.**

www Is it true there is an alternate ending to King Kong where he lives?

*Kongnut, forum*

**Yes, he gets married to Ann and everything and they have oversized monkey babies together. Actually, check out last issue to find out how to get the secret 'happy' ending.**



www Is Fahrenheit any good? I've seen screenshots of it and although it looks good I'm not sure whether I'll enjoy it or not.

*Malaka, forum*

**Yes Mr Malaka, it's very good. Its very creepy, very clever, and pisses all over Dan Brown for conspiracies and ancient prophecies. Buy it – it's dead cheap at the moment too!**

@ I've heard that you can play Xbox 360 games on the original Xbox. Please tell me this is true!

*Lyndsay Barrett, email*

**Ah Lyndsay, if only it were. No, Xbox 1 won't play 360 games, but it does make some rather nice grinding noises.**




» online". I troubleshooted it and everything was okay. What do I need to do? Is there something on the EA website or in the manual I have missed?

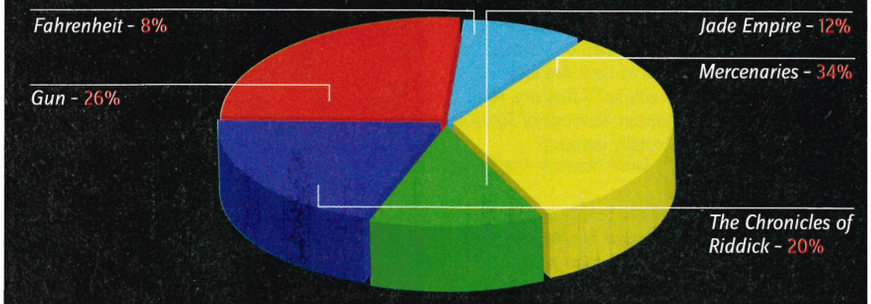
*Miles Vallance, Croydon*

**What a surprise. Don't worry Miles, it's not you – it's EA's stupid servers. Ever since it opted to host games on its own servers there have been problems when things get really busy. When a lot of people try to play at the same time, the servers just don't seem capable of handling it. We're afraid patience is the only answer – you'll get a game eventually. Failing that, you could always go to www.eagames.co.uk and complain. Don't all go at once, though – we're not sure their hardware would be able to cope.**

## YOU DECIDE

Find more online polls on our forum at http://xbox.oxm.co.uk

Which of these original games would you like to see a sequel to on Xbox most?




» **GET ON THE FORUM NOW!** To join the discussions on the forums, just head for our great website, found at **http://xbox.oxm.co.uk** and click on Discussion Forums. Give yourself a name and a password, and then you can take part. Simple.

*TERMS AND CONDITIONS By texting the editor or entering the competition you are agreeing to receive details of future offers from Future Publishing Ltd, if you do not want to receive this information please text the word STOP to 80889. Texts will be charged at 50p plus standard network tariff rate. Please ask permission from whoever pays the bill. Competition winners will be drawn at random from all entries that answer the questions correctly after the closing date. Postal entries should be sent to *OXM*, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW. Mag choice of prize is final. Only UK residents aged 16 and over may enter. No employees of Future Publishing Ltd or any company associated with this competition, or any member of their close family may enter. No photocopies will be accepted for postal entries. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives cash or otherwise are available. Future Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury caused by any prizes won except by its negligence. Publicity may be given to any competition winners and/or entrants and their names and/or photographs printed in *Official Xbox Magazine*. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Where prizes are offered on behalf of an associated company these prizes are provided in their entirety by these associated companies. Future Publishing Ltd cannot be held responsible for any failure to provide prizes as specified and all enquiries relating to such prizes will be referred to the associated companies. All entries must be received by the closing date. Copies of competition entry forms and winners lists are available by written request from Games Marketing, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

# Win Our Stuff!

## Rag 'n' bone! Rag 'n' bone! It's junk, the lot of it. Quite frankly, you're welcome to it

WIN ALL THIS!

Much like a black binliner placed outside the back door of a rundown hospital, it's a real mixed bag of prizes this month - some you could potentially enjoy if really you put your mind to it, others you probably wouldn't want to touch for fear of catching some deadly, incurable form of lurgy.

On the plus side, we've got some glossy coffee table books, ideal for starting highbrow conversations (*The Art of Halo* and a violent *Punisher* comic book), a lovely black plastic man-bag from THQ, a pack of WWE Top Trumps (the game of kings!) the *XIII* soundtrack (rescued from the bin) and a weird Xbox 360 bracelet thing that came free with Japan's *Famitsu* magazine.

On the minus side, we've donated prizes ourselves. Ben has given up his personal copy of the Booker Prize-winning *The Life of Pi*, Mark has offered his swanky Midway biro and Gav, ever the generous one, has donated a proof copy of an *OXM* bag. Cheers. Oh, and we've signed them so you can't sell them on eBay!

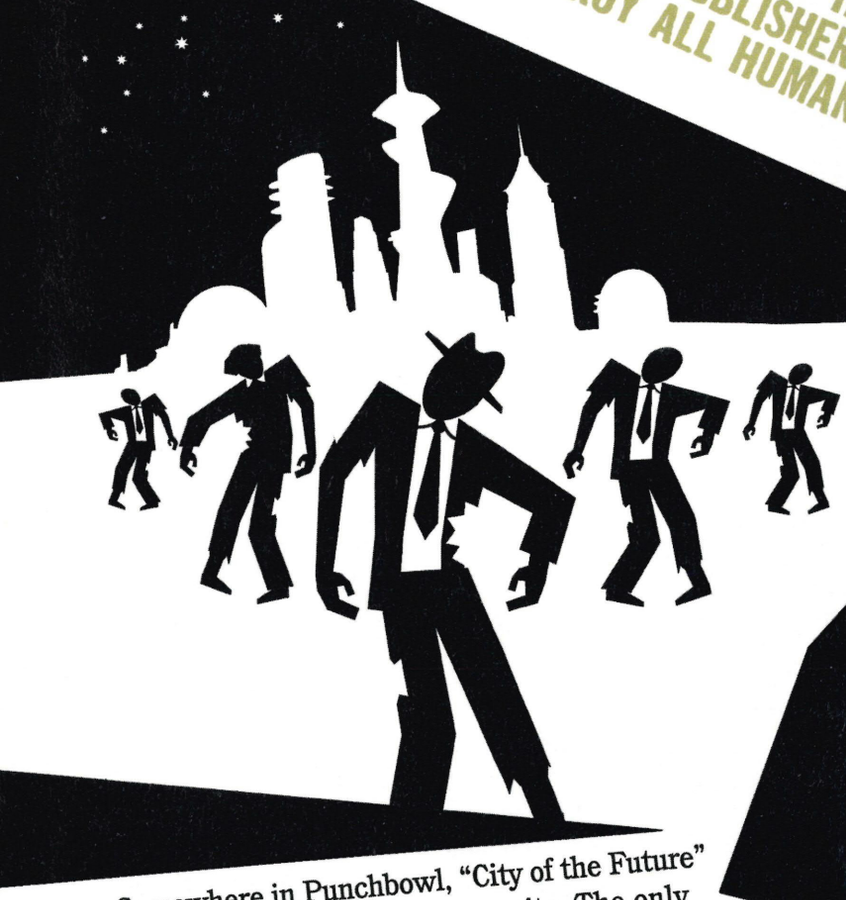
To win, tell us which WWE superstar (or diva) Ben pretends to be in private and why. Text the word OXMSTUFF, followed by a space, then UR answer 80889* by 16 March. The funniest answer wins the junk.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER OF HALO® AND THE PUBLISHER OF DESTROY ALL HUMANS!™

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**POSSESS THE LIVING:** Clamp your severed hand on the living & use any of their weapons.

15 XBOX PC DVD-ROM SOFTWARE NVIDIA WIDELOAD aspyr THQ

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XBOX




# We're hitting Mexico City, armed to the teeth with prototype guns and satellite technology. This is Ghost Recon at its best...

**Words:** Mike Jackson

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Ubisoft | Pub: Ubisoft |
| Players: 1-2 | Live: 2-16 players |
| Release: 31 March | |
| www.ghostrecon.com | |

WAR ISN'T COOL. People get shot and blown up and stuff. But when you're sat in front of your TV with a copy of *Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter* buzzing round in your Xbox, the joy of its absorbing warfare is going to keep you stuck to your controller like it's coated in superglue.

*Advanced Warfighter* is special. You've played wargames that hark back to the bigger wars in history, particularly WWII, with its ancient guns, propeller-driven warplanes and simple metal helmets. There are so many of those it's almost getting boring using the same feeble old guns to waste Nazis. On the other hand you've also had your fair share of sci-fi shooters, with laser guns, far-fetched time-travel and teleportation. Escapism is all good.

*Advanced Warfighter* also takes you into the future. But it's a uniquely believable interpretation of what war might actually be like in the near future. It gives you a realistic idea of the kind of equipment the military might be carrying into the battlefield in years to come, and how this technology will affect the way they do battle. It's not just guesswork either – as revealed in our Exclusive Access last month, the development team worked with real military sources to ensure the game is as authentic as can be. The guns and gadgets you use are all based on real-life military weapons and actual concept designs.

It's amazing to think that you get to see some of the hardware that's being developed for the future battlefield in action. Going hands-on with the cool guns and gadgets featured in the new *Ghost Recon* got us all excited like boys on a Christmas morning...

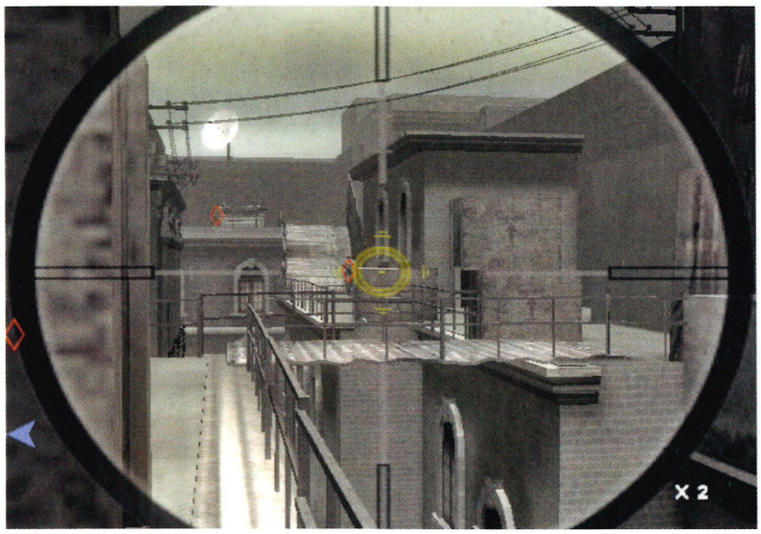
The most significant of all are the many impressive functions of your helmet (or your on-screen HUD). Your fancy soldier-hat is actually part of an advanced satellite system called IWS (Integrated Warfighter System). You can




↑ You've got to watch your buddy's back, bagging enemies that he doesn't see.



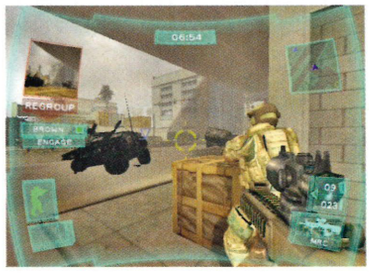

↑ This is what you need - a hefty gun turret on a rooftop makes you the DADDY.




↑ Ladders to rooftops means the enemy can get there too. Keep an eye out.




← When you're too scared, send the other dude to fight.




← Your AI helper is always keen to blow stuff up.




↑ We're looking forwards to multiplayer!




↑ Calling a taxi in Mexico...

see the map in the top-right of the screen. Similar to the *Metal Gear Solid* games, it not only displays the layout of surrounding structures but also the positions of any hostiles. Handy, but not a complete cheat - your helmet's cool tracking system will only track the locations of enemies you've seen. These positions also show up on your main view, outlining anyone in your sights with a red marker, as well as friendly personnel in green and mission objectives in blue.

Waypoint markers and enemy locators have featured in countless games before. And though *Advanced Warfighter* deserves credit for justifying these features with actual technology, essentially they're nothing new. But what is amazing is the box on the top-left that links you to your comrades during missions, which shows you what your partner is looking at. This is linked to your helmet's tracking systems - the positions of any hostiles he sees will be fed to you and tracked on your HUD. It's also useful if you drift apart - you can look at the visor to see what he's up to.

Giving orders to your squadmate couldn't be easier. Pressing up on the D-pad sends him in the direction you're facing. If you send him forwards into points of cover, he's useful for scoping out areas for hostiles before you tip-toe in. You can send your guys to attack a specific target by tapping up while aiming at the hostile you want floored. Tapping Y switches your man between Stealth and Assault modes. In Stealth mode they do their best to stay hidden and only shoot when shot at. In Assault mode they go berserk like Taz the Tasmanian devil, blasting crazy shots and lobbing grenades at anything that moves. It's not a mode you want to be using often.

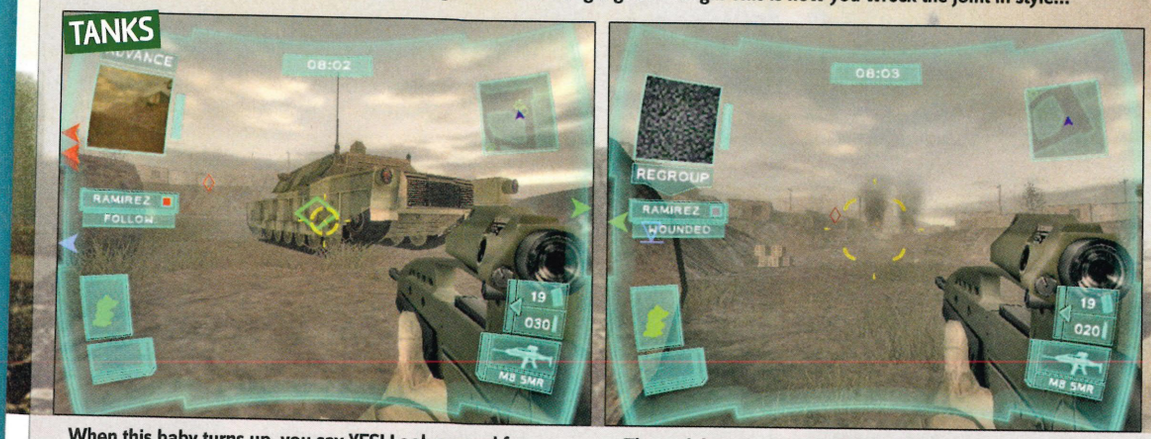
What struck us almost instantly is the reserved nature of the game - it isn't the crazy, all-out action shooter the trailer footage led us to believe. We were expecting a frantic, high-octane battle to kick off from the word go - something comparable to the intense *Call of Duty 2: Big Red One* (Issue 50, 9.0). But the first mission quickly proved us wrong. Fans of the quieter, more subdued traditions of the *Ghost Recon* series can rest in the knowledge that *Advanced Warfighter* hasn't abandoned them completely.

It makes a compromise. *GRAW* doesn't force you to spend ages planning an attack with a map. It's far more instantaneous than that. You push forward into hostile areas »

## A HELPING HAND

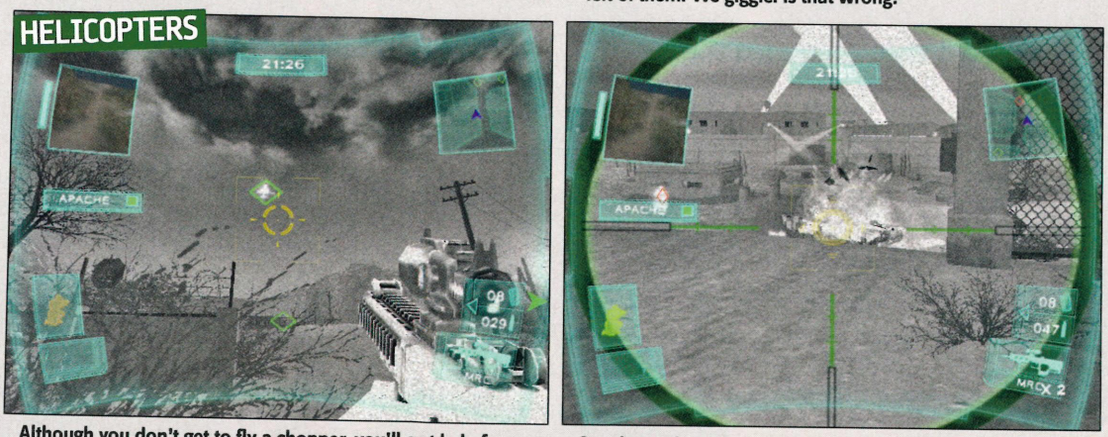
### Because sometimes hefty machine guns just aren't enough

**It's not just your infantry grunt you'll get to boss about. The game deals out bigger firepower in the form of tanks and choppers for you to give orders to. You'll even get your own team of remote snipers to make people dead. But when stuff needs blowing up, forget your semi-auto pistol or armour piercing rifle. That's not gangster enough. This is how you wreck the joint in style...**




When this baby turns up, you say YES! Look around for anyone that want to give you jip. Aim your cursor at them and press up on the D-pad to order the attack.

The tank lets rip. BLAMMO! The tank's fat shell makes a mess of what they used to call their body. There's nothing left of them. We giggle. Is that wrong?




Although you don't get to fly a chopper, you'll get help from the Apaches now and then. They'll hover above your position, waiting for your order via radio...

See those plumes of smoke down there? They used to be loud-mouthed enemy tanks. That was before our helicopter turned them into scrap metal.

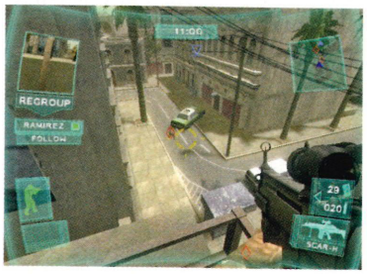





↑ Use grenades to kill hiding enemies.



↑ The huge explosions are awesome.




↑ Provide enemy cover from a rooftop.

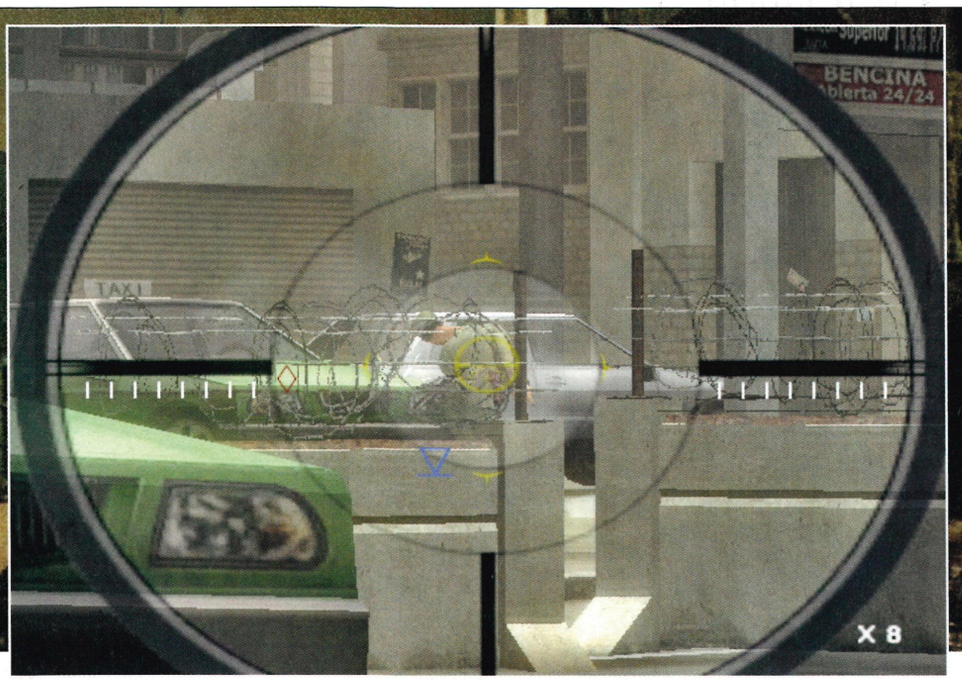


» and make strategic decisions in the heat of battle. It gets hectic in small doses. You might have to blow up a gas tanker to distract enemies, or destroy a building to block the path of an enemy convoy. But for the most part you won't have bullets whisking past your head and explosions going off in every direction like it was Pearl Harbour. *Ghost Recon* never was, and still isn't, that type of game.

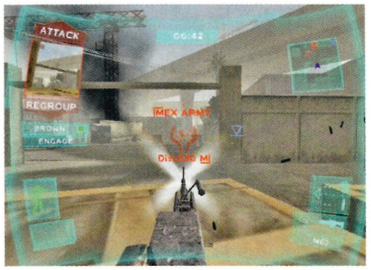
Slow and careful progression is still essential the vast majority of the time. Run into new areas like you're playing *Doom 3* (Issue 40, 8.5) and you'll be seeing the Load Previous Checkpoint screen before you can fire a single round. It's all about checking out the environments, clearing out hostiles as you go. But it's not all linear action. The levels are vast, with multiple routes through the streets and back alleys of Mexico City.

Not only do you have the freedom to roam, but you can also hit the rooftops to snipe enemies. Often when you encounter a group of hostiles, you will have the choice of multiple angles from which to attack.

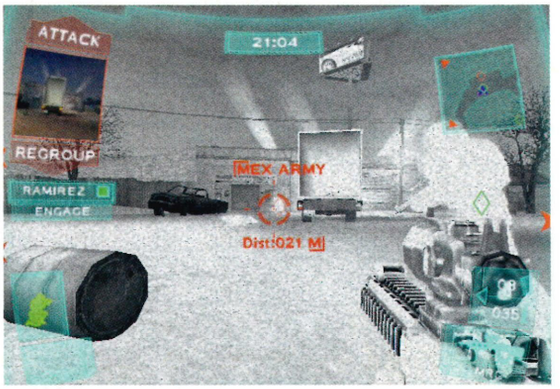





↑ It's safer to take out the enemy from a distance. And if you're really good, he'll never even see you.

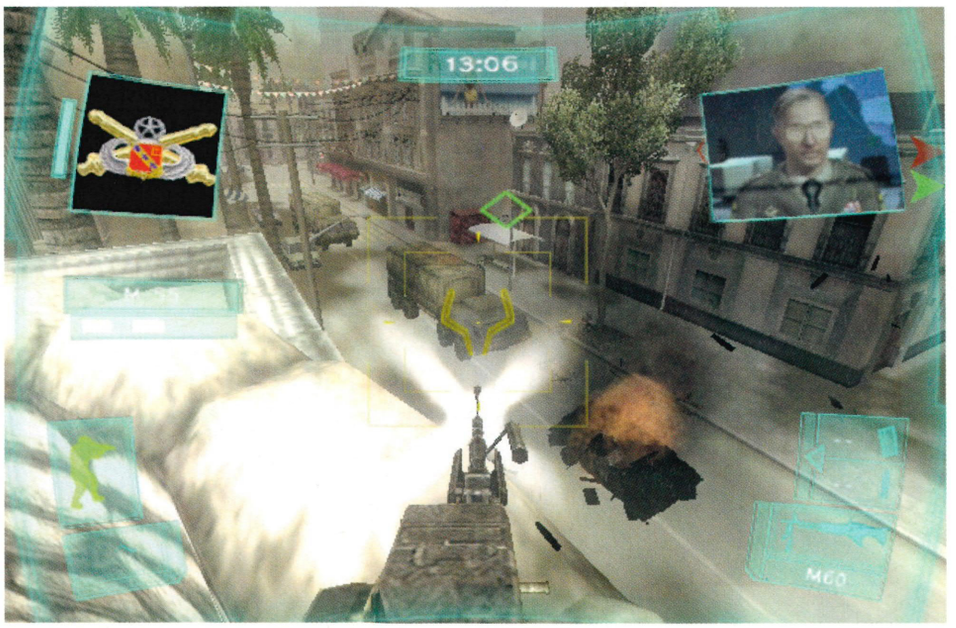



↑ Pinned down and shooting for survival.




↑ It's slow and tactical stuff. Apart from the bits where it isn't...

This is great stuff in single-player, and we're betting good money it's going to be awesome in multiplayer co-op mode too. The version of *Advanced Warfighter* we played featured no multiplayer options, but Ubisoft has already confirmed that the full game will be big on multiplayer, with the entire single-player campaign available in co-op. Even better, there will be ten whole missions dedicated to co-operative play. GET IN! Ubisoft says these missions will focus more on strategy than the single-player missions, accommodating the fact that co-op players can plan more complex, multi-angled attacks. We haven't seen any multiplayer yet, but with Ubisoft being so clearly dedicated to the cause, you can be sure it'll be awesome on Xbox Live. By the time you read this we'll be on the blower demanding that Ubisoft sends us the full game - and we can't wait.




↑ Be on the constant lookout for gun turrets. Find one on the roof and you can take out entire convoys alone.

## QUICK FLICK

You have to see this. It's just too awesome...




There's an enemy convoy rumbling down the road, including a big bastard tank. It must be stopped...




Whip out the old C4 and stick it to the building on the right of the road. Keep those hands steady now!




And... BOOOOOOOOM! Jesus Harold Christ! We never expected a result that big.




There ain't going to be no one getting past that rubble without a bulldozer or three. Suckers.

# IT'S AWARDS SEASON AND THE WINNER IS...YOU!




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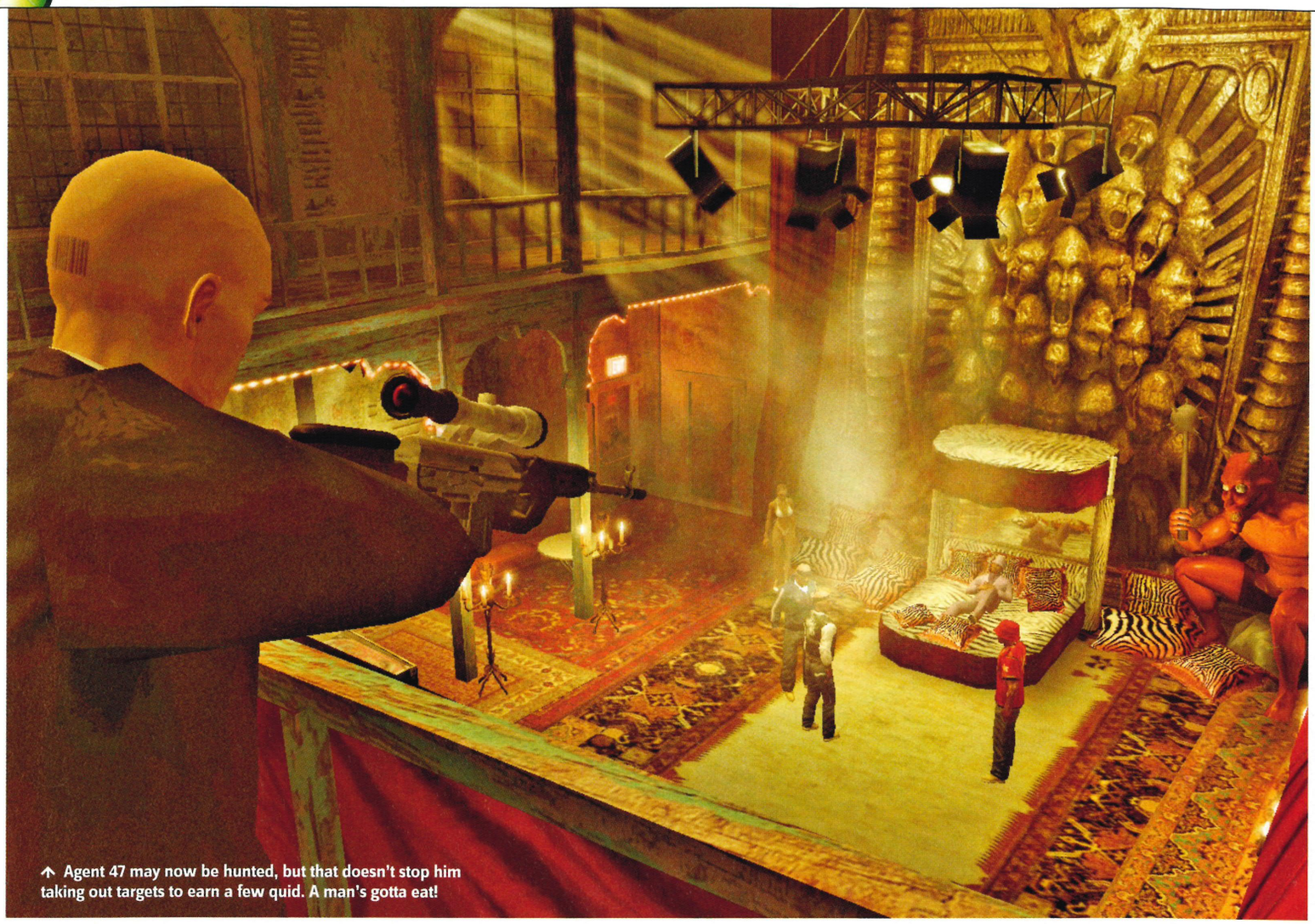



# Hard Target

## With a bounty on his head the hunter has just become the hunted...

**Words:** Ben Lawrence

THE DEVELOPER shifts in his chair. He is clearly uncomfortable. "Yeah, it happens all the time," laughs *Hitman* game director Rasmus Højengaard nervously while we're badgering him about the forthcoming *Hitman: Blood Money*. Really? You've actually had to ditch some forms of assassination because they're too extreme? "Usually what you see in the game are extreme ideas that have been given a family treatment," he says. "That's the approach we vouch for." As in the Manson family? Because if this is considered 'family', with the raft of new weapon upgrades and lethal new game modes, we don't want to come round for dinner thank you very much. Agent 47 is back. Ladies and gentlemen, start your screaming... »



↑ Agent 47 may now be hunted, but that doesn't stop him taking out targets to earn a few quid. A man's gotta eat!

» SINCE OUR LAST shadowy encounter with baldilocks, a lot has happened to Agent 47. His mentor has been murdered, he's lost the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, and to top it all it appears he's getting a little bit lazy. And getting lazy means opportunists trying to muscle in on your patch, which for Agent 47 means the appearance of a rival hitman stalking the streets and taking hits off his book. Could it be the insidious slaphead is losing his touch? He's a bit too old for all this killing malarkey now, surely?

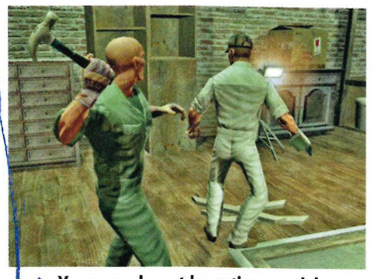
"He will never be too old – it's in his genes man! He'll probably die with his Silverballers tightly clenched in his fists." His what? "Oh sorry – his guns." Okay then. But surely he's lost his touch if the rumours of another hitman are true? There can't be room for two top killers in the world.

"Well, the good old hunter-becomes-the-hunted scenario seemed to be a very nice foundation for a character like 47. We also wanted to create a very large and multi-layered story, so we could make a tasty blend of intrigue and twists and turns," says Højengaard. The 'hunter' in question is a rival hitman, another master of murder who is out to screw up Agent 47's life, big time. We're talking about him not only trying to assassinate 47, but force him into highly volatile conditions where situations can quickly go tits-up. It's this new story element that gives *Blood Money* the new game mechanic. You'll have to buy off witnesses (or murder them, of course), but you'll also have to consistently alter your appearance to evade assassination, or to prevent drawing unwanted attention to yourself.

"We wanted to add some dynamics to the gameplay. *Hitman* is not really a shooter, and it's not really a stealth game – it's a balance of both," says Højengaard. "We wanted the game to have consequences if you just went in guns blazing. That's where the new Notoriety system comes in. If you just kill like mad, and leave witnesses, it will have consequences later on in the flow of the game. The levels will get harder, people will start to recognise you, and your picture will be all over the newspapers. This kind of paranoia and suspicion adds a lot of spice, as well as giving you feedback as you play through the game. If people start pointing, you know you're not being careful enough."

So what do you do to counter that, then? Surely some sort of disguise would help, short of chasing down every last witness and running them through.

"Well, *Hitman* has got many new cool disguises, but I won't tell you too much about them. You're just going to have to



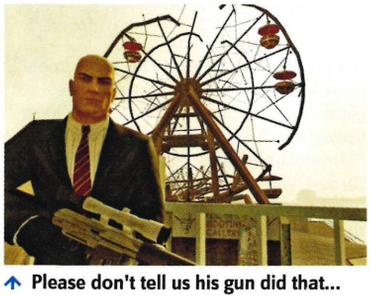
↑ You can almost hear the squelch.



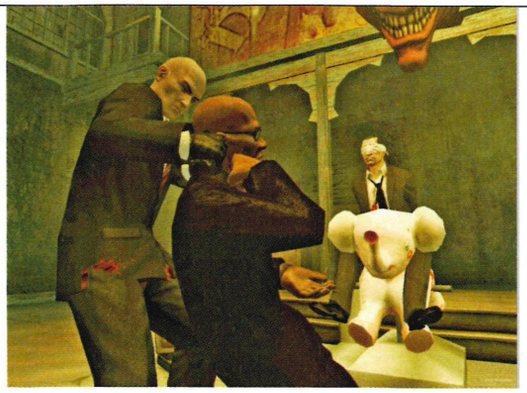
↑ It's like a game of Where's Wally, except the stakes are... DEADLIER!



↑ Create smoke to hide from your foes.



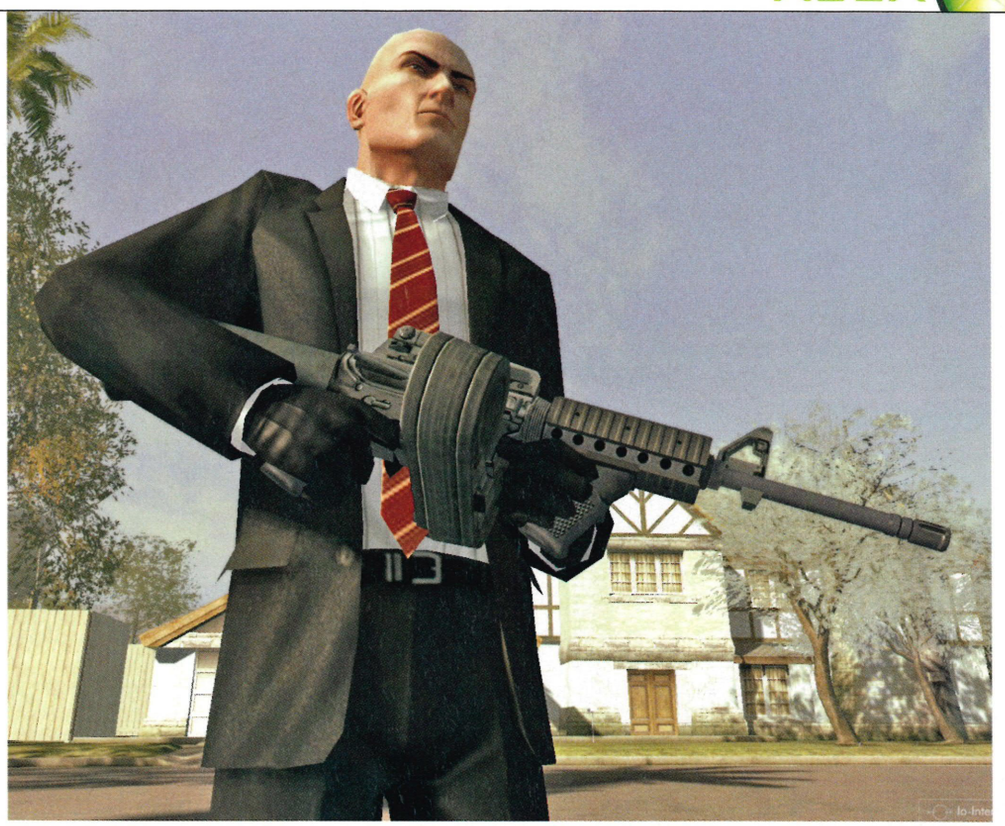
↑ Please don't tell us his gun did that...



Well, that's novel - torture people with toy elephants.



Could this be the man hunting us during the game?



Weapons are upgraded as you progress. We're guessing this baby is earned through a lot of hard work.




The first set of upgrades. We can't wait to see set five.

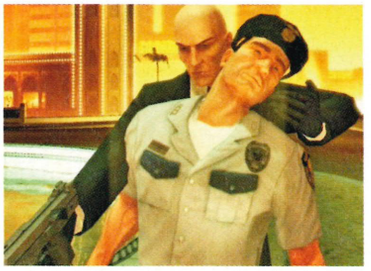
experience them all in the final game." Fine, be elusive then. See if we don't pop a cap in your ass, or something. Okay, tell us about this amazing new 'Blood Money' feature, then. Højengaard smiles. It's clear this is something he's proud of.

"The money acts as several things. It of course acts as a score, but the coolest thing you can spend it on are all the nice upgrade gadgets for your five signature weapons. They can all be upgraded with between ten and 20 different add-ons. Apart from altering the appearance of the gun, you can add upgrades that affect the weapon's power, stability, precision and noisiness." An example of the first stage of upgrades can been seen above - and it's pretty impressive considering this is just the 'My First Rifle' stage of upgrades. What the fifth set of upgrade entails is anyone's guess. Chances are you'll need a wheelbarrow to move it about, though.

"Your money will also be spent on clean-ups after your mission", says Højengaard. "The more of a mess you make, the more money you're going to have to spend to clean it up. If the going gets too tough you can even use your money to lower your notoriety. Heck, you can even *buy* new identities, or if you're stuck on a level and need some help, you can buy additional help in the form of hints."

All handy stuff, we're agreed, but we don't want to be stealthy all the time for fear of being seen by a few measly passers-by - we've got to have some gratuitous gore in there. Are there ever any times where you're encouraged to cause a scene? Are there any 'anti-rewards' for being particularly noisy or violent? We're poking his arm at this point, with a stern look on our face.

"Well, you can get all kinds of weird mission ratings if you take strange and exceptionally violent approaches to the game. We don't really encourage specific playing styles much, but of course some places are better for shootouts or for rigging potential 'accidents'," he says. But IO Interactive isn't about to start putting signposts up showing us where and when to go mad with a rifle. We've played the Vegas level and it seems a much more open-ended game than before. "Yes, the levels are more open-ended. There are several reasons for this, one being that they are quite big. The levels have also been designed to support openness, though there are always hints and pointers on hand so the player doesn't get frustrated. There are so many new things you can do that we needed to really think through every little detail of a level to make everything neatly balanced."



Take hostages to use as human shields.

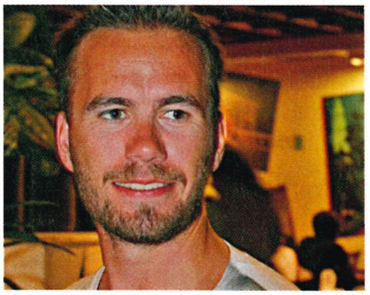


Remember to clean up afterwards!

And every little detail is still being addressed as well. Although IO is unable to produce an online *Hitman* game just yet, it is certainly within its sights. According to Højengaard, the idea is "always in our heads". Until that day, we're going to have to learn to put an end to our hunted status, and reclaim the rank of 'top assassin'.

With hints that Diana, 47's hot chocolate-voiced controller is returning, plus an as-yet-unannounced collection of locations spanning the globe, there is still much to be uncovered in *Blood Money*. Even pointing a couple of fingers at Højengaard in the shape of a pistol doesn't help. Tell us something no one else knows, we scream a little too theatrically. He's having none of it. "If you search the basement of the Paris Opera level, you might be able to find some really strange critters...", he says.

We'll have the full *Blood Money* review and playable demo soon. Time to calibrate that sniper sight, wethinks...



Højengaard: proud of slaphead 47.



Mmm... Tarantino's been at work!

XBOX






# SCARFACE

## THE WORLD IS YOURS

We hit the Scarface set and reveal why it's been hiding for the last six months...

**Words:** Gavin Ogden

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Radical | Pub: Vivendi |
| Players: 1 | Live: None |
| Release: Sept 2006 | |
| www.scarfacegame.com | |

Official XBOX Magazine EXCLUSIVE SCREENS

ALL TONY MONTANA'S got in this game are his balls and his continual use of the F word. But you're going to need barrels of both if the world is indeed to become yours. Anyone who's seen the legendary movie that starred Al Pacino will know to expect straight talking, a head for business (and drug-taking), bags of dirty money and plenty of guns. And let's not forget the women. Throw in a bit of coke-induced paranoia and you have pint-sized ticking time-bomb Tony Montana, just waiting to blow up in someone's face. This is going to be nasty.

But before you get the women, you need to get the money. Once you get the money you get the power. And once you've got the power, you can get anything you want in this world, even a free lifetime subscription to *OXM*. *Scarface: The World is Yours* tells the story of Cuban immigrant Montana's rise back to the top of the organised crime scene in and around Miami. The game's story is essentially the same as the movie's – in 1980s Miami, a determined Cuban immigrant takes over a drugs empire while slowly succumbing to pure greed. But if you're expecting a straight walkthrough of the film, sit down and hold tight. You're going to be shocked, stunned and surprised to learn that events kick off right at the film's grisly finale... »

XBOX

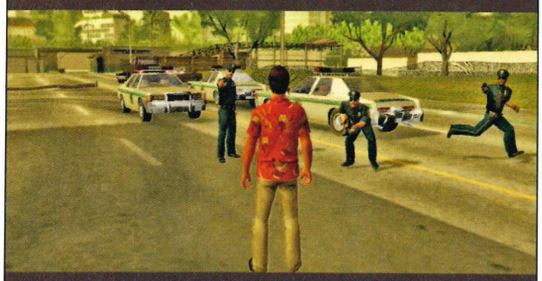
## HOW TO BREAK SOME BALLS

### A day in the life of Tony Montana

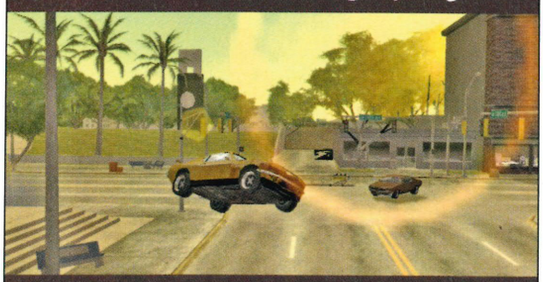
**Montana's a busy man with plenty of people to see and many cock-a-roaches to stamp on. Just remember the golden rule: don't get high on your own supply...**



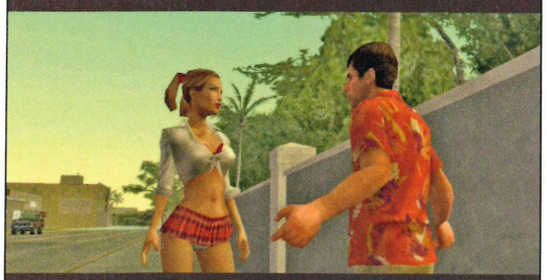
**INTIMIDATE: Need a front for your operation that'll go unnoticed by the law? Try tapping up the local storeowners. The bigger your balls the more respect you'll get.**



**THREATEN: Terrorise the local population too much and the cops will pay you a visit. Go quietly or shoot the place up and make a run for it. One of these gives you big balls...**



**ROAD RAGE: Pick a car, any car. Then steal it to use in your next mission. Or just steal it for fun and earn yourself a Big Ball bonus.**



**EAR TO THE GROUND: Make easy money by talking to your contacts on the street. Yes, the more you know the bigger your balls grow.**



**BLIND RAGE: Sometimes you have tell people more than twice. When this happens, pull out a big gun and shoot the place up. They'll listen to you next time.**



↑ **The start of the game, where Montana gets shot in the back! We're still not telling you how he survives though...**

### Bonus info

**CREDIT'S DUE**

Hollywood screenwriter David McKenna penned the screenplay for the *Scarface* game. His Silver-screen highlights include *S.W.A.T.*, *Get Carter* (the Stallone remake) and *American History X*. Radical took McKenna's script and merged it with the gameplay.

**GET INVOLVED**

Hollywood megastar Pacino might have only limited involvement in the game, but at least he's involved. Michelle Pfeiffer, who played Tony's girlfriend in the movie, point-blank refused to have anything to do with it.

» IT'S BEEN over six months since Vivendi last talked to us about its *Scarface* game. Rumours appeared on the web speculating that it would be delayed, to be released on next-generation consoles only, but the Xbox 360 launch came and went and still nothing was mentioned on the fate of Montana. Then, right out of the blue, we were invited to spend a few days in the company of the game's development team in Vancouver, Canada just after Christmas.

During *Scarface*'s six-month absence from the games schedules, as far as we could see not a lot had changed. We were half expecting some sort of revolutionary new gameplay feature to have been included since we last saw it, but the developers seem to have concentrated on making the overall visual presentation better. And, to be fair, it does. Though we're not sure it looks 'six months' better.

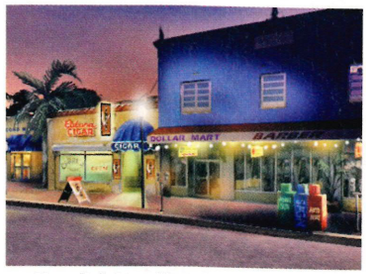
As the movie progresses to its inevitable conclusion, Montana gathers all the money and power in the Miami area, and it's no surprise that it goes to his head along with all the drugs. The movie closes with the ultimate showdown between Tony and his enemies in his multi-million dollar mansion. Tony's one-man army goes out in style – high as a kite and clutching his "leetle friend", squeezing the life out of the trigger.

In the game, though, you've got one chance to change the course of history, allowing Tony to escape death, flee his plush mansion, go into hiding and slowly start up his empire all over again. We know what that chance is, but in the interest of trying to write a spoiler-free preview, we're not going to tell you how you change the events of a cult classic unless enough of you write in and ask us to. Before we continue, we'll give you a moment or two to let that all sink in – Montana survives the shoot-out and lives!

Obviously the first question we had to ask the development team was how the hell they came to that decision. Producer Cam Weber was on hand to explain. "Well, we looked at the game and looked at the movie and thought about just recreating the movie from start to finish. But a lot of times when a game just copies a movie it lacks tension and that's something we didn't want to do with *Scarface*. We wanted to create a game that allowed people to build their own experience with the character of Tony Montana. It's a game about being Tony f***ing Montana! So we took the mansion shoot-out scene, which I think is the most powerful scene in the movie, and thought that would be a great place to start."




↑ **The game's vehicles can be upgraded with cold, hard cash.**



↑ **New lighting effects have been added.**



↑ **Cause trouble and expect a car chase.**



↑ Keep up the shooting and Tony will hit Blind Rage mode (also known as God mode).




↑ Even hardman Tony Montana obeys the highway code from time to time.

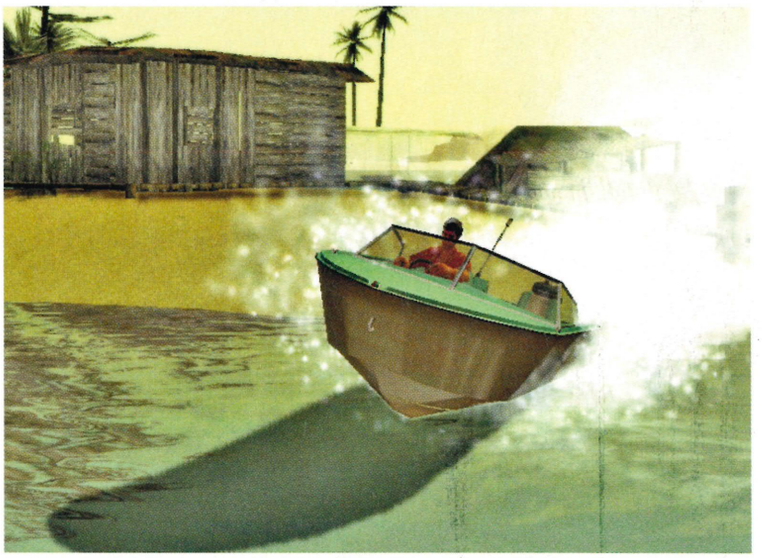
So after running for his life, Montana's back on the street pushing small-time deals through and roughing up the locals to make ends meet. The police have locked his mansion down and all his close friends are dead. This is the basic premise of the whole game – as Tony you must make deals and take over Miami one area at a time, before, once again, going after the world (very similar to the movie). Throw in the odd boss-battle along the way and the game's structure quickly becomes clear.

Visually the game is very similar to any recent *Grand Theft Auto* title (most notably *Vice City*, for obvious reasons). Clearly it's a third-person action game that rewards you for stealing cars, harassing the general public and getting chased by the police in a very familiar free-roaming style. There is a linear plot-line that you ultimately have to follow to progress, but you can just take an hour out and cruise around Miami looking for trouble if you want to.

The key to the game is Tony Montana himself. Take away the *Scarface* branding and you'd be left with a game that would be just another *GTA* clone. But as Weber has already said, it's a game about putting the player in that awful Hawaiian shirt and 'being' Tony. And even though Radical landed the rights to use Pacino's likeness, it didn't score the rights to his vocal cords. But then Pacino's voice has changed a bit over the last 25 years, so he probably wouldn't sound much like Tony anyway these days.

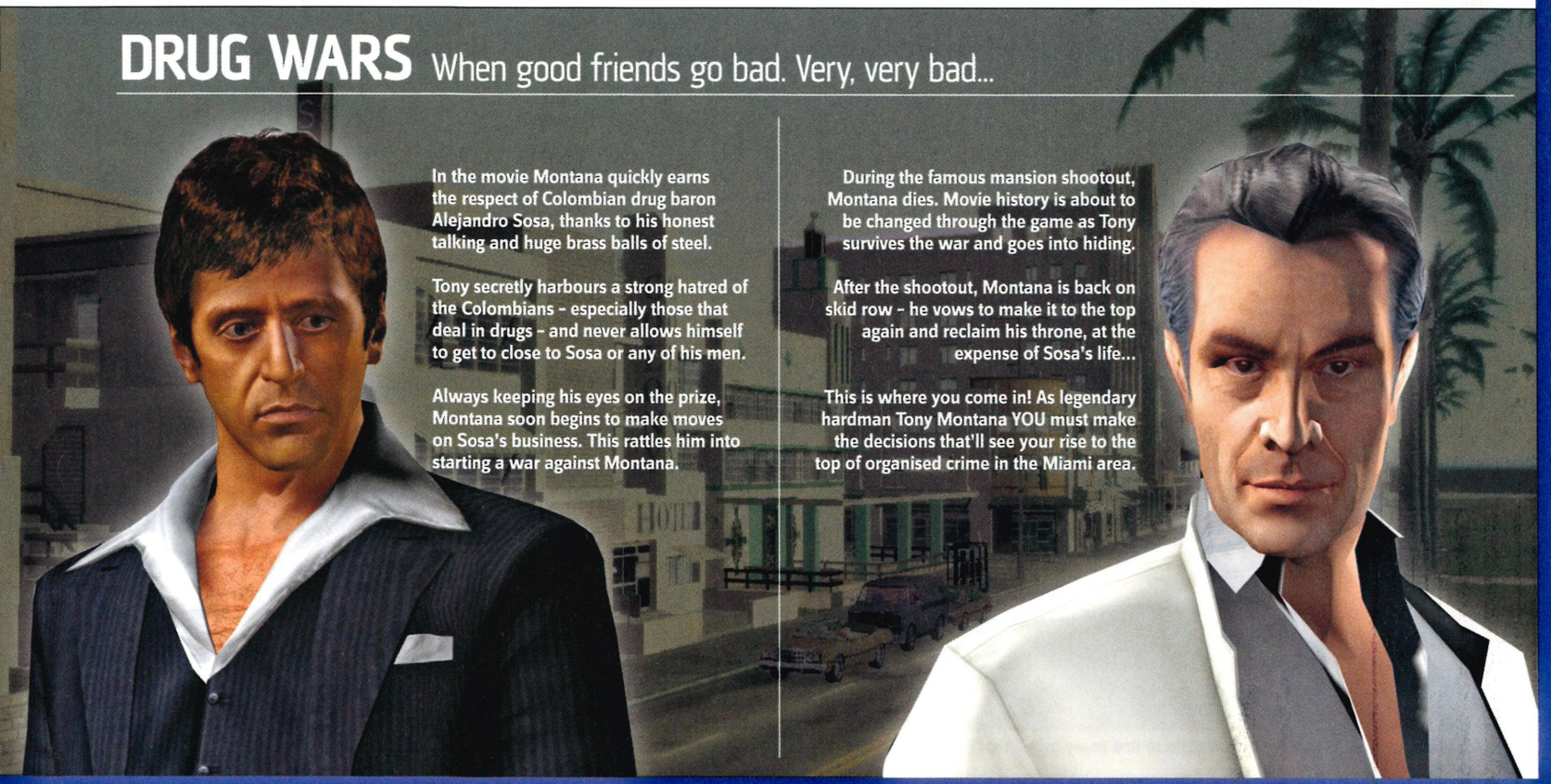
Radical brought in 200-odd sound-a-likes and asked anyone who thought they could nail it to give it a shot. To be fair, »

"This is a game about being Tony f***king Montana!"



↑ You'll needs millions to enjoy luxury items such as speedboats and biplanes.

## DRUG WARS When good friends go bad. Very, very bad...



In the movie Montana quickly earns the respect of Colombian drug baron Alejandro Sosa, thanks to his honest talking and huge brass balls of steel.

Tony secretly harbours a strong hatred of the Colombians – especially those that deal in drugs – and never allows himself to get to close to Sosa or any of his men.

Always keeping his eyes on the prize, Montana soon begins to make moves on Sosa's business. This rattles him into starting a war against Montana.

During the famous mansion shootout, Montana dies. Movie history is about to be changed through the game as Tony survives the war and goes into hiding.

After the shootout, Montana is back on skid row – he vows to make it to the top again and reclaim his throne, at the expense of Sosa's life...

This is where you come in! As legendary hardman Tony Montana YOU must make the decisions that'll see your rise to the top of organised crime in the Miami area.

XBOX

# EXOTIC ITEMS

## Luxury goods you won't find at Argos



SPEEDBOAT: Straight out of *Miami Vice*! You too can rip through the ocean once you've gained the respect of the locals (or scared the life out of them).



CAR: Each vehicle is upgradable and you can even add turbo boosts to cars to give you a better chance of avoiding the pork chopper in the sky.



PLANE: No drug lord is worthy of his status without his own private plane. Why bother with customs? Just fly your cargo straight to the street for maximum value.




↑ Montana checks out the local record store to find some music that'll match his shirt.



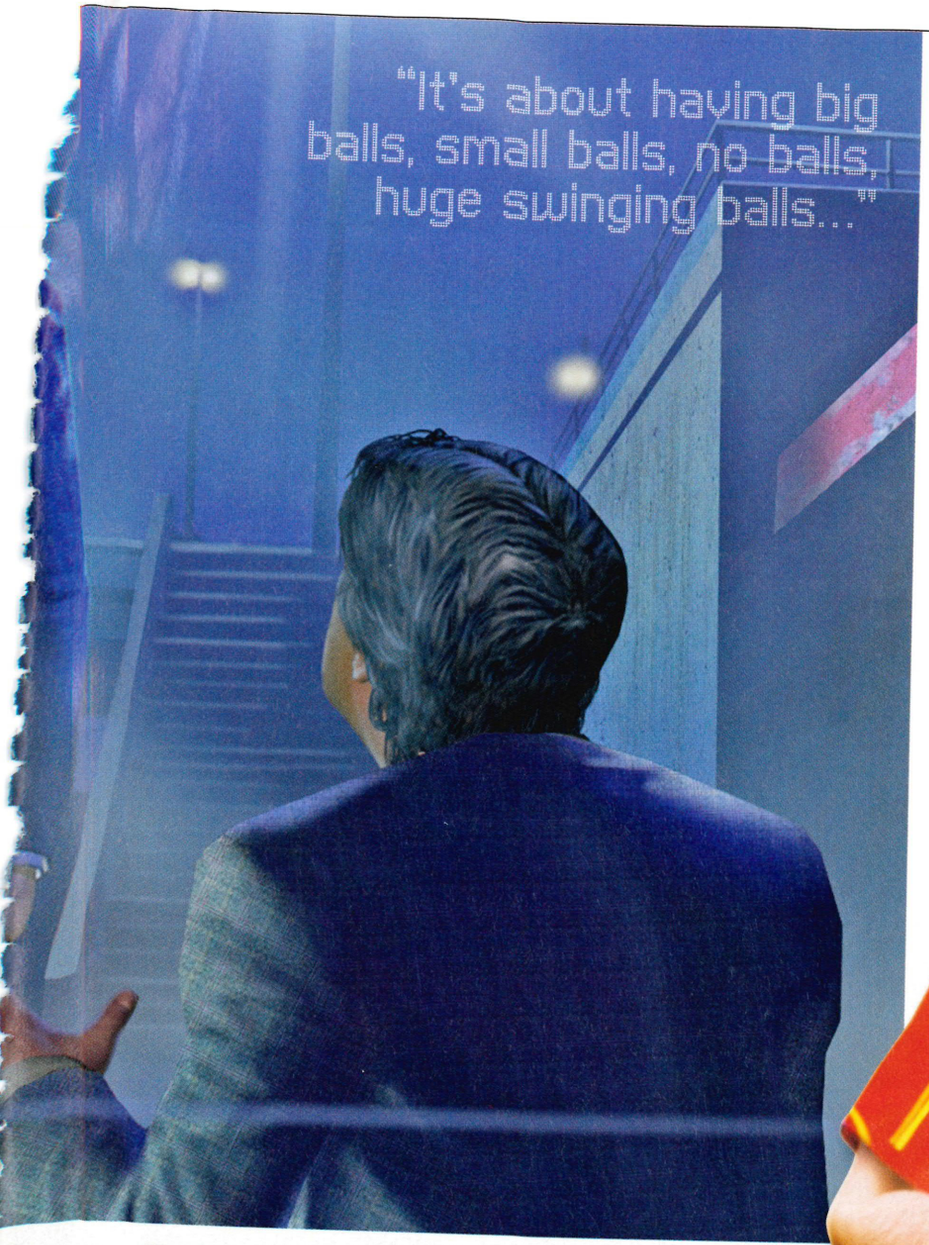



↑ When the world is yours the last thing you have to worry about is driving on roads.

» whoever got the gig is doing a great job, from the very early in-game cut-scenes demoed to us. His tone of voice has all the arrogant swagger and cockiness of the Pacino of old. Apparently, Al's lawyer signs off builds of the game too.

It seems any crime game worth its salt these days has to have a 'respect'-earning feature. But Radical has gone one further with *The World is Yours*. Tony doesn't keep score with respect – he doesn't NEED your respect. Nope, Tony keeps score with BALLS! It's all about having big balls, small balls, no balls, huge swinging balls or even tiny little ball-like marbles. Everything Montana does (or doesn't) will affect the size of his balls.

So, the bigger your, er, 'balls', the more respect you have, and the more people





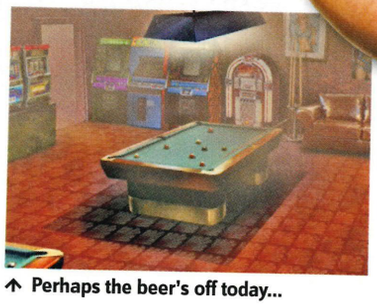


## Bonus info

**ONLY ON XBOX**
With Xbox having the upper hand over PS2 in terms of power, our version will be higher res, have better draw distances, better bump mapping and even a nice heat shimmer!



↑ **Reclaiming your mansion is a must!**



↑ **Perhaps the beer's off today...**

you'll be able to get close to. It's pretty standard stuff, really, whatever you call it. If its a crime game with RPG-like depth and strategy, it's EA's *The Godfather* you want. Here, you'll gain balls for speaking with Miami's civilians, taking out your targets, completing objectives and all the usual bad things you'd expect Montana to get up to.

By showing the world how big your balls are, you'll also fill up your Blind Rage meter. Once this hits max, Montana goes insane for a few seconds. Blind Rage is best used during gunfights, as it makes you invincible for a few moments, allowing you to clear the area of any immediate threats. The game is played out in third-person, but Blind Rage moments switch to first-person.

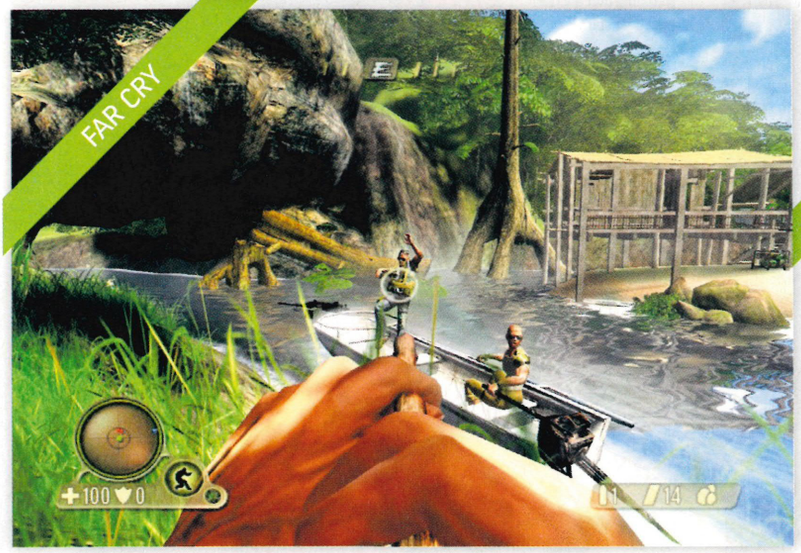
Once Tony's back on the road to criminal stardom, you'll need to get yourself a front that will covertly act as a base for all your dodgy dealings. These can be anything from pawn shops and fishing huts to clubs and hotels depending on how well endowed you are in the 'balls' department. There are 16 fronts to locate and move your operation into. Being the handy things they are, each has a back door for an ultra-quick getaway and an office complete with a desk to work out your next move up the ladder.

Even though Radical was forthcoming on the game's story and main features, we've yet to get a good hands-on session with the code. It obvious from our visit that *Scarface: The World is Yours* is going to be a solid entry into the crime genre. Whether it'll blow the competition away, though, is too early to call. Stay tuned for more Montana madness in a coming issue.













GAME ACCESS

# PHASE TWO IS GO!

Second wave of Xbox 360 games promises to push the machine – and its owners – harder than ever!

**It's not over yet! It's only the end of the beginning, and the next wave of Xbox 360 titles is coming – and pushing our expectations of games higher still.**

New images of Epic's *Gears of War*, 100 per cent guaranteed as in-game shots, show glorious levels of detail that go beyond anything seen on Xbox 360 so far. The organic, ground-dwelling creatures you battle make the stilted enemies of *Quake 4* look like something out of the stone age, with screen-filling, scenery-crushing bad boys tunnelling through the environment to get at you. This isn't just a minor improvement on what we've seen so far – it's leagues ahead.

The gulf between old and new is further widened by Xbox 360 *Far Cry Instincts Predator*, an updated version of the PC and Xbox stunner that looks set to bring new levels of realism to Xbox 360 thanks to its gorgeous jungle environments. We've also been treated to new shots of *Burnout: Revenge*, which makes the tame racing of *Project Gotham Racing 3* look as exciting as parking grandad's Toyota Corolla.

Instead of giving us a barely enhanced version of *Burnout* in time for the machine's launch as we saw Activision do with its disappointing *Tony Hawk's* and *Gun* Xbox 360 releases, *Burnout's* UK-based super-developer has taken its time and polished this one up well. Check out the latest issue of *Official Xbox Magazine 360* for more on the work of beauty that is *Burnout: Revenge*.

Expect more over the coming months. The extra development time lavished on this next generation of next-generation games is really paying off, with the second wave of Xbox 360 titles pushing the machine harder, looking better and finally proving Microsoft has got it right.

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»The level of detail goes beyond anything seen on Xbox 360 so far

## DON'T STOP THINKING ABOUT TOMORROW

It'll soon be here, and so will the next wave of hot Xbox 360 games

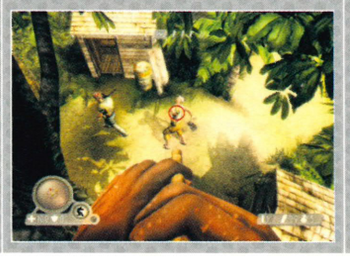
**BURNOUT: REVENGE**
OUT: "April"
MORE LIKE: June
STYLE: Crazy crash-focused racing
LIKELY REVIEW QUOTE: "Fast and furious! 11/10"



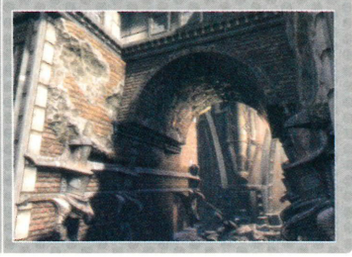
**FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3**
OUT: "March"
MORE LIKE: Yes, March
STYLE: Endless head-punching
LIKELY REVIEW QUOTE: "This is the greatest! 11/10"




**FAR CRY INSTINCTS PREDATOR**
OUT: "March"
MORE LIKE: May
STYLE: Survival-horror shooter on island
LIKELY REVIEW QUOTE: "Come in *Halo*, your time is up! 11/10"



**GEARS OF WAR**
OUT: "2006"
MORE LIKE: September
STYLE: Tactical survival-horror shooter
LIKELY REVIEW QUOTE: "Like *Halo* crossed with *Resident Evil*! 11/10"



**WHAT'S YOUR OPINION ON THIS? TELL US AT WWW.OXM.CO.UK**

# GREEN LIGHT

REVEALING THE HOTTEST NEW GAMES GREEN LIT FOR DEVELOPMENT!




**PUB:** EA | **PLAYERS:** 2
**DEV:** EA | **XBOX LIVE:** TBC

**RELEASE:** MARCH

NEW GAME!

## FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

EA heads for its first Xbox 360 world title by way of a dead pig

**KUDO TSUNODA AND** his *Fight Night* development team believe in the method acting version of game development. While noble in principle, in practice this means that the team ended up somewhat bruised. "We all got into the ring so we knew what we were about," grins executive producer Kudo, behind his gold plastic Elvis shades. "I entered the Golden Glove amateur tournament in Chicago, and made it to the second round before I got knocked out. Spending a night in hospital makes you realise the importance of big punches and defence in boxing."

Each boxer, ranging from Winky Wright to Roy Jones Jr, was brought into the studio and scanned to make a three million-poly model. Their skin was photographed and the photos used for the models' skins, and then their boxing style was mo-capped. For older boxers, like Muhammad Ali or Joe Frazier, separate face, body and skin look-a-likes were used to create a realistic representation of them in their prime.

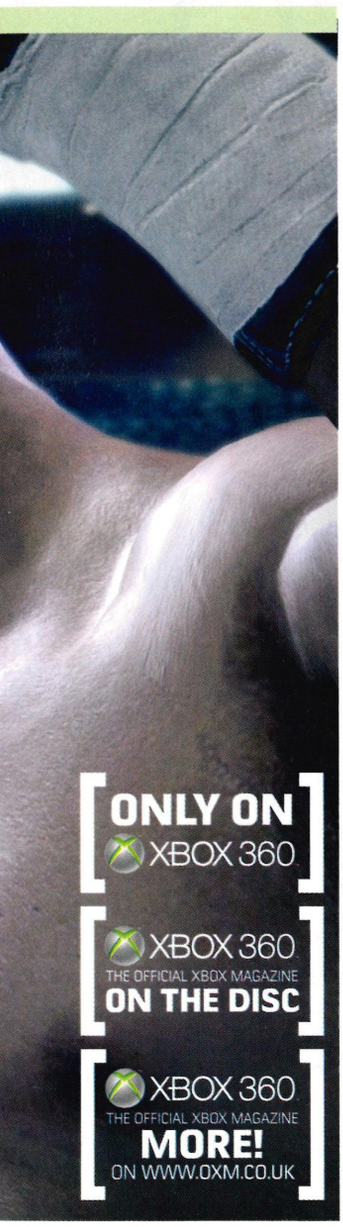
Even the bruising is real says Kudo. "Yup, we got some stuntmen in and beat them up good. It worked for the visuals and the animations, but the sounds weren't realistic – the stuntmen were too buff. We had to get a 100-pound pig carcass in and lay into that to get the right sound." At this point we started to suspect Kudo of being in the Baron Munchausen school of storytelling, but playing the game (over Xbox Live!) convinced us otherwise. Hopefully we'll have more *Fight Night* info next month.

### SELECT SCREENSHOT...

1. **ROCKY ROAD:** Bosh! That hit his face like someone's hand! Land a punch and gloves crumple, bones shift and the recipient's face ripples like a blancmange – showing off every pore and hair and throwing spittle in a variety of directions.
2. **PUNCH DRUNK LOVE:** Ali's Rope-A-Dope technique's just one of the special moves available in-game. Older characters like Jake LaMotta and Sugar Ray Robinson can be accessed through the ESPN Classics mode; your best fights from the Career mode can end up in there too.
3. **FIST OF THE NORTH STAR:** The Stun Impact punch knocks the recipient into a confusing first-person mode, where they can only defend until they successfully parry a blow or get knocked down. And new to the game: broken noses!
4. **RING OF FIRE:** The Flash KO punch instantly knocks off all your opponent's health for a short period, leaving them easy to take down with a swift haymaker or uppercut. However, like all three Impact punches it's tricky to pull off and leaves you open to attack afterwards.
5. **DOWN AND OUT:** Particularly damaging punches are followed by slow-motion replays, where you can watch the protagonist's skin and fat shudder and wobble with the impact. Tapping the X-button repeats the replay, which can be done indefinitely if you're a sadist.

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# KILLER FEATURES

## HIT 'EM HARD

Bernard Hopkins and the other boxers advised EA that defence is key – it can take one strong Impact punch to take you down. So now a single well-thrown punch can completely switch the match round, known as the EA superpunch.

## LOSE YOUR HUD

The lack of HUD adds enormously to the game's realism. You can tell how you're doing by how your character is breathing, how he's moving, if his hands have dropped and a hundred other cumulative indicators. (Lying on the canvas is a bad sign.)

## CHEEKY BURGER

Burger King has sponsored the 'punch of the match', which is replayed in the post-match highlights. "We call that the '$500,000-to-us' replay," says Kudo. "No! Don't write that down!"

## HEY CHAMP!

On top of *Fight Night*'s character customisation, you can now select different stances, styles and blocks for your boxer, ranging from the George Foreman mummy stance to Prince Naseem's wild stance.



**Kudo confirmed player-versus-player matches would be available on Live.**












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## JOHNO VERITY

Johno Verity, star of the Extreme Sports Channel, never says no to a bit of snowboarding...

**How did you get into snowboarding? What's the worst injury you've sustained?**
I met some BMXers in New York that got me into it about ten years ago. My worst injury was last April when I went wrong on a 70-foot kicker. I landed about 90 foot from the kicker, caught my toe edge and whiplashed my upper body into the ground. I collapsed my lung and was out cold for ten minutes, in hospital for five days. I don't remember too much of that.

**Have you ever played any snowboarding videogames?**
I have played *Amped*, *SSX Tricky* and *SSX On Tour*. I found that *Amped* was the most realistic as they had gone into the most detail with getting everything as similar to actual snowboarding as possible. I think I found *SSX On Tour* more fun to play though, as you can do things that aren't real – like take the board off and flip it around in the air, for example.

**Will a game ever capture the thrill of snowboarding?**
Maybe with a full body motion sensor machine and a 3D image headset with wind and anti-gravity chamber. To feel the same adrenaline I think you would really need to fear slamming, so the machine would need to bash you randomly with a plank when you fall. I guess it would be cheaper just to do the real thing.

**What can pull off in a game, but not on the slopes?**
Any trick where you slide more than 60 feet on a rail over massive chasms, or do a 1660° over a building while taking your board off and spinning it in your hands then start rotating in the other direction before you land.



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# Reviews

Written by gamers who live and love games



TOP-CLASS FPS action kicks off this month's reviews with a bang. Check out our exclusive review of *Black* followed by the awesome *Commandos Strike Force*.

It's a good month for rugby fans with reviews of EA's *Rugby 06*, and *Rugby Challenge 2006* from Ubisoft. And if egg-chasing isn't brutal enough for you, check out our triple serving of gore in *Raze's Hell*, *BloodRayne 2* and the hilariously named *Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse*.

It was a long struggle, but *Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure* finally got up and made its way to our office for review, and *Aeon Flux* somersaults its way to Xbox with some surprisingly neat tricks. There's way too much to talk about here, so flick over the page, get reading and enjoy.

## Our Badges explained

**XBOX ELITE**
Any game scoring a whopping 8.5 or more.

**GAME OF THE MONTH**
Our favourite of the Elite games reviewed this month.

**XBOX LIVE**
Downloadable content, online play, or both.

**ONLY ON XBOX**
An Xbox-exclusive game for at least three months.

**ON THE DISC**
A playable trial or movie of the game is on our disc.

## Score Key

**8.5-10.0**
THE XBOX ELITE - ONE OF THE VERY BEST AVAILABLE

**7.5-8.4**
A TOP-QUALITY RELEASE THAT'S WELL WORTH HAVING

**6.5-7.4**
STILL WELL WORTH CONSIDERING, BUT HAS SOME FLAWS

**5.0-6.4**
AN AVERAGE TITLE WITH NOTHING OUTSTANDING TO OFFER

**2.5-4.9**
A BAD GAME, AND ONE YOU SHOULDN'T BOTHER WITH

**0.0-2.4**
CALLING SUCH A RANCID STINKER A 'GAME' IS LIBELLOUS


**Black** 068
Nothing but hardcore shooting in Criterion's spectacular blaster.

**Commandos Strike Force** 076
The Commandos series returns with an awesome new twist.

**Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure** 080
NYC is just so plain. Why not adorn its dull walls with your spray skills?

**Raze's Hell** 082
Brutally murder cute bears in this bizarre third-person shooter.

**America's Army: Rise of a Soldier** 083
The US Army takes time off to help make a wargame. This is it.

**Rugby Challenge 2006** 084
Ubisoft's rugby debut faces up to the challenge from EA's latest.

**BloodRayne 2** 086
The sexy ginger vampire returns to spill a few more gallons of blood.

**Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows** 088
Looks nice, but can it match the original for raw enemy-killing fun?

**Pac-Man World 3** 090
Someone out there is STILL making Pac-Man World games.

**Rugby 06** 092
This year's rugger game from EA - will it put the boot in on Ubisoft's?

**Zathura** 094
It's Jumanji in space. But without the crazy monkeys. Shame, that.

**Tak: The Great Juju Challenge** 095
Swing through the jungle with a friend. No, not that kind of swing.

**Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse** 096
Empty infectious zombie wee into a reservoir - it's a great night out.

**Ford Street Racing** 098
Should keep the chavs in their Fiestas out of Tesco car parks for a bit.

**Aeon Flux** 100
We were pleasantly surprised. Aeon's got some fly moves.

**Elite Directory** 102
The best Xbox games money can buy.

# BLACK™



Official XBOX Magazine ON THE DISC

Official XBOX Magazine GAME OF THE MONTH

## Short, sharp, and spectacular, but has Criterion actually reinvented the FPS?

**Words:** Ben Lawrence

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Criterion | Pub: EA |
| Players: 1 | Live: None |
| Release: 24 February | Price: £40 |
| http://eagames.co.uk/ | |

THERE SHOULD be a label somewhere on the box that reads "concentrated gaming, add water before playing", for that is precisely what *Black* is – a first-person shooter condensed from what would ordinarily be several days of play into several ear-splitting hours. Criterion's certainly done what it set out to do – put the bang back into a genre at risk of becoming a mite stale. It has stripped away the flim-flam of HUDs, tactics, gadgets and different vision modes, returning to a simpler, more honest time when guns did the talking. But it's come at a price, too. Pure, crunching, fantastic action this may well be, but a lot has been sacrificed along the way.

*Black* is essentially one dazzling set-piece after another, strung together with the loosest of stories told via flashback. Traitors, sleeper cells, Eastern Bloc paranoia and macho military mumbo-jumbo punctuate the action, trying to give some kind of coherence to the onslaught of violence. You'll not want to take too much of it in, of course – the hunt-for-a-traitor-within-your-midst storyline is something of a disappointment. The ending is far too abrupt and unsatisfying too, but we'll get to that later.



↓ Gravestones offer some protection. But not that much, unfortunately.

## Bonus info



**SHATTERED SHOT**
Remember, your surroundings can kill as well. If you see enemies under glass, shoot out a few panes and watch the blood flow. They'll be ripped apart like tissue paper. It's not a nice way to go, but it saves ammo.

**RUN AND DUCK!**
Keep your ears open for clues to what is going on during a level. RPGs can often be heard before the impact is seen. Listen to the direction they're being fired from, then run and hide like a tiny, scared child!




↑ Get 'em near a balcony then blow the sonsofbitches over the edge.




↑ See that red marker? It's where the danger is coming from. Like, duh.

"Black is essentially one dazzling set-piece after another, strung together with the loosest of stories"

First up, the killing! Criterion's promise to take shooters back to their roots has seen ladles of attention lavished upon the mechanics of holding and firing a gun (and all the destruction that follows once you pull the trigger of course). *Black* has the finest collection of weapons we've seen in an FPS. Everything feels properly weighted, with just the right dose of recoil, and accuracy. The detail of each gun is astounding too (apparently, each one has more polygons than a *Burnout* car). Ammo belts protruding from guns swing as you move, or tiny belt clips on sub-machine guns rattle lightly in their casing. After boasting that *Black* is supposed to be 'all about the guns' Criterion had to go to town, but we've a feeling the developer's been a little too zealous about getting the weapons 'just so'.

See, the thing is, the guns in *Black*, as good as they are, should be secondary to what you actually do with them. The big problem is though, every time you reload (which is, unsurprisingly, very often), everything in the foreground goes out of focus while you're forced to watch the reload sequence. It takes little more than a second or two, but it is horribly off-putting. In the heat of a battle, if you're caught in the open and made to reload it's as though your glasses have fallen off. Why Criterion thought we'd want to endure these eye-aching moments of seeing the screen blur in and out of focus is anyone's guess, but it looks like a poorly made last-minute decision. You'll notice »

BLACKOUT: IT ALMOST GOES WITHOUT SAYING, BUT TRY TO EXPERIENCE BLACK WITH PROPER SURROUND SOUND. TRUST US, IT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE



↑ Two of these guys spells trouble. Don't take them on unless you're packing some serious weapons.



↑ When they're dead check them for ammo.

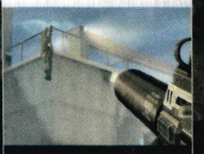


↑ A bad guy with an RPG will explode if hit!



↑ See those gas pipes? Oh, you're learning fast!

## Bonus info



**HANGIN' AROUND**
If you take out a sniper, watch him fall before letting your eye stray. Sometimes they are only knocked off their perch. If they climb back on you've only winged him.

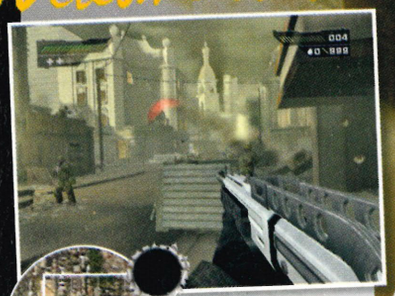
**BETTER RED...**
...than dead. Anything red is pretty much destructible and normally highly flammable. A single well-placed shot to a barrel can take out many dozens of enemies at once.

» the demo has none of it. We just reckon someone thought the gun models were so impressive we wouldn't mind having to watch the painstakingly detailed reload sequence every 30 seconds or so. It's a bad idea, and you can't turn it off either. You should be watching what they do, not watching the weapons themselves.

As an exercise in destroying the environment, though, *Black* will not be seconded in the current generation of games, nor many of the next-gen either. Just about everything you see you can obliterate, and it quickly becomes apparent that this is precisely what *Black* is all about. It's an excuse to shoot and blow things up in the most glorified way possible. Trucks laden with oil barrels, parked cars, heating ducts, pillboxes, walls, windows and walkways can all be grenaded or shot to merry hell. None of it is actually physics-based (although being so over the top, how could it be?), but as far as scripted explosions go, this is more fun (and more ridiculous) than *The A-Team*. Waiting for bad guys to take shelter behind a truck before lobbing a grenade after them is great fun – but chucking one through a window is gobsmacking; a second or two of silence followed by a muted 'whooomph', as the entire front side of the building

## Welcome to Treneska!

Sample the sights, sounds and rubble of this delightful east-European hotspot!



**Veblensk City Street**
Explore the Veblensk museum, but watch out for the natives! It's a local tradition to blow cars up on national holidays.



**Border Crossing**
Delightful woodland, complete with hidden grottos, armed patrols, and volatile gas canisters. The wildlife can be nasty.



**Naszran Town**
Featuring the ancient graveyard, recently filled with your teammates. Or take a stroll down sniper's alley, near the mausoleum.



**Naszran Foundry**
Visit a real working iron-smelting foundry! Remember to stay with your party at all times and watch out for the land mines!



**Tivliz Asylum**
This spooky mental hospital is a treat for young and old. Those walls may hide a few secrets – watch out for the showers!



**Graznei Bridge**
This glorious feat of Soviet engineering can be crossed in many ways. Why not walk right over the top? There's a lovely breeze!



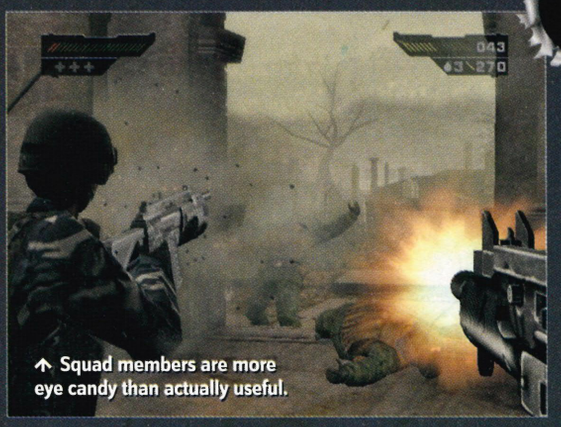
**Vratska Dockyard**
Home to some of Trenska's finest snipers. These shy creatures can be enticed from their cranes with a well placed grenade.



**Spetriniv Gulag**
Be sure to bring the locals gifts in their charming bunkers. They enjoy eating rocket-propelled grenades and bullets.



If in doubt fire until ammo runs out. Easy.



Squad members are more eye candy than actually useful.



Check your environment for handy explosive stuff.



Remember: always aim for the knees.



Storming the asylum is a deadly game. Watch out for bad guys up high!



Point blank shots mean instant kills.



Wait for baddies to congregate nearby...

## Bonus info

**YOUR PLACE OR MINE?**
Watch where you're treading, especially during the Foundry level. The grounds are littered with mines. Set one off for an explosive chain reaction!

**KEEP COOL**
If you see a ventilation duct on the side of a building, especially one under a window, take it out. For some reason it causes explosions similar to if you threw a grenade through a window – ideal if there's a sniper there.

bursts outwards. It's relentless, fast-paced and undeniably good fun, pretty much as Criterion promised it would be, sure. But just as the game starts to crank things up a gear, when you're fighting tooth-and-nail to stay alive against a volley of RPG fire and armoured soldiers, *Black* abruptly just ends. And if you thought the *Halo 2* finale was a cop-out, wait until you play this. It's a deflating sucker-punch of an ending alright.

We checked the stats screen to see just how much we had missed of *Black*. It informed us that, in fighting from one end to the other, we'd only actually completed 33 per cent of the game. The remaining 67 per cent comes in the form of the 'replay value' – which consists of unlocking the abundance of hidden weapons and finding all the secret documents littered about. Because *Black* lacks any kind of multiplayer mode, it would seem Criterion has secreted away that 67 per cent of fiendishly hard-to-reach content to keep the completists happy. But what if you're not that bothered with collecting documents or extra weapons, but more interested in blasting the hell out of enemies? It's a terrible let-down, that's what.

Granted, that hidden content is going to take forever to discover, and the replay value is assured because the game is so much fun. We can't imagine how anyone would be able to finish the last level



If explosions are huge then stay clear!



Try shooting from afar, it sometimes works.

on the granite-hard 'Black Ops' mode either, but surely a massive two-thirds of the game shouldn't be about replaying a mere third's-worth of actual content? It makes us want to take our anger out by firing loads of bullets from a huge gun at something.

Dispatching the numerous goons in *Black* is a real laugh too. They fall through glass roofs, tumble over banisters with a wail, or fly through the air, limbs a-go-go. They walk a set patrol pattern so you can be pretty much certain where they'll be on subsequent play-throughs, but we did notice a few flanking us if we gave them the chance. That's about as smart as they get though. They look good, but as with so much else in *Black*, they're mostly target practice. In Normal mode, only a significant number will hinder your progress - otherwise it's head and body shots for goons, twice for goons in armour. Follow that pattern and you're laughing.

The further we progressed, and the more intensely lunatic *Black* got, the more we were beguiled by it. The lighting effects alone are stunning, while it's worth putting a few quid on the sound picking up an Interactive BAFTA this year. From the muted spitting of suppressed SMGs, to the crashing, screaming blasts of buildings falling down, it beats *Halo* with a barbed stick.

BLACK/BURNOUT AS WELL AS FINDING HIDDEN DOCUMENTS, LOOK OUT FOR STOLEN BLUEPRINTS FOR THE BURNOUT GAMES!




↑ Glass roofs can be shot out if you think the enemy is directly underneath. It'll save ammo too.




↑ Save the RPG for long-range kills only. It's a bit hardcore, like.




↑ As easy as smashing melons with a hammer.



↑ If a truck is carrying barrels, shoot them out!

»» Yet the further you progress, the more evident it becomes that what you see is just what you get. It makes no pretence at having a proper story, the bad guys are anonymous, faceless sitting ducks, and once it reaches a certain level of armageddon it digs its heels in and stays there. Only with a little hindsight, away from the buzz of the game, is it apparent just how one-dimensional *Black* really is. Criterion would argue this is precisely what it had in mind, but the shift from the stale FPS genre is one notch too far, resulting in *Black* coming off as little more than an incredible exercise at shooting guns.

We don't mean to whinge and moan, for *Black* is still an exemplary piece of gaming. *Half-Life 2* and *Halo 2* are put to shame by the dazzling array of destruction on show, and the work of the programmers to construct environments so completely destructible is an achievement that

## CHAIN REACTION SLAUGHTER

Brains as well as bullets can kill many men. It's just a case of finding a level's weak spot



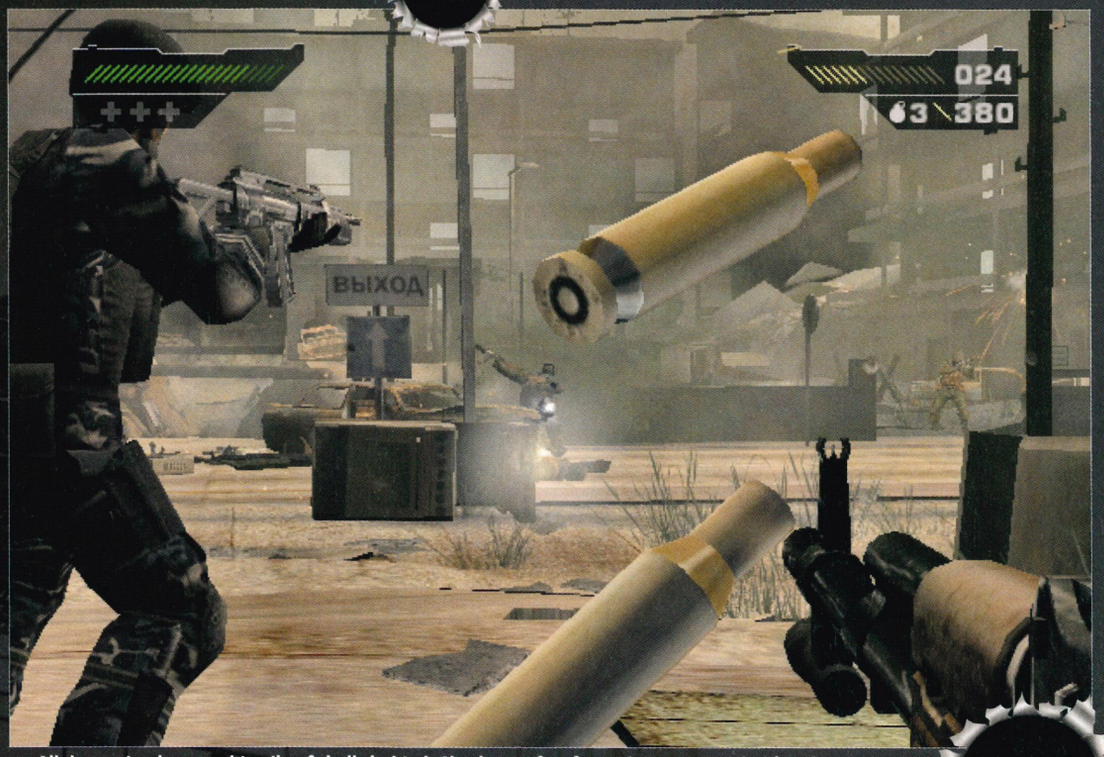

A minefield, filled with many mines. It may be tempting to tiptoe around them taking out enemies one by one, but check out those huge fuel tanks... An idea is brewing in our brain!




Look at the pattern in which the mines are laid out. Some form a dotted line towards a fuel tank, which, as a bonus, is surrounded by bad guys. Take, aim, squeeze the trigger, and set off a chain reaction.




As the mines set one another off, the huge fuel tanks go up, killing everyone in the vicinity. Hit the correct mines and several tanks will go up, wiping out almost everyone. And all from a single bullet.




↑ All that action leaves a big pile of shells behind. Check your feet for casings once you're done!




↑ When a baddie is this close it's not good. His weak points are his knees and, obviously, his squishy little head.




↑ Anything that can be blown up should be!



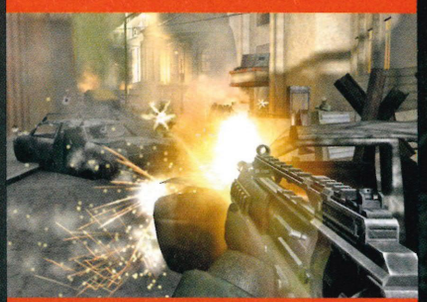

↑ You'll grow to hate the fancy reload sequence.




## On The Disc: Playable

### Lock And Load

Want to have a go on *Black*? Have a sneaky peek at the coverdisc, then, where you can play through part of the early street siege level. Head towards the town museum, flush it free of goons, and blow up a few cars along the way. Remember to look out for health packs inside burned-out gun nests. You'll need them...



↑ MUST... KEEP... FIRING...

## Bonus info

**LOOK AROUND YOU**

There are many hidden paths through each level, so explore them all. They can hide weapons, secrets documents and health packs, all of which help you in your quest.

"The dazzling array of destruction on show puts Halo 2 to shame"

screams quality. The sound, physics, level design and volume of weapons is astounding, yet these demonstrations of Criterion's technical ability are deflated by the agonising shortness, and the over-riding feeling that *Black* is really just a demo of the game it could, and should, have been.

We're not sure whether *Black* could have been any longer, or supported multiplayer even if Criterion had wanted it to. The love, time, and energy spent on it is all there, in every cloud of dust and tumbling body. But, grudgingly, we'd have to admit we could have done without quite so much. A little less bang for our buck, and just another five minutes of original gameplay would have gone down a treat. But that's not what Criterion wanted from its first foray into the shooting genre. It wanted to prove shooters could be fun again, and in the short example *Black* offers, it has proven just that. Here's hoping the developer now takes this painfully short, yet spectacularly sweet game, and turns it into the giant-killing franchise it was born to be. Until then, sample it, savour it, but brace yourself for when the rug is pulled from under your feet and you're sent crashing back into reality after what only seems like five minutes in the most crazy, fantastical shooter you'll ever experience.

## The Summary

**BLACK** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

| | |
|---|---|
| ✔ | Astounding sound and lighting bring the world to life, making the weapons on offer the juiciest killing machines in any Xbox game. |
| ✔ | The destruction! Firing off an RPG and watching whole cars and buildings explode near some bad guys is pure gun-psycho heaven. |
| ✘ | No multiplayer. The thrill of *Black* would have lasted so much longer if there were just a few maps to scoot around in. |
| ✘ | One-third of the game is content, the other two are about collecting stuff or completing side-missions. Replay value or not, it's too short. |
| ✔ | Raises the bar for gun games. Perhaps at the expense of many other elements, but watch just about every FPS copy the formula. |

## The Verdict

A spectacular, noisy, intensely enjoyable game about the sheer joy of firing guns, but often at the expense of the gameplay.

**8.4//10**

PREVIOUSLY: Exclusive Access - Issue 52
COMING SOON: Masterclass - Issue 54

BLACKBOARDS: IF YOU HEAR A BAD GUY UPSTAIRS, TRY SHOOTING THROUGH THE FLOOR - SOMETIMES IT WILL SPLINTER, ALLOWING YOU TO SEE RIGHT UP INTO THE ROOM FOR AN EASY KILL

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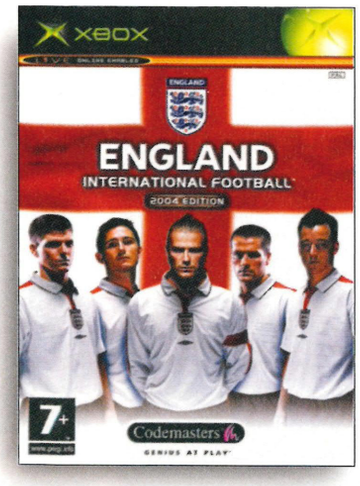
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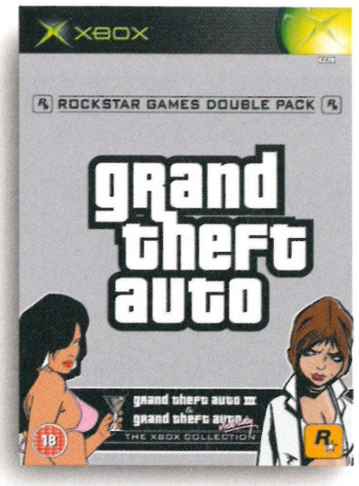
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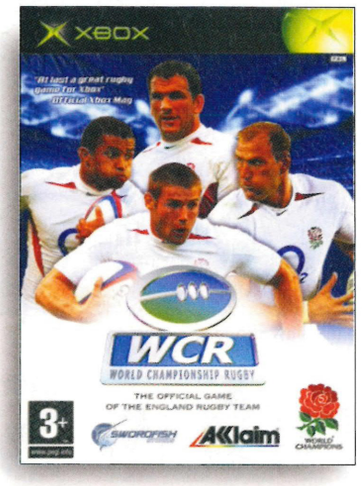



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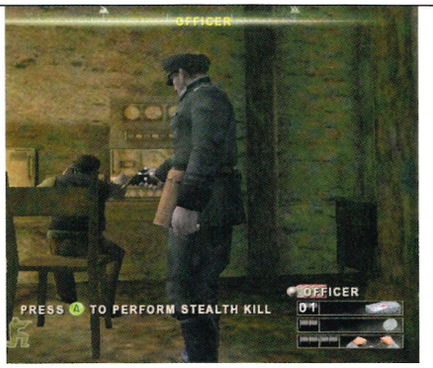
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↑ Firefights can usually be avoided by clever, stealthy play. Shooting is more fun.




↑ They're all a bit deaf, the poor Germans.




↑ That's a knife. He won't have a clue.

# Commandos Strike Force

## New-style Commandos kicks three kinds of arse

**Words:** Gary Cutlack

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Pyro | Pub: Eidos |
| Players: 1-16 | Live: 2-16 players |
| Release: Out Now | |
| www.commandosstrikeforce.com | |

### Bonus info

**WELL COVERED**
You often fight alongside Xbox-controlled troops, with all manner of crossfire and group scenarios going down. They add another level of awkwardness to the action, with certain missions being automatically failed if you let too many of your Allied troops die. So, like, don't.




↑ Here, you chuck a coin to distract the fella, then do the bad killing thing from behind.

WHAT A SURPRISE. A wargame that starts with an intro movie in which you parachute into enemy territory. It must've been... last Tuesday when we last played a wargame with an intro movie in which you parachute into enemy territory! Then you're dumped in Germany and expected to play some war. It's not a particularly original turn of events for an Xbox game. But once you start playing, it's obvious that *Commandos Strike Force* is a quality presentation beneath its familiar surface.

This is an all-new *Commandos*. Not just a new instalment, but an entirely different and vastly better approach. Previous games have been one thing - hard. That insane difficulty has gone, as has the isometric viewpoint - now it's all posh 3D. You can even select Easy, Normal or Hard when starting each mission. It's user-friendly, fun *Commandos*!

And get this - it's really good. Your gaming chores are in keeping with *Commandos* history, a mixture of sniping, spying and shooting. The first mission is stealthy, using the usual hidey-game elements - sneaking up behind Germans to kill them, crouching, staying hidden in the shrubbery and working your little radar to figure out which way people are facing so you can stab them in the back. War is dirty like that.

Sniper William Hawkins helms these initial stealthy bits, but his real job is shooting things that are far away. When sniping, the Left trigger holds your breath for more accurate shots, and with massive, open fields to fight in, loads of zoom and clever planning is necessary. It's a bit of a pain the way your sniper scope view 'zooms out' each time you fire a shot and reload, causing you to lose your aim, and the auto-aim option is extremely generous, so you might like to turn that off if you want more of a manly challenge.

But that's just stealth for beginners. You're quickly introduced to the Spy, who isn't just stealthy - he's positively invisible. Now you're infiltrating the French Resistance to try and work out who the Nazi mole is. Spy missions are even more challenging than those of the sniper. Now you're on the ground, among the German menace, eavesdropping on them and stealing their uniforms to blend in. Soldier uniforms won't fool the high-ranking commanders, so you have to have the appropriate uniform for each occasion - like a wedding.

Now you have to start planning and looking ahead even more. Relying on the radar isn't enough - you absolutely have to pay attention to what's happening, where the soldiers are, what rank they are and use your binoculars to see who's moving and who's standing still. The Spy's missions are the game's hardest bits by far, featuring much forward thinking, constant bush-hiding and numerous tough situations. You can chuck a coin to distract guards,

## MULTIPLE CHOICE How the multiple character business works...

1




**SPY FROM AFAR:** This mission has you fighting as two characters on two fronts – a sniper holed up in an empty barn, and a soldier out in the field. You can switch between the two at will by pressing the Black button.

2




**GET INVOLVED!** Now we switch to controlling the Green Beret in the middle of the battlefield. It's hard out there so we die quite quickly, but that's okay – we've got a spare body to inhabit thanks to the sniper.

3




**SWITCH BACK:** When you die, you automatically teleport back into the body of a living Commando. Look, you can see the 'dead' Green Beret getting healed in the inset image. He'll be back on his feet in no time. Whadda guy!

4




**BACK INTO ACTION:** And once the Green Beret guy is healed, we can switch back down to the front line. This multiple-perspective combat is great, really bringing the battles to life and letting you see more combat action.



"Fail a mission and your comrades are gunned down. Poor chaps"

spy through keyholes and generally immerse yourself in the world of war.

The second mission kicks everything up a gear. Now you're introduced to the Green Beret, your beefcake man who likes to get involved. Now you control two men at once, switching between the manly Beret and sniper Hawkins by pressing the Black button.

Suddenly you're commanding an entire battlefield, but it doesn't feel technical or like a chore. If one of your men dies he's taken out of action for a minute or so until one of the Allied troops you fight alongside can get to him and heal him, forcing you to switch characters and use your full range of skills. This is awesome stuff. Leading your ground troops and switching to a distant sniper gets you right into the middle of the action, action that'd normally be split into two separate levels in most games.

*Commandos* is like this all the way through, giving you more play options and never bogging you down with much in the way of organisation. Plus, the usual claim of there being multiple routes through each mission is actually true for once. Levels are more open in *Commandos*, with wider surrounds, more bushes and many more opportunities for clever play. You can edge around a group of soldiers by hiding in the bushes, spending ages spying on them with your binoculars and working out how to pick off each soldier individually. Or you can gas them, strangle them from behind, snipe them from afar or shoot them in the face from really close up with a big machine-gun. With all three characters working together on several missions, there are options galore.

Each mission is also split into Primary and Secondary objectives. Not a particularly original way of doing things, but you always know what your next task is. Play it on Easy mode and you don't even have to worry about failing mission objectives and can just carry on smashing through. Fail a mission and you get to see your comrades gunned down too. Poor chaps.

Obviously with such a varied cast of characters *Strike Force* is ideal for Xbox Live »

GETTING STUCK IN: ALTHOUGH IT'S 'EASIER' COMMANDOS, YOU STILL REACH POINTS WHERE IT ALL SEEMS MIND-NUMBINGLY HARD. THERE'S JUST FEWER OF THOSE MOMENTS



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Jump in.

XBOX 360




↑ To the right is a gasmask and set of poisonous grenades. We took the easy option of just shooting.



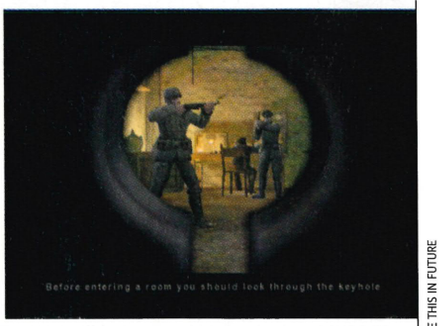

↑ Yeah, this went a bit wrong. You're supposed to quietly plant bombs on the trucks. But they noticed.




↑ He's having a wee. You're never safe.



↑ The story scenes are a little boring.




↑ Wait till he's turned his back, then MURDER.




↑ You can get more sandbags from B&Q.

» play, coming with support for 16 players and much to do. There's teamplay in the online stuff too, with co-operative missions where rival teams set out to infiltrate a base and arm a bomb - but only the Spy has the skills required to interrogate enemies and get their half of the arming code. You've got to work together in multiplayer too, as well as when playing on your own. This isn't a game - it's a morality tale!

The only blotch on the landscape is the duff old flat cardboard bushes. When you spend so much time sneaking through the undergrowth, it's a shame you're always surrounded by pretty terrible 2D shrubs. Apart from that and some ropey cut-scenes, *Strike Force* looks the business.

*Commandos Strike Force* achieves the impossible - it's a wargame that's innovative and interesting to play. Switching characters in the middle of a battle keeps the pace high, while the solo chapters use each fighter and their skills to their fullest. It's all good. Well, the story's a bit old and predictable, but hammer A through all the boring talking bits and you're left with one of the finest and most intelligent war games on Xbox.

## The Summary

**COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ Three ways to play, each of them top quality. The stealth, sniping and action bits are all superb.
- ✔ Clever multiple-character missions let you control the battlefield better than ever before.
- ✔ The game delivers on the promise of giving you multiple ways to complete each mission - and this time it's true.
- ✔ The levels are big and open, giving you room to plan your attacks and plenty of sniping hidey-holes.
- ✘ The plot and story sequences are rather ropey, with a bland, clichéd old war story and dodgy look.

## The Verdict

Looks good, each mission is different, huge levels and loads to do. A fantastic shooter with incredible depth.

**8.6//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** PrevIssue 52
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats - Issue 54

YOU COPY? SWITCHING CHARACTERS IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE ISN'T AN ENTIRELY NEW IDEA, BUT STRIKE FORCE DOES IT BEST. IT MAKES A MASSIVE DIFFERENCE. EXPECT MORE GAMES TO USE THIS IN FUTURE



↑ Beat the crap out of him, then write all over his tag.

# Mark Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure

## A beat 'em up, a platformer and a graffiti sim, all in one

**Words:** Jonathan Todd

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: The Collective | Pub: Atari |
| Players: 1 | Live: None |
| Release: 17 February | Price: £40 |
| www.gettingup.com | |

NOW THIS IS just weird. How the hell do you sum up a game that mixes running about, climbing stuff, jumping around, fighting people and colouring things in all in equal measure? Try to explain what genre *Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure* is to your mates down the pub and you'll be there until closing time – a point at which your brain usually orders you to get a dirty kebab before shutting down completely for the night.

In an era of same-again sequels and dodgy licensed guff it's refreshing to play a game that, by and large, defies explanation. It isn't always the most successful at everything it tries to do, sometimes tending to bite off more than it can chew, but full marks for trying something different. You'll never get bored, let's put it that way.

And yet it doesn't exactly start off in the most promising fashion. You see, *Marc Ecko's Getting Up* also happens to be another in a long, long line of games obsessed with gangs, urban slang and the curious idea of earning 'respect' by disrespecting pretty much everyone around you. This game handles those clichés and its unoriginal set-up with more subtlety and credibility than most, but we're definitely bored of this game system by now. Anyway, the basic gist of the 'plot', such as it is, is that your character Trane wants to paint the city of New Radius red (and plenty of other colours too), despite there being a total ban on graffiti by the city's corrupt and tyrannical leaders.

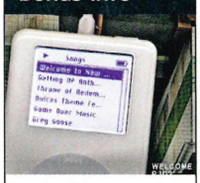
But that's just even more encouragement to a young graffiti writer out to make a name for himself. And the only way to do that is to take the biggest risks and get to the most hard-to-reach places – easily the most enjoyable aspect of the game. The high-wire manoeuvres as you use all kinds of posts, walls and ledges is a bit like *Prince of Persia* crossed with the extreme sport known as free running – you know, the one where those crazy idiots leap over rooftops and other man-made obstacles.

Like *Prince of Persia* it's always made obvious where you're supposed to climb or jump to next, and the platforming controls aren't fiddly in the slightest. Trane also possesses a spooky sixth sense for the best tag spots too; hit a button and a blurry pointer ghosts through the air so you can never get lost. It's simple and oh-so-effective.

Once you reach your target area the game becomes even more unusual. Scrawling a design on a wall is the 'getting up' part of the game, so-called because you're 'getting' your tag 'up' for everyone to see. Hey, we're down with the kids, you know. A quick check to make sure there are no pedestrians, police or rival gang members around and you're ready to paint. You'll see the silhouette of your design on the wall, and by moving the analogue stick evenly across the tag is filled in. Pausing to shake the can, painting fast and ensuring there are no drips all contribute to your reputation points. If you think that sounds too easy and almost babyish, by the way, then you're underestimating the skill and satisfaction involved.

So it's a shame that sandwiched between the cool exploring and the cool painting is a pretty duff fighting game. By that we mean there are only a handful of moves and it's all utterly predictable. What tends to happen is this: you throw a few punches or kicks which the enemy very rarely

### Bonus info

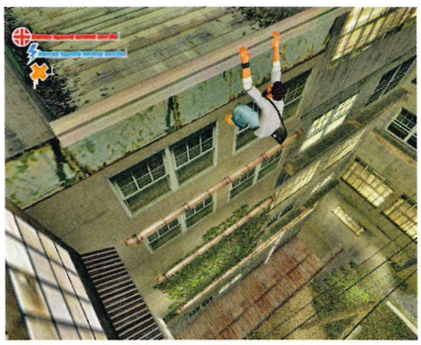


**SOUND OF THE UNDERGROUND**

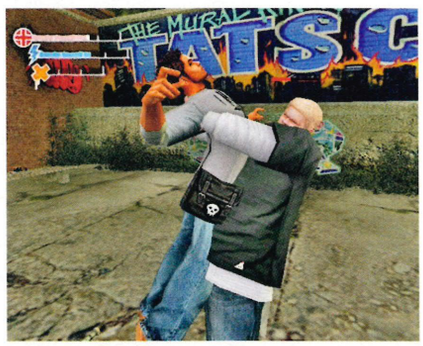
The soundtrack features artists as diverse as Jane's Addiction, Roots Manuva, Bloc Party, Nina Simone and Kasabian. Sean 'Diddy' Combs also 'executively co-produced' four tracks (whatever that means), and RJD2 composed the in-game music. Er, cool!



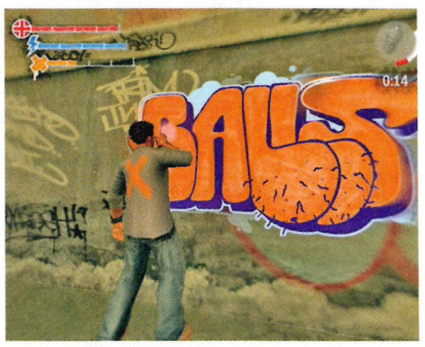
↑ A basketball to the head can kill, apparently.



↑ The higher the tag spot, the bigger the score.



↑ Big; fat; called Mike. Three reasons to kill him.



↑ And hairy ones at that, going by the tag.



↑ As long as he doesn't notice your aerosol you'll be safe.

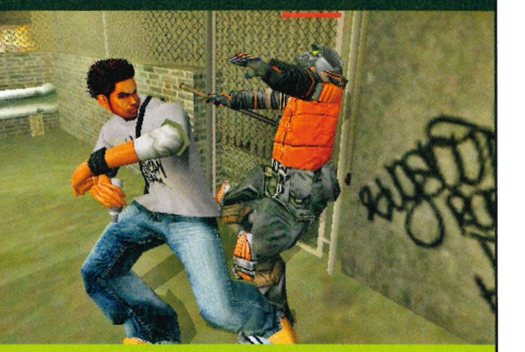
## ART ATTACK Getting Up's three broad gaming styles revealed



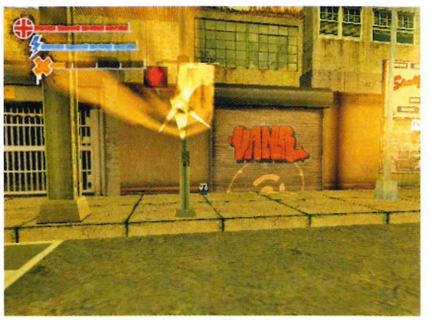
**GETTING IN**
Scale girders, pipes, walls, ledges and entire buildings to reach the difficult graffiti 'heaven spots'.



**GETTING UP**
Get your tag up using aerosols, rollers, markers, wheat paste, stickers or stencils. Vary its size for extra points.



**GETTING OUT**
Rival gangs don't like you intruding on their turf, and the cops enforce the anti-graffiti policy with guns and tasers.



↑ Trane's intuition highlights tags and cameras.



↑ Living with your gran: hardly keeping it 'real'.



↑ It's The Man! He doesn't suspect a thing, despite the paint being wet.

manages to block, then he launches a combo at you which you manage to block easily. Then you wallop him unopposed again, and so on until the health bar above his head is empty. For such an underdeveloped part of the game it's strange that the fighting is so prevalent.

Things pick up a bit with the occasional boss fight, inasmuch as they bother to vary their attacks with special wrestling moves and the like, so you have to actually work out the pattern to defeat them. But you'll still want to blitz through them and move onto the good stuff again, so we advise you make use of the admittedly nifty weapons that you can find lying around. Wooden planks, dustbin lids, basketballs and other everyday objects can come in very handy indeed.

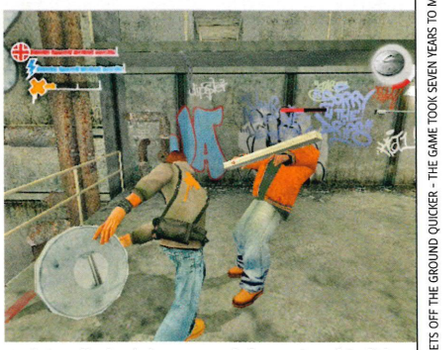
Back to the cool stuff then, where the game encourages you to kick back and enjoy exploring the city, either to just mess around with graffiti or find hidden music tracks. Yes, there's an actual iPod at the menu screen that adds songs as you discover them, making up an eclectic mix of rap, hip-hop and guitar bands. There are time-based bonus graffiti missions too, and you can also build up a 'black book' of designs from real graffiti artists who contributed to the game, thus increasing the amount of tags and styles available to Trane. All in all, there are plenty of things to do outside of the main mission structure.

We're sure the game's subject matter and mix of genres won't appeal to everyone. It definitely feels strange going from monkeying around up a lamp-post, to twatting a gang member with a paint pot, to hanging on the side of a train carriage so you can daub on it, straight after each other. It's this very quirkiness and unpredictability that makes *Marc Ecko's Getting Up* what it is - not like any game you've played before.

### Bonus info



**KINGS OF NEW YORK**
COPE2, FUTURA, Shepard Fairey, Seen, Smith and T-kid are the six real-life graffiti artists who appear in the game to teach Trane different forms of writing. Most of them were famous among the scene in the 70s and 80s.



↑ A small plank is no match for a giant bin lid.



↑ The easiest places to tag are the ones that keep you out of sight.

## The Summary

**MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ It's an interesting and unusual mix of gaming styles, from platformer to beat 'em up to graffiti sim.
- ✔ There are also plenty of bonus graffiti missions, unlockable music tracks and extra tags and art styles.
- ✔ The licence to explore is made even more enjoyable thanks to the simple *Prince of Persia*-style controls.
- ✘ The simplistic combat feels turn-based in that you have to wait for each enemy to finish their three-combo move.
- ✘ Story-wise, it's the now-overfamiliar street gangs/respect nonsense. Just because it sells doesn't make it interesting.

## The Verdict

A unique three-pronged experience that falls short in one area. Recommended, even if you're bored of 'urban' games.

**8.0//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** News - Issue 43
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats - Issue 54

**MOVIE WRITES:** MTV FILMS HAS ACQUIRED THE FILM RIGHTS, WITH MARC ECKO AS PRODUCER. HOPE THIS ONE GETS OFF THE GROUND QUICKER - THE GAME TOOK SEVEN YEARS TO MAKE!



↑ Spit rapid-fire seeds of death and spill these dudes' guts on the floor.

# Raze's Hell

## An intriguing mix of cuddly bears and almost-disturbing gore

**Words:** Mike Jackson

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Artech | Pub: THQ |
| Players: 1-2 | Live: 2 players |
| Release: 16 February | Price: £20 |
| www.majescogames.com | |

THE ENEMIES in *Raze's Hell* are some of the strangest we've seen in any third-person-shooter. Some fluffy bears with pink hearts on their chests merrily skip your way all happy and gleeful... then blast your face off with laser weapons. The little gits.

These nasty little bears believe themselves to be a perfect species and so, rather like Hitler, reckon killing everyone who isn't 'perfect' is the way forward. During their killing spree they destroy Raze's town and everyone he knows. Luckily, Raze doesn't have to stand for it. He may not be armed in the traditional sense, but he can spit seeds like his mouth is a machine gun. Even though the game is viewed from a third-person angle, you control his movement and aim in the same way as you do a first-person shooter (like in the *Hitman* games). It works very well, so with your amazing *Halo* skills you'll be right at home taking Raze into battle.

But beating these bear dudes is no easy task. They might look like childrens' toys, but they're quite intelligent and don't die easily. They're like the little Covenant Grunts in *Halo 2* (Issue 36, 10.0) running scared when you're packing heat and coming back for another pop at you when your back is turned. They shout pre-school abuse at you too. "You icky, wicky, poo", they go, and so on.

That's why you'll learn to hate them. You'll take pleasure in seeing them die painfully, then smashing their corpses into little bloody pieces. Apart from being fun, it's also necessary to splat their internal organs over the ground, which you then eat to replenish your health. Sick, we know.

We like the strange style of this game, which blends fluffy cuteness with gruesome brutality. We like the characters and their mannerisms, and we like the decent AI. We DON'T like the crap weapons and the rubbish environments. We'd do anything to get a hold of a proper gun in *Raze's Hell* - spitting seeds feels all wrong, and that meaty feeling you get from clutching a lethal piece of steel is missing. You can't even pick up the weapons dropped by enemies. C'mon, this is 2006. You should be able to do that in ALL games by now.

As for the environments, you only need to glance at the screens to see how plain and lifeless it is. There's nothing even remotely eyecatching about these worlds. They're completely lacking any motion or life. The colour pallet is hideous and horrible invisible walls haunt certain areas, too.

Missions are equally dull - blow up this and collect that, nothing you haven't seen before. You can have a mate join the killing in co-op mode, but that's only fun for an hour. After that you'll have exhausted most of *Raze's Hell*'s potential - apart from its potential as a makeshift frisbee.


↑ Seed-spitting is original, but a dirty great AK-47 would have been better.

### Bonus info



**REST IN PIECES**
Have no mercy for those dirty bears. It's not over when they die. As well as being able to slash them to pieces and eat their insides, you can finish them in a more comical fashion - roll into them and watch as their bloody corpse splats on your TV screen. Nice.


↑ Shooting down their ships is rock hard.


↑ Those flames are all that's left of Raze's home.


↑ Pelt them with seeds and watch the blood fly.


↑ Look - a cuddly little bear. BLAST HIM!

## The Summary

**RAZE'S HELL** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

| | |
|---|---|
| ✔ | The bears look as cute as kittens, but as brutal and nasty as angry Rottweilers. We like the crazy character design. |
| ✔ | Insane levels of blood and comical violence. Watching a decapitated bear throw a tantrum is quite a giggle. |
| ✘ | Dull levels with minimal detail and absolutely no life. We hit some ludicrous invisible walls, too. |
| ✘ | Uninspired mission objectives will have you doing the sort of stuff you've seen in many games before. |
| ✘ | It's tough to kill the bears, and they can mess you up easily. Retry-heavy gaming will drive you nuts. |

## The Verdict

A nice, unique idea with cool characters, hindered by flat level design, unoriginal missions and dull graphics.

**6.6//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** Our first trip to hell and back
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Tips - Issue 54



↑ Never go anywhere without your team. If you do, they shout at you.

# America's Army: Rise of a Soldier

## Solid shooting action from the official game of the US Army

**Words:** Mike Jackson

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Secret Level | Pub: Ubisoft |
| Players: 1 | Live: 1-16 players |
| Release: 24 February | Price: £40 |
| www.riseofasoldier.com | |

*AMERICA'S ARMY* tries to be that little bit more realistic than your average shooter. But some things are in games to make them more intuitive and enjoyable to play. Crosshairs, for example. Unrealistic, but useful.

You don't have a white icon telling you where you're pointing your gun in real life. But without crosshairs, how awkward would aiming Master Chief's Battle Rifle be? How would you have coped in *Half Life 2*? Would you have survived the armies of enemies in *Call of Duty* games? Crosshairs are your friend, but *America's Army* dumps them. We can deal with that. You do get used to the absence of the little white marker, and you can always pull the gun up to eye level to use the sight.

We got more annoyed with the 'realistic' reload times, which take forever. There's no automatic reloading either, and everyone forgets to do it now and then. Your player will take his time pulling out a clip, slipping a new one back in, banging it in securely and fiddling with a couple of switches. While he's doing that you're gritting your teeth and yanking the R-trigger in desperation for the bloke to just shoot the DAMN GUN!

Although annoying, the realism of *America's Army* doesn't stop it from being highly playable, unlike other hardcore sims, where 'realistic' basically means 'impossible'. Levels take you through a mix of empty, Middle-Eastern urban environments, open fields, underground tunnels and indoor complexes. It's the sort of solid tactical shooter action we know so well.

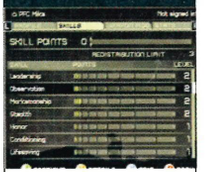
You progress through missions as part of a team, and they hold your hand every step of the way. They watch your back while you watch theirs, and move strategically through buildings and open enemy-infested lands. Your allies tell you where to stand, and waypoint markers give you an extra hint when you seem confused. Hold on... waypoint markers? We've never seen any giant yellow stars hovering just off the ground in real life. It makes the game's slightly annoying efforts to be realistic appear a little bit inconsistent.

The game also swallows its geek-like simulation pride by adopting an auto-sighting system. When you aim in the direction of an enemy soldier the game will lock onto them, placing a red dot over their head. Hold the L-trigger to look down the sight of your gun and the game will pull your aim in his direction. All you have to do is refine your targeting while battling with the breathing movements of your soldier, and take a shot.

Surely that's not realistic either. But at the end of the day it's intuitive and makes for a highly playable game. We just wish they'd realised that when they killed the crosshair.


↑ He'll cop it when those barrels explode.

### Bonus info



**CREATE-A-SOLDIER**
For each mission you clear, you will be awarded with skill points which you can use to upgrade your soldier. Tweak his shot accuracy, stealth ability, health and even reduce the amount of shellshock he gets from explosions. Just like in real life, eh?



↑ Thin sewer tunnels make gunfights tough.



↑ It's a military game - flanking tactics apply.



↑ When things get hot, hide behind an ally.


↑ The AI don't hang about when hostiles appear.



## The Summary

AMERICA'S ARMY: RISE OF A SOLDIER THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ A terrific variety of environments to blast your way through, with a good mix of urban and rural settings.
- ✔ The AI-controlled soldiers are highly professional. They cover all the bases and will leave you behind if you linger.
- ✔ The intuitive auto-sighting system helps you pick off enemies without taking the skill out of the game.
- ✘ Geeky realism in the form of long reload times and slow medipack healing are just painfully annoying, not cool.
- ✘ You need to play through some long and tiring training missions before you can get out onto the battlefield.

## The Verdict

Not the best out there, but a competent and playable shooter, with a large variety of cool missions and decent visuals.

**7.3//10**

PREVIOUSLY: First Look - Issue 41
COMING SOON: Hints & Cheats - Issue 54

TOO REALISTIC? REAL SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIVES HELPED TO MAKE THE GUN HANDLING AS REALISTIC AS POSSIBLE. WHICH COULD BE WHY IT TAKES TEN MINUTES TO RELOAD ONE




↑ "Allez les noirs! Come on you Sarries!" Classic rugby stuff.

# Rugby Challenge 2006

## Unlike a Kiwi prop, this is pretty lightweight stuff

**Words:** Mark Robins

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Swordfish Int. | Pub: Ubisoft |
| Players: 1-2 | Live: None |
| Release: Out Now | Price: £40 |
| www.rugby-challenge.com | |

FOR A GAME riddled with so many rules and – let's face it – pointless intricacies, rugby fans are an unfussy bunch. So long as the ball keeps moving, the scrums are steaming and the beer is flowing, just about any display of egg-chasing, no matter how basic, will keep the punters happy.

And that's why we reckon the rugby massive will happily lap up *Rugby Challenge 2006* like it's spilt Guinness on the floor of a sweaty changing room. It's slick, reasonably fast, easy to get to grips with and, unlike its 2004 semi-prequel *World Championship Rugby* (Issue 28, 8.0), it finally offers the chance to play as both the national teams and all the British club teams (both Premiership and Celtic league). Who cares that *Rugby Challenge 2006* isn't the greatest sports game made? You get to play as club teams rugby fans! Like Saracens and Worcester! Since when have you been able to do that? Er, like, never!

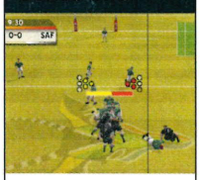
But let's not get too carried away. We have, after all, just suggested that *Rugby Challenge 2006* doesn't quite measure up in the quality stakes. Sure, it's great for pick-up-and-play stuff – especially if you're not all that au fait with rugby's rules and regulations – but if you're looking for a game with slightly more depth than a toddler's paddling pool, Ubisoft's first crack at the peanut-hugging market falls just short of touch.

So let's start with the good stuff. As with *World Championship Rugby*, everything is geared towards a fast running and passing game. Get possession, sprint towards the line and keep recycling the ball out to the wings courtesy of the trigger button passes. If you've played *World Championship Rugby* then you'll know exactly what to expect as the controls are nearly identical. In fact, the only real update to the controls are the mauls and scrums, which now use a simple repeating reaction test to help drive your pack forwards. Penalties are uncommon and, providing the ball doesn't go into touch too often, it's possible to keep a single phase of play going for an entire half's worth of action – that's how focused on free-flowing ball recycling *Rugby Challenge 2006* is.

There's a much improved training mode too. And not just your typical running and passing tutorials either (although these are really helpful). *Rugby Challenge 2006* offers loads of innovative little training games that help sledgehammer the basic techniques home – and bloody hard some of them are too.

But the real improvement is just how much content has been added. Not only are the Guinness Premiership and Celtic League teams now present, but the European clubs and the Southern Hemisphere clubs too, and all the competitions that go with them. Throw in plenty of challenge matches, some novel tweaks on the rugby format (Hot Potato for example, where you're only allowed to hold the ball for three seconds before passing) and a perfectly playable career mode that bears more than a passing resemblance to *PES5*'s Master League and you have a game that most rugby fans will be pleased just to see exist.

### Bonus info



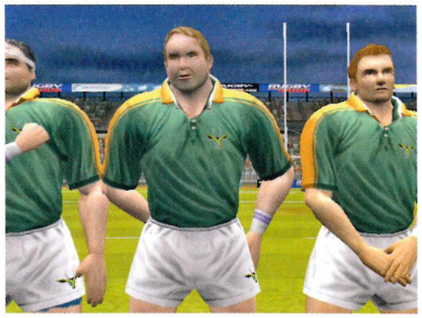
**CLASSIC MATCHES**
As always, there's a Classic Match mode where you get to replay key moments in rugby history. *Rugby Challenge 2006* has ten of these matches to play through, cherry-picking the best bits from over 50 years of the sport, although somehow Ubisoft managed to forget England's last-gasp win over Australia in the 2003 World Cup. Duh!




↑ TOUCHDOWN! Hang on, wrong game.




↑ The crowds waits patiently for the kick off.



↑ Eurgh, don't fancy yours much love.



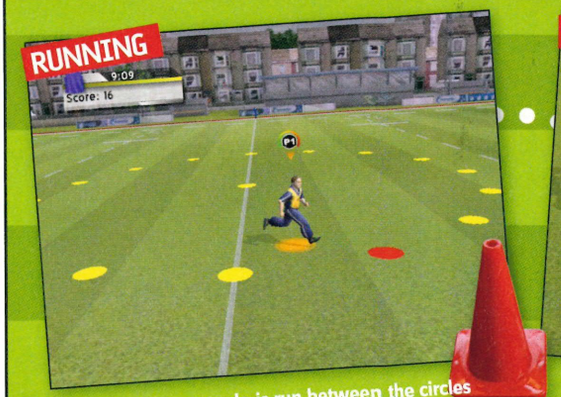

↑ Stamp on 'im! Rake his bloody eyes out!




↑ Keep throwing the ball to the fastest player and you won't go far wrong.

# BODY MOVING

## Get involved with Rugby Challenge 2006's strenuous bonus training games. It's male bonding at its most intimate!




"So all I've got to do is run between the circles as they light up. Easy! That's one, two... huff... three. What? I've got to keep doing this for a minute? Four, five... pant, pant... jeez, six, seven. God, I think I just ruptured my spleen. And they say exercise is good for you?"




"You want me to put my head where? I can't do that - I'm still knackered from the running. Hang on mate, watch where you put those hands. Oooh! Heave? Heave where? Euurghh. God, I don't think that's supposed to bend like that. I think I'm going to faint."




"No, please! That's three against one! How's that fair? And you're all bigger than me. Plus, I can't run as fast after that man stamped on my big toe in the scrum. Look, I've got a note from the doctor excusing me! I have a bad back! No... no, God please NO!" (CRACK!!)

But this isn't 2003 any more, and with England's World Cup victory now but a fading memory of a lunchtime hangover it's not so easy to jump on the first open-topped rugby bandwagon that comes along. After EA's *Rugby 2005* (Issue 40, 8.2) managed to add some depth to *World Championship Rugby*'s simple format with its momentum-based mauls and advanced passing and running techniques, we expected *RC2006* to follow a similar suit. But it hasn't, and with EA's *Rugby 06* (page 092) improving even further, this is likely to look even more basic in comparison.

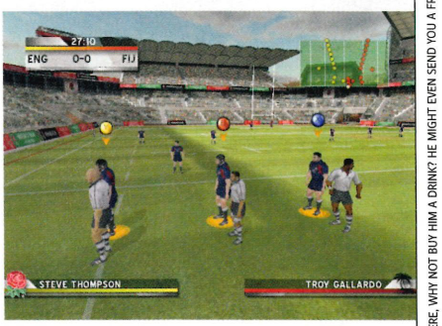
There are some other troubling faults with *RC2006* too. For one, it doesn't look all that hot. We know rugby players aren't the best-looking of sportsmen, but even the Elephant Man would gag at some of the monstrosities representing the Six Nations' finest here. Okay, so the lack of detail keeps things running smoothly, but Steve Thompson should consider talking to his lawyers.

And while we're on the subject, we're pretty sure balls, no matter how wrongly shaped they are, shouldn't bend in mid-air quite like they do in *RC2006*. Banana kicks we've heard of, but banana throws? It's like a bunch of magnetic players chucking a metal ball around - and no, we don't have the gravity-bending cheat turned on either.

But mostly it's in the lack of any real attempt to add depth to the game where *Rugby Challenge 2006* suffers the most. Once again it's simply a case of continually passing the ball to the wings while running at full pelt towards the goal line. While *RC2006* is certainly an improvement over *World Championship Rugby* in terms of content and options, it plays virtually the same, and for that it gets a significantly lower score. Rugby isn't the easiest game to recreate on a console, we'll admit, but you'd best try EA's *Rugby 06* before making any kind of judgment call over which game to buy for this year's Six Nations, eh?

### Bonus info

**KICKING IN THE WIND**
Conversions and penalty kicks have been tweaked somewhat since *World Championship Rugby*, although the principle remains the same - check the wind, choose your direction, wiggle your bottom like Wilkinson then hit the power bar at the right spot for a clean shot between the posts.




↑ The simple throw-in mechanic remains.




↑ Dude, what happened to your neck?




↑ Given that's 30 players and three officials all moving smoothly at once, you can't fault the technical side of the game.

## The Summary

**RUGBY CHALLENGE 2006** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ For such a complicated source material, *Rugby Challenge 2006* is a remarkably easy game to pick up and play.
- ✔ At last! All the top British club sides have been included, alongside the usual selection of national teams.
- ✘ Simplistic controls don't allow for any great sense of depth and games quickly fall into a repeated pattern of play.
- ✘ The graphics are rather simplistic, and the commentary from John Inverdale and Dewi Morris is very weak.
- ✘ There's still no kind of online game. Surely this is a must to keep people playing in the long term.

## The Verdict

Simple, easy to pick up and play, but lacks that all-important depth factor. We say wait for EA's game first.

**6.5//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** Preview - Issue 48
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats - Issue 54

SPOT THE FAN: IF YOU'VE NOT GUESSED ALREADY, OUR OWN MR ROBINS IS A BIG FAN OF SARACENS AND REGULARLY GOES TO SEE THEM PLAY AT VICARAGE ROAD. IF YOU SPOT HIM THERE, WHY NOT BUY HIM A DRINK? HE MIGHT EVEN SEND YOU A FREE GAME IN RETURN!



↑She can shoot while grinding. She's all action.

# BloodRayne 2

## Trampy vampire babe seeks same for bloodsucking fun

**Words:** Gary Cutlack

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Terminal Reality | Pub: THQ |
| Players: 1 | Live: None |
| Release: Out Now | Price: £40 |
| www.bloodrayne2.com | |

MMM! LOVELY SEXY vampire lady who doesn't wear many clothes! Initial hopes were high for the new *BloodRayne* (Issue 17, 7.4), but then, like with so many attractive ladies, it all goes a bit wrong when she opens her mouth. "I never drink... wine," she wisecracks lamely, in dialogue that tries hard to be sexy but is about as arousing as a naked Jimmy Saville covered in cold sores.

This Parental Guidance level of inoffensive sexy chat continues throughout the game, which combined with the gameplay, makes us want to go to sleep. Rayne's initial in-game action sees her running through a mansion. A grey, marble mansion full of identical grey, marble rooms for you to run through, again and again. Not a brilliant start.

Through this bland mission you learn about Rayne's skills. Swords and kicks are her staples, but she has one quite unique feature that sets this game apart and places it very slightly above most run-of-the-mill action games - she has a thirst for blood. What this means to you, the player, is that instead of simply hacking all the enemies to death, it's best to keep some alive to suck the blood out of. Sucking blood boosts your energy bar, see, and chopping them into bits fills your Rage gauge.

Rage gives Rayne access to special moves, and these again are actually a bit interesting! Obviously there's a 'bullet time' one, which is useless at the start as it just slows down everything, so it's like playing the game in really boring slow motion. It can be levelled up and enhanced, though, with her other Rage skills - stronger attack and defence, remote viewing and mind control - also becoming more useful as you cut enemies up into chunks and spray their blood about the place.

Not that these enhanced skills make the game easier. The 'Aura Vision' means that instead of there being an obvious door for you to go through, you now get a hidden door that you have to search for with your magical vision, then go through. When powered up you can send off a ghost version of yourself to feed or mind control enemies, but these are all diversions. The sad fact is that *BloodRayne 2*'s core fighting element isn't really that good.



↑ Red blades mean Rayne has additional Rage power.

### Bonus info



**FLIGHT NIGHT**
*BloodRayne 2* has plenty of 'Environment Kills' in it, where Rayne uses her sexy harpoon to grab enemies and lash them into spikes, animal horns and fan blades. It's fun, but seeing bad guys flying unrealistically slowly (or sideways) towards their pre-determined kill locations looks a little silly.

## IS IT SEXY?

Rayne was in Playboy, you know! So how rude is BloodRayne 2?



**KISSING?**
It looks like they're kissing. And parts of their bodies are touching. But the fact that one of them is about to die puts a downer on it.



**MEN?**
Sadly yes, some of the enemies are men. Luckily, they wear suits - the depraved fetish stuff is saved for the ladies. Thank goodness.

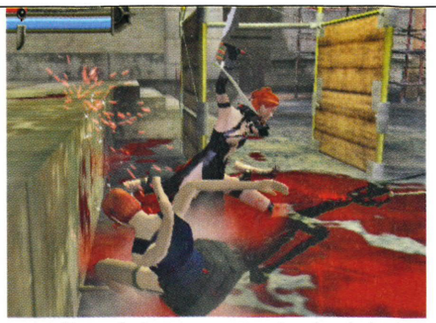


**SEMI-NUDITY?**
All the female enemies dress like Page 3 girls on a night out to School Disco. Stockings and suspenders? Outside on a cold night like that?



**WOBBLY?**
Yes, they really wobble! They never actually come out at any point, though, so she must be extremely securely taped in there. No way are they real, though (because she's a videogame character).

**BLOODRAYNE'S SEXY SUMMARY**
Mmm... it actually is quite hot. Watching Rayne wrap her legs around some freaky Goth prostitute is, you know, quite nice. It made Gavin get a funny feeling in his tummy!



↑ It's like a chainsaw massacre in a brothel.



↑ Lovely. Shame her head's just come off.




↑ And she has guns. For killing.



↑ She's quite sexy! (For a pretend person.)



↑ A new costume, and it's already stained within minutes.



↑ It's, er, a bit rude in places. Not bad, for a button-masher.

You can spend a minute or so engaging in a rather bland exchange of blocking and slashing, or you can press Y to grab them and suck their blood out. It's quicker that way and you get a health boost. When fighting with a sword rather than your lips and teeth it's hard to know when you've made contact with enemies – so you never know how much damage you've done, or whether the game thinks it's your turn to block and its turn to attack. It's a bit of a letdown really.

The bloodsucking is another way the developer has tried to make the game sexy – like when Rayne wraps her legs around a female enemy and starts sucking away at her neck. As a fighting game it's not particularly impressive, but as soft porn it's rather good! Not that she ever gets naked, mind. And sadly, for such a high-profile lead character, Rayne isn't that impressive in action. She's a bit rigid, and quite cumbersome when navigating the leap-around platform bits. Yes, she can grind and shoot at the same time, but making her jump, stop, rotate, stop, jump again, stop, swing and jump just to get from one swinging beam to the next is really quite a chore.

There are also quite a few familiar themes. Even sexy vampire babes have to play missions where you climb around scaffolding to find a switch to cut the power to a locked door. Boring. It's a boatload of clichés, too – all the females wear suspenders, all the bad guys are goatee-bearded vampire characters and the plot's cheesy and naff. It's all a bit old-fashioned underneath the sexy bits.

Had this game come out three years ago it would've been considered pretty awesome. It looks quite nice, the bloodsucking health idea works well and the combat, although a bit wobbly, is bloody and a laugh. But things have changed, games have moved on. *Ninja Gaiden* has come out and made all other hack and slash games look like the work of amateurs. All *BloodRayne 2* really has in its favour is a shiny look and sexy vampire overtones. If you want to look at pert bottoms and women sucking each others' necks while wearing stockings, you'd be better off doing it on the internet for free.



↑ The clear winner of the roly-poly contest.



↑ Feeding boosts your energy. It's a nice touch.

## The Summary

**BLOODRAYNE 2** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ Shiny walls, lots of blood, very nice levels and she's not exactly hard on the eyes. It looks quite nice, as far as feasting on blood goes.
- ✔ Although the combat is simple, seeing your enemies fall apart into chunks of human meat is satisfying.
- ✔ The feeding aspect to keeping Rayne's health boosted is a nice feature that makes you play strategically.
- ✘ A lot of the game is running through endless, samey corridors and performing boring old memory-test puzzle play.
- ✘ The plot and dialogue is like an episode of *Buffy* written and performed by six-year-old children.

## The Verdict

It's a grower. At first it's a bland slash 'em up, but Rayne's skills evolve to make her a more intelligent killer. Not half bad.

**7.9//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** Preview – Issue 48
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats – Issue 54

LENGTH AND GIRTH: SOME OF THE BOSS FIGHTS LAST FOR AGES, WITH ENDLESS TRIPS BACK TO FEED ON ENEMIES TO FILL UP YOUR ENERGY BAR AGAIN. IT CAN BECOME A BIT OF A DRAG



↑ The Wizard's spells are good for crowd control.

# Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows

## Looks fairly pretty but it's old and tired, like Madonna

**Words:** Mike Jackson

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Midway | Pub: Midway |
| Players: 1-4 | Live: 2-4 players |
| Release: 16 February | Price: £40 |
| www.gauntletsevensorrows.com | |

GAMES LIKE *NINJA GAIDEN* have done wonders for the aging hack 'em up genre, bringing old-skool gameplay into the new age with the excitement and flair you expect from a modern game.

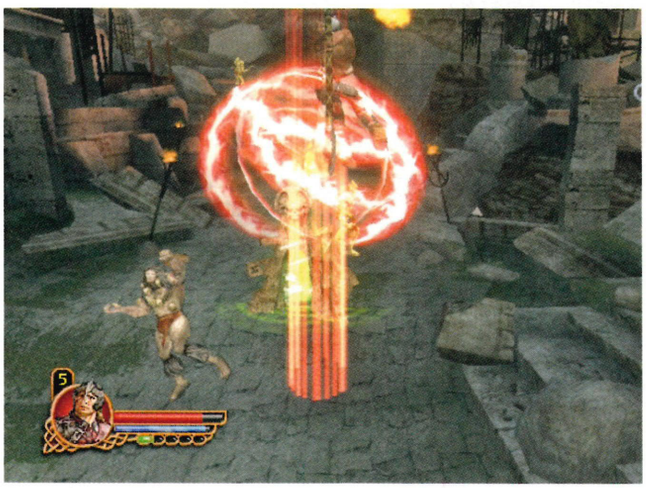
*Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows* sticks its middle finger up at new ideas, though, and clings onto the old style like a granny refusing to chuck out her black and white TV. You choose your character from an enormous range of four: Warrior, Wizard, Valkyrie and Elf. Then you run through level after level, smacking the crap out of the hundreds of goons spewing from every nook and cranny in the scenery.

The attacks number four too - one for each of the main face buttons on the pad. You've got your hacking attacks, for breaking through an enemy's defence and cause damage even if they're blocking. Projectile attacks are great for hitting enemies at a distance, like the archers that ping arrows at you from the top of watchtowers and across canyons.

Launch attacks, which send your victims flying into the air, are some of the most satisfying. With ninja skills you can hyper-smash them a few more times before they hit the floor. Then, of course, you have your standard slash attack, the one that'll leave you with a sore right thumb and a broken A button by the end of the game.

Smacking the buttons in different sequences activates some really smart combos. Our favourite was the one where the Warrior slaps an opponent upwards, then chucks his axe at them in mid-air. Spinning and on fire, the axe chops them up and cooks their flesh before their lifeless body hits the ground. And they don't get up.

To cause even more devastation, *Seven Sorrows* gives you Mana, a power that allows you to perform special moves with a tap on the D-pad. These can be used to clear overpowering crowds, hammer bosses and smash enemy-spawning


↑ It uses up loads of precious Mana, but this move wrecks everything.

### Bonus info



**DEADLY TASKS**

There are no puzzles as such, but many of the levels are interactive, with levers that need to be yanked to lower a drawbridge and the like. But it's not so easy when you have a dozen nasty buggers trying to cut your head off.

## A WARRIOR'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

### A dozen angry axemen are the least of your worries



**FIRE!**

↑ Being set on fire hurts more than getting smashed in the face with an axe. Look out for the flamethrowers in the floor and hanging pots of magma. They're lethal.



**DEATH!**

↑ Death's purple soul-sapping magic drains energy faster than a battery-powered space rocket. He likes to hide inside treasure chests and surprise you. RUN AWAY! RUN AWAY!



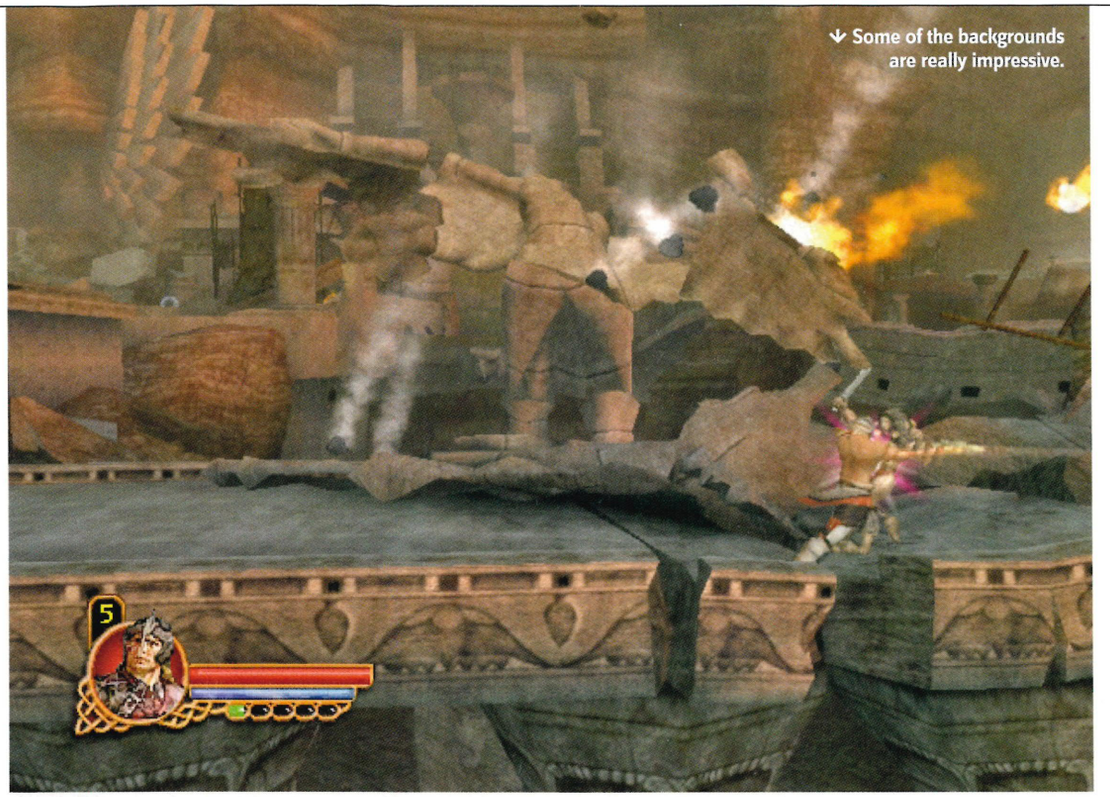
**BLADES!**

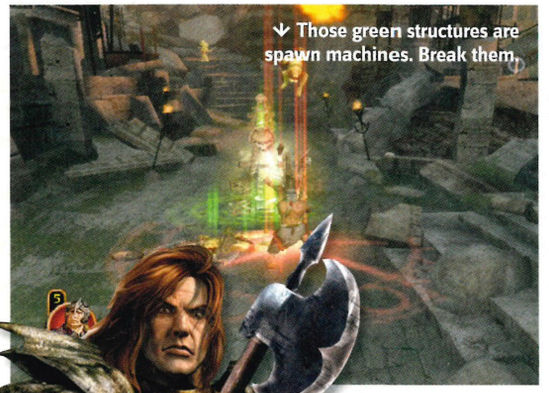
↑ So there you are, merrily hacking monsters to bits when suddenly, giant spinning blades pop out the wall and give you a nasty scratch. They could easily have your eye out.



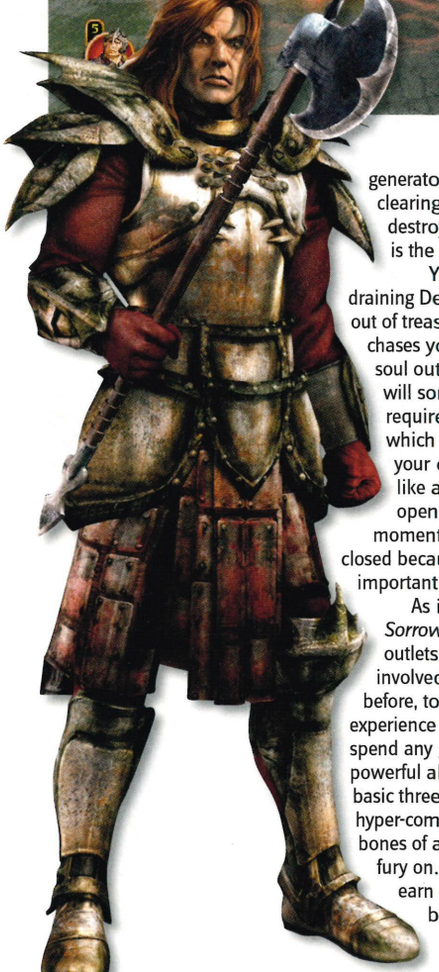
**GENERATORS!**

↑ It's all very well just standing there hacking up endless streams of monsters - if you don't take out the generators they'll just keep on coming. A couple of mega-chops'll do the job.


↓ Some of the backgrounds are really impressive.


↓ Those green structures are spawn machines. Break them.


↑ An angry woman armed with knives. Walk away.



generators. You also have a screen-clearing Blast attack that completely destroys everything around you, and is the only way to, er, kill Death.

Yes, the near-invincible, life-draining Death dude is back too. He leaps out of treasure chests now and then and chases you around for a bit, sucking the soul out of your body. The Blast attack will sort him out in a jiffy, but that requires you to have a full Mana bar, which is always unlikely, so usually your only option is to run away like a screaming girl. It makes the opening of every chest a tense moment, but you can't leave them all closed because they contain two all-important items: gold and chicken.

As is the *Gauntlet* tradition, *Seven Sorrows* has more fried chicken outlets than Kentucky. There's a more involved upgrading system than ever before, too. As well as the standard experience points, you will be able to spend any gold that you find to get more powerful abilities. You'll start off with basic three-hit jabs, progressing to 20-hit hyper-combos that instantly shatter the bones of any victim you unleash your fury on. With every level you gain, you earn a point, which can be spent on boosting individual stats of your choice. The announcer from the old games is back too. "RED WARRIOR NEEDS FOOD, BADLY" goes his booming voice, helpfully, when the red Warrior needs food badly. It's great to hear again after all these years and gives us a fuzzy glow of nostalgia.

But none of this has much impact on the way the game plays. Any additions just feel like a last-minute feature, tacked on for the sake of having some kind of improvement over the originals. Nevertheless, *Seven Sorrows* basically plays exactly the same as *Gauntlet* of old, except in 3D. And just like its ancient brother, it's crap in single player. Without any mates to help out, you'll find yourself being frequently overwhelmed by the sheer number of enemies attacking you. And there's no one to hold off the hordes while you're trying to take out the enemy-spawning machines either. Everything about *Gauntlet* that makes it a classic only applies to the multiplayer, such as the way you work together but still fight with other players over the gold in the level. Or like when you're all low on health and the four of you scramble towards a roast chicken an enemy dropped, arguing over who deserves it most. It's team play with an undertone of competition that makes *Gauntlet* games fun.

*Seven Sorrows* doesn't stray too far from the original formula – it isn't trying to. Respectable though its faith to the old-skool way is, it's not going to satisfy the modern gamer. If you and your three mates still adore the original arcade game you'll get a kick out of playing this prettier version, but everyone else will be snoozing within the hour.



↑ Last we knew, scarecrows didn't kill people.


↑ The Warrior's strong but tougher to play with.


↑ The Wizard's circular attacks ruin everything.


↑ She has a severe case of explosive diarrhoea.

## The Summary

**GAUNTLET: SEVEN SORROWS** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ A great sequel to a much-loved classic that's still a good laugh to play with three mates.
- ✔ We weren't expecting it to be much of a looker, but Seven Sorrows turns out to be quite the visual treat.
- ✔ Death makes a welcome return to scare the crap out of you by jumping out of chests and chasing you round the screen.
- ✘ It's basically more of the same simplistic hack 'n' slash gameplay we grew tired of years ago.
- ✘ There's no point in playing this in single-player mode. It's extremely dull and excessively difficult.

## The Verdict

A great-looking sequel that does little to update the *Gauntlet* series. Still fun in multiplayer but you've seen it all before.

**6.8//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** Preview – Issue 51
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats, Live Review – Issue 54

**FOUR TO THE FLOOR:** THE ARCADE VERSION OF GAUNTLET WAS ONE OF THE FIRST ARCADE MACHINES TO ALLOW FOR FOUR-PLAYER SIMULTANEOUS PLAY




↓ Pac-Man Jr looks about as happy as the Queen did at her huge, expensive Golden Jubilee party in 2002.

# Pac-Man World 3

## He's olden, but in this case certainly not golden

**Words:** Mark Robins

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Blitz Games | Pub: EA |
| Players: 1 | Live: None |
| Release: Out Now | Price: £30 |
| http://pacmanworld3.namco.com | |

INCREDIBLY, IT'S Pac-Man's 25th birthday this year. Twenty-five years old! Amazing, isn't it, not least because 25 in videogame years is equal to about 256 in human years – and he hasn't aged a bit, either. Not a single grey hair or digital wrinkle to speak off – although he does seem to have somehow evolved legs, eyes and a nice pair of red wellies somewhere along the way since 1981. Then again, when you're a smooth yellow ball-thing with feet poking out from where your dangly bits are supposed to be, it's pretty difficult to spot any degree of aging.

What has aged, however, is just about every idea and concept on show in this, the third platform-hopping game in the painfully so-so *Pac-Man World* series (the previous two titles being so nondescript that they didn't even make an appearance on Xbox). For a birthday celebration, *Pac-Man World 3* is as lame as a three-legged donkey with arthritis in one leg and a bad case of flesh-eating bacteria disease in the other two. And possibly even worse than that.

Here's why: it's *Pac-Man*'s 25th birthday party (did you see what they did there?) and Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man and Pac-Man Jr. are all settling down for a nice cup of tea and a slice of cake when – who'd have guessed it! – Pac-Man is kidnapped and whisked away to an alternate dimension to help some friendly ghosts fight off an invasion of super-nasty evil ghosts. And stuff. If it sounds a bit rubbish explained that way, just imagine how bad it must be when explained via entire minutes of fully animated cut-scenes.

From then on, it's platforming business as usual. This is no-nonsense, middle-of-the-road jumping and item-collecting goodness. Which is actually us being a bit sarcastic, because when we say 'goodness' we actually mean 'predictableness'. A shame, because given how starved the Xbox is of really decent platform games, you might be tempted to pick up *Pac-Man World 3* just for a bit of old-school hopping-about fun – and you probably could, providing your quality expectations are exceptionally low.

It's not that there's anything wrong or broken with *Pac-Man World 3* particularly, it's just that there's more flair and imagination running through your average cement mixer. Take the opening level for instance – an industrial sewer-set riot of platforming clichés: bottom-bounce the switch to open that door; jump across the poisonous green goo to collect the power-up; smash those boxes to find the health. Will someone please shoot us in the head before we're forced to find yet another cleverly hidden bonus fruit?

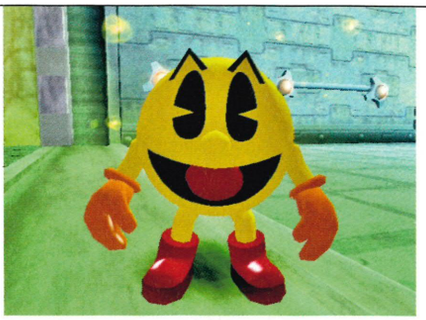
Of course, it could be argued that *Pac-Man World 3* has been designed with a younger, slightly less demanding audience in mind, and you'd be right, but even little Johnny deserves better than this lesson in mediocrity. Watching a funny yellow round man make a fool of himself in the cut-scenes might make your average six-year-old laugh, but the tired and jaded gameplay certainly won't.



### Bonus info



**PILL POPPING**
Apart from secreting the original Pac-Man arcade game within it's sweaty folds, *Pac-Man World 3* also has a few jazzy visual updates to the old pill-eating-in-a-maze formula, in the form of bonus levels. They don't add much apart from a spot of retro charm.



↑ One power pill later and he's raring to go...



↑ Not a yellower, crapper version of *Sonic* at all!




↑ A rubbish yellow man doesn't stand a chance.



↑ Says it all, really. TIME TO RETIRE, GRANDAD.

## The Summary

**PAC-MAN WORLD 3** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

| | |
|---|---|
| ✔ | Some of the level design is surprisingly clever in places - but such moments are few and far between. |
| ✔ | It's easy enough for anybody to pick up and play, which makes it an ideal present for third or fourth favourite nieces and nephews. |
| ✘ | Utterly predictable and uninspiring as platformers go. Every challenge has been done a million times before. |
| ✘ | Looks a bit sloppy in places, with Pac not quite sitting on the scenery properly, or cameras that suddenly go all jittery on you. |
| ✘ | 25th birthday parties are supposed to be fun. Not as bad as licking the toilet clean, but certainly worse than ironing. |

## The Verdict

A predictable platformer that lacks innovation and polish. Harmless enough, but utterly forgettable.

**4.8//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** We've kind of been ignoring this one until now...
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats – Issue 54 (maybe)

# Don't insert coin!




# Just play!




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↑ Robinson in full flight: sheer poetry in motion. Liquid rugby.

# Rugby 06

## Public school football makes it as an EA annual update

**Words:** Mark Robins

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: EA | Pub: EA |
| Players: 1-4 | Live: None |
| Release: March | Price: £40 |
| http://easports.co.uk | |

IN THE SAME way last summer's Ashes victory brought a legion of fair-weather cricket fans crawling out of the woodwork ("No, I've always been a very keen follower of our proud nation's summer sport I think you'll find"), so the Six Nations competition is generating a new breed of fervent rugby fans. Unless you happen to be Welsh (in which case the game's already in your blood – just ask Charlotte Church, she's full of rugby player at the moment), chances are you're currently 'mad for a bit of rucking and mauling', so let's all give a EA a nice big round of applause for the timely appearance of its first rugby game since, well, this time last year. Hurrah!

Put simply, *Rugby 06* (as it's cunningly been titled to fit in snugly with the EA '06' sports range) is as good an update as we've seen EA produce in a long time. For one, it looks stunning. *FIFA*-stunning, in fact. With player likenesses and television-style presentation easily on a par with EA's footballing megalith, it comes as no surprise that *Rugby 06* is one of the best-looking sports games on Xbox. The first time you see an angry scrum actually STEAMING on screen it becomes clear that an awful lot of work has gone into the visuals. Even the cauliflower ears look good enough to eat.

But that's only the start of it. Apart from just looking good, *Rugby 06* has really refined what it is to play rugby on a console – no easy task by any stretch of the imagination. Like last year's game, the controls are tight and responsive, and once mastered let you play a fast, intelligent game, but it's the new moves that really add to the game.

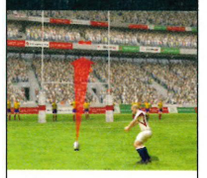
Alright, so it's one new move in particular that adds to the game, but being able to offload the ball to a nearby player just as you're being man-handled to the ground allows you to really rip through the defences. More than that, it keeps the ball moving so you never feel like you're slowing down every five seconds just to scrap for the ball in the mud. Likewise the ability to take quick penalties and line-outs before the opposition have fully got their heads together keeps the game flowing and unpredictable.

Clearly the emphasis on this year's EA rugby game is on attack, but defence hasn't been forgotten entirely, with damaging – barely legal – high tackles giving overeager full-backs something seriously painful to think about. Not to mention that both attack and defence benefit from new set-plays



↑ Squint and it could almost be football, eh?

### Bonus info



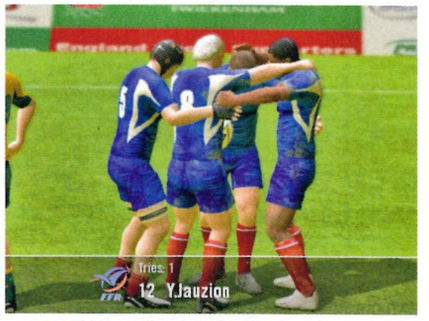
**CAN YOU KICK IT?**
Impact Players – star players who act and play just like their namesakes – are a new feature. Players such as Jonny Wilkinson act just like they do in real life. Look! He's taking his kick that famous way like he's having a poo and everything!



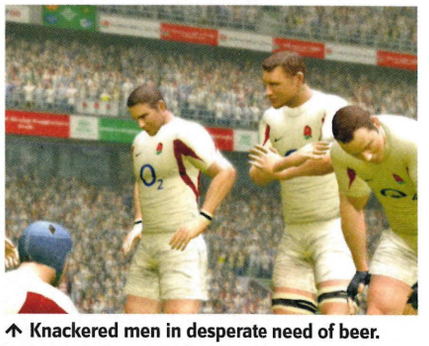
↑ Nothing says 'warm up' like a manly lunge.



↑ Mark got this shirt for Christmas: true fact.




↑ EA's TV-style presentation in abundance.



↑ Knackered men in desperate need of beer.



↑ The animation of all the players is spot on. This looks quality moving.




↑ Someone's about to get a good shoeing.



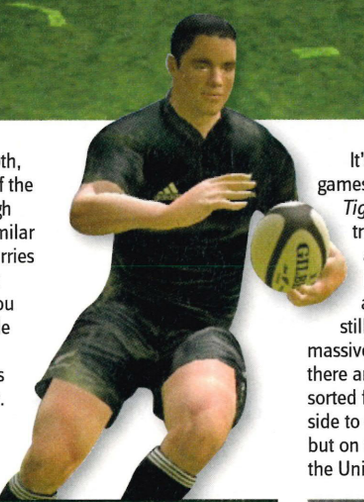
↑ Chuck the ball in and stand well back.



↓ Three hundred stone of raw man-muscle in action. Solid.

that can be activated with a flick of the D-pad during mauls and scrums. Plus, each team now boasts a number of 'star' players, which makes squad management a far more important aspect than it ever was before. Okay, so with all these new features to think about it's still nowhere near as easy to get to grips with as *Rugby Challenge 2006* (see page 084), and you still can't assign the trigger buttons to pass the ball, but there's far more depth here than anything offered by Ubisoft's game.

And that's about the crux of it. *Rugby 06* may not be as beginner-friendly as *Rugby Challenge 2006*, but the chances are if you're smart enough to follow the sport you're probably smart enough to cope with *Rugby 06*'s additional layers of depth, which is why EA's game is clearly the better of the two. It looks better, it plays better and although the list of teams and competitions are very similar between the two games, it's *Rugby 06* that carries the official Guinness Premiership and RBS Six Nations licences (but then what else would you expect from moneybags EA?). The career mode is suitably life-sapping and the annoying way players constantly strayed offside in last year's version seems to have been finally ironed out. Now all EA needs to do is add some Live support and it really will have the perfect game for egg-chasers everywhere.

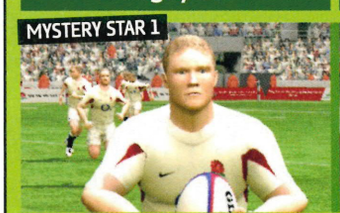
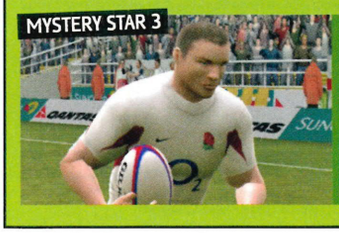


It's not often we get excited about sports games that aren't *Pro Evolution Soccer* or *Tiger Woods*, but then rugby fans have traditionally had very little to get excited about on Xbox in the past. The fact that it takes some patience to get all the rules and rugby quirks down means that it's still unlikely to draw any of the football massive over to the 'public-school' side, and there are a couple of issues we'd like to see sorted for next year (it's far too easy for a good side to exploit holes in a poor team's defence), but on this form, *Rugby 06* certainly looks the Union effort to beat this season.

## WHO YOU LOOKING AT?

### Can you spot these famous England players from their digital counterparts?

**We've taken three of England's most recognisable players, grabbed their mugshots from *Rugby 06* and *Rugby Challenge 2006* and lined them up to see if YOU can spot who they are (we've added a giveaway clue to help). Are the likenesses accurate enough for you to spot the stars, or might they just as well be extras from a horror movie? Here goes!**

| Rugby 06 | Rugby Challenge 2006 | CLUE |
|---|---|---|
| MYSTERY STAR 1  |  | This Wasps' full-back could be the key to England's Six Nations push this year - no joshing! ? |
| MYSTERY STAR 2  |  | This Bath and British Lions player is nicknamed Thumper - because he's dead hard, probably. ? |
| MYSTERY STAR 3  |  | Actually, you've got no chance with this one. Look - they both look like they could be anyone! ? |

1: Josh Lewsey, 2: Danny Grewcock, 3: Ben Cohen (yeah, we'd never have got that one either)



↑ Thank God EA included club rugby this year.

## The Summary

**RUGBY 06** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ Amazing graphics and TV presentation. Not just the best looking rugby game on Xbox, one of the best looking sports games ever.
- ✔ Loads of teams and competitions to keep fans occupied. Only crap teams like Harlequins don't make the cut (bring on the hate mail!).
- ✔ New attack and defence moves add more depth to the already well designed and relatively simple to master controls.
- ✔ Commentary from All Blacks legend Grant Fox adds knowledge and authority to the predictable licensed rock soundtrack.
- ✘ There's still no kind of Live support which is a real shame, although the game will support four players at once on the same screen.

## The Verdict

A stunning-looking and equally playable rugby effort. *Rugby 06* is a must-own if you're a committed fan of the sport.

**8.4//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** First Look - Issue 52
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats - Issue 54

START SAVING NOW: NEW ZEALAND HAS BEEN CONFIRMED AS THE HOST OF THE 2011 RUGBY WORLD CUP. SO, FLIGHTS, PLUS TICKETS, PLUS GUINNESS, PLUS PIES, PLUS MERCHANDISE. PLUS SCARF EQUALS YOU'D BETTER START SAVING NOW FOR ANY CHANCE OF AFFORDING TO GO




# Zathura

## Duller than playing snakes and ladders with a corpse

**Words:** Mike Jackson

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: High Voltage | Pub: 2K Games |
| Players: 1 | Live: Scoreboards |
| Release: Out Now | Price: £40 |
| www.2kgames.com/zathura/ | |

*ZATHURA makes* no sense. The younger of the two boys you control in this drab puzzle adventure can kick and break wooden and metal crates. But he can't break cardboard boxes. The older boy can't kick at all. He has to find a spanner before he can smash the crates that block his path.

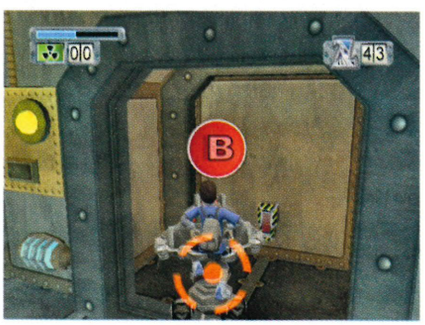
It's a prime example of the stupid logic in this game. And it only gets worse. You walk into a room where three turrets are firing lasers at you. You're told you can repel the lasers by hitting them with your spanner. What? Maybe this kid is Luke Skywalker in disguise. We wouldn't mind so much if it worked, but it's near impossible to hit back lasers without taking most of them in the face

This defective, totally useless play mechanic reflects the overall quality of *Zathura*: it's shoddy. There are lots of large, platform-filled rooms with pre-fixed camera angles so useless you'll struggle on the simplest of jumps. The totally rubbish gameplay doesn't help, with clumsy controls and really weak jumps. It's this sort of game that results in the death of innocent Xbox controllers. Luckily, when you die the game tends to respawn you at the entrance to the room in which you perished, so you don't have the added torture of playing through large sections of levels over again.

But you'll still get a feeling of déjà-vu as you wander from one identical looking room to the next. Unbelievably, the exact same room is used multiple times in a single level, with nothing but a few repositioned crates and a different enemy to distinguish one from the other. And there are no clever puzzles either – just kill a few enemies, press a switch and be on your way.

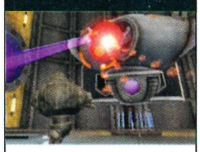
This lack of variety is slightly made up for by changing gameplay scenarios. As well as the two young boys, you also play as a robot that jumps higher and can fire lasers. A mix off different events means that one minute you'll be shooting down little flying saucers, the next plummeting down a deep chasm firing at rocks as you fall.

Unfortunately, every gameplay scenario handles about as well as a car with one wheel. When manning the gun turret, more UFOs charge at you than you can possibly shoot. The bit where you fall down the chasm is pointless – hitting the rocks is easy and even if you miss they don't kill you. But the worst bit is when you have to run away from a wall of fire, avoiding explosive barrels that are hurled your way (as stolen from 1983's *Donkey Kong*) – although it's impossible to tell where they're going to land. After dying a lot, we discovered the secret was not to dodge at all, but to just run in a straight line so the barrels would miss. Playing *Zathura* is like being force-fed Saddam Hussein's skidmarked underpants. And we find that kind of thing really upsetting.




↑ Hammer B or get your guts ripped out.

### Bonus info



**LASER EYES**

This is the first boss. He has laser eyes, two lethal gun turrets and can also pick you up to wreck you. We were impressed by the scale and chaos, but it's disorganised chaos seemingly without any real design, as opposed to normal chaos (the fun kind).




↑ It's a shame this battle isn't as cool as it looks.




↑ UFOs are as annoying as flies on your food.




↑ Looks tough, hates a spanner in the nuts.




↑ Easy platforming made hard by shoddy control.

## The Summary

**ZATHURA** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

| | |
|---|---|
| ✓ | Does its best to mix up the action a little, with varied gameplay styles and scenarios featuring in each level. |
| ✗ | Edgy movement, weak jumps and a rubbish camera make platform sections harder than doing a handstand while drunk. |
| ✗ | Rubbish and inconsistent logic, like being able to break a metal crate but not a cardboard box, and battling lasers with a spanner. |
| ✗ | Identical rooms are repeated ad infinitum, which is a complete farce. Copy and paste should be banned in development. |
| ✗ | You would think such a basic-looking game would run as smooth as silk on your Xbox. In this case, you'd be so awfully wrong. |

## The Verdict

Uninspired, dull and repetitive. This should never have made it past the testing stages.

**3.2//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** Its first and hopefully last appearance
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats – Issue 54 (maybe)



↑ Now you can play as Lok too, whose hammer wrecks enemies.

# Tak: The Great Juju Challenge

## The scrawny Pupanunu boy and his stick return

**Words:** Mike Jackson

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Avalanche Soft | Pub: THQ |
| Players: 1-2 | Live: None |
| Release: Out Now | Price: £30 |
| www.takgame.com | |

TAK IS A hero now. He has defeated evil and saved the land. You would think he'd relax a bit, abuse his hero status and make fit Pupanunu girls fan him with giant leaves and feed him grapes. But no. He clearly is as much of a dork as he looks.

There's no arch nemesis for Tak to hit with his little stick anymore. So Tak enters the Juju Challenge, in which he has to go up against the best warriors of other tribes to complete a series of obstacle courses and puzzles within a time limit. These obstacle courses basically translate as large platform-filled levels, rather like the ones in *Tak 2* (Issue 41, 7.1). Nothing out of the ordinary, then.

But wait - the difference this time around is that Tak isn't working alone. He teams up with the half-wit hero, Lok, who tags along every step of the way. Surprise, surprise: both characters have differing abilities, making for the need to swap control from one to the other in order to get through the 'all-new' co-op obstacles. The thing is we can't decide whether this makes the game more enjoyable, or just a hell of a lot more tedious.

Lok is bigger and stronger, so he's better for bits where you need to lift stuff, like explosive barrels. He can also pick up and throw Tak to higher platforms. Right, that makes sense. But Lok can't swim because he's... scared of fish? That's funny, but lame. So you use Tak to swim (who's smaller and would be more vulnerable to aquatic predators). But Tak can't climb vine-covered walls. WHY THE HELL NOT? He's a little bush-boy. He looks like he's Mowgli's cousin. Mowgli can climb like a monkey ninja. We've seen him do it on the telly. So you have to use Lok, who we'd have billed as the heavier, less agile character. Having to swap for basic things like swimming, climbing and jumping high is a pain in the ass. Not fun.

The co-op aspect is used to better effect on other occasions. You walk into a room with a series of platforms, but they're too far apart to jump across. You discover some switches that raise stepping stones between them. The idea is that you leave one character to press the switches, while the other jumps across the stones to the far side. As we did all this, we asked ourselves: is this fun? It's not bad in two-player split-screen co-op, where each player takes half the strain. It can be done quicker that way. But it's not as cool as the animal puzzles that have always been in *Tak* games since the beginning of the franchise.

Oh well. At least you get to dress in that wicked chicken suit again, and a new lobster suit, too. The cut-scenes made us laugh, too. Lok is a total buffoon and he'll crack you up. But he doesn't make this more than another average, slightly tedious platformer.



### Bonus info



**RIDING RHINOS**
As well as wearing ridiculous animal costumes, you'll get to jump on the backs of animals, too. We don't condone animal cruelty, but when you've got to get through huge, thorny bushes, there's point in getting YOUR skin all scratched up.



↑ Use Juju gun turrets to solve puzzles.



↑ The graphics and animation are great.



↑ Lok isn't too bright.


↑ Tak busts funky moves to cast a spell.

## The Summary

**TAK: THE GREAT JUJU CHALLENGE** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ The brightly coloured, detailed worlds and well-animated characters look really great.
- ✔ The animal suits that have become synonymous with *Tak* games make a welcome return.
- ✔ The two-player co-op modes allow you and a friend to work together through the entire adventure.
- ✘ Long-winded and tedious puzzles are about as fun as scrubbing a huge floor with a toothbrush.
- ✘ The illogical split abilities of the characters annoyingly force you to swap to perform basic actions.

## The Verdict

As funny and as colourful as ever, but tedious and repetitive puzzles keep Tak stuck in the league of the mediocre. **6.8//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** Tak's been on vacation until now
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats - Issue 54

THE SPEAKER: HOLLYWOOD ACTOR PATRICK WARBURTON, WHO DID THE VOICE OF THE ALIEN COP IN CHICKEN LITTLE, PROVIDED VOICES FOR TAK'S COMICAL CUT-SCENES

Official XBOX Magazine ON THE DISC

ONLY ON XBOX



↑ He looks pretty cheerful for someone whose skin is infected with worms.



↑ Eating brains replenishes energy and powers.



↑ Push your zombies into mines to set them off.



# Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse

## Without a pulse, without guts and without a clue, either

**Words:** Ben Lawrence

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Wideload Games | Pub: THQ |
| Players: 1-2 | Live: None |
| Release: Out Now | RRP: £40 |
| www.stubbsthezombie.com | |

*STUBBS THE ZOMBIE* is a truly strange game, but we can't put our finger on precisely why that is. It's built on the *Halo* engine, it's about turning the world of man into a shuffling horde of brain munchers, it's original, funny, and spectacularly well intentioned, but there's a strangely hollow thud in everything under the bonnet. It's as though developer Wideload had all the ingredients ready for a perfect title, then dropped them on the floor on the way to the oven.

*Rebel Without a Pulse* (is the subtitle an indication of future *Stubbs* games in the works?) is a collection of many bright ideas, none of which are developed to their full potential. Our undead hero can drive about in tractors and 'Clodmobiles' – clearly just the Warthog and Banshee with different skins – but it never really feels as though he should. He can detach his noggin and roll it around like an explosive bowling ball, but does the game ever actually need you to do so? Nope.

Stubbs lurches from one location to the next without any kind of story to explain why. He can be eating farmers one minute, then blowing up a dam the next, but it's never very clear why he's doing it. Sprinkled as it is with funny moments, *Stubbs* always feels like a series of slightly broken, unfinished bits and pieces of a modified *Halo* engine, squished together in the best way Wideload could manage.

While Stubbs is chomping brains or possessing people with his ghoulish hand and you're 'in the moment', the game can actually be great fun. Watching chewed corpses get up and start chewing for themselves made us feel a little paternal, we have to admit. Shoving zombies about and towards the action in search of fresh meat is fine and dandy, but that's all they really do. We can see that



## HAND OF THE DEAD He's armed and dangerous - quite literally...

**STUBBS CAN SWIPE at his enemies, but he can also use his bodily functions to kill, maim, and zombify humans. Observe...**




↑ **THE HEAD:** Stubbs can unscrew his head, and roll it towards humans. Once it gets close to the target, he can then explode the head, sending humans everywhere. If killed by this method, the humans will turn into zombies themselves.



↑ **THE HAND:** Detach your hand and use it to control humans. Latch onto a cop or soldier and you can even use them to kill their fellow man, unlock gates, or throw switches Stubbs can't reach himself. Unfortunately, it doesn't work on sheep.



↑ **THE GUTS:** Reach into the gaping cavity in your stomach and throw fistfuls of putrefying guts at humans. Anyone caught up in this cloud of green stink will die and return as one of your undead chums. Watch the chaos unfold!



↑ **THE ARSE:** Being a zombie, Stubbs' farts are almost as potent as Phil's. Any human caught in his flatulent fog will stumble about, eyes streaming. Get in close and take a bite of their soft gooey matter while they're 'distracted'...



↑ Avoid pulse blasts - they'll throw you around.



↑ Mmm... gooey, squishy brains. On toast.



↑ Let the prisoners out, then eat them all.



↑ Fat police captains don't stand a chance. Yum.

### Bonus info




**DANCE OFF!**
The first boss is a strange one because he'll challenge you to a dance off. Time the beats well and score a perfect in every round and you'll be treated to a special cut-scene at the end of the level.

Wideload has tried to make the most of the zombies in the game's puzzle elements, by having them complete electric circuits or utilising them as shields. But as with so much in the game, the zombie mechanics never feel like they're actually working properly - rather like actual zombies, we suppose. Your new undead friends will shuffle about a bit and eat a few heads capably enough, but they never shift up a gear, always ambling about when the game should be racing along.

The strongest part of *Stubbs* lies on the surface in the form of what there is to see and hear, rather than touch and play. The soundtrack is superb, rich with classic 50s rock 'n' roll, love songs and Hawaiian melodies. Chewing heads down to the neck to the sound of The Chordette's 'Mr Sandman' is a highlight, while watching all-American teens run about screaming while 'My Boy Lollipop' plays over a diner's jukebox is classic stuff.

The kitsch 1950s Americana is everywhere you look in *Stubbs*, from mad scientists waving laser beams about, to the strange grainy filter Wideload has dolloped all over everything. Fresh off the back of *Destroy All Humans!* (Issue 44, 8.4), *Stubbs* feels somewhat samey (although to be fair it was in development at around the same time, and the team has done well). But, for all the natty ideas and incidental goings-on that take place as you shamble your way through the game, there's a distinct impression that Wideload thought the words 'built on the *Halo* engine' would carry all the weight. But *Halo* should have been the foundation for something great, not a crutch to lean against. One bad guy is even called Chief Masters. We don't need reminding, and it does the game a disservice.

Creating *Stubbs* from scratch might have been a wiser idea. At times it feels like little more than zombie's clothes on scraps of *Halo* code, less fun than it sounds. It's a brave attempt to do something different, and flashes with momentary munching goodness, but like the poor zombie himself it just doesn't have the guts to see it through.



↑ A good brain-munch always causes splatter.



↑ The carnage you cause is quite wonderful.

## The Summary

**STUBBS THE ZOMBIE...** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

| | |
|---|---|
| ✔ | Looks good, sounds good, you'll enjoy chewing people's heads off to the sound of all those 1950s classics. |
| ✘ | Too few truly cool bits are outweighed by lots of odd, badly glued-together sections that make very little sense. |
| ✘ | Those zombies might have no brains but that's no excuse for stupidity. Why can't you fully control your undead army? |
| ✔ | The exploding head and crawling hand special powers are fantastic, although there could have been more opportunities to use them. |
| ✘ | The *Halo* engine is one of the downfalls, oddly. Driving modified Warthogs for the sake of it breaks up the feel of the game. |

## The Verdict

Let down by bizarre game mechanics and a fractured story, *Stubbs* is a collection of superb ideas badly glued together.

**6.6//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** Gallery - Issue 52
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats - Issue 54

LAND OF PEGG: FAN OF LAND OF THE DEAD? LOOK OUT FOR SIMON PEGG'S CAMEO APPEARANCE AS A ZOMBIE CHAINED UP AT THE FUNFAIR. WHAT A GIGGLE



↑ It's set in a grey future-hell where everyone works for the Ford Corporation and drives a Focus.

# Ford Street Racing

## Out of my way, I'm headed to Tesco in my Escort!

**Words:** Ben Lawrence

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Razorworks | Pub: Xplosiv |
| Players: 1-2 | Live: None |
| Release: Feb 2006 | Price: £20 |
| www.2ksports.com | |

KIDS IN the back? Dog in the front seat? Exhaust held on with gaffer tape and tax disc due for renewal? Then welcome to the heady grey world of *Ford Street Racing*, a world - nay, universe - of traffic jams and light inner-city lane meandering. Mum, are we there yet?

Fords by their very nature are more suited to carrying Nan to her hip appointment than bombing around circuits, so from the get-go this is an uphill, perhaps impossible struggle. Either way, it hasn't been addressed. All the dropping to first gear and hill starts in the world aren't going to help this.

Fatally, the cars - apart from the very top-end super-performance models - are a scrapheap of flatliners and fridges. Want to try your hand at shifting the cumbersome 1975 Gran Torino Sport around? Be our guest - just make sure you turn into a corner before the Xbox has had chance to animate it, and you'll be right as rain.

Ah, and what delights you get to drive your lumps of lead around too. The 'skid row' track is a wealth of lumbering grey skyscrapers that, to the untrained eye, could be upended shoe boxes. The roads themselves are nasty buggers as well, never allowing for any kind of leeway or sly kerb-cutting. Beware of the bushes lining the streets of old Ford City too - they're all grown from concrete. Want to overtake an opponent on a high mountain pass, perhaps risking your footing near the cliff edge? No chance. The Ford ethos is one of safety, and god forbid any kind of derring-do or crazy risk-taking. No, the entire world is protected by impenetrable walls of invisible goodness that stops you from attempting such ludicrous antics as 'overtaking' or 'having fun'. Here's a tip, though - not all lamp-posts are solid. No, some are mere ghost lamp-posts, existing neither in this world or the next, but somewhere in between, caught in a ghastly grey limbo. Was this intentional? Why, of course it was, probably. Maybe.

The faster the car, the more jellylike things seem to become. The gorgeous Ford GT 2005 handles like the entire world was one big bouncy castle, as it bobs and lurches around like it had helium-filled wheels. But fear not - collision detection isn't something that happens much in the Ford world. After all, its cars are for families to travel in in dull safety and not for having fun in, so no matter how many times you crash or collide with other vehicles, you'll just bounce off and continue your merry jaunt. Huzzah!

Sure, *Ford Street Racing* is a budget title, thus raising the 'you gets what you pays for' and 'budget titles don't have to be good, they're cheap', arguments. But think about this: if just 100 people bought this, that would be nearly £2,000 in Ford's vast corporate clown-trousers. Almost enough to put another boring Fiesta on the road. And do you really want that on your conscience?


↑ Another boring Ford, with stripes.

### Bonus info



**YOU SPIN ME RIGHT ROUND**

Great news readers! Not only can you race all of the tedious street circuits one way, but once you're done you can turn around and race them all in reverse. How's that for innovation, eh?


↑ Non-Ford sighted ahead. MISSILES ARMED.


↑ Big spoilers: about as exciting as it gets.


↑ The car that started it all, back in 1902.


↑ A rare non-black Model T, here. Possibly.

## The Summary

**FORD STREET RACING** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

| | |
|---|---|
| ✔ | If you really like Fords, there are plenty here to fart about with. And when you get bored with all the Fords, there are... oh. |
| ✔ | It's nice and safe and good for teaching road safety techniques such as staying in the right lane and not driving off cliffs. Is that good? |
| ✘ | That handling! Imagine riding a bucking bronco only to find your bronco turns into a shipping container halfway through. |
| ✘ | It's as grey as a wet Wednesday afternoon in Hull. We expect more colour and variety from our driving games (unless they're set in Hull). |
| ✘ | Live would have been nice, you know, just to kind of mix it up a bit and add some colour to the tedium. And some non-Ford cars too? |

## The Verdict

A bit naff, a bit safe, and a bit too one-dimensional. Not the face-removing speed-freak it should have been.

**4.1//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** First Look - Issue 52
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats - Issue 53

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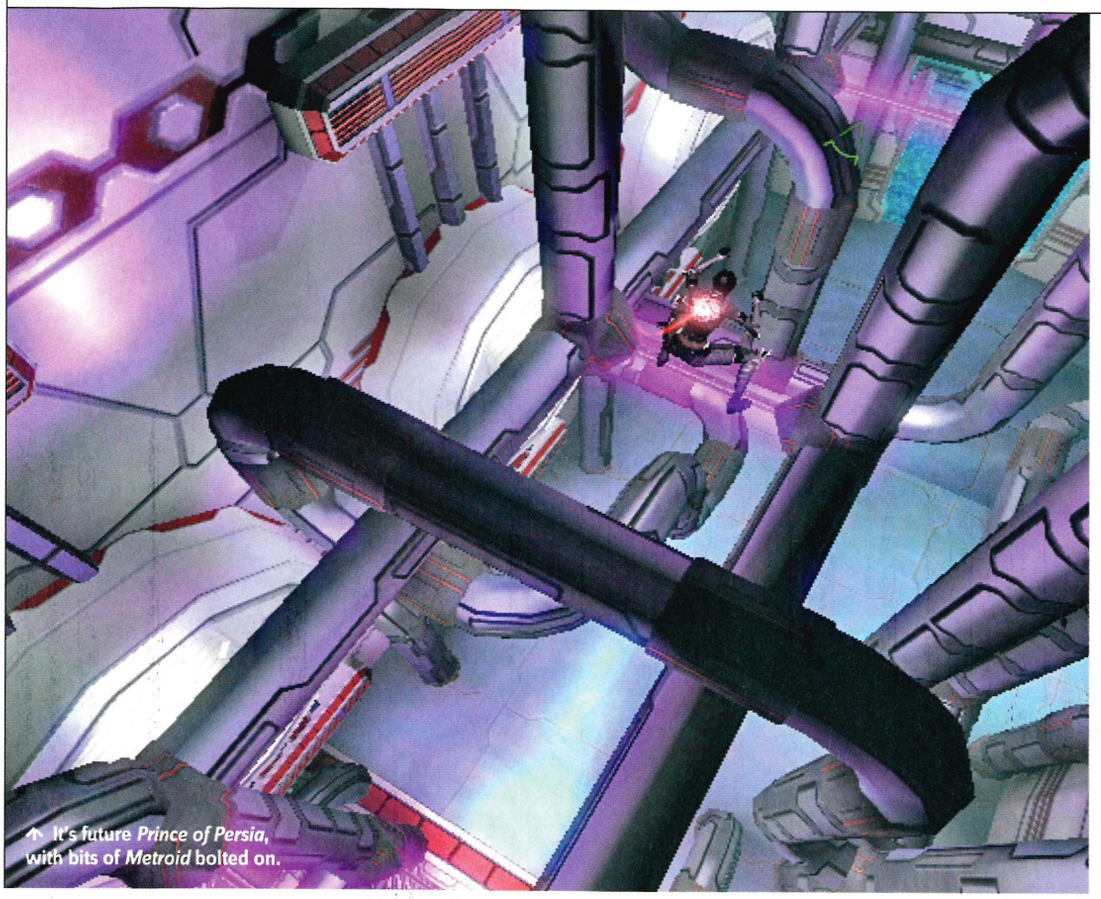


Play and Charge Kit

CREATED BY XBOX Microsoft

Jump in.

XBOX 360™



↑ It's future *Prince of Persia*, with bits of *Metroid* bolted on.

# Aeon Flux

## A movie tie-in that's actually better than the motion picture it's based on?

**Words:** Mike Jackson

| | |
|---|---|
| Dev: Terminal Reality | Pub: THQ |
| Players: 1 | Live: None |
| Release: 16 February | Price: £40 |
| www.aeonflux.com | |

IT'S ALWAYS a nice surprise when playing a movie-licensed videogame doesn't make us feel like headbutting the TV. We didn't expect much from *Aeon Flux*, especially after the awful press the film is receiving in the US.

But we were pleasantly surprised to find a fast-paced platformer that's worth a look from anyone into the acrobatic action pioneered by the *Prince of Persia* games. But instead of a long-haired, sword wielding dude in stupid trousers, you get a young, tight leather-wearing female armed with guns to flick around your screen.

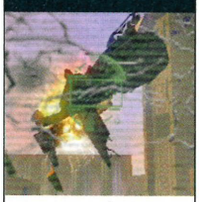
The sexy Aeon has clearly learned a few tricks from the Prince, because she knows many of the same moves. She can hang off and run along ledges, run up and along walls and leap acrobatically between suspended poles. Any *POP* player will be instantly familiar. Controlling Aeon is a breeze because, just like *Prince of Persia*, the environments have been set up so that Aeon will always leap to exactly the right spot - you just have to tell her to do it. It's cleverly done - it's not very challenging to make the jumps, yet bouncing acrobatically from one thin pole to the next feels gratifyingly skilful. Aeon's most spectacular move sees her leap off ledges attached to a sort of laser-rope, and rappel down hundreds of feet to a platform below. Hold the R-trigger and she'll whip out her gun and blast at enemies as she falls. It's awesome to look at.

That's the difference between Aeon and the Prince - Aeon is even more about flair and style. She doesn't settle with rappelling down massive chasms in a sensible fashion, she spins and flips on her way down, pulling several impressive and highly flexible poses before reaching the bottom. She doesn't just run along a wall and leap off it to a platform. She runs along a wall, kicks off it and triple-somersaults to a platform in slow-motion, while the camera swoops below her for cinematic effect.

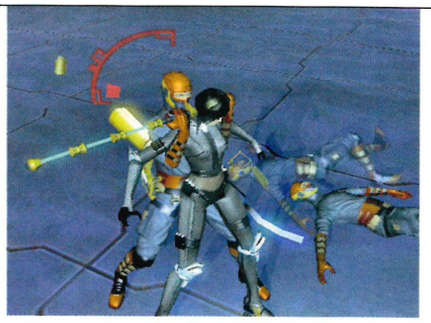
It's just a shame that the combat isn't nearly as cool as the acrobatics. Melee combat gets pretty repetitive - mash the X and Y buttons and watch Aeon flail her limbs about, hoping that she floors the suckers. There's very little depth to it. As you fight, you charge up a power bar that can be used to perform more powerful strikes. Once you hammer enemies down to near-death, you can perform an array of takedowns. These brutal moves involve Aeon sticking explosives to her victims and watching them explode, stamping on their face, throwing them off ledges or jumping onto their shoulders and using her legs to snap their necks. The neck-snap is the takedown of choice - Aeon recharges a little health each time she does it.

But the melee combat just isn't fun. You'll find yourself wishing you could skip enemy encounters and get back to the acrobatics. This is made worse by Aeon's gunplay - you have no manual control whatsoever over aiming. All targeting is automatic, with Aeon aiming at seemingly random enemies in her local proximity. When there's a single soldier or gun turret, this works fine. It becomes a problem

### Bonus info



**BIG BOY'S TOYS**
During levels you'll get to commandeer gun turrets and missile launchers with infinite ammo. You can cause ultimate carnage, even wrecking bits of scenery, but beware: enemies will try to break your new toy so blast them quick.



↑ The combat's shonky and a bit boring...



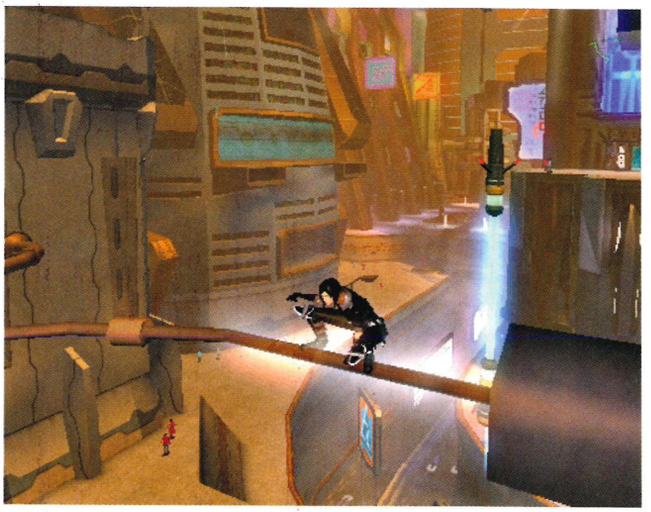
↑ She's a bit handy with the old explosives!




↑ Here's the *Metroid* bit. Watch the sides there!



↑ More crappy fighting. Press X, X, X, X to win!

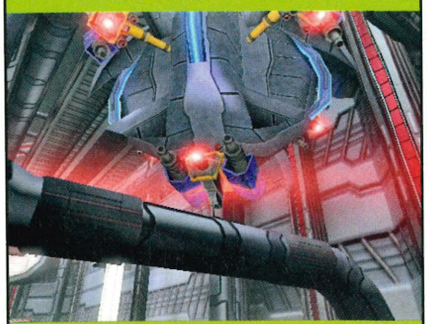


↑ In the 90s MTV series she dies at the end of each episode, Kenny-style.

## MY-BALL MADNESS

### Neat puzzles with battery operated balls

**Most of your time's spent sprinting around snapping necks and running up walls. But when the path ahead is too dangerous, Aeon has to rely on gadgets to solve the problem...**



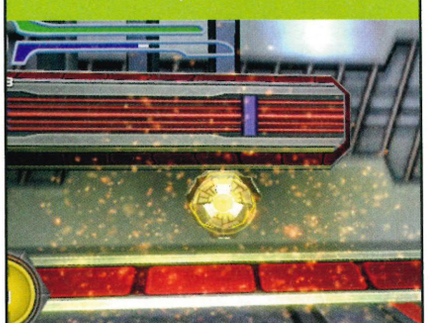
**This massive, menacing security cannon is scoping out the corridor. If it spots Aeon it'll blast her into about a thousand pieces. Maybe more.**



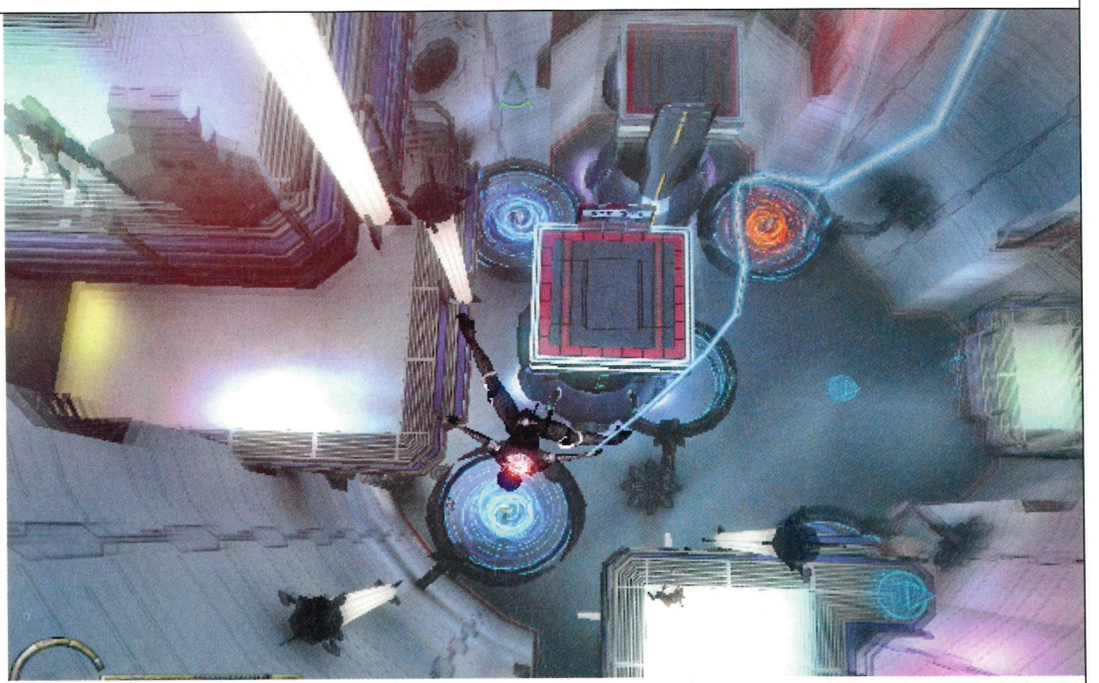
**There's a computer access point down at the other end of the corridor, so Aeon lays down her hacking orb, which you then get to take control of.**



**Now it's time to get the old *Super Monkey Ball* skills a-flexing. You have to manoeuvre the little orb safely past the gun turret's angry rockets. It's not easy, either.**



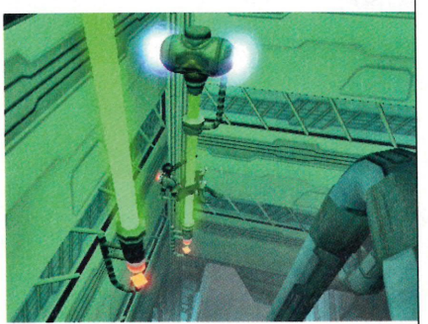
**Your orb's power is depleting pretty rapidly too, so there's no time to stand around. Reach the access point in time and deactivate the nasty old cannon. Sweet.**



↑ **Yup - it's *Prince of Persia* set in a manga film where everything's made of lasers (and without the crazy pantaloons).**



↑ **You're 'ridding the world of an evil tyranny'. (With bullet-time skills.)**



↑ **Charlize Theron did the voice and everything!**



↑ **Evil finishing moves increase Aeon's health.**

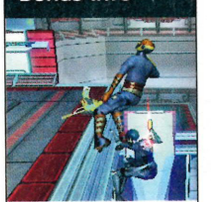
when there are multiple hostiles charging at you. Targeting a specific enemy is impossible.

But where the game disappoints in its combat, it makes up for it in other areas. The puzzles in *Aeon Flux* use a clever mix of cunning acrobatic skill and impressive physics to get your brain working. For example, although the route to an important switch or key is essentially pre-set, it's not always instantly obvious, forcing you to work out the route for yourself. Another great puzzle has you destroying the support beam of a tube through which large metal orbs are transported. With the tube collapsed, these orbs roll out one by one and begin to form a pile in a depression in the floor. This pile eventually becomes large enough for Aeon to climb up, and onto a previously unreachable platform.

These cool physics play extra significance when, at many points in each level, Aeon folds her flexible body into a transport orb. Seemingly taking influence from the GameCube's *Metroid Prime* titles, you have to roll her through a series of obstacles and past guards, making sure that her orb's armour isn't penetrated by enemy fire. The orb is a little heavy, but it's still an amusing contrast of gameplay that blends nicely with the on-foot action.

Whether you're ploughing through groups of soldiers in orb-form or extravagantly flicking from thin ledges to poles suspended high above the streets of a futuristic city, *Aeon Flux* will put a smile on your face. The combat isn't as good as it should be, which sadly lets down what is otherwise a solid acrobatic platformer with cunning puzzles, set in a dazzling futuristic world.

### Bonus info



**STEALTH KILL**

Aeon's nutty enough to be able take out guards with ease, so stealth's never really necessary. But if you're in a tactful mood, you can make her perform stealthy instant takedowns, springing up from a ledge or pouncing down from above. The poor geezer won't know what hit him.

## The Summary

**AEON FLUX** THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW!

- ✔ Cool boss fights that force you to think. The simple, intuitive controls make all the crazy jumps and tricks super-easy to pull off.
- ✔ Some surprisingly clever puzzles, making good use of environments and a solid real-time physics model.
- ✔ Well designed levels that look great and give you ample opportunity to flick about like a circus ninja.
- ✘ The combat is soulless, repetitive and dull. Fighting groups of soldiers quickly becomes an irritating chore.
- ✘ All the targeting is done automatically, meaning you'll sometimes waste precious ammo on unintended targets.

## The Verdict

A solid acrobatic platformer with some neat puzzles, let down by a flawed combat system. Still well worth a look.

**7.3//10**

**PREVIOUSLY:** Preview - Issue 48
**COMING SOON:** Hints & Cheats - Issue 54

A DOUBLE PLOT: THE AEON FLUX GAME IS NOT ONLY BASED ON THE MOVIE BUT ALSO ON THE POPULAR COMIC SERIES OF THE SAME NAME, WRITTEN BY PETER CHUNG

Official Xbox Magazine ELITE

# Elite Directory

The best Xbox games that scored 8.5 and more!



**BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT**
REVIEWED: Issue 48
TYPE: FPS
"Thrilling, tactical and easy to play. A great multiplayer FPS"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★★★



**BEYOND GOOD & EVIL**
REVIEWED: Issue 26
TYPE: Adventure
"Diverse and delicious. This isn't about violence, but about story, subterfuge and character"
SCORE 8.9



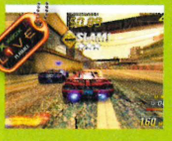
**BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON**
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Adventure
"A detective game that will stick with you after you've finished"
SCORE 9.0



**BROTHERS IN ARMS: EARNED IN BLOOD**
REVIEWED: Issue 48
TYPE: Squad shooter
"A gripping, even harder follow-up to a great title"
SCORE 8.9 XBL: ★★★★



**BROTHERS IN ARMS ROAD TO HILL 30**
REVIEWED: Issue 41
TYPE: Squad shooter
"A compelling, well-designed title. Depth *MOH* dreams of"
SCORE 8.9 XBL: ★★★



**BURNOUT: REVENGE**
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: Racing/Action
"Sensational speed, great looks and superbly aggressive racing - recommended"
SCORE: 8.9 XBL: ★★



**CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE**
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: "Amazing sound and visuals. The ultimate on-rails WWII shooter!"
SCORE: 9.0 XBL: ★★★★



**CONFLICT: VIETNAM**
REVIEWED: Issue 34
TYPE: Squad-based shooter
"Bigger and tougher than its *Desert Storm* siblings. It'll suck you in and love you long time"
SCORE 8.5



**CONKER: LIVE AND RELOADED**
REVIEWED: Issue 44
TYPE: "Rare delivers a game worthy of its pedigree. Funny, crude and hugely playable"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★★★



**CRIMSON SKIES**
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Action
"A great package that's been playtested to death - and it looks gorgeous"
SCORE 8.9 XBL: ★★★★★



**DEAD OR ALIVE ULTIMATE**
REVIEWED: Issue 39
TYPE: Beat 'em up
"A beautiful, balanced fighter; a wealth of multiplayer options"
SCORE 8.8 XBL: ★★★★★



**DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NEW YORK**
REVIEWED: Issue 35
TYPE: Beat 'em up
"Thoughtful, well-constructed. As fun as it is violent. Rated 18"
SCORE 8.5



**DEUS EX: INVISIBLE WAR**
REVIEWED: Issue 26
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Mind-blowing, expertly crafted experience. Don't miss it"
SCORE 9.0



**DOOM 3**
REVIEWED: Issue 40
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Not the genre-defining FPS that we expected but still extremely polished and entertaining"
SCORE 8.5 XBL: ★★★★



**FAHRENHEIT**
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: Adventure/Puzzle
"A truly captivating, dark, and grown-up adventure title. Xbox needs more games like this"
SCORE: 8.9



**FAR CRY INSTINCTS**
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: FPS
"Shoot guns in a free-roaming island paradise! At times stupid, at times wildly brilliant"
SCORE: 9.1 XBL: ★★★★



**FIFA 06**
REVIEWED: Issue 48
TYPE: Sports
"Your annual update of football fodder is served. The *Pro Evo*-est *FIFA* yet!"
SCORE: 8.5 XBL: ★★★★



**FIGHT NIGHT 2004**
REVIEWED: Issue 29
TYPE: Sports
"Absorbing, sweat-drenched title. Dazzling graphics and a groundbreaking control system"
SCORE 8.5



**FORZA MOTORSPORT**
REVIEWED: Issue 42
TYPE: Racing
"All the thrills of *Gotham*, plus mods galore and phenomenal online options"
SCORE 9.4 XBL: ★★★★



**FSW: TEN HAMMERS**
REVIEWED: Issue 52
TYPE: Strategy
"The nail-bitingly tough RTS is back. More wartime action than your fingers can handle!"
SCORE 9.0



**GRABBED BY THE GHOULIES**
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Action adventure
"Very polished. Top animation. A sure-fire crowd-pleaser"
SCORE 8.9



**GRAND THEFT AUTO DOUBLE PACK**
REVIEWED: Issue 25
TYPE: Driving/Action
"PS2 port, but a benchmark of crime titles yet to be beaten"
SCORE 8.9



**GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS**
REVIEWED: Issue 44
TYPE: Driving/Action
"Tons of new features - the biggest, most polished *GTA* yet"
SCORE 9.6



**GUN**
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: Action Adventure
Cracking western action. Dusty horseback *GTA*-style epic from the House of Hawk"
SCORE 9.0



**HALF-LIFE 2**
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: FPS
"The finest single-player shooter made gets squeezed into the big black box"
SCORE 9.8



**HALO 2 MULTIPLAYER MAP PACK**
REVIEWED: Issue 45
TYPE: FPS
"This great collection of maps is stunning value for money"
SCORE 9.0



**THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION**
REVIEWED: Issue 46
TYPE: Action
"Destroy everything you see in the Xbox smash spectacular!"
SCORE 8.5



**INDIANA JONES AND THE EMPEROR'S TOMB**
REVIEWED: Issue 14
TYPE: Action adventure
"One of the best single-player adventures on Xbox. Brilliant"
SCORE 9.0



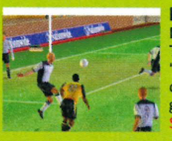
**JET SET RADIO FUTURE**
REVIEWED: Issue 02
TYPE: Platformer/ Extreme sports
"Supremely playable and very stylish. Huge, intricate levels"
SCORE 8.9



**KINGDOM UNDER FIRE: THE CRUSADERS**
REVIEWED: Issue 34
TYPE: Action/strategy
"Atmospheric slash 'em up with a strong strategy element"
SCORE 8.9 XBL: ★★★



**KINGDOM UNDER FIRE: HEROES**
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: Strategy
"Give the orders, then get stuck in yourself! The best *KUF* yet..."
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★



**LMA MANAGER 2006**
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: Sports
"Chewing gum and sheepskin coats at the ready - *LMA* gets a great(ish) new look!"
SCORE 8.5



**MADDEN 2005**
REVIEWED: Issue 34
TYPE: US sports
"Incredible visuals, great commentary, brilliant play. You'll be busy for months"
SCORE 8.5



**THE MATRIX: PATH OF NEO**
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: Action Adventure
"The Matrix game we should have had in 2003"
SCORE 8.5



**MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE**
REVIEWED: Issue 25
TYPE: Action/Shooter
"Definitive blockbuster action title bursting with new ideas"
SCORE 9.2



**MERCENARIES**
REVIEWED: Issue 39
TYPE: Third-person shooter
"Amazing effort. More plot and fewer explosions would have shaken *GTA*'s grip considerably"
SCORE 8.5



**METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM**
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Action/Shooter
"Gorgeous graphics, engaging characters, stacks of variety"
SCORE 9.0



**MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS**
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: Beat 'em up
"Eye-wateringly good. A new beginning for the *MK* franchise"
SCORE: 8.6



**MOTOGP: URT 3**
REVIEWED: Issue 46
TYPE: Racing
"Thrilling tracks and the best graphics on Xbox - you need this more than any other racer"
SCORE 9.5 XBL: ★★★★★



**MTV MUSIC GEN. 3**
REVIEWED: Issue 30
TYPE: Music
"Essential for anyone with aspirations of headlining at Ministry. Playable and friendly"
SCORE 8.5



**NHL 2005**
REVIEWED: Issue 35
TYPE: US sports
"The standard annual update, but with an improved roster of dummy shots and tricks"
SCORE 8.9



**OTOGI 2: IMMORTAL WARRIORS**
REVIEWED: Issue 39
TYPE: Adventure
"An absolutely stunning, deceptively deep actioner"
SCORE 8.6



**PANZER DRAGOON ORTA**
REVIEWED: Issue 15
TYPE: Action/Shooter
"Cutting-edge looks and classic blasting. Gorgeous"
SCORE 8.8



**PARIAH**
REVIEWED: Issue 42
TYPE: FPS
"Absorbing, tightly paced, ace mapmaker, incredible physics, innovative weapons system"
SCORE 8.9 XBL: ★★★★★



**PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG**
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: FPS/Action
"Beat your chest with joy! This is the true king of the jungle..."
SCORE 8.7



**PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP. I & II**
REVIEWED: Issue 17
TYPE: MMORPG
"This should be the most addictive online game ever"
SCORE N/A XBL: ★★★★★



**PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME**
REVIEWED: Issue 26
TYPE: Adventure
"The Prince is the new king of platformers. Truly outstanding."
SCORE 9.0



**PRINCE OF PERSIA THE TWO THRONES**
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: Action/Platformer
"Easily the best *Prince of Persia* game to date"
SCORE 9.1



**PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 5**
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: Sports
"Proving that *Pro Evo* is still the greatest sports game ever"
SCORE 9.5 XBL: ★★★★



**PSI-OPS: TMC**
REVIEWED: Issue 33
TYPE: Third-person shooter
"Inventive powers offer hours of fun. Outstanding AI compensates for poor story"
SCORE 8.6



**PSYCHONAUTS**
REVIEWED: Issue 50
TYPE: Adventure
"Platforming adventuring inside the mind itself! A beautifully warped experience"
SCORE 8.5



**RED DEAD REVOLVER**
REVIEWED: Issue 30
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Frantic, fun and reasonably demanding. Highly polished arcade entertainment"
SCORE 8.5



**ROCKY LEGENDS**
REVIEWED: Issue 35
TYPE: Sports
"Excellent visuals and gameplay. Controlling Creed, Lang and Drago is a big plus"
SCORE 8.6



**SERIOUS SAM II**
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: FPS
"Bonkers, balls-out blaster. All first-person shooters should be this much fun"
SCORE: 8.5 XBL: ★★



**THE SIMS 2**
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: World builder
"The little people are back, this time with proper console controls. Hurrah!"
SCORE: 8.5



**SOUL CALIBUR II**
REVIEWED: Issue 21
TYPE: Beat 'em up
"The most fluid fighter ever. Easy to pick up, tough to master, graphically superb"
SCORE 9.1



**SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY**
REVIEWED: Issue 41
TYPE: Action adventure
"Elegant, engaging, electrifying. The best *Splinter Cell* yet"
SCORE 9.4 XBL: ★★★★★



**STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT II**
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: MMOFPS
"Top notch *Battlefront* action made even more accessible"
SCORE 8.5 XBL: ★★★★



**STAR WARS KOTOR II: THE SITH LORDS**
REVIEWED: Issue 37
TYPE: RPG
"All that was good from *KOTOR*, in a far more oppressive place"
SCORE 9.3



**STAR WARS: REPUBLIC COMMANDO**
REVIEWED: Issue 40
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Amalgamation of every quality shooter - it's great fun to play"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★



**SUDEKI**
REVIEWED: Issue 32
TYPE: RPG
"One of the best-looking games on Xbox. A brilliant, vibrant adventure romp with great AI"
SCORE 8.7



**SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE**
REVIEWED: Issue 41
TYPE: Party
"The gameplay is simple but so addictive. A huge challenge too"
SCORE 8.6



**THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS**
REVIEWED: Issue 31
TYPE: Stealth
"Captivating, atmospheric, with massive replayability"
SCORE 8.9



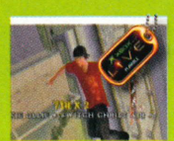
**TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2006**
REVIEWED: Issue 48
TYPE: Sports
"The Tiger-man finally gets a Live mode for his golf game!"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★★



**TOCA RACE DRIVER 3**
REVIEWED: Issue 52
TYPE: Racing
"Four-wheel action to cause an even bigger bulge in Jeremy Clarkson's ill-fitting jeans"
SCORE 9.2



**TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3: LOCKDOWN**
REVIEWED: Issue 47
TYPE: First-person shooter
"The most accessible one yet"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★



**TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND**
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: Extreme sports
"Hawk on Xbox Live! It's ace!
SCORE: 8.8 XBL: ★★★★



**TOTAL CLUB MANAGER 2005**
REVIEWED: Issue 35
TYPE: Sports
"The guvnor of Xbox managerial titles. Works with *FIFA 2005*"
SCORE 8.7



**ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN**
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: ACTION
"Spidey versus Venom! Make a big mess of New York in this comic-book grudge match"
SCORE: 8.5



**UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP 2: THE LIANDRI CONFLICT**
REVIEWED: Issue 40
TYPE: Shooter
"First-person blasting and frantic third-person action. Superb"
SCORE 9.2 XBL: ★★★★★



**WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED FEAT. SHAUN MURRAY**
REVIEWED: Issue 17
TYPE: Extreme sports
"Outrageous arcade action"
SCORE 8.6



**WORLD CHAMP. SNOOKER 2004**
REVIEWED: Issue 31
TYPE: Sports
"Tension-filled fun for anyone remotely interested in snooker"
SCORE 8.8 XBL: ★★★



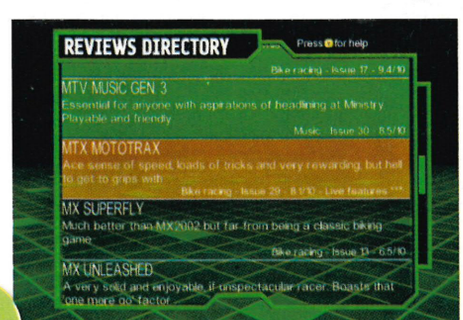
**XIII**
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: First-person shooter
"Unique, stylish and captivating. You can't afford to miss this superb FPS"
SCORE 9.0 XBL: ★★★



**X-MEN LEGENDS II: RISE OF APOCALYPSE**
REVIEWED: Issue 49
TYPE: Adventure/RPG
"Super-detailed comic adventuring goodness"
SCORE: 8.5 XBL: ★★★

# Full Interactive Reviews Directory

The ultimate buyer's guide! Scroll through more than 650 Xbox games on the disc. Press the A button on your controller to read the full reviews!




# ELITE CLASSICS

All of these Elite-scoring games are now available for the incredible price of £19.99 in the Xbox Classics range...

**AMPED 2**
REVIEWED: Issue 23
TYPE: Extreme sports
"Stunning visuals. Easy to pick up and furiously addictive"
SCORE 8.9 XBL: ★★★★

**BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER**
REVIEWED: Issue 09 TYPE: Platformer
"Inventive, intriguing and unique. *Blinx* looks superb and has loads of genuine replay value. Essential"
SCORE: 9.3

**BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN**
REVIEWED: Issue 34 TYPE: Driving
"Essential arcade racer, brimming with deliciousness. The *Burnout* franchise comes of age"
SCORE: 9.4 XBL: ★★

**COLIN McRAE RALLY 2005**
REVIEWED: Issue 34
TYPE: Driving
"Every bit as good as *04*, with added online play"
SCORE 8.5 XBL: ★★★

**DEAD OR ALIVE 3**
REVIEWED: Issue 01 TYPE: Beat 'em up
"Accessible, slick, satisfying, and instantly enjoyable. Breathtaking levels and superbly animated fighters"
SCORE: 8.5

**FABLE: THE LOST CHAPTERS**
REVIEWED: Issue 50 TYPE: Action/RPG
"Confident, flashy, beautifully polished update of the seminal RPG for only 20 quid. Buy it now!"
SCORE: 9.4

**FIFA FOOTBALL 2005**
REVIEWED: Issue 35 TYPE: Sports
"Improved gameplay, massive career modes and Live play"
SCORE: 8.9 XBL: ★★★

**FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR**
REVIEWED: Issue 30 TYPE: Strategy
"Punishing, innovative strategy title that captures the visceral atmosphere of modern-day warfare. Essential"
SCORE: 9.2 XBL: ★★★★

**HALO: COMBAT EVOLVED**
REVIEWED: Issue 01 TYPE: First-person shooter
"A masterpiece; without question one of the best games ever. Brilliant story and unmatched level design"
SCORE: 9.7

**HALO 2**
REVIEWED: Issue 36 TYPE: FPS
"The Chief is back to kick more Covenant ass in his biggest, most ass-kickingest adventure yet! You won't find a better single-player and multiplayer game on current consoles"
SCORE: 10.0 XBL: ★★★★★

**JADE EMPIRE**
REVIEWED: Issue 41 TYPE: Action/RPG
"Imaginative, accessible, beautiful and inventive RPG. The BioWare boffins outdo themselves once again"
SCORE: 9.3

**MOTOGP: ULTIMATE RACING TECHNOLOGY**
REVIEWED: Issue 04 TYPE: Bike racing
"Hotly contested bike racing combined with a perfect control method, sumptuous visuals and ace presentation"
SCORE: 8.9 XBL: ★★★★★

**NINJA GAIDEN BLACK**
REVIEWED: Issue 49 TYPE: Action
"Calling all ninjas - it's now EVEN HARDER! Twice the ninja goodness for half the price"
SCORE: 9.4

**PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4**
REVIEWED: Issue 35 TYPE: Sports
"The most accurate and fun console footy sim. Superb"
SCORE: 9.4 XBL: ★★★★

**OUTRUN 2**
REVIEWED: Issue 34
TYPE: Driving
"Top presentation and brilliant controls. Fast and furious racer that'll please old and new fans"
SCORE 8.5 XBL: ★★★★

**PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2**
REVIEWED: Issue 23 TYPE: Driving
"The definitive, best-looking driving experience available. Hefty single-player and limitless enjoyment on Live"
SCORE: 9.3 XBL: ★★★★★

**PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN**
REVIEWED: Issue 37 TYPE: Adventure
"Grittier, enhanced combat and a darker storyline set the tone for the sequel. Ass-kicking adventuring at its best"
SCORE: 9.0 XBL: ★★

**RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2**
REVIEWED: Issue 30 TYPE: Driving
"Edge-of-your-seat racer that doesn't overload on technical details. Equally fun for a quick blast or becoming absorbed in Career mode. Looks great, with brilliant Live multiplayer"
SCORE: 9.0 XBL: ★★★★

**RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: TIDES OF WAR**
REVIEWED: Issue 16 TYPE: First-person shooter
"A cracking action shooter that is superb in single-player and provides outstanding team play experiences on Live. An epic, gripping, cinematic adventure from start to finish"
SCORE: 9.2 XBL: ★★★★★

**SPIDER-MAN 2**
REVIEWED: Issue 32 TYPE: Action
"Fun tutorial, simple combat, and a huge environment to explore - you'll be smashing and swinging your way around the streets of New York in no time"
SCORE: 8.6

**STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT**
REVIEWED: Issue 35 TYPE: Action shooter
"Breathtaking. A joy to play from start to finish, every time"
SCORE: 9.0 XBL: ★★★★

**STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC**
REVIEWED: Issue 20 TYPE: RPG
"A whole universe with a thousand paths to explore. One of the most compelling games on any console ever"
SCORE: 9.5

**THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY**
REVIEWED: Issue 33
TYPE: First-person shooter
"A textbook example of how to do movie/game tie-ins. Intuitive controls, stylish, atmospheric and violent"
SCORE: 9.0

**THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING**
REVIEWED: Issue 23 TYPE: Action
"Blockbuster action that recreates the film beautifully. Get torn from your seat and launched into Middle Earth!"
SCORE: 8.5

**TIMESPLITTERS 2**
REVIEWED: Issue 09 TYPE: First-person shooter
"Frantic, hyper-paced action. There'll be a McDonalds on Mars before you exhaust all the deathmatch variations"
SCORE: 9.3

**TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER**
REVIEWED: Issue 21
TYPE: Squad-based shooter
"Atmospheric expansion with a great online option"
SCORE 8.5 XBL: ★★★★

**TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON**
REVIEWED: Issue 11 TYPE: Squad-based shooter
"Hugely playable - easy command interface and intuitive controls make *Ghost Recon* the strategy/action benchmark"
SCORE: 8.9 XBL: ★★★★

**TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3**
REVIEWED: Issue 23 TYPE: First-person shooter
"A great variety of missions, excellent multiplayer. Looks fantastic, sounds incredible and the action is relentless"
SCORE: 9.4 XBL: ★★★★★

**TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL**
REVIEWED: Issue 23 TYPE: Action adventure
"Amazingly good-looking, addictive, exciting stealth adventure. Superbly tense with lots of cool gadgets."
SCORE: 9.0

**TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4**
REVIEWED: Issue 11 TYPE: Extreme sports
"Silky trick system. User-friendly structure and loads of new ideas. Levels aren't quite as interesting as *THPS3*'s though"
SCORE: 8.6

**TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND**
REVIEWED: Issue 24 TYPE: Extreme sports
"The slight change in direction is refreshing. Story mode is impressive, but still no Live play. Hop off and explore!"
SCORE: 8.6

**TOP SPIN**
REVIEWED: Issue 23 TYPE: Sports
"Incredible. The best tennis game in the world. Massive single-player game and awesome with friends"
SCORE: 9.0 XBL: ★★★★

**UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP**
REVIEWED: Issue 10 TYPE: First-person shooter
"Frantic action will have you playing for hours at a time. Fast yet easily controllable and limitless fun on Xbox Live"
SCORE: 9.2 XBL: ★★★★

EVERY! REVIEW! EVER! YOU CAN READ EVERY SINGLE OXM REVIEW FROM ISSUE ONE ONWARDS BY SIMPLY CHECKING OUT THE REVIEWS SECTION OF THE COVERDISC (PROVIDED BEN T'S ACTUALLY REMEMBERED TO PUT THEM ON THIS MONTH...)

# Play:More

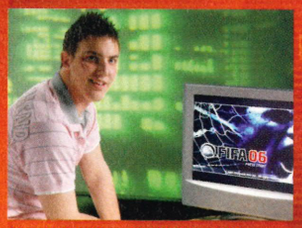
PLAY:MORE is about getting more from your games. From tips and cheats to in-depth Masterclasses, you'll find everything, explore everywhere and beat everyone.

It's about playing games until the disc wears out. It's about demonstrating your expertise, proving you're the best and taking your place among our elite community of Xbox gamers. It's about winning stuff, beating the challenges and earning respect from your fellow gamers.

Play:More is where you make *Official Xbox Magazine* your magazine.



DEMO: STUBBS THE ZOMBIE



INTERVIEW: FIFA WORLD CUP



GUIDE: CASTLEVANIA: COD

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## Don't Forget Your Free Tips Book

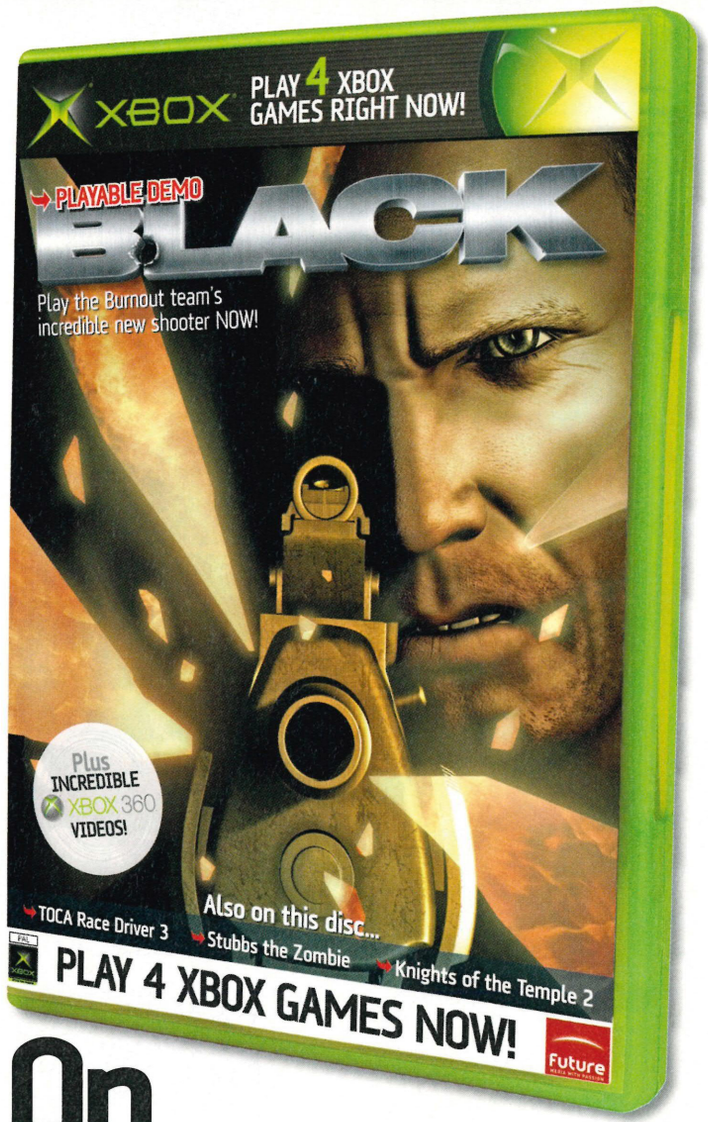



Yes! All that extra paper might be a blow to the world's tree population, but for Xbox gamers this bumper free tips book is a gateway to gaming nirvana! Get stuck in and lead a better life through cheating!

**Featuring:**

- A complete walkthrough for the ultra-awesome yet brain-searingly tough *Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers*
- The complete solution to *Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows*. Blue Elf will never be hungry again!
- Oodles of must-know hints and cheats from the biggest-selling games around!

**So get stuck in and rip your games to SHREDS!**




# On Your Disc...

BLACK! BLACK! Black like the depths of darkest night! Black like the bottom of the deepest pit in which the unholy hell spawn make their home! Or, more entertainingly, *Black*, like our massive cover game demo!

Yep, you've read the beautifully crafted review (starting on page 068), now it's time to actually play the game and see for yourself exactly what all the fuss is about. If HUGE explosions and powerful weapons are your cup of tea, expect to be very happy people indeed!

Plus, we've got the first goals in our new regular *PES5* Goal of the Month feature, brand new Xbox 360 movies and exclusive Xbox footage you won't see anywhere else. It's good 'ere, innit?







↑ The logical conclusion of the man-with-a-gun game.

# Black

Reviewed: Issue 53 | Score: 8.4
Players: 1

THERE'S SIMPLY nothing more satisfying than firing endless rounds from a big, heavy machine gun at a stationary vehicle full of highly combustible petrol until it explodes in a shower of twisted metal – especially if several terrorist goons are standing in the vicinity. Happily, this exclusive playable demo of *Black* has such blissful situations in abundance.

From the moment you fire it up you'll be chucked into a maelstrom of gunpowder abuse and potentially ear-damaging noise (make sure you turn it up REALLY loud for the full effect). This demo features one full level of action, and lets you get to grips with the awesome destructive potential of both the assault rifle and the shotgun.

Look out for the friendly forces towards the end of the level (they'll provide you with cover fire), and the much needed health packs strewn around the streets. Apart from that, have fun blowing things up and don't forget: if you can blow up their cover, they can blow up yours!

ON THE DISC

- MOVE / CROUCH
- LOOK
- CHANGE WEAPON / USE HEALTH PACK
- A RELOAD
- B MELEE
- X PICK UP WEAPON
- Y NOT USED
- L GRENADE
- R FIRE
- NOT USED
- NOT USED

# TOCA Race Driver 3

Reviewed: Issue 52 | Score: 9.2
Players: 1

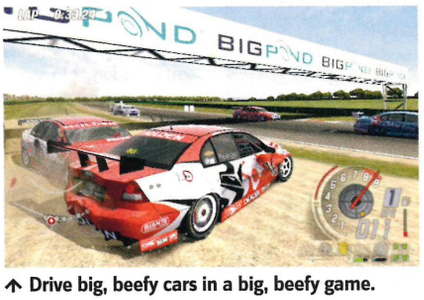
WE WERE going to bring you a special Xbox Live demo of the awesome *TOCA Race Driver 3*, but unfortunately, due to technical problems beyond out control (we're not saying Microsoft's coding pixies have been at the furniture polish again, but, well...), the online demo won't appear until next issue. Never mind – you can still enjoy *TOCA Race Driver 3* this month before it hits the shop shelves with this huge single-player demo. Five races, four categories of vehicle and hours' worth of driving and engine-tinkering fun – how's that for *TOCA* heaven?



JOYTECH

**Prize Challenge**
We want you to complete the V8 Supercars race as quickly as possible (it's in the Touring Cars division). Fastest time wins a pair of JOYTECH Neo S wireless controllers, our favourite third-party joypads. As this month's disc is rated 15 you must be 15 years or older to enter. The closing date is 16 March and the editor's decision is final.



↑ Drive big, beefy cars in a big, beefy game.

- STEER
- NOT USED
- NOT USED
- A LOOK BEHIND
- B HANDBRAKE
- X GEAR DOWN
- Y GEAR UP
- L BRAKE
- R ACCELERATE
- CHANGE CAMERA
- NOT USED

## Replay

WANT A taste of how explosive *Black* really is? Then see how we teach this old banger a lesson... explosive shell-style!



# Challenges

WELCOME TO the section of the magazine where we ask you to polish your trumpet and blow it louder than anybody else. In a games-playing sense of course. Think of it as your chance to become a gaming celebrity! Look out for challenges based on both the Game Disc demos and full-price titles. Some are for prizes, others just for glory. Check it out!

**TOCA RACE DRIVER 3**
**Game Disc 51**
**THE CHALLENGE: Get the fastest time in the Baja Motocross Challenge.**




| NAME | LOCATION | TIME |
|---|---|---|
| JAMES ANDERSON | CAMBRIDGE | 2:25.39 |
| MICHAEL RYDER | BIRMINGHAM | 2:30.66 |
| GLYN HORSLEY | KIRKBY | 2:31.93 |
| DEAN KING | LONDON | 2:36.57 |
| MAD MAC | CHESHIRE | 2:38.57 |
| ARRONXAN POUCHER | HULL | 2:39.15 |
| GLENN HORGAN | BIRMINGHAM | 2:41.72 |
| STEPHANE MAWETE | LONDON | 2:43.13 |
| SIMON HICKS | IPSWICH | 2:43.49 |
| RICHARD BOYD | TORQUAY | 2:43.87 |

One day somebody other than Glyn Horsley or James Anderson will win the demo challenge joypads, but until then, it's congratulations Mr Anderson, as Agent Smith from *The Matrix* would say.

# Issue 53 Challenges

**Dear *Official Xbox Magazine***
Here is my Demo Challenge score:

**TOCA RACE DRIVER 3**
My best time for the V8 Supercars race is:

Name
Address

Email Address
Telephone number

Fill out the form and send it to Game Disc 53 Demo Challenge, *OXM*, 2 Balcombe Street, London, NW1 6NW by 16 March, or email your times to staff@futurenet.co.uk.

BLACK IS BACK: COOL THINGS THAT ARE BLACK: MAGIC EIGHT BALLS, BLACK HOLES, THE NEW ZEALAND RUGBY TEAM (THE ALL-BLACKS), SAM FISHER'S KINKY RUBBER SUIT

# Xbox Movies

**The Godfather**
See some exclusive footage of us on the streets of New York, threatening shopkeepers, bribing coppers and wilfully damaging private property. We're right scallys, we are.

**TOCA Race Driver 3**
We suggest you buckle up as *OXM* dinosaur Ben Talbot takes Codemasters' latest racer for a spin (no, he doesn't have a licence).

**Black**
See even more exclusive new footage from EA's big-balled blaster. All-new levels revealed for your viewing pleasure.

**Commandos Strike Force**
Take a look at the WWII shooter with brains in this brand-new movie of the Eidos FPS. Eyes front, soldier.

**Painkiller: Hell Wars**
We go behind the scenes to show you the making of a potential Xbox classic.

# Xbox 360 Videos

Don't forget to check the special Xbox 360 section of the disc for awesome footage from some of tomorrow's hottest next-generation games.

**Full Auto**
It's *Burnout* with guns and a little bit of *Prince of Persia* thrown in for good measure! How does that work? See Sega's killer driving game in action to find out.



↑ **The next fad in gaming: CARS + GUNS.**

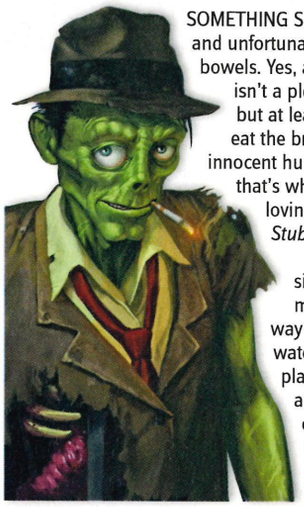
**NBA 2K6**
It's hoop-shooting madness, 360 style. Slam dunk da funk and all that Utah Jazz (did you see what we did there?).

**NHL 2K6**
One of the finest sports games known to man, and now on Microsoft's brain-melting new console too!

**Amped 3**
Those wacky Americans – what are they like? Not all there if this intro to the 360 snowboarding game is anything to go by.

# Stubbs the Zombie in Rebel Without a Pulse

Reviewed: Issue 53 | Score: 6.6
Players: 1-2



SOMETHING SMELLS rotten, and unfortunately it's your bowels. Yes, a zombie's lot isn't a pleasant one, but at least you get to eat the brains of innocent humans, and that's why we're loving this massive *Stubbs* demo.

The aim is simple – you must fight your way through a water-treatment plant and, using a combination of your rotting bladder and a severe urinary tract infection, contaminate the water supply in the most despicable manner (use your imagination). Along the way you'll get to eat your fill in tasty human brains and create your own personal zombie army! Don't forget to experiment with Stubbs' ability to detach his head and arm (possessing humans is particularly amusing), and when you do reach the water supply keep an ear out for the lady's voice – she'll let you know exactly how much 'self-relieving' work you still need to do...




ON THE DISC

- MOVE
- CAMERA
- NOT USED
- A JUMP
- B FLATULENCE
- X ATTACK
- Y USE
- L GRENADE
- R ATTACK
- HAND
- HEAD



↑ **Kill everything in the NAME of THE LORD.**



↑ **Why? Because GOD SAYS SO, that's why.**

# Knights of the Temple 2

Reviewed: 48 | Score: 5.5
Players: 1

STEADY ON *Star Wars* fans – that's Knights of the TEMPLE, not Old Republic. You won't find any Jedi mind-tricks in this game, although on the plus side you do get a decent selection of medieval-style sword-swinging combos to play around with, as well as a healthy amount of magical spells and powers. Who needs Luke Skywalker when you've got a Crusades-inspired action-adventure, eh?

This demo features two levels of demon-battering action, with you clanking about dispatching evil with sword and crossbow. Oh, sorry, we forgot to say – you play a Knight who has to collect some artefact things to close a hell gate, or something. Anyway, the introductory movie explains it better than we ever could. One level is set on a cold, dark, fishy quayside while the other is based in a Roman-esque temple that is slowly falling apart. Don't forget – you can build your magic bar up by killing enemies and then release your powers by holding down the triggers and pressing the corresponding buttons on the joypad.

ON THE DISC

- MOVE
- LOOK
- SELECT WEAPON
- A ATTACK 1
- B ATTACK 2
- X BLOCK
- Y JUMP / USE
- L ABILITIES
- R SPECIAL ATTACKS
- QUICK MAP
- UNLOCK ENEMY

## Replay

Mmm, brains. See how Stubbs gnaws his way through the crunchy skull to get at all the delicious white brain-meat on the inside.



# GOAL OF THE MONTH!

DON'T FORGET to check out the *PES5* Goal of the Month competition on the disc. We've got three corkers for you to peruse, and we want you to vote on your favourite. Simply pick the goal you reckon is best (Mark's, clearly), make a note of the code, and text it to 87103* to register your vote.

If you think you've got a goal that's good enough for a future goal of the month send it to us on a memory card, with your name and address, to *PES5* Goal of the Month, *OXM*, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW. If your goal is selected and voted the best, you'll win a cool random prize! We'll have more goals and the results of this month's competition next issue...

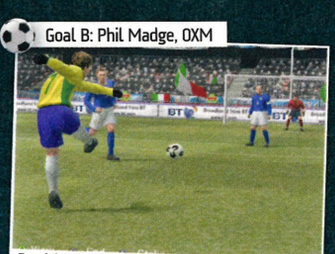


Goal A: Mark Robins, OXM



A textbook example of chipping the keeper... with your head! Text code: GOALA

Goal B: Phil Madge, OXM

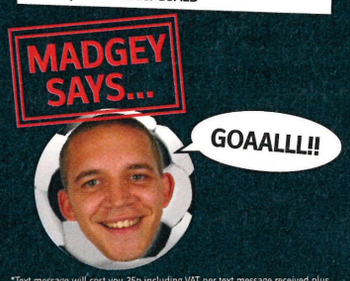


Precision fishing with a killer instinct - or so Phil says. Text code: GOALB

Goal B: Matt Hockey, Barnstaple



It's a Toure own-goal howler, but a very funny one. Text code: GOALC




*Text message will cost you 25p including VAT per text message received plus your usual text message cost. Please source all necessary permissions. This service is available to all networks. See page 042 for full terms & conditions.

# Play:More On The Disc

Earn a place in Xbox history and appear in your section of the Game Disc! Play:More brings you the maddest tricks, and we love to show Xbox Live clans causing mayhem.

Complete and cut out this coupon and attach it to the front of your VHS tape or DVD. Entries must be less than ten minutes long and rewound to the correct starting position. Please don't have custom soundtracks playing.



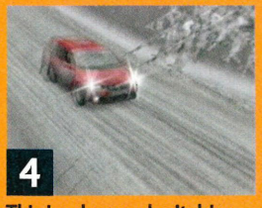
**He's Deingerous! No really, that's his name, and this is his insane Master Ninja challenge fight clip. Check out how little energy he has left at the end!**



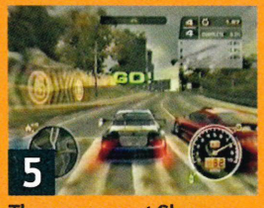
**A second nutritious helping of Master Ninja madness from the hand of Iain Smollett, as he expertly hacks his way through some giant freaky dinosaur things.**



**The Mexican Idiots dish up some *Total Overdose* madness from the recent Game Disc demo. Thanks for the Christmas card by the way, lads.**



**This is why you don't drive fast in the snow - David and Grant offer up a *Colin McRae* mega crash. We're guessing they didn't walk away from this one.**



**The ever-present Glyn Horsley shows us why he wins so many Game Disc challenges with this awesome display of *Need For Speed* talent.**

## Play:More On The Disc

Name _____

Address _____

_____

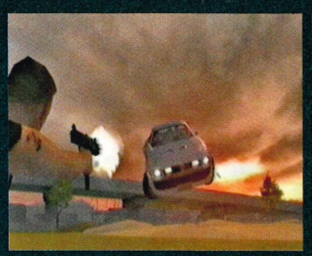
Postcode _____

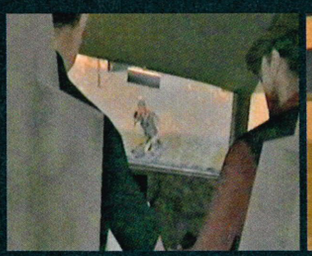
Description of my Top Play _____

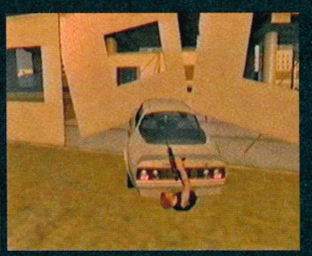
❑ I have made sure that custom soundtracks are turned off.

## Replay

Glyn Horsley's latest *Driv3r* epic serves up a timely reminder of why you shouldn't take Tanner (in a car) head-on if you value your life.







# Challenges

ANOTHER TOP challenge league for you. If you want to suggest a new challenge, or have some results from an event you've organised, send them to the usual address and we'll do our best to get them mentioned in the magazine.



↑ **Are you the scourge of *Battlefield* pilots?**

**BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT**
**Full Game Challenge**
**THE CHALLENGE: To see who's the biggest helicopter destroyer on Live.**

| NAME | LOCATION | HELICOPTERS |
|---|---|---|
| TREVOR SIMPSON | BILLERICAY | 56 |
| JUSTIN STEN | MIDDLESBROUGH | 47 |
| JODY DEVON | CHESTER | 39 |
| TREY JALAL | LUTON | 31 |
| KEIRAN CONLETH | STOKE | 27 |
| SAM THORNSTEIN | LONDON | 25 |
| JAY WILKIE | DUNDEE | 23 |
| DES KEATON | KING'S LYNN | 17 |
| BEN TALBOT | LONDON | 8 |
| NASSER MERARI | LEICESTER | 7 |



We've already had plenty of people claiming to be helicopter-blasting masters in our new rolling challenge, but there's room for improvement, so if you've yet to get involved and you fancy yourself as a bit of a *Battlefield 2* master, send your Gamertag to the usual address (staff@ futurenet.co.uk) and we'll check how many copters you've put paid to. If your total's high enough you could get listed. Come on - it won't take too much effort to wipe Talbot off the list!

# Reviews Directory

IT'S NOT just great demos and exclusive content that your *OXM* Game Disc is stuffed to the gills with. Oh no. We've also squeezed in every single review featured since Issue 01, in the form of the huge interactive reviews database. It's indispensable, whether you're new to the Xbox scene or as a handy reference. No other mag gives you this much!

WEE WEE OF DEATH: IF ANY UNRULY SCIENTISTS OR SECURITY BODS GET TOO CLOSE TO YOU IN THE STUBBS DEMO WHILE YOU'RE CONTAMINATING THE WATER SUPPLY, TRY TURNING ROUND AND CATCHING THEM IN YOUR 'PUTRID STREAM'. IT'S SKIN-MELTINGLY GOOD STUFF

# EventsCalendar

Your official guide to this month's hot releases, events and Live gaming sessions. If it's online and happening, it's happening on here

### THUR 16 FEBRUARY 06

Fansite Event
Solo Oddball Tournament
Meet new friends and shoot them in the head!
www.xboxgamezone.co.uk

### FRI 17 FEBRUARY 06

Fansite Event
*Halo 2* Three Way Dance
Nine players, three teams, total carnage.
www.matchbox360.co.uk

### SAT 18 FEBRUARY 06

WINNING WEEKEND
*Burnout Revenge*
Hit Xbox Live tonight for the chance of winning an amazing 42" Samsung HDTV!
www.xbox.com

### SUN 19 FEBRUARY 06

Fansite Event
Join the *Halo 2* Team League every Sunday! All skill levels welcome. Visit www.xboxliveaddicts.co.uk to register

### MON 20 FEBRUARY 06

Monday Night Blitz
Give the world a kicking tonight on *Dead or Alive Ultimate*
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/d/deadoraliveultimate

### TUE 21 FEBRUARY 06

OXM Lunchtime Madness!
Play Gav at *Halo 2* on Live between 1 and 2pm today! (Gamertag: OXM PLAYMORE)

### WED 22 FEBRUARY 06

The *PGR* 100
The virtual racing event of the year.
www.xbox.com/en-GB/community/news/

### THUR 23 FEBRUARY 06

Skive with Live
Get involved in our mega-Skive with Live *Burnout: Revenge* challenge. Turn to page 127 now for more details.

### FRI 24 FEBRUARY 06

OUT TODAY!
Get down the shops now and buy EA's brilliant blaster *Black*!
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/b/black/

### SAT 25 FEBRUARY 06

WINNING WEEKEND
*Dead or Alive Ultimate*
Hit Xbox Live tonight for the chance of winning an amazing 42" Samsung HDTV!

### SUN 26 FEBRUARY 06

Trueplayerz Tournament
Take part in a unique *Far Cry Instincts* challenge on specially created maps to win cool prizes
www.joystickjunkies.com/trueplayerz

### MON 27 FEBRUARY

Featured Game
*Star Wars Battlefront II*
Get on Xbox Live tonight and use the Force!
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/s/

### TUE 28 FEBRUARY 06

Featured Game
*Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2: Summit Strike*
Tonight's theme on Live is hardcore war so get involved.
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/t/tomclancysghostrecon2summitstrike/

### WED 01 MARCH 06

Fansite Event
*Pro Evo 5* Knockout Tourney
There are prizes for the winners too!
www.matchbox360.co.uk

### THUR 02 MARCH 06

The *PGR* 100
Xbox Live presents the virtual racing event of the year. Will you be one of the 100 *PGR* winners?
www.xbox.com/en-GB/community/news/

### FRI 03 MARCH 06

OUT TODAY!
*FIFA Street 2* hits the, erm, streets today! It's well boss, innit!

### SAT 04 MARCH 06

WINNING WEEKEND
*Call of Duty 2: BRO*
Get on Xbox Live tonight for the chance of winning an amazing prize!
www.xbox.com

### SUN 05 MARCH 06

WINNING WEEKEND
*Call of Duty 2: BRO*
Got on Xbox Live tonight for the chance of winning an amazing prize!

### MON 06 MARCH 06

The *PGR* 100
The *Project Gotham Racing* super-competition continues! Hundreds of prizes are up for grabs!
www.xbox.com/en-GB/community/news/

### TUE 07 MARCH 06

Fansite Event
Sign up now to take part in this three-week *Splinter Cell Chaos Theory* tournament.
Visit www.xboxliveaddicts.co.uk for details.

### WED 08 MARCH 06

*OXM* Lunchtime Madness!
Play Mark at *PES5* on Live between 1 and 2pm today! (Gamertag: OXM PLAYMORE)

### THUR 09 MARCH 06

Featured Game
*Pro Evolution Soccer 5*
Pull your football boots on, peeps.
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/p/

### FRI 10 MARCH 06

Frag Doll Friday
The Frag Dolls will be on Live tonight hoping to beat up some boys on *Dead or Alive Ultimate*. Join in, but don't hit too hard: they are girls after all.
www.fragdolls.co.uk

### SAT 11 MARCH 06

WINNING WEEKEND
*Project Gotham Racing 2*
Hit the highway of Xbox Live tonight for your chance of winning something super-awesome.
www.xbox.com

### SUN 12 MARCH 06

WINNING WEEKEND
*Project Gotham Racing 2*
Hit the highway of Xbox Live tonight for your chance of winning something super-awesome.
www.xbox.com

### MON 13 MARCH 06

Featured Game
*Fight Night Round 3*
Get your friends on Live for tonight's knock-out boxing battle.

### TUE 14 MARCH 06

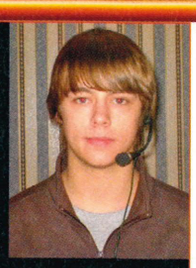
Featured Game
*Battlefield 2: Modern Combat*
Get online for our PlayMore game challenge. See page 107
www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/b/battlefield2moderncombat/

### WED 15 MARCH 06

Look out for the new issue of *Official Xbox Magazine* with an exclusive review of *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend*, on sale tomorrow!

All dates and events subject to change due to reasons beyond our control. For up-to-date Xbox Live event news visit www.xbox.com/en-gb/community/calendar

## Game Star of the Month



**Name:** Aaron Gregg
**Age:** 18
**Gamertag:** EmSixTeen
**Home town:** Coleraine, Northern Ireland

WITH HIS foot firmly pressing pedal to the metal, this issue's Game Star of the Month is Aaron Gregg (AKA EmSixTeen), whose Xbox Live car club Team Technique Racing had the immense honour of winning the recent XboxElite.co.uk *Project Gotham Racing 2* tournament, something that easily warrants instant God-like status.

We caught up with Aaron (by driving EXTREMELY fast) to quiz him on his clearly legendary driving skills. "I love playing driving games over Xbox Live with my friends and Car Club," Aaron told us, "and we mess around all the time with all the different challenges in *Forza Motorsport* and *Project Gotham Racing 2*. We're always collecting as many Kudos points as possible."

Aaron first joined the Xbox Live community back in December 2003 and has been an avid online gamer since. He particularly enjoys the challenge of *Rainbow Six 3*'s team-based engagements and, obviously, *Forza Motorsport*, and is always whiling away the early hours on Xbox Live with friends. Clearly they must have a job keeping up with him.

# Birthday Party Halo

## Celebrate four years of Xbox with Halo 2

IT SEEMS like only yesterday that we first sat down to enjoy Master Chief's incredible debut in *Halo*, but this month sees the fourth anniversary of the Xbox console in the UK. Games website pro-g.co.uk wants us all to – what else – celebrate with a huge bout of online *Halo 2*.

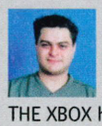
Pro-g.co.uk's Xbox fourth birthday *Halo 2* tournament is set to take place on March 14 and 15, to coincide with the exact dates that Xbox was launched, and registration for the event begins in early March. The initial aim is to limit the competition to 100 entries, but if the demand is high enough – and it will be – this may increase, so sign up early to be sure of a place.

While fame and fortune can't be promised for the winners, respect and a copy of *Dead or Alive Ultimate* can, plus you could end up having your mugshot splashed in these here pages. How's that for a treat? So head over to www.pro-g.co.uk/tournament and get registering.



PRO-G

# The X-Word



**With Luke 'Duke' Newcombe, community expert**

THE XBOX has had a significant impact on the gaming community since it was launched on 14 March 2002 – the day that I picked up my own Xbox. One year later and Xbox Live was unleashed upon the world. A service so good that, to date, over two million people have signed up. Combined, they've racked up a phenomenal amount of hours playing games!

Xbox Live has brought about a huge change in the way people play videogames online, adding a whole new realm of unique connectivity and interaction between gamers all over the world. It's pretty amazing when you think about it.

We've had numerous upgrades to the Xbox Live dashboard in that time, like the ability to see community events pinned to the Xbox Live Calendar, but what I'm really keen to find out is what the community thinks should happen next. What do you think of the Xbox Live service and how do you think it should evolve? Drop me an email (luke.newcombe@totally360.com) and let me know.



↑ **Write in and tell The Duke your thoughts on the future of Xbox Live.**

# Clans Reunited

## Keepin' it Xtreme

AFTER SUBJECTING us to a non-stop barrage of politely worded letters and emails (it's okay guys, you can stop now), we're pleased to announce that this issue's clan of the month is Team Xtreme, a mad-for-it bunch of Xboxers who originally came together in November 2004 in the form of James Wheeldon (Ace Xtreme), sister and former Game Star of the month Angel Wheeldon (Angel Xtreme) and friend Dan Harper (Danhrules).

Team Xtreme is predominantly a British clan, but boasts clan members from all corners of the globe including Canada, China, Switzerland and the United States – and being the general good sports they are, welcome gamers from all over the world to come and join them. Yes, even the French!

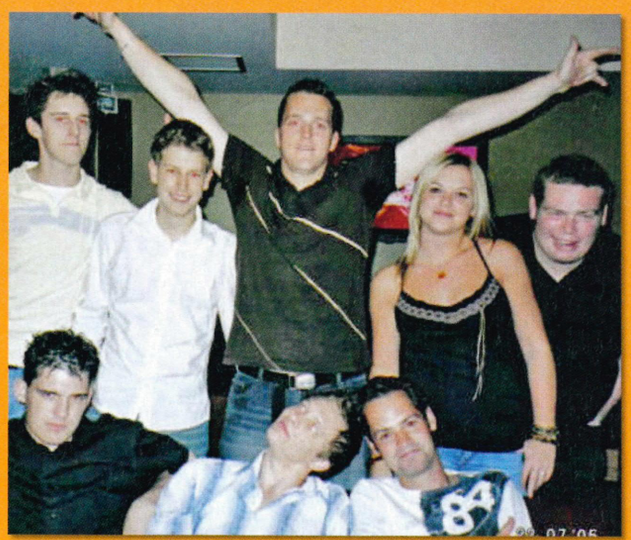
Team Xtreme's greatest achievement as a clan was when several members met up for a night on the tiles in Portsmouth, all of who have gone on to become good friends outside of Live as a result. However, their coolest moment to date was on Xbox Live when Ace arranged a 'massive' clan war between rival gangs on *Halo 2*. They might have lost the battle that night but the event was a success!

Notably, Team Xtreme is currently ranked number one on topclansite.co.uk, and the clan's happy to accept challenges from all-comers. Check out their website www.team-xtreme-central.co.uk if you fancy your chances.



"Big shout out from da Potzmuf crew!"

↓ **Delighted Angel Xtreme couldn't believe her luck!**



# Challenges

**MOTOGP3**

Skive with Live challenge

**The Challenge: Get the fastest lap time on the Tuscany track.**




It's good to see such a close battle in the final *MotoGP 3* Skive with Live between two of the best bikers, but Pitkin 31 just sneaked it from F1 Raikkonen. Don't forget there's all-new Skive with Live on page 127.

FANCY SOME HALO? GAV SPENDS ALL DAY PLAYING HALO 2 ON LIVE WHILE WE ALL WORK. WHY NOT JOIN HIM (OXM PLAYMORE, BETWEEN 10AM AND 5PM DAILY)

# Top of his Game

## Englishman Chris Bullard is the greatest FIFA player in the world. We ask him how he achieved his incredible victory, and exactly what it's like to stand next to Ronaldinho

On December 18 2005, teenager Chris Bullard became the first Englishman since Bobby Moore to hold a World Cup trophy aloft when he blitzed the international competition at the 2005 FIFA Interactive World Cup. A day later he was at FIFA headquarters in Zurich to stand alongside Ronaldinho and hero Frank Lampard at the FIFA World Player of the Year 2005 Gala. How did he manage such an incredible gaming feat and what were the key attributes that helped him on to victory? We spoke exclusively to Chris to find out.

**OXM:** Describe what it was like to win.

**CB:** Incredible. It was just surreal being there. It was a nerve-racking experience playing up in front of 300 people.

**OXM:** And what was it like attending the Player of the Year Gala in Zurich?

**CB:** It was pretty nerve-racking too, with eight million people watching me on TV (EuroSport) - plus, I had to make an acceptance speech. It took me off my feet, really. All of a sudden you were alongside Ronaldinho and Frank Lampard (and Ian Wright!). It's another life.

**OXM:** How many hours a day did you practise?

**CB:** It depends, but usually one hour a day, maybe a bit more at weekends. I've been playing the game for nine years now so I've got plenty of hours behind me. I qualified by playing on Xbox Live (through a ranking system) and to do that I had to play about 400 games over two months or so.

**OXM:** What was the competition standard like?

**CB:** It was very good, but obviously you're playing the best in the world. I think I was on a roll for the semis and the final, but I did lose a couple of group games. It's hard because you go a goal down and you start chasing the game. That's when you have to keep calm and not do anything stupid. I lost focus a couple of times and that's why I lost games.

**OXM:** What were your tactics when you were going into the competition?

**CB:** I never really went into matches with a particular game plan, although I always played 4-1-2-1-2 at home. When I played this in my first game, people suggested I switched to 5-2-1-2 to counter the wing play (a common ploy on the day). I'm not sure the change in tactics won me the competition, but it certainly helped.

**OXM:** How do you cope with the stress of playing such important games in front of an audience?

**CB:** It's unbelievable that I managed to keep so calm, really. I just tried to imagine that I was sitting at home in my bedroom, playing on Xbox Live as normal. I tried to keep focused solely on the TV screen. Even when I scored I tried not to celebrate too much.

**OXM:** What are the talents you need to win a competition like this?

**CB:** You need to be able to read your opponent and anticipate what they're going to do. Most of my goals came from intercepting passes.

**OXM:** Now you've got a taste for fame, do you find people treat you differently? Would you like it to continue? Can you see yourself as a professional games player?

**CB:** I was on the front of the local newspaper when I got home so I was like a local celebrity for the day. People kept asking me who I was going to take to the World Cup Final. Yeah, I could do this again and again, although I'd have to think carefully about making the sacrifices to do it professionally.

**OXM:** Do you plan to keep playing *FIFA*?

**CB:** Definitely - I still love it. I haven't played as well as I did during the tournament yet, but you always get better with every game you play.

**OXM:** What advice would you give people wanting to become the best *FIFA* player in the world?

**CB:** Practise. Play lots. Play people. Play your mates. Play people on Xbox Live. Everybody's got a chance. I lost twice in the finals and still won.





FIFA 06

### GAMER'S BIO

**Name:** Chris Bullard

**Gamertag:** Chrisybullard

**Age:** 19

**Home town:** Ipswich

**Build:** Surprisingly tall

**Hobbies:** Xbox gaming, football (plays as a goalkeeper in his local Sunday league)

**Gaming career:** 13 years

**Favourite game:** *FIFA Football* (naturally!)

**Best gaming moment:** Winning the 2005 FIFA Interactive World Cup

**Gaming ambition:** To be the first person to win back-to-back FIFA Interactive World Cups!

"It was pretty nerve-racking, with eight million people watching me on TV"

# Match of the Day

## So what's it really like to play a world champion?

SO HOW GOOD is the best player in the world? Like, really? Surely no one's that good, right? To find out for sure (and seeing as we had him in the office for the afternoon anyway) we decided to put the FIFA Interactive World Cup winner to the test. The challenge was simple: could we (as in deputy editor Mark) beat Chris (ranked 15,478 places above us in the official *FIFA* rankings) in a game of *FIFA 06*?

Chris picked England, as he always does, and we selected Italy (hey, we wanted to give him a chance). The game kicked off and he was all over us. To be fair, we're more *PES* player by rights, but we didn't expect to be so overrun by Chris's punishing through-balls and clinical finishing. We thought our defence would last a good 20 minutes or so before we conceded a goal. Sadly, we were 1-0 down after eight.

By 28 minutes it was an embarrassing 4-0 (Rooney with one and Owen on a first-half hat-trick). It's at that point we started to put some passes together and survived to half time without any more defensive howlers. The second half was better and we nearly (yes, NEARLY!) had a shot, but ultimately another precision shot from Owen sunk us 5-0. Seems he really is a bit special.

Just to make sure the first game wasn't a fluke, we played him again, only this time we were Brazil, and for the first 20 minutes or so we had all the play and even managed to force a save from Chris. But then Chris decided to open his eyes, and a 20th-minute goal for England led to two more, leaving us 3-0 down at half time.

The final half kicked off and we were determined to score, but our 'all attack' theory left us with holes at the back that Chris easily punished to the tune of two more goals. And so it ended 5-0. Again. Leaving us to switch off the machine in frustration and Chris to gloat in the satisfaction of another job well done.

## MoTD



...another super strike by Chris flies past Robins!

DIET OF CHAMPIONS: WANT TO KNOW WHAT A WORLD CHAMPION EATS TO STAY HEALTHY? WHEN WE TOOK CHRIS TO LUNCH HE ORDERED A MARGHERITA PIZZA (HOLD THE SALAD) AND A COKE (NOT DIET). SO NOW YOU KNOW

# Hints&Cheats

Unlimited lives? Super-health? Characters with enormous comedy heads? Don't get stuck on games - get with the only cheats listings page you'll ever need, right over here!

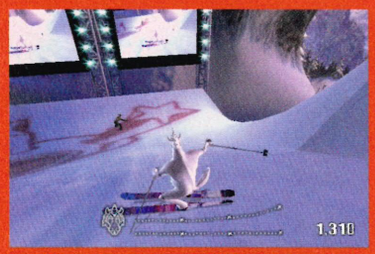
## CHEATS IN MOTION

### SSX ON TOUR
Issue 49, 7.4

Select Cheats from the Extras menu, then enter the following codes:




↑ Unlock Conrad (The Mini-Viking): BIGPARTYTIME




↑ Unlock Mitch Koobski (The Unicorn): MOREFUNTHANONE




↑ Unlock Nigel (The Rocker): THREEISACROWD




↑ Snowball Fight! (Press R during events to fling snowballs): LETSPARTY

### THE SIMS 2
Issue 49, 8.5

**CHEAT TROPHY**
While playing a game, press L, R, Up, A, Black. The Cheat Trophy (actually a Plumb Bob Trophy which resembles a metal post) will now appear on the lots. Enter the following cheats while playing:

**9,999 Simoleons:** R, L, Black, Right, Left. Select Cheat Trophy, Interaction/Location, Give Simoleons.
**All locations:** B, White, Left, B, Up, B. Select the Cheat Trophy, Interaction/Location, Unlock/Unlock All Locations.
**All objects:** White, B, Down, Left, Up
**All recipes:** Black, X, Up, Down, Right, A
**All fashions:** X, Black, Down, Right, X
**Full motives:** Up, B, Up, Right, White. Select the Cheat Trophy to access the option to fill all motives.
**Set Skill level:** Y, B, X, Black, Left. Select the Cheat Trophy, then Interaction/Location, Change Skill [name], Change to [number].
**Advance time by six hours:** B, X, L, Up, Down while playing a game. Select the Cheat Trophy, then Interaction/Location, Advance 6 Hours. Note: Using this code when someone is at work or away may cause problems with them coming back.
**Horn audio:** Enable the 'Cheat Trophy' code, then press R, L, R, L, Y while playing.

### HALF-LIFE 2
Issue 49, 9.8

**CHEAT CODES**
Enter the following codes any time during gameplay to achieve the corresponding results:

**Restore 25 per cent health:** Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A
**Restore ammo for current weapon:** Y, B, A, X, White, Y, X, A, B, White
**Unlock all chapters:** Left, Left, Left, Left, Black, Right, Right, Right, Right, White



### X-MEN II: RISE OF APOCALYPSE
Issue 49, 8.5

**TEAM CONFIGURATIONS**
By organising your team like those from the comics, you can gain these in-game bonuses:

**Age of Apocalypse (+100% attack rating)**
Any four heroes with *Age of Apocalypse* skins
**Agile Warriors (+5% XP)**
Nightcrawler, Sunfire, Toad, Deadpool
**Brotherhood of Evil (adds 5% to your earned XP)**
Scarlet Witch, Toad, Juggernaut, and Magneto
**Bruiser Brigade (+20 Energy per knockout)**
Juggernaut, Wolverine, Rogue, Colossus
**Dark Past (5% DAM inflicted as health gain)**
Gambit, Wolverine, Rogue, Deadpool
**Double Date (20 Health per KO)**
Gambit, Rogue, Cyclops, Jean
**Energy Corps (+5% Damage)**
Gambit, Bishop, Cyclops, Iron Man
**Family Affair (+5 Health Regen)**
Magneto, Scarlet Witch, Juggernaut, Professor X
**Femme Fatale (5% DMG Inflicted as Health Gain)**
Rogue, Scarlet, Storm, Jean
**Forces of Nature (+10 All Resists)**
Sunfire, Magneto, Iceman, Storm
**Heavy Metal (+10 All Traits)**
Ironman, Magneto, Juggernaut, Colossus
**New Avengers (+15% Max Health)**
Iron Man, Scarlet Witch, Wolverine, Bishop
**New X-Men (+15% Max Health)**
Nightcrawler, Storm, Colossus, Wolverine, Sunfire, Bishop
**New X-Men (+15% to max health)**
Storm, Wolverine, Colossus, and Nightcrawler
**Old School: (+15% Max Energy)**
Cyclops, Jean Grey, Ice Man, Toad, Magneto, Prof X
**Old School: (+15% Max Energy)**
Magneto, Toad, Jean, Cyclops
**Raven Knights: (+60% Tech Bit Drops)**
Ice Man, Professor X, Iron Man, Deadpool
**Special Ops: (+5% Damage)**
Bishop, Deadpool, Nightcrawler, Gambit



↑ Dr Freeman uses the power of SCIENCE CHEATS to kill stupid zombies!



### SHATTERED UNION
Issue 50, 6.0

**RAISE POLITICAL REPUTATION +1**
Enter X, B, B, X, B in the Cheats menu

**SKIP CURRENT WEEK**
Enter X, Y, X, B, A in the Cheats menu




↑ Vampires are definitely cheating at SOMETHING, but we're not sure what.



↑ Tony Hawk is TOO OLD and WRINKLY for cheats. He should settle down and play golf or something.

## CASTLEVANIA: CURSE OF DARKNESS

Issue 52, 4.5

**UNLOCKABLES**

**Boss Rush Mode:** Beat every boss in the game. Next time you go to a warp room, Boss Rush becomes a warp choice.

**Crazy Mode:** Beat the game once, then start a new game with @CRAZY as a name to play on extreme difficulty mode.

**Sound Mode:** Beat Boss Rush with Hector. You'll find a music box lying around in the warp room. You can then access Sound mode from the title screen.

**Trevor Mode:** Beat the game once, then start a new game with @TREVOR to play as Trevor Belmont.

**Moebius Brooch:** After you beat Crazy Mode, the Moebius Brooch will be available in the shop. Equip it and it allows Trevor to use sub-weapons without using hearts.

**Unlock the Complete Chair:** Simply sit in the 23 other chairs in the game. Don't forget about Dracula's Throne during the final fight with him; it's your only chance to sit in it.



**SECRETS**

**Fight the Legion (optional boss):** In order to battle the Legion (a floating mass of dead bodies) you first must obtain the 5th Innocent Devil (Devil type). Equipped with this, head back to Garibaldi Temple, and slide under the crack in the wall near the area with the four courtyards and Fencers. Travel down these hallways into the basement until you come to an area that seems to be 'beating' like a human heart. Avoid the Evil Cores, and enter the boss door.

**The Tower of Evermore:** To get to the Tower of Evermore, you'll need a Bird-type Innocent Devil with the Long Glide ability. From the top of the Tower of Eternity, face the moon in the background so that it is directly in front of you and jump off the ledge, gliding all the way to the Tower of Evermore. The monsters here are much harder than the ones found in the Tower of Eternity.



## CALL OF DUTY 2: BIG RED ONE

**LEVEL SELECT**

In the Chapter Selection Screen, Hold L + R and press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Left, Right, Right, X, Right, X, Right, X

## TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND

Issue 49, 8.8

**UNLOCK CODES**

Enter these codes in the Cheats menu to unlock the following:

**All Story mode levels unlocked:** JARMIE
**Unlock Matt Hoffman:** the_condor
**Moon Gravity:** 2them00n
**Perfect balance:** grindXpert
**Perfect manual:** 2wheels!
**Perfect skitch:** h!tchar!de
**Unlock Mindy:** help1nghand
**Unlock Jason Ellis:** sirius-DJ

## CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION

Issue 49, 7.0

**SUPER UNLOCK CODE**

To unlock all secrets and weapons in *Ghosts 'n Goblins*, *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* and *Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts*, enter the following code at the main title screen before you hit Start: L trigger, R trigger, Up, Down (on the Right thumbstick), L trigger, R trigger, Up, Down (on the Left thumbstick), L trigger, R trigger, Up, Down (on the D-pad). A text message at the top of the screen will confirm correct entry. Hit Left or Right on the Right thumbstick while playing to access all of the weapons.



↑ A cheat for *Ghouls 'n Ghosts*, you say? Well, it's ABOUT FRICKING TIME.

# THE GAMES MECHANIC

## Shoving his greasy spanner right into your games-related problems

**Dear Games Mechanic,**

In *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* I can get as far as the bit where you have to fight your father when he's a sand demon, but I just can't beat him. Every time I get close his guards keep killing me. Can you help?

*C Craig, via email*

**It's probably the hardest fight in the game – the trick is to kill the guards before attacking the king. The red guards can be dealt with using the Vault attack and you can get the blues by bouncing off the walls. There's a small pool at one end of the hall where you can heal yourself.**

**Dear Mechanic of Games,**

Since you're supposedly a 'Games Mechanic', I was wondering if you could give me some advice on how to beat Alma when you fight her for the first time in *Ninja Gaiden Black*. I only have two spiritual elixirs.

*Abs, Reading*

**Abs? Not THE Abs from defunct boy band 5ive? If you are, this one's half price (er, the wife's a fan). Beating Alma is all about learning her attack patterns, using the roll technique and being patient. I can't explain them all (it's my break in five), but the best time to attack is after she tries to stomp you and misses. The only way to get more elixirs is to go back to an earlier save position and buy some. Can you sign it 'Love, Abs', please?**

**Dear Sir,**

I'm stuck at 81.5 per cent completion in *Gun*! I can't subdue Mad Dog – he never runs out of bullets – and I can't kill Hollister either because he has Ned's rifle and it's impossible to take his life gauge below a quarter. Help!

*James, via email*

**Sir? I like the sound of that – Sir Games Mechanic. Yeah, that'll do. Anyway, to beat Mad Dog you need to sharpshoot his cronies first, shoot his horse from under him, then finally shoot him in the leg to subdue him. As for Hollister, circle round to the right when he starts lobbing dynamite, using the rocks for cover. Keep pumping him with your shotgun and slugging whiskey shots. After a bit he'll slope off with some dynamite. Follow him, but as soon as he lights it run away as fast as you can. Easy!**

Write to The Games Mechanic, *OXM*, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW, or email staff@futurenet.co.uk



BONUS CHEAT! TO WIN THE CIVIL WAR, SIMPLY ENTER THE CHEATS MENU, (YOU WILL STILL HAVE TO FIGHT THE FINAL BATTLE FOR ALASKA AGAINST THE RUSSIANS)

# YourReviews

It's your chance to tell us what you really think about the games you love (and loathe)!

## Prince of Persia The Two Thrones

Score 9.5/10

STAR REVIEW
Carl wins *Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows*

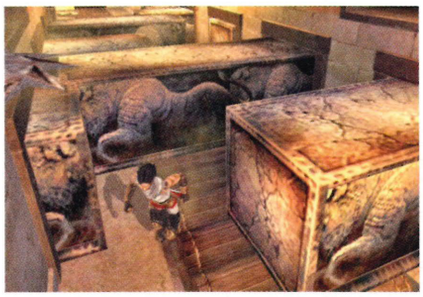


**By Carl Didcock, Torquay**

HE'S SEEN HIS palace ruined by an evil Vizier, he's had to kill his own father (who's been turned into a sand zombie) and he's even been forced to watch himself die at the hands of the time-hopping demon known as the Dahaka - not to mention more to-ing and fro-ing through time than Marty McFly in a pair of 1.21 gigawatt-charged underpants. But now the Prince has come up against his most fearsome adversary yet - HIMSELF!

As the third part in the amazing *Prince of Persia* series, *The Two Thrones* sees not one but two Princes (one light, one dark) battle it out against the Vizier and his warped vision of Babylon. Only, both Princes are the same person and you never quite know what's going to happen next as you shift constantly from one identity to the other.

The action is intense throughout, with just the right mix of puzzles and fighting. The chance to perform stealth kills is a brilliant addition and it's great seeing how the story turns out in the end. The only downside is that it doesn't last nearly as long as previous episodes in the series.





Have you ever wanted to be a games reviewer? Play:More is here to put your review in print! Send your reviews - of no more than 200 words, please - to Your Reviews, *OXM*, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW or email them to staff@futurenet.co.uk with the subject Your Reviews. The star review wins a mystery prize. What are you waiting for? Get scribbling!



## The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind

Score 9.0/10

**By Mark Frost, Ipswich**

WHAT DO YOU want from a game? The scope of *Morrowind* is so large it's likely to cater for you, as you can be anything from a florist or petty thief to a powerful mage or god-killing hero.

Such is the freedom of this game you can do virtually what you want. Some gamers will find the start slow as you work your way up the ranks by picking flowers for local healers and killing rats for merchants, but then it kicks off and you start the fun, with assassinations and nicking valuable artefacts resulting in a price being put on your head.

The only drawback is the lack of replayability - half the fun of the missions is finding out how to do them, but I spent over 100 hours completing it and I still occasionally play it! Definitely a must buy.




## Metal Slug 3

Score 8.0/10

**By Mykhael Boyes, Stonehaven**

STICKING TO its retro 2D graphics, *Metal Slug 3* has everything that you would expect from the series - big guns and even bigger bosses, resulting in one of the most fun-packed old-school shooting games you can play on Xbox.

While it's an extremely short experience, this game will destroy your thumbs until you reach the end, either on your own or with a friend, as you take on all manner of weird enemies - including zombies and even crabs! Also included are a large number of vehicles to hop into and drive around, such as the Slug Camel and Slug Flyer. There are plenty of unlockable modes, too.

This may be short, but it's also a sweet, all-out insane blasting game - and it can be yours for only £20!

# YourShout

## Reader events

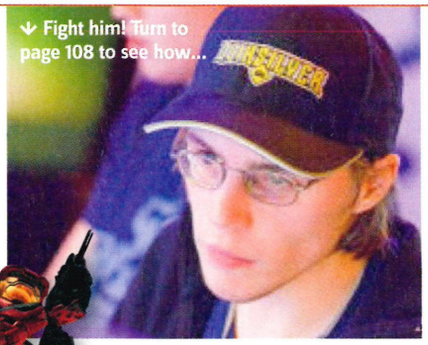
### The UK's biggest fan-run Halo 2 tournament explodes in style

SO YOU reckon you're pretty good at *Halo* then? Good enough to beat over a hundred of the UK's greatest players in one fell swoop? Of course you do, but thinking it and doing it are two very different things, as the recent matchbox360.co.uk *Halo 2* Free For All conclusively proved.

Although very much a community-run event, matchbox360 organisers Jay Snee (Rain 501) and Ryan Hughes (Tugsy) pulled all the stops out to put on a huge and brilliantly executed tournament. The original plan was for a 72-player competition, but thanks to some great promotion this quickly expanded to 144 (with over 60 registered players in reserve). The boys from Matchbox360 (together with their marshals) then went on to host nearly 50 individual games of *Halo 2* Slayer over a two-day period.

Although the competition attracted a huge range of *Halo 2* playing abilities, it was the professional players that dominated throughout. In the end it was Mark Thurston (more commonly known by his Gamertag, La1) who battled through five rounds of combat to win the day.

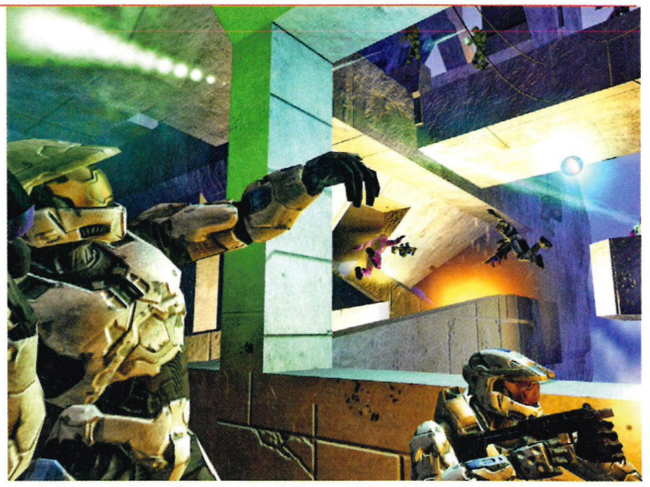
Not surprising really given he represented the UK at last year's World Cyber Games event in Singapore. "The event had most of the best players from the UK there," Mark said. "I hope there are more in the future, as the Xbox 360 games aren't at the same competitive skill level as *Halo 2* yet."



↓ Fight him! Turn to page 108 to see how...



And indeed, there will be more events in the future, with forthcoming tournaments split into both 'Pro' and 'Casual' tiers for the serious and not-so-serious players. First up following the success of the *Halo 2* Free For All is Matchbox360's UK *Halo 2* league, now in its third season. For more details of this and other forthcoming events, visit www.matchbox360.co.uk or check out the Xbox Live Calendar on page 108.



↑ There ain't no party like a 144-player *Halo 2* LAN party.

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### Do you have an Xbox event to promote?

Are you organising an Xbox Live event? Do you have a big LAN party on the cards? Whether you're throwing a games night party for all your mates or organising an online tournament for half the known world, so long as it's Xbox we want to hear from you. Just send us all the details - when it is, who's going, what the game is - and we'll do our best to give it some free promotion in the Play:More pages. They're your pages, after all! Send us any footage you've got as well and maybe we'll stick it on the Game Disc too! Just write to us at Your Shout, *OXM*, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW, or email us at staff@futurenet.co.uk.

# Anyone For Ruggers?

## OXM scrums down with England rugby ace Josh Lewsey



↑ "Square it! Square it!"



↑ Mr Lewsey, looking a bit starstruck here.

TO HELP promote *Rugby Challenge 2006* (see page 084), Ubisoft recently invited *OXM* along to a swanky London hotel for a special head-to-head match-up against England rugby World Cup hero Josh Lewsey.

"I don't play a lot of games, to be honest," Lewsey admitted to a slightly starry-eyed Mark who, incredibly, stood taller (if a lot less broader) than the ace England and Wasps winger. "But this is pretty good. It's reasonably realistic too: every time I get the ball I seem to get smashed."

In a slightly unfair allocation of teams, Lewsey picked England and Mark had Georgia picked for him. With the game's simple controls a breeze for even Lewsey's giant hands, both players set to it.

Unsurprisingly, it was England's ridiculous pack size advantage that ruled the day. Despite getting plenty of ball possession there was no way Georgia was going to turn over the likes of Shaw and Grewcock, and, with the benefit of a little practice under his belt, it was Lewsey who scored first. And second. And, rather embarrassingly, third. Then again, when you're sitting next to someone hard enough to grind diamonds with their bare hands, you tend to lose on purpose.

We forget the final score (it was embarrassing given we're supposed to be the experts), but Mr Lewsey walked away the clear winner. "I really enjoyed that," he summed up at the post-match press conference.

Josh Lewsey can currently be seen leading a glorious Grand Slam assault on the Six Nations championship (his words), while *Rugby Challenge 2006* is available to buy now.

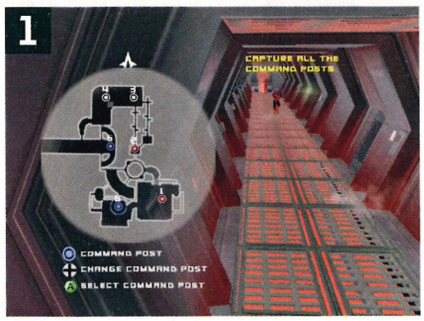


# 10-minute Masterclass

## Crush the rebel scum or bring peace to the galaxy

THE GALAXY is a dangerous place online, alright. You know, the one far, far away and a long time ago. And with killer clans and deadly teamwork, it isn't just the Force that makes the best players top of the tree – it's a combination of forward-planning, communication and preparing for the unexpected.

Clans use a variety of tactics to make sure they're the best at online *Battlefront*, but with these ten tips plucked from Lucas's very own beard, we reckon you'll be well on your way to stamping out that damned rebel uprising. And you might even nab yourself a space prince.




**PLAN AHEAD**: Don't just spawn anywhere because you're eager to get back into the battle – think. If you see one of your spawn points flashing, get in quick before it's taken over. Always spawn closer to the action – command posts may be safe but they're also miles away from the action.




**DEATH CAMP**: Camping is good. Every command post has an area around it that can be camped in to guard your spawn points. Find them, assign a player to guard the most vulnerable, then sit back and watch the enemy drop like flies.




**BE A HERO**: Keep an eye on the bottom of your screen. When you've enough kills a hero option will appear, asking if you want to play as a hero. Always say yes! Heroes are super-fast, super-hard, and can turn the tide of any battle.




**RANCOR PIT**: *Battlefront* is filled with perils, from steep drops, hidden mines and Jabba's Rancor pit. Falling into one costs time and could forfeit a battle if you're not careful. Use a jet-pack if you can, and learn the terrain well.



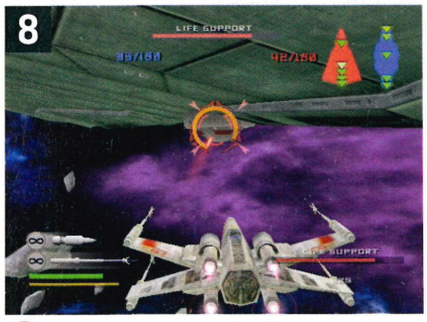

**CAN THE BLASTER:** Fusion cutters are vital. They can be used to fix up vehicles, turrets and droids that supply your team with ammo and health. Always make sure one team member, especially during vehicle missions, has the cutter.



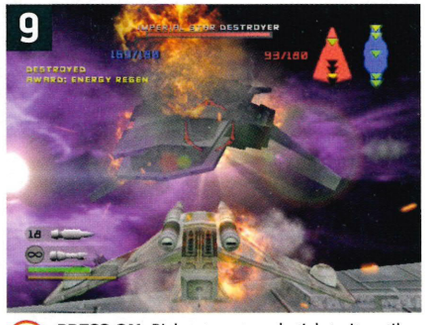

**STAY ON TARGET:** Locking onto an enemy (X) brings up a display detailing their strengths and fighter class. This lets you know if you can afford to challenge them or not. You'll stay locked on until you turn it off or destroy the target.




**SHIELDS DOWN:** The single most important target during a space battle is the enemy shield generator. Take this out first. Grab a troop-carrying ship, slam into the enemy hangar and then fight tooth and claw to destroy it.




**SOFT BELLY:** The underside of an enemy ship is its weakest part. Get under it, take out the turrets, and use the bulk of the ship as a shield from fire. This allows you to gradually weaken it without the enemy knowing. Han would be proud.




**PRESS ON:** Pick a target and stick to it until it's destroyed – don't faff about. Sustained attack will knock out an enemy's defences better than random pot-shots. Better still, you'll be rewarded with heath or ammo for your trouble.




**GET HIGH:** Gaining the high ground forces the enemy to fight uphill towards you. Remember how Anakin lost his legs? Don't fall into the same trap. Players with jet-packs should get up high and relay enemy positions via the headset.

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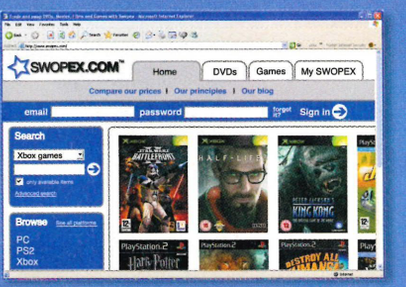
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# Masterclass: Castlevania: Curse of Darkness

Massive bosses and hundreds of deadly man-eating beasts make navigating the mazes of Curse of Darkness tough as nails. So we figure a handy walkthrough is what you need. Thank us later

**Three years previously, Trevor Belmont and his allies killed Dracula, as seen in the NES classic *Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse*. Dracula's downfall was largely blamed on one of his own men, Hector, who was punished for his failure by former friend, Isaac. Now you take control of Hector to pursue Isaac into the heart of a cursed land for revenge. Help him make it through with the aid of *OXM*'s exclusive guide!**

### Abandoned Castle

It all kicks off as soon as you enter the castle. Once you're in, deal with the Executioner for your first Memorial Ticket, then go east. The path will eventually lead you to the Cyclops. Demolish its Skeleton backup, then bait its club swings and retaliate while it's recovering. It's guarding the Fairy Devil, which can open the chest that contains the Dragon Crest. Backtrack to the front hall when you're done, and this time head west; the Crest will open a locked door.

Descend into B1F, past the boss fight with another Executioner, and work your way around to the west to find a wine cellar. Inside, smash the barrels to find Aluminium. Your path will lead to a dead end. Smash the offensive pillar as directed to lower a new ramp.

From this point, explore the castle at your leisure. To progress, you'll eventually have to climb to 4F to face the Crazy Armour... which would be far more dangerous if its defence was higher. Use the Fairy's magic to restore your health as you beat hell out of its knees.

### Baljhet Mountains

Upon your arrival, you'll get the Battle Devil. Forge westwards, through an assortment of enemies that are mostly the same as the ones you fought in the Castle. Get used to fighting alongside the Battle Devil, as it'll become be your strongest ally as the game progresses. You'll eventually run into Julia and your first Warp Room. Stock up on Potions, then continue on your way.

Keep going and you'll soon encounter a Gunnery Seat. Run around to its offside and destroy its Skeleton operator, then seize the turret and use it to destroy the nearby fortifications. As long as you see debris flying, it was a successful hit.

As you pass the gate, resistance will continue to stiffen - watch out for Armour Knights and Orcs. When the path branches, take the western road to find the Boiling Ring - this is going to come in very handy shortly.




↑ Now that's just cheating.

The boss of the Mountains is the Wyvern, whose only vulnerable spot is its head. It'll try to keep you at bay with tail sweeps, so wait for it to lunge, then dodge and let it bury its head in the ground. This is your chance to summon the Battle Devil and lay into its exposed neck. The rest of the time, keep your distance.

### Garibaldi Temple

At the outset, your enemies in the Temple look pretty easy, and you won't be too bothered by the Flea Men, Dead Barons, Fenrir and the other opponents that cross your path. But the Temple has the most challenging boss yet: Trevor Belmont.

Avoid him when he bursts into flames. The best times to hit him are after you've just blocked one of his whip combos, or after dodging his waves of flame. One tactic is to trap him between you, your Battle Devil, and the corner of the room, then use Aura Blast to whittle away at his health. You'll 'win' once you've taken off roughly a third of Trevor's lifebar.

The Temple continues past Trevor's room. In a nearby room, you can teach your Battle Devil the Brute Force technique. Alternatively, you can explore the rest of this floor to find rare Sun Tears, or descend into the basement for a Sixth Sense Brooch. Once you've finished in the Temple, use the Warp Room to return to the Mountains - you can now open the heavy door near Julia's shop.

**DIVIDE AND CONQUER**

Most bosses are so busy trying to squash Hector that they'll leave your Innocent Devils alone. Focus on evasion during boss fights, and use your Devils' powerful techniques to do damage for you.




↑ Ah, the trademark Belmont Holy Water. Run!

### Mortvia Aqueduct

Stock up on Steel and Ancient Memory materials as you make your way through the Aqueduct. You'll eventually reach a chasm. As before, seize control of the Gunnery Seat and knock down the towers.

Inside the subsequent complex, climb to the second floor, then follow the northern path. Hit the statue to raise the stairs; after that, it's a running battle until you reach daylight again. Visit the Warp and Save Rooms on the bridge before you enter the boss's room and face the Skeleton Diver.

You'll spend most of the fight blocking, since the Diver is often throwing spears at you from afar. You can knock some of its health off with Aura Blast when the mount comes wriggling across the platform at you, but you'll have to do most of your damage when the Diver itself comes after you with its axe. As the Diver's health dwindles, it'll opt to simply orbit the platform and bombard you with spears. Finish it off by smacking it with heavy weaponry as it swims by.

Climb the stairs after the battle to find the Bird Devil. Use it to glide from the bridge near the boss room's entrance to the distant exit.

### Forest of Jigramunt

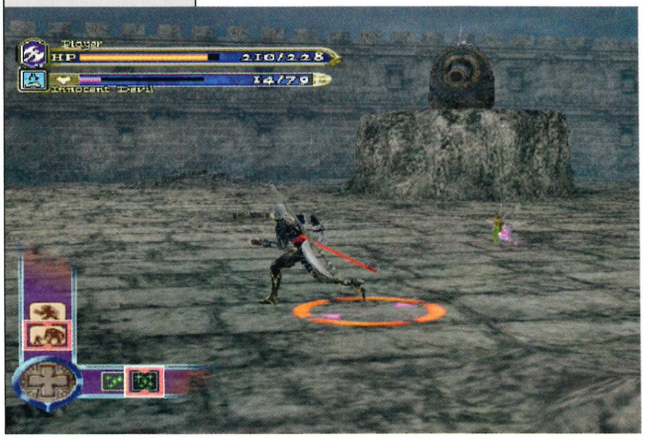
Like the Mountains, this stage is more or less a straight line. Don't try and do a detour to save time




↑ Tread on its foot. Actually, don't bother.

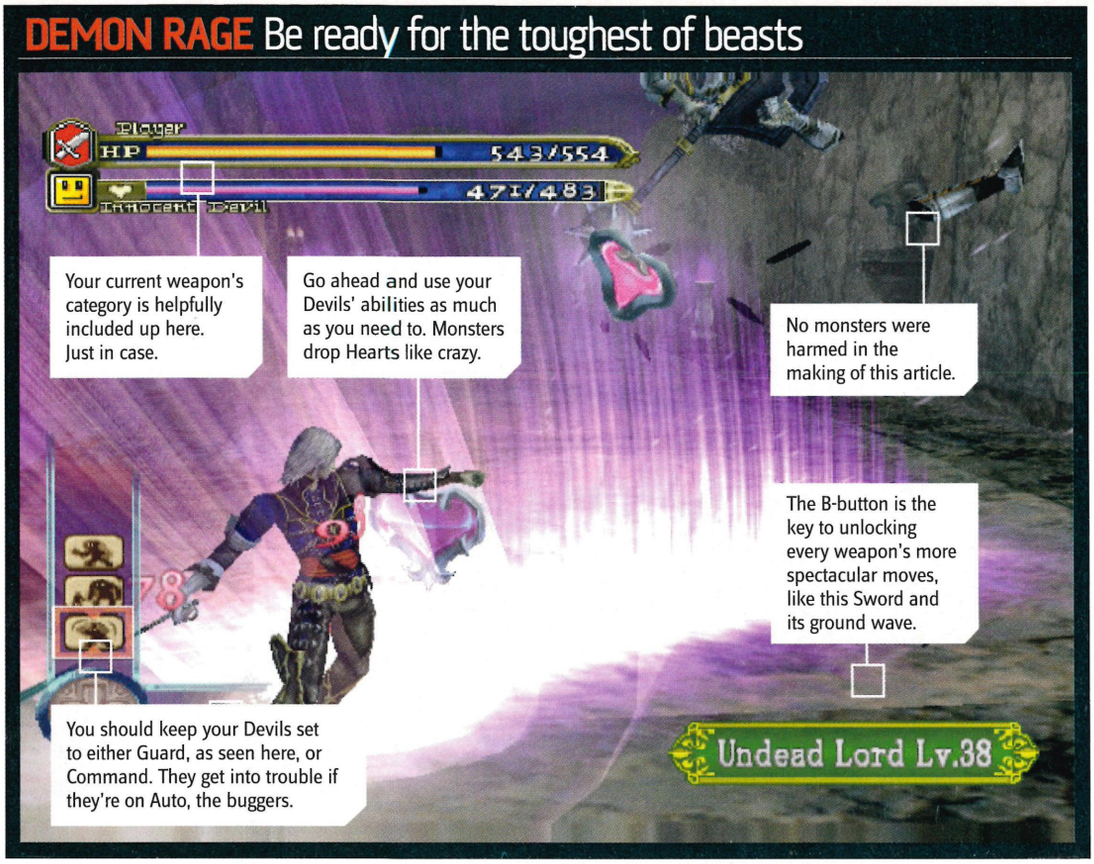



↑ The Crazy Armour. Now that is crazy armour.




↑ When the crosshair turns orange, the gunner's about to fire.

# DEMON RAGE Be ready for the toughest of beasts




- dead ends are everywhere, and most branches in the path lead to the same destination.

The Tower of Eternity is hidden in the northwest corner of the map, and guarded by dangerous Flame Demons. Inside, you can forge through 50 floors of enemies you've fought before. This location is useful for stocking up on materials, but more importantly, you'll find a valuable Kit Bag on the Tower's roof.

As you progress towards the southeast corner of the Forest, be sure to explore the place thoroughly. Keep looking around until you find the Absolute Zero Ring. If you have an Iyeti Battle Devil with Shoulder Ride, you can shatter a set of statues here to open a new part of the caves. Inside, you'll find a Rare Ring and a Dragon Scale.

The Forest's paths will eventually lead you to the Minotaurus, which is... a big walking target. Like Cyclops or Red Ogres, this is all about baiting its swings, then counter-attacking while it recovers.

**Cordova Town**

While in Cordova Town, home of three million Ghouls, visit the bizarre Chair Room in the suburbs of the city, right by the first Warp Room. This area will store all the chairs you've found and sat on during your travels. While a room full of chairs you've, er, put your bottom on isn't about anything, and there are no items to pick up or enemies to fight, the Chair Room is still worth checking out. It's bizarre, but a nice touch all the same.

Like in the Forest, your trip through Cordova Town is a straight line. It will eventually culminate in a battle with Isaac. For all his aggro he's a bit of a punchbag. He knows powerful attacks, but he's also prone to standing still and absorbing punishment. Keep your Bird or Battle Devils out to occupy Isaac's familiar, and equip yourself with powerful melee weapons like a Battle Axe.

After Isaac's defeat, step through the next door you see to get the Mage Devil. Its Time Stop ability will allow you to open the door at the end of the path. If you stop time, the candles that line the road cannot go out, and thus the gate cannot close.

**Eneomaos Machine Tower**

In the courtyard, hit the lever to raise the stairs, then use Time Stop to climb them before the timer expires. Once you're inside, you'll have to hit the pistons on the sides of the lift platforms to raise them to the next floor.

There's a particularly lethal encounter awaiting you on the third floor. Do whatever you have to do to kill off the posse of Executioners before they get near you, or they will continually dizzy Hector until he dies. A Bird Devil's Carpet Bombs or the Battle Devil's Hip Press will both work well.

After that fight, and a ruck with Dead Fencers, you'll find one of the Tower's main engines. Climb on top of it and smash its inner workings to blow out the wall. That's the last real obstacle between you and the boss, St Germain, the most annoying opponent in the game.

If you have an item to defend against Poison, use it. St Germain is fond of using a venomous overhead slash, and when he speeds up time, he'll increase the intensity of his attack with equally venomous vines that emerge from the ground. Worse still, if you're poisoned when time speeds up, Hector will be too busy taking damage to be much help, so use a Serum as soon as you can. Alternatively, you can counter St Germain's time tricks with the Mage Devil's Time Stop.

Once you reduce St Germain to zero life, he'll regain his yellow lifebar with Time Reverse, but he'll only do that once.

Victory lets you grab the, um, Devil Devil; its Magic Circle ability lets you slip through gaps in walls and explore a new part of the Tower. You can find the Sacrifice Brooch while you're here, and will eventually emerge on the Tower's battlements. »»

**FAIRY EVOLUTION**

To explore 100 per cent of the map, you'll need a Proboscis Fairy's 'Press it and See' ability. Use Sword Crystals to evolve your Fairy into a Leaffle, then equip an Axe to oversee its transformation into a Honey Bee. Now gather Special Crystals to finish the job.



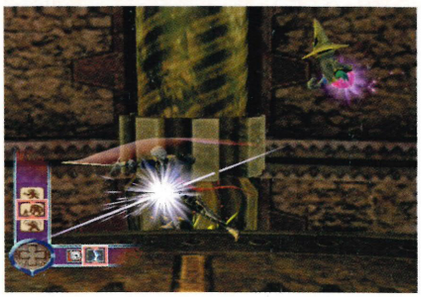

↑ "Devils, devils everywhere..."



↑ Stop time. It's easy.




↑ This end of the Tower has the Sacrifice Brooch.



↑ This doesn't seem an efficient use of labour.



↑ "I said take that, sir!"

FAULTLESS DEFENCE: YOU CAN TRY FOR A PERFECT GUARD IN SITUATIONS WHEN YOU COULDN'T ORDINARILY BLOCK, LIKE THE MIDDLE OF A COMBO




↑ Acid puke is bad for you, by the way.




↑ The Proboscis Fairy's ugly, unlike Tinkerbell.




↑ The Ailion Ruins: might need climbing boots.




↑ Don't waste your Devil abilities on these dudes. They fall easily enough with a few axe blows to the face.

» Warp back to Cordova Centre, and Magic Circle underneath the gate in the nearby Courtyard.

**Ailion Ruins**

If you do not have a Fire spell, such as the Mage's Sorcery Flame or a Proboscis Fairy, now would be a good time to get them.

The first stretch of the very linear Ailion Ruins turns up the difficulty a bit, with Jinns, Zombie Assassins and hordes of Undead Lords. Powerlevel a bit before continuing, as you'll run into some problems otherwise.

Just past the first Save Room, you'll find another open courtyard dominated by a Gunnery Seat. Seize it and use it to destroy the usual fortifications. While you're at it, blow open the face of the mountain to get a valuable Innocent Supporter accessory.

At this point, you'll start running into a lot of annoying Skeleton Troopers. Use a Battle Devil's Hip Press to halt their incessant charges. This tactic will stand you in good stead for much of the rest of the game.

Once you do reach a fork in the road, you can go north to explore a new part of the map. Outside a new Warp Room, you'll find a door held shut with vines. You can't cut them away, but a Fire spell will burn them off, allowing you to enter. Inside, you'll find two chairs, Damascus Steel, a health pack Max Up and a Frenzy of Wind.

Continue to the west with your Proboscis Fairy in tow, and it'll open up a new part of the map for you. This new area contains treasures such

**THE PACE OF PROGRESS**

Always get at least two of a material before you use it, and always make a new item when you can. This'll speed up the pace of Hector's inventions and give you access to more powerful items.



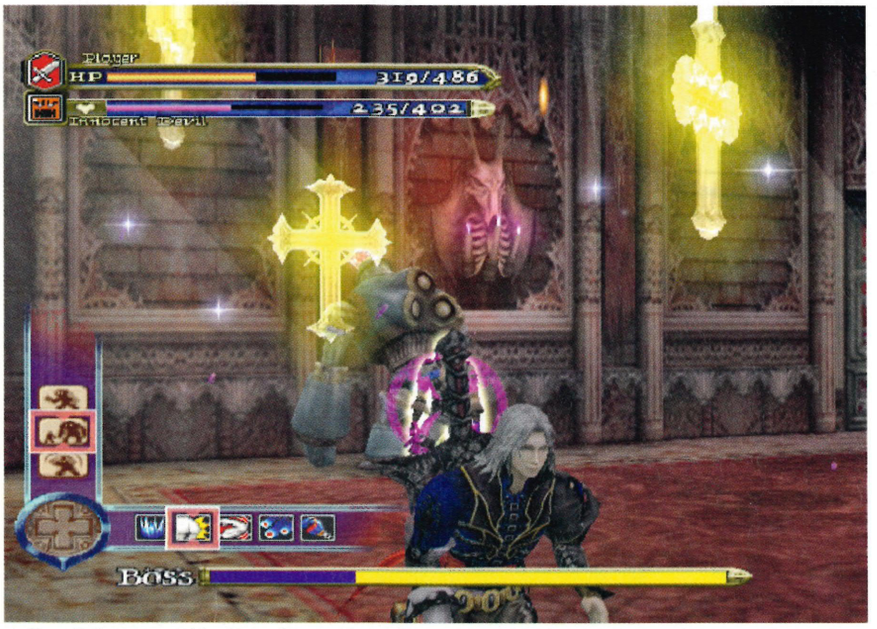

↑ Get to know the icons on the D-pad menus and selecting different powers will be second nature.



↑ A spear is ideal for fighting hordes of weaker enemies.




↑ Trevor seems to like being hit with swords. He lets you do it so often.




↑ How Belmonts say 'don't touch'.

as Orichalcum and the Megingelos. Gather them, then keep going west.

**Abandoned Castle**

Return to the Crazy Armour room to find a new staircase. Climb it for a rematch with Trevor Belmont, who's taken off the kid gloves.

Most of his moves cannot be blocked, and when he glows gold, he's completely invulnerable. Keep your Battle Devil between Hector and Trevor, and strike with your best melee weapons when Trevor rushes after you with unarmed attacks. He also leaves himself open for a surprisingly long time after you block one of his insanely lethal whip-combos (watch out for those!).

**Infinite Corridor**

Like the Forest or the Ruins, the Infinite Corridor is quite linear. When the path does branch, it'll converge shortly thereafter. When you reach the Warp Room, sit on the Emperor's Throne to be transported to a treasure room full of rare materials.

You'll come upon a large crystal. Use Brute Force Lv 2 to open the iron door to its south and access a sub-dungeon, in which you'll find a Lightning Stone and a Phlogiston. To the crystal's west, you can find another sub-dungeon if you use a Bird Devil's Long Glide to bridge the gap. There, you'll find $1,000 and a Void Ring.

Return to the large crystal and dispatch the Thunder Dragons to open the western gate. To pass the next room, you'll need to stop time, then smash the barrier.

After that, you've only a few short rooms before you encounter Dullahan. Unless you're dramatically overlevelled, Dullahan does heaps of damage with any attack. However, you can readily dodge most of his assaults by staying across the room. This neutralises his field attacks. You can leap over his massive shockwave, and you can easily hurdle »

**MAGE EVOLUTION**

It's like alchemy, only with objects. Feed your Wood Rod Spear Crystals, for example, and you make a Nautilus Rod. This Rod has strange 'learning' abilities, and is able perform new attacks such as Purify, which destroys Blood Skeletons. Feeding it Sword Crystals will create a powerful Embryo Rod, which 'knows' the devastating Demonic Disaster spell. Spooky, but very useful.




↑ Roll under or jump over Dullahan's lasers.




↑ This Cone of Force does heavy damage.

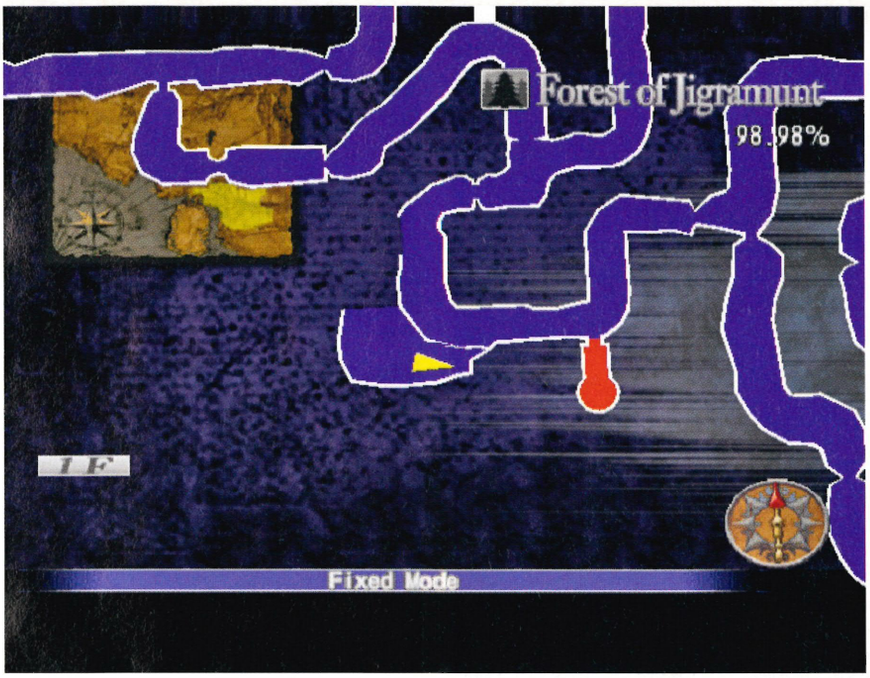


↑ Fluffy thing: not as cool as Hector.




↑ These guys have some nasty scythes for arms.

GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL: THERE ARE A TOTAL OF SIX TYPES OF INNOCENT DEVIL, EACH WITH DIFFERENT ABILITIES. GET THEM ALL TO TACKLE DIFFERENT SITUATIONS




↑ After Dullahan's defeat, check here for a Devil's Vein.




↑ The Battle Devil's Hip Press is... just great.



↑ Without his Devils for backup, Isaac's meat.

» his laser beam. This leaves his simple sword combos, which can be dodged and countered without any problem. For extra damage, send in a Battle Devil to stomp him flat while Hector's avoiding Dullahan's assault.

Upon your victory, you'll be returned to the bridge outside the Aqueduct's boss room. The bridge ahead leads to the final level of the game, but Dullahan's defeat has drained the water out of many areas. There are now secret levels available in the Aqueduct, Forest, and Mountains, should you care to look. The drained creek in the western Forest is particularly important, as it contains an extremely rare Devil's Vein. When you're done exploring, return to the Aqueduct and use Brute Force to open the door at the end of the bridge.

**Dracula's Castle**

It's tough, but it's a straight line. You've got some serious opposition ahead of you, but aside from some use of Magic Circle, there are no puzzles or tricks between you and the final battles.

Your first bout is with Isaac, who'll summon a Crimson to keep you busy after the first few hits. That'll be a little tricky to take down unless you have an aerial Devil with ice powers to counteract it. Otherwise, Hip Press it out of the sky. Isaac's next trick is to bring out an Iyeti; it's a speed bump. Finally, he'll opt to summon a bizarre Knight (that fights a lot like Hector) wielding a powerful and annoying attack that involves a rain of knives. In all three cases, you'll have to destroy Isaac's Devils before you can whittle him down. Compared with,



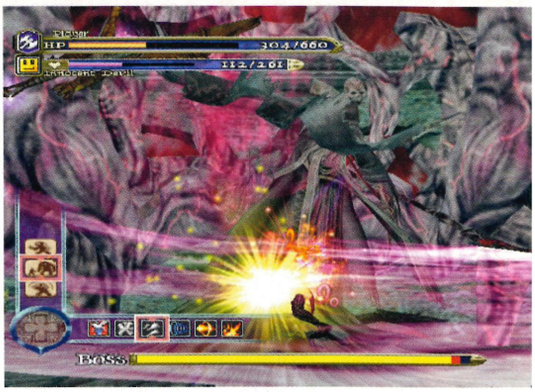
↑ Use your Bird Devil to bridge long gaps.



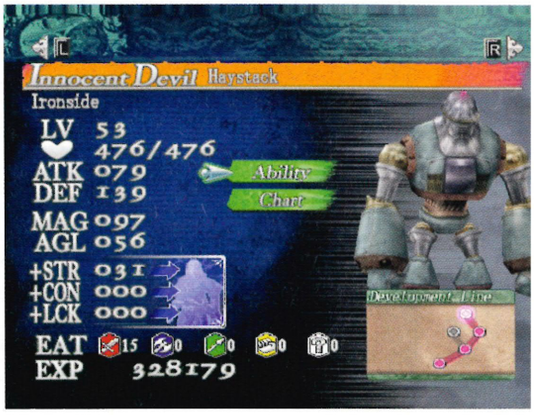
↑ Top up your health before bosses.

**BIRD EVOLUTION**

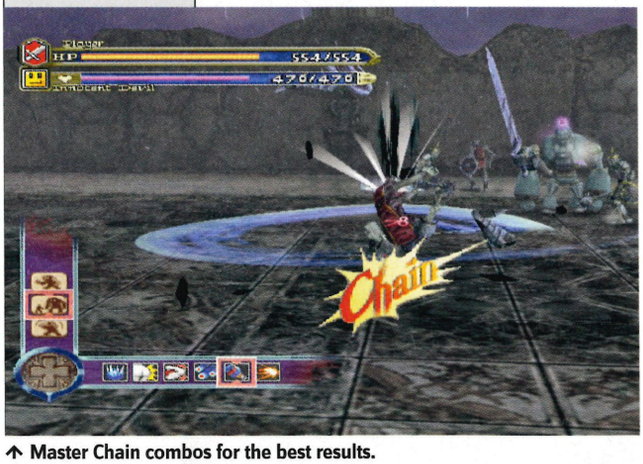
You'll need Long Glide to reach the Tower of Evermore and one part of the Infinite Corridor. You can get this by feeding Sword or Axe Crystals to your Crow to create a Skull Wing, and then a Wingosaurus!



↑ Keep attacking Death's legs, whatever happens.




↑ High defence makes Haystack a toughie.




↑ Master Chain combos for the best results.



↑ Remember, you don't have to fight, but you'll need the experience points.




↑ When Dracula's cape flies up like this, start running...




↑ Use Devil abilities on tougher foes.




↑ The Diver. Watch for its mount's ice breath.

say, Trevor – whose moves he's largely stolen – Isaac by himself is nothing to speak of, and it's pretty easy to take him out.

Once Isaac falls, you'll need to have a few strong words with Death. He has a broad range of offensive tactics, none of which prevent you from running up and whacking him in the shins until he kicks over. You will have to heal often, but there's little need for real strategy here. With Death out of the way, it's time for the inevitable: a showdown with Dracula.

In his first form, Drac's got a few tricks to contend with, but he'll spend much of his time trying to brutalise Hector. Your Devils can pound the snot out of him while you dodge Drac's waves of spikes and giant purple blasts. If Dracula disappears, start running and rolling, or he'll teleport on top of you and bite Hector – something that will cause massive damage.

Alternatively, if you've got any kind of Holy Spell, such as the delicate-sounding Twinkle Star, it will eat Dracula for lunch.

Then, of course, he'll uncork the second form. If his first form ran you out of Potions, you may be in trouble, but that Void Ring you picked up back in the Infinite Corridor will be a big help. Dracula's big Achilles heel is that he likes to sit there and laugh while you pound him in the sternum with whatever's available. Since he's flying around just off the ground, now's a good time to trade out your Battle Devil, if you've been using him, for a Mage. You can also hedge your bets by buying a Devil Doll accessory from Julia.

When Dracula backs off, he's preparing to throw bolts of energy at you. This harsh shower of rays can be evaded by jumping constantly, but to get past it all you need to do is hop over the electrical field. At close range, watch Drac's arms at all times to see which direction he's going to swing in, and move accordingly. Once he's been beaten, you've won!

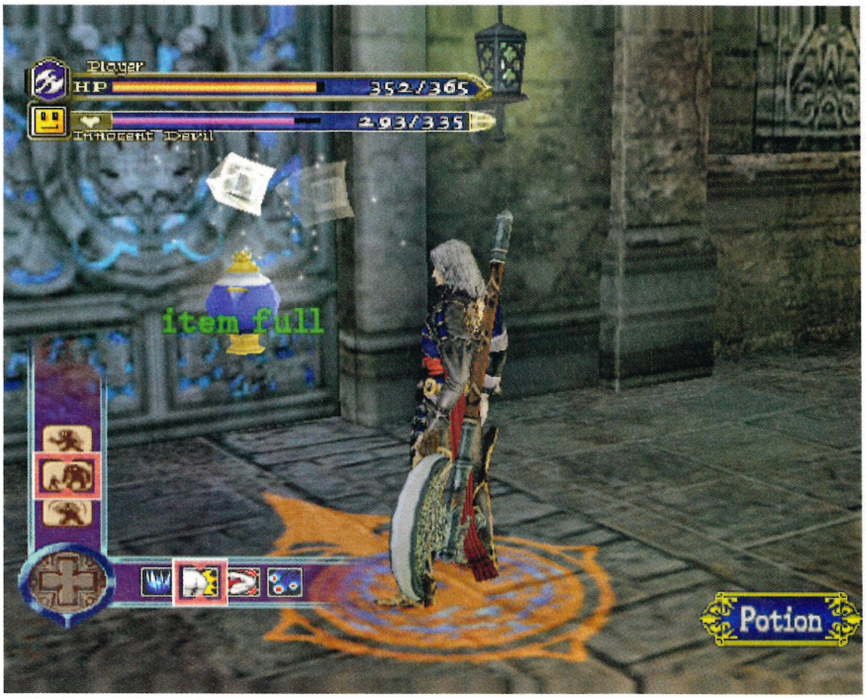
**MONSTERS' BALL**
When you command your Battle Devil to Guard, it's like flypaper for monsters. There are reasons why you might want to draw them in, though – it's easy to steal from them while they're distracted!




↑ There's a lot of blood when you fight Dracula.




↑ Make a mistake and he'll mess you up real bad.




↑ You'll need all the potions you can carry.

CURSE THE DARKNESS: GET INTO THE HABIT OF BREAKING TORCHES. THEY CAN CONTAIN MONEY, MEAT, POTIONS, SERUMS OR UNCURSES

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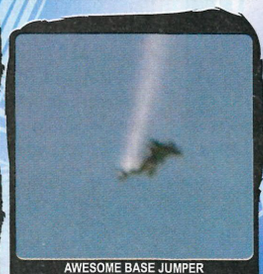

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|---|---|---|
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| SHAYNE WARD - THAT'S MY GOAL | 178376 | 171500 |
| NIZLOPI - JCB SONG | 178365 | 171490 |
| SUNBLOCK - I'LL BE READY | 178481 | 171516 |
| RICHARD ASHCROFT - BREAK THE NIGHT WITH COLOUR | 178480 | 171515 |
| BRIAN KENNEDY - GEORGE BEST - A TRIBUTE | 178385 | 171512 |
| BLACK EYED PEAS - MY HUMPS | 178317 | 171435 |
| MADONNA - HUNG UP | 178286 | 171412 |
| TEXAS - SLEEP | 178482 | 171517 |
| JOSE GONZALEZ - HEARTBEATS | 178483 | 171518 |
| PUSSYCAT DOLLS - STICKWITU | 178306 | 171477 |
| JAMES BLUNT - GOODBYE MY LOVER | 178371 | 171495 |
| SUGABABES - UGLY | 178355 | 171472 |
| EDITORS - MUNICH | 178387 | 171513 |
| ARCTIC MONKEYS - GOOD ON THE DANCEFLOOR | 178292 | 171427 |

### talking tones

| | TRUE |
|---|---|
| BARBARA - LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN | 178394 |
| BASIL FAWLTY | 178396 |
| BILL AND TED | 178398 |
| BRAVEHEART | 178399 |
| COCKNEY GANGSTER | 178404 |
| DAFFYD - LITTLE BRITAIN | 178406 |
| DASTARDLY AND MUTLEY | 178407 |
| KRUSTY - THE SIMPSONS | 178426 |
| MEL B - BO SELECTA | 178434 |
| MICHAEL JACKSON | 178435 |
| OB1 KANOBE | 178446 |
| OZZY | 178448 |
| PAULINE & MICKEY- LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN | 178449 |
| SOUTHPARK | 178458 |
| SPONGE BOB | 178459 |
| TUBS & EDWARD LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN | 178465 |
| VICKY POLLARD - LITTLE BRITAIN | 178468 |

### real sounds

| | TRUE |
|---|---|
| THROWING UP - SPLAT!!!! | 178012 |
| ACE VENTURA - ALRIGHTY THEN | 178022 |
| DR EVIL - THROW ME A BONE | 178024 |
| THE GREATEST FEMALE ORGASM EVER!! | 178031 |
| HOMER SIMPSON - DOH DOH DOH | 178032 |
| KICK YOUR ASS! | 178038 |
| ITALIAN JOB - BLOW THE BLOODY DOORS OFF | 178040 |
| AUSTIN POWERS - ALOTA FAGINA | 178044 |
| BO SELECTA MICHAEL JACKSON - SHAAMONE | 178047 |
| PULP FICTION - THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS MAN | 178051 |
| DONALD DUCK GETTING A BJ (HILARIOUS) | 178056 |
| BUZZ LIGHTYEAR - TO INFINITY & BEYOND | 178067 |
| MONKEY GOING NUTS | 178080 |
| FULL METAL JACKET - SARGEANT "DO YOU SUCK?" | 178138 |
| POLICE - 'COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP' | 178118 |

### more true tones

| | TRUE | POLY |
|---|---|---|
| RIHANNA - PON DE REPLAY | 178322 | 171324 |
| SUGABABES - PUSH THE BUTTON | 178323 | 171385 |
| MYLO - DOCTOR PRESSURE | 178331 | |
| GWEN STEFANI - CAN I HAVE IT LIKE THAT | 178332 | 171440 |
| THE DARKNESS - TICKET TO HELL AND BACK | 178333 | 171439 |
| GORILLAZ - DARE | 178340 | 171340 |
| 2 PAC - CHANGES | 178475 | |
| 2 PAC - GHETTO GOSPEL | 178476 | |
| 50 CENT - IN DA CLUB | 178479 | |
| AALIYAH - TRY AGAIN | 178488 | |
| BLACK SABBATH - PARANOID | 178548 | |
| BLINK 182 - ALL THE SMALL THINGS | 178549 | |
| BLUR - GIRLS & BOYS | 178556 | |
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| BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN - BORN IN THE USA | 178568 | |

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# Skive With Live

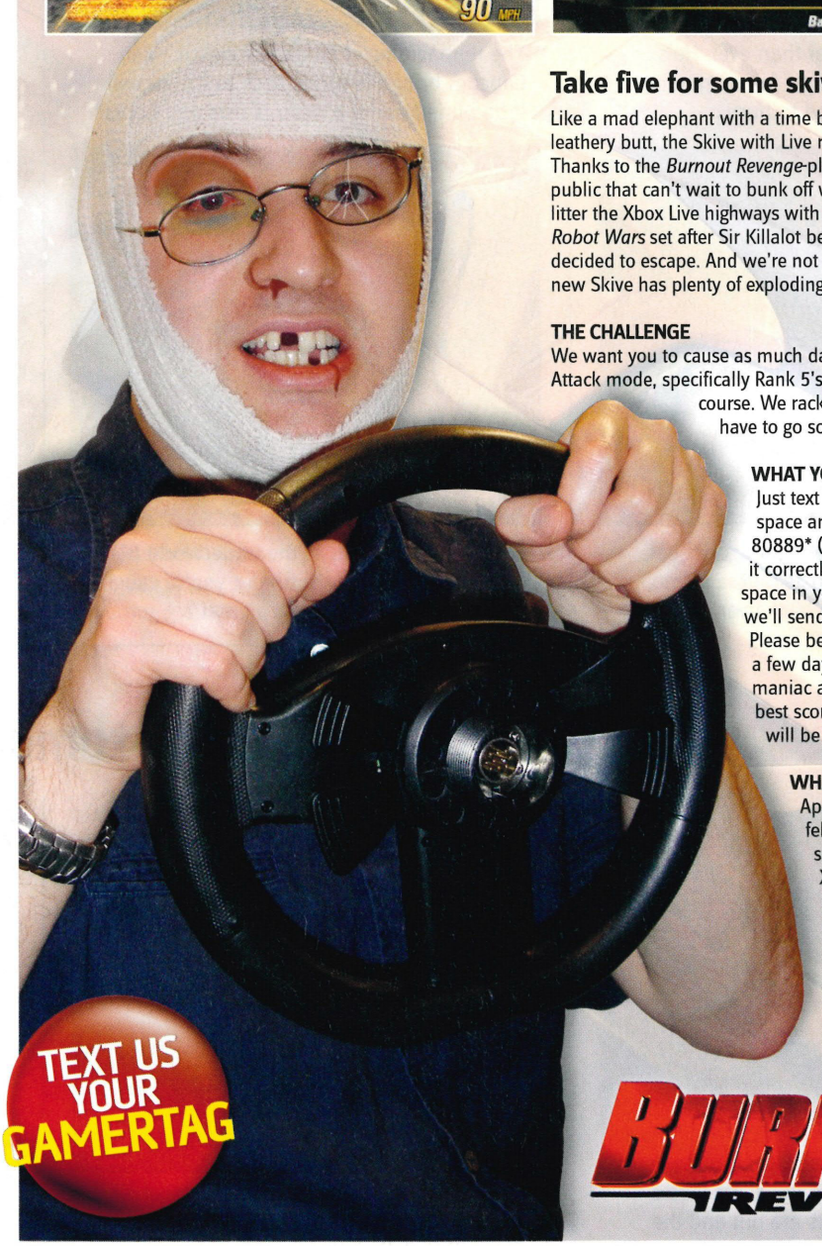
# Win BIG* with our awesome monthly Xbox Live challenge

*And by 'big' we actually mean 'it probably won't cost us much to send by Royal Mail'.










## Take five for some skive, bro

Like a mad elephant with a time bomb strapped to its big, leathery butt, the Skive with Live roadshow thunders on. Thanks to the *Burnout Revenge*-playing efforts of an Xbox public that can't wait to bunk off work, we've managed to litter the Xbox Live highways with more scrap metal than the *Robot Wars* set after Sir Killalot became self-aware and decided to escape. And we're not ready to stop yet: this new Skive has plenty of exploding petrol tanks left in it yet.

### THE CHALLENGE

We want you to cause as much damage as possible in Traffic Attack mode, specifically Rank 5's White Mountain Long F course. We racked up $2,037,150 so you'll have to go some to beat us.

### WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO DO

Just text OXMTAG followed by a space and then your Gamertag to 80889* (please make sure you enter it correctly and check you've got space in your Friends list first) and we'll send you a Friends request. Please be patient - this may take a few days! Blow stuff up like a maniac and the person with the best score as of 5pm on 16 March will be declared the winner.

### WHAT YOU WIN

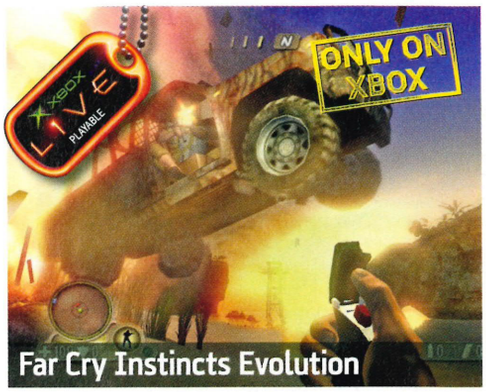
Apart from the respect of your fellow gamers, get the best score and we'll send you the Xbox game of your choice. Plus we'll get all the best Skivers back for a Special Champion of Champions competition, with an amazing prize up for grabs. So get texting and start skiving!

BURNOUT REVENGE

* Text message will cost you 50p including VAT per text message received, plus your usual text message cost. Please source all necessary permissions. This service is available to all networks. If you have any problems sending your text message or with your call, please contact the service provider. Telephone: 0845 330 5002; email futuresupport@opaltelecom.co.uk. Please see page 044 for full terms & conditions.

# Next Month
## Official XBOX Magazine

## Reviews Exclusive reviews before every other magazine!




**Far Cry Instincts Evolution**

Carver's back and angrier than ever. He's got new feral skills, a jungle full of mutants, and more than one island to burn...



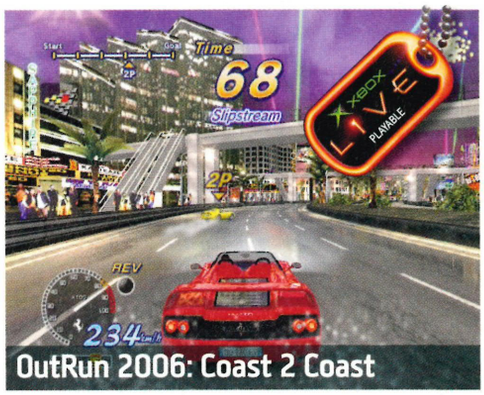
**Final Fight: Streetwise**

The reimagining of an arcade classic - can Capcom bring the series back to life, or will it be buried under a heap of fists and boots?




**Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon AW**

So good it looks like an Xbox 360 game. We go in-depth with the latest and potentially most explosive *Ghost Recon* game yet.



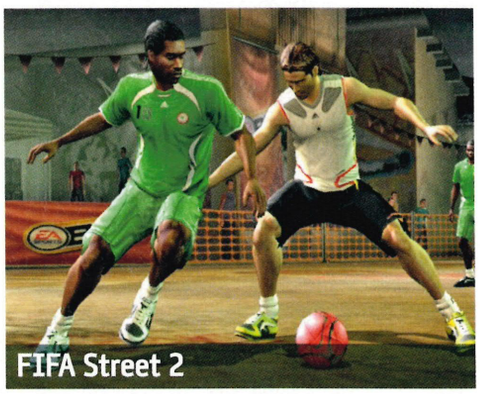

**OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast**

A sultry blonde sat in the passenger's seat, awful Casio keyboard music on the stereo, and every single *OutRun* track ever designed!




**Painkiller: Hell Wars**

All hell breaks loose as the underworld tries to take over heaven. Naturally, you're caught up in the middle of it with a great big gun...



**FIFA Street 2**

You know what we thought about the first one. Will the series redeem itself or score another hat-trick of own goals?

## Previews See the Xbox games of tomorrow first!




**Rainbow Six: Critical Hour**

As the series returns to its roots, we take a look at why super-gadgets are out and the need to actually think is back in fashion...



**Superman Returns**

The man in tights has never had a good console game, EVER. Will this movie tie-in reinvention deliver the goods?

### Star Trek: Legacy

War in space! World-exclusive first look at the new *Trek* strategy epic, where YOU command massive fleets of ships in every *Star Trek* era!

### The Da Vinci Code

Dan Brown's best-selling conspiracy caper comes to Xbox, courtesy of the makers of *The Emperor's Tomb*. We take a sneaky peek...

### Just Cause

This mysteriously beautiful title from Eidos creeps ever closer. You are a CIA agent up to his neck in jungle-based trouble. Excited yet?




We're on the threshold of a new chapter for Lara, as the Xbox's first Tomb Raider game prepares to share its secrets. Exclusive review next month...

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# Driver Parallel Lines

After months of waiting and months of hoping this will be better than the last one, you know what? We've got a funny feeling it might be. Two decades, two stories, and one huge garage stocked with new cars is coming your way...

Contents are subject to change due to reasons beyond our control

# NEXT MONTH Official XBOX Magazine

Official XBOX Magazine ON THE DISC




## DRIVER PARALLEL LINES

Smash through boxes, crash into other vehicles, and feel pretty pleased with yourself that you're playing the best *Driver* title since the original. Well, that's the idea anyway.



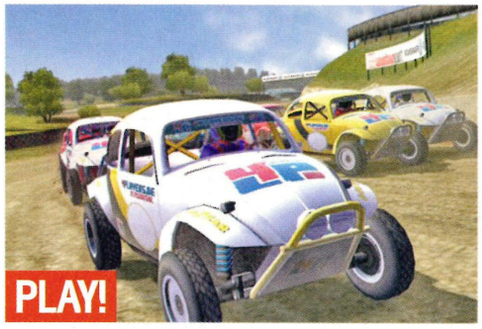

## FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

Pummel people's faces in! Watch their noses explode! Cheer as their eyes blacken! It's violent, it's playable, and it's on the disc, with a big snarly expression on its face!




## COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE

Sneak up on those nasty Nazis and wring their necks in *Commandos*' first-person debut. It's still hard as nails though, so expect a lot of replay value within!




## TOCA RACE DRIVER 3

Rack up the best times, knock your opponents from the circuit and gain pole position for this Live demo of Codemasters' astounding new *TOCA* game.




## TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON AW

You won't believe just how sweet this baby looks – proving (if proof be needed) that the Xbox still continues to stretch itself to produce the goods. Who needs an Xbox 360?




## FIFA STREET 2

Okay, we admit it, judging by the moves on show here, we're quietly optimistic about the new *FIFA Street* game. We've even picked up a few hints for Sunday afternoons.

## XBOX 360 VIDEOS

### Splinter Cell Double Agent

Okay, you'll have to wait until September to play it, but take a look at this gorgeous piece of Sam Fisher action on Xbox 360. The wait is as sweet as it is painful. Hurry up, September!

### Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII

More spectacular footage of Ubisoft's World War II shooter – and it looks better than ever on Xbox 360. It almost makes you want to take up flying lessons and go and shoot out a few dockyards yourself.

### Lost Planet: Extreme Condition

Icy wastes, giant monsters, fighting tribes, AND vehicles, what more could you want? Take a peek inside this stunning little next-gen number that will have you pre-ordering a console quicker than you can shout 'T-Rex'.

### The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion

You've seen the screenshots all over the internet, you've heard whispers about just how damned pretty this is... now watch it unfurl in glorious video form.




**OVER 650 REVIEWS NOW ON THE DISC!**

## MOVIES

### Final Fight: Streetwise

It's a whole heap of fun down in Metro City. If you're not smacking the living bejesus out of an enemy, you're being hired to squash roaches in a diner. Witness those pesky bugs being flattened underfoot, and the crafty way the last one tries to hide from our big karate feet...

### Blazing Angels: Squadrons of WWII

Get in the thick of the action as World War II takes to the air with Ubisoft's superb looking airborne fighter. Intense battles, dogfights, and ground assaults are what's in store for the finest-looking flight combat game in a long while.

### Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3

They're back! The pizza-obsessed, cel-shaded mutants are out to save the world again from various threats, robots, and masked gun-toting ninjaroids.

### Sonic Riders

Waaaaah! What the hell is going on? Rings, zappy things, hedgehogs, snowboards... it's like watching a rollercoaster ride of vomit and bright colours. Be warned, this is perhaps the fastest Sonic game we've ever seen.

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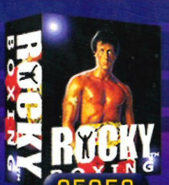
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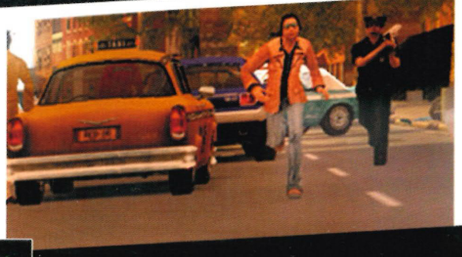
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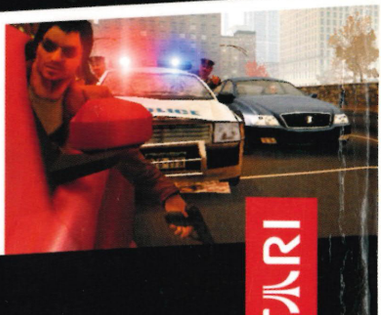



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