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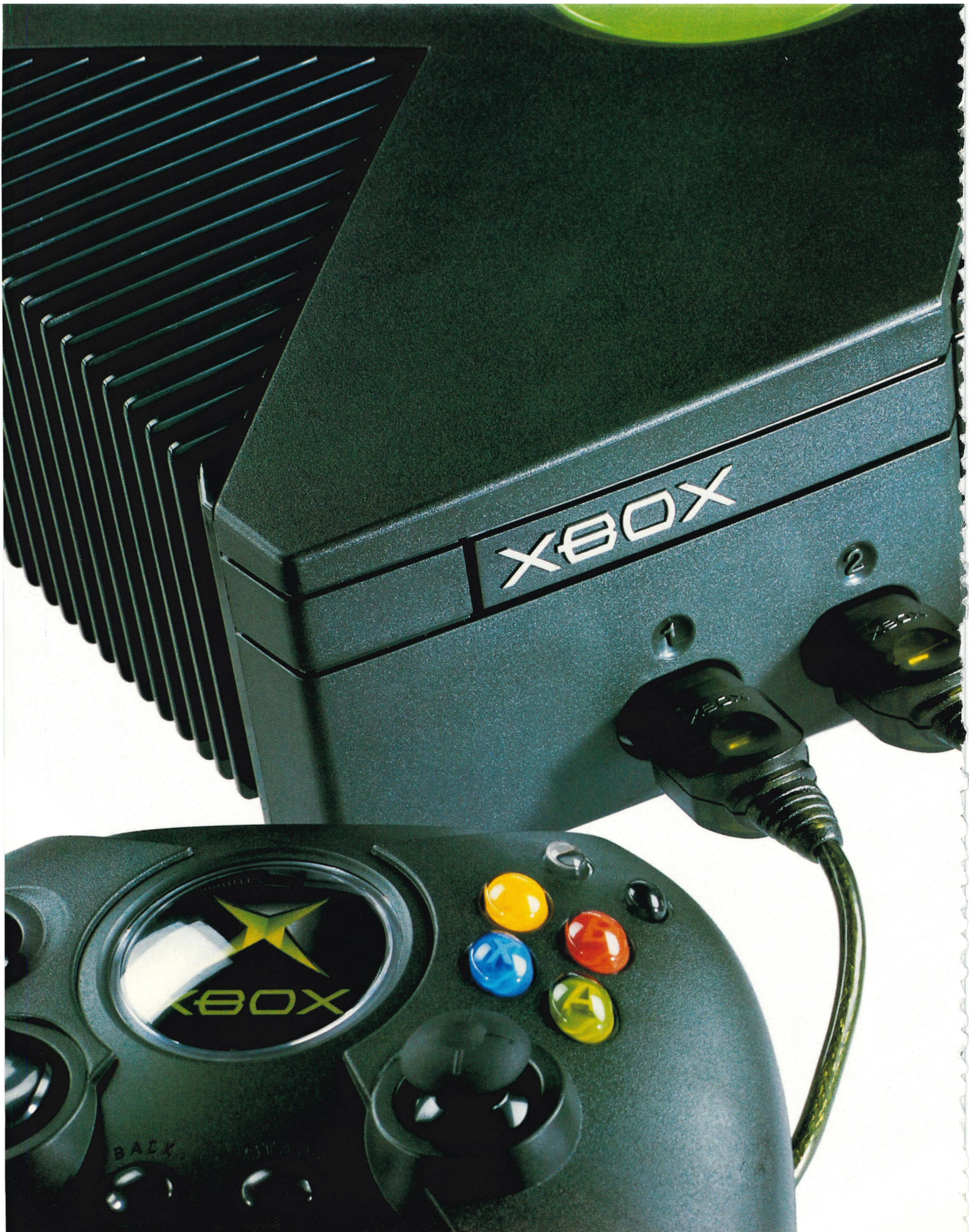


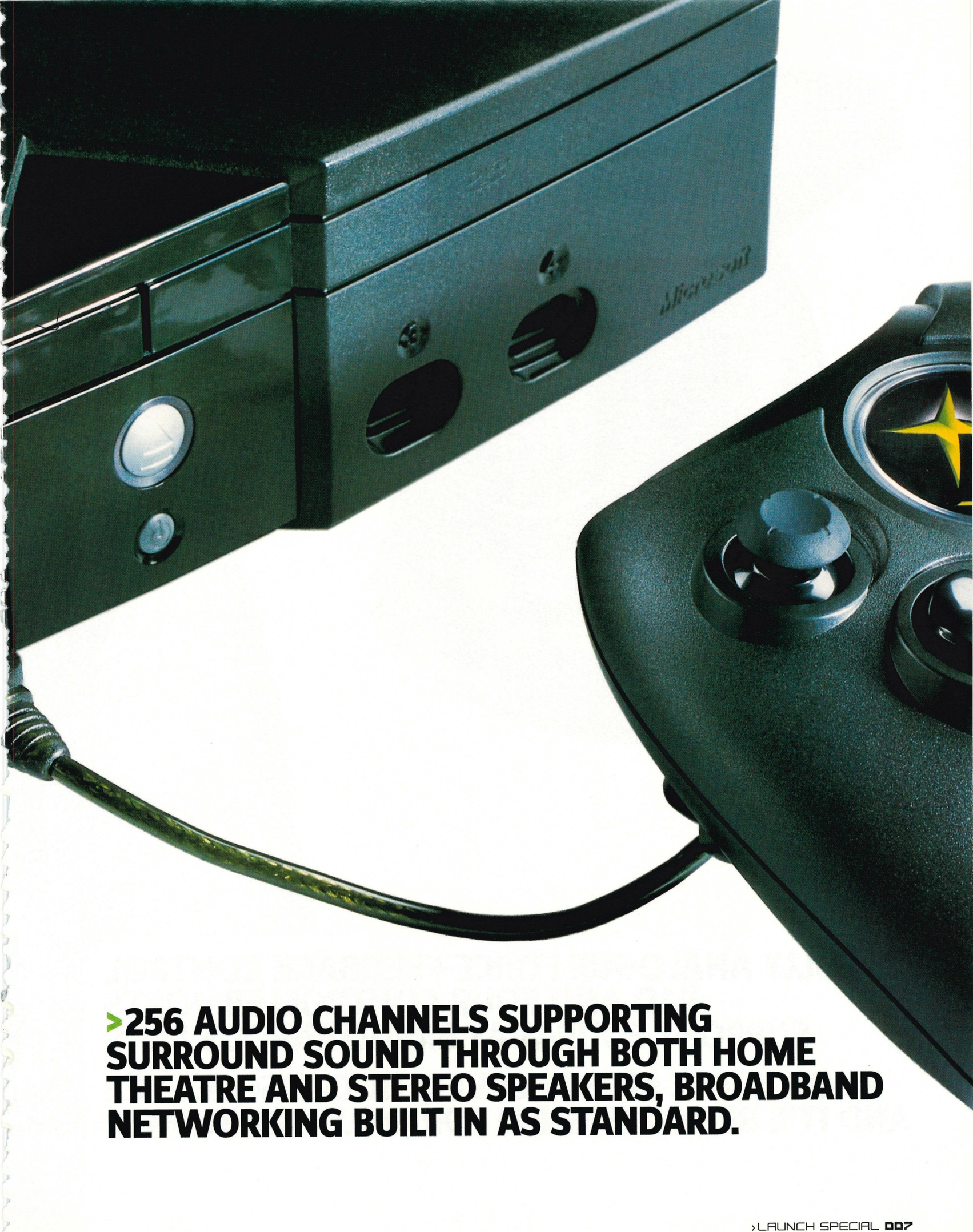
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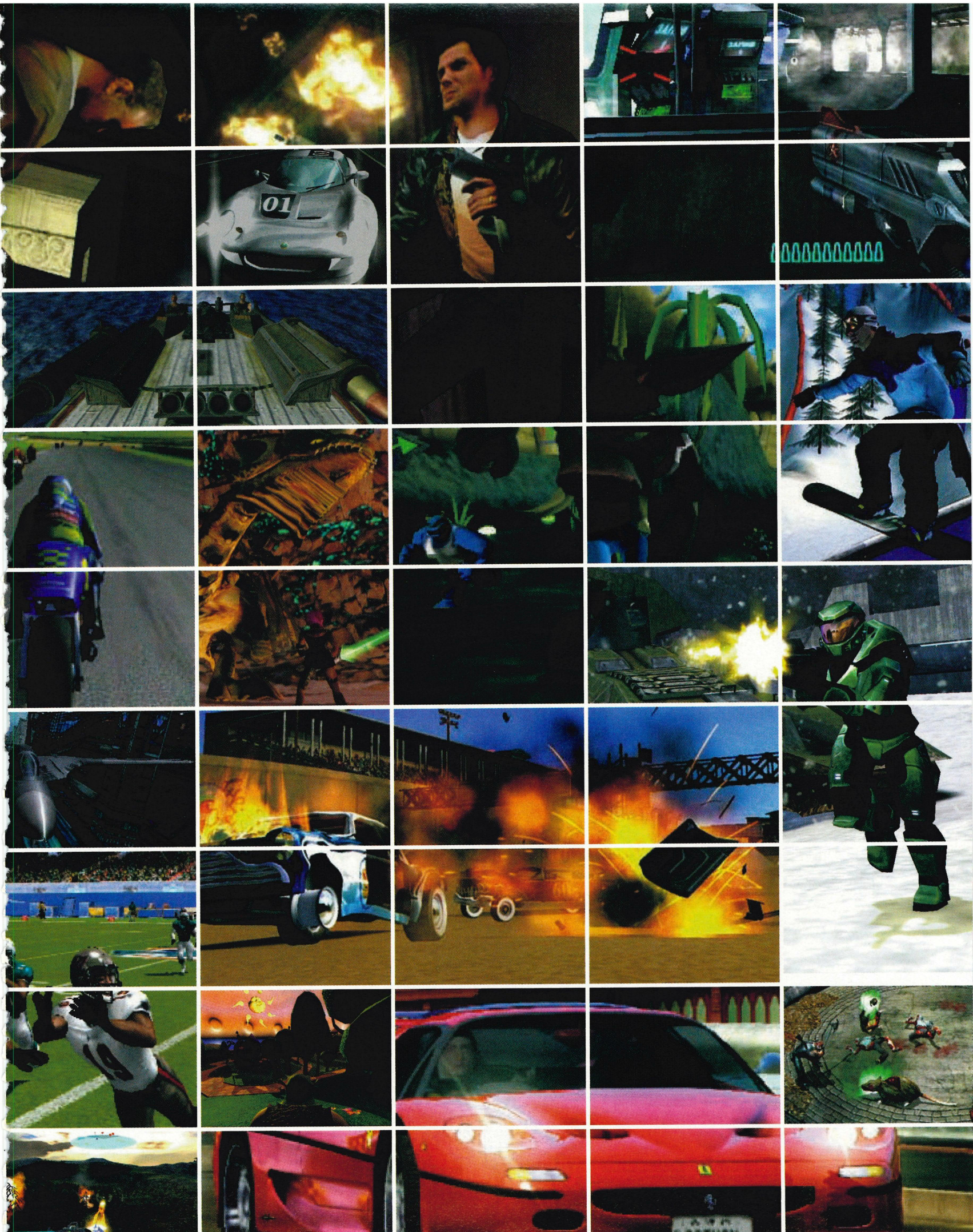
XBOX IS THE MOST POWERFUL CONSOLE EVER AND IT'S BEEN DESIGNED FOR ONLY ONE THING...


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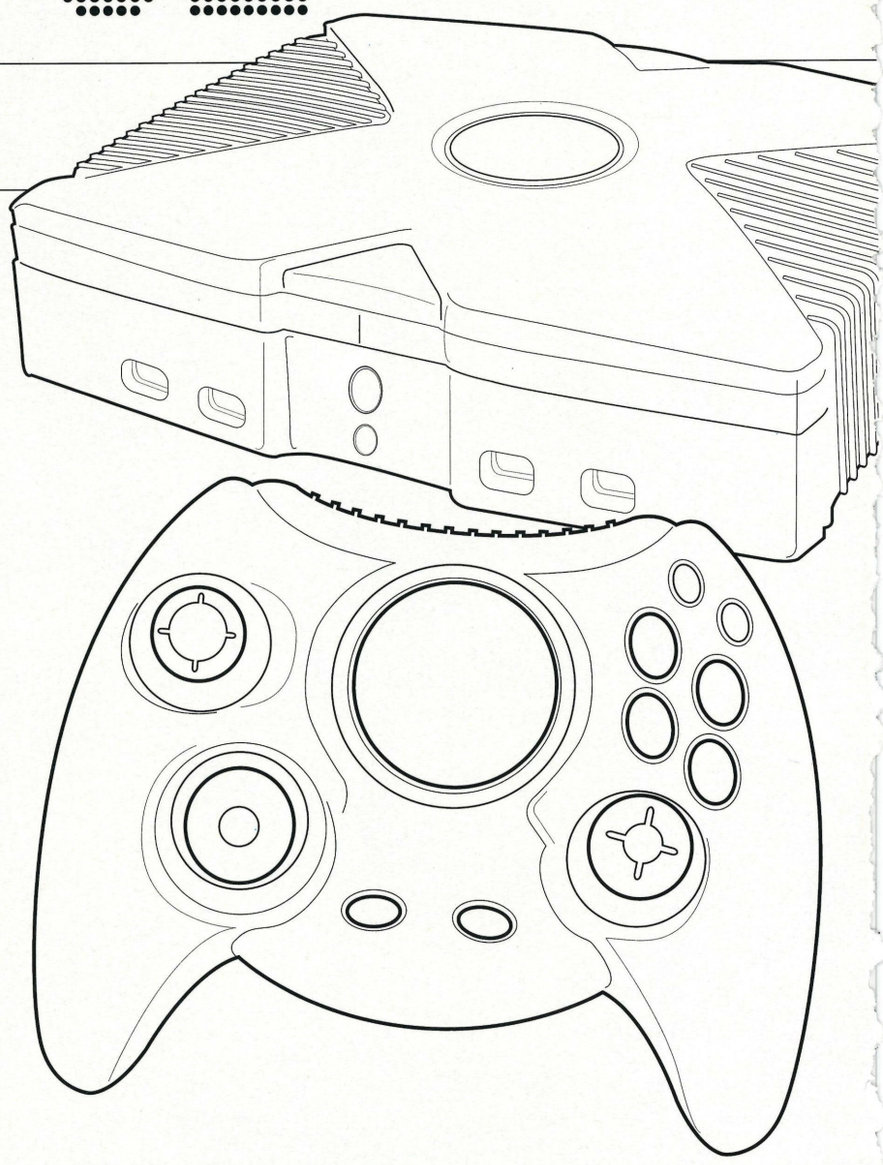







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THE LAUNCH OF XBOX is the most exciting event to hit video gaming for years. On March 14 next year, British gamers will get their chance to buy the most powerful games console in the world - the first-ever to come with a built-in hard-drive and broadband networking capability.

Microsoft may be new to the console market but over the past couple of years it's quietly become one of the world's most important PC game developers and publishers. This has put the company in an ideal position to move up a league - to become a format holder and take on the might of the Japanese giants Sony and Nintendo.

For those that doubted Microsoft had the aptitude required to make a mark in the console market, the sheer range and quality of the games featured in this magazine will come as a revelation. While Microsoft has had the foresight and skill to build an incredibly powerful piece of hardware in Xbox, it understands better than most that it's the games that will make or break the system.

And it's with the games that this Launch Special edition of the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* is primarily concerned. The technology feature starting on page 40 examines the new worlds that Xbox opens for developers and, in turn, what they will mean for gamers. The future of games is not just about improving polygon performance, it's about innovation and it's here that Xbox offers more opportunity than any other console.

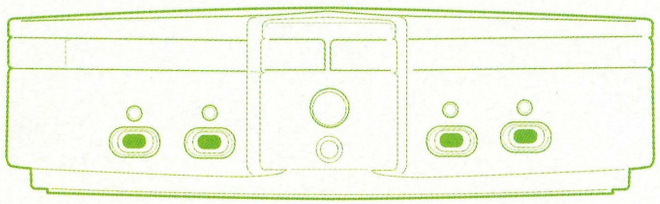
The rest of the magazine is devoted to the 118 games announced for Xbox at the time of going to press. For the first time, screenshots are of a high-enough quality to print at a size that does justice to the games, and this Launch Special uses almost exclusively in-game images. It might come as a shock to learn, for instance, that the pictures on pages 16 and 24 are actually in-game, but that's exactly what they are.

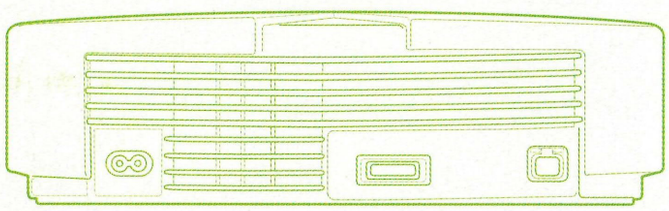
Xbox is good news for gamers everywhere. More power, more choice, more innovation, more fun - the ultimate games games machine is only months away.

Enjoy the issue.

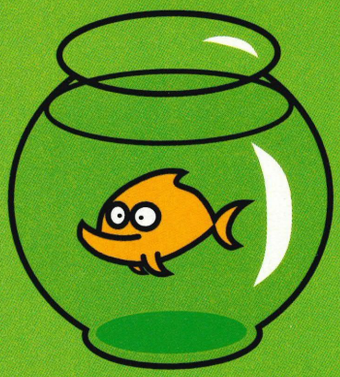
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PREVIEW DEVELOPER: **BUNGIE** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT** RELEASE : **Q1/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **16 (VIA LAN)** WEBSITE: **WWW.XBOX.COM/GAMES/ACTION**

HALO

This is Microsoft's Mario, Sonic, Tekken and Ridge Racer – if only one reason were needed to buy Xbox, this would be it.

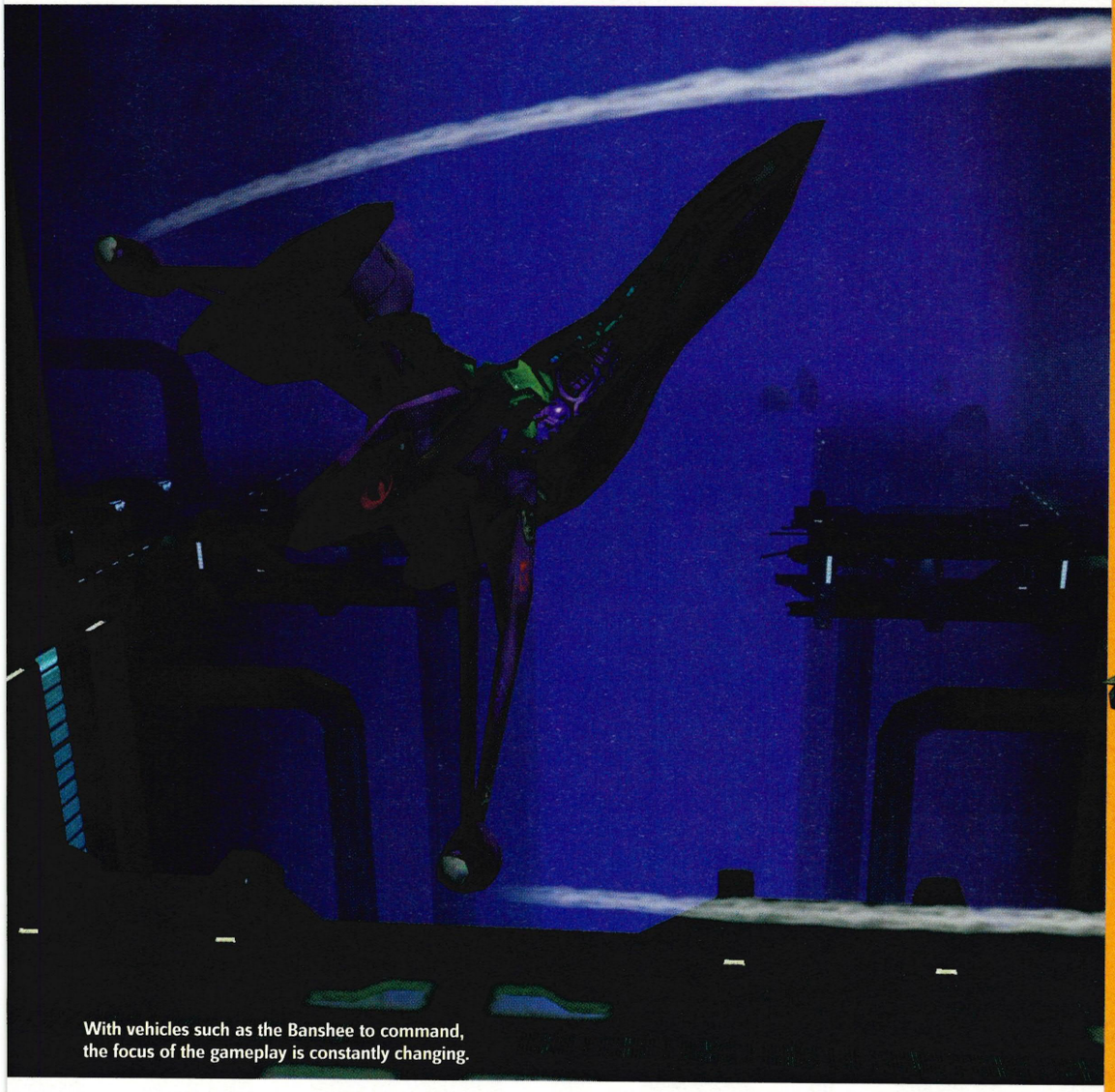
Expectation can be a dangerous thing. The problem of 'non-delivery', as marketeers would have it, can kill an enterprise in a fraction of the time it took to create. Disappointment is something people can learn to live with, but the failure to live up to specifically crafted hype makes them angry. And angry consumers bite companies hard. In the arse.

Which is why the eyes of the video game world have been so firmly fixed on *Halo*. The game that wowed PC gamers back at 1999's Electronic Entertainment Expo, which subsequently got bought – along with its developers – by Microsoft and is now a key first-party launch release, has come to symbolise the Xbox more than Microsoft or Bungie would probably have liked. If *Halo* failed to impress, it was always going to be a long hard first year for the first American-based console since the glory days of Atari.

For everyone involved with the Xbox project, then, it's come as a palpable relief that *Halo* is as good as it is. Not 'competent', not 'good', not even 'excellent' – for the people that have played *Halo* in the weeks running up to launch (including the *Official UK Xbox Magazine*, naturally) the game has become the lead contender for game of the year.

It is certainly valid, and only right, to compare *Halo* with the likes of *GoldenEye*, *Quake* and *Half-Life*. There can be little doubt that this is a landmark title. It really is an astonishing game...

»



With vehicles such as the Banshee to command, the focus of the gameplay is constantly changing.

THE COVENANT CAN COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER, SENDING OUT SMALLER SQUADS TO OUTFLANK THE SPACE MARINES FROM ALL SIDES

The big trend for action games over the past few years year has been the inclusion of meaningful story lines. Arguably, *Halo* appropriates some of the oldest sci-fi clichés going, cheerfully ransacking the archives of *Alien*, *Starship Troopers* and all the other set-in-space action movies. However, the way in which the story is advanced both within the gameplay itself and the now-obligatory cut-scenes displays a quality of plot that most games can only dream about.

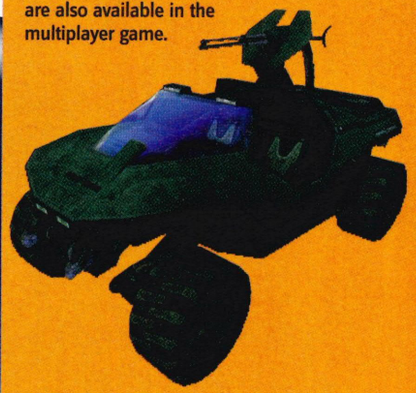
The game casts its player in the lead role of a cybernetically enhanced Space Marine on board a military spacecraft on its way back to Earth. As the ship comes under surprise attack from an alien breed called the Covenant, the Space Marine is rudely woken from stasis and thrust straight into battle against the might of the alien boarding party.

After taking emergency evasive action, the mother ship takes a hyperspace leap and finds itself in orbit around an immense ring structure supporting an artificial eco-system - Halo. With the ship in danger of imminent destruction, its surviving Marine contingent, with the gamers' character in tow, take a drop ship down to the ring's surface with the Covenant in hot pursuit. It's here that the majority of the game's action takes place and where - unfortunately for the game's heroes - the Covenant turn out to be only one of their problems.

The decision by Bungie to base the game in a 'natural' environment, rather than the

THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE

Halo provides an array of land and air vehicles to jump into and control, including a huge human tank called the Scorpion and the Ghost, a sleek Covenant jet fighter. In gameplay terms, they change the focus of the action, with each requiring a different set of control skills. All vehicles are also available in the multiplayer game.



WARTHOG: An all-terrain vehicle with incredible hill-climbing ability. It comes with a tail-mounted heavy machine gun and room for a passenger to provide additional fire support.
IN-GAME HIGHLIGHT: Jumping inside an enemy Warthog in the middle of a multiplayer game and taking out the crew before they realise where the shots are coming from.



SCORPION: The Marines' tank is a serious piece of hardware, packing a heavy machine gun, a devastating main cannon and slots on the chassis from which multiple extra marines can cling to and fire.
IN-GAME HIGHLIGHT: Co-op mode. One player at the wheel and cannon, the other riding on the side with a fully loaded rocket launcher.



GHOST: The Covenants' primary air fighter is sleek, agile and packs a punch. Expect its speed and manoeuvrability to be a big factor in multiplay.
IN-GAME HIGHLIGHT: Shoot down a Covenant without destroying the Ghost. Then hop in and start taking out aliens from above.



BANSHEE:
An almost-vertical one-man ship. Weapons stored in front pods.
IN-GAME HIGHLIGHT: Banshee has one of the most striking flying styles of all the craft available to the gamer.

All screenshots in this feature have been taken in-game, but some, like this one, are from the third-person perspective.

HALO MULTIPLAY

> *Halo* comes equipped with an impressive array of multiplayer options, including a split-screen co-operative mode that allows players to take on any of the game's ten missions together.

Incredibly, the missions play out the in the same way as in solo play, but by double-teaming, players can totally change their tactics to complete them.

In addition there are no less than 26 variants on the gamer-on-gamer deathmatch. These include standard Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Assault, and the excellent Oddball, in which teams fight for possession of a human skull. Gamers can also tinker with the rules to create custom games.

Halo allows for as many as four players to compete on a single Xbox in split-screen mode, and for as many as four Xbox systems to be connected via Ethernet, creating a network with a grand total of 16 possible players.



An actual first-person in-game shot, this illustrates perfectly what gamers can expect in terms of full-on action.

typical war-torn, post-apocalyptic setting of many similar games, was an inspired one. In a world of stunning sunsets, lush plain, expansive beaches and mysterious alien architecture, the game's graphics shine like no other. Quite simply, the views are the most spectacular ever seen in a video or computer game. If there wasn't a vicious war raging, it often feels as if simple exploration and sightseeing would be worth the admission price alone.

However, there is a war raging and, as with the game's setting, it's a war the like of which gamers have not experienced before. *Halo*'s enemy AI is simultaneously awe-inspiring, terrifying and relentless. While enemies in many games are, for the most part, unthinking tactical morons content to throw themselves continuously against superior firepower with no thought for their own safety or the welfare of the fellows, the opposition here is as far from cannon fodder as it's possible to get. Covenant opposition take cover behind portable shields and use scenery to shelter from incoming fire. Moreover, they appear to communicate, sending smaller squads out to outflank the player from all sides.

Fortunately, the AI of the human marines fighting alongside the gamer is just as impressive. Not only does their context-sensitive (and censor-baiting) speech enhance the sense of 'being there', but their covering movements and intelligent tactics are also of real and vital use. Far from the irritating, useless drones of most first-person games with pretensions to squad-game status, playing *Halo* is like a multiplayer experience played solo.

Game structure is divided into ten missions, although the frequent cut-scenes help to bury the segmentation and maintain the integrity of the story. While ten missions hints at a short and sweet experience, each one is seamlessly subdivided into smaller objectives separated by invisible - but much-needed - save points. Mercifully for all right-minded people, the ability to save is held by the game-designers and their army of play-testers and not by the gamers themselves. A game like *Halo* would be destroyed by the 'two steps forward and quicksave' trial-and-error approach of all-too-many first-person PC shooters.

There can be no doubt that *Halo* has been tested, trialled and play-tested to perfection. »

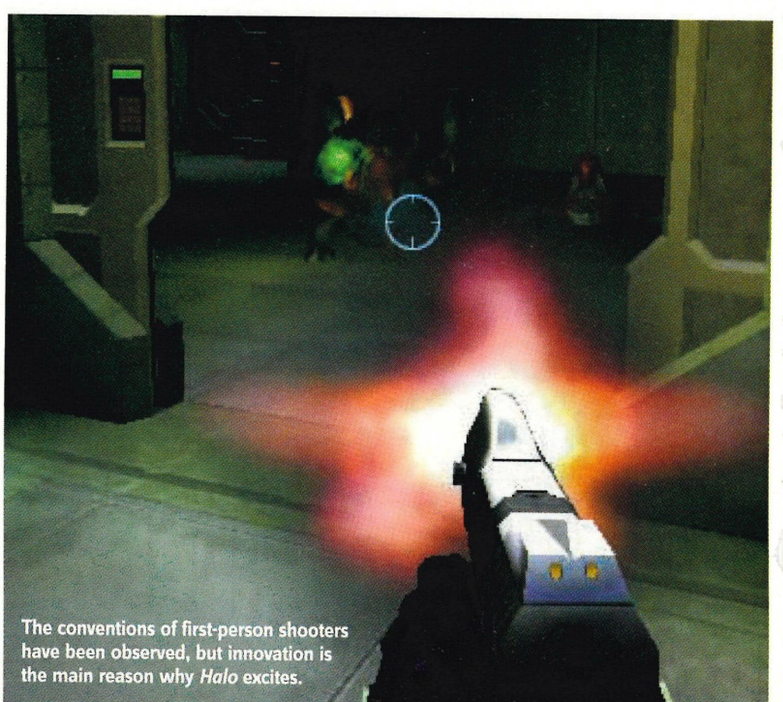
Here, the Space Marine lets a Covenant member feel the full force of one of the numerous weapons.

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT HALO HAS BEEN TESTED, TRIALLED AND PLAY-TESTED TO PERFECTION

Take weapon selection as just one example – where standard game spec allows players to pick up and carry a huge and improbably heavy array of weaponry, *Halo*'s Space Marine can carry only two guns at a time. While there is a vast number of weapons in the game, it becomes a question of tactics as to which is best for the particular job in hand and when to discard one in favour of another.

One area of concern for *Halo*-watchers ever since its move from PC has been that of control. With first-person shooters so entrenched as the preserve of the PC's keyboard and mouse, many have doubted that a game originally designed for such a control system could ever be backwards-engineered for a game pad. It's true to say that control in *Halo* is not an instinctive process. The left analogue is reserved strictly for directional movement, albeit in a full 360° range, rather than the back, forward and strafe afforded by the W, A, S and D keyboard keys. The right analogue takes the place of the mouse, controlling direction of look and aim. Weapon selection is via the gamepad's top buttons and firing is taken care of by the triggers on its underside.

Up until now, it fell to *GoldenEye* to demonstrate that a gamepad could happily cope with a first-person shooter and still be instinctive. With the double analogue control on the Xbox control pad, Halo was never going to be as easy to pick up and play as Rare's N64 classic. However, after about thirty minutes of play, gamers should be in full control of their Space Marine, with the only further disturbance occurring when players are given their first



The conventions of first-person shooters have been observed, but innovation is the main reason why *Halo* excites.

HALO WEAPONS

Halo delivers a mean arsenal of US Marine weaponry, plus you can pick up alien weapons from the bodies of dead Covenant troops. Some of the best:



ASSAULT RIFLE Reminiscent of the M-41A Pulse Rifle from *Aliens*, this comes with a 60-round clip and a dazzling rate of fire. With only two weapons able to be carried at one time, it's a good idea to keep hold of this.



SNIPER RIFLE Equipped with two zoom modes and a night-vision scope, this one-shot killer is ideal for taking out enemies from a safe distance. Hopeless for close-quarters fighting, though.



ROCKET LAUNCHER With very limited ammunition and a slow reload time, this is a specialist weapon for use against distant and overwhelmingly superior forces.



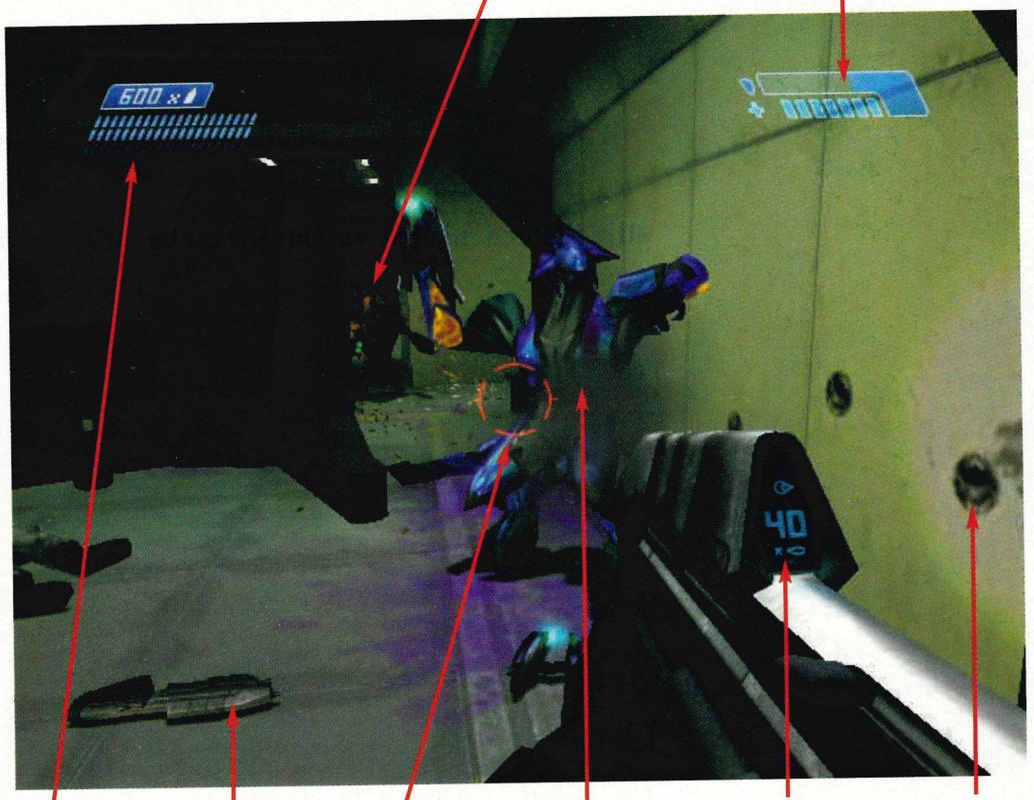
PLASMA PISTOL The standard sidearm of lower-rank Covenant troops, this single-shot repeater is most effective when the trigger is held down for one big powerful burst of energy.



NEEDLER This Covenant weapon shoots out waves of razor-sharp glass needles that home in on a target, embed themselves and then explode.

FREEZE FRAME

One moment in Halo



COVER Covenant frequently make intelligent use of cover before dodging out to return fire.

HEALTH BAR Hits reduce right to left, cartridges beneath it replenish it but take a second-or-so to load. With the health bar at zero, another hit will kill if there isn't the time to refill with a new cartridge.

AMMO COUNTER Monitors your magazine level and the number of spares carried. The reload button is X

DISCARDED WEAPONS Vital for ammo refills and picking up new guns. Only two weapons can be carried at any one time, though.

AREA-SPECIFIC DAMAGE Occurs on all enemies and marines in the game.

COVENANT This variety can cast a body-encompassing shield, which must be broken down before hits can be administered.

GUN-MOUNTED ROUND COUNTER Only available on the Marine's Assault Rifle.

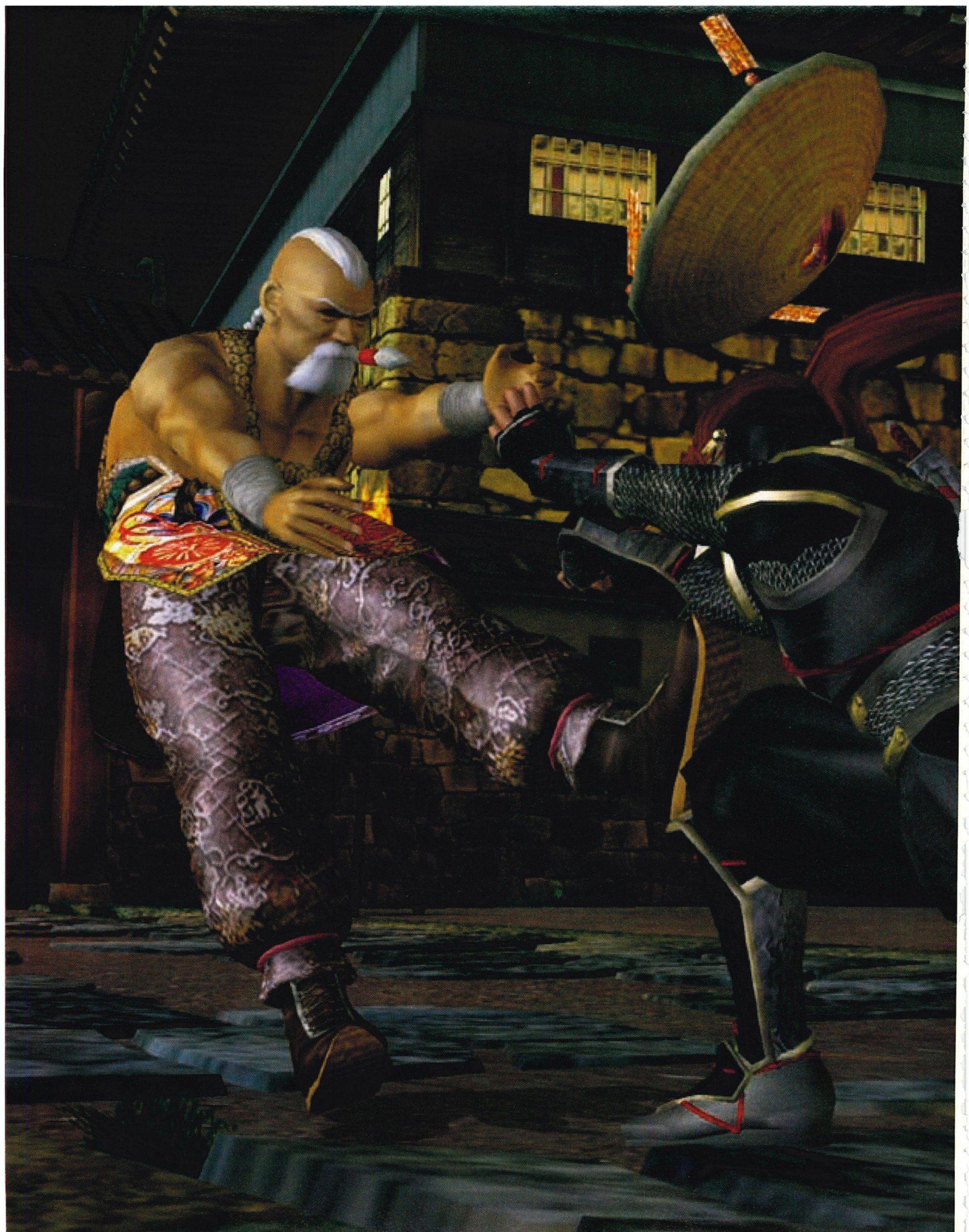
BULLET HOLES Scenery takes visible hits during firefights.

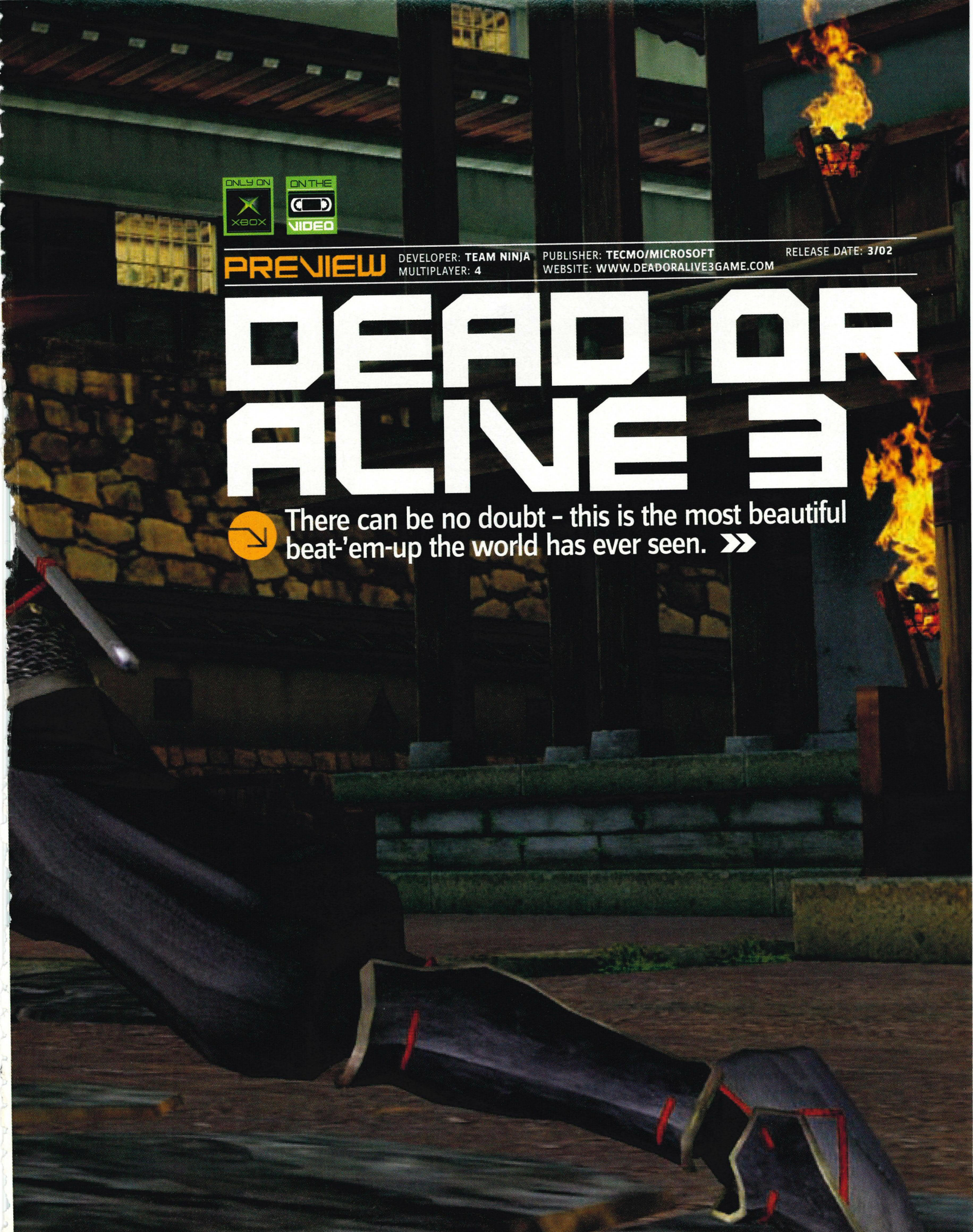
chance to pilot one of the game's vehicles. PC gamers will carp that the game's look and aim are too slow, although this is adjustable. *Halo* is tuned to be accessible for all players, not just for gamers with several years of first-person shooter experience.

However, if *Halo* was only playable after a three-month intensive training course by a squad of battle-hardened sergeant majors, it would undoubtedly still find a massive following. There is so much to love, inspire, excite and thrill in this game that it absolutely demands to be played. From the evil-sounding abuse thrown at the player by the Covenant ground troops to the way shell cases ejected from the Marine's guns bounce off the walls they're using for cover. From the brilliant lapping water on the beaches of the ringworld to the astonishing clarity and depth of graphics on every single piece of scenery. From the complex, challenging mission structure to the joy of seeing a squad of alien enemies spot a grenade thrown at them and run for cover. From the satisfaction of lugging a Covenant commander in the head from 500 yards with the sniper rifle to the horror of finding yourself outflanked by a squad of previously unseen troops. There seems to be no part of this game that isn't shot through with brilliance.



While *Dead or Alive 3* is undoubtedly a brilliant game, it is still a beat-'em-up following, in the main, a tried-and-tested formula. *Halo* is a first-person game – and the world isn't short of them – but the level of innovation contained in its gameplay stand it head and shoulders above any game released on any system for years. Add to this its astonishing technical achievement in graphics and sound, and you have a game that, if nothing else was released for the machine, would justify the purchase of an Xbox alone. Stand by for the all-format game of the year. OXM





PREVIEW

DEVELOPER: **TEAM NINJA**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**
PUBLISHER: **TECMO/MICROSOFT**
WEBSITE: **WWW.DEADORALIVE3GAME.COM**
RELEASE DATE: **3/02**

DEAD OR ALIVE 3

There can be no doubt – this is the most beautiful beat-'em-up the world has ever seen. »



As the title of this Xbox-exclusive game puts it so succinctly, beat-'em-ups fall into two distinct categories – dead or alive. The margin for error or, more accurately, mediocrity, is tiny. With such a simple game plan (a gaming staple, in fact) it's all too easy to end up with an underwhelming experience.

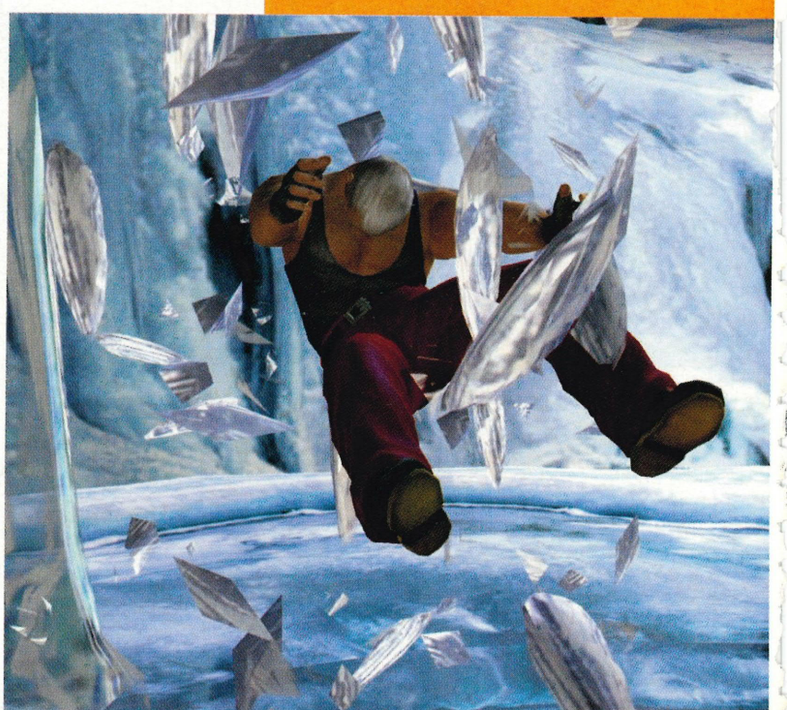
Fortunately for Xbox, *Dead or Alive 3* is one fighter very much in the land of the living. The *DoA* franchise has always been admired for its simplicity of combat and use of scenery (and, by some, for the heaving cleavages of the female combatants). For good reason, then, developers Team Ninja haven't made a completely clean breast of things in retaining all that has been so strong in the series. They're concentrating on making this third *DoA* more accessible than its forerunners, while building on the innovative use of interactive scenery in an attempt to raise standards for the entire genre.

The combat system has been slightly tweaked, with the dual aim of retaining the traditional simplicity and providing more moves. It should mean less potential for boring stand-offs. The basic actions remain kick, punch, block and counter, but a significant number of combinations have been added to the existing canon of moves. Reaction speeds have been improved to provide a fluidity of action that lends itself perfectly to the expanded, exploitable environments.

There are few things more irritating and pace-killing in a beat-'em-up than characters whose offensive and defensive moves negate one another, so that eventual victory becomes almost arbitrary in result. Deliberate effort has been made to avoid 'dead time' with *DoA 3*, with almost obsessive balancing of the combatants to reduce stalemates.

Along with far faster and more intuitive moves (which, incidentally, should allow the Xbox controllers to demonstrate their solidity, precision and comfort) it's impossible for a cautious player to rely on prolonged blocking to salvage a battle. For the more strategic player, the use of brain over brawn will be essential for victory and to fully exploit the depth of the interactive environments.

With previous *DoA* games, there was some



←All screens in this preview are actual screenshots taken during gameplay.

↓Interactivity with scenery is not just cosmetic – it's a part of tactical play.





GET SMASHED

Arenas based in buildings feature objects such as torches, screens, windows, and neon signs into which opponents can be thrown for extra damage points. Natural levels also come packed with cunningly-disguised destructible scenery. In the ice levels, for instance, there are both solid and breakable ice formations, both of which do damage to your enemy when he or she is introduced to them. Some, however, will shatter, opening up wider areas of the arena. Using the environment has transcended gimmick status in *DoA 3* and is now an intrinsic and fun element of gameplay.

←Many parts of the scenery break upon impact, such as these ice formations.

"THE ENTRY-POINT IS NOW MORE APPEALING TO CASUAL AND HARDCORE ALIKE, WITH EMPHASIS ON DISCOVERY RATHER THAN LEARNING THE FIGHTING METHODS PARROT-FASHION."

concern that the Tag Battle system was too difficult and had only really been enjoyed by the most hardcore of fans. This has been addressed, and Tag Battle is now not only more open to all players, but it also creates a strong argument for placing *DoA 3* at the very top of the fighting tree. No longer is it a prerequisite to invest days in learning the rules and moves of virtual combat.

The entry-point is now more appealing to casual and hardcore alike, and the emphasis is on discovery rather than learning methods parrot-fashion. Tag Battle can now be placed alongside Story, Versus, Time Attack or Team Battle modes as an example of pure, fist-clenching fun. In fact it's difficult to favour any one mode of play over another – this is the real judge of the supremely balancing game experience that is *DoA 3*.

The characters have also received a thorough workout and makeover. Each one is exquisitely detailed and animated, making use of over 20,000 polygons. There are plenty of new additions to the roster. One such new character is the Russian assassin Bayman, who comes with an enormous combat knife strapped to his barrel chest. English beauty Christy practices the graceful, fluid art of She Quan and looks stunning. Hidden characters will also be revealed as *DoA 3* is played through and beaten, including the mysterious Genra.

Although the fighting arenas took on a far greater significance in *DoA 2*, Team Ninja have »



↓ The sequence starts with Gen being thrown through a plate glass window.





"LEVEL SELECTION BECOMES AS IMPORTANT A CHOICE AS THAT OF CHARACTER, AND EXPLORATION OF NEW MULTI-LEVEL ARENAS IS AN EXTREMELY ENTICING PROSPECT."

turned estate agent with 'location, location, location' taking on enormous importance in *DoA 3*. This is the first fighting game that makes the environment not only a tactical resource, but also a genuinely motivating factor in level progression. Too often in fighting games, a new level is indicated by the replacing of the old background with a similarly-styled 'new' one, but there's a genuine sense of change in *DoA 3* that makes the game as a whole far more satisfying. Level selection becomes as important a choice as that of character, and exploration of new multi-level arenas is actually exciting. This is a virtually unprecedented aspect of beat-'em-ups, but one which *DoA 3* explores fearlessly and with great success.

With each new level, unique 3D features are presented that add fresh aspects to both offensive and defensive play. This is far more than simply introducing different split-height arenas, although variation in elevation is certainly a big part of the combat. Trees and flaming torches cease to be background decoration and become bone-crunching objects to swing an opponent into during a counter-attack. Barriers, screens and partitions are often destructible, and form gateways to gorgeous new chambers – if only this fed back into the real world. The logical progression for TV shows like *Changing Rooms* would surely be a *DoA 3*-style *Wrecking Rooms*, where the delights of each new showroom in your neighbour's house

FALLING FOR YOU

The Hong Kong skyscraper level demonstrates the amazing scope for taking *DoA 3* fights way out of bounds. In this sequence, Gen is smashed through a large window, leaving the remaining panes shattered. For the actual fall, the camera angle switches intelligently to give a real sense of the plunge. Gen then lands on a neon sign, suffering serious damage from the hot broken glass. Eventually, he lands face first in the middle of a superb street scene. Unbelievably, the fight continues on the pavement.



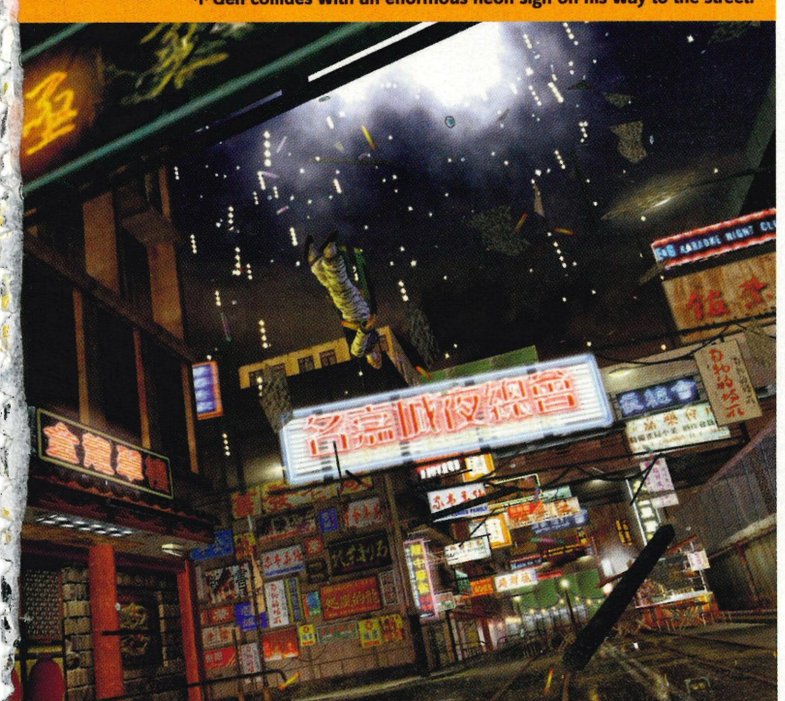
→ The fighting location has been totally transformed during a single bout.



↑ Dynamic camera angles capture the full glory of the spectacular action.



↑ Gen collides with an enormous neon sign on his way to the street.



TEAM NINJA TALK

Official UK Xbox Magazine **talks exclusively with Tomonobu Itagaki, Executive Officer & General Manager Creative Division, Tecmo Ltd.**



"All areas of the game benefit from the Xbox technology. It is powerful enough to handle everything at once. In terms of power, the Xbox seems approximately three to five times more powerful than the PlayStation 2." Tomonobu Itagaki

***Official Xbox*: What has changed in *Dead or Alive 3* from previous versions?**

Tomonobu Itagaki: In the first place, it's two years later and most of what has changed is my feeling towards it. I wanted to make a fighting game that anyone can enjoy. I've tried to make a game that has a lot of reaction, and yet a game that is also a very fair and balanced one.

There is also a great deal of strategy added. You can have a game that features a lot of beautiful action, but a game that is also very easy for anyone to play. So it is easy, but it is also very deep.

***Official Xbox*: How have you found the technology during this process?**

TI: The Xbox hardware is excellent to work with. It's powerful rather than easy. All areas of the game benefit from the Xbox technology. It is powerful enough to handle everything at once. In terms of power, the Xbox seems approximately three to five times more powerful than the PlayStation 2.

It would be possible to create the snow level we've done on the PS2, but not with the other things, such as characters and environment motion. It would be impossible to have all those things featuring with the PS2 machine power.

***Official Xbox*: What have you done to utilise the Xbox's other features?**

TI: We utilise the hard-drive to make game loading faster. We wanted the game loading almost instantaneously, so it gives us much quicker loading times. *DoA 3*'s engine and the Xbox both have the ability to handle huge volumes of data simultaneously.

***Official Xbox*: Tell us a little about your next project.**

TI: Team Ninja, after *DoA 3*, will continue work on a new *Ninja Gaiden*. Some of them are already working on it. We want to create a game that will let you do many of the things you could do in the original game.

So yes, you can hang and swing around on posts, and the character can climb walls. But the game will be much more advanced than the original. The game engine for *Ninja Gaiden* is already 60 per cent complete, but a lot of work has to be done.

are discovered by hurling an interior designer through a wall panel made of MDF.

In the *DoA 3* castle level, for instance, fights occur in a beautifully reflective, but seemingly simple and constrictive, black marbled chamber. However, rolling brawls heed no boundaries and after splintering through the Shoji screens onto the precipitously-sloped roof of the castle keep, the fight can even continue down into the courtyard below. The slapping can then conclude amidst the spluttering torches throwing glowing embers into the night sky. This is a *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* of a game with stunning beauty, tight action and the free-roaming, self-choreographed and always epic fight sequences.

The destruction of scenery and the associated damage it causes opponents in *DoA 3* never becomes predictable and with every new level comes new discovery. After the Shoji screens and torches of the Japanese Castle come expansive glass dividers in the Hong Kong skyscraper. These don't just smash, but on first impact crack into the most realistic spiderwebbed fractures ever seen. Later, a thrilling plunge onto neon signs teaches that broken glass tubing and electricity are no friends to a bare fighter's back.

Ice levels are also particularly adept at demonstrating *DoA 3*'s expertise in combining destruction with tactics. As ice formations and giant icicles shatter into glistening shards, the very geography of the arena is changed by the fighters, making for a different level layout every time you play. Other environmental effects include swirling sand and snowstorms, with clumps of snow falling from shaken trees and drifts of both substances adding still more depth and variation to tactics and scenery. Add fantastically implemented Dolby Digital 5.1 storm sound effects to the mix and *Dead or Alive 3* is looking practically unbeatable.

DoA 3 looks set to be *the* definitive fighting game. It demonstrates incredible flair and detail in every important area of game design and realisation, taking advantage of the Xbox hardware to create stunning visuals and sound, and loading speeds simply unachievable on any other system.

The Japanese development community won't support Xbox with killer applications? Four words: *Dead or Alive 3*. OXM






GOTHAM





ONLY ON XBOX

ON THE VIDEO

PREVIEW

DEVELOPER: **BIZARRE CREATIONS**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02**

PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

Nothing to do with Batman; everything to do with fast cars, big cities, loud music and showing-off... »



A Subaru Impreza trails in the wake of a Ferrari 550 Marinello.

TIME TO REFLECT

>THE REFLECTIONS on *Project Gotham*'s cars are extremely impressive, but how are they done? Basically, at the same time as the Xbox draws the 3D city to create the roadside locations, it also draws it from other perspectives and pastes the result over the car models. A technique called Fresnel reflection, which simulates the way light reflects in real life, is incorporated. It subdues the reflection head-on and keeps it shinier at the sides, avoiding the unnatural all-over shine seen on vehicles in other games. The end result is surprisingly realistic, and makes *Project Gotham Racing* look considerably smarter than existing driving games.

With almost every existing race circuit already featuring in at least one driving game somewhere, Liverpool-based developer Bizarre Creations instead chose some of the most famous stretches of road in the world for their first Xbox game. But this hasn't meant sticking something that looks a bit like Buckingham Palace next to a piece of track and calling it London, or coding a few steep hills and calling it San Francisco. Bizarre actually built large chunks of those two cities in full 3D – the same treatment was given to Tokyo and New York – modelling every road, building, kerb and phone box with shocking detail. And then, with mile upon square mile of real city to play with, it came up with different routes for the player to take, giving *Project Gotham Racing* a total of over 200 separate circuits.

Improving the fantasy of racing around the world's biggest cities is a dream-like selection of high-powered cars in which to do it. Cars from Ferrari, Porsche, BMW and TVR feature, along with the new Mini Cooper. All are constructed with the same amount of detail as the cities they drive around.

Every curve is rendered to perfection, every badge and decal is in the right place and every part of bodywork is matched to the exact paint colour used by the car manufacturers. The wing mirrors really work, and the wheels even have separately moving brake discs in them. It's attention to detail that won't go unappreciated – the overall effect is stunning, and leagues ahead of other games featuring similar cars.

But the most impressive thing about the look of the cars is the way they gleam as if straight from the factory, clearly reflecting the scenery around them. The reflections aren't the kind of over-the-top, fake ones used in games like PS2's *Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec*. They are real 3D reflections of the city bouncing off the cars. Drive an Audi TT past Big Ben and the clock tower's reflection will show up on its bodywork.

Stop in Times Square and the flashing lights of the advertising boards will flickering on the bonnet. Passing planes are reflected in tinted windows. It's a visual effect that has, until the arrival of Xbox, been impossible to generate.



London is instantly recognisable – the detail shown in the locations is highly commendable.



↑ **An extremely accurate rendition of a San Francisco street, somewhere south of Market.**



RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

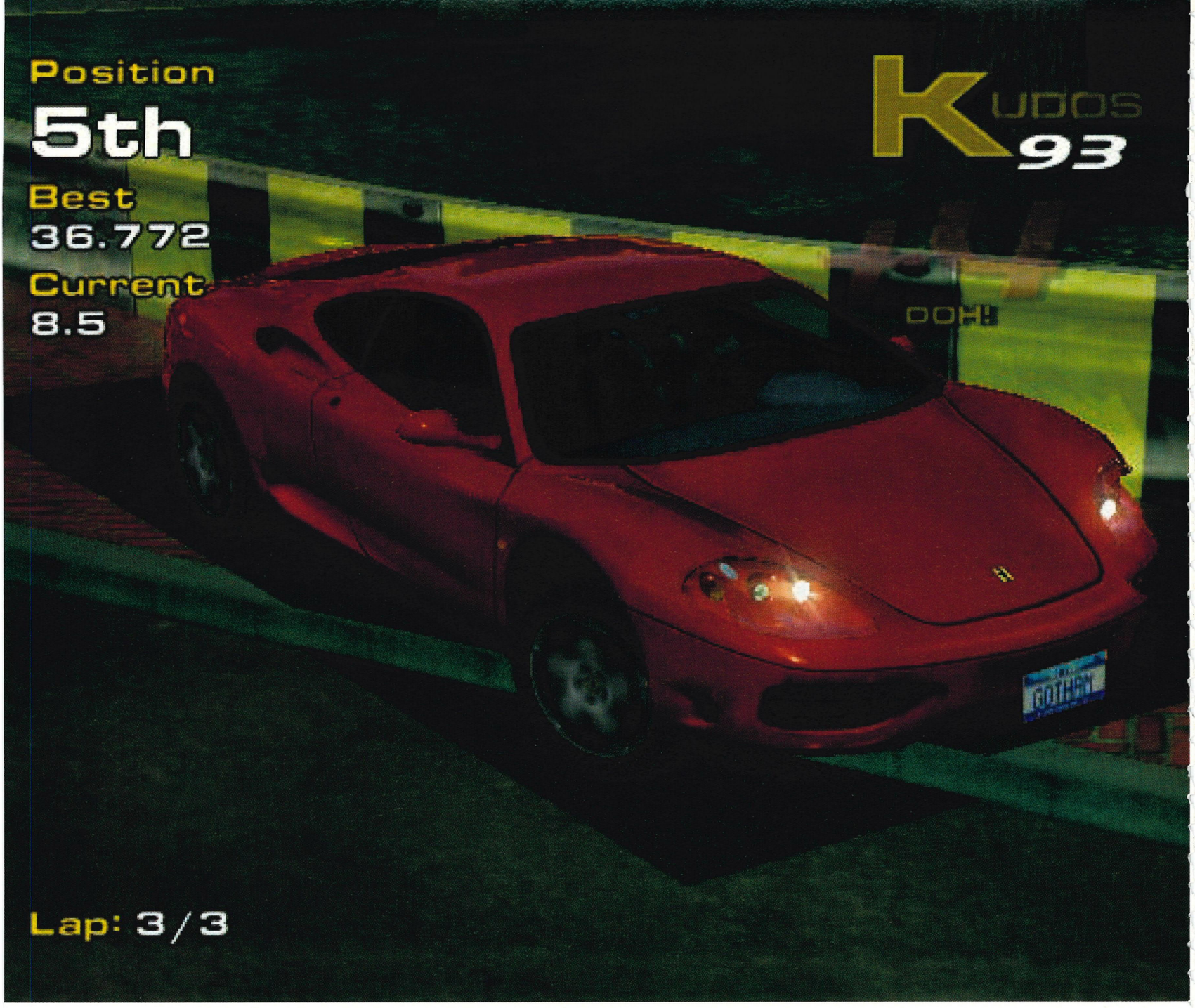
>IN ORDER to create *Project Gotham Racing*'s city locations, the Bizarre Creations team did an enormous amount of research. Developers were dispatched to four cities – London, Tokyo, San Francisco and New York – where they took thousands of photographs and shot hours of video footage of every last building and piece of scenery. Ordnance Survey maps were used to ensure the road layouts and hill contours were entirely accurate, and each building was then created by hand in 3D using the research material. The photographs were then touched up and pasted onto the buildings as textures, thus making the game locations look spookily like the real thing.

As if to prove that the reflections are all generated in real time, careless driving can dent all of *Project Gotham*'s cars, bending the bodywork and, consequently, the scenery reflected in it. There's always been a reluctant acceptance that racing games featuring real cars don't show any bodywork damage – car manufacturers are naturally reticent to have their latest models smashed up in games.

But in another first, *Project Gotham Racing* has got round this problem. Every car takes visible damage whenever it hits a wall or other vehicle, with bodywork scratching and denting, and lights smashing when hit too hard. While the damage is purely superficial – it doesn't affect the handling at all – losing a headlight in a night race can make seeing the road ahead difficult. Losing *both* headlights is something that should obviously be avoided at all costs...

The immense graphical detail is matched by the attention lavished on the sound. All the real cars' engines were recorded for the game, and coded in surround sound. And, to add even more to the feel of being in the featured cities, each one has a number of radio stations available to the player - real radio stations, with real DJs talking and playing real tunes from real acts. The Chemical Brothers, Iggy Pop, Photek, Stereo MCs, Doves and even David Lee Roth provide some of the 60-plus licensed tracks featuring on the various stations. There's something for everyone. But still, if the player

MANUFACTURERS ARE NATURALLY RETICENT TO HAVE THEIR LATEST MODELS SMASHED UP IN GAMES, BUT HERE EVERY CAR TAKES VISIBLE DAMAGE WHENEVER IT HITS SOMETHING



↑ The Kudos points (top right corner) build up when players prove their ability to showboat while maintaining total control.

wants to listen to tunes of their own, they can put any CD in their Xbox, 'rip' the tunes onto the hard-drive and add it to the radio playlist.

But *Project Gotham Racing*'s most exciting feature, and the one which sets it apart from every other driving game, isn't a cosmetic one – it's a gameplay idea that shifts the emphasis away from straight-out racing for the finish line and instead encourages the player to drive quickly, accurately and stylishly. It's all about earning respect, or in this case, Kudos.

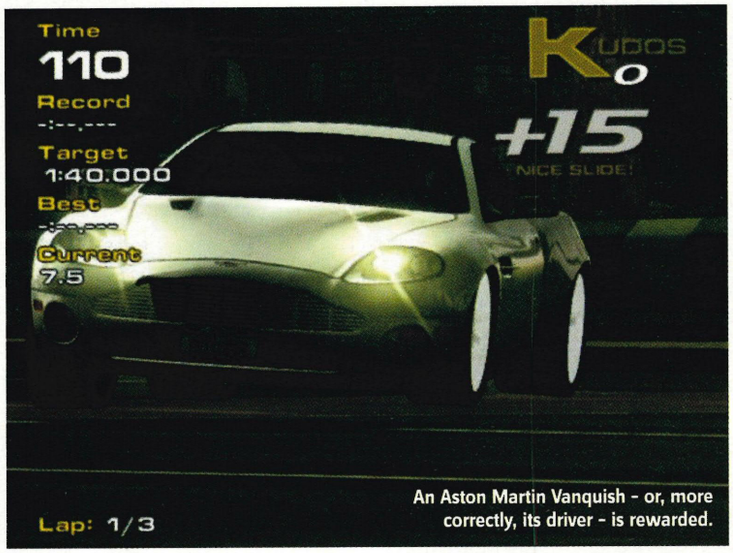
During most of *Project Gotham*'s races, Kudos points are awarded for impressive displays of driving skill. If the player pulls a big power slide, the Kudos counter in the top-right corner of the screen starts ticking over. The longer the slide is held, the more points are given. If the player does a cool overtaking manoeuvre, gets some air when going over the crest of a hill, or momentarily forces the car onto two wheels, the Kudos counter will again tick up. But should the player lose control and clip a barrier with their back end immediately after pulling off one of these show-off techniques, the Kudos will be lost.

Players have to demonstrate skill by controlling their vehicle for a few seconds after executing a flashy trick if they want to bank the Kudos points. The way to really rack up big Kudos scores is to put together combos of cool moves without making any mistakes. For example, if players power slide around a corner,

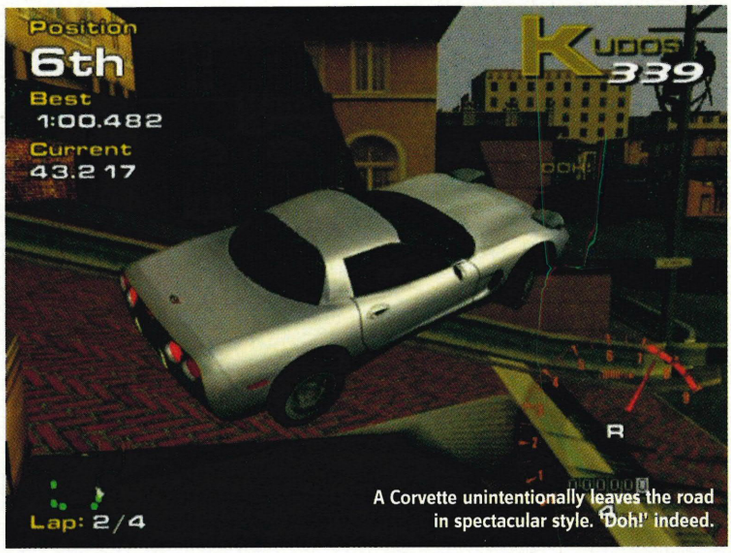
EVERY CURVE IS RENDERED TO PERFECTION, EVERY BADGE AND DECAL IS IN THE RIGHT PLACE AND EVERY PART OF BODYWORK USES THE MANUFACTURER'S EXACT PAINT COLOUR

QUAD WRANGLE

>AS WELL AS LOADS of single-player championships and challenges, *Project Gotham Racing* offers extensive multi-player options. With two people playing at once, the screen can be split either vertically or horizontally, while with three or four players, it is divided into quarters (with the spare space being occupied by a TV-style highlights view when three people play). Almost no graphical detail is lost in multi-player games, and the frame rate stays pretty much as smooth as that for one-player action. Races can take lots of forms, but it's the Kudos races that are most fun – as well as trying to cross the line first, the player needs to demonstrate their skill by driving more stylishly than the opposition.



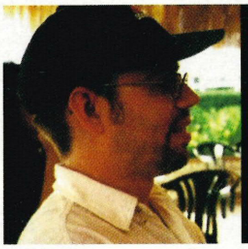
An Aston Martin Vanquish – or, more correctly, its driver – is rewarded.



A Corvette unintentionally leaves the road in spectacular style. 'Doh!' indeed.

BIZZARELY SPEAKING

Official UK Xbox Magazine talks exclusively with **Martin Chudley**, Managing Director of Bizzare Creations and a significant contributor to *Project Gotham Racing*.



"We have all the statistics in from the car manufacturers, which are entered into the game's comprehensive 3D physics system... we've tried to make the cars feel as real as possible without being overly difficult." Martin Chudley

***Official Xbox*: Why call the game Project Gotham Racing?**

Martin Chudley: This was a Microsoft idea initially, as they needed a codename. Gotham is the old name for New York, and as we were adding in New York, it fitted really well. They got good feedback from the codename after Gamestock, and so they went with it in the end.

***Official Xbox:* How have you found working with Xbox?**

MC: It's great from a developer's perspective. It's not a 'PC in a box' – console developers will find it really good to work with, but even PC developers will find a familiar face with the extended Direct X libraries available. It's a good all-rounder, with plenty of room for the future too.

***Official Xbox:* How did you get the car companies to allow you to show damage to their cars?**

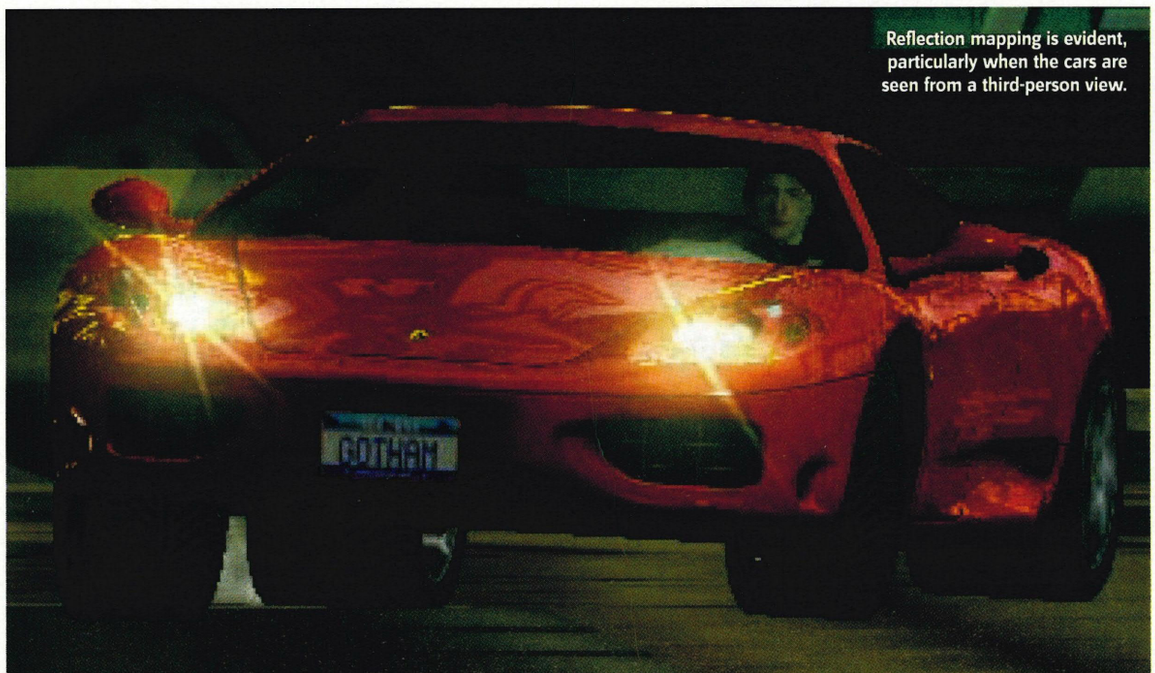
MC: A bit of Microsoft magic, I think! I don't know what was said to persuade them, but Microsoft showed the manufacturers the early game and told them what we planned, and they all agreed, which was cool with us!

***Official Xbox:* How would you describe the handling? How realistic is it?**

MC: We have all the statistics in from the car manufacturers, which are entered into the game's comprehensive 3D physics system. On top of this, we have the handling parameters. This allows the guys who are balancing and tweaking the cars to make them *feel* right as well. So we've tried to make them feel as real as possible, without being overly difficult.

***Official Xbox:* What work is there still left to be done?**

MC: We're nearly there in terms of the modelling and gameplay, although there's still some lighting, camera and play-balancing work to finish off. Microsoft is currently thoroughly testing the game and all being well, we're hoping to be ready for the US launch of Xbox. With that out of the way, we can then start work on the European version...



Reflection mapping is evident, particularly when the cars are seen from a third-person view.

then manages to overtake someone during that power slide, they'll make a combo and get extra Kudos points.

If they immediately follow that up with a two-wheeled skid, they get a three-hit Kudos combo and lots of bonus points, as long as they can then safely regain control.

It's a very arcade-like feature – having a score on the screen while driving – but it adds a whole new dimension to the way the racing game is played. Showing off isn't just for show-offs any more, it's compulsory.

Bizarre Creations has created a driving game that will feel fresh and exciting, even though the genre is one of the most crowded in the video game marketplace. Its unprecedented realism and detail is not the main factor – fun is.

The game has been shaped by the designers' love of gaming, rather than an obsession with cars, which has led to something set to be as immensely enjoyable as it is amazingly detailed.

As an Xbox launch title, *Project Gotham Racing* is going to show a lot of people exactly what the console is capable of. OXM





ONLY ON XBOX

ON THE VIDEO

PREVIEW PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT** DEVELOPER: **ODDWORLD INHABITANTS**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

One of the jewels in PlayStation's crown has made the jump to Xbox. But can Abe succeed in 3D?

In the early days of PlayStation, when every development company was writing platform adventure games set in 3D worlds, one company stood alone. Oddworld Inhabitants launched the 2D *Abe's Oddysee* into a climate where 3D was king and anything so anachronistic as a side-on 2D world seemed to stand no chance. With the honourable exception of Nintendo's *Super Mario 64*, however, the vast majority of 3D platform games failed to live up to the entertainment standards set by their 16-bit forebears. *Abe's Oddysee*, and its sequel *Abe's Exoddus*, went on to be two of the best-loved character games on the PlayStation.

The developers at Oddworld Inhabitants always maintained that they wouldn't move their game universe into three dimensions until a console came along that could fully handle their vision. Having openly, almost acrimoniously, transferred development of the third Oddworld game from PlayStation 2 to Xbox – citing a lack of power in Sony's new machine – the time of reckoning has now come. Can Oddworld Inhabitants meet the challenges posed by placing a platform game in 3D? More importantly, can they do it while preserving the characterisation and dark humour that marked the previous two games apart from the crowd? This world is watching the Oddworld. »

Abe has two main abilities aside from his physical attributes - persuading fellow Mudokons to work with him or, shown here, he can control objects and creatures with his mind.

MUNCH IS A 'BIG PICTURE' GAME, REQUIRING GAMERS TO THINK THEIR WAY AROUND TASKS, RATHER THAN SOLVE THEM WITH GUNS BLAZING

Of the four 'big' Xbox launch titles, *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee* has been by far the most mysterious. Little has been seen of the game, and what has been demonstrated has largely consisted of the same few areas shown over and over again. While it's true to say that the game's graphics have improved, worries have been voiced about the lack of opportunity to sample gameplay. What is clear is that Oddworld Inhabitants is using every available moment to ready their game for launch.

Playing *Munch's Oddysee*, it's easy to suggest why Oddworld Inhabitants want to keep as much under wraps as possible. Unlike *Dead or Alive 3* or *Halo*, for instance, *Munch* is very much a 'big picture' game, lacking the headline-grabbing set-pieces that can be quickly and easily demonstrated. It presents involving tasks, requiring gamers to think their way around a problem rather than solve it with guns blazing.

For players familiar with Oddworld adventures, the most important addition to *Munch's Oddysee* is a second playable character alongside Abe. Munch is a Gabbit, a fish cruelly trapped by a Slig scientist who also implanted a mind control device into his head. Taking his chance to escape, Munch finds that the majority of his race have been wiped out and teams up with his old friend Abe to set things right.

In effect, Munch offers the player an alternative way to proceed through the levels. His movement on land is erratic and slow -





MIND OVER MATTER

Having escaped from the lab, Munch finds that he can use the alien device implanted in his brain to fight the evil scientists responsible for putting it there. The red lightning that Munch can discharge from the top of his head acts as a powerful offensive weapon with which to take on the Slig foot soldiers. When teamed up with a group of Fuzzles. Munch becomes a powerful fighting force. All it takes is a bit of concentration...



↑ Munch takes a swim in one of the many flooded areas in the game.

unless Abe can find a wheelchair for him, that is. However, in water Munch travels faster than any creature in the game. Also, his implant can be turned against the game's evil Sligs and used to control all manner of animate and inanimate objects, from cranes and robots to other game characters themselves. Abe of course, maintains his ability to persuade other Mudokons to help in his and Munch's quest. Nippier on land than Munch, he can also jump and climb far better than his fishy friend.

A typical section of the game, then, works something like this. Using Abe, gamers pick up Munch and throw him over a wall he can't climb on his own. Over the wall, control switches to Munch, who jumps into the water and swims around a terrifying array of mines. Once through the aquatic minefield, Munch frees a group of Fuzzles - small coconut-like creatures who look cute but have a vicious bite. Persuaded to follow Munch by the gabbit's use of 'gamespeak', the Fuzzles set upon a platoon of Slig foot soldiers, clearing the way for Abe to come through to the next section of the level.

Another section of the game sees Abe using his spiritual power - gained from eating SpooceShrubs, naturally - to persuade some fellow Mudokons to open up a set of vents. With these vents open, play switches back to Munch, who takes control of a large crane, using it to drop bombs on both Sligs and a large wall that bars further progress in the level. »

A drink from a Zap Soda machine will revitalise a tired Munch.

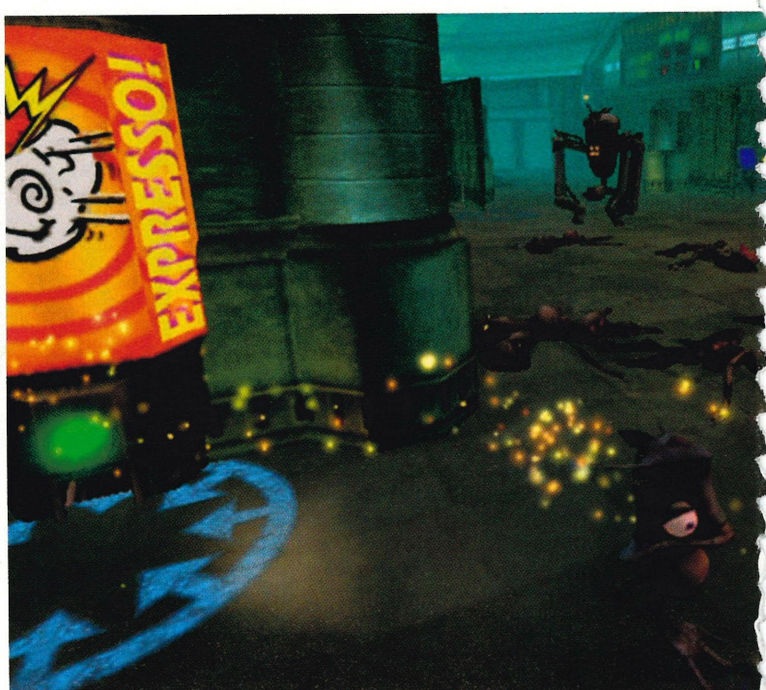
A SYSTEM OF DEATH MANAGEMENT HAS BEEN CREATED... IF ONE OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS IS KILLED, THE REMAINING ONE CAN REVIVE HIM

The use of alternative characters to complete different parts of a game level is not in itself a new idea, and the issues that this approach raise pose a potential problem. The danger is that levels require a tight design to prevent gamers 'cheating' their away around obstacles. While this is necessary, it can also mean that there is only one correct solution to each poser, and gamers are stuck until they find it.

From the areas that Oddworld Inhabitants has allowed the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* to play, it seems that a lot of time has been spent trying to avoid this situation. In one area, for instance, Munch and a team of Fuzzles can be used to clear the way ahead through a group of armed Sligs or Munch alone can take control of a crane, pick up Abe and winch him over, above and beyond the lethal force ahead. From his advanced position, Abe can throw bombs onto the Sligs, allowing Munch through unchallenged.

In an obvious nod to the potential frustration inherent in a game with so much 'trial and error, a new system of 'death management' has been created. If one of the game's central characters is killed, the remaining one can revive him and gameplay continues.

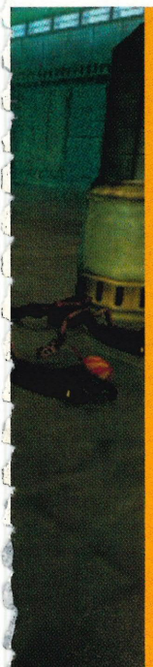
Also, the number of times players are taken back to their last save point seems to be far less than in the previous Oddworld games. The availability of a Quicksave feature may upset the purists but avoidance of frustration is the clear motivating factor for its inclusion.



ROBOTIC PROXY

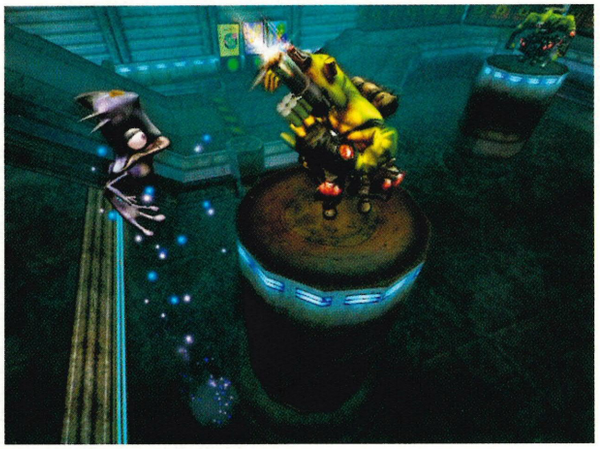
>ANOTHER BENEFIT of Munch's artificially enhanced telepathic powers is his ability to control inanimate machinery from distance. This three-legged Snoozer droid can be used to storm into Slig strongholds immune from their machine gun fire and use its special powers to put the guards to sleep. Abe and Munch now have a limited time to sneak through the area before the guards wake up.





WARNING: CONTAINS CAFFEINE

Spaced through some of the levels are Expresso machines. By taking a drink from these, both Abe and Munch receive a speed boost, allowing them to dash through areas of danger as well as enhancing their existing special abilities. It's the use of these power-ups that hold the key to many of the challenges within the game.



↑ **Sligs are still the unthinking, trigger happy grunts they were in the first two Oddworld games.**

Control problems have afflicted many 3D platformers in the past, and *Official UK Xbox Magazine*'s limited time with the game has not made it easy to be convinced that Oddworld Inhabitants has things completely right. Speed of character movement is clearly one of the game's strong points. However, there is a nagging feeling that the player is never quite in as much control as they'd like, with Abe displaying such violent, speedy animations that precision jumps in particular can be difficult to pull off. To be fair, the control in *Super Mario 64* – still the undisputed leader in the field – did take some time to become accustomed to.

What is certain is that the game's camera work is good enough to avoid the unintentional mishaps that dog many 3D games. However, whether the game is as easy to play as the first two in the series will only be revealed in time by extended play.

In the days leading up to the launch of *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee*, then, there are still doubts as to whether the game can live up to the blistering standards set by *Dead or Alive 3*, *Halo* and *Project Gotham Racing*. No such worries have been expressed publicly by either Oddworld Inhabitants or Microsoft.

This isn't the first time that an Oddworld game has arrived at market with the judgement of Abe's creators questioned. But the rumours have been proved wrong in the past, and it's a brave man who bets with them now. OXM

› INSIDE XBOX

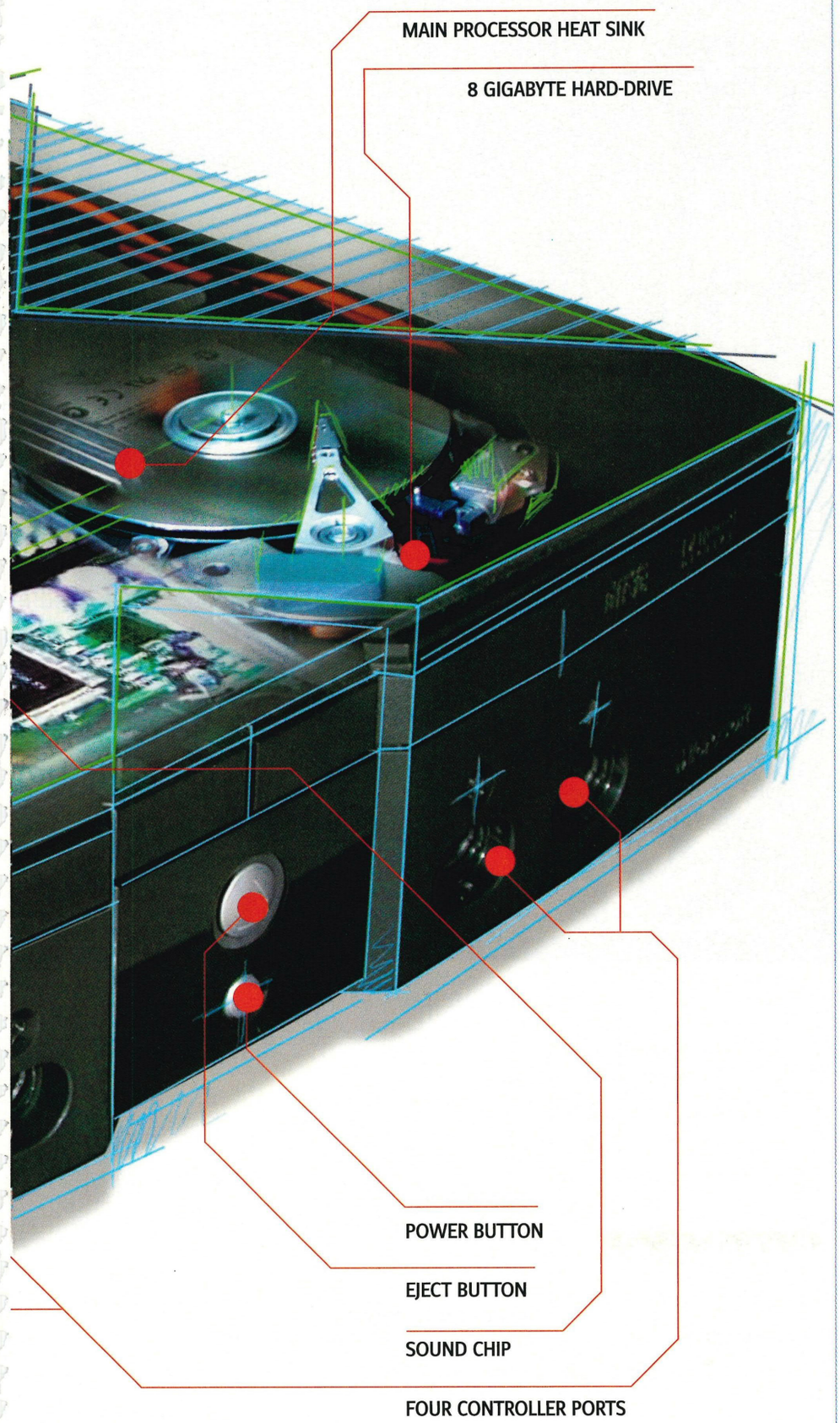
DESIGN TITLE: **XBOX**

DESIGN BRIEF: **TO BUILD THE MOST POWERFUL, MOST VERSATILE AND MOST INNOVATIVE GAMES CONSOLE.**

WORKING GROUPS: **MICROSOFT NEW TECHNOLOGY GROUP, INTEL, NVIDIA CORP, DOLBY CORP**

DESIGN APPROVED FOR RELEASE: **15/11/01 (US) 14/03/02 (UK)**





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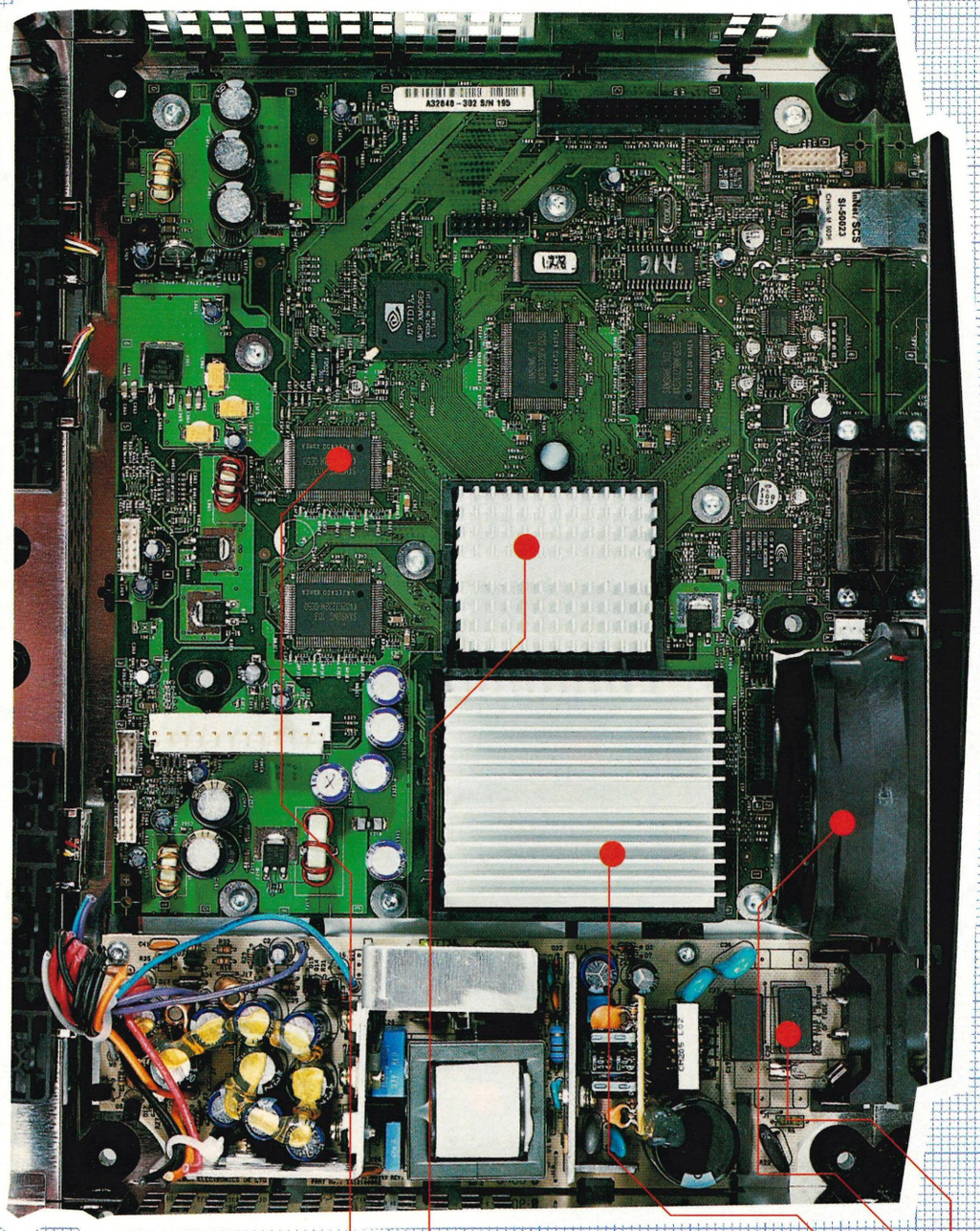
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Xbox isn't just breaking new ground in terms of the graphics it produces, it will present those graphics better than any console before it. It even futureproofs its methods of display. Then there's DVD playback...

XBOX MAIN PROCESSING BOARD

The heart of any games console is its main circuit or 'mother board'. Consisting of three major components – CPU, GPU and RAM – it is at this level of architecture that a game world is created, the players inputs are received and the graphics output signal is created.

While the quality of any game is primarily the result of the skill and creativity of its programmers, it is the power and flexibility afforded by a console's processing board that ultimately governs how well their vision can be realised. Xbox's amalgamation of the most powerful individual components together with an innovative unified memory structure offers these game designers an unprecedented level of creative freedom.

Diagram 1.1:



TECH SPECIFICATION:
CPU
Covered by an aluminium heat sink

TECH SPECIFICATION:
RAM
Total of 64 megabytes

TECH SPECIFICATION:
COOLING FAN
Positioned to cool GPU and CPU

TECH SPECIFICATION:
GPU
Covered by an aluminium heat sink

TECH SPECIFICATION:
POWER TRANSFORMER
Step-down unit to provide correct system voltage

TECH SPECIFICATION:
MAIN PROCESSING BOARD

733 MHZ CUSTOM INTEL PROCESSOR

250 MHZ NV2A NVIDIA PROCESSOR

64 MEGABYTES, UNIFIED

COMPETITOR CHECK:
PROCESSOR SPEED

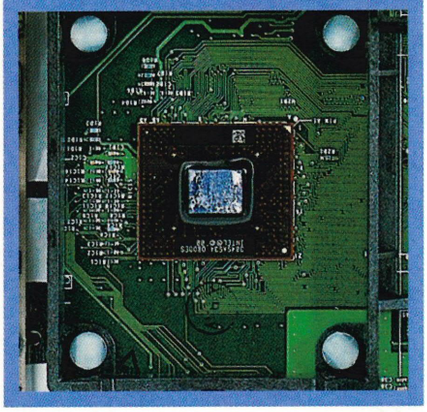


XBOX:	PLAYSTATION2:	GAMECUBE:
MAIN PROCESSOR RUNS AT <733MHZ	MAIN PROCESSOR RUNS AT <295MHZ	MAIN PROCESSOR RUNS AT <405MHZ

"The most powerful individual components, together with innovative memory structure, offer Xbox developers unprecedented freedom"

Diagram 1.2:

HARDWARE: CPU
DETAILS: SEE BELOW



SYSTEM AREA:
CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT (CPU)
SPECIFICATION:
733 MHZ CUSTOM INTEL PROCESSOR

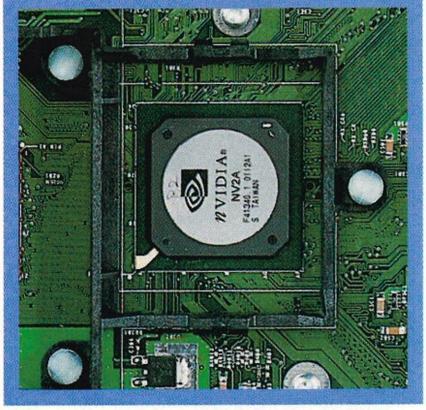
››OVERVIEW

BASED CLOSELY on Intel's Pentium chips, which currently power the majority of the world's PCs, the central processing unit (CPU) in Xbox is considerably faster than any other games console, though slower than top-of-the-range PCs. However, given that Xbox does not have to run a processor-intensive operating system such as Windows (or indeed any other program other than the game it's playing at any one time), the number of processor cycles available for creating game experience is far higher than any currently available platform.

The role of the CPU is to perform all of the calculations that go into making a game, with the exception of creating the graphics the player sees on the TV screen. The more power the CPU offers, the more expansive programmers can make their games, and the more realistic - in terms of dynamics and artificial intelligence - they can be. The processor in Xbox is the most powerful of any games console.

Diagram 1.3:

HARDWARE: GPU
DETAILS: SEE BELOW



SYSTEM AREA:
GRAPHICS PROCESSING UNIT (GPU)
SPECIFICATION:
250MHZ NV2a NVIDIA PROCESSOR

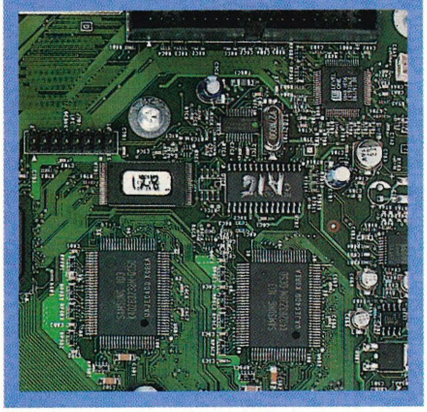
››OVERVIEW

THE GRAPHICS PROCESSING unit (GPU) inside a console receives a precalculated set of signals from the CPU and then creates the graphics that represent the game on the player's TV screen. nVidia is currently the market leader in graphics chip design and the NV2a represents the latest in development technology. The headline figure for its performance is 125 million polygons per second, almost twice as many as that of PlayStation2.

However, the throughput of polygons - the basic building blocks of 3D graphical worlds – is not the sole criterion by which to judge the NV2a chip. The variety of ways in which each polygon can be shaded, distorted and lit is also vital in terms of quantifying the level of graphical realism. These effects can be performed by program routines in many graphics chips, but the NV2a carries out the majority actually within its hardware, freeing up even more processing power. See pages 42-46 for details.

Diagram 1.4:

HARDWARE: RAM
DETAILS: SEE BELOW

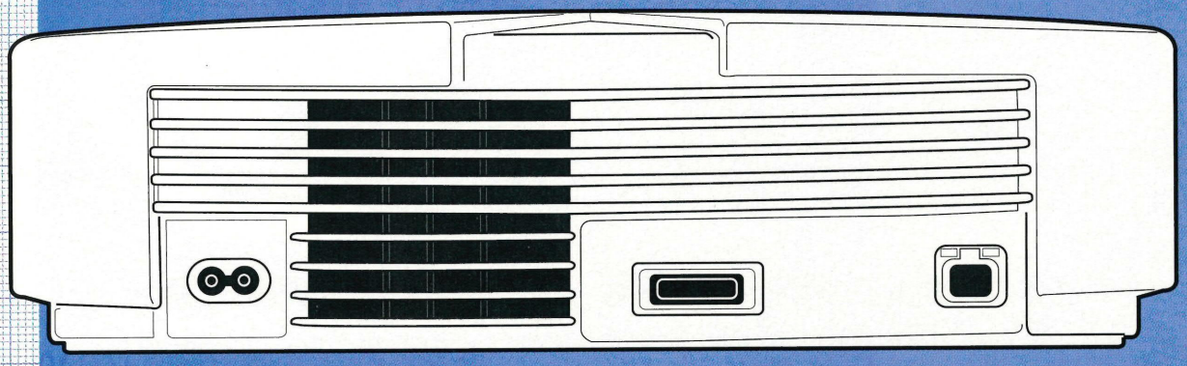


SYSTEM AREA:
RANDOM ACCESS MEMORY (RAM)
SPECIFICATION:
64 MEGABYTES, UNIFIED

››OVERVIEW

THE AMOUNT OF Random Access Memory (RAM) possessed by a computer system governs how much of a game's program code the CPU can address at any one time and thus the level of work that the processor can carry out. Xbox has considerably more RAM than any other games machines - including many modern arcade games.

The RAM in other existing consoles is physically partitioned into memory for use by the CPU and memory reserved for producing graphical output. RAM in Xbox, however, exists in one 64 megabyte block, with the ratio of usage of CPU to graphical memory free to be determined by a game's programmers. With each game having subtly different requirements for graphical and CPU memory, this unified arrangement allows coders to make the most efficient use of Xbox resources. Along with increased ease of use for programmers, this arrangement will allow for deeper, richer game experiences.



› INSIDE XBOX

GRAPHICS PROCESSING UNIT

The graphic routines shown over the next four pages can be carried out by hardware contained within the Xbox NV2a graphics chip. The advantage of this 'hardwiring' of routines is that they can be implemented in game software without additional strain being placed upon the CPU. The CPU is thus left purely to power the mechanics of the game, allowing programmers to build increasingly convincing game environments and detailed scenarios.

Diagram 2.1:

GAME NAME: HALO
DETAILS: SEE PAGES 16-21



Without pixel shading, grass would be coded or recreated using an inferior-looking surface.

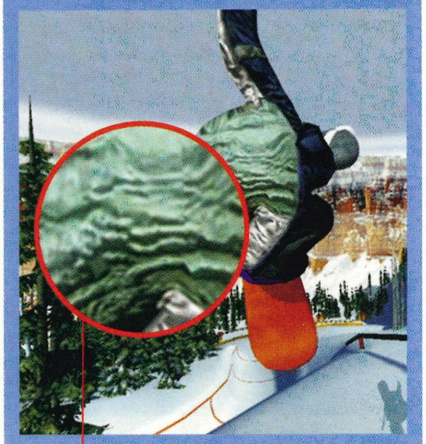
GRAPHIC ROUTINE: PIXEL SHADING

›› OVERVIEW

A PIXEL SHADER is a graphics function that calculates – one pixel at a time – visual effects on a surface. It helps developers to transform the typical, flat-looking surfaces familiar in video games into textured, organic and realistically bumpy-looking surfaces. To accomplish this effect, the graphics processor takes the desired effects that need to be applied to the pixels and performs the necessary calculations. This runs to millions of pixels for each frame, all of which must be recalculated and updated at up to 60 frames per second.

Diagram 2.2:

GAME NAME: AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWB'DING
DETAILS: SEE PAGES 92-93



The shadows produced via vertex shading lend a large amount of detail and realism.

GRAPHIC ROUTINE: VERTEX SHADING

›› OVERVIEW

VERTEX SHADING is a complicated process that was, until recently, only possible on graphics workstations. In simple terms, the process warps, shades, and deforms flat surfaces to give a better impression of reality. The effect is best demonstrated in the modelling of ripples and waves in water; however, it can also recreate realistic-looking clothes and facial expressions. Because Xbox is capable of performing vertex shading in real time, the effect can be used as a central part of a game's graphical design.

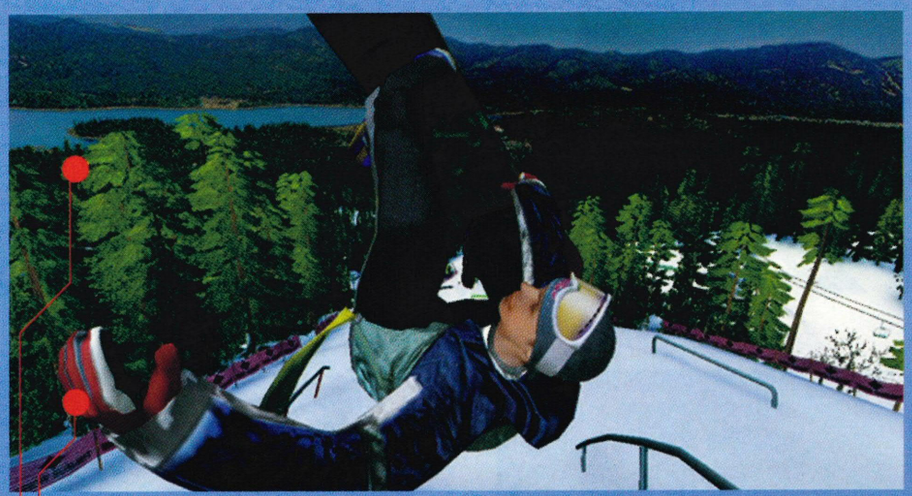
COMPETITOR CHECK: MEMORY



XBOX:	PLAYSTATION2:	GAMECUBE:
64 MEGABYTES UNIFIED	**40 MEGABYTES PARTITIONED**	**43 MEGABYTES PARTITIONED**

Diagram 2.3:

GAME NAME: AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING
DETAILS: SEE PAGES 92-93



No jagged edges on this boarder's gloves, despite them being at an angle.

Multisampling has blurred the edges of the trees, resulting in superb forest imagery.

GRAPHIC ROUTINE:
HIGH RESOLUTION ANTI-ALIASING

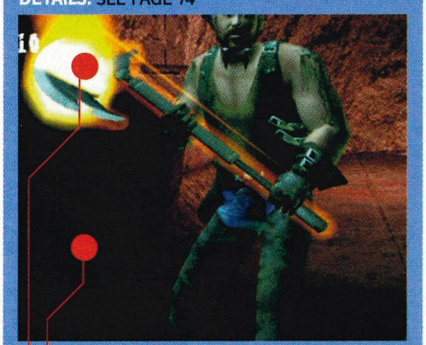
››OVERVIEW

ONE OF THE bugbears of 3D graphics is the jagged edging that frequently appears at the edges of polygonal constructions, particularly those at an angle to the horizontal or vertical. The best way to eliminate these 'jaggies' is a technique called anti-aliasing, which blends the colour of the pixels at the jagged edge to make them less noticeable. Anti-aliasing has been used in other games machines but some of the software solutions used blur the game too much - the Nintendo 64 often suffered from this - while others slow the frame rate.

The anti-aliasing used by Xbox, however, is achieved via a technique known as multisampling. This creates the blended pixels inside the GPU without slowing down the graphics processing. The results are cleaner and crisper graphics at no extra expense to the central processing unit.

Diagram 2.4:

GAME NAME: HUNTER
DETAILS: SEE PAGE 74



Shadows may become as significant in games as they are films with shadowing.

Shadowing comes into its own when strong and numerous light sources feature.

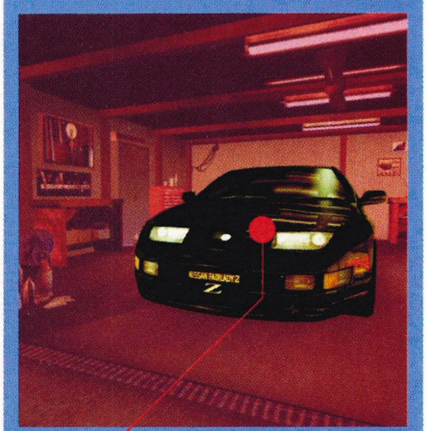
GRAPHIC ROUTINE:
SHADOWING

››OVERVIEW

SHADOWS ARE an overlooked part of video game design, an extra touch that adds realism and life to 3D games. The graphics processing unit in Xbox can render shadows on the fly, adding graphical realism at little expense to processing speed. With shadows so easy to implement, designers can take advantage of lighting effects to add atmosphere and even gameplay features to their games.

Diagram 2.5:

GAME NAME: SEGA GT
DETAILS: SEE PAGE 87



Instead of merely representing reflections, accurate mapping will recreate it exactly.

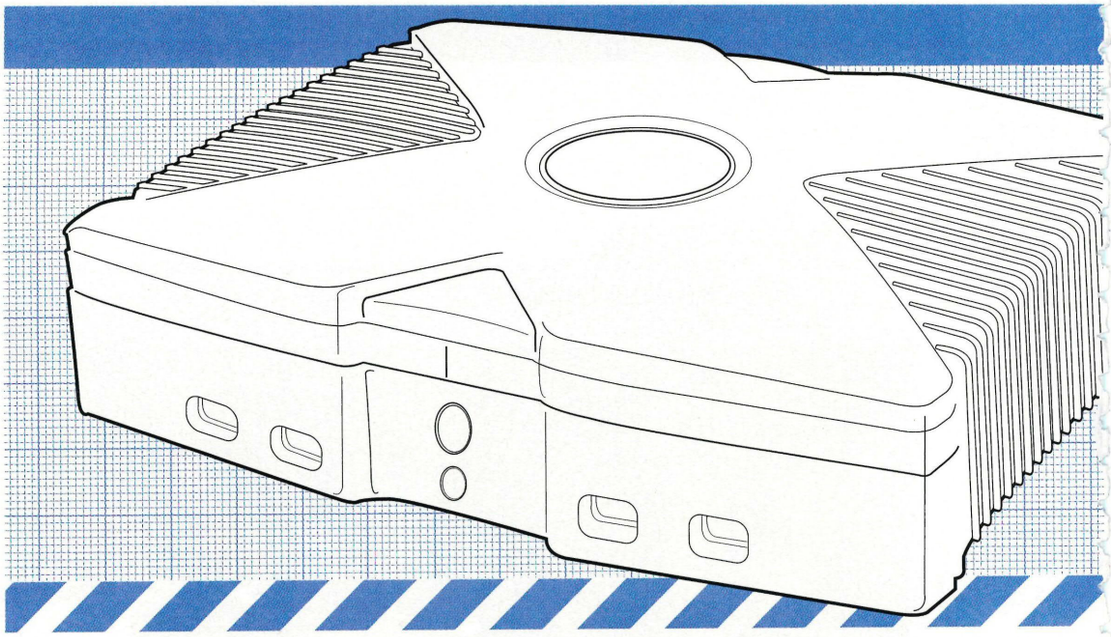
GRAPHIC ROUTINE:
REFLECTION MAPPING

››OVERVIEW

IN REAL LIFE, mirrored surfaces reflect the environment. It is enormously complicated for computer games to emulate this phenomenon, with the scene to be reflected having to be generated and then mapped appropriately on top of the reflecting surface. In effect, the computer is being asked to render two different scenes simultaneously.

Reflection mapping is an effect that can easily be added to Xbox games. In addition, reflections can even be mapped to include additional effects, such as bump-mapping or simultaneous textures. Games with a high level of reflection, such as car or ice hockey games, will benefit from this the most.

GRAPHICS PROCESSING UNIT (CONTINUED)



COMPETITOR CHECK:
POLYGON PERFORMANCE



XBOX:	PLAYSTATION2:	GAMECUBE:
116.5 MILLION PER SECOND	**66 MILLION PER SECOND**	**6-12 MILLION PER SECOND, ALL EFFECTS ENABLED**

Diagram 2.6:

GAME NAME: DEAD OR ALIVE 3
DETAILS: SEE PAGES 22-27



GRAPHIC ROUTINE: POLYGON PROCESSING

››OVERVIEW

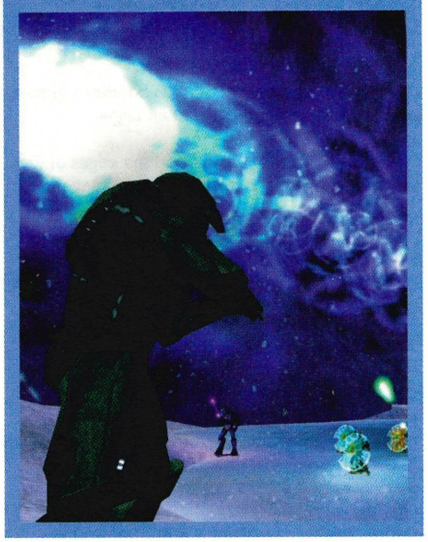
POLYGONS ARE THE fundamental building blocks of nearly all 3D games. The more polygons used to build a scene, the more realistic and impressive it will look. It follows, then, that the more polygons a console can generate, the better looking and more involving its games are likely to be.

Xbox can create and move 116.5 million polygons per second, 75 per cent more again than PS2, which moves 66 million at full capacity.

More importantly, with so many special effects created in the hardware and taken care of by the functions of the GPU, these 116.5 million polygons can also be lit and shaded for extra realism.

Diagram 2.7:

GAME NAME: HALO
DETAILS: SEE PAGES 16-21



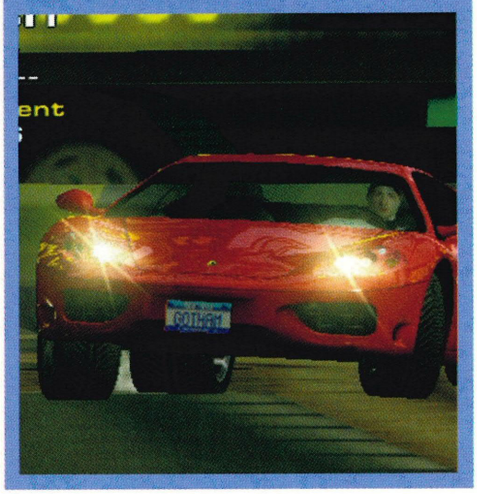
GRAPHIC ROUTINE: TEXTURE COMPRESSION

››OVERVIEW

THE QUALITY OF 3D graphics is as much about the quality of the textures used as it is the number of polygons used to construct the scene. High quality textures require more RAM, and frequently have to be downgraded during the optimisation process in order to ensure a game runs at an acceptable speed. Texture compression is a unique trick available to Xbox. High quality textures can be stored in RAM at a sixth of their real size and decompressed instantly as required. As a result, a scene in an Xbox game can be constructed from textures six times the quality of the equivalent on the PS2 for exactly the same RAM loading. Couple this with the fact that Xbox has 50 per cent more RAM than any other games console, and the potential for Xbox graphics becomes clear.

Diagram 2.8:

GAME NAME: PROJECT GOTHAM RACING
DETAILS: SEE PAGES 28-33



GRAPHIC ROUTINE:
SIMULTANEOUS TEXTURES

›› OVERVIEW

EVERY GRAPHICAL EFFECT applied to each of the frames of graphics that make up a game requires a single rendering 'pass' of processing. In other words, after the frame has been created in one pass of processing, each effect added to it requires one more subsequent pass. Unlike any games machine before it, Xbox is capable of four such rendering passes for every single frame on the screen.

In effect, this means that a game scene can be rendered by Xbox – and then, for example, lit, bump-mapped and colour-lit – all before it makes it to the screen. In the light of the fact that the maximum framerate for Xbox games is 60 per second, this is an impressive achievement, and one that will make for the most beautiful video games ever made.

Diagram 2.9:

GAME NAME: TRANSWORLD SNOWBOARDING
DETAILS: SEE PAGE 99



Objects in close-up will appear extremely realistic thanks to the techniques used in bump-mapping.

GRAPHIC ROUTINE:
BUMP-MAPPING

›› OVERVIEW

3D GRAPHICS ARE constructed from polygon shapes, which are then patterned by the application of predetermined 'textures'. A wall, for instance, could consist of one large polygon: the appearance of bricks is then added to it by the application of a relatively simple 'brickwork' texture.

The process of bump-mapping extends this technique of texturing polygons to add an extra level of realism. Normal textures look flat to the viewer at close range. By bump-mapping them, Xbox gives an appearance of depth as well as texture and grain. It achieves this by creating artificial shadows on the surface at a micro-level of scale. Bump-mapping will come into its own when players come close to surfaces or walls within a game environment.

Diagram 2.10:

GAME NAME: FUZION FRENZY
DETAILS: SEE PAGE 108



GRAPHIC ROUTINE:
THE PROGRAMMABLE GPU

›› OVERVIEW

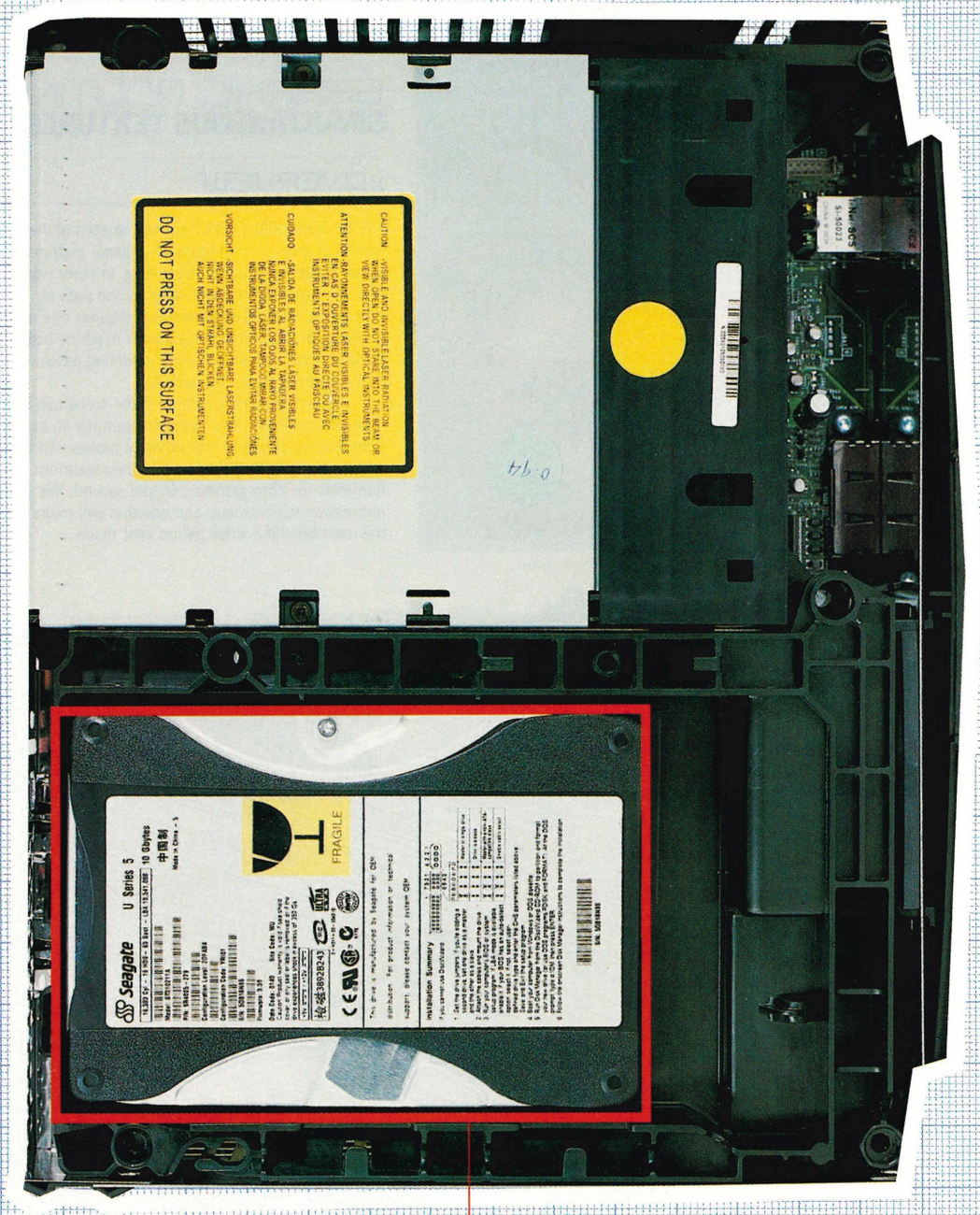
AS WELL AS a host of built-in graphics functions, the Xbox GPU has the additional ability to 'learn' new tricks. As new graphics effects and routines are created, games designers can program the Xbox GPU to carry them out. If, for instance, nVidia develops a way to render see-through, light-emitting, reflective bump-mapped textures that are animated in a predetermined way, developers will easily be able to implement the technique in their games.

The important aspect of this function of the GPU is the 'future-proofing' it offers to the console. As time passes, Xbox games will not date as quickly as games have on previous consoles, ensuring that the console will still be host to cutting-edge games years into its life span.

BUILT-IN HARD DRIVE

Xbox is the first console in history to come with a built-in hard-drive, and one of the only ones to have any kind of persistent internal memory. The eight gigabytes of available memory has huge implications for the type of games that will be made for Xbox and the different experiences they'll be able to offer the player.

Diagram 3.1



BENEFIT: HARD-DRIVE BUILT INTO MACHINE

››OVERVIEW

THE SINGLE most important aspect about the hard-drive is that it will be built into the machine from day one. Because of this, developers will be able to use it with every single game they make, confident that every Xbox gamer will enjoy the benefits. From shorter loading times at the very lowest level, to evolving game worlds and characters at the top end of the scale of ambitions, every Xbox will have exactly the same capabilities.

The problem with an add-on hard-drive, such as that for PlayStation 2, is that for developers to make use of it, they must either make separate games – one for hard-drive owners and one for those without – or risk selling only to hard-drive owners. As console peripherals have a poor take-up rate (a successful one typically sells to only 10 per cent of console owners), the advantages of Xbox are only too clear.

TECH SPECIFICATION: BUILT-IN HARD DRIVE

DISK UNIT: **SEAGATE U SERIES 3**

MAXIMUM CAPACITY: **8 GIGABYTES**

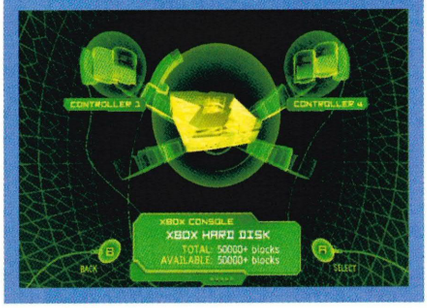
COMPETITOR CHECK: STORAGE



XBOX:	PLAYSTATION2:	GAMECUBE:
8Gb BUILT-IN HARD-DRIVE, 8Mb MEMORY CARD	HARD-DRIVE AS OPTIONAL EXTRA, 8Mb MEMORY CARD	NO HARD-DRIVE, 4Mb DIGICARD, 64Mb SD CARD

Diagram 3.2:

↓ Manipulation of important game data and files on Xbox will be incredibly simple.



BENEFIT: SIMPLE HARD-DRIVE MANAGEMENT INTERFACE

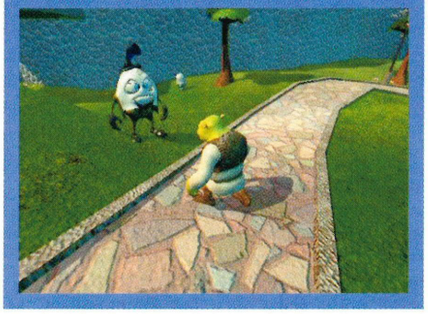
››OVERVIEW

The Xbox memory interface has been designed with ease-of-use in mind so that organisation and management of the hard-drive will be simpler than that of any desktop set-up. Space on the hard-drive is divided into blocks and a simple control pad system allows easy 'point and press' management.

With 8Gb available, it will be some time before players run out of space. If that happens, the memory management system will make it easy to clear old files to make more room. Another use of the memory interface will be to exchange files between hard-drive and the 8Mb memory card in the Xbox Controller. This could be especially useful in competing against other players' race times, or using another person's custom character or game level.

Diagram 3.3:

↓ Without loading screens to punctuate the action, Xbox game experience is heightened.



BENEFIT: INSTANTANEOUS LOADING TIMES

››OVERVIEW

THE LENGTH of time it takes to retrieve a set amount of data from a storage medium into the system RAM is known as 'access time'. Access times for even the best DVD drives are typically five to ten times slower than for a hard-drive system. The result, as seen with all DVD/CD-based consoles, is the frequent appearance of the 'loading' screen.

In games with large levels – *Tomb Raider*, for instance – it is often necessary to load new parts of the level while the gamer plays. Xbox developers can circumvent this problem by copying the majority of game code to the Xbox hard-drive when a game is first loaded into the console. During play, code can be called up from the hard-drive, with no interruption to the game. Loading screens should be a far less-painful experience for Xbox gamers.

Diagram 3.4

↓ *Project Ego* (see page 107) is one of the next projects for Lionhead Studios, responsible for the massive *Black and White* on PC. It should boast a vast and almost completely interactive gameworld when completed.



BENEFIT: GAME SIZE

››OVERVIEW

XBOX GAMES designers will also be able to create game worlds that haven't previously been feasible on consoles. Put simply, Xbox game levels can be bigger and more expansive than those on any other console. The limiting factor for most console games is the amount of code that can be loaded into the system RAM at one time. It is this set amount of code that is used to generate the game world – if the world is bigger than can be contained in the RAM at one time, then the game will have to pause and load more code into RAM from CD/DVD. As discussed in Instantaneous Loading Times (left), this is not ideal.

The faster loading time of the Xbox hard-drive will allow game code to be loaded into RAM as and when it's required, without an interruption of gameplay. When games designers are confident of working with this system, they can start to build game worlds around it, hopefully eliminating the stop/start nature of genres such as adventure games, and providing one long, uninterrupted cinematic game experience.

BUILT-IN HARD DRIVE
(CONTINUED)

The previous page described the 'low end' benefits of the Xbox hard-drive – the benefits that are immediately apparent and that should be implemented into all Xbox games early in the console's life. Here, the more complicated, more experimental benefits of built-in storage are discussed. It is these areas that the most ambitious and talented Xbox developers will be itching to explore.

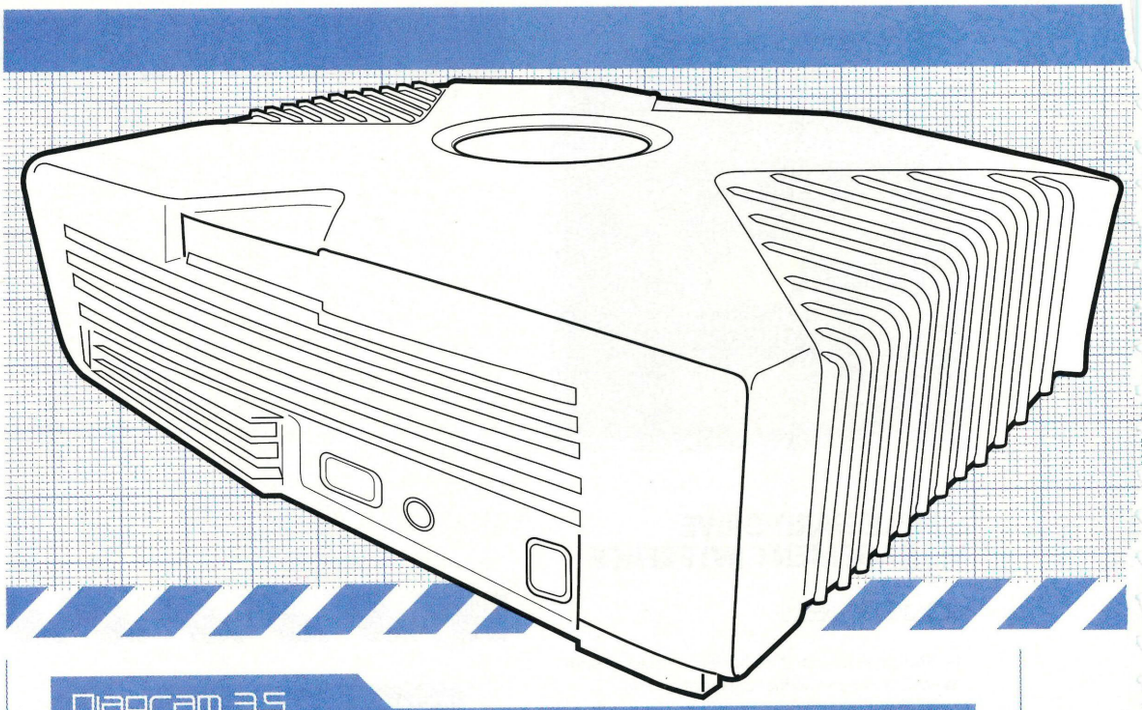
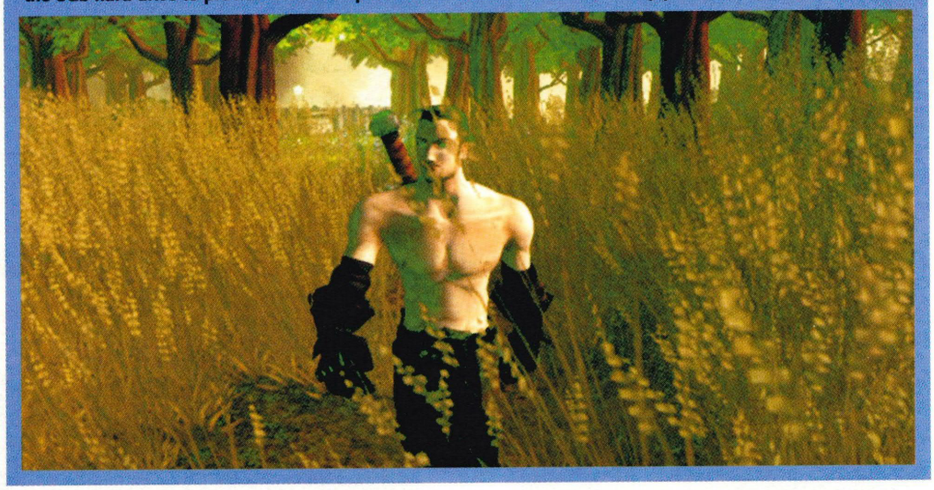


Diagram 3.5

↓ Lionhead Studios' *Project Ego* should feature an unprecedented game world – thanks to the capability of the 8Gb hard-drive to provide the developers with the chance to create a truly persistent dynamic world.



BENEFIT: PERSISTENT DYNAMIC WORLDS

»OVERVIEW

One of the Holy Grails for games designers is the creation of a game world that has a life over and above the elements put into it to govern the gameplay. Game worlds often give the feeling that they exist purely for games to take place in them, damaging the sense of realism that the graphics are trying so hard to create. The easiest illustration of this is the fact that, in most 3D games, the only items with which the player can interact are those bits and pieces that have a direct role to play in moving the game forward.

A persistent, dynamic game world is one in which changes can occur over time caused both by the player and by effects in the worlds themselves. For instance, the choice by a player to chop down a sapling in a young forest would be 'remembered' by the game. When the player returns to the forest many game years later, the rest of the trees have grown, but the sapling remains only a stump.

Changes and events that happen outside of the gamer's direct action also go to improve the sense of immersion offered by a game. A 'whole world' sensation is created when, for instance, non-player characters affect a player's character through indirect events in the game's past.

Games like *Black and White* on the PC are examples of designers trying to break down the tightly-scripted nature of most video games to create a much more organic, open-ended experience. While this science is still in its infancy, and a lot more is still to be learned, the bottom line is that none of this kind of experimentation is possible without a large writeable storage medium. Xbox will be the only console to benefit from experiments like this.

Black and White creator Peter Molyneux is one of the leading exponents of persistent world gaming. His new Xbox title *Project Ego* promises to be the first console game which truly exploits this area of technology. The game follows a character from childhood into old age, with every player action having effects in the game future.

COMPETITOR CHECK: MEMORY BANDWIDTH



XBOX:	PLAYSTATION2:	GAMECUBE:
6.4Gb PER SECOND	**3.2Gb PER SECOND**	**2.6Gb PER SECOND**

Diagram 3.6:

↓ Any game could have extras created for it by the original developers or maybe the players themselves – the life span of, say, *DoA 3* could be significantly prolonged with new arenas and costumes for the fighters.

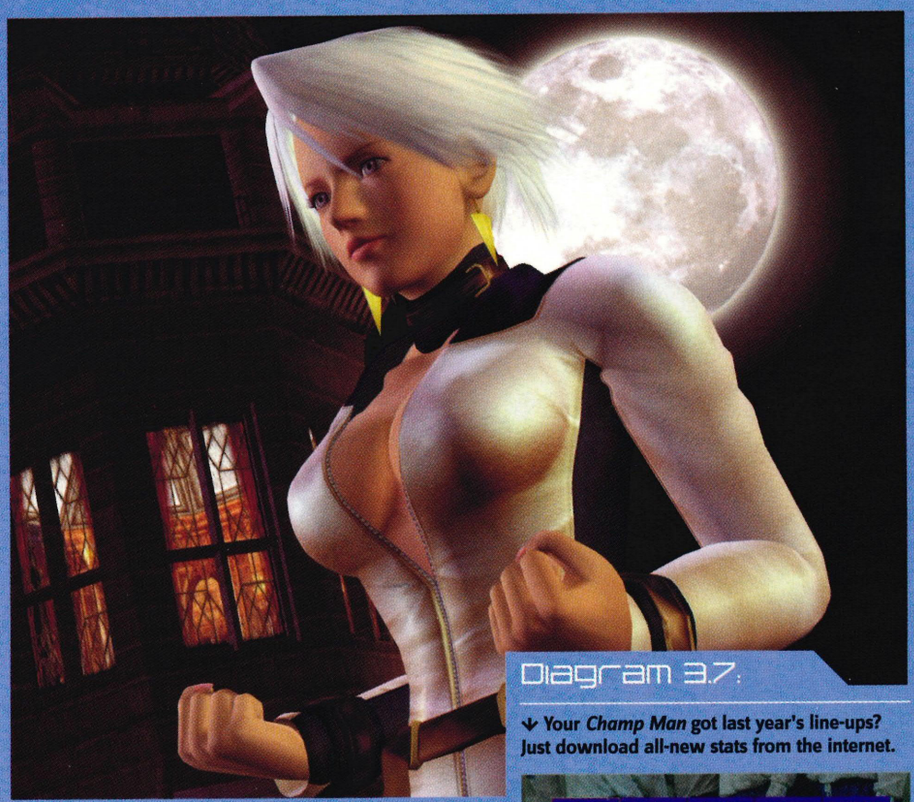


Diagram 3.7:

↓ Your *Champ Man* got last year's line-ups? Just download all-new stats from the internet.

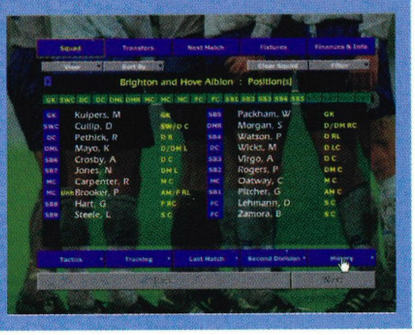


Diagram 3.8:

↓ In theory, games with editable levels and stats could have almost infinite life spans.



BENEFIT: UPGRADES AND ADDITIONAL CONTENT

››OVERVIEW

When games can only be read from a console's CD drive, the game CD has to be rewritten from scratch and redistributed in order for new code to be added to the game. The ability to store game code on a console's hard-drive could lead to some intriguing possibilities when it comes to game add-ons. The PC games market is currently dominated by user-built extra levels and multiplay arenas for games such as *Half Life* and *Unreal Tournament*, and there is no reason why games publishers shouldn't be able to take advantage of this new kind of additional content distribution on Xbox.

The strict testing and approval of all new games by Microsoft will ensure that this upgrade facility will definitely not need to be used to 'patch' faulty game code. Instead the facility could create extra tracks for racing games or new missions for a first-person action adventure. Without the built-in hard-drive, that simply wouldn't be a possibility.

BENEFIT: INTERNET DOWNLOADS

››OVERVIEW

The ability of Xbox to access the internet is discussed in detail over the page. The fact that the console has a built-in hard-drive insures that far from having just a simple 'browsing' experience, Xbox gamers will be able to take materials from remote sites and store them on their machine.

Downloading game content via the internet mirrors the distribution of 'extra' content as discussed in Upgrades and Additional Content (left). In practice, net connectivity will probably involve smaller chunks of material, such as up-to-date team listings for sports games and user-created tracks and levels. Without the built-in hard-drive, gamers would be forced to store this kind of material on memory cards – an expensive, time-consuming and inefficient process.

BENEFIT: LEVEL EDITORS

››OVERVIEW

Some console titles in the past have offered gamers the opportunity to create their own levels or tracks, and to customise their characters. A limiting factor, however, has always been the amount of storage available. Many 3D games in particular need a lot of space to store level information, relative to the amount commonly available on memory cards. The reliability of these cards has also been an issue, with gamers reluctant to risk losing many hours of work to a faulty save.

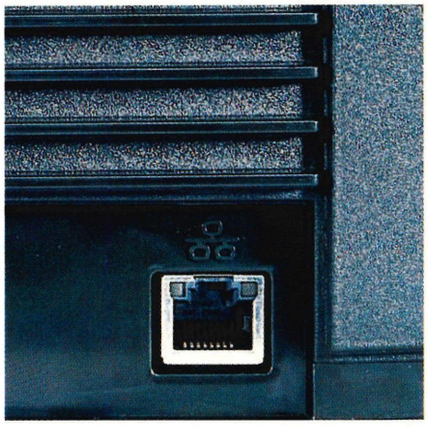
These problems are, of course, solved by the Xbox built-in hard-drive. As a result, games designers will be able to support level and character customisation from the start of the console's life. Successfully implemented, this would mean that even when a game was theoretically 'finished', the creation of custom levels and other new variations of existing features, the game could offer further levels of entertainment.

Couple this with the fact that via the internet – or 8Mb memory card – levels can be swapped with friends, and the opportunity is there for large-scale communities to spring up around Xbox games in a way that's not been possible before.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, for example, will offer gamers the ability to build their own skate parks. The possibilities offered by freely interchangeable, user-created game levels are immense, and should ensure that Xbox benefits from the single best aspect of PC gaming – its strong sense of community.

NETWORKING AND CONNECTIVITY

Since its inception, online gaming, save for one or two exceptions, has been the sole preserve of the PC. While the currently poor infrastructure of the internet and the complicated nature of PC hardware have hampered development and widespread acceptability of this form of gaming, the potential for consoles to join in is enormous. The design of the network facilities for Xbox takes into account the future development of the internet, and acknowledges the mistakes of the past, such as Dreamcast. While high-speed gaming via the internet is still some way off, Xbox is equipped and ready for it as soon as the infrastructure is in place.



↑ A broadband function, accessed via this port on the rear of Xbox, could be a winning masterstroke.

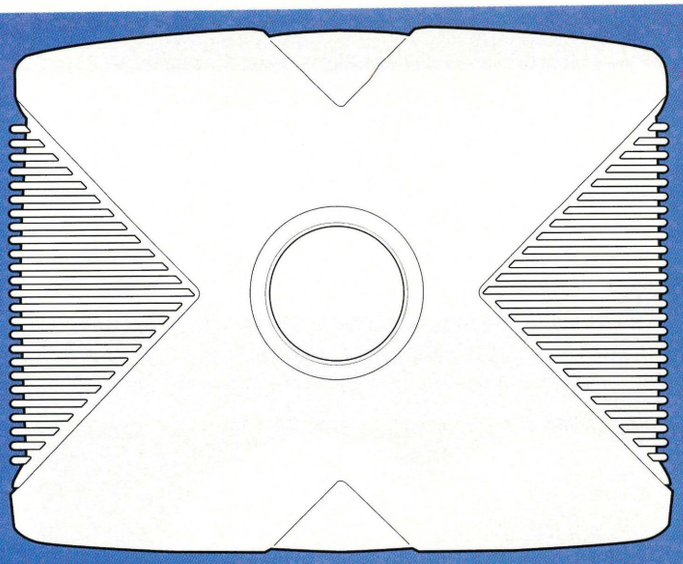


Diagram 4.1:

↓ Watch for *Unreal Championship* to become as successful online with Xbox as the original game became with the PC community, thanks to the network capability and online connectivity built-in to the console.



FEATURE: BROADBAND ADAPTOR BUILT-IN

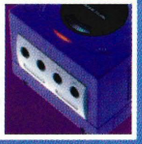
›› OVERVIEW

There are several important factors to be considered with the inclusion of a broadband adaptor. Crucially, Xbox is only compatible with broadband networks. 56k modem connections are not fast enough to cope with high-speed action games. Rather than risk a below-par experience via this sort of connection, Xbox will only work with networks fast enough to provide the speed and quality of connection required for modern 3D gaming. The breadth of the broadband connection will also allow the use of 'voice over net' technology as employed in the Game Commander (see page 57).

XBOX HAS A STANDARD SPECIFICATION (I)
While Sony and Nintendo intend to support both broadband and dial-up connections, developers can be certain that all Xbox owners will only have a broadband set-up. This means that games will be optimised for just one set-up, and need not be reverse-engineered for slower connection speeds. This certainty in speed reduces game development time and increases the quality of experience.

COMPETITOR CHECK: NETWORKING

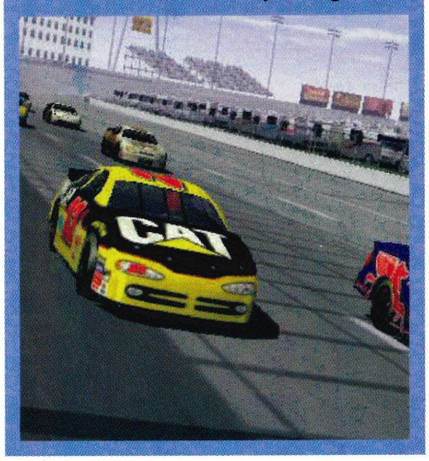




XBOX:	PLAYSTATION2:	GAMECUBE:
4 CONTROLLER PORTS, BROADBAND BUILT-IN	2 CONTROLLER PORTS, BROADBAND VIA ADDITIONAL PURCHASE ADD-ON	4 CONTROLLER PORTS, BROADBAND VIA ADDITIONAL PURCHASE ADD-ON

Diagram 4.2:

↓ The prospect of racing on *NASCAR Heat 2002* over the internet is a very exciting one.



XBOX HAS A STANDARD SPECIFICATION (II)

While internet connectivity kits will be available for the GameCube and PlayStation 2, they are peripheral add-ons that must be purchased in addition to the main console.

The adoption rate for console peripherals is notoriously low (around 10 per cent) and any games designed with a specific peripheral in mind can necessarily only be bought by that fraction of the gamers which owns the right kit.

Designing a game that can only be played by a minority of the total number of owners of a particular platform is a huge risk for developers. Effectively, it means they must sell to a much higher percentage of the available market than they would ever hope to achieve with any other game. As a result, few games are developed specifically for console peripherals.

With broadband connectivity a standard specification of Xbox, developers run no such risks. Multiplayer games can be bought and enjoyed by all Xbox owners, with no fracturing of the market. As with all high-speed online gaming, though, it will be the speed of broadband adoption – via cable and ADSL modems – that will determine how quickly these types of games appear.

Diagram 4.3:

↓ *Halo* can be played over a LAN by utilising the game's X-Link function and X-Link cables.



FEATURE: X-LINK

››OVERVIEW

Many consoles have included the option of a link-up cable, allowing two gamers to play head-to-head via individual console/TV set-ups. However, because Xbox has an in-built Ethernet connection, Xbox owners will be able to connect up to 12 machines together in a simple Local Area Network (LAN). Effectively, the gameplay options offered by this feature are exactly the same as those for broadband internet play.

While the broadband network will take time to establish, though, X-Link gaming will be probably prove to be Xbox owners' best chance of true multiplayer gaming in the near future.

Obviously, moving Xbox machines and TVs to one location is a bit of a pain. Xbox consoles plugged into an existing LAN network, however – in an office or university block, for example – will find one another and be able to play, regardless of what other devices are connected to the system.

Diagram 4.4:

↓ The possibilities offered by *Star Wars Galaxies* will be compelling for Xbox owners.



FEATURE: MMORPGS

››OVERVIEW

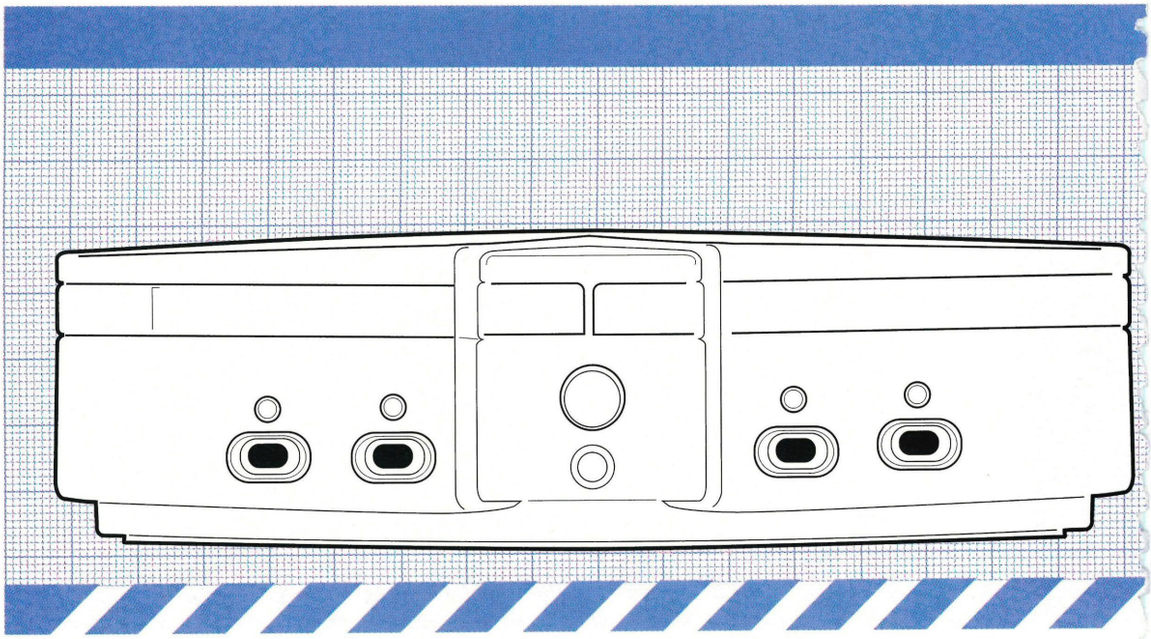
Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPGs) such as *Everquest* and the *Ultima* series, have found a wide audience on the PC. The idea of a persistent game world consisting of thousands of characters all played by individual gamers is a compelling one, and one so far denied to console gamers because of a lack of net connection and/or permanent memory.

The broadband connection of Xbox combined with another of the machine's unique features, the built-in hard-drive, opens up the definite possibility of developing Xbox MMORPGs.

Sega's recently announced *Phantasy Star Online Ver. 2* will be the first such MMORPG for Xbox (see page 109). Other intriguing rumours concern *Star Wars Galaxies*, a MMORPG set in the *Star Wars* universe. Xbox gamers will play such games in Xbox-only domains, PC owners having their own 'worlds'.

SOUND CHIP

Game sound can generate and sustain as much atmosphere as the graphics, yet the quality and mechanics of a console's sound capabilities are rarely discussed. The sound chip used in Xbox is one of the most powerful sound units available in any home entertainment unit. Its sheer power, along with a range of special abilities, will ensure that programmers have the widest possible scope for the design of the game's audio, and that even simple functions – like DVD and CD playback – will outstrip any other console.



TECH SPECIFICATION:
SOUND CHIP

3D AUDIO SUPPORT: 64 3D CHANNELS
NUMBER OF SIMULTANEOUS VOICES: 256
DOLBY SUPPORT: 5.1 (HOME THEATRE SURROUND SOUND)
MIDI DLS2 SUPPORT: YES
AC3 ENCODED GAME AUDIO: YES

COMPETITOR CHECK:
SOUND COMPARISON

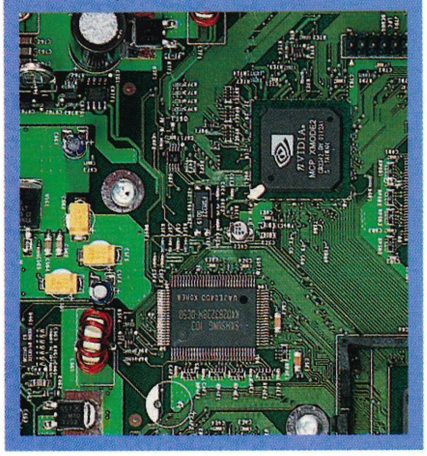




XBOX:	PLAYSTATION2:	GAMECUBE:
256 AUDIO CHANNELS	**48 AUDIO CHANNELS**	**64 AUDIO CHANNELS**

Diagram 5.1:

The makers of Xbox have given their machine unparalleled potential to use sounds.



FEATURE:
RAW POWER

››OVERVIEW

In simple terms, the power of a sound chip can be measured by the number of separate voices it can generate. Each 'voice' represents a separate channel of sound, emanating from a different set of code. The more voices a sound chip has, the richer the sound effects it is able to generate, and the greater the ability it has to produce special effects, such as spatial sound positioning.

The Xbox sound chip is capable of producing 256 separate voices. Compare this to PlayStation 2's 42 and 64 on Nintendo GameCube. While it will be up to developers to take full advantage of this extra power, it will mean that no other machine can compete in the field of audio.

Quite simply, the sound chip will deliver more sound power than any other console. Xbox games will sound as good as they look.

Diagram 5.2

With rich soundscapes to complement the visuals, games like *Nightcaster* will impress.



FEATURE:
DIRECT SOUND MUSIC DYNAMIC SOUNDS

››OVERVIEW

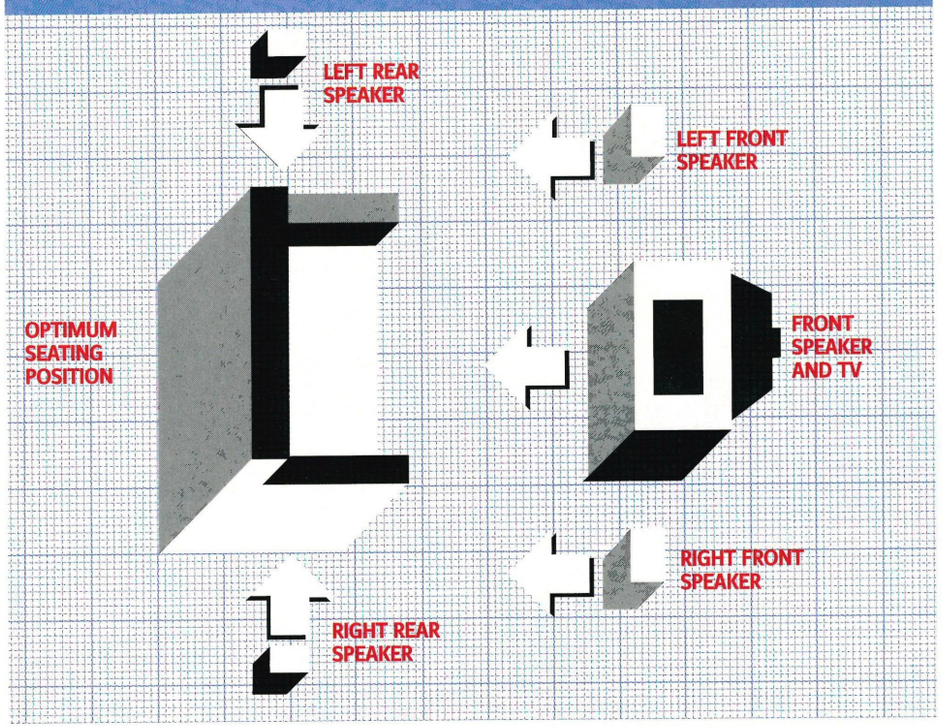
Direct Sound is a technique whereby the audio soundtrack to a game is cued by events and actions in that game. For instance, in the path leading up to a confrontation with some enemies in a fighting game, a Direct Sound soundtrack would employ tension-building music. As the battle unfolds, the soundtrack would recognise the situation and switch to a faster-paced, action-orientated sound.

Dynamic soundtracks are not a new idea – many N64 games made good use of them. However, each time developers wanted to institute such a set-up, the programming would have to be done from scratch.

With Direct Sound, developers can use this audio structure without any additional programming burden. As a consequence, gamers are far more likely to see dynamic soundtracks in Xbox games. The implementation of Direct Sound will give developers the creative freedom to exploit the power of audio.

Diagram 5.3:

A home cinema set-up is not a common sight. With Xbox games supporting the 3D surround sound of Dolby Digital 5.1, they will likely become more widespread. DD5.1 genuinely improves the game experience.



FEATURE: DOLBY DIGITAL 5.1 IN-GAME

››OVERVIEW

Xbox is the first game console to support Dolby Digital 5.1 sound in gameplay. This means that games programmed with the system in mind can link up with home cinema systems to produce sound effects in 3D space. Players using such a set-up will hear sounds to the left, right, forward and rear, depending on the action they're experiencing on screen. The fact that the sound signal is in digital format also means that there is no chance of signal degradation on the way from Xbox to amplifier.

While the number of people with home cinema set-ups is relatively small, the extra overhead incurred by including DD5.1 sound code is not significant, and most serious Xbox developers will want to include it in their games. While PlayStation 2 supports DD5.1 in DVD and FMV playback, games themselves can not make use of it. The GameCube offers no support.

For players with a home cinema set-up, gaming on Xbox will be a neighbour-waking experience.

Diagram 5.4:

A simple management system will allow people to download music from their CDs.



FEATURE: MUSIC MANAGER

››OVERVIEW

While not strictly a benefit of the sound chip, the unification of a DVD/CD drive with a hard-drive raises the possibility of gamers creating their own musical mixes to play while gaming. By inserting CDs into Xbox, players will be able to record tracks to the hard-drive, building a personal jukebox that may be allowed to play over certain games or during particular sections of games.

While gamers will be able to make their own jukeboxes on Xbox, it is unlikely that this will combine with the internet link-up to form a music exchange system.

FEATURE: SIMULATED SURROUND SOUND VIA STEREO SPEAKERS.

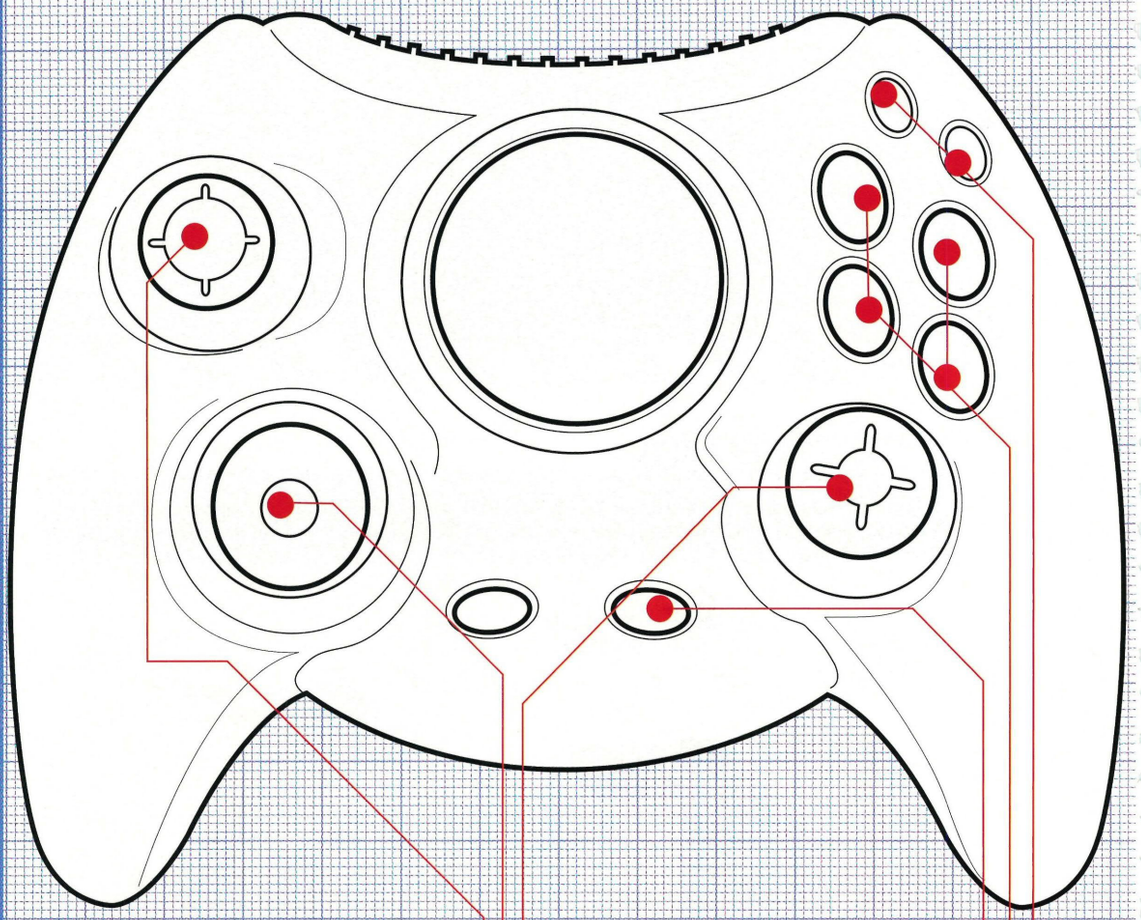
››OVERVIEW

The sound chip has also been designed to simulate 3D spatial sound using the far-more-common stereo speaker set-up. Using development tools available from Microsoft, developers can implement this system reasonably easily and the results are surprisingly effective. For the majority of gamers – those without a home cinema system – this simulated surround sound will be of enormous benefit and go some way to enhancing the gaming experience to a significant extent.

CONTROLLERS AND PERIPHERALS

The feature of Xbox design that comes closest to the player, the Xbox Controller is the most sophisticated console input device ever created. While the control options it offers are available on other systems, the pad has been designed with the input of thousands of gamers, and represents the most complete fusion of practicality and comfort. Xbox also uses USB technology to connect console to pad. This technology offers huge improvements, both for traditional functions – such as the speed of data transfer to memory cards – and for innovations such as the 'voice over net' technology of the Game Commander.

Diagram 6.1:



THE CONTROLLER:

OVERVIEW
The Xbox Controller is the most advanced of any game control device. It combines full analogue control with built-in force-feedback and the ability to connect two additional peripherals.

DIRECTION PAD:
A traditional eight-way digital controller.

LEFT ANALOGUE STICK:
Full 360° analogue direction control.

RIGHT ANALOGUE STICK
Analogue control for the right hand. Digital buttons are activated by pressing down on top of both Analogue Sticks.

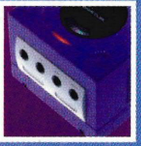
START BUTTON
Digital button, mainly for menus (same going for the Back button on its left).

FOUR ANALOGUE ACTION BUTTONS
A, B, X and Y. Each feature eight levels of resolution, from unpressed to fully depressed.

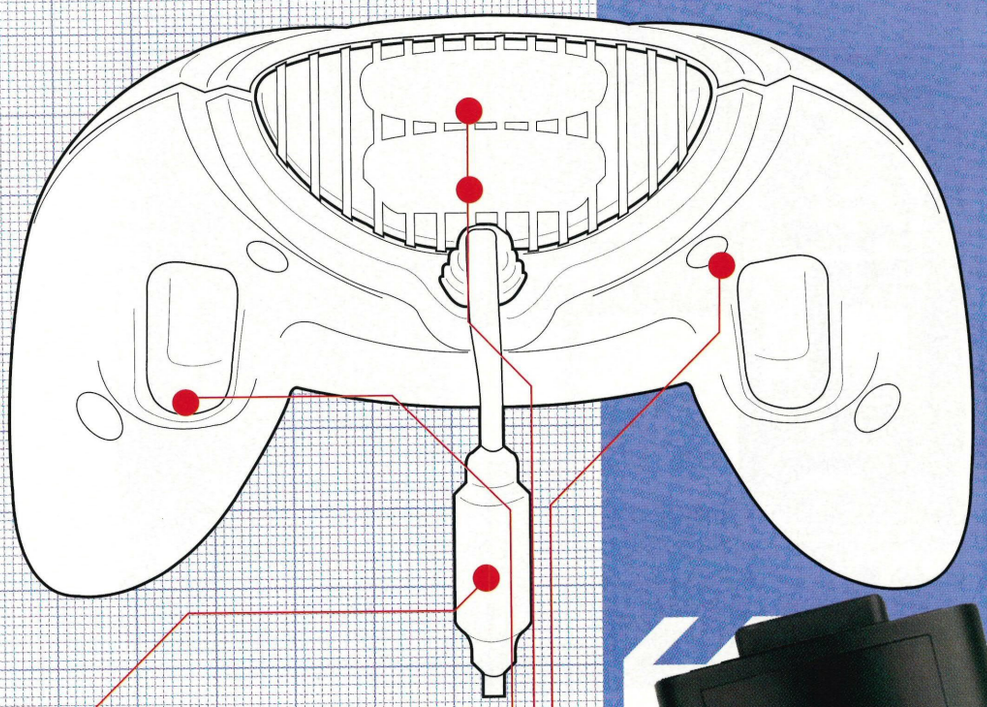
BLACK & WHITE ANALOGUE BUTTONS
Likely to be used in games compatible with the Game Commander. The Black button will broadcast messages to your team. The White button will broadcast to all players.

COMPETITOR CHECK: PERIPHERAL SUPPORT





XBOX:	PLAYSTATION2:	GAMECUBE:
4 CONTROLLER PORTS	2 CONTROLLER PORTS, MULTI-TAP AVAILABLE SEPARATELY TO INCREASE CAPACITY	4 CONTROLLER PORTS



DUAL ANALOGUE TRIGGERS
One for both left and right hands, the analogue triggers register eight bits of movement from unpressed to fully depressed.

DUAL PERIPHERAL SLOTS
Two Xbox peripherals can be connected to each pad.

(INTERIOR) TWIN FORCE-FEEDBACK MOTOR
Two eccentric cam motors, one each in the right and left spur of the pad, create a force-feedback effect.

CABLE
Three meters of USB standard connecting cable – the longest of any console. Cable includes a breakaway safety node to prevent accidental movement of the Xbox machine.

IF DEVELOPERS support these Controllers properly, it'll be a new era for racing games, sports titles – any game, in fact, that uses them.

ANALOGUE CONTROL:
OVERVIEW

Digital control devices register only two states: off and on. An analogue controller measures the extent to which it has been activated by the user. In the context of direction, analogue controllers can recognise 360° degrees of directional change and the extent of that change. Digital direction controllers can only register that a change has happened, in one of eight possible directions.



PERIPHERALS: MEMORY CARD

››OVERVIEW

DESPITE THE FACT that Xbox has a 8 gigabyte hard-drive built in, and that all game content normally saved to a console's memory card will be stored permanently there, separate 8 megabyte memory cards will also be available. With the broadband network taking time to be established, it is envisaged that these cards will predominantly be used for file sharing between machines.

Each memory card has 8Mb of storage held on battery-supported RAM chips. This large capacity will allow gamers to game save files – such as sports stats and replays – as well as user-created material like custom tracks and levels. The twin slots on the Xbox Controller can accommodate two memory cards simultaneously, and the machine's memory manager will make duplicating data between cards easy. Also, given that the console's Controller uses USB, the speed of data transfer will be far higher than for non-USB systems.



PERIPHERALS: GAME COMMANDER

››OVERVIEW

THE TWIN SLOTS on the front of the Xbox Controller offer a number of possibilities for additional peripherals, especially with the speed of data transfer afforded by the USB connection system. The first to be announced is the 'voice over net' voice recognition system – Game Commander.

Consisting of a headset and microphone, the Game Commander unit will allow players to talk to other squad members or all players in a network game. Even before network games are widespread, the Game Commander can be used in single-player squad games to command non-player characters.

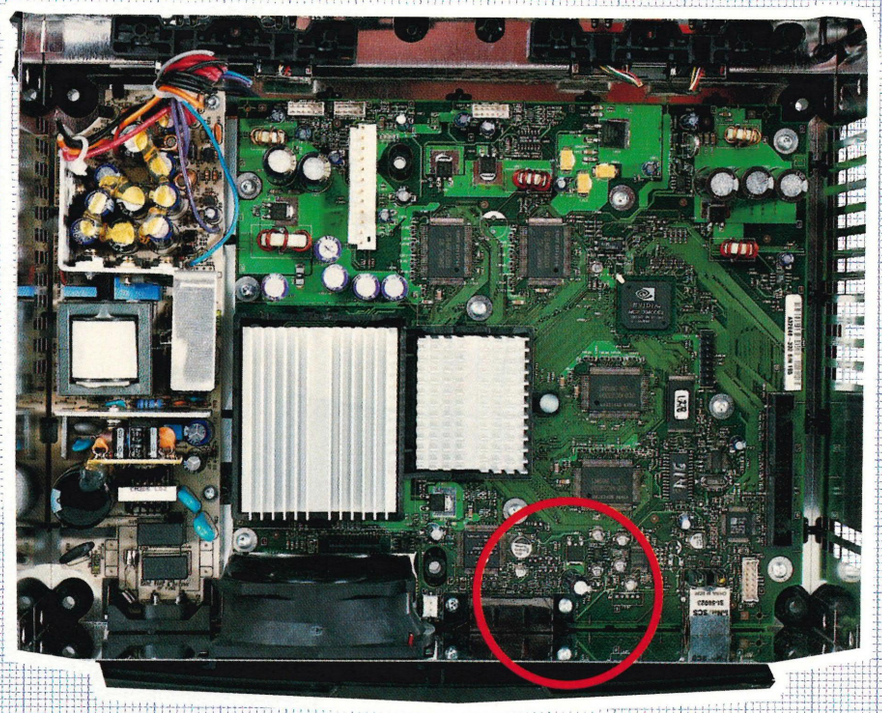
One non-finalised feature of the Game Commander is that of voice modulation. Using this system, gamers can set Xbox to change voice tone and inflection prior to their talking to other gamers, giving them the opportunity to sound like anyone, from Julian Clary to Darth Vader.

AUDIO VISUAL OUTPUT

A large part of the development of hardware and software for games has been the quest for ever-improving game graphics. However, few games consoles have ever extended their engineering brief in the area of picture and sound delivery - the signal which forms the game on the TV screen. Many of the sound and graphics features created by Xbox could easily be lost or damaged by the standard RF connection used by many to link their games consoles to televisions. To avoid this, considerable time and effort has been spent to ensure that the signal delivered by the console makes the best possible use of current and future television technology.

Diagram 7.1:

↓ In bucking the previous trend for low-quality TV signal units in consoles, Xbox is in effect doing itself a huge favour - the graphical excellence of Xbox simply wouldn't come across with inferior outputs of old.



FEATURE: TV SIGNAL UNIT

››OVERVIEW

COST OF PRODUCTION is one of the key economic concerns for any format holder. Most companies lose money on each machine they sell, gambling that these costs will be recouped through game revenues.

With this in mind, but still somewhat surprisingly, one of the cost-saving measures employed in most consoles prior to Xbox was the inclusion of a low-quality TV signal unit, the chip used to convert the game signal into a form recognisable by televisions.

Xbox is the first console to produce graphics of such high quality that the on-screen depiction of those graphics would be seriously compromised by the use of this type of chip. As a result, the Xbox TV signal unit is of a significantly higher basic quality than those in other consoles.

Diagram 7.2:

↓ HDTV exists today, but will likely become *the* format of the future. Xbox is already compatible.



FEATURE: HIGH DEFINITION TV SUPPORT

››OVERVIEW

HDTV IS THE new standard for televisions, displaying pictures at far higher resolution than the standard 512 lines of a normal PAL TV. Xbox can support this new format from the outset and - because it's a feature built-in to the GPU - can accomplish the extra resolution at little or no extra processing overhead.

As well as supporting 720 and 1080 line progressive scan HDTVs, the maximum output resolution that Xbox is capable of is 1920x1080 - the resolution of most of the screenshots taken for this magazine. At this resolution, the console's special graphical features, such as bump-mapping and high resolution textures, are at their most impressive. As players update their TV sets over time, Xbox will be ready to support the new technology.

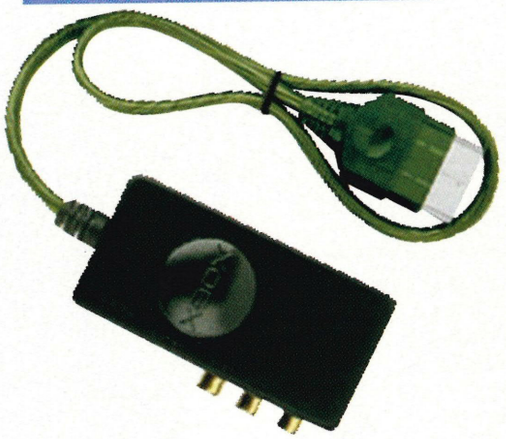
COMPETITOR CHECK: MAXIMUM RESOLUTION



XBOX:	PLAYSTATION2:	GAMECUBE:
1920 X 1080	1280 X 1024	UNKNOWN, BUT UP HDTV STANDARD - AT LEAST 1050 X 600

Diagram 7.3:

The component AV Pack is one of two improved TV connectors available for Xbox.



FEATURE:
SIGNAL OUT CONNECTIVITY

››OVERVIEW

THERE ARE SEVERAL standards for connecting external inputs such as games consoles to televisions. The most simple is the RF unit (supplied with the console), which plugs straight into a TV aerial socket. But there are better options, and Xbox supports all current standards, ensuring that gamers can use the best quality connection on their TV, and also that any new equipment they buy will also be supported.

Standards supported by Xbox include RF, S-video, SCART, RCA, Component Video and Optical Digital Audio. To take advantage of some of these, gamers will need to purchase Xbox AV packs. Plugging into the AV-out port at the back of Xbox, these consist of six inches of cable leading to a junction box with a variety of sockets. The S-Video pack includes regular RCA-style audio/video and optical connections. The component AV Pack replaces standard S-Video with component connectors.

Diagram 7.4:

Although an extra cost, the DVD remote unit is a far better control device than a gamepad.



DESIGN:
DVD PLAYBACK

››OVERVIEW

UNLIKE PLAYSTATION 2, Xbox does not play DVDs out of the box. To play DVD movies, Xbox owners will need to invest in an Xbox DVD remote unit.

The reasoning behind this arrangement is that for every DVD player sold, the DVD licensing authority demand a royalty payment. Instead of paying the authority this money, the decision was taken to invest it into the actual game-playing mechanics of the console. It was also thought likely that many prospective Xbox owners would already own some form of DVD player - the remote control arrangement means that only those people who want to use Xbox as a DVD unit are actually charged for doing so.

With the remote unit installed, gamers with a high-definition TV set will benefit from the Xbox progressive scan facility. This improves standard DVD output and, coupled with a home cinema sound system, transforms Xbox into a high-end piece of home entertainment hardware.

The unit consists of a handset and an infrared receiver that plugs into a Controller port.

WIN!

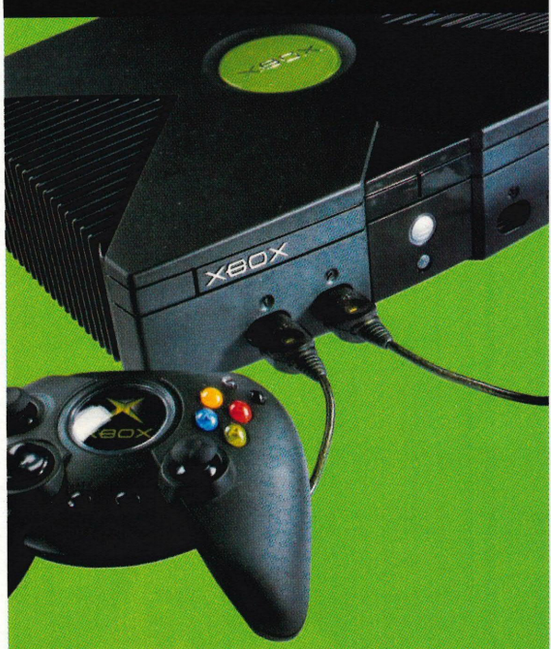
ONE OF THE VERY FIRST XBOX SYSTEMS IN THE UK!

Fill in our questionnaire and become one of the first people in the UK to own an Xbox.

WHEN MICROSOFT'S EUROPEAN manufacturing plant swings into action later this year, the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will be there to pick up one of the first Xbox consoles to roll off the production line. Officially certified as one of the very first European machines ever made, we've decided to give this extremely rare Xbox away to the lucky winner of our survey competition.

This Xbox will be one of the very first to arrive in the UK and will be sent to the winner before the British launch of the machine. We'll also throw in five games of the winner's choice, ensuring they'll be playing Xbox games long before anyone else in the country.

To be in with a chance of winning this fantastic prize, read 'How to enter' below and get your entries in as quickly as possible. Good luck!

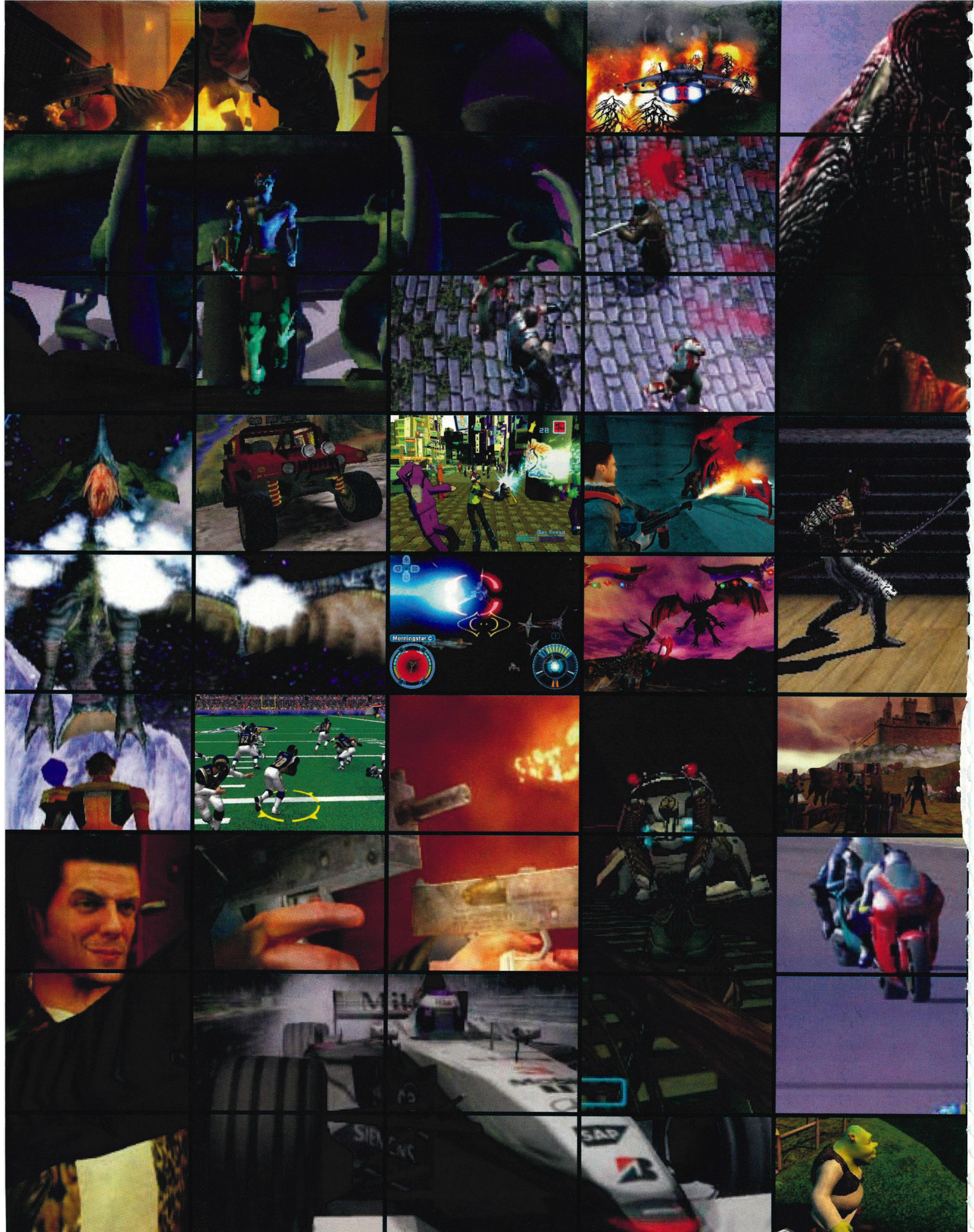


HOW TO ENTER

TO BE IN with a chance of winning the Xbox, complete the questionnaire enclosed in this Official UK Xbox Magazine Launch Special and return it to the address below. Your opinions count and are important to us. Your answers will not affect your chances of winning. Please be as honest as you like.

RETURN COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES TO:
Andrea Cooper (Xbox)
Market Research Manager
Official UK Xbox Magazine
FREEPOST
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, BA1 2XF




Morningstar C



THE COMPLETE PICTURE

114 games, 50 pages – details of every single title announced for Xbox.

For a new console from a company new to the market, Xbox has gathered unprecedented support from the games development community. Initial fears that the machine would not attract the major Japanese firms have proved groundless with Sega, Namco, Konami, Capcom and Microsoft's own Japanese group already pledging strong support. Couple this with firm commitment from the cream of the US and European developers and Xbox's future looks rosy.

Over the next 50 pages, you'll find details on 114 games – every single title (other than *Project Gotham Racing*, *Halo*, *DoA 3* and *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee*, on pages 16-39) announced for Xbox at the time of going to press. Many of these games have never been written about before and the majority come with exclusive in-game screens obtained directly from the developers themselves.

Not only can gamers be sure that there will be a steady stream of strong Xbox titles to keep them playing, but also that the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will keep them fully up to date with every development. »

ONLY ON XBOX — **If this icon appears by a game, it's exclusive to Xbox.**

ON THE VIDEO — **If this icon appears by a game, it's on the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* Launch Video**



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› EVERY XBOX GAME

ACTION GAMES

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

DEVELOPER: **DIGITAL EXTREMES**
RELEASE DATE: **2/02**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
MULTIPLAYER: **32 VIA LAN**

Unreal is coming exclusively to Xbox and it's shaping up to be a must-have title.

ONLY ON XBOX

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP is the highly anticipated follow-up to *Unreal Tournament* and it's only coming out on Xbox. Built from the ground up using the very latest technology to run at a smooth 60 frames per second, developer Digital Extremes is making the game as accessible as possible, designing it specifically for Xbox and its controller.

Features new to the *Unreal* series featuring include speed pads, a double jump option, numerous unlockable features and land and air vehicles.

A variety of incredibly detailed characters, each with unique abilities and origins, can be selected to battle it out over 25 vast indoor and outdoor environments. The single-player game users some of the most impressive AI first-person shooters have ever witnessed.

One of the many special effects added to the *Unreal* mix is a dynamic particle system. When a weapon is fired through a cloud of smoke or a character runs though it, the smoke realistically disperses. This technique has also been used to display other effects such as explosions, fog, mist, and smoke trails.

Although still unfinished, *Unreal Championship* looks set to raise the standard to which other games aspire.

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

Up to 32 players via LAN, online play, four-player split screen and X-Link capability.

www.unrealchampionship.com »


DON'T JUST READ IT WATCH IT!
gamer.now.com
now GAMER



↑ Having several different craft, such as this gun-toting jet, should give *Yager* longevity.

DEVELOPER: **YAGER DEVELOPMENT** PUBLISHER: **THQ**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

YAGER

Freelance fighter pilots required. Must have superior dog fighting skills, experience of future air combat and craft.

IN THIS, A FUTURISTIC aerial action game, players assume the role of pilot-for-hire Magnus Tide, bought in for a mission to bring peace back to a troubled world.

Rather than flying above the clouds, most of the action in *Yager* takes place close to the ground in a range of detailed environments. The enemy attack from both airborne and ground targets, which the development team hopes will give the impression of being movie-like flight sequences.

Although the game will feature several cut-scenes to help drive the story, the majority of the narrative will be fleshed out in the actual gameplay, spread over 20 levels.

Each level will present a variety of combat-based, performance-related objectives. As the story unfolds, Tide meets over 20 characters that can help or hinder his progress.

With its roots firmly in air-to-ground combat, multiplayer options are a must. Such features in *Yager* include deathmatch-based games where players can attack each other in anything from a single-seater jet to a heavily armoured battle ship.

KNOW YOUR SUBJECT

The *Yager* website, has a comic illustrating part of the game's second chapter.
www.yager.de



DEV: **INTREPID COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT** RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

BC

Prehistoric god game from the genre's father.

ONLY ON XBOX

THINK *ONE Million Years B.C.* - minus Raquel Welch, sadly - for this game set in a brutal, fully simulated prehistoric world. Peter Molyneux will have a big say in the design process, as his company is directly involved.

The object of the game will be to create and sustain a new tribal culture. As the tribe uses natural resources and develops new skills, it rises up the food chain. Overshadowing the social climbing will be the threat of a potentially devastating natural disaster, such as a huge meteor crashing into the earth and wiping out all in its path.

As a release date comes closer, there'll be increasing interest generated in Molyneux's latest pet project.

WHY MR MOLYNEUX?

Intrepid is a Lionhead satellite, with ex-Bullfrog, Sony and Codies staffers.
www.intrepidgames.com/games.html



↑ Expect *Global Strike Team* to utilise the Game Commander peripheral.

DEVELOPER: **ARGONAUT SOFTWARE** PUBLISHER: **SIERRA**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/02** MULTIPLAYER: **8**

SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM

Where leading a crack team of highly trained operatives on world-saving manoeuvres is all in a day's work.

ONLY ON XBOX

THE *SWAT* SERIES is already a favourite with PC gamers, and now, with a new direction, is aiming to reach a new audience on Xbox. Previous *SWAT* games have been created by in-house Sierra teams, but *Malice* developer Argonaut has now been given the task of bringing *Global Strike Team* to Xbox.

Following the Global Strike Team founded in 2020 as an international offshoot from the original SWAT organisation, the gameplay is about helping countries and organisations out of tricky situations beyond their control.

Needless to say, the missions will usually involve the bringing-down of terrorists, hitmen or both.

Argonaut has designed a new engine to give *Global Strike Team* its own distinct look and feel compared to past *SWAT* titles. Harnessing the power of Xbox, hard-edged shadows will feature, and a photo-realistic film filter is also being used to give the game a true-to-life look.

Gameplay is viewed from a first-person perspective and strategic elements will play a major part in the action. Incredibly, Argonaut were already working on *Kleaners*, a first-person Xbox shooter, when the got the nod for *SWAT*.

YOU MAY NOT KNOW...

...that SWAT is an acronym that stands for Special Weapons and Tactics.
www.sierra.com



↑ A very, *very* different action game.

DEV: **KODIAK INTERACTIVE** PUB: **ENCORE**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

CIRCUS MAXIMUS

'On my signal, unleash chariot-racing hell!'

ALTHOUGH IT HAS no ties to the Oscar-winning movie *Gladiator*, *Circus Maximus* might just be the closest thing to taking on the Roman empire in the style of Russell Crowe.

Best described as a chariot racing combat game capturing the feel of ancient Rome during the height of the Empire, the title will feature two single-player game modes.

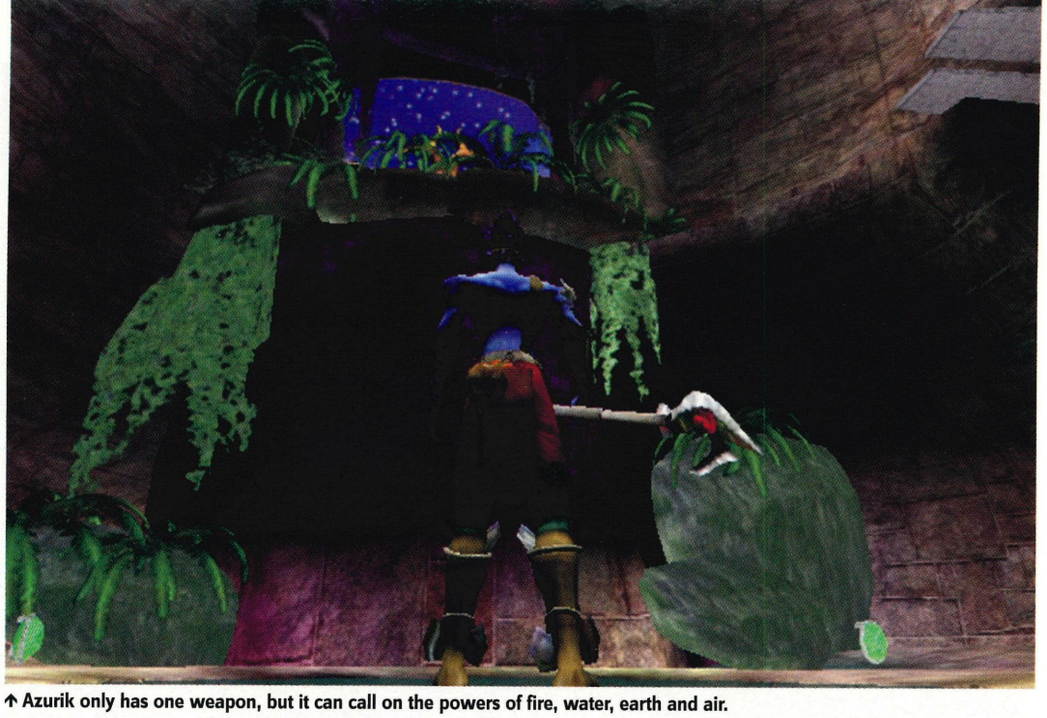
The first offers straight races with no on-board warriors. The second allows players to switch between control of the chariot's driver and warrior, with AI taking control of the unused character. While the driver's role is obvious, it's the job of the warrior to beat off other chariots and ensure victory by fair means or foul.

Circus Maximus may excel in a very promising multiplayer mode. By teaming up in pairs and deciding who drives and who wields the sword, four players can take part in a split-screen battle to the death.

EDUCATION PAYS OFF

The game's Art Director Tom Hudson has a degree in ancient history.

www.kodiakgames.com/circus



↑ Azurik only has one weapon, but it can call on the powers of fire, water, earth and air.

DEVELOPER: **ADRENIUM GAMES** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

AZURIK: RISE OF PERATHIA

The adventures of a young apprentice sworn to protect the four sacred elements

ONLY ON XBOX

ON THE VIDEO

FRONTED BY A young blue man, *Azurik* is shaping up to offer something extra to fans of *Soul Reaver*-type games. As the young apprentice Azurik, gamers have to safeguard fire, water, earth and air to stop the world plunging into darkness.

The game is split into regions, each dedicated to one of the four elements. On the journey between worlds, players will notice the lack of loading screens, thanks to the Xbox built-in hard drive.

Azurik has a double-edged staff-like weapon, which harnesses the powers of the four elements. One quick button action switches between the different elemental attacks. Enemies also have element-specific characteristics – those in the water world, for instance, are more immune to fire attacks.

Looking very good so far, the only serious issues to resolve in *Azurik* in the final development months are camera angle problems and some clipping.

TAKE A BOW

This is Adrenium's first game.

www.adrenium.com/azurik/az_setting.asp





↑ Gameplay will be split over four large – and graphically lush – zones.



↑ Finally, there's a platform on which lightsabers can be represented properly.

DEVELOPER: **LUCASARTS** PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

STAR WARS: OBI-WAN

Young Jedi master battles the Empire only on Xbox.

ONLY ON XBOX

THE PLOT BEHIND this *Star Wars* game begins weeks before the events of *The Phantom Menace*, climaxing in a showdown with Sith Lord Darth Maul. *Obi-Wan* also introduces new adversaries in the form of mercenary group the Jin'ha and an evil sect known as The Black Heth.

The basic structure of the storyline will be familiar to *Star Wars* fans: a threat to the balance of the force has occurred and it must be eradicated.

As young Obi-Wan, several abilities are available to the player, including some not seen in the movie.

Force abilities include attack, push, pull, throw, defend and jump. As players progress through the game, new abilities can be gathered, in the form of glowing orbs that are scattered across the levels.

Armed with standard-issue Jedi equipment – lightsaber and the Force – Obi-Wan visits locations including Coruscant, Tatooine and Theed. Using the lightsaber requires more than repeated button bashing. One option is the Saber Throw, which allows players to hurl the weapon at enemies while controlling its direction mid-flight.

Over 15 levels, the gameplay focuses on exploration and adventure, as in *Tomb Raider* games, while puzzle and platform elements also feature.

PRODUCT COMPROMISED

Obi-Wan was due for PC, but Lucasarts decided only Xbox could handle it.

www.lucasarts.com/products/obiwan



DEVELOPER: **THE COLLECTIVE** PUBLISHER: **EA** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

The Hellmouth opens wide and smiles...

AIMING TO RECREATE the dark humour and sharp plots of the *Buffy* TV show is this, a third-person offering combining action, puzzle and fighting elements.

Everything from the High School to the cemetery, from the Bronze Nightclub to the library, is brought to life here. The story concerns demons known as the Old Ones, forced back to hell while man ruled the world.

As Buffy, players have to stop the Old Ones and the Master reclaiming the earth. The Master is a 600 year-old vampire specialising in opening dimensional portals.

Special abilities at Buffy's disposal include kung-fu, gymnastics and the slayer's immense strength. Quick healing and slayer sense - which can be used to slaughter enemies, depending on levels of experience and power - are also in the player's arsenal.

Other enemies to stake include characters from the show, such as Spike and Drusilla, along with additional zombies, demons, werewolves and other assorted supernatural creatures.

The actors behind Angel, Xander, Willow, Cordelia and Giles provide voices for the game, and the recreation of the trademark 'morphing creature effect' from the show all help to enhance the *Buffy* Xbox experience.

↑ The vampire here looks very much like one from TV - a promising sign.

Any game based on a popular TV programme sets itself the tough challenge of living up to expectations, and no playable versions of *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* have yet been seen.

However, if The Collective can create a strong plot and engrossing gameplay that fits into the *Buffy* chronology - these screenshots are testament to the company's graphical expertise - you can't help feeling they're on to a winner.

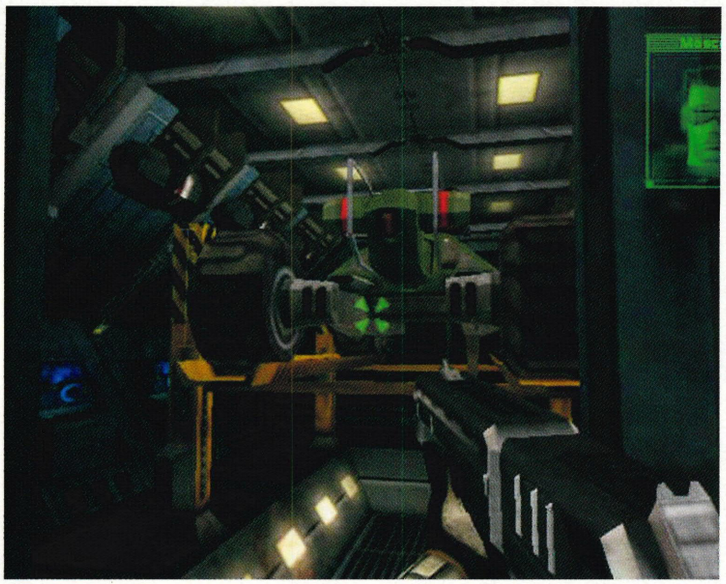
KEEPING IT REAL

TV show bigwigs are working closely with The Collective to ensure authenticity.

www.foxinteractive.com/games/buffy



↑ Spectacular graphics characterise the space combat sections.



↑ The space station setting will make for excellent FPS arenas.

DEVELOPER: **WARTHOG** PUBLISHER: **EA** RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **1**

BOUNTY HUNTER

Get revenge, destroy massive space stations and stop alien cattle from being rustled.

ONLY ON XBOX

WITH THE WIDELY-admired PC space combat game *Starlancer* under its belt, Manchester-based Warthog has turned its attentions to Xbox in the shape of a colourful first-person shooter.

Bounty Hunter won't win prizes for originality of storyline, but nevertheless impresses with its vast space stations, a host of interesting alien races and techno weaponry.

Set in a futuristic frontier system, the lead role is that of a former Ranger, a Special Ops officer framed for killing his comrades and now, fresh out of prison, working as a bounty hunter.

Along with the usual explore-and-kill mechanics, though, there are moments when some brain-power is needed. It's essential to interact with non-playable characters (NPCs) and players are advised not to make too many enemies within one race.

The action takes place in first-person perspective, both at the controls of a spacecraft and on two feet exploring space stations. Warthog are promising a seamless transfer between the two viewpoints, thanks to something they're calling the TUSK engine. Watch too for extras fleshing out standard missions.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Warthog is creating a game with a "semi-linear story-branching system".
www.warthog.co.uk/flash/main.htm



↑ Since action switches between on-foot and in-craft, expect fun in the docking bays.



↑ The ability to command a team will be as important as strong shooting skills

DEVELOPER: **PIVOTAL GAMES** PUBLISHER: **SCI**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

CONFLICT: DESERT STORM

Take charge of an SAS squad in a game that recreates some of the actual events of the Gulf War.

Conflict: Desert Storm has gamers taking control of squads of either British SAS or United States Delta Force soldiers. Each squad consists of a player-controlled team leader, plus experts in heavy weapons, demolition, infiltration, electronics and a sniper.

The emphasis is on teamwork and tactics, rather than blazing gung-ho. In-game assignments include defending towns from Iraqi invasion, rescue and assassination operations, Scud-hunting missions and a showdown in Baghdad.

For those moments when stealth is out of the question and only all-out warmongery will suffice, it'll be possible to take command of various types of military hardware. Confirmed for inclusion are helicopters and tanks.

A reward system will allow players to pick up medals, while an experience system will be used to improve team members' abilities. Although simulation-based war games are usually associated with the PC, touches like go a long way to make *Conflict: Desert Storm* an enticing experience for Xbox gamers. Whether current world events will delay release is unknown as yet.

SANDS OF TIME

The Gulf War took place in Kuwait in 1991, between January and March.
www.pivotalgames.com



↑ Tactics, stealth and deep-thinking -- all ignored in favour of all-out action.

DEVELOPER: **SMILEBIT** PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
RELEASE DATE: **TBC** MULTIPLAYER: **TBC**

GUN VALKYRIE

Mix the pedigree of Sega game creation with an crazed, technology-ridden alternative world, and this is the result.

ONLY ON XBOX

GUN VALKYRIE Is bursting with more nauseating monsters than a Babylon 5 fancy dress party. And the point of this gathering of the gross? Fast-action gunplay, of course. Think *Starship Troopers* minus the sentimental approach to alien rights.

It's a mech-shooter, but that description doesn't do justice to the speed of the combat. It's not so much about stalking your prey one-on-one as mashing your way through a blizzard of foes. Don't forget the windscreen wipers – carnage is at close quarters.

OK, so there's no shortage of 3D third-person shooters doing the rounds. The difference here is that this is Sega's view of the genre, and is therefore heavily biased towards a commercial arcade imperative that delivers a high turnover of action.

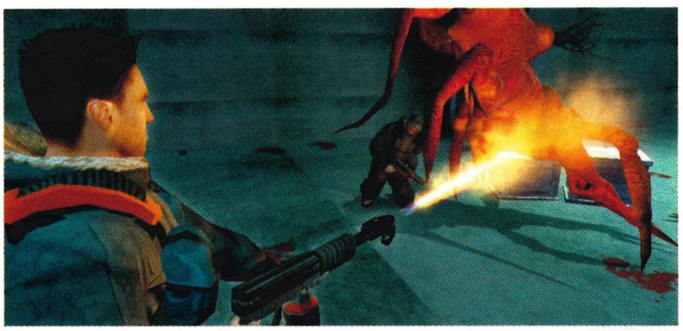
Surprisingly, the developer is Smilebit, best known for the gorgeously original anti-establishment skater *Jet Set Radio Future*. But *Gun Valkyrie* is all about old-fashioned gameplay – the real innovation is in the overall look. It's essentially *Space Invaders* in three dimensions, with a seemingly unlimited pool of anime visual treats.

Expect some smart design in the control system, which allows for sharp 180° turns and quick rotational combos. Also notable is the large number of aliens, weapons and destruction effects visible on screen at any one time – it's very impressive.

Gun Valkyrie might just show the world what Xbox could achieve when pushed to the limits.

WHAT IS A VALKYRIE?

Handmaiden to Viking god Odin; also guided fallen warriors to Valhalla.
www.smilebit.com/eng/index/index.html



↑ Hideous creatures were the calling card of the film – same will go for the game.

DEVELOPER: **COMPUTER ARTWORKS** PUBLISHER: **UNIVERSAL INTERACTIVE STUDIOS**
RELEASE DATE: **Q2/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

THE THING

A follow-up to the claustrophobic sci-fi horror movie.

RESIDENT EVIL brought survival horror to the wider world, and few games outside the series have challenged its dominance. This situation looks set to change, though, with Computer Artworks' take on *The Thing*, John Carpenter's 1982 film classic .

The third-person perspective game is set just after the final events of the movie. The player assumes the role of film hero Blake in what is described as a sequel to the film. Blake leads a squad of military rescuers sent into the ruined base in Antarctica to find out just what the hell has been going on.

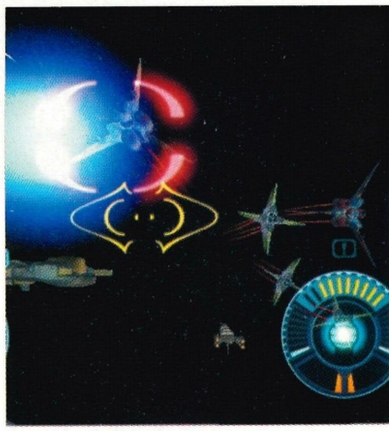
Fans of the film will remember that trust played a strong part in its story. This will be reflected in the game, which uses a 'Trust and Fear' mechanic, a system where players are asked to make decisions about AI-controlled squad members. Judging a character's motives and feelings correctly will affect progression in the game, and have far-reaching consequences for the storyline.

As Blake leads his team through the base, stomach-turning Things (as in the film) will attack, such as dog-headed deformed humans sprouting tentacles.

The Xbox parental lockout chip – for parents to set up an Xbox not to play mature-rated games – will allow the designers to indulge the more twisted elements of their nature.

THE THING IS...

The 1982 film is a remake of 1951's *The Thing From Another World*
www.artworks.co.uk/thing.htm



↑ The game closest-ever to *SW* vision?

DEVELOPER: **SECRET LEVEL**
PUBLISHER: **LUCASARTS**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **2**

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER SPECIAL EDITION

Improved technology offers more than PS2 ever could.

ALTHOUGH *Starfighter Special Edition* is a conversion of a PlayStation 2 game, LucasArts has been able to include in the Xbox release several previously-unseen features.

For the first time, and exclusive to Xbox, players will be able to pilot several all-new spaceships, including the exciting prospect of a trip at the helm of Darth Maul's Infiltrator craft.

Special Edition also presents five new bonus missions, along with a variety of new two-player games – capture-the-flag, dogfight, tag, hunter/hunted and steal the beacon.

Before launching into the game, players must choose one of three characters: Naboo pilot Rhys Dallows, space pirate Nym and refugee Vana, each having their own ship.

The game begins with a simple training mission, allowing players to get used to the controls as well as offering some firing practice against static and moving target drones.

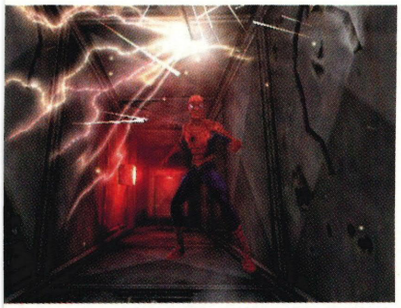
From here, action is spread out across 14 missions based on scenes and locations from the *Episode I: The Phantom Menace*, right up to Droid Control Ship finale. As with *Star Wars: Obi-Wan*, this title presents new twists on the Episode I story.

With the PlayStation 2 version occasionally struggling to display large-scale battles on screen, LucasArts will use the extra RAM present in Xbox to keep the action fast and smooth.

This means that *Starfighter: Special Edition* will be the definitive version of what is considered to be the best *Episode I* game currently available.

SOFTOGRAPHY

Secret Level is also behind *Episode 1* games *Pod Racer* and *Starfighter*
www.lucasarts.com/products/starfighter



↑ No Xbox shots yet, this is (ahem) PS2.

DEVELOPER: **TREYARCH**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
RELEASE DATE: **Q2/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

SPIDER MAN

Does so much, *much* more than a spider can...

WITH PETER PARKER'S Hollywood debut set for next summer, Activision and Treyarch are busying themselves creating an action game that will mirror the plot of the film and keep Spidey fans happy. The game will be set in highly detailed New York City environments and will follow Parker's arachnoid alter ego as he battles his old enemy, the Green Goblin.

Obvious abilities include being able to climb up walls and spin webs, but the spidery superhero will also be able to crawl, leap, and swing around NYC in his fight against crime. The Xbox title is currently being called *Spider-Man: The Movie*, but that could change.

Recent *Spider-Man* console games published by Activision have set a precedent for excellence that Xbox will look to continue.

BITTEN BY THE BUG

Spider-Man first appeared in the August 1962 edition of *Amazing Fantasy*.

www.activision.com/games/spiderman



↑ Immediately, the unique look of the game sets it apart from any other title. It's a bold move that pays off handsomely.

DEVELOPER: **SMILEBIT** PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES** RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **2**

JET SET RADIO FUTURE

Sparklingly original good looks and witty, fast-paced gameplay place this futuristic skating experience in a class of it's own...

ONLY ON XBOX

WHEN THIS sequel to Dreamcast style-sensation *Jet Set Radio* was shown at US game show E3 last spring, it made something of an impact. Quite frankly, it's one of the most beautiful games ever made.

This is nothing like the *Tony Hawk* skating games – characters here zoom around on rocket-powered skates. Once a character is chosen, the objective is to speed around the futuristic, comic book cities competing with rival gangs for the best places to spray with graffiti tags, while avoiding the police and performing extreme skating stunts

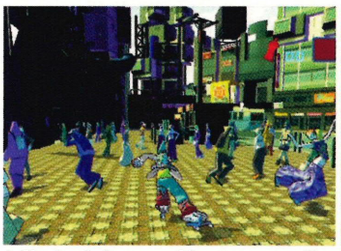
Multiplayer competitive and co-operative options are planned, including co-operative combos – a prospect likely to promote both late-night gaming sessions and heated disagreements.

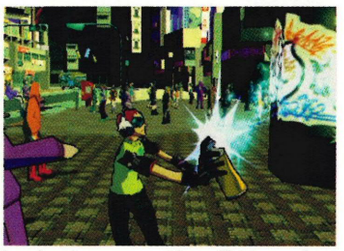
Unlike the largely flat world of the Dreamcast game, *JSRF*'s environments are largely 3D, with plenty of interaction above and beyond grinding down handrails and concrete steps.

CHEE-YOWN!

Hip-hop and techno soundtrack *JSRF*.

www.smilebit.com/eng/index/index.html





↑ Skating is just one thing to master. Tagging the cityscapes with graffiti is another.



↑ From the expression and the outfit, it's a good bet that this is a Dark minion.

DEVELOPER: **STARBREEZE STUDIOS** PUBLISHER: **CONSPIRACY GAMES**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

ENCLAVE

The planet of Enclave has been ripped apart by a war between light and dark. Which side will be triumphant?

ONLY ON XBOX

IT'S REFRESHING to turn out for the dark side once in a while. Starbreeze Studios' third-person Xbox-exclusive action game allows gamers to do just that – to choose to play as a warrior of Light or as a minion of Dark.

The story takes place after Enclave was literally split down the middle by the hand of God. On one side of the gaping hole there are the good guys, on the other, the baddies. The huge rift between the two sides then literally begins to close, bringing with it a war for control of the planet.

With a strong *Dungeons & Dragons* look and feel, *Enclave* is as much about story-telling as it is about big guns. Both sides have a history to tell, and actions and decisions made during the game will affect the outcome of the story.

Each side in the conflict will have a selection of five different character classes. For fans of fantasy-based games, ogres, gnomes, wizards, druids and wolf riders will be familiar, but Starbreeze promises the balance of character class attributes will keep the game fresh. Add to the mix several destructible environments and four-player deathmatch options, and *Enclave* quickly becomes one hot Xbox property.

PIGGY BACK

The Boar Rider will be an important character on the side of Light.

www.starbreeze.com



↑ Bases are there to be attacked *and* defended, depending on their allegiance.



↑ Armed to the gums, never mind 'teeth'.



↑ Multiple bogeys, and then some.

DEVELOPER: **RAGE** PUBLISHER: **RAGE**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **2**

GUN METAL

Giant flying robots knocking the hell out of one another.

ON THE VIDEO

BEING GIVEN the option to freely transform from a towering mech robot into a state-of-the-art jet fighter doesn't come along often. When it does, you can't help but sit up and take notice.

Assuming the role of a 10 metre-tall silver warrior, *Gun Metal* players will, over the course of 25 missions, have to defend targets under attack from a variety of enemies. Transforming from robot into jet is done at the press of a button at any time.

The capabilities of Xbox have allowed Rage to create hugely detailed environments. If rockets are fired at a forest, for instance, the trees will burn and the fire will spread until there's nothing left. If gamers return to the same part of the level later on in the game, the Xbox hard-drive ensures that their handiwork is reflected fully.

Continuing the deforestation theme, it'll also be possible to crush trees as robots runs through the forests. Buildings can be razed to the ground and settlements wiped from the map.

Rage is known for its mastery of the lavish explosion, and *Gun Metal* combines plenty of high-destruction action with the sheer joy of playing as a real-life Transformer.

METAL GUNS

Famed gun maker Smith & Wesson uses stainless steel to make its weapons.

www.rage.com



↑ True to Konami's plan, there are no dials and indicators as in old-school flight sims.

DEVELOPER: **KONAMI** PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

AIRFORCE DELTA STORM

Because the first casualty of flight simulation is fun.

ONLY ON XBOX

FLIGHT SIMULATORS do not have a great reputation for being fun. Thankfully, this sortie into jet plane territory avoids the need for tedious technical expertise with its simple seek-and-destroy format

There are *some* elements of performance-enhancing control-freakery. Players choose from 40 current military aircraft, including the F/A 18C Hornet and the F-14D Tomcat.

After that, it's just a question of flying over 50 varying locales, obliging the local banditry with the full extent of the plane's weaponry. In short, it's open season on ground units, enemy aircraft, communication infrastructure. Machine guns are available when the going gets sticky, but generally speaking it's a question of rocket science.

What sets *AirForce Delta Storm* apart from previous attempts at action flight sims is its detailed landscaping and reasonably realistic combat effects. Thus far the view from the cockpit looks like a passable version of the real world as seen from 5,000 feet at 700 mph. This makes a pretty change from the 'pasted-on' landscapes of previous console flight-games.

THIS SOUNDS FAMILIAR...

Konami were responsible for bringing *Air Force Delta* to the Dreamcast.
www.konami.com/main



↑ If it's big and metallic, shoot it.

DEVELOPER: **XENOPI STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **TBA** RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

DREADNOUGHTS

Sticking a spanner into the first-person shooter works.

ONLY ON XBOX

THE CLASSIC first-person shooter formula is so good that gimmicks tend to get a cold reception, whereas gameplay and technical tweaks are welcomed.

Dreadnoughts is tackling this issue head-on. It's a multiplayer first-person shooter with squad-based missions and a capture-the-flag mentality - but with an interesting twist.

Instead of protecting or raiding fixed bases, players have bases that actually move, the eponymous Dreadnoughts. A 'captain' chooses a path for the Dreadnought, and players must attack other Dreadnoughts.

A winning strategy offers the best explanation. Jump onto an opposing Dreadnought, knock out the enemy, destroy the defensive capabilities of the Dreadnought, bring your ship along, and let it finish the job with its big guns. Familiar stuff to seagoing pirates of the 17th Century.

TAKE COMMAND

The designers intend including a level editor, keen to create a community.
www.xenopi.com



↑ Great as a still, but check out the Launch Video for in-game footage.

DEVELOPER: **STORMFRONT STUDIOS** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

BLOOD WAKE

Big boats featuring big engines and even bigger guns blowing other boats out of the water? This way please...

ONLY ON XBOX

ON THE VIDEO

ON THE FACE of it, this Xbox exclusive from Stormfront Studios is pretty simple. Players choose one of ten gunboats - the selection includes catamarans, torpedo boats, sampans and devil boats. After that, they cast off and proceed to destroy anything else on the water using chain guns, cannons, rockets, torpedoes, and mines.

Dip in more than a toe, though, and it's soon clear that *Blood Wake* offers a lot more than simple marine destruction. Single-player combat takes place across 25 story-based missions, with widely different objectives. From attacking a designated target, such as a ship or building, to defending an escort and gathering information to be used later in the game, there's much more here than just racing around letting off big rockets at anything and everything that moves. Although there is that too...

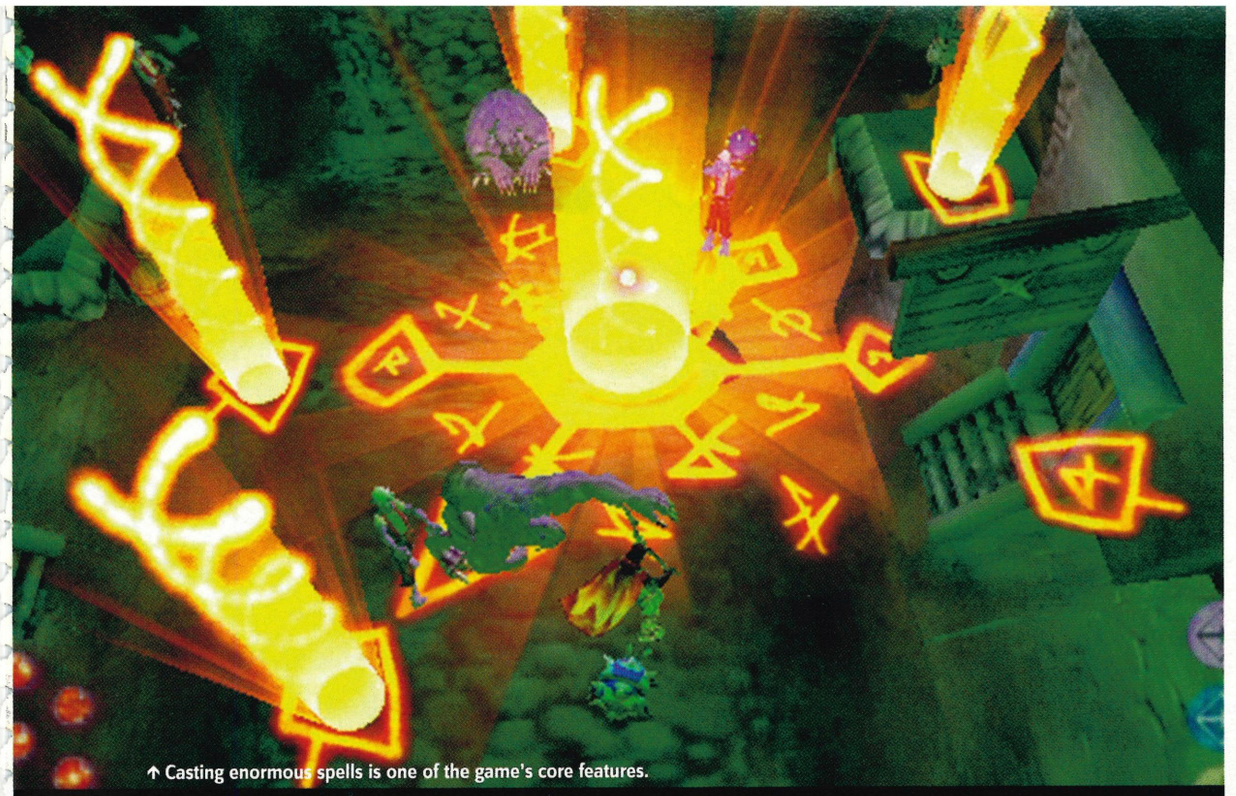
Some campaigns will be played out on the open ocean, some around small groups of islands or in reclusive bays, and some in wide river estuaries. One of the most impressive aspects of *Blood Wake* is its realistic modelling of waves and spray.

Boats are tossed and turned by the ocean swell and as they crash through the water, they create their own wakes. Several of the missions also take advantage of specific weather effects, such as fog and storms, which add to the challenge of rolling waves.

Multiplayer modes will focus on last-man-standing type scenarios such as deathmatch and team deathmatch games. AI-controlled boats will also be thrown into the mix, ensuring that even the loneliest Xbox gamer should be kept entertained, even after the last single-player campaign has been won.

OVER LAND AND SEA

Based in California, Stormfront has already created several NASCAR titles.
www.xbox.com/games/action



↑ Casting enormous spells is one of the game's core features.

DEVELOPER: **VR-1 ENTERTAINMENT** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

NIGHTCASTER

Not every apprentice wizard fighting off the forces of darkness has the initials HP and wears little glasses.

ONLY ON XBOX

ON THE VIDEO

FOCUSING ON a young wizard apprentice called Arran, *Nightcaster* is best described as a third-person action game relying heavily on fantasy themes. Arran's aim is to rid the world of eternal night, his magical power growing as he matures through the game.

Over 40 explosive spells are available to the young wizard, each from a different school of magic – Light, Dark, Fire and Water. As Arran encounters some of the 30 different types of foe, he will have to decide which spell best suits the situation. Certain spells will have no effect on certain enemies, and each creature has a unique attack style .

The most interesting feature of *Nightcaster* is Arran's magical orb and its implications in gameplay. The orb is used to target enemies in a way that requires the use of both sticks on the Xbox pad. Once it has been triggered, the Orb becomes the focal point for spells and how they will work. The closer the orb is to enemies, the more effective spells will be in combat.

Many games based in huge environments suffer from poor camera angles, but once again the Orb comes to the rescue. Should players struggle to get the perspective needed to advance, the Orb can be sent across the screen, prompting the camera to zoom out to keep both it and Arran in view. Very handy when checking out the path ahead for nasty surprises.

With plenty of NPCs for interaction and beautifully detailed 3D locations to explore, *Nightcaster* is a great prospect.

LISTEN UP

Direct Music will be used to enhance the action (see page 54 for details).
www.xbox.com/games/adventure



DEVELOPER: **SIERRA**
PUBLISHER: **SIERRA**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

JONNY DRAMA

Superspy spoof tapping into the cel shading trend.

ONLY ON XBOX

PROVING THAT cel-shaded games are on the rise, *Jonny Drama* is an over-the-top cartoon action game with *Austin Powers* overtones. In the role of the ultra-cool Jonny, players must save the world and defeat evil Dr Bumbershoot.

Over the course of eight missions, comedy combat blends with mind-bending puzzles. The best way to solve some conundrums will be to use disguises, *Inspector Gadget*-type spy devices and entertaining diversion tactics. Split-screen multiplayer racing modes heighten the *Drama* experience.

An army of Bumbershoot's foot soldiers will be chasing Jonny down at all times. Sierra is promising that AI will allow enemies to react to bullet holes, give-away sounds, and even footprints.

WHAT IS CEL-SHADING?

A term used to describe the process of making images look cartoon-like .
Website TBA



↑ This is a PC screen, but Xbox will have no trouble keeping up.

DEVELOPER: **2015** PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
RELEASE DATE: **Q2/02** MULTIPLAYER: **1**

MEDAL OF HONOUR: ALLIED ASSAULT

The hugely successful WWII franchise comes to Xbox.

IN THIS World War II action game, players assume the role of Lt. Mike Powell, battling across 20 diverse levels and environments based on actual wartime events, and developer 2015 wants the game to convey some sense of the courage needed by soldiers to survive the war.

There has already been a sequel since *Medal of Honor* first appeared on PlayStation in 1999, and now the game is gearing up to break across the formats. *Allied Assault* will build on previous titles by including new weapons, new interactive vehicles – including Sherman tanks – and even the ability to call for help. Should the situation become a too hairy, players will be able to radio for artillery strikes.

Missions will be based in the deserts of North Africa, on the shores of France, across Norway and over the Rhine into Nazi Germany. Challenges range from sabotaging U-boats in the sub pens to landing at Omaha Beach alive, and taking out the massive guns at Port Arzew.

There is also a sizeable multiplayer side to *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault*. Various forms of team combat, deathmatches and last man standing games should give the game a long life once single player options are completed.

I HAVE A DREAMWORKS

The *Medal of Honor* series grew from an idea put forward by Steven Spielberg.
mohaa.ea.com



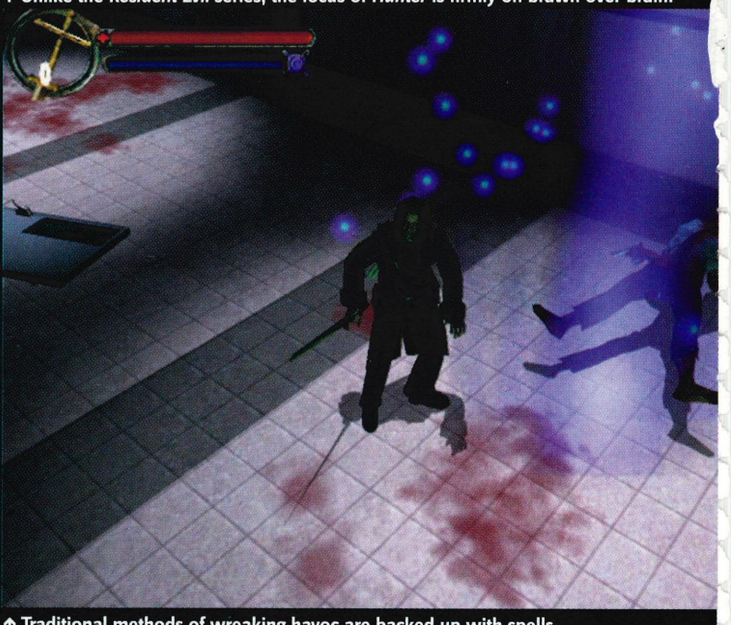
↑ If this many zombies appear, it's to be hoped that enough advanced skills are at a player's disposal.



↑ Unlike the *Resident Evil* series, the focus of *Hunter* is firmly on brawn over brain.



↑ Here, three of the Hunters (indicated by the energy and weapon bars) take on the unholy hordes.



↑ Traditional methods of wreaking havoc are backed up with spells.

DEVELOPER: **HIGH-VOLTAGE SOFTWARE**
PUBLISHER: **INTERPLAY** RELEASE DATE: **Q2/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

HUNTER: THE RECKONING

Zombies feature in a game that technically isn't 'survival horror' – a refreshing change.

ONLY ON XBOX

'ZOMBIE' COULD well be the best word in the English language. It was originally the Caribbean-French word for a common-or-garden ghost.

But thanks to 19th Century horror literature and the worst excesses of straight-to-video 1980s video spookdom, the term has come to evoke malevolent corpses shuffling around post-apocalyptic streets, arms raised as if aiming to kill with the underarm odour of the living dead.

Not so in this very different world of darkness, in which zombies, vampires and other ingesters of flesh, blood, gore and grey matter are too crafty by half, and have made themselves invisible to most people.

They can only be ferreted out through the second sight of Hunters. Of those, there is a choice of four – Father Cortez, a prison chaplain; Deuce, a biker ex-con; Kassandra, a raver chick and former cop Samantha.

High Voltage Software has created an action game within an RPG universe.

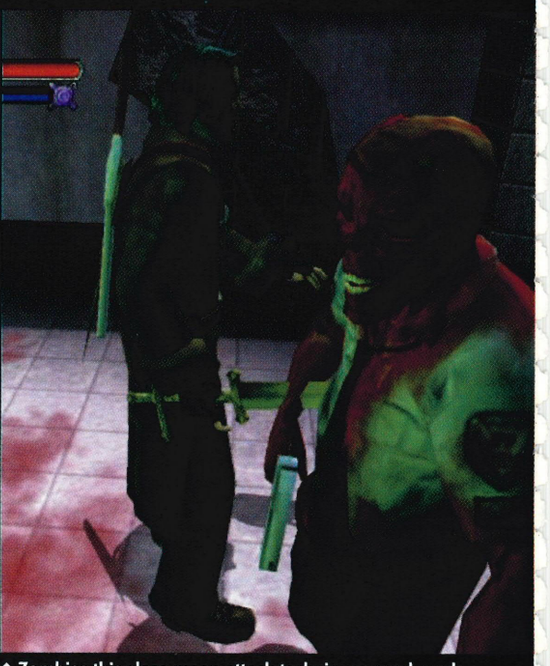
The game is set in a small town infested with undead cadavers. There are currently 25 levels to explore, each offering unique challenges. Confirmed environments include a cemetery, gothic church, train station and prison.

Over 20 weapons, some drawing on the power of specific magic spells, can be used to battle the zombies, including axes, shotguns swords and the obligatory flamethrower.

Additional to the core action are hidden characters and variants which reveal themselves on completion of certain tasks. A Movement Independent Targeting System allows characters to run in one direction and shoot in another – a welcome feature that makes Hunter one for the 'eagerly awaited' list.

FOUR PLAYER FANTASY

A co-operative mode is planned, posting a very different -but- enticing challenge.
www.interplay.com/hunter



↑ Zombies this close mean attack techniques need work.



↑ The smaller ships are for blasting out of sight. Larger craft need to be boarded to steal supplies and cargo.

DEVELOPER: **POINT BLANK** PUBLISHER: **VIRGIN INTERACTIVE** RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

FALCONE: INTO THE MAELSTROM

Do space pirates have robotic parrots on their shoulders and infra-red eye patches?

IN *FALCONE: Into the Maelstrom* – developed using the latest *Unreal* engine technology from Epic – players join pirate federations and battle for control of deep space.

Gameplay will be a mixture of dogfights – based around huge convoys of dreadnoughts – and first-person mission-based action. The 20 single-player missions will include having to board dreadnoughts and swipe their valuable cargo to get the upper hand over competitors.

Five large-scale multiplayer maps will also be included in the finished game, which will be played via a split screen arrangement.

Once you're on board the dreadnoughts, gameplay switches to a first-person shooter set-up, with players facing wave after wave of ground troops as they advance towards the booty. The object of each attack is to find the enemy's cargo and escape with the loot.

A player's reputation increases as the progressively more difficult missions are completed.

As the game progresses, players will meet and recruit new team-members with specialist skills. These will include a computer hacker, an explosives expert and an assassin.

These specialist space pirates accompany players throughout subsequent missions and a teamwork mechanic plays an increasingly important part.

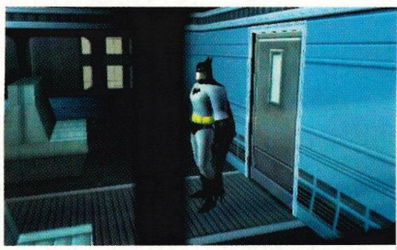
The characters and gritty space environments have been modelled and animated to give a distinctively comic-book look and feel to the game.

In fact, to make things as 'comic book' as possible, artist Jim Murray was brought in to create the *Maelstrom* universe, while renowned wordsmith Robbie Morrison was responsible the game's script.

THEY DID 'THE LAW'

Murray and Morrison have both worked on Judge Dredd for 2000AD.

Website: TBA



DEVELOPER: **UBI SOFT CANADA**
PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

BATMAN: VENGEANCE

The Joker's out of the pack but the Caped Crusader has other problems

ON THE VIDEO

USING CARTOON series *The New Batman Adventures* as its inspiration, *Batman: Vengeance* is a third-person action game set over 19 levels, all based in Gotham City.

The Joker is out for revenge and control of Gotham City, but due to a nasty fall, he calls on Poison Ivy, Mr. Freeze, Harley Quinn to fill his shoes.

Broken down into five episodes of linear gameplay, the game stays true to the Batman legend. On the utility belt will be stun grenades, Batarangs, Bat Scopes, and the lethal Bat Launcher. Of course, players will also have access to the Batmobile and Batplane.

The level of detail crammed into each section of Gotham City is very impressive, and with nearly 500 unique animations, the Caped Crusader may be at last getting the game he always deserved.

COOL VOICE LUKE

Mark Hamill provides the voice of the Joker, as he does in the cartoons.

www.ubisoft.com/batmanvengeance

DEV: **WESTWOOD STUDIOS** PUBLISHER: **EA** RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **2**

PIRATES: THE LEGEND OF BLACK KAT

Timbers will be shivered as a female captain thirsting for paternal revenge sets sail on the high seas.

CAPTAIN KATARINA de Leon is on a mission is to avenge the death of her father Marcus. Journeying to five distinct islands, she encounters exotic treasure, witch doctors, mermaids, monsters and magic – all elements associated with pirate yarns.

Gameplay in *Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat* is split between a third person viewpoint and ship-to-ship combat. Kat can control 12 vessels, each with its own handling qualities and weapons. Players will be able to customise certain areas of a ship's décor.

The bulk of the game is dedicated to Kat's mission of vengeance, but Westwood has also included a few extra modes to serve up some light relief. Should players need a rest from searching the seas and islands for clues leading to Kat (eventually) to her father's betrayer, a Captain versus Captain battle mode will pitch two players head-to-head on the seas.

First one to sink their opponent's ship will, unsurprisingly, earn the right to be declared the winner. Making this mode more than just a blow-'em-up are obstacles, traps and island chains.

WESTWOOD WHO?

The developer is also responsible for the Command & Conquer series

westwood.ea.com/games/pirates



↑ Cannon battles are a very different – and welcome – form of combat (PS2 shot). »

DEV: **NEO SOFTWARE** PUB: **ROCKSTAR** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

MAX PAYNE

The smash-hit PC game moves over onto Xbox. But will it have multiplayer options?

TAKING ITS inspiration from the stunning bullet-time action sequences in *The Matrix*, *Max Payne* has already set a new standard for action games. With one quick press of a button, a shoot-out can be brought almost to a standstill while the player dodges bullets and simultaneously returns fire.

The story follows undercover cop Max Payne, who has been framed for the murder of a fellow agent. As if that wasn't enough, Max is also trying to avenge the murder of his wife and child by the Mafia. The level of detail – not just in the way the story is told but in the creation of characters and environments – is nothing short of incredible.

Although the PC version did live up to four years of continuous hype and media attention (during a long and tortuous development period), the common criticism was that it was way too short and lacked multiplayer options. The essential game structure will stay the same for its Xbox release, but it's still not yet clear whether the all-important multiplayer options will be added. Even if they're not, *Max Payne* should still hold its own against the likes of *Halo* in the final analysis.

BIG SCREEN PAYNE

The film/TV rights to Max Payne were snapped up by Collision Entertainment.

www.maxpayne.godgames.com

↑ **A massive favourite with gamers and games industry alike, *Max Payne* was voted Best Game of ECTS 2001.**



↑ **Xbox's Onimusha will be bigger than the PS2 game from which it derives.**

DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM** PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

GENMA ONIMUSHA

Samurai survival-horror has never been better!

ONLY ON XBOX

FROM THE creator of *Resident Evil*, the semi-legendary Shinji Mikami, comes another horror-based action game. But this one has no zombies – in the place of a zombie-infested Raccoon City is 16th century feudal Japan.

After shooting the walking dead with pistols, shot guns and rocket launches for almost five years, *Genma Onimusha* comes as a welcome development for survival horror fans wanting more for their money.

Samurai action is interspersed with FMV cut scenes that create as much tension as they impress. As *Genma Onimusha* relies on melee combat rather than just guns and bigger guns, players are able to block and execute a number of special moves while attacking enemies – think *Soul Calibur* meets *Resident Evil*, on a very good day.

To spice things up in the combat department, a selection of different swords have been placed in the game to be collected and then upgraded as the game progresses.

Assuming the role of skilled samurai warrior Akechi Samanosuke, players are taken down the survival horror route that Capcom is rightly famed for.

Samanosuke must rescue a young girl who has been kidnapped by a legion of dead warriors and rid the world of evil forever. Aside from the main character, players will also meet and be able to control a young ninja who goes by the name of Kaede and see events from a different angle.

If that isn't enough, all this is accompanied with an orchestral score, adding another level to the already rich atmosphere. And, with one in the eye for PS2 fans, *Genma Onimusha* opens areas otherwise closed in the original.

HISTORY LESSON

'Samurai', means 'warrior'. They rose to power over 800 years ago.

www.capcom.co.jp



↑ No glimpse of the dragons as yet – if they are done well, Reign of Fire has a chance to make a name for itself (PS2 shot).

DEVELOPER: **KUJU ENTERTAINMENT** PUBLISHER: **BAM ENTERTAINMENT** RELEASE DATE: **Q3/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

REIGN OF FIRE

Better than slaying dragons in a future England? Being the dragon...

BASED ON A forthcoming film of the same name starring Matthew McConaughey as an American ex-marine and Christian Bale as a British castle dweller, Reign Of Fire focuses on Matty and Chris's rather large dilemma.

In it, a group of men working on the Jubilee Line extension wake the last of the dragons. Once released, the dragons quickly reproduce and take over the world.

Bale's character, whose mother was toasted by a dragon, leads a clan of survivors and, with the ex-marine's help, hopes to hunt down the queen dragon for some serious payback.

Due to the continuing battles between dragons and humans the landscapes have been completely scorched – this is also the case throughout the game.

Players can either take the side of the humans struggling against the dragon onslaught, or play as a dragon where the goal is to crush the humans once and for all.

Reign of Fire will aim to take full advantage of the technical capabilities of Xbox by offering detailed objects, dynamic lighting and 3D sound.

With the film almost a year away from UK release, Kuju Entertainment has plenty of time to transform the idea of playing as a dragon into an enjoyable gaming experience.

It'll be interesting to see how the game matches up to *Panzer Dragoon*. That has the similar feature of being able to ride a dragon, but it doesn't actually let players *be* one.

LICENCE. PLEASE

BAM! is working on conversions of *Driven* and the thriller *Ecks Vs Sever*.
www.bam4fun.com

DEVELOPER: **THE COLLECTIVE**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

WRATH

Mythical beasts go head-to-head in arena combat.

ONLY ON XBOX

ALSO HARD at work on the conversion of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (see page 67), The Collective is promising that their fighter-strategy hybrid *Wrath* will break the action game mould.

Players assume command of an army of mythical beasts and gods that must be led into battle in a bid to conquer a series of fantasy-based worlds and rule the universe.

The core gameplay element will be one-on-one, arena-style combat against a huge range of creatures. Multiplayer games will allow up to four players to team up and fight in pairs through a special matchmaking service. LAN and online play are earmarked for inclusion.

The developers are calling *Wrath* a 'strategy fighter' to reflect the turn-based strategic command components of the game and the combat portion.



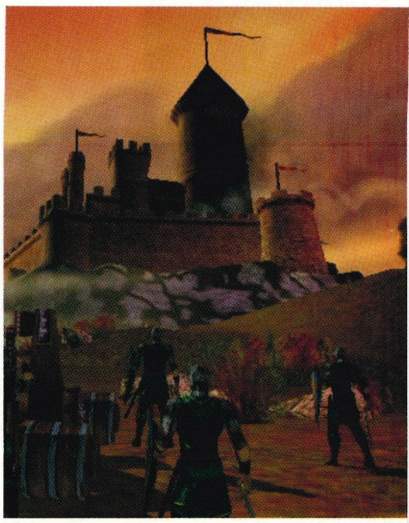
↑ Just one of nearly 50 giant creatures available to battle (with or against).

Whenever two creatures engage in combat, both players must fight to the death within a terrain-based arena, using a combination of claw-to-claw, special weapon, and magical attacks. Combat tactics vary from full-on war to a more stealthy, commando approach.

With at least 48 gods and beasts to choose from, there should be variety to the fighting. Gods are affiliated to one of four Realms, and the conflict between Realms and gods is what drives the story. Gamers can play *Wrath* from the different viewpoints of each Realm.

IT'S A DEADLY SIN

When Brad Pitt shot Kevin Spacey in *Se7en*, he was exemplifying Wrath.
www.collectivestudios.com



↑ Taking control of castles such as this takes a crucial role in Robin's conquering of England.

DEVELOPER: **CINEMAWARE**
PUBLISHER: **TBA** RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

ROBIN HOOD: DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

Once-upon-a-time, deep in Sherwood Forest...

CINEMAWARE first surfaced in the 1980s, and in 1986 came one of its sleeper hits – *Defender of the Crown*, a strategy game where players were cast as a Saxon lord who had to fight off the Norman invasion of Britain.

Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown is a remake of that early action/strategy game, although much more has been done to modernise the game than just rethinking the graphics.

As the title suggests, the action's leading man is the legendary Robin Hood. In his Lincoln green boots, players must use strategy and stealth approaches to defeat Prince John, rescue King Richard and reunite England.

To help the cause, Robin will be able to rely on his band of merry men, with the likes of Little John, Friar Tuck and Maid Marian on hand. Robin's own abilities will include archery, swordsmanship and jousting.

Knowledge of how to lay a good siege will also come in handy, as this forms an important part of the plot. As the battle moves through mediaeval Britain, Robin Hood and his followers must take control of each territory in order to progress.

Once a territory has been secured it can then be pillaged for resources such as better weapons and troops.

Cinemaware still has a long way to go with this take on one of *the* great stories, so keep an eye on.

CINEMAWARE'S CV

Other games include *X-Wing vs Tie Fighter* and *Secret of Monkey Island*.
ww.cinemaware.com

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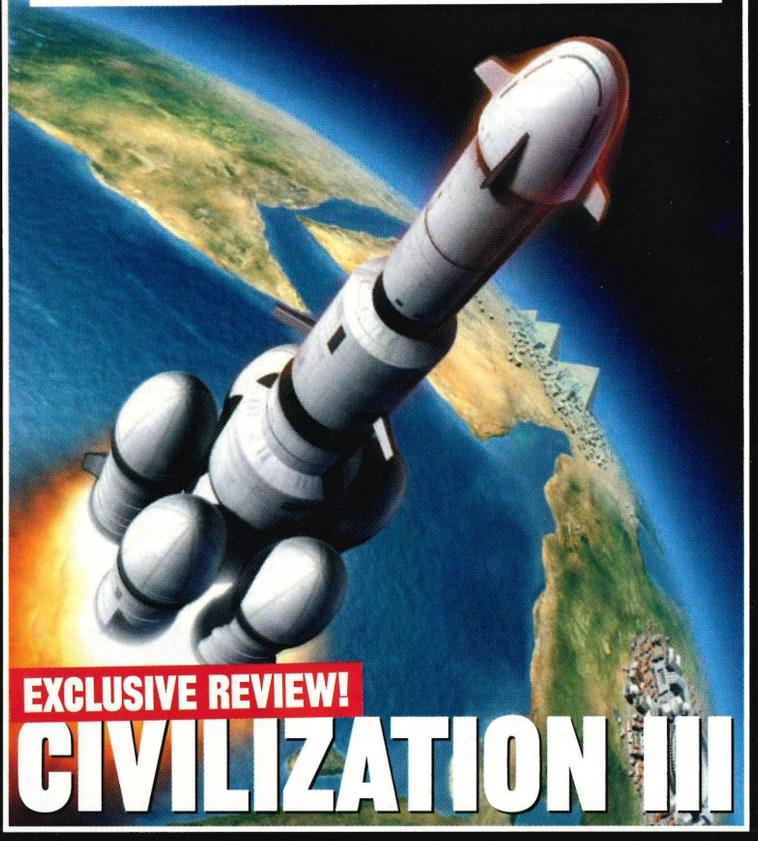
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DEVELOPER: **NAMCO USA**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

DEAD TO RIGHTS

Namco has implemented a Hong Kong action movie style in *Dead To Rights*. As police officer Jack Slate, players will have a vast array of 'cinematic' abilities at their disposal.

These include being able to run across rooms mid-gun fight and dive across tables while locking onto the enemies mid-flight. There's also a disarm option which sees Slate spin around, grab his enemy's piece and use it against him.

The story is thus: Slate is on his way home after a hard day at the office when he receives a call from the station asking for emergency backup. During the battle he comes across his father's murdered body and quickly sets his sights on revenge. Slate's prime suspect is then killed...

EAT IT

Namco created Pac-Man, a genuine classic video game.
www.namco.com

DEVELOPER: **CRYSTAL DYNAMICS** PUBLISHER: **EIDOS** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

BLOOD OMEN 2

BEGINNING 400 years after *Legacy of Kain: Blood Omen* (PlayStation, 1996), *Blood Omen 2* sees vampiric hero Kain stripped of his powers. To reclaim the land of Nosgoth, he must unleash the armies of darkness and foil a plot threatening the land he aims to conquer.

Played out over huge environments, this is a third-person, story-driven adventure. Kain's abilities cover all the usual bases, including combat, puzzle solving and stealth.

Supernatural abilities, used to unlock previously inaccessible areas include rooftop jumping – in a Crouching Tiger style – and mind control.

The emphasis, however, unlike that of Crystal's adventure-heavy *Soul Reaver 2*, is on the combat.

DROP IT

The *Legacy of Kain* prefix no longer applies.
www.eidosinteractive.com

DEVELOPER: **DIGITAL ANVIL**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

BRUTE FORCE

ONLY ON XBOX

DIGITAL ANVIL has created a futuristic world in which the gamer takes charge of a group of four commandos, each with unique skills. All it takes to switch control between the four characters is the touch of a button.

The premise has yet to be revealed, but the game will be a squad-based shooter played from a third-person view. Interaction between characters will from a large part of gameplay.

During each mission, players will have to pick one from the sniper, assault trooper, scout or feral alien as the right man for the job.

A simple tactical interface will be available to steer each character towards the specific mission goals, as well as each one's own objectives.

UNDER THE ANVIL

Head man Chris Roberts was behind *Wing Commander*.
www.digitalanvil.com

DEVELOPER: **REBEL ACT**
PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

ULTIMATE BLADE OF DARKNESS

ONLY ON XBOX

STEMMING FROM *Severance*, a PC fantasy action game with a hint of RPG, *Ultimate Blade of Darkness* features some of the bloodiest combat scenes seen in a game.

The game offers a choice of several characters, from human warriors to knights and dwarfs. After choosing a character, a sword-wielding player can then hack off an opponent's limb, pick it up and then use it to club the victim to death. Pleasant.

This 3D hack 'n' slash will not be for the faint-hearted. Codemasters, who moved into 'adult' gaming with *Severance*, has described *Ultimate Blade of Darkness* as a brand-new extension of the PC game but with more highly-detailed visuals.

NOT FOR KIDS

Expect this to use Xbox's parental control lock out.
www.codemasters.com

DEVELOPER: **RED STORM**
PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON

ONLY ON XBOX

IN THIS, the latest title carrying the name of military thriller king Tom Clancy, the player gets to command the elite Ghost Recon team, called on to stop Russia from reclaiming Georgia and the Baltic States.

The 15 levels of this squad-based mission game will range from demolition type campaigns to search-and-rescue objectives.

Bringing a welcome twist to squad-based shooting is the fact that each soldier in the squad has stats that can be enhanced as the game progresses. These include weapon and stealth skills as well as endurance and leadership traits.

With the possibility of myriad multiplayer elements coupled with the Clancy legacy, this is looking very promising indeed.

BLIMEY

Clancy earned $66m in 1999 and $37m in 2000.
www.ghostrecon.com

DEV: **PLANET MOON STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **INTERPLAY**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

GIANTS

THE QUEST OF three different races to fight for control of an island upon which they've become stranded is the intriguing premise of Giants.

Each race has a different story and style of gameplay. The Meccaryns rely on regular weapons and British humour, while the specialities of a Sea Reaper are its speed and stealth. The giant Citizen Kabuto can cause devastating earthquakes with a stamp of his foot.

Together, the species are the three key elements of an innovative and engrossing real-time strategy challenge. The game originally appeared on PC last year, but this version will take advantage of the Xbox's graphical capabilities to create something above and beyond the original incarnation.

DEV TEAM SEZ...

"Xbox opens up endless creative possibilities."
www.interplay.com/giants

DEVELOPER: **3D REALMS**
PUBLISHER: **TAKE TWO**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

SET IN Las Vegas, Duke Nukem Forever is the long-awaited return of the hugely popular first-person shooter series. Assuming the role of Duke Nukem, players must save the City of Sin from an evil cyborg determined to turn all the citizens into flesh-loving zombies.

Duke will again have access to a huge arsenal of firepower that will include rocket launchers, shotguns, pistols, a sniper rifle and even his own feet.

The game was in development long before Xbox was announced, and the expectations surrounding it are extraordinarily high. If 3D Realms can deliver, Duke will be a huge asset for Xbox

HAIL TO THE KING

Duke Nukem made his bow on PC in 1991, in 2D.
www.3drealms.com

DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

PANZER DRAGOON

ONLY ON XBOX

THE WORLD of *Panzer Dragoon* – a key part of Sega's heritage – has players taking to the skies on the back of a huge dragon to take out predesignated targets in a sci-fi fantasy world.

The dragons are back in the Xbox version, of course, and the arcade feel of the previous games has been maintained.

The 'on rails' nature of every previous *Panzer Dragoon* games was not to everyone's taste is something that may not be to every gamer's taste – but its inclusion in this version has yet to be confirmed.

Lots of action is promised, and the rebirth of this classic will be whetting the appetites of those who remember it of old.

THE NEW BOYS

Smilebit, of *Jet Set Radio Future* fame, are developing.
www.sega.co.jp

DEVELOPER: **TBA**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

AI: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ONLY ON XBOX

MICROSOFT WILL be creating a series of games based around the movie *AI*. The games are being pitched as interactive sequels and will expand on the movie's theme of highly sophisticated androids coping with humans and human emotions.

Quite how the games continue the story is unclear. The film dealt in particular with a robot boy, David, created to love his owners but who was discarded by the couple who used him as a 'surrogate son' while their real son was in a coma.

Director Steven Spielberg told a packed E3 Xbox conference that he has huge plans for the Xbox titles.

STEVE SAID THIS:

"I want the games to be creative and groundbreaking."
www.dreamworks.com

DEVELOPER: **SHINY**
PUBLISHER: **INTERPLAY**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

THE MATRIX

ONLY ON XBOX

THE JOB OF creating games based on the sci-fi blockbuster series has gone to Shiny Entertainment, and they're said to be based on the upcoming sequels rather than looking back to the 1999 original.

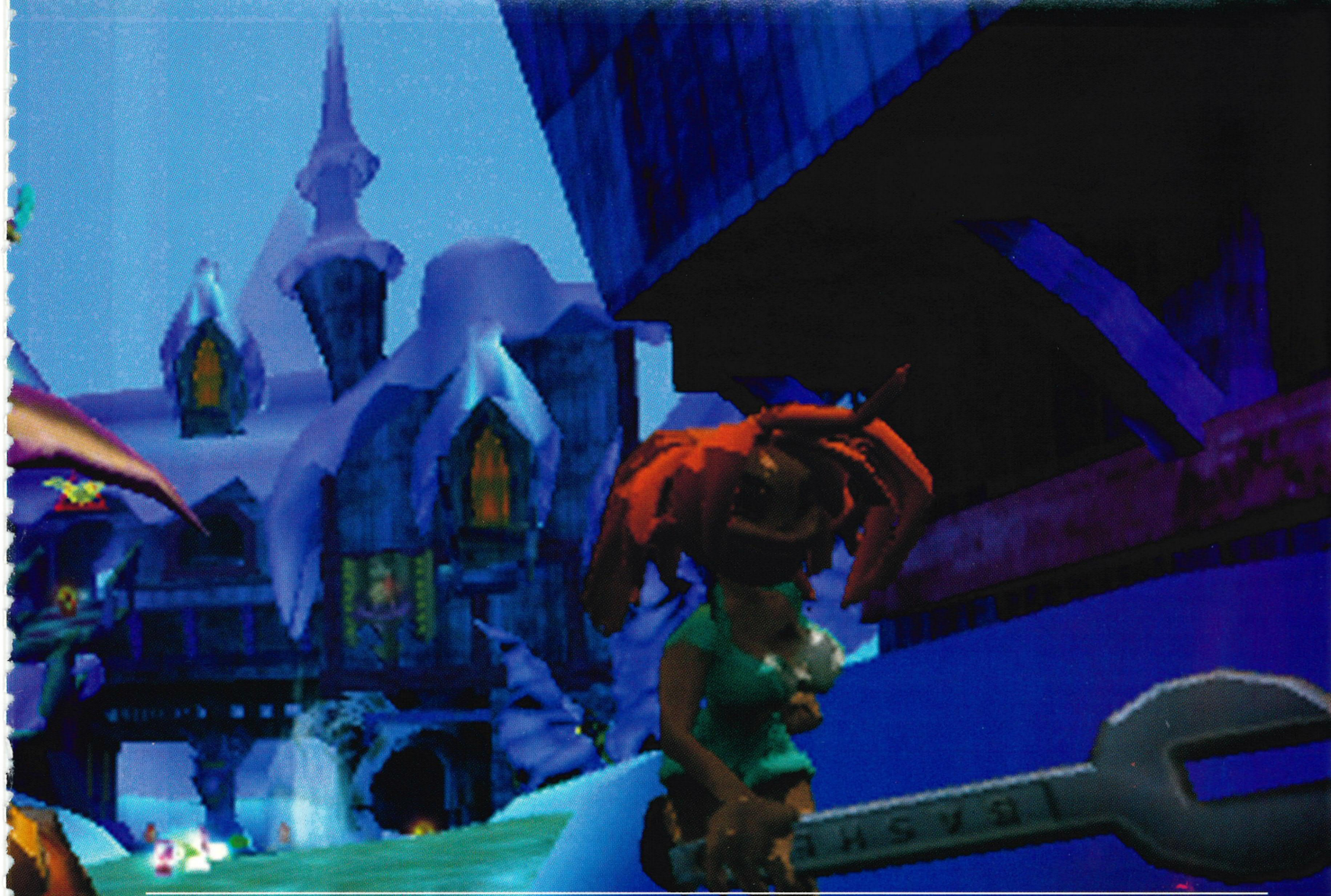
The first movie follow-up, *The Matrix Reloaded*, is due for release in 2003, but is already rumoured to be suffering from delays.

Expect to see action-adventure games heavily influenced by The Matrix 'universe' – a future Earth controlled by a race of intelligent machines who draw their energy from an enslaved humanity, who are trapped in an artificial reality created by the machines to keep them in check.

GIZZA JOB

Shiny are looking for people to work on these games.
www.shiny.com/company





›EVERY XBOX **GAME**

RACING GAMES

MAD DASH RACING

DEVELOPER: **CRYSTAL DYNAMICS** PUBLISHER: **EIDOS** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

Dash, bash or glide your way across the finish line in this original cartoon combat racer

ONLY ON XBOX

ON THE VIDEO

PERHAPS THERE'S a cartoon petrol crisis on. Instead of racing in cars, nine insanely colourful characters have decided to leg it to the chequered flag in environmentally-friendly foot race to the finish. Each competitor has a special ability that will influence the outcome of the race and offers access to special areas, power-ups, even a shortcut or two.

These special abilities can be summed up as a variety of moves including gliding, bashing, dashing, sliding, swimming, jumping, climbing and attacking, all of which can be fine-tuned by the player. A racer's chosen colours can also be personalised in the options screen.

As players race to survive against the evil boss Hex and his bungling minions, the game travels through eight visually impressive worlds. Lava rivers, icy glaciers and the occasional boulder or three will hamper efforts to be the first to the finishing line.

The real hook to *Mad Dash Racing* is its multiplayer set-up, in which up to four friends can bash each other senseless for ultimate bragging rights. An arsenal of traps, trip wires, power-ups and TNT will be on offer to spice things up a little.

Adventure elements also have a part to play - hardly surprising, since Crystal Dynamics is behind the *Blood Omen* series (see page 79).

NICE ONE BILLY

BIlly West provides vocals; he has worked on *The Simpsons* and *Futurama*.

www.maddashracing.com »



↑ A new direction for the *TOCA* series.

DEVELOPER: **CODEMASTERS**
PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**
RELEASE DATE: **Q3/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

TOCA RACE DRIVER

British touring car racing with plot-driven narrative.

THE *TOCA* SERIES is famed for its realistic portrayal of British touring car racing. But for this fourth instalment, Codemasters is bravely altering its successful format.

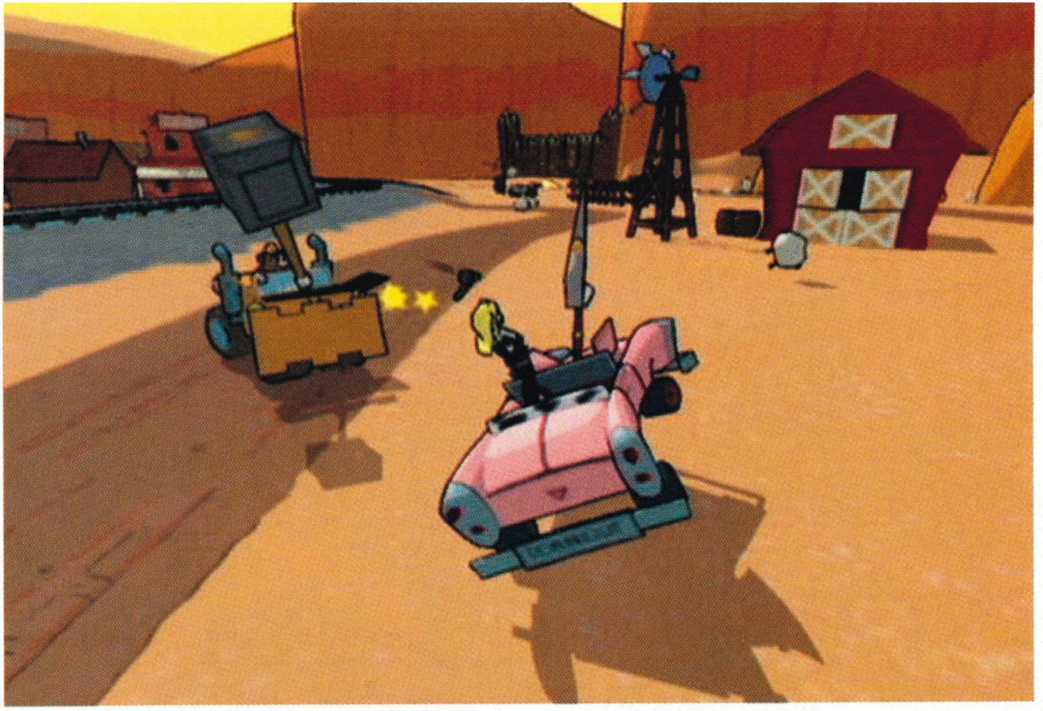
Maintaining the close-contact racing with real cars, teams, tracks and drivers, *TOCA Race Driver* will also introduce a character-based narrative and episodic plot set around the real world championships. The player takes the central role of an aspiring driver named Ryan McKane.

The main objective is to take McKane from test driver to world champion. As each race is won or lost, a plot will evolve, focusing on his racing colleagues and family, the latter having a rich motor racing heritage and expecting its success to continue.

Aside from an all-new physics and AI system, *Race Driver* will also accurately simulate the deformation of cars. Hit a wall at top speed and the chances are the race will be over.

SOUNDS GOOD

Engines were recorded in a chamber where cars reached speeds of 120mph.
www.codemasters.com/racedriver



↑ The graphics are relatively simple when compared to other games, but it's a winning look.

DEVELOPER: **PSEUDO INTERACTIVE** PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

CEL DAMAGE

Cartoon combat unfolds with hilarious results.

ONLY ON XBOX

A CARTOON-STYLE racer at heart, *Cel Damage* allows players to choose from one of six characters to take part in some stylish vehicular combat.

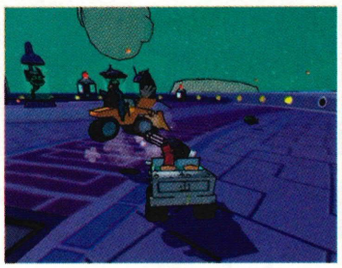
The action takes place over ten different levels based on space, jungle, desert and Transylvanian themes, with a choice of 36 different weapon power-ups including giant axes, portable holes, shrink rays, mallets and machine guns. Several secret racers and their unlockable cars should keep prolong the game's lifespan.

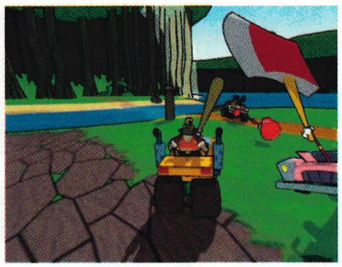
A bit of thought has gone into creating some original extra modes. Smack Attack challenges each toon to beat one another silly and earn as many smack points as possible. In Flag Rally, a player must collect four flags and make it to the winner's circle. The only problem is that the flags are actually on the move, avoiding capture.

Gate Relay is all about combat racing, with two checkpoints set up on a particular course. As is the way with these things, the first player to pass each checkpoint five times is the winner.

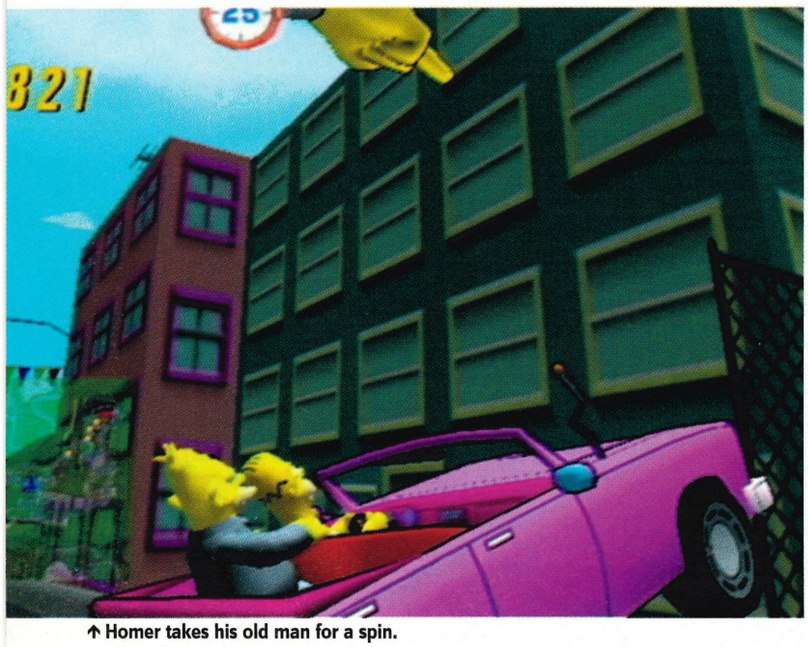
THE HARD CEL

The word 'cel' derives from 'celluloid', the stuff of which film stock is made.
celdamage.ea.com





↑ Will the simple look and simple gameplay appeal to Xbox gamers?



↑ Homer takes his old man for a spin.

DEVELOPER: **RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT** PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **2**

THE SIMPSONS ROAD RAGE

Homer loves a different kind of doughnut in this racer.

GAMES BASED on *The Simpsons* have yet to get anywhere near the astonishing standard set by the TV series. But creator Matt Groening and his team are keeping tight control over *The Simpsons Road Rage*. Every aspect of the game's content has to be approved by him, including characters' dialogue and the exact content on the signs and posters around Springfield.

As with many a *Simpsons* episode, the story revolves around Mr. Burns, who has purchased the Springfield Transit Corporation and increased fares. The people of Springfield refuse to pay up and look for cheaper rides. Which is where Homer and friends come in.

The game's core story mode, which will be familiar to fans of *Crazy Taxi*, has 40-60 unique passenger deliveries and seven smaller bonus deliveries. There's also a Sunday driving mode that lets players pick up passengers and amble around the city at a more leisurely pace.

Over 25 familiar characters, with their real voices, can be found over five Springfield neighbourhoods. *Simpsons* buffs will also be keen to spot more than 100 landmarks from the show.

A-HUH HUH

Radical has created games based on another carton - *Beavis & Butthead*.
www.radical.ca

DEVELOPER: **BUNKASHA PUBLISHING** PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

WRECKLESS

Chase your quarry with a lorry, track down triads with trucks...

ONLY ON XBOX

FOR THE MOST part, *Wreckless* is about taking huge trucks and causing maximum damage to heavily populated areas. But there is a plot – locate and take down a Hong Kong crime organisation, over 20 mission-based levels.

There will be around ten vehicles of devastation to choose from, ranging from an absurdly large monster truck to a bijou bubble car. Mission objectives will vary and will be reminiscent of those seen in the likes of *Driver*.

Completing a mission successfully might involve completing a race within a certain amount of time, or taking on another vehicle and stopping it dead.

Close attention has been paid to the game's physics model. All cars and trucks suffer heavy amounts of damage as they are cruelly abused. It will even be possible to leap at 100 miles per hour from an overpass onto the roof of a bus travelling below.

Traffic patterns have been modelled on real-life Hong Kong gridlock, meaning there's an existing method to traversing the downtown madness. However, those less familiar with the island's road layout will still be able to negotiate the bedlam



↑ **Unlike most driving games, it seems the idea here is to smash everything.**

Pedestrians will either scatter or splat as the vehicles hurtle through the bustling streets with feet firmly planted on the floor.

The level of detail in the game, as can be deduced from these shots, is more than impressive. If the quality of gameplay comes close to the quality of the visuals, then *Wreckless* has the potential to be a surprise hit in the first wave of Xbox releases.

TAKEN LITERALLY

Wreckless implies a lack of wrecks. This game, however, is brimming with them.

www.activision.com »

DEVELOPER: **RAGE** PUBLISHER: **RAGE** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

CRASH

Destroy, destroy... SMASH THEM ALL!



↑ The action is reminiscent of the US favourite demolition derbies.

ON THE VIDEO

ONLY ON XBOX

THE MAJORITY of today's racing titles all have one thing in common, whatever it says on the their back of their boxes. In essence, they all promote the safe and clean negoatiation of tracks and courses without damage to the vehicles.

Crash, however, promotes exactly the opposite. In order to prevail in its various challenges and tasks, you have to rasie merry Hell, causing as damage to the other cars on the track as is humanly possible.

There's no tweaking of engine performance to squeeze out that extra bit of speed, nor will players have to keep returning to the garage for tyre and oil checks between levels. This is a driving game boiled down to the essentials - just step on the gas and knock the bejeezus out of everyone else.

Over 10,000 polygons have been crammed into each car, so even though they're going to be pummelled on their way around the various tracks, the hot rods, muscle cars and other high performance autos are all incredibly detailed. The demolition process initially spills over eight levels, with a further four opened up on completion of special challenges.

An impressive feature of *Crash* is the replay and highlights system. Here players have several options to enjoy the carnage from a variety of angles. A very pleasing bullet-time *Matrix*-type reply is also on offer when you're sitting in the director's chair.

RAGE ARE ALSO DOING...

David Beckham Soccer (see page 97), Rocky (page 91) and Gun Metal (page 71).

www.rage.com





↑ A traditional action-racing offering, but an unusual location.

DEVELOPER: **MIDWAY** PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

ARCTIC THUNDER

Rocket-launching snowmobiles at the ready - this is war!

WHEN A top-of-the-range snowmobile comes with fitted atomic snowballs and proximity missiles as standard, you know you're in trouble - but only because the opposition have access to the same arsenal.

Initially there will be six characters on offer in *Arctic Thunder*. Each one has his or her own skills, plus a custom-made snowmobile. A further ten additional characters can be unlocked during the course of the game.

During a race, several different power-ups will be scattered around the tracks. As well as additional weapons, players will be able to collect speed boosts, shields and health power-ups.

Taking a leaf out of *Road Rash*'s book, players will be able to lash out at rivals who get too close for comfort with fists and feet.

Each of the 12 courses is set in a different snow-bound location. Already earmarked for inclusion in the finished game are circuits entitled Blizzard in DC, Lost Himalayan City, Chernobyl Meltdown and Alaskan Pipeline.

Six unlockable bonus tracks have also been crammed into proceedings. With a Battle Arena mode for up to four players only available in the Xbox version, *Arctic Thunder* looks set to continue Midway's long tradition of arcade-style action.

WATER GOOD IDEA

The idea for this can be traced back to Midway's N64 title, *Hydro Thunder*.

www.arcticthunder.midway.com



↑ *Maximum Chase* is one of the strongest Japanese-developed Xbox titles.



↑ Befitting a game with seemingly cinematic influences, at times the visuals are very film-like.

DEVELOPER: **GENKI** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

MAXIMUM CHASE

Putting the fun back into driving games.

THE ROOTS of this driving-action title can be traced back to the 1980 film *The Cannonball Run*, in which Burt Reynolds took part in an illegal cross-country race for a huge cash prize.

Rather than taking a 'prepare to qualify' stance, *Maximum Chase* is best described as a mission-based racing game along the lines of *Driver*.

A mysterious girl needs rescuing from a mysterious bad guy, and getting to her means competing in various races. Each race, or chase, takes in a different locale littered with props such as tow trucks with ramps or dumpsters with planks leaning against them. There's a strong stunt motif running throughout the game.

Missions take the gamer through countryside, dusty backroads and cities, the latter having accurate traffic patterns, pedestrians and policemen.

The cops will be a constant thorn in players' sides whenever they are behind the wheel.

THE RAT PACK

Cannonball Run II had cameos by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr.
www.xbox.co.jp



↑ It's retro, and it's looking good.

DEVELOPER: **BUGBEAR**
PUBLISHER: **JOWOOD**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

RALLY TROPHY

When Coopers, Cortinas and Escorts ruled the rally.

OCCUPYING WHAT is arguably a niche of a niche, *Rally Trophy* is a trip back to the golden age of rallying. Gamers take to the tracks in a variety of classic rally cars from the 1960s and 70s, including Escorts, Cortinas, Saabs and the all-conquering Mini Cooper.

All cars are two-wheel drive and driver aids extend only as far as headlights! Locales include Russia, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland and Kenya.

Developed in Finland, the sovreign state of rallying, *Rally Trophy* has already attracted plaudits from the PC community who have compared it to *Grand Prix Legends*, Hasbro's vintage GP sim.

Details on the Xbox version are sketchy. It should support X-Link, but there's no word as yet on a split-screen multiplayer mode.

NOW THAT'S AUTHENTIC

Bugbear tracked down the real cars so that they could record the engine sounds.
www.jowood.com



↑ UK-based developers Climax are the force behind MotoGP.

DEVELOPER: **CLIMAX** PUBLISHER: **THQ**
RELEASE DATE: **Q2/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

MOTO GP

Not a port of the PS2 launch title, but a brand new game.

THANKS TO the appearance of all the bikes and riders from the real life 2001 MotoGP motorcycle racing series, *MotoGP* will be as authentic as it's possible to be.

Confusingly, a game called *MotoGP* appeared on PlayStation 2 soon after the console's launch but this Xbox version is an all-new title created from scratch.

High-powered motorcycles from manufacturers such as Honda, Aprilia, Suzuki and Yamaha have all been realistically recreated for the game.

A total of six racing modes, including a four-player split-screen option, form the core of the gameplay. Single-player modes will include a pick-up-and-play Arcade mode and an Xbox-exclusive Career mode. The various modes are being designed to specifically appeal to different standards of player.

Races throughout all modes will take place on the ten tracks of the real-life MotoGP championship. Each one accurately recreates the locations with much attention paid to detail.

Additional game features will include customisable bikes and riders, and the chance to develop rider's attributes in GP and training modes.

A selection of hidden tracks, riders and cheats have also been worked into the final package.

THAT EXPLAINS THE ADS...

Last year, 354 million people in 171 countries watched MotoGP live on TV.
www.climax.co.uk

»

DEV: **DIGITAL ILLUSIONS** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT** RELEASE DATE: **2/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

RALLI SPORT CHALLENGE

Fully-licensed rally action.

ONLY ON XBOX

FANS OF close-corner rallying will get four different types of racing in *Rallisport Challenge*. These are Hill Climb, a World Rally Championship-style event, RallyCross and the more obscure Ice Racing. More than 25 cars, such as Audi, Citroen, Lancia, Ford, Subaru and Mitsubishi, have been licensed and several bonus vehicles can also be unlocked after completing certain races.

For the first time in a rally game, drivers of opponent cars will have unique personalities (thanks to some nifty AI) that become clear when cars are jostling for the lead. Bump the car in front a few too many times and the driver may turn nasty.

Visual effects will include swaying trees, animated crowds and mud, dirt, snow and water spraying the car during races. Extravagant crashes complete with realistic car damage will also help to convey a sense of realism.

Players will begin with a limited selection of cars and then have to earn entry into the professional, classic and world classic circuits. The points a player accumulates through good performances on these circuits will unlock new cars and guarantee qualification for the faster races.

HAT TRICK HERO

In 2001, Tommi Makinen won the Monte Carlo Rally for the third year in a row.

www.dice.se





↑ **The FIA don't like screens with crashes in them. Never mind, eh?**

DEVELOPER: **EA SPORTS** PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

F1 2001

Insane speed, intense competition, celebrity girlfriends – this is the official F1 experience.

ONLY ON XBOX

FORMULA 1 titles are possibly the least consistent genre of video games, ballooning in both number and unreliability. EA's official F1 series has run the whole gamut, with certain iterations providing the definitive racing simulation and others falling foul of lazy sequelitis.

Thanks to EA Sports, the Xbox is now a potential home to this lottery of quality, but hopefully this latest instalment of the franchise will carry with it all the winning numbers.

All the necessary features are planned – authentic and infamous circuits, unpredictable weather conditions, detailed representations of pit stops, crew-to-driver dialogue and dramatic replays. In fact, all the bells and whistles that should be expected from a sterling paradigm of the speedy sport are present.

The addition of a challenge mode should spice things up nicely, allowing the player to unlock brand new modes of play on completion of specific tasks.

The official FIA licence helps to make the whole experience eerily reminiscent of the real thing. The clincher, however, will be just how satisfying an F1 experience this game turns out to be. It's only out on the virtual tarmac that *F1 2001* can really prove itself.

THIRSTY WORK

A Formula 1 team consumes as much as 44,000 litres of fuel per season.

www.easports.com



DEVELOPER: **ANGEL STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD

BIG MUD, big jumps and big trucks - *Test Drive Off-Road - Wide Open* is as far away from its slick-shod *Underground* cousin as it's possible to be.

Fifty monster trucks including the Dodge T-Rex, Ford Bronco and Hummer are available to take around several mud-strewn tracks set in American locations including Hawaii.

The game promises a 'go anywhere' approach to track design, with the taking of short cuts positively encouraged between checkpoints

TURN IT UP

Metallica and Fear Factory, feature on the soundtrack.

www.angelstudios.com



DEVELOPER: **KUJU**
PUBLISHER: **VIRGIN INTERACTIVE** RELEASE DATE: **TBA/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

LOTUS CHALLENGE

FOR THE Xbox debut of *Lotus Challenge*, Kuju have promised a host of improvements to the PS2 version, including real-time lighting effects and a better screen resolution.

As well as the Lotus cars old and new, at least two more unspecified vehicles will be added to the final line-up.

Given the number of 'special projects' that Lotus have handled in the past, these could include some rare classic editions such as the Lotus Talbot Sunbeam, the all-conquering Lotus Ford Cortina or the Lotus Vauxhall Carlton.

HOT WHEELS

Moore's Lotus Esprit S1 was the finest Bond car of all.

www.lotuschallenge.com



DEVELOPER: **TERMINAL REALITY** PUBLISHER: **TAKE2** RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

4X4 EVO 2

ONLY ON XBOX

ANYONE WITH a hankering for wild driving should be revving up in anticipation of *4x4 Evo 2*. It features several dozen faithfully recreated vehicles, each host to myriad potential upgrades that can be purchased with prize money gleaned from one of several career modes.

Sample locales include the parched slopes of the Grand Canyon, and the tropical climes of a Central American jungle. Whether the races will be the close-knit pack kind or isolated clock-watching rally runs is unclear at the moment.

GET IT OUT

A mud stain can be removed by rubbing with raw potato.

www.xbox.com



DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

SEGA GT 2002

ONLY ON XBOX

WHEN *SEGA GT* was originally released on Dreamcast in 1999, the game received some flack for being a bit slow. Early indications of the Xbox remake, however, are very promising.

The original game had players choosing from over 130 sports cars, each one meticulously reproduced from manufacturer specs. It also offered the option to design cars from scratch in the Workshop mode. There's no reason to doubt the presence of these features alongside further additions in the Xbox version.

THE REAL DEAL

Nissan, Subaru and Toyota were in Dreamcast's *Sega GT*.

www.sega.co.jp



DEVELOPER: **PITBULL SYNDICATE** PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES** RELEASE DATE: **4/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

TEST DRIVE UNDERGROUND

THE LONG-running *Test Drive* series has undergone a significant transformation for its debut on Xbox.

Underground is set in four cities including, as in *Project Gotham Racing*, San Francisco and London. However, as the name suggests, this has a less law-abiding take on racing.

Included vehicles range from American muscle cars like the Mustang and the Dodge '69 Charger, to the Porsche 911, Jaguar XK-R7 and the rest of the more familiar Euro auto-erotica.

GROUP ACTIVITY

A four-player split screen mode will be included.

www.xbox.com

DEVELOPER: **NAMCO**
PUBLISHER: **NAMCO**
RELEASE DATE: **Q2/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

RIDGE RACER NEXT

ONE OF Namco's first titles for Xbox will be a new version one of their best-loved games.

Ridge Racer Next is the working title for the sixth chapter of the driving game series that came to define racing on PlayStation before *Gran Turismo* came along and stole the show.

The news that one of Sony's key Japanese developers is creating Xbox games can only be good.

How, or if, the new *Ridge Racer* will differ from its predecessors is yet to be announced, along with any hard detail on the basic content of the game itself.

The situation should be clearer by the new year, making it ideal for inclusion in Issue One of the *Official UK Xbox Magazine*.

LAUNCH SPECIAL

The original Ridge Racer helped launch PlayStation.

www.namco.com

DEVELOPER: **CODEMASTERS**
PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**
RELEASE DATE: **Q3/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

COLIN MCRAE 3

OVER FOUR million copies of *Colin McRae* games have been sold on PlayStation and PC to date. It's a hugely popular title.

The Xbox version plans to offer a realistic and deeply challenging racing experience to both the casual and hardcore fans.

A selection of the world's finest rally cars will be available, led by McRae's signature Ford Focus RS World Rally Car.

Colin McRae 3's enhanced damage engine will result in a totally destructible car and, of course, amazing replays of what went wrong.

During breaks in certain stages of a rally, players will be able to repair any damage that might affect the car during the remainder of the race.

NICE ONE SON

Colin McRae's dad Jimmy was also British rally champ

www.codemasters.com

DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

CRAZY TAXI NEXT

ONLY ON XBOX

THE ORIGINAL *Crazy Taxi* was a hit on Dreamcast thanks to its simple but highly addictive gameplay. After choosing a cabby and taxi, the player had to earn as much money in tips as possible.

The crazier (natch) the driving, the greater the player rewards - *Crazy Taxi* passengers like to be thrown around the backseat while the cabby shows off his arcade driving skills. On receiving the ride of their lives, they get their money out.

The Crazy Taxi Next name will change before the game's release, and so will the game's features - but only to improve those of the original version.

A DONNER DEAL

Director Richard Donner owns the movie rights.

www.sega.co.jp



DEVELOPER: **MIDWAY**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

FREAKY FLYERS

PLAYERS SINK into the cockpit of one of 13 cartoon planes in *Freaky Flyers*, in order to race against similar craft over vast open worlds.

Although the aim is to get from A to B in first place, the sheer size of the courses means there are several shortcuts for the player to seek out and use to his or her advantage.

Freaky Flyers might owe a lot to both *Diddy Kong Racing* on Nintendo 64 and Saturday morning cartoons, but early indications are very good.

ALTER EGO

The game's lead is based on the writer of *The Tick*.

www.midway.com



DEV: **MONSTER GAMES**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
RELEASE DATE: **6/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

NASCAR HEAT 2002

ONLY ON XBOX

PLAYERS OF *NASCAR Heat 2002* will be faced with 19 real Winston Cup tracks and a choice of over 25 professional drivers.

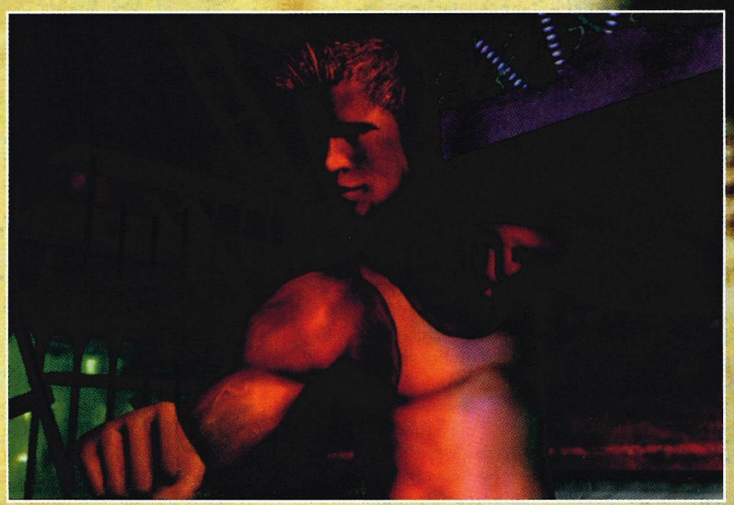
Accompanying the single race and championship modes will be a variety of others offering head-to-head challenges. Of these, the most interesting could be Race the Pro, a variant where players take on the might of real drivers in the form of ghost cars.

ROUND 'N' ROUND

NASCAR is the most watched motorsport in the US.

us.infogrames.com

»



↑ Someone is clearly a fan of Brad Pitt at developer Dream Publishing.



↑ Non-human characters are also set to appear.



› EVERY XBOX **GAME**

BEAT-'EM-UPS

KAKUTO CHOJIN

DEVELOPER: **DREAM FACTORY** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

Fists of fury, feet of flame and buns of steel. Presenting *Return to Fight Club*...

ONLY ON XBOX

MANY SEE THE Japanese market as crucial to the success of the Xbox. Whether this is the case or not, *Kakuto Chojin*, as a Japanese first-party Xbox development, adds a welcome credence to the machine. Created by the same team responsible for *The Bouncer* and the *Tobal* series, the game, unsurprisingly, is set to be a 3D fighting title in the mould of the latter.

With strong competition from the likes of *Dead or Alive 3*, the game will have to be something rather special to avoid being dismissed as a poor man's scrapper. A highly stylised roster of combatants should feature - in the vein of the striking characters from *The Bouncer* and the *Final Fantasy* series. Video footage of the title dazzled onlookers at spring's Tokyo Game Show, with several impressive-sounding graphical techniques simultaneously at work - self-shadowing, projection mapping and motion blur However, all those didn't stop *The Bouncer* from being a rather limp experience.

If important beat-'em-up elements are present - slick controls, grimace-inducing holds and throws, OTT flying kicks, cocksure posturing, a strong multiplayer facet and a lengthy move list - then *Kakuto Chojin* will be more than just a scrawny pipsqueak cowering against the likes of *Soul Calibur*. Here's hoping that the team at Dream Publishing can deliver a killer blow.

CHEEKY BOY

Jackie Chan didn't know the cheekbone existed, until he dislocated it in 1992.

www.xbox.jp »



↑ Even at this early stage, the graphical quality is better than in the acclaimed original.

DEVELOPER: **NAMCO** PUBLISHER: **NAMCO** RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

SOUL CALIBUR 2

Dreamcast is dead, but Namco's fantastic weapon-heavy beat-'em-up strides onward.

SOUL CALIBUR was arguably the Dreamcast's finest hour, featuring a great roster of characters, excellent graphics and incredibly polished gameplay. So it's only natural that Namco's latest sequel – the third in the series, *Soul Edge* being the first – carries a weight of expectation heavier than Astaroth's axe.

However, little is known about the game so far. Aside from releasing a handful of screenshots, Namco have remained tight-lipped. So what can fans of Kilik, Maxi, Voldo, Mitsurugi and friends reasonably expect?

Certain to be improved in the Xbox version, of course, are the graphics. Given that *Soul Calibur* itself is one of the best-looking games ever released, its sequel is something to get extremely excited about. Fighters will look even smoother and more detailed than ever, and a new batch of backdrops will make use of the Xbox's huge potential.

It will be interesting to see if Namco is influenced by *Dead or Alive 3* in terms of what can be achieved with 'interactive' 3D arenas. Either way, expect another set of gorgeously rendered medieval buildings and oriental gardens.

There's much to look forward to with *Soul Calibur 2*. The accessible (yet infinitely deep) gameplay of the original should be bolstered by scores of new moves, and there'll be more of the lovely details that made the Dreamcast title such a classic. It may be some way off completion (there's no confirmed release date, yet) but it's already a massively anticipated title for Xbox.

SIBLING RIVALRY

Reports suggest that Sophitia's younger sister Cassandra is a new character.

www.namco.com



↑ The Kabuki element is intriguing.

DEVELOPER: **LIGHTWEIGHT**
PUBLISHER: **TBA**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

KABUKI WARRIORS

The fighting genre gets a healthy dose of realism.

ONLY ON XBOX

KABUKI WARRIORS is a spiritual successor to the *Bushido Blade* series – games with the focus on realistic combat. Failing to block a single swinging katana meant instant game over.

Kabuki Warriors keeps the *Bushido* series' mechanics. A part of the game is spent in training, where the player learns new moves and the best way to execute them.

Additionally, characters can be powered up with attributes encompassing both mind and body. Of course, the meditative elements don't mean that there aren't plenty of spectacular ways to despatch enemies.

By the time *Kabuki Warriors* is complete, there will be plenty of waterfalls, monasteries and suchlike over which to spill blood, as well as the facility to design a character from scratch to take through the adventure.

THE STAGE IS SET

Kabuki is a traditional form of Japanese theatre founded in the 17th century.

www.lightweight.co.jp



↑ Expect the Xbox version to look far better than this PS2 shot.

DEVELOPER: **ANCHOR** PUBLISHER: **THQ**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

WWF RAW IS WAR

And verily, the smacketh was once more laid down.

WWF GAMES, especially those that are fun to play *and* capture the sweaty theatrics of the sport, have proved extremely successful. Grapple fans now have reason to look to the Xbox, with all the action and melodrama of sports entertainment due for an appearance on the new machine.

Created by Anchor, the team behind *Ultimate Fighting Championship* for PSOne, *WWF Raw Is War* is mooted to exploit Xbox's intestinal fortitude to the full. Expect to see WWF glitterati such as the Rock, with his bizarre self-aware eyebrow, and the veteran Undertaker. A comprehensive clutch of customisations should be available to satiate the demanding squared-circle fans, allowing them to submit their own Superstar into the WWF leagues. Using the create-a-wrestler options, it may just be possible to concoct a character more outlandish than the real thing.

All the pay-per-view extravaganzas should feature, including the soap opera of Wrestlemania and the bouncy castle of muscle that is Royal Rumble. Orgies of violence will be catered for with hardcore matches aplenty. Four player modes are included, and should hopefully promote lots of heated, turncoat bitch-slapping in a bid for the coveted tag titles.

NOW THAT'S HARD

Andre the Giant drank 14 bottles of wine before fighting at Wrestlemania III.

www.thq.com



↑ One of the world's most unpleasnat real-life 'sports' but strangely compelling as a video game.

DEVELOPER: **DREAM FACTORY** PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **16**

UFC TAPOUT

Extreme fighting like you've never seen it before.

ONLY ON XBOX

THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING Championship is all about dishing out maximum pain with minimum rules in an octagonal ring. Each contender can use whatever form of specialist martial arts they like to beat opponents into submission. In order to capture the championship belt, a wide variety of martial arts from ju-jitsu to sleeper holds must be employed.

While technique and stamina form a big part of the sport, the winning blow usually comes from knocking a dazed opponent to the floor. This is then followed up by repeatedly punching the head until the ref sees fit to stop the fight before someone *really* gets hurt.

The US TV pay-per-view UFC events are truly a gruesome sight, and much of that realism has been captured for the Xbox game. *Tapout* features a host of newly motion-captured fighters, improved AI, and new modes of play over previous *UFC* efforts.

Players will be able to participate in both eight-player and 16-player tournaments. There's also a career mode with 20 fighters to choose from and ten different arenas in which to wipe the floor with hapless opponents.

An increasingly popular facet of fighting and wrestling games is the create-a-fighter mode. In the case of *UFC Tapout*, players will be able to choose a fighter, pick a style in which to specialise and choose one of the many voices on offer.

Ultimate Fighting is currently banned from broadcast in the UK and judging from this game, it's not hard to understand why.

GREAT NAME
Randy Couture is the current heavyweight champion of UFC
www.ufcvideogame.com



↑ Pre-rendred art only at this stage.

DEV: **MIDWAY** PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

MORTAL KOMBAT

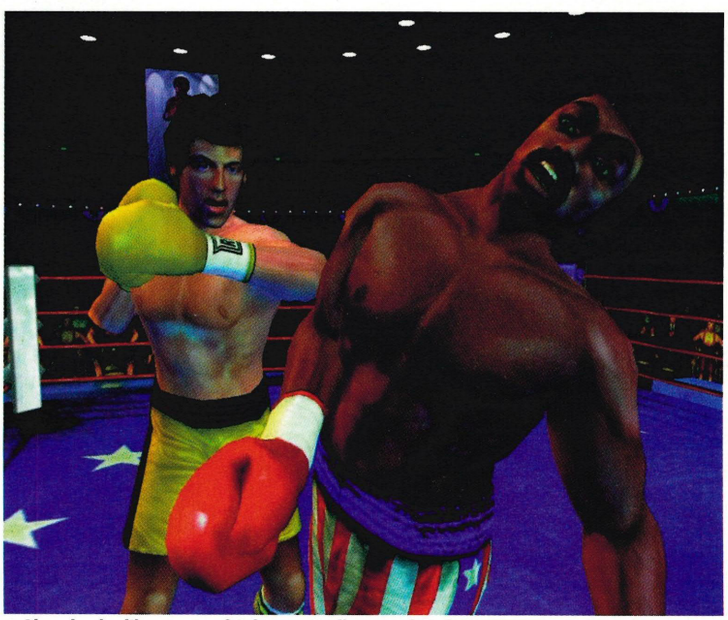
Heads will roll, bones will snap, guts will spill. But will thumbs ache?

MORTAL KOMBAT - a favourite of those looking for an easy example of video game controversy, but not the world's favourite beat-'em-up. So will the Xbox instalment rely on substance rather than shock tactics to court gamers and the press?

Scorpion and Sub-Zero are the only alumni so far confirmed for a return in the latest *MK* outing, a title that is planning to slightly ape *Soul Calibur* in its extensive use of weapons. A brand new control configuration is also promised, and not a moment too soon.

Expect a rogue's gallery of muscled-up pugilists with death wishes, and gory battles that descend into B-movie territory with smatterings of blood and spinal fluid. Essentially, the stuff of which all *Mortal Kombat* is made.

CONTINUITY GIRL
Kitana was in the first *MK* movie but her game debut was *Mortal Kombat 2*.
www.midway.com



↑ Already, the likenesses of Sylvester Stallone and Carl Weathers are spot-on.

DEVELOPER: **RAGE** PUBLISHER: **RAGE**
RELEASE DATE: **2002** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

ROCKY

The Itallian Stallion puts on his gloves once more.

THE RETURN of boxing's biggest name has been a long time coming, and its Rage who have the honour of bringing Rocky Balboa out of retirement. The developer can draw on the entire movie anthology and is focusing on arcade boxing rather than the simulation seen in *Knockout Kings* and *Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing*.

Before going head-to-head with the likes of Apollo Creed though, there are several forms of training to complete. This will allow the player to enhance a boxer's skill and stamina, as well as improving punching techniques. The bulk of the game will feature a variety of single and multiplayer options including Movie, Knockout and Exhibition modes.

While the majority of boxing games don't create the same impact as a *Street Fighter* or a *Tekken*, Rage is hoping *Rocky* will change all that. Rather than repeating a mixture of sluggish jab-hook-then-uppercut combinations, a mixture of arcade-based punches as well as several forms of defensive blocks, ducks and weaves are included.

Each one of the five films in the series introduced a new character for Rocky to overcome. Players will be able to choose to fight as or against these characters - Apollo Creed (from the first two movies), Clubber Lang (played by MrT in *Rocky III*), Ivan Drago (part IV) and *Rocky V*'s Tommy Gunn.

BOY DONE GOOD
Rocky won the Oscar for Best Film of 1976, beating Taxi Driver on the way.
www.rage.co.uk





›EVERY XBOX GAME

SPORT GAMES

AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING

DEVELOPER: **MICROSOFT** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

Extreme sport done in a very different way.

ONLY ON XBOX

ON THE VIDEO

IN A DELIBERATE move away from the traditional, race-to-the-bottom-while-doing-some-tricks type snowboarding game, *Amped* focuses the player on building a career through authentic boarding moves and attitude. There will be the chance to race, of course, but it's merely a small fragment of the game.

To move up the rankings from nobody to world-beating somebody takes more than mastery of tricks - although that goes a long way to help. Pull off the tricks in front of the right people (pros, potential sponsors, board magazine snappers and journos) and 'exposure points' are awarded. As these bonuses mount up, so the boarder climbs the rankings. The other pros may step forward to offer a challenge, which if won will also gain vital points.

Mountain runs are wide open, with the chance for serious exploration and utilisation of all natural and man-made objects littering the snowy areas. All areas are captures of existing runs in places like Utah, California and Vermont. Chris Gunnerson, a man famed for his terrain architecture, has also designed hidden courses that are unlocked on completion of certain game criteria. In all, there are 120 different to find and board

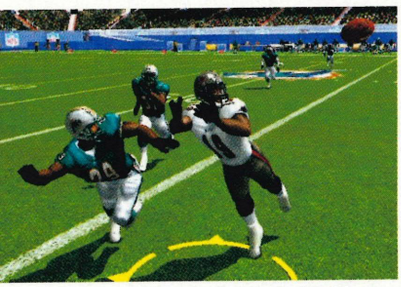
Multi-player support should be fun, with the chance to pelt the other boarders with snowballs sounding equally as entertaining as winning contests. Challenges here (and also in the single player quickstart mode) will include the standard stuff as well as more unusual tasks, such as hitting every snowman on the mountain.

Scheduled for Xbox's US bow, *Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding* may have both the gameplay and visuals to make it big.

NOT VERY 'GREEN'

One way to rack up the exposure points is to shave the bark from trees

www.xbox.com »



↑ A credible challenger to *Madden*?

DEVELOPER: **MICROSOFT**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

NFL FEVER 2002

Microsoft's first in-house sports sim bears fruit.

ONLY ON XBOX

AN IN-HOUSE Microsoft creation, *NFL Fever 2002* is being made with the holy trinity of the American football experience firmly in mind – a fast-paced representation of the sport itself, authentic stats and atmospheric stadia.

Aurally, the title oozes pedigree, with commentary from NFL broadcast analysts Dick Stockton and Ron Pitts, and a soundtrack that boasts contributions from hip-hop luminaries Chuck D and The Neptunes.

News from our sister magazine in the States suggests *Fever* has the pedigree to outplay long-term league leader, EA's *Madden*. It just remains to be seen whether the gaming public at large can be convinced.

DOMED TO FAILURE

No NFL team that plays in a domed stadium has ever won a Superbowl.
www.xbox.com



↑ Prepare for *Champ Man* to eat into any available hours. Ask anyone with a PC version...

DEVELOPER: **SPORTS INTERACTIVE** PUBLISHER: **EIDOS** RELEASE DATE: **03/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 01/02

The daddy of all management games at last gets a console powerful enough to handle it.

ONLY ON XBOX

ON THE VIDEO

ACCORDING TO Miles Jacobson, MD at developer Sports Interactive, *Championship Manager* has never appeared on a video game console because "until now, a machine simply hasn't been built that can handle it".

He's right – the game that's become something of a religion for hundreds of thousands of PC gamers is dependent on a hard-drive allocation to manage the vast amount of data it contains. This, of course, is where Xbox comes in.

There can be little doubt that Championship Manager is the definitive football management game – many people have splashed out on a PC just to play the game.

Now in its tenth year, the game features detailed profiles and histories for over 130,000 players, managers and coaches in 26 concurrent leagues.

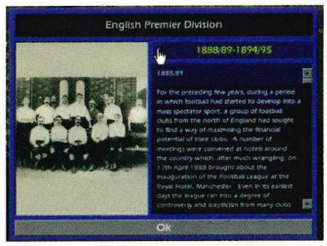
Famous for its depth of play which extends to almost every aspect of managing your favourite club, new additions for the Xbox version will include interaction with the board, an appeal system and fines from the FA.

Sports Interactive has re-designed the game's screens to take into account television rather than monitor resolution and tweaked a control system that up until now has been mouse-and-keyboard driven.

It may not boast flash 3D graphics, a thumping soundtrack or alien gore, but it would be foolish to bet against *Championship Manager 01/02* hitting the top of the first Xbox charts to appear after the console's UK launch.

HOME AND AWAY

Teams supported in the *Official Xbox* office include Ipswich Town and Chelsea.
www.sportsinteractive.co.uk



↑ No statistical stone is left unturned.



↑ No gameplay shots as yet, just this video from spring's Tokyo Game Show.

DEVELOPER: **KONAMI** PUBLISHER: **KONAMI** RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

ISS XBOX

Little info as yet, but *ISS* will come to Xbox.

ONLY ON XBOX

With over five million *ISS* branded games being sold worldwide, Konami must be doing something right. Over the years *ISS* has arguably become the best football game to grace any platform since the 8-bit glory days of *Kick Off*.

Details of the Xbox version are being kept pretty much under wraps. Gameplay modes will include exhibition, league, cup and master league, with a training option included to perfect those all-important running and passing techniques.

One of the biggest improvements to the series for its next generation release has been the game's AI engine, which has been tweaked to improve each player's style and originality. It seems that the visual aspect of the game has been updated the most with detailed effects such as fireworks, confetti and smoke markers being used to bring each stadium to life.

FIFPro head Gordon Taylor had no hesitation in granting *ISS* real player name rights after seeing a demo.

Each time an *ISS* game is released Konami tweaks the gameplay and sneaks in a few new features. Whatever the new bits turn out to be, football fans will only come out singing.

BADDLY SPELLT

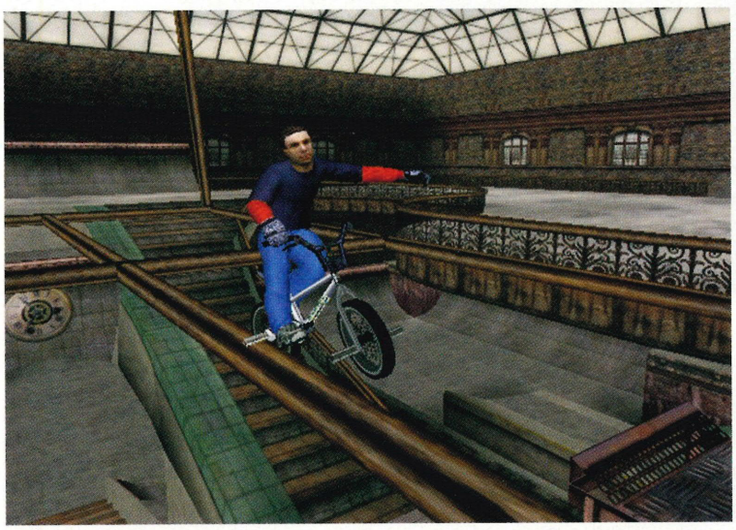
Before real names, *ISS* had Sheerer and Oren up front for England.
www.konami.co.jp



↑ Dave might want to reconsider messing about at airports.



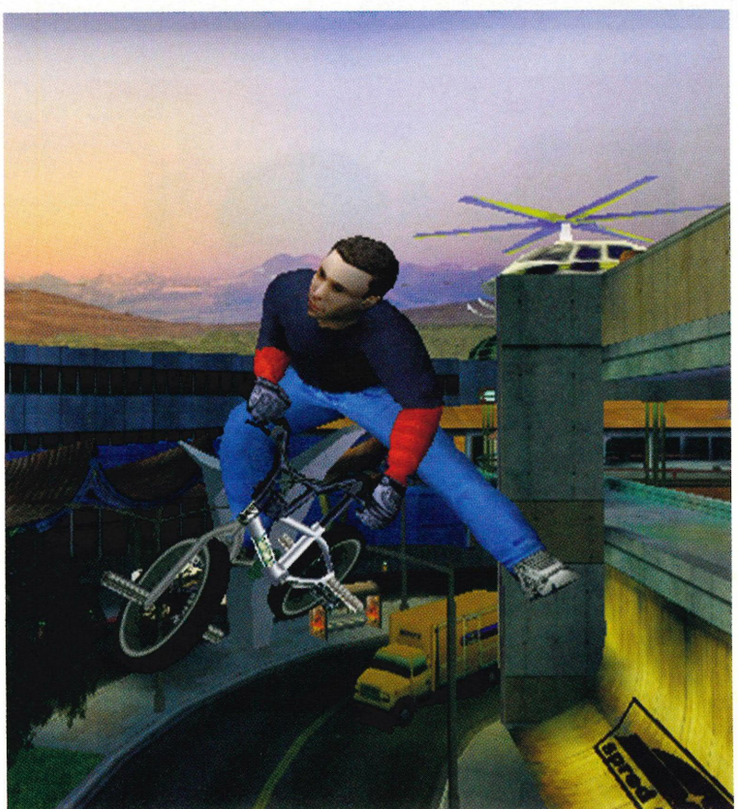
↑ See Dave Mirra in action on the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* Launch Video.



↑ Two levels of the game are exclusive to Xbox.



↑ Fly like a bird. A bird on a bike.



↑ A safe landing area just out of shot, hopefully.

DEVELOPER: **Z-AXIS** PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX2

Two-wheel tricks and plenty of broken bones...

ON THE VIDEO

EXTREME SPORT games are big business now, and the *Mirra* franchise is part of the leading pack. Dave's on-bike adventures will be appearing on Xbox with two of its 10 levels exclusive to the machine.

Exclusive or not, all play areas are huge, with hidden areas only opened after the completion of certain tricks or tasks. Levels announced for inclusion so far are Woodward Camp, Train Yard and Devil's Peak.

If you include all of the combos and modifications, tricks exceed 1500 – a massive amount, leaving those keen to master a game needing to invest serious time to learn and use them all.

But it's not all about massive depth. Complementing a ProQuest mode that has you trying to knock Mirra off his World's Number One perch is a pick-up-and-play function.

Sometimes, just playing about without a pressing or testing long-term mission objective is just the ticket.

Other features include a choice of 14 real-life BMXers, sponsors such as Adidas providing rewards and a frankly impressive 13 multiplayer modes. The latter alone could make *Dave Mirra* the BMX game of choice on Xbox.

The extensive course editor also sounds promising – over 180 track elements to arrange in one of nine different environments.

With authenticity seemingly high on the developers list alongside playability and depth, it comes as no surprise to find that crash animations – the quietly pleasingly, masochistic part of any good extreme sports title – are planned to be as realistic as possible.

Expect to be wincing, squinting and inhaling through teeth long into 2002.

REALLY?

Dave Mirra is 27, likes Italian food, and a car knocked him off his bike in 1993.

www.acclaimmaxsports.com »

↑ ***SSX Tricky* plans to win gamers over as the 'arcade' snowboarding game.**

DEVELOPER: **EA SPORTS BIG** PUBLISHER: **EA** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **2**

SSX TRICKY

A bigger, better version of the best snowboarding game ever made.

One of the most promising of the snowboarding games earmarked for Xbox (and there are quite a few) is *SSX Tricky*, a game which blends over-the-top tricks with gorgeous locations. The original was released on PlayStation 2, and its emphasis on fun rather than simulation struck a chord with gamers.

Every aspect of that original *SSX* has been beefed up for the sequel. As well as new courses and totally redesigned routes, there are also two completely new hills to conquer: Garibaldi in British Columbia, and one simply titled Alaska. Both mountains offer new challenges, with Garibaldi focusing on big air and Alaska serving up extreme verts.

Sub-naming this game *Tricky* is an indication of the greater emphasis on skills and stunts. This area of the game has been significantly tweaked to make the grinds, vert riding and other moves noticeably easier.

Six new characters will join six from the original, with character development moving one step further. Riders have a set of basic skills, but now each one also has a glut of individual moves.

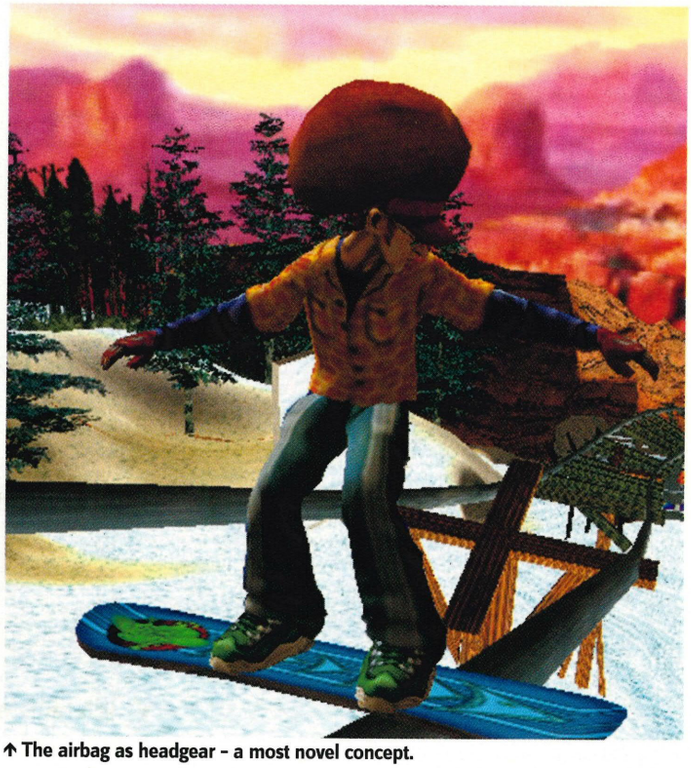
Celebs Lucy Liu, Oliver Platt, Macy Gray, Billy Zane and David Arquette have all been signed up to provide voice-over content.

SSX Tricky is being pitched as an update, as opposed to a true sequel, but from the amount of new features lined up, EA Sports Big could have the leading Xbox snowboarding game on their hands.

SSX STANDS FOR...

Snowboard Supercross, a single event mixing racing and trick disciplines.

ssxtricky.ea.com

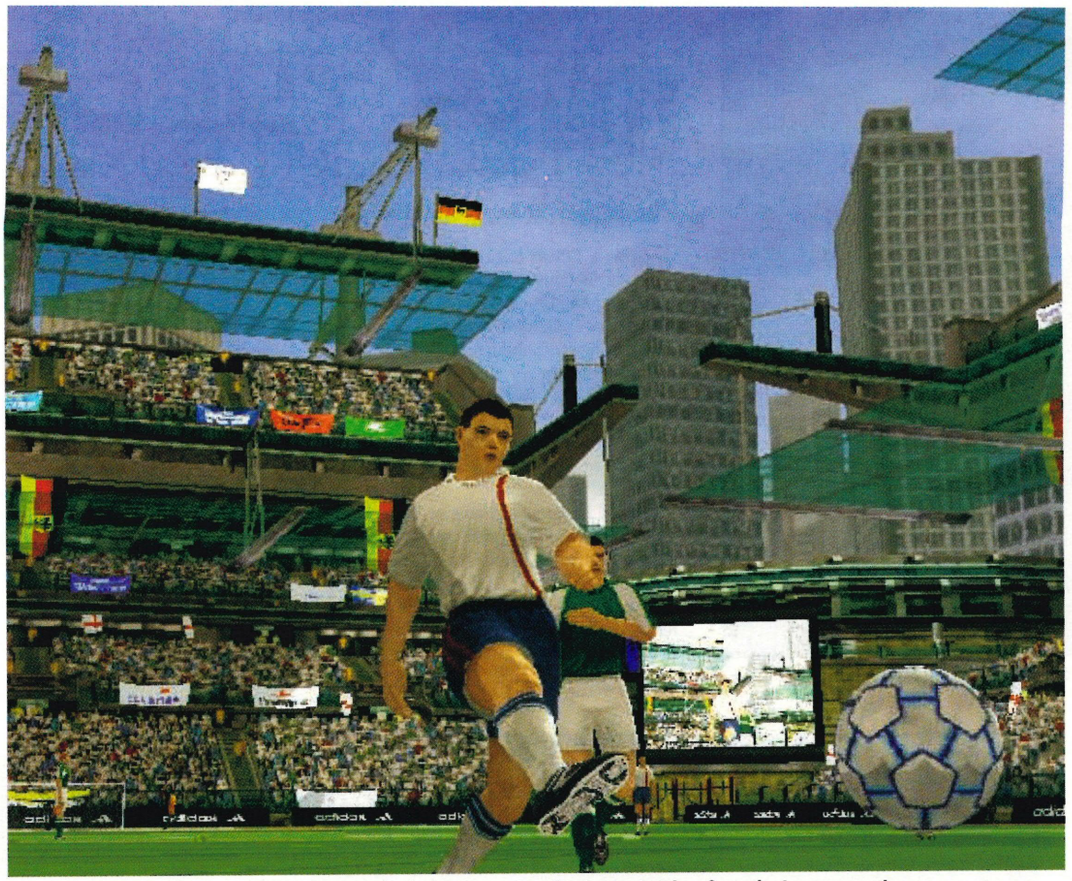


↑ **The airbag as headgear - a most novel concept.**

DEVELOPER: **RAGE**
PUBLISHER: **RAGE**
RELEASE DATE: **Q2/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER

England skipper's own title.



↑ **Although this is unlikely to be a camera angle during gameplay, this image is taken from the in-game engine.**

IT MAKES A lot of sense to use the most famous footballer in the country as the backbone and inspiration for a football title, so full marks to developer Rage for getting that very person to endorse their attempt at the beautiful game.

A footy game wouldn't be a footy game without recreations of major international and domestic competitions, motion-captured player animation, league play, friendlies and authentic commentary – all these are present here. Big Ron Atkinson and shouty-type Jonathan Pearce provide the punditry.

Beckham himself has selected the hidden teams, but the real challenge is to master free kicks like the Man Utd midfielder – a task that Rage are planning to build into the training modes. Over 200 top club and international teams will feature, using up-to-date stats and data.

Training functions have always been a part of sports games, but are often dull and pointless. In *David Beckham Soccer*, however, training is 'led' by Beckham and split into three levels, youth, reserve and professional. Completing the increasingly difficult tasks results in the awarding of certificates and unlocking of extra teams.

With David Beckham's name enough to sell millions of papers, magazines and books, what price him doing the same for this promising footy game?

AT THE END

In 1995, Beckham played five games on loan at Preston North End, scoring twice.

www.davidbeckhamsoccer.net »



↑ **With Beckham attached, dead ball moves *have to* be perfect.**



↑ **Why use one hand when two will do?**

DEVELOPER: **RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT** PUBLISHER: **THQ**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **2**

DARK SUMMIT

Adventure-based snowboarding, where the idea is to get to the top of the mountain and the bottom of the mystery.

DESCRIBED AS A mission-based snowboarder with a strong story, the action in *Dark Summit* takes place on Mt. Garrick, a peaceful ski resort that has never welcomed snowboarders. Mountain ranger Chief O'Leary is trying to keep them off the mountain altogether. As players attempt to uncover the reasons behind the closure, they will have to unlock new areas of the mountain as they move closer to the summit – and the truth.

Only a small section of the mountain is available at the beginning of the game, but as players unlock the 17 different sections, the game comes into its own. Once the path to the summit has been fully opened, players will be able to ride down the entire mountain in one go – an option the development team believes will take almost 20 minutes.

Littered over each section of the mountain will be a number of secrets players can uncover to improve characters' snowboarding abilities. Only by exploring hidden paths and hidden jumps can players pick up new moves and complete certain goals to open up Mt. Garrick and discover Chief O'Leary's dark secret...

SOCIALISE, MAN

Six playable riders are available in the expansive multiplayer mode.

www.thq.com/darksummit



↑ **There will be opportunity to pull of tricks in between the detective work.**



↑ Much effort has gone into making a realistic Mike – and it's paid off (PS2 shot).

DEVELOPER: **ATOMIC PLANET** PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**
RELEASE DATE: **Q2/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

The meanest man alive makes his next-generation debut.

MIKE TYSON originally graced US PlayStations in a game that was released in the UK as *Prince Naseem Boxing*. For Codemasters' Xbox overhaul of its boxing series though, Naz loses out to Iron Mike.

Players can assume the role of Tyson and play the game from either a first or third-person viewpoint. There won't be an option to bite off opponents' ears.

It will be possible, however, to see facial damage in high detail as big red glove meets nice smooth face. Atomic Planet has written a realistic facial damage engine in to the game – the realism is also noticeable in the appearance of the in-game Tyson. It's a very impressive recreation.

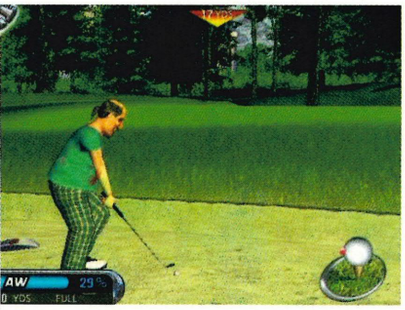
Seven game modes cover all bases associated with boxing games, with a training mode, arcade mode, two-player mode and career mode.

Players will also be able to create up to four fighters and take them through to a championship belt, choosing from personal and physical attributes, entrance music, taunts, speeches, and knockout moves. Personalised boxers will also be able to swipe special moves from beaten opponents, which could make for some very lively two-player matches.

TALE OF THE TAPE

Tyson has fought 52 times, with 42 of 48 wins via knockout.

www.codemastersusa.com/tyson



↑ When done right, golf games shine.

DEV: **SIMON & SCHUSTER INTERACTIVE**
PUBLISHER:**SIMON & SCHUSTER**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

OUTLAW GOLF

Lawlessness on the links.

ONLY ON XBOX

PURISTS LOOKING for a genteel outing on the fairways should think twice before playing a round of *Outlaw Golf*.

The game takes the light-hearted approach to the sport that paid off so handsomely for the *Everybody's Golf* games on PlayStation.

Players can pick from a variety of cartoon-esque characters, and play around courses set in outlandish locations like swamps and airports.

Intriguingly, and perhaps correctly, a character gets harder to control the worse he or she performs, so a steady nerve is required to put together a decent score.

However, frustration can be relieved by taking a swing at the caddy, something Ian Woosnam would probably have loved to do following the notorious 'extra clubs' incident at this year's Open Championship.

MULTIMEDIA

Simon & Schuster is best known as one of the world's leading book publishers.

www.simonsays.com



↑ Graphically, *TW Surf* is on the right tracks. Fingers crossed for the control method.

DEVELOPER: **ANGEL STUDIOS** PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES** RELEASE DATE: **Q2/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

TRANSWORLD SURF

On the crest of the wave or soggier than seaweed?

ON THE VIDEO

Now that there's a console that can accurately recreate the look and behaviour of water, it's hardly surprising to see games set on the seas.

Going head-to-head with Kelly Slater and his Pro Surfer is TransWorld Surf, a game backed by a leading extreme sports mag and packed with plenty of authentic surfing features.

As is the case with almost all extreme titles, the main body of this game concerns itself with tricks, tricks and more tricks. Many moves are realistic, but several more exciting (and in real life, impossible) tricks spice things up a little. Realism only goes so far to making things enjoyable.

There will also be missions and tasks to complete. One such level has the player freeing netted dolphins.

Already turning heads with its excellent graphics, TransWorld Surf will also have virtual photographers snapping tricks, which will be rewarded with bonuses if they are sufficiently flashy. This is one to keep an eye on.

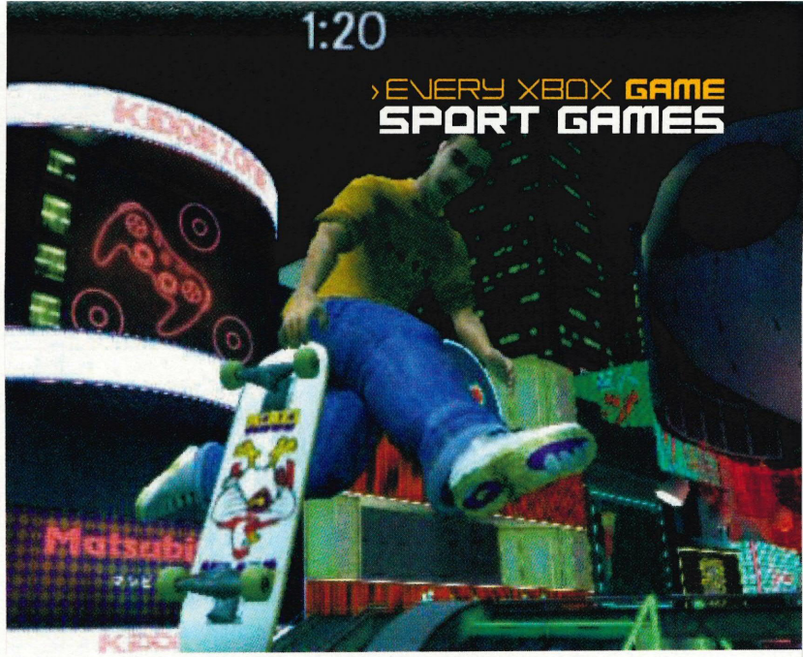
ANCIENT HISTORY

Polynesians were the first surfers, taking 'boards' onto the Pacific circa 1500BC.

www.angelstudios.com/twsurf



↑ It's authentic enough for the skating community, but open to all-comers.



↑ Those familiar with previous *Hawk* backdrops will be blown away by the new ones.

DEVELOPER: **NEVERSOFT** PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **2**

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

The benchmark of extreme sports games ollies its way onto Xbox with new features.

WHEN *TONY Hawk's Pro Skater* was released on PlayStation, the man with his name on the game was unknown outside the skating community. Thanks to the success of that game and its sequel, he's now world-famous.

Pro Skater wasn't the first game based on skateboarding, but never before had it been so easy or rewarding to pull off tricks. The tasks and goals in the game also proved hugely addictive.

The greatest difference between *Pro Skater 3* and previous incarnations is that environments are far busier and far more interactive. While players are performing all manner of 50/50 kickflip nollie grinds, the streets will be awash with pedestrians getting in the way. Be sure to watch out for the odd car too.

Although the formula hasn't changed much - skate to earn points and money to succeed - several new areas in which to do the *Hawk* thing have been created, in places like Rio de Janeiro, Los Angeles, Canada, Tokyo, Skater Island and Paris.

To skate as the Birdman is all many players want, but he will be accompanied by 11 other top pros. If they're not enough, custom options mean gamers can create a bespoke skater, right down to the tattoos.

Essentially, Neversoft is promising more of the same *Hawk* magic, only the graphics will naturally be stunning, the career mode will be bigger and there'll be more character-specific goals.

They're doing the right thing.

RECORD BREAKER

Tony was the first skater to do a '900' - a two-and-a-half turn rotation in the air.

www.activisiono2.com/tony_hawk



↑ One of the big innovations s the inclusion of pedestrians. There's one, right there.



↑ The modelling on the boarder's clothing is extremely impressive.

DEVELOPER: **HOUSEMARQUE** PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

TRANSWORLD SNOWBOARDING

Take to the slopes with this, a new take on the increasingly popular sliding-down-mountains genre.

ONLY ON XBOX

ON THE VIDEO

WITH *AMPED: Freestyle Snowboarding* having garnered considerable pre-launch coverage, *TransWorld Snowboarding* may have a harder time breaking into the Xbox market than it maybe would have predicted.

Nevertheless, the game is looking very good at the moment, with a wide array of different modes to test the would-be boarder's skills.

A four-player mode will be included to enable competitive sorts to out-gnarl each other over the game's gorgeous slopes, which are set (as the title suggests) in pretty much every civilised nation that sees snow.

Within the one-player mode, the slopes are littered with extreme sport papparazzo, waiting for the opportunity to snap the player in midst of top-level trickery. The honour of being *TransWorld Snowboarding* magazine's virtual cover star awaits those skilled in the wintry arts.

MAKE YOUR MIND UP

Some scientists think no two snowflakes are alike; others completely disagree.

www.housemarque.fi

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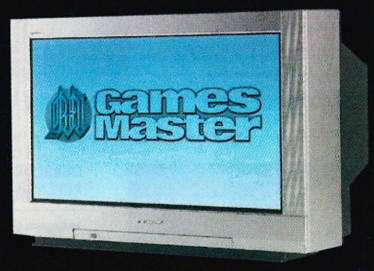
including...

Q. How good is Xbox?

A. Find out in the new issue of GamesMaster

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All three next-gen consoles pitched together in a fight to the death! Find out which one deserves the space under your telly!



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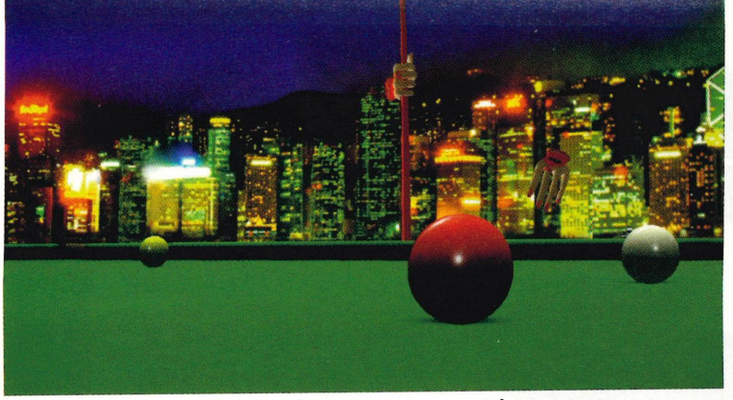
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↑ It's odd to look at, but there's no better way to represent the opponent.

DEVELOPER: **AWESOME DEVELOPMENTS** PUBLISHER: **VIRGIN INTERACTIVE**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **2**

JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL WORLD

The Whirlwind blows on to Xbox.

AS THE first snooker game available for Xbox, *Jimmy White's Cueball World* is setting a precedent. It features the most realistic physics yet seen in a snooker game, making it (apparently) just as hard as the sport on which it's based – unless you're as good as Jim himself.

Although Jimmy's name will be on the box, the real force behind the game is Archer Maclean, creator of previous *White* games. A close friend of the Whirlwind, Maclean is also a bit of a wizard on the table.

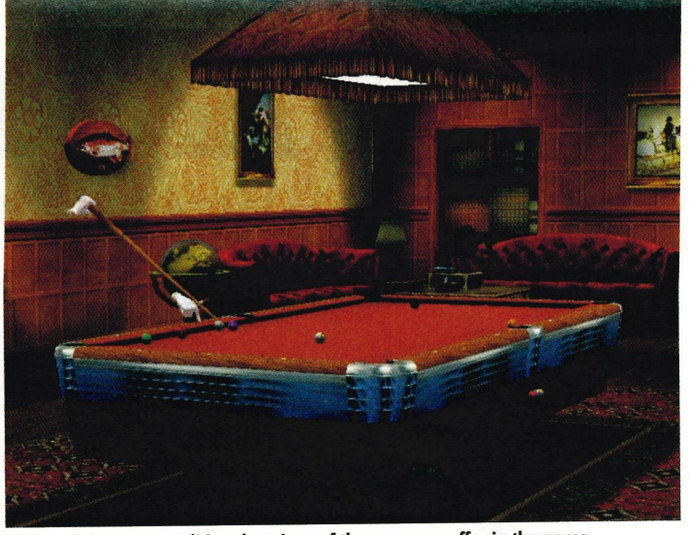
The tables aren't just in pool halls. They crop up everywhere from desert islands and graveyards to Stonehenge and even a U-boat – all displayed in high detail. The opponent is represented by two animated hands, with each hand composed of more polygons than were used in the whole of *Cueball 2* on PlayStation.

Besides being the most realistic snooker and pool game yet seen, *Cueball World* will have a wide variety of sub-games. Available to both one and two players, these include crazy-golf played on stunt tables against the clock, a tilting maze, thumb wrestling and darts.

IS JIMMY IN THE GAME?

Yes – an appearance in the opening sequence, and in voice-overs.

www.virgininteractive.co.uk



↑ One of the more traditional settings of the many on offer in the game.



↑ As nice as they are, it's to be hoped the backdrops aren't too distracting.

DEV: **ESPN THE GAMES**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

ESPN NBA 2NIGHT 2002

PLANNED TO look and sound like an ESPN broadcast, *NBA 2Night 2002* promises the total basketball experience. Squeaky trainer noises will definitely be included.

Unconventional microphone placement and camera angles have been used to help represent the action in new ways.

With the ESPN brand and the backing of so many big names (NBA All-Star Tracy McGrady, for one), this title has all the makings of an engrossing and attractive basketball game. Exactly what the gameplay will offer, however, is still an unknown quantity.

DON'T GIVE UP

A forfeited games ends with a score of 2-0.

www.espnthegames.com

DEVELOPER: **MIDWAY**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

NFL BLITZ 20-02

IN PLUMPING for accessible fun and exaggerated action over realism, Midway plough an admirable furrow with their sports titles.

NFL Blitz 20-02 aims to continue this tradition. The gameplay and visuals still have 'arcade' stamped all over them.

A new feature, allowing gamers to tweak plays so that, for example, receivers follow a player-ordained route, should mean that this version of *Blitz* will last longer than previous incarnations of the franchise.

To convincingly animate some of the game's more bizarre moments, stuntmen were motion-captured using *Matrix*-style rigging wires.

NO, SERIOUSLY

There once was a pro team called Tonawanda Kardex.

www.nflblitz.midway.com

DEVELOPER: **EA SPORTS**
PUBLISHER: **EA**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

NHL 2002

IN TERMS of speed and competition, ice hockey is one of the sports best suited to video game representation. *NHL 2002* looks like continuing the lineage, with plenty of game modes and the usual, fully-licensed take on NHL finery.

New additions are EA Game Story – a tracking of game events (a player on a hat-trick, game trends etc) told via overlays, replays and commentary – and the 'breakaway cam', which enhances the action when players make lone runs towards goal.

As this game marks the continuation of the most established of all ice hockey franchises, there are high hopes for *NHL 2002*.

FROZEN SOLID

The vehicle that resurfaces ice rinks is a Zamboni.

nhl2002.ea.com/en/xbox

DEVELOPER: **EA SPORTS**
PUBLISHER: **EA**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

FIFA 2002

THIS FOOTBALL series has been around since the mid-1990s, gracing every available platform and selling millions of copies.

The Xbox version will present footy fans with more licensed leagues, teams, and competitions than any other football game on the market.

Major new features include an open-ended and flexible passing system (passing has long been a FIFA weakness), an all-new referee and tackling model and information 'hotsheets' providing team, player and opponent statistics.

Best of all is the chance to qualify for, and go on to win the World Cup in (virtual) Japan and Korea.

CLUB SEAL DEAL

Ministry of Sound are confirmed as soundtrackers.

www.fifa2002.ea.com

DEV: **VISUAL CONCEPTS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA US**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

NBA 2K2

CONTINUING AND improving the franchise that so impressed on Dreamcast, Sega have high hopes for *NBA 2K2*.

A broadcast-quality main game with all the official NBA trimmings, a one-on-one game and recreations of famous street venues make up a very busy sports package.

NBA 2K2 will feature up-to-date rosters, signature moves, up-to-date rules and all the other hallmarks of authenticity and specifics that are required for an authoritative sport feel.

Over 2200 animations will be used to create what should be fluid and highly realistic player movement.

If gameplay can match the detail, this could be big.

POINT SHAVING

Michael Jordan shaves his head Tuesdays and Fridays.

www.segasports.com

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DEVELOPER: **PACIFIC COAST**
PUBLISHER: **THQ**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **2**

MX 2002 FEAT. RICKY CARMICHAEL

NINTENDO'S Excite Bike 64 is currently acknowledged to be the best motocross game available, but THQ are doing their best to put *Ricky Carmichael* at the forefront of this particular racing genre.

As well as plenty of straightforward racing over 22 tracks, there will be other modes, including a stunt mode that allows players to take advantage of a stunt combo system containing the signature moves of Carmichael and several of his rivals.

Xbox-exclusive tracks are also planned, as are six different multiplayer modes

One feature that the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* is particularly keen on sampling is the Bus Jump. It brings back fond memories of motorbike daredevils of old.

CLEAN SWEEP
Ricky won all races in 98's 125cc Supercross Series.
www.thq.com/mx2002

DEV: **VISUAL CONCEPTS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA US**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

NFL2K2

BY CLAIMING 'electrifying gameplay, devastating tackles, nosebleed visuals and breakneck tactics', developer Visual Concepts appears to want to hurt rather than entertain.

But the aggressive superlatives are evidence of the effort being made to create a bona fide NFL title. To that end, an advanced passing system is in development for *NFL 2K2*, as is improved QB logic.

And in a welcome effort to make easier what can be a complicated and confusing sport at the best of times, any play can be called from any formation. Also, the presentation will be as TV-like as possible.

Sega are also making the most of the Xbox Controller's many analogue capabilities. Among several NFl titles planned for the console, this one shows real promise.

A REAL HIDING
A year's worth of NFL balls = leather from 3000 cows.
www.segasports.com

DEVELOPER: **EA SPORTS**
PUBLISHER: **EA**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

TRIPLE PLAY BASEBALL

XBOX OWNERS keen to get into the swing with a baseball game will no doubt be intrigued by this iteration of the *Triple Play* series on Microsoft's new hardware.

All the features you would expect from an EA Sports game are there, coupled with the astounding visuals soon to be familiar on Xbox.

Official stadia, players and leagues are plentiful, and a comprehensive create-a-player mode lets gamers invent their own big-hitting, tobacco-chewing redneck and take him to the top.

Not surprisingly for a baseball game, there's nothing particularly inventive planned, but this will be a polished, playable package nonetheless.

BE QUICK
A batter has under half a second to react to a fastball.
www.easports.com

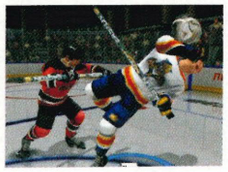
DEV: **ESPN THE GAMES**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

ESPN NHL NIGHT 2002

IN TERMS OF game structure and proposed features, *ESPN NHL Night 2002* is analogous to ESPN's NFL title. With its authentic uniforms, stadia and teams; a comprehensive range of play modes (a choice of tournaments, and the chance for players to rear and foster a bespoke NHL superstar); full commentary from the best in the business and myriad celebrity endorsements, there's enough to keep the staunchest fan happy.

If it can deliver a fraction of what's promised, *NHL Night 2002* looks to be a respectably bone-crunching proposition. Here's hoping that ESPN The Games captures those annoying organ jingles just right.

STICK THIS
Canada imports about 850 Russian hockey sticks daily.
www.espnthegames.com



DEVELOPER: **BLACK BOX**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

NHL HITZ 2002

LIKE ITS spiritual brother NFL Blitz, NHL Hitz boots realism into touch and replaces it with pure arcade action.

After years of 'cardboard' audiences, a fully 3D, interactive crowd.should make more of a difference than other 'cosmetic' improvements. Bad-tempered fans hammer on the glass and will even walk out of bad games, adding to the already unruly atmosphere.

This may not offer the longer-term experience of other NHL games, but for pure thrills, Hitz could be the one.

HIDDEN AWAY
Secret, fantasy-themed rinks are there for the unlocking.
www.nhlhitz.midway.com

DEVELOPER: **EA SPORTS**
PUBLISHER: **EA**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

KNOCKOUT KINGS

EACH RELEASE in the *Knockout Kings* series has improved over its predecessor, and there's no reason to believe that won't continue with the game's debut on Xbox.

No specifics have been confirmed, but one of the features of EA Sports games, and *Knockout Kings* in particular, is that established formulae are refined rather than overhauled in new editions.

For its bow on Xbox, expect to see gameplay tweaks that take advantage of the controller, plus all the usual features such as career, exhibition and one-off-fight modes.

And of course, if the game isn't the best looking boxing title in existence, it'll be something of a disappointment.

QUEENSBURY...
...Rule 11: "No shoes or boots with springs allowed."
www.easports.com

DEVELOPER: **ACTIVISION**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA**
MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2

LIKE SKATEBOARDING legend Tony Hawk, Mat Hoffman is the man at the top of his extreme sport. Hoffman-endorsed BMX games have already scored highly on several other formats.

With additional riders, *Pro BMX 2* builds upon the signature moves and game modes that made the original a success.

Players will be able to perform hundreds of tricks across street, vert and dirt jump courses.

With a new developer taking the reigns from *Hawk* developer Neversoft, Hoffman has every chance to become a household name just like his skateboarding pal.

EASY RIDERS
BMX began in Southern California in the early 70s
www.activision02.com

DEV: **ESPN THE GAMES**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/02**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

ESPN NFL PRIMETIME 2002

AMONG A surfeit of NFL titles looming for Xbox is Konami's take on the sport.

It promises the obligatory stuff of gridiron games - season and tournament play, bespoke play tactics, create-a-player, authentic commentary, endorsements galore, gorgeous animation and uncanny AI - but it also lays claim to an insane amount of detail.

Touches such as grubby stains building up on players' garb throughout the match are a neat idea.

Also present is a burgeoning range of camera angles, including one that promises to go 'deep into your endzone' - a very intimate notion.

ALL IN A NAME
'ESPN' doesn't stand for anything, says the company.
www.espnthegames.com

DEVELOPER: **EA SPORTS**
PUBLISHER: **EA**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

NBA LIVE 2002

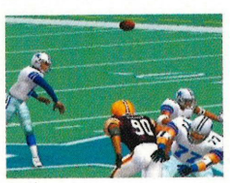
BASKETBALL hi-jinks abound in *NBA Live 2002*, another step forward for one of EA's massive sport franchises.

There are plenty of game modes and leagues, and those looking for respite from the on-court action can deliberate at length over which headbands and kneepads to wear in the next match thanks to comprehensive create-a-player options.

In addition, basketball legend Michael Jordan will be making his digital comeback, enabling you to pitch him against the greats from different eras.

His Airness, and all the other pros recreated for the game, will have never looked better.

NBA POINTS KING
Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, with an astonishing 38,387.
nbalive2002.ea.com/xbox



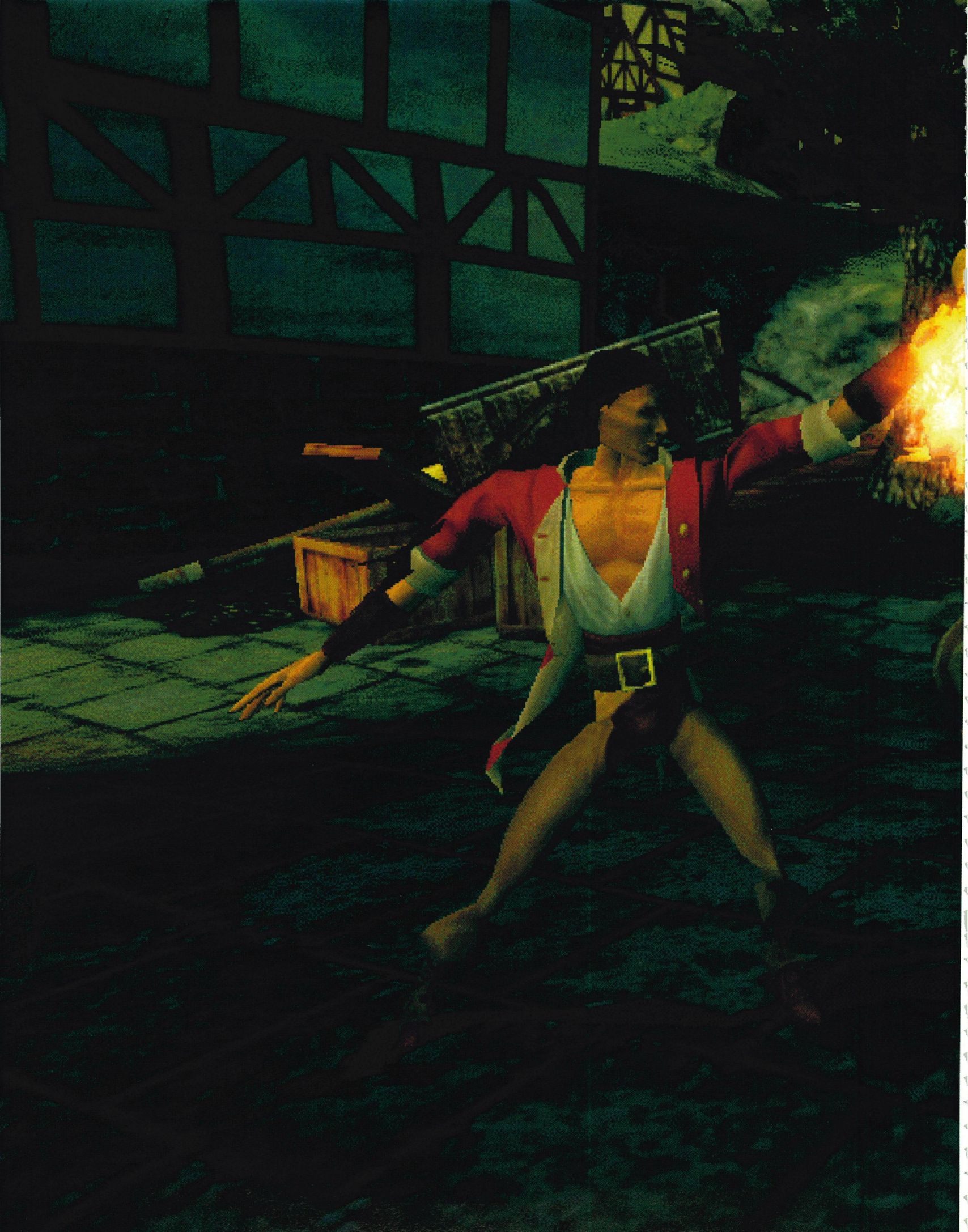
DEVELOPER: **TIBURON**
PUBLISHER: **EA**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/01**
MULTIPLAYER: **4**

MADDEN NFL 2002

THE TITLE that kick-started the EA Sports business model - a big licence, frequent updates, and big sales - was *John Madden's Football* on Mega Drive. Commendably, it was also lots of fun.

The first *Madden* game for Xbox looks set to continue this trend. Combining crunchy gridiron gameplay with stunning visuals, this is the title that all other NFL games - and, for good reason, all other sports games - are measured against. Expect very big things indeed.

DOUBLE VISION
Another John Madden is a famous film director.
madden2002.ea.com/xbox





›EVERY XBOX GAME

PLATFORM & RPG

GALLEON

DEV: **CONFOUNDING FACTOR** PUB: **INTERPLAY** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

Tomb Raider creator sets sail with new idea.

ON THE VIDEO

FRONTED BY TOBY GARD, the man who dreamt up Lara Croft and *Tomb Raider*, Confounding Factor have spent three years working on what it hopes will be the next big thing in adventure gaming.

Leaving behind the famous curves and bumps of Miss Croft, the hero of *Galleon* is Captain Rhama Sabrier, a handsome adventurer. While hanging out in the port of Akbah, a local healer stumbles across a ghost ship holding a secret cargo. The healer knows absolutely nothing about where the ship came from, so he calls on Rhama and his crew for help. And so begins this third-person adventure.

Set out across six lavishly designed islands, players will have to use each of Rhama's abilities to traverse the many environments *Galleon* has to offer. The islands all hold different clues about the mysterious ship and are filled with traps, dungeons and some of the most enormous monsters ever seen. There are also loads of great characters to meet and interact with.

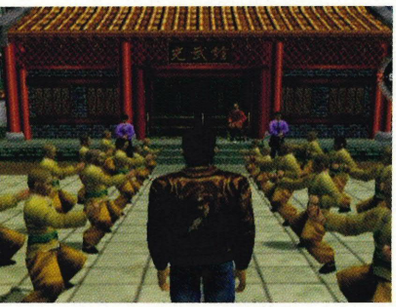
Using Confounding Factor's own game engine (built especially to accommodate Gard's vision), characters will be able to perform a variety of fluid movements including leaping, climbing, swimming and swinging. Rhama will also be able to call on two other characters for help along the way: Faith and Mihoko. Faith is an idealistic young student skilled in the art of healing while Mihoko is a powerful fighter. Many of the levels require close co-operation between the three to achieve the game's complicated objectives.

Confounding Factor's vision is to create an action game on an epic scale. With Guard controlling the ship's wheel, this could be something very special.

GARD SAYS

"We want to beat what was going on in *Tomb Raider* in every conceivable way,"

www.confounding-factor.com »



↑ A taster from the Dreamcast version.

DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

SHENMUE II

The revolutionary RPG epic comes to Xbox.

SHENMUE WAS HAILED as one of the most realistic games ever created for Dreamcast. The long-awaited sequel promises even more in the way of realism, allowing the player to interact with virtually everything on screen. *Shenmue II* sees Ryo Hazuki, born in Japan and a martial arts master, arrive in Hong Kong to continue his quest to avenge his father's murder.

Also set in Kowloon and Guilin, the detailed world will again feature advanced weather and time control technologies, presenting a real-time world with moving 3D skies and changing terrain and vegetation.

A new navigation system has been implemented, allowing players to keep track of their journey more easily. This will map out a player's current location and mark areas visited.

Sega expects the gameplay to last for over 20 hours. With new enemies and characters to interact with each time the game is played from the beginning, every experience will be different from the last.

YU SUZUKI WHO?

Yu Suzuki is Sega's answer to Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto.
www.sega.co.jp



↑ With its genuinely unsettling atmosphere, *Silent Hill 2* is not to be played alone...

DEVELOPER: **KONAMI** PUBLISHER: **KONAMI** RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

SILENT HILL 2: RESTLESS DREAMS

Returning to the god-forsaken town yields disturbing discoveries...

WITHOUT DOUBT, *Silent Hill* on PlayStation was one of the most intense gaming experiences there has ever been. Forget *Resident Evil* and how it occasionally made you jump when rabid dogs smashed through windows - *Silent Hill* and its sequel are a considerably more disturbing proposition.

The original told the story of a father's effort to find his daughter who went missing after a road accident in the creepy town of Silent Hill. In *Silent Hill 2*, Konami has brought in a whole new cast and plot rather than continuing directly from where the first game so memorably concluded.

This time around, the story follows John Sunderland, whose wife passed away three years ago. Sunderland is having trouble getting his life back on track and is in a deep depression when he receives a letter from his wife Mary. The letter tells him she is waiting for him in Silent Hill. Despite obvious doubts as to the authenticity, Sunderland packs his bag and heads to Silent Hill to find out the truth behind the mysterious correspondence.

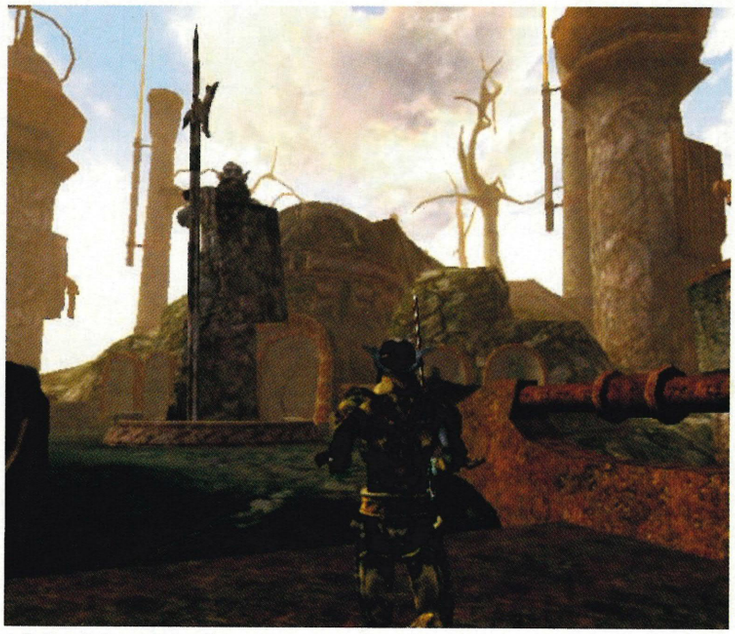
The Xbox version of *Silent Hill 2* is an enhanced version of *Silent Hill 2* on PS2. At this stage it's thought to contain tweaks and slight changes to the original version, along with the inevitable graphical improvements that the Xbox hardware will bring.

OPENING NEW DOORS

Access to places locked in the original *Silent Hill* will reveal dark secrets...
www.konami.co.jp



↑ Angela, a girl with a mysterious past.



↑ Bethesda have the pedigree to turn out a fine Xbox RPG.

DEVELOPER: **BETHESDA SOFTWORKS** PUBLISHER: **EON DIGITAL**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **1**

ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

As one of the first RPGs on the machine, this could set an impressive precedent.

THE *ELDER SCROLLS* series, which includes the titles *Arena* and *Daggerfall* on PC, is about to get its biggest update so far. This third version of the role-playing series received a lot of attention at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles this year with its fine attention to detail and epic scale.

In true RPG fashion, players step into the role of a chosen one, foretold by prophets as the stranger who would come to save their land. It's the chosen one's task to rid the land of a plague, called the Blight, which has crippled the once quiet province of Morrowind. Over the course of the journey there will be a variety of different character classes to interact with, including fighters, magicians and thieves.

The sheer size of *Elder Scrolls III* is mind-boggling and there are several different ways in which the player can try to save Morrowind. All choices have an affect on the resulting storyline.

Bethesda Softworks has laid its cards on the table by saying that the game will feature over 200 hours of non-linear gameplay. That's a big game.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Bethesda have written *Echelon*, *Sea Dogs* and *SkyNE* amongst others.
www.elderscrolls.com



↑ Incredibly, each stalk of wheat is individually modelled.



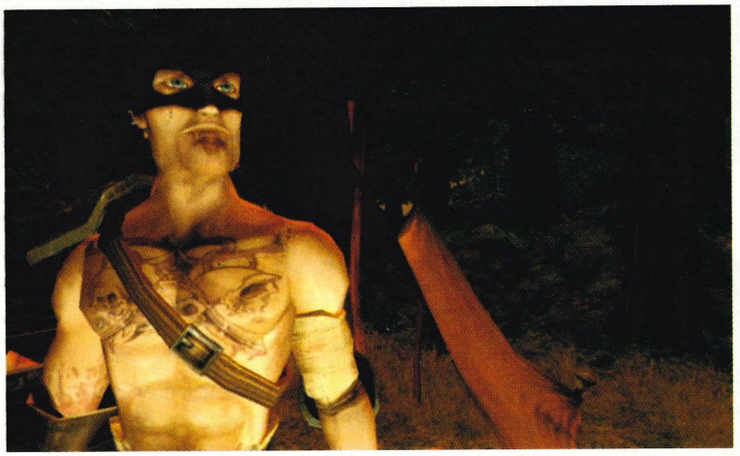
↑ As well as stunning exterior environments, the insides look pretty good too.



↑ Yes, these are game engine screenshots.



↑ Lens flare – that's just *sooo* 1997 driving game.



↑ An example of how not to dress in order to make friends and influence people.



↑ A seemingly-innocent woodland glade, yesterday.

DEVELOPER: **BIG BLUE BOX** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **Q4/02** MULTIPLAYER: **1**

PROJECT EGO

Some titles claim to be 'games of a lifetime' – this one genuinely is *exactly* that.

ONLY ON XBOX

WITH PETER MOLYNEUX helping out in the background, Big Blue Box is in the process of developing its first game, *Project Ego*. It's a role-playing game of sorts, with a slight Japanese look about it. From this starting point, though, it takes a dramatically different path...

Players create a character and take it from childhood to old age. As the character matures, the aim is to turn an inexperienced youngster into the most powerful being in the world by fair means or foul.

As in Molyneux's PC game *Black & White*, players will have to decide which path they choose to follow. The choice between righteousness and evil is always open and unlike games with traditional branching storylines (which always promise freedom, but rarely deliver it), players always have an option to react to situations in any way they feel appropriate.

This could be the first game ever to feature a character who gradually ages as the game progresses – rather than simply switching from youth to maturity as in *Zelda*, for instance. By the time your character grows to adulthood, his or her appearance will be defined by how much exercise they've had, the acts they've carried out in the game, even how much time they've spent in the virtual sun. If you want to be buff and tan when you're 30, you'll going to have to get off the sofa and take some exercise a few game years in advance.

This feature isn't just a cosmetic one, either. The way that non-player characters react to the gamer's hero will depend on the way he or she looks (the only initial choice players are presented with is their character's gender). If a gamer's character is covered in evil-looking facial tattoos, for instance, villagers won't be nearly so friendly as they would to a nice, clean-cut hero.

If *Project Ego* fulfils its promise, it's likely to be a gaming benchmark, up there with the likes of *Mario 64* and even *Populous*.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Project Ego was originally known as *Heroes*, and then *Fable*.

www.bigbluebox.com

DEVELOPER: **BLITZ GAMES** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

FUZION FRENZY

One of the least-hyped third-party games is fast turning into one of the most enjoyable.

ONLY ON XBOX

DESIGNED AS A simultaneous four-player button-bashing romp, *Fuzion Frenzy* consists of a street-based 'future' game with a further 45 mini games sitting underneath it.

Each player starts out with a number of crystals, which are used as betting currency. When the game starts, players have to collect crystals of their own colour and bring them back to their goal – the more crystals accrued, the bigger the bonus.

However, other players can steal the crystals and take them to their goal.

After this, the game switches to one of 45 mini games where more crystals can be earned Just four examples of these are races in rubber boats, 'last-man standing' in body-encompassing steel balls, a *Tron*-style game with bikes that create player-trapping walls and a simple 'splat as many bugs as possible' button bash-athon.

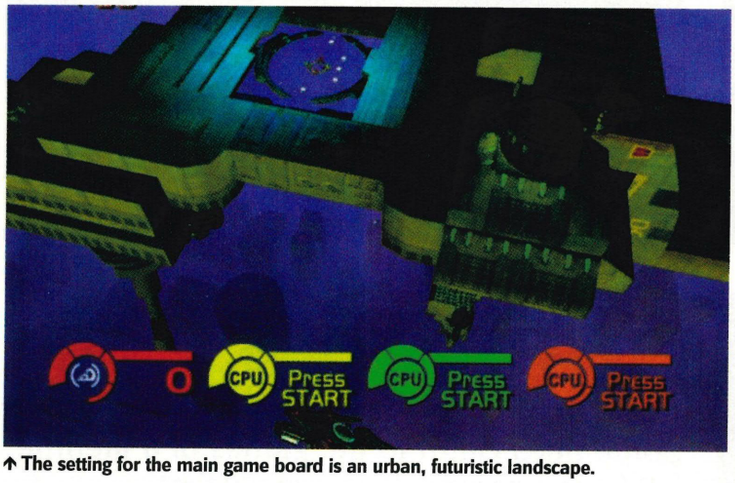
The 'party game' is a tricky genre to tackle – and even harder to get right – but Blitz appears to have hit the target. There's little doubt that *Fuzion Frenzy* will sell more second, third and fourth Xbox controllers than any other game.

FROM THE TOP

This games is expected to accompany the Japan, US and UK launches of Xbox.
www.blitzgames.co.uk/games



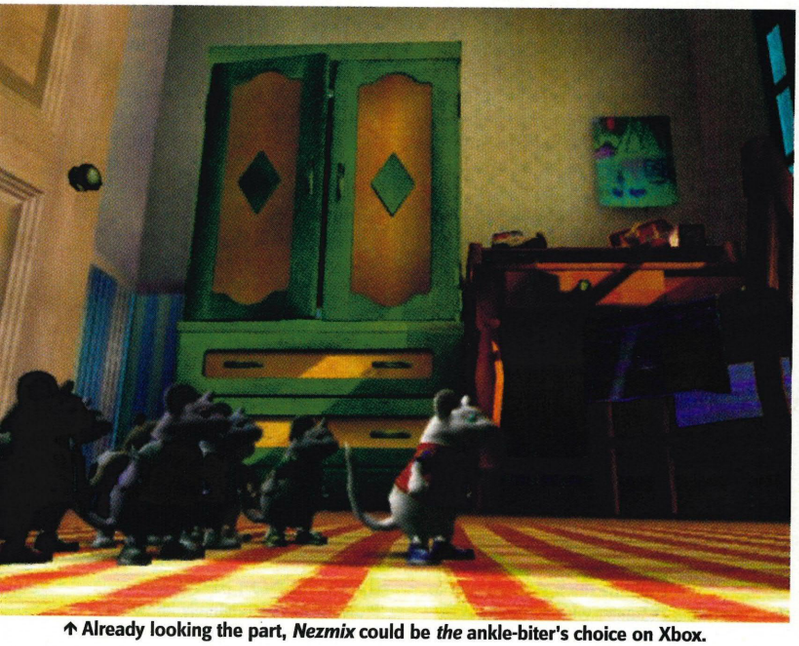
↑ ***Fuzion Frenzy*** **takes the baton from the** ***Mario Party*** **series on N64.**



↑ **The setting for the main game board is an urban, futuristic landscape.**



↑ **It's the simple concepts of the parts that makes the whole so compulsive.**



↑ **Already looking the part,** ***Nezmix*** **could be** ***the*** **ankle-biter's choice on Xbox.**

DEVELOPER: **MEDIA VISION** PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

NEZMIX

What with all the FPS, racing and adventure announced for Xbox, a game about likkle mice makes a nice change.

ONLY ON XBOX

ALTHOUGH WHAT was shown of it at the Tokyo Game Show was a very early work-in-progress, Nezmix already displays some novel ideas.

The premise is simple – players are cast as the leader of a mouse gang fending off rival groups to maintain its position of superiority in a large house.

Negotiating the dwelling from an inch above the floor – where everyday objects naturally look enormous – the band of meeces has a number of different rooms through which it can pursue the enemy rodents.

Rather than the whole of the planned-to-be-vast house being open to full exploration at all times, a player's choice of room and path will instead trigger one of several scripted events. Each location will also feature a number of puzzles.

To alleviate some of the confusion that may arise from scuttling around at toe-height, a free-look option will allow for players to get a better perspective of the surroundings.

In tone and look, *Nezmix* is very similar to the *Stuart Little* movies. One for the litl'uns, perhaps, with its simple story and cute graphics, but it could turn out to be great fun.

GONE TOO FUR

To create realistic mice, Media Vision use 'fur shading', of their own invention.
www.xbox.jp



↑ Daffy's Duck Dodgers persona gets another airing.

DEVELOPER: **WARTHOG** PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES** RELEASE DATE: **Q4/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

LOONS: THE FIGHT FOR FAME

The most endearing and enduring bunch of cartoon characters are brought together for the purposes of a party game.

PITCHED AS an action beat-'em-up with a party game twist, *Loons - The Fight for Fame* features most of the legendary Warner Bros cartoon characters in a colourful multiplayer experience.

Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Sylvester the cat and the rabid Tasmanian Devil take the central roles. Each one naturally does all the things it is famous for from the cartoons.

During each party-themed game up to four players can use every ACME-designed trick in the book to prevail and ultimately become the number one star of the show. If an item has appeared in a cartoon, chances are it'll feature in the game. Custard pies, falling anvils, instant storms and TNT dynamite are all at the player's disposal.

Gameplay will involve out-dancing, out-performing, out-fighting and upstaging the enemy in a series of interactive movie sets.

There will also be Behind the Scenes mini games in each location that allow players to step back from the main action should it get too heated.

Warthog is devising a trademark cartoon Loonyverse using all the tools provided by Xbox. The cartoons upon which this game is based may have been drawn with pencil and ink, but likes of dynamic lighting, character deformation and particle effects are needed to impart that Loony Tunes feel. That's technology for ya...

THEY ARE REAL

A loon is a bird similar to geese and ducks, long considered special in the US.

www.warthog.co.uk



DEVELOPER: **PRESTO STUDIO**
PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

MYST III: EXILE

The saga continues...

SINCE IT first appeared in 1993, *Myst* and its sequel *Riven* have between them sold more than nine million copies. That puts *Myst*, on some lists, as the best-selling PC game ever.

The games are puzzle-heavy adventures with lush graphics and a deliberately slow pace. *Myst III: Exile* is no exception, and so memory-guzzling are its fantasy landscapes that a proposed PS2 version was canned in favour of one for the more-capable Xbox.

The plot continues the story unfolded in *Myst* and *Riven*, but it's not necessary to have played both or either to get the full benefit of *Exile*. The player is trapped in a mysterious age, and has to explore the environment while solving puzzles and gradually shedding light on the mysterious plot.

Compared with other adventure games, *Exile* is something of a curiosity, but one with undeniable charms.

BRAD'S ENTERTAINMENT

Horror regular Brad Dourif plays the villain Saavedro in live-action segments.

www.myst3.com »

DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM** PUBLISHER: **TBA**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

The benchmark online RPG is made-over for Xbox.

AT THE AUTUMN Tokyo Game Show one of the biggest announcements was that Sega would create a new *Phantasy Star Online* title for Xbox. Developed by the acclaimed Sonic Team under the watchful eye of Yuji Naka, the Dreamcast version of *Phantasy Star Online* has already amassed more than 300,000 players from around the world since its launch.

Sega and Microsoft will work together on the development which will take full advantage of Xbox's online and hard-drive technology.

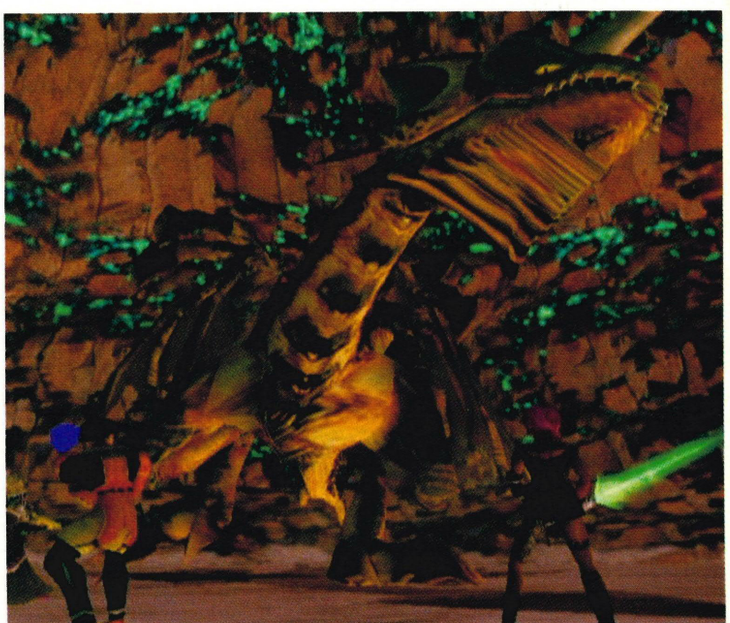
Solid details of the Xbox version have yet to be released. The recently released *PSO Ver. 2* for Dreamcast included all of the original content, but expanded the universe with extra levels, features and creatures.

Phantasy Star Online was the first MMORPG for consoles and included a revolutionary user interface. It allowed players to interact with each other using simple icons such as a coffee mug to signal a break. Expect the Xbox version to improve an already-winning formula.

A SEGA STALWART

Phantasy Star graced every one of Sega's consoles, even the handheld Game Gear.

www.sega.co.jp



↑ One of the most popular online games of all time (GameCube shot).



↑ The massive and beautifully realised *Rayman* worlds should be perfect for deathmatches.

DEVELOPER: **UBI SOFT** PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT** RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **4**

RAYMAN M

Where 'M' stands for multiplayer in a new departure for one of platforming's stars.

THE ANTICS OF Rayman are usually associated with an abundance of platforms and well-timed jumps, but *Rayman M* throws Ubi Soft's mascot into a multiplayer action game.

Based on the environments seen in *Rayman 2*, established characters join Rayman for two kinds of cartoon action, including Ly the fairy and Globox.

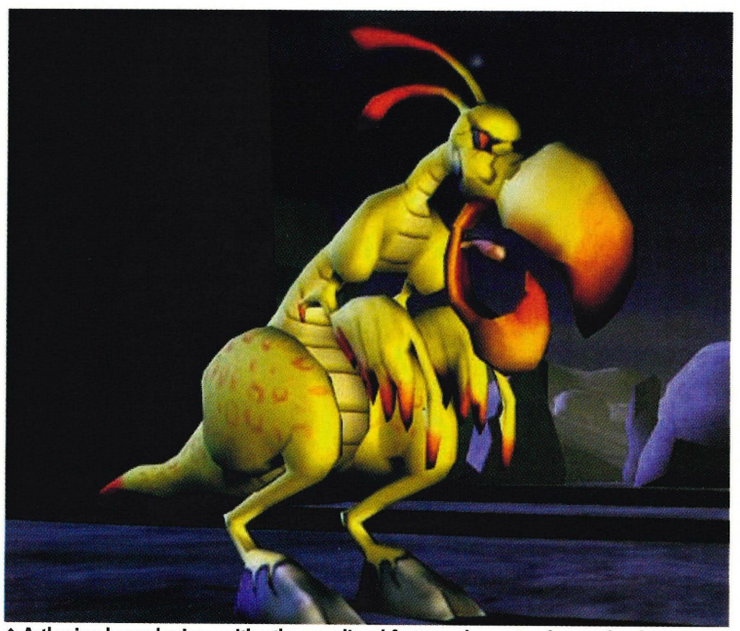
As in *Mad Dash Racing*, players race against each other on foot and have to traverse numerous obstacles in a bid to seal first place. The 12 courses are based on existing Rayman universe locations, and have been designed with shortcuts, alternative routes and traps.

In the shooting mode, players have to collect 'lums', the signature *Rayman* tokens. Again, the 12 arenas are littered with traps and obstacles to make this deathmatch-style mode more interesting.

SPOONERISM

Man Ray was a photographer who dabbled in Dadaism and Surrealism.

corp.ubisoft.com



↑ Arthurian legend mixes with other medieval fantasy elements – hence the dragon.

DEVELOPER: **MICROIDS CANADA** PUBLISHER: **MICROIDS**
RELEASE DATE: **TBA** MULTIPLAYER: **TBA**

APPRENTICE KNIGHT

The story of King Arthur is given another airing, but this time his world will be a very different place indeed...

SETTING AN action game in medieval times is nothing new. Giving that medieval action game a cartoon theme, similarly, has been done before. But drawing directly from Arthurian legend as the basis for the cartoon medieval action – now that's some original thinking.

Canadians fiddling with one of England's most treasured legends? It's to be hoped that developer Microids doesn't mess too much with the tale of King Arthur in its efforts to 'toon it up'.

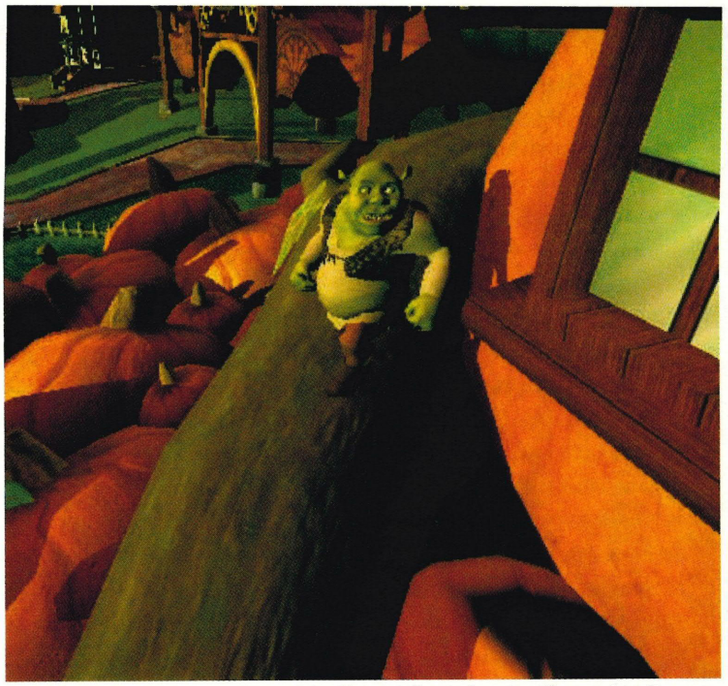
Details are scant at the moment, but it would be remiss of anyone retelling what is one of history's greatest yarns without mentioning the Knights of the Round Table, Merlin the wizard, Arthur's less-than-loyal other half Lady Guinevere and sword-in-the-stone Excalibur. A name like *Apprentice Knight* points to the game being an episodic, learn-and-grow adventure, but that has yet to be confirmed.

One the favourite new toys of Xbox developers – based on the sheer number of games announced to include it – appears to be Dynamic Sound, and Microids are not alone in using the function to heighten atmosphere during tense or exciting game sequences.

STUFF OF LEGEND

Historians still argue as to whether or not King Arthur actually existed.

www.microids.com



↑ *Shrek* isn't a straight reworking of the film, so all-new locations feature heavily.

DEVELOPER: **DIGITAL ILLUSIONS** PUBLISHER: **TDK**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

SHREK

A big green ogre hopes to break the 'great film doth not a great game make' rule.

ONLY ON XBOX

THE ANIMATED movie *Shrek* was a massive success, and this platform game sees Shrek having to rescue Donkey, who's been trapped in the magic mirror by the evil sorcerer Merlin.

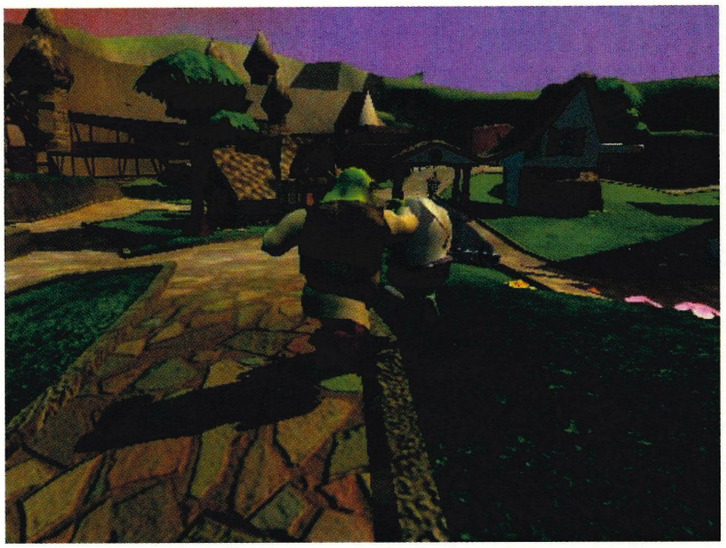
The action takes place across eight environments not seen in the film. In each one, Shrek will have to perform six specific tasks before he can progress to the next. Completing extra missions will unlock hidden secrets and cheat modes within each world.

Several new characters will also be introduced, but during his journey, players will come across some familiar characters. Unfortunately, Merlin will have possessed them by the time the big ogre turns up.

As games of films go, this is more a case of 'based on the world of' rather than 'page-by-page adaptation of', but authenticity seems to be high on TDK's list of priorities. Early screenshots show worlds very similar to those seen in the film, and Shrek himself looks superb.

GROOVY BABY

Mike Myers provided Shrek's film voice, the game voice has not been confirmed.
www.shrekgame.com



↑ Dreamworks has been "really cool" about all-new additions, says TDK.



↑ Shrek will have the ability - like he had in the film - to fart at will.

DEVELOPER: **ARGONAUT** PUBLISHER: **VIVENDI UNIVERSAL**
RELEASE DATE: **Q1/02** MULTIPLAYER: **NO**

MALICE: KAT'S TALE

The game first used to showcase the power of Xbox at the machine's public unveiling at the CES back in January.

DESCRIBED AS A dark and comic modern day myth, *Malice: Kat's Tale* is loosely inspired by Lewis Carroll's book *Alice in Wonderland*.

The lead character may look like an innocent little girl, but things start go wrong when she accidentally unleashes an ancient Fire Demon into the world.

Gameplay follows a character-driven plot revolving around the girl's attempts to track down the hideous demon, which is named Malice Incarnate.

As the screenshot shows, the amount of detail in the game is more than impressive - take a close look at the heroine's weapon of choice, the enormous Clockwork Hammer.

Other weapons include the Mace of Clubs and the Quantum Tuning Fork.

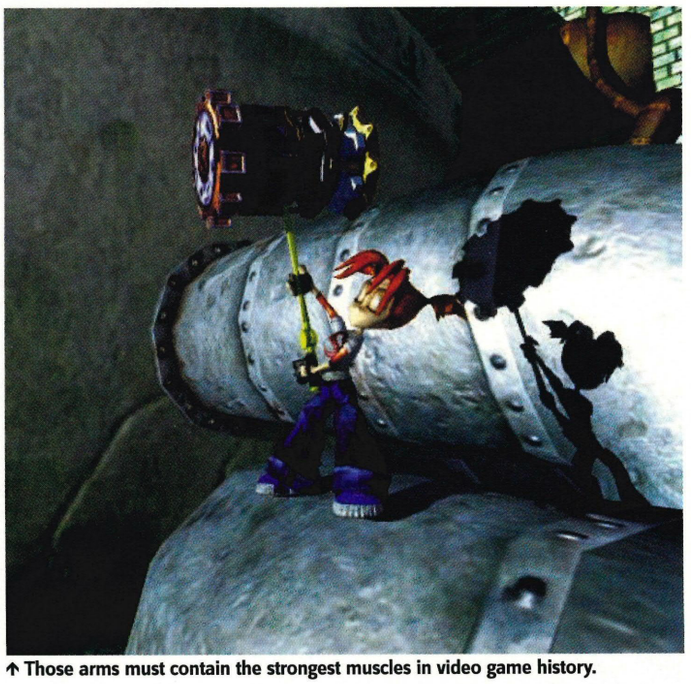
The game environments are similarly impressive. As the young girl completes her journey she will travel through the Glowurm Kingdom, the Fountain of Tears, the Clockwork Maze and the nest of the Crow Assassin.

Magic can be used along with the weapons, and as the game progresses, so the girl ages, growing through different incarnations until she becomes a goddess. Only at the level of deity can she slay Malice Incarnate.

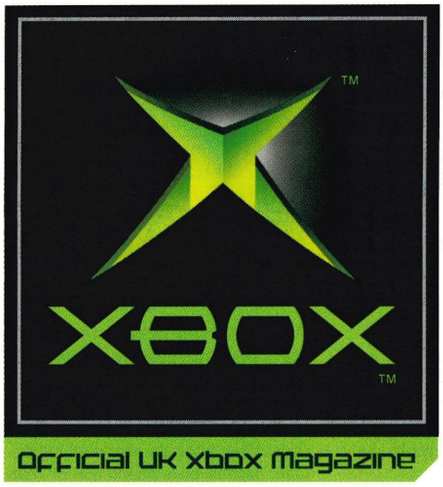
Quite simply, *Malice* is looking superb - here's hoping it plays that way.

NOT SO CUTE

Argonaut were behind the distinctly darker *Alien Resurrection* on PlayStation.
www.argonaut.com/malice OXM



↑ Those arms must contain the strongest muscles in video game history.



THE COMPLETE PICTURE: INDEX

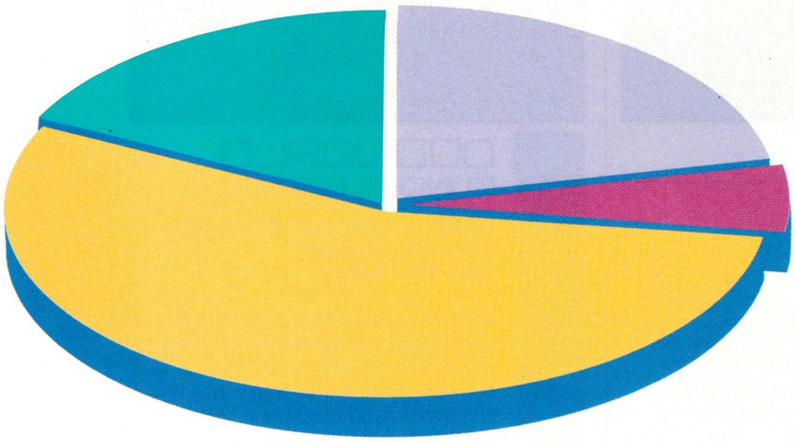
The complete guide to every Xbox game in development.

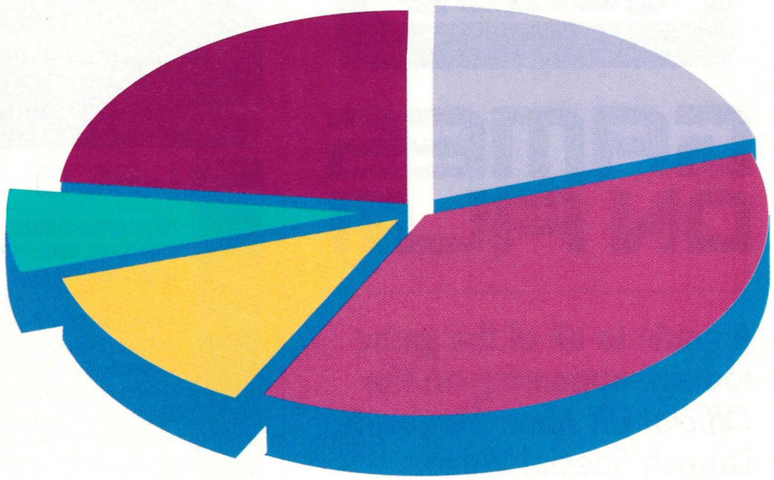
GAME NAME	PAGE	GENRE	ORIGIN	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	RELEASE DATE
4x4 Evo	87	Racing	US	Terminal Reality	Take 2	Q1/02
AI: Artificial Intelligence	79	Action	US	Microsoft	Microsoft	TBA
Air Force Delta Storm	72	Action	Japan	Konami	Konami	TBA
Amped: Freestyle Snowboarding	92	Sports	US	Microsoft	Microsoft	Q1/02
Apprentice Knight	110	Platform	Europe	Microids	Microids	Q2/02
Arctic Thunder	84	Racing	US	Midway	Midway	Q1/02
Azurik: Rise of Perathia	66	Action	US	Adrenium Games	Microsoft	TBA
Batman Vengeance	75	Action	US	Ubi Soft Canada	Ubi Soft	Q1/02
BC	65	Action	UK	Intrepid Computer Entertainment	Microsoft	Q2/02
Blood Omen 2	79	Action	US	Crystal Dynamics	Eidos	TBA
Blood Wake	72	Action	US	Stormfront Studios	Microsoft	Q2/02
Bounty Hunter	68	Action	UK	Warthog	EA	Q1/02
Brute Force	79	Action	US	Digital Anvil	Microsoft	Q1/02
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	67	Action	US	The Collective	EA	Q1/02
Cel Damage	82	Racing	US	Pseudo Interactive	EA	Q3/02
Championship Manager 01/02	94	Sports	UK	Sports Interactive	Eidos	Q1/02
Circus Maximus	66	Action	US	Kodiak Interactive	Encore	Q1/02
Colin McRae	87	Racing	UK	Codemasters	Codemasters	TBA
Conflict: Desert Storm	68	Action	UK	Pivotal Games	SCi	Q3/02
Crash	84	Racing	UK	Rage	Rage	Q4/02
Crazy Taxi Next	87	Racing	Japan	Sega	Infogrames	Q1/02
Dark Summit	97	Sports	US	Radical Entertainment	THQ	Q2/02
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	95	Sports	US	Z-Axis	Acclaim	Q1/02
David Beckham Soccer	97	Sports	UK	Rage	Rage	Q2/02
Dead or Alive 3	22	Action	Japan	Team Ninja	Tecmo	TBA
Dead to Rights	79	Action	USA	Namco USA	Namco	TBA
Dreadnoughts	72	Action	US	Xenopi Studios	TBA	Q3/02
Duke Nukem Forever	79	Action	US	3D Realms	Take 2	TBA
Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	106	Platform	US	Bethesda Softworks	Eon Digital	Q1/02
Enclave	70	Action	Europe	Starbreeze Studios	Conspiracy Games	Q1/02
ESPN National Hockey Night 2002	103	Sports	US	ESPN the Games	Konami	TBA
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	100	Sports	US	ESPN the Games	Konami	TBA
ESPN NFL Primetime 2002	103	Sports	US	ESPN the Games	Konami	TBA
F1 2001	86	Racing	UK	EA Sports	EA	Q1/02
Falcone: Into the Maelstrom	75	Action	UK	Point Blank	Virgin Interactive	Q2/02
FIFA 2002	100	Sports	US	EA Sports	EA	Q1/02
Freaky Flyers	87	Racing	US	Midway	Midway	Q1/02
Fuzion Frenzy	108	Platform	UK	Blitz Games	Microsoft	TBA
Galleon	104	Platform	UK	Confounding Factor	Interplay	TBA
Genma Onimusha	76	Action	Japan	Capcom	Capcom	Q1/02
Giants	79	Action	US	Planet Moon Studios	Interplay	Q1/02
Gun Metal	71	Action	UK	Rage	Rage	Q2/02
Gun Valkyrie	69	Action	Japan	Smilebit	Infogrames	TBA
Halo	16	Action	US	Bungie	Microsoft	Q2/02
Hunter: The Reckoning	74	Action	US	High Voltage Software	Interplay	Q1/02
ISS Xbox	94	Sports	Japan	Konami	Konami	Q1/02
Jet Set Radio Future	70	Action	Japan	Smilebit	Infogrames	Q4/02
Jimmy White's Cueball World	100	Sports	UK	Awesome Developments	Virgin Interactive	TBA
Jonny Drama	73	Action	US	Sierra	Sierra	TBA
Kabuki Warriors	79	Action	Japan	Lightweight	TBA	Q1/02
Kakuto Chojin	88	Beat-'em-up	Japan	Dream Publishing	Microsoft	Q1/02
Knockout Kings	103	Sports	US	EA Sports	EA	TBA
Loons - The Fight for Fame	109	Platform	UK	Warthog	Infogrames	Q1/02
Lotus Challenge	87	Racing	UK	Kuju Entertainment	Virgin Interactive	Q1/02
Mad Dash Racing	80	Racing	US	Crystal Dynamics	Eidos	Q1/02
Madden NFL 2002	103	Sports	US	Tiburon	EA	Q1/02
Malice: Kat's Tale	111	Platform	UK	Argonaut Software	Vivendi Universal	Q4/02
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	103	Sports	US	Activision	Activision	TBA
Max Payne	76	Action	US	Neo Software	Rockstar Games	Q1/02
Maximum Chase	85	Racing	Japan	Genki	Microsoft	TBA
Medal of Honor: Allied Assault	73	Action	US	2015	EA	Q1/02
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	98	Sports	UK	Atomic Planet	Codemasters	Q1/02
Mortal Kombat	91	Beat-'em-up	US	Midway	Midway	Q1/02
MotoGP	85	Racing	UK	Climax	THQ	TBA
MX 2002 feat. Ricky Carmichael	103	Sports	US	PCP&LC	THQ	Q2/02
Myst III: Exile	109	Platform	US	Presto Studio	Ubi Soft	Q4/02
NASCAR Heat 2002	87	Racing	US	Monster Games	Infogrames	Q1/02
NBA Live 2002	103	Sports	US	EA Sports	EA	Q2/02
NBA2K2	100	Sports	US	Visual Concepts	Sega of America	TBA
Nezmix	108	Platform	Japan	MediaVision	Microsoft	TBA
NFL 2K2	103	Sports	US	Visual Concepts	Sega of America	TBA
NFL Blitz 20-02	100	Sports	US	Midway	Midway	Q1/02
NFL Fever 2002	94	Sports	US	Microsoft	Microsoft	Q1/02
NHL 2002	100	Sports	US	EA Sports	EA	Q1/02
NHL Hitz 20-02	103	Sports	US	Black Box	Midway	Q1/02
Nightcaster	73	Action	US	VR-1 Entertainment	Microsoft	Q1/02
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee	34	Platform	US	Oddworld Inhabitants	Microsoft	TBA
Outlaw Golf	98	Sports	US	Simon & Schuster Interactive	Simon&Schuster	TBA
Panzer Dragoon	79	Action	Japan	Sega	Infogrames	Q1/02
Phantasy Star Online	109	Platform	Japan	Sega	Sega	Q2/02
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	75	Action	US	Westwood Studios	EA	TBA
Project Ego	107	Platform	UK	Big Blue Box	Microsoft	Q1/02
Project Gotham Racing	28	Racing	UK	Bizarre Creations	Microsoft	Q1/02
Rallisport Challenge	86	Racing	UK	Digital Illusions	Microsoft	Q1/02
Rally Trophy	85	Racing	Europe	Bugbear	JoWood	TBA
Rayman M	110	Platform	Europe	Ubi Soft Canada	Ubi Soft	Q2/02
Reign of Fire	77	Action	UK	Kuju Entertainment	Bam Entertainment	Q1/02
Ridge Racer Next	87	Racing	Japan	Namco	Namco	TBA
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown	77	Action	US	Cinemaware	TBA	Q1/02
Rocky	91	Beat-'em-up	UK	Rage	Rage	Q1/02
Sega GT 2002	87	Racing	Japan	Sega	Infogrames	TBA
Shenmue 2	106	Platform	Japan	Sega	Sega	TBA
Shrek	111	Platform	US	Digital Illusions Canada	TDK Mediactive	Q4/02
Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams	106	Platform	Japan	Konami	Konami	Q1/02
Soul Calibur 2	90	Beat-'em-up	Japan	Namco	Namco	Q1/02
Spiderman	70	Action	US	Treyarch	Activision	Q1/02
SSX Tricky	96	Sports	US	EA Sports Big	EA	Q4/02
Star Wars: Obi Wan	66	Action	US	LucasArts	Activision	Q1/02
Star Wars: Starfighter SE	69	Action	US	Secret Level	LucasArts	Q1/02
SWAT: Global Strike Team	65	Action	UK	Argonaut Software	Sierra	Q1/02
Test Drive Off-Road - Wide Open	87	Racing	US	Angel Studios	Infogrames	Q1/02
Test Drive Underground	87	Racing	US	Pitbull Syndicate	Infogrames	TBA
The Matrix	79	Action	US	Shiny Entertainment	Interplay	TBA
The Simpsons Road Rage	82	Racing	US	Radical Entertainment	EA	TBA
The Thing	69	Action	UK	Computer Artworks	Universal IS	Q4/02
TOCA Race Driver	82	Racing	UK	Codemasters	Codemasters	Q1/02
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	79	Action	US	Red Storm Entertainment	Ubi Soft	Q1/02
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	99	Sports	US	Neversoft	Activision	TBA
TransWorld Snowboarding	99	Sports	Europe	Housemarque	Infogrames	Q1/02
TransWorld Surf	98	Sports	US	Angel Studios	Infogrames	Q2/02
Triple Play Baseball	103	Sports	US	EA Sports	EA	TBA
UFC Tapout	91	Beat-'em-up	Japan	Dream Factory	Ubi Soft	TBA
Ultimate Blade of Darkness	79	Action	Europe	Rebel Act	Codemasters	TBA
Unreal Championship	62	Action	US	Digital Extremes	Infogrames	TBA
Wrath	77	Action	US	The Collective	TBA	Q1/02
Wreckless	83	Racing	Japan	Bunkasha Publishing	Activision	Q1/02
WWF Raw Is War	90	Beat-'em-up	Japan	Anchor	THQ	Q3/02
Yager	65	Action	Europe	Yager Development	THQ	TBA

For news on all Xbox announcements between now and UK launch, log on to: **www.officialxboxmagazine.co.uk**

ESSENTIAL XBOX STATS

The key statistics in the world of Xbox gaming.



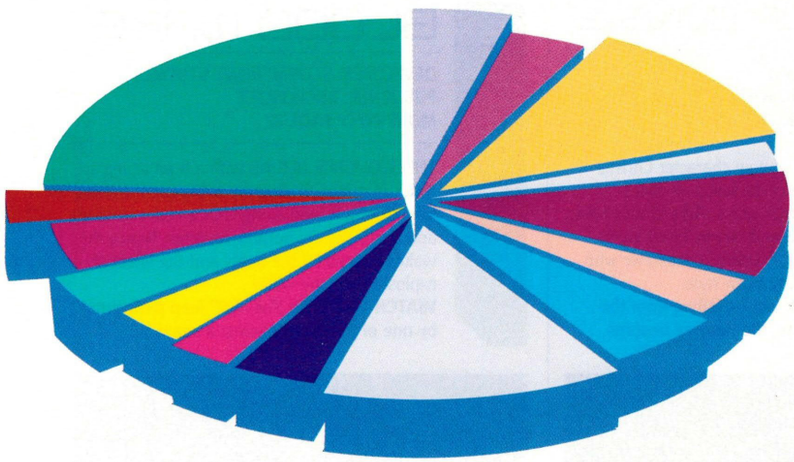


GAMES BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

KEY	
North America	65
Japan	20
UK	26
Rest of Europe	7

GAMES BY CATEGORY

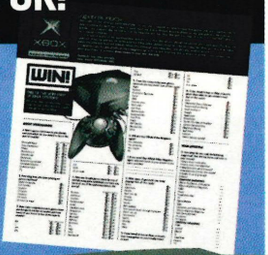
KEY	
Action games	44
Sports games	28
Racing games	24
Platform games (including Puzzle and Role-Playing Games)	15
Beat-'em-ups	7



GAMES BY PUBLISHER

KEY			
Activision	5	Microsoft	17
Codemasters	4	Midway	5
Electronic Arts	14	Namco	3
Eidos	3	Rage	4
Infogrames	12	THQ	5
Interplay	4	Ubi Soft	5
Konami	6	Virgin Interactive	3
		Others (less than 3 titles in total)	28

WIN! ONE OF THE VERY FIRST XBOX SYSTEMS IN THE UK!



Fill in our questionnaire and become one of the first people in the UK to own an Xbox.

HOW TO ENTER

TO BE IN with a chance of winning the Xbox, complete the questionnaire inserted in the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* Launch Special and return it to the address below. Your opinions count are important to us here at the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* and your answers will not affect your chances of winning. Please be as honest as you like.

RETURN COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES TO:
Andrea Cooper (Xbox)
Market Research Manager
Official UK Xbox Magazine
FREEPOST
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath BA1 2XF



The *Official UK Xbox Magazine* Launch Special Complete Picture sponsored by GAME.
GET INTO GAME FOR THE ULTIMATE IN PC AND CONSOLE SOFTWARE www.game.co.uk

GAMES ON FILM

A guide to all of the game footage appearing on the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* Launch Special Video.



1 HALO

DEVELOPER: **BUNGIE**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 16**

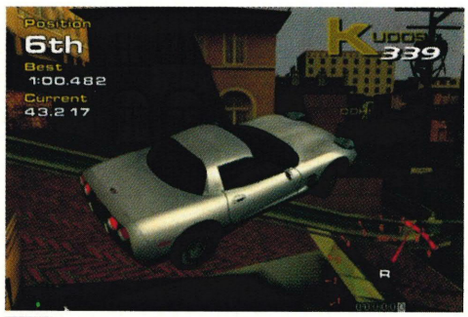
A LONG SHOT of the Halo ringworld opens the *Halo* footage, followed in quick succession by a snow environment and one of the games grassier opening levels. The Warthog jeep, Scorpion tank, and Banshee vehicles are shown along with the Needler and Assault Rifle weapons.
WATCH OUT FOR: The drop ship sequence.



2 ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

DEVELOPER: **ODDWORLD INHABITANTS**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 34**

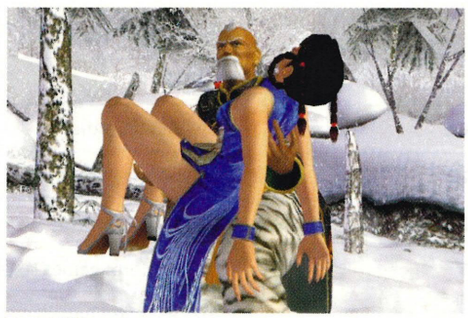
A FAST-PACED set of clips including fire-fight sequences and the mind-controlled Snoozer Droids attacking a group of Slig warriors. Abe helps Munch over a tall fence who later makes use of one of the game's vending machines to take a power-up.
WATCH OUT FOR: Abe crossing a drop.



3 PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

DEVELOPER: **BIZARRE CREATIONS**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 28**

TWO CITIES feature in this clip montage - New York and London - and the weather is decidedly grim in both. Some of the cars featured include a Ferrari 550 Marinello, a Porsche 911, Porsche Boxster and there's a fleeting glimpse of the new TVR.
WATCH OUT FOR: The body deformation.



4 DEAD OR ALIVE 3

DEVELOPER: **TECMO**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 22**

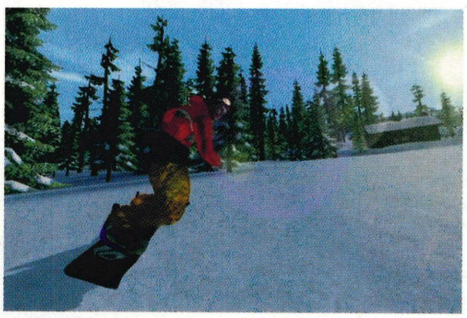
A PANNING SHOT of new character Christie warming up - one of the first sequences released to the games press. Fight scenes take place on the beach and snowy forest levels and feature Leifang, a Chinese character who fights in the T'ai Chi Quan style
WATCH OUT FOR: Leaves falling from the trees and, of course, the heaving bosoms.



5 BLOOD WAKE

DEVELOPER: **STORMFRONT STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 72**

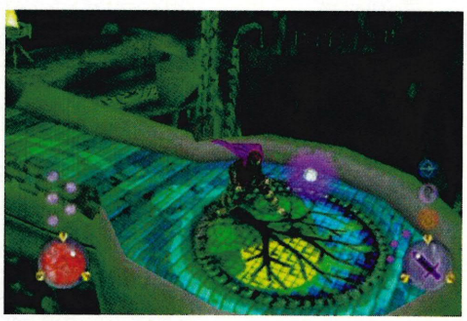
THE SEQUENCE BEGINS with a boat laying a series of mines. During the subsequent battles, torpedoes are fired along with a chain cannon and a selection of homing missiles. Notice the wakes created by the boats and the effect of explosions on the water .
WATCH OUT FOR: The 360° leap performed by one of the boats against a sea wall.



6 AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING

DEVELOPER: **MICROSOFT**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 92**

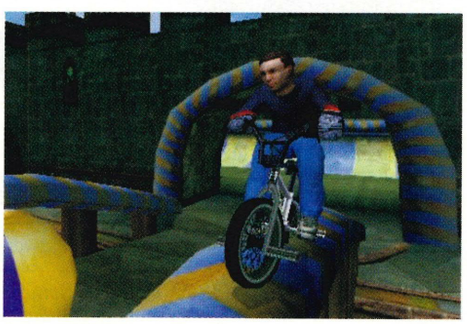
FOOTAGE FROM the 'free roaming' mode, although there is a glimpse of a half pipe. Lots of 'big air', slow mo action, along with some fantastic weather effects as a boarder makes his way through a forest during a blizzard.
WATCH OUT FOR: A stunt in front of one of the game's roving photographers.



7 NIGHTCASTER

DEVELOPER: **VR-1 ENTERTAINMENT**
PUBLISHER: **MICROSOFT**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 73**

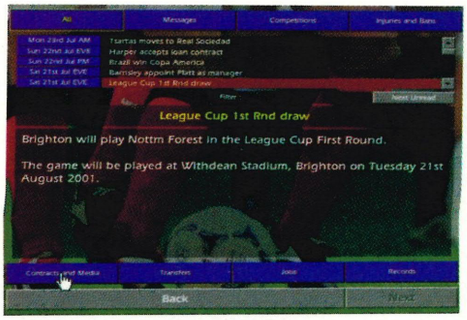
LOTS OF MAGIC-RELATED pyrotechnics, including one of the game's most outlandish spells where enormous metal walls are thrown up around the targeted enemies, who are then mown down by a huge rotating blade.
WATCH OUT FOR: The game's central character aging from child to old man over the course of just a few seconds.



8 DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

DEVELOPER: **Z-AXIS**
PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 94**

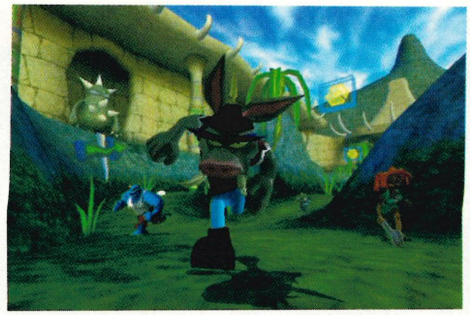
FOOTAGE of both in-game Dave and the man himself, although he restricts his stunting to the half pipe outside his house. In-game Dave rides downtown, no doubt enraging the council with his destruction of bus shelters and roofs.
WATCH OUT FOR: Dave jumping on to some pylons and nonchalantly riding the lines.



9 CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 01/02

DEVELOPER: **SPORTS INTERACTIVE**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 94**

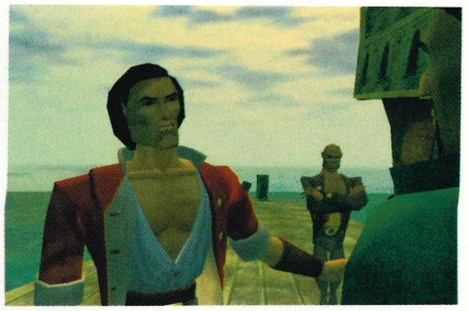
AN INTERVIEW with one of the chief brains behind *Championship Manager*, the most successful series of footy management games ever made. Also, a group of programmers is shown hard at 'work'.
WATCH OUT FOR: The various versions of *Champ Man*, localised for the Continent.



10 MAD DASH RACING

DEVELOPER: **CRYSTAL DYNAMICS**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 80**

THE SMOOTH animation of all the cartoon characters in this footage is an impressive feature, along with the wide range of levels - from beach to prehistoric desert. Also, look for one of the characters scaling an enormous chain link fence to continue his race.
WATCH OUT FOR: The four-way split screen footage showing the multiplayer game.



11 GALLEON

DEVELOPER: **CONFOUNDING FACTOR**
PUBLISHER: **INTERPLAY**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 104**

ONE OF THE most eagerly-awaited Xbox titles, demonstrating that Lara Croft-creator Toby Gard hasn't lost his touch. The footage shows seamless transitions between cut-scene and gameplay, as well as some of the most death-defying platform leaping ever seen in a game.
WATCH OUT FOR: An improbable escape from a collapsing bridge - spectacular.



12 BATMAN VENGEANCE

DEVELOPER: **UBI SOFT CANADA**
PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 75**

A HOST OF scenes from the forthcoming game based on the cartoon series. As well as hand-to-hand combat with a few henchmen, several of Batman's vehicles appear.
WATCH OUT FOR: The Bat Plane chasing an enemy craft through the streets of Gotham.



13 NASCAR HEAT 2002

DEVELOPER: **MONSTER GAMES**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
MORE INFO: ***OFFICIAL UK XBOX MAGAZINE* PROMOTIONAL SUPPLEMENT**

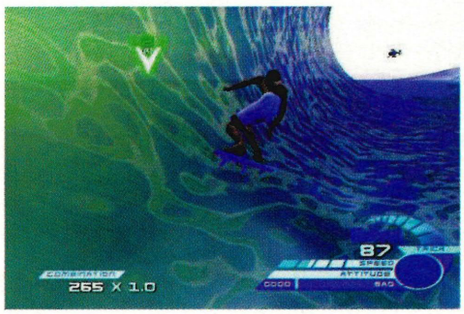
NASCAR MAY BE unfamiliar to Europeans but this might be the game to bring it to a wider audience. Check out the inter-cutting between real world and game footage.
WATCH OUT FOR: The bit with the brief collision, and also some flying bodywork.



14 TRANSWORLD SNOWBOARDING

DEVELOPER: **HOUSEMARQUE**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
MORE INFO: **OFFICIAL XBOX PROMOTIONAL SUPPLEMENT**

THIS FOOTAGE shows that Microsoft's *Amped* won't have it all its own way next year. More huge snowboarding air here, as well as shots of one of the game's half pipes.
WATCH OUT FOR: Look for the detail on the boarder's clothes - it's amazing.



15 TRANSWORLD SURF

DEVELOPER: **ANGEL STUDIOS**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
MORE INFO: ***OFFICIAL UK XBOX MAGAZINE* PROMOTIONAL SUPPLEMENT**

HUGE, TWELVE-FOOT waves towering above a surfer, and a glimpse of one of the in-game photographers which hints at the way the game's scoring system will work.
WATCH OUT FOR: Water on the camera.



16 GUN METAL

DEVELOPER: **RAGE**
PUBLISHER: **RAGE**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 71**

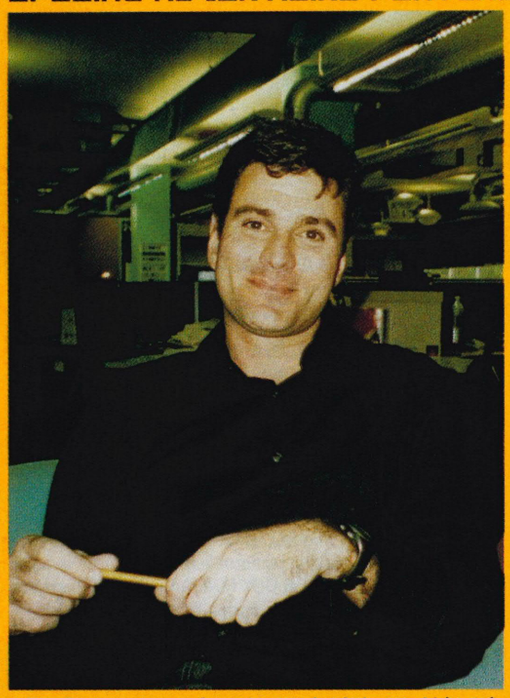
A SEQUENCE FROM the game's opening level shows the enormous variety of both land and airborne enemies. The transformation between robot and jet is shown, along with a variety of the offensive weapons on offer.
WATCH OUT FOR: The giant robot stomping through the forest in the most un-ecological manner imaginable.



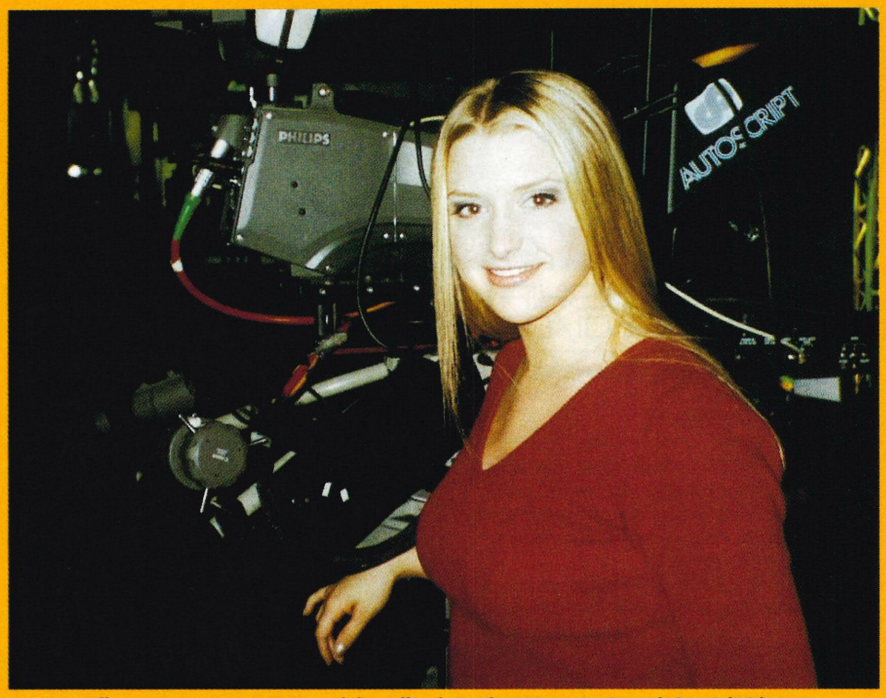
17 CRASH

DEVELOPER: **RAGE**
PUBLISHER: **RAGE**
MORE INFO: **PAGE 84**

THE CLIPS show a number of different arenas and wide variety of the cars available. Car doors swing open after impact and bumpers and bodywork fly off in all directions. It's a simple idea but the execution is superb.
WATCH OUT FOR: The Matrix style slow-mo in the replay mode showing the best collisions and the debris flying from them. OXM



↑ Tim Stott, senior producer, NetWork Of The World (NoW).



↑ Anna Williamson, presenter, NoW and the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* Launch Special Video.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE LAUNCH VIDEO

The Launch Special Video was produced by NetWork Of The World, a broadcaster and producer of games content. Here, *Official UK Xbox Magazine* finds out more about them.



WHEN WE AT the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* decided to compile a video for our Launch Special, we had a problem. We make magazines, not videos. Someone would have to help us out.

We knew that the video would have to be of TV broadcast quality. And we needed expert voice-overs and state-of-the-art graphics. There was only one place to go - NetWork Of The World.

NetWork Of The World is based in modern offices in west London. The company broadcasts TV shows about games via broadband internet. Next year, you'll be able to watch the shows on cable and satellite TV.

"We're bringing together television and the written word like never before," says senior producer Tim Stott. Viewers can watch the shows, and link directly to associated websites. And because NoW broadcasts every day, it's able to show the most up-to-date video footage of new games, as well as developer interviews.

Stott adds: "We have journalists, writers and camera crews all over the world, working with developers on four continents. Their mission is to get the latest scoop on the biggest games. But the most important thing is to be able to show the games running. That's where TV has so much to offer."

Currently, NoW produces four shows. *Gamer* is an international 30-minute magazine show based in Japan and New York. It aims to give viewers the inside track on new games by interviewing the world's top developers. *Lock n Load* is aimed at online gamers and shows first person shooters in action. *Game Sauce* features the latest tips and cheats as well as previews, reviews and news.

And then there's *Heads Up*. It's a daily 30-minute show dedicated solely to games news. The presenter is Anna Williamson, also the presenter of the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* Launch Special Video.

"I wanted to get involved in the video because I really believe in Xbox. It's got the games and the technology to impress," says Anna, who is most looking forward to *Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee*.

"I'm very interested in exploration adventures anyway, and I'm also intrigued by the potential to interact with dozens of other characters."

Anna, who also presents on Channel 5, says that working on a daily games news programme is challenging work.

"I get in first thing and start working on that day's show. We're looking at the latest news that's breaking, gathering new footage from around the world. I'll sit down with the research team and work out what we're going to be talking about.

"After that it's time to work on the script. That changes right up to the point when we begin filming. We also bring in guests whenever we can - we like to present arguments on the show. For example, the other day we had some game journalists arguing about whether PC games are better than console games. It got pretty heated.

"We're quick to react to what the viewer wants and we'll present opinions from gamers as well as from specialists and developers. I think lively debate and passionate opinions make great entertainment."

Heads Up is filmed every afternoon in the company's multi-million pound TV studio. "We rehearse around lunchtime, and make changes to anything we don't like," Anna explains.

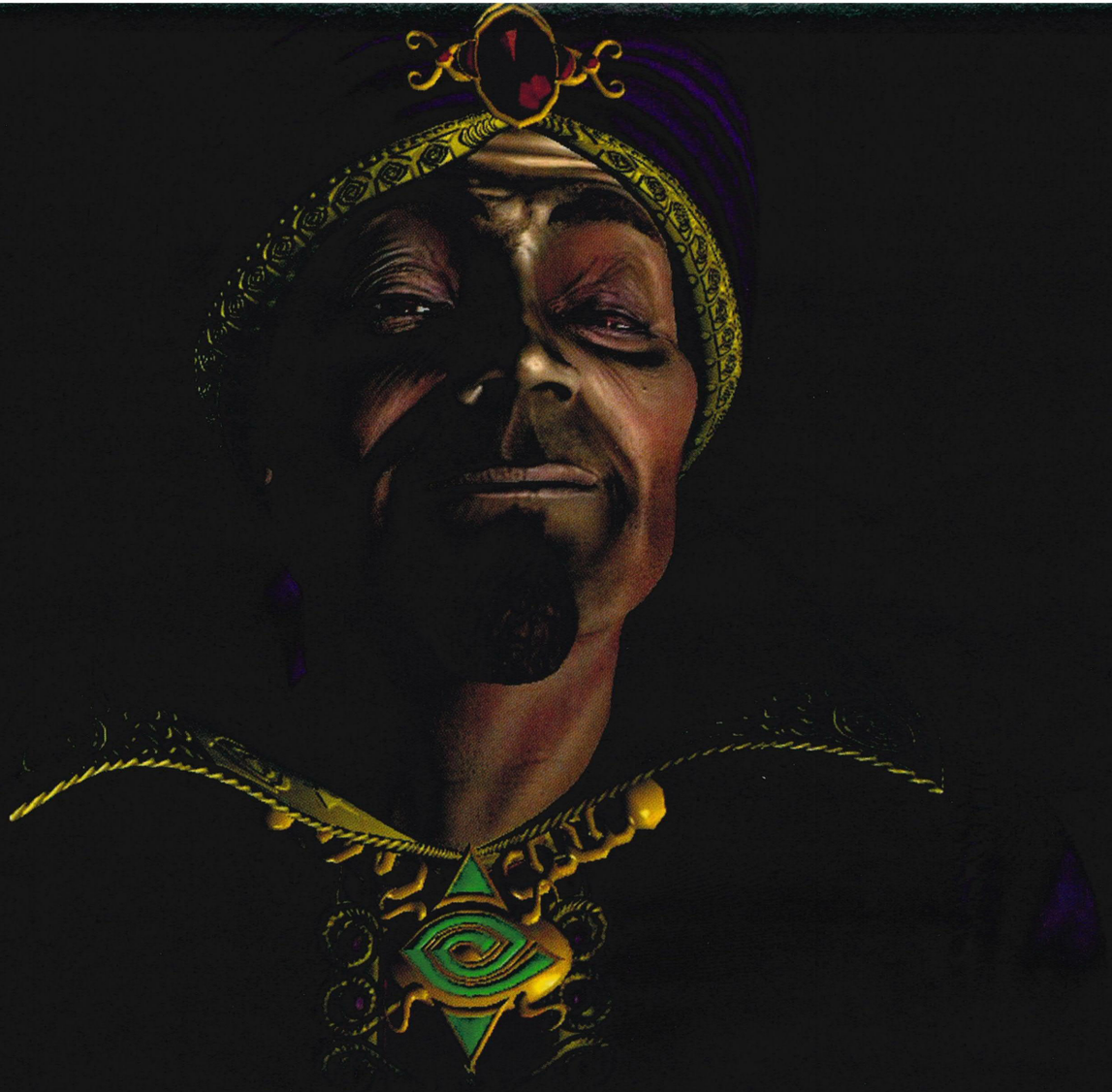
"Then I'll go into make up. After that we pick up any last-minute news that's breaking and then the cameras roll. It's pretty intense, but a big buzz."

Creating the video for *Official UK Xbox Magazine* wasn't just about presenting. A huge back-room crew had to collate the video clips, edit them, add graphics and write the script. Then there are the camera crews, editors, lawyers, tea-makers and so on. More than 50 people work on *Gamer*.

"Working with the NoW team gave us a great insight into how games are being shown on television and the internet," says James Ashton, editor-in-chief of the *Official UK Xbox Magazine*.

"We wanted to create a magazine where gamers could see the best Xbox games in action. Working with NoW, we've been able to offer our readers the best possible content."

To view Network of the World's shows. log on to **www.gamer.now.com**



I see...



nVIDIA



... I see a

NVIDIA is the company that is powering the Xbox™ Visual and
Our graphics processing unit (GPU) is responsible for the millions
It would take Earth's entire population 1 hour to calculate what the

I see beautiful things



Anti-aliasing (AA)

Because a monitor draws pictures using pixels, it's impossible to draw a perfect diagonal line, as it will always have a step-like effect. Take a look at the image on the far left. We call these jaggies. Now take a look at the image next to it. By adding washed-out pixels to the stair-like edge of the line, we can greatly reduce the appearance of these jaggies, creating a smoother, more realistic image.



Turning on the lights !

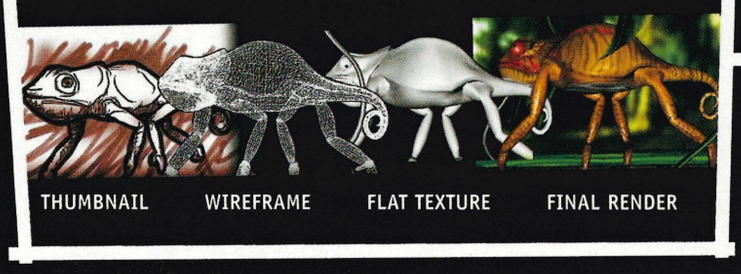
The scene on the left doesn't look real - it's as if it is lit evenly from the same light source - we call this ambient light. The image on the right is lit from multiple sources making shadows which give an image more substance and make it more realistic.

Light also moves and has different effects on different surfaces or textures - merging these to create believable surface reactions is a very difficult process - or at least it would be if you didn't have an Xbox™ !



Textures

In real life, people wear clothes, animals have fur and oranges have bumpy skin. - these are called textures and textures are made up of pixels. Pixels can look like a collage of blocks close up so we apply filters that make the image smoother and more realistic.



Rendering

Graphics in movies are pre-rendered and it can take a whole day to render a single second of footage.

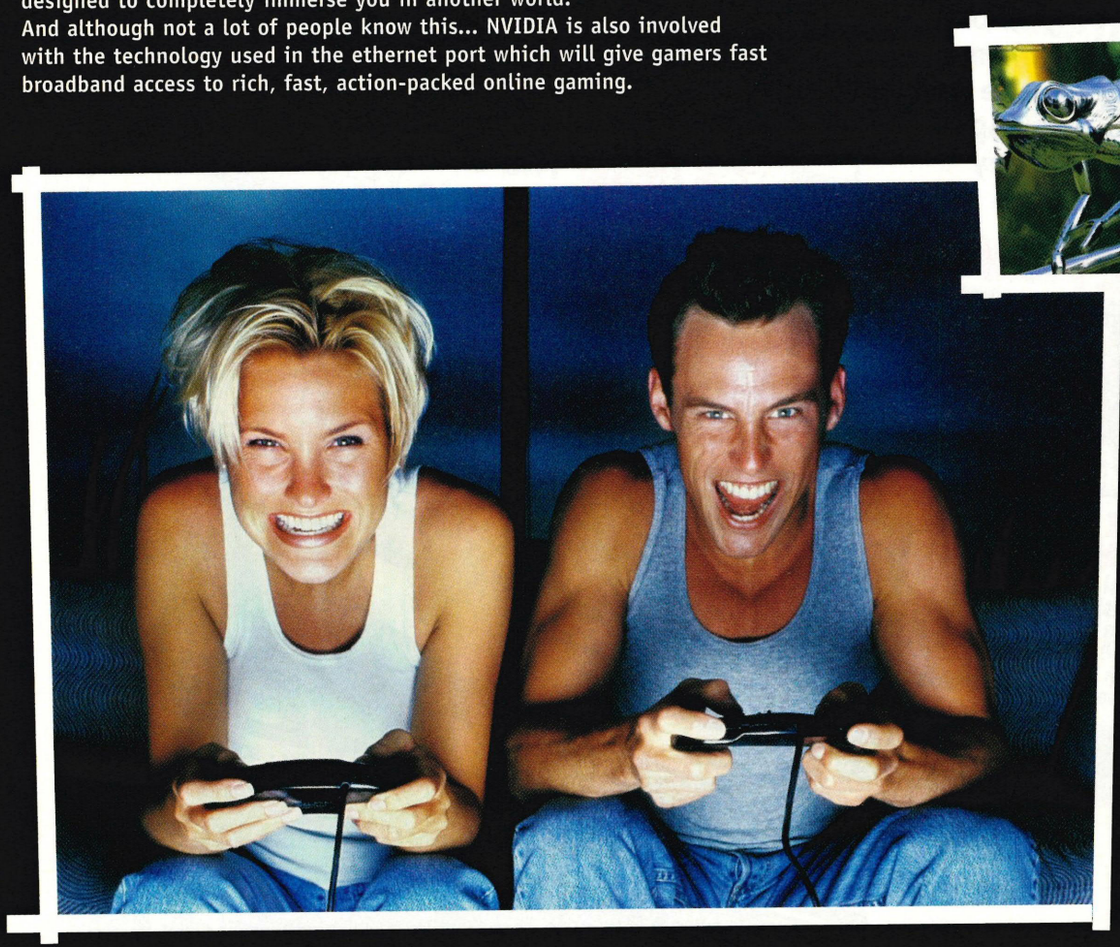
A GPU has literally 1/60th of a second to render each frame so you need technology capable of rendering at very high speeds - ENTER THE GPU!!

world full of beauty

Audio Experience. We provide the technology, inside the Xbox™, that brings your games to life.
of calculations needed to create 3D worlds. The Xbox™ GPU computes a TRILLION operations per second.
Xbox™ can do in a second ! And we don't only do grahics !

I hear beautiful things

NVIDIA also provides more than just the graphics technology for the Xbox™.
Everything you hear is powered by NVIDIA in the form of our audio processing unit (APU)
NVIDIA's APU technology is another industry first - the sounds and game effects you hear represent a new and unprecedented level of sound quality, delivering a unique experience designed to completely immerse you in another world.
And although not a lot of people know this... NVIDIA is also involved with the technology used in the ethernet port which will give gamers fast broadband access to rich, fast, action-packed online gaming.





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www.nvidia.com

Powering the Xbox™ Visual and Audio Experience

NVIDIA®



↑ Disc and magazine shown here are examples only.

OFFICIAL
PLAYABLE
FIRST



Xbox is the ultimate games machine. The Official UK Xbox Magazine is the ultimate games magazine.

ON MARCH 14 2002, Xbox will launch in the UK. Without doubt, this will be the most exciting event for years in the world of video games. Xbox has the power and potential to take console gaming to new levels of immersion and excitement, as well as opening up whole new arenas in which to play. The intention of the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* is to reflect this revolution.

The *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will deliver more than any games magazine has delivered before. Written by people who live and love games (an attitude evident in everything in the magazine), the goal is to make something that redefines what people expect from a games magazine. As well as a playable disc every month - your exclusive source of playable Xbox game demos - *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will provide everything you need to play an active part in the world of Xbox.

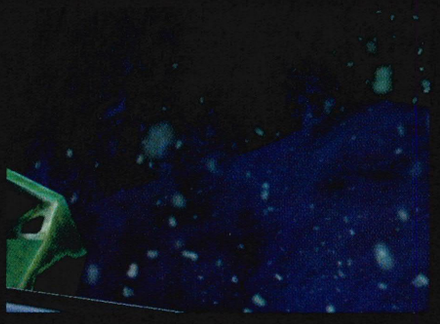
In the time before launch, the team at *Official UK Xbox Magazine* has been planning a publication worthy of Xbox. It's been impossible to implement many of our plans in this launch special - without finished games to review and play, it wouldn't have made much sense to try. However, over the next few pages you'll see exactly why we're so confident about *Official UK Xbox Magazine* and why we will always be Official, Playable, First.





THE **OFFICIAL** UK XBOX MAGAZINE IS...

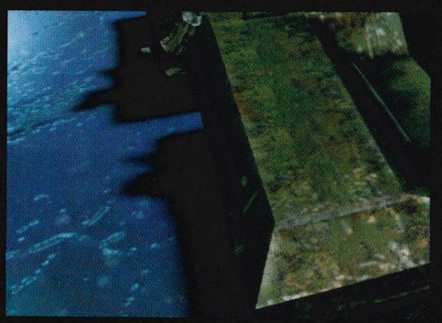
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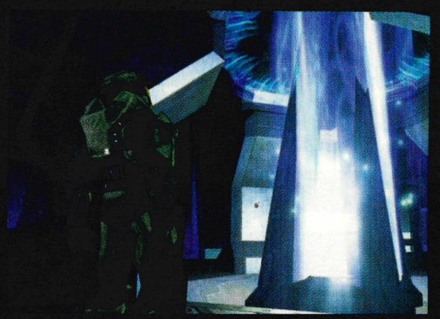






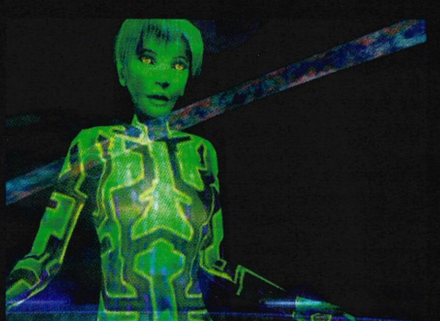
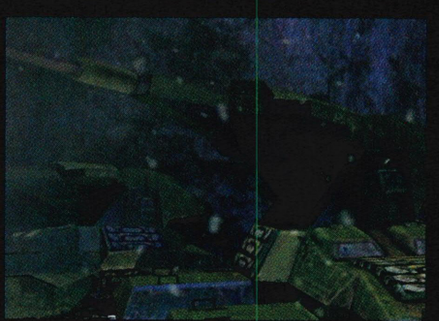










What does 'official' mean for readers of the Official UK Xbox Magazine?

100 PER CENT HONEST REVIEW POLICY
Being the official Xbox magazine means we are in the best position to give impartial, honest review scores. We don't do any deals to get access to finished games. As a result, we're in the best possible position to give our readers what they deserve - balanced, objective and accurate reviews on which they can base their buying decisions.

COMPLETE EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE FROM MICROSOFT
Microsoft has no access to, or influence over, the *Official UK Xbox Magazine*. The company's involvement ends once it has made available to us materials we need for the magazine, and it will only read our reviews when our readers do. Microsoft recognises that it would damage its credibility to have an official magazine that didn't tell the truth.

EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO NEW GAMES AND THE PEOPLE MAKING THEM
Because we are the official magazine, we have unprecedented access to the newest Xbox games in development and the people making them. Our coverage of forthcoming titles will take our readers closer than ever before to the most exciting new games, talking to the developers and publishing the best new screenshots before anyone else.

THE TRUTH ON EVERY XBOX STORY
Our official status allows us to get closer to every Xbox story, rooting out the truth from the rumour and speculation. Because we can go directly to the people involved, readers can be assured that every story in the magazine will be accurate and truthful. The *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will be the definitive source for Xbox news.

WE DON'T COPY FROM THE INTERNET
As the official magazine, we're able to get our stories and, more importantly, our screenshots directly from the games publishers themselves. If a story or screenshot in our magazine also appears on an internet site it will be because the site has taken it from the magazine - not the other way around.

WE HAVE SISTER MAGAZINES IN EVERY GAMES-PRODUCING NATION IN THE WORLD
The Future Network produces official Xbox magazines for the United States, Germany, France and Italy, and will eventually produce magazines for every Xbox-buying nation via licensee publishers. This means that we have a huge network of games journalists across the globe, ready to visit games developers wherever they are and report exclusively for the *Official Xbox Magazine* World Network.

THE OFFICIAL UK XBOX MAGAZINE WILL BE THE ONLY XBOX MAGAZINE WORTH BUYING
As the official Xbox magazine, we saw and played first-party Microsoft games like *Halo* and *Dead or Alive 3* long before other magazines or internet sites. We also have a close relationship with the third-party publishers making games for Xbox. These exclusive screenshots from Microsoft's *Halo*, one of Xbox's launch titles, were first made available to the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* before being released to anyone other publication.

THE **OFFICIAL** UK XBOX MAGAZINE IS...

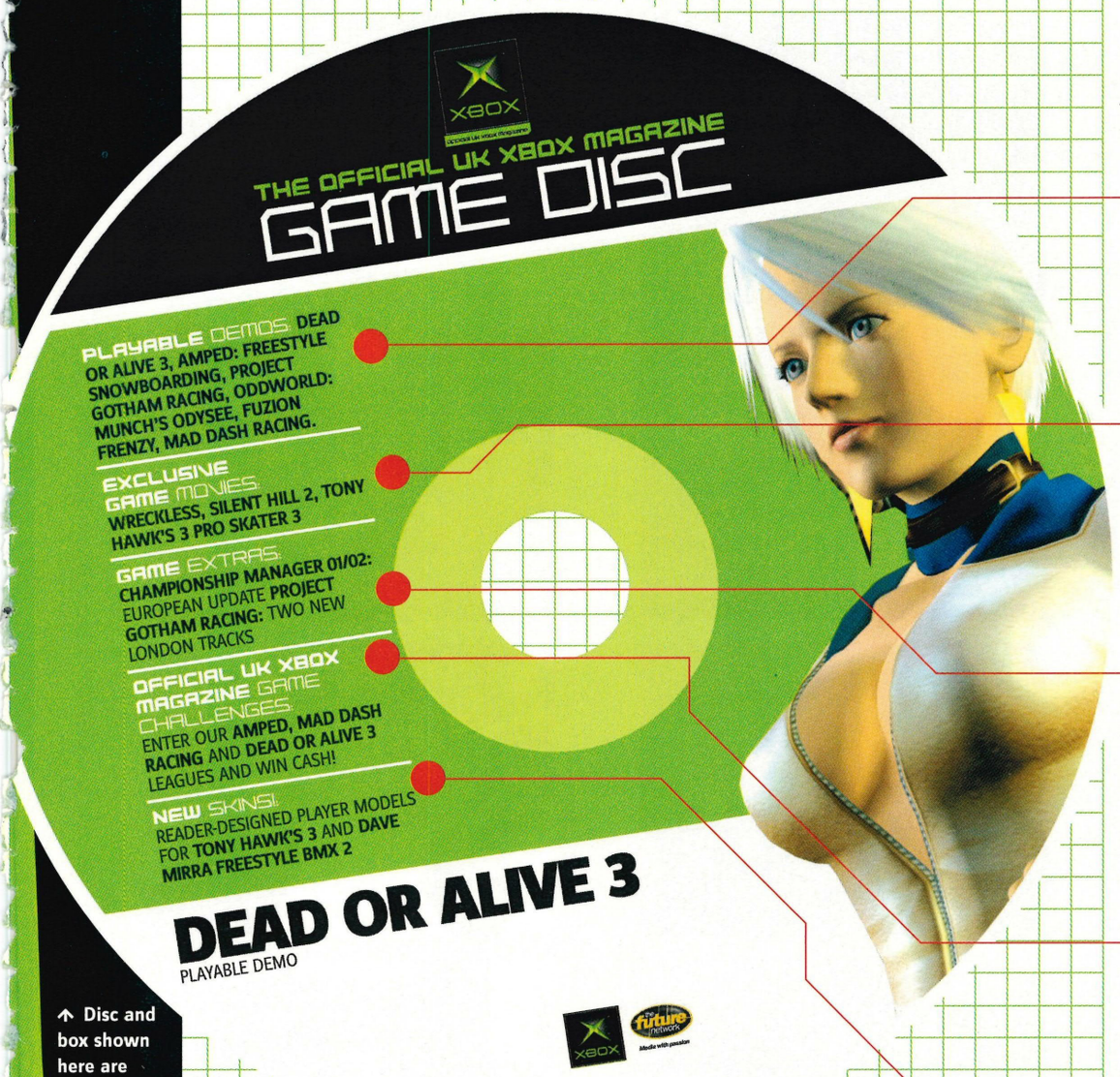
PLAYABLE

5

7 GIGABYTE PLAYABLE GAME DISC

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The Official UK Xbox Magazine is the exclusive source for playable game demos. But it's also so much more...

EACH EDITION of the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* comes with an exclusive Xbox Game Disc, packed with up to seven gigabytes of playable game demos, game videos, interviews, game extras and other features. Packaged in an official green case, the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* Game Disc will give readers the means to try games before they buy, as well as being an invaluable source of extra interactive material and supplementary information. We produce the Game Discs ourselves, which gives us the freedom to include an extensive range of essential material. Here's a complete breakdown of what to expect.

PLAYABLE DEMOS

The *Official UK Xbox Magazine* Game Disc is the only exclusive source for playable Xbox demos in the UK. The Xbox team is committed to ensuring that there is a demo available for every major Xbox game, either before the game's release or at the time of review. Along with the magazine itself, the Game Disc will be the most complete buyers' guide for Xbox gamers.

PLAY EVERY NEW GAME!

NEW GAME MOVIES

Enhancing information about up-and-coming releases is the opportunity to actually see them – which is where our game movie section comes in. The *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will have unprecedented access to the games development community, and bring you footage of new titles before anyone else. Watch this issue's Launch Video and imagine the game trailers playing via the superb DVD quality of Xbox.

SEE NEW GAMES FIRST!

GAME EXTRAS

One of the major advantages of the Xbox hard-drive is that it allows extra content to be added to finished games. This can include updated stats for sports games, new tracks for racing games, and new levels for adventures or first-person shooters (the only thing it categorically will not include is patches). Before broadband, the Game Disc will be the exclusive source for these add-ons. If an update for a game exists, the Game Disc will be the easiest way to get it.

MORE TO PLAY!

PRIZE CHALLENGES

Many of the game demos on the Game Disc will have prize challenges devised for them. As simple to enter as possible, these challenges will encourage readers to register the best score or fastest time in any given game demo. Prizes will range from a simple credit in a league table to free games and game controllers, widescreen TVs, home cinema systems and beyond.

PLAY AND WIN!

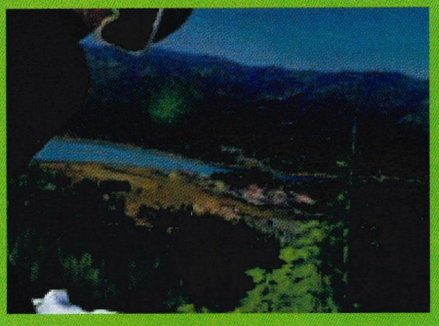
READER CONTRIBUTIONS

The inclusion of a hard-drive for Xbox opens up all sorts of possibilities for gamer-created extras – from custom 'skins' for game characters or cars, to whole new tracks and levels. When games featuring these sorts of options appear, we will get as many reader contributions on to the Game Disc as possible. If you create a fantastic game extra, the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* can ensure that your talents are appreciated by the whole UK Xbox community.

EVEN MORE TO PLAY!

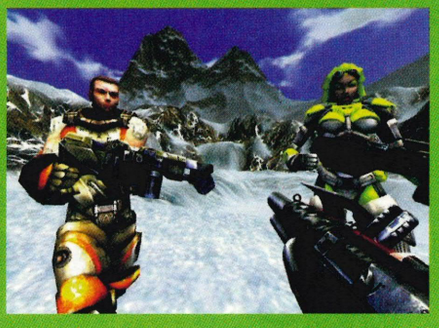
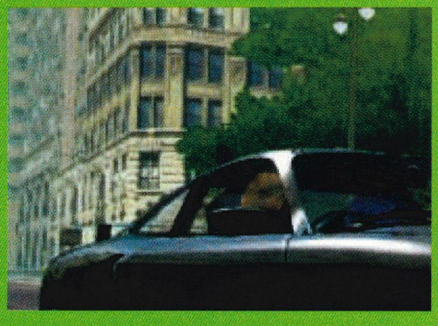
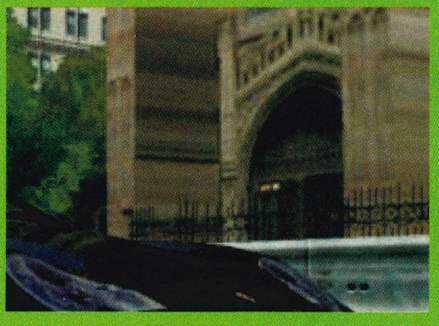



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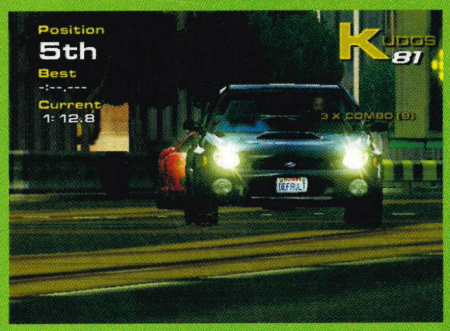




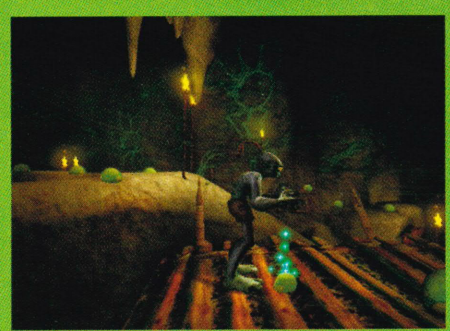

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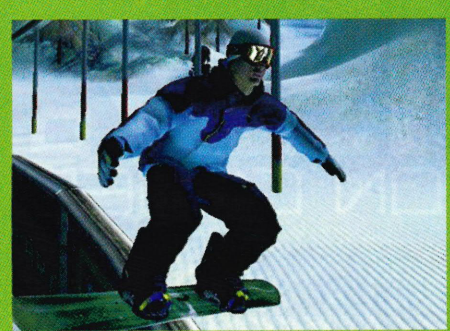












THE **OFFICIAL** UK XBOX MAGAZINE IS...

FIRST

If it's to do with Xbox, it's a cert that the Official UK Xbox Magazine will have it before anyone else.

OUR CLOSE RELATIONSHIP with Microsoft guarantees us inside access to the complete world of Xbox. However, the writers at the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will not sit back and wait for news and reviews to arrive in the office - their task will be to go out and use their extensive contacts to ensure that each event and development in the world of Xbox is reported first in the *Official UK Xbox Magazine*.

As well as the magazine team based here in the UK, the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* has access to the staff and resources of sister Official Xbox magazines around the world. Together we will ensure that *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will be the only magazine Xbox owners need.

● FIRST FOR UK REVIEWS
Our relationship with Microsoft means that the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will have reviews of every major UK Xbox release before anyone else. Because we're the official magazine, we don't need to do 'deals' to get our exclusives and all of the reviews in *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will be 100 per cent honest and accurate.

● FIRST FOR NEWS
The *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will bring you every Xbox story before anyone else, along with expert comment and inside knowledge. Instead of just copying conjecture and rumour from the internet, you can be sure that the news in the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* is truthful and accurate.

● FIRST WITH PICS OF ALL-NEW GAMES
The writers at *Official UK Xbox Magazine* are as excited as anyone else at the prospect of playing new games on the Xbox console. As a result - and because of our inside connections at Microsoft and elsewhere - we'll chase down every new screenshot of every new game, ensuring that they appear in the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* magazine first.

● FIRST WITH IN-DEPTH PREVIEWS OF EVERY NEW GAME
As the official magazine, we have unique access to all the big games currently in development for Xbox. As gamers ourselves, the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* team know which aspects of new games interest people the most, and our preview features will examine new games with intelligence and depth.

● FIRST TO TALK TO THE DEVELOPMENT TEAMS MAKING THE GAMES
Too often, games magazines have ignored the talent behind a game in favour of a celebrity interview with someone whose only connection to a title is their name on it or music in it. The *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will talk only to the developers behind the games, getting the thoughts of those who count and giving our readers a behind-the-scenes view of the world of games development.

● FIRST WITH UPDATES ON BIG TITLES
Too many magazines are stuck in a cycle of coverage that rarely deviates from 'news, preview, review'. The *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will recognise which games our readers are looking forward to the most, and provide regular and exclusive updates on their progress.

● FIRST WITH HINTS AND TIPS DIRECT FROM GAME CREATORS
Thanks to our close links to Microsoft and other games developers, the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will have every hint, cheat and tip before anyone else. However, instead of just focusing on how to get to the end of a game as quickly as possible, our hints and tips will actually show our readers how to get more entertainment and enjoyment from a title.

PLUS!

THE OFFICIAL UK XBOX MAGAZINE WILL BE 'FIRST' IN OTHER WAYS AS WELL...

● A GAMES MAGAZINE BY GAMERS FOR GAMERS
The writers at the Official UK Xbox Magazine are gamers first and foremost. They know what games players want from a games magazine and they're 100 per cent focused on delivering exactly that. You won't see meaningless celebrity interviews or fashion, and we won't be forcing our taste in DVDs and CDs down your throats.

● A MAGAZINE THAT GETS YOU MORE FROM YOUR GAMES
As gamers ourselves, we know that games are expensive. It'll be our mission to help you wring every last bit of entertainment from the games you own. This will range from revealing secret or alternative ways to play the games to setting interactive challenges and competitions. No other magazine will help you get as much from your Xbox and games as the *Official UK Xbox Magazine*.

● A MAGAZINE WHERE YOUR VOICE CAN BE HEARD.
The *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will listen to its readers and provide a platform from which they can speak out. Ranging from the forums on our website **www.officialxboxmagazine.co.uk** to features in the magazine where your input will be vital, the *Official UK Xbox Magazine* will provide more opportunity for interaction with the Xbox community than any other magazine.

FOR THE LATEST XBOX INFORMATION AND NEWS ON THE *OFFICIAL UK XBOX MAGAZINE* IN THE RUN-UP TO THE FIRST ISSUE, CLICK ON: www.officialxboxmagazine.co.uk

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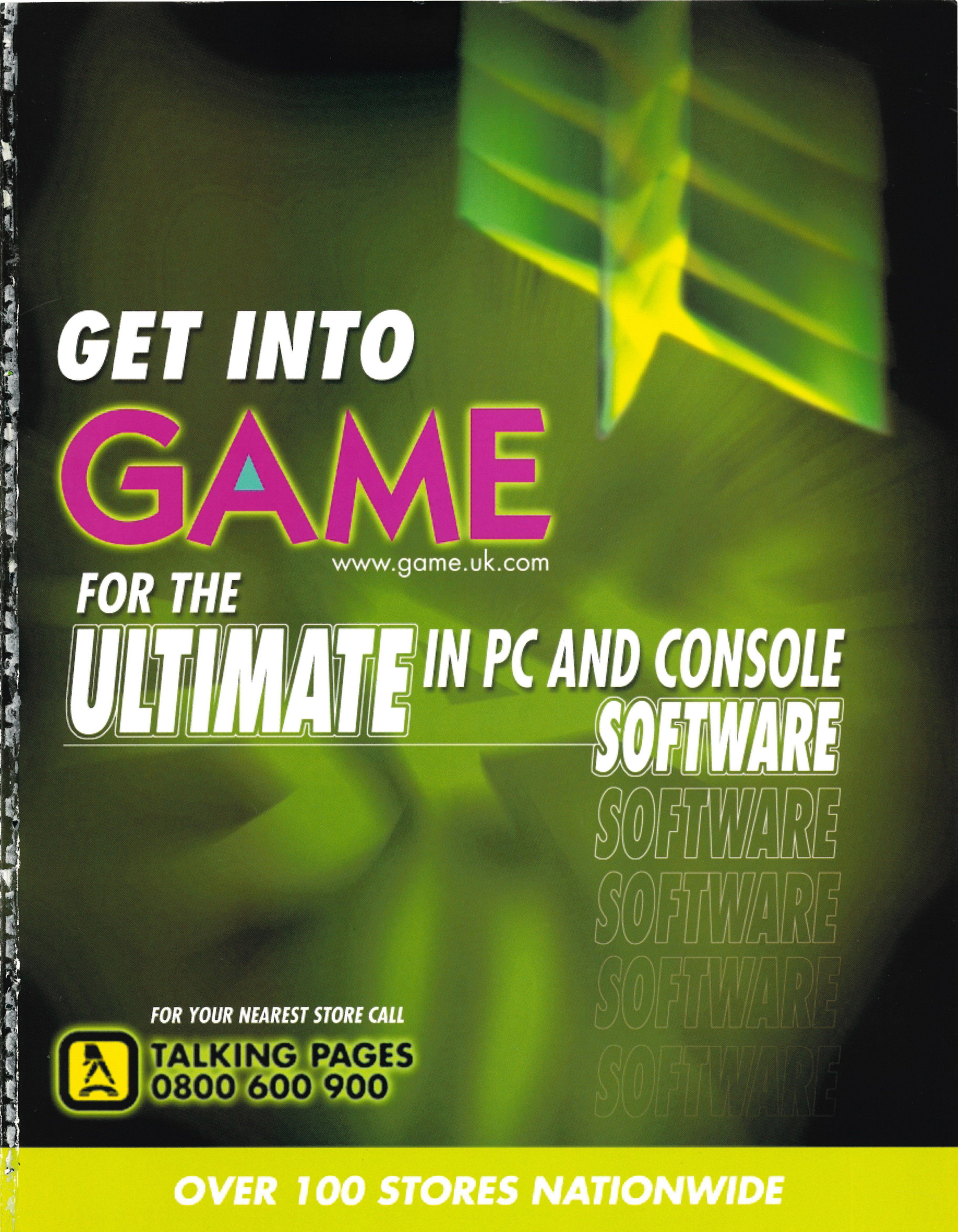
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