



20 REVIEWS

UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003 • LORD OF THE RINGS
NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2 • HITMAN 2 • LINKS 2003

TURN YOUR PC
INTO A TIVO

PC GAMER

's Best-Selling PC Games Magazine

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

**HOLIDAY
GIFT GUIDE**

55 fabulous gifts
for the gamer
in your life

SOLVED!

Mafia + Medal of Honor:
Spearhead complete
walkthroughs

HOLIDAY 2002
VOLUME 9 • NUMBER 13

future
network usa

Media with Passion



\$4.99 US \$6.99 CAN

133

SOLO EDITION

YOUR SECOND TIME.



Cate Archer returns to a world of action, espionage, and dry humor inspired by the '60s spy craze. Armed with an arsenal of deadly weapons, cunning spy gadgets, and devious traps, you must undertake a top secret mission that will take you to exotic locales like Japan, India, and Akron, Ohio in your quest to save the world from H.A.R.M.

"Trust Us, This Game Is Going To Rock!"
-GAMESPY

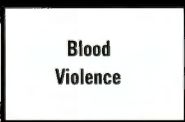
No One Lives ForeverTM 2

A SPY IN H.A.R.M.'S WAYTM

Sequel to the award-winning 2000 Action Game of the Year.*



NOLF2.SIERRA.COM



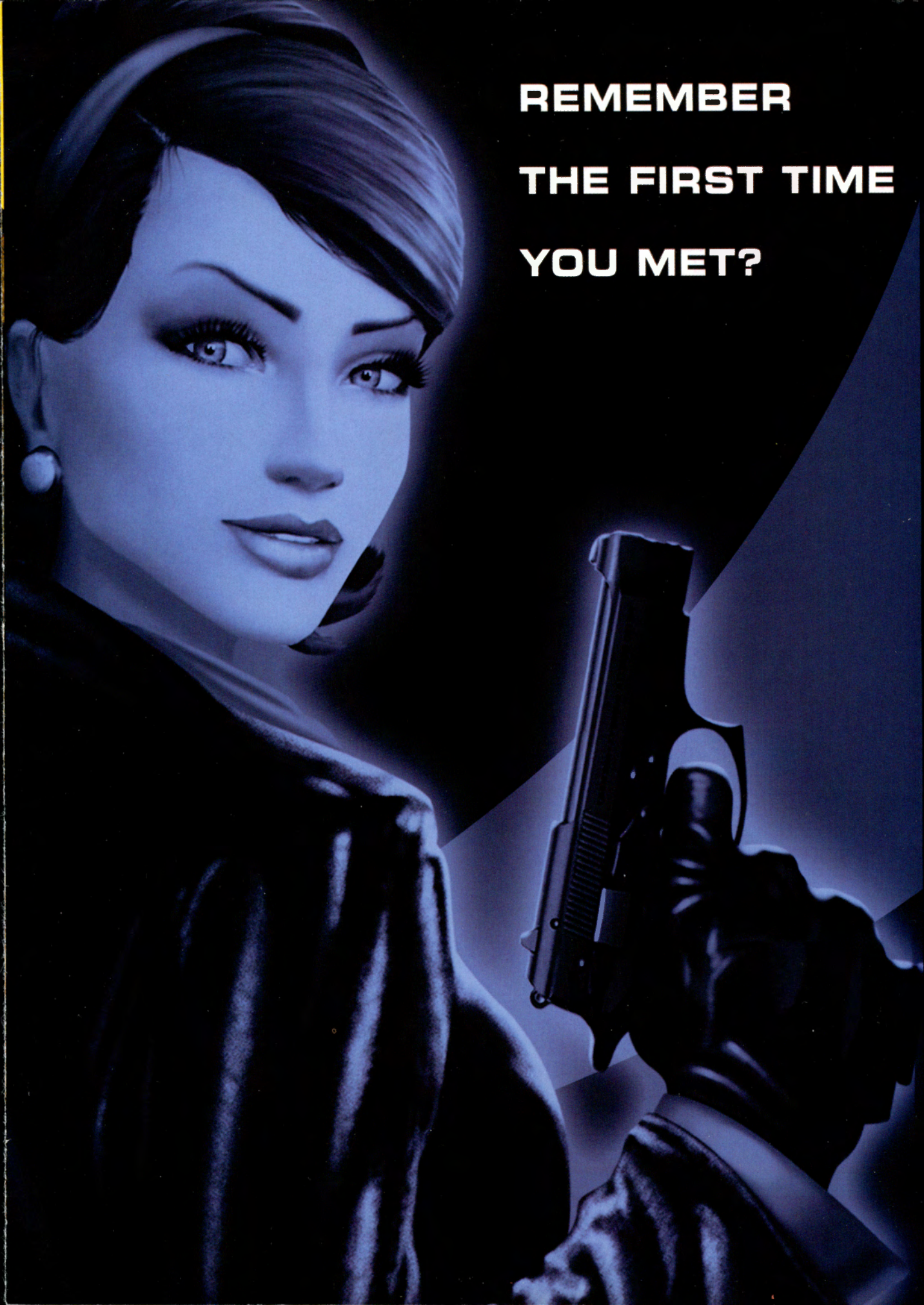
© 2002 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. Fox Interactive, No One Lives Forever and their associated logos are registered trademarks or trademarks of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Sierra and the Sierra logo are trademarks of Sierra Entertainment, Inc. NVIDIA, the NVIDIA Logo, NVIDIA The Way It's Meant to be Played Logo and other NVIDIA Marks are trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation in the United States and other countries. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. *Computer Games Magazine, PC Gamer, Computer Gaming World.

YOU'LL NEVER FORGET



- 40 ACTION-PACKED SINGLE PLAYER MISSIONS
- OVER 30 WEAPONS, GADGETS AND TRAPS
- STUNNINGLY REALISTIC AI & GRAPHICS
- COOPERATIVE MULTIPLAYER ONLINE MISSIONS

**REMEMBER
THE FIRST TIME
YOU MET?**



Game of the Year

Computer Games Magazine - 2000

Action Game of the Year

CGW - 2000

Action Game of the Year

PC Gamer - 2000

Action Game of the Year

Gamespot - 2000

5 Stars out of 5

Computer Games Online - 2000



contents

p.35 **HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE! 55 Great Games & Gadgets!**

PC GAMER

The World's Best-Selling PC Gaming Magazine



WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW! Age of Mythology

20 SUPER REVIEWS!

p.78



NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2

p.112



UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003

p.92



EARTH AND BEYOND

p.96



LORD OF THE RINGS



COMPLETE WALKTHROUGHS Mafia and Medal of Honor: Spearhead

CD-ROM EDITION

COVER STORY

68 Age of Mythology

Bruce Shelley and Ensemble Studios have RTS gamers waiting desperately for this follow-up to the massive *Age of Empires* games. Figuring that you'd want to know as soon as possible whether it's worth buying, we locked Billy Harms in a small cupboard with the gold code for three straight days. He emerged bleary-eyed, just before deadline, with the definitive word. To buy or not to buy — that question is answered.



FEATURE



35 PC Gamer Holiday Gift Guide

Is there a gamer in your life who seems to have everything? Want to drop any subtle hints to family or friends about what you'd like for the holidays? We've decked out the house with the kit and goodies that'll make any gamer's wintery dreams come true. From the gameroom to the bathroom, cool gifts and gadgets can be useful everywhere you look.

SCOOPS



NASCAR Racing: The Final Edition

14 NASCAR Racing: The Final Edition

Papyrus, developer of seminal racing game *Grand Prix Legends*, is bowing out of the NASCAR genre after this *Final Edition*. Andy Mahood tells us what waits in the final lap.

16 Inside Gaming

As *EverQuest II* takes shape, we go back inside Sony Online to see how the new face of gaming's biggest online addiction is looking. More outdoors areas are finished, and we've got the skinny with new screens and information.

20 Hands-On

Billy gives the lowdown on *SimCity 4* after his extensive playtest. Plus, we journey through the old-time world of 1503 A.D.



ON THIS MONTH'S PCG CD Coconut Monkey in *Impossible Creatures*? Play the only demo with this exclusive unit! Plus, be the world's greatest spy in the *007: NightFire* demo. And play the back nine of the fictitious Skeleton Coast course in *Links 2003*.

REVIEWS

- 68 Age of Mythology**
- 114 Batman: Vengeance**
- 114 Casino Empire**
- 92 Earth & Beyond**
- 107 Earth 2150: Lost Souls**
- 102 Empire Earth: Art of Conquest**
- 84 Ghost Recon: Island Thunder**
- 86 Hitman 2**
- 105 Incoming Forces**
- 106 Links 2003**
- 96 Lord of the Rings**
- 110 Michael Schumacher Racing World Kart 2002**
- 78 No One Lives Forever 2**
- 97 RollerCoaster Tycoon 2**
- 116 The Sims: Unleashed**
- 85 Stronghold: Crusader**
- 112 Unreal Tournament 2003**
- 83 Virtua Tennis**
- 82 WarBirds III: Fighter Pilot Academy**
- 110 Xtreme Air Combat**

THE HARD STUFF

120 We fired TheVede! Just kidding: he's been locked away with Alienware's shiny, psychedelic laptop, along with other marvelous paraphernalia. Damn him.



STRATEGY

140 Mafia

The streets of 1930s Chicago are a dangerous place for wiseguy and cop alike. Our exhaustive guide will help you become a made man.

148 Medal of Honor: Spearhead

If there are Nazis needing shooting, you can bet your last cent that we'll be there with every possible hint and tip to ensure you get the job done right. Bask in our full walkthrough.

DEPARTMENTS

8 Letters

Where do the games go that we review? Are ESRB ratings too harsh? And what's a good "non-Satanic" RPG? Oh-vey. These quandaries and more explained, solved, and ridiculed.

26 Eyewitness

PC gamers are getting the sliver-thin edge of the sports-title wedge. Is there hope for PC sports nuts? Plus, what the hell is Blizzard thinking: *StarCraft: Ghost*...on consoles? It's sad but true.

132 Desktop General

The Colonel checks out *TacOps 4*, the wargame that brings the concepts and challenges of the post-9/11 military world to the wargaming genre.

134 Killing Box

Half-Life 2 is available now...in Chuck's deranged mind. What *should* Valve be doing to top the best PC game ever? Our shooter expert reveals all.

134 Extended Play

Dan aims for some *Links 2003* glory as he dives into its *Championship Courses* add-on.

136 Sim Column

Choo-choo. Andy rides the rails across a slew of commercial add-ons to *Microsoft Train Simulator*.

136 Alternate Lives

With a little help from readers, Steve offers concrete advice for completing mammoth RPGs.

160 Backspace

Behold the glory of our "What to do on the can?"—inspired crossword. You can thank us later.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

"This isn't life, it's just stuff."



Once again, as we go to press, the games industry is being targeted by crass attention-seekers milking 15 minutes of fame by blaming video- and computer games for the tragedies of our time. By openly blaming games for the Washington, D.C., sniper's

evil crimes, factually inaccurate commentators are getting primetime media coverage peddling lies and using the basest forms of scare-mongering to justify their self-styled positions as expert pundits.

A story on CNN Europe quoted a Washington psychologist commenting on how such speculation was a response to feelings of helplessness we experience in the face of such horrific actions. Fair comment. But the report then went on to quote Florida lawyer Jack Thompson pathetically attempting to make some connection between the sniper's alleged "I am God" references and games. "You go to video-game chat rooms and you have the proclamation 'I am God' all over the place," says Thompson. What a load of hyperbolic crap.

In case friends, parents, co-workers, or colleagues reference Thompson's comments within earshot of you, consider that this is the same man who unsuccessfully sued gamemakers and movie studios for the tragic shooting incident in Paducah, Kentucky, in 1997. That case was, like all similar cases brought against the movie and video-game industries, thrown out by the judge.

CNN's story referenced Thompson's appearance on NBC's *Today* show (he evidently has an effective PR team working on his behalf). Curiously, CNN contacted *PC Gamer* and asked us about any link between the phrase "I am God" and computer games. Since there is no link, we told them that, well, there is no link. Nobody here could recall any instance of that phrase appearing in a game, and even if it did, to call it inspiration for these sniper shootings is stretching the link past the breaking point.

But the report failed to mention that Thompson's claims were discredited by a source (us) that knows games and the games industry incredibly well. Funny that.

So be wary of this reporting, and if you have skittish parents, friends, or colleagues taking so-called expert opinion as gospel, be sure to alert them to the deeper political agendas being served by these statements. And keep enjoying your games!

On a lighter note, Corey Higby has been randomly chosen to win some random junk from my desk for correctly ID'ing last month's quote from *As Good As It Gets*. As usual, identify the quote at the top of this column and send your answer to ednote@pcgamer.com.

Rob

Rob Smith
Editor-in-Chief

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.



Visit www.esrb.org or
call 1-800-771-3772
for Rating Information.



POWERED BY
gamespy



VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.



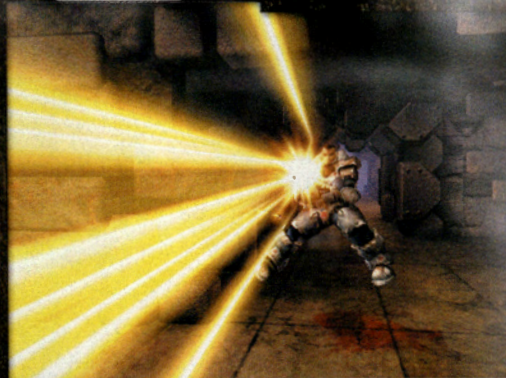
THE FIGHT FOR THE GALAXY HAS BEGUN

The wait is over. Master of Orion 3 has finally landed and it's unlike anything you've ever experienced. 16 unique alien races vie for domination of the galaxy through diplomacy, deception or just plain brute force. Are you good enough to rule the galaxy? Find out with the triumphant return of the most challenging strategy game in the universe. www.moo3.com



AVAILABLE NOW

"...beyond anything you've
seen before...it's the new
face of futuristic combat."
PC Gamer



MVP OR DOA. WHICH WILL YOU BE?

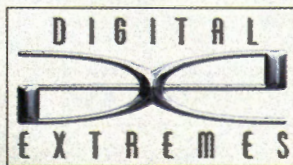


BLOOD AND GORE.
VIOLENCE.
Visit www.esrb.org or
call 1-800-771-3772 for
rating information.



www.unrealtournament2003.com

Unreal © Tournament 2003 © 2002 Epic Games, Inc. Raleigh, N.C. USA. Unreal and the Unreal logo are registered trademarks of Epic Games, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. All other trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners. Unreal Tournament 2003 was created by Digital Extremes in collaboration with Epic Games Inc. Manufactured and marketed by Infogrames, Inc., New York, New York, under license from Epic Games, Inc. The Atari trademark and logo are the property of Infogrames.



On the Idiocy Watch

▶ We want to hear from you! Write to us at **PC Gamer Letters**, Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005, or email us at letters@pcgamer.com.



▶ DO THE RIGHT THING?

AFTER WATCHING BATTLEFIELD 1942's AI (artificial idiocy) run around in circles, hopping in and out of various vehicles for hours, I've decided that EA's gone too far. Can you knock some sense into them and please publish this letter? Forums are filled with people complaining about the lack of patches and support for EA's games. And after playing them, I have to agree with those people. One patch resolving miniscule issues simply isn't enough. *PC Gamer* is the voice of the gaming world — and basically the only way we as gamers can make an impact.

— Anonymous

You bring up some valid points, Anonymous, though we can't say we fully agree with you — which is why we recommend Battlefield 1942 even in its current (at press time, v. 1.1) form. Sure, the game's AI isn't perfect — e.g., we've seen soldiers pace back and forth while missing our plainly visible anti-tank troop — but we'd argue that it also delivers a compelling single-player experience, especially in co-op play.

As for Battlefield needing patching, we play at work with nary a complaint, then go home and play on our own computers with no real problems either. Granted, the game could benefit from some fixes to various issues, but EA is well aware of this need: at press time, company rep Jerris Mungai told us that the publisher would have an announcement soon.

Be patient: we think we'll see those patches. And in the meantime, enjoy what is certainly a fantastic — if not necessarily perfect — multiplayer game.

▶ THE VEDIC AGE

I WAS DOING MY HISTORY homework and noticed something that disturbed me in a number of differ-

ent ways. Did you guys know that there was a "Vedic Age"? There's also a "Vedic Religion," where the followers studied and worshipped "The Vedas." Your very own hardware specialist could be the descendant of a god. Needless to say, I'm converting. Also, great mag, I love it.

— Don B

P.S. Cell shading sucks.

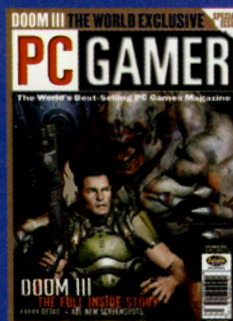
At our offices, the Vedic Age never ended. While we're reluctant to ascribe deific qualities to our multi-talented Senior/Hardware/Disc Editor, his time is most definitely at hand. If you can overlook the hairy palms, that is.

▶ ARMY = FLORID WRITERS

AS AN OFFICER IN THE UNITED STATES Army, I would like to reply to Specialist "Name Withheld" about his/her complaints about Army life. First, we need many Specialist "Name Withhelds" or our army posts would look about as pleasing as Vede's office cubicle. I think SPC "Name Withheld" should go back and complain to his army recruiter about his/her choice of MOS, because anyone who's ever served in the infantry would appreciate the detail and precision America's Army offers as a simulation of light infantry combat.

Also, I was absolutely astonished in missions using MILES gear how close to reality it became, with the short beeping of "close shots" and that damned infernal BEEEEEEEEEEEP when you're killed. For anyone who's been to the Joint Readiness Training Center and has experienced a MILES war, America's Army is the closest thing you'll ever experience to simulated combat without actually being there. Kudos to the developers, for I know

▶ DOOM-TACULAR



The December 2002 issue of *PC Gamer* rules! And you had TEN pages of EXCLUSIVE footage from *Doom III*, the most exciting game to stir awake us restless FPS fans. I don't know

whether I want to read through the entire issue all over again, or have it re-shrink-wrapped and put in a frame.

— Zach Friedrich

We'd go for the shrink-wrap, then the frame. Then place it in a sealed vault in a Swiss bank.

I see from the cover of your December 2002 issue that Frank Sinatra will be in *Doom III*. Since he's been dead for some time (and judging by the looks of the monster behind him), I can only assume that he'll be playing some kind of zombie. Well, it's good to see he's still working.

— Mark Skier

Good spot. His role is serving as inspiration for a slew of new numbers — "Luck Be A Demon," "New Mars, New Mars," and everyone's favorite, "The Lady is an Arch-Vile." The CD will be released on Phobos Records next year.

What the hell is the deal with *Doom III*? It'll support only four players in multiplayer, and it's a remake of *Doom*! I mean, *Doom* is one of the greatest games ever, but the FPS genre has changed a lot since then. We're all tired of key-card searches and exit-finding. Great graphics and sound are cool, but they alone don't make an excellent game. *Doom III* is sounding more and more like a mere demo of next-generation graphics and not a real game. Sorry, Carmack, but this is one Space Marine you've already lost.

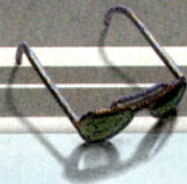
— Happyflyman87

You'd be amazed just how much of a difference the look and sound of the new technology make. But you'll just have to take our word on that until the game finally ships.

I loved your cover story on *Doom III*. Questions: (1) When will it ship? (2) Will it run on my 950MHz with a 64MB GeForce2 MX 400? (3) Will there be a Collector's Edition? (4) Will it release a *Doom III* demo?

— Thomas Cila

(1) "When it's done." (Our guess is May/June 2003.) (2) Probably, but not with all the details turned on. (3) Probably, once it's won Game of the Year awards. (4) Probably, but not until the game ships.



THE ONLY MEDAL THEY'RE GOING TO GET IS SHRAPNEL.



Microsoft
game studios



Violence

If you want a victory medal, you'll have to go through them. So pick an allegiance, choose from one of our 34 authentic planes and prepare yourself for extreme, low-flying WWII combat missions over Europe. *Combat Flight Simulator 3. As real as it gets.*



Microsoft
Combat Flight Simulator 3
Battle For Europe

www.microsoft.com/games/combatts3

ALREADY JADED

THE ESRB IS REALLY OVERREACTING these days! It rated *No One Lives Forever 2* "M" and *Asheron's Call 2* "M," and not only were the prequels to both these games rated "T," but there is more blood in many T-rated games than in those two combined. Is it because unrealistic-looking red stuff is being spawned from high-polygon models? Do we have to be 17 years old to push our video cards to the limits?

The ESRB also rated *Rock Manager* "M" just because the F-word is used frequently, but I know kids my age (I'm 12) who curse more times in three minutes than the characters in *RM* do in five hours of play! Is the ESRB going to rate *The Sims Online* (which many 9-year-olds are highly anticipating) "M" because people can curse in the chat box?

— GreenMonkey82

You're 12 years old? You should be memorizing state capitals and eyeing toy commercials. Hey, you want a job?

this officer loves every minute of the simulated hair-raising action.

— Captain "Name Withheld"

Guys, guys, guys — we're all on the same team, aren't we? Let's all come together for the big win.

THAT'LL LEARN 'EM!

BECAUSE I'M AN ADVENTUROUS TYPE, I stopped reading your reviews and started trying out games myself to see if perception had been controlling reality. Y'know, maybe you had been calling games crap that weren't crap, I thought. So I was browsing through my local Wal-Mart (the only place to get PC games in my town) and spotted *Hero X*. I already own *Freedom Force* and loved it, but was looking for a superhero game that was open-ended and non-linear. Stupidly ignoring the fact that this pile of doo-doo was easily recognized as doo-doo by the 3D chrome on the box, I read on the back that you could create your own hero from scratch, and bought it with hope.

The install screen looked cheap. As soon as I heard the title music and saw the title screen, I knew I had just soiled my PC with something horrible. I wanted more pain, so I played the game. I laughed out loud at all the stupid cutscenes and the "fighting." I got to the part where you fight frat boys and I just uninstalled it right there and put it back in its box just like I bought it and proceeded to stomp on it like it was a giant roach.

The next day, I bought your mag to see if you had reviewed it correctly, and I learned two things:

- (1) You know icky-poo when you see it.
- (2) 3D chrome on a PC game box definitely means "NO!!!"

— Malcolm the Masochistic Moose

We hope you learned a valuable lesson, Malcolm.

KEEPING IT REAL...DUMB

What up PCG, yo, you guys be keepin' it real. You keepin' it straight-up gangsta, yo...you be chillin', right? Awww, yeah. Yo, keep pimpin' those ho's PCG, yo, you be dawgs, chillin' in da hood and I be readin' your magazine, plays. Tell that Vede pimp I feel him and all that pressure you be puttin' him thru...awwww yeah, keep it up homie.

— The Dawgfather

Thanks for the support, Dawgfather. It's nice to know that our fans are as appreciative of our ongoing efforts as we are of the opportunity to serve them. Word.

RE: THE BOYS OF BUMMER

In the intro to November 2002's reviews section, Dan Morris wrote: "My Giants have made the playoffs in eight of the 10 seasons I've managed. Eight. Want to know how many World Series we've been to? NONE!"

You know what they say about reality being far worse than fantasy? The Mariners went to the postseason in 1995, 1997, 2000, And 2001, AND THEY NEVER GOT TO THE WORLD SERIES. They won 93 games this year and didn't even get to the playoffs. They won 116 games last year and they didn't even get a World Series loser ring.

Feh. Cry me a river.

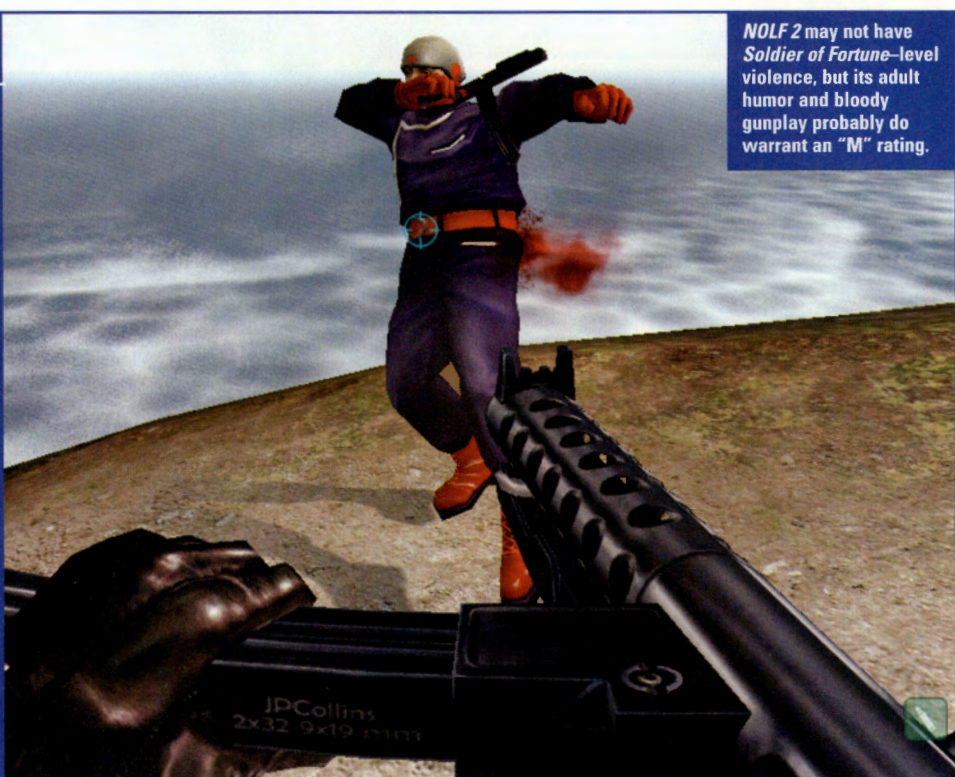
— Russell Lautzenhiser

Fair enough, Russell. May we suggest moving to the San Francisco area and becoming a Giants fan?

CORRECTION

The photo on page 88 of our December 2002 issue should have been credited to John Callahan.

NOLF 2 may not have Soldier of Fortune-level violence, but its adult humor and bloody gunplay probably do warrant an "M" rating.



THE GAME GRAVEYARD

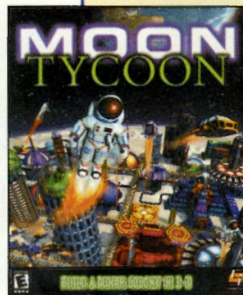
After all these years, you've reviewed quite a few games. Ignoring the last few issues, that's 100 magazines on the shelf with a conservative guess of 10 reviews per month. That's 1,000 games reviewed! Even though publishers have decreased box size, I've been wondering where all those games end up. Do they get selectively trashed, or do you have some massive vault-like archive where every game ever reviewed is filed, catalogued, and documented? I would find that hard to believe, but

then again, you do employ a Coconut-Simian hybrid.

— Jacob Hammer

Ten games an issue!? The average is probably closer to 15 to 20. But in any case, Jacob, to answer your question, most of the games we receive are stashed for a while on the Wall of Games in our newsroom,

where triumphs like Ghost Recon cuddle up next to filth like F.D.N.Y. Firefighter in no discernable order. Then, after a period of months and/or years, the Wall is emptied into boxes and shipped off to a charity organization. Some of the choice ones are snagged by our interns, and some of the less choice ones are taken by our company's IT guys, who don't know the difference. Bottom line: In the end, they all find a happy home with a joyful owner. Can you feel the love?



DEVASTATION

RESISTANCE BREEDS REVOLUTION

"It sneaks up on you and stabs you in the eye with a broken bottle."

—Computer Games Magazine

www.DevastationGame.com



A REVOLUTION TEARS THROUGH THE STREETS



AS YOU FIGHT OFF UNEXPECTED FOES



AND DESTROY THE CORPORATE OPPRESSORS

FEATURES

- ▶ POWERFUL NEXT-GENERATION UNREAL® ENGINE PROVIDES DRAMATIC VISUALS
- ▶ OBJECTIVE-BASED SINGLE PLAYER AND TRADITIONAL MULTIPLAYER GAMES
- ▶ FIGHT ALONGSIDE HIGHLY INTELLIGENT NPC TEAMMATES THAT YOU COMMAND
- ▶ 32 LEVELS PACKED WITH OVER 40 REAL-WORLD AND FUTURISTIC WEAPONS
- ▶ INCREDIBLE REAL-WORLD OBJECT PHYSICS AND RAG-DOLL DEATHS
- ▶ NEXT GENERATION AI CREATES REALISTIC ENEMIES AND TEAMMATE BEHAVIORS

Win An Alienware Area 51 Gaming System!

Join the Resistance at www.DevastationGame.com and sign up today!

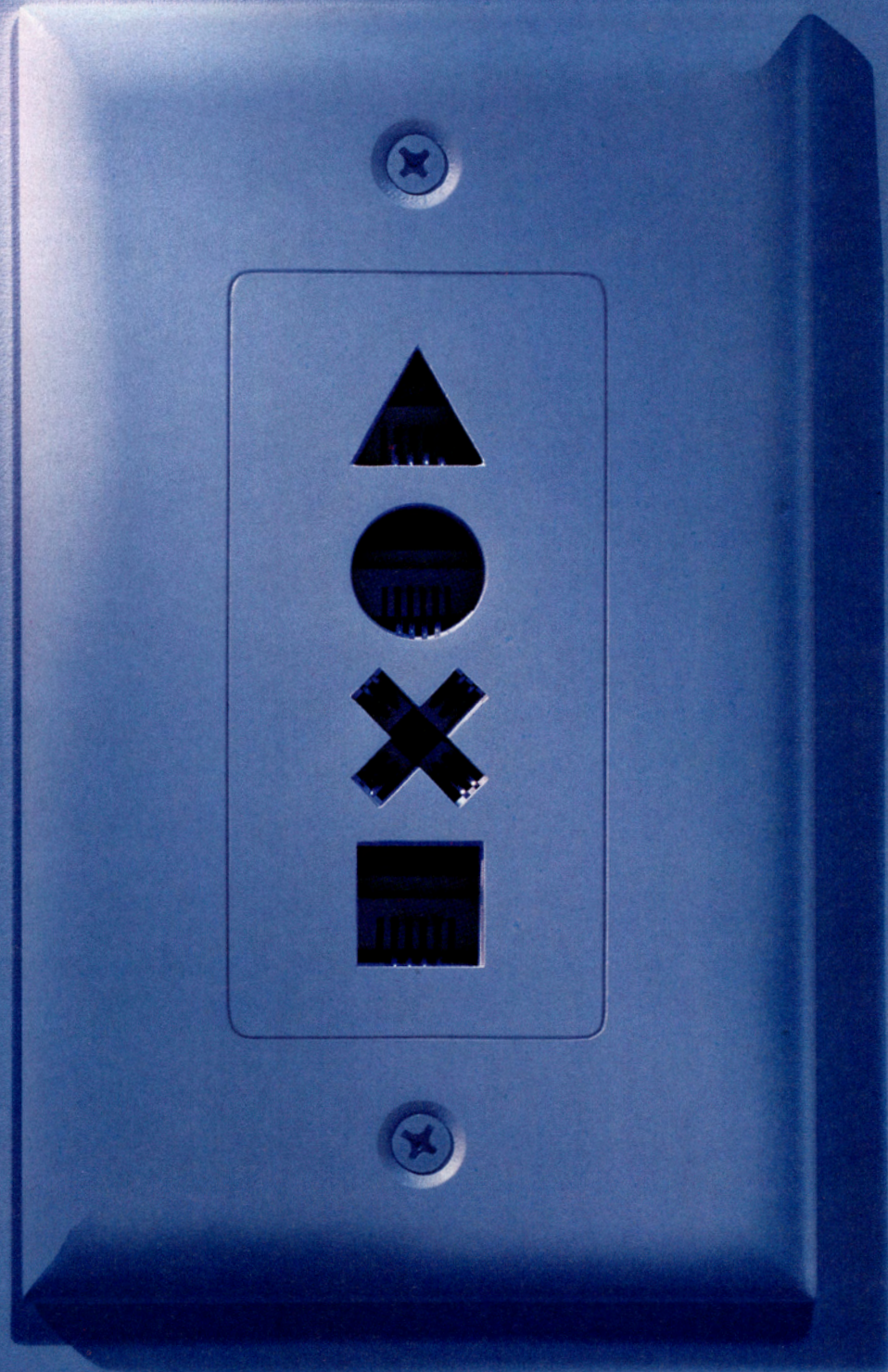
PLAYS BEST ON
ALIENWARE



Devastation™ ©2002 ARUSH Entertainment, a division of World Entertainment Broadcasting Corporation and Groove Media Inc. Developed by Digitalo Studios, Inc. using the Unreal™ Engine. Co-published by ARUSH Entertainment and Groove Media. Unreal™ Engine ©2000 Epic Games, Inc. MultiEngine Karma™ ©2002 MultiEngine P.L.C. Devastation is a trademark of World Entertainment Broadcasting Corporation and Groove Media Inc. ARUSH, ARUSH Entertainment, the ARUSH Entertainment logo, and Play Outside the Box are trademarks or registered trademarks of World Entertainment Broadcasting Corporation. Groove Media and the Groove Media logo are trademarks of Groove Media Inc. Digitalo Studios is a trademark of Digitalo Studios, Inc. Epic Games, Unreal, Unreal Engine and their associated logos are registered trademarks or trademarks of Epic Games, Inc. used under license. MultiEngine and Karma and the MultiEngine and Karma logos are registered trademarks or trademarks of MultiEngine P.L.C. used under license. All other trademarks and logos are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.



Visit www.esrb.org
or call 1-800-771-3772
for more info.



PLAYSTATION.2. NOW ONLINE.

Introducing the Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2. Reach out and smoke someone.



Or cross-check, smash, tackle, leg-sweep or ollie over them – even if they're in another time zone. With the Network Adaptor (Ethernet/modem) (for PlayStation 2), just about anything is possible. Like downloading new rosters, stadiums and characters. Trash-talking opponents you've never met. Or, better yet, starting your very own East Coast-West Coast sports rivalry. All against live competition, so no two games are ever alike. The Network Adaptor for PlayStation 2 is here. Get your game online.

WHAT YOU GET:

- The Network Adaptor, which offers both dial-up and broadband connectivity
- Mail-in offer for a **FREE** copy of **Twisted Metal:Black™ ONLINE**
- Start-Up Disc with playable demos of **Madden NFL 2003** and **Frequency**
- Video demos of **Tribes™ Aerial Assault**, **ATV Offroad Fury™ 2** and **Tony Hawk Pro Skater™ 4**
- All this for just \$39.99 (SRP)

WHAT YOU NEED TO CONNECT:

- PlayStation 2 (duh)
- Network Adaptor (obviously)
- Memory card (8MB for PlayStation 2) with at least 137K of space (that ain't much)
- Dial-up or broadband Internet connection (in English: such as cable modem, DSL, T1 or just a plain ol' phone line)
- Network Adaptor Start-Up Disc to create ISP settings (don't worry, it's easy)

OTHER STUFF:

- The Network Adaptor works with just about any ISP subscriber, including AOL, AT&T Worldnet, EarthLink, Prodigy/SBC and Sympatico. Check with your ISP for details.

These are just a few of the games with online features available this year:



AutoModellista



ATV Offroad Fury 2



Madden NFL 2003



Tony Hawk Pro Skater 4



SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs



Frequency



Twisted Metal:Black ONLINE



NFL GameDay 2003



Tribes Aerial Assault

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM
RATING PENDING TO MATURE

RP-M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

www.playstation.com "PlayStation" and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. "Live In Your World. Play In Ours." is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. NFL GameDay 2003 ©2002 NFL Properties LLC. Team names and logos are trademarks of the teams indicated. All other (NFL-related) marks are trademarks of the National Football League. Officially licensed product of PLAYERS INC. The PLAYERS INC. logo is a registered trademark of NFL players. www.nflplayers.com. ©2002 PLAYERS INC. All other games featured herein are trademarked and copyrighted properties of their respective publishers and/or licensors.



LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.

NASCAR Racing: Final Edition

IN A NUTSHELL
The most storied NASCAR sim of all time comes to the end of the road

Papyrus' last *NASCAR Racing* title will be rolling out of the garage just in time for the 2003 Daytona 500. Yes, you read that right: when *NASCAR Racing: The Final Edition* ships in February, it'll mark the end of one of the most successful and critically acclaimed PC racing-sim series of the past decade.

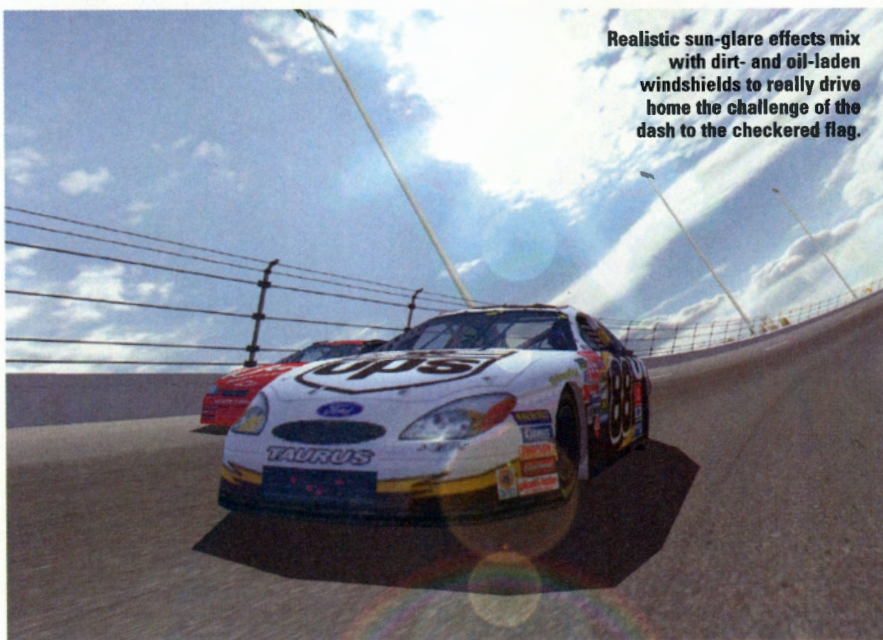
A recent decision to develop multi-platform titles for both PC and console racing audiences ultimately positioned Papyrus up against the licensing muscle of EA Sports, exclusive rights-holder to all things NASCAR in the lucrative home-video game market. Consequently, the Massachusetts-based racing-sim developer reluctantly decided to abandon its PC-specific NASCAR brand as soon as *NRTFE* leaves the shop.

Papy's genre-defining racing franchise isn't about to bow out quietly, though. As Director of Design and Production Rich Yasi puts it: "Anyone who thinks that we intend to bring a nine-year legacy to an end by coasting to the proverbial finish line is sorely mistaken. Everyone at this company is 100 percent committed to making sure that Papyrus' NASCAR line goes out with a bang, not a whimper."

The "bang" in this case includes a number of enhancements to the *NR 2002* engine that should significantly improve the overall driving experience. Chief among the changes are some new graphics tweaks that'll not only throw realistic sun glare at you as you navigate the 23 licensed Winston Cup tracks, but will also allow for the dynamic accumulation of dirt and oil on your car's windshield. "The longer you stay on the track, the darker the film will get," explains Yasi. "And the only way for you to get your windshield back to pristine condition will be to come to the pits and have a tear-off removed."

Gone, too, are the billiard-table tracks of previous *NASCAR* releases. Each circuit will now feature accurately placed bumps and road irregularities to further drive home the challenge that real stock-car drivers face every weekend.

"They really do change the way the game drives and feels," says Yasi. "Feeling the suspension bottom-out on a really big bump just brings an instant grin to your face, and going three-wide over the tunnel



Realistic sun-glare effects mix with dirt- and oil-laden windshields to really drive home the challenge of the dash to the checkered flag.



On some tracks, accurately placed bumps and road irregularities will severely test your driving skills.

at Daytona brings the 'pucker factor' to unprecedented heights." Papyrus is also working closely with Goodyear and a couple of Winston Cup teams to ensure that the sim's upgraded physics model — already the best in the business — remains the de facto benchmark for years to come.

Toss in a populated pit road (complete with team war wagons and pit signs) and distinctive Ford, Chevy, Pontiac, and Dodge car models, and it looks like there'll also be more than enough graphics fuel to keep *NRTFE* running well past its normal due date.

That's a good thing, too, because with no *NR* replacement in sight, Papyrus is



NRTFE will boast crowded pit lanes, complete with signal boards and team war wagons.

hoping that the third-party mod community will continue to nurture this final *NASCAR* chapter with the same degree of enthusiasm it gave *Grand Prix Legends* (which is still going strong after four years). For their part, Sierra and Papyrus have pledged to continue supporting the sim's dedicated 42-person multiplayer servers well into the foreseeable future.

It's always sad to see the end of a storied game franchise, but it's looking like *NASCAR Racing: The Final Edition* will be a fitting tribute to one of the best racing series ever. We'll bid *NASCAR Racing* a proper farewell early next year. — Andy Mahood

E.I.


CATEGORY: Racing sim
DEVELOPER: Papyrus Racing Games
PUBLISHER: Sierra/Vivendi
WWW: sierra.com
PERCENTAGE COMPLETE: 60%
RELEASE DATE: February 2003

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL?: It'll be the last *NASCAR* sim from Papyrus, and for serious simmers, that's like Tiger Woods announcing his retirement from golf. Papy has promised to make this release the best one ever.

DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD: From 1989's *Indianapolis 500: The Simulation* to 1998's *Grand Prix Legends* and this year's *NR 2002*, Papyrus has produced a string of truly incredible, realistic racing sims.

**YOU'LL
NEVER DIE
ALONE!**

INTERNET CONNECTION
REQUIRED TO PLAY!



neocron

A VIRTUAL WORLD BY REAKKTOR.COM

www.cdv-neocron.com

Available November 2002

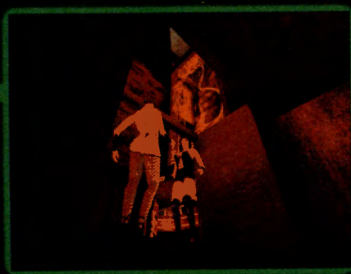
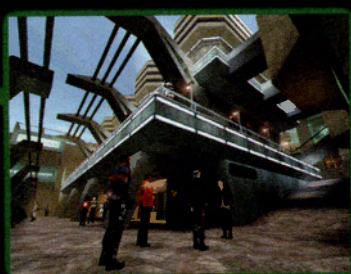
- Epic real-time sci-fi/cyberpunk MMORPG; thousands of users can play at the same time
- State-of-the-art 3D engine
- Combines MMORPG and first-person-shooter technology in an exciting first or third-person view. Accuracy increases as your stats increase
- More than 250 different maps
- A practically unlimited number of weapon systems created through combinations and extensions
- Balance of Power (BoP) engine lets players transform their actions into share values for their factions and clans
- NavRay System points the way to the right places
- Ideal for playing in teams, clans or solo

DIVE INTO A NEW INTERACTIVE GAME DIMENSION!

It's the 28th century, the metropolis of Neocron. Fight in the chaotic world alongside thousands of other online players against hideous monsters and dreadful mutants for power and money. Live your life the way you like it: be a PSI-Monk, GenTank, Private Eye, or Spy.

In order to survive the jungle of crime and corruption, you will have to increase your powers. A nearly unlimited weapons arsenal and communication with other players on the other will help you. Form alliances, but do it carefully, for intrigue and espionage await you.

Live your exciting life without regret in a dynamically changing world: **NEOCRON!**



The content of this game may change due to interactive exchanges



© 2002 CDV Software Entertainment USA.
All rights reserved. Subject to change.



REAKKTOR.COM
BUILDING BETTER WORLDS.
A DIVISION OF SCHNEIDER SYSTEM LTD.

From the new temple to Cazic Thule in the jungle of Feerrott, the Lizardmen apparently know the region, and how to access its dank, dangerous interior.



EVERQUEST II

Back inside Sony Online's fortress, lead designer Bill Trost and his crew are adding extra content to fill out the new shape of the post-cataclysmic world of Norrath. How is that monumental task progressing, and what's in store for new adventurers? We find out.

PC GAMER: When a new game appears in the massively multiplayer genre (like the *Asheron's Call 2* beta, which is looking spectacular), does that act as a renewal of focus, or change anything in the way you're working?

BILL TROST: We are always observing our competition as both developers and players of massively multiplayer (MMP) games. We have a pretty concise development plan and are constantly comparing our assumptions in development with those features that are in play in current releases. That said, we try to avoid being too reactionary during development, which can threaten to randomize the team and cause us to lose focus. We are very confident that the feature set we are building into *EverQuest II* will exceed players' expectations.

PC GAMER: Since the announcement of *EQ II*, what's been the biggest single response you've had from users about what they want to see?

BILL TROST: The single biggest response has been "Wow, when can I get in the beta?" We keep a close eye on what our current players are experiencing and what they would like to see improved. We have a customer service rep assigned to our team, responsible for making sure that players' voices are heard as we make various



Don't feed the cute little Mogwai after midnight, or here's what happens...

development decisions. We also maintain a relationship with the Live [original *EverQuest*] team and have access to firsthand knowledge as they make improvements to the existing world. I would like to note that they've been doing an awesome job of improving the existing gameplay and systems, and we are always following their progress to ensure that we can maintain a certain level of consistency between the products where they intersect.

PC GAMER: In producing *EQ II*'s new outdoor areas, what rules do you live by to keep the scenery interesting to look at and compelling to travel through?

BILL TROST: We have some key rules to live by: Quality, Playability, and Flow. We expect to maintain a visual state of the art that is unprecedented in the current MMP market, with a level of detail that will immerse players in their environment. Playability has to be carefully balanced with quality to provide a consistent and acceptable frame rate when large groups of characters — both NPC and PC — are gathered in the zones for events, raids, or just socializing.

Flow is also very important when laying out a zone — how a character migrates between different areas of interest in the zone, what landmarks players can recognize as they travel, and how they'll get from one place to another.

PC GAMER: With *EQ II*'s new story and cataclysmic events, are you redesigning entire outdoor areas, or will they maintain the same shape and dominant natural and architectural features that existing players will recognize?

BILL TROST: The outdoor areas will feel familiar but you'll be compelled to explore the regions to discover how your favorite places have been reshaped by the events of the past.

PC GAMER: And how's it all coming along?

BILL TROST: It's going very well. Our development tools are complete and in the team's hands, the engine's very mature and polished, the fundamental gameplay systems are built, and we're in a good rhythm as we continue to pour content into the world.



On Odus (at the base of Mount Erudition, near Erudin), the grand plateau sweeps for miles.

RIGHT TURN IN FRONT
OF BUS IS ILLEGAL

5431

Why Wait? EarthLink High Speed Internet is always on, so you're always on. You move up to 50-times faster than dial-up and won't get stuck in traffic. Get your **FIRST MONTH FREE** when you CALL 1-800-EARTHLINK and  **Move to EarthLink.™**

M 81-064

©2002 EarthLink and the EarthLink logo are registered trademarks of EarthLink, Inc. Offer expires 12/31/02. Your first 30 days are free. Available to new residential EarthLink High Speed Internet subscribers. Services not available in all areas. Other restrictions, taxes and fees may apply. Minimum term commitments and early cancellation fees may apply. Call 1-800-EARTHLINK for details.

ALIENWARE
HIGH-PERFORMANCE GAMING SYSTEMS



"The mobile Alienware is the fastest notebook we've ever tested."

-Maximum PC Kick Ass Product Award



THE ULTIMATE **MOBILE** GAMING MACHINE™

Award-Winning Systems

- 10x listed on PC World Top 15 Home PCs Lists
- 7 PC Gamer Editors' Choice Awards
- 5 Computer Gaming World Editors' Choice Awards
- 4 Maximum PC Kick Ass Product Awards
- 2 CNET Editors' Choice Awards
- 2 Computer Shopper/ZDNet Best Buy Awards



Area-51™: Mobile Gaming

The Area-51™ represents the first fully capable mobile gaming solution. The performance requirements of today's most cutting edge games have been simply too demanding for a laptop unit, until now. The Area-51™ plays games at blistering speeds, handles quick motion with incredible accuracy, and performs phenomenally high in benchmarks. Perfect for LAN parties and for those who simply cannot part from their desktop system's performance, the Area-51™ is the ultimate **mobile** gaming machine.



FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY!

ALIENWARE® MICE

\$59

Available in many Custom Colors!

Visit us at www.alienware.com/gearshop



AREA-51™
MOBILE GAMING

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 2.8GHz with 533 FSB and 512KB Advanced Transfer Cache
High-Performance Heatsink/Cooling with Arctic Silver III
Intel® 845MP+ ICH3M Chipset Motherboard
512MB PC-2100 DDR SDRAM
Exclusive Metallic Cyborg Green Laptop Chassis
40GB 5400RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
15.0" UltraXGA+ TFT Active Matrix LCD
ATI® Mobility RADEON™ 9000 PRO 64MB DDR with Dual-View Display Monitor and TV-out
Removable 3.5" Floppy Drive 1.44MB
Removable 24X/10X/24X CD-RW/BX DVD Combo Drive
Sound Blaster® PRO Compatible with Wavetable
5.1 3D Surround Sound with S/PDIF Digital Output
Front Panel Audio DJ CD Player
Allows CD Play While System is On or Off
One Type II PCMCIA Slot
Four USB 2.0 Ports and One IEEE 1394 Port
Infrared Wireless Fast IR Interface
10/100Mb Ethernet LAN and 56K Modem
Dimensions: (H) x (W) x (D) : 1.7" x 13" x 11.4"
Weight: 7.6lbs. without battery
Exclusive 120-Watt A/C Adapter
Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
1-Year Toll-Free 24/7 Technical Support with Allencare On-Site Home Service
AlienAutopsy: Automated Technical Support
Personalized Owner's Manual
FREE Exclusive Alienware® T-Shirt
FREE Custom Alienware® Mouse Pad
Optimized & Configured for High-Performance

\$2,999.00

Alienware® recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional for Mobile Computing.



the invasion has begun



HIVE-MIND™
DESKTOP GAMING

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 2.4GHz
533 FSB and 512KB Advanced Transfer Cache
High-Performance Heatsink/Cooling System
Intel® 845PE Chipset Motherboard
512MB PC-2700 DDR SDRAM
Black Floppy Drive 1.44MB
60GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
NVIDIA® GeForce4™ Ti 4200 64MB DDR
Exclusive Koolmaxx™ Video Cooling System
Sound Blaster® Audigy 2™ 6.1 Sound Card
16X/48X DVD-ROM Drive
Black Dragon Full-Tower ATX Case 340-Watt PS
Black Microsoft® Internet Keyboard
Black Microsoft® Intellimouse Explorer 3.0
Intel® PRO/100 S Network Adapter
Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
1-Year Toll-Free 24/7 Technical Support
with Alienware On-Site Home Service
AlienAutopsy: Automated Technical Support
Personalized Owner's Manual
FREE Exclusive Alienware® T-Shirt
FREE Custom Alienware® Mouse Pad
Optimized & Configured for High-Performance

\$1,499.00



AREA-51™
DESKTOP GAMING

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 3.06GHz
533 FSB and 512KB Advanced Transfer Cache
Hyper-Threading Technology
High-Performance Heatsink/Cooling System
Intel® 850E Chipset Motherboard
512MB PC-1066 RDRAM
Black Floppy Drive 1.44MB
200GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive 8MB Cache
ATI® RADEON™ 9700 PRO 128MB DDR
Exclusive Koolmaxx™ Video Cooling System
Sound Blaster® Audigy 2™ 6.1 Sound Card
16X/48X DVD-ROM Drive
Black Lite-On 48X/12X/48X CD-RW IDE
Black Dragon Full-Tower ATX Case
Enermax EG651P-VE 550-Watt Power Supply
Black Microsoft® Internet Keyboard
Black Microsoft® Intellimouse Explorer 3.0
Intel® PRO/100 S Network Adapter
Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
1-Year Toll-Free 24/7 Technical Support
with Alienware On-Site Home Service
AlienAutopsy: Automated Technical Support
Personalized Owner's Manual
FREE Exclusive Alienware® T-Shirt
FREE Custom Alienware® Mouse Pad
Optimized & Configured for High-Performance

\$3,099.00

"Alienware is the true
price-vs.-performance champion."

-PC Gamer Editors' Choice Award



Laptops and Desktops available in custom metallic colors!

NEC MONITORS

19" NEC 95F	Flat CRT	\$289.00
19" NEC FE991SB	Flat CRT	\$339.00
22" NEC FE2111SB	Flat CRT	\$769.00
18" NEC 1850X	LCD	\$1519.00
20" NEC 2010X	LCD	\$1769.00

KLIPSCH SPEAKERS

Klipsch ProMedia 2.1	200-Watt THX-Certified	\$179.00
Klipsch ProMedia 4.1	400-Watt THX-Certified	\$249.00
Klipsch ProMedia 5.1	500-Watt THX-Certified	\$399.00

ALIENWARE®

Custom Build your Dream Machine at WWW.ALIENWARE.COM

For More Information Call Toll-Free: 1-800-ALIENWARE
(254-3692)

Prices, configurations, and availability may change without notice. Taxes and shipping charges not shown. Alienware cannot be held responsible for errors in photography or typography. On-site service may be provided via contracted third party, service not available in all areas. Technician will be dispatched if deemed necessary following telephone-based troubleshooting. For complete information on our warranty, support, and on-site service, visit www.alienware.com. For hard drives, GB means 1 billion bytes and accessible capacity may vary depending on configuration. For CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, CD-RW, and DVD+RW/+R drive(s), maximum data transfer rates may vary and discs created with these drives may not be compatible with all drives and players. For modems and network cards/hardware, maximum achievable data transfer rates may vary. Award(s) and quote(s) listed do not pertain to a specific system or configuration. Intel, Intel Inside Logo, and Pentium are registered trademarks of Intel Corporation. All registered trademarks and trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Actual case may vary in design.

HandsOn

As big-name games finally near release, playable late-beta builds land on our desks. Here's where we give hot-off-the-burner first impressions of how these titles are coming along.



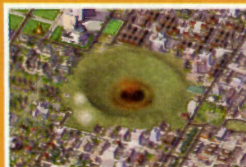
SIMCITY 4

Maxis returns to its first love in what may be this series' defining chapter

In my mind, the *SimCity* games have always been the undisputed champions of the city-management genre. And after playing a few hours of *SimCity 4*, I expect that legacy of greatness to continue.

The basic gameplay remains blissfully unchanged: create your city by building residential, commercial, or industrial zones, and then give your new metropolis enough power, water, and other services to make the lives of your citizens easy and stress-free.

What has me so excited, though, are the myriad tweaks that add even more depth to the game. First, you now control the entire *region*, not just your city — meaning you can build all of the cities in the region and have each one serve a specific purpose.



DEVELOPER
Maxis

PUBLISHER
EA

RELEASE DATE
January 2003

For example, one city can be designated an industrial, crime-ridden hell-hole, while another can be a quaint residential area. These different areas can be connected by roads, rails, airports, and seaports.

Once you're into the city-building phase, the changes are even more immediate. Instead of simply

laying down zones willy-nilly, you're forced to start small. If you zone out a large heavy commercial area, for instance, it'll go unused because your populace is unable to meet the educational requirements of large commercial businesses. The same goes for industrial zones: to get things started, your primary goal will be to create farms, not sprawling industrial wastelands.

In terms of zoning, *SimCity 4* automatically places secondary roads when you zone an area, which should eliminate some frustrating micromanagement. However, based on my play-testing, this feature still needs some work. It was very hard to match the new roads with existing ones, and far too often, roads would be laid down that didn't make much sense. Hopefully Maxis will fix these issues before *SC4* ships.

You can tweak taxes to the decimal, and the ability to set zone-specific tax levels means that a specific business type, such as medium industrial, can be targeted if you find that type of business floundering (or soaring to uncharted heights of success).

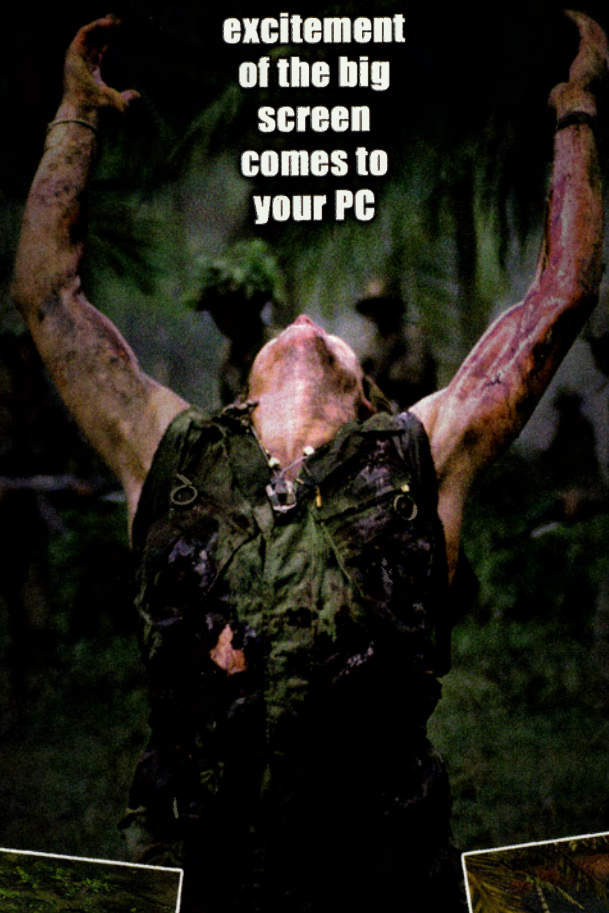
Also, the fire and police departments come in two sizes, and all buildings that provide a service — including schools and hospitals — display a coverage-zone circle onscreen before you build them. And the utilities, in addition to the base construction charge, cost you a monthly fee. These changes may seem subtle, but the end result is more of the sweet *SimCity* gameplay that we all know and love. — William Harms



■ From top to bottom: (1) Disasters such as this meteor impact play a huge role in *SC4*. (2) Before building your city, edit the terrain and create mountains, forests, and ancient craters, and even insert wildlife. (3) Various overlays show vital info such as traffic flow (seen here), crime, pollution, and land value. (4) The hugely updated graphics look fantastic. Buildings are highly detailed and new building animations signal construction projects. (5) A tornado wreaks havoc in Billyville.

PLATOON

**All the
excitement
of the big
screen
comes to
your PC**



Manage a platoon of up to 30 soldiers including medics, snipers, commandos, and engineers, each with their own personality and unique abilities.



The dynamic 3D terrain and weather effects accurately remodel the harsh Vietnamese conditions, affecting combat.

First tactical strategy game to cover the Vietnam War from 1965 to 1968, recreating actual US Army missions.



MONTE CRISTO



PLATOON Interactive Game (all object code, all other software components and certain audio visual components only). © 2002 Monte Cristo Multimedia. Monte Cristo and its logo are registered trademarks of Monte Cristo Multimedia. PLATOON Interactive Game (certain audiovisual components). © 2002 Orion Pictures Corporation. PLATOON TM & © 1986 Orion Pictures Corporation. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and logos are property of their respective owners. Developed by Digital Reality.



Violence

A lush, dense jungle scene with large, moss-covered tree trunks and thick ferns. The lighting is dappled, creating a sense of depth and mystery. The text is overlaid on the lower left portion of the image.

YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE MOST ELITE
COMMANDO UNIT ON THE PLANET.

SOCOM
U.S. NAVY SEAL

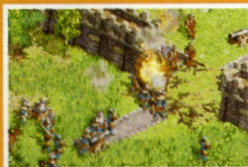
Hands On

1503 A.D.: THE NEW WORLD

Sprawling campaigns and slower gameplay mark this engaging sequel

There are two kinds of real-time strategy gamers: those who like simple, straightforward combat and resource management, and those who like to get their hands dirty with all kinds of micromanagement. The first probably won't care a whole lot for *1503 A.D.*, the sequel to *1602 A.D.*, but the latter should go absolutely nuts over it.

The year is 1503 (shocker) and you're a generic explorer sent out to colonize the New World. The land is alive with the sound of music...and nine different cultures, including Native Americans,



DEVELOPER
Sunflowers

PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts

RELEASE DATE
April 2003

Aztecs, and Africans. The other sides exist for your trading and warmongering pleasure. The game includes a full campaign mode, an open-ended mode, a single-campaign mode, and multiplayer. In the build that I played, the only mode available was open-ended, but it gave me a good taste of what we can expect from the full game.

As in real life, your choice of real estate is key. You need to make sure you have enough natural

resources — such as trees, animals to hunt, and so on — to build a healthy colony. Play your cards right, and you'll see your humble outpost turn into a grand, thriving city, bustling with trade, full of luxuries, and bristling with weaponry. And since *1503* is an RTS game, combat will also factor into the mix.

The graphics are quaint, if slightly dated, and competently portray the game's peaceful beaches, green forests, and growing colonies. What really cracked me up, though, is the soothing music that makes you feel like the world is calm and well, even when your village's stores are depleted and your colonists are starving to death.

1503 progresses at a much slower pace than most RTS games, and it gives you a lot of details to track — at times, too many for my tastes: My towns often became congested, and having to connect my buildings with dirt roads grew frustrating because roads work only if they're touching the very front of a building. (I really hope Sunflowers changes this condition before the game ships.) Overall, the level of micromanagement looks like it might be a tad excessive for gamers seeking a basic *Warcraft III*-type experience.

Nevertheless, with 250 building types, gigantic maps to explore and conquer, and almost endless options that let you be the kind of frontiersperson you want, people who like meaty RTS games (or who enjoyed *1602*) should find plenty of fun. — *Li. C. Kuo*



Eventually, your tiny colony will become a massive, bustling metropolis.

You can't see them, of course. After all, they're SEALs, a commando unit legendary for its ability to penetrate enemy territory undetected. And then strike with surgical precision. Enter the world of *SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs*, where stealth, intelligence and teamwork are the ultimate weapons.



Developed in association with the U.S. Navy SEALs, *SOCOM* is unconventional warfare the way it's really fought. That means hostage rescues, reconnaissance, ambushes and demolitions. Hoo-yah.



Whether you're in single-player mode or playing online with and against up to 16 total players, your *SOCOM* headset is critical. It'll help you communicate and strategize with your unit, so everyone returns in one piece. Remember: "No SEAL left behind."



Combat terror in extreme environments like Turkmenistan, Alaska, Thailand and the gnat-infested Congo. Should be a walk in the park. Next to Hell Week, that is.

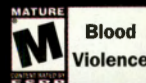
SOCOM

U.S. NAVY SEALs



LIVE IN YOUR WORLD.
PLAY IN OURS.

PlayStation 2

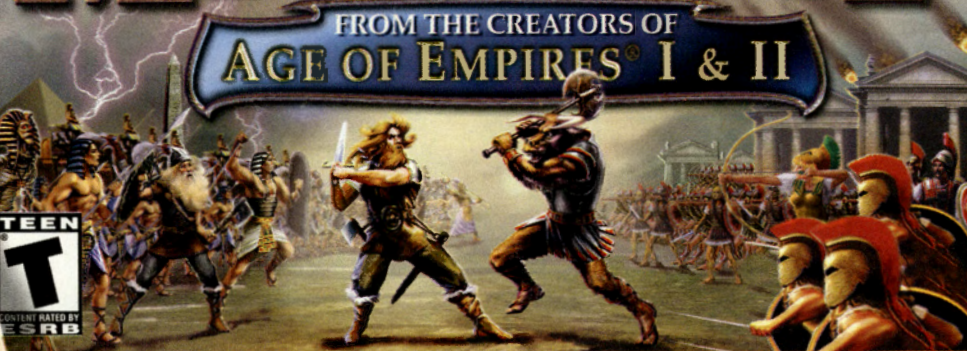
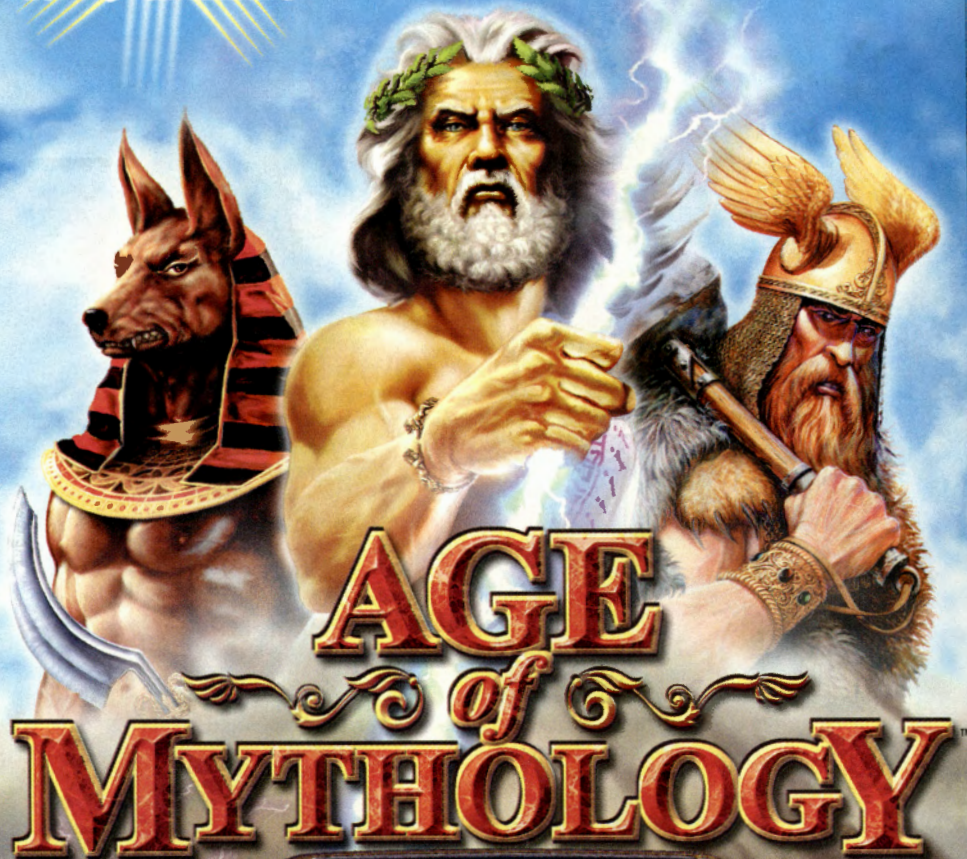


EB GAMES™

electronics boutique®

ENSEMBLE
STUDIOS

\$44.99
at **EB GAMES™**



Call **1-800-800-5166** For the store nearest you or **1-800-800-0032** to place your order now!

*Scenario available when Age of Mythology releases. Limited quantities available. While supplies last. See sales associate for details. Prices, offers, and selection may vary by store and in Canada.

electronics boutique®

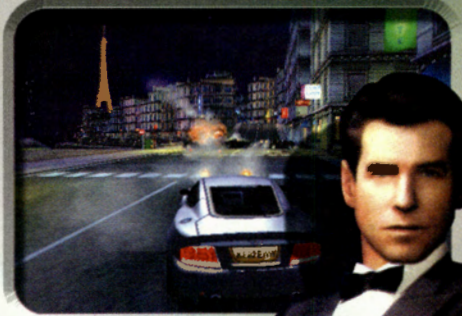
EB GAMES™

\$44.99
at **EB GAMES**



de hamo: 230 28

007™ *nightfire*™



VISIT US AT **WWW.EBGAMES.COM**

THE SPORTS REPORT

Is the PC sports genre dead, or merely on life support?



Madden for the PC may look astounding, but that doesn't mean it's a best-seller.

SHOW THEM THE MONEY...OR NOT

The simple reason that more publishers don't release sports games for the PC is that they generally don't sell very well. The PC sales-to-date figures below were provided by NPD, and show that even the largest sports title on the PC, *Madden*, doesn't generate a lot in sales. These figures are even more depressing when you consider that *Madden* for the PS2 sells around 1 million copies every year and that *NBA Live 2002* for the PS2 sold over 500,000 copies; EA didn't even release *NBA Live 2002* for the PC.

Madden NFL 2002: 82,024

Madden NFL 2003: 36,149

High Heat Baseball 2003: 56,939

NBA Live 2001: 36,151

NHL Hockey 2002: 60,280

Ask any console manufacturer what the main ingredients are for a successful launch and continued success and you're sure to find "killer team-sports titles" among the answers. Ask any PC publisher what's the quickest way toward filing bankruptcy, and you might hear the same exact answer, although the adjective "killer" takes on a whole new meaning. Why is it that a genre so vital for the video-games business has become nearly irrelevant in today's PC games market? That's what we wanted to find out.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

BACK IN THE MID-NINETIES, the sports market, at least from the standpoint of number of titles available, was extremely strong. For your favorite sport you could find anywhere from three to seven games to choose from. That's not saying they were all quality offerings, but at least publishers gave us gamers some options.

The *Front Page Sports* line from Dynamix (published by Sierra) was among the most popular. Consisting of a baseball and football franchise — and later Fishing, Golf, Skiing, Hunting, and Bull Riding — these games were, in the early days, way ahead of their time, combining fairly decent arcade

play with management and coaching features that have arguably yet to be matched.

In particular, Dynamix's football game, *Front Page Sports: Football*, was a huge critical success, and it even sold well — in the neighborhood of 150,000 copies each year. When you consider that the number of PCs in homes back then was just a fraction of what it is today, that's not a number to sneeze at.

Unfortunately, stagnation occurred in both sales and innovation. The former was the direct cause of the latter, and in the last few years of its life, Dynamix's football series offered little more than roster and interface updates.

"Sierra knew that no matter what they did, they were going to sell only about 150,000 copies of *FPS: Football*," says Dan Rogers, former general manager of the Dynamix product line. "It didn't take long to figure out that you couldn't spend \$4 million developing a game that would sell only 150,000 copies. So, in effect, the only thing that the executive staff was willing to do was 'patch the house,' when what the series really needed was a complete overhaul. We did have a plan to completely rebuild the *FPS* line, but we couldn't get the executive staff to commit to it."

The horribly unfinished and bug-ridden 1999 edition of *FPS: Football* (which was — in a rare move for our industry — eventually recalled by Sierra), marked the end of the series. In retrospect, it also signaled the overall decline of the genre.

THE TROUBLES OF TODAY

ONE OF SIERRA'S BIGGEST competitors back then was EA Sports, whose *Madden NFL* line offered a flashier arcade game that had little in the way of *Front Page Sports'* statistical depth. *Madden's* combination of marketing, big-name recognition, and simplistic design appealed to the more casual gamer, allowing EA Sports to also sell approximately 150,000 copies a year. If you'll notice, though, *Madden* is still around on the PC, while *FPS: Football* is but a footnote in the history books.

The reason for that discrepancy is leverage: EA Sports' investment is spread out across all platforms, so even though the PC numbers are still pretty low in comparison to the consoles numbers (see chart), there's enough return to justify the PC games' existence. A PC-only company like Sierra, on the other hand, had to recoup its dollars directly, which wasn't going to happen.

WIN BILLY HARMS' NEW GRAPHIC NOVEL

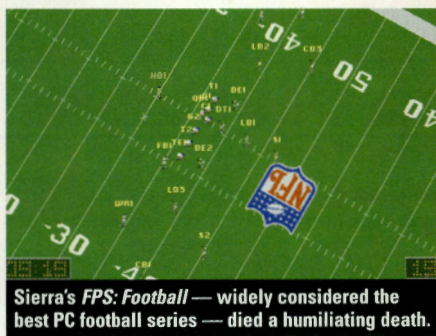
PC Gamer senior editor Billy Harms writes comics on the side, and we have 10 signed copies of his latest effort, *Abel*, to give away (courtesy of publisher AIT/PlanetLar). To be eligible for our random drawing, just send an email to eyewitness@pcgamer.com with "Abel" in the subject heading, and include your name and address in the body of the message. Only one entry per person allowed. Contest ends Jan. 31, 2003. See additional rules on page 159.



The only baseball title released on the PC in 2002 was 3DO's *High Heat 2003*.



Microsoft had a brief fling on the PC with its *NBA Inside Drive* (shown) and *NFL Fever* titles.



Sierra's *FPS: Football* — widely considered the best PC football series — died a humiliating death.

This situation raises an interesting question, though: If such leverage works for EA Sports, then why isn't a company like Sega Sports releasing its games on the PC? Its titles have a presence across all console platforms and are generally well-received, yet so far, there's no sign that the company is interested in producing PC sports games.

We asked Sega about their interest in our market, also hoping to get the company's thoughts on why the PC sports market is currently in a slump. Their response was less than nothing. Sega's refusal to even give us a "no comment" speaks volumes: we were told that everyone was too busy getting ready to launch the new console basketball games. In fact, Sega's public-relations company, Access Communications, told us point-blank that if this story were appearing in a *console* magazine, Sega would be more interested in speaking with us. That pretty much says it all.

Microsoft — which published *NFL Fever 2000* and *NBA Inside Drive 2000* on the PC, and at one time released baseball and soccer games for our platform — also declined to go on record about its PC plans or to comment on market conditions. This silence is even more disheartening considering the

company's clear commitment to the PC in so many other areas.

EA Sports, however, is obviously thrilled that the competition has taken their balls and gone home, so to speak.

"EA is more than happy to pick up the business from any developer who foolishly believes that the PC market is shrinking," says Jeff Brown, a spokesman for EA. Brown did say that EA Sports wouldn't necessarily mind a little healthy competition, though. "So far, the console competition with Sega has been great for EA. It fired up everyone from our studios to our publishing group, and, as a result, EA's *Madden* and *NCAA* games have captured 85 percent of the football market. If Sega can give a similar boost to EA games on the PC, we're happy to have them try."

When asked why certain games, such as the *NCAA Football* series or last year's version of *NBA Live*, weren't released for the PC, Brown was more pragmatic. "Those decisions have as much to do with bandwidth as marketing," he explains. "The simple fact is that even a big operation like EA Worldwide Studios has got more opportunities than we have teams to take advantage of them." In other

PC GAMER RELEASE METER



Release dates used with permission from Gone Gold (www.gonegold.com). Games farthest out are most likely to change dates. Send release info to dates@gonegold.com.

→ January

TITLE	PUBLISHER	DATE
Airline Tycoon 2	Global Star	01/03/03
Star Wars: Galaxies	LucasArts	01/06/03
Impossible Creatures	Microsoft	01/10/03
Jurassic Park: Evolution	Vivendi	01/15/03
Enclave	Conspiracy	01/15/03
Castles and Catapults	Infogrames	01/16/03
SimCity 4	Maxis	01/17/03
Vietcong	G.O.D.	01/17/03
Operation Steel Tide	Infogrames	01/22/03
Highland Warriors	Data Becker	01/23/03
Unreal II	Infogrames	01/24/03
Freelancer	Microsoft	01/24/03
Indiana Jones: Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	01/30/03

→ February

TITLE	PUBLISHER	DATE
Escape from Alcatraz	Hip Interactive	02/05/03
Shadowbane	Ubi Soft	02/07/03
Imperium Galactica III	Hip Interactive	02/07/03
Praetorians	Eidos	02/12/03
Rainbow Six III	Ubi Soft	02/14/03
Cold Zero	JoWooD	02/14/03
Gothic II	JoWooD	02/14/03
BloodRayne	Majesco	02/18/03
PlanetSide	Sony Online	02/19/03
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	02/19/03
Metal Gear Solid 2	Konami	02/19/03
IL-2: Forgotten Battles	Ubi Soft	02/19/03
Command & Conquer: Generals	Westwood	02/26/03
Devastation	Groove	02/26/03
Harpoon 4	Ubi Soft	02/26/03
Republic: The Revolution	Eidos	02/27/03
Star Wars: KOTOR	LucasArts	02/28/03



Praetorians

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

PC GAMER PLAYLIST



ROB So little gaming this month, so much vacationing: playing golf in Bangkok, visiting the Bridge on the River Kwai. Barely any time to scratch out some playoff games in my *High Heat* campaign, and virtually no time to fine-tune my *Magic Online* deck. With *Mafia* and *Hitman 2* waiting to be installed, even *NWN* modules are taking a backseat.



COREY Joining Billy for some *NOLF 2* co-op play — me dyin', him spyin' — was truly humbling. A week later, I think he's still laughing at the sight of me trying to take on five AK-toting soldiers with my (gulp!) mascara stungun. At least playing the *Starfleet Command III* beta has cheered me up: I have high hopes for the finished game.



DAN So much brilliance, so few hours in the day. A short list of my current game-playing includes *Links 2003*, co-op *Special Forces* missions with Billy in *Ghost Recon: Island Thunder* (we will bring stability to Cuba), and regular bouts of *Battlefield 1942*. Add in my ongoing season in *High Heat 2003*, and you've got a veritable overload of joy.



CHUCK With four courses to swallow, my review plate was a little full this month: all that "BatCoaster Tournament of the Rings" playing meant there was no time for anything else. Actually, that's a game I'd like to play. All the carnage of *UT 2003* mixed with the balladery of *LOTR*. On a rollercoaster. Piloted by Batman. Kewwwwl...



BILLY After reviewing crap game after crap game (*Deadly Dozen*, anyone?), some goodness came my way and I got my hands on *NOLF 2* and *Age of Mythology*. Talk about gaming overload! The only downer this month was Greg's insistence that I go with him to Chin's House, a local hole-in-the-wall Chinese eatery, for buffet. My colon still hurts.



JOE *Icewind Dale II* is a fantastic RPG with some of the toughest battles I've ever faced in any D&D game. The Infinity engine may look a little tired, and the pathfinding is annoying at times, but the story and the gameplay are brilliant. Suddenly I want to go back and play through the *Baldur's Gate* series again. *Neverwinter* who?



CHIAKI What to do this weekend? Golfing? Fishing? Surfing? Camping? Motorcycling? Watch baseball? Play rock-'n'-roll? Drink cold beer? Mmmmm...beer...drool. As tempting as all those sound, *Neverwinter Nights* has got me in its evil, evil clutches. Whoa, I got an idea: I can play *NWN* and drink beer...oh yeah, baby!



GREG You know me — *Battlefield 1942* and *UT 2003*! (Hee-hee!) As much as I love the complexity and tactics of *BF 1942*, *UT*'s fast-paced action and streamlined simplicity hook me, too! I don't always have a half-hour chunk of time to devote to playing a game, so, especially at work, I appreciate *UT*'s "get in quick, get out quick" design philosophy.

FIRST-PERSON SHOUTERS

WHO'S SAYING WHAT AROUND THE WORLD OF GAMING



why, in *Tennis Masters Series 2003* you have the choice of four different serves, four different regular shots and two special shots."

— Press release from Microïds extolling the virtues of its upcoming tennis-game sequel

CONFIDENCE IN YOUR PRODUCT?

"EA reserves the right to terminate the online service for this product after 90 days notice."

— Large notation on the back of the *Earth & Beyond* retail box

WE'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT

"If you want a good laugh, I'll drop my pants and give you a good laugh."

— Our very own Greg Vederman, being his normal utterly vile self

HOPE YOU ENJOY THE TIME OFF

"It is? Ok, I guess we can go home then. :)"

— *3D Realms'* George Broussard, responding to the "news" from forum poster iNCDOA claiming that *Duke Nukem Forever* had been cancelled, from www.voodooextreme.com

THE SPORTS REPORT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

words, the projected sales of these PC titles were likely deemed insufficient to justify their existence.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Fortunately, 3DO, maker of *High Heat Baseball* — the only baseball game available for the PC last year — plans to stick with our favorite platform. Ross Borden, the game's public-relations representative, tells us: "Between the success that we have enjoyed and the current information that we have about the market, we will continue to make *High Heat* for the PC indefinitely. We are totally committed to baseball. And yes, *High Heat Baseball 2004* for PC is confirmed."

While it doesn't appear that sports games will completely dry up on the PC, there seems to be little sign of expansion. David Cole, president of DFC Intelligence, a company that analyzes sales trends within the PC games market, says, "There is a niche, established audience for these types of games, but I don't see it as being a big growth area."

This attitude is shared by Jerry Madaio, the head buyer for retailer Electronics Boutique. Madaio also believes that there's little room for growth in the PC sports-games genre, and thinks that the absence of this vital support means your local Electronics Boutique won't be brimming with choices anytime soon.

Each representative seemed to agree on one thing: Due to a combination of social and technological factors, the majority of people who play sports games prefer to play on consoles, and even the

ALL STEAK, NO SIZZLE

One market that has seen some recent growth is the text-based sports sim. Old-timers like *Diamond Mind Baseball* and the Strat-O-Matic series of sports games are still going strong, while impressive newcomers like *PureSim Baseball*, *Front Office Football*, *Out of the Park Baseball*, and a host of other games are attracting PC gamers who are interested in the statistical aspects of sports games (something the PC does infinitely better than any console). Games such as *Baseball Mogul* are usually very reasonably priced and fully supported by the programmers, who love to get feedback from their customers. Most of them are also extremely solid and a lot of fun, so be sure to check them out.

superior graphics or the richest, easy-to-use online components in a PC game aren't going to change that fact.

As enthusiastic supporters of the PC platform, we have to wonder: Is it possible that we could see a resurgence down the road? The incredible comeback of roleplaying games is proof that anything is possible. What's needed is for a company (or preferably companies) to come along and blow everyone away with a game that expands the audience and makes enough money to justify its existence. Until that happens, sports games for the PC will remain in their troubled state.

GAMES ON DEMAND

Yahoo introduces an ambitious plan to sell PC gameplay over broadband. The question is, Will gamers pay the rent?

Yahoo is a gigantic company, even by the standards of PC gaming's largest power-houses. So when Yahoo decided in October to enter the PC games market with a large-scale rent-on-demand program, it made a splash even in the mainstream media.

The plan is to become a sort of online Blockbuster for gaming. Here's how it works: you sign up at <http://gamesondemand.yahoo.com> with a Yahoo account, which is the free part. This step allows you to download the free software for Games on Demand,

PRICING INFO

Yahoo offers four options for renting games:

- **Three-day rental for one game** \$4.95
- **30-day rental for three games** \$9.95
- **30-day rental for five games** \$14.95
- **30-day rental for ten games** \$19.95

a quick and easy download with DSL (which, by the way, is an obvious requirement for the service — the setup will check your system for basic requisites like Windows 98/2000/XP operating system and DirectX 8.0, plus a DSL/broadband connection).

Once set up, you're given access to a surprisingly wide menu of games for rental. At press time, the list was 41 games long, divided into action, adventure, arcade/family, roleplaying, simulation, sports, and strategy genres. Highlights included *Civilization III*, *ST: Voyager* — *Elite Force*, *Grand Theft Auto II*, *Hitman*, *Age of Wonders*, and the highly popular *Monopoly Tycoon*.

Each game has its own system requirements, of course. So if you want to rent *Elite Force*, you'll be

advised that you need at least a 233MHz processor, 64MB RAM, and a 3D card to play. (You'll also be given the recommended and optimum requirements, which are a bit more realistic.) Once you've paid the rental fee via a secure transaction, your account is activated with the number of slots paid for that month. Then the slots are filled up as you select games for download.

The security mechanism is a "cache download" which has to be downloaded every single time you sit down to play your rental. This system is going to prove aggravating in the long run, given that the whole benefit of "games on demand" implies a plug-and-play setup that just isn't reflected by the reality of cache downloads. Because the game doesn't reside on your hard drive, you're at the mercy of a significant download to get into "your" game. We can't help but think that this condition is going to frustrate both kinds of gamers — the hardcore set who are used to the idea of a downloaded demo, as well as casual gamers who are conditioned to expect tiny one-time downloads to play their *Monopoly*, *pai-gow* poker, and such.

We spent the days leading up to press time trying to use our account to download a game, only to meet with abject failure. After successfully completing the installation of all needed components, we found ourselves unable to get hold of any actual games. Every time we tried to download a game, we were met with a charming error message: "This game is currently unavailable. Please try again later." And even after we re-verified that our account was active and all systems were go, we continued to get this message.

Our problems don't necessarily bode badly for the whole experiment, as plenty of people were downloading successfully by the time we went to press. But they certainly make us a little more wary about the whole enterprise.



Since we couldn't actually download *Civ III* from Yahoo's service, we can only fawn over this old screenshot.

→ PCG NEWS TICKER

→ **Don't Ask Y:** Westka Interactive, which was developing the *Unreal*-powered shooter *The Y-Project*, has closed its doors due to lack of funding, effectively canceling the project. Also abandoned was the recently announced horseracing sim *Race Tracks Unlimited*.

→ **Microids** has revealed that it's working on a sequel to this year's highly rated adventure game *Syberia* (September 2002; PCG rating: 80%). Expect a release as soon as October 2003.

→ **Black Moon Falling:** Vircom has halted development of its MMORPG *Black Moon Chronicles*. Curious gamers can still play the beta client for free by downloading it from http://bmc_client.0C113nt8@vircominteractive.com/.

→ **NCsoft** will publish *Wreckage*, a post-apocalyptic massively multiplayer car-combat game being developed by NetDevil. You'll be able to arm and upgrade vehicles, form groups, and declare auto war. Launch is scheduled for sometime in 2004–2005.



If *Final Fantasy XI* reaches the PC, it'll be our first FF game since *FF VIII*.

→ **Final Fantasy XI** announced: NVIDIA and Square have teamed up to develop a GeForce4 Ti-enhanced version of *Final Fantasy XI* for the PC. Currently, the massively multiplayer game is set for launch only in Japan this November, but inside sources have confirmed that *FF XI* will eventually be released in the U.S.

→ **Gamer dies from excessive gaming:** A 24-year-old South Korean man was found dead in an Internet café restroom following an 86-hour gaming session without food or sleep. An incensed President Bush blamed Saddam Hussein for the death, calling on South Korea to endorse a U.S. invasion of Iraq in retaliation.

→ After seeing its stock price drop as low as a nickel, Interplay (*Baldur's Gate*, *Fallout*) was delisted from the NASDAQ exchange in October. Ironically, the company is probably best known for publishing *Descent*.

→ **Sigil Games**, recently formed by *EverQuest* creator Brad McQuaid and Verant-alum Jeff Butler, has added another *EQ* renegade to its ranks. Former lead programmer and co-author Steve Clover has joined Sigil for its secret upcoming project to be published by Microsoft. A first-person shooter, perhaps?

→ **Neverwinter Knighted:** The British Academy of Film and Television Arts has selected *Neverwinter Nights* as the best PC game of 2002, saying that it "will rank among the best PC RPGs of all time." *Grand Prix 4* took honors for best sports game.

Since its 1998 release, the original *StarCraft* has sold more than 6 million copies worldwide, says Blizzard.

BLIZZARD GOES BONKERS

There's a new *StarCraft* game in the works...for the Xbox

So Blizzard shocked the gaming world with its announcement at September's Tokyo Game Show that its next game, *StarCraft: Ghost*, would be a console-only title — definitely to be released on Xbox, likely to be released on other consoles. Stunned and bewildered, we went to Blizzard Executive Producer and spokesman Bill Roper to get the straight story.

PC Gamer: What kind of a game is *StarCraft: Ghost*?

BR: *StarCraft: Ghost* is a tactical action game. Basically, we want to take the split-second decisions and long-term strategies that are involved in a game like *StarCraft* and combine them with the adrenaline-pumping action of a first-person shooter.

As the *Ghost* operative Nova, the player uses cloaking technology in covert operations, uses psionic powers in one-on-one fights, and employs an array of high-tech weapons in small group combat. You'll jump into numerous vehicles, summon armored support, or even call down nuclear strikes

as you help sway the outcome of planetary battles. No matter the scope or scale of the mission, your *Ghost* unit will play a key role in its success.

PCG: Why is Blizzard releasing *StarCraft: Ghost* only on console systems?

BR: When we were in *Ghost*'s early concept stages, it seemed to naturally be a style of game that just fit on consoles. [Judging from what they play], we believe that PC and console gamers have different expectations, and what we intend to do with *StarCraft: Ghost* is definitely oriented toward the console systems.

PCG: What prompted you to develop a console game in the first place?

BR: Blizzard got its start by doing third-party work, and then original game development, on the Super Nintendo and Sega systems. Since the days of *Blackthorne*, *The Lost Vikings*, and *Rock & Roll Racing*, we've been itching to get back to developing for the console.

PCG: Does this mean that Blizzard will be shifting its attention away from computer-game development?

BR: We never envision Blizzard leaving the PC-gaming market. While we gained our first critical recognition for our game designs on the console with projects like *Rock & Roll Racing* and *Lost Vikings*, we have been extremely fortunate to attract an amazing community surrounding our PC games.

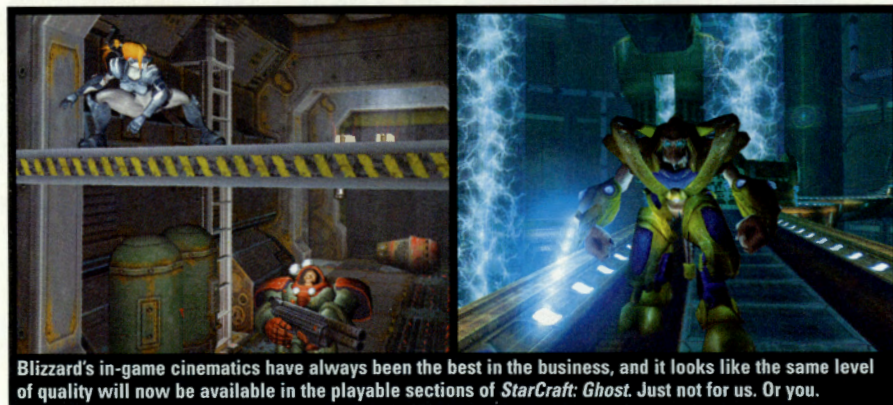
This is one of the great things about the structure of the development team for *StarCraft: Ghost*. By entering into a joint development with Nihilistic, we've been able to add a console game to our plans without replacing a PC game. I really want to stress that we understand how important our PC community is, how our success is due to the support and satisfaction of that community, and that *Ghost* in no way impacts our plans or ability to keep making games for the PC.

PCG: The response to the announcement was swift and to the point — PC gamers are not pleased. What do you think of that reaction?

BR: I think that unless we simultaneously announced *StarCraft 2*, *Diablo III*, *Warcraft IV*, and maybe something else to boot, some portion of the people who play our games would be disappointed. That said, we want to let you all know that we love those worlds as much as you do, and if we could find some way to do all of those projects — and many more — we would! We also know that we simply can't do all of that while still dedicating the focus and resources that every project demands to meet the high expectations of both our developers and the fans of our games.

PCG: Will *Ghost* ever be released on the PC?

BR: We have no plans to release it for the PC since we are very driven to create a game that's designed to take advantage of many different aspects of next-generation console systems.



Blizzard's in-game cinematics have always been the best in the business, and it looks like the same level of quality will now be available in the playable sections of *StarCraft: Ghost*. Just not for us. Or you.

You are Now Free to Move About the Castle

From an enchanted castle, a captive princess calls for a courageous knight to rescue her from the keep of a foul dragon...

The legend returns.

Experience this next generation legacy from the visionary creators of the original arcade classic.

DRAGON'S LAIR 3D

Return to the Lair



Over 250 chambers loaded with traps, puzzles and secrets.



Defeat enemies such as Fire Drakes, Giddy Goons & Singe the Dragon.



Action-packed 3D adventure with total control over Dirk the Daring.



Mild Violence



Dragonstone
SOFTWARE

Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT
www.ubi.com



PC
CD
ROM

www.dragonslair3d.com

©2002 Ubi Soft Entertainment. Ubi Soft and the Ubi Soft Entertainment logo are registered trademarks of Ubi Soft Entertainment, Inc. The Dragon's Lair name, logo, characters and indicia are either registered trademarks, trademarks, or copyrights of Dragon's Lair LLC and Don Bluth, and are used under license with permission. The Dragon's Lair 3D game ©2002 Dragon's Lair LLC and Don Bluth. The original Dragon's Lair game ©1983 Bluth Group Ltd. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Xbox and the Xbox Logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or in other countries and are used under license from Microsoft. Screenshots taken from PC CD-ROM version.

EBGAMES™

electronics boutique®



the LORD OF THE RINGS™

+ THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING +



\$49.99
at **EBGAMES™**



PC
CD-ROM

OFFICIAL GAME
BASED ON THE LITERARY WORKS OF J.R.R. TOLKIEN



Call **1-800-800-5166** For the store nearest you or **1-800-800-0032** to place your order now!

*Scenario available when Age of Mythology releases. Limited quantities available. While supplies last. See sales associate for details. Prices, offers, and selection may vary by store and in Canada.

Buy Asheron's Call 2 at EB Games

AC2 Sweepstakes: Enter online to win an account for life

<http://www.ebgames.com/ac2>

EBGAMES™ electronics boutique®

HOW TO SHOP

Call for a store near you ..1-800-800-5166

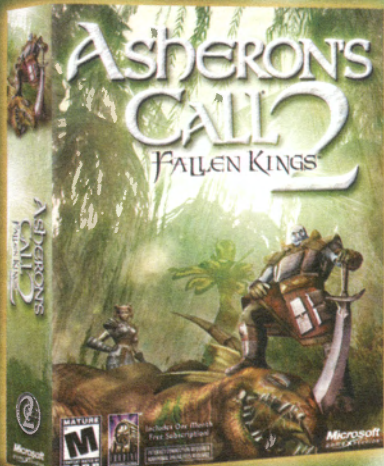
Shop by phone1-800-800-0032

COME IN AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT:

- Newest and Hottest Games!
- Large Selection
- Knowledgeable Sales Associates
- PC/Video Game Trade-In Program
- Pre-purchase/Reserve List Program

Buy Asheron's Call 2 at

EBGAMES™



**AC2 Sweepstakes: Enter online
to win an account for life.**

<http://www.ebgames.com/ac2>

EBGAMES™ electronics boutique®

electronics boutique®

EBGAMES™

\$49.99
at **EBGAMES™**

MASTER OF ORION

RATING PENDING
RATING PENDING
RP
This rating is pending. For more info,
visit www.esrb.org or call
1-800-771-8739 for more info.
ESRB

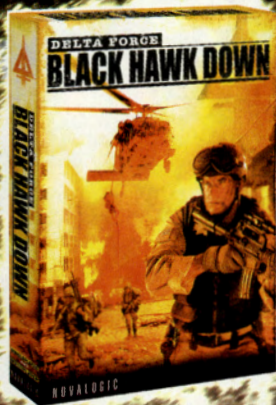

INFOGRAMES™



VISIT US AT **WWW.EBGAMES.COM**

DELTA FORCE BLACK HAWK DOWN™

EXPERIENCE THE INTENSITY
OF MODERN WARFARE



- Execute Compelling Missions with Multiple Objectives
- Fire Weapons From Black Hawks and Humvees
- Engage In Urban CQB and Sniper Combat
- New, Challenging AI System • Nonstop Online Gaming



**In Stores
November
2002**

PLAYS BEST ON
ALIENWARE

www.novalogic.com

NOVALOGIC®



Prima Strategy
Guide Available!



Violence
Blood

© 2002 NovaLogic, Inc. NovaLogic, the NovaLogic logo, NovaWorld and Delta Force are registered trademarks of NovaLogic, Inc. The Delta Force logo, Black Hawk Down and the NovaWorld logo are trademarks of NovaLogic, Inc. All other trademarks and logos are property of their respective owners.

FANTASTIC
GIFTS FOR
YOUR...



BEDROOM!

#36



COMPUTER ROOM!

#38



LIVING ROOM!

#40



KITCHEN!

#48



BATHROOM!

#50



BOOKCASE!

#56

PC GAMER'S HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

'Tis the season to be greedy. (Tra-lalalala-laaaa-la-la-la-la.) Every year around this time, we break our humps trying to figure out what you guys want to see stuffed in your stockings. (Stop snickering in the back.) Well, this joyous holiday season we've decked our own halls (if you know what we mean) and festooned the ultimate gamer's crib. From bedroom to bathroom, you'll find a gift here for the gamer in your life. Now go on...support democracy and the U.S. economy and spend away.

THE GAMER'S BEDROOM

For sleeping, lounging, or whatever it is you do in there, the bedroom is your own private sanctuary for, well, whatever it is you do in there.

MEADE DIGITAL CAMERA BINOCULARS

Spy on exotic wildlife of all shapes and sizes, and then snap its digital picture in 640x480 resolution. A must-have for bird-lovers and peeping toms alike.



shop.nationalgeographic.com

\$99.95

NOMAD MUVO

For quick data storage or for listening to your MP3s/WMA's on the go, the MuVo is a tiny marvel. It works with standard headphones and easily connects to any USB port whenever you need to transfer files. So small, it'll connect to a keyring.



www.creativelabs.com

\$129-\$169

TARGUS COMPUTER BACKPACK

Padded for the comfort of both you and your laptop, this sturdy backpack has plenty of room to store peripherals, CD-ROMs, and hint guides for all your mobile-gaming needs.



www.targus.com

\$69.99-\$99.99

THE SANDS OF PRIDE

An epic Civil War saga as scribed by our very own Desktop General, William Trotter. A great read for gaming grognards, Civil War buffs, or anyone who needs to kill a really big bug.



www.carrollandgraf.com

\$28

DRAGON'S LAIR 3D ACTION FIGURES

Nine-inch plastic replicas of the not-so-bright Dirk the Daring, sexy ditz Princess Daphne, evil wizard Mordroc, and nasty princess-kidnapping dragon Singe.



www.digitalleisure.com

\$49.95
(set of four)

OFFLINESHIRTS.COM GAMING SWAG

Celebrate your inner-geek with T-shirts, hats, license-plate frames, and even lunchboxes dedicated to your favorite hobby. Confuse the non-gamer squares and ask, "Got Clarity?"



www.offlineshirts.com

\$11.99
(each up)

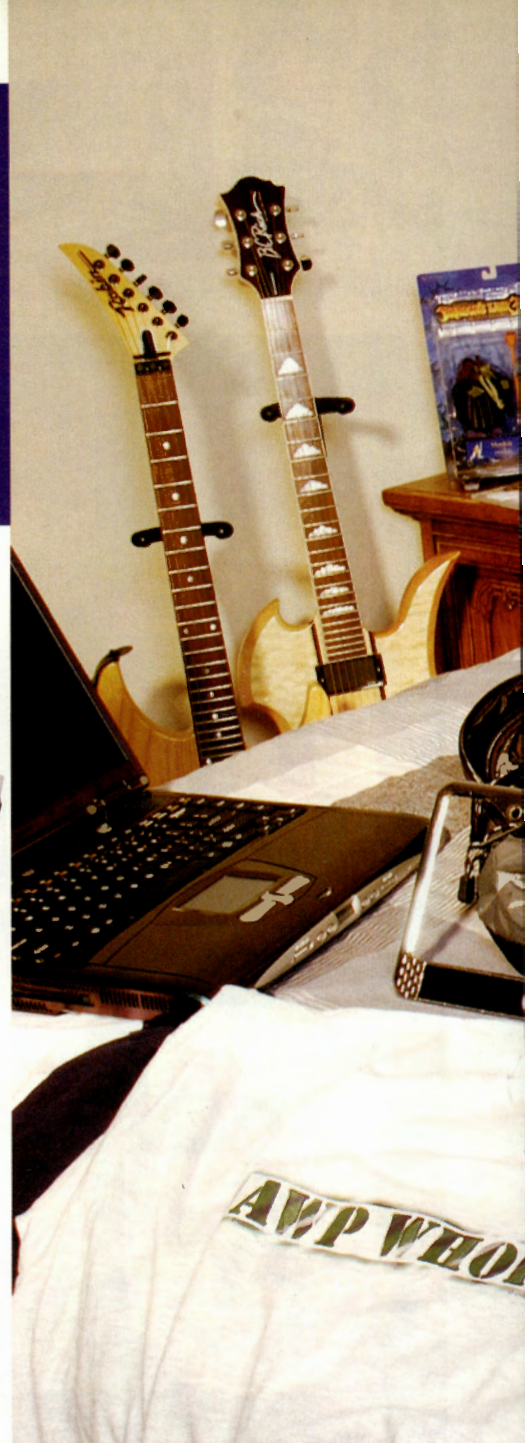
GET IN THE GAME!: CAREERS IN THE GAME INDUSTRY

Learn how to land a job in the glamorous world of video-game development with this step-by-step guide. It'll tell you what classes to take, how to sell yourself — even what producers do!



www.newriders.com

\$29.99



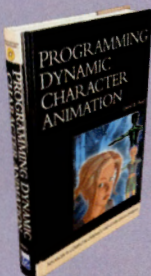


What's Chuck looking at?
Send your revelations to
letters@pcgamer.com.

PROGRAMMING DYNAMIC CHARACTER ANIMATIONS

Programming types and game-maker wannabes can bolster their bedtime reading by studying the intricacies of programming realistic character animation. Feeling... sleepy...already...

www.charlesriver.com



\$49.95

PC GAMER SUBSCRIPTION

Thanks to mutant space-age technology, you can now have the best-selling PC games magazine delivered *right to your home*. Each issue comes with a collectible demo CD.

www.pcgamer.com

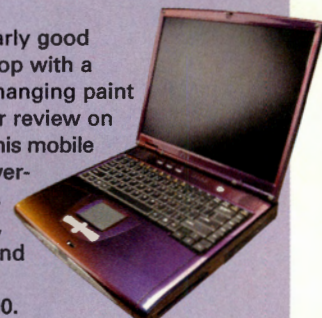


\$29.95
(12 issues/CDs)

ALIENWARE AREA-51M

A spectacularly good gaming laptop with a cool color-changing paint job. (See our review on page 130.) This mobile gaming powerhouse packs a P4 2.8GHz, 1GB RAM, and a RADEON Mobility 9000.

www.alienware.com



\$2,799

THE GAMER'S COMPUTER ROOM

Here's where it all happens — the nerve center of your gaming life. Treat yourself right by outfitting this important real estate with enough toys and electronic doodads to make Walt Disney look Amish.



IPOD

Not just for Macs anymore — the new iPod MP3 player comes in 5GB, 10GB, and 20GB models, and is fully compatible with Windows. PCs rule! In your face, Apple!



www.ipod.com

\$299-\$499

ULTRAVIEW MIRROR

Play games and watch TV at the same time with this rear-view mirror that uses a double reflection to keep images behind you in their proper perspective. Now that's what we call multi-tasking!



www.ultraviewmirror.com

\$49-\$79

WARCRAFT III ACTION FIGURES

Invite the Orc-ish war chief Thrall, dwarven mountain king Muradin Bronzebeard, and night elf arch-druid Furion Stormrage into your home this year. The cat's day of reckoning has come!



www.blizzard.com

\$10
(each)

MICROSOFT SIDE-WINDER FF WHEEL USB

You call yourself a gamer and you don't use a force-feedback wheel to play *NFS: Hot Pursuit 2*? Shame on you, little mister. We are very disappointed.



www.microsoft.com

\$104.95

MICROSOFT PICTUREIT! DIGITAL IMAGE PRO

An advanced photo-editing program for enhancing washed-out pictures or creating home-made porn by placing celebrity heads on anonymous naked people (not recommended, by the way).



www.microsoft.com

\$109

KLIPSCH PROMEDIA 4.1 SPEAKERS

TheVede insists that these are the very best 4.1 speakers on the market, and despite his being something of a doofus, we believe him. (Mainly because he uses them.)

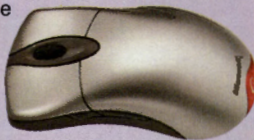


www.klipsch.com

\$249.99

MICROSOFT INTELLIMOUSE EXPLORER 3.0

The IntelliMouse Explorer is the standard for optical-mouse technology, and it's only gotten better with version 3.0. It's sleek and sexy, and one of the most comfortable mice around.



www.microsoft.com

\$54.95

FUNC SURFACE1030 MOUSEPAD

Sure, it's a mousepad, but it's the best mousing surface we've ever set ball to. You already bought three *Warcraft* dolls — what's another 20 bucks?



www.func.net

\$19.99

LOGITECH FREEDOM 2.4 CORDLESS JOYSTICK

We don't normally recommend cordless-gaming doodads, but this one's sturdy, reliable, comfortable, and responsive. And it looks damn sexy.



www.logitech.com

\$69

PLANTRONICS HEADPHONES

Let sleeping spouses lie and still immerse yourself in bone-crunching audio with this excellent line of headphone/microphone digitally enhanced headsets from Plantronics.

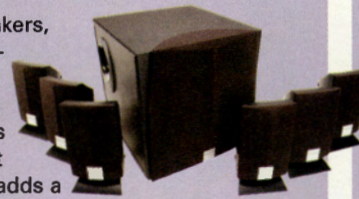


www.plantronics.com

\$69-\$109

CREATIVE INSPIRE 6.1 6600 SPEAKERS

Six speakers, one sub-woofer, no waiting! This 120-watt system adds a rear-center channel to any existing EAX or DirectSound3D game. It's the ideal companion set for the Audigy 2.



www.creative.com

\$129.99

NOMAD JUKEBOX ZEN

Edging out its bulkier Creative Jukebox cousins, the Zen offers 20GB of MP3 mobility in a tiny 9.5 ounces. Flexibly serves as a portable hard drive to transfer files between PCs.



www.nomadworld.com

\$299
(after rebate)

ALIENWARE AREA-51

Sidle up to rich Uncle Bill and plead with him to get you a hand-painted custom PC from the hippest (and best) computer company on the planet. But get him drunk first.



www.alienware.com

\$3,294

ATI REMOTE WONDER

If your PC does double duty as a home entertainment system, it's now possible to change music tracks or pause DVD movies from afar. This easy-to-install remote lets you operate multimedia functions from a room away — even through walls.



www.atl.com

\$49.95

LINKSYS WIRELESS LAN SETUP

Create a home gaming network between two or more PCs without a mass of unsightly wires. Connect any PC to a network via the Linksys Wireless USB Adapter and Wireless Dual-Band Access Point.



www.linksys.com

\$149 \$249.99
(adapter) (access point)

THE GAMER'S LIVING ROOM

When you're not gaming, relax in style by enjoying the finest home entertainment the DVD industry can muster. Aw, hell, go ahead and play some games, too — we won't tell.



DRAGON'S LAIR 25TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

Includes the arcade laserdisc classics *Dragon's Lair*, *Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp*, and *Space Ace*, complete with lost footage, interviews, and more. Playable on your home DVD player.

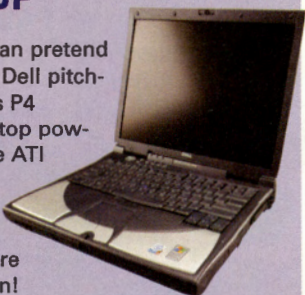


www.digitalleisure.com

\$59.95

DELL INSPIRON 8200 LAPTOP

Now you can pretend to frag the Dell pitch-guy on this P4 2.2GHz laptop powered by the ATI Mobility RADEON 9000. Dude, you're going down!



www.dell.com

\$1,199

GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS 2003

Want to know what the best-selling video game of all time was? The fastest-selling title? Most popular computer? This book has all the answers — plus tantalizing photos of a whole lotta freaks.



www.amazon.com

\$27.95



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER SEASON 2

Spike arrives! Angel turns evil! Willow's straight! Prepare for the third-season DVD set (coming in January) by catching up on some of this cult series' very finest episodes.

www.buffydvd.com

\$59.98



THE SIMPSONS SEASON 2

Here's where the show really started getting good. Includes first appearances of such favorites as Comic Book Guy and Blinky, the three-eyed fish, plus the first Treehouse of Horror episode.

www.thesimpsons.com

\$49.95



BACK TO THE FUTURE TRILOGY DVD

All three flicks starring Marty, Doc, and a time-traveling DeLorean. Includes behind-the-scenes footage, interviews, and original scripts — all the stuff you don't get on the TNT network re-runs.

www.universalstudios.com

\$39.95



ORIGINAL OUTER LIMITS SEASON 1 BOXED SET

A four-disc set containing the entire first season of the famed '60s sci-fi TV series that launched more than a few acting careers. (Trekker Alert: Leonard Nimoy appears in one episode.)

www.mgmhomevideo.com.com

\$79.96



LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

Actually, you don't want the bare-bones version pictured — you want the awesome Platinum Series Extended Edition Collector's Gift Set. Now trying saying that five times fast.

www.newline.com

\$29.95 (regular) **\$79.92** (Platinum)



THE GODFATHER DVD COLLECTION

All three of the Academy Award-winning movies augmented with audio commentary by director Francis Ford Coppola, making-of documentaries, and deleted scenes.

www.paramount.com/homevideo

\$105.90



THE HANNIBAL LECTER ANTHOLOGY

Brace yourself for the DVD release of *Red Dragon* by catching up with everyone's favorite charming cannibal serial killer. Contains *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Hannibal*.

www.mgm.com/hannibal

\$39.99

A dark silhouette of a soldier in a combat stance, wearing a helmet and holding a rifle, is centered against a heavily textured, golden-brown background that resembles aged parchment or metal. The soldier is positioned in the center of the frame, facing forward with legs apart and arms extended. The background has a mottled, grainy appearance with various shades of brown and gold, giving it an antique or industrial feel. The text "ACCESS GRANTED" is superimposed over the soldier's midsection in a white, serif font.

ACCESS GRANTED



WE ARE
FREEDOM'S ANSWER TO FEAR.
OUR DUTY BEGINS WHEN NEGOTIATIONS END
FOR WE DO NOT BARGAIN WITH TERROR.
WE STALK IT, CORNER IT, TAKE AIM,
AND KILL IT.
WE ARE TEAM RAINBOW.



SQUAD-BASED COUNTER-TERROR

The father of all tactical shooters returns, in an all-new game locked and loaded to change the face of action gaming. **AGAIN.** Advance to a new level of gaming realism with new high-tech gear to hunt the Tangos and 57 weapons to take them down. Experience unmatched graphical realism and high velocity multiplayer action powered by next generation Unreal™ technology. We wrote the book on tactical squad-based combat. Now we're rewriting it. Study up.



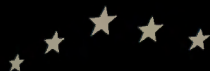
Blood
Violence



Play It On
ubi.com



★ Tom Clancy's
RAINBOW SIX 3™
RAVEN SHIELD
www.raven-shield.com



I ALONE HAVE THE FIFTH FREEDOM.

THE RIGHT TO SPY, STEAL, DESTROY AND ASSASSINATE,

TO ENSURE THAT AMERICAN FREEDOMS ARE PROTECTED.

IF CAPTURED, MY GOVERNMENT WILL DISAVOW

ANY KNOWLEDGE OF MY EXISTENCE.

I AM SAM FISHER.

I AM A SPLINTER CELL.



S T E A L T H A C T I O N R E D E F I N E D

You make the rules in the high stakes game of covert espionage. Work alone, outside the boundaries of the law, to thwart cyberterrorist attacks against the United States. With thermal goggles, fiber optic cameras, prototype guns and other dirty tricks, you redefine justice and punishment. Rappel, split jump, glide along ziplines, force information from your enemies, even use them as human shields. And remember - a dead witness is not really a witness.



Blood and Gore
Violence





★ Tom Clancy's
**SPLINTER
CELL™**

www.splintercell.com

GAME OF THE YEAR



WE ARE
THE NATION'S CHOSEN FEW.
WE ARE SWIFT, SILENT, AND INVISIBLE.
WE WILL NOT FAIL OUR COUNTRY.
WE WILL NOT FAIL EACH OTHER.
WE WILL NEVER SURRENDER.
WE FIGHT, SO THAT PEACE MAY REIGN.
WE ARE THE GHOSTS.



Xbox screenshots shown

SQUAD-BASED BATTLEFIELD COMBAT

Join the ranks of critics and gamers who have experienced Ghost Recon and made it their Game of the Year. Command an elite handful of specially-trained Green Berets in deadly, realistic campaigns on the battlefields of tomorrow. Gear up and fall in.

NOW COMBAT-READY ON ALL PLATFORMS



Blood and Gore
Violence



PlayStation 2



XBOX
LIVE



THE YEAR

Tom Clancy's

**GHOST
RECON**™

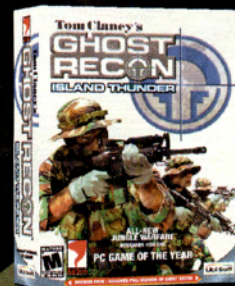
www.ghostrecon.com

"NOT ONLY IS IT THE GAME OF THE YEAR, IT'S THE GAME OF THE LAST TWO YEARS".

- PC GAMER

- PC GAMER'S GAME OF THE YEAR, 2001
- IGN PC'S GAME OF THE YEAR, 2001
- PC GAMER'S BEST SOUND, 2001
- NOMINEE - ACADEMY OF INTERACTIVE ARTS AND SCIENCES
 - BEST SOUND DESIGN
 - BEST MULTIPLAYER
- NOMINEE - INTERNATIONAL GAME DEVELOPER'S ASSOCIATION
 - EXCELLENCE IN LEVEL DESIGN

ALSO AVAILABLE



**TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON™:
ISLAND THUNDER™ MISSION PACK**

PC
CD-ROM
SOFTWARE



Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT
www.ubi.com

THE GAMER'S KITCHEN

Real gamers order takeout, so why not turn your kitchen into a PC-building lab? Just don't gunk up your components with microwaved cheese spread.

LOGITECH MX700 WIRELESS MOUSE

Playing *Unreal Tournament 2003* from a comfy ol' bean-bag doesn't have to be a pipe dream. The MX700 offers worry-free cordless mouseing from up to 40 feet away. Mix with a wireless keyboard, stir, and relax.



www.logitech.com

\$79.95

WORKS SUITE 2003

This Suite is pretty darn sweet! Includes Microsoft Works, Word, Encarta Encyclopedia, Microsoft Money, Picture It!, and Streets and Trips.



www.microsoft.com

\$109

SOUND BLASTER AUDIGY 2



The first sound card to support Advanced Resolution DVD-audio playback, the Audigy 2 is capable of delivering stunning 6.1 surround sound with 24-bit audio and EAX support. It comes equipped with SB1394 ports for super-fast data transfers (up to 30 times faster than USB!) of MP3 tunes to your digital audio player or external CD-RW drive. Two Audigy 2s can even be connected to create a home gaming LAN. Bow down before its awesome power, mortals.

www.creative.com

\$129.99 \$199.99
(regular) (Platinum)

PLEXWRITER 48x/24x/48x CD-RW

You *could* use it to burn extra game copies (only games you own and only for your own use...), but we prefer using it to make our own MP3 CDs.



www.plextor.com

\$159

GEARGRIP COMPUTER HARNESS

We hate lugging our PCs to LAN parties as much as the next guy. That's why the GearGrip is a godsend — it really gives us a handle on the situation. Hyuck.



www.geargrip.com

\$19.95-\$36.95

LOGITECH MX500 OPTICAL MOUSE

If you prefer a mouse safely corded to your PC for the ultimate in reliability and precision control, the MX500 smoothly fits he-man mitts while gathering 4.7 megapixels of data per second.



www.logitech.com

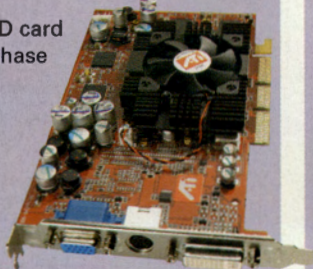
\$49.95





RADEON 9700 PRO

The fastest 3D card you can purchase at this very moment, the 9700 PRO is armed with 128MB of onboard DDR memory and fully supports the DirectX 9.0 API.



www.atl.com

\$399

MS SIDEWINDER FORCE FEEDBACK 2

A premium joystick for space shooters, flight sims, racing games, or any action game that could benefit from a little force feedback.



www.microsoft.com

\$109

LOGITECH Z-680 5.1 SPEAKERS

This THX-certified 5.1 surround-sound speaker system will blast you with 450 watts of sound. Bonus: a wireless remote lets you adjust speaker settings from afar.



www.logitech.com

\$399.95

THE GAMER'S BATHROOM

Using the throne room can be a mini-vacation...if you do it right. If you're sneaky, you can even get in a few games when nobody's looking.

ELLULA HOT AIR SPEAKERS

For gamers or music-lovers on the go, here are speakers you can blow that don't blow back. Good for the beach, picnics, or (as shown here) the crapper.



www.ellula.com

\$45

FIGHTING ROBOTS: A GUIDE TO RADIO-CONTROLLED COMBATANTS

Practically everything you could ever want to know about the science of building and pitting killer robots against one another in metal combat. If this book was any cooler, it'd give you frostbite.



www.amazon.com

\$16.95

FOX SPORTS OFL FOOTBALL/BASKETBALL GAMES



Play head-to-head against sports-freak friends or AI bots — anytime, anywhere — on a Java-enabled cell phone. Both games have full-color graphics, real-

time animation, and a system to track your character's experience. You can even play against PC users!

www.sorrent.com

\$2.99
(30 days)

RIO VOLT SP150

The SP150 can play up to 24 hours worth of music on one CD packed with MP3 or WMA digital audio files. It can also play CD-Rs, CD-RWs, as well as any standard audio CD.



www.sonicblue.com

\$99.99

MOTOROLA i95cl CELLULAR PHONE

The i95cl's large Java-enabled color display transforms your bland old cell phone into an action-packed mobile gaming console. Features include speaker-phone, voice activation, and a two-way radio.



www.motorola.com

\$399.99

ABEL

PC Gamer senior editor Billy Harms wrote this wrenching graphic novel of a young boy's struggle between friendship and his own cowardice. Buy it (because Billy needs a new car/house/PC/lunch).



www.khepri.com

\$12.95

WASHED-UP PC GAMER EDITOR

For only pennies a day, you can own an actual member of the PC Gamer staff. Beaten down by life and bad games, our editors are docile, housebroken (as you can see) companions eager to entertain you with their wacky antics.



www.pcgamer.com

\$0.10
(per issue)



AGE of MYTHOLOGY

From the creators of *Age of Empires*®
and *The Age of Kings*™



Microsoft
game studios

ENSEMBLE
STUDIOS

www.microsoft.com/games/ageofmythology

Unleash the wrath of the gods

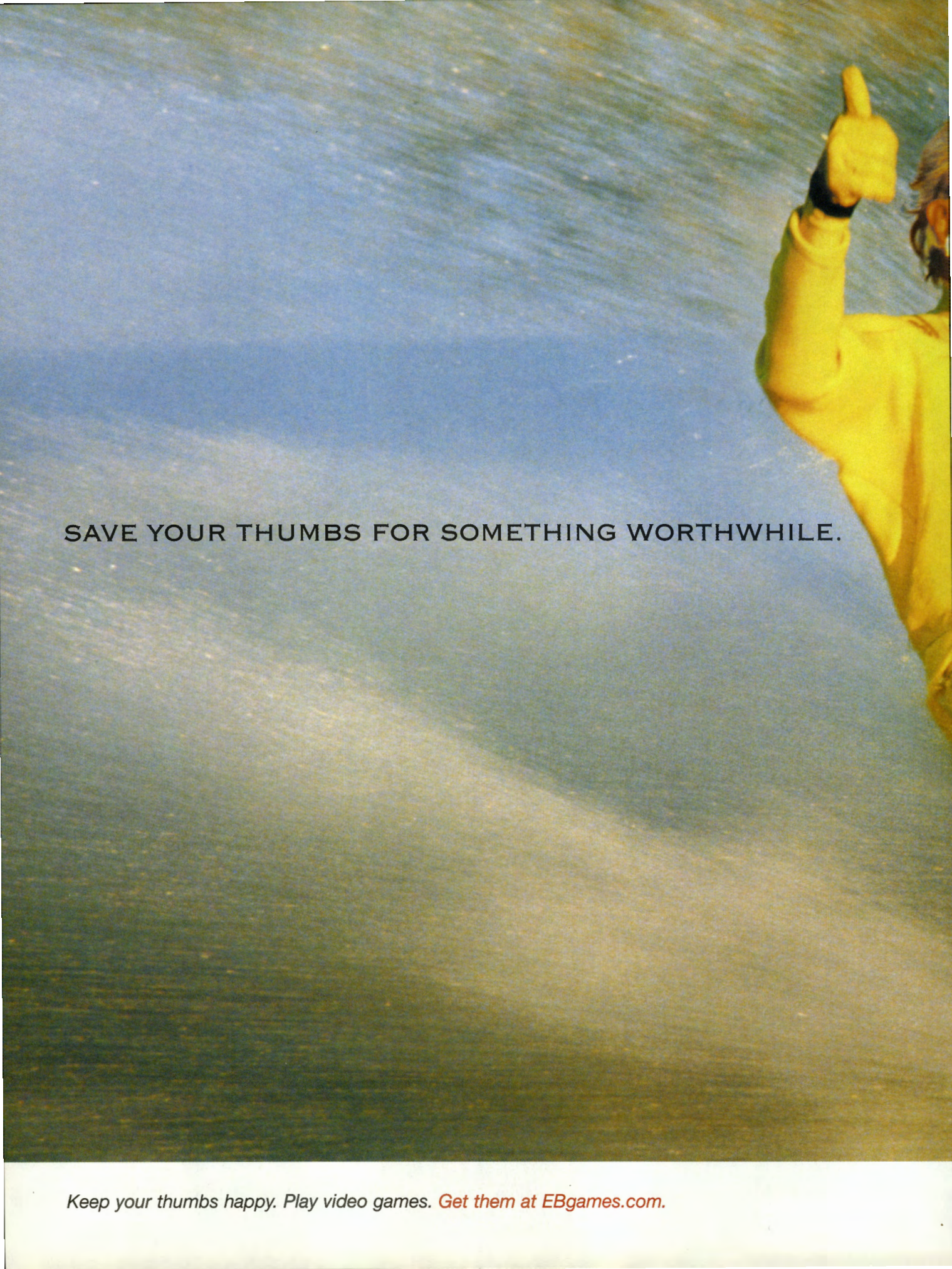
Enter a world where legends are real and the will of the gods decides the fate of mortal man. Build majestic temples, farm the fertile valleys, and seek out wealth in distant realms. Join brave heroes in the greatest battles of mythology, from the walls of Troy to the gates of the Underworld. Summon mighty minotaurs to smash enemy citadels, or call down fire from the skies. The choice is yours.

Age of Mythology Music Soundtrack available in record stores now.

© 2002 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Microsoft Game Studios logo, Age of Mythology, Age of Empires, and The Age of Kings are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. Other products and company names mentioned herein may be trademarks of their respective owners.



Violence
Blood

A person wearing a bright yellow long-sleeved shirt is shown from the chest up on the right side of the frame, giving a thumbs-up gesture. The background is a vast, clear blue sky with some light, wispy clouds. The overall tone is positive and energetic.

SAVE YOUR THUMBS FOR SOMETHING WORTHWHILE.

Keep your thumbs happy. Play video games. *Get them at EBgames.com.*



EBGAMESTM.COM
AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY OUR GAMES



God's Hand

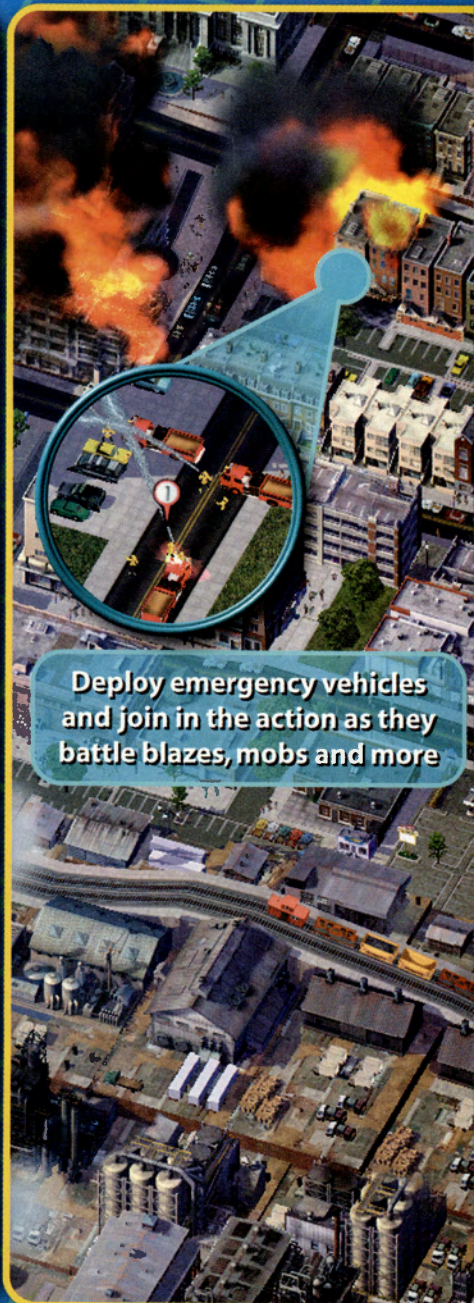


May

Sculpt mountains, gouge valleys,
seed forests, and bring forth animals
to create a world all your own



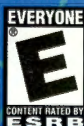
Summon volcanoes,
release tornados, and call down
meteors and lightning



Deploy emergency vehicles
and join in the action as they
battle blazes, mobs and more

Create a world imagined only by you.

Build and run the



Visit www.esrb.org or
call 1-800-771-3772
for Rating Information.



or's Limo



Your Sims

Connect a massive region of SimCities, each sharing and competing for resources

Place your sims in your city to get the inside scoop on what's going on around town

Feel the rhythm of the city: peaceful protests and rowdy riots, noontime crowds and nighttime calm

city of your dreams.

Immerse yourself in the lives of your Sims.

SIMCITYTM 4

Find out more at SimCity.com



Challenge Everything[™]

THE GAMER'S BOOKCASE

We know what a bookcase should *really* hold — all the games that have overflowed from your computer desk. Here are a few suggestions.

EVERQUEST GOLD EDITION

This limited-edition set (which comes in a snazzy gold metal chest) includes *EverQuest Classic*, all four add-ons, and a miniature pewter figurine.



www.everquest.com

\$69.99

DIABLO: THE KINGDOM OF SHADOW

The *Diablo* universe expands with the third book in the ongoing saga. Find out what your illustrious champions are up to when they're not unlocking treasure chests or slaughtering their thousandth ghoul.



www.simonsays.com

\$6.99

WARCRAFT III EXCLUSIVE GIFT SET

Blizzard's new compilation features *Warcraft III* and its official strategy guide, a collection of cinematics on DVD, and a copy of *Warcraft II Battle.net* edition.



www.blizzard.com

\$64.99

THE MECH COLLECTION

This set includes *MechWarrior 4: Vengeance*, its *Black Knight* add-on, and *MechCommander 2* all in one box. If you're a bigtime Mech fan, it doesn't get any better than that.



www.microsoft.com

\$39.99

THE SIMS DELUXE EDITION

If you haven't jumped aboard the *Sims* bandwagon yet, now's your chance. Contains the original *Sims*, its *Live'n' Large* add-on, and some exclusive content.



www.maxis.com

\$44.99

WIZKIDS GAMES

Highly collectible and fun, these tabletop combat games are based on *MechWarrior*, *MageKnight*, and the Marvel and DC comics universes. My Hulk miniature can beat up your Solomon Grundy, biznatch!

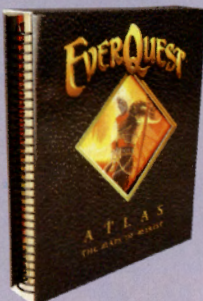


www.wizkidgames.com

\$6.95-\$29.95

EVERQUEST ATLAS

Over 170 full-color maps and a complete reference guide to the world of Norrath (including the *Planes of Power* expansion) can be yours for a Bard's song. Never be lost again!



www.everquest.com

\$19.99

STAR TREK ACTION PACK

You owe it to yourself to assimilate this *Trek* collection. Includes *Star Trek: Armada* and *ST: Armada 2*, plus the exceptional *Star Trek: Voyager — Elite Force* and its ship-touring add-on.



www.activision.com

\$29.99

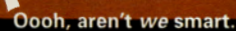
GREAT EMPIRES II

An impressive five-game collection of highly addictive civilization building. Includes *Zeus*, its *Poseidon* expansion, *Caesar III*, *Pharaoh*, and the *Pharaoh* expansion, *Cleopatra*.



www.sierra.com

\$29.99



THE TOP 10 GAMES OF THE YEAR

Looking for a great game? Here are the 10 best-scoring titles we've reviewed since our last gift guide — each a perfect gift.

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS



This RPG set in the D&D universe has it all: lush 3D graphics, fantastic gameplay, an epic story, and hundreds of free downloadable modules available online.

September 2002 issue

95%

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

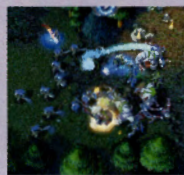


First-person shooter fanatics had been waiting for the next *Wolfenstein* installment with bated breath, and they weren't disappointed. Nazi-stomping thrills abound.

January 2002 issue

91%

WARCRAFT III: REIGN OF CHAOS



It's the fastest-selling game of the year, and with good reason — Blizzard's real-time strategy masterpiece is addictive Orc'ing good fun, and a stellar sequel.

August 2002 issue

94%

MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT



MOHAA pushed the *Quake III* engine to its limits, giving us a World War II-themed action experience that should be on every gamer's must-buy list.

February 2002 issue

91%

FREEDOM FORCE



Any comic-book fan on your list will absolutely love this game. It's the best superhero-themed title we've ever seen, and a superb tactical RPG in its own right.

May 2002 issue

94%

DUNGEON SIEGE



Simplified hack-and-slash roleplaying at its best. With its slick graphics and incredible variety, this opus may even have Grandma pushing you away from the keyboard.

June 2002 issue

91%

GRAND THEFT AUTO III



What a rush! Even if you've already played it on the PS2, *GTA III*'s never looked as good (or played as well) as it does on the PC. Just keep it away from the little ones.

July 2002 issue

92%

JEDI KNIGHT II: JEDI OUTCAST



In what other game can you master Force powers *and* find yourself fighting back-to-back with Luke Skywalker? *Star Wars* fans won't be able to get enough of this FPS.

June 2002 issue

91%

MS FLIGHT SIMULATOR 2002



Even "mature" gamers who don't play action games can't resist flying the friendly skies in a virtual Boeing 747. Dad will love the realistic graphics, too.

January 2002 issue

92%

BATTLEFIELD 1942



For the online gamer in your midst, *1942* is the most intense, action-packed experience of the year. Commandeer tanks, fly bombers, or just gun Nazis face-to-face.

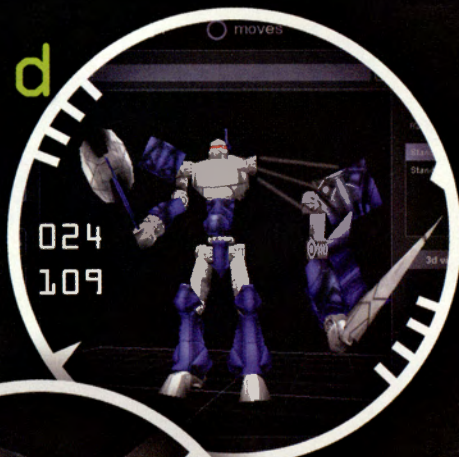
December 2002 issue

91%

ROBOFORGE

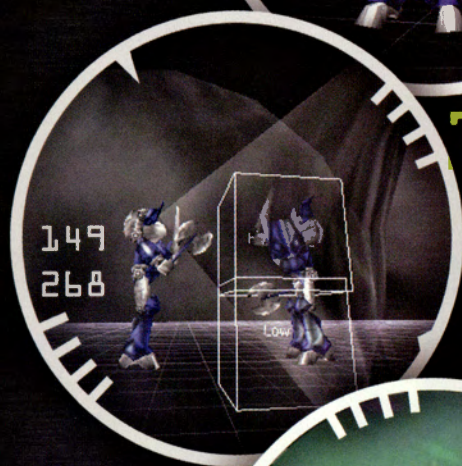
ROBOT COMBAT SPORT

Build



Build superior robotgladiatorsfor
arena**combat**from a
library of over**300**components

Train



Trainyour robots to survive andconquer
by creating their**artificial intelligence**
and refining them against
the computer in simulation arenas

Compete



Competeonline in daily amateur ranked
tournaments, or**challenge**the
international Professional Circuit
to see how your**metal monster**
stacks up to the best in the world!

HIGHS: Unlimited design choices, engaging AI system;
easy online experience...

BOTTOM LINE: Unique PC gaming - a digital canvas for
the mechanical creations of your mind.

PC GAMER **87%**
EXCELLENT

SUMMITSOFT
ENTERTAINMENT
www.summitsoft.net

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

PC CD ROM

**IN STORES
NOW!**



COMPUSA **Fry's**
GameStop **Fred Meyer** **EB**

©2002 Summitsoft Corporation. All Rights Reserved. RoboForge and the RoboForge mark are property of Summitsoft Corporation. All other trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners. Manufactured and marketed by Summitsoft under license from Liquid Edge games.

THE ACCLAIMED ONLINE RPG OF 2001



Dark Age of Camelot

Shrouded Isles

SHROUDED ISLES: THE FIRST EXPANSION PACK FOR DARK AGE OF CAMELOT, THE FASTEST GROWING ONLINE ROLE-PLAYING GAME EVER! THREE NEW ISLAND CONTINENTS, SHROUDED IN MYSTERY, CHAOS AND ADVENTURE ARE YOURS TO EXPLORE. EXPERIENCE IT ALL IN A STATE-OF-THE-ART NEW GRAPHICS ENGINE WHICH BRINGS THE WORLD OF THREE REALMS OF CAMELOT TO YOU IN SHARP, CLEAR, REALISTIC GRAPHICS AND AN AWESOME DISPLAY OF NEW SPECIAL EFFECTS WITH FRAME-RATES FASTER THAN EVER BEFORE!

- STUNNING NEW VISUAL EFFECTS WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART GRAPHICS ENGINE
- EXPLORE THREE NEW ISLAND CONTINENTS - ONE FOR EACH REALM
- DISCOVER THREE NEW PLAYER RACES
- EXPERIENCE TWO NEW CLASSES PER REALM
- EXCITING ALL NEW AMBIENT MUSIC SOUNDTRACK
- FIND NEW MONSTERS, TREASURE, ARMOR, WEAPONS, QUESTS AND MUCH MORE CONTENT
- MULTIPLE SERVER TYPES INCLUDING NEW "ONE WORLD" SERVERS WITH NO PVP AND ALL REALMS AVAILABLE TO ALL PLAYERS AT ALL TIMES



JUST GOT BIGGER, FASTER AND DEADLIER



PC
CD-ROM
GAME

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Visit www.esrb.org
or call 1-800-771-3772
for more info.

WWW.SHROUDEDISLES.COM

INTERNET CONNECTION AND
ADDITIONAL ONLINE FEES REQUIRED

ABANDON
ENTERTAINMENT

MYTHIC
ENTERTAINMENT

reviews

YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO NEW GAME RELEASES

Ignore Us at Your Peril

And now, an important threat from *Mystery of the Druids*

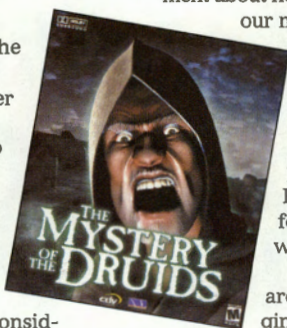


You'd better buy the game: the Druids look serious about killing this baby if you don't.

Good afternoon. We are *Mystery of the Druids*, an adventure game that PC Gamer never reviewed. Published to great German acclaim by the fine folks at CDV, our graphical adventure features exquisite visuals, a compelling thriller story, and, of course, an intriguing Druidic mystery.

Alas, sales of the game in the U.S. suffered greatly when PC Gamer failed to review it earlier this year, and thus we feel we must take the unfortunate step of threatening to sacrifice an innocent, cherubic baby in a Druidic ritual unless you go and buy *Mystery of the Druids* from your nearest bargain bin.

This threat should not be considered indicative of modern Druidism, nor should it reflect on the greater spectrum of pagan magical orders. By and large, Druids are a peaceful people attuned to nature and the healing energies; it's just that we're



piSSed off that PC Gamer cut our review from several issues in sequence, deciding ultimately that no review would be published. We believe our ultimatum is an appropriate response to the magazine's high-handedness.

You therefore have the following choice: buy *Mystery of the Druids*, or this tyke will get the old "knife-job" right here on our altar. You may view this action as grossly unfair, but it's nothing compared to the gross unfairness of having labored over our game only to have it cast off like an old newspaper by the arrogant swine who run this publication.

Just listen to their pretentiousness. In his response to our indignant letters of recent weeks, editor-in-chief Rob Smith writes: "Dear Druids, we appreciate your disappointment about not being reviewed. Unfortunately, our magazine receives a tremendous number of games for review, and while *Mystery of the Druids* was slated for review, it simply became a victim of excess games in the busy time period in which it was released. Please accept our best wishes for your next product, which we will endeavor to review in full."

Next? Next, Rob Smith?! We are Druids! This is the only frigin' game we'll ever get! And now your readers will pay the price — \$14.99, or whatever stores are charging. Otherwise, the baby gets it!

This is *Mystery of the Druids*. You may not expect any further communication...

PC GAMER RECOMMENDS

Holidaytime means loads of excellent games. Don't overlook these recent sleepers:

MAFIA

REC. 2002



If you liked *Grand Theft Auto III*, this mob-themed action game ought to get you revved up all over again. It's an open-ended 1930s crime caper.

91%

MEDIEVAL: TOTAL WAR

REC. 2002



The assembled armies of the Middle Ages are yours to command in this real-time strategy epic. Siege castles and win the day on bloody fields.

82%

PRISONER OF WAR

REC. 2002



Here's a game where violence is never the answer, as you seek to plan an escape from a Nazi prison camp. Stealth and smarts only.

80%

HOW WE RATE GAMES: THE BREAKDOWN

90%

100%–90%
EDITORS' CHOICE

It's not easy to get here, and games in this range come with our unqualified recommendation.



80%

89%–80%
EXCELLENT

These are excellent games. Anything that scores in this range is well worth your purchase, and is likely a great example of its genre.

70%

79%–70%
GOOD

These are pretty good games that we'd recommend to fans of the particular genre, though it's a safe bet you can find better options.

60%

69%–60%
ABOVE AVERAGE

Reasonable, above-average games. They might be worth buying, but they probably have a few significant flaws that limit their appeal.

50%

59%–50%
MERELY OKAY

Very ordinary games. They're not completely worthless, but you can definitely find numerous better places to spend your gaming dollar.

40%

49%–40%
TOLERABLE

Poor quality. Only a few slightly redeeming features keep these games from descending into the utter abyss of the next category.

30%

39%–0%
DON'T BOTHER

Just terrible. And the lower you go, the more worthless you get. Avoid these titles like the Vede's smelly socks, and don't say we didn't warn you!

In the modern world,

***GREAT LEADERS
RESOLVE CONFLICT***

**WITH
WORDS**

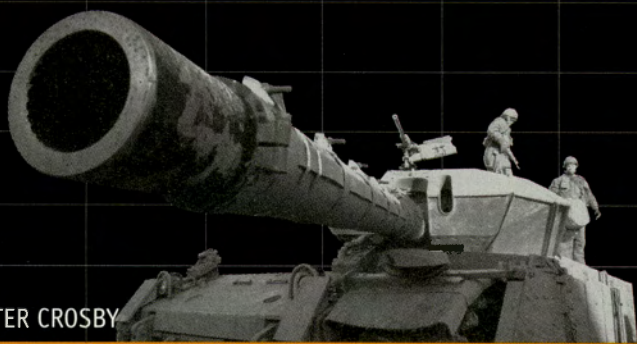
**THE UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL:**

Established in Geneva (1945), this center for diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of international disputes has had a spotty record. In times of global crisis, the United Nation does their best to prevent armed conflict. All too often, however, it is not enough.

the threat



WORDS LIKE: "CARPET BOMBING," "SCUD LAUNCHERS"



By PETER CROSBY

Recent military aggressions around the globe have many nation's worried. Between the United States, China and the Global Liberation Army, tensions run high. Their leaders profess no interest in escalating the situation, but words ring hollow when satellite photos tell a different story. The issue is no longer "Will there be military conflict?" but instead, "Who will prevail?"



CHINA:

No longer a red-communist step-child, China's army is well-financed with a nationalistic bent. Parading technology like Dragon Tanks and Nuclear Missiles, China's military goes beyond sheer troop numbers. But defeating the GLA is no walk in Yangmingshan National Park. While the Chinese military forces are formidable, so is the task.

JANUARY 22ND, 2020

ON THE BRINK OF ARMAGEDDON:

At the end of the conflict there will have been 23 different missions completed. The success of which will be ultimately determined by whatever historians survive the devastation.

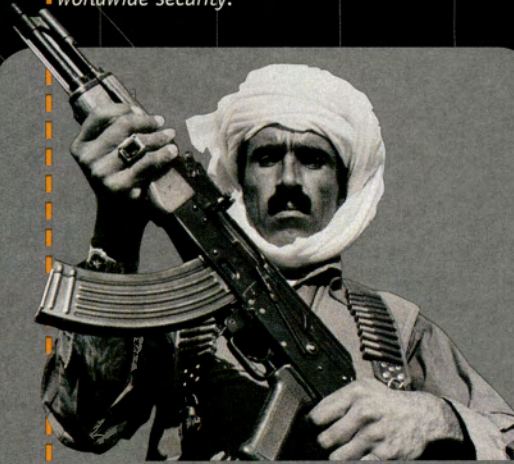


military resources



THE WILD CARD:

Despite their inferior military resources, the GLA still poses a real threat to worldwide security.



GLOBAL LIBERATION ARMY:

Facing superior firepower, the GLA embraces bio-terrorism, sabotage and suicide bombings to further its political agenda. But leading this chaotic group of "freedom" fighters against two global super-powers is no easy task.

AND "TOMAHAWK MISSILES"





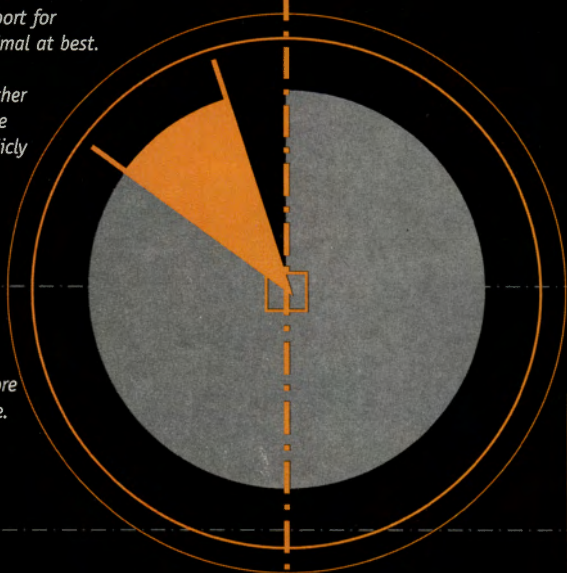
AND "STEALTH FIGHTERS," "NUKES,"

TO GO OR NOT?

5% International support for military action is minimal at best.

15% Aggression by either China or the US will be unanimously and publicly derided by the global community.

80% Not surprisingly, most countries still contend that non-violent embargos, boycotts and international pressure are more effective than violence.



LOOSE CANNON:

The GLA is believed headed by the rogue Abdul Ha' Abeeel, a highly intelligent and outspoken critic of many foreign governments. Ha' Zeel commands a fanatical group of guerrilla fighters and has a long history of organizing insurrections and uprisings. His current whereabouts and activities are unknown. ~ Joe Silvestri



RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Visit www.esrb.org or
call 1-800-771-3772
for Rating Information.

PC
CD
ROM



UNITED STATES:

Roused by GLA bio-terrorism attacks, the U.S. must now act decisively. America's military leader faces the unenviable task of rooting out an elusive foe. The world's most advanced military—with Daisy-Cutter bombs and Comanche Gunships—will make the job easier. But eradicating the GLA will also take conviction, courage and the will to see it through to the end.



TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE?

Despite the difference in resources, all three forces achieve an eerie kind of parity. The GLA's low-tech approach is no less effective than either China's superior forces or America's advanced technologies.

JANUARY 22ND, 2020

NOWHERE IS SAFE:

The GLA's distributed network of terror cells can strike any time, from anywhere—including deep inside an enemy's own borders—with low tech, but nonetheless highly effective tactics.



AND "PATRIOT MISSILE SYSTEMS"



COMMAND & CONQUER
GENERALS

Get briefed at generals.ea.com



Challenge Everything™

©2002 Electronic Arts Inc. Electronic Arts, Command & Conquer, EA GAMES, the EA GAMES logo and Challenge Everything are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. All rights reserved. The Way It's Meant to Be! Patriot Logo and other NVIDIA Marks are trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. EA GAMES™ is an Electronic Arts™ brand.

Age of Mythology

Ensemble's latest offering is a sprawling, epic tale packed with all manner of mythic beasts

GETTIN' IT DONE, NORSE-STYLE



The most "non-traditional" side in *AoM* is the Norse. Their military units build all of their structures, and they can construct ox carts, which add mobility to your resource-collecting.



God powers like this Bronze power are devastating, and can easily turn the tide of battle.



TOP: Protect the door!
MIDDLE: Summon a killer tornado.
BOTTOM: Unleash a winter attack and a pack of ravenous wolves.

Without a doubt, Ensemble Studios is one of the premier developers of real-time strategy games. Its first two titles, *Age of Empires* and *Age of Empires II: Age of Kings*, received great critical acclaim and combined to sell approximately 9 million copies, thus adding substantial amounts to Mr. Gates' already bulging coffers.

Arkantos, a young fella who hails from the magical isle of Atlantis.

A THREE-HOUR TOUR

THE STORY, WHICH IS SORT OF PARALLEL TO Homer's *Odyssey* (in fact, Odysseus appears at various times throughout the tale), begins with Arkantos heading off to fight in the Trojan War. It seems that Poseidon is ticked off at the Atlanteans, and the only way to placate him is if the war in Troy is brought to an end.

After the battle of Troy, Arkantos wishes to head home, but circumstances

dash his plans and he's forced to journey across most of the known (and unknown) world on mythology's most tortuous route back to his pad. Along the way he visits the Underworld, Egypt, Circe's Island, and the Norse lands of Northern Europe before he finally manages to get back to Atlantis for the final showdown.

As you'd expect, this kind of epic globe-trotting campaign makes for some imaginative settings and situations. The 32 single-player missions (not counting the three tutorial missions) are divided into three campaigns — Greek, Egyptian, and Norse

VITAL STATS

CATEGORY Real-time strategy
ESRB RATING T
DEVELOPER Ensemble Studios
PUBLISHER Microsoft
REQUIRED PII 450, 128MB RAM, 1.3GB HD, 16MB 3D card
WE RECOMMEND PIII 1.4GHz, 256MB RAM, 64MB 3D card
MAXIMUM PLAYERS 12

a couple of areas. In fact, were it not for these gripes, *AoM* would easily rival *Warcraft III* as the best RTS game of the year.

For its third title, Ensemble jettisoned the semi-historical settings that fueled the first two *Age* games in favor of the classical mythology of heroes and monsters from the ancient Greek, Egyptian, and Norse cultures. The primary hero of this saga is



The Greek mission in which you're a pig leading other pigs is extremely imaginative.



The hero and myth units are packed with firepower like this lightning bolt. Fry, scum!



Relics: these ancient objects give you specific bonuses that can quickly turn the tide of battle. Find them immediately.

These tabs along the top of the screen give easy access to your group military units, heroes, mission objectives, and lazy workers.

Hey, look at these Centaurs... everyone loves Centaurs!

One of the keys to success is to have a variety of units, such as ranged weapons, myth units, and your basic hack-and-slash grunts.

If you look very closely at this shot, you'll see Chuck in fetal position, begging for his mommy.

Why did Ensemble feel the need to have their in-game screenshot utility watermark the shots? This angers us greatly.

— which also represent the three playable sides. And many of the missions are extremely well-crafted.

The early mission where you sneak out of the Trojan Horse under the cover of night and let in the rest of your troops, who quickly raze the city, is a great deal of fun. Circe's Island serves as the backdrop for another standout experience: As soon as you land on the island you're turned into a pig (!), so you must set out and free the other pigs (which are Odysseus and his men), all while fending off farmers and other would-be butchers.



Our favorite god power, Meteor, can level entire villages and annihilate nearby troops.

Another highlight is a mission set in the Underworld, where you have to protect a group of dwarves who are desperately trying to build a new hammer for Thor. And the "Welcoming Committee" mission has you luring Norse clan leaders out of their bases so you can kill them.

Sprinkled throughout these encounters are moments of genuine comedy — a truly delightful surprise. During an early cut-scene, Arkantos and Odysseus share a disgruntled look after they learn that Agamemnon's plan is for them to do all the fighting; once the fighting is done, Agamemnon will "rush in" and rescue Helen. Another great moment is when the bad guy Skult tells Arkantos and Ajax to surrender. In response, Ajax fires a giant wooden bolt that kills one of Skult's men, and Ajax then says: "We surrender...move a little closer." Great stuff.

BUILD ME A SETTLEMENT, DAMMIT!

REGRETTABLY, MOST OF AOM'S MISSIONS SUFFER from one recurring, frustrating problem: a severe case of "build base-itis." No matter the situation, you're forced to form a settlement, build an economy, and raise a large armed force before heading out to take on

the enemy. Even the mission set on Circe's Island sees you eventually building a settlement so you can destroy her. Why not just have your men, once they've been returned to human form, sneak across the island, find a boat, and escape?

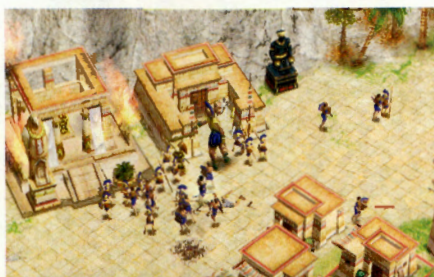
I know base-building is inherent to the genre, but even the most ardent fan will be put off by just how much there is. What's most disappointing is that AoM's setting really lends itself to imaginative mission design — and I don't think the designers took full advantage of the backdrop, which is a shame. It would've been cool, for instance, to have an entirely sea-based mission, wherein Poseidon threw sea monsters at you while you tried to steer a ship convoy to safety.

Fans of the earlier Ages will find managing these settlements extremely familiar. The resources to collect are your standard food, wood, and gold, with a fourth resource called "favor" that each side has a unique way of collecting (see sidebar).

In addition, AoM follows the same age advancement from the Age games. Moving through the four ages requires you to collect a specific amount of gold, wood, or food, and build a specific structure, such as a mar-



Each of the game's three campaigns does a wonderful job of introducing new units and locales.



The Egyptian campaign tasks you with finding Osiris' body, which is scattered across the kingdom.



Despite my complaints about AoM's pathfinding, the AI usually does a good job of whooping ass.

ket or an armory. The really cool thing about the age advancements is that each of them provides you with a unique opportunity to shape your strategy for the remainder of that mission, thanks to the gods above.

Because of AoM's setting, interaction with the gods is a regular occurrence and especially plays out during the age upgrades. Depending on the mission, you can choose to worship one of two minor gods, and your selection determines which special units, upgrades, and god powers will be available, adding a wonderful bit of strategic depth. For example, if you're playing a mission wherein water is a factor, you'll want to pick a minor god that gives you a water-based myth creature, such as the Kraken, which you can then summon to obliterate an enemy fleet.

After each age upgrade you're given a god power, with a maximum of four per mission. Again, these powers — which range from swarms of locusts to massive asteroid attacks that flatten stretches of land — help bolster a particular strategy. And if you pick your god powers carefully, you can use them one after another to decimate an enemy's forces.

GO FORTH AND PILLAGE

IN TERMS OF MILITARY UNITS, THE THREE PLAYABLE sides provide a bevy of unique men, heroes, and mythological units. Each side has its own standard military grunts, such as spearmen or the equivalent, but the real fun comes from using hero and myth units. These are the bona-fide ass-kickers, and they're an absolute joy to play around with (see sidebar). More importantly, they're also properly balanced.

And this balance is particularly noteworthy. A powerful myth creature will make short work of the game's standard grunts, but since heroes get an attack bonus when fighting myth creatures, it's extremely important to have a couple of heroes mixed in with your fighting force. And if you create a hero that also heals allied units, you'll have a powerful army at your behest.

Managing that army can be a bit annoying at times, though, because of AoM's errant pathfinding. On more than one occasion, I'd try to send my units to a specific spot on the map and they'd end up on a hill overlooking the spot where I wanted them to be. Other problems include units getting trapped between rows of bushes, units "jerking" this

GUIDE TO MYTH UNITS

MEDUSA

Special Attack: Turns units into stone with a ranged "sight" attack

Cost: 250 gold, 40 favor

History: Medusa was one of three sisters known as the Gorgons, children of sea gods with live sea snakes for hair, scaly necks, boar-like tusks, golden hands, and bronze wings. She was killed by Perseus, with the help of Athena and Hermes. From her blood was created the winged horse Pegasus.



SPHINX

Special Attack: Turns into a small tornado with an increased attack that's good against buildings.

Cost: 120 food, 20 favor

History: "Sphinx" was originally derived from a Greek word ("to strangle") that was applied to the pharaoh-headed lion statues that the Greeks saw in Egypt, which Herodotus named "androsphinx." The Greek sphinx was a monstrous brood of Typhon and Echidna, usually depicted as a winged lion with a female head.



MINOTAUR

Special Attack: Throws units with headbutt/gore attack

Cost: 200 food, 16 favor

History: King Minos prayed to Poseidon to send him a snow-white bull as a sign he was fit to rule Crete. Minos promised to sacrifice the animal, but when it appeared, he kept it for his own. In retribution, Poseidon caused Minos' wife to fall in love with the bull. Their offspring was the Minotaur, a beast with the head of a bull and the body of a man.



HYDRA

Special Attack: Grows new heads after kills, which increases its attack power

Cost: 250 food, 28 favor

History: Another of the fierce offspring of Echidna and Typhon, the Hydra was a large serpent with multiple heads and poisonous breath. Killing the Hydra near the city of Lerna in Argolis was the second of Heracles' 12 labors. Each time he cut off one of the Hydra's heads, two more grew back. A nephew helped him by cauterizing each wound as a head was lopped off. The last head was immortal, so Heracles buried it under a big rock.



KRAKEN

Special Attack: Destroys ships with tentacles and grabs human units from the shore and throws them

Cost: 300 food, 25 favor

History: A sea creature so huge that on the surface it was mistaken for a chain of islands, the Kraken is found in Norse mythology. Seamen were often drowned when they camped on what seemed to be an island, and then the creature swam back to the bottom of the sea. It could seize large ships with its tentacles and suckers and drag them down. The Norse believed the Kraken would rise to the surface at the end of the world.





SAVAGE



R e a l T i m e S t r a t e g y S h o o t e r

C O M I N G 2 0 0 3

W W W . S 2 G A M E S . C O M

©2002 S2 Games, LLC. Savage is a trademark of S2 Games, LLC.
iGames is a trademark of Internet Game Distribution, LLC.





One segment of the game has Arkantos journeying through a creepy dreamworld full of all kinds of enemies.

GENERATING AND SPENDING FAVOR

AGE OF MYTHOLOGY INTRODUCES a new resource into the *Age* pantheon: favor. Symbolizing the goodwill of the gods, favor is arguably the most important resource in the game. Without it, you won't be able to build heroes or myth units, or research certain upgrades.

There's a cap on how much favor you can generate and store; it's 100 points for the Norse and Egyptians, and 200 points for the Greeks. A temple is also required if you want to build the gut-stompers that have favor as part of their associated cost.

GREEKS: The Greeks gain favor by worshipping at temples. After constructing a temple, simply select a group of your villagers and then click on the temple and they'll go there and pray. Naturally, the more villagers you have praying, the faster they'll generate favor.

EGYPTIANS: Building elaborate monuments is key for the Egyptians. You can build only one monument at a time, and once it's constructed, a new one is unlocked. Naturally, the monuments that generate the most favor are large and costly.

NORSE: Taking a more personal approach, the Norse gain favor by kicking ass. All damage done to enemy units, buildings, and animals by Norse military units generates favor. Norse heroes generate the most favor, but even the lowly villagers generate favor by hunting animals for food.

TEMPLES: Regardless of the culture, the best units are the ones that require favor, and these units are built at the temple. This is also where you can upgrade your myth units, such as the Medusa, giving them greater hit points or healing abilities.

Temples also serve as the holding place for ancient relics, which grant your civilization a special ability (like lower construction costs) when they're garrisoned within your temple.

way and that as they move, and units hugging a cliff instead of simply walking down the road in front of them (which results in them moving much slower than they should).

It's also irritating that units won't move to let another unit pass by. During one mission, for example, I needed my hero to board a transport ship, but the shore was covered with my army. Instead of the army moving to let her through, she tried to walk around them, which got her nowhere. Only when I went in manually and created a path was I able to get her onto the ship. That level of micromanagement is a drag.

But when it comes time to fight, the units do an excellent job of butchering each other. The AI recognizes and confronts enemy units quickly and efficiently. The AI for your workers is a little more sketchy: Sometimes, they'll automatically get to work when a resource is depleted, but other times they won't. Luckily, a handy interface tab tells you when a worker is slacking off.

ANIMATION BRILLIANCE

INSTEAD OF USING THE 2D GRAPHICS THAT powered the first two *Age* games, *Age of Mythology* enjoys a brand-new, fully 3D game engine. And boy, does it look sweet. The environments, units, and buildings are packed with detail. I especially enjoyed the levels that featured water: waves wash against the shore, seaweed sways with the tide, and ambient sea creatures such as sharks are visible swimming beneath the surface.

What really impressed me, though, were the game's animations. When a Minotaur smacks a dude with his club, the schmoe goes flying, skids on the ground, and then bounces back into the air. Krakens will grab units off the shore, shake

them, and then fling them away. And the special abilities of the myth units, such as Medusa turning a foe into stone or the Frost Giant freezing a hapless victim, really immerse you in the mythological world.

Those sweet graphics come at a price, however, especially if you want to crank up all the details. Even on my 2.2GHz with a GeForce3 card, there were noticeable slowdowns when I played at the maximum (1600x1200) resolution with everything cranked up. These slowdowns were especially noticeable when I had numerous units on the screen and I was using a god power. I tested the frame rates on a lower-end system — a 1.33GHz with a GeForce4 — and the game ran fine at lower resolutions.

SLAY YOUR FRIENDS

IN ADDITION TO THE SINGLE-PLAYER CAMPAIGN, you get 21 random skirmish maps (each map has specific elements, such as a main river, but randomizes its location) that can also be used in multiplayer. *Age of Mythology* has four multiplayer modes — Supremacy, Conquest, Deathmatch, and Lightning — and the game is playable over a LAN or via Direct IP, or through Ensemble's in-game matchmaking service. Of the four multiplayer types, Deathmatch will be the most familiar to *Age of Kings* players, while Supremacy and Conquest are variations on the "destroy everything in sight" theme.

Before starting a multiplayer game, you pick one of nine gods to determine which myth units, upgrades, and god powers you'll get during the course of the game. A useful handicap feature also gives an advantage to a less skilled player by letting him collect resources at a faster rate, and by reducing build times.

Overall, the multiplayer segment is finely balanced. The games are a little slow to get started (the Egyptians, for example, can't build a barracks until they hit the second age, and the Greeks can't build farms right away), but once you're into the grind, the combat is fun. And because of the way the population cap is designed, you have to constantly expand by finding and building new settlements. Fail in this goal, and you don't stand a chance.

Age of Mythology isn't a straight-out classic, but I had a great time playing it. It's an easy recommendation for fans of Ensemble's *Age of Empires* games, or for any RTS aficionado. — William Harms

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Imaginative units; detailed graphics; great setting for an RTS game; solid multiplayer.

LOWS: Way too much base-building; annoying pathfinding problems; the final cut-scene sucks.

BOTTOM LINE: Nothing revolutionary, but it's an extremely solid and entertaining experience.

PC GAMER **86%**
EXCELLENT

DO IT IN THE DIRT

It's all about trying to control a power slide through the dirt. It's all about traveling at blistering speeds with mud kicked in your face. It's the biggest, baddest and best dirt track racing game available. It's Dirt Track Racing 2 - back and packed with more!

Mind-blowing graphics, special effects, awesome sounds, challenging tracks and 3 classes of cars from Street Stock to Modified. This is raw racing!



Visit www.esrb.org
or call 1-800-771-3772
for more info.



POWERED BY:

gameSpy



RATBAG

www.ratbaggames.com



INFOGRAMES™

Available for PC CD-ROM

©2002 Ratbag Pty Ltd. IMCA and the IMCA logo are registered trademarks of the International Motor Contest Association. GameSpy and the "Powered by GameSpy" design are trademarks of GameSpy Industries, Inc. All rights reserved. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Manufactured and marketed by Infogrames, Inc., New York, New York.

EVERQUEST[®]

PLANES OF POWER[™]



PC
CD
ROM

SOE
SONY ONLINE
ENTERTAINMENT

"All Who Challenge Me Shall Feel My Vengeance and Fire Shall Rain From the Sky."

Solusek Ro, The Burning Prince

Behold the portals. Journey to the throne rooms of the Gods of Norrath and challenge them to battle. In the Planes of Power lost treasures, mighty challenges, and adventures unknown await the hearty and brave.

- ◆ Classic version of EverQuest included
- ◆ 18 new zones for experienced players
- ◆ New translocation zone specifically linking all cities
- ◆ Hundreds of new and powerful weapons, spells, armor, & jewelry
- ◆ Over 50 new creatures to combat including -
Rallos Zek the God of War, Bertoxxulous the God of Disease,
Saryrn Goddess of Torment, and more
- ◆ Dozens of enhanced quests for experienced and
non-experienced players alike



Also look for the
official EverQuest Atlas,
a complete and detailed
collection of all the maps
of Norrath.

www.everquest.com



YOU'RE BEING ATTACKED (HALF PIRANHA/HALF



James, 20
biology student
Denver



Jessie the Kid: let's face it. The only good Pirawolf is a dead Pirawolf. 😊

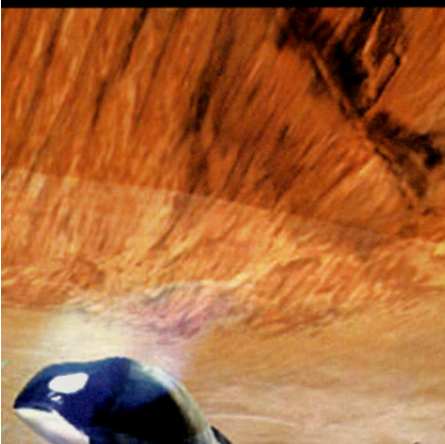
You need to have balance. A good air combat squadron of Vulturesharks, plus a battalion of Hyenadragons, and finally, Turtlelions for the amphibious fights. "Snakes and snails with scorpion tails." These are what real men are made of.



Tommy, 23
computer programmer
San Francisco



BY AN ARMY OF PIRAWOLVES (WOLF).... **WHAT WILL YOU DO?**

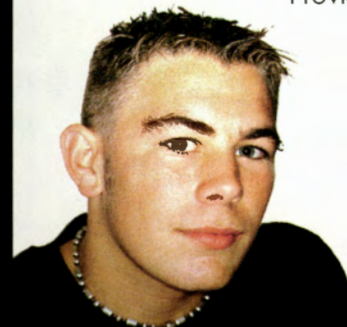


cjm1565: send in my
goons. Egorillas and
Rhinobulls.

These boys will punish
anything. If the French
had them, they wouldn't
have needed us in WWII.

END OF STORY, BIZATCH!

Craig, 22
pro skateboarder/slacker
Providence



Tom Tom: let's just say,

MAJOR PAIN IN THE...;)

A Tigebra is pretty wicked, or
a Tiganzee. Haven't tried a
tiger and a rhino yet.

My bet is it terminates with
extreme prejudice. I like that.



IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES™

A DIFFERENT KIND OF ANIMAL

Coming January 2003

Welcome to Impossible Creatures, the next real-time strategy game from the makers of Homeworld®. Get ready for a world where you create completely whacked-out mutant animals and then unleash them on your enemies. Fast-paced RTS action and dynamic 3D environments combined with over 40,000 possible animal creations equal combat like you've never seen. And with intense online multiplayer action, your opponents are as limitless as the creatures you create.

www.microsoft.com/games/impossiblecreatures

No One Lives Forever 2



Stopping super-soldiers, crazy Russians, and a nuclear war is all in a day's work for everyone's favorite spy



Most missions let you choose how you want to play — you can either sneak around or run in with guns blazing.

The original *No One Lives Forever* was a desperately needed breath of fresh air in a genre that had stagnated under the suffocating pressure of dank corridors, generic hell-beasts, and mind-numbing key hunts. *NOLF*

offered inventive mission design, hilarious voice-acting, and lively graphics, and wrapped the entire package in a wondrously tongue-in-cheek story. We greatly appreciated its innovation, and so *NOLF* was awarded

our Action Game of the Year for 2000.

Those are some mighty big shoes for any game to fill, even for a sequel, but thankfully the much-anticipated *NOLF 2* rises to the challenge and delivers on most counts. I have a few minor quibbles here and there, but overall I must say, *NOLF 2* is a fantastic follow-up that's worth every gamer's attention.

Picking up where the original left off, *NOLF 2* once again finds the nefarious (and

cranially challenged) members of H.A.R.M. up to no good. This time around they plan to unleash an army of humongous super-soldiers upon the world, thus causing much fire and death and gnashing of teeth. And just to keep things saucy, they're also trying to instigate a full-scale nuclear war between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. Naturally, sex-tastic secret agent Cate Archer has to go in and make the bad things right.

As in *NOLF*, the story unfolds via a series of hilarious cut-scenes. All of the primary characters from the original game are back (along with their respective voice

actors), and the results are incredible. The writing, too, is top-notch, with laugh-out-loud dialogue. In one instance, as the world teeters on the brink of nuclear annihilation, war-mongering General Morgan Hawkins anxiously lingers around the Big Red Button and asks, "Think the President will let me push the button?" The perfectly condescending reply: "I'm surprised he lets you use a telephone."

There are many such moments throughout the game, and they really call out the fact that the folks at Monolith took the time and care to craft a complete fictional world. As you sneak around, you'll often overhear characters talking to each other, discussing their personal lives (one of my favorites is when one female ninja tells another ninja that her mother is insulted by their new costumes), and even the bad guy, Eustace, must deal with a chronically insane mother who constantly telephones him.

Of course, all of the humorous cut-scenes and witty banter are secondary to the

gameplay, and in this area, *NOLF 2* nearly lands a knockout punch. The action takes place across 14 chapters. The impending threat of H.A.R.M. keeps Cate on the move, journeying to Japan, Siberia, India, an underwater base, and the fictional South Pacific island of Khios.

And there are some flat-out breathtaking moments. The best of the bunch is set in Akron, Ohio, as Cate hunts for clues to H.A.R.M.'s plan. After you search a house, the action moves outside, where Cate squares off against a pack of ninjas and a massive category-five tornado.



One of the highlights of the game is this sequence, where you ride around on the back of a tricycle.



Cut-scenes like this chat with Armstrong move the plot forward and feature some hilarious moments.

VITAL STATS

CATEGORY Action

ESRB RATING M

DEVELOPER Monolith

PUBLISHER Fox Interactive

REQUIRED PIII 500, 128MB RAM, 1.2GB HD, 32MB T&L-enabled 3D card

WE RECOMMEND P4 2GHz, 256MB RAM, 128MB T&L-enabled 3D card

MAXIMUM PLAYERS 4

CO-OP MULTIPLAYER MAYHEM



The game's co-op multiplayer mode offers plenty of fun scenarios. In the top screen, Billy covers Corey; in the bottom screen, Billy gets worked while Corey does nothing. Thanks, buddy!

NOLF 2 ESCHES traditional multiplayer offerings (such as Deathmatch and Capture the Flag) in favor of a fully realized multiplayer cooperative game. In this mode, which supports a maximum of four players, you play as blue-collar UNITY operatives who are sent in to do the grunt work that superstar agents like Cate Archer can't be bothered to take on.

Although fans looking for brainless multiplayer will be disappointed, we were very pleased with *NOLF 2*'s co-op mode, which is a vast improvement over the multiplayer in the original *NOLF*. For one thing, it offers five fairly compelling levels, albeit ones that are reworked versions of the single-player levels. Better yet, these missions feed directly into the game's single-player story, thus providing a nice "behind-the-scenes" look at the inner workings of UNITY and its agents.

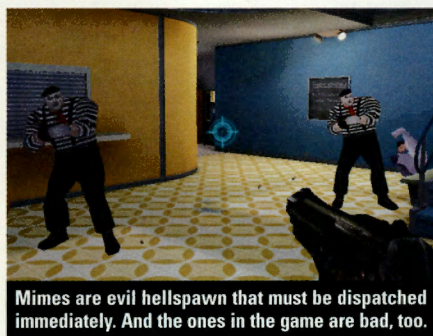
For instance, at the beginning of the single-player game, Cate is ambushed and left for dead; the cut-scene that follows shows her in a hospital bed. How did she get there? It's explained in one of the co-op missions, in which you must retrieve an unconscious Archer and carry her to safety, fighting off hordes of ninjas all the while. In another mission you must go into a base that Cate has already "visited" and plant explosive charges. Can't let the enemy rebuild, after all.

Story niceties aside, the real joy of co-op action is quite simple: playing through a romp-'em, stomp-'em single-player-style game with other people. We had an absolute blast storming through the co-op segment — yelling at each other, setting up ambushes, racing around on snowmobiles, and laughing as we were mercilessly gunned down by the excellent enemy AI.

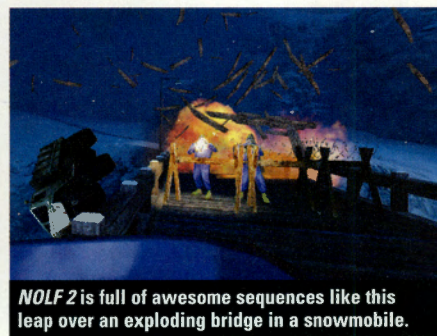
The missions are designed to ramp up their difficulty based on how many people are in the game (the host can also adjust the difficulty setting), and you can save your progress at any time. With other developers falling over themselves in an effort to create yet another death-match-style game, *NOLF 2*'s multiplayer co-op mode is a refreshing change.



Super-soldiers are crucial to H.A.R.M.'s plans for world domination. Stop them at all costs!



Mimes are evil hellspawn that must be dispatched immediately. And the ones in the game are bad, too.



NOLF 2 is full of awesome sequences like this leap over an exploding bridge in a snowmobile.

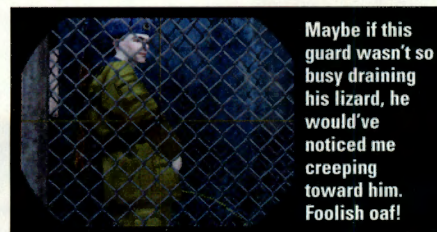
The resulting carnage is exquisite, with debris flying through the air and a trailer getting dumped on its side and tossed around like a rag doll. The level climaxes with Cate fighting the head ninja in a house that is actually *inside* the tornado, whipping through the air. As the battle rages, the house is slowly torn to pieces, and bikes and other wreckage sail through the holes in the structure. And should you venture too close to one of the openings, you'll be sucked out. This is some brilliant, inspired stuff.

Other great moments include an extremely low-speed tricycle ride through the streets of Calcutta, India (trust me, it's a load of fun), and a snowmobile sequence where you must jump a bridge right as it's exploding beneath you.

Unfortunately — and here's my only substantial complaint with the game — at times I felt like the mission design wasn't inventive enough, especially since the original *NOLF* set the standard for imaginative missions (epitomized by the truly genius falling-to-earth level). For instance, one mission is set in UNITY's headquarters, which comes under attack by

H.A.R.M.'s goons. As expected, you must battle them back, but the level is surprisingly devoid of gags. You'd think that the main base would be packed with NPCs and other operatives, but instead, it's pretty much empty. As a result, you run around by yourself, dispatching goons in a deserted building, wondering why the heck you're even in UNITY headquarters in the first place.

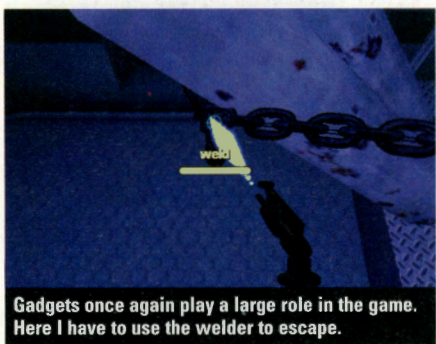
In general, the gameplay is much more forgiving this time around, particularly in regards to how stealth is handled. If you wish to sneak through the game, stealthily setting traps and knocking out people, you can go that route. But if you're more inclined to damn the torpedoes and go in with guns blazing, you'll still be successful.



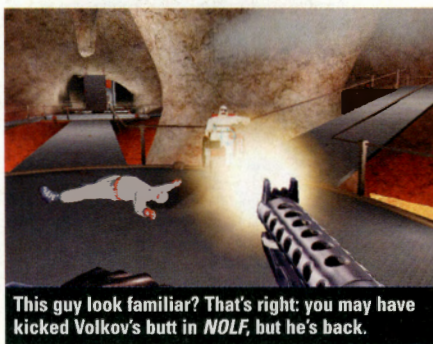
Maybe if this guard wasn't so busy draining his lizard, he would've noticed me creeping toward him. Foolish oaf!



The highlight of the game is the section set in Ohio, where a tornado is tearing a trailer park to pieces.



Gadgets once again play a large role in the game. Here I have to use the welder to escape.



This guy look familiar? That's right: you may have kicked Volkov's butt in *NOLF*, but he's back.



If you don't want to end up as a man-crate, stay away from the Man-Handler. The results ain't pretty.

In fact, only one level *requires* you to use stealth, and it's pretty simple.

Because of the multi-approach/open-ended nature of the gameplay, the world feels very alive. This sensation is facilitated by the outstanding enemy AI. Enemies will wander realistically through the world, whistling, talking, and even urinating. If they see or hear anything out of the ordinary, they'll automatically investigate, and if they spot you, they'll either engage you or run for help. (If they find dead or unconscious comrades, they'll even nudge them and ask what's wrong.) During firefights, enemies will roll away from your fire, go prone, or hide behind cover. And most impressively, if you flee, they'll come searching for you.

When they do, you can find a dark spot and hunker down and hide; if you stay stationary for a set amount of time, you'll basically become invisible. You can also turn off room lights to improve your chances of hiding successfully, but if the AI is actively searching for you, they'll walk into rooms and turn on the lights. Naturally, this tendency sets the stage for some glorious ambushes.

In an effort to introduce some RPG-lite elements, *NOLF 2* uses a skills system that awards points for finding information, dispatching enemies in a certain manner, or completing mission objectives. You then distribute these points across eight skill areas, such as weapons, armor, and health, and the effects on your performance are noticeable. I really like this feature, and hope Monolith keeps it around for the inevitable third game in the series.

Polishing off the brilliance that is *NOLF 2* are the game's stunning graphics, powered by the LithTech Jupiter engine. As in *NOLF*, everything is rendered with oodles of detail. The character models take the cake, showcasing originality and style — especially the poor fools who have been subjected to H.A.R.M.'s Man-Handler machine, turning them into cube-shaped menaces.

My heaping pile of praise aside, I had a few minor issues here and there, such as one instance where a guard was standing about two feet in the air, clipped into the side of a building, but those qualms are negligible. *No One Lives Forever 2* is an exceptional game, and welcome proof that we have another powerhouse action-game franchise on our hands. — William Harms

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Visually superb; great sense of style and humor; loads of fun; co-op multiplayer.

LOWS: Some of the mission design is a little disappointing; weird bugs here and there.

BOTTOM LINE: Packed with style and action, it's a worthy successor to our Best Action Game of 2000.

PC GAMER 90%
EDITORS' CHOICE



REVOLUTIONIZE THE WAY

YOU INTERACT WITH YOUR PC

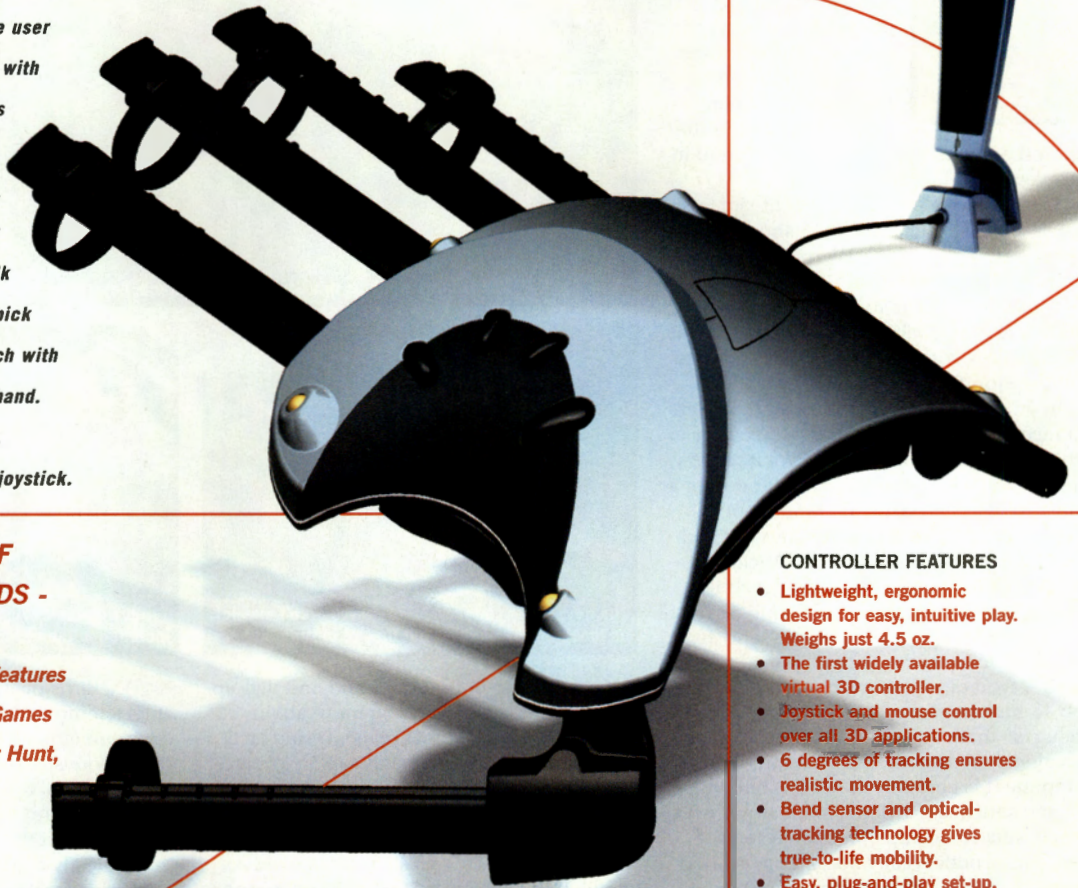
THE FUTURE IS AT HAND



P5 is an electrifying and innovative PC peripheral that gives the user **total intuitive interaction** with 3D and virtual environments (Games, web sites, educational software, etc.). With **P5**, brandish a mighty sword in a video game, walk through an online room or pick up objects on a screen, each with simple movements of your hand. No complicated keystrokes. No fumbling of a mouse or joystick.

PUT THE POWER OF FIVE IN YOUR HANDS - OCTOBER 2002

Special Premier Edition Features
3 New P5-Enabled Free Games
Including *Hitman 2*, *Tiger Hunt*,
and a Demo Version of
Beach Head 2002.



CONTROLLER FEATURES

- Lightweight, ergonomic design for easy, intuitive play. Weighs just 4.5 oz.
- The first widely available virtual 3D controller.
- Joystick and mouse control over all 3D applications.
- 6 degrees of tracking ensures realistic movement.
- Bend sensor and optical-tracking technology gives true-to-life mobility.
- Easy, plug-and-play set-up.


RECEPTOR FEATURES

- Infrared control receptor with scratch-resistant, anti-reflective lens
- Easy-to-use anywhere — desktop, living room, etc.



ESSENTIAL
REALITY
www.essentialreality.com

For a complete list of retailers, visit www.essentialreality.com

software 

GameStop

 epgames.com
— electronics boutique —


electronics boutique

PC
CD-ROM

USB
UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS

©2002, ESSENTIAL REALITY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

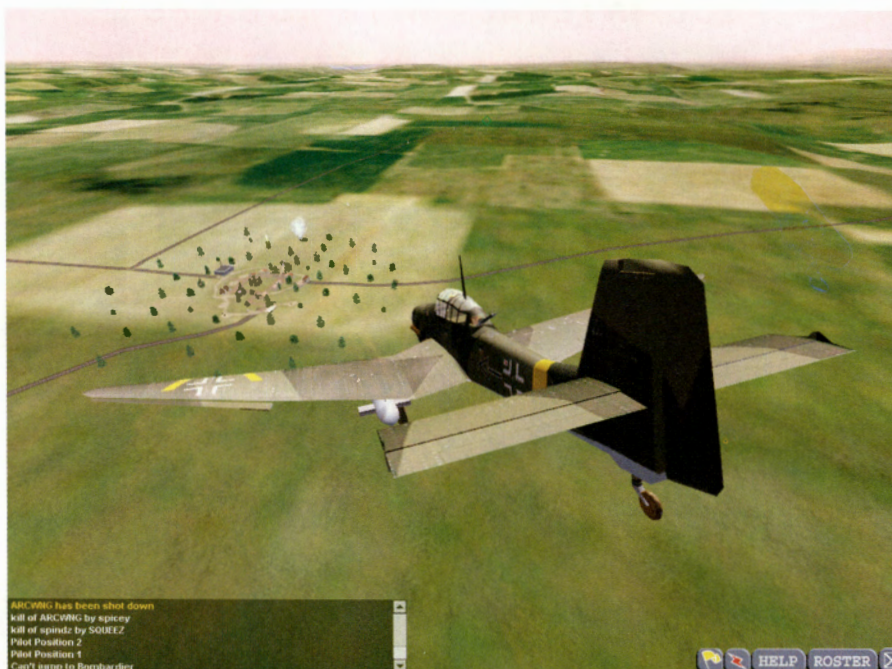
WarBirds III: Fighter Pilot Academy

A retail release brings the online classic to the masses

These days, when hardcore propeller-heads argue the merits of the best online World War II aerial combat game, you're unlikely to hear mention of anything other than *Aces High* and *WarBirds*. At any given moment, scores of dedicated stick-and-rudder fans can be found violently abusing their fellow pilots in the virtual skies that HighTech and

iEntertainment rent out on a 24-hour basis.

When *WarBirds III* rolled out of the hangar earlier this year with its spiffy new T&L-enhanced graphics engine and dozens of upgraded aircraft and ground-combat vehicles, iEntertainment jumped straight to the



A few offline AI missions, such as this Stuka convoy attack, have been added to help newbies gain skills.



The new T&L-enhanced 3D graphics aren't as slick as those in *IL-2* or *CFS3*, but they're getting closer.



Twelve conspicuously brief training missions are included in the offline game.

top of the online flight-simming pyramid in the eyes of most online veterans.

The massively multiplayer flight-sim business is a shaky one, though. A shortage of subscribers knocked *Air Warrior* completely off the radar last year, and, with a hefty \$24.95/month charge for full access to all of *WB III*'s arenas (\$9.95 buys you basic access), the *WarBirds* community has also begun to thin out significantly over the past year.

In an effort to reverse this trend, iEntertainment has joined with Simon & Schuster to produce *WarBirds III: Fighter Pilot Academy*, a new retail version of the sim that boasts a standalone offline gaming component calculated to entice new recruits into the fold.

So what do you get for \$30? Well, in addition to all the stuff you can get gratis via a 155MB download — including 52 flyable WWII fighters and bombers, and several attractively rendered real-world terrain maps — you get 12 short training missions and 13 Instant Action and scripted Battle scenarios that can all be completed offline in a single afternoon. The addition of an AI component is certainly welcome, but without any cool maps, printed manuals, or even a multi-mission campaign to sweeten the deal, this product really doesn't have a hope in hell of competing with premium boxed titles like *IL-2 Sturmovik* or *Combat Flight Simulator 3* for standalone gameplay value.

Nor does it want to. With two free months of access to the basic online game (or one month of premium access) bundled into the purchase, the real purpose behind this release is to expose as many customers as possible to the rich *WarBirds* multiplayer environment and encourage them to sign up for a full online hitch. So what if the offline training missions take less than an hour to complete? The online game, which runs

hiccup-free on both broadband and dial-up connections, will teach you more about dogfighting and combat-maneuvering tactics in one week than most sims will in a year.

The *WarBirds* community is populated by a number of skilled veterans who are only too willing to help newbies earn their combat wings. This process often involves ventilating your aircraft with 30mm cannon fire, but it's a "tough love" kinda thing.

When set to full realism mode, *WarBirds III*'s ultra-challenging aircraft physics can be quite daunting for rookie pilots, but the payoff comes when you get your first air-to-air kill against an honest-to-god human opponent. Although almost all of the action in *WarBirds* is weighted heavily toward the advanced, premium-priced arenas, the relaxed-realism theaters (currently all but deserted) will likely get a much-needed influx of new players thanks to this new release.

WarBirds provides one of the most entertaining and challenging air-combat environments on the Net. Though this release doesn't really deliver the expected offline goods, it does give novice sim fans a convenient and inexpensive opportunity to learn what all the hubbub is about. And that's mostly a good thing. — Andy Mahood

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Dedicated online community; many flyable planes; authentic flight modeling; hiccup-free Net play.

LOWS: High monthly fee; dinky offline component; no printed manual; empty relaxed-realism arenas.

BOTTOM LINE: The *Top Gun* of online aerial-combat sims — but a so-so offline experience.

PC GAMER 75%
GOOD

Virtua Tennis

The Dreamcast "smash" is a port that's been a long time coming

Few of us, regardless of our platform predilections, have anything bad to say about Sega's *Virtua Tennis*. More than a few of my acquaintances bought a Dreamcast just to play it. It has just the right mix of authentic "feel" and high-flying arcade game, and it became that

VITAL STATS

CATEGORY Sports

ESRB RATING E

DEVELOPER Sega/Hitmaker

PUBLISHER Activision

REQUIRED PII 450, 64MB RAM, 310MB HD, 16MB 3D card

WE RECOMMEND PIII 800, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card

MAXIMUM PLAYERS 4

rare sports title that appeals even to people who don't usually care a whit about tennis.

After a long time in PC-port limbo here in the U.S., *Virtua Tennis* at last makes its way to the computer, courtesy of Activision Value Publishing. Did I say

value? I sure did: this meticulously transferred port will set you back just \$19.99, and for that price, it represents a must-buy for anyone who owns a gamepad.

The game is indistinguishable from the DC version. The graphics are first-rate, (especially at 1280x960), and not just on the court: the stadiums, player models, and even the crowd are detailed and captivating. The feel of the in-game physics is superb, even when it's not totally realistic — you quickly get a good feel for the flow and start to pull off great shots. The exhibition mode, "world tour" mode, and skill-building "mini-games" mode (whose drills include knocking down bowling pins with serves) give you a decent amount of single-player diversion.

But multiplayer is what VT is all about. The



Go in low to get a player's-level view of the action.

PC version offers a head-to-head daisy-chaining option for up to four players in a doubles match (though my preferred arena of combat is still mano-a-mano). You can also hook up via LAN. Head-to-head play is a blast, and should prompt a torrent of trash-talk.

We did notice, however, some annoying slowdowns in multiplayer mode, even while playing head-to-head on the same machine. As with many ports, we suspect the ported code just isn't rigorous enough to maintain long sessions in multiplayer mode.

Other than these console-itis headaches (such as the obnoxious fact that the Esc key does *nothing*), there's nothing wrong with *Virtua Tennis* that a good multiplayer match won't make you forget. It's as good as tennis fans may ever see on their PCs. — Dan Morris



Do battle on the courts of tournaments eerily similar to the French, Australian, U.S., and Wimbledon majors.

This was never my choice.



THE NOTUM WARS
Anarchy
online



www.anarchy-online.com

Copyright © Funcom 2002 All rights reserved

Ghost Recon: Island Thunder

If you thought being a Ghost was hard before, welcome to hell

Castro has finally died, and Cuba is ready for its first free elections since the Communist revolution. But is it ever an easy road for nascent democracies? Nope. As is getting to be the norm, it'll take military intervention to ensure that people are free to cast their votes.

The dark shadow over this election is a "political party" called the FDG and its thuggish, drug-tainted candidate. They've hired mercenaries and smuggled in heavy weapons in an attempt to short-circuit the election and install another government by force. But we all know what the U.S. Special Forces thinks about that.

VITAL STATS

CATEGORY First-person shooter
ESRB RATING T
DEVELOPER Red Storm
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft
REQUIRED PIII 450, 128MB RAM, 1GB HD, 16MB 3D card, full version of Ghost Recon
WE RECOMMEND PIII 1GHz, 256MB RAM
MAXIMUM PLAYERS 36

Ghost Recon: Island Thunder is the second expansion to Red Storm's tremendous tactical-shooter franchise. Like the original game and its African-centered *Desert Siege* add-on, *Island Thunder* does a masterful job of creating a vivid and immersive environment in which to fight. Here the Ghosts trade in the empty deserts of Ethiopia for the lush, rain-soaked jungles of Cuba.

In eight missions, the single-player campaign takes you through dense rainforests and night-time beach landings, on river raids, and ultimately into the chaotic streets



Heavier firepower: don't mess with a guy who has an anti-tank missile and an automatic grenade launcher.

of Havana. At each step, you're presented with an absolutely breathtaking environment. There has never been a more realistic sensation of moving through the outdoors, with both detailed graphics and phenomenal sound design adding to the effect.

But you won't have much time to enjoy the scenery. Each mission has been coldly calibrated to induce the death of your entire squad in short order. The enemy AI — never a pushover in this series — has reached a new stratum of danger. They see farther, have better hearing, and move faster and more defensively to find cover, and you'd better friggin' believe they shoot straighter! The first two editions look positively tame next to the sheer wrath of these Cuban irregulars.

Island Thunder is so hard, in fact, that even a rabid *Recon* fan like myself had to resort to the Recruit difficulty setting —



Defend a vital polling center and uphold democracy in Cuba's elections. It's your duty.

and even then, I saved frequently to allow for inevitable squad-decimating ambushes. Working through missions in co-op mode with our own Billy Harms, we were riddled with bullets and hammered by grenades. Our first successful mission was cause for much roaring and fist-pumping exultation.

Five new multiplayer missions add to the challenge. A new "Defend" multiplayer mode is more fun than can be described — just you and your comrades holding an objective against waves of attacking enemies, for a hell-bent "Alamo" feel.

Your arsenal has compelling new hardware, including a world-shattering MIM-1 automatic grenade launcher (imagine a shotgun that chucks grenades). There are new scares as well, such as jeep convoys that pour forth attackers (best to hit these with the AT-4 right off the bat), and generally a higher concentration of "clusters" of enemies — instead of picking off solo sentries, you'll often have to deal with groups of as many as six or eight. (These gangs can be especially daunting when they're holding a hostage, who can't be allowed to come to harm.)

LAN play is one of life's great pleasures, but I had less luck with the online servers: Ubi.com continues its nutty habits of inexplicable kicks-out and providing bad information on the game being run.

At \$19.99, *Island Thunder* is a must-buy for fans of the series. There are no huge new strides in gameplay, but the story-driven campaign is top-notch — albeit murderously hard. — Dan Morris

Mission Name: CO2 - Angel Rage



The jungle scenes feel wet, misty, and cold. This series is a triumph of 3D environment-building.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: As immersive as a game gets; awesome new "Defend" mode; lots of content value for \$20.

LOWS: Harder than any other shooter you've ever played; Ubi.com is headache-ridden.

BOTTOM LINE: This series keeps bringing the love to fans of the tactical-shooter genre.

PC GAMER 80%
EXCELLENT



The new fire-tossing units make formidable opponents. Where's my stop-drop-and-roll button?

Stronghold: Crusader

If you build it, they will come and besiege it with arrows and ballistas

It's not *Stronghold 2*, and it's not an expansion pack, so what exactly is *Stronghold: Crusader*? It's a stand-alone follow-up that uses all the same technology as the original, but concentrates more on the battles than on straight-up castle-building. Though the

campaigns are abbreviated and the peasant-pushing formula's unchanged, the polish and variety make this game enjoyable for fans and fresh meat alike.

The main course consists of four loosely linked campaigns, each with five

missions. You'll switch sides along the way, taking turns as the Europeans or Arabs, which gives you a healthy appreciation of each side's arsenal. The most challenging missions revolve around the same zero-sum economic puzzles that haunted *Stronghold*: building the appropriate structures in the right order, quantity, and location is literally the difference between winning and losing.

The best reason to pick this one up is for the *Crusader* trail missions, which let you fight through 50 linked games, each more grueling than the last. A terrific unscripted build-and-battle mode is also included, pouring down some wicked AI along with the boiling oil. This game adds seven new units, including wall-scaling

assassins, lightning-fast horse-archers, hyperactive slingers, and devastating fire-throwers (who help a lot in sieges).

Yes, you'll still spend perhaps too much time threshing wheat and brewing beer instead of building (or storming) enemy strongholds. Military battles in the campaigns are fun to watch, but strategically disappointing, since they devolve too often into tank rushes (beeline for the stronghold's keep, kill the lord, and you're left sitting pretty).

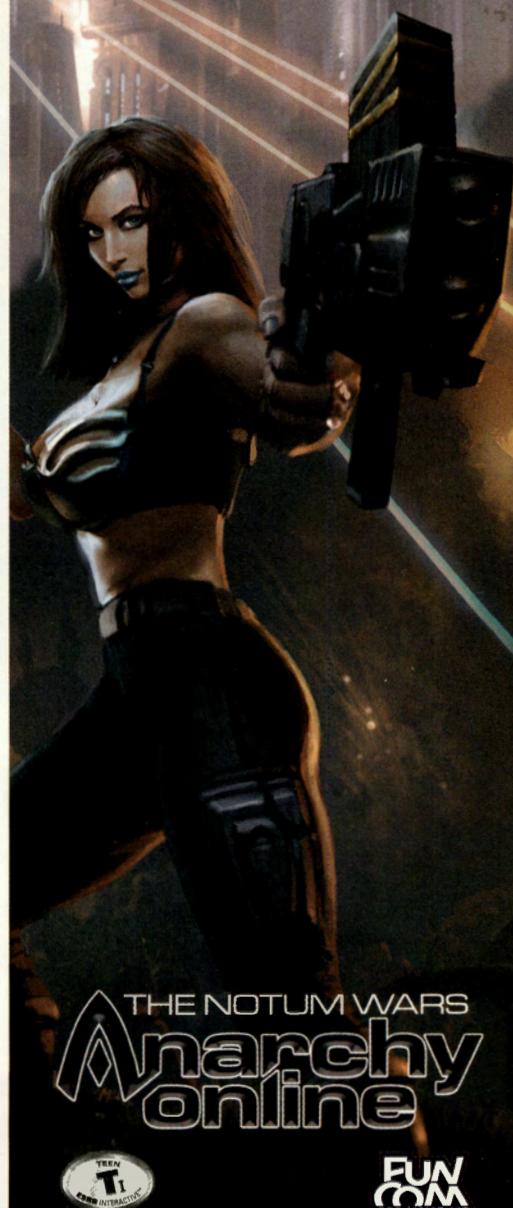
The overall presentation is a mix. *Crusader's* music is dark and gorgeous, but the 2D graphics are quite bland. Forget trying to build elegant geometric strongholds with a 2D isometric view, period, much less micromanaging units without exercising the helpful but dreadfully ugly "flatten" option. And problems that plagued *Stronghold* are still problems here: Where are my build queues? Waypoints? Unit formations? Why is the interface still so shamefully klutzy?

It's best not to ask too many questions when the gameplay is as compelling as this game's sieges are. It's probably not the final word in castle-building simulations, but it's still the best one we've heard to date. It's just a few new features away from glory. — Matthew Peckham



<http://www.pcgamer.com>

Some
times...
war is
inevitable.



www.anarchy-online.com

Copyright © Funcom 2002 All rights reserved

Hitman 2: Silent Assassin

Its forebear was just arm's reach from greatness. How close can this sequel get?

The original *Hitman: Codename 47* walked away with the "Most Unrealized Potential" award for 2000. Stealthy *Thief*-like gameplay in a modern setting coupled with an awesome physics engine seemed a sure shot, but a lack of in-mission saves, an awkward control scheme, and stringent play rules kept fun out of the equation.

VITAL STATS

CATEGORY Action
ESRB RATING M
DEVELOPER IO Interactive
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
REQUIRED PIII 450, 128MB RAM, 800MB HD, 16MB 3D card
WE RECOMMEND PIII 1GHz, 256MB RAM
MAXIMUM PLAYERS 1

Thankfully, these issues have been fixed for the sequel, but the revised formula is still less than perfect.

Mission objectives usually consist of executing a single target and retrieving a piece of intelligence. But unlike in *Hitman*,

you're not limited to a cool, stealthy approach: You can play most missions balls-out as you would any ordinary shooter, executing everything in sight. Indeed, it's often easier to play this way, but in doing so you miss out on half the game — the intricate and multiple pathways to finishing incognito. So you end up having to discipline yourself into playing the game stealthily, as the developers intended, and not as an average third-person shooter. It's an uncomfortable game mechanic, relying on you to make up for schizophrenic game design.

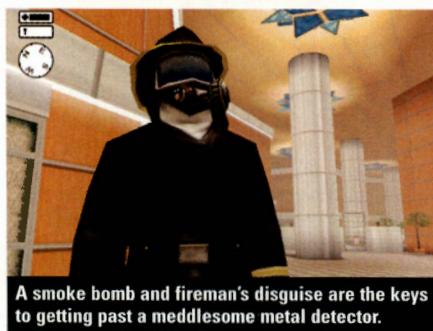
After all, it takes patience to sneak around these worlds, strangling people for their clothes and hiding their bodies, and there's a constant trial-and-error discovery of the safest route. To ease the pain, IO Interactive added a limited number of in-mission saves, which you can use to save anywhere. The saved-games load extremely fast, though a quick-load key is MIA.

Before starting missions, you get a verbal briefing from your employer, Diana, as her text scrolls up a computer terminal. It's imperative to pay attention here: If you miss any key details you have to listen to her whole speech again — sometimes several minutes' worth — because there's no way to manually scroll through her spiel. Worse, it's possible to miss a detail in the opening of a mission, reach the end, and have to start all over because you weren't paying attention to Diana's little communiqué.

In-game planning is aided by a new map system that tracks the movement of every person in the level, color-coding them according to threat and priority. While it's helpful to see when you've alerted patrol guards on the other side of the compound, it also takes all the mystery out of what's around the corner.



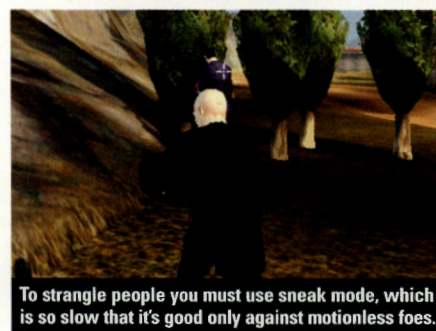
You can switch to a new first-person view using the F1 key.



The most impressive aspect of the game is the engine itself. The graphics are sharp, including sprawling outdoor landscapes and well-animated 3D human models. The cut-scenes were obviously made by a would-be filmmaker stuck with game tools — they're outstanding.

And the physics add surprising realism. Shoot people with your shotgun, and they go flying backward to topple like a rag doll over whatever furniture (or staircase) happens to be there — kind of like corpses in *Unreal Tournament 2003*, but to much greater effect.

Another treat is the score, conducted by the Budapest Symphony Orchestra and Choir, echoing at times John Williams' operatic tracks from the new *Star Wars* films. It's a fresh change from the distortion-drenched rock we action fans are so often spoon-fed.



For those seeking the old *Hitman* in a new suit, the hardest difficulty setting removes both the map system and in-game saves. Displaying admirable persistence, several of you will undoubtedly win the game in this mode. But whichever way you play, you'll get lost inside a thoroughly immersive game world. — Jeremy Williams

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Multiple ways to succeed stealthily; great graphics, physics, and sound; in-game saves.

LOWS: Poor mission briefings; drama is weakened by the map system on most difficulty levels.

BOTTOM LINE: Still a bit less than the brilliant "sneaker" game that it should be.

PC GAMER 79%
GOOD

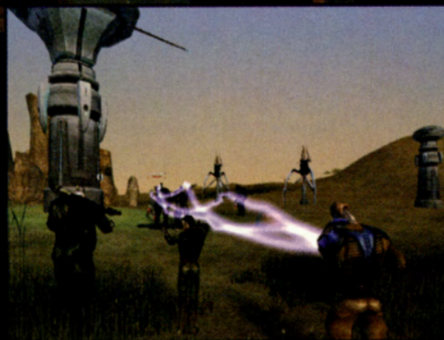
THE NOTUM WARS **Anarchy** online

"BEST MMOG OF
THE YEAR" (2002)

PC GAMER US

**The future has not been set.
There is no honour in apathy.**

IN STORES THIS THANKSGIVING



FUN
COM
www.funcom.com

www.anarchy-online.com

Copyright © Funcom 2002 All rights reserved

"...the game looks amazing – the explosions, detonations,
and other effects are spectacular."

–Computer Games–

Disney's
TREASURE
PLANET
Battle
AT
Procyon



www.disneyinteractive.com



Violence

© Disney. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. All rights reserved.

**Ships and
weapons like
you've never seen**

**"...it's a swashbuckling good time."
—Computer Gaming World—**

**Pierce combat with
powerful adversaries**

**"...the six full servings of multiplayer should
more than accommodate even the most
gluttonous of gamers."
—IGN—**

**Strategic online
multi-player combat**

**"Treasure Planet is Disney's surprise
gem for the holidays."
—Computer Games—**

**A universe
unlike any other**





Violence
Blood

Microsoft
game studios





IT'S NOT A FANTASY WORLD ONCE YOU LIVE IN IT.

REALITY IS WHAT YOU SAY IT IS. DRAGONS DESTROYING YOUR TOWN.

THE WORLD CHANGING WITHOUT WARNING. PLAYERS AFFECTING THE EVOLUTION

OF THE GAME. WITH AN ALL-NEW GRAPHICS ENGINE, NEW COMBAT SYSTEM AND

DRAMATIC MONTHLY EVENTS, AC2 IS RAISING THE BAR FOR MMORPGs. YOU TOO

WILL FIND YOURSELF BLURRING THE LINE BETWEEN FANTASY AND REALITY.

DO YOU WANT TO GO?

OR ARE YOU ALREADY THERE?

ASHERON'S
CALL 2
FALLEN KINGS

www.AsheronsCall2.com

©2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, the Microsoft Game Studios logo, Asheron's Call, and Fallen Kings are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. ©1996-2006 Turbine Entertainment Software Corporation. All rights reserved. "TURBINE" and the Turbine logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Turbine Entertainment Software Corporation in the United States and/or other jurisdictions. NVIDIA, the NVIDIA Logo, NVIDIA The Way It's Meant to be Played Logo and other NVIDIA Marks are trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation in the United States and other countries. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association.

Earth & Beyond

Meet new people, races, and cultures — and then kill them. Or not. It's totally up to you.

THE STYLE OF THE 21ST CENTURY



Your avatar is visible in space stations while you talk with other players. The look of your character is very customizable, and there's no GM penalizing players for bad style, so go for it.

Westwood Studios was the pioneer of the real-time strategy genre, and now it's set on blazing a trail through an unexplored section of another realm — namely, the first big-name space-themed massively multiplayer RPG.

It's a refreshing take on the genre in a number of ways. For one thing, it's great to finally have a new MMORPG that's not set in a kill-the-orcs-and-rats fantasy setting. Plus, it doesn't require a library of thick manuals and intimate knowledge of obscure third-edition Dungeon & Dragons rules just to start playing. And it's pulled off

what was — and remains — perhaps the most glitch-free launch for a massively multiplayer online game ever.

Finally, and surprisingly (given its focus on team play), it actually manages to appeal to both solitary gamers and social players — not an easy task for a game that's played 100 percent online.



Ship designs are by Doug Chiang, whose credits include the new *Star Wars* and *Matrix* movies.

Set in a distant future, *Earth & Beyond* drops you in the midst of a galaxy made up of 11 systems, each containing a number of assorted navigational points of interest, ranging from asteroids to space stations to homeworlds.

You can play as one of three races — Progen (who consider themselves uber-beings and masters of combat), Jenquai (peaceful thinkers who are masters of exploration), and Terrans (boring ol' humans who excel at free enterprise). You also choose one of six trades: Explorer, Warrior, Defender (a defensive warrior, per



If you're damaged in combat, you can be towed or request a jump start from a fellow player (as shown).

se), Enforcer, Sentinel (a blend of warrior and explorer), and Tradesman.

Each race and trade offers a distinct playing style and a different perspective on the game's constantly evolving story, which centers on ancient stargates and strange alien invaders that are appearing throughout the galaxy and raising havoc. You can choose to ignore the main plot, and concentrate on building up your character's skills, upgrading your ship, and exploring the galaxy — all very fun things to do in and of themselves. Or you can elect to seek out and fulfill missions that are part of the

central plot. And you can do either of these paths by yourself or with others, depending on your personal preference.

If you pick the former route — play mostly by yourself — the game still has a ton to offer. It's sort of a *Privateer* experience but with hordes of human players who can answer questions when you're stuck or chat with you during long transits between systems (of which there are many). Westwood has four separate game servers running, each with 500 to 1,600 people online at any given time.

Decide to dive into the community and team up with other players, and you'll be rewarded with experience bonuses and upgrades that solitary players forgo. Also, each race's skills are designed to combine with those from other races to create well-balanced teams. So it does pay to play together, particularly when you hit a difficult mission.

Each race/trade has a beginning tutorial and easy-to-follow intro missions that will get you off and running quickly. The controls and interface couldn't be simpler —



If you've got the hardware, *E&B* isn't short of special effects and all sorts of visual dazzlement.

Earth & Beyond adheres strongly to the Keep It Simple, Stupid principle. Flight controls are handled entirely by keyboard and mouse (I like the default settings, but everything is configurable), and it takes only an hour or two to get fully up to speed.

Where the KISS principle falters a bit is in the chat and navigation systems. Figuring out how to respond to individual people can be daunting (it involves a "/tell Frank" command, when you should just be able to click on their name in the chat window). Setting up or joining a particular private chat is similarly tricky.

And the navigation map is simply far too difficult to understand as far as figuring out how to get from a planet in System A to a starbase in System B — particularly at the outset of a game, when only a few navigation points per system are marked for you.

Westwood has addressed this issue a bit with a new downloadable map that offers much more detail in this regard. Still, some sort of onboard "trip computer" that automatically sets up safe routes between major points would have been a good idea — heck, you get one with a new Lexus, right?

While extremely friendly to newbies, this game may not be challenging enough to hold the attention of more hardcore players for too long — at least not at \$13/month (the first month is "free"). *E&B*'s skill system is pretty straightforward, so there really isn't a huge difference between one Progen Warrior and the next. And the piloting is extremely basic: you can't use your fancy new force-feedback joystick because the game doesn't support joysticks or gamepads, and the space physics (or lack thereof) don't allow for much in the way of showing off.

Furthermore, because of Westwood/EA's determination to keep *E&B* as "clean" as possible so as not to offend new/young/sensitive players, it's missing a certain "rogue" quality that may turn off MMORPG vets. For

instance, there's no player-versus-player (PvP) combat at this time — when you're fighting, it's against drones, space worms, and marauding pirates, and PvP is conspicuous in its absence. Case in point: The story depicts the Progen as the most vile enemy of the Jenquai people, to the point that as a Jenquai you're itching to tear any Progen that you stumble across a new one. However, you can't be anything worse than neutral to a Progen character, and through the skill sets you're actually encouraged to pool your respective talents. Howzat?

Jump on any server and you'll see someone begging for PvP sooner or later, and Westwood should deliver it in some shape or form (add a new high level-only system that's PvP, for instance, or a separate PvP server). PvP could also open up new and interesting professions such as pirates, outlaws, and assassins.

While support for forming and maintaining guilds is built into the game, you

unfortunately can't create custom skins or decals for your ship at this time, though an extensive customization option at the outset lets you tweak your vessel's shape, along with your on-planet avatar's look and dress style.

"Experienced-player" caveats aside, *Earth & Beyond* is as beautiful and enthralling a space-exploration game as this space junkie has ever played — stand-alone or online. Having put in close to 50 hours in nine days, I've seen barely a hint of lag (playing over DSL) and not a single fatal crash or lockup. This stability is a testament to thorough beta-testing: *E&B*'s as polished a MMORPG as you're likely to find so early in a game's life cycle.

That's a big reason why it represents the best option for getting your feet wet in the genre. And even if you're an experienced MMORPG vet who's simply tired of bashing rats, *Earth & Beyond* offers a refreshing alternative to the fantasy standards. — Steve Klett



Get used to this scene — you'll constantly be using jumpgates to hop between different points in the galaxy.



LEFT: *E&B* does a great job of making all vital info readily available, such as how you're getting along with each faction. RIGHT: Pick what emotion your character displays with the "Emote" pulldown menu.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Newbie-friendly; awesome visuals; huge galaxy to explore; stable and lag-free.

LOWS: Might not offer enough challenge for genre vets; no PvP system; no custom decals or skins.

BOTTOM LINE: An extremely refreshing space-exploration take on the massively multiplayer genre.

PC GAMER 80%
EXCELLENT

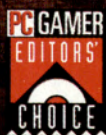
The Elder Scrolls III

MORROWIND™

**"ALL HAIL THE NEW KING
OF RPGS!" -PC ZONE**

- **PLAY ANY CHARACTER YOU CAN IMAGINE, FROM THE HEROIC WARRIOR TO THE SECRET ASSASSIN.**
- **THE ENORMOUS GAME WORLD IS OPEN AND FREE FOR YOU TO DISCOVER.**
- **REALISTIC TEXTURES AND OBJECTS, INCREDIBLE POLYGON COUNTS, AND ADVANCED WEATHER SYSTEMS.**

WINNER OF MORE THAN 40 AWARDS:



IGN, EDITORS' CHOICE
GAMES DOMAIN, TOP GAME AWARD
GAMEZONE, EDITORS' CHOICE
GONE GOLD, PLATINUM AWARD
GAME PEN, NUMB THUMB AWARD
GAMESPOT, GAME OF THE MONTH
ALLOUTGAMES, SEAL OF APPROVAL
LOADEDINC, HOT PROPERTY AWARD

ACTION TRIP, EDITORS' CHOICE
VOODOO EXTREME, CAN 'O WHOOPASS
ZEN GAMER, GOLD ZEN AWARD
RPGDOT, EDITORS' CHOICE
XISTENZE, CHOICE AWARD
VN ROUNDUP, STAMP OF APPROVAL
WORTHPLAYING.COM, EDITORS' CHOICE
ENTERTAINMENT DEPOT, EDITORS' CHOICE



Bethesda
SOFTWARES
a ZeniMax Media company



Blood
Violence

The Elder Scrolls III

TRIBUNAL™

Morrowind Expansion Pack

**A DEAD KING. A MAD GOD.
A CITY UNDER SIEGE.
A HERO MARKED FOR DEATH.
THE FATE OF MORROWIND IS IN
YOUR HANDS...AGAIN.**

- TRAVEL TO MAJESTIC MOURNHOLD, THE ANCIENT CAPITAL CITY OF MORROWIND.
- UNRAVEL THE MYSTERIES OF THE CLOCKWORK CITY OF SOTHA SIL.
- DELVE INTO NEW EPIC-SIZED DUNGEONS.
- BATTLE GOBLINS, LICHES, AND OTHER NEW CREATURES.

COMING NOVEMBER 2002
THE EXCITING EXPANSION TO THE
AWARD-WINNING MORROWIND



RATING PENDING



Visit www.esrb.org or
call 1-800-771-3772
for Rating Information.

© 2002 Bethesda Softworks LLC, a ZeniMax Media company.

The Elder Scrolls, Morrowind, Tribunal, Bethesda Softworks and its logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of ZeniMax Media Inc. All Right Reserved.

LOTR: Fellowship of the Ring

Too short and too glitchy to be the "greatest adventure," *Fellowship* is nonetheless a respectful adaptation

First, let's clear up some lingering confusion — *Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring* is not based on last year's hit movie. (EA owns the movie rights; Universal/Vivendi — and by extension, Black Label — has the book rights.) *Fellowship* is instead a third-person action/adventure translation of Tolkien's literary epic, and except for being rushed out too early in an effort to beat EA's *Two Towers* game to shelves, it's not at all bad.

VITAL STATS

CATEGORY Action/adventure
ESRB RATING T
DEVELOPER Surreal Software
PUBLISHER Black Label Games
REQUIRED PIII 600, 128MB RAM, 800MB HD, 32MB T&L-compatible 3D card
WE RECOMMEND P4 2GHz, 256MB RAM
MAXIMUM PLAYERS 1

Considerable love and respect for the source material went into designing *Fellowship*. The early part of the game takes place in the charming village of Hobbiton,

where you start out as Frodo Baggins, the gentle Hobbit chosen by fate to become the reluctant ringbearer. As in the book, you're not immediately thrust into action — your first few tasks (selling your home of Bag End and ringing the town's warning bell) are menial, yet serve to illustrate the relative safety of the Shire in contrast to your later, grimmer adventures.

Thankfully, Frodo hasn't been turned into some bazooka-lugging, high-flipping martial artist — your first weapons are a



Aragorn and Frodo gang up on this troll. Avoid the roundabout attack with his club — it's nasty.

walking stick and rocks. (The stick is later replaced by a dagger, and finally Bilbo's legendary sword, Sting.) You can also wear the Ring to make yourself invisible, but doing so diminishes your purity (and is usually unnecessary, in gameplay terms).

As you continue through the faithful retelling of the story, you'll switch between playing as Frodo, the ranger Aragorn, and the powerful wizard Gandalf. Aragorn uses sword, arrow, and kick attacks, while Gandalf brandishes the ancient magical sword Glamdring and can cast an assortment of magical spells like fireball and heal.

It's probably a compliment to movie director Peter Jackson's adherence to the book, and less outright mimicry, that *Fellowship* resembles the film so much.



Teaming up with the AI-controlled Gimli, Legolas, and Boromir against orcs is one of *LOTR*'s highlights.

The graphics, cut-scenes, and voice acting are all top-notch: even cheesy lines from Frodo like "Shall I ever dance around the maypole again?" are delivered as believably as possible under the circumstances.

And because it's based on the book, *Fellowship* includes several scenes you won't find in the movie, such as a boss battle with Old Man Willow and a run-in with enigmatic singing woodsman Tom Bombadil. (Yes, he *does* sing at you. Twice.)

Still, I can't heartily recommend *Fellowship*. To begin with, it takes slightly longer to finish the game than to watch the movie — I got through it in about seven hours — and considering that there's very little replay value, the \$49.99 list price is too high. Plus, the game could've used more time in QA testing. I found a few obvious bugs — crouched wolves hanging in mid-air, my character warping between places — that never should've made it to store shelves.

The camera could've been refined as well. The perspective never goes as high or as low as you'd like, and it's frequently blocked by obstructions like walls and trees, making aiming and pulling off the game's stiff sword attacks even more of a chore than they should be.

If you're a *Lord of the Rings* fan — and frankly, aren't we all? — my recommendation is to wait for a price drop and an inevitable patch before buying. *Fellowship* is very nearly worth getting...but not quite yet. — Chuck Osborn

It's the boss battle you've been waiting for: Gandalf versus the Balrog. Are you ready to rumble?



I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the Flame of Anor. You cannot pass!

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Beautiful graphics; faithful story adaptation; fun group combat with AI fellowship.

LOWS: High price given the short game length and low replay value; bugs; tricky camera.

BOTTOM LINE: Almost any action/adventure fan will enjoy it — once it's patched and the price drops.

PC GAMER 68%
 ABOVE AVERAGE

SAVE 69%!

GET



3 FREE GIFTS!

from

PC GAMER

YES, send me the next 12 issues and 12 CD ROMs of PC Gamer for just \$29.95 — *that's a savings of 69% off the newsstand rate!* With my paid order, I'll also receive *The Ultimate Strategy Guide, Vol. 4, The Complete Reviews Index, Vol. 3* plus *The Extended Play Collection, Vol. 5* — **ALL 3 FOR FREE!**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Offer good in U.S. only. Canada: U.S. \$49.95 (includes GST); Foreign: U.S. \$69.95. Prepaid in U.S. funds. Newsstand price per issue with disc is \$7.99. Please allow 6-8 weeks for mailing of first issue.

PC GAMER

JGH2SD18Y



GET FREE STUFF!

YES, send me the next 12 issues and 12 CD ROMs of PC Gamer for just \$29.95 — *that's a savings of 69% off the newsstand rate!* With my paid order, I'll also receive *The Ultimate Strategy Guide, Vol. 4, The Complete Reviews Index, Vol. 3* plus *The Extended Play Collection, Vol. 5* — **ALL 3 FOR FREE!**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Offer good in U.S. only. Canada: U.S. \$49.95 (includes GST); Foreign: U.S. \$69.95. Prepaid in U.S. funds. Newsstand price per issue with disc is \$7.99. Please allow 6-8 weeks for mailing of first issue.

JGH2SD18Y



GIVE A GIFT!

YES, send me the next 12 issues and 12 CD ROMs of PC Gamer for just \$29.95 — *that's a savings of 69% off the newsstand rate!* With my paid order, I'll also receive *The Ultimate Strategy Guide, Vol. 4, The Complete Reviews Index, Vol. 3* plus *The Extended Play Collection, Vol. 5* — **ALL 3 FOR FREE!**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

Offer good in U.S. only. Canada: U.S. \$49.95 (includes GST); Foreign: U.S. \$69.95. Prepaid in U.S. funds. Newsstand price per issue with disc is \$7.99. Please allow 6-8 weeks for mailing of first issue.

PC GAMER

JGH2SD18Y



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 218 HARLAN IA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

PC GAMERPO BOX 5158
HARLAN IA 51593-2658**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 218 HARLAN IA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

PC GAMERPO BOX 5158
HARLAN IA 51593-2658**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 218 HARLAN IA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

PC GAMERPO BOX 5158
HARLAN IA 51593-2658NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATESNO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATESNO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES**SAVE****69%****Subscribe
to****PC GAMER****TODAY!**

RollerCoaster Tycoon 2

A few tweaks, an editor, and the Six Flags license don't quite add up to a sequel



Six Flags Belgium's one-of-a-kind wooden coaster, the Loup Garou (The Werewolf), is one of many new rides.

Is it possible for a game to be the disappointment of the year and still be very good? Yes, it is. Long story short, if you own the first *RollerCoaster Tycoon* (July 1999; PCG rating: 89%) and its two expansions, then you already own about 80 percent of *RCT 2*. The 2D graphics are exactly the same, the gameplay is essentially unchanged, and the most requested

feature — the ability to ride coasters in a first-person perspective — remains conspicuously absent. That said, it's still the best rollercoaster sim ever made.

Why it's been deemed a full-fledged sequel instead of an expansion pack smacks of cynical

marketing strategy. Sure, it'll sell a bazillion copies, but speaking as an avid coaster zealot, I was expecting more from a second installment.

So what's new in *RCT 2*? The big news is that the second-most-requested addition — a separate rollercoaster editor — has finally been implemented, allowing you to design coasters free of crowd or cost considerations and then save them for use later in the game or for swapping online. This editor, and the new scenario editor that lets you create theme-park management missions, are where *RCT* upgraders will likely head first.

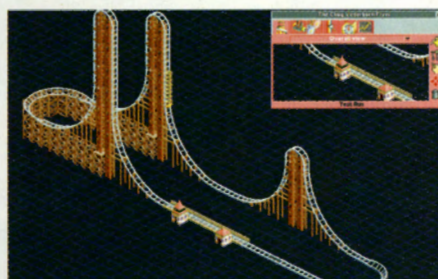
And then there's the acquisition of the Six Flags license. Though the box advertises that you can test your *Tycoon* skills with five Six Flags parks — Magic Mountain, Great Adventure, Belgium, Holland, and Six Flags Over Texas — what it doesn't say is that a ton of Warner Brothers-themed attractions, props, and characters, plus some classic rides, have been left out. Scenarios suggest that you "build the missing Six Flags rides" — an impossible task when you don't have the elements necessary to create a "Texas Chute Out" or Batman-themed props for "Batman: The Ride."

RCT 2 comes with a total of 20 new scenarios, larger park maps, and all-new rides and coasters (like the Giga Coaster and Inverted Impulse Coaster). It also adds more prop themes (Wild West, Pirates) and a few minor customization tweaks, such as the ability to build tunnels or enclosed cue lines.

What it *should* come with is a magnifying glass. Though *RCT 2* supports a top resolution of 1280x1024, enabling it reduces the size of the interface to eyesight-straining minuteness. At higher resolutions, you can't even zoom the camera in close enough to feasibly build coasters or identify guests. In one instance, I got stuck trying to lay a ground path away from one of the game's pre-built coasters: the exit was so obscured by track, and the camera perspective so distant, that squint-



Even at maximum zoom, laying an exit path for this Wild Mouse proved to be very tricky.



Built in *RCT 2*'s coaster editor, the Chug Vederborn Flyer is a super-fast air-propelled coaster.

ing an inch from the screen didn't help in creating an escape route.

Managing your park is exactly the same as in the first game — like before, you can borrow money, launch advertising campaigns, hire staff, buy land, and put money into developing new rides and attractions. The detail is dazzling: some of the Six Flags-exclusive coasters even have the rides' actual logos emblazoned on their entrances. A tested coaster can categorize a range of data, such as maximum speed, ride time, gravity force, "air time," and number of drops.

So you have to ask yourself: Are a track editor and the Six Flags license enough to warrant a \$29.99 purchase? To coaster geeks like myself, of course! Developer Chris Sawyer has us over a barrel here. Let's just hope that a *RollerCoaster Tycoon 3D* pulls into the station sometime in the near future. — Chuck Osborn

VITAL STATS

CATEGORY Strategy

ESRB RATING E

DEVELOPER Chris Sawyer

PUBLISHER Infogrames

REQUIRED PIII 300, 64MB RAM, 128MB HD, 8MB DirectX 8.1-compatible video card

WE RECOMMEND PIII 600, 128MB RAM, 200MB HD

MAXIMUM PLAYERS 1

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Same addictive gameplay; much-anticipated coaster and scenario editors; Six Flags license.

LOWS: Same old 2D graphics; still no first-person coaster-riding; too few improvements.

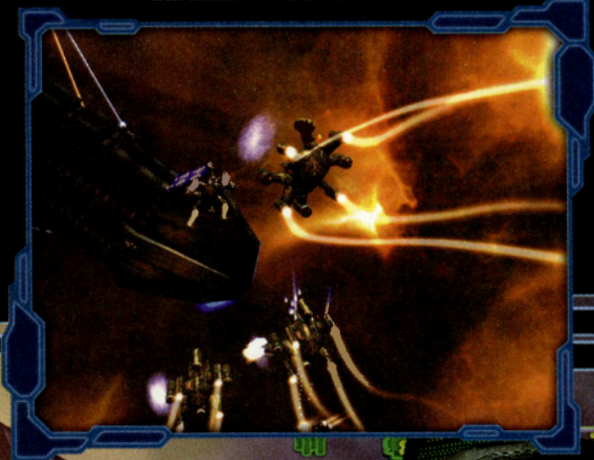
BOTTOM LINE: Though lacking in innovation, it's still a must-buy for coaster enthusiasts.

PC GAMER
EXCELLENT

80%

THE UNIVERSE JUST GOT

UNPARALLELED 3D GAMING ACTION



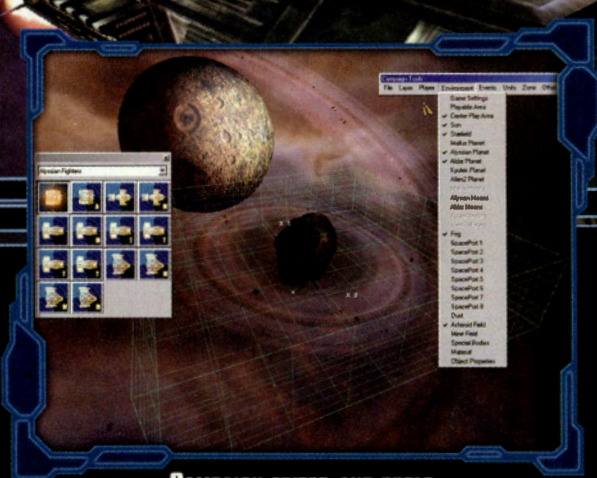
TWO FULLY DEVELOPED RACES



EXPLOSIVE BATTLES



CAMPAIGN EDITOR AND TOOLS



Produced with the participation of Telefilm Canada.
 ©2002 Strategy First Inc. All rights reserved. O.R.B.: Off-World Resource Base is a trademark of Strategy First Inc.
 All rights reserved. All other trademarks and copyrights are the properties of their respective owners.



Violence

A LITTLE MORE:

- a) Exciting
- b) Dangerous
- c) Crowded
- d) All of the above

ONE-OF-A-KIND DYNAMIC UNIVERSE



EPIC FLEET COMBAT



O.R.B

OFF-WORLD RESOURCE BASE

W W W . O - R - B . C O M
W W W . S T R A T E G Y F I R S T . C O M



Can you see the 300,000 Nazis, 600 Panzer tanks and 29 batteries of artillery in this picture?

Neither could they.

1944: The Long Road to Berlin

Jun. 6: D-Day

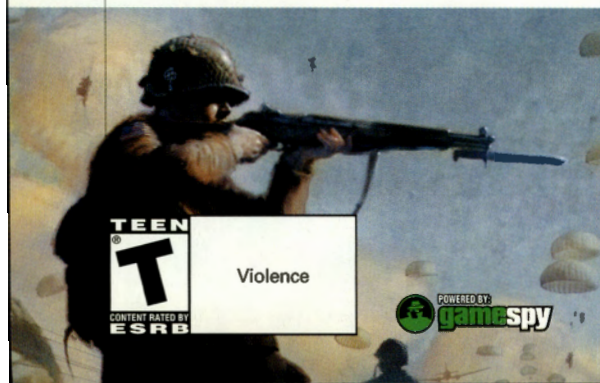
Since dropping behind enemy lines 3,000 ft. above Normandy, France, your efforts have pushed the Nazis deep into the Ardennes forest.

Dec. 16: The Battle of the Bulge

During the worst blizzard in war history, Hitler's greatest gamble begins on a 90 mile loosely held Allied front.

Dec. 24: The Ardennes Forest

Hold the Allied line until a break in the weather allows American and British forces to begin bombing again.



Jan. 12, 1945: Nazi Berlin

Strike the heart of the Axis war machine. Join the fight. Play Medal of Honor Allied Assault™
Spearhead. 15 new weapons. Multi-player action. Help crush the Nazis once and for all. moh.ea.com

Medal of Honor Allied Assault™ Spearhead. You Don't Play. You Volunteer.™



Challenge Everything™

Empire Earth: The Art of Conquest

Mad Doc reaches into the pool of history — and pulls out something messy

The Art of Conquest turns out to be a bit like Schubert's *Unfinished* symphony: What you get is generally dandy, but at \$30, you're paying full price for half a performance. The campaigns are fun but short, and you're left with the feeling that someone decided that an add-on was a good way to get you to pay more for *Empire Earth*'s bounteous content overflow.

VITAL STATS

CATEGORY Real-time strategy
ESRB RATING T
DEVELOPER Mad Doc Software
PUBLISHER Sierra
REQUIRED PIII 350, 64MB RAM, 300MB HD
WE RECOMMEND PIII 1GHz, 256MB RAM
MAXIMUM PLAYERS 8

In case you missed it, *Empire Earth* (Holiday 2001; PCG rating: 85%) was last year's real-time hit from Stainless Steel Studios and Rick Goodman, co-designer of the original *Age of Empires*. It spanned 500,000 years of history, depicted 14

playable epochs, and sported hundreds of technologies, buildings, and units.

Developer Mad Doc's expansion, by comparison, is a little piddle in the bucket. You get three abbreviated campaigns, the new "space" epoch, two new heroes and civilizations (Japanese and Koreans), a few extra buildings and units, a couple dozen civ-specific attributes, and one new half-hearted Wonder.

Of the three campaigns, the much-anticipated tango with the Roman Empire is the best. The missions are well-orchestrated and run from a fictitious general's attempts to raise an army through to the ascension



That's me raining down fiery hell on the enemy's space-rock-asteroid-planet-thingie defenses.

of Julius Caesar. The storytelling's decent and the larger battles get the endorphins crackling, but it ends abruptly after six missions — which is simply too soon.

The other two campaigns consist of a mediocre rehash of the Pacific campaign in World War II and a muddled glimpse into a futuristic confederation of Asiatic republics as they scramble to colonize space. The WWII campaign comes off like the tutorial scenarios, where scope is so limited that technology development is moot. Midway, Iwo Jima, and Guadalcanal are all here, sort of, but tactics generally take a backseat to meeting arbitrary objectives. The scripting throughout is overwrought and ham-fisted.

The Asian/space campaign stumbles from Earth to Mars to outer space, never quite finding its footing. The first several missions consist of disjointed colony wars,



Ghost soldiers of the Roman Empire? Not all of the new units are strictly conventional.

before graduating to space battles in the latter three. Borrowing liberally from *StarCraft*, "planets" (or asteroids, or whatever) are chunks of land surrounded by "space," which in turn is just water replaced by a pinpricked black background. You get a few spaceships that follow the rock-paper-scissors formula of the naval vessels, a nifty new death-ray howitzer, and a few bland unit upgrades, and that's it. Carbon deposits replace trees; otherwise, it's the same old hunt-and-grab for food, gold, iron, and stone, with most of the same technology from *EE*.

In an unabashed attempt to bring the series a step closer to "real-time Civilization," the developers have added 23 civilization-specific powers: Ancient Greece gets flaming arrows, England gets exploration, Japan gets cyber-ninjas, and so on. Unfortunately, none of these abilities are used in the actual campaigns — they're confined to multiplayer — so you're left to ponder what the point was. The gameplay gets marginally better in skirmish and multiplayer modes, which is where you'll probably find the most enjoyment.

Empire Earth had only acceptable graphics when it shipped, and a year later little has improved, though the terrain in the Roman and Asian campaigns looks somewhat more detailed. The camera supports zooming right down to eye level, but the blocky units and fuzzy textures will keep you up in the sky.

Buy it now if you want a Roman campaign or if you plan to spend a lot of time in the random maps and multiplayer matches. Just don't expect much more. — Matthew Peckham



Japanese Zeros attack Midway Island. The Pacific Campaign is a mix of island-hopping and sea battles.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Interesting Roman campaign; a few cool new units; good multiplayer/skirmish modes.

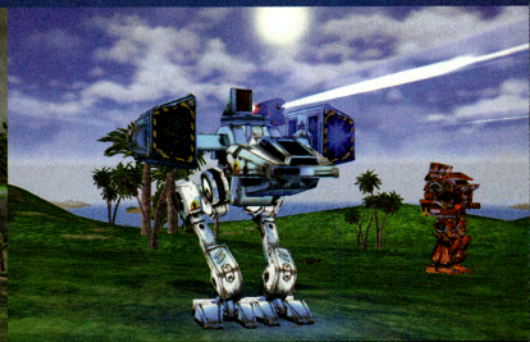
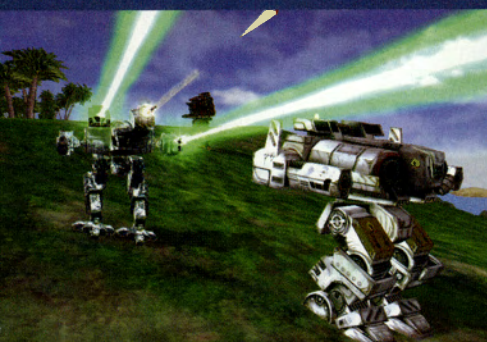
LOWS: Very little new stuff; two drab campaigns; new powers are available only in multiplayer.

BOTTOM LINE: *EE* fans will like the Roman missions, but this add-on's a bit undercooked.

PC GAMER 51%
MERELY OKAY



MISSIONS +490% VIOLENCE +430.5% DEATHS +150% FAME +95.2% EGO +
+20% GREED +150% ENEMIES -95% DESTRUCTION +320% WEAPONS +200%



MAKE A KILLING.

WELCOME TO THE BUSINESS OF DESTRUCTION. VIOLENCE IS ON THE RISE. NOW YOU CAN HIRE AND COMMAND YOUR OWN TEAM OF UP TO 8 MECHS TO CRUSH YOUR ENEMIES AND GAIN NOTORIETY. WITH OVER 50 DIFFERENT MISSIONS AND 10 NEW MECHS TO CHOOSE FROM, YOU'LL RAKE IN THE CASH TO BUY SERIOUS UPGRADES, MEANER WEAPONS AND WIDESPREAD PANIC. WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T MIX BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE?

MECHWARRIOR MERCENARIES

WWW.MICROSOFT.COM/GAMES/MW4MERC/

©2002 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, FASA Studios, MechWarrior, and the Microsoft Game Studios logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association.



Violence
Blood

ENTER THE TRAILER PARK SWEEPSTAKES AT WWW.JALECO.COM

Trailer Park Tycoon™

Y'all comin'
over to the party?



You're in charge of your own double wide empire with Trailer Park Tycoon. Your new neighbors are a bunch of crazy characters like fishing guy, gothic girl and mullet dude. And they're all looking for a cheap and easy place to live. Dodge tornados and alien abductions as you create the perfect setting for your new tenants. Build a laundromat, open a shooting range or plant some pink flamingos in the front yard - it's all up to you. Soon you'll be kickin' back in your barcalounger downing cold ones and collecting cash.



© 2002 Jaleco Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Jaleco Entertainment, Jaleco Entertainment logo and Trailer Park Tycoon and the Trailer Park Tycoon logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Jaleco Entertainment Inc. in the United States and other countries.



Incoming Forces

Rage's seminal space shooter returns — minus the original's "originality"

Back in 1998, *Incoming* offered a glimpse into a future in which accelerated 3D graphics would redefine PC games. While not particularly taxing on the gray matter, it did serve as a wonderful technological showcase for the era's formative accelerator cards.

VITAL STATS

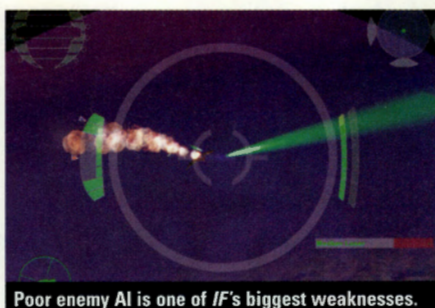
CATEGORY Flight combat
ESRB RATING T
DEVELOPER Rage Software
PUBLISHER Hip Interactive
REQUIRED PIII 550, 128MB RAM, 350MB HD, 16MB 3D card
WE RECOMMEND P4 1GHz, 256MB RAM, 64MB 3D card
MAXIMUM PLAYERS 8

Its sequel, *Incoming Forces*, boasts some extremely attractive scenery and lighting/particle effects, but it's not at the sharp end of the visual curve.

Without the graphical one-upmanship of its predecessor, it can be measured only by its gameplay value — and in this regard, it's spectacularly average.

IF puts you behind the controls of several fighter aircraft and land-based weapons platforms such as hover-tanks and fixed turret emplacements. It's 20 years after the first game, and you're now on the side of the alien Kaiyodo race, fighting an unprovoked attack on your system's homeworlds by some Nazi-like human invaders.

The game's linear campaign hosts 16 missions, each split into a series of linked tasks that you must execute successfully to advance. Among these sub-missions are aircraft escorts, aerial attacks on enemy installations, and the downing of enemy fighter waves with a fixed laser turret. Should your current craft take too much damage, you



Poor enemy AI is one of *IF*'s biggest weaknesses.

can hop from one allied fighter or tank to another with a single keypress.

The keyboard-and-mouse control scheme works for the flight segments, but it can be truly awkward for maneuvering ground vehicles, and the joystick option is so horribly counter-intuitive that it exacerbates the problem. Several cool external chase views are available, but the absence of a targeting HUD makes them redundant in the heat of battle.

Incoming Forces is definitely a quantity-over-quality kind of game. Even at the highest of three difficulty levels, AI foes mostly just swarm around your aircraft like mindless practice drones. This pyrotechnic orgy probably offers up more explosions per minute than any other game of its type, but that's about all it offers. — Andy Mahood



The fixed laser turret is lethally effective against enemy fighters.

<http://www.pcgamer.com>

ENTER
THE
Trailer Park Tycoon
KING OF THE
PARK
SWEEPSTAKES



WIN
THE
ULTIMATE
TYCOON
THRONE!

TO ENTER GO TO
WWW.JALECO.COM



Rules and
restrictions apply

jaleco
ENTERTAINMENT

Links 2003

All the beauty, plus a realistic mouse-swing...*Links* is golfing nirvana

When you think about great sports simulations on the PC, your mind dutifully dredges up nods to EA. But no game re-creates a sport with greater verisimilitude than *Links 2003*, a near-perfect sim.

The *Links* series is often described as "postcard-perfect," and this edition delivers the same kind of visual splendor. The main

VITAL STATS

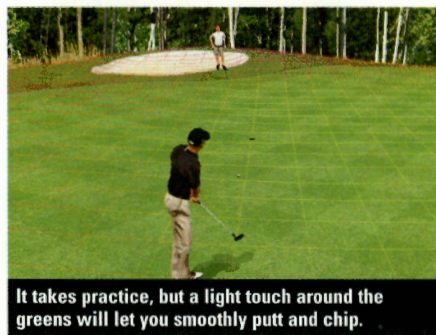
CATEGORY Sports
ESRB RATING E
DEVELOPER Microsoft
PUBLISHER Microsoft
REQUIRED PIII 400, 64MB RAM (128MB RAM with Win XP), 16MB 3D card, 56K modem for Internet play
WE RECOMMEND PIII 1GHz/ Athlon XP, 128MB RAM, broadband connection
MAXIMUM PLAYERS 64

graphical addition — which happens also to be the main gameplay addition — is a 3D-rendered golfer, which allows for a real-time mouse-swing.

The beauty of the six brand-new real-world golf courses is unimpeachable: everything looks amazing,

from the finely detailed trees to the desert sweeps of the southwestern courses. Every elevation change, every stretch of water, every stupid little ball-washer is a gorgeous sight. Sometimes you just need to stand at a tee box and marvel at the scene in front of you.

But the mouse-swing is the real innovation. Now, to put this development in proper perspective, let me remind you that the *Links* series has been two- and three-clicking its way through swings for over a decade now. Folks like me who have



It takes practice, but a light touch around the greens will let you smoothly putt and chip.

been with the franchise for most of that ride have become very attached to our click-swings. I've mastered the three-click technique myself — I've been smugly shooting par for years.

Now it's all changed.

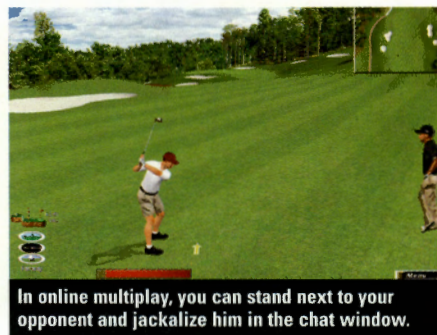
My initial distrust of the mouse-swinging is past, and I agree with all the people who ever said "Once you try mouse-swinging, you'll never go back." With a mouse-swing as natural and lifelike as the one in *Links 2003*, the series is reawakened. After just a few rounds, I learned how to groove a decent swing (but not perfectly so — one of the pleasures of the game is the occasional blown swing, resulting in an all-too-authentic flubbed shot). Chipping and putting are particularly responsive to a light touch.

Online play has long been a major appeal of this series, and this value is still

ADDING COURSES



Go to www.linkscountryclub.com for a list of sites housing user-made courses built with *Links 2003*'s Arnold Palmer Course Designer. You'll find hundreds of custom courses, many of them well-designed.



In online multiplayer, you can stand next to your opponent and jackalize him in the chat window.

resident. The *Links* Tour lets you compete with up to 63 other players in an online tournament, and if you haven't tried your hand at these tourneys, you've been missing out on some great competition. A matchmaker service helps facilitate head-to-head and foursome play, and includes Buddy List options that let you hook up with friends for an online round.

Significant graphical upgrades bring six courses to life; it's fun to see the evolution of the graphics engine at work on a course like Kauri Cliffs, a New Zealand wilderness wonderland. A new Career Mode lets you try your hand at qualifying school and earning your tour card, permitting you to play through a season schedule for cash prizes.

One potential downside: *Links 2003*'s steep price. Microsoft wants \$60 for this package, while EA's revamped *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003* will ship next month for just \$40. While the *Links* crowd is assumedly a decent-income group, given the economics of golf, this game asks more of its buyer than the EA competition (and even more so when you consider that *Links* requires a 3D card and the EA game does not).

It's going to be a close finish between *Links 2003* and *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003* (which we'll be reviewing next month — it was going gold as we went to press). Both franchises have taken big strides forward, but we can already heartily recommend *Links 2003* as a sports classic. — Dan Morris



The scenery is routinely breathtaking — especially in some of the "fantasy" fictional courses.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Splendid graphics; 3D mouse-swing system is genuinely lifelike; strong Internet play.

LOWS: Stiff \$60 price tag; not quite as satisfying as playing a real round of golf.

BOTTOM LINE: A golfer's desert-island PC game, sweetened by a great new mouse-swing.

PC GAMER 89%
EXCELLENT



Earth 2150: Lost Souls

Apocalypse Rule #666: If you can't flee a doomed planet, go whoop some ass

Lost Souls picks up where the first two acclaimed *Earth 2150* games left off, with billions of people having already evacuated Earth before its degenerating orbit leads to natural cataclysms of apocalyptic proportions. Three factions now fight to gain access to escape ships or, failing that, to take revenge on those they blame for their setbacks. Over the course of the single-player campaign, you'll command all three forces, in either the suggested order or starting with your side of choice.

One of the most attractive features of

the *Earth 2150* games is the handling of unit production: instead of churning out a set variety of units, you mix and-match chassis, weapons, shields, and armor to make customized weapons of war. Each side has unique weapon mounts — e.g., plasma guns for the United Civilized States and sonic cannons for the Lunar Corp. All weapons can be improved through research, and eventually you'll discover nuclear bombs and even the ability to launch devastating meteor showers.

A mouse-based system for tilting, rotating, and zooming makes viewing the battlefield easy. Though the graphics engine seems to be the same as in the original game, it's still got pizzazz: zoom in for a close-up during battles, and the brilliant pyrotechnic effects will give you the urge to duck for cover.



Like any complex game, *Lost Souls* has its quirks. Its "fog of war" is both annoying and anachronistic — to think commanders wouldn't know the terrain of every area on the globe 150 years from now is laughable. Plus, time actually advances bit by bit in Pause mode as you click to queue production of buildings and units — not a lot, but hell, it shouldn't advance at all.

Thankfully, the long, challenging single-player missions, full support for Internet play over Earthnet, and a built-in (albeit undocumented) mission editor more than compensate for these little glitches.

Though *Lost Souls* offers few new units or gameplay enhancements to distinguish it from *Earth 2150: The Moon Project*, it packs plenty of punch for series newbies. — Stephen Poole



Trailer Park Tycoon™

TRAILER PARK TYCOON KING OF THE PARK SWEEPSTAKES OFFICIAL RULES

No purchase necessary. You may enter by going to the website at www.jaleco.com beginning on 10/22/02 through 11:59PM (ET) 02/28/03 and submitting an on-line entry in accordance with the on-screen instructions. You may also enter by hand-printing your name and complete address on a 3" x 5" card. Mail entry in an envelope to: Trailer Park Tycoon King of The Park Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 8553, Prospect Hts. IL 60070. Entries must be postmarked by 02/28/03 and received by 03/07/03. Limit one entry per person regardless of method of entry. Multiple entries, including multiple entries by the same entrant using different email addresses, will void all entries by the entrant. In the event of a dispute regarding the identity of the person submitting an online entry, the online entry will be deemed submitted by the person in whose name the email account is registered, provided that person meets all eligibility criteria set forth in these Official Rules. Jaleco Entertainment ("Sponsor") assumes no responsibility for computer system, hardware, software or program malfunctions or for other errors, failures, or delays in computer transmissions or network connections that are human or technical in nature, or for lost, late, illegible, incomplete, damaged, postage-due or misdirected entries or mail. All entries become the property of the Sponsor and none will be returned. If, in Sponsor's opinion, there is any suspected or actual evidence of tampering with any portion of the sweepstakes, or if technical difficulties compromise the integrity of the promotion, Sponsor reserves the right to suspend, modify or terminate the sweepstakes and conduct a random drawing to award the prizes using all entries received as of the date of action taken by Sponsor. DRAWING: Winners will be selected in a random drawing on or about 03/12/03 by an independent judging organization whose decisions will be final on all matters relating to this sweepstakes. ELIGIBILITY: Sweepstakes open to legal residents of the fifty (50) United States and the District of Columbia, 18 years of age or older, except employees of Jaleco Entertainment, its respective affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising, sales promotion and judging agencies and the immediate families and household members of each. PRIZES: One (1) Grand Prize: a King of The Park Prize Pack, including one (1) La-Z-Boy Recliner, one (1) 32" Television, one (1) Electric Bug Zapper, one (1) 12' Inflatable Pool and Six (6) Plastic Pink Flamingos. Approximate retail value ("ARV"): \$2,980.00. Twenty five (25) First Prizes: a Trailer Park Tycoon PC game. ARV: \$50.00, each. Total ARV: \$4,230.00. Limit one prize per household.

GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS: Potential winners will be notified by mail. Grand Prize winner will be required to execute and return an Affidavit of Eligibility and Liability/ Publicity Release within 21 days of attempted delivery of notification. Failure to comply may result in disqualification and award of prize to alternate winner. Odds of winning depend on the total number of eligible entries received from all methods combined. Prizes will be awarded, provided they are properly claimed. By entering, entrants agree to abide by and be bound by these rules and the judges' decisions. Prizes are non-transferable. No cash redemptions or substitutions permitted, except by Sponsor, who may substitute a prize of equal or greater value if the featured prize becomes unavailable. All taxes on prizes are winners' sole responsibility. By accepting prizes, winners agree that neither Jaleco Entertainment, its respective affiliates, subsidiaries, and/or any of their respective shareholders, directors, officers, distributors, employees or agencies will have any liability whatsoever for any injuries, losses, harm, damage, cost, or expense arising from or in connection with participation in this promotion or any prize related activities or the acceptance, possession, use and/or misuse of prize including, without limitation, any personal injury or property damage. Acceptance of prize further constitutes winner's consent that the Sponsor may use winner's name, likeness and/or prize and biographical information worldwide without limitation for advertising or promotional purposes without further compensation, except where prohibited. All Federal, State, and Local laws and regulations apply. Void where prohibited. WINNER'S LIST: For a list of winners, available after 03/12/03 send a self-addressed, stamped envelope before 04/01/03 to: King of The Park Winners, P.O. Box 8419, Dept TK, Prospect Hts. IL 60070. Sponsor: Jaleco Entertainment, 119 W. Tupper St., Buffalo, NY 14202





\$29.99
at **EBGAMES®**

The Elder Scrolls III
TRIBUNAL™

Official Expansion to
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind™

The exciting expansion to Morrowind.
Winner of more than 40 awards:



Bethesda™
SOFTWARE
a ZeniMax Media company



Call 1-800-800-5166 For the store nearest you or 1-800-800-0032 to place your order now!

*Scenario available when Age of Mythology releases. Limited quantities available. While supplies last. See sales associate for details. Prices, offers, and selection may vary by store and in Canada.

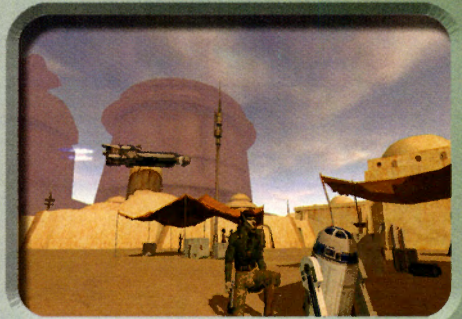
electronics boutique®

EBGAMES™

LUCASARTS ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY PRESENTS

STAR WARS GALAXIES™

AN
EMPIRE DIVIDED



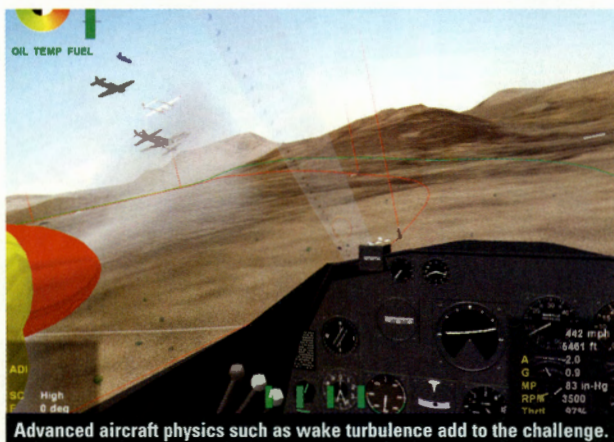
VISIT US AT WWW.EBGAMES.COM

Xtreme Air Racing



The developers have thrown in a number of unconventional planes, including this Japanese J7W1 Shinden. If you're going to race planes, it helps to have kamikaze spirit.

CATEGORY Flight sim ESRB E DEVELOPER Victory Simulations PUBLISHER Outerbound Games REQUIRED PIII 600, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card WE RECOMMEND PIII 800, 256MB RAM, joystick MAX. PLAYERS 8



This flight/racing hybrid offers fun for flight-sim and race-sim fans alike. Inspired by the popular Reno Air Races that take place in the high desert of Nevada each September, *Xtreme Air Racing* straps you into the cockpit of a nitrous-burning 4,000-horsepower World War II fighter plane and then sends you skimming 50 feet off the ground in a high-speed, wingtip-to-wingtip pylon race against seven similarly modified vintage aircraft.

Originally offered as an Internet-only product by Victory Simulations in 2001, *XAR* recently found a new lease on life with publisher Outerbound Games. As a result, the sim's dated Glide- and OpenGL-based graphics are beginning to show their wrinkles. The aircraft and terrain modeling are noticeably spartan by modern standards, and this deficiency unfortunately translates into an in-game experience wherein 500mph feels

more like 50mph — a pretty critical shortcoming in a low-altitude plane-racing sim.

Lean visuals notwithstanding, *XAR* delivers a unique and compelling flying experience that should appeal to anyone who prefers a joystick over a mouse for their PC gaming kicks. You get five diverse track environments and over 20 track layouts, including the real-world Stead Airport championship course in Reno (plus fantasy locales). Over two dozen high-

horsepower prop planes — like the F4U Corsair and P-38 Lightning, and the legendary "Miss America" P-51 Mustang — have been meticulously re-created, and each is imbued with a distinctive, high-fidelity flight model.

The single-player game contains a wealth of gameplay options, including free-flight, single race, and a selection of multi-event race seasons. There's also a nifty bonus combat mode for those of you who simply must shoot at something when behind the stick. The adaptive AI pilots pose a significant challenge at all skill levels, but if you prefer human opponents, *XAR* supports up to eight players over a LAN or TCP/IP connection, as well as through GameSpy.com.

For what it lacks in graphics and development budget, *Xtreme Air Racing* more than makes up for in straight-ahead aeronautic racing thrills. A few hours with this very original sim, and you'll be a better pilot and a better racer. — Andy Mahood



Michael Schumacher Racing World Kart 2002

CATEGORY Racing ESRB E DEVELOPER Terratools PUBLISHER JoWood REQUIRED PIII 450, 64MB RAM, 16MB 3D card WE RECOMMEND PIII 800, 256MB RAM, 32MB 3D card, joystick/wheel MAX. PLAYERS 1

Slapping the name and likeness of Grand Prix racing's most recognizable driver onto a PC game is certainly no guarantee of World Championship quality. This kart racer's a case in point: though it looks gorgeous and is entertaining to play at times, it's conspicuously underpowered in three critical areas: physics, AI, and gameplay depth.

This German import tries to capture the kart-sprinting class that launched Schumacher's early racing career. If sparkling visuals and inventive track layouts are all you seek in a PC racer, then the game does a pretty serviceable job. Sixteen largely fictional indoor and outdoor circuits are set in various locales throughout the world, each with lavish background scenery and some splendid lighting and texturing effects. Unfortunately, once you get past all the pretty pictures, the game goes downhill very quickly.

Three karting classes are represented, from the slow and steady four-stroke "Fun" class to the high-revving two-stroke ICA and FSA classes. But the relationship between rubber and road is awfully damned arbitrary, and little effort has been made to approximate real kart-racing physics. The



vehicles remain pinned to the track as though on rails, with some momentum-killing slide effects tossed in to remind you to lift occasionally for the corners. There's no damage modeling or setup options of any kind, and the collision detection is so poor that even glancing contact between karts will usually slow both machines to an immediate crawl.

Other deal-breakers include the absence of a replay screen, robotic AI drivers who drive pre-programmed lines without any regard for where you are on the track, and a surprisingly transitory single-player experience (I unlocked everything the game had to



offer in a single afternoon). With no multi-player options to fall back on — even the promised Internet ranking competition yielded nothing but a broken link — there's really precious little to keep you coming back.

Ah, what the hell: Schumacher already makes over \$50 million a year at Ferrari, so it's a safe bet that he probably doesn't need your money anyway. — Andy Mahood



ULTIMATE TRAINZ... COLLECTION

The Ultimate Trainz Collection includes 2 CDs full of dynamic railroad action that lets create your own landscape, collect and customize your locos, and control as many trains as you and your PC can handle.

This package includes:

Ultimate Trainz – Create your own unique 3D environments with realistic graphics and sounds. Choose from your collection of hundreds of locomotives and cars and then hop in the cab to control the railroad you've just built.

TrainzScript – Script or choose from numerous scenarios or activities such as passenger runs, shunting yard exercises, heavy freight operations and more.

Gmax™ v 1.1 – Build any dynamic 3D objects you can imagine to add to your landscape and your collection of rolling stock and locos.

Trainz Paint Shed – An easy-to-use set of templates lets you paint and customize your trains with your choice of color schemes, logos and motifs or redecorate existing railroad stock.

Loads of new content – Over 150 individual rail vehicles: locomotives, freight cars, and passenger cars. – Over 1000 scenery objects and trackside accessories. – Maps and routes from North America, Europe and Australia.

And there is more... use the Trainz Download Station to quickly access thousands of free items from the Trainz community web site, with more being added daily. (www.virtualtrainz.com)



gmax® www.strategyfirst.com

©2002 Strategy First Inc. All rights reserved. Ultimate Trainz Collection is a trademark of Auran Pty Ltd. All other trademarks and copyrights are the properties of their respective owners.



Visit www.esrb.org or
call 1-800-771-3772
for Rating Information.

Unreal Tournament 2003

If you're going to buy only one *Unreal Tournament* in 2003, then get this one

It's time to upgrade. Unless you've got an overclocked P4 3.6GHz packed inside a mini-igloo flooded with liquid nitrogen and a currently nonexistent GeForce5, running *Unreal Tournament 2003* at its higher settings will bring your system to its knees.

To be sure, *UT 2003* looks effin' amazing. Using the up-to-now newest version of the vaunted *Unreal* engine (still pre-*Unreal II* in

beauty, mind you), this is the best-looking shooter you'll play until *Doom III* rears its rotting zombie head. And still, even with the much higher polygon counts, enhanced lighting effects, realistic bump-mapped texturing, and advanced particle system, *UT 2003*

doesn't look that much better than *Unreal Tournament*. Not "sell your soul for a new Alienware" better, anyway.

As the name implies, this 2003 edition of *Unreal Tournament* is less a sequel than a refinement. Though it's added an obligatory nod to squad-based gameplay, death-



In Bombing Run, your goal is to score points by running a bomb into your opponent's home base.



You can tell which side a character is on by the color of their shoulder-light. (I'm blue and he's red.)

match is what it's all about — thundering weapon blasts, outrageous verbal taunts, and torsos ripped in half by flak-cannon shards, all accompanied by a booming play-by-play as performed by an overbearing Mr. Moviephone.

And like *Madden 2003* or *NHL 2003*, the *UT 2003* moniker means something else: *Unreal Tournament* is now being treated like a full-fledged sport. After setting up a character and playing a few qualification deathmatch rounds designed to test your readiness, the single-player game lets you draft bot-mates from a roster of free agents

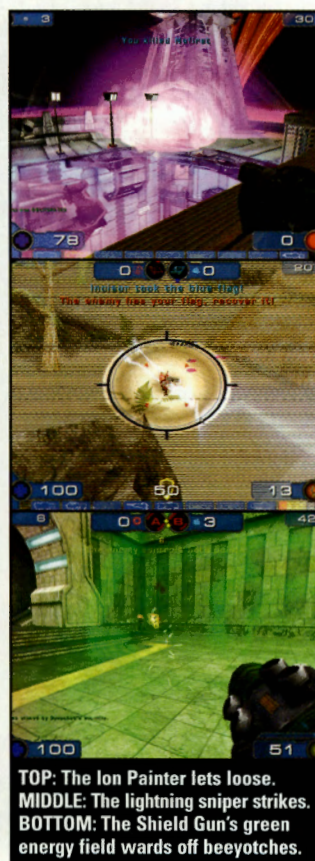
before entering the main tournament. (It comes with 30 maps in all.)

Picks are based on the stats of accuracy, aggression, agility, and team tactics, as well as a bot's preferred weapon. As you ascend the ladders of Team Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Double Domination, and a new combat mode similar to soccer called Bombing Run, you'll have the opportunity to swap team members for newly available free agents.

Unfortunately, that's as far as the sports analogy goes. Original plans called for a salary-cap system and even squad formations, but they were scaled back in favor of



UT's rocket launcher has changed very little in the far-flung future of 2003. The particle and lighting effects are cooler, though.



TOP: The Ion Painter lets loose. MIDDLE: The lightning sniper strikes. BOTTOM: The Shield Gun's green energy field wards off beeyotchies.

more conventional game mechanics. Hopefully the sports angle will be advanced further in the next iteration of *UT*; right now, it's a slight innovation that borders on novelty.

Don't get me wrong — *UT 2003* is fun. In fact, it's the most fun I've had with an FPS since *Quake III* came out. There's a good reason for that — and one that may not please devotees of the original: *UT 2003* is more like *Quake III* than the original *UT*. It's faster and more bombastic, and though you'll still find low-gravity levels, more time is spent running and gunning firmly on the ground. (The exception being the newly added "double jump" that lets you perform a second jump at the apex of the first, and a few John Woo-style dodge tricks. Yes, they're unrealistic...but they work.)

AI and level design have been similarly enhanced. Bots are smarter than ever before, running away or camping depending on their "personality." And the levels are far more diverse than in any *Quake* game: Sometimes you'll blast through dark, claustrophobic corridors; other times, you'll stalk expansive Egyptian-themed outdoor areas; and still other maps are dominated by rolling hills of lush greenery.

Further new enhancements are "combos" that can be activated after gaining 100 points of adrenaline — either from collecting red-and-white capsules or from killing opponents — and then tapping the appropriate button combination (see "Adrenaline Rush" below). Emphasizing skill over the being-in-the-right-place-at-the-right-time nature of powerups, adrenaline is a welcome addition to the game. Of course, you'll still run across familiar powerups like health, armor, and double-damage.

For some reason — my guess is to keep the sports analogy going — the popular Assault mode from the first game has been dropped, as has Last Man Standing. The new addition, Bombing Run, is a blast to play, and I wholeheartedly approve of its inclusion, but it just seems like the only reason to leave out Assault this round is so Infogrames can put it in the *UT 2003 Platinum GOTY Collector's Box* when it inevitably shows up next year.

On the whole, weapon selection is an improvement. Gone are *UT*'s little-used Ripper and Impact Hammer; newbies include the Shield Gun (self-explanatory), the Link Gun (a takeoff on the pulse gun that lets you "link" energy with teammates



Is this *UT 2003* or *Asheron's Call 2*? With the lush greenery in this CTF map, it's hard to tell the difference.



Lava? Check. Skulls? Check. Chicks in skimpy armor shooting big guns? Check. Is it *Quake III*? Noooo....



A razor-sharp flak-cannon shrapnel discharge at close range will neuter this "Bulldog."

for a more powerful burst), the Lightning Gun (which acts as a sniper rifle in secondary fire), and the awesome Ion Painter, a weapon that nearly matches the Redeemer in destructive firepower by calling down a strike from an orbiting ion cannon.

The multiplayer interface is virtually the same, easily letting you find LAN or Internet matches in whichever game mode you desire. *UT 2003* comes with 12 "mutators," or gameplay mods. Some, like Vampire (leeching health from slain opponents), impact your strategy; others, like BigHead (the better your score, the bigger your head grows), are just for fun.

And finally, for the few of you who own them, *UT 2003* supports force-feedback mice. Now, don't laugh — I found that using one enhanced the fun without detracting from the play experience. You'll feel a slight shudder from weapon recoil and a more obvious buzz when running over pick-ups, but nothing so obtrusive as to throw off your aim.

I'd say Epic's aim was pretty damn accurate, too. In short, *UT 2003* aims at doing one thing, and succeeds remarkably well at it: It's the best damned *Unreal Tournament* on the market...at least until *UT 200X* rolls around. — Chuck Osborn

ADRENALINE RUSH



NOT SURE WHAT TO DO when your adrenaline hits 100? Use these combos until adrenaline runs out.

Speed: Tap forward, forward, forward, forward for a running boost.

Regeneration: Tap back, back, back, back to slowly begin regaining your health. You can get as much as 200 points worth.

Invisibility: Tap right, right, left, left to turn invisible to other players. (All they'll see is a shimmering disturbance.)

Berserk: Tap forward, forward, back, back for a faster firing rate.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Outstanding graphics; fast-paced gameplay; innovative "sports" system; level editor; adds combos.

LOWS: Very steep system requirements; no Assault mode; free-agent bot system is shallow.

BOTTOM LINE: Gorgeous gib-filled excitement for deathmatch players with beefy systems.

PC GAMER **88%**
EXCELLENT

Batman: Vengeance



Bat-Klepto? Like a magpie, Batman loves shiny objects. The sad truth is that Batsy can't resist glittering baubles, so if you run off the road, don't wear anything sparkly.

CATEGORY Action/adventure ESRB T DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER Ubi Soft REQUIRED PII 450, 128MB RAM, 7MB HD WE RECOMMEND PIII 650, 256MB RAM, 549MB HD, gamepad MAXIMUM PLAYERS 1



Guess the old saying "Never hit a woman" doesn't apply to superheroes.

There hasn't been a real Batman game for the PC (read: non-kiddie) since 1995's *Batman Forever* (aka "guano"). *Batman: Vengeance* won't prompt a Batrenaissance anytime soon, but at least the PC port — following a whirlwind tour of the console market — earns faint praise for being the best-looking, best-playing version of the lot.

A third-person action/adventure game, *Vengeance* is based on *Batman: The*

Animated Series — a bold art-deco universe wherein square-jawed Bats & Co. are mildly violent enough to earn a Teen rating. The Joker (voiced by the series' own Mark Hamill) is back and maniacally pseudo-evil, yet falls to his "death" amid a sky-high Bat/Clown showdown. The aftermath finds Batman and the not-yet-in-a-wheelchair-but-still-unplayable Batgirl investigating a mysterious crime wave perpetrated by Mr. Freeze and Poison Ivy.

Visually, *Vengeance* excels, especially at the highest resolution and with anti-aliasing enabled. It's a testament to the game's smooth 3D cartoon-quality graphics that in-game sequences look superior to the fuzzy low-res pre-rendered cut-scenes, though as is usual with these types of games, camera control can be nightmarish. (For example, re-centering your camera to look over Batman's shoulder

requires you to jump in and out of first-person sniper mode.)

The game's controls are probably what inspired the name "vengeance." You can play with a keyboard/mouse or a gamepad; I found it easiest to switch between a gamepad for the third-person platform action and a mouse for precision first-person freelooking. Still, even at its best, button response is a hair off, resulting in unexpected falls from ledges and inescapable bashings by beefy clowns.

Vengeance is also stiffly linear: you can Bat-grapple up only at predetermined points, and the sole outlet for your "world's greatest detective" skills is solving simple color-matching puzzles.

A couple of driving and flying sequences break up the action, but they're exercises in pure frustration — included, I suspect, solely to make the game feel longer than it is. And unlike Activision's similar, but superior, *Spider-Man* titles, the replay value is small.

— Chuck Osborn



Casino Empire

CATEGORY Simulation ESRB T DEVELOPER Sierra PUBLISHER Vivendi REQUIRED PII 300, 64MB RAM, 600MB HD WE RECOMMEND PIII 1GHz, 128MB RAM MAXIMUM PLAYERS 1



The ability to play your own MP3s makes the casino a hoppin' joint.

Wannabe high-rollers should take a chance on Sierra's new sin-city simulation, *Casino Empire*. While the concept is anything but original, the game is polished and enjoyable.

The goal of the story mode is to build and maintain casinos in Las Vegas, each with a distinct look and a unique set of missions. You set up games (blackjack,

slots, craps tables), line the rooms with services (cashiers, security offices, and washrooms), hire staff to keep things safe and clean, and work with the hotel to generate more business. Later in the game, the competition can get nasty, sending thugs who break machines and intimidate patrons.

Micromanagement opportunities abound: set minimum bets, tweak the "house edge" on certain games, dish out bribes and payoffs, and observe the needs of your patrons (including "hunger," "satisfaction," and "thirst"). You'll also need a watchful eye for the optional sandbox mode. When a finicky blackjack player asks, "What does a guy need to do to get a drink around here?" you'd better butter him up with a comp.

The interface is pretty well-thought-out: a clever color-coded pull-down menu iden-

tifies patrons and their needs, and updates you on the whereabouts of staff and security cameras. It can also distinguish how well each table or slot machine is doing.

Oddly, the mandatory "Level Up" button is awkwardly placed — it took me about 20 minutes to find it. Another minor beef: click on a customer who says he's got to pee like there's no tomorrow, and he doesn't even walk toward the bathroom. Ditto for a hungry local who won't set foot in the restaurant.

The graphics are quite good, with casinos that resemble real Vegas mainstays (e.g., Luxor, Excalibur); slot machines that light up and animate; and patrons who raise their hands in joy, or sob before succumbing to the dreaded ATM.

Casino Empire shows that this kind of biz sim in a casino environment can be done right. And it's fun to be the house instead of losing to it.

— Marc Saltzman



The Sims: Unleashed

Every dog has his day, and that day has finally come for *The Sims*. Get ready for some barks in the park.

It's *The Sims*' 13th expansion. Okay, so it's really the fifth — but can anyone even remember when this game wasn't on store shelves?

The Sims: Unleashed introduces pets to the virtual neighborhood of the biggest-selling PC gaming franchise of all time. EA says it's been one of the most requested features from fans, so this

expansion allows Sims to call for a bus to the "Old Town District" and pick out the perfect dog or cat for their home.

Sure, you can also purchase one of those other so-called pets like iguanas, turtles, or goldfish, but you might as well get a

pet you can play with. And if you stick to the basic game mechanics, your furry friend can be a conversation piece when strengthening relationships with other humans who drop by the house.

Once your pet is named and brought home, it becomes part of your family, so an icon of its face appears at the bottom of the screen and the pet has its own stats for hunger, energy, hygiene, comfort, and so forth. The new pet can also increase its attributes in obedience, tricks, and housebreaking (a litter box for cats, outside for dogs).

You can praise and scold pets to train them, or even hire a professional pet trainer (though that'll cost you). Think your pet is best in class? Put your mouse where your mouth is and enroll him in a Dog Show to impress judges for prizes — and then show off the trophy in a cabinet at home. Rover will make you so proud.

Along with the new home lots and expansive parks, this "old district" offers more than two dozen new areas, including shopping arcades (why not buy Fluffy a spiked cat collar?), restaurants, bars and cafés, amusement areas, and a New Orleans-esque "Gothic Quarter" complete with curio shops, a graveyard, and street-side jazz musicians. (But where are the women willing to flash for beads?)

The Sims: Unleashed also introduces another in-game digital diversion — gardening. You can visit the farmer's market to buy vegetable seeds (e.g., "Get Ahead" lettuce seeds or "Lean N Mean" green beans) and ask advice, and then go home to grow the crop in your backyard for consumption or profit. Hint: cats might help keep pests (gophers, mice) from destroying your precious horticultural



All parks are pet-friendly and give the kids some room to play. But please remember to curb your dog!



If you don't care for your pet, he may run away. See how sad this girl in the red dress is?



Dog + Raccoons + Destroyed Garden = Trouble! Just one of many disasters waiting for you.

work. On the other hand, a disobedient pet may dig up your garden, too.

Other features in *The Sims: Unleashed* include five new career paths, more than 125 new objects and people, new music, and more home-decoration furnishings thanks to the French Quarter-style theme.

I don't have many "pet" peeves when it comes to this ambitious add-on, but it would've been more fun if you had more control over the pets, perhaps with commands such as "play with ball" or "pee on hydrant." Pets are really here only to be taken care of by humans and to help with the game's main goals. (But then again, pets really don't do much other than get taken care of.)

Other minor issues include steep system requirements and some clipping problems (especially when dogs frolic together). Oh, and when you install this

expansion, you'll be prompted to install AOL 7.0. Shame on EA — as if they don't make enough money from this series as is.

But as with *Sims: Vacation* and *Sims: Hot Date*, this add-on delivers an original new theme for *Sims* fans to enjoy. It's one of the game's better expansions, and a no-brainer for pet lovers. — Marc Saltzman

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: It's a great idea that's long overdue; "Old Town District" gives you lots to do.

LOWS: Pets themselves aren't too interactive; some clipping issues; high system requirements.

BOTTOM LINE: This double-disc expansion will appeal to animal enthusiasts.

PC GAMER **78%**
GOOD

XG6000-GAMER ULTRA SE

- MSI KT4 Ultra ARU VIA KT-400 w/ ATA 133 MB
- Kingston 1024MB PC3200 400Mhz DDR
- MSI ATA 133 Raid Build-In
- Western Digital 80GB 7200 RPM 8MB Cache Special Edition
- ATI RADEON 9700 Pro 8X AGP 128MB DDR w/ TV out & DVI
- Toshiba 16X DVD-ROM & Sony 40X12X48 CD-RW Drive
- Creative Labs Sound Blaster Audigy X-Gamer 5.1 w/ 1394 IEEE
- Creative Cambridge SoundWorks Desk Top Theater 5.1 Inspire 5200 Sound System
- Creative Labs 56K V.92 Fax Modem w/ Voice
- 10/100 Network Interface Card
- 4 USB 2.0, 1 FireWire 1394 IEEE Port
- 1.44MB Floppy Drive & PS2 internet Keyboard
- Microsoft® USB Optical IntelliMouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- One Year On Site Service w/ 24/7 Techsupport
- Aluminum TurboGamer SX635 Tower Case 420Watt**

AMD Athlon™ XP 2600+ ¹	\$ 1629	XG1251
AMD Athlon™ XP 2400+ ²	\$ 1553	XG1252
AMD Athlon™ XP 2200+ ³	\$ 1515	XG1253
AMD Athlon™ XP 2000+ ⁴	\$ 1455	XG1254
AMD Athlon™ XP 1800+ ⁵	\$ 1435	XG1255



XG4000-GAMER PLATINUM XP

- MSI KT4 Ultra-2 VIA KT-400 w/ ATA 133 MB
- Kingston 512MB PC3200 400Mhz DDR Memory
- Western Digital 80GB 7200 RPM 8MB Cache Special Edition
- MSI NVIDIA Geforce-4 Ti4200 8x 128MB DDR w/ TV Out and DVI
- Toshiba 16X DVD-ROM & Sony 40X12X48 CD-RW Drive
- Creative Lab Sound Blaster Live Audigy w/ FireWire 1394 IEEE Port
- Altec Lansing 251 5.1 PC Gaming Desktop Theater Speakers System
- 56K Modem, 1.44MB Floppy, Keyboard & Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- One Year On Site Service w/ 24/7 Techsupport
- AHANIX Platinum XP Case w/ Digital Thermometer & 420 Watt Power Supply**

AMD Athlon™ XP 2600+ ¹	\$ 1175	XG1231
AMD Athlon™ XP 2400+ ²	\$ 1099	XG1232
AMD Athlon™ XP 2200+ ³	\$ 1065	XG1233
AMD Athlon™ XP 2000+ ⁴	\$ 1029	XG1234
AMD Athlon™ XP 1800+ ⁵	\$ 995	XG1235



XG2000-ELITE

- MSI KT3 Ultra-2 VIA KT-333 w/ ATA 133 MB
- 512 MB PC2700 266Mhz DDR RAM Memory
- 60GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA 100 Hard Drive
- NVIDIA Geforce-2 MX400 64MB AGP
- Sony 52X CD-ROM, 3D Wavetable Sound
- 480-Watt Subwoofer Speakers System
- 56K Modem, 1.44MB Floppy, Keyboard & Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Black X-Gamer Medium Tower Case with See Through Window and Sound Activated Neon Light 350 Watt**

AMD Athlon™ XP 2600+ ¹	\$ 785	XG1211
AMD Athlon™ XP 2400+ ²	\$ 709	XG1212
AMD Athlon™ XP 2200+ ³	\$ 669	XG1213
AMD Athlon™ XP 2000+ ⁴	\$ 609	XG1214
AMD Athlon™ XP 1800+ ⁵	\$ 599	XG1215

MONITOR UPGRADE

- AquaView 7GS.27 17" 1280x1024 (Black or White Color) \$ 129
- AquaView 9GX .25 19" 1600x1200 (Black or White Color) \$ 189
- Viewsonic E70F Perfect Flat .23H 17" 1280x1024 (Black or White Color) \$ 179
- Viewsonic E95 .22H 19" 1600x1200 (White) \$ 189
- Viewsonic E90F Perfect Flat .22H 19" 1600x1200 (Black or White Color) \$ 269

XG3000-WORKSTATION

- MSI 845PE-MAX Intel I845PE Chipset 533Mhz FSB MB
- 512MB PC2100 266Mhz DDR Memory
- 60GB 7200 RPM Ultra ATA 100 Hard Drive
- MSI NVIDIA Geforce-4 MX 440 64MB DDR w/ TV-Out
- 16X DVD-ROM & 40X12X48 CD-RW Drive
- MSI 6 Channels 5.1 Surround Sound Card
- 480-Watt Subwoofer Speakers System
- 56K Modem, 1.44MB Floppy, Keyboard & Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Black X-Gamer Medium Tower Case with See Through Window and Sound Activated Neon Light 350 Watt**

Intel® Pentium® 4	2.8Ghz	\$ 1035	XG1221
Intel® Pentium® 4	2.6Ghz	\$ 935	XG1222
Intel® Pentium® 4	2.53Ghz	\$ 865	XG1223
Intel® Pentium® 4	2.4Ghz	\$ 815	XG1224
Intel® Pentium® 4	2.0Ghz	\$ 779	XG1225
Intel® Pentium® 4	1.8Ghz	\$ 759	XG1226



* Price subject to change without notice.

XG9000-GAMER DIGITAL PRO

- Intel® D850EMV-2 Pettium® 4 533 FSB Motherboard
- Kingston 512MB PC1066 Rambus Memory
- Western Digital 80GB 7200 RPM 8MB Cache Special Edition
- NVIDIA Geforce-4 Ti4600 128MB DDR w/ TV out & DVI
- Sony 40X12X48CD-RW Drive
- Toshiba 16X DVD-ROM
- Creative Labs Sound Blaster Audigy X-Gamer 5.1 w/ 1394 IEEE
- Creative Cambridge SoundWorks Desk Top Theater 5.1 INSPIRE 5200 Sound System
- Creative Labs 56K V.92 Fax Modem w/ Voice
- 10/100 Network Interface Card
- 1.44 MB Floppy Drive & PS2 internet Keyboard
- Microsoft® USB Optical IntelliMouse
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- One Year On Site Service w/ 24/7 Techsupport
- All Aluminum Kingwin KT436 Tower Case 420Watt w/ 3 See Through Windows & Sound Activated Neon Light**

Intel® Pentium® 4	2.8Ghz 533FSB	\$ 1649	XG1241
Intel® Pentium® 4	2.6Ghz 533FSB	\$ 1545	XG1242
Intel® Pentium® 4	2.53Ghz 533FSB	\$ 1479	XG1243
Intel® Pentium® 4	2.4Ghz 533FSB	\$ 1425	XG1244
Intel® Pentium® 4	2.0Ghz 533FSB	\$ 1395	XG1245

- Quantispeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 2.60GHz processor, Quantispeed™ architecture operates at 2.13GHz.
- Quantispeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 2.60GHz processor, Quantispeed™ architecture operates at 2.00GHz.
- Quantispeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 2.20GHz processor, Quantispeed™ architecture operates at 1.80GHz.
- Quantispeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 2.00GHz processor, Quantispeed™ architecture operates at 1.60GHz.
- Quantispeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.80GHz processor, Quantispeed™ architecture operates at 1.533GHz.



TOLL FREE 1-888-937-5580

ABS™ Diablo X3

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 2.53GHz with 533FSB
Blue Kingwin Aluminum Case w/Acrylic Windows & Neon Light
Enermax 330-Watt Power Supply
Asus P4T533 Intel 850E Chipset Motherboard w/533FSB & USB 2.0
Samsung 512MB 1066MHz RAMBUS Memory
Western Digital 100GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive w/8MB Cache
Pioneer 16X DVD Player & Mitsumi 1.44MB Floppy Drive
48X12X48 SMART-BURN® CD-ReWritable Drive
ATi Radeon 9700 Pro 128MB DDR 8X AGP Video Card
Creative Labs SoundBlaster Audigy Sound Card & Mic
3Com PCI 10/100 Network Card & USRV.90 PCI 56K Modem
Microsoft Internet Keyboard & Optical Mouse
Microsoft Windows® XP Home Edition
Free 7/24 Tech Support and 1 Year Onsite Service
Free ABS™ PC Organizer (3" Color Binder for Manual, Drivers, etc.)

\$1749

ABS™ Diablo X5

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 2.80GHz with 533FSB
Black Kingwin Aluminum ATX Case w/3 Windows (Picture Shown)
Enermax 550-Watt Power Supply
Asus P4T533 Intel 850E Chipset Motherboard w/533FSB & USB 2.0
Samsung 512MB 1066MHz RAMBUS Memory
Two 80GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA 133 Hard Drives
Lite-On 16X DVD Player & Mitsumi 1.44MB Floppy Drive
Plextor 48X12X48 CD-ReWritable Drive
NVIDIA® GeForce™4 Ti 4600 w/128MB Video Card
Creative Labs SoundBlaster Audigy XGamer Sound Card w/IEEE 1394
Integrated Intel Network Controller
Black Multimedia Keyboard & Optical Mouse
Microsoft Windows® XP Professional
Free 7/24 Tech Support and 1 Year Onsite Service
Free ABS™ PC Organizer (3" Color Binder for Manual, Drivers, etc.)

\$2459

NEC Monitors

Viewsonic 19" P95F+	White	\$289.00
SONY 21" CPD-G520P	White	\$639.00
NEC 22" FE2111SB	Black	\$609.00

KLIPSCH Speakers

Klipsch ProMedia 2.1 THX-Certified 200W	\$179.00
Klipsch ProMedia 5.1 THX-Certified 500W	\$349.00

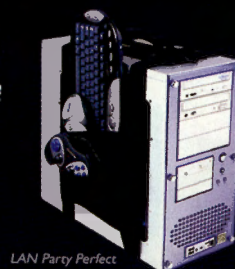
Gamepad & Harness

Guillemot THRUSTMASTER Fire Storm	
dual Power Gamepad	\$ 30.00
Gear Grip-Pro Computer Harness	\$ 34.00



ABS™ Diablo PCs with the
Intel® Pentium® 4 processor

ULTIMATE GAMING MACHINE



LAN Party Perfect

ABS™ PCs use genuine Microsoft® Windows®
www.microsoft.com/piracy/howtotell
ABS™ recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP



3 Years limited parts and lifetime labor warranty. 30 days money back guarantee. Optional 24 hours technical support. Picture shown with upgrade options.
Original shipping and handling fee along with return shipping charge are non-refundable.

Products returned after 30 days or in a non-refundable condition are subject to a restocking fee. Intel, Intel Inside, and Pentium are trademarks
or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries

ABS™ Diablo M2



AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2600+ with QuantiSpeed™ architecture
outperforms competitive 2.4GHz processors
Chieftec Aluminum Case w/Acrylic Windows 400-Watt PS & Neon Light
(Color Option: Green/Yellow/Blue/Silver/Black)
NVIDIA® nForce™2 DDR400 8X AGP Motherboard w/Dual LAN
Kingston 512MB Fast PC3200 400MHz DDR SDRAM Memory
(Upgraded Memory, Motherboard and Processor)
Two 60GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA Hard Drives
Pioneer 16X DVD Player & Mitsumi 1.44MB Floppy Drive
Plextor 48X12X48 BURN-Proof™ CD-ReWritable Drive
NVIDIA® GeForce™4 Ti 4600 w/128MB Video Card
NEC 19" .22mm 1600X1200 Color Monitor
Creative SoundBlaster Audigy XGamer Sound Card w/IEEE 1394 & Mic
Creative Inspire 5.1 5200 Subwoofer/Speakers
Integrated Network Controller & V.92 PCI 56K Modem
Logitech Cordless Elite Duo Keyboard and Mouse
Microsoft Windows® XP Home Edition
Free 7/24 Tech Support and 1 Year Onsite Service
Free ABS™ PC Organizer (3" Color Binder for Manual, Drivers, etc.)

\$1819

**EXTREME
PERFORMANCE**
FOR WINDOWS® XP

Make gaming opponents wish they had an
AMD Athlon™ XP processor

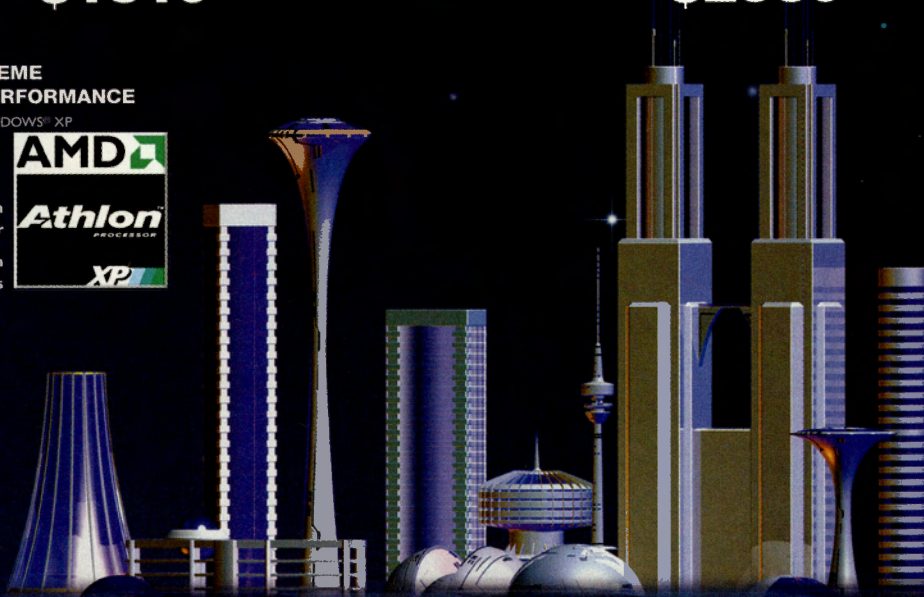
Enjoy efficient multitasking when
using multiple peripherals



ABS™ Diablo M5

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2800+ with QuantiSpeed™ architecture
outperforms competitive 2.8GHz processors
Chieftec Aluminum Case w/Acrylic Windows 400-Watt PS & Neon Light
(Color option: Green/Yellow/Blue/Silver/Black)
MSI KT4 Ultra Socket A (462) VIA KT400 8X AGP Motherboard w/LAN
Corsair 512MB Fast PC3200 400MHz DDR SDRAM Memory
Two 80GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA Hard Drive
Pioneer 16X DVD Player & Mitsumi 1.44MB Floppy Drive
Plextor 48X12X48 BURN-Proof™ CD-ReWritable Drive
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 128MB DDR 8X AGP Video Card
Viewsonic 22" .25mm 2048X1536 Color Monitor
Creative Labs SoundBlaster Audigy Gamer Sound Card w/IEEE 1394 & Mic
Klipsch ProMedia 5.1 THX Subwoofer/Speakers
PCI 10/100 Network Controller
Logitech Cordless Elite Duo Keyboard & Mouse
Microsoft Windows® XP Home Edition
Free 7/24 Tech Support and 1 Year Onsite Service
Free Software: Corel WordPerfect Office 2002 CD
Free ABS™ PC Organizer (3" Color Binder for Manual, Drivers, etc.)

\$2589



877.852.0797

Please use full URL to get latest prices and special promotions.
www.abspc.com/pg01

Sales Hours: Mon-Fri 8:30AM-5:30PM PST Technical Support: Mon-Fri 8:30AM-5:30PM PST
Technical Support: 800-685-3471 General Office: 562-695-8823 9997 East Rose Hills Road, Whittier, CA 90601

Price, specification, and terms are subject to change without notice. Illustrations may not accurately represent exact configurations priced. ABS™ is not responsible for errors in typographic and/or photography. 30-day money back guarantee does not include opened software, parts, or special order merchandise. Original shipping and handling fee along with return shipping charge are non-refundable. Products returned after 30 days or in a non-refundable condition are subject to a restocking fee. Onsite service may be provided by contracted third party provider. Technician will be dispatched if necessary following phone support. AMD, the AMD Arrow logo, AMD Athlon, AMD Duron, and combinations thereof are trademarks of Advanced Micro Devices, Inc. *QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 2.25GHz. **QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 2.133GHz. ***QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 2.0GHz.

hardstuff

THE ULTIMATE MONTHLY GUIDE TO GAMING GEAR

A GREAT WHITE SHARK NAMED ROSIE



ONCE UPON A TIME, I lived in Santa Cruz, California — a beach town. I surfed only rarely; usually I body-surfed and boogie-boarded. At some point, the verb “to boogie-board” must have started sounding lame to all you paint-huffing kids, because I hear it’s now called “body-boarding.” Whatever. You guys aren’t even remotely as rad as I used to be back when I had a great ass and no man-boobs.

Anyway, it was during my teenage years that I was out in the water the most. As any body-boarding, body-surfing, surfing, old balding boogie-boarder will tell you, most of your time in the ocean is spent *waiting* for waves rather than *catching* them. For the most part, you’re just sitting there, feet dangling in the water, waiting for a Great White shark named Rosie to bite you in half and spill your bloody, Taco Bell–filled intestines into the briny deep. Cool, huh? Yeah, I thought so, and that’s why I stopped going in the ocean. (I mean, I didn’t stop “going” in the ocean — I still peed in it whenever I had to.)

Yup, that whole shark realization thing really changed my life. Changed it all around. Changed. All different. Yup. Whew! Diiiiii-frent. Indeed...Hey, heaven forbid one of you guys out there would ever run out of steam mid-story. You, with your silly anecdotes about that time you passed a note to Sally in history class and Mr. Jones was like “Hey! That’s not appropriate in-class behavior!” and you were like “Yeah, whatever, Mr. JONES!” and he was like “Get to the principal’s office!” and you were like “BAM! It’s TheVede!” and then all the guys in class kinda giggled, but the teacher and all the girls in class totally didn’t get it and then you were suspended. Yup, that’s what boogie-boarding meant to me.

“TheVede”

Greg Vederman,
Senior Editor

PRODUCT TYPE



Every hardware review now includes a chart that lets you know if a product is meant to be used with an Entry-level, Mid-range, or Dream-class computer, or if the product itself falls into one of these three categories.

hstrinity

Building a new PC can be a thrilling experience, but picking the wrong parts by mistake can end the joyride in a hurry. Luckily, we’re here to help you select the best parts for the job. The prices listed below (obtained almost entirely from www.pricewatch.com) are the lowest we could find as we went to press. (Note: Prices do not include shipping costs.)

■ ENTRY-LEVEL SYSTEM

ROUGHLY \$750

CASE	
300-watt ATX form factor	\$50
PROCESSOR	
AMD Duron 1.3GHz	\$39
MOTHERBOARD	
Asus A7V-133	\$80
MEMORY	
256MB PC-133 SDRAM	\$24
CD-ROM/DVD-ROM DRIVE	
Pioneer 16x DVD-ROM	\$60
FLOPPY DRIVE	
Samsung 3.5-inch 1.44MB	\$8
HARD DRIVE	
40GB Maxtor 7,200rpm	\$68
SOUND CARD	
Creative Labs Audigy (white box)	\$59
MODEM	
3COM #2976 56K v.90 Hardware Modem	\$45
MONITOR	
17-inch Optique Q71	\$130
VIDEO CARD	
GeForce4 MX440 64MB DDR	\$60
JOYSTICK	
Microsoft SideWinder Joystick	\$25
GAMEPAD	
Logitech WingMan Rumblepad	\$23
SPEAKERS	
Logitech WingMan Z-340 (2.1)	\$39
KEYBOARD	
Addtronics	\$15
MOUSE	
Logitech or Microsoft USB	\$39
TOTAL	\$764

■ MID-RANGE SYSTEM

ROUGHLY \$1,250

CASE	
300-watt ATX form factor	\$50
PROCESSOR	
AMD Athlon XP 2000+	\$90
MOTHERBOARD	
Asus A7V333 (Award 1007)	\$110
MEMORY	
256MB PC-2700 DDR SDRAM	\$56
CD-ROM/DVD-ROM DRIVE	
Pioneer 16x DVD-ROM	\$60
FLOPPY DRIVE	
Samsung 3.5-inch 1.44MB	\$8
HARD DRIVE	
80GB Maxtor 7,200rpm ATA-133	\$110
SOUND CARD	
Creative Labs SB Live! Audigy MP3+	\$85
MODEM	
3COM #2976 56K v.90 Hardware Modem	\$45
MONITOR	
19-inch NEC FE950+	\$292
VIDEO CARD	
NVIDIA GeForce4 Ti 4200	\$120
JOYSTICK	
Microsoft SideWinder Precision 2	\$45
GAMEPAD	
Logitech WingMan Rumblepad	\$23
SPEAKERS	
Logitech Z-540 (4.1)	\$60
KEYBOARD	
Addtronics	\$15
MOUSE	
Logitech or Microsoft USB	\$39
TOTAL	\$1,208

■ DREAM SYSTEM

ROUGHLY \$3,000 AND ABOVE



CASE	
400-watt ATX form factor	\$100
PROCESSOR	
Intel 2.8GHz P4	\$497
MOTHERBOARD	
Intel D850EMV2	\$150
MEMORY	
Twin sticks of 256MB PC-1066 RDRAM	\$220
CD-ROM/DVD-ROM DRIVE	
Pioneer 16x DVD-ROM	\$60
BURNER	
Plextor 48x24x48 CD-RW	\$130
FLOPPY DRIVE	
Samsung 3.5-inch 1.44MB	\$8
HARD DRIVE	
180GB Western Digital ATA-100	\$337
SOUND CARD	
Creative Labs SB Live! Audigy Platinum 5.1	\$160

MODEM	
3COM #2976 56K v.90 Hardware Modem	\$45
MONITOR	
22-inch ViewSonic P220f	\$647
VIDEO CARD	
ATI RADEON 9700 PRO	\$325
JOYSTICK	
Thrustmaster HOTAS Cougar	\$269
GAMEPAD	
Logitech WingMan Rumblepad	\$23
SPEAKERS	
Klipsch ProMedia 5.1	\$399
KEYBOARD	
Microsoft Natural Keyboard Pro	\$40
MOUSE	
IntelliMouse Explorer 3.0	\$50
TOTAL	\$3,460

The Alienware® Times

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 06, 2101

Area-51™ Landing Reported

Possibly the
New T9 Model

BY JUSTIN METZL
WE GET SIGNAL, SERVICE

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 2.4GHz with 533 FSB and 512KB Advanced Transfer Cache
High-Performance Heatsink/Cooling with Arctic Silver III
Intel® 845MP+ ICH3M Chipset Motherboard
256MB PC-2100 DDR SDRAM
Exclusive Alienware® Laptop Chassis
20GB 5400RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
15.0" UltraXGA+ TFT Active Matrix LCD
ATI® Mobility RADEON™ 9000 PRO 64MB DDR
with Dual-View Display Monitor and TV-out
AlienAdrenaline: Video Performance Optimizer
Removable 3.5" Floppy Drive 1.44MB
Removable 8X DVD-Rom Drive
Sound Blaster® PRO Compatible with Wavetable
5.1 3D Surround Sound with S/PDIF Digital Output
Front Panel Audio DJ CD Player
Allows CD Play While System is On or Off
One Type II PCMCIA Slot
Four USB 2.0 Ports and One IEEE 1394 Port
Infrared Wireless Fast IR Interface
10/100Mb Ethernet LAN and 56K Modem
Dimensions: (H) x (W) x (D) : 1.7" x 13" x 11.4"
Weight: 7.6lbs. without battery
Exclusive 120-Watt A/C Adapter
Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
1-Year Toll-Free 24/7 Technical Support
with Alienware On-Site Home Service
AlienAutopsy: Automated Technical Support
Personalized Owner's Manual
FREE Exclusive Alienware® T-Shirt
FREE Custom Alienware® Mouse Pad
Optimized & Configured for High-Performance

\$2199.00

VISIT WWW.ALIENWARE.COM ►



NEW SIGHTING OF ALIENWARE® CROP CIRCLE

With an Alienware® system, PC gaming is taken to a new level unmatched by standard PC systems. Alienware® systems are available in many custom colors with the most advanced graphics rendering hardware available and intense theater quality sound. Our systems will leave you wondering why you ever played games on anything else.

The Area-51™ represents the first fully capable mobile gaming solution. The performance requirements of today's most cutting edge games have been simply too demanding for a laptop unit, until now. The Area-51™ plays games at blistering speeds, handles quick motion with incredible accuracy, and performs phenomenally high in benchmarks. Perfect for LAN parties and for those who simply cannot part from their desktop system's performance, the Area-51™ is the ultimate mobile gaming machine™.

The Alienware® Difference

- Built by Skilled Alienware® Technicians
- Stringent 200-point Quality Control Process
- The Most Advanced and Personalized Online Customer Support Available
- AlienAutopsy: Automated Technical Support Request System
- AlienAdrenaline: Video Performance Optimizer

Area-51 T9 Spotted Streaking Across the Sky

Witnesses
Interviewed!

BY YUSNEY GARAY
WHAT YOU SAY, SERVICE

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 2.4GHz with 533 FSB and 512KB Advanced Transfer Cache
High-Performance Heatsink/Cooling System
Intel® 850E Chipset Motherboard
512MB PC-800 RDRAM
Black Floppy Drive 1.44MB
80GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
ATI® RADEON™ 9700 PRO 128MB DDR
AlienAdrenaline: Video Performance Optimizer
Exclusive Koolmax™ Video Cooling System
Sound Blaster® Audigy™ 5.1 with 1394™
Black 16X/48X DVD-ROM Drive
Black Lite-On 48X/12X/48X CD-RW Drive
Green Dragon Full-Tower ATX Case 340-Watt PS
Black Microsoft® Internet Keyboard
Black Microsoft® IntelliMouse Explorer 3.0
Intel® PRO/100 S Network Adapter
Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
1-Year Toll-Free 24/7 Technical Support
with Alienware On-Site Home Service
AlienAutopsy: Automated Technical Support
Personalized Owner's Manual
FREE Exclusive Alienware® T-Shirt
FREE Custom Alienware® Mouse Pad
Optimized & Configured for High-Performance

\$1999.00

TOLL FREE 1-800-ALIENWARE ►



ALIENWARE® SIGHTINGS: EYEWITNESSES INTERVIEWED

BY MIKE GOWEN
ZERO WIND, SERVICE

"For mobile gamers, a notebook made by a real gaming company should come as a good sign. The Area-51™ portends a massive invasion soon to come."

•Maximum PC Kick Ass Award August 2002

"Perfect, beautiful, the best looking laptop in the universe. Perfectly placed ports, nice CD-DJ on the front panel, beautiful screen, great keyboard. It looks like its worth a million dollars."

•Team X-Box August 2002

"Alienware® is the true price-vs.-performance champion. Time and time again, we're hard pressed to build our own comparably equipped machines for less than they charge!"

•PC Gamer Editor's choice award August 2002

"...ultimately we'd put our money on Alienware's offering. Not only is the Area-51 a solid gaming PC with striking looks, the extra year of on site service is a real bonus for those who value quality service and support-our advisee included."

•Computer shopper's best 100 products of the year, November 2002

"If you want to go all the way, the hot-rodgers at Alienware® will take care of you."

•Rolling Stone Magazine September 2002



Nine Day Delivery Guaranteed On All T9 Systems!*

BY GABRIEL GONZALEZ
ALL YOUR BASE ARE BELONG TO US, SERVICE

Prices, configurations, and availability may change without notice. Taxes and shipping charges not shown. Alienware® cannot be held responsible for errors in photography or typography. On-site service may be provided via contracted third party, service not available in all areas. Technician will be dispatched if deemed necessary following telephone-based troubleshooting. For complete information on our warranty,

support, and on-site service, visit www.alienware.com. For hard drives, GB means 1 billion bytes and accessible capacity may vary depending on configuration. For CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, CD-RW, and DVD+RW/+R drive(s), maximum data transfer rates may vary and discs created with these drives may not be compatible with all drives and players. For modems and network cards/hardware, maximum achievable data transfer rates may vary. Award(s) and quote(s) listed do not pertain to a specific system or

configuration. Intel, Intel Inside Logo, and Pentium are registered trademarks of Intel Corporation. All registered trademarks and trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Actual case may vary in design.

* From the time at which payment is received.

TOLL FREE 1-800-ALIENWARE ►

Turn Your PC into a TiVo

THE WORLD'S BEST GAME MACHINE CAN BE A SWEET TV MACHINE, TOO

Reason number 243 not to get off your ass: TiVo. But did you know that the hard drive-based digital video recorder that sits atop your TV is actually a simple PC? Why should couch potatoes have all the fun? If you're playing the latest PC games, you've already got a beefy hard drive and a high-powered processor, so the only thing coming between you and video nirvana is a couple of bucks and a screwdriver! Our guide is broken up into three categories based on the level of tinkering you'll need to do to get up and running. Heed our words and you'll be recording and playing back episodes of *Friends* faster than you can say "Battlefield 1942"!

FOR THOSE WHO WANT EASY...

You've got a tricked-out PC, a hard drive the size of Montana, and the patience of Mike Tyson. You want this setup over and done with during a commercial break. For those who "can't be bothered," the easiest way to go is an external USB solution. Several companies put out such packages; two worth considering are Hauppauge Computer Works' WinTV-PVR USB (\$199) and Pinnacle Systems' PCTV Deluxe (\$199).

The installation for devices like these is so simple, a chimp could do it: Open box, install software, plug in power supply, attach through USB port, eat a banana, done. Since the biggest selling-point here is having a no-fuss solution, you've got to be ready to make some sacrifices. For example, a USB 1.0 port limits the bandwidth of video capture to 6Mbps/second. Not too shabby — and not really a problem unless you're a hardcore videophile — but internal solutions average 12Mbps/second and provide a better-quality picture as a result. Those recording fullscreen video at a high-quality recording level will be a little bummed, but these boxes are great soup-to-nuts solutions for the lazy.

If you're one of the few whose machine actually has a USB 2.0 port, though, the PCTV Deluxe is a great choice. It supports USB 1.0 and 2.0, which means you'll be able to record video at a whopping 12Mbps/second.



FOR THOSE WHO NEED ONE CARD TO DO IT ALL...

If your graphics card is gathering dust, chuck the damn thing. And since you've got a couple hundred dollars burning a hole in your pocket, we have the solution: an all-in-one card! The two top contenders in this category are the Compro Personal Cinema GeForce Ti 4600 card (around \$450) and ATI's All-in-Wonder 9700 PRO (under \$500). Both offer a high level of 3D graphics performance for your games, and also turn your PC into a high-end TV/TiVo combo!

Each card yields

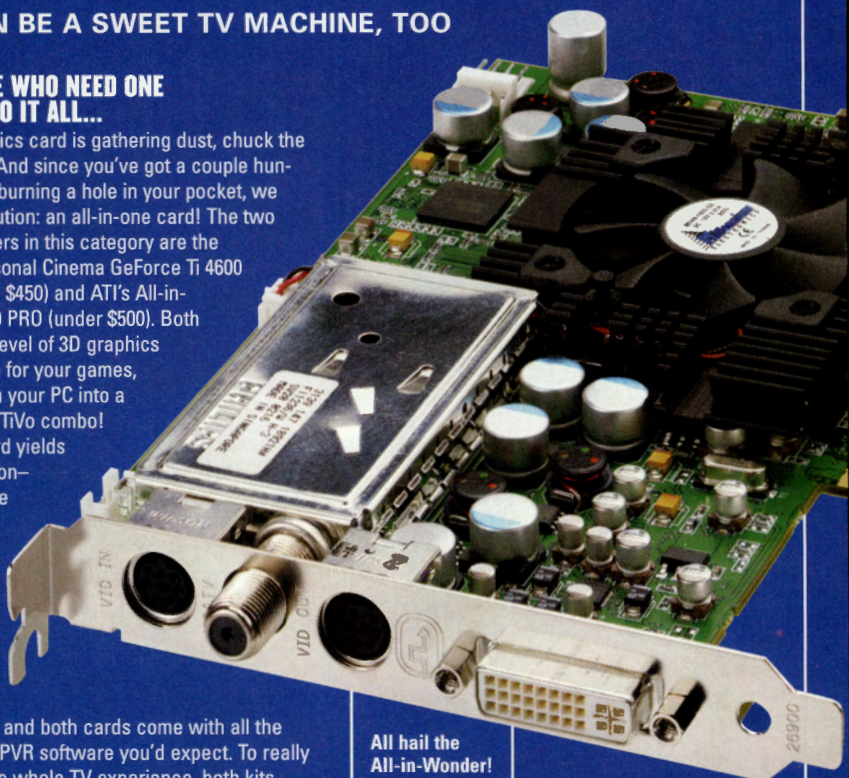
High Definition-caliber image quality by converting analog TV signals to digital signals (480i, 480p, 720p, and 1080i

resolutions), and both cards come with all the high-quality PVR software you'd expect. To really round out the whole TV experience, both kits come with an external breakout box that lets you plug in additional video sources and communicate with remote controls.

FOR THOSE WHO AREN'T AFRAID TO GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY...

Are you happy with the video card you've already got? Are you a cheap bastard? For you, we present the surefire-est way to get up-and-running — for under 150 bucks!

Hardware-wise, you can pick up a simple TV add-in card that sits shotgun to your existing video card, as long as you've got an available PCI slot. Popping in this kind of card is fairly painless. Hauppauge Computer Works' WinTV-Radio (\$99) does the trick, and it's got a single analog TV input. The only snag here is its bundled software,



All hail the All-in-Wonder!

which is as weak-willed as Pee-wee Herman in a nudie movie theater.

What you need to beef up your bargain-basement card is SnapStream Personal Video Station (\$50). This software is so good that even if you bought one of the all-in-one combo solutions we recommended above, you may want to consider upgrading. The new version, codenamed "Granite," isn't available in stores at press time, but it promises to give users even more of the set-top experience they've been looking for. With its onscreen display info, navigation system, and elegant library listing for your recordings, we had to triple-check to make sure we weren't looking at an actual TiVo menu! (Note: For the ultra-geeky, an optional add-on program lets you compress your shows so you can copy them onto a Pocket PC. Watch *Buffey* and *Smallville* on the road!)

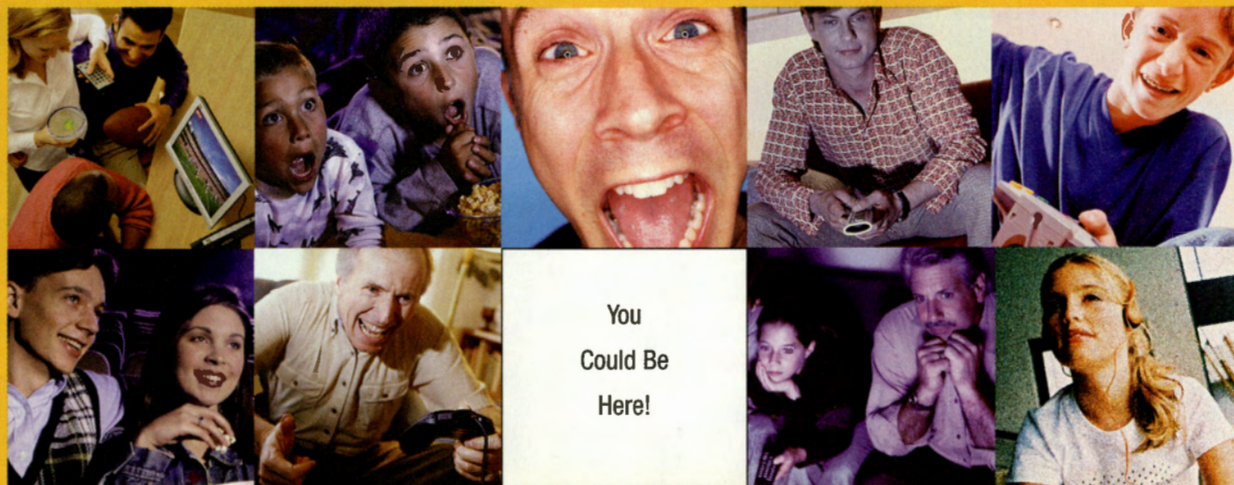
That's it, kids! Try not to get any popcorn on the keyboard, okay?

PRODUCT SOURCES

Hauppauge Computer Works (hauppauge.com; 631-434-1600)
Pinnacle Systems (www.pinnacle.com; 800-522-8783)
Compro Technology (www.comprousa.com)
ATI Technology (www.atitech.com; 905-882-2600)
SnapStream (www.snapstream.com; 713-644-6240)

SnapStream PROGRAM GUIDE			
WED	03:00 PM	03:30 PM	04:00 PM
004 KIDS	Scooby-Doo: Where are you?	Jackie Chan	Yu-Gi-Oh!
007 WPNB	Scooby-Doo and Mrs. King		Life Moments
008 KULT	Reading Rainbow	Zoom	Liberty's Kids
009 KREV	Home Improvement		The Steve Harvey Show
010 KOLA	El Gordo y la Flaca		Primer Impacto
011 WKOL	Hollywood Squares	Jeopardy!	Oprah Winfrey
3:00pm - 4:00pm (2:30hrs) Home Improvement			
are			

Ten Lucky ViewSonic® Winners Will Change The Way They View Their Desktop



You
Could Be
Here!

Win your own ViewSonic desktop entertainment system! Enter today at

www.ViewSonic.com/GamerGiveaway

ViewSonic's Great Gamer

Giveaway celebrates a revolution in desktop entertainment. One lucky contestant will win the extraordinary NextVision™ N5 Video Processor — with a built-in TV tuner — and a top-of-the line UltraBrite™ CRT that offers three to five times the brightness of ordinary desktop displays. Nine runners-up will win a ViewSonic NextVision N5 video processor. With inputs for gaming consoles, TV signals, DVD and VCR players and digital cameras, NextVision video processors turn any LCD or CRT into a full-screen,



GRAND PRIZE: NextVision N5 Video Processor and UltraBrite G71f+SB 17" (16.0" viewable) CRT monitor, with matching keyboard and mouse. Full-screen gaming, TV and multimedia with dazzling brightness and clarity you have to see to believe.

WIN
NextVision™ N5
Video Processor and
UltraBrite™ G71f+SB
17" (16.0" viewable) CRT Monitor
Matching Keyboard
& Mouse
\$500 Value

high-resolution desktop entertainment center. Get more from gaming, TV viewing and multimedia entertainment right on your desktop. More clarity. More color. More detail. And with UltraBrite monitors, brightness that rivals your TV. Don't delay. Register to win online today at ViewSonic.com/GamerGiveaway and See the Difference®!

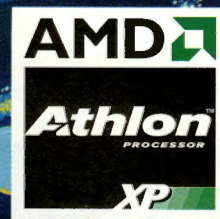


No purchase necessary. Contest open only to U.S. residents at least 18 years old at time of entry with Internet access (generally found for free at local public library). Not eligible: residents of FL, NY, AZ, and RI. Entries accepted online only from 10/25/02-12/31/02. Limit one entry per household. See official rules at www.ViewSonic.com/GamerGiveaway. ViewSonic is not responsible for malfunctioning hardware, software, Internet connections, or any technical problems related to the web site or access thereto. Winners will be selected by random drawing on or about 1/15/03 from all entries received during contest period and will be notified by mail. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. Void where prohibited. Copyright © 2002 ViewSonic Corporation. All rights reserved. [10640-00E 06/02]


ViewSonic®
See the difference.®

CYBERPOWER X-TREME GAMING DIFFERENCE

"CYBERPOWER RECOMMENDS
MICROSOFT® WINDOWS® XP"



CYBERPOWERINC.COM

CyberPower PCs use genuine Microsoft® Windows®
www.microsoft.com/piracy/howtotell

\$ 999

HP-SPECIAL

- VIA KT-400 400MHZ DDR 8X AGP MB
- 512 MB PC3200 400MHZ DDR Memory
- 80GB 7200 RPM Ultra ATA 100 Hard Drive
- NVIDIA Geforce-4 8X AGP MX440 64MB w/ TV Out
- 16X DVD-ROM & 40X12X48 CD-RW Drive
- 3D Wave Sound & 450Watt Subwoofer System
- **Viewsonic 19" E95 .22MM SVGA Monitor**
- 56K Modem, Floppy Dr, Internet Keyboard & Mouse
- **Aluminum SX1030 SOHO Server Tower Case 425W w/ MOD "See Through Windows" & Neon Light**
- 6 Custom Colors to Choose From
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Free First Year On Site Service plus 24/7 Tech Support



\$ 1299

TITANIUM GAMER FORCE PRO

- VIA KT-400 400MHZ DDR 8X AGP MB
- 512MB PC400 PC3200 DDR memory
- 80GB 7200 RPM ULTRA ATA100 Hard Drive
- NVIDIA Geforce-4 Ti4600 128MB w/ TV Out & DVI
- 16X DVD-ROM & 48X16X48 CD-RW Drive
- Creative Lab Sound Blaster Audigy 5.1 w/ 1394 IEEE
- Creative Cambridge Desk Top Theater 5.1 Inspire 5200 5.1 Surround Sound System
- **Viewsonic 19" E95 .22MM SVGA Monitor**
- 56K Modem & 1.44 MB Floppy Drive
- PS2 Internet Keyboard
- Microsoft® Optical IntelliMouse
- **Aluminum SX1030 SOHO Server Tower Case 425W w/ MOD "See Through Windows" & Neon Light**
- 6 Cool Custom Colors to Choose From
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Corel Wordperfect Office 2002 or MS Work 2000
- Free First Year On Site Service plus 24/7 Tech Support



\$ 1595

X-TREME GAMER PLATINUM PRO

- VIA KT-400 400MHZ FSB DDR 8X AGP MB
- 1GB MB PC400 PC2700 DDR Memory
- 80GB 7200 RPM Ultra ATA 133 Hard Drive
- ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 8X AGP w/ 128MB DDR RAM
- 16X DVD-ROM & 48X16X48 CD-RW Drive
- Creative Lab Sound Blaster Audigy X-Gamer 5.1 w/ IEEE
- Creative Cambridge Desk Top Theater 5.1 Inspire 5200 5.1 Surround Sound System
- **Viewsonic 19" E90FB .22MM SVGA Monitor**
- 56K Modem & 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- Silver PS2 Internet Keyboard
- Microsoft® Optical Intelli Explorer Mouse
- **Aluminum SX1030 SOHO Server Tower Case 425W w/ MOD "See Through Windows" & Neon Light**
- 6 Cool Custom Colors to Choose From
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Free First Year On Site Service plus 24/7 Tech Support



AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2600+ ²	\$ 1215	CXA121
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2400+ ³	\$ 1135	CXA122
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2200+ ⁴	\$ 1095	CXA123
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2100+ ⁵	\$ 1065	CXA124
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2000+ ⁶	\$ 1035	CXA125
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1800+ ⁷	\$ 999	CXA126

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2700+ ¹	\$ 1615	CXC121
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2600+ ²	\$ 1475	CXC122
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2400+ ³	\$ 1429	CXC123
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2200+ ⁴	\$ 1389	CXC124
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2000+ ⁵	\$ 1329	CXC125
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1800+ ⁷	\$ 1299	CXC126

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2700+ ¹	\$ 1895	CD121
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2600+ ²	\$ 1795	CD122
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2400+ ³	\$ 1725	CD123
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2200+ ⁴	\$ 1685	CD124
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 2000+ ⁵	\$ 1625	CD125
AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1800+ ⁷	\$ 1595	CD126



Price subject to change without notice. *

4802 Little John St. Baldwin Park, CA 91706

Tel: (626)813-7730 • Fax: (626)813-3810

Technical Support (877)876-4965

Hour: Mon-Fri 8:30A.M. ~ 6:00P.M. • Sat 9:30A.M. ~ 3:00P.M.

- 1 QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 2.70GHz processors, architecture operates at 2.53GHz.
- 1 QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 2.60GHz processors, architecture operates at 2.13GHz.
- 2 QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 2.40GHz processors, architecture operates at 2.09GHz.
- 3 QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 2.20GHz processors, architecture operates at 1.80GHz.
- 4 QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 2.10GHz processors, architecture operates at 1.75GHz.
- 5 QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 2.00GHz processors, architecture operates at 1.67GHz.
- 6 QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.80GHz processors, architecture operates at 1.533GHz.





\$ 1565

CYBERPOWER K-TREME TITANIUM

- Intel I850E Chipset 533Mhz FSB 4x AGP MB
- 512MB PC1066 Rambus Memory
- 80GB 7200 RPM Ultra ATA 100 Hard Drive
- NVIDIA Geforce-4 TI-4600 128MB w/ TV Out
- 16X DVD-ROM & 48X16X48 CD-RW Drive
- Creative Lab Sound Blaster Audigy 5.1 w/ IEEE
- Creative Cambridge SoundWorks Desk Top Theater 5.1 Inspire 5200 Sound System
- **Black 19" Viewsonic E90FB .22MM 1800x1400 SVGA Monitor**
- 3COM US-Robotic 56K V.90 Fax Modem w/ Voice
- 1.44 MB Floppy Drive & PS2 internet Keyboard
- Microsoft® USB OPTICAL IntelliMouse
- **CoolerMaster ATC-710 SOHO Sever Case w/ 420Watt Power**
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Corel Wordperfect Office 2002
- Norton Anti Virus 2002
- One Year On Site Service +\$39

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.8Ghz	\$ 1845	CO121
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.6Ghz	\$ 1739	CO122
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.53Ghz	\$ 1675	CO123
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.4Ghz	\$ 1619	CO124
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.0Ghz	\$ 1585	CO125
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 1.8Ghz	\$ 1565	CO126



\$ 975

HP 8000 DREAM

- Intel I845PE Chipset 533Mhz FSB 4x AGP DDR 333 MB
- 512MB PC2700 DDR DDR333 Memory
- 80GB 7200 RPM ATA 100 Hard Drive
- ATI Radeon 9000 w/ 64MB DDR
- 16X DVD-ROM & 48X16X48 CD-RW Drive
- **Viewsonic 19" E95 .22MM SVGA Monitor**
- AC97 3D Sound & 480Watt Subwoofer Speaker System
- 56K V.90 Fax Modem w/ Voice
- Mitsumi 1.44 MB Floppy Drive
- Internet Multimedia Keyboard & Internet Mouse
- **Turbo X-Gamer Case 350Watt with See Through Windows and Sound Activated Neon Light.**
- 6 Cool Custom Colors to Choose From
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Corel Wordperfect Office 2002
- One Year On Site Service +\$39
- Upgrade to Viewsonic Office Keyboard and Optical Mouse +\$49

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.8Ghz	\$ 1265	C1221
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.6Ghz	\$ 1165	C1222
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.53Ghz	\$ 1095	C1223
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.4Ghz	\$ 1039	C1224
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.0Ghz	\$ 995	C1225
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 1.8 Ghz	\$ 975	C1226



\$ 1155

CYBERPOWER MEDIA CENTER PRO

- NEW Intel I845PE Chipset 533Mhz FSB DDR 333 MB
- 512MB PC2700 PC333 DDR Memory
- 80GB 7200 RPM ATA 100 Hard Drive
- ATI All-In-Wonder Radeon 8500DV w/ 64MB DDR, Build-In TV Tuner and Digital VCR
- 16X DVD-ROM & 48X16X48 CD-RW Drive
- **Viewsonic 19" E95 .22MM SVGA Monitor**
- Creative Lab Sound Blaster Live 5.1 Sound Card
- Creative Lab Inspire 4400 4.1 Subwoofer System
- 56K Modem, 1.44MB Floppy, Keyboard & Mouse
- **Turbo X-Gamer Case 350Watt with See Through Windows and Sound Activated Neon Light.**
- 6 Cool Custom Colors to Choose From
- New Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional Media Center Edition
- Corel Wordperfect Office 2002
- One Year On Site Service +\$39

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.8Ghz	\$ 1439	CM121
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.6Ghz	\$ 1335	CM122
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.53Ghz	\$ 1268	CM123
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.4Ghz	\$ 1199	CM124
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.0Ghz	\$ 1175	CM125
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 1.8Ghz	\$ 1155	CM126



\$ 649

LIGHTNING PROFESSIONAL

- Intel I845E Chipset 533 FSB Main Board
- 256MB PC2100 DDR Memory
- 60GB 7200 RPM ATA 100 Hard Drive
- NVIDIA Geforce-4 MX440 64MB 4X AGP w/ TV Out
- 16X DVD-ROM
- 3D Sound & 450Watt Subwoofer System
- 56K Modem, 1.44MB Floppy, Keyboard & Mouse
- Black ATX Medium Tower Case w/ 350Watt
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition +\$89
- One Year On Site Service +\$39

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.8 Ghz	\$ 929	CP121
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.6 Ghz	\$ 825	CP122
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.53 Ghz	\$ 757	CP123
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.4 Ghz	\$ 695	CP124
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.0 Ghz	\$ 669	CP125
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 1.8 Ghz	\$ 649	CP126

ORDER TOLL FREE (800) 707-0393

COMPANY HERCULES, WWW.HERCULES.COM PRICE \$429 (M.S.R.P.)



3D Prophet 9700 Pro



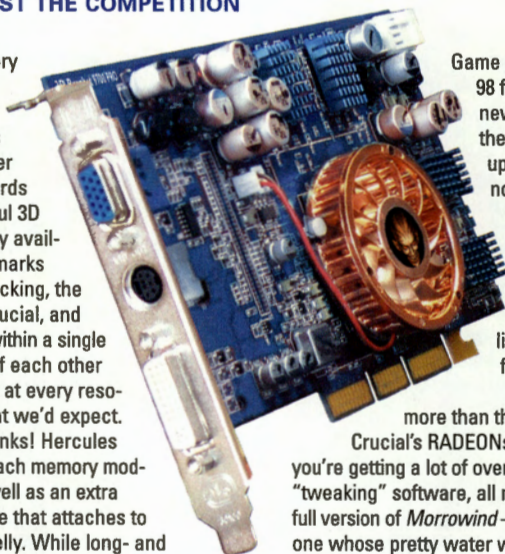
GUILLEMOT TAKES A HERCULEAN LEAP PAST THE COMPETITION

ATI isn't the only company selling 9700 PRO-based cards. Other guys, like Hercules and Crucial (see review below), have entered the game. Hercules' angle is reliable overclocking.

Like the RADEON 9700 (November 2002; PCG rating: 94%), the new Prophet has 128MB of 620MHz DDR RAM and a core speed of 325MHz,

plus a 256-bit memory interface and DirectX 9 functionality. That makes it — along with other 9700 PRO-based cards — the most powerful 3D technology currently available. As our benchmarks prove, sans overclocking, the three cards (ATI, Crucial, and Hercules) perform within a single frame per second of each other in almost every test at every resolution, which is what we'd expect.

Enter the heatsinks! Hercules adds heatsinks to each memory module on its card, as well as an extra heatsink for the core that attaches to the board's underbelly. While long- and short-term mileage may vary from card to card, we were able to crank out an *amazingly* fast 372MHz core and 702MHz memory from ours, which equates to a 3DMark2001 SE score of 13,514 on our benchmark system, up from 13,097 with default clocks. Furthermore, at that speed,



Game 4: Nature jumps from 98 fps to 111 fps. The bad news is that even though the card ran without lock-ups at that speed, we did notice a lot of artifacting. We had to bump the memory back down to 670MHz or so to prevent it, but still managed to retain the lion's share of the performance boost.

The Prophet costs \$29 more than the M.S.R.P. for ATI's and Crucial's RADEONs, but for the extra green you're getting a lot of overclockability via Hercules' "tweaking" software, all necessary cables, and a full version of *Morrowind* — an excellent game, and one whose pretty water will make you glad you've got the cream of the crop of RADEON 9700 PROs.



BENCHMARKS		
3DMARK-2001 SE*	3DMarks	13,097
	Game 4: Nature	96 fps
QUAKE III†	1280 x 1024	130 fps
	1600 x 1200	89 fps
JEDI KNIGHT II‡	1024 x 768	89 fps, 89 fps, 88 fps
	1280 x 1024	89 fps, 89 fps, 88 fps
	1600 x 1200	88 fps, 88 fps, 86 fps
DUNGEON SIEGE*	1024 x 768	69 fps, 67 fps, 68 fps
	1280 x 1024	68 fps, 66 fps, 65 fps
	1600 x 1200	67 fps, 65 fps, 58 fps

*Tests run at 1024x768 in true color, all settings maxed. †Tests run at 1024x768 in true color, all settings maxed, with 4x anti-aliasing enabled. ‡Tests run in true color with all settings maxed. Scores are with no AA, 2x AA, and 4x AA, respectively. [Tests run on P4 2.6GHz/512MB PC-800 RDRAM/Win XP Home Ed.]

COMPANY CRUCIAL TECHNOLOGIES/MICRON, WWW.CRUCIAL.COM, 800-336-8896 PRICE \$399 (M.S.R.P.), \$369 (DIRECT)



Crucial RADEON 9700 PRO



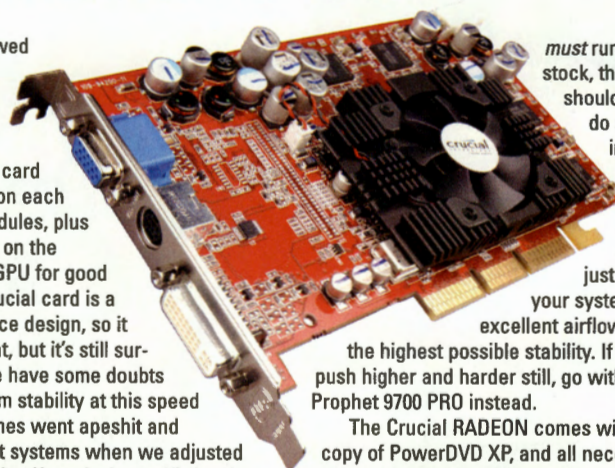
A LARGE MEMORY MANUFACTURER SHOWS THAT IT'S GOT VIDEO-CARD GAME

Yields on the new RADEON 9700 PRO seem to have improved dramatically since ATI launched the technology just a short while ago. By default, the core of this new Crucial card runs at 325MHz, and its 128MB of DDR memory runs at 620MHz. That makes it like ATI's own 9700 PRO: DX9-ready and blisteringly fast. But like the

3D Prophet reviewed above, this RADEON is capable of running even faster.

The Hercules card sports heatsinks on each of its memory modules, plus an extra heatsink on the underbelly of its GPU for good measure. This Crucial card is a stock ATI reference design, so it offers none of that, but it's still surprisingly spry. We have some doubts about its long-term stability at this speed (the card sometimes went apeshit and locked up our test systems when we adjusted clocks — something Hercules' new 3D Prophet *never* did), but just to give you an idea of what you might be able to achieve, we were able to get the card to play nice for an hour at heavy load at 360MHz/670MHz.

We're still more comfortable overclocking a card *with* heatsinks than one without, especially with the aforementioned "wonkiness" the Crucial would occasionally exhibit. But if you simply



must run faster than stock, this card should allow you to do so (depending on your board — each one is a little different): just make sure your system has

excellent airflow to ensure the highest possible stability. If you want to push higher and harder still, go with the 3D Prophet 9700 PRO instead.

The Crucial RADEON comes with drivers, a copy of PowerDVD XP, and all necessary cables. It's exactly as fast and powerful as Hercules' and ATI's RADEON cards at default clock speeds, making it one of the three fastest video cards on the planet today.



BENCHMARKS		
3DMARK-2001 SE*	3DMarks	13,131
	Game 4: Nature	98 fps
QUAKE III†	1280 x 1024	130 fps
	1600 x 1200	89 fps
JEDI KNIGHT II‡	1024 x 768	89 fps, 89 fps, 88 fps
	1280 x 1024	89 fps, 89 fps, 88 fps
	1600 x 1200	88 fps, 88 fps, 86 fps
DUNGEON SIEGE*	1024 x 768	69 fps, 67 fps, 68 fps
	1280 x 1024	67 fps, 66 fps, 65 fps
	1600 x 1200	67 fps, 65 fps, 58 fps

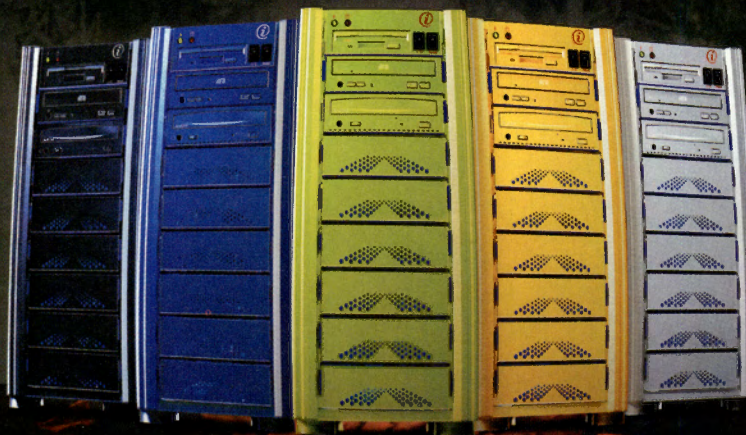
*Tests run at 1024x768 in true color, all settings maxed. †Tests run at 1024x768 in true color, all settings maxed, with 4x anti-aliasing enabled. ‡Tests run in true color with all settings maxed. Scores are with no AA, 2x AA, and 4x AA, respectively. [Tests run on P4 2.6GHz/512MB PC-800 RDRAM/Win XP Home Ed.]

TITANIUM XP

- NEW!!! INTEL® Pentium® 4 Processor at 2.53GHz with 533MHz FSB
- <SILVER> Aluminum 8-Bay Super Light Weight Tower Case w/ 420 Watt Power + See Through Window + Sound Activated Neon Light
- INTEL® 850E 533MHz FSB PC1066 4x AGP Main Board
- 512MB PC1066 RAMBUS Memory
- 80GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA-133 Hard Drive
- <SILVER> 16x DVD-ROM Drive
- <SILVER> 48x12x48 CD-RW Drive
- <SILVER> 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- NVIDIA Geforce-4 TI-4600 128MB DDR 4X AGP Video
- Sound Blaster Audigy 5.1 Sound Card w/IEEE Fire Wire
- 10/100 Network LAN
- Klipsch ProMedia 4.1 THX 400-Watt Surround Sound Speakers
- <BLACK> 19" ViewSonic Perfect Flat E90FB .21H MM Monitor
- Microsoft® Optical IntelliMouse Explorer
- <SILVER> Enhanced Multi-Media Keyboard
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional Edition
- FREE Norton AntiVirus 2003 CD
- Free 1-Year 24/7 i-Care Deluxe Technical Support + On-Site Service

\$ 1 989

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.0 GHZ	\$ 1899
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.40 GHZ	\$ 1919
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.66 GHZ	\$ 2039
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.80 GHZ	\$ 2149



TOLL FREE 888. 462.3899

GAMER PRO XP

- ~ AMD Athlon XP Processor 2000+ with QuantiSpeed Architecture outperforms competitive 2.0GHz processors
- ~ <BLACK> Aluminum I-TEC SOHO Server Tower Case w/420 Watt Power + See Through Window + Sound Activated Neon Light
- ~ VIA KT400 Chip DDR400 8x AGP Main Board w/ USB 2.0 Ports
- ~ 512MB DDR400 PC-3200 Memory
- ~ 80GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA-133 Hard Drive
- ~ <BLACK> 16x DVD-ROM Drive
- ~ New!!! <BLACK> 48x12x48 CD-RW Drive
- ~ <BLACK> 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- ~ NVIDIA GeForce-4 Ti-4200 128MB DDR 4x AGP Video
- ~ Sound Blaster Live 5.1 Sound Card
- ~ Creative Labs Inspire 5.1 5200 Surround Sound Speakers
- ~ 56K V.90 Fax/Modem w/Voice
- ~ NEW!!! USB 2.0 Port x2 + USB 1.1 Port x2
- ~ <BLACK> 19" ViewSonic Perfect Flat E90FB .21H mm Monitor
- ~ Microsoft® Optical IntelliMouse Explorer
- ~ <BLACK> Enhanced Multi-Media Keyboard
- ~ Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- ~ FREE Norton AntiVirus 2003 CD
- ~ Free 1-Year 24/7 **i-Care** Deluxe Technical Support + On-Site Service

\$ 1 289

AMD Athlon XP Processor 2100+	\$ 1319
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2200+	\$ 1359
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2400+	\$ 1379
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2600+	\$ 1449
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2700+	\$ 1539



WWW.IBUYPOWER.COM

NIGHT DREAMER XP

- ~ AMD Athlon XP Processor 2000+ with QuantiSpeed Architecture outperforms competitive 2.0GHz processors
- ~ <BLACK> Aluminum 8-Bay Super Light Weight Tower Case w/420 Watt Power + See Through Window + Sound Activated Neon Light
- ~ VIA KT400 Chip DDR400 8x AGP Main Board w/ USB 2.0 Ports
- ~ 512MB DDR400 PC-3200 Memory
- ~ 80GB 7200RPM Ultra ATA-133 Hard Drive
- ~ <BLACK> 16x DVD-ROM Drive
- ~ NEW!!! <BLACK> 48x12x48 CD-RW Drive
- ~ <BLACK> 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- ~ NVIDIA GeForce-4 Ti-4600 128MB DDR 4X AGP Video
- ~ Sound Blaster Audigy 5.1 Sound Card w/IEEE Fire Wire
- ~ Creative Inspire 5.1 5200 Surround Sound Speakers
- ~ 56K V.90 Fax/Modem w/Voice
- ~ <BLACK> 19" ViewSonic Perfect Flat E90FB .21H MM Monitor
- ~ Microsoft® Optical IntelliMouse Explorer
- ~ <BLACK> Enhanced Multi-Media Keyboard
- ~ Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional Edition
- ~ FREE Norton AntiVirus 2003 CD
- ~ Free 1-Year 24/7 **i-Care** Deluxe Technical Support + On-Site Service

\$ 1 489

AMD Athlon XP Processor 2100+	\$ 1509
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2200+	\$ 1549
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2400+	\$ 1569
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2600+	\$ 1649
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2700+	\$ 1729



GAMER'S PRO

- ~ AMD Athlon XP Processor 2000+ with QuantISpeed Architecture outperforms 2.0GHz processors
- ~ <SILVER> i-TEC A268 Mid-Tower Case + See Through Window + Neon Light
- ~ VIA KT400 Chip DDR400 8x AGP Main Board w/ USB 2.0 Ports
- ~ 512MB DDR400 PC-3200 Memory
- ~ 60GB 7200 RPM Ultra ATA-133 Hard Drive
- ~ 16x DVD-ROM Drive
- ~ NEW!!! 48x12x48 CD-RW Drive
- ~ NEW!!! 8X AGP NVIDIA GeForce-4 MX-440 64MB Video
- ~ Sound Blaster 5.1 Sound
- ~ Creative Labs Inspire 4400 4.1 Surround Sound Speakers
- ~ 56K V.90 Fax/Modem w/Voice
- ~ 19" ViewSonic E95 .21H mm Monitor
- ~ <SILVER> Scrolling Internet Mouse
- ~ <SILVER> Multi-Media Keyboard
- ~ Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- ~ FREE Norton AntiVirus 2003 CD
- ~ FREE 1-Year 24/7 **i-Care** Deluxe Technical Support + On-Site Service

AMD Athlon XP Processor 2100+	\$ 1089
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2200+	\$ 1119
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2400+	\$ 1139
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2600+	\$ 1219
AMD Athlon XP Processor 2700+	\$ 1289



\$ 1059



i **buypower**



TOLL FREE 888. 462.3899

Price, Specification and terms are subject to change without notice. Picture may differ from actual products. We are not responsible for errors in typography and/or photography. 30-day money back guarantee does not include opened software, parts, or special order merchandise.
Original shipping and handling fee along with return shipping charge are non-refundable. Products returned after 30 days or in a non-refundable condition are subject to a restocking fee. * 3 year limited warranty includes 3 years labor and 1 year parts only.

Sales Hour: Mon-Fri 7:30AM-6:00PM, Sat 10AM-3PM PST
602 Monterey Pass Rd., Monterey Park CA 91754
Tel: (626) 281-8262 Fax: (626) 281-0767
All Prices effective on Dec. 15, 2002

ALIENWARE, WWW.ALIENWARE.COM, 800-494-3382 ■ PRICE \$2,799



Area-51m



BEWARE OF ANAL PROBES, DELL: ALIENWARE'S OUT TO ABDUCT YOU!

Forgetting how terribly screwed up the world is right now is so much easier when you've got a new Area-51m laptop to play with, done-up fresh with a cool, color-shifting paint job. Did I say laptop? I meant mobile gaming machine — really, that's what this laptop... erm, computer, is. Yes, it's closer to a desktop replacement than any other comp... syste... aw, screw it — laptop — we've seen before.

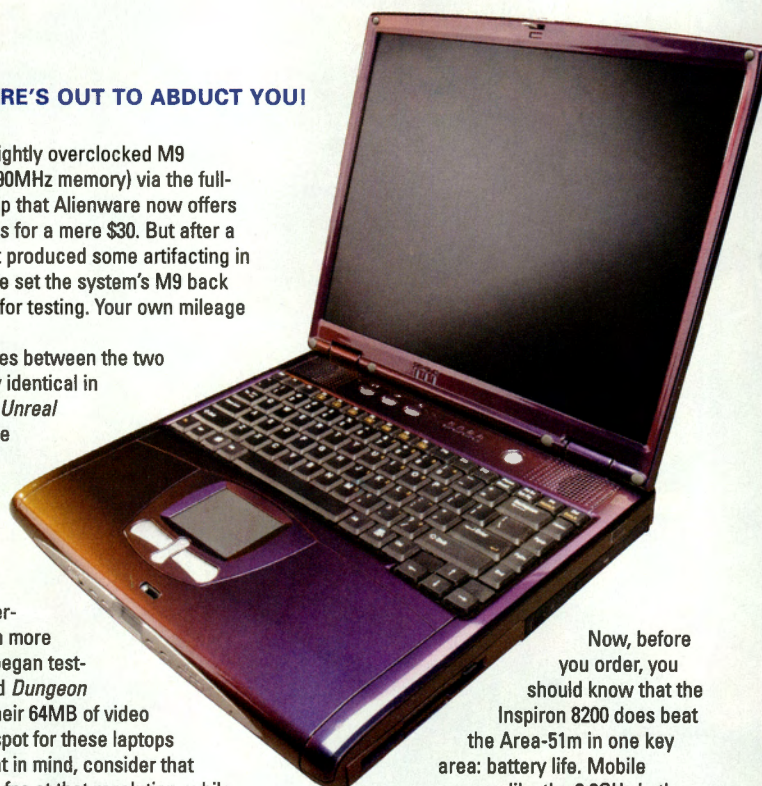
What makes the Area-51m relatively unique among laptops is that it runs not on a mobile P4, but on a full-fledged desktop processor. That means that instead of running at 2.2GHz, the current mobile high-end, this new Alienware runs at an astonishing 2.8GHz, powered by the exact same 533MHz FSB CPU that's sitting in the kind of high-end tower you drool over.

There's precious little this system can't crunch and crush in record time, with help from ATI's new DirectX 8.1-compatible Mobility 9000 (M9 for short) graphics system (think: RADEON 8500), the fastest, most powerful mobile GPU currently available. We know this for sure because we put the Area-51m up against Dell's own latest and greatest, the new Inspiron 8200, and watched sparks fly.

Like the Alienware, Dell's system runs a 64MB DDR M9 processor, and the memory in the Dell is even clocked a little faster by default (252MHz core and 200MHz memory versus 259MHz core and 182MHz memory). Why? Well, because it's harder to cool a desktop CPU than a mobile one. Alienware bumps its card down to keep everything running smooth. That said, our Area-51m did

come to us with a slightly overclocked M9 (270MHz core and 190MHz memory) via the full-version of PowerStrip that Alienware now offers with all of its systems for a mere \$30. But after a while, the extra heat produced some artifacting in certain games, so we set the system's M9 back down to its defaults for testing. Your own mileage here may vary.

Benchmark scores between the two systems were nearly identical in 3DMark2001 SE and *Unreal Tournament 2003*. The Dell pulled 7,056 3DMarks while the Alienware pushed 7,113. In *UT 2003*, the Alienware was only 3 fps faster. The differences became much more apparent when we began testing *Jedi Knight II* and *Dungeon Siege*. Because of their 64MB of video memory, the sweet spot for these laptops is 1024x768. With that in mind, consider that the Dell ran *DS* at 43 fps at that resolution, while the Alienware cranked out 68 fps. And in *JKII*, the Dell coughed up a respectable 78 fps, while the Alienware kicked it up a notch-and-a-half to 92 fps. When you further consider that the Area-51m is only about \$100 more than an Inspiron 8200 with a comparable configuration, the choice for hardcore gamers becomes clear, no?



Now, before you order, you should know that the Inspiron 8200 does beat the Area-51m in one key area: battery life. Mobile processors like the 2.2GHz in the Dell are made to throttle down hard

when on battery power: unplug from the wall, and your processor drops down to 1.2GHz. Also, by default, the screen dims substantially to further conserve power. As a result, you'll get as much as two-plus hours of use from a single battery charge.

Not so with the Area-51m. We didn't see an option for dimming the screen, and the CPU throttles down to 1.75GHz only if the system gets too hot — not because you've unplugged the laptop from the wall. Result: you get only 35 to 45 minutes out of a single battery charge. That's where the whole "mobile gaming machine" thing comes in. This laptop isn't meant to fly around with you on airplanes while you run Excel spreadsheets: it's meant to replace a gaming desktop if need be, and to be taken to LAN parties or wherever you can plug in and frag. (A cool laptop bag is even included.) An additional battery will net you an extra 45 minutes or so, but ultimately, if you need a mobile system with a long battery life, a slower machine like the Inspiron 8200 may be more your "speed."

SYSTEM SPECS

OS	Windows XP Pro
PROCESSOR	P4 (Northwood) 2.8GHz 533MHz FSB
MEMORY	1GB DDR PC-2100
SCREEN	15-inch Ultra XGA (1600x1200 Native)
VIDEO	Mobility RADEON 9000 (64MB)
HARD DRIVE	40GB IBM 5,400rpm ATA/100
FIREWIRE	Yes (1 input)
USB 2.0	Yes (4 inputs)
AUDIO	Avance AC97 Audio (Sound Blaster-compatible)
OPTICAL DRIVE	24x10x24x CD-RW/ 8x DVD combo
FLOPPY DRIVE	Yes
MODEM	56K
NETWORK CARD	10/100
PCMCIA	Type II (1)
S/VIDEO-OUT	Yes
SERIAL PORT	Yes (1)
PARALLEL PORT	Yes (1)
PS/2 PORT	Yes (1) — supports mouse and keyboard via Y-cable
INFRARED TRANSFER	Yes
WARRANTY	"Aliencare" toll-free, one-year 24/7 onsite warranty

BENCHMARKS

3DMARK-2001 SE*	3DMarks	7,113
	Game 4: Nature	32 fps
UT 2003†	Flyby	65 fps
	Botmatch	47 fps
JEDI KNIGHT II*	1024 x 768	92 fps
	1280 x 1024	77 fps
	1600 x 1200	56 fps
DUNGEON SIEGE†	1024 x 768	68 fps
	1280 x 1024	62 fps
	1600 x 1200	53 fps

*Tests run at 1024x768 in true color with all settings maxed
†*Unreal Tournament 2003* Tests run at 1024x768 in true color.
‡Tests run in true color with all settings maxed.

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: 2.8GHz P4; RADEON Mobility 9000; cool paint that color-shifts depending on how light strikes it; built-in network card and modem.

LOWS: Heavy; really short battery life.

BOTTOM LINE: The Area-51m is feature-rich and 600MHz faster than its competition. 'Nuff said.

PC GAMER 92%
EDITORS' CHOICE

COMPANY LOGITECH, WWW.LOGITECH.COM, 800-231-7717 ■ PRICE \$399 (M.S.R.P.)



Z-680 Speakers

THIS THX-CERTIFIED SYSTEM WILL PUT THE BUMP IN YOUR RUMPI

I've never seen the exact requirements for THX certification, so I'm not entirely sure what's needed to qualify, but I think it must have something to do with having a subwoofer capable of rupturing soft organs like the spleen and liver. That's an educated guess based on a lot of time spent with THX-certified Klipsch, and with Logitech speakers like the new Z-680s I just finished testing.

As with any 5.1 speaker system, the "5" means you're getting five satellites: two fronts, two rears, and one center. The ".1" is the subwoofer. To fly that center channel, you'll need a 5.1-capable sound card like the Audigy. Still, only when playing movies via a 5.1-compatible DVD decoder like CyberLink's PowerDVD XP 4.0 will your center turn on by itself. You can force it to fire up at any time by enabling Dolby Surround via the system's control pod, but the effect, while very good, doesn't thrill us as much as standard 4.1 audio, which we use for anything short of DVDs.

The entire system is controlled by this pod. From it, you can turn the speakers on and off and adjust levels for the sub, center channel, rear speakers, and the master volume. Digital versus

analog output can be selected from the unit (or from the included wireless remote) as well, and effects like Dolby Surround and expanded stereo modes can also be enabled and tweaked. (Note: To run in Dolby Digital mode, you'll need to connect to your PC, DVD player, Xbox, or PS2 via either a coaxial or optical cable — both sold separately.)

Two front-mounted inputs round out the pod. One is for headphones, the other's for plugging in an MP3 device so you can listen to your kickass tunes through your pimp-daddy speakers without having to plug-in to the back of your PC.

As for sound quality, you're getting what you pay for. To get Dolby Digital out of a set of Klipsch's 500-watt, \$399 ProMedia 5.1s (the reigning champ), you'll need to spend an extra \$100 on a separate decoder. Logitech gives you 450 watts and digital decoding for that same \$399 — a savings of \$100 if you want digital. While the sub-

woofer units are comparable (read: fantastic), Klipsch's satellites produce richer, thicker sound and don't seem to "hiss" as much.

Do I notice these differences? Yes. Will your friends? Probably not. Given their versatility, the Z-680s kick a lot of ass for the price.



PC GAMER 86%
EXCELLENT

Microsoft® Train Simulator Paint Shed

MSTS® Paint Shed provides an easy to use set of templates that helps you design and create your very own unique railroad. Choose your own color scheme, add logos, motifs or running numbers and you'll have a yard full of customized locos and rolling stock before you know it.

Locomotives included:

■ GP38-2 ■ SW-7 ■ British Rail Class 50 ■ Nohab EMD (D13)

Wagons included:

- 40' Boxcar
- 50' Boxcar
- 50' Gondola
- 54' Covered Hopper
- 3 Dome Tank Car
- Bay Window Caboose
- Flatcar w/ Container
- Sssy716 - Bogle Flatcar
- Gs - Covered Van
- Gbs - Covered Van
- Faos - Bogle Hopper
- Eaos - Bogle Open Wagon
- Uh - Tank Car
- Rils - Bogle Covered Wagon



Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for Rating Information.

© 2002 Strategy First Inc. All rights reserved. Paint Shed and Microsoft® Train Simulator Regional Add-On Pack USA and Canada are a trademark of Auran PTY Ltd. All other trademarks and copyrights are the properties of their respective owners.

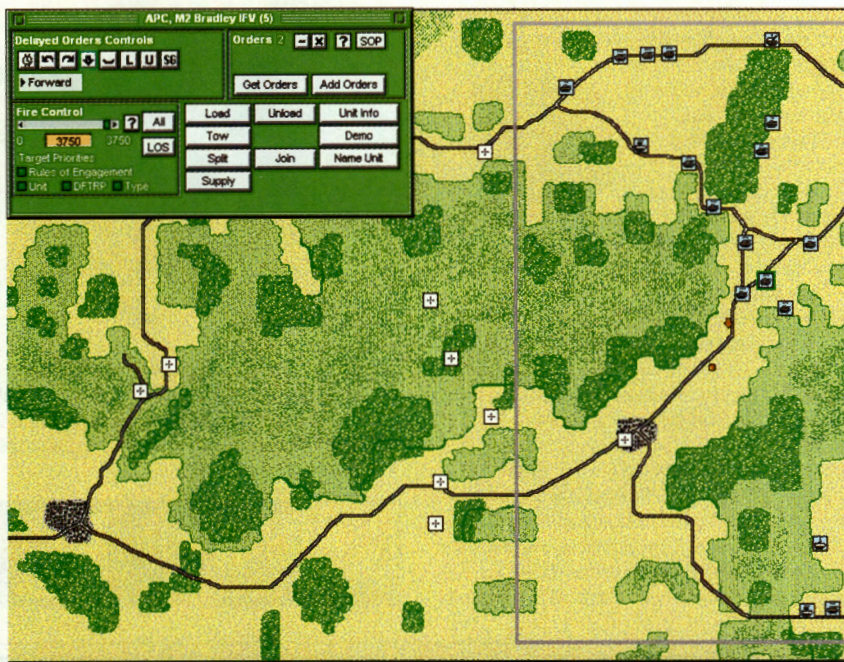


Also available from
Strategy First and Auran



A Proud Soldier Returns

The newest version of *TacOps* models CNN reporters, car bombs, and warlord militias into its rules



Modern warfare: forces vie for control of a strategically critical road junction.

May you live in interesting times" is an oft-quoted "curse" attributed to some (usually unnamed) ancient Chinese philosopher. If you share such appreciation of irony, then most Americans may indeed consider themselves accursed, for these times are nothing if not "interesting."

As I did my share of personal reflecting on the anniversary of the 9/11 horrors, I realized that it was no coincidence that, along with the usual emails from readers who were new to wargaming and wanted my advice about novice-friendly, entry-level games, I was also starting to get inquiries from civilians who wanted to learn more about contemporary, real-world tactics, equipment, and doctrines. If, as now appears certain, America's military has a very active decade (or more) in store for it, it strikes me as a very healthy sign that the civilian populace wants to know more about these things.

That's why I'm glad to announce the publication of a new and greatly enhanced version of the classic contemporary-era "professional-class" simulation, *TacOps* 4.

The series has had a loyal cult following since it debuted in 1994 (published by the small and unfortunately short-lived Arsenal Games); it's the kind of game that

many of us kept on our hard drives for years and fired up during the slack periods while waiting for the next high-profile title to materialize. That's one reason why it's not as well-known today as it deserves to be: the original fans take it for granted, and since it's the creation of a single visionary designer who has neither the money nor the inclination to spotlight it with mass-market hype, it's just never come to the attention of its large potential audience.

TacOps was conceived by Major I. L. Holdridge (USMC, ret.), who, in the mid-Eighties, became so convinced of computer simulations' potential as a training aid for professional soldiers that he taught himself programming on the Macintosh and set out to design a simulation of modern combined-arms land warfare. He hoped to allow real warriors to confront hundreds of tactical challenges in realistic simulations before having to face them in real combat. *TacOps* also attracted a non-professional following, because once you got past the admittedly formidable learning curve, the game provided not only an unprecedented feel of authenticity, but a lot of exciting, intellectually challenging Gaming Goodness as well.

Though the game's audience has remained rather static, it deserves to be

known — and savored — by a much larger segment of the wargaming public. Since the appearance of version 4 coincides with a newfound public interest in military affairs, the timing couldn't be better.

The Major has added 200 new units to the huge database, many of which reflect the new political and civil realities of warfare. The new units include armed civilian bands and warlord militias (for Somalia- and Balkan-type scenarios), car bombs, CNN reporters, fire and rescue personnel, and a lot of ultra-high-tech weapons that haven't seen combat yet. Wait 'til you see the M-548 "Volcano" mine-dispenser go into action! Nineteen networked players can fight it out simultaneously (with an optional slot for an "umpire"); the manual is superb; the reference library is full of real military manuals; the air- and artillery-support dialogues are greatly enhanced; and first-time players will soon adjust to the (by-now traditional) no-frills graphics.

And even though battalion commanders have been "unofficially" lap-topping exercises with their units for years (with great success), the game has finally received the ultimate vindication: since January, the U.S. Army's Armor School (Ft. Knox) has officially adopted *TacOps* 4.

You can learn more about that, and about what's in the 200,000 lines of new code Major H. has added since versions 2 and 3, at his website, www.tacops.com. To order the game, go to Battlefront.com.

If you want up-to-date insights into how today's professional soldiers train to cope with post-9/11 challenges, and if you don't mind doing a little hard work to master the doctrines and technology, *TacOps* 4 is the game you've been asking for. If you already know and love it, rest assured that this version is significantly bigger, deeper, and richer than versions 2 and 3. I recommend it heartily.

— desktopgeneral@pcgamer.com

- 1. Concepts
- 2. Installation
- 3. Starting The Game
- 4. Information Line
- 5. Map And Unit Sty
- 6. Giving Orders To
- 7. Movement
- 8. Ground Combat
- 9. Air Combat
- 10. Artillery And Air
- 11. 101st Off Map Act
- 12. 102nd On Map Act
- 13. Artillery Tar
- 14. Air Support
- 15. Combat Effects
- 16. Unit Disposition
- 17. Ending The Game
- 18. Game Options
- 19. Network Play
- 20. Play By Mail
- 21. Manual
- 22. Scenario Editing
- 23. Custom Scenarios
- 24. General Notes
- 25. Designer's Note

Proper use of elevation masking in an anti-armor ambush.

Whenever possible the defense should be conducted a

Bonus: dozens of military field manuals.

HERE COMES THE BEST KEPT SECRET FOR EXTREME GAMING

The Genetically Modified, Testosterone Charged, Grin Inducing **SOYO**
P4X600 FIRE DRAGON GS PLATINUM EDITION For the New Intel®
Pentium® 4 Processor With Hyperthreading® Technology



Dual DDR!



D: Dual Channel DDR333
R: Serial ATA IDE-RAID
A: 6-Channel Crisp Hardware Audio
G: Extreme 8X AGP Pro Graphics
O: Flexible Overclocking Options
N: Gigabit LAN
Fire: USB 2.0 / IEEE 1394 Firewire
On Board

BONUS Bundles:

- » Sigma Box Featuring 6-In-1 Flash Memory Reader/Writer + Front USB 2.0 Ports
- » SPDIF Audio Connector For Crisp, Digital Sound
- » 8-In-1 CD Pack

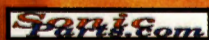
Available At:



800.394.4053



877.OUTPOST



888.647.5457



800.390.1119



888.PC.PROGRESS



SOYO
www.soyo.com

killing box

Chuck Osborn



If I Could Make Half-Life 2...

Chuck's pitch on how to make the sequel better than the original

Dear reader: This column was found scribbled on a greasy carton of Jimmy Dean pork links under Chuck's desk, where, allegedly, he'd collapsed in an eggnog-induced haze. We're running it as-is. The opinions expressed are barely intelligible and should probably be ignored, especially by Valve Software.

It's nearly 2003, a pile of *Ultimate Collector's Edition Half-Life Platinum GOTY Adrenaline Packs* threatens to crush me in my sleep, and still no *Half-Life 2*. Is Valve even working on it? Hell, I don't know. I just know I'm not playing it.

Well, call me Mr. Helpful. I'm a man of ideas — vague, incoherent ideas, but ideas nonetheless, and I've spent literally minutes coming up with five foolproof ways Valve should proceed in making *Half-Life 2*. Tipping is encouraged.

(1) GORDON FREEMAN SHOULD NOT STAR: "Whaaa?" you wheeze. "Are you insane?" Well, yes, but that's beside the point. Gordon's story is over, and even though he might have the looks and charisma of Charlie Sheen in *The Arrival* (as many have pointed out), the downside is that he has the looks and charisma of Charlie Sheen in *The Arrival*. *Half-Life* is about the story, not Gordon. Let somebody else take over — say, Emilio Estevez (*The Mighty Ducks*).

(2) DITCH THE BLACK MESA RESEARCH FACILITY: It was a perfect setting for the

first *Half-Life*, but after poking around the place as Gordon, Adrian, Barney — even Babs the receptionist — I can draw its layout in a snowbank with my pee. Let's take it to the streets this time out, and see how the Xen invasion has affected the rest of our planet.

(3) JIMMY DEAN SAUSAGE = HEALTH: 'Nuff said.

(4) GET NEW VILLAINS: Just as Gordon should cameo, but not star, in *HL2*, the Xen aliens must bow out gracefully (especially the headcrabs). They're has-beens, and inviting them back for a second helping of scientist goulash would be lame. Kinda like *Men in Black 2* — essentially the exact same movie as the original.

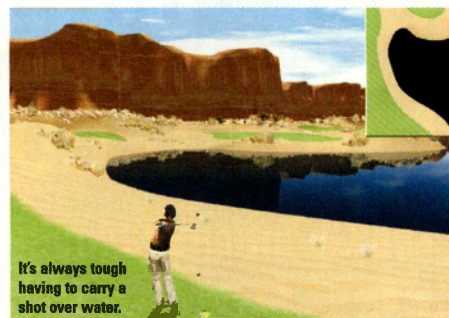
(5) KEEP THE GAMEPLAY CONSISTENT: Nothing quite leads to painful feminine itching like playing through 13 levels of a first-person shooter only to suddenly find yourself hopping around Xen like Mario, shrieking, "It's-a me, Charlie-a Sheen!" Diverse gameplay rules, but don't go altering the laws of physics in the last inning.

SO TO SUM UP: Make it just like *Half-Life*, only different. What would you do? Let me steal your brilliant ideas at killingbox@pcgamer.com.



Gerardo Freeman, Gordon's half-brother, finds himself alienated in Chuck's vision of *Half-Life 2*.

MY GAMES OF THE MONTH: 1. UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2003, 2. NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2, 3. FREEDOM FORCE, 4. BATTLEFIELD 1942, 5. ARX FATALIS



It's always tough having to carry a shot over water.

extended play

Golfing Glory: 20 More Links in the Chain

FOR GOLFERS, HALF THE FUN OF THE PASTIME

is exploring new courses and pitting your (meager) skills against each new challenge. It's no different for virtual golfers. After honing your mouse-swinging talents on the wonderful new *Links 2003*, you can more than double the number of professionally rendered courses available to you with the \$20 purchase of the *Links 2003 Championship Courses* add-on.

Some might say this purchase is unnecessary, since a wealth of user-created courses will soon be available for free download. That's true enough, but as with most things, you get what you pay for — the quality of the amateur courses is hit-and-miss, and you can spend an awful lot of time sorting through them before finding one that's really well-done.

Enter Microsoft, which gets paid to create courses based on real-world licenses. The *Championship Courses* expansion adds 20 new courses, including a couple of fictional ones that are some of the most spectacular of the bunch (go figure). At a buck a course, you're getting a lot of value out of this add-on — you won't find a dog in the whole pack, and you'll be playing each of these courses many times over the next year or two.



Dan Morris

While it's not my favorite, the fictional course at Mesa Roja is easily the most visually stunning. Set in a dramatic red-rock valley in the Southwest, it features vertical plateaus and wide desert vistas. Other standouts include the real-life Judge Course at Capitol Hill, with fairways wrapped in autumn trees of every conceivable hue, and Banff Springs, with its dizzying elevation changes and panoramic scenes of forested mountains.

Many of the courses are new to the *Links* franchise, but even the ones that are recurring (like Banff) have been given 2003-engine makeovers that make them practically all-new for visual purposes. The texturing quality is much-improved, and the graphics throughout are sharp and detailed. It's surprising to see how a course like Banff has evolved from the original *Links: The Challenge of Golf*, when 2D sprites and simplistic color palettes rendered a course that was Banff-like in name only. Cut to the postcard-ready images of today's game, and it's easy to see how far this series has come.

That dollar-a-throw for these 20 excellent courses will serve a *Links*-ster well. *Championship* is a great add-on for those seeking to test their skills against a wide variety of courses.

— extendedplay@pcgamer.com

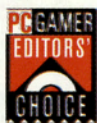


Order Now for Guaranteed
Holiday Delivery!

"Bottom Line: Add Velocity Micro to our short list of highly recommended premier system builders."

Editor's Choice

PC Gamer, July 2002



"Record-setting scores and elite components put the ProMagix in league with the big boys."

Kick Ass Product

MaximumPC, August 2002



"Velocity Micro machines flex some muscle"

Computer Shopper, October 2002



The Fastest Gaming PC for
Under \$1500 anywhere



➤ **Gamer's Edge 1500**



➤ **ProMagix DX**

PUMP itUP!



➤ **NoteMagix S56**

www.velocitymicro.com

1-800-303-7866

© 2002 by Velocity Micro, Richmond VA.



A World of Trains

Add-ons lay out miles of new track for *MS Train Simulator*



Blue Sky Interactive's *Pro Train* add-on for *MS Train Simulator* showcases Germany's 200mph ICE3 train.

Fans of *Microsoft Train Simulator* aren't typical gamers. These Casey Jones wanna-bes can find endless hours of entertainment in a game that doesn't let you bomb, strafe, or steer into a guardrail. They can also derive an uncommon degree of satisfaction from the mundane process of moving hundreds of invisible passengers or tons of freight down some lonely ribbon of virtual steel with only an arbitrary timetable as motivation.

Like the robber barons of the 19th century, train-simmers are also spurred on by the prospect of expansion. Longer routes, faster locomotives, more rolling stock — it's all part of the railroader's credo. When *Train Sim* first shipped in 2001, the game delivered a healthy cross-section of steam, diesel, and electric locomotives, with over 500 miles of real-world track laid out over three continents. Microsoft thoughtfully threw in a full-featured (albeit unwieldy) editor that permitted the mod community to add their own custom routes and activities as well as new locomotive and car skins.

A year and a half later, hundreds of commercial and user-created add-ons are available. It'd take me several columns to list them all, so here's my list of some of the key commercial add-ons.

PRO TRAIN; PRO TRAIN II; USA & CANADA ADD-ON PACK
(STRATEGY FIRST; WWW.STRATEGYFIRST.COM)
A trio of imports from Germany-based

Blue Sky Interactive and Australia-based Auran. Blue Sky's *Pro Train* add-ons deliver a pair of lengthy new passenger routes through central Germany, while the Auran pack cranks out a score of new diesel and electric locomotives from all over North America.

CASINO EXPRESS; RAIL YARD COLLECTION; SCENIC RAILWAY
(ABACUS; [HTTP://TRAINSIMULATORWORLD.COM](http://TRAINSIMULATORWORLD.COM))
A beefy collection of products (\$20 to \$30 each) that'll almost double the size and scale of your default *Train Sim* scenery and rolling stock overnight. The *Casino Express* package — featuring a high-speed elevated train from Barstow, Calif., to the Vegas Strip — is particularly inventive.

KICKING HORSE PASS; SANDPATCH
(MAPLE LEAF TRACKS; WWW.MAPLELEAFTRACKS.COM)
Tricky high-altitude routes through the Canadian Rockies and Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains are the themes of these highly detailed scenery-and-locomotive packs (\$15 and \$20, respectively).

Don't feel like parting with any of your hard-earned cash? No worries. Just direct your browser to Microsoft's official *Train Sim* website (<http://microsoft.com/games/trainsim>) and click on the "Community" link for a list of fan sites where you can download heaps of free stuff. Be warned, however: the damn things are breeding like rabbits!

— simcolumn@pcgamer.com

I spend more time as this guy than as Steve Klett. [Because he's cooler! — Ed.]



alternate lives

RPG'ing for the Lively and the Lifeless

I WAS ASTOUNDED BY THE number of responses to my October column on the length of RPGs and the heartfelt futility of finishing them all. So I wanted to readdress the issue here, and share some of your "advice."

Most of us clearly do qualify as addicts. Respondents ranged in age from 14 to 60, with responsibilities ranging from "none" to more than most shoulders should try to bear (such as my trying to juggle caring for newborn twin girls and still finding time to game...a lot). The overriding thing we all had in common — except for a select, brave few — was the inability to finish many of the RPGs we owned, and to stop ourselves from running out and buying every new game that hits the shelves.

From the lips of the youngest writer — 14-year-old Krill Petrov — came what may be the best advice. (What's scary is that he has the fortitude and patience to follow it, and I don't.) His recipe for RPG-playing happiness goes as follows:

(1) Pick a series (same world/same engine), and play *only* it, one game at a time. This way, you don't have to read the manual to understand the controls every time you open up a new box — and the story should make a lot more sense.

(2) Sort your RPGs just like you sort your inventory in the games themselves. First, play the best RPG that you think you have, and then the second best, and so on.

Petrov used this strategy to beat eight games, including both *Diablos*, *Dungeon Siege*, and the *Fallouts*. Not bad, kid. But these are the *shorter* RPGs, so let me know how this tactic works for the *Forgotten Realms* titles that you plan on playing next...

Now for some numbers: Most of you own more than a dozen RPGs (many of you have more than 50 to 100 across all gaming platforms). On average, you've finished less than 20 percent of your games (which makes me feel better, at least).

Opinions on whether new RPGs should be longer, like BioWare's, or shorter, like *Dungeon Siege*, were pretty much split down the middle. Younger players seemed to like the Gas Powered Games model, while us "older" players still want to have our cake and eat it, too — i.e., long-ass games and all the time in the world to finish them.

I'll end with what may still be the best advice, as phrased by Carl Bachelore (whose last name says it all): "Tell your readers that card-carrying, hardcore RPGers shouldn't have a life — and if they do, they don't belong in the hobby."

— alternatelives@pcgamer.com



Steve Klett

Where diplomacy ends...

HEARTS OF IRON

1936-1948

War begins!



From the makers of the award winning Europa Universalis I & II. Hearts of Iron, the first WWII game of grand strategic scope, covers the war from 1936 - 1948 and lets you control and conquer any country in the world. Assign political leaders and promote generals as you struggle against the great alliances of the new world orders of Fascism, Communism and Democracy!



www.strategyfirst.com
www.paradoxplaza.com

©2002 Strategy First Inc. All rights reserved. Hearts of Iron is a trademark of Paradox Entertainment AB. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and copyrights are the properties of their respective owners.



Violence



YOU HAVE 60 SECONDS TO SAVE THE WORLD. **GO.**



You'll need gadgets, lots of gadgets, gadgets to master the art of becoming invisible, infrared goggles to start, maybe a grappling hook



Violence
Suggestive Themes



tick a laser camera, tock and magnets tick all to help you obtain secret documents tock and then scale the walls of a large international organization 60 stories above Tokyo,



tick or defend yourself from sniper fire high above the alps tock while dodging bullets from tick would be jungle assassins all in time to tock get the girl

but don't pat yourself on the back yet tick because that was only one minute tock and there are still 1,400 left in the day tick and 14 more classic Bond enemies to fight online.

Sixty seconds of Bond's world. It's more than most people do their entire life.

Online maps
provided
by GameSpy



SEE
*DIE
ANOTHER
DAY*
IN THEATERS NOVEMBER 22

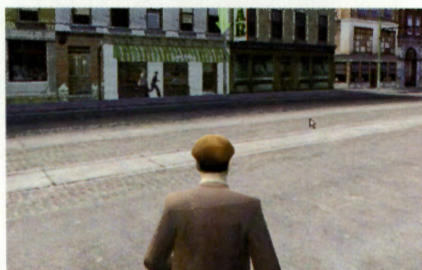


Challenge Everything™

Mafia: The City of Lost Heaven



Hey, Paisan, if you want to get in good with Salieri, you can't screw up. Lucky for you, I'm here to give you a hand. Just do what I say and you'll be a made man in no time.



In "Running Man," once you make it to Salieri's bar, you're home free.



To enter the motel in "Ordinary Routine," climb up these crates to get onto the second-story balcony.



Do whatever it takes to avoid taking damage to your racecar. ("Fairplay")

AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE Just drive. The guys chasing you will try to knock you off the road by hitting your car on the driver's side: don't let them. Try driving really close to oncoming traffic, effectively "shaving" the tail off your caboose. Once you're in the clear, use the map to get to Salieri's place. Just be sure to use your speed limiter (default key is F4) so that you don't get pulled over on the way there. In fact, it's a good rule in general to always use the speed limiter when you're not in a hurry.

RUNNING MAN You'll start this mission driving your fares back and forth, but things go south when some of Morello's men come to rough you up. All you need to do is survive and make it to Salieri's bar. Use the map so you won't run into any dead-

ends, and strafe left to right as you run to minimize the number of times you get hit.

MOLOTOV PARTY This one's a cakewalk. Once you get to the parking lot, just go around back, sneak up to the guard from behind, and knock him out with one fully charged hit from your baseball bat. Then use your Molotov cocktails and baseball bat to destroy the three cars in the lot.

ORDINARY ROUTINE You get your first taste of serious action here. The job starts off quiet, but it'll heat up real fast once you get to the motel. Enter the motel through the back window on the second floor, using the crates in the back of the building to get up to the window. Don't enter through the front door.

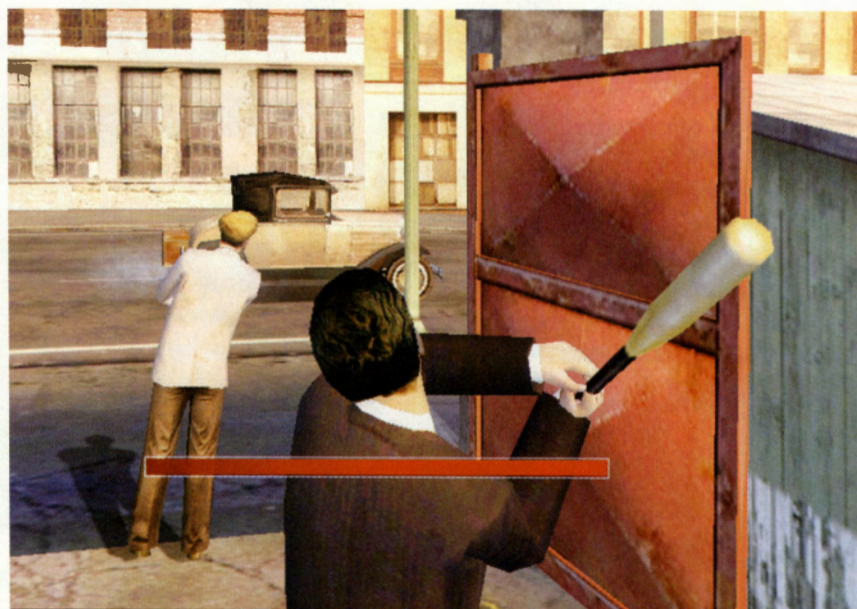
Once inside, you'll find a Tommy gun sitting on a bed in the room right across from the window. Use it to clear out the building. Before you head into the room where Sam is, go back out the way you came, to the front of the motel, and shoot the wheels off the yellow convertible parked out front. Just aim for the center of each wheel using whichever gun has the most ammo: it'll take only a few shots to flatten it. Then, go all the way back inside and get Sam. If you need health, you'll find some in the bathroom to the right of the stairs on the second floor.

The last guy will take your money and run outside. But guess what? Since you blew the wheels off his car, he isn't going anywhere. Rub him out and you're done.

FAIRPLAY No one in the mob plays fair, and this job proves it. Stealing the racecar and getting it back in time isn't the hard part: Just stay clear of cops by using your radar, and to avoid damaging the car, don't drive too fast. The time limit isn't as tight as it seems if you keep a good pace.

The real challenge comes in winning the race: This contest is definitely one of the hardest parts of the game. There's no fast and easy way through it — you just have to keep racing 'til you come in first. Try to get a lead early and hold it, rather than trying to work your way up slowly. Also, the usual mouse-and-keyboard setup doesn't facilitate the best driving. If you have a joystick, use it for your driving controls: it'll make winning much easier.

SARAH Here's your turn to get some action of another kind. But first, you'll have to bust some heads. No big deal: just escort Sarah home. When some tough guys show up, teach 'em a lesson. To make pummeling them easier, beat them with the wooden plank leaning against the right



The key to "Molotov Party" is to sneak up to this guard and clock him with your baseball bat.

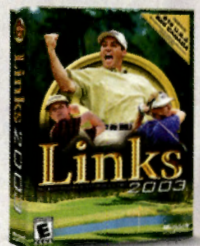
You're looking at the par 4 fifth at Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail's Cambrian Ridge.
The most beautiful hole on the course is arguably its most difficult. Its lush
fairway lies behind a focus-rattling body of water. A daunting mix of
sand and skyscraping trees eagerly awaits your slightest miscalculation.
And 426 yards away, a mercilessly placed flag waves in a 10mph wind.

By the way, you're looking at a computer game.



www.microsoft.com/games/links2003

To be more specific, you're looking at Links 2003. Thanks to lifelike graphics, you can experience the beauty of actual world championship courses while playing with top pros like Sergio Garcia. If the state-of-the-art practice facility doesn't help you conquer one of the six new world-renowned courses, you can always build one using the Arnold Palmer Course Designer. There's also authentic ball physics and a hyper-realistic golf swing to help you hone your skills. Best of all, every day is a perfect day to play.



©2002 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Links, and the Microsoft Game Studios logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. Other products and company names mentioned herein may be trademarks of their respective owners.



Use this wooden plank to go to town on some unruly thugs in "Sarah." Full-power swings are key.

wall in the alley where you are attacked. The most effective way to deal with these guys is to run away to give yourself some distance, and then charge up a full-power hit. Start swinging once someone gets close enough. You don't need to kill these guys, so don't chase after them when they run away, or else you'll lose Sarah.

BETTER GET USED TO IT Your biggest problem will be keeping Paulie alive. Try to keep guys off him because the mission ends if he goes down. The mission will also end if you start shooting before the bad guys do. Use the same hit-and-run technique you used in the previous mission. If you're having trouble when the gunfight starts, try rolling, shooting, and rolling and shooting again — you'll take fewer hits that way.

In the post-cutscene car chase, all you need to do is keep up: The guys in the car will eventually wreck.

THE WHORE, PART I: THE HOTEL Once you get to the hotel, talk to the concierge, and he'll tell you that the guy you're looking for is in the restaurant. Take a right and go to the last room. At the corner table you'll see a man in a white suit. Shoot him and his bodyguards. More people will come into the room once the shooting starts: take care of them and head back to the concierge. Go behind the counter and get the key to the manager's office. You'll also find some health by the key.

Head to the third floor; you'll find the prostitute in one of the rooms with a welcome mat at the door. Once you've taken care of her, head back the way you came to the manager's office. There'll be one man inside with a gun: dispatch him and plant the bomb by walking up to the desk and hitting your action key. Then get out of there.

THE WHORE, PART II: THE ROOF Here's another tough one. About a half-dozen cops are coming up the fire escape. They'll get bottlenecked there, so if you position yourself at the top of a flight of stairs at just the right angle, you can take them out one by one without incurring too much damage. Don't bother shooting it out with the officer across the street who's toting the Tommy gun — just run upstairs and keep going.



Here's the guy you want to rub out in part I of "Whore." Note his bodyguard across the room.

There's only one way to go, and you'll have to make your way through more cops. Just remember to use cover wisely. Watch out for one cop with a Springfield rifle: he can kill you with one headshot. You'll want to save your magnum revolver for him, as it'll dish out the most damage with the least hits.

Eventually, you'll reach a ladder that you can tip over and use as a bridge to get to the church.

THE WHORE, PART III: THE PRIEST After making it through all that, you'll end up in a shootout that's even bigger than the one you were running away from. Immediately retreat back behind the door and use it as a bottleneck. Next, you'll want to take out both the guy in the high-up pulpit and the guy in the balcony sporting the Tommy gun. Then mop up the rest of the wiseguys.

Once you get to the door, more goombas will show up. Roll out of the way fast, as some of them have shotguns. If you still have ammo for your own shotgun, use it to blow 'em away.

When you finally get to a car, you'll have to lose the cops. Just find some alley-



In the church shootout near the end of "Whore," the guys holding the high ground are your top priority.

way to hide out in until they stop looking for you, and then head back to Salieri's.

A TRIP TO THE COUNTRY This night mission is full of guys with shotguns — but it's also very straightforward. Just remember that shotguns aren't as effective at long range: If you stay back, you can nail these enemies with your handguns. Once you get to the barn to rescue Sam, some cops will show up. Stay upstairs: it'll give you the high-ground advantage, since you can shoot out the hay-loft window. But watch your back for anyone who may come up behind you.

The getaway segment isn't hard: just shoot straight and watch your ammo. Don't bother aiming for the tires of the cars chasing you — just take out their engines.

OMERTA Here's another long mission; you'll want a fast car for it. Talk to your informants (you'll have to punch Joey to get info out of him) and then head to where they're keeping Frank. You'll end up tailing Frank to the airport. Once there, you'll have to waste some guards while looking for Frank.

If you want, you can steal a car and use it to drive around the airport while



Stay upstairs when Paulie goes for the truck. ("A Trip to the Country")

PROJECT

NOMADS

Available NOVEMBER 2002

After the Disaster!

STORY

Disaster Strikes!

YOUR FORMER planet has been reduced to a group of drifting islands. You, Nomad, are one of the few survivors with a single goal: destroy those responsible for the catastrophe. Equip your island with weapons, armor, and magical items to create a roving battle giant. Send heavily armed flight devices to gather raw materials and artifacts.

You have work to do and a revenge to attend to in this unique action strategy RPG.

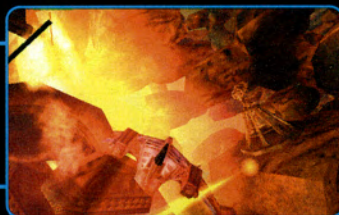
GET TO WORK!

FEATURES

- 3D world with breathtaking graphics
- Three diverse heroes to choose from: clever John, strong Goliath or fairy-like Susie; use unique tactics depending on your choice of character
- 8 main quests with numerous sub quests, with more than 40 different opponents
- Fight enemies with fireballs and spellbombs!
- Control your own flying island, and experience unlimited freedom of movement between the islands
- Multiplayer game for up to 8 players via LAN or Internet
- Innovative storyline



"Best PC Game,
ECTS 2001"



RATING PENDING

RP

Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for more info. CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

For more information on this product's rating, call 1-800-771-3772 or visit the ESRB website <http://www.esrb.org>

www.cdv.de
www.PROJECT-NOMADS.COM

RADON
LABS

cdv

© 2002 CDV Software Entertainment AG. All rights reserved. Subject to change.



Blowing up the cars will take out some goombas in "A Great Deal."



Look for this box in "Visiting Rich People" — you can use it to turn off the lights in the courtyard.



In "Omerta," this building is the one with Frank's family. Take Frank to them.



Sergio's hiding in this building ("You Lucky Bastard"). The door's locked, so use a train car to bust in.

you fire your gun out the window. Don't kill Frank when you finally find him: just talk to him. He'll ask you to find his family. They're in a wooden building a couple of doors down. Find them and take him to them. Next, you'll have to find their plane tickets. The tickets are in the first building at the parking lot where you came in. It's crawling with cops now. Grab the tickets and get back to Frank, then make a quick getaway to the bank.

VISITING RICH PEOPLE Head left when the mission starts. You'll need to take out the sentries quietly: a fully charged hit with the baseball bat should do. If you head left when the level starts, you should find a box next to a bench — it'll turn off the lights in the backyard. Once in the house, you'll have to make your way upstairs to the safe. If you run into anyone, knock them out with the bat. Don't forget that you can use Salvatore to open some doors if needed. Once you have the documents, get out fast and take Salvatore back home.

A GREAT DEAL This mission goes downhill fast once you get in the parking lot. Use the cars in the garage as cover; if you want, you can move them to form a barrier before the cutscene starts to provide more adequate cover. When you work your way downstairs, watch out for the guys barricaded behind their cars: they have grenades. Listen carefully and you'll hear when a grenade lands near you. Try to take out these enemies from a distance. Once you've killed everyone, you have to go back up to the truck and drive it back to the warehouse. If you don't lose the tail, get ready for one last shootout once you reach the warehouse.

BON APPÉTIT It's just you and Salieri here. When Morello's hitmen start shooting up the restaurant, head outside through the back door. Once outside, head down the alley to the street. Watch out for the thug with a Tommy gun: kill him, take his gun, and go around the corner. You've now flanked Morello's men. Take them out, then go back to the alley, and enter the building adjacent to the restaurant. Watch out for a guy with a shotgun. Kill him, then head to the second floor and take out the other guy with a Tommy gun. After that, head down to the street to eliminate anyone you missed. Move fast so Salieri doesn't get killed. The rest is easy.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY If you go into the building that's behind the line for the boat, you'll find a sailor uniform. Change your clothes and you'll be let onboard. Go to the bathroom on the second level (toward the back of the boat and by the stairs); you'll see that it's locked. Find the skipper — he's wearing a white and blue striped shirt —

Free issue! Free demo- packed game disc!



SAVE 69% OFF THE COVER PRICE

NO OBLIGATION! Send me a **FREE ISSUE** of the Official Xbox Magazine, plus a **FREE demo-packed GAME DISC**. If I like the Official Xbox Magazine, I'll pay just \$29.95 for 11 more issues and 11 more discs (12 in all) and save 69% off the cover price. If I'm not completely satisfied, I'll write "cancel" on the invoice and return it. I'll pay nothing, will owe nothing, and the **FREE ISSUE** and **FREE GAME DISC** are mine to keep.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

EMAIL ADDRESS (OPTIONAL)

Offer good in U.S. only. Annual newsstand rate is \$95.88. Canada US \$43.95 (includes GST). Prepaid in US funds. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of first issue.

JXH2SDG1Y

MAIL THIS POSTAGE-PAID CARD TODAY





NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 218 HARLAN IA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

OFFICIAL XBOX MAGAZINE
PO BOX 5156
HARLAN IA 51593-2656



SUBSCRIBE TODAY



SAVE 69%
OFF THE
COVER PRICE!

SAVE 69% OFF THE COVER PRICE

Free issue! Free demo-packed game disc!

If you're pleased with what you see, we'll send you 11 more issues and 11 additional discs (12 in all) for only \$29.95 – that's a savings of over \$65 off the cover price.

Offer good in U.S. only. Annual newsstand rate is \$95.88. Canada U.S. \$43.95 (includes GST). Prepaid in US funds. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of first issue.

EXH2PCG1Y





Here's your target in "Election Campaign." Take the headshot, then make your way down to your car.



Don't pull anything funny at the warehouse ("Just for Relaxation"), or the guards will be all over you.



When fighting Sam in "The Death of Art," pop up, shoot, and take cover. Repeat.

and talk to him a few times to get the key. Get the bucket from the bathroom that's on the starboard-aft side of the boat and then go back to the second-floor bathroom. You'll clean up the mess and get your gun. Return the key to the skipper and wait for the speech to start. Once it does, walk up to the counselor, kill him, and run back down to where you started the level. Paulie will be waiting in a boat to get you out of there.

YOU LUCKY BASTARD You'll spend most of the first part of this mission trying to lose tails. The tricky part comes when you're paired with the hired goons. Once they die, you'll have to chase down Sergio. Don't bother trying to shoot his car: just tail him. He'll lead you to the trainyards. You'll have plenty of bad guys to dispatch here, but Sergio will hide in one of the buildings. You can't get in because the door's locked. Go to the train tracks and you'll see a switch. Use it to direct the train tracks toward the building Sergio is in, then go to the nearby train cars and move the blocks at the wheels. The train will roll and break

open the door. (You have two trains, so you can try again if you mess up the first time.) Now just go in and kill Sergio.

CRÈME DE LA CRÈME The plan goes to hell and you'll have to chase Morello to the airport. Once there, make a beeline for the airplane. Shoot at the engines with a shotgun or Tommy gun. If you do enough damage, Paulie and Sam will show up and give you a ride. Once in the car, keep shooting at the engines until they catch on fire.

Sometimes Morello's car won't turn into the airport. If this happens, just keep chasing him. He'll eventually get caught up at a bridge and a cutscene will show you pushing his car off the edge of the bridge.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN Get into the old prison through the sewers, and kill the guy near the manhole. Fight off the bad guys inside and get up to the tower. It won't be a challenge to hit your target: just take your time and go for the headshot. Then just make your way out by going all the way down the stairs in the tower, and when you get to your car, lose the cops.

JUST FOR RELAXATION Run the truck off the road and the driver will get out. Chase him down and beat him up to get the documents. Take all of the crates out of the back of the truck, get in, and drive it back to the docks. Take it straight down from the entrance and you'll come to a warehouse on the left with the door open and a guy standing out front. Back up the truck to the warehouse and then talk to the guy. Move the crates that he points out with the help of the workers standing next to them. When you're done, talk to the guy again and you'll tell him they're having problems with the train. He'll walk off and you'll be able to load the crates you need onto your truck. Then drive out. You'll be chased, but it shouldn't be too big of a problem to lose your pursuers.

MOONLIGHTING No tricks here: Just move fast once you're in the bank and bring lots of guns. For the getaway, having a fast car such as the Trautenberg Model J is vital.

THE DEATH OF ART You start off at Paulie's. Put your guns away and run from the cops. You'll want to stop by Yellow Pete's shop to get some more firepower: get a rifle and whatever else you can carry. (Don't bother getting a Tommy gun, since you'll eventually be able to pick one up from someone you killed.) Once you get to the museum, you'll be surrounded. Fight your way out — which may take you a few tries. Watch out for grenades when you get to the first stairs leading up. Eventually you'll have to fight Sam one-on-one. He doesn't miss often. Use your rifle here. Pop out, shoot him once, and then take cover again. (If you try to get in more shots at a time, he'll nail you with his Thompson.) After a dozen or so hits, Sam will run off. Chase him down with a pistol or Tommy gun and finish it.

There you go — done. Now that I've led you through La Cosa Nostra, I need you to do me a small favor. In the game's Freeride Extreme mode, you'll find a woman chained to a pole on a rock by the beach (shown below). I'm just dying to know why she's there. If you can find out what the story is on this dame, I'll consider us even. **POG**



Just who is this lady, anyway? I've got to know!

It's what's inside that counts.



MAGIC The Gathering® ONLINE

With 350 new cards, the *Onslaught™* expansion is the perfect entry into the **Magic: The Gathering®** Online game. And the new Morph mechanic allows you to keep a poker face as your opponents lose their heads. That's because you play Morph cards face down. So your they won't know what's lurking underneath, except that it's going to be one nasty surprise.



free game download:
www.magicthegathering.com

All trademarks are property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ©2002 Wizards.



Medal of Honor: Spearhead



Time to load that BAR again for some more Nazi-bashing! This sequel is every bit as tough as the World War II epic that spawned it, so use our complete walkthrough to succeed in the second assault.



This tiger tank comes out of nowhere to waste one of your allies. Man the nearby artillery cannon to blast it to pieces. (Norm-M3)

grenade inside the barn, storm in and eliminate the four soldiers inside. Bomb the first artillery cannon, but be ready for many enemies to spawn right after the explosion. Stride across the wheat field and under the sewage gutter.

As you exit the tunnel, shoot the sniper in the large barn and kill all his buddies inside. Go around the adjacent house and toward the gated compound. As you enter, shoot the two snipers in the windows, and then kill the men in the barn to the right. For the buildings to your left, enter the one farther away from you — that's where the captain rushes to first. Take out the men in the other building only after the enemies in this one are dead, to avoid the captain getting into any death duels. Don't shoot the soldiers working on the artillery, or they'll blow you away once the next sequence begins. Follow the private outside the balcony and rush the enemies when

→ NORMANDY

MISSION 1 After your fall through the barn, a group of soldiers will rush inside to kill you. Press the Use key to detach quickly from the parachute, and then climb up the broken stairs to avoid the gas grenade. One enemy will throw a grenade from the top level of the barn, so waste him first. From the open window, shoot the two soldiers standing across the stream. Peek through the broken floorboards to kill the guy waiting for you downstairs. Descend to the lower level and grab the health on the table. Shoot three soldiers outside the window, then go back upstairs and jump into the stream. Climb out from the right side of the stream to the back of the house and rush the soldiers manning the artillery. Use the artillery to blow up an incoming truck.

Head along the road and kill the soldiers hiding behind trees, along with the one using a machine gun. When you reach a field with a windmill, a new wave of soldiers will ambush you from the back. After disposing of them, shoot one of the enemies near the windmill, and some friendly NPCs will arrive to assist

you. Take control of the 88mm cannon to blow up the tank. Follow your allies to complete the mission.

MISSION 2 Don't let the captain die in this mission! Start by rushing the three soldiers inside the windmill. Run to the house that's to the right of the windmill; stay away from the opening in the fence. Kill all the enemies inside the house, then exit through the back and ambush the baddies in the barn. Advance down the road and be prepared for a large number of soldiers waiting to the left of the house. After the captain throws a

given the order. Look out for two enemies hiding in the white tent. Blow up the second artillery and get on the boat to finish the mission.

MISSION 3 Get off the boat and then head to the house. Shoot the men through the right-side windows before going through the door. Don't let the captain enter first: he might get killed. Exit the back of the house and immediately kill the enemies to your left. Let the colonel ride away on the bike, then rush up the road and kill the soldiers waiting outside. Go up the stairs and pump the colonel full of lead.



Meet up with these beret-wearing buddies to free Normandy from the Nazi scourge. (Norm-M1)



The colonel escapes from you several times. Pump him full of lead so he can't do it again. (Norm-M3)

SAVE



Where Gamers Go...

Play More - Pay Less

Visit us @ www.gogamer.com or call us @ 888-948-9661



When fighting gunners to reach these airdropped bombs, use disabled vehicles as cover. (Norm-M3)



Ambush these cowardly scum from behind their well-hidden trenches. (Belg-M1)



Before blowing up the cannons in this level, use 'em against infantry and incoming tanks. (Belg-M1)

Down the road, a tiger tank will break through the wall, killing the private. Go through the break in the wall and man the flak cannon. Shoot through parts of the wall and let the captain lure the tank into range. Blow up the tank with two timely shots before it kills the captain. He'll say "Good job" and tell you to blow up the flak cannon that you just used to destroy the tank. Place a charge on the flak (just as you did twice in the previous mission) and run for cover. After the flak blows, an airplane flies overhead and the captain tells you that it's an Allied plane dropping off some explosives for you to use to destroy the bridge.

Continue through the map, slaying everyone you encounter. You have to bypass the first of two MG42 nests shortly after the airplane sighting. (Whenever dealing with MG42s, toss a smoke grenade in front of them and then rush in, taking them out before the smoke dissipates.) You'll find the supply drop

shortly thereafter. Gather the explosives and use them on a communications center located in a shack.

After eliminating the comm center, continue through its wreckage; you'll soon come upon the second MG42 nest. After you've killed the gunner, you can man the gun and use it against a squad of Nazis. From this point, you'll engage in some more room-to-room fighting until you eventually make it to the bridge, which you're supposed to blow up before the supply train arrives. You have approximately 40 seconds to plant four charges on the bridge while fending off a stream of enemies: If you take too long, the train will arrive, and you'll fail the mission.

➔ BELGIUM

MISSION 1 Lead your soldiers along the frosty road, staying to the right side of the road. Shoot the idle group of guards,

and then proceed until you reach a fork in the path. A truck will approach from the right side, so head toward the left and secure the area with the artillery cannon. Man the cannon to take out the truck and enemy soldiers climbing over the hill. Grab sticky bombs from one of your teammates and blow up the cannon.

Follow the navigation arrow on your compass along the path that the truck came from. When you reach the tower, destroy the cannon and shoot the men guarding it, including the one in the tower. Continue on the path, keeping to the right. A tank will be coming toward you soon: shoot the gunner on top, and attach a sticky bomb to blow up the tank. Get off the path and follow the compass to the right. Avoid the artillery on the other side of the road and take out the soldiers hiding in makeshift trenches. Blow up the artillery.

Not far along the road is another cannon, followed by a tank. Take out the tank first using a sticky bomb, then blow up the cannon to finish an objective. A swarm of troops will spawn immediately after, so make sure your teammates aren't all killed. When you reach the fenced compound, wipe out the soldiers from the flipped-over truck, and go along the left side of the fence. Enter the building and clear it of pesky soldiers. After killing everyone in the compound, enter the second garage building, next to the shed with the vehicle. Take the supply truck hanging from the ceiling.

It's all run-and-gun for this next sequence. The ammo indicator may show only 20 rounds, but you actually have an unlimited amount. Just shoot everything that moves, but make wasting tanks and rocket infantry your top priority. Don't let that supply truck be destroyed!

MISSION 2 After your camp is bombarded, run toward the nearest trench to find cover. Find the injured captain and get instructions to find the medic. Make your way back in the direction you came from, using trenches whenever you can find them. Follow the navigation arrow and pass a trench with hapless soldiers crushed by a fallen tree to find the medic



Enemy groups use various weapons. Nail the rocket-launcher guy first, but watch for grenades! (Belg-M1)

LIVE THE LEGEND...

Fun and dynamic gameplay

Use cunning or might to complete missions

Play as Robin Hood, Little John, Maid Marian and others

Stunning graphics and realistic atmospheric conditions

BECOME THE HERO!

Take on the role of the legendary nobleman, Robin Hood or one of his Merry Men and play over 30 different missions that combine action and adventure with stealth tactical elements as you battle for control of the King's throne in the stunning, lush backdrop of Sherwood Forest.

Robin Hood

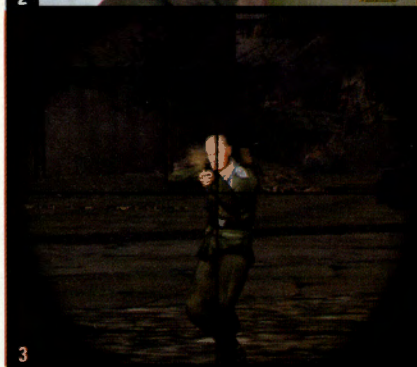
THE LEGEND OF SHERWOOD



© 2002 Wanadoo Edition. All rights reserved. Co-published by Strategy First Inc. and Wanadoo Edition. Created by Spellbound Studios.



Violence



From top to bottom: (1) This airplane makes several passes, so figure out its flight pattern, then shoot it down before it bombs the captain. (Belg-M3) (2) When defending the lines, target tanks first: Nazi infantry aren't nearly as deadly. (Belg-M2) (3) Long-distance assaults are always better than a close-up confrontation. Pick him off! (Berl-M1) (4) Find the fallen pilot's documents next to his plane and this ready-to-blow-up truck. (Berl-M1)



Rain will defuse your sticky bombs, but you can still detonate them with a precise hit. (Berl-M1)

assisting a fellow NPC. Lead the medic to the captain via the same route you used to get there.

Defending the right and left flank is simply a matter of shooting first — and accurately. The invading Nazis will start off using gas grenades, and then slowly emerge from the ensuing haze. (*Distinguishing enemies from the green gas may be difficult at first, but changing the brightness and gamma in your video settings may help.*) Use the dug-out trenches to shield yourself from the onslaught. The enemy will come in waves, so fire in spurts and not wildly.

After defending the right flank, head over to the left side and pick up the rocket launcher. Ready your launcher to take out a tank, but don't let any of the enemy get through to the front line: Your allies are fodder in hand-to-hand combat, and won't provide an adequate defense. When instructed to return to the right flank, pick up two more rockets before entering the trench. The first tank back at the right flank will be destroyed by an ally, but you'll need to rocket two more vehicles before finishing the mission.

MISSION 3 This level is *Spearhead's* Omaha Beach counterpart. First, rush to hide behind the small hill area where the other soldiers are located. When given the advance signal, run out from the right side and head for the next safe spot, where a rocket launcher will be waiting for you. At this point, there are two tanks

to destroy — one on either side of the hill. Take them out and continue on. At the gunner, go to the left of the house to eliminate two ambushers. Clear the tank that's waiting for you ahead.

The next sequence involves entering several buildings and wiping out the soldiers inside. First is the church, which has two men waiting inside on the ground floor and numerous enemies lurking on the upper two levels. Be sure to climb the ladder to reach the upper-roof level, where several more soldiers are waiting. The house that follows has two enemies on either side of the door, just as you enter. Secure the school and hotel, and watch out for soldiers that spawn outside after each building is cleared. Meet up with the captain after every building, and get instructions to take down a plane with a flak cannon. The plane makes several passes, but you must shoot it down before it bombs the captain. Grounding the plane ends the mission.

➔ BERLIN

MISSION 1 The first objective is to cross the bridge to your right. The first wave of Nazi defenders should be easy to take out with the help of your Soviet allies. Along the way to the fallen pilot, you'll pass several trucks, moving and stationary. You can blow up a truck by sticking a bomb on one of four spots (two on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 159

ATTENTION PC POWER GAMERS:

Don't miss the Ultimate PC How-To Guide, a newsstand-only special issue from:

MAXIMUMPC

**NEW
FEATURES
NOT AVAILABLE IN
THE MONTHLY
MAGAZINE**

MAXIMUMPC PRESENTS THE ULTIMATE

PC HOW-TO

FALL | WINTER 2002

GUIDE

Turbocharge Your PC

**12 easy
step-by-step
tutorials!**

**THERE'S
MORE!**
OUR ENTIRE "BUILD
YOUR OWN PC"
TUTORIAL IS ON
THE DISC

The Doctor is in!

Our resident tech guru
tells you how
to fix the most
nagging PC problems



Silicon Encyclopedia

Ultimate geek reference
guide! 45 CPUs and
chipsets: Cataloged &
spec'd for your upgrading pleasure



HOW TO:

Uncover WinXP's
Best Kept Secrets

Tweak Your BIOS

Overclock Your
Sluggish CPU

Test Your PC
Airflow

Choose the Proper
Cooling Device

Master PC Security

Paint Your Case
Like the Pros

Build a 3D
Environment

Create a Feature-
Length DV movie

Master Digital
Photography

Rip & Encode the
Perfect MP3

AND MORE!



Available only at newsstands from **Nov 5, 2002 - Feb 5, 2003**

HardDrive.com

Your STORAGE Resource

We are the largest source for Color Components We stock thousands of Computer Products

PORTABLE HARDDRIVE

Ultra compact size
USB Connectivity
Driverless Installation
PC, Mac & Linux

64MB	\$45	256MB	\$139
128MB	\$75	512MB	\$290

EZ/CD Print CD Printer

\$399

Prints directly on CD, CD-RW, DVD, DVD-R/RW Media

Pacific Digital DVD Burner

\$289

1x DVD-R
2x DVD-RAM

Sales Line: 800-400-3499

IDE Hard Drives SCSI Hard Drives CDRW/DVD Drives

MAXTOR

20GB	5400rpm	ATA 133	2F020J1	\$69
20GB	7200rpm	ATA 133	6E020L0	\$76
30GB	7200rpm	ATA 133	6E030L0	★ \$77
40GB	5400rpm	ATA 133	2F040J1	\$81
40GB	7200rpm	ATA 133	6E040L0	\$83
60GB	7200rpm	ATA 133	6Y060L0	\$102
80GB	7200rpm	ATA 133	6Y080L0	\$119
120GB	5400rpm	ATA 133	4G120J6	★ \$155
120GB	7200rpm	ATA 133	6Y120L0	\$173

SEAGATE

40GB	5400rpm	ST340810A	\$76
40GB	7200rpm	ST340016A	\$82
60GB	7200rpm	ST360021A	★ \$95
80GB	7200rpm	ST380021A	\$113

IBM

60GB	7200rpm	07N9209	\$103
80GB	7200rpm	07N9210	★ \$118
120GB	7200rpm	07N9219	\$174
180GB	7200rpm	07N9216	\$289

SAMSUNG

20GB	5400rpm	SV2011H	\$71
20GB	7200rpm	SP2001H	\$73
40GB	5400rpm	SV4012H	\$75
40GB	7200rpm	SP4002H	\$78
60GB	5400rpm	SV6003H	★ \$83
80GB	7200rpm	SP8004H	\$104

Western Digital

20GB	7200rpm	WD200BB	\$69
40GB	7200rpm	WD400BB	\$77
60GB	7200rpm	WD600BB	\$97
80GB	7200rpm	WD800BB	\$102
80GB	7200rpm	WD800JB	★ \$115
100GB	7200rpm	WD1000BB	\$152
100GB	7200rpm	WD1000JB	\$149
120GB	7200rpm	WD1200BB	\$170
120GB	7200rpm	WD1200JB	★ \$179
180GB	7200rpm	WD1800JB	\$315
200GB	7200rpm	WD2000BB	\$384

2.5" IDE for Laptops

20GB	Toshiba	9.5mm	4200rpm	HDD2168	\$97
20GB	IBM	9.5mm	5400rpm	07N9481	\$119
20GB	Hitachi	9.5mm	4200rpm	DK23DA20F	\$98
30GB	Toshiba	9.5mm	4200rpm	HDD2159	★ \$118
30GB	IBM	9.5mm	4200rpm	07N8326	\$145
30GB	Hitachi	9.5mm	4200rpm	DK23DA30F	\$130
40GB	Fujitsu	9.5mm	4200rpm	MHR2040AT	\$146
40GB	Hitachi	9.5mm	4200rpm	DK23DA40F	\$153
40GB	IBM	9.5mm	4200rpm	07N8327	\$162
40GB	IBM	9.5mm	5400rpm	07N9482	★ \$164
40GB	Toshiba	9.5mm	5400rpm	HDD2171	\$170
60GB	IBM	12.5mm	5400rpm	07N8328	\$368

2.5" to 3.5" Adapter Kit & Bracket \$15

Controller Cards

Pacific Digital
DISCSTAQ ADMA Enterprise ATA Controller
Supports Command Queuing, freeing up CPU for other tasks. **\$120**

SCSI Controllers

Adaptec	RAID 2000S	\$225	19160 Kit	\$219
Adaptec	RAID 2005S	\$224	29160 Kit	\$295
Adaptec	RAID 3210S	\$654	29160N Kit	\$279
Adaptec	RAID 3400S	\$814	39160 Kit	\$340
Adaptec	RAID 5400S	\$900		
Adaptec	DuraStor 6200SS Bundle Kit			\$6278
Adaptec	DuraStor 7220SS Bundle Kit			\$7710

IDE Controllers

Adaptec	ATA RAID 1200A Kit	\$65
Adaptec	ATA RAID 2400A Kit	\$320
Promise	ATA133 Card ULTRA133TX2	\$49
Promise	ATA100 2ch RAID FASTTRAK100TX2	\$87
Promise	ATA133 2ch RAID FASTTRAKTX2000	\$100

Firewire Controllers

Adaptec	1394/Firewire CardBus Kit	\$79
Orange Micro	Firewire 3 Port PCI Card	\$48

USB Controllers

Adaptec	USB 2.0 2-port CardBus Kit	\$65
Orange Micro	USB 2.0 4 Port PCI Card	\$47

External add \$99 SCA versions also available.

MAXTOR

18.4GB	10K U160	KW018L2	8MB	\$152
18.4GB	10K U320	KU018L2	★ 8MB	\$178
36.4GB	10K U160	KW036L4	8MB	\$232
36.4GB	10K U320	KU036L4	★ 8MB	\$265
73.4GB	10K U160	KW073L8	8MB	\$532
73.4GB	10K U320	CO1L073G	★ 8MB	\$821

SEAGATE

18.4GB	7K Ultra160	ST318438LW	4mb	\$147
18.4GB	10K Ultra160	ST318406LW	4mb	\$169
18.4GB	15K Ultra160	ST318452LW	8mb	\$248
18.4GB	15K Ultra320	ST318432LW	★ 8mb	\$236
36.7GB	10K Ultra160	ST336706LW	4mb	\$252
36.7GB	10K Ultra320	ST336607LW	8mb	\$280
36.7GB	15K Ultra160	ST336752LW	8mb	\$375
73.4GB	10K Ultra320	ST373307LW	★ 8mb	\$543
181GB	7K Ultra160	ST1181677LWV	16mb	\$1145

IBM

18.4GB	15K Ultra160	07N6800	4mb	\$236
36.7GB	10K Ultra160	07N6340	★ 4mb	\$245
36.7GB	15K Ultra160	07N6801	4mb	\$375
36.7GB	10K Ultra320	08K0342	8mb	\$251
73.4GB	10K Ultra320	08K0332	★ 8mb	\$523
146GB	10K Ultra320	08K0322	★ 8mb	\$998

Hitachi

18.4GB	10,000rpm	DK32DJ-18MW	4mb	\$166
36.9GB	10,000rpm	DK32DJ-36MW	4mb	\$246
73.9GB	10,000rpm	DK32DJ-72MW	4mb	\$513

Ultra320 Drives require Adaptec's Ultra320 Controller to achieve full performance - A39320D \$259

SCSI External

MAXTOR

18.4GB	10K rpm	KW018L2	8mb	\$251
18.4GB	10K Ultra320	KU018L2	8mb	\$277

SEAGATE

18.4GB	10,000rpm	ST318406LW	4mb	\$268
36.9GB	10,000rpm	ST336706LW	4mb	\$351
18.4GB	7,200rpm	ST318438LW	4mb	\$246

IBM

36GB	10,000rpm	07N6340	4mb	\$344
------	-----------	---------	-----	-------

Hitachi

36.9GB	10,000rpm	DK32DJ-36MW	16mb	\$345
--------	-----------	-------------	------	-------

CRU

- Convertible Tower
 - Eight external accessible 5.25" half-height bay
 - Dual 300W load-sharing, hot swappable power
 - Built-in SCSI ID Selector
 - Overload, over voltage and short circuit protection
 - Three high output cooling fans for maximum cooling
 - Hot swap capability with CRU DataPort™
 - RAID controller not included
- DAE 400 **\$1,599**

Firewire Drives

Firewire Hard Drives

Buslink	60GB	7200rpm	FW6072E	\$190
Buslink	80GB	7200rpm	FW8072E	\$237
Buslink	100GB	7200rpm	FW10072W	\$285
Buslink	120GB	7200rpm	FW12072W	\$313
lomega	80GB	7200rpm	32387	\$250
Maxtor	160GB	5400rpm	X01FWRA160	\$347
QPS	60GB	7200rpm	QPM3HD72F60L	\$195
QPS	100GB	7200rpm	M3HD72F100L	\$338

Firewire CDRW Drives

Buslink	48x12x48	RW-4848FE	\$172
QPS	40x12x40	CRW40124OFL	\$189
lomega	40x12x48	32359	\$149
Yamaha	44x24x44	CRW-F1ZDX	\$262

Firewire DVD Drives

Addonics	8X DVD/24X	DVD8X24FW	\$272
LaCie	DVD-R/RW & CDRW	300164	\$460

CDRW Drives

16x10x40	IDE	Pacific Digital U-30105	Beige	\$50	Color	\$75
24x10x40	IDE	Pacific Digital U-30106		\$59		\$84
32x10x40	IDE	BenQ 3210A		\$53		\$78
32x12x40	IDE	Pacific Digital U-30119		\$65		\$90
40x12x48	IDE	Goldstar GCE400BI		\$58		\$83
40x12x40	IDE	Plextor PXW4012TA/SW		\$120		\$135
40x12x48	IDE	Teac CDW540E/KIT		\$89		\$114
40x12x48	IDE	BenQ 4012P		\$58		\$83
40x16x48	IDE	Pacific Digital U-30133		\$75		\$100
44x24x44	IDE	Yamaha CRW-F1ZE		\$144		\$159
48x12x48	IDE	Sony CRX210A1		\$99		\$124
48x12x48	IDE	Pacific Digital U-30127		\$82		\$107
48x12x48	IDE	Lite-On LTR48125S		\$68		\$93
48x16x48	IDE	BenQ 4816P		\$73		\$98
48x16x48	IDE	Goldstar GCE-8480BI		\$74		\$99
48x16x48	IDE	TDK AI-481648		\$101		\$126
48x24x48	IDE	Lite-On LTR48246S		\$70		\$95
48x24x48	IDE	Plextor PXW4824TA/SW		\$135		\$150
52x24x52	IDE	Lite-On LTR5224		\$81		\$106
12x10x32	SCSI	Plextor PXW1210TS/SW		\$215		\$240
24x10x40	SCSI	Yamaha CRW-F1ZS		\$234		\$250

DVD Drives

16x/48x	IDE	Toshiba SDM1612TA	\$75	\$90
16x/40x	IDE	Pacific Digital U-30115	\$59	\$84
16x/40x	IDE	Pioneer DVD Slot DVD106	\$69	\$94
16x/40x	IDE	BenQ DVD1648A	\$80	\$105
10x/40x	SCSI	Pioneer DVD305S	\$104	\$129

CD-ROM Drives

52x	IDE	Lite-On LTN525	\$35	\$60
52x	IDE	Creative Labs BLASTER52X	\$35	\$60
52x	IDE	Sony CDU5211	\$40	\$65
56x	IDE	BTC G621D	\$34	\$59
40x	SCSI	Plextor PX40TSI	\$89	\$114

What's your favorite color?

Black Silver Yellow Blue Green

We stock thousands of Black, Silver, Yellow, Green & Blue Components. Every CD/DVD/CD-RW Drive we carry is available in color.

USB Drives

QPS	40GB	5400rpm	QPM3H2U240L	\$146
lomega	40GB	7200rpm	32391	\$176
Buslink	40GB	7200rpm	UII-4072E	\$172
Buslink	60GB	7200rpm	UII-6072E	\$190
Buslink	80GB	7200rpm	UII-8072E	\$237
Buslink	100GB	7200rpm	UII-1007E	\$285

USB Removable Drives

lomega	100MB Zip Ext	USB Drive 31714	\$80
lomega	250MB Zip Ext	USB Drive 31310	\$122
lomega	750MB Zip Ext	USB Drive 32324	\$161

USB CDRW Drives

lomega	Predator 32214	24x10x40 USB 2.0 CD-RW Kit	\$142
lomega	32497	48x24x48 USB 2.0 CD-RW Kit	\$175
Sony	CRX2100U	48x12x48 2.0 CD-RW Kit	\$149
Pacific Digital	U-30130	24x10x40 USB 2.0 CD-RW Kit	\$118
Pacific Digital	U-30125	32x12x48 USB 2.0 CD-RW Kit	\$135
Plextor	PXW4824TUSW	48x24x48 USB 2.0 CD-RW Kit	\$190

USB DVD Recorders

HDC	USB 2.0 DVD-R	U30116USB	\$379
-----	---------------	-----------	-------

USB DVD/CDRW Combo

Sony	USB 2.0 24x10x24/8x	CRXP90MU	\$240
------	---------------------	----------	-------

Orange Micro offers a wide range of USB 2.0 Products. Check our site for details harddrive.com/orangemicro

ASUS P4T533-CLAN Socket 478 Mobo

850E Chipset
1066 RDRAM
USB 2.0 - LAN

\$164



Seagate 40GB Barracuda IV

Ultra ATA/100
7200rpm - 9ms
2MB Cache

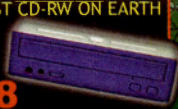
\$81



Pacific Digital 48x12x48 BLUE

THE FASTEST CD-RW ON EARTH
80ms (avg)
2MB Cache
6 MB/sec.

\$108



Creative Labs Audigy Platinum Silver

Silver Audigy Drive
True 5.1 multi-channel

\$201



Intel P4 533 2.8GHz

Intel Pentium 4
2.8GHz Socket 478
512KB Retail

\$555



Processors

AMD		INTEL	
1.0GHz Duron	\$65	Celeron 1.7GHz 478pin 128k	\$80
1.3GHz Duron	\$70	Celeron 1.8GHz 478pin 128k	\$96
Athlon XP1700+	\$84	Celeron 2GHz 478pin 128k	\$118
Athlon XP1800+	\$96	Xeon 2GHz 512 cache	\$230
Athlon XP1900+	\$114	Xeon 2.4GHz 512k cache	\$267
Athlon XP2000+	\$121	P4 2.26GHz 512k	\$333
Athlon XP2100+	\$144	P4 2.4GHz 512k	\$333
Athlon XP2200+	\$174	P4 2.53GHz 512k	\$333
Athlon XP2400+	\$259	P4 2.66GHz 512k	\$333
Athlon XP2600+	\$359	P4 2.8GHz 512k	\$333

Motherboards

SOCKET A Call for a great deals on a processors!!				
Asus	A7V8X	\$120	A7V8X/A/L/SATA	\$142
	A7V333AU2	\$114	A7V333ARU2F	\$137
	A7M266	\$85	A7N266VM	\$73
Abit	KX7-333	\$84	AT7	\$141
	KX7-333R	\$94	KD7	\$114
Gigabyte	GA-7VAX	\$90	GA7VRX	\$79
	GA-7ZX	\$55	GA-7VKML	\$65
MSI	K7N420PRO	\$134	KT3ULTRA2	\$82
	KT4ULTRA	\$100	KT4ULTRA-SR	\$118
Iwill	XP333	\$79		
SOCKET 370 (Flip Chip/Celeron)				
Asus	TUSL2C-SWA	\$97	TUV4X	\$74
Intel	D815EGEWU	\$94	D815EGEWLU	\$104
SOCKET 478 (Pentium 4)				
Asus	P4B533-E/LAN	\$155	P4B533	\$125
	P4T533-C/LAN	\$164	P4T533	\$170
	P4B533-V	\$153	P4B266-C	\$103
Abit	IT7	\$141	BD7II	\$90
	BG7	\$96	BD7II-R	\$107
Iwill	P4D	\$85	P4R533N	\$145
	mp4G	\$115		
Intel	D850MVSE	\$144	850EMV2L	\$158
	D850MV	\$136	845PEBT2	\$142

Video Cards

ATI		
100-430283	RADEON 7000 64MB	\$64
100-432001	RADEON 7500 64MB	\$91
100-431022	RADEON 8500 128MB	\$171
100-433001	RADEON 9000P 64MB	\$129
100-433002	RADEON 9000P 128MB	\$155
100-434003	RADEON 9700P 128MB	\$359
100-710002	AIW RADEON 8500DV 64MB	\$182
100-710030	AIW RADEON 8500 128MB	\$273
EVGA		
064A4NV70S1	GEFORCE4 MX440 64MB	\$90
064A4NV76S1	GEFORCE4 Ti4200 64MB	\$157
128A4NV78S1	GEFORCE4 Ti4200 128MB	\$166
128A4NV82S1	GEFORCE4 Ti4600 128MB	\$258
MSI		
MX400DT64	GEFORCE2 MX400 64MB DDR	\$57
G4MX440VTP	GEFORCE4 MX440 64MB	\$88
8870-030	GEFORCE4 Ti4200 64MB	\$141
8870-040	GEFORCE4 Ti4200 128MB	\$166
8872-010	GEFORCE4 Ti4600 128MB	\$259
PNY		
VCGX2A32SPB	GEFORCE2 MX200 32MB	\$51
VCGF4T142APB	GEFORCE4 Ti4200 64MB	\$147
VCGF4T144APB	GEFORCE4 Ti4400 128MB	\$208
VCGF4T146APB	GEFORCE4 Ti4600 128MB	\$249

Thermaltake
GeForce 4th Highest
Performance cooler
\$29

NVIDIA GeForce4
Ti4200, Ti4400, Ti4600
Push pin easy to install
3 pin fan connector

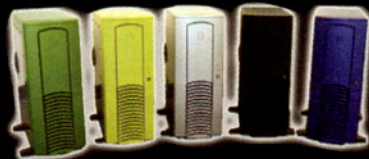
Sound Cards

Creative Labs Audigy Platinum
is also available in Black, Silver,
Blue, Yellow & Green

Creative Labs	Audigy X Gamer	\$89
Creative Labs	Audigy MP3+	\$80
Creative Labs	Audigy Platinum	\$176
Creative Labs	Audigy Platinum eX	\$221
Creative Labs	Sound Blaster Extigy	\$132
Turtle Beach	SantaCruz 512 Voice	\$70

Sales Line: 800-400-3499 Computer Cases & Accessories

ATX PC Cases



Aluminum ATX Cases with 420watt P4/AMD power supply and full side window. Available in Green, Yellow, Silver, Black & Blue

HDC Color Case w/Window & P4 420watt \$169

Aluminum 9Bay ATX Cases w/Window, 2 Fans



\$159



Thermaltake
Xaser II 5000
Built in Hard-
Cano 7 & 5
Silent fans
\$149



Thermaltake
Xaser II A5000A
Plus Built in
HardCano 7 & 5
fans w/Window
\$159



Thermaltake
Xaser II 6000 Plus
Built in Hard-
Cano 7 & 5 fans
\$169



Thermaltake
Xaser II A6000A
Built in Hard-
Cano 7 & 5 fans
aluminum
\$179



Cooler Master
ATC210WN320
12" Blue Cold
Cathode 320watt
Power
\$329



ATX288BK
320 watt
Black & Silver
9 Bays with
Front USB
\$79



Nikao MT2000
300watt power
Black & Silver
\$99



Chieftec Blue
Matrix MA-
01BLD full
tower ATX case
\$119



860BLKWN
Hydraulic case
with window &
neon 300watt
power
\$159



SF860USB
Hydraulic case
with front usb
300watt Power
\$109



Antec SX-1240
Performance
Series
FULL TOWER
400W CASE
\$155



Antec SX1040B
10 Bay Black Per-
formance Series
Workstation with
300 Watt
\$145



Antec SX1030
10 Bay Black Per-
formance Series
Workstation with
300 Watt
\$95



Antec PLUS
1080AMX Black
Full Tower Case
With a 430Watt
\$145



Antec PLUS
1080AMG ATX
Grey Full Tower
Case With a
430Watt
\$129

Enermax Power Supplies

Dual Fan P4 Ready	
300 Watt EG301P-VE	\$47
350 Watt EG365P-VE	\$55
430 Watt EG465P-VE	\$84
550 Watt EG651P-VE	\$155
Dual Wisper Fan P4 Ready	
350 Watt 365P-VE	\$64

Antec Power Supplies

330W TRUE330	\$56
380W TRUE380	\$75
430W TRUE430	\$80
550W TRUE550	\$115
TRUEBLUE480	\$105
510W FOR DUAL AMD	\$105

**Adaptec 2100s
RAID SCSI CARD**
Single-channel
Ultra160 SCSI
RAID card w/
cache memory
\$420

**Seagate 36.7GB
Cheetah 36ES**
Ultra160 SCSI
10,000rpm
5.2ms access
\$245

**D-Link AirPlus
Enhanced
802.11b**
Enhanced 11/22 Mbps
2.4GHz Wireless
\$124

**Palm VIIx 8MB
with Keyboard**
Includes Cradle,
Keyboard, Case &
Parallel Adapter
\$139

**Iwill P4R533N
Socket 478 Mobo**
\$139
Supports up to
2GB PC1066
533 MHz Bus
Onboard Nic

Klipsch ProMedia

ProMedia 5.1
\$399
ProMedia 4.2
\$359
ProMedia 4.1
\$249
ProMedia 2.1
\$179 "In a word INCREDIBLE" -IGN.com

PC Mods

Fans & Grills

Fan Grills

Radiation
80mm \$17
92mm \$19
120mm \$22

Biohazard
80mm \$18
92mm \$20
120mm \$24

Atomic
80mm \$17
92mm \$19
120mm \$22

Swirl
80mm \$19
92mm \$22
120mm \$25

CPU Fans

**Thermaltake
Volcano 9**
AMD Athlon XP
up to 2600+
\$27

**Thermaltake
DRAGON ORB**
P4 478 to
2.4GHz
\$28

**Thermaltake
VOLCANO 7**
INTEL Socket 370
& AMD Socket 462
\$19

**Thermaltake
VOLCANO 7+**
Intel™ P4 478 &
AMD™ Athlon XP
\$29

**Zalman Noise-
less Pure**
Copper Socket
A/423
\$28

Arctic Silver III
99.8% pure micronized
silver compound
\$6

**Thermaltake
Crystal Orb VGA**
Card Chip Cooler
\$19

**Zalman Pure Aluminum and
Copper Combined CPU Cooler**
For Socket 423 and 478
\$36

**Thermaltake Active Memory
Cooling Kit PC2100/PC100/133**
\$19

Window Kits

Rectangle \$25
Round \$25
Oval \$25
L-Shaped \$30

We can install any window
into a case you buy from us for \$35

Window Etchings

Bio-Hazard Etched Applique \$12
Atomic Etched Applique \$8
Radio Active Etched Applique \$8

Neons

10" Neon Accent \$24
Blue, Green, Red, Black

12" Cold Cathode Neon \$39
Blue, Green, Red

6' Neon Glow Wire \$39
White, Red

Neon Power Adapter \$2
standard power connector

Water Cooling Kits

CPUFX Complete Water Cooling Kit \$199

PCG1202 P3

F18 HORNET GAMING SYSTEM

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 2.8GHz
Asus P4T533-C 533MHz w/LAN
ATI Radeon 9700 128MB w/Tv-Out
512MB PC1066 DRDRAM Non ECC
PDC 16X/40X DVD-ROM
Creative Labs Audigy Platinum
Windows XP Professional
Logitech Cordless Freedom Pro
Pacific Digital 48x12x48 CD-RW
WD 120GB 8mb Special Edition
Cold Cathode & Matching Drives
Enermax EG465P-VE 420W PS
Promedia 5.1 Sold Separately

\$2,650

DARK KNIGHT ATHLON XP 1900

AMD Athlon™ XP1900+ Processor at 1.67GHz
The Dark Knight Features Color Matched Drives
& Keyboard/Mouse Combo

512MB PC3200 DDR400 Non ECC
Pacific Digital 48x12x48 CD-RW
Western Digital 100GB 7200rpm 8MB Buffer Special Edition
10/100 Ethernet
Asus A7V8X
GeForce4 TI4200 128MB
Windows XP Home

\$1,283

SILVER BULLET 1900XP

AMD Athlon™ XP1900+ Processor at 1.67GHz
The Silver Bullet 1900XP Features Silver Color
Matched Drives, Keyboard/Mouse Combo, & Altec
Lansing Color Matched Speakers

512MB PC133 SDRAM Non ECC
Pacific Digital 16x40x40 CD-RW
Seagate 40GB 7200rpm 2MB Buffer
Windows XP Home

64MB Video
56k V.90 Modem
10/100 Ethernet
Monitor Sold Separately
Viewsonic Silver & Black
17" P70F \$227

\$725

SILVER HAWK EXTREME

Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 2.8GHz 533MHz Front Side Bus
Adaptec Ultra320 SCSI
140GB Seagate 15K Cheetah
512MB PC1066 DRDRAM Non ECC
ThermalTake XaserII 6000
12" Cold Cathode, Case Fans w/Blue
Hardcano, Rounded Cables
40x12x40 Plextor CDRW Silver
Asus P4T533-C 533MHz
ATI Radeon 9700 128MB
Thermaltake P4 Volcano
Led Fans, Neon Switch,
Enermax 550W Power Supply
Pacific digital 16X/40X Silver DVD
Creative Labs Audigy X-Gamer

\$2,759

Sales Line: 800-400-3499
WWW.HARDDRIVE.COM

ThorTek Corp. 2800a West Main St League City, Texas 77573 Lifetime FREE technical support.

Prices & Specs subject to change without notice. Shipping charges are non refundable. Returns may be subject to restocking fee.
Products are covered by manufacturers warranty only. We accept all Government PO's. Local calls 281.557.8336 Fax 281.557.1426

IBM 80GB Deskstar 120GXP

80GB Ultra ATA/100
7200rpm - 8.5ms
100MB per second



\$118

Pacific Digital DiscStaQ

ATA100 PCI Controller
Command Queuing opti-
mized for IBM Drives



\$120

Pioneer DVR-A04 DVD Burner



\$319

HDC Mobo/CPU/Case Builder Combo

AMD ATHLON XP1900
64MB VIDEO - 10/100
56K V.90 - USB
AUDIO - 320W 7 BAY



\$209

ATI Radeon 9700 Pro AGP



\$359
128MB with
TV Out

Featured Products



We stock thousands of Black, Silver, Yellow, Green & Blue Components.
Check Page 1 of our ad for all the CD/DVD/CD-RW Drives we carry.



Creative Labs
Audigy Platinum -
Available in Black,
Silver, Yellow, Blue
& Green
\$201



Keyboard Mouse
Speaker Combo Kits
available in the
same assorted
colors!
\$35



Rounded Cables

18"	Rounded Ultra ATA Cable	\$10.00
24"	Rounded Ultra ATA Cable	\$15.00
36"	Rounded Ultra ATA Cable	\$15.00
24"	Rounded Ultra Floppy Cable	\$10.00

CABLES AVAILABLE IN

RED, BLUE, GREEN, PURPLE, CLEAR, GOLD, SILVER
GREEN, YELLOW, BLACK, GREY



Media

CD & CD-RW Media

24X 80Min 100 Spindle LED1C **\$47**
See our web site for other incredible prices!

DVD Media

DVD-R 4.7GB Single Side 01892	\$5.95
DVD-R 4.7GB Single Side 50 Spindle R470550	\$266
DVD+R 4.7GB Single Side 16022	\$7.25

CD/CD-RW/DVD Accessories

Drive Cleaner Allsop 23934	\$16.99
Disc cleaning wipes Allsop 50100	\$4.99
CD scratch repair system Allsop 58200	\$11.99
Radial CD scratch repair system Allsop	\$27.99
Disc Removable Labels qty 20 20101	\$11.99
4 pack CD Markers Blk/Blu/Red/Grn 84088	\$6.99

Monitors

KDS					
XF-7P	17"	CRT	1280x1024	.25mm	\$135
XF9C	19"	CRT	1600X1200	.22mm	\$179
RAD5	15"	LCD	1024X768	.29mm	\$331
RAD7C	17"	LCD	1080X1024	.26mm	\$569
RAD9	19"	LCD	1080X1024	.29mm	\$723
RAD23	23"	LCD	1600X1200	.29mm	\$2646
Viewsonic					
E70-8	17"	CRT	1280x1024	.24mm	\$147
E70F-2	17"	CRT	1280x1024	.214mm	\$164
E90F	19"	CRT	1600X1200	.21mm	\$246
P220F-2	22"	CRT	1600X1200	.25mm	\$590
VE170	17"	LCD	1280X1024	.25mm	\$574
VE800	18"	LCD	1600X1200		\$574
VP230MB	23.1"	LCD	1600x1200		\$2989

Speakers

Creative Labs					
Inspire4400	5pc	41W	\$52		
Inspire5300	6pc	48W	\$83		
Inspire5700	6pc	79W	\$242		
SW320	3pc	21W	\$40		
FPS1600	5pc	45W	\$52		

Logitech					
Z560	5pc	400W	\$155		
Z540	5pc	40W	\$69		
Z340	3pc	-	\$242		

Altec Lansing					
621	3pc	200W	\$112		
641	5pc	400W	\$145		
ATP3	3pc	-	\$59		
ATP4	5pc	80W	\$110		
AL2100	3pc	40W	\$73		
AL4100	5pc	140W	\$110		

Networking

Network Hubs

3Com OfficeConnect 8 Port Hub	\$85
3Com 16 Port Eth. Hub	\$179
Linksys 24-Port Hub	\$239
D-Link 5 Port Switch	\$75
Netgear 16-Port Hub 10/100	\$189
Linksys 8-Port 10/100 Hub	\$67

Network Cards

Jaton 10/100 PCI Eth. Card	\$17
Netgear 10/100 PC Card	\$64
D-Link 10/100 PCI Eth. Card	\$27
ConnectGear 10/100 PCMCIA	\$29
LANPRO PCI 10/100 Ethernet Card	\$50
Intel PRO/100+ Fast Ethernet PCI	\$55
Netgear PCI 10/100BaseTX NIC	\$20
Generic 10/100 PCI	\$15
Allied Telesyn 10/100 PCMCIA	\$53
Intel Pro/100S CardBus 10/100	\$84
Xircom PCMCIA 10/100 and 56K Modem	\$114
Intel CardBus II 10/100 w/RealPort	\$48

Network Routers

Linksys Wrls Router w/4 Port	\$169
Linksys Router 8-Port	\$133
SOHO 17 Port 10BASE-T/2 Hub	\$89

Print Servers

Linksys Wireless Print Server	\$112
Hawking 3-Port Eth. Print Server	\$159

Special Purchase

HERCULES XPI900



\$675

17" Flat CRT
Monitor Included!!

AMD Athlon™ XP1900 Processor at 1.6GHz
Keyboard/Mouse Combo, & speakers
512MB PC133 SDRAM
48x12x48 CD-RW Drive
40GB 7200rpm 2MB Buffer
Windows XP Home

Wireless Networking



EZ Connect 802.11a High-Speed Wireless LAN

The Perfect solution for your home or business

SMC2735W EZ Connect 802.11a Wireless CardBus Adapter



\$145

SMC2755W EZ Connect 802.11a Wireless Access Point

\$366



WCF11 11Mbps Wireless Network CF Card

\$112

WPS11 EtherFast 11Mbps Wireless Print Server

\$112

WPS11 EtherFast Wireless AP+ Cable/DSL Router with 4 port switch

\$169

WPC11 11Mbps Instant Wireless Network PC Card

\$87



DWL900AP 802.11B Wireless Access Point

\$144

DWL520 802.11B Wi-Fi Compatible PCI Adapter

\$88

DWL650 802.11B Wireless PCMCIA Card

\$79

Sales Line: 800-400-3499
www.HardDrive.com

ThorTek Corp. 2800a West Main St League City, Texas 77573 Lifetime FREE technical support.

ThorTek Corp. 2800a West Main St League City, Texas 77573 Lifetime FREE technical support.

Prices & Specs subject to change without notice. Shipping charges are non refundable. Returns may be subject to restocking fees. Products are covered by manufacturers warranty only. We accept all Government PO's. Local calls 281.557.8336 Fax 281.557.1426

Vazhar
by Full Sail Graduate
Brian Germain

FULL SAIL®

Real World Education

School of:

- Game Design and Development
- Computer Animation
- Digital Media
- Film
- Audio
- Show Production

800.226.7625
www.fullsail.com

3300 University Boulevard • Winter Park, FL 32792

- Financial aid available to those who qualify.
- Job placement assistance.
- Accredited college, ACCSCT.

©2002 Full Sail, Inc. All rights reserved. The terms "Full Sail," "Full Sail Real World Education," and the Full Sail logo are either registered service marks or service marks of Full Sail, Inc.

Why do so many students choose ACCIS for their degree?

FLEXIBILITY

- Study at your own pace
- No classes to attend
- Affordable for everyone
- Enroll anytime
- New MIS degree

accis

American College
of Computer
& Information Sciences

ACCREDITED MEMBER
DETC
BIRMINGHAM, AL



FREE CATALOGUE • 1-800-767-2427 • WWW.ACCIS.EDU

Check the Rating!

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rating system can help you decide whether a computer or video game is right for your family. The ESRB system provides both **CONTENT DESCRIPTORS** that indicate whether there are particular content elements which may be of interest or concern, and **RATING Symbols** that tell you what age the game is appropriate for.

RATING SYMBOLS

(found on the front of the game box):



Content may be suitable for persons ages 3 and older.



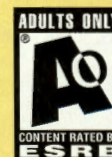
Content may be suitable for persons ages 6 and older.



Content may be suitable for persons ages 13 and older.



Content may be suitable for persons ages 17 and older.



Content suitable only for adults.



Product is awaiting final rating.

CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

(found on the back of the game box):

The content descriptors tell you whether the game includes elements such as:

- Mild language
- Strong language
- Mild animated violence
- Mild realistic violence
- Comic mischief
- Animated violence
- Realistic violence
- Animated blood and gore
- Realistic blood and gore
- Animated blood
- Realistic blood
- Suggestive themes
- Mature sexual themes
- Strong sexual content
- Use of tobacco or alcohol
- Use of drugs
- Gaming
- Edutainment
- Informational content
- Some assistance may be needed

ESRB
ENTERTAINMENT
SOFTWARE
RATING BOARD

1-800-771-ESRB

www.esrb.org



This publication abides by the Principles and Guidelines for Responsible Advertising Practices developed by the Advertising Review Council of the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB).

MEDAL OF HONOR: SPEARHEAD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 152



LEFT: Demolish tanks with your heavy shells and infantry with your heavy machine gun. RIGHT: After you destroy the bridge, a duel between Axis/Allied armor ensues.

each side), but the rain will defuse the bomb before detonation. Shoot the bombs to make them explode. Keep in mind, you don't need to wait for the fuse to go out before shooting the bomb.

Follow along the path until you reach a large plaza. Take out the sniper camped out on each of four buildings, and decimate the tank with a well-placed bomb. Find the dead pilot and documents next to the plane and immobile truck. Take command of the cannon in the large Greek building to blow up an incoming tank. Proceed through the alleyway left of the niche in which the tank was hiding, ready to face another tank. Quickly attach a bomb and run past the tank, turning around to detonate the bomb. On the next street, several snipers sit on the balconies waiting for you. A tank hides behind the ruins of another building immediately after the next truck drives by. Destroy both.

When you approach a small car, turn left to enter the Chancellery Building. Climb up the first flight of stairs and turn left around the corner. The safe with the list of double-agents is in the room behind the first door to your right; the combination is in the small room around the corner to your left. Continue down the hall and

descend the stairs to exit the building. Get into the tank waiting outside after taking out the sniper in the broken-down building to the right.

MISSION 2 Tank control is sweet and simple: Use the main cannon to shoot down other tanks, but switch to the machine gun to mow down infantry. (The cannon is efficient at taking out large groups of soldiers, but it takes too long to reload.) As in the Belgium level, look out for infantry with rocket launchers who are looking to pierce your armor. Follow the arrow down the path you came from, but look around corners for hidden tanks and rocket-equipped trucks. Always keep your tank on the move, either forward or backward, to avoid incoming rockets. Most tanks can be disposed of with one hit, so place your shots carefully. Blow up the far bridge as you cross over to the Soviet side of the map. When you reach the Soviet Recon Group, the final objective is to hold your position against tanks and infantry. Let the Soviet tank take care of the infantry crossing the bridge, while you focus on the tanks across the river and on the adjacent bridge. Once you've held your position for a long enough time, the bridge will be bombed, and you've won the game! **POG**

PC GAMER STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

Post Office Notice: Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for Periodicals class privileges as required by 39 USC3685: 1. Title of Publication: PC Gamer 2. Publication No. 1080-4471 3. Date of Filing: 9/23/02 4. Issue Frequency: Monthly, except semi-monthly in July 5. Number of issues published annually: 13 6. Annual subscription price: \$29.95 7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Future Network USA, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005 8/9. Complete address of the headquarters of general business offices of the publisher, editor and managing editor: Publisher: Simon Whitcombe — same address, Editor: Rob Smith — same address, Managing Editor: Corey Cohen — same address 10. Owner: Future Network USA, 150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005 11/12. N/A 13. Publication title: PC Gamer 14. Issue date for Circulation Data below: October 2002 15. Extent and nature of circulation given in this order, number of average copies each issue during preceding 12 months followed by actual number of copies published nearest filing date: A. Total number of copies: 582,489, 539,150. B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation (B1) Mail subscriptions Outside-County: 233,787, 192,199. (B2) Paid In-County Subscriptions: 0.0. (B3) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: 97,378, 110,594. (B4) Other Classes Mailed Through USPS: 0.0. C. Total Paid and/or Requested: 331,165, 302,793. D. Free Distribution by Mail: 879, 1,019. E. Free Distribution Outside the Mail: 333, 0. F. Total Free Distribution: 1,212, 1,019. G. Total Distribution: 332,378, 303,812. H. Copies not distributed: 250,112, 235,338. I. Total: 582,489, 539,150. J. Percent Paid and/or Requested: 100%, 100%. 16. Publication of Statement of Ownership is required and is printed in this issue of this publication: Holiday 2002. 17. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete: Kate Bailey, Group Circulation Director.

ADVERTISER INDEX

COMPANY	PRODUCT	PAGE #
ABSPC	Hardware	118-119
ACCIS	Education	158
Alienware	Alienware PC Systems	18-19
Alienware	Alienware PC Systems	121
ARUSH Entertainment	Devastation	11
Bethesda Softworks	Tribunal	94-95
CDV	Neocron	15
CDV	Project Nomads	143
Compu Experts	Gogamer	149
Creative Labs	Creative Labs	OBC
Cyberpower Inc.	Cyberpower Computer Systems	124-125
Disney Interactive	Treasure Planet	88-89
EarthLink	DSL	17
Electronic Arts	SimCity 4	54-55
Electronic Arts	Medal of Honor: Spearhead	100-101
Electronic Arts	James Bond 007: NightFire	138-139
Electronic Arts	C&C: Generals	63-67
Electronics Boutique	EB Games	52-53
Electronics Boutique	EB Catalog	24-25
Electronics Boutique	EB Catalog	32-33
Electronics Boutique	EB Catalog	108-109
Essential Reality	The Glove	81
Full Sail	Full Sail Education	158
Funcom	Anarchy Online: Notum Wars	83, 85, 87
ibuypower Computer	ibuypower Computer Systems	127-129
Igames	Igames	71
Infogrames	Dirt Track Racing 2	73
Infogrames	Master of Orion 3	4-5
Infogrames	Deadly Dozen	IBC
Infogrames	Unreal Tournament 2003	6-7
Jaleco	Trailer Park Tycoon	104-105, 107
Microsoft	Age of Mythology	51
Microsoft	Combat Flight Simulator 3	9
Microsoft	Mech: Mercenaries	103
Microsoft	RalliSport Challenge	115
Microsoft	Asheron's Call 2	90-91
Microsoft	Links Golf	141
Microsoft	Impossible Creatures	76-77
NovaLogic	Black Hawk Down	34
Sony Online Entertainment	Planes of Power	74-75
Sony — SCEA	Network Adapter	12-13
Sony — SCEA	Socome	22-23
Soyo	Soyo	133
Strategy First	Hearts of Iron	137
Strategy First	O.R.B.	98-99
Strategy First	Platoon	21
Strategy First	Robin Hood	151
Strategy First	Ultimate Train	111
Strategy First	MSTS Paint Shed	131
Summitsoft	RoboForge	59
Thortek (Harddrive.com)	harddrive.com	154-155
Thortek (Harddrive.com)	harddrive.com	156-157
Ubi Soft	Raven Shield	42-43
Ubi Soft	Splinter Cell	44-45
Ubi Soft	Ghost Recon	46-47
Ubi Soft	Tom Clancy Branding	41
Ubi Soft	Dragon's Lair	31
Velocity Micro	Velocity Micro	135
ViewSonic Corp.	Video Processor Contest Page	123
Vivendi Publishing Group	No One Lives Forever 2	IFC
Vivendi Publishing Group	Dark Age of Camelot	60-61
Wizards of the Coast	Magic: Onslaught PC	147
Xtreme Gear	Xtreme Gear Comp. Systems	117

Future Network USA is not responsible for typographical errors found in the Advertiser Index.

The PCG Crossword — Answers

ACROSS 1. Pooping, 5. Paris, 6. Zeus, 9. Rampage, 10. Combat, 12. Abuse, 15. Extreme, 18. Iron, 20. Longbow, 23. Mana, 25. Hell, 26. Levelord, 27. North Africa, 29. Half-Life, 31. Ivo Jima, 33. Divinity, 34. Sawgrass
DOWN 2. PC Gamer, 3. KITT, 4. LeRoi, 5. Presto, 7. Batman, 8. Allies, 11. Mars, 13. Shuriken, 14. Willmore, 16. Transform, 17. Motorhead, 19. Salieri, 21. Ballista, 22. Unleashed, 24. Sonic, 28. Titus, 30. Epyx, 32. OICW

CONTEST RULES

No purchase is necessary. Only one entry per household, per month, will be counted. Anyone can enter, but only U.S. residents are eligible to win prizes, and the offer is void in FL, RI, Puerto Rico, and where prohibited by law. Your chances of winning depend on the number of entries we receive. Failure to follow the rules will result in instant disqualification. Canadian law prohibits those readers from entering.

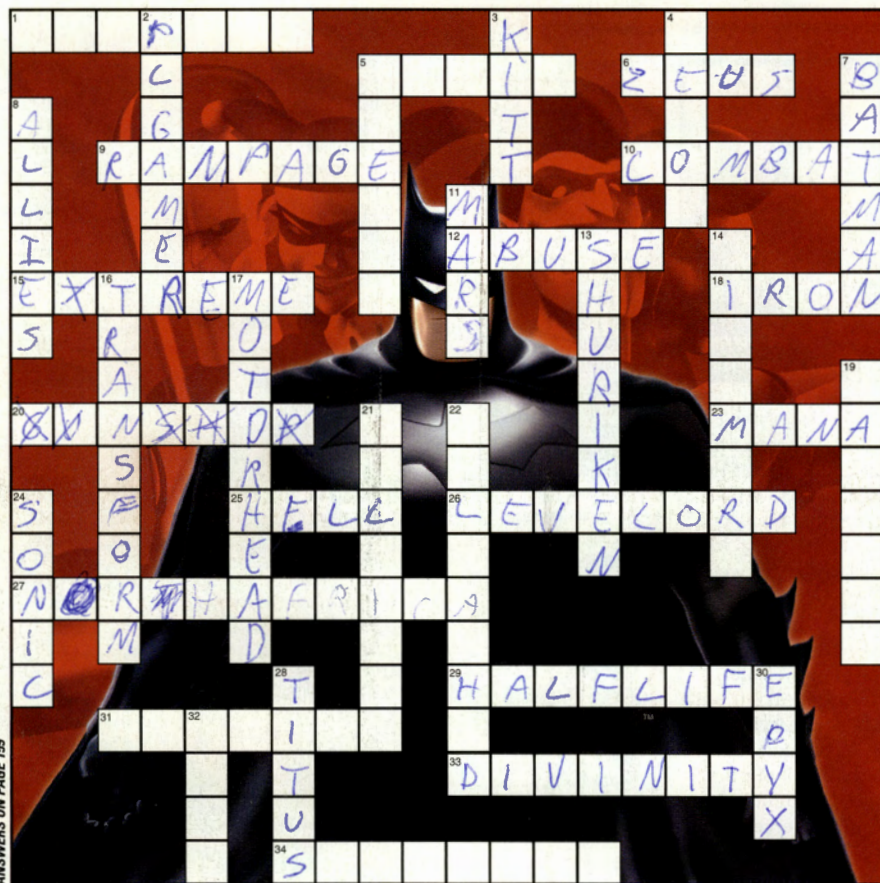


CHIEF EXECUTIVE/FUTURE Greg Ingham
PRESIDENT Jonathan Simpson-Bint
VP/EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Matt Firme
VICE PRESIDENT/CFO Tom Valentino
VP/CIRCULATION Holly Klingel
VPHUMAN RESOURCES Steve Leibman
GENERAL COUNSEL Charles Schug
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Simon Whitcombe
MARKETING MANAGER Katie Cole
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL SERVICES Nancy Durlister

The Future Network plc serves the information needs of groups of people who share a passion. We aim to satisfy their passion by creating magazines and websites that offer superb value for money, trustworthy information, multiple ways to save time and money, and are a pleasure to read or visit. This simple strategy has helped create one of the fastest-growing media companies in the world: we publish more than 100 magazines, 20 magazine websites, and a number of web networks from offices in five countries. The company also licenses 42 magazines in 30 countries. The Future Network is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FNET).

Tel +44 1225 442244
www.thefuturenetwork.plc.uk
MEDIA WITH PASSION
Bath, London, Milan, Munich, New York, Paris,
San Francisco

The dreams left him barren. Devoid of emotion, or hope, the drugged man struggled to gain consciousness. Where was he? Slowly...painfully...the lids of his eyes parted to take in his surroundings. Glimpses of the recent past shot into his brain: the undulating mass of dark shapes; the towering mechanized beast; a tropical island lair; the shattering rush of fists and feet that engulfed him. "Ah," he whispered to no one in particular, as the strings of loose thought strained to ravel, "The Cult of the Monkey." The agent was alone. Dimness greeted his lazy gaze. Then he bolted upright, panicked. An unnerving silence washed over him. Where was the cult? And what of the simian-shaped robot? Damnit...and why couldn't he get the image of that blonde in the red dress out of his pounding head? Damn.



ACROSS

1. What you're doing while filling out this puzzle
5. Setting of *Broken Sword*
6. King of the gods in Greek side of *Age of Mythology*
9. Giant-monster arcade port in which you eat people for health
10. Atari 2600 tank game reinvented for PC
12. Cracked dot com's first and last game
15. *Links* _____ — the one with skeletons and exploding golf balls
18. ____ *Storm*, a World War I-themed FPS from DreamCatcher
20. Helicopter-sim series with projectile-weapon title
23. Magical stuff you collect in *Magic Carpet*
25. Non-planet setting of *Doom III*

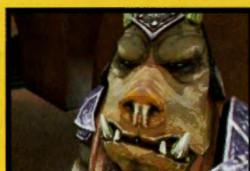
26. Famed one-named level designer at Ritual
27. First battlefield in *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault*
29. The game Valve is hopefully developing a sequel to
31. *Battlefield 1942* map that comes last in single-player campaign
33. White fudge-like candy or a "Divine" *Diablo* clone
34. *Links* course with world-famous 17th hole

DOWN

2. The world's best-selling PC games magazine
3. Talking car in upcoming game based on Hasselhoff TV show
4. Shadow Man's real-world Cajun surname
5. *Myst* III developer that's R.I.P.

7. Caped Crusader shown above
8. Good guys in *Battlefield 1942*
11. Red planet setting of *Doom III*
13. "Star" weapon in *NOLF 2*
14. Name of agent you play in *The X-Files* adventure game
16. The "T" in T&L (Hint: Think 3D cards)
17. 1998 Fox Interactive racing game à la *Pod* and *Wipeout*
19. The family your character represents in *Mafia*
21. Medieval artillery piece
22. *Sims* expansion that adds pets
24. Sega mascot who had a spin on the PC in 1995
28. The name of a comic actor and a French games publisher
30. Published *California Games* titles
32. Next-generation *Ghost Recon* weapon (abbrev.)

NEXT MONTH JANUARY 2003



PC gaming may never be the same after the release of next month's huge cover game. Gamers everywhere are psyched to find out how LucasArts' *Star Wars: Galaxies* is played, what it takes to become a Jedi, and how to lay the smack down on the Empire. We'll reveal all after spending weeks in the beta and haranguing the developers. Plus, we've got our **8th Annual Ultimate Strategy Guide**.

Direct Your Ear
to the Rear with

Sound
BLASTER
AUDIGY 2



6.1

Hear all the action in 6.1 surround with a discrete rear center speaker

Sound Blaster® Audigy™ 2 with THX® certification delivers 6.1 surround sound with Unreal® Tournament 2003, Hitman 2: Silent Assassin™, and over 400 existing EAX® ADVANCED HD™ and DirectSound® 3D games. Distinctly hear enemies approaching directly behind you and blow them away before you end up in their crosshairs. Experience 106dB SNR clarity and Advanced Resolution™ DVD-Audio from multi-channel 24-bit/192kHz DACs and 24-bit ADVANCED HD™.



6.1 Surround

CMSS® 3D up-mix technology and Dolby Digital® EX support provides 6.1 surround for CDs, MP3s, and DVD movies. Make 6.1 surround a reality by combining Sound Blaster® Audigy™ 2 or Sound Blaster® Audigy™ 2 Platinum including internal connectivity drive with Creative Inspire™ 6.1 6600 – the only PC speaker system with rear center speaker and 120 watts system power.

For more information, check out
www.soundblaster.com.



CREATIVE

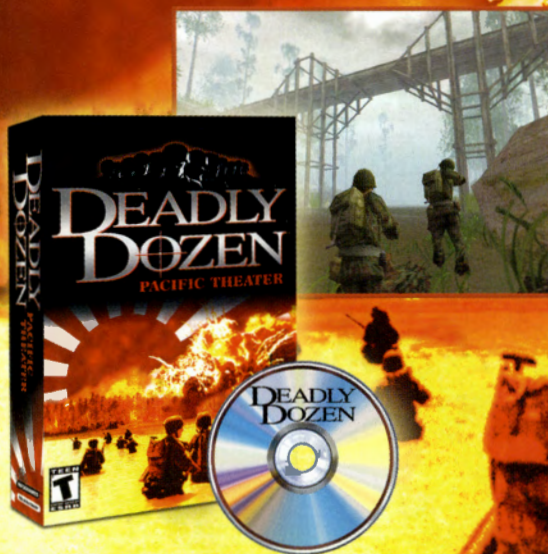
AUTHENTIC
WWII COMBAT GAME

DEADLY DOZEN™

PACIFIC THEATER

In 1942, specially trained soldiers were deployed to carry out commando-style missions against the forces of Japan. They were cold as steel and could strike without warning. Through sweltering rainforests, sun-baked coral beaches and stinking mangrove swamps, these skilled heroes took the war to the Japanese.

Bring the hard-edged intensity of the Pacific Theater to your computer. Arm your squad with an impressive arsenal of weapons for each mission. Experience the story of that 12-man unit, known only as... **The Deadly Dozen™**.



PC CD-ROM
GAME



WIN 98/Me/2000/XP



www.deadly-dozen.com



BLOOD
VIOLENCE