

# *dualgamer*

the online games magazine

THE SHENMUE ISSUE - free to readers of dualgamer and partner sites - Issue 02 - September 2001

You're not dreaming.  
It's nearly here...

*Shenmue II*

**ALSO IN ISSUE 2...**

Huge Final Fantasy Feature

Mario Kart Advance

Gran Turismo 3

Tony Hawk's 3

Onimusha



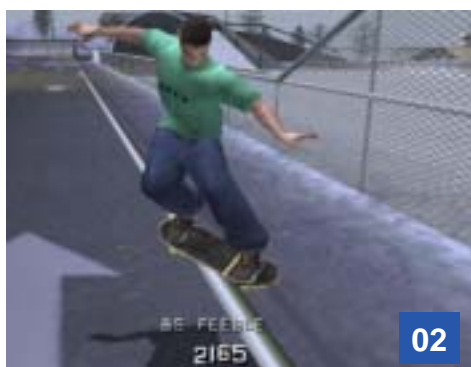
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## Welcome to Issue 02

Wow, I'm glad you guys liked the first magazine. All I can say is that things are going to be even better this time round. Infact, if we can't improve each issue on the one before, we'll give you your money back (which is okay for us, seeing as you didn't pay us anything in the first place).

This issue, Sega's epic Shenmue saga continues on the Dreamcast (with rumours suggesting that PS2 owners may get a taste of the action too). Also, we have a massive Final Fantasy feature, including a Final Fantasy XI premier preview.

Elsewhere in the magazine, we have reviews of Mario Kart Advance and Gran Turismo 3, plus previews of THPS3 and FIFA.

Enjoy,

*Chris* - CHRIS ZARDIS - MAGAZINE ED

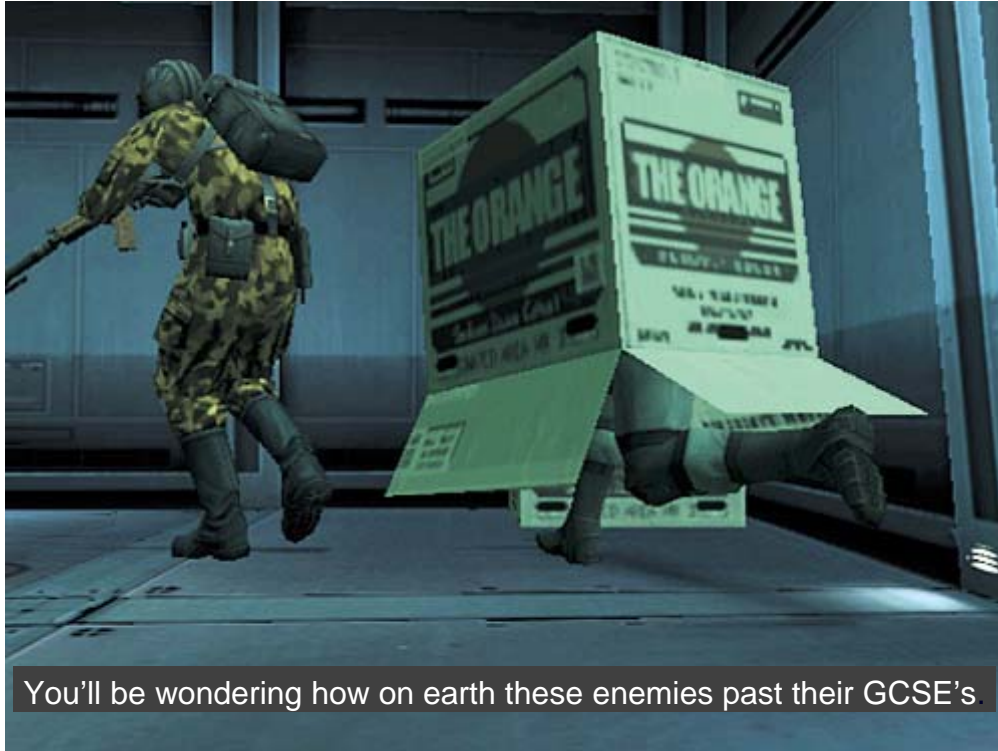
Next Issue release date  
 20th September 2001

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# Dualgamer :News:

News editor  
Rob Ratcliff



You'll be wondering how on earth these enemies past their GCSE's.

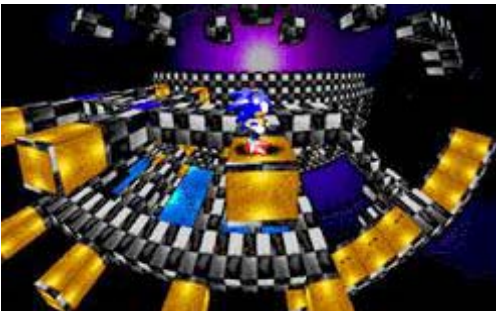
## More Metal Gear Secrets

If you have played the Metal Gear Solid 2 demo for PS2 so hard you think you've found all the secrets (like every other PS2 owner in the world) then you're in for a shock. The game's director himself, Kojima, gave a couple away. When guards think they have seen or heard you a blue exclamation mark appears above their heads. If you can hit it, it stuns the guards for a short period of time, it looks pretty cool as bubbles begin to fizz out of their heads! The second secret improves your grip strength, when hanging from any ledge do 100 pull-ups by holding R1 and pushing R2 and L2 at the same time. Kojima

has also dispelled rumours that there are to be no more Metal Gear games after Metal Gear Solid 2. However, he is stepping down as director of the games but hopes the series will continue under the management of someone else. He also hopes to stay on as a producer so he can keep an eye on how the games progress. We'll bring you a full review of MGS2 later this year (unless the game hits another delay), so check back then to see how the game shapes up.

## Shenmue II exclusive to DC?

There's another excuse to buy a Dreamcast as it seems Shenmue 2 will probably be a Dreamcast exclusive. Peter Moore, President of Sega of America said that Shenmue 2 is best for the Dreamcast. He went on to say that the games producer Yu Suzuki is finding things in the Dreamcast hardware and pushing the envelope that he never did with Shenmue and it's stunning. This means that if Shenmue 2 was ported over to PS2, GameCube or Xbox it would be too difficult to achieve the same graphics as these systems are relatively new compared, and a direct conversion would be impossible. Shenmue 2 will almost definitely be the last Shenmue on Dreamcast so the question now is if it will continue, where? A hotly tipped favourite is Xbox but there is no official word what so ever about this. We will of course bring you news on this when or if it happens.



## Whatever happened to...

## SONIC XTREME (SS)

The Saturn made the fatal mistake of not really having it's own 'major' Sonic game to boast about. Instead, it had so many near misses (Sonic R was a racing game, Sonic 3D a Mega Drive game and Sonic Jam a compilation), but they never released what the fans wanted, a brand new Sonic game. Sonic Xtreme was the answer to these prayers and, unveiled at E3 '96, things seemed to be going well. Unfortunately, Sega weren't happy with the game, which was not being produced by Sonic Team, rather an outside developer, and ended up dumping it, never to be seen again.



## Get ready to burn PS2 rubber

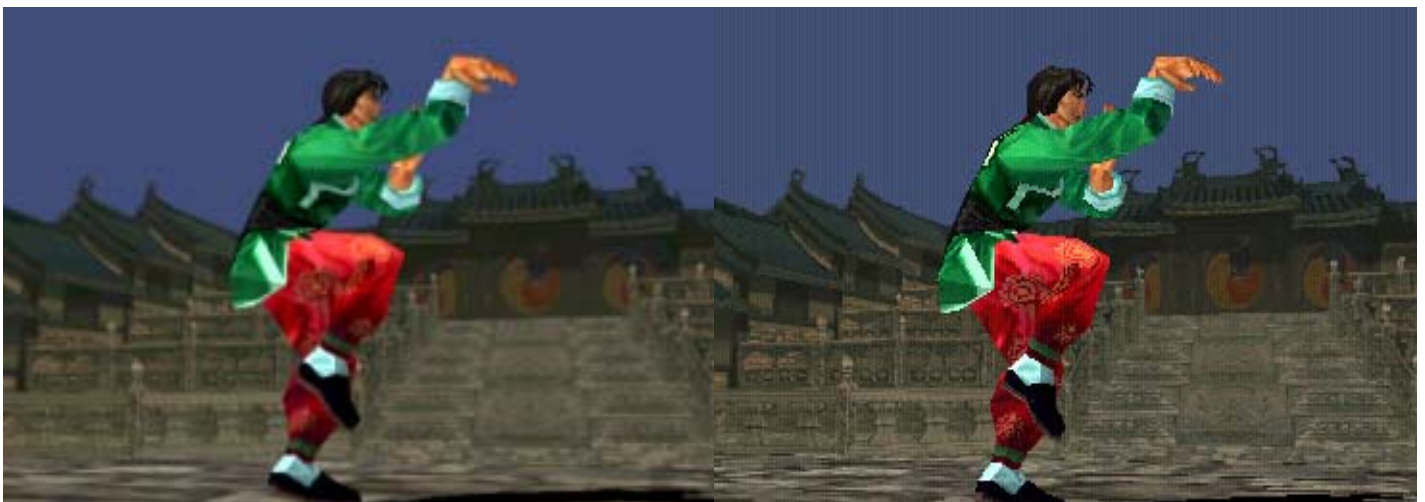
We have some brand new shots of the game formerly known as 'SRC' or 'Shiny Red Car' (oh dear, Ed). Under a new name and Acclaim as publisher, Criterion Studio's Burn-Out looks ace. Burnout takes the type of 'foot to pedal and keep it there' full on racing often associated with circuit racing and takes it to major highways and traffic filled city streets. Looking like a cross between a console Midtown Madness and MSR, the PS2 seems to have no problems in chucking all the necessary polygons around the screen at devilishly high speeds. Interestingly, Burn-Out also features a simulated in-game heart monitor, which rewards the player with incredible bursts of speed as they experience danger and their pulse increases.

We are already looking forward to this game and, with speeds almost rivalling the heights of Extreme G, it should be a hit when it is released at the end of this year,

## Am I only Bleeming?

The controversial Bleemcast has just announced the next edition to the Bleem series, Tekken 3. For those who don't know what Bleem is, it is a series of discs with Playstation games on that is playable on Dreamcast and it improves the graphics substantially. It was originally supposed to be a machine that played all Playstation games on Dreamcast but because of legal problems games have to be released individually. The first game to be released was Gran Turismo 2, Metal Gear: Solid is soon to be in the shops and this latest announcement about Tekken 3 is very exciting for PlayStation-less.

As you can see the Dreamcast pictures improve greatly on the Playstation ones, hardly surprising considering the 96 bit difference in power. Of course, although the graphics are better than the PSone version, you can't really expect them to be up to scratch compared to other DC fighters such as Soul Calibur. We don't have any news on when Bleemcast No 3 will be out but it should be before the end of the year, if not early next year. The left version is from the Dreamcast enhanced game.



## Commandos waves good bye to DC

It seems Eidos don't like the Dreamcast much anymore, after they cancelled Soul Reaver 2 for the DC, there was outrage. Sadly it seems the petitions haven't had any desirable effect on Eidos as Commandos 2 has now been scrapped for the machine. While Eidos said the PC and PS2 versions of the strategy will still go ahead this latest announcement is yet more proof of developers lack of faith in the little white box of joy. It seems Sega is nearly on their own now supporting the Dreamcast, almost a complete rerun of the situation with the Sega Saturn at the end of it's life.



## MEDIA BLAST: TEKKEN GBA



^These images of Tekken show an excellent pseudo 3 dimensional world. It almost looks as good as the Playstation original.

## GBA Doomed for Life

Just as you thought you were safe and that it was never going to happen, Activision have unleashed unbelievable screenshots from Doom... on the Game Boy Advance. Looking almost identical (par resolution of course) to it's PC brother, Doom proves once again that the GBA, although at heart a 2D console, can pull off some truly splendid handheld feats when it is pushed to do so. Doom should incorporate all of the classic gameplay and the 27 original levels that made it a household name when it was released on the PC back in 1993. The best news, however, is that the game will support multiplayer death-matches via the GBA's link cable.



## X Box Goes Large

It has been confirmed that the demo disks of the Official Xbox Magazine, which will first hit the shelves of America at the Xbox's release on the 8th November, will be doubled layered 'DVD-9' disks capable of holding a whopping 8.5GB of space. This is comparable to the standard PS2 DVDs (and most DVD formats for that matter) which currently only use 4.7GB DVD-5 disks and the GameCube's minute (by comparison anyway) 1.3GB disks. This should lay a standard for X Box games to come on these ultra-high capacity disks, and something for Sony to follow.

We guess this means DVD-9 demos for Europe too.





This time it's personal.

The Shenmue saga continues, get ready to be amazed.

Written by: Chris Zardis

**PUBLISHER:** Sega  
**PLATFORM:** Dreamcast

**DEVELOPER:** AM2  
**GENRE:** RPG

## SHENMUE II

Shenmue on the Dreamcast was considered to be one of the best games of the year 2000, and it looks like Shenmue II is going to continue the respectability of the series again with the next game in the series.

Shenmue was originally going to be released as a single game, but Yu Suzuki decided that, as it was so large, and in order to get Shenmue 1 out as soon as possible, that the game would be split into 16 parts., or chapters. The first game covered Chapter 1, and Shenmue II will continue with the next five chapters, meaning that the game will likely finish off on another console. The new game continues right where the original left off; Ryo is on a boat to China to seek Lan Di,

the murderer of his father, and to stop him from getting the two mystical mirrors.

We're not sure how he's done it, but AM2 have managed to create even more impressive and realistic environments than in the original, with huge towering high rise buildings and some very nice lighting. Another area of considerable improvement is the detail on the characters' faces (see left), which, even though they were already very impressive in the original, have now got even smoother. Also, where as there were hardly ever more than around five characters on screen at once in the original, Shenmue II can handle dozens with no slowdown.

Some of you may recall seeing screenshots released by Sega of the original Shenmue of areas that never existed in the final game. Well, many of these areas now feature in Shenmue II, as a result of the story so far being split in two.





There are many areas that Ryo will encounter in his next adventure. We've outlined some of the major ones you'll come across.

The game will feature a brand new navigational system allowing you to map out your current location and mark areas you visit to advance you through your adventure. This should avoid some people from getting frustrated in that they had to go to find a static map located in the town to find where they are.

Also, you're going to have to find alternative ways to get money in Shenmue II, as Ine San isn't around to give you an allowance. Instead, you can make money from part time work (which should involve moving crates around like in the first game), and gambling on the streets of Hong Kong. Also, there is the chance that you'd be able to win prizes from doing well in arcade games that you'll be able to track down and play. Shenmue II's arcades not only feature Space Harrier and Hang on from the first game, but will also introduce Afterburner 2 and Out run to the mix, as well as a range of other games, including QTE (quick timer event) training, and probably darts. If you are lazy and don't want to earn money to play these games, there will be an option to get straight into them from the title screen, although this may have to be unlocked.

Shenmue II will also feature a new interaction 'engine', dubbed Action Key. Basically, you'll get to choose how you talk to people by selecting from a list of pre set phrases to say, much like in many other RPG's, such as Skies of Arcadia. Saying the right things will get you through the game on a more efficient path.

Also new to Shenmue II are "Advanced Weather" and "Time Control" technologies. These create a visually impactful real-time world with moving 3D skies and changing terrain and vegetation, something that is sure to be very interesting to see in action.

## BOXOUT

## THE CHARACTERS

### Shuei Kou

She's the girl who appeared in the Shenmue Passport disk of the original game and, err.. never actually appeared in the game. Anyway, she's in Shenmue II and apparently will help Ryo understand the importance of him keeping the Phoenix Mirror safe from Lan Di.

### Joy

This orange haired girl might just be the object of Ryo's heart now that Nozomi has gone to Canada. Whether she takes a big part of the story or not is yet to be seen, but she was also seen with Ryo on a motorbike on the very first Shenmue II postcards.

### Ren

He lives in Aberdeen (no, not in Scotland, it's the sea side area of Hong Kong), where he is chief of a street gang. He has been created as an initial rival of Ryo's, but will rivalry turn into a 'Sonic and Knuckles' style friendship?



## CAPTION

## SHENMUE II

Ryo still has his trademark plaster (that's a 'band aid' to all our American readers) on his left upper cheek.

The textures seen on Ryo seem much the same, although his jacket seems to look that little bit nicer than before.





'AM2 had managed to create even more impressive and realistic environments than in the original'



### Aberdeen

The harbour area of Hong Kong that was seen in the original Shenmue images around two years ago.



### Nine Dragons (Coulomb)

Not much is known about this place, but, even though it is described as a 'castle', it looks more like a slum.



### Guilin

It looks like Ryo will dock here in the final game. A sub tropical paradise, home to a traditional Japanese culture.

For those of you who are worried that they will not be able to get into Shenmue II because you have not played the original, Sega have included a summary movie from the original on Disk 4, for you to have a look at first. Alternatively, you could rush out and buy Shenmue now, so that you'll be all prepared for the sequel's release around Christmas, or possibly early next year.

Rumours of a PS2 version or Shenmue being released on another format are unconfirmed, but surely possible (although the latest news goes against this), seeing as this will be the last instalment on the Dreamcast and that we know the saga will continue after Sega's white box gets put down for the last time. As soon as we get any more info, we'll let you know.

Well, that's about it from Shenmue II at the moment, as you can see, it's looking very impressive. We'll keep you up to date on any advances on the game in the Dual-gamer new sector. Shenmue II will not be the last game released on the Dreamcast, but it will be one of the last important triple A titles. It seems rather fitting that the console's favourite games will be getting a sequel as one of it's last releases.

Trust us, it'll be worth the wait. Let's just hope that Sega don't ruin it all by chucking in a turbo charged machine gun or something (maybe I'll suggest it to them, Ed).







Cruzn15 gets his board out for his Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 Preview

Previewed by Cruzn15

# TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

**PUBLISHER:** Activision  
**PLATFORM:** Playstation 2

Tony is back again, and he's still across all platforms. The Tony Hawk's Pro Skater series is, believe it or not, a key title in the history of gaming. Before the time of Tony Hawk's introduction onto the Playstation, you wouldn't see extreme sports lovers, skaters and the like playing many home videogames. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater introduced gaming to the mainstream media and then the already established form of entertainment among geeks and techno-junkies became loved by all walks of life. The game was simple to understand but drew beginners in with the depth of tricks and play. However, many can argue that as Tony Hawk expanded to its first sequel, the gameplay remained pretty much the same with a few added tricks. So, what're we going to get from the third instalment? Just a few more skaters and a couple extra tricks? Not a chance.

The previous titles helped you to get accustomed to kick flipping off jumps, some manuals, grinding rails and edges, and, well, that's about it. The depth just about stopped there with some variations of each but not enough to add a whole new mode of play. Well, luckily, Neversoft hears your call for depth and is adding whole new styles of skating. Ask any true skater; there's much more to skating that kick flips, grinds, and the like. One of the new additions is of flatland skating where they've added to the library of tricks al-

ready available. Flatland is done as explained in the name; done on flat land (no ramps). Once your special meter is full, you can execute the many tricks. You'll do an ollie while skating level to a manual or a handstand or a one-footer or even luge on the board - the possibilities will stretch as far as Neversoft brings it. Another of the new innovations includes the revert. This is when you press L2 or R2, you'll be able to use this to link flatland tricks to vert tricks into different and varying combos.



PREVIEWS TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3



You can even go through the car wash in THPS3... pity you don't actually have a car *to* wash.

Besides tricks, you can expect much deeper and interactive level environments. There will be plenty of levels with plenty of differences. Ever wonder why there are ramps outside of the school? Well, this time the level design will be more innovative to turn actual architectural designs into something that can be skated. In other words, you won't see many more random handrails in an inappropriate area. Even the missions are deeper requiring character interaction and much more than the average collect the three bus tokens or grab S-K-A-T-E (although, that hasn't been left out; more on that later). You'll now require player interaction. For example, in one level, you have to speak to "The Thin Man" who was locked out of his haunted house being boarded up. You must find an axe and give it to him so he can break the door down. Now, that you've completed the mission, you can explore the haunted house as a secret area. Also, some missions are varied among different skaters. For example, a skater that excels in ramp tricks would have to perform a certain trick off a jump while a flatland skater would have to manual over an object. It all depends on a skater's strengths.

Speaking of character interaction, you won't feel so lonely on the streets anymore as pedestrians and interactive motorists will be on the streets. Some of the locals are scared easily, while some are just looking to be wowed by your tricks (in fact, one of the missions is to pull off tricks to gain the approval of one of the pedestrians), while others get angry and are only in it to knock you off your board. Some of the street-goers converse with each other and you can listen in on their conversations (which are actually done in quite detail as they don't repeat themselves much if you listen in for a while). Such missions as collecting the S-K-A-T-E tokens will be a little trickier as you'll find them often randomly placed throughout a level so you won't be able to memorize the locations of each letter to complete the mission. With all



this, Activision is not only touching up on the graphics but giving it a full overhaul. The title is sharper and more realistic than ever with incredible player designs and how they interact with the environment. Even the pro skaters are beginning to resemble their real-life models (look at the Hawk Man and tell me that doesn't look like Tony Hawk, himself). The game will still include the Create-A-Skater and Create-A-Skatepark features although they will be expanded to encompass more. For example, you can now create female skaters.





Developed by Neversoft

Any game in its right mind could argue that all that is quite enough for a single title but this baby is going to pack a punch. The title is going to include multiplayer options and plenty of it. Besides local multiplayer modes (played around a single console) such as trick attack, tag, graffiti and horse (and possibly a few others), THPS3 will also include, drum-roll please, Internet multiplayer functions via PS2's upcoming modem (LAN or Internet) and online network (also coming to the Xbox although online details unannounced for these consoles). You're definitely going to want to get online and get your skate on with gamers from around the globe (and have fun knocking them to the ground if you're feeling a little evil). Expect all the usual multiplayer modes to be carried over online and perhaps some stats, level and player creation trades through the network also.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 will be a leap forward from its predecessor in every way (you can even expect the great all-star punk rock/hip-hop soundtrack available in previous titles) and for all those who feel that Activision is milking their extreme sports lineup for all its got, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 surely proves otherwise. Look for Tony Hawk to fly across all platforms including the Playstation 2, Xbox, Game Boy Advance, Game Boy Color and Playstation One.

We'll bring you more, including a full review, in Dualgamer nearer the game's release.

(See right for images from all the officially announced levels. Activision will be leaking more from now until THPS3 hits the shelves.)





Written by: Chris Zardis

# FIFA 2002

**PUBLISHER:** EA  
**PLATFORM:** Playstation 2

**DEVELOPER:** EA Sports  
**GENRE:** Sports

**Fifa** used to be a pedigree name in the days of the Mega Drive and SNES. Now, it has changed more into annual event that has got so repetitive that no one cares any more (such as Manchester United's yearly win of the FA premiership). Well, EA have surprised us all again with the announcement that, (shock horror) they will be bringing a new FIFA game to the Playstation 2 this year, under the name of, get this, FIFA 2002. Apparently, the game will actually offer something new this time. There will be a whole new tackling system that will use the angle and timing of your tackle to determine whether the referee gives you a card or not. You'll also be able to enter a mode which lets you go through the qualifying process for World Cup 2002, which will be held in Japan and Korea (note: there will be two separate FIFA games based upon next year's world cup, Road to World Cup 2002 on X Box and FIFA World Cup 2002). This will give users more feedback than ever before, including "hotsheets", which will update the player on international status of teams, players, upcoming opponents, etc. You'll can also enter many of the major European domestic leagues, including the Premiership, German Bundesliga, and Spanish Premier League.

Graphically, FIFA 2002 looks to be one of the most impressive football games ever, with immense player detail focusing in on individual aspects, such as hairstyles and player accessories.

Even though there are some obvious improvements to the game, including more teams, stadiums and single player leagues, it is doubtful that there will be enough in the game to get the games

market to listen again. Football games are, and always will be, a great cash cow for EA. But to continue the growth of the market, they will have to find a way to get gamers to continue buying their annual releases.

I can't say that I am particularly excited about this release, nor football on the whole, for that matter. It looks un cannily familiar to the last game, but I'll reserve my full judgement until the game's release.

Fans of the FIFA series will no doubt love this game however. In terms of stats, options and realism, FIFA 2002 looks more comprehensive than ever. For everyone else, EA are going to have to do something major to grab our attention before release. Still, I'll be very surprised if Electronic Arts don't have another number one release on their hands. It'll be a very interesting Christmas period this year...







Written by: Ben Matthews

# PIKMIN

**PUBLISHER:** Nintendo  
**PLATFORM:** GameCube

**DEVELOPER:** Nintendo  
**GENRE:** Strategy

Shigeru Miyamoto, what comes to mind when you here that name? Donkey Kong, Mario, or even Star Fox. Well now you better be ready to think of Pikmin, the latest idea from probably the worlds best ever game creator. So what's this Pikmin? Pikmin are a tiny little plant like creature who grow in the ground that are all grouped on this garden like planet, actually the idea came from Miyamoto's love of gardening. In this original strategy game you are a spaceman who's been shipwrecked on this planet full of the Pikmin, and you must use their help to get your spaceship back up and running. In return you must help them by protecting all the Pikmin from different types of larger monsters, who will eat our little friends if they get the chance. So you are in charge of controlling over a hundred of these tiny critters at the same time, gathering materials to make walls, build bridges and find the pieces of your ship that have been scattered all over the planet, while at the same time keeping them out of danger. Time will pass in real time, so when it's dark outside, it'll be dark in the game, and that means it's time to get the Pikmin into their pod so they're safe from the monsters. And your days will be charted throughout the game. Also the Pikmin have their different colour groups, and their plant like features grow over time which will alter their abilities and personalities, adding another tactical side to your challenge. The graphics are very nice and cartoony, and very colourful too. It looks amazing when hundreds of these little things are trekking across the wonderful landscape that was based on photos Miyamoto took around his neighbourhood.

All the objects in the garden like area are huge in comparison to you and the Pikmin, blades of grass tower of you, and small pebbles seem more like huge boulders. And all the Pikmin have fabulous animations when being pulled from the ground where they grow, or interacting with the environment (e.g. legging it from one of the monsters. Although some players of the game think there could be more detail on some textures, and real time lighting and shadows from surrounding objects. This game is looking extremely promising, so be set to spend more than a couple of hours playing on this game once the GameCube has been launched.





'Sega's arcade blaster is being reincarnated in Dreamcast form... is it a good thing?'

Written by: Chris Zardis

## OUTTRIGGER

**PUBLISHER:** Sega Europe  
**PLATFORM:** Dreamcast

**DEVELOPER:** Sega AM2  
**GENRE:** Shoot 'em up

Sega fans were actually asking for this game to be released way back in the days of the Saturn. It never did come out, but now Sega's arcade blaster is being reincarnated in Dreamcast form. The main principle behind the game is to kill enemies... and to win points. A deathmatch scenario, then. The only slightly original twist on the standard deathmatch are the way that the points are handed out. For each kill, you instantly gain one point. Then, depending on the style of the kill and your position, the enemy will disintegrate and leave behind either a silver token (worth 1 point) or a gold token (worth 2). When you pick up the token, you are awarded the set number of points as a bonus. This means that you can easily get three points per kill. But, here's the twist. In a two player match, it's almost a certainty that the killer will gain the points from a token, but if you are shooting long distance, or get killed before you reach the token, in a three or more player match, there's the chance that someone will swipe it before you do, awarding *them* the points.

Unfortunately, that's all there really is to Outtrigger. There are a few training missions to complete, and some variants on the gameplay, such as protecting civilians, but most of these either suck or are repeated so many times that it becomes worthless. You would have thought then, that Outtrigger is a mainly multiplayer title. And you'd be right. Multiplayer games can, although sometimes become te-

dious, often be quite exciting and close (thanks again to Outtrigger's point system). The only downside to this are the controls. The problem is, Outtrigger's control system is unnecessarily complicated and hard to get used to (the L and R buttons make you turn like the rudder of a boat). This means that you lose the 'pick up and play' and it is quite hard to get any friends you may have to get to grips with the game. The controls are definitely better with a keyboard and mouse, but how many of you truthfully have four sets of those at home? To an extent, the game is let off the hook in the States with the ability to play with up to four players over the Internet. This was taken out of the European version though.







'You might just find Outtrigger up your street if you have enough patience'

Graphically, Outtrigger is no Shenmue. The game runs perfect smoothly, but you can tell that the game's relatively small arena's and sharp edges do not push the Dreamcast in any way. Some of the music is pretty atmospherical, which is always a good thing. Also, some of the weapons give you a great feeling when they are fired. The selection of weapons, however, is yet *another* of Outtrigger's down points. Each character has 3 main weapons, some sort of gun, a weapon of mass destruction, often a rocket launcher, and a grenade weapon. This isn't exactly the best selection in the world, and, even though there are a couple of 'pick up' weapons, such as the flame thrower, this doesn't add to the game's variety.

A few other modes, such as capture the flag, might have aided Outtrigger, but as it stands, it is little more than a five minute blast. If you can learn the controls in that time, of course.

Having said all of this, you might just find Outtrigger up your street if you have the patience to learn the controls (or the money to buy a few keyboard and mouse combos), and a group of friends who also like the game. For most other people, they will find that there isn't enough to Outtrigger to justify the purchase, especially with Quake 3 and Unreal Tournament both released on the console.



## VERDICT

## OUTTRIGGER

**Graphics** 7.0 Acceptable, but by no means ground breaking.

**Sound** 8.2 Some nice music and the standard sound effects.

**Gameplay** 6.8 Not bad once you get used to it. Could do with more variety.

**Controls** 4.6 One of the most bizarre, hard to play, control methods every thought up.

**Lastability** 5.5 Not enough variety to keep you interested.

**Overall** 5.9 Very disappointing from Sega, a few people will probably like it though.



'The original was a stunning blend of fantastic graphics and unrivalled fun '

Written by: Ben Rowe - Gamenikki.com Staff

# MARIO KART ADVANCE

**PUBLISHER:** Nintendo

**DEVELOPER:** Nintendo

**PLATFORM:** Gameboy Adv

**GENRE:** Racing

Amazingly it was way back in 1992 that Nintendo introduced the World to a whole new video game genre with the release of Super Mario Kart. The game was a stunning blend of fantastic graphics and unrivalled fun that is still remembered fondly by anyone who ever owned a SNES. Many, many attempts have been made since to replicate the success of this game with stars such as the Muppets, the Toy Story cast, and not forgetting Sonic the Hedgehog, to name but a few, appearing in their own cutesy racers. Indeed it is the belief of many that even Mario Kart 64, despite being a great game, quite scaled the heights of its 16-bit predecessor. Thus it was unsurprising that a wave of euphoria swept through the games industry when Nintendo made the inevitable announcement that the inhabitants of the Mushroom Kingdom would once again be back behind the wheel on the GBA. We were given a teasing glimpse of what to expect at ECTS, and now at last, a year on, we can truly sample the delights of Mario Kart Super Circuit. Nintendo have sensibly chosen to stick with the same characters that were present in the N64 game and so there's no return for Koopa Trooper and no sign of the likes of Waluigi or Baby Mario. Each different character has his or her own attributes that make the driver selection an important issue; do you choose Toad who's quite fast but does tend to get knocked around the track by the bigger racers, or Bowser who can hold his own but doesn't really have the pace. The different strengths and weaknesses of the various characters are nicely balanced and any new additions to the fold might well have put this in jeopardy. Whilst Konami Crazy Racers, another kart racer on the GBA, was good fun one reason why it didn't come close to challenging Mario Kart was the choice of characters within the game. It's so much more fun taking Mario out with a red shell just as he's about to cross the finish line than some unknown from a Konami game.

There are four cups to play, across the standard Mario Kart speeds of 50, 100, and 150cc. Should you manage to win all the cups across a particular speed you will be rewarded with the Special Cup, which basically means you'll have another four tracks to race round. As well as simply winning the cups you will be awarded a grade ranging from 'A' to 'E' that corresponds to how well the cup was won. This is based on whereabouts you finish and how many coins you have at the end of each race. Twenty tracks to compete on would have been great but this is Nintendo and they always like to go one better. Well this time they have in fact gone twenty better! If you manage to win all the cups with a grade of 'A' you will open up five bonus cups featuring the best tracks from the SNES original.



**CAPTION**

**MARIO KART ADVANCE**

Any critics of the GBA's power to re create and even improve on the SNES's abilities should now bow your heads in shame. Alternatively, go down to the shops and get one.



All this means that there will be forty tracks on one cartridge, which is fantastic value and should ensure the longevity of this game.

Much in the way it did on both the SNES and the N64 Mario Kart Super Circuit (MKSC) has set a standard for graphical achievement. The look of the game is best described as being somewhere between the two previous outings. The animation on the characters themselves is excellent and the tracks too are beautifully realised, containing such pleasures as rain, wiggams, and objects that move around on the horizon. The processing power of the GBA ensures that the game hammers along at a fair old speed once you move up to the 150cc option. The classic Mario Kart sounds are all here too, the music is adequate enough, and it's great to hear the various characters chatting away!

Another feather in MKSC's cap is the accomplished learning curve. Whilst all but the inexperienced gamer will quickly rattle through the 50cc cups the challenge will increase greatly as you move onto to 100 and especially 150ccs. Once you reach the top level the computer controlled racers become far more of a challenge and will not surrender their position easily. Indeed even if you can win the cup you will still have the grading system to consider, as an A grade will be needed to truly complete the game as well as open up the extra tracks. This ensures that even if you blitz the game the game non-stop, which is easily done, it'll still take you a fair while and a few batteries to completely master and complete it. More great news concerning Mario Kart Super Circuit is that power sliding is most definitely back in fashion. The joy of the SNES version was using the shoulder button to slide round the corners maintaining your speed rather than breaking, and whilst it found limited use on the N64 it's absolutely vital here. It's surely no coincidence that the tracks on MKSC are littered with U-turns that are ideally designed for power sliding around in order to gain those valuable seconds that can make the difference between winning and coming second. It's hard to express the pleasure of sliding past Bowser on such a corner after he has spent the entire race blocking your progress.



'The processing power of the GBA ensures that the game hammers along at a fair old speed'

The power-slide is achieved by pressing and holding the left-shoulder button, whilst tapping it will mean your kart hops. The A-button controls acceleration, B is the brake, and the right shoulder-button utilises whichever power-up you might possess. The power-ups and indeed the boxes in which they are contained remain the same as the N64 version, as does the way the red or green shells circle your kart when you pick up three together. As with the 64-bit game you are able to 'dangle' bananas or shells from the back of your vehicle, by holding the left shoulder button, that will protect your rear from attack.





If any of your friends have Gameboy Advances, you'll be in for a treat with the multiplayer modes on offer here. Even if you don't have any friends with the console, you'll still enjoy the single player modes and, with around 40 tracks to choose from, it isn't a one night game.

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This being Mario Kart things just wouldn't be right without the inclusion of a cracking multi-player mode. Much like with F-Zero: Maximum Velocity, one cartridge allows up to four-players to link-up and battle it out over one track with more cartridges meaning more tracks. It is here that Mario Kart GBA power slides past its SNES predecessor by offering the same great multi-player fun but now it can be enjoyed on a handheld by four people rather than just two. It has to be said that it's also nice to actually have the entire screen to yourself when sampling the joys of link-up play rather than sharing one television. Also included is the superb battle mode that can also be enjoyed by four. This mode places four drivers together in an arena with three balloons attached to their karts. The aim is quite simply to burst said balloons using the various weapons available. The battle mode was slightly disappointing on the N64 and we can happily declare this to be a real return to form and fantastically good fun.



It's nigh on impossible to fault MKSC and quiet honestly the only drawbacks I can think are that the game won't be officially available on these shores until late August at the earliest, and that it's wickedly addictive! Mario Kart is all you could hope for from the Game Boy Advance; not simply a SNES rehash but instead a completely new game, with stunning graphics, unparalleled gameplay, and an excellent multi-player option. Whether you are battling it out with friends or simply trying to shave a few seconds off your personal best in the time trials, this is one game that you'll be slotting into the back of your GBA for years to come. This is what handhelds were created for and hopefully it will show other developers what can be achieved with a little time, thought, and effort. You simply cannot fail to love this game and it will surely go down in history as one of the greatest handheld games ever created. It may be almost ten years since they first pulled away from the starting grid, and indeed a new millennium, but there's no doubting that Mario and his chums are still very much the kings, and queen, of this genre.

## VERDICT

## MARIO KART ADVANCE

**Graphics** 8.5 It's a handheld game... but it looks almost N64 quality.

**Sound** 8.6 Classical Mario music.

**Gameplay** 9.3 Excellent fun to play, you'll love the multiplayer.

**Controls** 8.6 As good as you'll get on the GBA's 4 buttons.

**Lastability** 9.6 Plenty to do and around forty courses to unlock.

**Overall** 9.4 Mario proves that, no matter how much others try, he is the king of kart.





'Even the Dreamcast's Metropolis Street Racer cannot compete at these levels of realism'

Written by: Chris Zardis

## GRAN TURISMO 3

**PUBLISHER:** Sony  
**PLATFORM:** Playstation 2

**DEVELOPER:** Polyphony Digital  
**GENRE:** Driving

**Ever** since Sony first showed off the Playstation 2 with the original tech demos, it seemed pretty obvious which one impressed the most, the demo demonstrating what was thought to be the next Gran Turismo. Since the Playstation 2's release, there haven't really been any excuses for gamers to go out and buy the console. Gran Turismo is perhaps the PS2's first triple A title. Has it been worth the wait? Quite probably.

The first thing that anyone who saw the game would notice are the quality of Gran Turismo 3's graphics. Even the Dreamcast's Metropolis Street Racer cannot compete at these levels of realism, with beautifully smooth cars and almost faultless environments, complete with some very cool lens flare effects and very detailed city levels in Tokyo and Seattle.

However, leaving graphics alone for a minute, it's the gameplay that makes a game, and Gran Turismo 3 has tonnes of that too. Although some may argue that many of them repeat levels that you have seen before, and become slightly tedious, there are loads of championships in Gran Turismo and, to the relief of some players who want to get straight into the action, you don't need a license to qualify for all events. Once you have completed the championships, which are divided into 'beginner', 'amateur', 'professional' and 'rally' sectors, you can challenge the endurance races, some of which have up to 300 laps in them.

The handling in the game is as good as you'll ever need it to be. Although it is still possible to spin on some surfaces, this is a much rarer occurrence than in the prequels, and is usually justified. Taking corners is also nice and easy, as long as you let go of the accelerator though.



**CAPTION** GRAN TURISMO 3

The level of realism is ridiculous. Just try and find a fault with the just that's being sprayed off the rally car, I think you'll find it a hard task to do so.



The GT mode is where all the action happens, where you buy cars, tweak them, get new licences and enter races for money to buy *more* cars etc. There are less cars on offer than before, but, to be honest, how many of you used all of Gran Turismo 2's 300 cars? There are now between 50 and 100 cars, with each of the models taking seven times longer to model in GT3 than in the prequels, probably the reason why Sony didn't want to delay the game two years to fit all the cars in. You start off the game with a measly 18,000 credits, with which I immediately purchased a Mazda Demio and souped it up with a turbo. I must admit, I was slightly disappointed when my car was left in the starting grid when everyone else was half way around the first corner. Then I realised that GT3 used the PS2's pressure sensitive buttons and that it needed more than a light tap to get the car going. This is probably a more annoying feature than a helpful one, as you often don't realise why your car is going slower than everyone else and have to thump down on the 'X' button to catch up. Also, it would have been helpful to have a meter on the screen to tell you how much accelerate and brake are being used, so you can more accurately adjust for corners. In the replay, you *can* turn this feature on, but it doesn't help much, seeing as the race has already ended.

Speed is one of GT3's only problems. It takes a long time to get a car that's good enough to make you feel like you are going fast, especially if you are playing in the 3rd person view, which makes things seem slower. However, once saying that, this allows you to gain better control over the car and be prepared for the power cars when you get there. Possibly the most enjoyable part of GT2 was the rally mode, and it's back for a second run, now even more bumpy than before. With more courses, the rally mode of Gran Turismo 3 could easily be made to a game of it's own, but it's all packed into one game, superb value for money there. There is so much to GT3 that makes it impossible to cover it all in this review. The huge selection of car manufacturers is very nice (even though many only have one or two cars on offer), and the replay mode makes the game look so realistic that you could probably trick someone into believing that you are watching racing on television. On top of that, there's the arcade mode, which allows you to have a quick game in a car of your choice, regardless of what's in your garage, either on your own or with a friend. The sound in the game deserves a special mention however. Many will recognise bands in the soundtrack such as Feeder and the classic 'CD player' song. This means that you don't have to put up with the Japanese rock backings whilst racing, definitely a good thing.



**CAPTION GRAN TURISMO 3**

That's a pretty sweet lens flare there. Some say that these are overused in videogames, but it gives a really nice effect when it filters through the trees on the Trial Mountain course.

Another cool effect is the refraction of the car you get on wet tarmac courses.



Lifespan wise, you can't really complain. A few more courses would have been nice, as I'd hate to count how many times I've taken the Rome circuit for a spin. However, Gran Turismo keeps throwing more at you, and for those of you who want to go through the whole game (you'll need to have a lot of cash to enter all of the manufacturer races), you'll find that you'll be at it for a very long time, with the 'percentage complete' box almost impossible to get over 5% for the first few hours of play, and it'll probably take you a good 100 hours to complete.



Gran Turismo is the game that we've all been waiting for, and one that finally shows off what the PS2 is capable of. If you have a Playstation 2, you have to buy this game, even if you don't particularly care for racers. If you don't have a PS2, it's probably questionable if you want to fork out £300 just to play one game. However, this is undoubtedly a good sign for the future of the console.

## VERDICT

## GRAN TURISMO 3

**Graphics** 9.8 Ridiculously good effects and smooth environments.

**Sound** 8.9 A mixture of popular music and good driving sounds.

**Gameplay** 9.4 You'd be mad to fault GT's smooth handling system.

**Controls** 8.3 Good on the whole, but the analogue acceleration is annoying.

**Lastability** 9.8 If you stick at it, there's at least 100 hours gameplay.

**Overall** 9.6 The best game on the PS2 yet, and a good step forward.

# MINISTRY OF SOUND

**PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft  
**PLATFORM:** Playstation 2

**DEVELOPER:** Ubisoft  
**GENRE:** Music



**Written by: Chris Zardis**

First of all, I'd like to make it perfectly clear that this is not a game. Instead, it is described by Ubisoft as "the graphics generator with 5 hours of dance music mixed by top Ministry of Sound DJs". It's almost like having a music compilation on your PS2, but with some fancy backing graphics and the inability to play the music without your television on. I suppose it is possible to have it on in the background of a party, but you'll need to be very cleaver with your setup to get the music playing on your speakers, and look that tad bit cheap when you turn your television contrast up to select a different song with your PS2 controller. There are literally hundreds of visual effects to play with, which is nice, but not really all that helpful, and often mildly epileptic. Of course, you could probably sit at your PS2 for hours on end and come up with a decent visual mix to fit in with your play list, but you'll have to be pretty dedicated.

If you're not dedicated, then this 'game' may as well be a CD that has to be played through your T.V. Even the DJ's that we talked to about the game weren't really that impressed, and declined the opportunity to swap the disk for some of their vinals. It's still pretty cool, and definitely a way to show off your PS2's ability to, err, play music, but there isn't all that much to this piece of software (note: we don't call it a game because it isn't one), and it certainly doesn't give us the opportunity to give us what we may have wanted.

When I first played the game, I was expecting to be able to mix together my own Ministry of Sound soundtracks. As it goes, all you can mix are the effects in the background. So what it comes down to is that this is almost a music review for your PS2. And, if you like this type of music, there's certainly a good collection of it here. With mixes from 5 select DG's and over 5 hours of soundtrack, this is the game's best point. As I mentioned before, you may want to use this at a party or something. If you're a huge fan of Ministry of Sound style music, you might want this just to listen to it. Whatever you do, however, don't buy this thinking it will be much more than a compilation of music, because it isn't. What it *is*, however, is a pretty fine compilation of music, and something you might like.



## VERDICT

## MINISTRY OF SOUND

### Summary of Review

Not a game - Good selection of music - Not very interactive

### Ministry of Sound: Overall

7.0 Some nice, but sometimes epileptic effects. Good selection of music also, but it has to be played through your television.





'Plots will unfold and twists will turn throughout the quest.'

Written by: Amin Hasan

# ONIMUSHA

**PUBLISHER:** Capcom EU  
**PLATFORM:** Playstation 2

**DEVELOPER:** Capcom  
**GENRE:** Adventure

Well, well, well, who wouldn't have seen it coming? Capcom are striking the PS2 with all its force. Capcom brought their Resident Evil series to the Playstation and created a household name. They released the dodgy Dino Crisis series but it still sold. Now Capcom are finally back, this time on Playstation 2 and with a twist, more like a tornado sword slash, with Onimusha: Warlords. Yes, Onimusha: Warlords, the survival/ horror/ slasher not many people expected, but little did they know. This time around instead of being armed with an arsenal of rocket launchers and flamethrowers, you've got mad swords and ugly demons to slash around. This time around it's not so much of a survival horror, but a survival slasher, but let's be real here, this is Capcom and they're not going to let their little baby sell like hotcakes without making to audience jump a little are they. Onimusha may be the first of a new generation of Capcom survival games. One example is the current game in process Devil May Cry, in which we previewed last month, yes you are a devil hunter and you do roam around with a few guns and swords, but the game presents a lot more action than expected.

Now let's get to the main game, you are a loan warrior ( Samonosuke) who travels around with a female ninja (Kaede). You have stopped off back at your home country and you see a battle, two clans are fighting over Japan. The good guys had lost the battle, but Samonosuke had one last gesture, he shot an arrow into the bad clans' leaders' (Nobunaga) neck. Samonosuke quickly runs back to his village to find the princess captured by demons. So the whole plot is to rescue the princess, but don't think this is a straight forward Final Fantasy scenario, plots will unfold and twists will turn throughout your quest.

Now, one thing you have to establish well on any game is the controls. The controls have to at least be acceptable, otherwise the player won't be too happy. In Onimusha, the controls follow the Resident Evil pattern (2D Controls), this is not a very good sign, yes sometimes it can be awkward but thanks to the mildly improved moves you can soon get used to living as Samonosuke much quicker and easier.



## CAPTION ONIMUSHA

Each character is made from around 10,000 polygons. Considering most game characters were averaging 50 five years ago, that's quite an achievement.



This problem has always plagued Capcom's survival horror games (especially Resident Evil), but Onimusha has improved a little, making battles just a notch easier, with the help of the side shifting and evasions which are very innovative ideas for the type of control used. Fortunately, this is the last time we will have to tolerate 2D control systems as Capcom have promised 3D manoeuvring for Devil May Cry, which leaves us hoping for the same improvements for the recently announced Onimusha 2.

Although, the controls are less than expected, the game plays beautifully, real-time battles and the running is always on, unlike the Resident Evil and Dino Crisis series' where you had to hold down a button while moving. The bosses are moderately tough on normal mode, always testing your ability, not only do you receive a great sense of satisfaction after beating the bosses, you are rewarded moderately too, always keeping you on your toes. The normal beasts that approach you are nothing to get bothered over, in fact one you get that special momentum with your sword you will start to rekindle old movies by the likes of Gladiator and Braveheart, where they just slash whatever is in front of them. Another traditional treat are the odd puzzles here and there, always travelling places to find items and place holders, cords, strings, statues, locks, traps, they're all there to be sussed. The FMV's are looking awesome and help the story move along quite nicely, but Capcom need to make sure they don't get carried away and follow the same path as Square did. As I said about the FMV's they look stunning, the PAL voice overs can do with a little more effort, but the graphics really present what the PS2 is capable of running and that's nothing below excep-



tional. Although, the character animation and scenery looks beautiful (let's not forget the water, don't forget the water), most of the background is drawn in 2D, which leaves something to be desired. If you check a lot of the Onimusha communities and forums you will see a lot of complaints about the PAL version. Thick borders with no 60Hz option, bad voice-overs and a cut down on one of the FMV's. However, only the PAL version has been affected by this, but most of the time you will not notice a thing. But then again if you really are that picky about it, then you should get your PS2 chipped to play imports, just make sure it's not Japanese, even though it's a slasher, some text/voice is still essential. Let's just hope Capcom take care of this for Onimusha 2, especially the need for more polygonal backgrounds.

As mentioned before, the PAL and NTSC voice-overs are a little dodgy, but not as bad as Jackie Chan's Rumble In The Bronx. The musical score is another thing.



The music adds 40% of the games elements. The whole score is made of traditional Japanese music. My theory is that without the accompanying music, the game would really lose most of its feel. The first piece you here just symbolises the whole game, it juxtaposes the survival and horror aspects of the experience. When the game picks up, the music does so too, it starts to present a heroic background. When scenes of sorrow occur, the player stars to feel the real emotions of the characters. (We love you emotion engine).

Now it's here where the game really disappointed fans of the genre. The game will last you 10 hours tops. The fastest time I've heard of so far is 3 hours and a half. Leaving SOME fans a little cheated. On the other hand some people like to think differently. It can be a great pick up and play game, beautiful slasher, maybe like a novel. If games like Tekken have about 10 hours of play then so can Onimusha. Once you have finished it two to three times over, I don't think you'll be coming back to this title for at least a month or two, yup, that's right. It won't be too long until tears of loneliness haunt you because you retired your bushido blade. To sum it up, it is quite a short game for a survival/horror, but never fear this game will *always* have that pick up and play feel whether you want to complete it each time or not, it can never feel bad to rip apart a 12 feet tall monster with two tusks that you are dying to stick up his ass!

Overall, this game rules, the play, the slash enjoyment, the story. Its short dept can leave a pick up and play feel, which can motivate you to always come back for one last go. The games gore is suitable for a more mature audience. It has its elements of shock and horror, but it fulfils all actions fans' wishes and then some! On paper, this game looks good but not great, but the experience is so much more, as one of the first quality games for the Playstation 2, I recommend this as an essential purchase and a classical experience, it can do with improvements but not any major overhauls, to be honest, I'm personally dying to see the latest news of Onimusha 2, that's why you can rely on Dualgamer, to bring you the latest of pictures and news.



'One of the first quality games for the Playstation 2'

## VERDICT

## OMISHUNA: WARLORDS

**Graphics** 8.5 Very nice characters... backgrounds could be improved.

**Sound** 8.5 Very important to the atmosphere created to the game.

**Gameplay** 9.0 Slashing up enemies has never been so fun.

**Controls** 7.3 Not great and will take you a while to get into.

**Lastability** 8.7 Not a long game by any means, but you're likely to come back to it.

**Overall** 8.3 An good purchase for the PS2, but this game could be that little bit better.

# *Inview : beach spikers*



Sega are about to let loose their newest edition to the Virtua series, Virtua Beach Volleyball, otherwise know as 'Beach Spikers'. Although we won't comment too much about the clothes, or lack of clothes, involved in this game, we'll just note that it must have been good fun when the developers went out to do some 'market research' for this particular game...



^"Don't invite these volleyball vix-ens to the party, they just might *spike* the punch"

The game features 8 teams to chose from, Italy, Spain, France, Japan, Cuba, Australia, Brazil and USA. There are also four different stadiums, with Mikasa and the Sega stage being played in daylight, the excellently titled 'Swatch' stage played in evening and the Coca Cola one set at night. Dave and Rob have already played it in all it's Naomi 2 beauty and have given Beach Spikers the thumbs up, so watch out for it when it's in an arcade near you.





# *Final Fantasy: The Feature*



There is a game series known in history for being the greatest RPG saga ever. Few games even reach the number 3, and now the most ironically named franchise in the gaming world is back. It's moved to the 128 bit PS2 where the developers claim will allow them to make the changes needed to keep it fresh, and we have previews of Final Fantasy X and Final Fantasy XI. The later promises a complete change in game-play, with online play being the focus. But will Final Fantasy XI be just evolution or will it be *revolution*?

Plus, we're chucking a Final Fantasy Movie review for absolutely free. Now isn't that nice?



^Caption: The graphics look much better on FFX than previous versions... 3D backgrounds, too.



Written by David Allan

## PREVIEW: FFX

**PUBLISHER:** Sony  
**PLATFORM:** Playstation 2

### Characters of FFX

Final fantasy X features a host of characters, here are a selection of the main ones...

**Tidus:** A professional Blitzball player from Zanarkand. He has many fans but on the inside is saddened by the disappearance of his father, Jecht 10 years ago.



**Yuna:** She is the daughter of the last person to defeat Sin 10 years ago. She is a summoner and well trained in magic.

**Wakka:** One of Yuna's bodyguards, he is the captain of a Blitzball team from the town of Besaid. He is also a friend of Tidus.

**Lulu:** A black mage who casts spells using different dolls, she is a bodyguard of Yuna. She is a serious woman who don't think twice about making her opinions known.



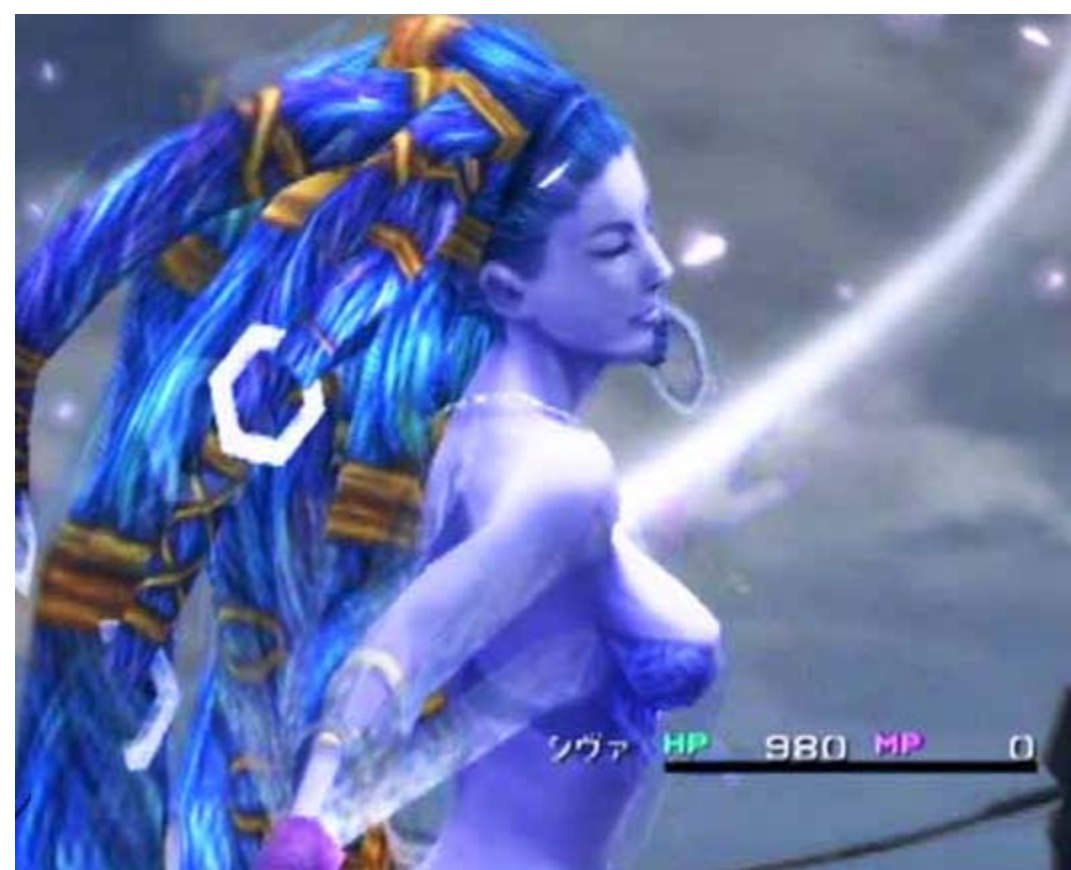
**Auron:** He knew Jecht before his disappearance, he has been like a father to tidus ever since. Prefers weapon fighting to magic.

The Final Fantasy games are the videogame equivalent of the Star Wars films. Mega popular, a huge brand, and always creating a large amount of hype when a new one is released. Each and every Final Fantasy game has been a classic, from the series' beginnings in the 8-bit days each game has managed to improve on the one before it. Incredible success was enjoyed on the SNES where the Final Fantasy series ruled supreme, which was not bad on a console known for its incredible RPGs. Squaresoft had produced an amazing mix of stylish graphics, great music, an interesting battle, and, above all – plot.

The plot has always been centre to the Final Fantasy games. Nobody will forget what happened to Aeries in FFXII on the Playstation and the tales of love and betrayal have left their mark in videogame history.

Thankfully, Final Fantasy X has a great plot and some very interesting characters by Tetsuya Nomura who has created characters for all the recent games, bar FFX. The hero of the story is Tidus, a world famous player of a Blitzball, an underwater game similar to polo and rugby. His father too was a Blitzball player but he disappeared over 10 years ago when Tidus was young. Without warning a massive creature called Sin smashes into Tidus' Blitzball game on his home world of Zanarkand, destroying everything in its path. Auron, a friend of Tidus' dad. Tidus receives his dad's old sword and the first combat of the game begins as you defeat Sin's evil drones. A portal opens in the sky and starts to suck up the ground. Tidus awakens in a new world, called Spira. It's a planet covered with seas and a few islands. Technology is forbidden by the religion of Yevon. Tidus soon meets up with Yuna a woman who knows of Tidus homeland, and a host of other characters.





While each Final Fantasy game has been different from the one before, there have never been any major changes to the formula of the series. As this is the first Final Fantasy game on the PS2, Square has tried to make some larger changes to a number of the game's elements. Ever since FFII, Final fantasy battles have used turn based fighting with ATBs (Active Time Bars) next to the character's names to know when their next attack will be ready. For FFX the ATB bars have been discarded completely, meaning all action between turns pauses (unlike with the ATB where you had to keep an eye on the fight as the action never stopped). A chart has been added to the top right corner of the screen,

which shows the sequence of turns for both the enemies and player characters. The player can now switch characters instantly whilst not wasting a turn to do so. Possibly the largest change to the battle/character system is the removal of Exp. Points. In previous FF games each successful battle would reward characters with experience points helping them to level up and become more powerful in different fields. In FFX, after winning a battle you gain spheres, which can be used on the sphere board to gain new spells and increase HP and MP statistics. As you move each character around the sphere board, they learn more and more. The further away on the board something is, the more powerful it will be. So it will take a lot of effort and battling to move your character all the way across to gain a spell and everything along the way. There are different character classes, such as Wizards and Knights. The Wizard will begin on the sphere board nearer to the magic, and the Knight will be near the weapons and HP increases. If you want to teach a Knight magic you'll need to spend a very long time moving him across the board to get towards it. This may sound very complicated but it works brilliantly and is a nice change to the game.

Two more functions have been added, Overkill and Overdrive. Overdrive is similar to a limit break, when your character takes enough damage it can unleash a super attack. Overkill is when the damage you do to an enemy far exceeds it's total health, this will gain you more rewards. The final change is that summoned creatures can now be controlled in the same way as a standard character. They are now a lot rarer and there are fewer, but they still very powerful.

More changes come in the way of the new world map. Used to allow the characters to move between towns and game areas, it used to be a scaled out with sort distances. Now, however, the game is seamless so you will have to walk a realistic distance without actually switching to a separate world map..



**^The chocobo's must have grown since we last saw them. Look at the size of it!**



The graphics are absolutely fantastic and now rendered in full 3D with polygons unlike the pre-rendered backdrops of the previous game. The camera still stays fixed though, but you'll never want to move it, it is always in just the right place. The characters look very life like which is a change from the fantasy creations in FFX but this is down to the returning of the series original character designer. The game now comes on a DVD, which allows more of the FMV clips that have been a famous feature of the games since FFXVII. They help to move the story along and look incredible, nearly rivalling the movie in beauty terms. FFX doesn't let down in the sound department either. 70 new music tracks have been created by composer Nobuo Uematsu and sound truly emotional. They really do add a lot to the game, it was the main way that emotions were shown in the previous games. However a new and somewhat controversial feature has been added, voice acting. Real actors have been brought in to give voices to the characters which makes the game a lot more realistic, but if done wrong with bad acting it could ruin the game. We are begging that Square sign up some descent actors for the English release, to compare with the fantastic talents in Metal Gear Solid.

We'll be keeping a close watch on this game. Together with Metal Gear Solid 2 it's the most wanted PS2 game and has already become the PS2's biggest selling game in 2 days. Translation has begun but it'll take a while, the script is hundreds of pages long and then there's the voices to record and re-sync the lips. Expect a release in the U.S. and Europe in the earlier part of next year, and a full review on Dualgamer around then.



Each of the Final Fantasy games has contained a mini-game and FFX continues this tradition with Blitzball, an underwater game similar to polo and football. You move in real time but all shooting, blocking and passing is turn based. There are 5 players on each team and the aim is to get the ball into the opposing team's goal. Each player has HP and MP, which alter the chance of scoring depending on if the stats of the attacker's is lower than those of the defender. There are also special moves to get players out of trouble when they are surrounded. Blitzball is an incredible game once you learn how to play it, and a welcome edition to FFX. Who knows, maybe it'll be a stand alone game one day (I hope not, Ed).



**CAPTION FINAL FANTASY X**

The facial detail in Final Fantasy X is next to none. If there's any game to take Shenmue's crown of 'most realistic looking RPG ever', it's going to be this.

We can't wait to see what else Square have up their sleeves for this game...





'The images we have here show some pretty impressive effects.'

Written by: Chris Zardis

## PREVIEW: FFXI

**PUBLISHER:** Sony  
**PLATFORM:** Playstation 2

**DEVELOPER:** Square  
**GENRE:** RPG

Not very much is known about this game, because not very much has been announced yet. The images we have here show some pretty impressive effects for a game that is still in very early development. The environments also look vast and quite detailed.

But the real turning point in this game is the way the game plays. The emphasis has, for the first time, been taken away from single player gaming to the broader scale of online gaming between different people all over the world, and probably from different consoles. This will probably be done on a pay-as-you-play basis from [www.playonline.com](http://www.playonline.com).

The game has been confirmed release on the Playstation 2 and the PC. An Xbox release is also likely, but the game may not come to GameCube because Nintendo refuse to collaborate with Square at the present for some silly reason (come on Nintendo, we want Final Fantasy V on GBA).

Of course, we'll bring you up to date on this game, and whether they decide to include chocobos or not. Expect to see Final Fantasy XI released at some point in the next couple of years, by which time, BT will have hopefully sorted out broadband connections in the UK so that we can all play the game.





'Finally, Square Pictures have released Final fantasy: The Spirits Within into cinemas after announcing it over 5 years ago.'

Written by: David Allan

## FINAL FANTASY: THE SPIRITS WITHIN

Films made entirely from computer graphics have always been 'kiddie' films. Recent examples of this are Toy Story 1 and 2, Antz and Dinosaur, it has seemed strange that no one has yet made a more mature film using the method. Finally, Square Pictures have released Final fantasy: The Spirits Within into cinemas after announcing it over 5 years ago. There has been a lot of pressure on the company to produce a film that will please fans of the games and bring a whole new audience to it, and in many ways Square have succeeded far better than the atrocity that was the Tomb Raider movie.



The year is 2065, and Earth has been invaded by aliens that have no physical body. They are ghosts that can travel through solid objects. The problem for the humans is that every person contains a spirit, like a soul, but when this spirit is taken out the body dies and the spirit returns to a place called 'Gaiya' which is sort of like heaven. The aliens have wiped out whole cities this way, but there are a few left that are surrounded by a shield preventing the aliens from entering. The main character of the film, Dr. Aki Ross together with Dr. Sid have a theory that if eight 'spirits' are collected from around the planet they can be used to destroy the aliens. The problem is that General Hein discards the theory as a fairy tale and intends to persuade the planetary council to use a huge orbiting weapon called the Zeus cannon. An army group called Deep Eyes become involved with Aki's struggle after they rescue her from old New York city. Gray, the captain and Ryan, Jane and Neil protect her throughout the film, which sparks some amazing action scenes.



### CAPTION

It seems the virtual girl is doing it again as star from the FF movie, Aki, was shown in the Maxim top 100 sexiest. Lara Croft, watch out, you've got some pretty tough competition ahead.



Admittedly, the story doesn't seem like much but the quality of the film's graphics is absolutely staggering. From the opening scene your mouth will be wide open, trying to tell yourself that what you are seeing was created by computers and artists. You can tell that it isn't real, but some of the scenes are near heart stopping in complexion and detail. Square really have gone to town in making sure the film look it's best. The same can be said for the voices, a host of talent has been brought in, including Alec Baldwin and Donald Sutherland. The voices really do help to add a lot to the film even more so than the music which just isn't as good as the game's. The music composer from the Final fantasy series hasn't made the music for the movie, which is slightly disappointing if you were expecting an emotional score.



Honesty, you will not believe this movie until you go out and see it. The effects surpass everything you'd have ever seen before and, even if you don't like the FF series, it's probably worth watching it for awe factor alone.

One of the main problems of the movie is that with the exception of the 2 main characters, the rest of them seem very flat and you find out little about them. In the games, many hours would be spent simply learning about a characters' background or where they came from, but none of this happens in the movie. In fact the movie is mainly action with little RPG elements but I found it to be very enjoyable. Finally a movie that does justice to the gaming world, but to think it took 5 years and over \$100million to do so means there may never be another film quite like this. Square, we salute you.

## VERDICT

## FINAL FANTASY MOVIE

### Summary of Review

An amazing looking film with a slightly flimsy plot but makes up for it with some amazing action scenes and an enjoyable script. A must see for fans of the games and newcomers alike.

### Final Fantasy Movie - The Spirits Within: Overall

8.9/10 (Watch out for more movies in future issues)



01

# Babes in Dualgamer

02

Well, we couldn't keep doing videogame babes for ever you know. This month, we've collected some nice images of a hardly known actress named Sarah Michelle Gellar.

Appearing in such low budget series as Buffy the Vampire Slayer on something called "Fox", does anyone really care? Well, we do, because she's pretty.

For the sake of wasting space, here's a description of Sarah's character in Cruel Intentions.

"Kathryn is the manipulative teenage stepsister of Sebastian and is from Manhattan's upper crust. When she is dumped by her beau, Court Reynolds, for the innocent Cecile, she challenges Sebastian to ruin Cecile by deflowering her and turning her into a tramp-thus humiliating Court by delivering Cecile to him as damaged goods."



02



04



03



05

**Look, the images have captions too! Ingenious...**

- 1) Here she is, the luvrly Sarah Michelle Gellar.
- 2) She also played Kathryn in a small, amateur film, called Cruel Intentions a couple of years back.
- 3) Here's another, perhaps more favourable, shot from Cruel Intentions.
- 4) Mmmm...
- 5) Sarah made a minor appearance (as main star) in the television series, Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

**MORE IN DG  
ISSUE 03**



# Letters@Dg

## With Melanie Usher

To be included in this page next month, please email Melanie - [letters@dualgamer.com](mailto:letters@dualgamer.com).

## Oooh, a compliment

I'd just like to say that I'm very impressed with the first issue of Dualgamer. I was surprised at the quality and quantity of you work. Will look forward to future issues.

From James, UK

*Thank you we are trying. Hope you continue to read and enjoy the mag.*

## PS2-me-do

As a PS2 owner, I am very satisfied with my purchase. With the great range of games out now, and more coming soon (eg MGS2), I think it will also do very well in competition with the new consoles, Microsoft's well supported X-Box and Nintendo's new console, the GameCube. With the release of both these consoles looming, the PS2 will be certain of a price drop/ special offer to make sure it still sells, and not flops. The PS2 has

already got a good name and reputation for itself, and despite lack of games on launch, it has turned out to be a stunning console, and we can expect lots more to come.

From Adam Pickles, Sutton UK

## You like 18 Wheeler!?

Well here's the thing... many people these days have no taste in games are missing the bigger picture that DC are better than PS2 games for example DC has games like Jet set radio, Crazy taxi, Shenmue, Resident Evil Code Veronica, Soul Calibur, Sonic adventure 1 + 2, Dead or alive 2, Powerstone, 18 Wheeler, Confidential Mission and House of the dead 2. You must agree that even just the examples I gave you are better games than the PS2 has in total. The only recently released game on the PS2 near the class of these DC games is GT3 and even that's just a rehash of GT2 on the Psone.

Kevin Douglas, UK

*Well I see what you mean but as a PS2 fan I must defend the fact that DC has more games than PS2 because PS2 is newer than DC...*

## Partners

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## Guess the game



Clue: It's a Saturn Game



Clue: It was released in 1997

Answers to the above are on the last page of this issue.

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## PROJECT EGO INTERVIEW

Joe has an exclusive chat to Dene, one of the Managing Directors and Lead Designers of Big Blue Box, based in Guilford, UK, who are currently hard at work on the exciting looking Project Ego on Xbox. Joe and Dene discuss some of the implications of this tremendously real-to-life RPG in which characters actually age physically.

<http://xbox.gamenikki.com/features/ProjectEgoInterview.shtml>

## HIGH POINT

## OUTTRIGGER REVIEW

Gamenikki looks into AM2's explosive shoot-em-up. Is it the explosive hit it should be, or does it bomb?

<http://sega.gamenikki.com/reviews/OutTrigger.shtml>

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# Next Month in DG



**[above]** Next issue includes a PSO v2 review and everything you'll need to know about the series.

**[below]** The highlight of the month, however, has to be Spaceworld 2001. We have all the action.

**Dualgamer+ members get this earlier.**



**Dualgamer- Written by**  
**Chris Zardis - Senior Editor**  
**David Allan - Deputy Editor**  
**Amin Hasan, Ben Matthews & Cruzn15 - Writers**  
**Rob Ratcliff - News Editor**  
**Also: Mr A Nonimouse, Melanie Usher.**  
**Special Thanks: Ben Rowe of Gamenikki.**

**Answers to 'Guess the Game':** The first game was Deep Fear, released in September 1998 it was a Resi style survivor horror game and the last Saturn game in the UK. The second game was Dark Rift, a mediocre N64 fighting game.

The address to email to is [inbox@dualgamer.com](mailto:inbox@dualgamer.com). Alternatively, check out the forums or the chat room the site, [www.dualgamer.com](http://www.dualgamer.com).

## The prankster's guide to... The Office. By Mr A Nonimouse

These are some great tricks to try at the hypothetical office. This is the office the office where you are in no danger of getting fired...

- Put a live lobster or any other creature in the file cabinet
- If your victim has a computer, reposition the monitor everyday
- Program the target's phone to forward to the office paging system. Pull the labelled buttons off of their phone and rearrange the order and put them back on their phone. They won't be sure of which line is which or which connects them to the boss!
- Tape your victim's telephone receiver down at top and bottom when they are away from their desk. When they come back, call them from your desk and watch them struggle to answer
- Take some cellophane and open up the glue bottle. Put the cellophane across the opening, and then close the bottle. Watch the victim try to squeeze glue out. They either open it up to check, or they squeeze too hard, breaking the cellophane and spraying glue everywhere
- Tell a new worker that everyone has tomorrow off because of the boss's religious beliefs. See if they show up the next day
- Does your co-worker have fish in the office? Take the fish and leave a ransom note
- Buy a package of approximately 200 of those little paper bathroom cups and neatly arrange them all over the subject's desk. Then staple them all together and fill them with water. See how long it takes them to figure out how to get rid of this set-up without spilling water all over their paperwork, files etc.
- Smuggle some hot chillies into your co-workers sandwiches. Wait till lunchtime and watch their face. Chances are they will then go for water; remove all the plastic/ paper cups that are used in the office for water. Now watch them panic
- Does somebody smoke at work when they're not supposed to? Put Ambesol on the filter of their cigarettes. Watch as their lips and mouth go numb when they light up!
- Take some paper out of the copier and write "Everything written on the this side of this paper is a lie!" Put it back into the copier.

Look out for more pranks on the dualgamer forum, follow the links at [www.dualgamer.com](http://www.dualgamer.com). Next Month... The Pranksters guide to...The home

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## SIGNING OUT