

Electronic Entertainment Expo 2000

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ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO 2000

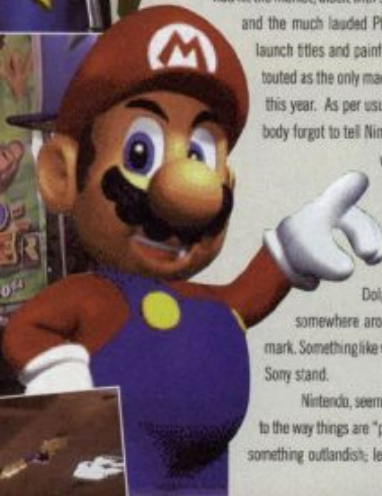
This wasn't exactly expected by most to be Nintendo's biggest year at E3, the world's largest annual electronic entertainment show. The N64, gorgeous beast that it is, was released in Japan nigh-on four years ago now, a long time for any system in today's market. Sega's Dreamcast had hit the market, albeit with something of a distinct 'splodge', and the much lauded PlayStation 2, despite mediocre launch titles and painful aliasing problems, was being touted as the only machine worth seeing whilst in L.A. this year. As per usual though, it seems that somebody forgot to tell Nintendo about all this, and that it was time for them to let go of their ground-breaking 64 bit machine, the best possible plan of course being to show off plenty of underdeveloped Dolphin titles with framerate somewhere around the 10 frames per second mark. Something like what they were doing over at that Sony stand.

Nintendo, seemingly oblivious at the best of times to the way things are "properly" done, decided they'd try something outlandish: leave the vapourware systems at

home and just go ahead and blow away the crowds with an incredible range of games that drive the current hardware past what we previously thought were its limits, and also keep a strong focus on something the company kept referring to as "gameplay", which incidentally had Sony execs looking terribly confused for most of the show.

Eye-blastingly beautiful titles such as Dinosaur Planet and Eternal Darkness showed us what happens when programmers have a chance to get familiar with a platform, and hone its graphics libraries to perfection. Perfect Dark and even Mario Tennis (just trust me) showed what happens when developers have time to focus on solid gameplay and that good old fun factor, and not just trying to squeeze out a title in half a sensible development life-cycle in order to meet an unrealistic launch date. Conker's Bad Fur Day showed what happens when you piss off a squirrel, in particular what happens when you tell a drunken squirrel to "f**k off," what happens when you remove the top half of a squirrel's head with your rifle, and a whole host of other things you just aren't supposed to see in Nintendo published titles.

So without even so much as a "we've got one, you haven't, so ner" in regards to the Dolphin and the GBA, Nintendo had an incredibly positive showing at this year's E3, and made it abundantly clear that the N64 is heading into its brightest year yet, much to the extreme pleasure of owners everywhere, and that they have no real interest in the ridiculous polygon-count battles that have taken up so much of Sega's and Sony's time and resources. The proof is in the games, my people. Go see for yourself.





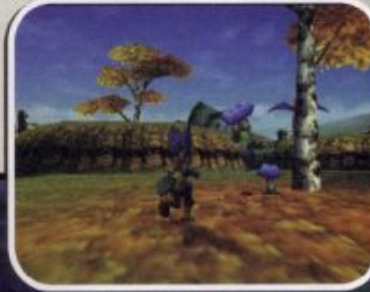
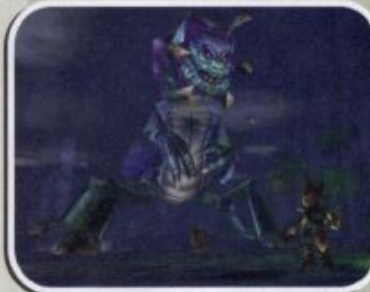
DINOSAUR PLANET

I was fairly obvious to anyone that's not a blind, decapitated Moose (don't laugh, it could happen to you... if you were a Moose) that Rare had an absolutely incredible E3. This was largely thanks to the showstoppers like Conker's Bad Fur Day and Banjo-Tooie, but also in no small part due to the finger-licking-sparky Dinosaur Planet. Following on, and quite bizarrely I might add, in the tradition of Ocarina of Time, Planet drops the player into a strange and beautiful world filled with all manner of inhabitants, from the endearing to the downright frightening, ready to help you, kill you, or just completely ignore you. Of course, now that you've saved the world as Link, it's high time you saved the Universe, so you'd better pack some clean underwear.

The general idea is that you will be taking control of two separate characters, Sabre and Krystal, two fine examples of the ever popular yet ill defined fox-eared manga furry family, and setting off towards the far-flung Dinosaur Planet, where I'm sure the cartridges grow on trees and the female population is entirely made up of Joanna Dark clones. To achieve all the tasks set before you and finally reach this fabled wonderland you'll need to switch between the pair quite often, but the chargeover has evolved a little from the days of Donkey Kong's sick fives; nowadays a gigantic green man takes you in his hand, does something mysterious and no doubt romantic by the light of the setting sun, and abracadabra - instant sex change. Quite exotic.

Each adventurer also sports one of two dinosaur sidekicks, Tricky and Kyte. The amount of control you'll have over these characters hasn't been revealed yet, but no doubt it'll be something inventive, knowing Rare. Controlling the main character, on the other hand, will give you instant Zelda flashbacks, with the auto-jump-or-die-in-a-large-hole feature present, and the Z trigger auto aim also rearing its rather attractive head. When you find yourself in different situations in the game, the controller will adapt itself to the situation, providing you with different control sets to suit your needs, from solving puzzles to battling ten metre high beasts.

Dinosaur planet was, without doubt, one of the most beautiful games of E3, with many an innocent passer-by standing frozen in place before the monitors, twitching in the oddest fashion and drooling on their shoes. The size of the game's environments is nothing short of preposterous. You'll find yourself adventuring both day and night, and through a whole range of convincingly funky weather conditions, all rendered on one of the finest graphics engines to grace the



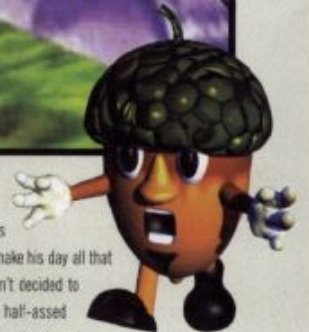
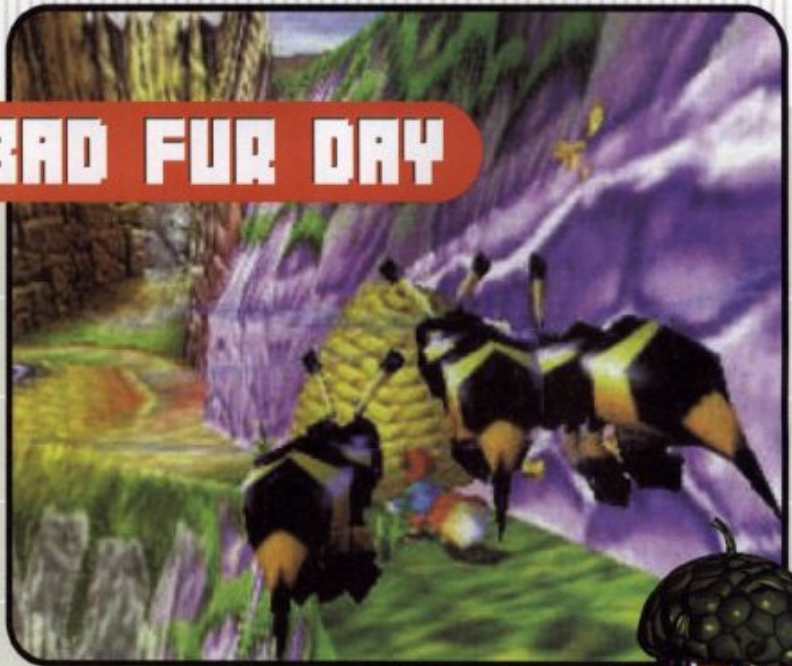
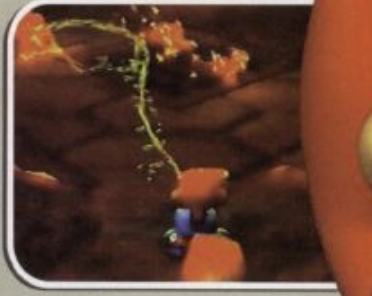
NG4. The game's music was also quite spiffy indeed, adding perfectly to the mood of the settings, and had Troy bopping along happily. It's such a good soundtrack, in fact, that Rare have provided the MP3's of the game's tunes on its Dinosaur Planet homepage, for all the crazy, whack, crazy-crazy fans to check out.

The final product will make use of the NG4's 4MB RAM pak, and take up a whopping 512 megabits of gaming silicon, making good use of the extra space on this largest of carts to include hours of in-game speech, spunky cinematic FMV sequences, and hopefully some sort of de-furring nudey code. "Another great game expected from Rare" wouldn't be my most creative final take on this one, nor the most surprising, but I don't care, do you hear? This will indeed be another great game from Rare, so there. Ner ner, even.



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CONKER'S BAD FUR DAY



The long and winding road of N64 platformers has been one that hasn't produced any major changes or new innovations since Mario 64. Sure, there have been a couple of feature additions but nothing to wet your pants in anticipation of, or anything. That is, until now. Those funky ducks at Rare have come along and unveiled what is quite possibly the biggest change to the game style since Super Mario Brothers was released. Conker's Bad Fur Day is the game in question and from what we've been able to see of it, Nintendo's long held image of a system for the 'younger fellas' is about to come under some major scrutiny.

Conker was once known as the loveable squirrel we'd all like to take home to meet our parents; not anymore. Conker has had just about enough of everything, especially little kids hugging him and pulling his ears. The day has come for him to let it all out and do his damndest to make all and sundry have as bad a day as him. The name Rare attached to the title's credits is enough to assure us all that Conker's Bad Fur Day will be chock full of as much as can be humanly crammed into a cart and a little bit extra. Equipped with a frying pan, Conker's weapon of choice, you are entrusted with the

task of guiding Conker through a bevy of hilarious levels in an attempt to make his day all that much better. Rare haven't decided to wuss out and create a half-assed 'bad' game, instead choosing to use their whole-ass and make BFD as loaded with drinking, nuddy, fart jokes and violence as possible.

One level, aptly named 'Golden Showers' for reasons you'll soon find out, sees Conker enter the domain of a number of liquored-up demons having a go at each other. Attempting to approach them causes his tail to begin to burn and life drains from the energy bar. Instead you must move to a locale marked with a light bulb and press the 'B' button. Upon doing this a cut scene will show the heroic squirrel chugging down on copious amounts of liquor until the 'trunk' meter in his eyes reaches the top and a cheesy smile spreads across his face. Conker is now totally and utterly wasted. In this state it is difficult for him to jump and his walking and attacks are staggered, however being full of liquid gives him one advantage that can help him dispatch those pesky demons. Hitting the attack button causes Conker to undo his fly and unleash a yellow torrent from the depths of his bladder. You are able to aim this and by splashing the drunken hoard you are able to 'extinguish' them. Needless to say, this is hilarious.

Above is just one example of the humour that will populate BFD and, as can be expected of anything brandishing the 'Rare' name, everything comes together to make this much more than just a laugh fest. The graphics utilised in the rendered environments and the animations of both Conker and his enemies are equal to if not better than those in any other title of this nature. Conker's controls are well implemented too, allowing him to engage in all types of far out situations. Conker's Bad Fur Day is probably my most highly anticipated game at this point in time and looks as though it will literally pee all over any other platform titles.

LEGEND OF ZELDA:



It seems Link has grown a little tired of this whole exclusive-partners business, and fair enough too, when said exclusive partner is a Princess who's so hopeless that every time he's putting his feet up after another six weeks of rescue-the-dumbass, he's having to answer the door and find another "We've got yer WOODMann HeeR" letter on his doorstep. He's decided, in fact, that the best idea may well be to slap on some sort of disturbingly animal-related mask, and head off and try his "magical abilities" on some of the other women of the Link universe.

This is a little different to the way Nintendo tells it, but we can read between the lines here. Nintendo prefers that we believe that Link has been transported to a strange world, a world so similar and yet different to his own, and filled with people he knows, but who have been inexplicably changed. You've stumbled here whilst in hot pursuit of Stalkid, the shifty bugger who's stolen the Ocarina of Time, and you've got every intention of retrieving it from his cold body. However, there are matters a little more pressing in this new world, namely the fact that the planet's moon is due to crash to earth in three days and destroy everyone and everything. Link becomes justifiably distracted by the course of these events, figuring perhaps it's fair enough that he spend the next three days doing what he can to avoid becoming quite dead, and hopefully the flubby thing will pop up along the way.

The gameplay, this time, centres around a series of magical masks, which provide Link with the various powers

he'll need to avert this disaster, and in three cases cause him to completely change form, inheriting the abilities and possibly the funky odour of his new shape. Examples include a mask that turns Link into one of Ocarina's Gorons, complete with the ability to smash obstacles and roll around at phenomenal speeds, and the Zora mask, which makes Link look all groovy and empowers him to travel underwater with the style and grace of an arctic penguin (yes I mean that, and no I'm not being sarcastic). No longer does one need metal boots to travel underwater. Not that you would in real life. But in Zelda you would have. Last time. But not now. You follow?

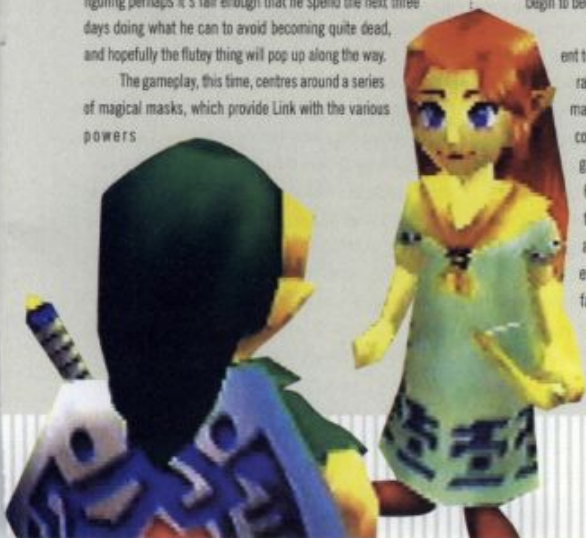
The other aspect of this game that really differentiates it from the first Zelda for the N64 is the extremely limiting three day time frame. You can't exactly wander around fluting amongst the trees like an acid soaked hippy, and attempting to be one with the animals when you've got a bloody great moon about to drop on your head. In fact, what may have seemed like fairly trivial puzzles had they been found in the previous Link adventure get downright intimidating as you begin to realize just how limiting your time frame is. Add that to the fact that you'll find yourself occasionally jumping about the timeline of the world once you find your Ocarina (like you didn't guess), and things begin to become quite hairy indeed.

The game's graphics didn't appear all that different to the previous Zelda, although the use of the 4MB ram pack this time around means more scenery and many more wandering loonies in the local towns. The controls are more or less the same, and while the gameplay itself isn't a huge leap over that of Zelda 64, a reasonable amount of development on top of the best RPG to hit a your system is a more than acceptable piece of sexiness for anyone who enjoyed Ocarina. Just what the doctor ordered in fact, to cure those finished-Zelda-forty-times blues.

MAJORA'S MASK



Oh Sir, that bizarre frog thingy mask is simply perfect on you. You'll be an absolute smash hit with the ladies. Come to think of it, Ugly Mob could score wearing that thing.



ETERNAL DARKNESS



It's interesting to see the extent to which Nintendo is moving towards making the system one that appeals to all age groups by releasing games that are geared to the older demographic as well as the youngies. Resident Evil 2 was one such example and there are a couple of other titles in the works that fit this grouping well. One such title is Eternal Darkness, which draws comparisons to the previously mentioned Resident Evil titles. From what we've seen however the game looks as though it will shoot RE in the kneecaps and then finish it off.

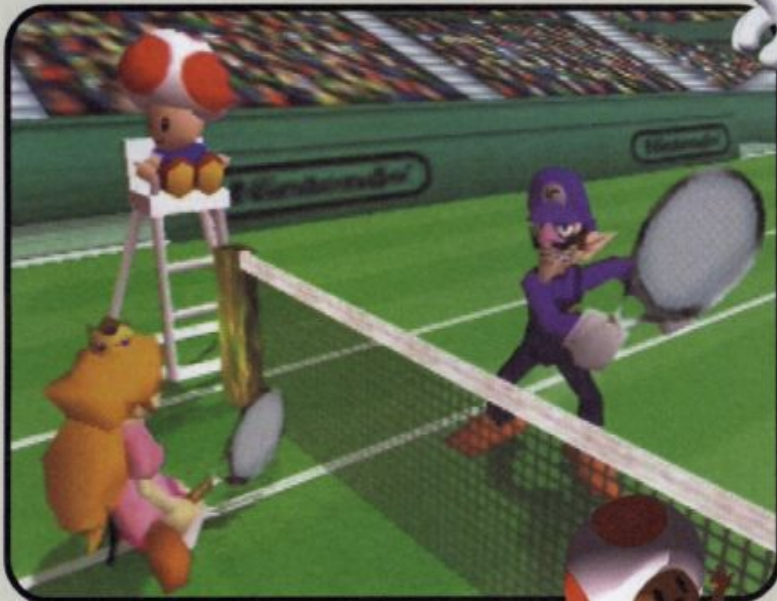
The story looks as though it will play a major part in ED as a whole and it has been designed with the intrigue of a best seller. It goes something like this, before humans ruled the earth there were a group known only as the Ancients who ruled the earth. They were not bound by the things that present day humans are, such as physics, nature or even ethics. Through the passage of time the species were pushed into the bowels of the planet, lying in wait until conditions were perfect for them to make their return. A number of secret societies on the face of the earth have been attempting to summon the return of the Ancients and are willing to kill anything and anyone in their way to reach their goal. They hope that in return the Ancients will give them power beyond comprehension yet they are in over their heads. The Ancients are going to come back and they plan to eliminate every single person on earth.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about Eternal Darkness is the way you, the player, are going to be able to stop the Ancients from making their 'triumphant return'. The player will take control of one of thirteen characters, stretching over a period of two thousand years. These range from a lowly monk of the past to a Special Forces soldier behind enemy lines. It will be imperative for you to work in conjunction with as many people as possible when you are in control because a united force is essential for beating the enemy.

The graphics engine utilised is also worthy of note. Although it is basically a third person title, the game's environment will also play a large part in the way you progress through the various stages. This is due to the fact that it's 100%, totally, completely interactive. Players will be able to move anywhere they please in the environment and utilise all manner of objects that happen to be lying around, such as weapons or tools. For example you may see a box and break it, you can then pick up the shattered wood and use it, melee style, to bust some heads. The engine used not only allows for total interaction but also looks spectacular, far surpassing anything we've seen before.

Eternal Darkness looks as though it will fill the void of survival horror titles on the N64. With an intriguing story, some highly innovative gameplay and a graphics engine superior to any other, Eternal Darkness looks set to be a classic.

MARIO TENNIS



Okay. Alright. I'll admit it. I don't mind the occasional tennis game. In fact, I can be seen to get damn excited about it when I win, too. I don't care either, because I'm not alone. Anyone keeping a close eye on the Nintendo stand at E3 would have noticed folks in Rare T-shirts wandering up and surreptitiously wrenching controllers from small children, kicking them, and then proceeding to play unfairly long games of Mario Tennis, much to the dismay of said children. Which makes me just about as cool as the coolest game developers out there. Cool.

Coming straight out of Camelot, the same crew who gave us the surprisingly fabbo Mario Golf, Mario Tennis sports the quality control system and solid frame rate one expects from the polished Mario series. It's just as well too, because it moves along at quite a snappy pace which, combined with the numerous play modes, abundant characters and intuitive controls, make for an almost criminally enjoyable and quite hectic multiplayer experience.

The game itself is simple to jump into, but don't let that fool you. Camelot have provided you with a full compliment of tennis shots, including smashes, volleys, lobs and cross courts, along with control over the power of every variant on these swipes, all from the use of just the analogue stick and two buttons. Bloody marvelous stuff.

Sixteen different characters are available to select from, including all your favourites like Mario, Princess Peach, Toad, Bowser and Boo, along with the new and wondrous Waluigi. By the "new and wondrous Waluigi", I of course mean "prft, that's what we need, a Luigi clone of all



things". Still, it's a cool game, and I'm willing to let that slide. Like Mario Kart, each character has a fairly obvious relation between their size and their power and speed, so those who prefer speed about the court will be able to pick the Princess, and those of you who don't actually want to swing like a girl can pick a proper character like Bowser or Toad. No doubt Toad will be the best player, just as he was in Mario Kart, and if I were to play you in this game I'd pick him before you would and I'd kick your ass. Then you'd probably cry and complain about it, and I wouldn't care. I'm Toad, and Toad's the man, so deal with it.

MT contains all manner of play modes, from the normal singles and four player doubles through to the chain-suspended, swinging court, Mario Kart power-up based magical extravaganza. One of the more interesting and unique game modes (for a tennis game) is the Ringshot mode. That's right the Ringshot mode. In this mode you find yourself trying to spank your shots through magical golden rings that appear on the court for shorter and shorter periods, ever more rapidly. Gosh, eh?

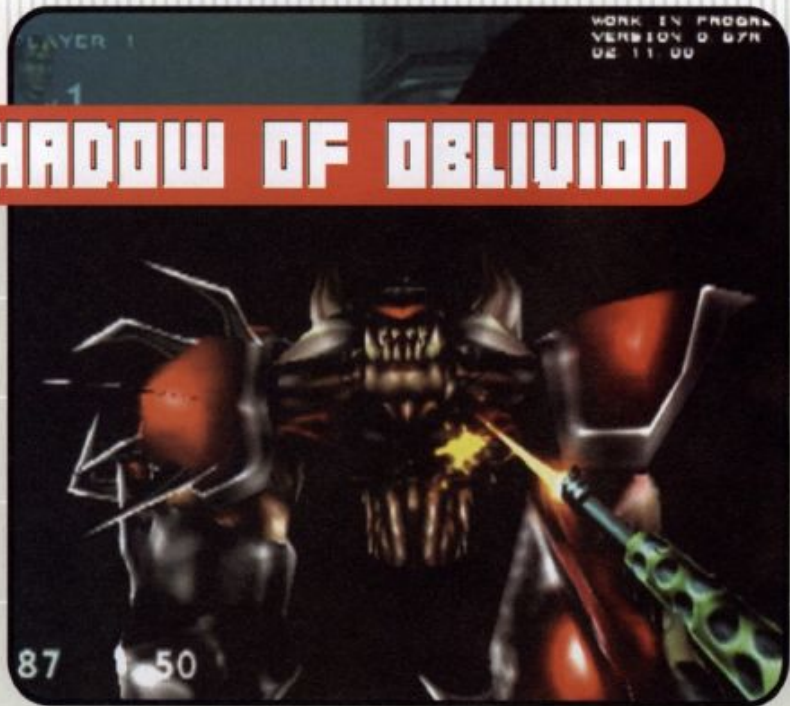
I expect most of us will find ourselves using Mario Tennis as the all important multiplayer come-down game for our inevitable six hour deathmatch sessions, come this summer. We'll need it to avoid throwing down control pads and madly hacking apart our fellow gamers in a fit of post deathmatch bloodrage, and I really can't see myself taking to someone with a tennis racquet post-Mario. Mostly because I don't have a tennis racquet, but I imagine you know what I'm getting at here. Wait for it to come out, then buy it.



so, you like surprises, eh? Well here's one for ya - Mario Tennis is going to rock. Quite hard, even.

TUROK 3: SHADOW OF OBLIVION

EVER WANTED TO GRAPPLE WITH TUROK'S SISTER IN A SIZZLING, DINOSAUR INFESTED JUNGLE? I KNOW I HAVE.



The first year of the new millennium is no big year for N64 third-party development, but Acclaim will hear no such nonsense when it comes to the fourth in the somewhat lovely *Turok* series, *Shadow of Oblivion*. The focus of *Turok* has moved away from the hardcore multiplayer nature of *Turok: Rage Wars*, and has taken a leaf from the book of the original *Turok*, focussing instead on an involving and original single player jaunt about the countryside.

With *Turok 3*, the term "single player" isn't entirely appropriate, and I think I'm going to call this one "single player and a half" instead, because I can't come up with anything better. There are now two characters available to choose from at the start of the game, Joseph Fireseed and his, no doubt, feisty sister Danielle Fireseed, both siblings of the "decommissioned" Joshua of old. Not only do they have different first names (oooooh), they've also been gifted with different talents, and completely different paths in the game.

Josia boy, as I call him, is a rather compact fifteen year old, and as such can squeeze into tiny places and enjoy fart jokes on a level his parents will never understand. His sister, on the other hand, has an "energy grapple", a type of spiritual grappling hook thingo that can get her to places her brother will never get to see. Loser. As a result, each player will be able to complete different challenges in the game, and access different areas, so really you've got two new *Turok* games to play. Add to that the fact that there's a good twenty levels for each of them to play, and it looks like we'll

be spending quite some time with feathers gaffer taped to our foreheads once this one comes out.

This doesn't mean, however, that Acclaim has forgotten about multiplayer freaks, such as ourselves. Hell, they've even thrown in several different multiplayer modes, including a nasty-ass paintball mode, and sports four, count 'em, four players in split screen mode. One of the main complaints we had with *Turok: Rage Wars* was the design of the multiplayer arenas, and their ability to foster the habits of filthy, smelly campers. I'm willing to take it on faith that with 36 levels available in T3, we should be able to find something playable.

Graphically the game is a mixed bag. The game looks not much different from *Rage Wars*, however, according to Acclaim T3 will feature "a 30 degree wider field of view with two to four times the draw distance that *Turok 2* had, and a better framerate". The characters themselves range from some of the dodgier seen on the system, through to some downright sexy armed-snakey things and marvelously textured horned monstrosities. Other general improvements, like the ability to finally save at any point along your adventure, rather than the painfully sparse save points of *Turok 2*, should see *Shadow of Oblivion* do well once it hits our shelves, conveniently just in time for the Christmas rush. Now you just need to decide what you want for Christmas - *Turok 3* or a second copy of *Perfect Dark*. Mmm, Joannaa.



HEY YOU PIKACHU

"Pik-ah-cho! Pik-ah-cho! Pika! Pika! Pik-ah-cho! Pika! PIKA!" - **Pikachu's take on the new 'Hey You, Pikachu' title from Nintendo.**

It's only taken a year of enormous success in Japan and the cries of millions upon millions of pokémon crazed children across the Western world, but some bright spark marketing exec has finally realized there may be a chance that Hey You, Pikachu! could "work" in our market. Here's to geniuses.

On a much lighter note, which is the only real note to be on when considering anything Pikachu related, Hey You looks like quite the groovy toy. Consider the sight of Troy and James having Pikachu-offs about the office, where each loads their memory packs into two of our vast array of Gamer N64's, and then begin the judging of who's small yellow pokémon is the most maladjusted, man fearing emotional wreck. Many hours of screaming "stupid!" and "Playstation!" into the N64's custom Pikachu microphone is seen by the esteemed Mr Ellis as the only way to truly master this title, the first ever console game to support speech recognition, and of course coming out of Nintendo.

Hey You, is being marketed by Nintendo as more of a new form of "toy" than a game, possibly in order to justify the hefty \$89US price tag, and finds Pikachu stationed in an appropriately pretty and acid-happy forest, where folks can play with, train and chat to their friend for endless hours in a quest to make Pika their own personal bestest buddy. I would have liked to have seen some of the other Pokémons in here, replete with separate personalities and vocabularies, but hopefully that will come in some form of inevitable sequel. At E3 the title seemed mostly translated to English, and was happily recognising English voice commands. We expect to see it hit our shores around August.



POKEMON PUZZLE LEAGUE

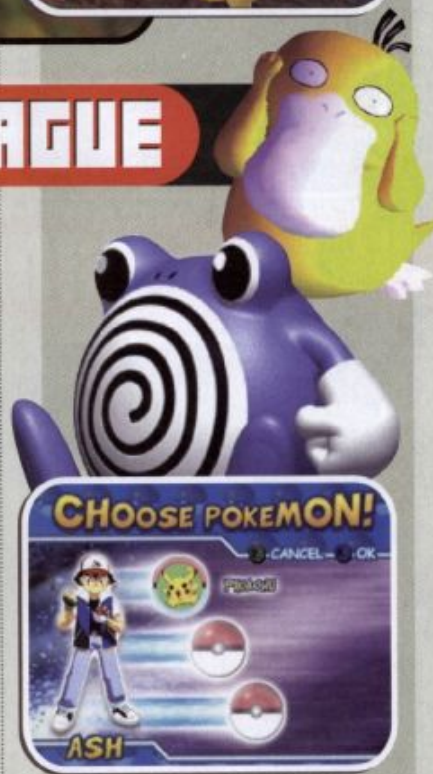
Tetris Attack! has never looked so **POKEMON PUZZLE LEAGUE.**

Here's a question: "Is it really possible that there are great big piles of people out there that would happily buy Tetris Attack! again, provided someone took a few weeks out to replace all the graphics with pokémon-centric imagery?" The answer, you idiot, is "Yes, you idiot". Fortunately, Pokémon Puzzle League is more than just a new cover on a very, very old book. Not much more, but at least a bit. Ash and his live-in life partner, Pikachu, are out to do horrible things to the probably very pleasant Puzzle Master, and it just so happens that they're going to have to destroy some innocent coloured blocks along their self-serving road to power and glory.

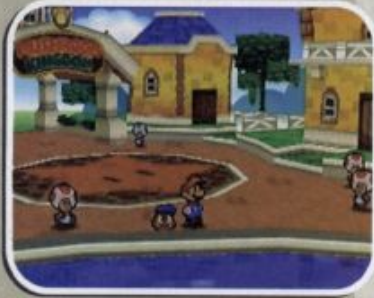
Lining up three blocks will destroy them, you can swap two blocks, leftovers will rain down upon your foolish opponent, yada yada Tetris. It's not so much the tried and true game mechanics as the multiple gameplay modes, six in single player and three unique multiplayer modes, that will keep people playing Puzzle League after the initial post-purchase-hardcore-pokémon-fix-haze has cleared. Included will be a straight-on two-player destroy each other mode, along with such eccentricities as the "Mimic Mansion", where you will attempt to mimic the Puzzle Master himself, no doubt in order to slide

into his honourable position and to take advantage of his unknowing Puzzle Mistress, once you have deceived and destroyed the poor man.

As much as I'd like to play this game, I still feel it's my responsibility to call upon censors to stop this bloodthirsty, anti Puzzle Master extremist nonsense making it through to innocent gamers on Nintendo 64 around October, and Game Boy Color shortly after. Hang on. Ah, I see. Ash is the GOOD guy? Screw it, I'm not writing this again



PAPER MARIO



Think ye know Mario do ye? Figure it'd be a Perfect-Dark-free day in the N64 Gamer offices before Miyamoto could surprise ye, eh? I suppose you're the type who assumes the sequel to the heart palpitation inducing goodness that was Mario 64 is going to be some sort of 3D here-we-go-again-but-bigger repeat performance? Well, you certainly haven't been paying attention to Nintendo for the last decade or two. Nintendo do not play fair with those that would try to predict them.

The aptly-yet-oddly titled Paper Mario is more of a 2 1/2 D RPG than anything else, although it unsurprisingly defies so simple a description. The game's characters are now heavily outlined paper cutouts, who run about in lush 3D worlds, moving along side-scrolling paths with limited movement into the screen's depths and doing bits of butt stomping and head smashing as usual, with spates of running vertically into the depths of your environments. If you weren't confused enough, head off to the boss and into complete 2D, for a bit of turn-

based battling, then get excited and do a few spins, looking like a coffee coaster from a Nintendo Wine and Loose Women dinner.

In order to battle these opponents you'll need to become friends with various filthy cretins that inhabit your sparkling world, such as bobombs and their ill-begotten ilk, who can then be asked to help you with their particular attacks. For those of you unfamiliar with turn based battles, it means you attack when it is your turn, so once it's Mario's turn to beat on his toes he can choose to pull an item like a hammer, or call on one of his friends to do damage, and so we progress. It's Miyamoto, it's different, and it's beautiful to watch. It's also coming out around October or so, when you'll all be apologizing to me and wondering how you could have doubted me.

BANJO-TOOIE



A bear, some human shoes, a bird and a backpack. Such an obvious formula for success, but it took Rare to come up with it.

As primary second-party developers to our beloved Nintendo, Rare have no intention of giving up on our even more beloved Nintendo 64. While they're at it, they see no reason to give up on the 3D platformer where's-Mario-I-was-sure-this-was-Mario genre, either. Enter the second in the Banjo series, with just enough new features to make you come back for more bird and bear love festival action.

The most obvious change to the game is that Kazooie has finally grown himself a pair, and as such uses his newfound courage to finally leave Banjo's backpack, to ends not yet announced by Nintendo. Both he and the furry one come replete with a whole new range of moves, and can now also hand control over to Mumbo, the spasticated shaman, to cast love spells on unsuspecting passing squirrels. I imagine.

The game is absolutely huge according to Rare, with 150 different characters, 150 distinct areas and nine worlds, complete with a big Boss type fella. With at least one mini-game for each



world, several four player modes and options for widescreen and surround sound, it's no wonder Rare isn't finished yet. Late July is the expected shipping date though, so if you're the type who finds great humour in the idea of a bear wearing leman shorts, or gets any form of unspeakable gratification from seeing a bird strapped to said bear's back, then start saving.

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO



The Resident Evil setting has, for some time now, and for reasons I don't quite understand, been one of the more popular places to hang out on just about any of the big consoles. I need only two words to describe the series: "clap, clap". This is what I hear as I watch some demented failed Hollywood scriptwriter taking us through disc after disc of too-boring action, wandering around as a far-too-dodgily animated character battles with too-constricted control.

However, I can understand how you people may like such a title, hell, I'd still be playing Uni-Rally on my SNES if I hadn't given it away to salvage what was left of my sanity and get on with my life. After all, the latest addition to the genre-defining series does look extremely sexy, and looks set to be just as polished as its brethren. For those that do wish to hand over a portion of their life to this game, you'll now be taking control of Rebecca Chambers, one of the people that was saved in the first Resident Evil title (on the PlayStation), and

her compatriot Billy. This time around though you'll be switching between the pair willy-nilly, rather than being told when the switchover is to occur, with the downside of needing to babysit the inactive player, as it's game over should they die.

The story is set a day before the events of Resident Evil, and begins aboard a train full of undead, and progresses from there. A train on rails, in fact. We can think of something else that's on rails here, can't we kids? Not much else was available at E3 except the story and some screens, which isn't so bad considering story-line and graphics are paramount in Resident Evil, and Troy seems to be drooping all over his greenish-blue chin and mumbling something about "brains, goodness", so I'll defer to his better judgement. A will-get for fans, come Christmas.

MADDEN 2001

Madden 2001 was very nearly complete at E3 this year, with little visual evidence of its unfinished status. The game already looks better than any past Madden for the N64, what with all the funky shadowing on the team uniforms, and some slightly less cartoony looking player models. Now that would normally make up most of the preview for a new sports game, along with some tosh about a bunch of extra players and the option to modify the spelling of players maiden names mid-season or some other useless crap.

No such trivial changes here. In the words of one of my fellow high school inmates, EA Sports next gridiron romp will have fans "craamin' in their strides". "Bring on the playbooks" you'll say, when you know what the hell that means. It means that EA have somehow managed to con NFL coaches into handing over a collection of their team's actual signature plays for your amusement. This will allow you gridiron fanatics to not only pick a

bunch of textured polys with what looks like your team's faces mapped on, but to have them actually make the plays you expect from your boys. Not only that, you can apply a team's specific playbook to any other team, and no longer have your boys suffering from the in-breeding that defines your hometown, but rather gifting your home squad with the ability to do something other than chase the other team's mascot pig. A most worthy addition.

Combine that with the new play modes, including a two-minute-drill mode where every possible advancing move and stylish swagger will gain you pinball-style avalanches of points, and the fact that it's another Madden title, and this one should have a lot of trouble staying on the shelves. Just as well we say, because titles as well executed as these deserve some support for giving us a yardstick against which to measure the efforts of so many paddle-pop-stick-and-sticky-tape developers out there.



WWF NO MERCY

Can you come and put your head on this steel staircase for a second? I just need to go grab a folding chair?



As with all things WWF, No Mercy for N64 is of course, bigger, louder, and even more ridiculous than last time. This is of course precisely what we wanted from THQ's sequel to *Wrestlemania 2000*, so as you can imagine we here at N64 Gamer are quite pleased with the potential here. James can be seen around the office slapping his own hiney, in fact, and muttering something or other about what "The James is cookin'", then developing a fanny look about the eyes and charging the letterboard head first, followed shortly after by uncontrollable sooking.

The first thing you'll go all retarded over is the updated player roster. Alongside our boy The Rock and his compatriots from WM2K, we've now got new additions like Chris Benoit, Kurt Angle and the ever-dodgy Rikishi, who not only come complete with signature rock-up-to-the-ring sequence, but also proceed to carry on with their own particular brand of general nonsense once they enter the ring.

Several of the sixty five wrestlers will now sport their own favourite weapons after delving into the crowd, which they can then use to beat the living crap out of any fool stupid enough not to have grabbed a more impressive weapon from some other piece of trailer park trash. Weapons don't disappear anymore either, so now you can pick that chair back up and finish what you started with the fat ass who knocked it out of your hand in the first place.

Several new arenas have been added for you to beat that fat ass in as well, including the spunky fresh Smack Down ring. You can do battle in several different modes in these funky new sets, including Ladder Battle and Guest Referee, in which the rules get even more vague, and where you can pull off such nonsense as the "adjustable-speed pin counts" and all other forms of tomfoolery. It will be interesting to see if it's at all possible to play a wrestling game with no real rules, titles that pop up for grabs at completely improbable moments, and up to four weapons lying about the ring at any one time. I guess the more important consideration is "Who cares, I'll kick your ass anyway."

MEGAMAN 64

Megaman, Megaman, does whatever a.. mega.. can? Hmm...



When Capcom, after long years of "we'll have none of this cartridge nonsense" resistance, finally caved and began to develop titles for the N64, I'm sure we all got a little excited. Far from the least of these reasons would be what appears at first site to be a midget in very cute blue armour, and his puppy. On closer inspection he looks a lot more like a great big bloody explosion, your entire life condensed into about two seconds, and then a long, bright tunnel leading to a warm and loving light.

Enter Megaman 64, a reworking of Megaman Legends from the PSX, only much, much better, being on the N64 and all. The title was something of a real-time RPG/action crossover, with huge worlds to explore, lots of storytelling and of course, Megaman. The Nintendo version is to stay true to the PSX, with a few graphical enhancements, somewhat more "condensed" though still huge levels, and the analogue stick support that was so painfully missing from the Sony port. The game is also



quite long and sports a nice, gradual but unmistakable rise in difficulty level, to the point where your control of Megaman needs to be near second nature. As such, it sounds like the perfect game to appease Megaman fans everywhere that have so desperately craved the presence of our hardcore midget friend for so long.

SAN FRANCISCO RUSH 2049

Flying cars, EXCEPT they don't, but they sorta are. You know.

No doubt most of you have seen San Francisco Rush in one of its incarnations by now, a series in which ex-gaming-deities, Atari, race you around the disturbingly bumpy city of San Francisco, providing you with the whacked out, high airtime, building-leaping physics of a stunt racing title combined with the beauty of an inventive futuristic environment running on a solid 3D engine. The series shows so much appeal that two previous versions have already made their way onto our beloved console, and the third in the series looks to be a fitting successor to the title of "funnest racey fly-ey fing around".

2049 is already doing the rounds of the arcades and was shown at E3 to be virtually complete on the N64, bar final tweaking and the obligatory interface prettifying, but already includes four stunt courses and two additional city tracks you won't get in one of those silly pay-per-play units. It looks extremely likely that the title will comfortably make its announced release date of September 31, and I'm glad.



Had enough of the absolute avalanche of badass motocross games to hit our funky graphite box yet? No? "What avalanche?" you say. "We wish," I hear you mumble? Ah well, you can forget cruddy motocross titles anyhow, because Vatical entertainment have decided to bring us something much more, well, snowy. From the very same people who've almost completed the as-

POLARIS SNOCROSS

yet-unheard-of-by-anybody Sea-doo Hydrocross, comes the actualy quite funky looking Polaris Snocross. I had no idea people did this stuff, I thought snowmobiles, for looking slick, rescuing dumbasses, and the occasional snowbunny kidnapping.

Well, people really do get up to this business, and in this title you'll be taking control of your own personal lunatic and their amazingly resilient, high flying snowmobile, and cutting sick across a slew of unique snowy-mountain-nutbag-rampage snocross tracks. Pull such moves as the "where's my napkin", the "I left my colostomy bag in Pennsylvania", and everybody's favourite, the death defying "tea-cosy." Even get to stuff snow down your pants to ease the swelling from the iffy landing on your last "Jesus Christ Badger" attempt. Definitely sounds like it could be worth a look, then.



MIA HAMM SOCCER

While before E3 we heard that 2000's first soccer game was to be Silicon Knights' World League Soccer. A good bit closer to E3 it seems the developers and their publishers, Southpeak, realised they needed something more to make a passable but uninteresting prospect turn into hot property. Thus was born the concept of Mia Hamm soccer, based around America's Soccer playing wonder, and coincidentally extremely attractive piece of sporting totty.

The game looked quite exciting, sporting twenty-three different animated special moves, which are available to players from over fifty

international women's soccer teams, including the entire American league. Diverse weather conditions, ten different stadiums and voice overs from Hamm herself and ESPN's Wendy Gebauer combined to make what looked like a promising game. Unfortunately the game's showing at E3 was not quite so promising. The less than convincing control system, seemingly constantly-distracted teammates and universally identical players make for what could be an very uninspiring title. The developers are still quite a way from releasing the product, so let's just hope it was an overly zealous early showing driven by E3 mania, and that we'll be seeing a very different product come release day.



PERHAPS HERE IS NOT THE MOST ELEGANT NAME IN SOCCER, BUT MIA HAMM KNOWS HOW TO KICK, AND HARD. KEEP THAT IN MIND.

GAME BOY COLOR



E3 COVERAGE

64 fans weren't the only ones with plenty to drool over at E3 this year. The handheld contingent were out in force and with the Game Boy Color really starting to bloom, a shovel load of brilliant looking titles were on display. We've gathered a few of the best-looking games together to give you an overview.

PERFECT DARK

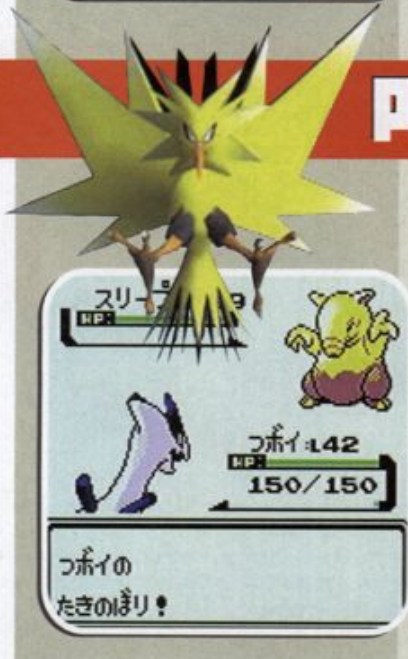


N64 owners aren't going to be the only ones that will be able to see Rare's lovely Joanna Dark flaunting her stuff. A Game Boy Color version of the game is on the horizon and we were able to get a little bit of time with the cart at E3. The first thing that stood out to us was the animation of Joanna as she moved through the levels. To say it was outstanding would be a blatant understatement, I would lean further towards perfection and it certainly oozes with the greatest amount of fluidity that I've seen on the system. The major strength of PD so far is the wide array of smaller style games inside the main game. Not only is it a simple top down action affair but also various other tasks must be entered into to complete the game. These range from sniper modes to an overhead driving adventure with the promise of many

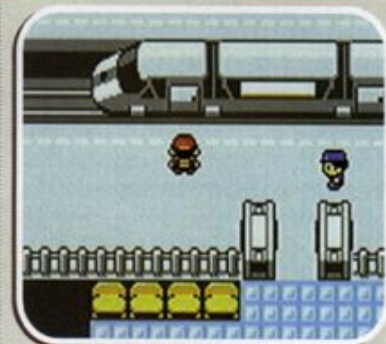


more to come. Rumour has it that both scrolling shooter and action style levels will also be part of the finished product. I can't wait! The best part is that the game isn't even near completion, meaning that in six months time we could quite easily have the most comprehensive Game Boy title ever.

POKEMON GOLD/SILVER



What would a Nintendo booth without Pokemon be? Probably still a Nintendo booth but it wouldn't feel complete. Sure enough, the rumours surrounding the new Silver and Gold versions of Pokemon are true - the game is swimming with all kinds of new features and a host of new creatures for you to ummm... play with. The graphics are one of the main things worthy of note as it is obvious that these titles are being made with the colour system in mind, even though you can play them on the monochrome Game Boys. All the pocket monsters are brightly coloured and the environments that you will explore are also worthy of note. As the game features a completely new story it is no surprise to see a plethora of new Pokemon available for you to collect, in fact 100 brand spanking new animals are ready to be gathered. As in the other titles you begin your quest at the house of the professor and are asked to choose from one of three Pokeballs, each containing a completely new Pokemon. This done, you continue on your merry way in similar fashion to the previous Pokemon outings. From



what we saw everything looks updated and the new adventure is definitely worth a look. We were told to look out for it around Christmas this year.

TOMB RAIDER



After we'd finished ogling at the impressive Lara Croft model, we dazedly made our way to where the game was being demonstrated. It was thought initially that this would just be another GBC platformer that would have us yawning in no time, thankfully we were wrong. The first thing that struck me was the detail that had been put into constructing Lara's sprite. Gone are the stiff, poorly animated characters of old and in is the new style that has Lara utilising 2000 separate frames of animation. It has to be seen to be believed. This Game Boy Color only title is nearing release and we could tell that the version we were playing was quite polished. Some of the things that

caught my eye included the digitised speech and FMV cutscenes. It is mind bending to see how much power developers are squeezing out of the Game Boy system and it looks as though us gamers are going to be the ones to benefit! As with most of the GBC only titles, the graphics are rich in detail and the game's environment is fully colourised. Lara herself is multi-talented, with the ability to dispatch enemies via the use of her twin... pistols. With the addition of various puzzle elements to the gameplay, Tomb Raider for GBC is looking and playing like an A class game and was certainly one of the most promising on display.



LEGEND OF ZELDA:

MYSTICAL SEED OF POWER

Any mention of a Legend of Zelda title is sure to bring gamers flocking from all over, and this was exactly what happened at E3 this year. After beating our way through the thick crowd we were able to take control of the game. Legend of Zelda: Mystical Seed of Power is the first in the Tri-Force series of Link games for the Game Boy Color. It is planned that these games will house a brand new story in the LOZ universe and all three will be required to finally complete the saga. This will be implemented in that the performing of one action in an earlier game that will have particular consequences in one of the latter titles. Quality radiated from this game, as one has come to expect from anything bearing the Nintendo insignia. Naturally the graphics and sounds are amazing but it is some of the new features in the game that I'd like to talk about. Firstly two new characters (initially, more appear



later in the game) will join Link on his quest, namely a Kangaroo called Ricky and a witch-like girl by the name of Maple. The interesting thing here is that Link will be able to utilise their help to complete set tasks. For example, if he gets in Ricky's pouch he will have the ability to jump higher and punch. These sorts of things are what Nintendo are famous for and believe me, they add plenty to the gameplay.



ARMY MEN II



Being packed into a crowded convention center is enough to make anyone want to dish out some punishment; thankfully we found the 300 booth in time. Building on the original game of a similar name, Army Men II sees you as leader of the green army attempting to rid the house of your tan counterparts. The game is looking and playing particularly nicely and the best news is that it will support the link cable for some deathmatch or capture the flag action. Watch out for this one when it hits stores in a couple of month's time.



MEN IN BLACK: THE SERIES



It looks like Jay and Kay are back in their suits, at least from what we've seen. MIB2 has the player in control of the two agents in a side-scroller that expands on the story of the original, MIB. Surprisingly the game plays incredibly well and happened to stand out from the dozens of other games of the same nature. The graphics are decent and the story is actually quite interesting, it looks as though Crave may have something decent on their hands with MIB2.

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY



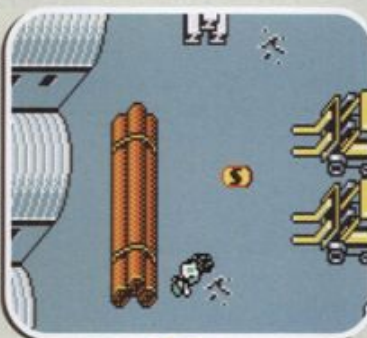
Remember Donkey Kong Country for the SNES? Well Rare are making a port of it for the GBC and in doing so are trying to make it as similar to the original as possible. From what we saw it appears that Rare have got everything spot on, in most cases improving over the console version. The graphics are one area where it isn't as good, however, this is to be expected and they are awesome anyway. The real point in favour of this version of DKC is the wide array of different level types, ranging from under water to the familiar mine carts. The various mini-games included also add to the total experience of the game.



TONY HAWK SKATEBOARDING 2



I had only just recently recovered from playing the horror that was Tony Hawk's Skateboarding when I happened to notice a dense population around the Activision booth. After beating some American guy with my bag of goodies I proceeded to play the latest in the Tony Hawk's franchise and believe it or not I was pleasantly surprised. You are able to use one of twelve skaters and bash your way through a similar set up to the first game, a half-pipe section and a street skating section. As before the half-pipe mode is a lot of fun and the new array of tricks and combos only enhance the fun. The big surprise was the street section, which has been totally redone and will now allow you to pull off all kinds of 'sick moves' including combos. Activision really look as though they're on the right track with this one.



LEGO RACERS

At first I thought it was a rendition of the arcade classic 'Crazy Cars' but then I noticed it was Lego Media's spangly looking Lego Racers. This isn't just another racing game, it is so packed with features that one may be excused for thinking this was a console title. The main and most outstanding feature of this game, in my opinion, is the ability to build your own cars using Lego blocks of your choice and then enter them into competition on any of the twelve tracks. The game plays superbly and the different powerups make your quest to meet the 'Rocket Racer' all the more enjoyable. Just quietly, I was blown away by this and feel it could be a sleeper hit.



- 300**
 - Army Men II
 - Army Men: Air Attack
 - Heroes of Might & Magic
- ACCLAIM**
 - Far Fighters
 - Mary Kate & Ashley: Get a Clue
 - South Park Rally
- ACTIVISION**
 - Math Hoffman's Pro BMX
 - Spider-Man
 - Tech Deck
 - Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2
 - X-Men: Mutant Academy
 - X-Men: Mutant Wars
- CAPOEM**
 - Mega Man X
 - Metal Walker
- CRAVE**
 - MIB 2
 - Dragon Dance
 - Supershot Robot Golf
 - Ultimate Fighting Championship
- CODEMASTERS**
 - Cannon Fodder
 - Pro Pool
- ELECTRO SOURCE**
 - Microsoft Entertainment Packs
 - Flintstones: Burger Time
 - Bugs Bunny Crazy Castle 4
 - Hydaria & Secret Office (GBA)
 - Star Trek Invasion (GBA)
- INFOGRAAMES**
 - Alone in the Dark 4
 - Driver
 - Looney Tunes: Alert!
 - Wacky Races
 - Rocky Mountain Trophy Hunter
 - Test Drive Cycles
- KEMCO**
 - Batman Beyond
 - RuneLord
 - Tweety's High-Flying Adventure
 - Daikatana
 - Territory
- KONAMI**
 - Woody Woodpecker Racing
 - Monster Force
 - The Grinch
 - Aurora Delta
 - The Mummy
 - ESPN 2Night
- LEGO**
 - Lego Racers
 - Lego Action Team
 - Lego Island
- MIDWAY**
 - 'Tootsie'
 - NFL Blitz 2001
 - NBA Hoops
 - Ready 2 Rumble 2
 - Ghostfreak Dark Legacy
 - Cross 'n Exotica
 - San Francisco Rush 2049
- NAMCO**
 - Mr. Driller
- NATSUME**
 - Legend of the River King 2
 - Harvest Moon 2
 - On Adventure
 - Return of the Ninja
 - Lufia: The Legend Returns
- NINTENDO**
 - Pokemon Gold/Silver
 - Pokemon Puzzle League
 - Legend of Zelda: Mystical Seed of Power
- PERFECT DARK**
 - Alice in Wonderland
 - Pocket Soccer
 - Warlock
 - Donkey Kong Country
 - Little Mermaid Pinball Frenzy
- RED STORM**
 - Roswell Conspiracies
- ROCKSTAR**
 - Austin Powers: Oh Behave
 - Austin Powers: Welcome to my Underground Lar
- SCI**
 - Alfred's Adventure
 - Cool Bricks
 - Titanium Angels
 - Carnagepdon TOR 2000
 - SWIV
 - Thunderbirds
- SIERRA**
 - Sabrina the Teenage Witch
 - Wyle Card
 - Hyde Casino
 - Ripper 3D Pinball: Thrill Ride
- SIMON AND SCHUSTER**
 - M&M Man Madness
- SM**
 - MP3 Player
 - Dynamite Sluggo
 - Foxhole
 - Neen Baccarat
 - Pocket Review
 - Picture Puzzle
 - Cotton
 - Evolution
 - US Wrestling
 - Cool Boarders Pocket
 - Cool Cool Jam
- SOUTH PEAK**
 - Dukes of Hazard
 - Took Training Car
- SUNSOFT**
 - Blaster Master: Enemy Below
 - Moonrime Adventure
- TQ**
 - Championship Motocross 2
 - Featuring Ricky Carmichael
 - NBA Live 2000
 - Rugrats in Paris
 - MTV Sports: BMX
 - MTV Sports: Skateboarding
 - Orc
 - Orc 2
 - Spooky Doo
 - The Simpsons: Treehouse of Horrors
 - Alien: The Arcade Encounter
 - Buffy the Vampire Slayer
 - Power Rangers LightSpeed Rescue
- TITUS**
 - Hercules
 - Nana
 - Titus the Fox
- UBISOFT**
 - Disney's Jungle Book
 - Disney's Donald Duck
 - Disney's Dinosaur
 - Batman: The New Adventures
 - Animorphs
 - Inspector Gadget
 - Playmobil Hype
 - Road to El Dorado
 - Little Nicky
- VITALIC ENTERTAINMENT**
 - Sea-Do
 - AMF Bowling
 - Bombberman Man
 - Sowers: Lord Baniff's Decent

G A M E R S