

Nintendo in 2000

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Nintendo in 2000

It's going to be the strongest year yet for Nintendo's machines. And here's why...

Despite the traditionally dry period around summer time, 1999 has been a brilliant year for Nintendo gaming. And, incredibly, the brand new millennium is going to be even better.

Foolish street corner banter may suggest the N64 isn't what it was, but with over 22 must-have games pencilled in between January and December (plus a

whole wealth of others including some surprises that haven't even been confirmed yet), only a bumbling numbskull would write off Nintendo in 2000, especially with its confirmed Molotov cocktail of Pokémon and Mario. Add to that a couple of Rare specials (including a certain *Perfect Dark*), a Turok threequel, a new Bond game and a possible Dolphin launch worldwide and it's go... for... launch!

Nintendo in 2000

JANUARY

Post-Christmas and there's plenty to look forward to. On January 26th, the intriguingly different *South Park Rally* finally hits the shelves, after some problems with South Park

TV people, Comedy Central. Its unique take on *Mario Kart* and top sounds should ensure a healthy position at the top of the charts.

Also this month is *Nuclear Strike*, THQ's top drawer chopper sim. For more on this little

beauty, check out our Future Look on page 8. You won't regret it – oh, no.

◁ Like motors about in his kart-like pram. There are over 30 other characters to choose from in *South Park Rally* – and it's review-time next ish.



▷ *Nuclear Strike*. It's got explosions, strikes and plenty of nuclear. It'll be smart.



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FEBRUARY

Castlevania sequel, *Legacy of Darkness*, hits UK shores at the end of the month. Early copies promise much of the same (which, unfortunately, means a similarly flawed camera), but with a choice of four characters, different story threads for each one, and some brand new levels, it could be fun.

On the GB, *Pokémon Pinball* makes its long-awaited appearance. Check out N64/30's Planet Game Boy for our five star treatment of the ace import version.



△ The *Castlevania* sequel shows signs of improving on the last outing. The camera's still a bit crud, mind.



Boss view

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MARCH

Come springtime and Konami roll out their newest ISS game, **Millennium**, a hi-res take on the series with a remarkable RPG mode. For more details, flip to page 54.

Nintendo will be pushing the **Micro Machines**-ey **Mini Racers**, a collaboration between NOA and developers Looking Glass (responsible for the middling **Destruction Derby 64**). Conflicting reports from N64 office members suggest this one could be an 'acquired' taste.



△ ISS Millennium. See page 54 for our exclusive Special Investigation.

The Micro Machines-like Mini Racers. Could be good, this.



Could May finally see the release of Rare's astonishingly long-in-the-making **Twelve Tales: Conker 64**? According to insiders, it's been completely rebuilt from the ground up – hence a delay that beats all other Rare delays hands down – though whether that means it's different enough from **DK64** and **Banjo** remains to be seen. The squirrel with the inane smile reportedly comes with a top, four-player deathmatch and some 'unique' features. Interesting.

"Right, let me get this straight: you're a blue rabbit with joining eyes who talks?"

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MAY



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JUNE

The Pokémadness continues with the release of **Yellow** this month. Slightly tweaked monsters, and a plot that mirrors the cartoon more closely, plus Pikachu from the beginning. There's also a different pokédex, some new trainers and monster locations.

Also in June comes **Ridge Racer 64**, Nintendo of America's in-house conversion of Namco's ace PlayStation game. Preview versions weren't enormously encouraging, but there's still plenty of time.

△ Ridge Racer. If the ECTS version is anything to go by, this ain't too special.

Pikachu turns up in Pokémon Yellow. Electrifying!



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APRIL

Question is, who's going to be brave enough to come up against **Perfect Dark**? The answer, of course, is no one, hence April – and the incredibly lucrative Easter period – looking a bit thin on the ground.

The only other big release might be from Nintendo themselves in the shape of **Mario Party 2**.

Party 2 the sequel to last year's fab four-player board game. It claims to have 60 new mini games, an impressive collection of game boards and a host of extra characters.

Mario Party 2. Sixty new sub-games and even more long nights guaranteed. It'll be a cracker, for sure.



Mew

With all five of America's top five best-selling games of 1999 being Pokémon titles – **Red**, **Blue**, **Yellow**, **Pokémon Snap** and **Pokémon Pinball** – it's not surprising that Pikachu and pals make up a large part of Nintendo's 2000 release schedule. And, this month you get to meet up with Mew, **Red** and **Blue**'s 151st monster and the rarest and most powerful of them all. Pop along to one of Nintendo's travelling roadshows and you can download him into your own GB.

Perfect Dark

Finally, after almost two knuckle-chewingly long years, we get to play **Perfect Dark**. The release date has been set – though, take note, *speculatively* – as the first day in April, and we've been assured by Rare that the game will feature "some revolutionary new ideas that no one else has even considered". Excited? You should be. **Perfect Dark** represents the next step in videogaming: it'll have a deathmatch to end all deathmatches, astonishing enemy AI, a wealth of ingenious weaponry, and – best of all – it'll grant you the ability to download your own face into the game. 102 days to wait... not that we're counting or anything.



GO! GO!

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It's rumoured to be in development, but no one really knows what sort of game it is, even though the **second Star Wars Episode I game** has been pencilled in for 'summer 2000'. Reports suggest it could be a first-person shooter, rather like the duff *Dark Forces*. If that fills you with a sense of dread, don't worry: LucasArts seem to have finally cracked the N64 and, if we're lucky, they might even farm development out to *Rogue Squadron's* Factor 5.

The normally barren month of August might not be so bad after all as Eurocom, the people behind *Duke Nukem: Zero Hour*, bring their recently announced first-person 007 shooter, **The World is Not Enough**, to the N64. By all accounts it's already been in development for over 16 months, and is keeping closely to the template laid down by *GoldenEye*, as well as introducing more gadgets and weapons. It'll use the ultra-smooth Zero Hour engine.



◀ We phoned Eurocom this month to get the lowdown on TWINE, but they fobbed us off with a "no comment". What we do know is that it'll use the engine created for the ace Zero Hour.

Nintendo in 2000 AUGUST



Nintendo in 2000 OCTOBER

Already over a year and a half into development, Rare's **Banjo-Tooie** will finally arrive in October, unless one of their famed 'delays' takes place. Certainly they'll want to keep their top secret sequel away from Christmas' *Mickey Racing*.

Mission: *Impossible 2* should also still be on for this month. Infogrames have learnt lessons from the first game and *GoldenEye*, and this sequel uses the eye-gouging engine created by their Belgian outfit for PC adventure, *Outcast*.



△ Banjo-Tooie. Finally, we'll be able to get to that ice key in Freezeezy Peak.



◀ Mission: Impossible 2. It's been talked about for a while. Could we finally see it in October?

Nintendo in 2000 SEPTEMBER

The last Pokémon game of the year, **Stadium** rolls into town as autumn draws in. It'll be the second game after *Perfect Dark* to use the Transfer pak, allowing you to download monsters you've collected in *Pokémon Red, Blue and Yellow* and watch them battle it out in stunning 3D.

Also out this month is **Super Mario Adventure**, the British version of *Super Mario RPG 2*. A strange 2D/3D hybrid, it'll be a mixture of mini games and lightweight RPG-ing.



△ Super Mario Adventure. It's a Mazza game and it's from Nintendo. Let's face it, it's going to be a ruddy corker.

▽ Pokémon Stadium'll give you the chance to see your 'mon in 3D.



△ Picking your Pokémon. All 150 are in the game, but you'll be able to download your high-levelled alternatives using the Transfer pak. Sweet.

Riqa

Once rumoured – unbelievably – to be using the *Zelda* engine, **Riqa**, along with November's *Eternal Darkness*, must surely rank as the most mysterious game of 2000. Developed by little known Bits Studios and published by Nintendo, the game features some similar themes to *GoldenEye*, with guns and gadgets high on the agenda. It also has a female protagonist not dissimilar in looks to one Lara Croft. Absolutely nothing has been seen of it but this one shot.



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NOVEMBER

Kirby finally arrives on the N64 in the imaginatively titled, er, *Kirby 64*. Seemingly a side-scroller like the criminally underrated *Yoshi's Story*, the game is in fact 2-and-a-half-D, with the levels swinging round so that the little pink fella also runs



△ Kirby 64. Should be an absolutely tip-top N64 debut for lil' pink.

Once again, The Kirbster can absorb his enemies' abilities. Neat.

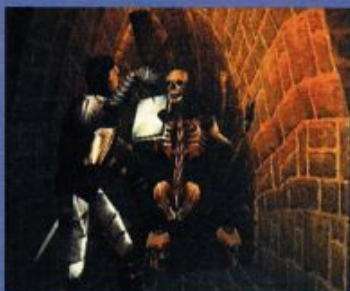
Turok 3

Scheduled for 'the end of 2000', *Turok 3* promises to return the series to its routes, with more emphasis on dinosaurs and less on science fiction and multi-legged bugs. Prehistoric environments have already been seen behind closed doors; indeed, our very own Mark saw some darkened dungeons and vast, lush landscapes during a trip to Acclaim-Austin earlier in the year. Apparently, levels will also be 'reduced' after complaints about the length of *Turok 2*'s.



Eternal Darkness

Seen for an all-too-brief time at this year's E3, *Eternal Darkness* is a cross between *Zelda* and *Resident Evil*, a dark adventure with fixed camera angles and lush pre-rendered backdrops. Developed by Silicon Knights, who turned out the first *Legacy of Kain* game on the PlayStation, the project is being overseen by Nintendo and is, according to rumours, 'very scary'. The story appears to be *Zelda*-esque too, with skeletons and a sword-wielding hero.



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DECEMBER

The back end of 2000 promises to be the strongest in the N64's history, and part of the reason is that *Mother 3*, or *Earthbound 2* as it'll be called over here, will finally arrive in time for Christmas. Over three years in development, HAL's RPG is an amazing showpiece for the console, and one of the first proper role-players (disregarding *Zelda*'s action-ey approach to combat). Turn-based scraps and parties of players will make for tip-top merriment.

▶ The massively atmospheric *Mother 3*. It's been in development for longer than any other N64 game, so it better be good.



Zelda Gaiden

Barely eight months after Japan get it, *Zelda Gaiden* arrives in the UK and US simultaneously, expansion pak-compatible and completely Miyamoto-free. Of course, that doesn't mean it'll be any less brilliant than *Ocarina*, especially as players can now use masks to endow Link with different abilities. Oh, and where those extra 4Mb's have gone is immediately obvious: watch in awe as up to six Stalfos skeletons attack you at the same time. This will be amazing.



Mickey's Racing USA

Top of your shopping list should be this, Rare's first N64 Disney licence, and a racing game with more than a hint of *DKR* about it. Announced at the beginning of November by Nintendo of America's Peter Main, *Mickey's Racing USA* uses an updated and refined version of the *Diddy Kong* engine, and is expected to offer much the same kart-based speeding as its marble-eyed predecessor. Let's hope they improve on *DKR*'s bland multiplayer mode...



and... Dolphin



Proposed as 'an end of 2000 release' by Nintendo of America CE Howard Lincoln at this year's E3, Dolphin's Christmas release is still in the balance despite reports that no one's even seen a working model of the machine, let alone got close to a development kit.

Miyamoto himself has admitted he and his team haven't even started a Dolphin game yet – and, remember, *Zelda* took three years from scratch – while the likes of confirmed developers Rare, Retro Studios, Left Field and the Software Technology Group presumably haven't either. Acclaim, Titus, Ubi Soft, Konami and Infogrames have all expressed an interest in developing for the machine, as have those all-important Japanese developers Namco and Capcom, but until development kits start getting sent out nothing can get underway.

With PlayStation 2 launching over here next Christmas, it's important Nintendo ensure they're not left behind – something that the Japanese brains will be acutely aware of.

We'll keep you up-to-date as news reaches us...

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