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PLAYSTATION 3

LAUNCH GUIDE

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THE GAMES

PREVIEWS OF LAUNCH TITLES

RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

CALL OF DUTY 3

MADDEN NFL 07

MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

AND MORE!

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THE LEGACY

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4 MUST-HAVE HITS
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By the Editors of
GAMEPRO

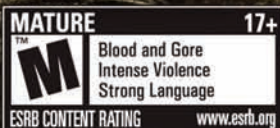


RESISTANCE

FALL OF MAN™



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Editor's Choice Awards

— Official Xbox Magazine, PC Gamer, Computer Gaming World,
IGN, GameSpot, Team Xbox, GameZone

“Superb...
A remarkable achievement”

— GameSpot

“An Absolute Masterpiece”

— Official Xbox Magazine

“If any game is worth the price
of the PS3, Oblivion is it.”

— Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine, November 2006

The Elder Scrolls® IV OBLIVION™

Coming November to PLAYSTATION®3 computer entertainment system



PLAYSTATION 3



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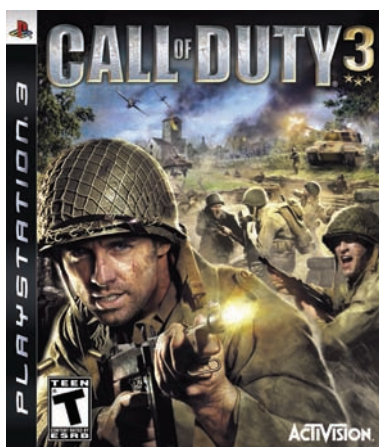
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Reengineered from the ground up for next-generation consoles, *Tony Hawk's Project 8™* immerses players in the definitive skateboarding experience using ultra-realistic graphics, enhanced physics and extremely responsive controls that simulate the feeling of skating with every trick and bail. The game challenges players to experience the intensity and excitement of skating against some of the world's top amateurs, as they climb the ranks in an effort to earn their way onto Tony Hawk's Project 8 Team. Delivering continuous skating action in a free-roaming living environment, *Tony Hawk's Project 8* incorporates the series' most popular features, all of which have been enhanced with next-generation technology.



In Call of Duty® 3 get closer than ever to the fury of combat as an Allied soldier in World War II's most harrowing military operation, the Normandy Breakout Campaign. Multiple attack routes mean you decide whether to flank your enemy or hit him head on. Varied terrain, a dramatic story and next-gen graphics and sound deliver Call of Duty's signature intensity. All new battle actions and destructible environments ensure Call of Duty 3 delivers the most cinematic combat moments ever experienced.



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PG-13



PG-13



PG-13



PG-13



R



PG-13



FULL 1080P PICTURE SUPERIOR SOUND NEXT GENERATION INTERACTIVITY

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LAUNCH

PLAYING WITH POWER

The Sony empire strikes back with a powerful new platform that'll do everything but butter your toast.



Two flavors—and prices—of the PlayStation 3: 20 GB at \$499 and 60 GB at \$599. There are other differences between the two units than hard-drive space, however.

Whether you've already broken down and bought an Xbox 360 or not, we're sure you're dying—just as we are—to see what Sony's next powerhouse will bring to the coffee table. Here's a run-down of everything currently known about the two distinct flavors of the PlayStation 3.

War for Your Living Room

The follow-up to this generation's undisputed sales leader is an always-on, always-connected, living room centerpiece, with a wide range of media support and connection options. Everything from movie and music playback, to browsing family pictures, to high-definition video conferencing via a brand new EyeToy IP camera is on the slate. Built-in gigabit Ethernet—not to mention full 802.11b/g Wi-Fi support in the more expensive version—should allow for easy integration with any existing home network for full Internet access, not to mention compelling PSP-to-PS3 connectivity. The PSP could even be used as a high-end remote control when its own future titles aren't interfacing with next-generation home content.

Almost every flavor of pressed and burned CD, DVD, and Blu-ray will be readable for music and movie playback, while the premium console adds a CompactFlash slot for easy

display of pictures taken on most popular digital cameras. High-speed USB 2.0 ports open the door for future peripheral expansion fairly wide. An HDMI connection graces the premium system, an analog AV Multi port will output to any modern television, and a single optical S/PDIF plug will send Dolby Digital and DTS surround sound streams to capable receivers.

HDTV Times Two?

Much has been made of the PS3's ability to output 1080p, but given that most currently installed HDTVs only support 1080i, and that most games are likely to target 720p instead, you shouldn't be in any great rush to buy that über-expensive 1080p television just yet.

Strangely, back in 2005 Sony claimed the PS3 would be able to output two high-definition streams simultaneously, theoretically allowing games to be played on side-by-side TVs at an aspect ratio of 32:9. The second set could also be used for additional game information, or to play different media altogether. One intriguing example of the two streams involves the game *Formula One 06* and the PSP. On the HD screen, you saw the road in front of your car, while the PSP served as a rear-view mirror and displayed what was behind you.



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The PlayStation 3 controller has a motion-sensing feature, but no rumble capability.

Fill 'Er Up

The PS3 features 256 MB of video memory, and 256 MB of main system memory that also happens to be addressable by the RSX. This puts the PS3 on more or less equal footing with the 360's 512 MB of shared memory. As far as media is concerned, however, the PS3 has a clear edge with its support for Blu-ray discs, with dual-layer releases that can pack 50 GB of data onto a single slab, as opposed to the maximum of 8.5 GB for dual-layer DVDs. The result should be games with more high-resolution textures, longer HD cut-scenes, and more extensive use of surround sound than the competition.

Time To Play

As you'd expect, a long list of developers are already preparing their wares for Sony's incoming juggernaut, from new entries in the Devil May Cry, Gran Turismo, Resident Evil, SOCOM, Tekken, Unreal Tournament, Brothers in Arms, Metal Gear Solid, Driver, and the Alone in the Dark series to brand new properties like Killing Day and Motor Storm. If you liked a game on the PS2, odds are good it has a next-generation entry on the way.

In a nod to the tens of millions of customers with existing libraries of games, Sony is promising universal backward compatibility across all 13,000-plus titles, including upscaling to high definition resolutions.

Online or Bust

Sony's online service offering for the PS3 is designed to meet and exceed the standards of other services, while remaining—perhaps surprisingly—free for all. Voice chat, game lobbies, friend lists, downloadable content, shopping, score rankings, tournaments, and more are all planned. What's more, because Sony is promising developers the possibility of a more direct relationship with the end gamer, the platform as a whole seems well-positioned for growth areas like massively multiplayer games that demand their own subscription management systems.

The possibilities don't end there: Sony is taking the battle for the living room out into the streets with the ability to stream data from your PS3 at home to your PSP on the road. You could watch a movie you saved to your hard drive, play a downloaded game, or video conference with friends remotely simply by connecting to your always-on PS3 over the Internet.

Control Freak

The PlayStation 3 controller resembles the traditional DualShock 2. However, this controller will include a six-axis motion and orientation sensing system, at the notable expense of any vibration functionality. Bluetooth support will allow for up to seven simultaneous wireless controllers, which means no more multi-taps.

Trouble in Paradise

Sony's next generation will arrive in the US on November 17th at \$499 and \$599 price points, and the differences between them run deeper than the 20 and 60 GB hard drives each respectively packs. The cheaper flavor lacks Wi-Fi support, has four USB ports instead of six, and loses support for CompactFlash cards, SD, and Sony memory sticks.

Only crazed fan-boys will argue that birthing pains are unlikely, especially after the rocky PlayStation 2 launch, but the potential of Sony's new baby is explosive, exciting, and expensive. Even if you find yourself watching with envy from the sidelines, there's no denying that this is an exciting time to be a gamer.

Tech Terminology

High definition technology is confusing enough without all the acronyms and cryptic words floating around. Here's a list of important vocabulary useful when discussing the HD world:

- **Progressive Scan:** All lines onscreen are displayed in sequence instead of in odds and evens like interlaced, therefore providing a crisper image than interlaced.
- **Interlaced:** Odd and even lines on the screen are displayed in alternation.
- **480i/480p:** The 480 indicates the number of vertical lines on the screen, while the *i* stands for interlaced and the *p* stands for progressive. Neither is considered high-definition.
- **720p:** 720 vertical lines shown and, like 480p, displays in progressive scan. However, unlike 480p, 720p is considered "widescreen" or in a 16:9 aspect ratio and is considered to be high-definition.
- **1080i/1080p:** The video mode that boasts the highest resolution, with a display of 1080 vertical lines, 1080i and 1080p are also considered high definition and have a 16:9 aspect ratio. Very few televisions, and even fewer content sources, are available in 1080p.
- **HDMI/DVI:** Acronyms for high definition multimedia interface and digital visual interface, respectively. Both are considered an all-digital connector, which is a good thing when it comes to high definition. Both are interchangeable with the other, so if you have one, you can use the other as long as you buy an adaptor.

CALL OF DUTY 3

Published by Activision

ESRB: Teen

Available November

4 players; 24 online

So, you've seen and done the virtual WWII thing before, eh? Well, you might be asking, "What's different this time around?" For starters, the events in the game are centered around the Normandy Break-out. Codenamed Operation Cobra, this critical point in history was when American troops broke out of the Normandy area, led by United States Army General Omar Bradley.

Call of Duty 3 features all-new battle action scenarios that break up the level of intensity of the game. When one of these events are triggered, players must act fast to neutralize hazards, and even fight hand-to-hand with enemy soldiers.

Up to 24 online players can fight at once this time around, manning vehicles such as tanks, motorcycles with sidecars, and multi-seated jeeps that allow for one person to mow down players with a mounted machine gun turret. And, another innovative aspect of the multiplayer in CoD3 is that anyone can join an in progress game without having to end a match. The game will immediately switch from full screen to split screen if one of your friends decides to play.



RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

Published by Sony

ESRB: Mature

Available November

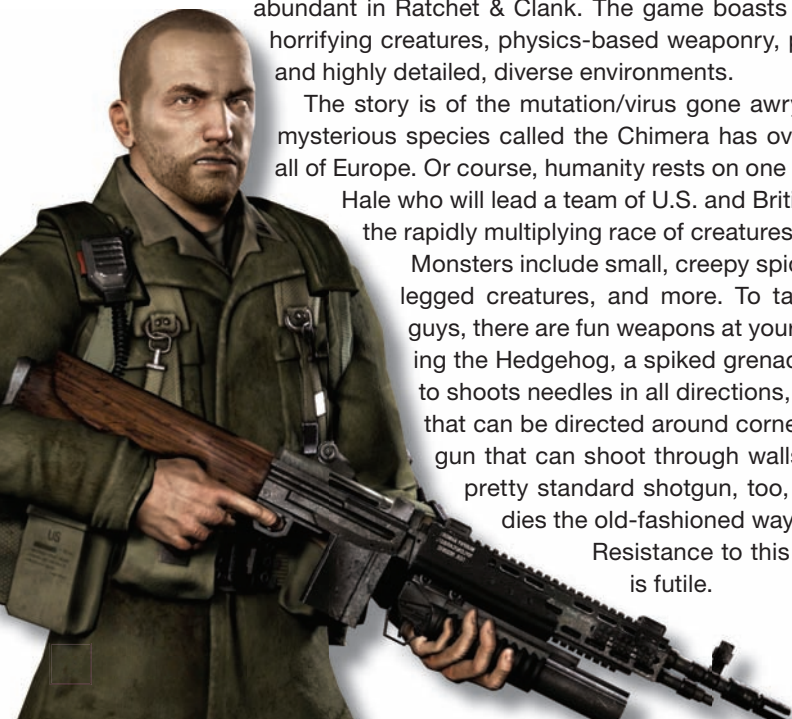
4 players; 32 online

Resistance: Fall of Man is a dark first-person shooter set in a 20th century reality that blends military combat with a hint of survival horror. While you won't see any cartoony graphics or cutesy robots, Insomniac has adapted the same lust for weapons into Resistance that was abundant in Ratchet & Clank. The game boasts a wide variety of horrifying creatures, physics-based weaponry, playable vehicles, and highly detailed, diverse environments.

The story is of the mutation/virus gone awry variety where a mysterious species called the Chimera has overrun Russia and all of Europe. Or course, humanity rests on one man, Sgt. Nathan Hale who will lead a team of U.S. and British forces against the rapidly multiplying race of creatures.

Monsters include small, creepy spidery kinds, lanky-legged creatures, and more. To take care of these guys, there are fun weapons at your disposal, including the Hedgehog, a spiked grenade stops in the air to shoots needles in all directions, as well as bullets that can be directed around corners and an energy gun that can shoot through walls. There is also a pretty standard shotgun, too, for blasting bad-dies the old-fashioned way.

Resistance to this title, as they say, is futile.





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SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

- Published by Sega
- ESRB: Everyone 10+
- Available Winter 2006
- 4 players

Sonic has been around almost as long as Mario, but on the PlayStation 3, Sega is reviving what made the series special in the first place: an incredible sense of speed. In fact, the game is so fast, you might feel picking the bugs out your teeth after you put down the controller. The worlds Sonic speeds through are filled with interactivity, including series trademark bumpers that send the hero hurtling through the air, as well as rails that you can grind, and even portions of the land that can be destroyed to open up new paths. On the PlayStation 3, Sonic goes next-gen in style.



MADDEN NFL 07

- Published by EA Sports
- ESRB: Everyone
- Available November
- 2 players; 2 online

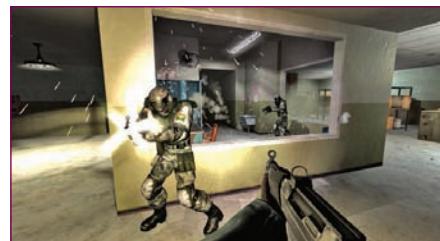
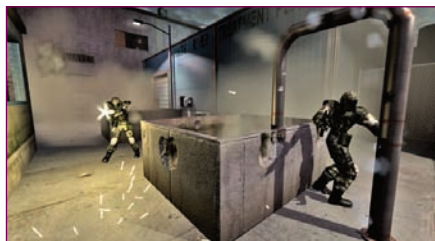
Madden goes next-generation in this seventeenth release of the classic footballer. Wrap your hands around all the gridiron action with brand new features, like lead blocker control that lets you create a hole in the opposition's defense yourself, then power through it with a tail-back for huge running yardage. Take control of a particular player in Superstar mode, and work your way up to the Hall of Fame by consistently performing in your chosen position. Individual player running styles are now reflected in detailed animation, and all new jukes, cut-backs, stiff-arms, and other moves let you show off your unique style on the field. Whether you're a dedicated fan, or a casual sportsman, Madden NFL 07 is the only game in town.



F.E.A.R.

- Published by Vivendi Universal
- ESRB: Mature
- Available November
- 1 player; 16 online

The paranormal isn't just real, it's incredibly dangerous in this supremely creepy first-person shooter hit. The First Encounter Assault Recon team is called in to contain a supernatural threat that'll sneak up behind you, flank you, and otherwise use every tactic it can to get the jump on your squad. Thanks to your unnaturally fast reflexes, you can occasionally slow time down as you spray bullets all over cloned soldiers. New for the console version is an Instant Action mode that drops you in the middle of an intense firefight, with tons of bad guys to take out of commission. When things get up close and personal, you can even unload melee attacks on any forces stupid enough to stand against you.



LAUNCH

FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES

- Published by Sega
- ESRB: RP
- Available November
- 2 players; 8 online

Take the wheel of 25 different vehicles—sports cars, trucks, muscle car classics, and even a tank—and wreak havoc on Staunton City where rocket launchers and machine guns are part of the race. With more than twenty different weapons at your disposal, not much is likely to remain standing. Take out buildings and other vehicles to block your rivals' paths through downtown, causing massive chain reactions of devastation. Six different



districts await, each with a distinct look and feel, and beating opponents will give you a go at their cherished rides. Your opponents may be as heavily armed as you are, but only you can "unwreck," winding back time itself for another shot at a tricky turn or split-second confrontation.

GENJI: DAYS OF THE BLADE

- Published by Sony
- ESRB: RP
- Available November
- 1 player

Take part in combat in a beautiful fantasy setting in this sequel which takes place three years after the events of the original Genji. Fight on foot or horseback as you tear up feudal China. Slice and dice enemy goons with the samurai Yoshitsune, destroy entire buildings with the huge monk Benkei, and bring nasties up close for a personal beat-down courtesy of female warrior Shizuka's signature grappling crescent blade. You'll have to switch

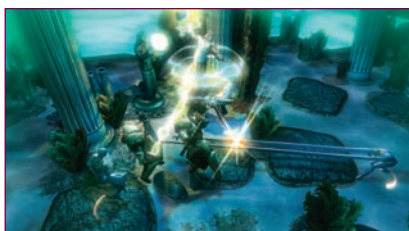


between your partners not just to find secret areas and power-ups, but to take advantage of individual strengths and exploit your enemy's weaknesses. This heroic struggle is based loosely on historic events, but you'll still encounter all sorts of strange and fantastic creatures on your path to glory.

MARVEL: ULTIMATE ALLIANCE

- Published by Activision
- ESRB: Teen
- Available November
- 4 players

You can always count on the ambitious Dr. Doom and his villainous rabble to start some trouble. Luckily you've got two dozen different insanely powerful Marvel superheroes at your back! Play by yourself or with up to three friends as you journey across land, through air, and under the sea to defeat his evil plans. This RPG lets you upgrade your costumed pal with new stats, equipment, and abilities regularly, you get bonuses for putting together classic



teams of four, and you can even select a logo and vehicle for your team. The action comes fast and furious in bright colors and true comic book style thanks to destructible environments, combination attacks, and an epic storyline from the creators of the X-Men Legends series.

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: CROSSFIRE

- Published by Namco Bandai Games
- ESRB: RP
- Available November
- 2 players

The world of heavily armored mech assault robots comes to the PlayStation 3 in all its glory in this tale from the popular Gundam universe. Choose to play as a soldier on the side of Zeon or the Federation, and you'll be asked to take a chunk out of the metallic hide of the other over the course of two separate mission-based campaigns. Launch missiles at your quarry from afar, or get right up in his titanium grill with your deadly energy



blade. Each giant robot takes damage in a variety of places, allowing you to cripple enemy weapons systems, arm function, leg movement, and chassis integrity. Powerful heavy metal whirs and grinds to thundering next-generation life in Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire.

NBA LIVE 07

Published by EA Sports

ESRB: RP

Available Winter 2006

2 players; 2 online

Head out onto the court with amazingly life-like players that sport incredibly realistic motion, hundreds of different moves, signature jump-shots that'll make you think you're watching a real-world highlight reel on television. A brand new control system lets you dominate by building momentum with crowd-wowing athleticism, and changing attributes on the fly gives you more freedom than ever before. As if the incredibly detailed graphics and intuitive controls weren't enough, unprecedented ESPN integration gives you updates,



breaking news, scores, and even radio podcasts as you play through your seasons. Even your computer-controlled teammates have been improved to allow for things like the triangle offense and pick-and-roll, and a Dynasty mode lets you play GM and manage your team to first place.

NEED FOR SPEED: CARBON

Published by EA Games

ESRB: RP

Available November

2 players; 4 online

Risk it all in incredibly dangerous downhill canyon races. Recruit drivers for your crew and give them assignments while on the road, like acting as blockers during contentious events, or scouting out time-saving shortcuts for you to take advantage of down the road. Carbon Canyon's wild curves and steep drops will test every ounce of your racing mettle thanks to the latest driving physics advancements, and a new AutoSculpt



car customization tool lets you tweak that high-speed whip into the car of your dreams. Take down rival crews in block-by-block domination of the streets, affiliate with a particular class of car and tune to your heart's content, or take to the online asphalt with your friends in no-holds-barred street battles.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07

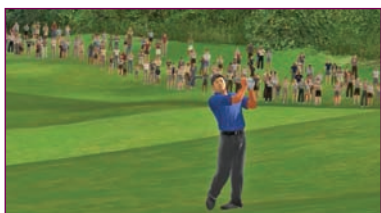
Published by EA Sports

ESRB: RP

Available November

4 players; 2 online

Compete against more than a dozen of the world's top golfers in marquee tournaments in the latest edition of Tiger Woods PGA Tour. Contestant expressions show real-time reactions to every shot, crowds are more lifelike than before, and sports commentators tell it like it is with every swing thanks to all-new ESPN integration that makes you a golfing star. Twice as many courses as last year give you more variety than any country club, and full



online stat tracking lets you see how you compare to video golfers all around the globe. Every twist and turn of the course, every strategically placed tree, and every blade of grass on the putting green is reproduced with stunning clarity in this next-generation rendition of the links.

TONY HAWK'S PROJECT 8

Published by Activision

ESRB: Teen

Available November

2 players; 8 online

Tony Hawk's Project 8 is rebuilt from the ground up for the glorious next generation, offering greater control over all the subtleties of skateboarding than ever before. Once again you'll be exploring a massive city with plenty of secret areas, a virtually infinite number of trick lines, and no load times. Motion-captured animation that responds to the slightest touch of an analog stick makes you a part of the truck-grinding high-jumping



world, all your favorite skaters—more than 40 of them!—twist and turn with incredible realism, and you'll have full control over every twist and turn of the board beneath your feet during Nail the Trick moments. Other new features include controlling bails for brutal bodily harm, and moving around parts of the environment.

FUTURE TITLES

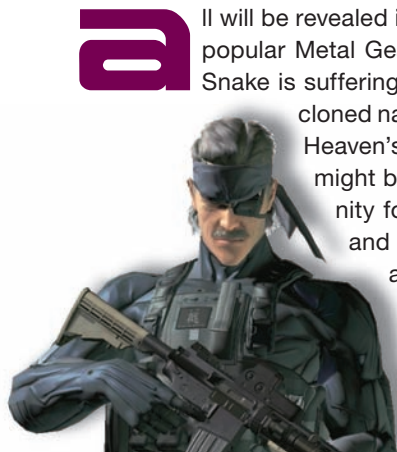
METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

Published by Konami

ESRB: RP

Available 2007

1 player; 8 online



It will be revealed in the next-generation installment of the immensely popular Metal Gear Solid series of stealthy adventure games. Solid Snake is suffering from the greatly accelerated aging process of his cloned nature, and heads to the Middle East to root out Outer Heaven's latest mechanical plans. The slogan for this game might be "no place to hide", but there's plenty of opportunity for an operative of Snake's caliber to sneak around and catch his enemies by surprise, including the new ability to hide in barrels. All your senses will tingle in the detailed environments portrayed here, whether you're listening for enemy footsteps in a derelict building or watching in awe as cyborg-like robots take to the street in fleshy legs.



ASSASSIN'S CREED

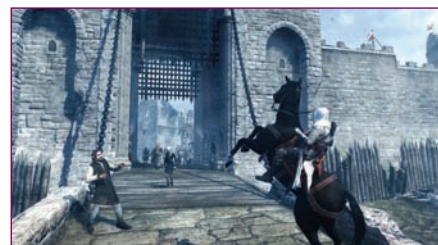
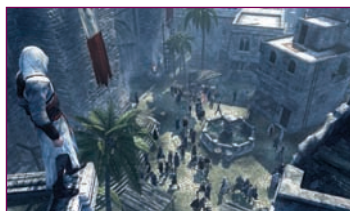
Published by Ubisoft

ESRB: RP

Available 2007

1 player

You're Altair, a lethal member of the feared assassin sect known as Hashashin, and your murderous missions will take you on a mind-bogglingly beautiful tour of Damascus, Jerusalem, and Acre. You may possess the remarkable ability to climb any surface that juts out more than an inch or two, but how you treat the ordinary people around you could have considerable impact on how successful you are at escaping once you've dealt death to your quarry. Treat townspeople with respect, and they might help you make a clean getaway. Shove them around without a thought, and they might just get you killed. However you choose to behave, Assassin's Creed will hold you in thrall to its beautifully detailed world and potent storyline.



ALONE IN THE DARK

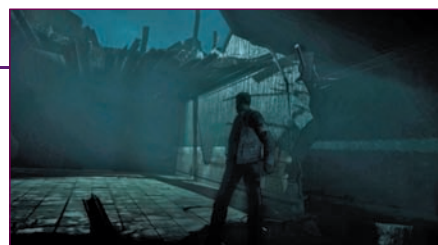
Published by Atari

ESRB: RP

Available 2007

1 player

Edward Camby is a paranormal investigator who gets far, far more than he bargained for in this horror-filled action adventure. Explore modern New York City's Central Park and its bordering streets, including a zoo, theaters, and restaurants, but stay alert: this is anything but just another run through the park. Something very nasty is lurking in the shadows, and it'll be up to you to explore ground where angels would fear to tread, solving puzzles, sneaking around, and beating the tar out of anything that puts your back in a corner. Interactive environments help this virtual city come to life (and undead) and will provide you with tools and weapons to aid in your quest to get to the bottom of this haunting tale.



DEVIL MAY CRY 4

Published by Capcom

ESRB: RP

Available 2007

1 player

The latest release in this series of extraordinarily stylish action combat games ramps the visuals up to the extreme for the PlayStation 3, filling the air with scintillating special effects and twisted enemies. Dante's not the star of the show, but all the style and attitude you've come to expect is certainly on hand. This time around you'll play as Nero, who packs both a revolver and a large sword in his battles against the demon hordes, not to mention his very own demon fist. The controls are as tight as you remember from the previous games, letting you get right down to business. Devil May Cry 4 offers more weapons, enemies, and moves than all three previous games combined.



MEDAL OF HONOR: AIRBORNE

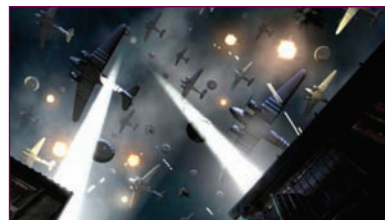
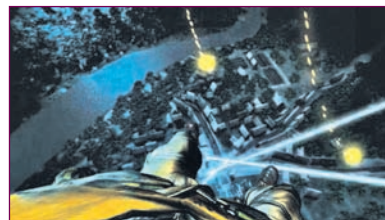
Published by EA Games

ESRB: RP

Available 2007

4 players; 8 online

World War II comes alive in the first next-generation offering from this established first-person shooter series. You'll play as Boyd Travers, a member of the 82nd Airborne Division, and travel from Sicily all the way to the heart of Germany, always landing squarely behind enemy lines. Survey the situation on your way down while directing your parachute, and then hit the ground running with a variety of authentic weapons from the period.



Historical accuracy is paramount here, promising the most accurate depiction of events you could ask for. Tackle non-linear missions in whatever way seems best to you, depending on where you manage to land, and customize your weapons in the field for a personalized touch that'll stay with you every step of the way.

HEAVENLY SWORD

Published by Sony

ESRB: RP

Available 2007

1 player

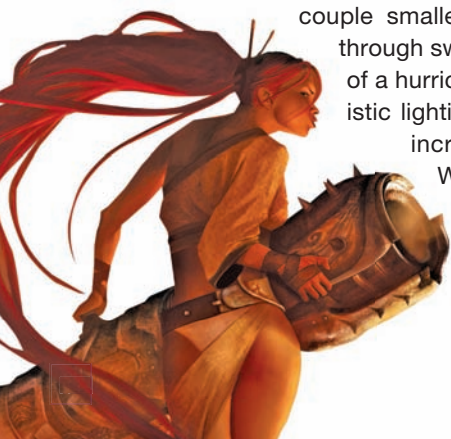
That fiery redhead you're

ogling is Nariko, and she's practically a force of nature. King Botan has invaded the territory of her people, and



though the titular sword is so powerful that it sucks the very life-force from whoever wields it, Nariko is willing to sacrifice her life for the greater good. Dream girl? Sure. Lightweight? Hardly. The depth and range of Nariko's incredible attacks owe to the sword shifting between one giant blade and a couple smaller knives on chains. Hack through swarms of foes with the force of a hurricane and marvel at the realistic lighting, gorgeous scenery, and incredibly varied animations.

With a classic sense of over-the-top combat and a cinematic flair, Heavenly Sword is no redheaded stepchild.



FINAL FANTASY XIII

Published by Square Enix

ESRB: RP

Available 2007

1 player

Set in a high-tech world of future gadgetry and strange combinations of old with new, Final Fantasy XIII continues the franchise's long-running



tradition of delivering an incredible story filled with memorable characters, overwhelming forces to be conquered, and dozens of hours of RPG gaming. You'll notice that this entry sports an unusual and distinctively modern style, though, crafted specifically to take advantage of the PlayStation 3's graphical muscle. Real-time battles keep you on your toes at all times, and wild abilities like Overclock help you by slowing down time as you bring the pain to all who oppose you. Fi-



nal Fantasy has a reputation for excellence, and that legacy is in no danger of ending any time soon.

THE DARKNESS

Published by 2K Games

ESRB: RP

Available April 2007

2 players; 8 online

As if being a Mafia hit man weren't enough stress for a guy, Jacki Estacado has the powers of the Darkness awake within him on his twenty-first birthday. Based on the comic of the same name, and developed by the makers of the excellent The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay game, this game lets you experience supernatural action in the first-person, wielding unholy powers of destruction. Usually you find yourself fighting dark forces; here, the dark force is you, as you impale and implode enemies, and even cannibalize enemy corpses to transform them into heinous Darklings. Avoid the light to replenish your powers, explore both New York City and the far reaches of the ethereal realm, and take down all comers in online bouts!



UNREAL TOURNAMENT 2007

Published by Midway

ESRB: RP

Available 2007

4 players; 8 online

Play through a campaign of first-person shooting madness on your own against computer bots, or hop online and lay waste to anything that moves with an arsenal of futuristic weaponry ranging from grenade launchers and shock rifles to flak cannons and translocators. There are even special super-weapons built into different maps that allow for carnage like you've never seen before. Hop into hoverbikes, buggies, jeeps, gunships, tanks, and more to get your mobility on in a variety of competitive modes like Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Onslaught, and Unreal Warfare. This contest doesn't take prisoners, and survivors are hard to come by, but the controls are tight, and the visuals are out of this world. Stretch your trigger finger, and get ready for a workout.



STRANGLEHOLD

Published by Midway

ESRB: RP

Available January 2007

2 players; 8 online

Stranglehold serves as the sequel to a John Woo film, and stars Chow Yun-Fat back in the role of Inspector "Tequila" Yuen. Destructible environments fly apart as you perform incredible stunts like swinging from chandeliers, running up banisters, and sliding around on delivery carts, all while endlessly pumping bullets into the air from your twin pistols. "Tequila Time" lets you play



your own personal slow-mo showdown sequence, dispatching foes in the time it takes to blink. Hong Kong and Chicago are rendered in remarkable detail, putting



you neck-deep in underworld baddies, and the Massive D destruction system lets you turn every inch to debris at the push of a button.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 5

Published by Sega

ESRB: RP

Available March 2007

2 players

This Japanese coin-op brawler never did make it to United States arcades, but now you can duke it out in high-definition PlayStation 3 glory on the home version of Virtua Fighter 5, which packs enough eye candy into its varied interactive environments to keep your jaw on the floor for days. You'll even find a few classic stages that have been given a modern makeover. Change the appearance of your character, including his or her clothing,



and then beat your friends or computer opponents to digital pulps courtesy of the faster-paced and newly-refined combat system. Favorites like Aoi and Kage are back for more, while new contenders like El Blaze and Eileen enjoy their first introduction to this fun and fast-paced fighting series.

FINAL FANTASY XII

Published by Square Enix

ESRB: Teen

Available now

1 player

The long wait is almost over, and Final Fantasy XII caps off the PlayStation 2's place as the reigning champion platform of modern RPGs. The world of Ivalice is being invaded. Princess Ashe teams up with the towheaded Vaan to save her homeland. Random encounters are a thing of the past: every enemy you'll face



explores the same ground you do, and though some are relatively peaceful, others will attack you on sight. An incredible new gambit system lets you direct the actions of your teammates with more flexibility than ever before, while licenses let you customize your party in a wide variety of ways. This huge adventure will give you dozens of hours of gaming pleasure, and no RPG fanatic should be without it.

LEGO STAR WARS II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

Published by LucasArts

ESRB: Everyone 10+

Available now

2 players

You may know the original *Star Wars* saga back to front, but you've never seen it like this. Your favorite scenes from all three original films are recreated with tongue-in-cheek humor in the spirited universe of LEGO toys. Get into blaster battles with Imperial Stormtroopers, then purchase them from the Cantina for use in



a free play mode that crams secrets and puzzles in every corner of space. Plug in a second controller and let a friend take control of your sidekick in eighteen different story segments that include everything from flying the Millennium Falcon to helping the Ewoks take out a shield generator. Everything you loved about the original breakthrough hit, from the puzzles to the silly jokes, is back and better than ever.

GUITAR HERO II

Published by RedOctane

ESRB: Teen

Available now

2 players

The cult hit phenomenon returns with forty new songs for closet air guitarists to wrap their calloused fingers around. Grab your axe controller, hit the stage, cue the pyrotechnics, and shred your heart out for thousands of screaming fans that'll demand an encore when you finally finish each set. The songs you perform come



from every school of rock, from Nirvana to The Police, Anthrax to Lynyrd Skynyrd, Alice in Chains to The Rolling Stones—more than 40 in all. Better yet, you can join a friend in the new co-op mode to grind out two parts together. Make your way from a lowly high school battle of the bands to headlining a cross-country tour of packed arenas in Guitar Hero II.

SOCOM: U.S. NAVY SEALS COMBINED ASSAULT

Published by Sony

ESRB: Teen

Available now

1 player; 32 online

Developed in association with U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command, the acclaimed SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs series has earned praise for its realistic firefights, but Sony's long-running franchise just got better with Combined Assault. Featuring an all-new four-player co-operative mode, Combined Assault also ups the ante with an improved enemy A.I., and all-new weapons and vehicles for



campaign mode, which can be played in single- or four-player online configurations. As an added bonus, Combined Assault will also include the complete SOCOM 3: U.S. Navy SEALs online multiplayer game, complete with all the updates and patches. Combined Assault also improves the Crosstalk functionality with SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo 2 for the PSP, which is also available now.