

Reviews round-up

“The odd, the niche or the just plain crap - verdicts on the games you might not know about”

Sony | PSP | Out now

Passport To Paris

For frequent travellers only



Passport To Paris is one of those things trying to turn the PSP into a multimedia machine. It's an interactive guidebook that aims to make your stay in a foreign city that much easier. Providing that city is Paris, that is, and not Beijing or somewhere.

Divided into sections, it includes everything from maps, pictures and video to basic phrases. The layout is pleasing to the eye and all the information is easily accessible at the touch of a button. There is also the ability to create your own tour of the city and set up an itinerary unique to your own interests. *Passport To Paris* also allows you to download information on the city and its attractions as submitted by other visitors, meaning you'll always find something new.

Mind you, it isn't much use unless you're going to Paris, but there's loads of info and even regular visitors will find new things to see and places to shop. So if you're going to the city on the Seine, get this. If not, don't. **Lesley Smith** **50**

Vivendi | PS2 | Out Now

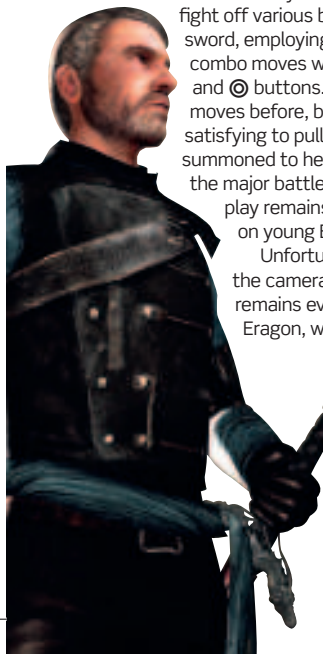
Eragon

Simple slashing for simple people



Got a film license that you can't feasibly turn into a cutesy children's platformer? Turn it into a generic slasher instead. Simple, really. And that's what they've done with *Eragon*. You fight off various bad guys with your sword, employing a simple system of combo moves which revolve around **X** and **○** buttons. You'll have seen all the moves before, but they're still quite satisfying to pull off. Saphira can be summoned to help out during some of the major battles, but the main focus of play remains pretty much squarely on young Eragon.

Unfortunately, you can't control the camera at all - the perspective remains ever fixed directly behind Eragon, which is irritating and a waste of the right stick. It looks lovely, though - the cut-scenes are especially well done



and it's obvious that the developers have put in a lot of work into them. That said, though, there's nothing particularly special or exciting in this game. It's a decent enough slasher, but really it's only for absolute die-hard fans of the movie or the books. Anyone else can probably ignore it without missing a great deal. **David Cook** **70**

THQ | PSP | Out now

Scooby Doo! Who's Watching Who?

We're watching, but we don't care much



Zoinks, and so on. Playing as everyone's favourite canine, Scooby Doo, you battle the usual selection of spooks possessing a hotel. Why is it always hotels (or fairs) in Scooby Doo? Why not a space cruiser or something?

Anyway, Scooby gets a nice set of moves, including his own version of a spin attack, but the game relies on collecting dog tags to access new areas and eating Scooby snacks to defeat restless ghosts. And for the first time, you get to drive the Mystery Machine.

Who's Watching Who works surprisingly well, with detailed levels and good voice-acting, with members of the cast reprising their roles from the show. Flanked by a suitably eerie soundtrack, this is ideal for younger players. It's not really for us or you, however. **Lesley Smith** **59**

Atari | PS2 | Out now

Saint Seiya: The Hades

Seiya later, alligator

Mixing 2D anime with 3D fights, *Saint Seiya: The Hades* is based on one of the most enduring anime series ever to come out of Japan. The game itself has a bit of an identity crisis, though - half of it's like a Choose Your Own Adventure book, where you scrolls through reams of text before pressing a button to pick a response. The rest of the time, it's a stylish beat-'em-up with great combos and flashy animations that look as good - but aren't - as *Tekken* or *Virtua Fighter*.

The mix of obscure references to Greek mythology, gorgeous animation and original Japanese voiceovers (with subtitles for those gamers not fluent in Nihongo) makes this a decent game, but you'll need to get your reading glasses ready before you play. **Andy Kelly** **62**



THQ | PS2 | Out Now

The Sopranos: Road To Respect

We can't respect a game like this

Gangster games are big money this year. It started with *The Godfather* and now *The Sopranos* has joined in on the act. The game is, obviously, based on the 'hit TV series', but while many of the locations are recreated digitally you don't actually get to see many of the characters. Like *The Godfather* before it, *The Sopranos* has you playing as an up-and-coming mobster who didn't appear in the original work. In this case it's Joey LaRocca, the illegitimate child of 'Big Pussy' Bonpensiero.

Bottom of the ladder

Unfortunately, for those beginning to see similarities between this game and *The Godfather*, it doesn't end there. Tony Soprano lets you work for him out of guilt and you start as the lowest of the low doing odd jobs. After a while a little more responsibility is thrown your way but most of the time is spent engaging in fisticuffs with enemies - and said scrapping is pretty basic, and never particularly gripping. Added to that, respect and money also matter, which is where the fighting becomes really important - but it feels like every single character in this game wants to batter you. Lowlife scum is understandable, but when



smartly-dressed business types approach you on the street to offer you a shoeing, it gets surreal.

The Sopranos should have been a good game with an all-star cast, great graphics and a cut-throat plot. The TV show remains popular and this title should have capitalised on it. However, *Road To Respect* feels as illegitimate as the main character, as if the show's creators didn't want it made into a video game. Put simply it feels like a clone of *The Godfather* but nowhere near on the same level in terms of depth and enjoyment. If you must play a gangster game this year, then don't bother with this - just go and buy *The Godfather*. Simple. **Lesley Smith**

PSM3 Verdict

Stick to watching the series on DVD. It's loads better.

40



Crime doesn't pay *The Sopranos* doesn't exactly make stellar use of its license, really.