



R: RACING EVOLUTION

It's not the next *Ridge Racer*, but it's the next best thing. Like Codemasters' *Pro Race Driver*, *R: Racing Evolution* has an ongoing story that tracks your career as a driver trying to make it big. Finally, those girls who appear in Namco games appear to have some kind of purpose to the gameplay, and not just the loading screen. Namco tells us newbies will dig this game. We tend to believe them.

Publisher: Namco **Developer:** Namco **Release Date:** November



MONSTER RANCHER 4

We were gonna start this preview with the standard, "If you liked *Monster Rancher 3*, then..." line, but after a glance at the appallingly paltry sales numbers for *MR4*'s PS2 prequel, we decided otherwise. Instead, we'll tell you this: *MR4* lets you breed your own beasts using data from any CD or DVD in your collection. Plus, you can now take your critters on all kinds of RPG-like quests. Trust us, it's a lot of fun.

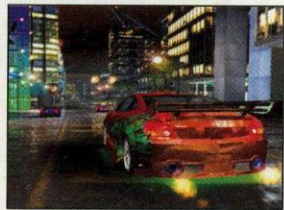
Publisher: Tecmo **Developer:** Tecmo **Release Date:** Late October

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

Best-looking PS2 game ever?

Electronic Arts, per its usual fashion of somehow managing to nail everything exactly right, has done it again with *Need for Speed Underground*. The company has freshened up its long-standing street-racing series with Japanese, European, and domestic hatchbacks and compacts, signed deals with every after-market mod company you could possibly imagine, and thrown it all into a game that may well be the most impressive-looking PS2 release so far. We're not kidding. The screenshots here really don't do it justice. With all of the races set at night, there's lots of potential for even more gorgeous lighting effects and reflective surfaces. Imagine the nighttime road race in *Gran Turismo 3* dialed up to 11. This rocks.

Publisher: EA Games **Developer:** EA Black Box **Release Date:** November

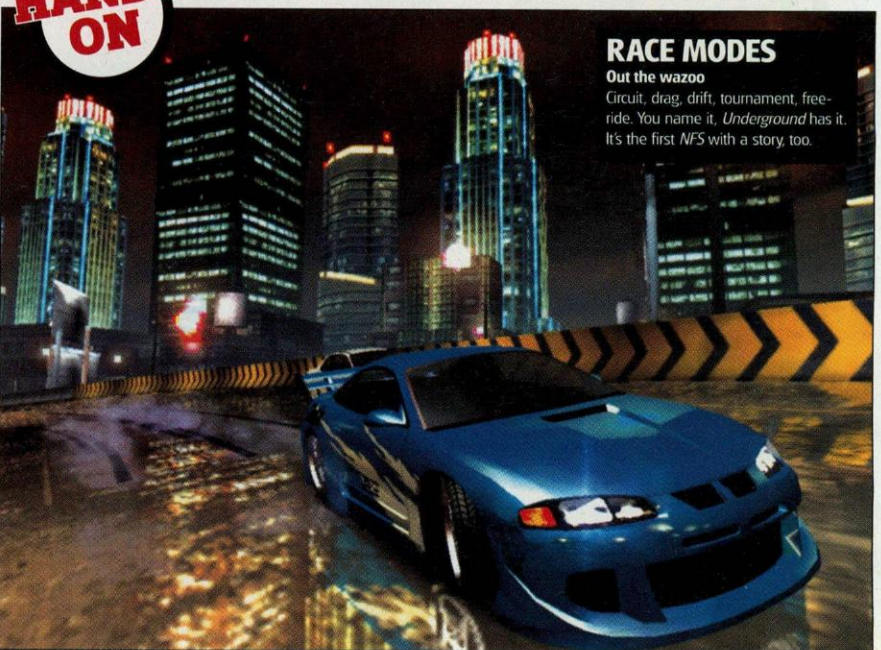


PLAY IT NEXT MONTH

Underground on Underground

Our demo disc for next month is incredible. Finally, you'll be able to see for yourself why we're so excited about *Underground*!

HANDS ON



RACE MODES

Out the wazoo

Circuit, drag, drift, tournament, free-ride. You name it, *Underground* has it. It's the first *NFS* with a story, too.