



PROJECT PERSEUS?

That, folks, is the working title of Panzer Dragoon 2. Team Andromeda's long-awaited sequel to last year's brilliant, ground-breaking 3D shoot 'em up. Rumoured to be the most expensive video game ever made, Panzer Dragoon certainly lived up to this mighty boast. Its lavish graphics were unlike anything previously seen in a game. With vast flying ships, monstrous sandworms, alien insects and, of course, majestic dragons filling its fantastical levels, it looked more like a moving oil-painting than a shoot 'em up.

Panzer Dragoon's brilliance went further than just looks though, as it fully-realised the potential of a 3D scrolling shoot 'em up. Expanding on the into-the-screen Afterburner gameplay, Panzer allowed you to scroll totally around your dragon steed. Suddenly you had to think in three-dimensions, as fleets of battleships soared up from behind, whilst sand-crabs burst out of the ground to your left and right. It totally broke the shoot 'em up mould and provided an incredibly exhilarating experience!

So what could Team Andromeda possibly have in store for the sequel? Well, you ride a dragon again. 360-degree shooting action is the basic formula. And it looks totally incredible. Naturally, all the winning factors of the original game are here. However, the basic gaming formula has grown and developed. Quite literally in fact, as the key word this time is 'Metamorphosis!'

THE HUNGRY CATERPILLAR

The way in which a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly is probably the best analogy to describe the idea behind Panzer Dragoon 2. You see, unlike in the original game, you don't start the game with a fully-grown dragon steed, but rather a dragon puppy. At the beginning of the game the dragon is unable to fly, so the first level takes place on the ground. As the game progresses, so the dragon matures, first learning how to shoot and then fly.

One of the main criticisms of the first Panzer Dragoon was over its difficulty level. Bizarrely enough, Sega found that opinions were clearly split between those that found the game too difficult and those that found it too easy. Panzer 2's new 'Metamorphosis' feature has been designed to prevent that problem surfacing again. The game actually judges the player's skill level and shapes the dragon's growth and development accordingly. Weak players will find their steed develops better defensively, whereas more experienced gamers will find the dragon's offensive prowess increases. The dragon literally grows to suit its owner!



Team Andromeda promise Panzer Dragoon Zwei will feature even more impressive enemies than its predecessor. Even from this early version it's clear that's the case.



Using the view rotation you can appreciate the incredible animation. The way your dragon steed gallops along in 'Ground Mode' is particularly impressive.

