



BURNOUT 2

DAMAGE \$1000
BOMBS X 8

continue X



Developer: Criterion Games

Publisher: Acclaim

of Players: 1-2

Features: Custom series mode; Guest appearance by Gary Neuman

BY ANTHONY G. CASASNOVAS



LET IT BE KNOWN THAT I DO NOT CONDONE DRUNK OR RECKLESS DRIVING for pleasure (unless a tank is involved). However, I must admit that I can rarely look away from a vicious accident probably caused by the town drunk on his way from (or to) his beloved watering hole. Another DUI, another carcass in the morgue, but I'd be damned if I didn't say I enjoyed watching the accident as it occurred. Luckily for me, Criterion Studios has created *Burnout 2* to satisfy my twisted curiosity.

Much like EA's release of *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2*, *Burnout 2* is more of an improvement on a winning formula rather than a complete retooling. Before accessing the game's various modes, one must first complete a series of training levels entitled "Offensive Driving 101." In these simple yet effective segments, drivers will learn to fill their Turbo Boost bar by driving as recklessly as possible while avoiding collisions. You are taught to drive on the wrong side of the road, barely scraping by traffic, drifting, catching air, and other stylish driving techniques. After completing this crash course in driving fit for a NYC cabbie, you're on your way to competing in the game's championship mode (where more cars and tracks can be unlocked), a 2-player head to head mode, chase mode, and the game's biggest draw - crash mode.

Crash mode is the meat of this title. Since the graphics are so crisp and detailed, providing attractive scenery to admire, fulfilling the objective of this mode remains a treat each and every time. Choose from one of 14 available cars (21 after unlocking), pick a traffic situation, and send your jalopy to its impending demise. That's right, crash it. The more chaos that ensues, the better your score. As soon as your car collides, the purposely caused accident is viewed from multiple angles in an artfully done slow-mo. Car models are mutilated - sparks fly as cars rub against barriers, bumpers take to the sky, glass shatters, fires bounce, hoods pop off. In short, it's a total disaster sequence and looks phenomenal. Since each situation takes no longer than 30 seconds to complete, it makes for great group play.

The in-game sound is good, if not great at times. Car engines rev, tires screech and squeal on the pavement, fenders go smash, and all of it sounds even better when the Dolby Pro-Logic II option is utilized (if your setup allows for this feature). You can also set the game's ratio for widescreen HD televisions, nice. The music is also great arcade fair, resembling a sort of cheesy heavy guitar rock found in any number of Sega's arcade games. Listen for dynamic changes in the music, guitar riffs are quiet and slow as you cruise along and explode into a full-fledged metal jam when boost is activated, rock.

Overall, *Burnout 2* is a very tight package. It offers a basic championship mode, a somewhat watered down police chase mode, nice graphics and sounds, and smooth arcade control. Toss in the crash mode and it becomes a game the entire family can take for a spin, even your drunk Uncle Lew. III

