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THE fun ISSUE



Finding Netherland

It's fair to say that if asked who the major video gaming nations were, any gamer would respond first with Japan and the US. But game development is a truly global business and, surprising as it might seem, The Netherlands is at the forefront of video game production.

Recent gaming phenomeon *de Blob*, courtesy of Ronimo Games, is an entirely Dutch creation; major studios are outsourcing development to Dutch companies such as Streamline Studios who have worked on *Saint's Row*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Gears of War* and dozens of other high profile games; and Guerrilla Games is the Dutch team responsible for *Killzone 2*, one of Sony's most successful PlayStation 3 titles.

Dutch programming talent is oozing out of The Netherlands and into homes across the globe. We spoke to Guerrilla Games' Managing Director Hermen Hulst to get his take on the future of games: What is Guerrilla's philosophy? "We see it as our mission to develop real showcase titles for PlayStation platforms. With *Killzone 2* we wanted to demonstrate what the

incredibly powerful PlayStation 3 is capable of. We wanted to create a Hollywood size experience in games."

What are your views on the current state of gaming?

"It is an exciting time for the games industry. Not only is it still growing, but it is also diversifying. On the one hand there are teams like us that create the big blockbuster games, and then, through the possibility of digital distribution of games, there is a great opportunity to create smaller size experiences. People now play on consoles, handhelds, mobile phones, the Internet and in arcades. It means that gaming has become accepted by the wider audience."

What is so great about the PS3?

"The PS3 is built around 'high-def'. The 'Cell' chip inside the machine is top-end and IBM also puts it into the fastest super-computers on the planet. Suffice to say, it's good at doing simulations, big explosions, realistic clothes, hair, etc. It's so powerful people keep unlocking more power from it."

What will the next generation of consoles bring to the party?

"It's paramount that the next generation will be even more photorealistic than the current one, but the biggest advances will be in gameplay and believability of characters. New consoles will have so much power we'll be able to make humans even more human."



►► controller technology, the Wii introduced whole new audiences to gaming. Due to its ease of use, suddenly grandparents are able to play tennis and pin bowling alongside their grandchildren. Girls find the Wii's diversity of games more appealing. And those who felt themselves perhaps too cool to play video games before are wading in to see what all the fuss is about.

And we haven't even mentioned handheld games yet. With the rise of the Wii in particular and casual gaming in general, electronic entertainment has never been so popular. Even old-skool gamers who thought they had seen it all are once again engaged and experiencing the excitement they felt all those years ago as they stared through the shop window at a shiny new Atari 2600 running *Space Invaders*. Although we are still only in the middle of the sales cycle for the current ba

ABOVE: Luz from *Saints Row 2*
LEFT: *de Blob*