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## PERSONAL TECH

SUNDAY • October 22, 2000

# REVIEWING THE PLAYSTATION 2 LINEUP: 'DOA2: Hardcore,' 'Tekken' pack a lot of fighting spirit

Troy Oxford - Staff  
Sunday, October 22, 2000

For the PlayStation 2, the number of fighting-themed games is relatively small, but two titles in particular have more than enough punch to make up for the small selection.

"DOA2: Hardcore" is the PlayStation 2 version of Tecmo's fighting game for the Dreamcast, simply titled "DOA2."

The new version has had the benefit of additional development to add characters, moves and costumes. It also includes more-interactive backgrounds and new game modes.

Characters are colorful, cleanly modeled and larger than life. From the flamboyant, Dennis Rodman-type kickboxer to the brazen, buxom blonde pro wrestler, there are more than 14 caricatures to choose from.

The animation complements the cast of characters nicely. Movements are very fluid, and clothing and hair flow realistically with each action.

Contributing to the big impact of the title are the interactive backgrounds. This feature is what sets "DOA2" apart from other games of the genre. Traditionally, basic fighting games take place on a single-level, two-dimensional axis. Characters can move forward, backward, left or right on one constant plane.

In "DOA2: Hardcore," however, fighters can run in all directions and can be knocked down numerous levels to the ground below. There is an overwhelming sense of amazement when you deliver a devastating kick that wallops your opponent through a brick wall to the street below.

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Some locales are garnished with painful barbed wire or buzzing electrified walls. Knocking your opponent into such an element will administer more damage, and vice versa.

Apart from the game play, there are a lot of nice extras. A variety of costumes can be released for each character. These aren't just different-colored corduroys but entirely diverse and outlandish attire.

One great extra is the replay mode. I've had some interesting fighting matches before in which I had finally pulled off a move worthy of a Kodak moment. Now with the new mode, I can save the entire match to the memory card, watch it later and humiliate my opponent.

"DOA2: Hardcore" has a very strong visual impact and the energy and sensationalism to capture fresh game players.

For technical, veteran gamers, Namco's "Tekken Tag Tournament" delivers a smorgasbord of eye candy and serious fighting depth.

From its humble start in 1995, "Tekken" has blossomed beautifully to this fourth installment and is considered to be one of the deepest fighting games today.

Featuring characters from the entire series, "Tekken Tag Tournament" boasts an incredible lineup of more than 30 characters, each with a unique appearance and set of moves. The variety goes a lot further than a Bruce Lee-type of character. Some of the imaginative fighters are a mechanized space ninja, a prototype robot and a boxing kangaroo.

Each character and every visual element are painstakingly detailed. Facial expressions, clothing textures and lighting effects are extraordinary. You can actually see eyelashes on some close-ups.

Although the background environments don't offer the interactivity of "DOA2: Hardcore," they are by no means bad. In fact, the backgrounds in "Tekken Tag Tournament" do a better job setting the mood for the battle taking place.

Backgrounds are composed of animated panoramas that feature a variety of locales and activities. One stage is located in a mall plaza, where onlookers cheer the combatants on as an illuminated carousel spins in the background. Another fighting ground is deep inside a temple bathed with the soft orange glow of flickering torches lining the walls.

Visuals of this title have a darker, grittier feel as opposed to the bright and colorful graphics of "DOA2: Hardcore." Although the characters and moves are a bit wacky, the game has more of an emotive tone.

Namco has been known for all of its additional extras included in its console game translations, and "Tekken Tag Tournament" is no exception. Finishing certain modes will unlock additional characters, movies and game modes, including an addictive bowling mode.

Punching, throwing, kicking and blocking are staples of every fighting system, but Namco, like the chef Emeril from the Food Network, has taken it up a notch.

Attacks can be delayed, moves can be parried and reversed, and combos can

be mixed up and customized. The possibilities are endless. One could play the title for several years and still learn more.

"DOA2: Hardcore" and "Tekken Tag Tournament" are both excellent choices for the PlayStation 2. Each title offers a premium concoction of brawling game play and beautiful visuals.

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