

# GSO

**GAMESTYLE OFFLINE**

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SEGA PRESENTS

# OutRun<sup>2</sup>

a g s o s p e c i a l e d i t i o n

## ARCADE PERFECT

Which seems like a great way to start this Gamestyle Offline Special Edition. As we did with Riddick a couple of months back, we've chosen a particularly stand-out title to spotlight, giving it the extra room to breathe that you can't always get with a straight on-line review. Sadly, this being written from review code, we've not been able to test the Live features out and we're also told that a couple of tweaks have been made to the code since this version was sent out. So, with that out of the way, let's get back to the headline above - Arcade Perfect.

The Chihiro arcade board is, to all extents and purposes, an Xbox in a cabinet, albeit one with enhanced memory and running off Dreamcast-style GD Roms as opposed to DVDs. This meant that not only was an Xbox port anticipated ever since the arcade version was announced, but also that whoever was responsible for the porting process had a good foundation to start from and build up around.

Famously, that role fell to Sumo Interactive, a Sheffield-based developer previously responsible for plenty of Gremlin (and, later, Infogrames) titles and one with enough natural pedigree to convince Sega Europe to outsource the home console version. Gamestyle can safely say that Sumo have done Britain proud with a hugely impressive Xbox conversion: right from the start the action is perfectly smooth, there are no loading gaps once the action has started and somehow they've managed to squeeze every detail into the 64 Meg the Xbox offers.

We're assuming they've used every byte, though - the game looks wonderful and effectively runs at exactly the same resolution as the arcade mode and even featured a 16:9 widescreen mode. Sumo assure us that there's nothing of note missing from the conversion: the graphics whizz by at a gorgeous 60 frames per second for the entire Outrun mode, even in widescreen. The only time this falters is when the engine is going above and beyond the Arcade mode in other modes, typically where you're racing against other AI drivers and on some of the more esoteric tracks later on.



## OLD SCHOOL

Everyone remembers the original 1986 Outrun, even if they've not actually played it. With its iconic Ferrari imagery and vast open roads, Outrun was everything we wanted from a race game. Thankfully, **Outrun 2** holds true to its older brother.





### ENJOY THE VIEW

Outrun 2 features 3 viewpoints - the behind the car chase cam in all the screenshots, one on the bonnet cam, and for the true sense of speed, there's also one on the bumper. It's a little too low for extended use, but you can practically feel the road rushing past!

### BACK TO BASICS

For those not familiar with how Outrun 2 works, it's similar in principle to the original 1986 version - starting at the Westernmost point on a pyramid-shaped map, your ultimate destination is one of five courses on the right hand side of the layout. At the end of each track (which lasts approximately a minute) the road forks into two and you can pick your own route. Left forking tracks are generally easier than those on the right - see the map on the next two pages for more information.

Time is awarded at each checkpoint (the straight road between courses) depending on which difficult level you choose at the menu screen, and that's about it. So, whilst Outrun 2 might be an absolutely fantastic looking game, with a 5 track maximum before the finish line each time (and first time players will reach the end in under 5 minutes) there doesn't seem to be that much to the game, right? This structure might be perfect for a coin-operated machine for occasional use but it wouldn't justify the £40 for the Xbox version.

Thankfully, though, Sumo are well aware of this and not only have they included the two additional arcade modes (Time Trial and Heart Attack modes) they have also included over a hundred 'Mission' challenges too (more on those later), plus the obvious Live play for racing against your mates.

Whilst Time Trial is fairly self-explanatory, it's worth mentioning that first there is no traffic in this mode, and secondly that you must initially pick from one of the possible course routes before starting - once in the race the forks are chosen for you with big red arrows blocking any incorrect map-reading from the player. This means that Time Trials can be accurately compared with those of your friends as the routes are the same.

Heart Attack is a different story altogether. You might well race along the same routes as you do in Outrun Mode, but along the way your female passenger shouts out instructions that you must attempt to execute - following the red line, hitting cones, not crashing, drifting and so on - doing so successfully awards you with hearts that contribute

towards a final score. It's an interesting diversion and one that offers a bit of variety. Heart Attack has much to answer for though, as it forms the basis for the entire Outrun Challenge mode.

### ON A MISSION

Each of the 15 areas (plus one additional start area named level 0) offers a number of individual missions with a final 'boss' mission unlocked after completion of the others in the series. These can range from a simple one-on-one race to any possible section of Heart Attack mode plus a number of new ideas thrown in by Sumo. The Max Speed missions (like a repeating version of Gotham 2's Speed Camera trials) can be some of the trickiest, but Outrun players should also get ready for taking photographs of love hearts and even some Crazy Taxi style pickup and drop off missions. All of these can be on a single track, or any combination of tracks in any order and some may even be played in reverse for an added challenge. Mission mode is great fun, and adds longevity.



### DRIFTER

The main change to the handling from the original 1986 version is the drifting. Not only does it keep your speed up on tighter corners but it's absolutely essential for the Mission Mode. Release the gas, tap the brake, then re-apply the accelerator to initiate a drift.

### SECRETS

Don't worry, we're not going to spill all the spoilers here. What we will say is that the main way to unlock Outrun 2's treasure chest of goodies is by completing each boss challenge in the Mission Mode. Although every single challenge unlocks something, they are mostly just cards and images of Ferrari-branded goods that don't actually do anything. The final challenges open up much more tangible rewards, including additional music and remixes, newer cars (including those already available on the arcade version) and some really nice, additional tracks that might be familiar to fans of some of Sega's older racing games. They've been mentioned elsewhere, but in case you don't know what they are we'll not spoil that one either, but in the review copy it's clear the graphics engine doesn't support animation in the background objects, so certain 'moving' features that were in the original versions of these secret tracks haven't made it into the Outrun 2 conversion. No big loss to the majority of gamers, but we can already hear the fanboys whinging...





For those not yet connected to Microsoft's Live service, Outrun 2 offers two other options for multiplayer gaming: system link is lag-free and great fun with a couple of mates, but there's also a Party mode where a series of challenges from the Mission mode are set up and players take the hot seat in turn to compete against friends. It actually works better than it sounds, the sheer variety in the challenges pulling this one through - sadly we couldn't find Math Mayhem (where you need to keep track of numbers as you drive underneath basic mathematics equations) in Party mode but everything else from the one player game is present and correct.

It's not all roses, though - the challenges can get repetitive (and some of the difficulty levels were mis-judged in our copy also this has since been fixed) and there are no options to use your own soundtrack, forcing you to either endure yet another version of Magical Sound Shower or switch off the music altogether. The new music for Outrun 2 isn't up to much either. There's also no replays and the lack of a dedicated force feedback wheel might upset some gamers.

## THE VERDICT

So how does it hold up as a £40 game? Well, Sumo have done everything humanly possible to beef up the replayability of the game. Well aware of the fact that a straight arcade conversion wouldn't have been enough, they've really gone to town with all the additional missions and multiplayer options, all of which they've done successfully. The handling is converted well to the analog joystick and the graphics are as wonderful as we've already mentioned.

Time Trial is (as usual in racing games) the mode that is likely to endure the longest, but with the Live play and Party mode there's plenty to do here. For fans of the original, Gamestyle definitely recommends a purchase as Outrun 2 captures the spirit of the 1986 classic perfectly (listen out for that age-old Sega Scream and you'll have unlocked one of the best secrets, too) and new takers to the Outrun experience will likely fall in love with this game just as us oldies did the first time around. Compelling stuff.

### Outrun 2

**Developer:**  
Sumo Interactive

**Publisher:**  
Sega Europe

**Platform:**  
Xbox

**Rating:**  
Suitable for all

**Version reviewed:**  
PAL

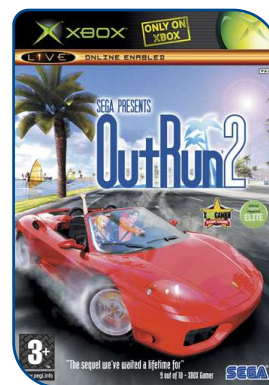
**Online play:**  
Full Live gaming, DLC hooks

**Release date:**  
1st October 2004

#### In Brief:

Arcade port taking full advantage of the home console capabilities with extensive Live play and lots of replayability as standard. One for the fans of the original, but also appeals to those new to the series.

**Gamestyle score: 9 / 10**





SEGA PRESENTS

# OutRun 2

## THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

The course layout in Outrun 2 is identical to the Arcade's (and thus exactly the same in style to the original 1986 Outrun) and is handled expertly - levels stream in off the disk as you approach them so there's no pause for loading between each 60-second area and in Outrun mode you're free to choose your own path through the game. Time trial (and other modes) give you a pre-determined route with the familiar two-way junction at the end of each stage.



## GSO: OUTRUN 2

Written and produced by Alex Carroll for Gamestyle.net (GSO) September 2004. Copyright: 2004 Gamestyle.net

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