A large, detailed illustration of Lara Croft in her signature brown outfit, looking down with a serious expression. She is positioned on the right side of the cover, with her right hand resting on the title.

LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER LEGEND

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS TURNS THE IDEA OF 'OUT WITH THE OLD AND IN WITH THE NEW' ON ITS HEAD



*Put together by Jamie Oliver
Thanks to Play Magazine - 2005*

Lara can make use of the environment to dispatch enemies, although hot lead works just as well.



See Lara's lovely bottoms? Well, look above it and you can see how many grenades she's carrying.

Steve Austin, astronaut. A man barely alive. Gentlemen, we can rebuild him. We have the technology. We have the capability to build the world's first bionic man.

Steve Austin will be that man. Better than before. Better, stronger, faster.

For those of you not in the know, that is the voiceover at the beginning of the *Six Million Dollar Man* television series, which starred Lee Majors as Colonel Steve Austin who was injured in a horrific accident during a test flight for NASA.

The *Six Million Dollar Man* may seem completely irrelevant to *Tomb Raider Legend*, but it's almost the perfect analogy when looking at Lara Croft and her cataclysmic fall from grace with her last appearance in *Angel Of Darkness*.

After what Core Design had done to her, Lara was a game character barely alive, but Crystal Dynamics – the company behind the *Legacy Of Kain* series – was given the task of rebuilding her and revitalising the *Tomb Raider* franchise. Better than before. Better, stronger, faster.

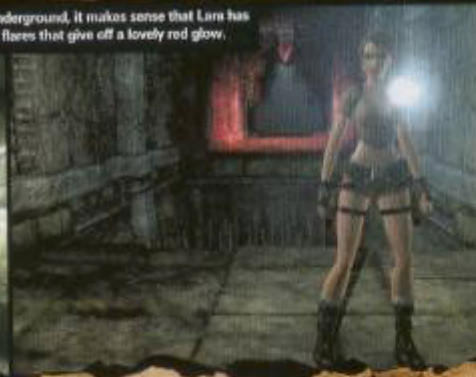
Of course, *Legend* won't be featuring any bionic men, women or children, but Lara has undergone a serious redesign to do away with the spectres of the series' apparent inability to evolve and move with the times. That said, Crystal Dynamics is quick to point out that this is first and foremost a *Tomb Raider* game. As the PlayStation2 version's producer, Morgan Gray says, it's "A re-

imagining; embracing what *Tomb Raider* great and building

This philosophy runs through single aspect of *Legend*, creating an experience that fans of the series should be instantly familiar with; this much classic Lara, reminding everything that made gamers love with her way back in 1996 was much more than an attractive female game character with an amply-stacked top-shelf, and made *Tomb Raider* a hit, because at least, was the completely unique gameplay experience, something that showed people what could be achieved as games moved in the third dimension.

We had a look at parts of a Peruvian level, beginning with

With the amount of time she spends underground, it makes sense that Lara has a torch. She also comes equipped with flares that give off a lovely red glow.



WHAT THE ANCIENTS DID FOR US... A brief history of Tomb Raider



TOMB RAIDER RELEASED: November 1996

Released back in 1996, the first *Tomb Raider* hit the shelves with little fanfare; its sales performance was helped by positive reviews in the gaming press and good word-of-mouth. Lara was hired by a shadowy corporation to recover a lost artefact, pieces of which were scattered across the globe, leading to a final showdown in the legendary lost city of Atlantis. It was the first game that had featured a marketable heroine, so Lara was the main focus of the advertising for the game, but she didn't blow-up until the sequel hit.





At the start of the Peru level that we got to, Lara is investigating an escapee from her base when these guys attack her.

ing in a small village looking to an excavation site from one of her escapades. The look of the was certainly authentic, with streets and ramshackle huts into a small square, where is arranged to meet an old stance. After a brief cut-scene, get upon by a group of thugs, to shoot first and ask ns later. This gave us a chance how the gunplay has fared in

Crystal Dynamics' reworking, and it seems that this base has been covered with ease. Whipping out her dual-pistols, Lara bounces around the screen, dispatching baddies with the grace of a ballet dancer. A new lock-on feature makes it all the easier to keep a bead on your target and enemy AI seems in place to make them more than just cannon fodder. Legend will feature a healthy dose of shooting, but much less than the

later games in the series. The split is apparently about 70/30 in favour of adventuring, but that doesn't mean to say that the action side of things will be underdeveloped. Most of Lara's enemies will be human, consigning 'Lara Croft: Endangered Species Hunter' to the depths of videogame hell. As well as her classic pistols, Lara will be able to make use of at least seven weapons in total including shotguns, an assault rifle, sub machine guns, an RPG and a grenade launcher. All her equipment will appear on her person, so if you want to see how many grenades she has, just look below her backpack where she keeps them. You see three



LARA BOUNCES AROUND THE GREEN, DISPATCHING BADDIES WITH THE GRACE OF A BALLET DANCER

TOMB RAIDER II RELEASED: November 1997

Lara was established as the biggest star in videogames with her second adventure, arguably the best in the series. Taking the groundwork laid by the first game, *Tomb Raider II* improved on its predecessor with better graphics, tighter controls and an even greater scale, if that was possible. Croft racked up yet more Air Miles, this time taking in sights of The Great Wall Of China, Venice and Tibet, to mention a long detour on a sunken ship at the bottom of the ocean.



TOMB RAIDER III RELEASED: November 1998

By this time only the most hardened of Lara's fans wasn't questioning the direction the series was headed in. The graphics improved yet again, Lara's arsenal expanded, the locales she visited were more exotic and you could choose the order in which you tackled the main adventure, but the whole thing was very much just more of the same. Unfortunately, the game's sales were strong enough to convince both Eidos and Core Design that the series could continue as it was, and still be successful.



CONTINUED OVER PAGE





Lara has always been hot with her guns, but the 'Legend' should be a lot more fun than it's ever been.



See! Pushing blocks around has been banished and replaced with... rolling balls around. Wait a minute...



The swimming sections are beautiful, with great water effects and Lara's graceful swimming animation. She's not too bad looking herself.

WHAT THE ANCIENTS DID FOR US...
A brief history of Tomb Raider continued...



TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION
 RELEASED: November 1999

Stop us if you've read this before, but *Revelation* was yet another identical entry into the *Tomb Raider* series. The game did away with the traditional level-structure of previous games, instead using a full world loaded in one go, just like Crystal Dynamic's own *Soul*.

Reaver. However, this was inconsequential to the actual gameplay, which was the same as all the other games, including the aging grid-based system. To its credit, Core Design tried to extend Lara's back-story, but it was pretty pointless considering the rest of the game was exactly the same.



CLEAR CUT

WHAT HAS CRYSTAL DYNAMICS EVER DONE FOR US?

Since its creation in 1996, the *Tomb Raider* series had been handled by Core Design – based in Derby – but after the disaster that was *Angel Of Darkness* released in 2003, the development reins were handed to Crystal Dynamics, based in the San Francisco Bay area.

The company has been around since the early Nineties, beginning as a software developer for multiple formats, before moving into publishing. It was then bought out by Eidos in 1998, and is now part of Eidos' videogames development division.

Crystal Dynamic's back-catalogue is littered with classics, but the company is probably best known for the *Legacy Of Kain* series, which began on the PSOne in 1996, around the same time as the first *Tomb Raider* was released. A few of their recent titles include:



Project Snowblind: A solid FPS, based on the Deus Ex universe.



The AI and combat were some way from complete when we saw them, but will be greatly improved.



Lara's character model is now twice as detailed as it's ever been before. And it shows.

» grenades? Well that's how many she's got.

Lara's inventory is going to be bolstered by a number of neat new gadgets to help her on her adventures, which are selectable through a press of the D-pad. She spends a lot of time in caverns, so naturally she has a torch attached to

her top with which to light up the area. There's a remote analysis device, which is essentially a map. Lara also wears a head-set at all times, which she uses to stay in contact with her colleagues back at Croft Manor, who are on-hand to dish out tips and directions at various points. One of these helpers is her

butler, Winston, who returns as a much younger version compared to the moaning genetric from *Tomb Raider II*. The most useful addition to Lara's backpack of goodies is the new grappling hook, deployed, as far as we can tell, through her buckle in a *Batman*-utility-belt-stylee. The

grappling hook to get Lara across a gap she couldn't reach by jumping, and pull down a pillar that was holding a ball we needed to complete a puzzle. At first this seemed a little gimmicky, but its implementation never seems nonsensical, as it's always obvious what can be grappled.

Of course, the main idea behind *Tomb Raider* is that of actually raiding tombs, visiting places where man – or in this case woman – hasn't been for thousands of years. Crystal Dynamics has acknowledged this, and views it as the central aspect of the game. With subsequent instalments it seemed that this sense of adventure was lost, with more and more focus on dull urban environments. "The later games failed to keep with the times," says Gray, "and the series lost its core by trying to compete with the core aspects of other games." This time around Lara is returning to her

LARA'S INVENTORY IS GOING TO BE BOLSTERED BY A NUMBER OF NEAT NEW GADGETS

her top with which to light up the area. There's a remote analysis device, which is essentially a map. Lara also wears a head-set at all times, which she uses to stay in contact with her colleagues back at Croft Manor, who are on-hand to dish out tips and directions at various points. One of these helpers is her

grappling hook cannot be used anywhere but is limited to use on metallic objects. If there is a "sheen" on a surface, Lara can lob the grappling hook at it and then use it to pull items or swing across gaps. It seems likely that mastery of this function will be essential; in the Peru level alone, we had to use the



The architecture in *Legend* owes a lot more to the earlier games in the series, rather than the dull urban levels in the later ones.



TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES

RELEASED: November 2000

Stop us if you've read this before. *Chronicles* was yet another identikit entry into the *Tomb Raider* series. We had to do that because this was the fifth game in the *Tomb Raider* series,

and it was yet again the same game as before. It was better than *Revelation*, and the premise of playing through some of Lara's misadventures from her past was pretty cool, but it was just too much to ask people to shell-out for a game that had changed so little in four years.



TOMB RAIDER: ANGEL OF DARKNESS

RELEASED: April 2003

There were finally some changes made with *Angel Of Darkness*, and while Core Design's heart was in the right place, the execution was lacking. The game was an absolute mess, in both design and the control of Lara, and is by far the worst entry in the *Tomb Raider* series. It received a pretty luke-warm reception in the gaming press, which eventually led to Eidos ripping the series away from Core Design and handing it over to Crystal Dynamics. The term 'one-for-fans-only' was invented for this very game. Possibly.



IT'S ALL RATHER PUZZLING

MORE SWITCH HITTING, DOOR OPENING FUN

One of the elements of the *Tomb Raider* series which has been a constant throughout all the instalments has been the interesting use of environmental puzzles. They weren't generally that tough – usually involving the pulling of a few switches to open a door further into the level – but they were usually clever, and got more complex as the series progressed. Fortunately, Crystal Dynamics has thrown a large number of puzzles into *Legend*, and they're going to be slightly more complex than we're used to, Morgan Gray explains, "Many of our puzzles are physics based – natural world machines – but we have to make strong physics puzzles which are realistic and integrated into the game world, but passable by the players... Gamers are trained on step-by-step puzzles, and we can do really cool things, but it comes down to how far 'outside-the-box' you go, against making something playable."

The game will feature the classic *Tomb Raider*-style puzzles, but the majority will be based in single rooms, requiring the use of logic and understanding of the game's physics in order to solve them. In the areas we got to see, there were some interesting puzzles, which we won't reveal here, but rest assured they were considerably more involving than 'push this block and pull this switch.'



This is the puzzle we got to have a go at. It's not overly complex, but Crystal Dynamics promises that there will be a good number of head-scratchers.



No, she hasn't fallen over – Lara has a number of new moves she can use in combat, such as the running slide she's using here.

roots, emphasised by a much more interesting travel itinerary, taking in the sights of such exotic locales as West Africa, Bolivia, the Himalayas and Peru.

We got to have a ramble around in a tomb later in the Peru level, helping Lara to retrieve an ancient artefact she failed to nab on her previous visit. The area we were exploring was pretty impressive, and everything has been given a much more natural look in *Legend*. The graphical engine Crystal Dynamics has created, exclusively for the game, is among the most impressive seen on the PlayStation2. The company has implemented some pretty impressive tricks to make the PlayStation2 sing louder than it has ever before, with almost all the system's resources used at any one time to render the section you're currently in. There are no loading screens during levels, so the game spools directly from disc, meaning that the game is loading as you play.

Somehow Crystal Dynamics has managed to make each segment load so quickly that the next area doesn't have to be loaded until you are almost in it, so the PlayStation2 is only handling one section at a time which means it can use much more power for each little piece of the level. Lara spending most of her time in enclosed tombs and caverns help somewhat, but you never feel fenced in by the game, which has a truly awesome sense of scale. There will also be some areas that have a more open feel to them – such as the Peruvian village – and the game handles these equally as well. It's very complicated, but as you can see the results are truly spectacular. According to Gray, however, this is the finished product, "We haven't been able, up until this point in time to drill-down and really make it perfect. As it stands we're pretty proud of it's a good starting block, but it's going to get better."

The emphasis will be on exploring, but there will also be a lot of action in *Tomb Raider Legend*.



The new model for Lara is twice-as-detailed than the one in *AC* and those extra polys haven't gone on her boobs for once.



Lara's new melee attack really shows off the quality of the game's animation and is extremely useful for taking-out dudes in close-quarters.



Lara's grappling hook is going to be an integral part of *Tomb Raider Legend*.



THE FIRST LADY OF VIDEOGAMES FINALLY HAS A LOOK TO MATCH HER SUPER-SEXY PERSONA

This new organic look for Lara's surroundings would be pretty pointless if Lara herself hadn't been improved, but luckily she has received a complete overhaul since *Angel Of Darkness*. The most important aspect of this is that Ms Croft is finally free of the shackles imposed on her by the grid-system implemented up until now in the series and can finally run, jump, swing and climb in a much more natural manner. Lara can jump at any number of odd angles, always reaching out and grabbing ledges with athletic grace. However, Lara isn't infallible, and to keep you on your toes at all times, Crystal Dynamics has employed a 'Saving Press' function. Basically, if your jump isn't perfect, there's a good chance that

Lara's grip will fail when she grabs onto the ledge you pointed her at. If this happens, of course, she'll fall, but an onscreen prompt appears and if you hit the @ in time, she'll be saved. For the sadistic amongst you, you'll be pleased to hear that Lara will still scream her lungs out if she falls a significant distance.

Lara's movement and control is central to Crystal Dynamics' outlook for *Legend*, and a much more realistic Lara is essential to achieve this. The character has always moved with grace, but her caricature look in the previous games made her gymnastic exploits seem impossible. Lara seems to have been given a much more 'solid' build – an athletic frame to cope with the rigours placed upon her

by the game. Her chest seems to have undergone a reduction too, resulting in a much more believable character. The model used for Lara in *Legend* uses over twice as many polygons as before, meaning that the first lady of videogames finally has a look to match her super-sexy persona.

While all these changes to Lara and the *Tomb Raider* world may seem quite drastic, Crystal Dynamics has succeeded in creating what is, essentially, the most *Tomb Raider*-y game since *Tomb Raider* itself. The sense of wonder has returned to the series, after it had spent much too much time grubbing around in the streets, concerning itself with brainless action and not breathless adventure. In *Legend*, adventure plays the most important role, providing numerous

LET'S MAKE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC TOGETHER

LEGEND'S SOUNDTRACK GOES CLASSIC

The music in the *Tomb Raider* series has always been an important facet of the games, but there wasn't actually that much of it. Most of us remember the classic theme-tune – and no doubt a few can hum it – but for the majority of the time spent playing, your only companions were Lara's footfall and the crack of her dual-pistols. This served to build up the anticipation, because when the music finally kicked-in, you knew something cool was about to happen, be it a confrontation with a sizeable foe, or entry into a particularly important area.

With Crystal Dynamics staying true to all the other elements that make a *Tomb Raider* game, it's little surprise that the music is also being handled with considerable care. The game's composer, Troels Brun Folmann, is a true connoisseur of videogame music, and

has gone back over the scores for all the previous *Tomb Raider* games to create the perfect soundtrack for *Legend*. We were treated to a sneak-peek of the main theme, which gives a heavy nod to the classic *Tomb Raider* arrangement.

The in-game music is as sparse as ever, again only putting in an appearance to underline key in-game moments and during cut-scenes. Folmann has developed a unique technique in order to achieve this, which he has dubbed 'micro scoring'. This can incorporate different sounds into the soundtrack, depending on the location and Lara's situation. Folmann's score is certainly impressive, but the technology behind it is even more so, consisting of a full digital orchestra housed on six high-end PCs.





We wouldn't mess with Lara - she's harder than Grant and Phil Mitchell put together. And that's hard.



Lara decided not to end this guy's miserable life, instead opting to do a little dance with him. He's dead.

» opportunities to help Lara live up to her reputation as the female Indiana Jones. Everything that you remember from her early outings will be here, with close-your-eyes jumps, intense gun-battles and nerve-jangling swims all combining to create the sense that you are playing something very special indeed.

With almost six months to go until *Legend* is released, there are still a number of elements which Crystal Dynamics is keeping well under wraps. The biggest of these, unsurprisingly, is the story, which is going to be based around Lara exploring a series of events in her past. In relation to the *Tomb Raider* timeline, it seems that Crystal Dynamics is placing *Legend* as a direct sequel to the first game, rather than continuing on from Lara's exploits later in the series. We weren't

ALL THE SIGNS POINT TO LARA RECLAIMING HER CROWN AS THE QUEEN OF ACTION-ADVENTURE GAMES

told any more than that, but judging by the quality of exposition in the *Legacy Of Kain* series, it's highly likely that the story will play a significant role in the game.

Once our time with *Tomb Raider Legend* was up and we were able to reflect on the game, it was hard not to be totally overwhelmed with excitement by the whole thing. **PLAY** is a big fan of the *Tomb Raider* series, and all signs point to Lara reclaiming her crown as the queen of action-adventure games. It's surprising to see a product that is as solid and polished at this stage, and it seems Crystal Dynamics is very happy with

how the project is going. "We could put out what we have now and probably have a decent *Tomb Raider* game, but with the pressure of this particular project and the *Tomb Raider* franchise, that's not acceptable," says Gray.

It's obvious that the people behind the game are fans, because they realise that anything less than a superb game could sound the death-knell for poor old Ms Croft, but Gray sums it up much better than we ever could, "It doesn't need to be the best game ever made, but it needs to be damn good and we're not going to settle for less." ■



The grapple hook isn't just for swinging about like a monkey - there will be loads of different uses for it throughout *Legend*.



INTERVIEW: TOBY GARD

TOBY GARD IS SOMETHING OF A VIDEOGAMES LEGEND, SEEING AS HE'S THE FATHER OF THE INDUSTRY'S FIRST STAR TO CROSS INTO THE MAINSTREAM – LARA CROFT. HE LEFT CORE DESIGN AFTER THE FIRST *TOMB RAIDER* TO MAKE HIS OWN GAME, *GALLEON*, WHICH APPEARED ON THE XBOX. AFTER THE PROJECT FINISHED, EIDOS INVITED HIM TO WORK WITH CRYSTAL DYNAMICS AS A CONSULTANT ON *TOMB RAIDER LEGEND*

What were your thoughts on the *Tomb Raider* series after you left Core?

I suppose the first few Core was playing it very safe, mainly because it felt like it had a formula that was working for it. It was too long before it properly grasped the mantle and went for a proper change, which is what it was going for with *Angel Of Darkness*. Obviously, it had a lot of issues achieving what it was going for, which is a shame because we've got all of its design and background stuff and what it was actually aiming for, what its goals were with *Angel Of Darkness*. They were all good goals and there was a lot of good in the direction it was taking but the execution was unfortunately lacking something.

What was your reaction when you heard Eidos had taken the franchise away from Core and handed it to Crystal Dynamics?

I've always been a big fan on the *Legacy Of Kain* series; when that came out at about the same time as the original *Tomb Raider*, I thought it was great. It seemed to me Crystal Dynamics would be the perfect group to take it on. It was something that I had already given up on and then when it came over to Crystal Dynamics and it was talking about restarting the whole thing, it seemed like an interesting thing to be involved with. I knew how entrenched everyone was at Core, I wouldn't have gone back there because nothing was really moving forward. That seemed like an interesting thing because I felt like there had been mistakes made through the years, and I felt what was being done here was an opportunity to bring the series back into greatness.

When you came onboard at Crystal Dynamics did you see any things in the game at that time that you felt you could help improve?

The project goals were all very good, there are always different things that you would want to do, and over the course of the project it's managed to keep it evolving, incorporating people's ideas into the game, and it's a very creative space in which to be working. It has certainly changed a lot since I arrived, for the better, but the groundwork was there, I've just been part of the tinkering process.

Was it a hard decision to come back to the series after all this time?

No, it was interesting. I was definitely interested; it was something that I'd like to come and do. And it was all about how much

history I had with Lara and it seemed like everybody here was very open to me coming in and seeing what they had. They didn't have a design for Lara, they didn't have costumes, they didn't have a look for her yet, all these sort of things, which sounded like a lot of fun to me.

You joined the *Tomb Raider Legend* team as a consultant. As time has moved on has your role increased?

Definitely. I came in as a consultant, specifically to do the visual aspect of Lara and then I got involved with the story, got together with the writer and the pair of us sat down and we wrote the story. And I was pushing on trying to get some consistency in the world and the *Tomb Raider* universe. And then trying to get room for the character to expand and going forward, because developers have generally been looking at it as too much like rushing onto the next big game and there isn't enough forward thinking to what's coming in the future. The character needs that story arc to go forward, so that's a thing I got heavily involved with. I also got involved with doing the animation, having worked on the animation for *Galleon*; I came in and was put in charge of that kind of stuff. And then, just recently, I've been put in charge of all the cinematics as well. So there's always something new.

You're obviously protective of Lara, so has this been like finding a long-lost daughter?

A little like that for sure – I've come back to put her back on the straight-and-narrow.

Was that feeling part of the reason why you left Core?

Not really. I think that it's important that if you're going to make a franchise, it has to evolve. I think that Core's mandate when I was there was just, "We have to pump out a *Tomb Raider* every year" and that was just not going to lead to the quality that is necessary for improving a franchise. I didn't really see much point in pursuing that. We'd already done it with the first one, so what are you going to do?

From the games that have come after *Tomb Raider* in the action-adventure genre, is there anything you have seen that has impressed you and made you think, "that would be good for Lara?"

Yeah, there have been lots of games that have been really good. But I don't think I really play games and think, "I'm definitely going to have to remember that one for *Tomb Raider*." I don't really approach games that way. But specifically, *Ico* is action-adventure the way I like it – it's not so action-paced that it's totally linear, and it's got heart to it as well. The design and art direction make it a provocative game – it's great to see something which is actually a worthwhile piece of art, especially within the videogames industry, too.

With games such as *Ico* and *Prince Of Persia* pushing the genre forward, does *Tomb Raider* still have the same power it once had as a brand? Looking at it as a story-wrapping concept for some sort of adventure game, *Tomb Raider* is pretty good because it's based on mystery, it's based on discovering

pretty amazing things – the whole 'wow' factor – and I think people are always interested in the unknown, it's something that does that for many people because that's what the game's about. And she's a pretty cool character in terms of her personality, that whole 'icy on the surface, but fiery underneath' thing is fascinating. It's more compelling, to me anyway, than the more totally fantasy *Prince Of Persia*-ery stuff, because it's more of a real-world thing, closer, in character at least, to what we experience today.

This project will be over by Spring 2006, so have you got any plans for the future after that?

I haven't really thought about it yet, but I would definitely like to continue with old Lara – she's got a big story arc to go down and I'd like to be involved with taking her down that road. Bringing the series away from Core has given the series life and given me an interest in *Tomb Raider* again.

“ **TOMB RAIDER IS PRETTY GOOD BECAUSE IT'S BASED ON MYSTERY, IT'S BASED ON DISCOVERING PRETTY AMAZING THINGS** ”