

ighting the Pffhor was no sweat at all! It's the waiting that's killing me! That's right, Mac gamers — waiting for that pending release of Bungie's Marathon 2: Durandal.

Any month now? Any week now? Even the ads have arrived full force... although I question the wisdom of advertising and hyping a game a few months before it's ready to release. This seems to be a widespread problem in the computer gaming industry. Shame on you, Bungie! Shame, shame, shame.

What's that? Screenshots? Web sites? That Macworld Expo Preview?! And a CD-ROM Demo coming forth any day now? All this to keep us dreaming of Marathon2? Many thanks to you, Bungie! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Sorry, I lost my composure there. But we all seem to have a love/hate relationship with the attention given to sizzling, upcoming game titles that are hyped mondo weeks before they see the light of day. Maybe we like to be teased; maybe not. Regardless, M2 is the so-called "sequel", yet promises to be a much different beast than the original Marathon. It's an entirely new game, and the changes are beyond superficial.

### **This ain't no Microsoft BOB!**

That's right! The BOBs (originally the civilian colonists aboard the colony ship Marathon) are now packing heat! They're not quite as lame as the old BOBs we saw back in the original Marathon. These BOBs won't let you or the aliens walk all over them. No, siree! This time, they're armed and they shoot back when provoked. Like the old Marathon, these BOBs are still on the player's side... just think twice before using them as target practice. Better yet, the new BOBs have a much expanded vocabulary, including -

1. "Perimeter Secured!"
2. "See You At Starside."
3. "Let's Go!"
4. "I Got Him!"
5. "Get Me Out Of Here!"

## ho ya callin' a homeboy!?

Tired of staying indoors? Well, M2 will allow you to roam the great outdoors. That's right! Some breath of fresh air is in order. Spectacular sceneries and beautifully rendered vistas of alien homeworlds are a part of the new turf. Fighting in underwater terrain as well as deep lava diving add new twists to the game. The ability to explore both indoor and outdoor settings adds a new dimension to the gameplay and depth of the game. It also adds to the sense of realism.

Of course, I haven't even mentioned the high-quality, hi-res graphics that the game offers — especially as a reward for those who already own Power Macs. 16-bit color is almost mandatory for gamers to appreciate the beauty of Marathon2. The 24-bit color option is almost certain to be there as well — for those people who spent way too much money on that top-of-the-line PowerPC.

## Is this what they call Dolby™ stereo?

"Incredible" is the only word to describe the new 16-bit sounds and sound effects built-in to Marathon 2. The sounds are so amazingly sharp, realistic, lifelike. From the subtle streams of water cascading down an indoor waterfall, to the bubbling hisses and crackles of hot lava pools down below, "Durandal" is an audio feast for your ears. Certain background noises will actually send chills up your spine in M2!

I recommend having a good pair of multimedia speakers before you attempt to immerse yourself in the audio sensation that makes this one of the best-sounding games ever for any computer, Macintosh or PC. You'll only cheat yourself of all the fun by using low-quality speakers.

## There's a lot to wait Pfhor!

I could go on forever talking about all that we've seen and witnessed about M2. Marathon 2: Durandal is still a work in progress at the time of this writing. Suffice to say, this game promises to be bigger and better than the original. A few more features will most likely be added in addition to the ones we have mentioned. At press time, it hasn't been verified if Bungie intends to allow (or is capable of including) modem-play via the Internet, a feature that is on the wish list of many Marathon fans. Still, the promise of Marathon2 is the best proof yet that the Macintosh gaming world is now ready to enter its Golden Age.

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Information and preview screenshots provided by Matthew Burns. Marathon2 Preview report and information provided by Edward Avila Jr. Article written by Marton Carungay.