

Six of the best:
SEASIDE ESSENTIALS

With the recent rise in popularity of "staycations", or holidaying closer to home, we've found a new passion for our great British beaches. Once you've enjoyed the benefits of one of our selected six, they'll become just as important as the suncream.

Play A While - Tailball Backpack Attack - £27.99 from www.play.com
The trouble with most bat and ball sets is that for younger players the ball is impossible to hit and they get frustrated. Tailball changes all of that. The streamers on the ball slow it down enough for smaller players to enjoy a few decent rallies, the set comes inside a carry pack that doubles up as the base - it keeps them active for hours.



Real Treat - HoMedics Outdoor Massage Body Roll - £49.99 from www.homedics.co.uk
Complete with a comfy head cushion, this is a superior horizontal solution to compete with even the finest Egyptian cotton towel around. Inside is a four motor massager to further enhance your sunray-soaking experience, meaning you'll be the envy of others. Delivered in a draw-string bag, the Outdoor Massage Body Roll can, and probably will, travel with you everywhere.



Beneath Your Feet - ABF flip flop - from £19.95 from www.crocs.co.uk
Just one of a vast range of Croc-styled shoes that are available this summer, from highly colourful kids' ones to very fashionable pairs for the ladies. This ABF, or almost barefoot design, is one of this summer's hottest properties due to its "almost not there" feel while it protects your feet.



Simple Solution - Beach Towel Clips - £9.99 for four from www.thebeachtowelclip.com
Forget all that fuss of a flapping towel, one that can only be tamed by placing various items at every corner. Grab yourself a set of these and secure not just your towel, but any other items that are prone to be picked up by the wind.



Outdoor Eatery - MarcO-Grill 3000 - £159.99 from www.heavenchef.co.uk
Those disposable BBQ units are a great idea, but if you've ever used one you'll know of the great disappointment that has followed. If you're going to cook up a feast outdoors you need a reliable, robust and efficient cooking system and these new grills from fiery chef Marco Pierre White tick all those boxes.



Create A Space - Gelert breeze blocker - £39.00 from www.woolworths.co.uk
Even the slightest of breezes on a sandy beach means your stuff, and in particular your sandwiches, are affected. Surround your space with one of these fantastic wind breaks, not only will it put a halt to the sand issue but creates a more private area for you all to enjoy.



GAMES CHART
All formats, full price

- 1 Toy Story 3
2. Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2
3. Dance On Broadway
4. Starcraft II: Wings Of Liberty
5. Red Dead Redemption
6. Just Dance
7. Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels Starry Skies
8. LEGO Harry Potter: Years 1-4
9. Super Mario Galaxy 2
10. Battlefield: Bad Company 2

Leisure software charts compiled by Chart Track, (c) ELSA (UK) Ltd

Fragger

Platform: iPhone
Genre: Action
Price: £0.59
ASIN: N/A

If you've played Worms or Angry Birds before, you'll be well at home with Fragger. Swapping feathered friends and slimy wrigglers for a military man with one sole purpose in life - to toss grenades - Fragger takes a gameplay style now seen frequently on the iPhone, but executes it superbly. Using your finger to control the angle and power of your throw, you need to nail the hapless

balaclava-clad enemies with as few grenades as you can, earning yourself big points, level medals and game progression. While the first few levels are a breeze, the terrorists start digging for cover building mini-fortresses for you to infiltrate and adding a deeper layer of strategy to the game than simply tossing a bomb and seeing what happens. Graphically it's great and it sounds good too, so for 59p add another chucking classic to your collection.

Rating: 87%

The GAMER



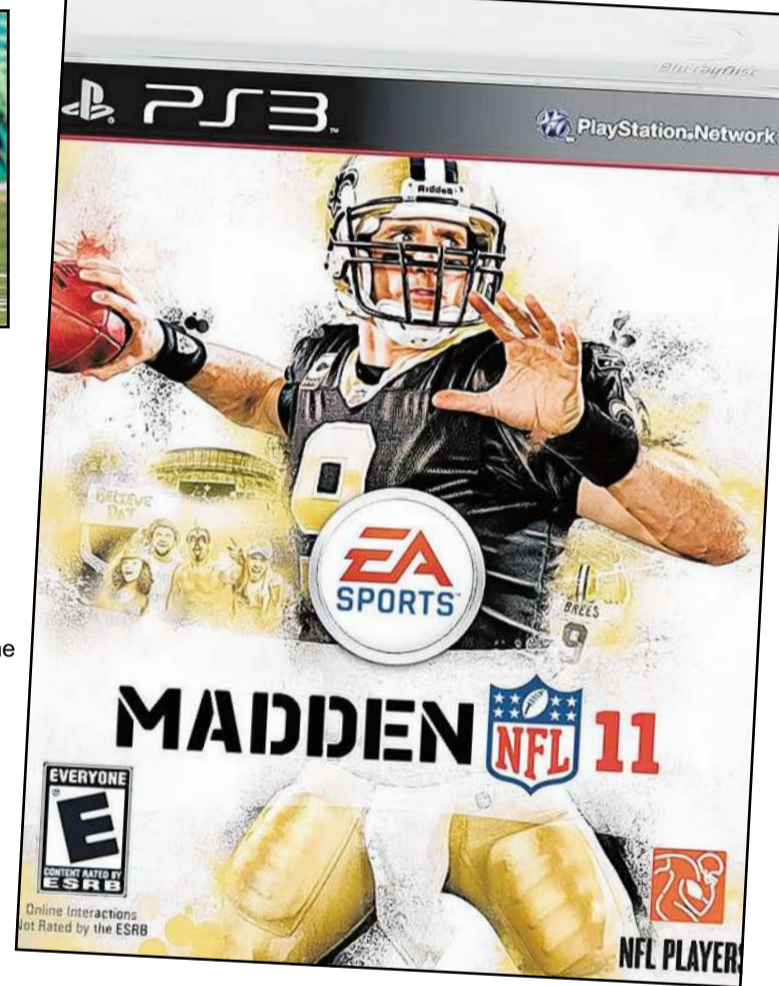
GAME OF THE WEEK

Madden NFL 11

Platform: PS3
Genre: American Football
Price: £49.99
ASIN: B0037HPSC8

WHILE the English Premier League season gets under way this weekend, across the pond the NFL season is rumbling into action, too, signalled by the release of American Football's standard-bearer across all consoles - Madden. The franchise has been around for 21 years, would you believe, and each annual incarnation is ultimately judged on the improvements made from the last version. Here, there are plenty of reasons to be cheerful. The new GameFlow system seriously speeds up games, as AI chooses plays from your tailored selection, while dual analogue controls allow you to now control a player's upper-body movements to help you glance off onrushing opponents. Online Team Play is another major addition that you'll love, but the lack of overhaul to Online or Offline Franchise modes may disappoint some diehards. Overall though, it's unmistakably Madden, and an annual gaming event you shouldn't miss out on.

Rating: 89%



We Sing Encore!

Platform: Wii
Genre: Singing
Price: £29.99
ASIN: B003LVYP7Y

THE Wii's answer to Singstar and Lips, We Sing was released to great fanfare last year, yet ultimately failed to deliver on its promise offering the least depth in gameplay of the singing trio. As such, entitling the sequel Encore is probably something of a misnomer, as few gamers would have been crying out for more. However, this version, boasts a host of new features, including the option for four singers to sing together on four mics, while there's an impressive 40-strong track list, too. Artists as varied as Gloria Gaynor, Lady Gaga and Florence And The Machine all make the line-up, plus there are now fully singable Rap and R&B songs. A host of party modes certainly improve the group experience and singing lessons allow you to fine-tune your vocal talent (if you have any). All in all, Encore is a step in the right direction but there are still some better console crooners out there right now.

Rating: 70%



Disney Pixar: Up

Platform: PC/Mac
Genre: Action/Adventure
Price: £4.99
ASIN: B003Y72W3Y

UP has been trumpeted as the biggest and best Disney/Pixar release since Toy Story. It was high praise indeed for the high-flying adventures of Carl Fredrickson and his young sidekick, Wilderness Explorer Russell, but did the video game meet similarly high expectations? In a word, no, but fans of the film will find more than enough to keep them entertained for a little longer on Mac or PC, as you take charge of the four main characters from the movie - Carl, Russell, Dug the lovable dog or Kevin the prehistoric bird - while also enjoying the choice of playing as a single-player or with a friend cooperatively throughout the entire game. It's predominantly a fun 3D platformer with a few puzzles and beasts to get the better of along the way, and special items such as Carl's hearing aid and Russell's trumpet have their own fun uses, too. You can't really go wrong for a fiver!

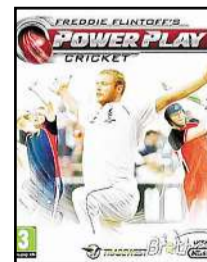
Rating: 74%

Freddie Flintoff's Power Play Cricket

Platform: Nintendo DS
Genre: Cricket
Price: £24.99
ASIN: B003JH7032

ENGLAND'S cricket team seems to lurch between abject and astounding, and right now we're in a pretty positive place (thanks in part to how shocking Pakistan are). Even without the crowd favourite Freddie Flintoff, success is coming on the field, so how's the man himself doing off the pitch promoting his own DS title? Well, similar to the mobile version, Power Play Cricket offers gamers a host of options, from head to head multiplayer to World Tour modes or Twenty20 quick matches, using the stylus to expertly execute the positioning and power of your shots or your bowling action. This is a blast for a quick smack around the ground, as you resurrect Freddie's virtual England career and re-establish him as an integral player.

Rating: 72%



Nick LAVIGUEUR
Rock, pop and anything else



■ **RUNNING AROUND:** Frank, Huey and Fast are the Fun Lovin' Criminals playing Holmfirth Picturedrome next month (S)

FUN Lovin' Criminals' frontman Huey can't wait for his trip up to the Holme Valley.

"Those are the best gigs man!" he enthuses after I ask him how he feels about coming to tiny Holmfirth. The funky American trio exploded onto the scene in the mid nineties, gate-crashing the euphoric Britpop party with their Pulp Fiction sampling hit Scooby Snacks. Their hip-hop gangster swagger went on to become a firm favourite in the UK and the New Yorkers' debut album Come Find Yourself produced two more hit singles, King of New York and The Fun Lovin' Criminal. Now adopted Brits, the band are hitting the road next month after a five year hiatus.

The September 10 gig is one of only three in the north of England and Huey said he was excited to play in the modest surroundings of the Picturedrome. "You can play the big ones but when you go to someone's home town and you play a gig and they're like, 'I like that band', that's the best for us. "For us the small places are the best. "Next summer we'll be doing all the big festivals with every big car company or beer company sponsoring them. "So we figured we'd take the time out now to go play to the people's face. "At the start of our last tour we played (drummer) Frank's local up in Leicester. "If you give us beer and electricity money we will go to your house - that's how we work. "We've always been that kind of band. "We played my boy's local and then we played Manchester Academy. "But for us the small gigs matter more than the big gigs. "In a small gig the crowd can see your face, they can feel your vibe. "For us it's better to vibe off the people like in the days of old when jazz musicians just used to get on a bus and go play." During the band's time-off, forced by a legal battle with an ex-manager, Huey has often been spotted gesticulating on BBC panel shows like Never Mind The Buzzcocks. He has also become a popular DJ hosting his own Sony award winning Sunday afternoon show on BBC6 Radio.

... on playing for beer and playing Holmfirth



■ **REVVED UP:** Fun Lovin' Criminals are gearing up for a party in Holmfirth next month (perou@perou.co.uk)

But the one time US Marine is cagey about taking his TV career any further. "Everybody wants me to come by and say hi," he says. "Where I come from there really wasn't many opportunities. "So I'll try anything once and if I like it you'll see me there twice. "One thing I do enjoy is doing my radio show. That's one thing I keep on doing. "But I don't really think you're going to be seeing me on Get Me Out Of Here, Strictly Come Dancing on ice skates, or swapping wives, I've still got some integrity."

The brothers Crim have now released their sixth album Classic Fantastic, but fans from days gone by still flock to gigs for the old stuff and taste of loveable rogue Huey's banter. He said: "Luckily technology has caught up with us where we can play songs from every album. "We switch it up a lot. We play all the songs that people know, a tune off each record and maybe a rock 'n' roll section in there and maybe a couple of new tracks. "It's about entertaining some people for a little while.

"They know the old tracks and then we play a new one for 'em. "People seem to like We The Three (from the new album) 'cause we all rhyme on it." The new material is unmistakably FLC and Huey said they would always stay true to their original sound. "We've always been influenced by black music from America. "If every album sounded different, like Madonna, I think that would be weird and people wouldn't understand it and wouldn't want to roll with us. "At least you know what you get if it says Fun Lovin' Criminals on the box." But Huey, the wisest wise-guy in rock 'n' roll, said he didn't think they could ever hit the heights of the late nineties ever again. "I don't think the music business is built that way anymore," he said. "We were on EMI back in those days and music outlets are different now. "You could play on five or six different shows and now it's only Jools Holland and Jonathan Ross. "I don't think anybody's going to be getting to those heights of the nineties and I think that's a good thing. "It blew a lot of musicians' minds when they weren't getting those platinum plaques. They were like, 'what's this download stuff?' "They had to change why they made music and they had to think about it. "We make music 'cause this is what we do. We don't do it to make money, 'cause if you do that you end up sounding like you are doing it for the money. "We're just lucky we're people that are recognised for our originality." And Huey, 41, a one-time ladies man, said Holmfirth folk should be ready for a party when the Fun Lovin' Criminals roll into town next month. He added: "I'm married but I can still go out to a bar. I just can't talk to no ladies, but that's my choice. "Tell everybody the women folk are safe but the bars ain't!"

Fun Lovin' Criminals play the Holmfirth Picturedrome supported by The Chemists on Friday, September 10. Tickets: www.picturedrome.net The single, 'We, The Three' is released on August 16.

Singles

THE UNCONVENTIONALS: Strawberry Sunshine. An unashamed sunshine band that draws its inspiration from the harmony groups of the late 60s. Made up of six West End musical performers who reached the finals on the X-Factor. They pull in the spirit of everyone from Glee to The 5th Dimension, The Mamas and the Papas and the Beach Boys. Many will view this as nostalgia-riddled pop heaven.

SKY LARKIN: Still Windmills. Nothing still about this lot with jaunty, edgy indie that goes round and round rather more manically than a windmill.

PENDULUM: Witchcraft. Huge synth mash-up that ebbs and flows as it sails inexorably to big-rolling glory. Half rock-pop, half dance.

JASON DERULO: What If. String-soaring ballad that draws on a rich soul heritage and more than delivers what it promises. On this showing, soul's got a bright future.



Albums

TRAVIE McCOY featuring BRUNO MARS: Lazarus. Debut solo album from the Gym Class Heroes frontman - and his statement of intent here is to mix hip hop up with genres veering from soul and jazz to rock and pumping synth. The rapid fire soul-blessed Dr Feelgood will set you up for the day, while Critical is as smooth as rockpop gets and Suberbad takes things down a synth-laden aching rock road. He uses the hip hop as his musical plaything - and uses it to great effect.

ORPHAN BOY: Passion, Pain And Loyalty. If you ever thought nothing creative has come out of Cleethorpes then think again. Although they switched to Manchester and got themselves sorted with a record label, a couple of the band members have returned to their seaside home town. This is stonking indie pop with more than a nod back to the leading lights of 1980s musical thinkers such as The Beautiful South while using this as a showcase to their versatility. They're inventive and different with songs that'll catch you out with their huge hooklines while others are rather more cerebral.

SARAH CLASS: A New Dawn. Just the seven tracks to go at on this mini-album, but that's enough to send you into a dreamlike state due to her sweet, twee and serene form of acoustic folk. More chills than thrills.

