

# GRAN TURISMO 2 - Q&A

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**Sean Kelly, GT2 Producer**  
**Sony Computer Entertainment Europe**

**1. The first Gran Turismo was a massive success in Europe. Did this come as something of a surprise?**

Yes and no. We felt that we had something really special on our hands, but I don't think anyone was quite prepared for the phenomenon that it became. When I was trying to sell the concept to the various music labels to get their music included in the European release, I can remember saying to them 'I really think this one could do a million units', which even now is a huge number. Obviously, it's getting on for three million units now, and is still top of the charts in Australia, and top ten nearly everywhere else. I think everyone has been surprised by this - even Kazunori, but we always knew that we had something special.

**2. Many people have described Gran Turismo as the perfect driving game. How on earth did you go about improving on it?**

It's a tough question, and once we'd finished GT, we had lots of discussions with everyone involved about what we could do differently, or better. Obviously, from a European standpoint, the original had a very Japanese slant in terms of cars, and so we wanted to increase dramatically the representation of the European manufacturers. There's over twenty European manufacturers represented now, and some brilliant cars. We've also added a historical context-there's lots of older cars, and some fantastic classic cars that you'd never get the chance to drive in real life. There's more tracks, and again they've got fantastic design that make them a real pleasure to learn, and drive. The AI for the other cars is improved, making it more challenging and realistic. And that's all before we've mentioned the rallying mode.

**3. Okay, let's cut to the chase. There will be a lot of disappointed PlayStation owners out there, what was behind your decision to delay Gran Turismo 2?**

Bottom line, tuning. Better that we release a game 100% right a little later, than 90% right too early. In terms of the number of real cars in Gran Turismo 2, there are over six hundred, and over one thousand if you include the fantasy race models. One of the things which has kept people playing Gran Turismo for so long is that it just feels right. You get a huge variety of driving experiences, but they all feel right, and you always want to know 'what'll happen if I change this? If I tweak that, can I get a couple of seconds off my times...' In Gran Turismo, we had a couple of hundred cars, and the tuning of the game was done in such a way that people could start at the bottom, and feel a real progression as they built up their stable of cars. All the cars were placed very meticulously in balancing where your

driving level was likely to be in relation to your finances, in order that you could buy cars that would add to your driving pleasure, but not be so difficult to drive at that stage that you would give up. So, it was a huge balancing act on the first one to get the money/skill/car thing balanced, and feeling like a good progression. With four times as many cars in GT2, and with the rallying thrown in for good measure, you can understand that the gameplay tuning with this many cars is a mammoth task, and one which has to be got right. I'd rather have people disappointed with the delay, rather than disappointed with the game.

**4. Does the delay mean that there will be more features in the game?**

There'll be some surprises for people, but the extra time will be spent getting what we've got in there already working perfectly.

**5. Aside from the obvious 'getting the game out on time', what is the biggest challenge in producing Gran Turismo 2?**

Well, there's not much point in messing with the actual gameplay as such-Kazunori's got this sussed anyway, so it's making sure that the game has a solid European flavour. That's meant getting involved in the dealing with the European manufacturers, and licensing of the cars with Birgit Zich, the Product Manager for GT, over the last eighteen months. I'm also responsible for the European soundtrack, and the quality of the on screen localisation for Europe, and making them as good as possible. So for example, this time, rather than just translate the Japanese car descriptions, they've all been written by motoring journalists, mostly from Top Gear Magazine. The music and remixes were all specially commissioned for the European version, and so on.

That said, the biggest challenge on this front is the sheer scale of the product, and the desire to bring the European release date as close to the Japanese release date whilst maintaining the quality of every aspect, so that people aren't kept waiting too long.

**6. Tell us about the rally section. How would you say it compares with games such as Colin McRae and V-Rally 2?**

The rallying feels absolutely brilliant, and by my reckoning is the most realistic and spectacular rallying experience on PlayStation. That said, Gran Turismo is a driving simulation, whilst Colin McRae, and V-Rally, are rallying simulations. The rallying in Gran Turismo is an aspect of the driving that you get to experience, but we haven't based the whole game around it, which I think is a big difference. In terms of driving experience, Gran Turismo 2 offers much more than just one style.

**7. Okay, you've got rallying, street racing and the normal GT racing - that's a lot of racing in one game. GT2 certainly sounds like value for money. Are you trying to put everyone else out of business?**

Not really. I think there's room for many different driving games. I love R4, for example, and Speed Freaks-both driving games, both absolutely brilliant, but both very different and distinctive from Gran Turismo. But, yes, Gran Turismo offers a

huge amount of value for money, and I think it's that depth that keeps people coming back to Gran Turismo, and which will have people playing Gran Turismo 2 for years.

**8. What about the cars? We understand that there are a lot more European manufacturers in there this time.**

Yep, loads of 'em. As I said earlier, myself and Birgit have been talking to various manufacturers for over eighteen months now. Pretty much as soon as we'd finished GT, Kazunori came up with his wish list of European manufacturers and cars, and we had some of our own that we wanted to get in there. From then it was a case of trawling round all the car shows in Europe-Geneva, Paris, London, introducing ourselves to the European manufacturers, and getting them interested in working with us.

**9. Are there any manufacturers that you would have liked to include? Did anyone turn you down?**

There were some that we couldn't get, for various reasons. Some were tied to exclusive deals with other companies, and one was even in the middle of being bought out by another manufacturer, and consequently wasn't in a position to sign any licensing deals. Hopefully, though, some of these will make an appearance in the future.

**10. And what about courses? Is there a European slant to these?**

Yes, we've got a course around Rome, which people have probably seen on the demo, and a couple of others with a European feel. The Rome circuit especially is absolutely fantastic-especially on the night drive.

**11. Can you race all the cars on the courses? For example: could you take a muscle car on a rally track?**

Some of the cars are transportable to different environments, but not all. Obviously, as it's a simulation we've kept our roots in reality, and mashing up a brand new Aston on a rally track is not something you would ever contemplate doing in real life, so it doesn't feature in Gran Turismo.

**12. Will you be able to damage your car this time?**

You can damage the car, but whilst it'll influence how the car handles, it's not reflected in the look of the car. With so many manufacturers involved, and a desire to treat every car in exactly the same manner, it was important that we didn't get into a situation where some cars could look damaged, but others couldn't. Plus, the PlayStation can only hold so much graphical data. If we'd have included crumpled polys, and different models, we'd have had to sacrifice the look of the game somewhere else. We think that we've found the best balance between having a car which responds to damage in the handling, but which allows us to treat every car and manufacturer in the same way.

**13. How has the license system changed?**

There's more, and different skills are needed to pass some of them. Again, it's ensuring that people can handle the car before they get to some of the beasts, to make sure they don't become frustrated with the gameplay. The good news is, license data from Gran Turismo is transferable, so if you bring over a save, you'll find that some of the tests are automatically 'passed' if you've passed the equivalent test in Gran Turismo.

**14. What games have caught your eye while you've been developing GT 2?**

I think the same ones that other people have picked up on. Metal Gear Solid is a brilliant gaming experience. Tekken III still gets played when my mates are around. Speed Freaks is another one that really shines on multi-player. Plus, a couple of titles in development in Japan for next year look absolutely stunning. I think it's brilliant that people are still bringing unique gameplaying experiences to the PlayStation five years after it was first released.

**15. What does the future hold for Polyphony Digital?**

A day or two resting once we master GT2, I reckon, and then straight on to finishing Gran Turismo 2000.

**16. GT 2000 on PlayStation2 is a mouth-watering prospect and your demo was certainly impressive. When will work on this begin?**

Begin? It's being going on for months in the background. The first time I saw it was back in March this year in Tokyo. The development kit at that time was about the size of a shed-absolutely huge-and GT2000 looked breathtaking back then. The guys have been totally focused on GT2 of course, but a lot of the work has been done in a fashion that will make the PlayStation2 implementation comparatively straightforward. In fact, some of the intro to Gran Turismo 2 was actually rendered real-time on PlayStation2.