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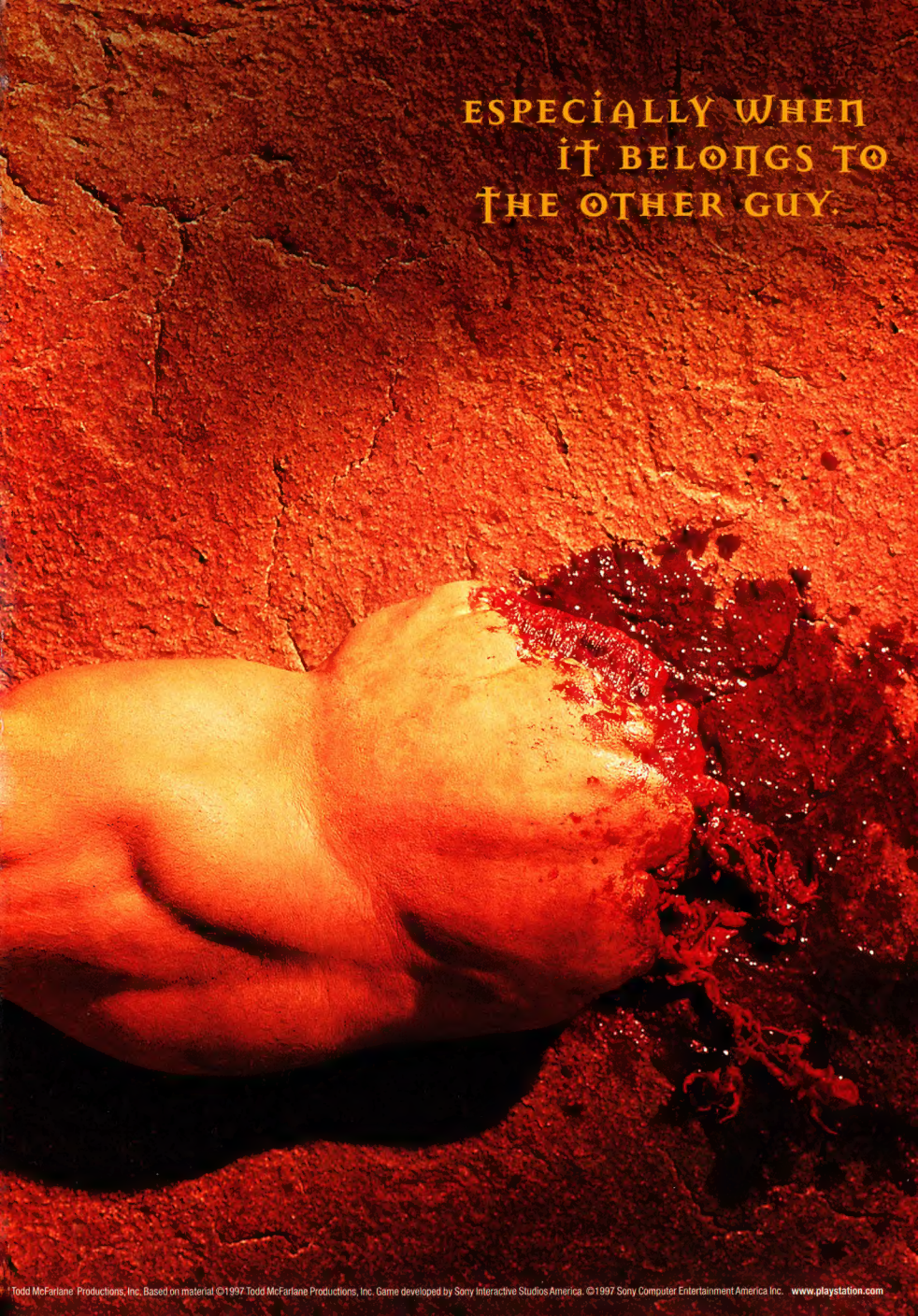

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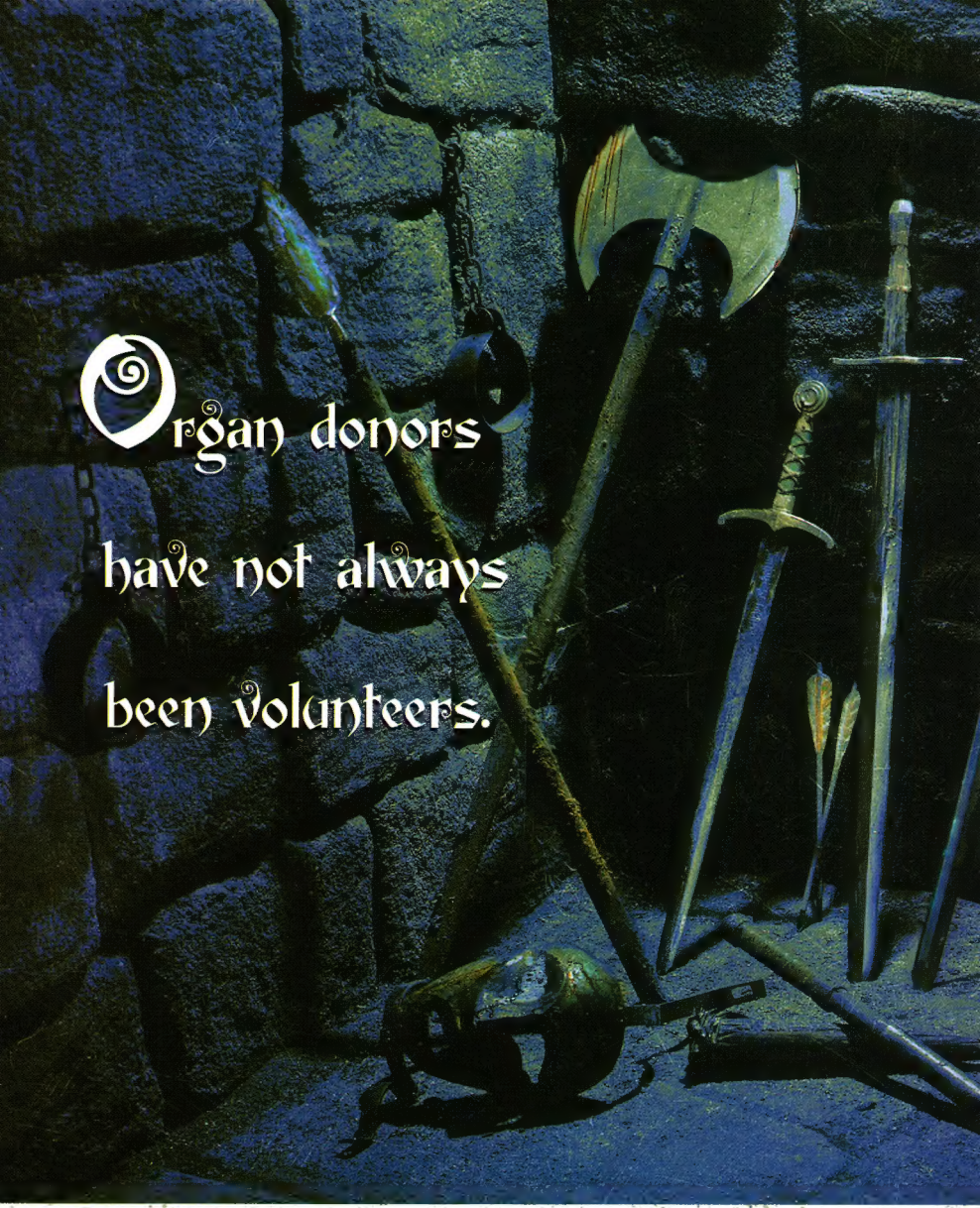

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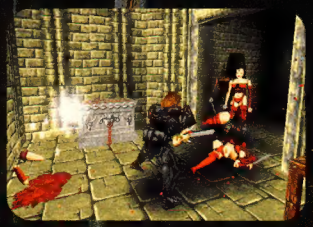

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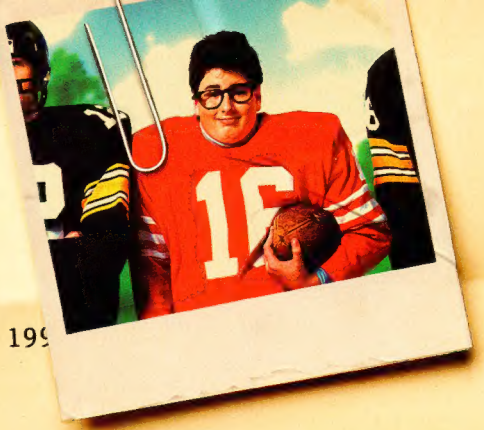

October 27, 19

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ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY™
Number 11.1
January 1998
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Editorial

By Joe Funk • joe_funk@zd.com

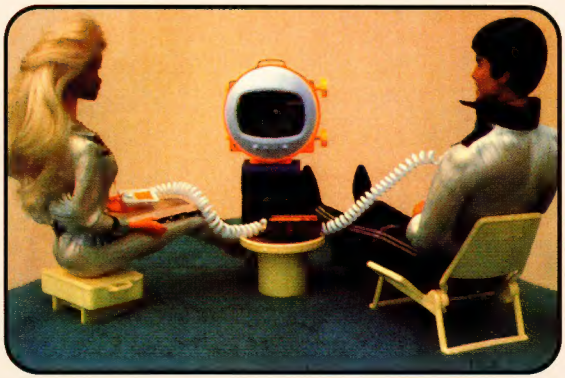
This month, we pay tribute to the founding fathers of our industry, with what may be the most comprehensive timeline ever created to chronicle the history of video games.

As this monster project came together from a variety of sources—including our friends and colleagues at GameSpot, several freelance contributors, our own editors/walking-encyclopedias and art directors plus nostalgic gaming buffs who have immortalized the classics with labor-of-love Web sites—at least two larger patterns emerged from the mosaic of contributors and contributions.

First, it is the reminder that our industry has always been fueled by the twin booster rockets of technology and human imagination in search of a most pure and universal human passion: to have fun. Video games touch the kid in all of us, which explains the undaunting effort and amazing array of contributions from such a diverse background of contributors. From military engineers and officers to pimply teenagers, from Japan to the U.S. to the U.K., the evolution of video games will remain a universal endeavor.

Next, and perhaps less apparent (yet cool) observation about the timeline: It predicts the future! History clearly demonstrates that games will absolutely, positively, continue to get better. From Pong to NHL 98, from Adventure to Final Fantasy VII, from Defender to Colony Wars and from Combat to GoldenEye, the list of examples goes on and on. We as consumers are in the catbird seat as benefactors of all this evolution, and with the ability to play both state-of-the-art stuff and revisit many of those old- time favorites with museum collections of classic games, gaming is undoubtedly better than it has ever been.

It's been an eye-poppin' ride so far, and we at *EGM* salute the creators, the gamers and all those who have helped build an industry rich with wonderful success stories, fantastic failures and everything in between. While we all endlessly look forward to the next great game, take a fascinating glimpse into the past with us, starting on page 112.



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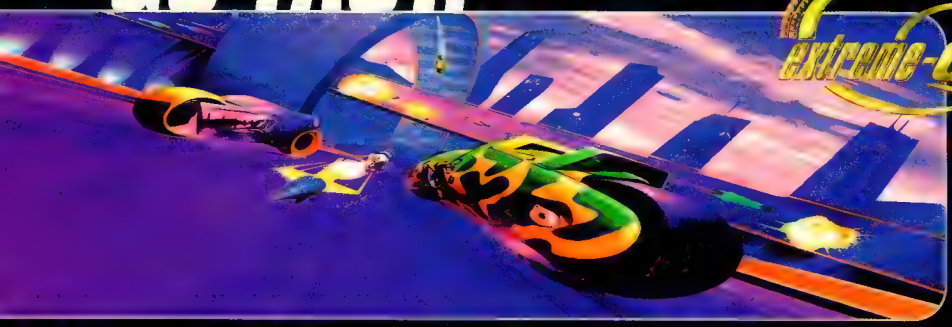

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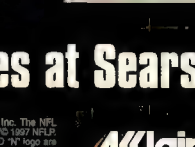

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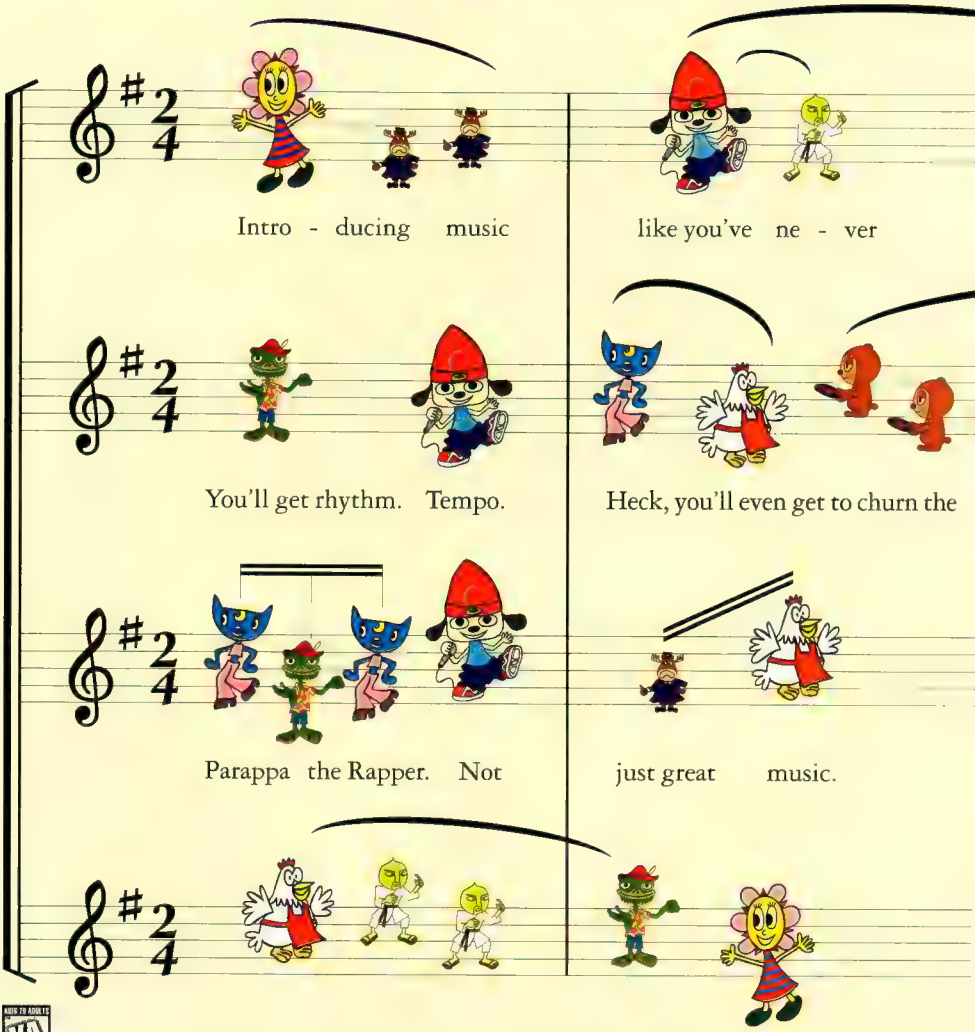
PaRappa the Rapper



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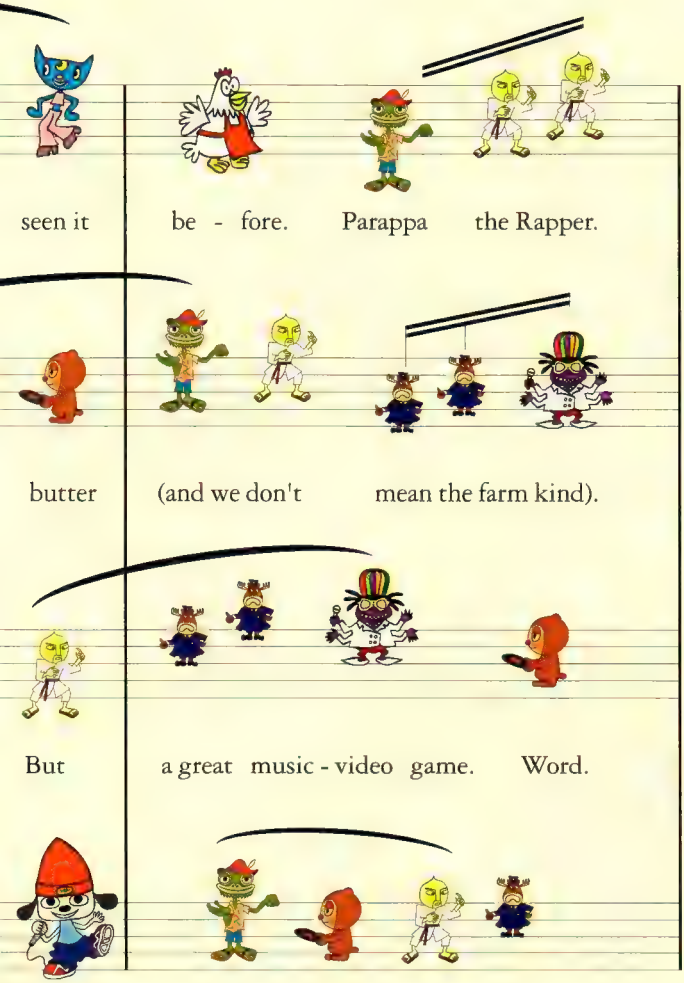

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egm letters

Compiled by: Dan "Shoe" Hsu

Letter of the Month

What Happened?

Something occurred to me while I was reading your 100 Best Games of All Time. What has happened to games today? A month ago, I wondered why my interest in games had been dying slowly. I have FFVII, but beat it in a mere 50 hours. Legacy of Kain suffered a similar fate, however it guaranteed me "100's of gameplay hours." I'd have liked to have seen one-tenth of that because I beat it in a little over 10 hours. Other games just don't hold the same interest in me anymore. And then I realized why when I read the list: I was spoiled early on.

I know what you're thinking. "Spoiled? With all the 3-D graphics and 64-Bit games?" Allow me to explain. When is the last time you sat down, and didn't get up for eight hours (even putting your bladder and stomach on hold)? FFVII did that for me, but now that I've beaten it, there's no replay value to it. No, I'm talking about old-school games, titles like Kid Icarus, Metroid, Goonies II, Guardian Legend, Metal Gear, River Raid and Kaboom. The list goes on. I remember sleeping over at my friend's house six times a week because he had a Nintendo, and we'd be up trying to figure out how we could get the timing to work to bomb ourselves into that certain room for an energy capsule in Metroid. Hell, I could spend an entire page just describing the complexity of Metroid alone, simply because there was so much to it. Those were the days of the games that challenged the mind, both in puzzles and motor skills. Try laying that claim to any game today.

I guess the point of this letter is more of a cry to the big dogs out there that are making the games today: Look back over these old games. Stop trying to impress us with how two gallons of blood can spew out of a guy when you shoot him in the finger, and start going back to the basics. Perhaps the one game I'm looking forward to anymore will be Metal Gear Solid, because I know that it'll work my brain unlike anything out there today (if it is to live up to its Metal Gear name). I can't get that guarantee with anything else out there. So, until that day comes, I'll be firing up the old systems. Oh, and on a final note, those of you who say that games improve hand-eye coordination and help with problem solving are fooling yourselves if all you play are today's games. You need to go back in time to reap the benefits of that adage.

Tym Kaywork—tym@vt.edu

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More Cloud Coverage

In your 100th issue, a reader who called herself "Terra" asked you for a picture of Final Fantasy VII's Cloud in his underwear. You did not show this picture, stating, "because of all the controversy surrounding us publishing the Nude Raider Web address, the best we can do is offer you a half-a-butt shot of Cloud, fully clothed of course." Now, ordinarily, this would be a plausible excuse. Yet on the following page, there is an image of Lara Croft in yet another revealing outfit (a bikini, to be exact). We (female readers) are not asking for pornography. We simply believe in equality. For every image of a scantily clad female video game character, there should also be an image of a male video game character (also scantily clad). After all, turnabout's fair play, right?

P.S. I wouldn't mind an image of Cloud in his underwear either!

"Celes"—Columbus, OH

1. The Lara Croft picture you referred to was in a GameBrain ad; it wasn't part of the editorial pages. 2. We were just joking around. Controversy hasn't stopped us from doing anything before; we were just poking fun at all the trouble Nude Raider caused us.

We don't have double standards here. The problem is (well, not *our* problem, but Cloud lovers' problem) no one has made any Cloud artwork that shows him, well...in his underwear, so we have none to show. The fact is, this is a male-dominated industry. Like it or not, you're going to find many more sexy images of females than of males.

One Reader Comes Through for Another

In regards to "Terra" of Springfield, Mass., who wrote you in your 100th issue begging you to show Cloud Strife in his underwear—I know you guys aren't hypocrites, so please print the enclosed picture that I drew just for Terra and all the other females wanting to see half-dressed polygonal men.

Darryl Taylor—Louisville, KY

Well whadaya know...Cloud in his underwear! We stand corrected. Thanks Mr. Taylor, for the...interesting artwork.

Segassem Terces

Excuse me, am I reading correctly? Gaming magazines like *EGM* taking hidden pot-shots at competitors? Must be very well-hidden, indeed. Really, if I were a competing publication and saw such an insult directed at me in a magazine as respected as yours, I'd probably sue for libel! (Unless, of course, it was so well-hidden that I couldn't find it in the first place...) Let the competition continue to meander around at the bottom of the video game magazine food chain. *EGM* has and will always continue to be number one! (Say, exactly how are all those hidden insults disguised, anyway?)

Tom Donoho—cbdb@ix.netcom.com
editor, *Above & Beyond* fanzine

Tom is referring to *EGM*'s little joke in issue #100. He, along with a number of other readers, caught our immature prank (we can have fun once in a while, no?). And yes, it is a secret. No one here is going to print just what that secret is, so don't ask us what it is.

Keep a sharp eye out for other hidden messages in future *EGM*s. Sometimes, we like to throw one in for the heck of it.

No Tours Allowed

Do you offer tours of the *EGM* offices? I'd love to see how things are run on a first-hand basis.

Robert Semsey—rsem@telerama.com

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egm letters

Sorry, we don't allow tours for a couple of reasons. First, we can't have prying eyes checking out Area 52's Clean Room, where we keep all the upcoming, top-secret games. Second, we can't expose our editors to anyone or anything from the outside, "real" world. That's just asking for trouble.

Coming Clean

Are you biased?

Brian Zajac—zajac@bgnet.bgsu.edu

***EGM* is and always has been biased. We really like good games, and we really hate bad games.**

Psycho Hoax of the Month

A new game is available for the 2600! More info can be found on this hot new underground release at all 2600 and classic gaming sites and newsgroups. I have the cart, and it rocks! As proof that Doom for the 2600 does in fact exist, I am sending a scan of the actual box and screen shots of the game.

This cart is quite illegal in terms of rights, trademarks, etc. I paid $150.00 to obtain it!

James Catalano—alicat@earthlink.net

Doom for the Atari 2600?...

...it certainly looks real.

Nice try, Mr. Catalano. We almost fell for it, but you forgot, we're journalists. We're going to check things out for ourselves. We discovered that this hoax has fooled several people on the Internet, as well as a couple of major software companies and gaming mags. It's just a joke, folks! Special thanks to Kevin Bowen of PlanetQuake (www.planetquake.com) for helping us in our research.

A Few More Comments on the Top 100

Your top 100 list was a fair overview of all the best games from all the systems. The article sounded like it came from real pros. But that's just the problem. None of the video gamers I know ever played some of the games you have listed, because nobody owned those systems. The only people I know of that ever had a TurboGrafx-16, a Sega CD or a Neo•Geo are on the staff of *EGM*. But aside from listing games from practically non-existent systems, you did a pretty good job!

ASIEMENS@jemam.com

Oh, we're sure that a few other people have owned those systems. Do you know how to identify a Neo•Geo owner? Look for the worn clothes and growling stomach. Who could afford to eat when you have to pay $200+ for a game?

I realize Top 100 Games lists have been done in other magazines, but you guys took it in a different direction which deserves commendation: You based the game's worth on how fun it is to play. How refreshing it is to see a "Best Games" list which does not have Pong anywhere on it.

I know you will receive hundreds upon hundreds of mailings concerning how wrong you were to list this or that game, so I wanted to be one of the few letters in the great percentage of things which say, "Good job!" and pat you on the back. This list, for me personally, reminded me of all the great memories playing fun games like Flashback, Metroid and Qix for hours on end. It has spawned me to get my old NES, Genesis and even my Game Boy and replay these games as if they were new! You know what? I'm having just as much fun as I did with Final Fantasy VII a few weeks previous. So thanks, *EGM*. For me, at least, the article achieved its purpose.

David Horn—address withheld

At first I was angry that Tetris was your best game of all time, but then I dug up the ol' Game Boy and played Tetris for five hours straight and understood.

P.S. After reading your Area 52 article in issue 100, I'm quite scared of Crispin Boyer.

Greg Tessier—Cummington, MA

You better be scared, especially now that Crispin has memorized the return address from your envelope.

It's easy to ascertain the average age of an *EGM* editor by looking at their top 100 list. Nothing predates the NES. *EGM* claims that their list included all consoles, but it ended up just being a nostalgia trip for a bunch of young pups who weren't old enough to be really serious video gamers in the classic era. I've been playing since I was 13 when Pong hit the arcades. Would I rather play Asteroids than Sonic CD or GoldenEye 007? ANY DAY OF THE WEEK! Ever play two-player Asteroids on the Atari 7800? How about Ladybug on the Colecovision? Space War on the Vectrex? The Incredible Wizard (a.k.a. Wizard of Wor) on the Bally Professional Arcade? Don't get me wrong, I own the new systems and really enjoy the games. But at the same time, I've never gotten rid of a single system I've owned. There are a number of games for my older systems that over the years I've gone back to again and again. These are games with staying power. Many of the Atari era games were just plain fun and far better, in my opinion, than half the titles that made your list. In conclusion: Hire some people who were driving something more powerful than a bicycle when Ronald Reagan was elected president. Get some perspective. One last thing. I couldn't agree with you more about the number-one game. Tetris is truly everything that a great game should be.

Jayson Hill—jlhill@ix.netcom.com

Hello Mr. Bitter-Old-School-Retro-Gamer-who-believes-his-opinions-are-the-only-ones-that-count. We were wondering when you were going to write us and complain about the Top 100. FYI, a few 2600,

Question of the Moment

Do you think Nintendo should be bringing out the 64DD?

Nintendo will make 64DD-only games. Then you'll be forced to buy this system if you want to play their games. I have seen this with too many game systems, and the companies have been pulling this crap for far too long.

Thisiszaw@aol.com

The N64's only downfall is its lack of memory, and with the 64DD, the memory of the system will be expanded. Granted they still can't do a game like FFVII, but the extra memory would be a welcome sight for game programmers.

reviere_david@colstate.edu

If the 64DD takes off, Nintendo needs to make sure they don't forget their loyal N64 customers who won't be buying the add-on.

deborahr@flashnet.com

If Nintendo keeps with tradition, the 64DD will never come out. Remember the Super NES CD-ROM drive? I waited two years for that thing...

dilbert256@juno.com

Next Month's Question of the Moment: What are your thoughts on censored "Director's Cuts?"

Send your short (very short, please), but sweet, responses to: EGM Mail@zd.com with the subject heading: **Q of the Moment: Cut cuts**

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egm letters

Intellivision and Vectrex games were nominated for the top 100 (but since those systems were out before we were even born, we really couldn't vote their games in). Seriously, we did consider every video game ever made (and yes, we've played just about every one of them from Pong on). Don't jump to the conclusion that we are all too young to remember just because we didn't want to take that trip down memory lane with you.

Can anyone help us identify this old game? Us youngins can't remember anything BM (before Mario).

Premature

I have a question about your three pack-in posters (showing all 100 covers of *EGM*). For the 100th issue, the poster showed a different cover than what actually came out; is this an alternate issue that we could obtain through a back-issue order? If so, I must have it!

loucifer.fudal.com@juno.com

If you've noticed, issue #99 had the same problem. The last poster had to be printed a few weeks before we started working on issue #99. So, we fudged it a little and put in mock-up covers in issue #99's and #100's places. Sorry, you won't find any actual *EGM*s with these covers.

It Doesn't Add Up

I have a slight problem with the pie graph you put on page 16 of the 100th issue: "*EGM*'s 100 Best Games—the list broken down by system." Super NES got 23.3 percent, N64 got 6.8 percent, etc. Where did you get the fractions? Since there are exactly 100 games on the list, and assuming you did not put fractions of games on the list, why are the percentages not whole numbers? Are you saying that 23.3 games of the 100 best games of all time are for the Super NES?

Ben Cheng—
address withheld

Nope. If you take a look at the list again, you'll notice that some games are on multiple systems (example: #19 is Madden NFL 98 for the PlayStation and the Saturn). That's how it's possible for the partial percentages (because the list actually had more than 100 games in it).

Quit Shouting

Regarding Resident Evil: Director's Cut, in no mode does the game include the extended shot of the severed hand holding the gun in the intro, nor is the severed head included in the very first computer-rendered zombie-munching scene which ends with the zombie turning his head toward the player.

Obviously you guys didn't review the FINAL copy, contrary to what you've said in previous issues about not reviewing demos deemed as "reviewable" by the company.

Tom Allen—FOFTom@aol.com

We DID review the FINAL copy (last issue, where we DID talk about the missing footage). You are mistaking issue #97's PREVIEW (where you saw the uncensored scenes) for a review. A PREVIEW is almost always on an incomplete or Japanese version of a game. It goes without saying, PREVIEWS are early coverage of games that are SUBJECT TO CHANGE when the game is finally released. That's why our PREVIEW showed scenes from RE: DC that eventually got taken out of the final. We do not REVIEW games that are not deemed REVIEWABLE by the publisher. GOT IT? Good.

The Ultimate Trick

When you said in your 100th issue that the most exciting feature in Super Mario 64 was seeing somebody get to the top of the castle without getting a star, I was fascinated. My friend and I tried and tried until our eyes hurt and fingers were numb, but we could not succeed. Is this statement true? If so, can you give us a hint as to how it's done?

MIGYMAC@aol.com

We received an overwhelming response (all four or five of you) to our bold statement about reaching the castle roof in Super Mario 64. It's an extremely difficult trick (only a select few *EGM*ers can do it), but it is possible. Trickman Terry will show you how in this issue.

OOPS

In our review of Virgin Interactive's Golden Nugget (October, Issue #99), we apparently missed a few features of the game: We complained about the heavy card animations (they can be turned off in the Options Menu) and the game not pointing out poker winners (hitting Select will display who won).

To be fair, we took Golden Nugget through the entire review process again, but came to the same conclusions as before. Because of this, we are not re-running the review (if the score changed we would have). We regret these oversights and apologize to Virgin.

Letter Art

Where creativity, your favorite video game and a stamp can make you immortal!*

WINNER

Tobias Ruffin
Jamaica, NY

Congratulations, your prize is on the way—an ASCII Specialized Control Pad for the PlayStation. It features rapid-fire controls for all buttons and slow motion for those intense moments.

Close, but no controller

Josh Nickerson
Homer, LA

Dwayne Bragg
Westminster, CO

Duy Tran
San Diego, CA

*Or at least get your name and work in the magazine and win yourself a great prize (FIRST PLACE ONLY!).

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www.fightingforce.com

By Chris Johnston chris_johnston@zd.com

Video Game News

The hottest gaming news on the planet

Farewell, Game Boy

The man behind many of Nintendo's biggest hits passes away

On Oct. 4, gamers lost one of the industry's most influential creators. Gunpei Yokoi, the man behind many of Nintendo's biggest successes in the video game industry, was driving with an associate when they hit the car in front of them. The two got out of their car to inspect the damage when another car sideswiped the two. While his associate suffered only a fractured rib, Yokoi was pronounced dead two hours later at a local hospital at the age of 57.

Yokoi was one of Nintendo's most talented designers, creating their first toy -- the "Ultra Hand"—in 1970. Through his early days at Nintendo, Yokoi created several more toys in the Ultra series and headed up Nintendo's first steps into the electronic games market with the hugely successful Game & Watch series. When the Famicom (a.k.a. the Nintendo Entertainment System in the U.S.) came out, Yokoi's R&D 1 development team at Nintendo Co. Ltd. came up with some of the system's best games under his direction. Metroid, Kid Icarus and others went on to be some of Nintendo's early hits.

The biggest success in Yokoi's career at Nintendo, of course, was the creation of the Game Boy. Small enough to fit in a pocket, the Game Boy was an instant success in Japan and the U.S. Launched in 1989, the Game Boy is still popular worldwide, eight years later. Driven by the success of games from all of Nintendo Co. Ltd.'s R&D divisions, Nintendo rereleased the Game Boy in 1996 as the Game Boy Pocket. Today, the system is beating even the Nintendo 64 in sales in Japan and continues to be strong worldwide.

After creating the Game Boy, Nintendo president Hiroshi Yamauchi called once again on Yokoi to create another machine for the company. Called the Virtual Boy, this machine would not mimic the Game Boy's success. A not-so portable "virtual-reality" game system, the Virtual Boy was a market failure due to its high $200 price tag and its red-and-black screen. The VB died despite software support from Nintendo's best.

When the Virtual Boy turned out to be a flop, Yokoi split from Nintendo after more than 30 years to form his own company, Koto Laboratory. Koto was designed as a haven for toy designers, and already the company was hard at work to produce LCD keychain games and other items. At the moment, their only product is a keychain game called "Kunekunecchо." It's not known how his death will affect the future of the small company.

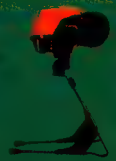
The staff of *EGM* would like to extend their condolences to Yokoi's family.

www.nintendo.co.jp
www.koto.co.jp

Gunpei Yokoi's Achievements With Nintendo

1966 - Ultra Hand
1968 - Ultra Machine
1969 - Love Tester
1971 - Ultra Scope
1973 - Laser Kure
1974 - Wild Gunman
Shooting Trainer
1980 - Game & Watch Series

1981 - Donkey Kong (Producer)
1983 - Famicom Controller
Donkey Kong Jr. (Producer)
1984 - Mario Bros. (Producer)
1985 - ROB Robot
Metroid (Producer)
Kid Icarus (Producer)
1989 - Game Boy



1990 - [illegible]
Dr. Mario
1992 - Super Scope
1993 - Super Metroid (Producer)
1995 - Virtual Boy
Panel De Pon (a.k.a. Tetris Attack)
1996 - Game Boy Pocket

Betting On a Better-Built Bulky

Concern grows that the introduction of the 64DD will split the Nintendo 64 market in two

If you've followed Nintendo for the past two years, you know that delays often plague their N64 releases. At this time last year, gamers had their fingers crossed that Zelda 64 would be out before the end of 1997 and hoped that the 64 Disk Drive (64DD) would come and finally put to rest the idea that the N64 would always be cartridge-based. It's 1998 and there's no 64DD under the world's N64 systems. Now, with the cartridge Zelda 64 not hitting U.S. shelves until mid-1998, the DD seems further away than ever. After delaying the Japanese launch of the 64DD to March 1998, it became apparent that, at least for the time being, cartridges would have to satisfy gamers hungry for N64 games. But with Sony boasting in Final Fantasy VII ads that "if this game were available on cartridge, it'd retail for around $1,200," the 64DD could be the kind of thing Nintendo needs to give developers the space to make bigger games for less money.

With 64 megabytes of space, there's enough room to put a game equal to eight Mario 64's on one DD disk. Or four Banjo-Kazooies. The extra space will give developers more freedom to give games more levels, graphics and sound. Nintendo's chairman Hiroshi Yamauchi has confirmed that the drive will have a modem port so that new levels, characters and stats can be downloaded over the phone, at least in Japan.

However, even with all of its advantages, there's still one hurdle that cannot be overcome easily—the 64DD is an "add-on." Add-ons to video game systems have not done well in the past, splitting the N64 market into two categories: gamers who have the upgrade and those who don't.

"The problem that Nintendo is going to face is the same problem that's faced every hardware manufacturer since Sega's CD drive hit the streets: It's extra," says Shiny Entertainment's David Perry. "Nobody ever wants to pay extra, and by releasing Zelda on cart, Nintendo may be shooting itself in the foot, because Mother 3 isn't going to get Americans rushing out to spend another $200 on a peripheral–not when all the great games are available as a cart, right now, and for no extra charge."

Originally supposed to be a DD release, Zelda 64 is on cartridge half the size of the proposed 64DD format. Does this mean that in the near future, carts could get as big as a DD? If it is possible to get 512 Megabits on a cartridge (and the Neo•Geo proved that big carts are possible, if pricey), then releasing the 64DD offers little advantage in terms of increasing the amount of storage space available to N64 developers. Instead, the DD would have to rely on the selling point of cheaper manufacturing costs, modem capability and writability to keep it viable.

"Modem capability is much overrated, as Sega found to their own cost with the Saturn NetLink. Having said that, if anyone can pull it off, it's the big N, but it's asking consumers to pay a premium for something they really don't, and probably won't ever, need," says Perry.

The biggest advantage, in the eyes of third parties anyway, would be the decreased cost of producing a cartridge versus a DD disk. A 64 megabyte DD would be cheaper than producing a cartridge half that size. That would be more than enough to persuade game companies to jump on the DD bandwagon, but getting consumers to buy into it would have to mean strong software support from the beginning. Judging from the almost full year it has taken third-party companies to get good N64 software to market, the chances that third parties would be able to support the DD quickly with quality software is low. The 64DD is much more important to Nintendo in Japan than it currently is in the U.S., with Mother 3 and the latest Pocket Monster incarnation scheduled among the first DD titles to launch with the system.

"Personally, I think the 64DD will not be that good," says Colin Gordon, of third-party Nintendo 64 developer Boss Game Studios. "We are already considering 128 Megabit cartridges, so Nintendo will be looking at even bigger carts. Unless DD disks are really inexpensive, and can be manufactured here in the U.S., then the disadvantages will outweigh the advantages."

Nintendo hasn't given any information on the peripheral since last spring. At last year's Shoshinkai (now known as Nintendo World) in Japan, the system was little more than a mock-up.

The DD will be officially unveiled at this year's Nintendo World show. But since the standard cartridge configuration has already taken hold of the American market, there's a chance that a DD release will only split Nintendo's previous N64 success. Developers and gamers remain skeptical about the system, but if Nintendo plays its cards right, they could be the first to launch a successful add-on. We'll have more details next issue.

The Official Word on the 64DD

Here's what we know [illegible] about it thus far:

- uses 3 1/2-inch magnetic disks which will be front loaded into the drive. Each 64DD disk contains 64 MB of data, eight times that of Super Mario 64.

- The DD utilizes power directly from the N64, so it does not need its own power supply. Comes packaged with a RAM expansion pack, further enhancing the drive's capabilities.
- The writable features of the drive allow players to customize their game, or save game progress directly to disk. Includes an internal, battery-backed realtime clock, so the games could change from day to night or unlock special features in real time.
- Boasts high-speed data access of 4 MB per second Data Transfer Rate. Integrates fonts and audio data capabilities, so that programmers won't have to store this information in the game program itself.
- Allows existing cartridge games to be expanded with new levels, characters and worlds. The cartridge and disk drive can be used simultaneously, allowing developers even more space.
- Will feature network capabilities to "enhance the gameplay experience." Last spring, Nintendo chairman Hiroshi Yamauchi told a Japanese newspaper that the DD will include a modem port, which opens up more possibilities.
- Games such as RPGs, racing and sports titles will benefit from the DD's ability to let players customize game options. Imagine a racing game where you can create tracks, an RPG where you can design the terrain. In development and said to include these features are SimCity, Mother 3 (EarthBound), Mario Artist and Pocket Monsters.

Classic System Gets New Shell

Nintendo redesigns and repackages the Super NES for a new generation

While the war this holiday season will be waged on the 32- and 64-Bit front, there's still room for gamers who want a solid library of games on a system with a cheaper introductory price than the current generation of systems. Finding a system and games for cheap is going to be easier than ever since many retailers have instituted discounts on 16-Bit hardware and software, making it easier than ever to get into gaming on the ground floor.

Nintendo, realizing that there's still a large (albeit declining) market for 16-Bit hardware, is now rereleasing their Super NES in a more streamlined package for the holidays. This "new" system is smaller than the original, and missing a few of the things its older, bulkier brother had. Gone are the RF Output and the Eject button, moved to the left side are the Power and Reset buttons.

Players hoping for that slight chance of a Super NES CD-ROM can now put it to rest. The new system does not have the expansion slot that the original Super NES had at the bottom. For those doubters who always held a candle for the add-on, it is now most certainly DEAD.

Also immediately noticeable is that the system is super light—weighing not more than the heaviest N64 cartridge. Talk about amazing! Gone is the Super Nintendo logo from the controller, replaced with a generic embossed Nintendo logo. This new Super NES may also be appearing in Japan as a sleeker (and cheaper to manufacture) Super Famicom.

The new Super NES will cost you about $99.95, and comes packaged with Yoshi's Island. Quite a good deal for those who missed out on the first round of Super NES stuff or for those who are looking for a cheaper alternative to the new systems.

In addition to new games like Kirby 3, Nintendo has also been rereleasing games under the Player's Choice series. Super Metroid, F-Zero, Zelda: A Link to the Past, Donkey Kong Country and Tetris & Dr. Mario.

www.nintendo.com

Tidbits...

M2's Second Life

Matsushita announced in October that they have started to take orders for their M2 machine. Instead of a video game system, the company is marketing the hardware as an industrial system capable of custom multimedia applications for simulations. They plan to have 200 ideas for applications this year and turn out 20-30 percent of those into real product.

Hajime Tachibana, of Matsushita's Electronics Interactive division, was quoted in Japan's *Asahi* newspaper indicating that using the M2 may not be entirely out of the picture as a video game machine. "We have learned about 3-D in the process, so we have to think about how to use it," he said. "[The] market changes in five-year circles, so we might retry using it as a game machine, depending on the situation."

Rugrats Crawl to Console

T*HQ recently announced they have inked a deal to create and publish games based on Nickelodeon's *Rugrats* series. The games will be released for the PlayStation and Game Boy in 1998, with a Nintendo 64 title scheduled for release in 1999. Each of the titles will be developed by Orlando-based n-Space Inc. Now which company will be the first to announce a *South Park* game?

Picking Up the Spare

Ten Pin Alley inducted into Bowling Hall of Fame

Never before has such an honor been bestowed upon a video game. ASC Games recently announced that the International Bowling Museum and Hall of Fame has selected Ten Pin Alley for induction in their historic halls.

The game now has a place in the St. Louis Hall of Fame complete with an interactive kiosk where gamers and bowlers can check out the most realistic of all bowling sims.

"It is a privilege to have Ten Pin Alley enshrined in The International Bowling Museum and Hall of Fame," said ASC president and COO David Klein. "We wanted to create a game that simulated the total bowling experience, capturing all of the subtle nuances of America's No. 1 indoor participation sport. This honor serves as a testament to the success we attained in creating the most realistic and coolest bowling game ever!"

www.ascgames.com

Bowling Hall-of-Famer Dick Weber gets defeated 219 to 27 in Ten Pin Alley.

50 Million Strong

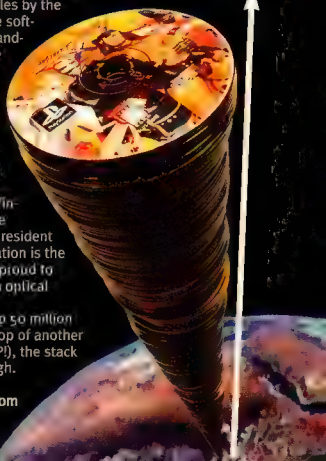
Sony celebrates production of 50 millionth disc

The release of Final Fantasy VII did more than just make RPGs go mainstream. It's also helped to push the number of discs that Sony Disc Manufacturing has produced over the 50-million mark. The PlayStation library is slated to have over 300 titles by the end of 1997, becoming the software leader of the 32-Bit-and-higher systems. Thirty-five million game discs and millions of sampler discs later, the PlayStation is the current leader in the industry.

"Much like the way the compact disc has changed the manner we listen to music, PlayStation is redefining our perception of home video games," said SDM president James M. Frische. "PlayStation is the market leader and we are proud to celebrate this milestone in optical disc manufacturing."

In fact, if you stacked up 50 million PlayStation discs one on top of another (and man, do they ever TIP!), the stack would be over 37 miles high. That's a lot of discs!

www.playstation.com



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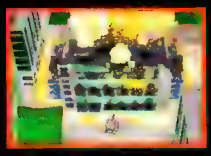
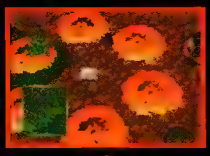
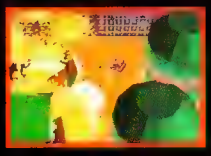

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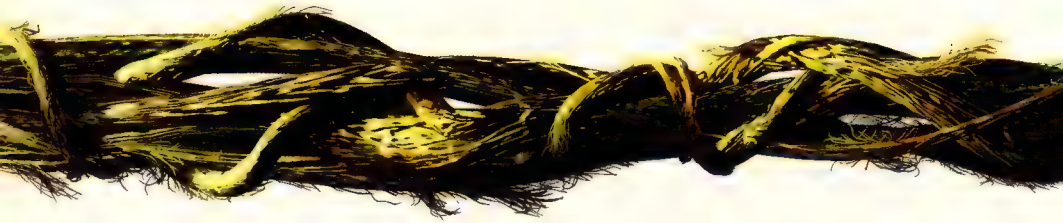

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Blasting the Airwaves

Companies declare war on the senses of potential players

Forget "Blast Processing." These days, it's not hardware features that are moving systems off store shelves. It's software. Each of the big three is making its impressions known with large advertising budgets to spread the word that they have the best-looking and playing software. In the fourth quarter of 1997, there have been more advertisements on TV for video games since the peak of 16-Bit

This isn't small potatoes; companies are spending millions of dollars to get their messages across. Nintendo's "Get N or Get Out!" campaign is a hefty $90 million effort. Sega spent $25 million on promoting their Saturn and PC products during the fourth quarter and Sony spent the majority of their $100 million advertising budget in the fourth quarter of '97 too.

Add to that millions of dollars spent by third-party publishers—GT Interactive spent $10 million promoting Abe's Oddysee worldwide—and it's easy to see the industry is waging an all-out assault on the eyes and ears of potential buyers. All this to attract new people to gaming.

"I think there are two reasons you're seeing [so many ads on TV]. One is because there's intense competition going on, so the advertising dollar is going to be a big factor this Christmas," says James Lin, an analyst at Wedbush Morgan. "Second, I think that as we see games contain more of the so-called 'mainstream' elements, a little bit more sex, a little bit more profanity, I think the advertising and marketing is going to reflect the kind of audience they're targeting."

Making advertising fast and sexy is only part of the battle. Companies like Eidos Interactive, GT Interactive, ASC Games, Activision and Psygnosis are doing more than advertising their latest and greatest titles. They're also gaining name recognition with players.

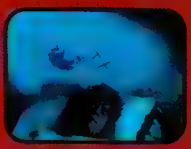
"I think what we're seeing is a lot more advertising on the more high-profile titles. You don't see a lot of advertising for the middle-of-the-road product," says Tony Gikas, an analyst for Piper Jaffray. "We're moving into a period now where the installed base of PlayStations and Nintendo 64s are so significant that it makes sense for these companies to really develop a material budget and start doing this type of advertising."

The mainstreaming of the video game industry is also an indication that the industry is broadening its spectrum. There are more and more products out there that are different from the "norm" of what were considered video games in the past. With Final Fantasy bringing gamers into the fold with its cinematic story line and the N64 spearheading a revolution in multiplayer console games, the general public is now more aware of video games than ever.

Visual Assault

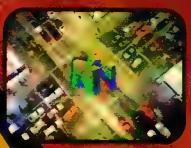
A sampling of the ads of 1997

Mass Destruction
ASC Games
Proven Safe for TV: "We will fry their installations with a crap load of [illegible] nasty weapons!"
Tagline: "Shoot first, ask...ah, just shoot."



Nightmare Creatures
Activision
Did You Know: The voice over for this commercial was done by Maurice LaMarche, who does the voice for The Brain on *Pinky & The Brain*.
Lesson: Counting sheep releases Nightmare Creatures.

Fighting Force
Eidos Interactive
Weird: The dog runs backward, yet everything else in the commercial moves forward.
Did You Notice: The guy with the white eyes isn't wearing his white contacts in the last shot of him at the end of the commercial.

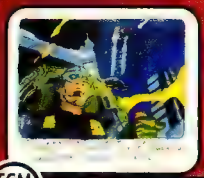


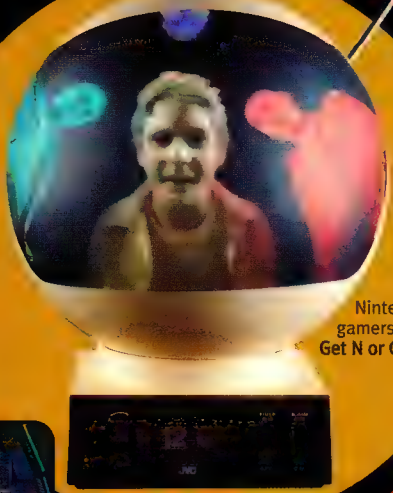
Get N or Get Out
Nintendo
Versions of this ad: four
Bet you didn't know: There are two versions of the "sports-themed" ad, one with Madden [illegible] the other with NFL Quarterback Club.

Last Dream
Sega
Lesson: He who laughs last [illegible]

G Police Go TV

Capturing the feel of gameplay is difficult to do in commercials. There's always a trade-off between making an ad look flashy and letting potential buyers see actual footage of the game. Psygnosis enlisted the talents of Peter Chung, master artist and animator behind *Aeon Flux* to create an ad which fits both the look and feel of their latest game, G Police. Psygnosis made an equal cut between gameplay footage and fast animation that looks great and feels futuristic. Chung's "anime-esque" style fits well to the title, matching the comic book style of their G Police print ads.





Nintendo tells gamers to Get N or Get Out.

Sushi-X Files

e-mail: sushi_x@zd.com

The Subscriber's-Only Newsletter from Mind of Sushi-X

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

Moves List part I

Fujin:

- Pull Out Weapon: **B, B, LP**
- Flying Knee: **D, F, HK**
- Lift: **F, D, F, HP**
- Slam (in lifted): **B, F, D, LK**
- Dive Kick (in air): **D, LK**
- Spin: **F, D, LP**

Jarek:

- Pull Out Weapon: **F, F, HP**
- Ball: **B, F, LK**
- Up Ball: **F, D, F, HP**
- Black Drop: **B, D, B, HK**
- Blade Projectile: **D, B, LP**

Jax:

- Pull Out Weapon: **D, F, HP**
- Fireball: **D, F, LP**
- Dash Punch: **D, B, LP**
- In-Air Grab: **BLK**
- Ground Pound: **F, F, D, LK**

Johnny Cage:

- Pull Out Weapon: **F, D, F, LK**
- Shadow Kick: **B, F, LK**
- Shadow Uppercut: **B, D, B, HP**
- Nard Punch: **BLK, LP**
- Low Fireball: **D, B, LP**
- High Fireball: **D, F, HP**

Kai:

- Pull Out Weapon: **D, B, LP**
- Up Fireball: **B, B, HP**
- Down Fireball: **F, F, LP**
- Flip Onto Hands: **BLK+LK**
- Spin (on hands): **Hold LP**
- Mule Kick (on hands): **HK**
- Mule Kick (on hands): **LK**
- Flying Punch: **D, F, HP**

Liu Kang:

- Pull Out Weapon: **B, F, LK**
- High Fireball: **F, F, HP**
- Low Fireball: **F, F, LP**
- In-Air Fireball: **F, F, HP**
- Flying Kick: **F, F, HK**
- Bicycle Kick: **F, F, LK**

Quan Chi:

- Pull Out Weapon: **D, B, HK**
- Skull: **F, F, LP**
- Stomp: **F, D, LK**
- Side Dash: **F, F, HK**
- Weapon Steal: **F, B, HP**

Raiden:

- Pull Out Weapon: **T, B, HP**
- Dive: **F, F, LK**
- Torpedo: **F, F, LK**
- Lightning: **D, B, LP**
- Teleport: **D, U**

Reiko:

- Pull Out Weapon: **D, F, HP**
- Teleport: **B, B, LP**
- Throwing Stars: **D, F, LP**
- Phantom Warp: **B, F, LK**
- Flip Kick: **B, D, F, HK**

Reptile:

- Pull Out Weapon: **B, B, LK**
- Crawl: **B, F, LK**
- Spit: **D, F, HP**
- Iron Palm: **B, F, LP**
- Invisible: **BLK+HK**

Scorpion:

- Pull Out Weapon: **F, F, HK**
- Spear: **B, B, LP**
- Teleport: **D, B, HP**
- Air Throw: **BLK**
- Fire Breathing: **D, F, LP**

Shinnok:

- Fujin: **F, F, B, HK**
- Jarek: **B, B, B, LK**
- Jax: **F, D, F, HK**
- Johnny Cage: **D, D, D, HP**
- Kai: **F, F, F, LK**
- Liu Kang: **B, B, F, HK**
- Quan Chi: **F, B, F, HK**
- Raiden: **D, F, F, HP**
- Reiko: **B, B, B, BLK**
- Reptile: **F, F, B, BLK**
- Scorpion: **B, F, LP**
- Sonya: **F, D, F, HP**
- Sub-Zero: **D, B, LP**
- Tanya: **B, F, D, BLK**

Sonya:

- Pull Out Weapon: **F, F, LK**
- Leg Grab: **D, BLK, LP**
- Cartwheel: **B, D, F, LK**
- Square Wave: **F, B, HP**
- Bicycle Kick: **B, B, D, HK**
- Energy Rings: **B, D, T, LP**
- Fireball: **D, F, LP**

Sub-Zero:

- Pull Out Weapon: **D, F, HK**
- Slide: **BLK, LK, LP**
- Freeze: **B, D, F, LP**
- Ice Klone: **F, D, B, LP**

Tanya:

- Pull Out Weapon: **F, F, HK**
- Drill Spin: **F, F, LK**
- Fireball: **D, F, HP**
- In-Air Fireball: **D, B, LP**
- Split Kick: **F, D, B, LK**

Key to Moves:

B: Back
F: Forward
U: Up
D: Down
HK: High Kick
LK: Low Kick
HP: High Punch
LP: Low Punch
BLK: Block

SUSHI-X FILES

And in this corner...

EGM was thinking, with all of the hub-bub about fighting games lately, it'd be neat to follow suit by presenting some of our own match-ups. We figure if Capcom can do it, so can we! Here's our top 10 faves:

10) ***EGM* vs. *Next Gen***
9) **Street Fighter vs. *EGM***
8) **X-Men vs. Kirby**
7) **Lara Croft vs. [any female]** mee-ow...
6) **Rudy Ray Moore vs. Mr. T** we wish!
5) **Nintendo big-wigs vs. Sony big-wigs**
4) **2-D games vs. 3-D games** an epic battle...
3) **Crash Bandicoot vs. Mario** yoga plumber!
2) **Sega of America vs. Sega of Japan**
1) **MK vs. Street Fighter** yea right

A What-Ality?

Mortal Kombat started a whole crazy way of knocking off your opponent, and we couldn't be more thankful. Admittedly though, sometimes things can get out of hand and a little silly (i.e., Babe-ality). So in the same vein the creators of MK followed, we thought we'd try our luck at some "Alities." Here's what we came up with:

- **Immortality** You just stand there and never die...BORING!
- **Slipality** Your opponent doesn't really die, they just slip and fall.
- **Babe-ality** Not like the old one – now your victim turns into a hot chick!
- **Tokenality** When you do this one, the game asks for three more tokens.
- **Inebriality** The enemy offers you a drink...but only if you're 21 or older!
- **Porkality** A herd of wild hogs runs by and tramples you to death.
- **Croftality** Lara Croft steps by...they're so amazed at her beauty they die!
- **Safeality** For some reason a safe drops from the sky and crushes them.
- **Killality** You kill them so bad they actually die! Go figure...
- **Fate-ality** You don't do anything...fate takes over and life goes on.

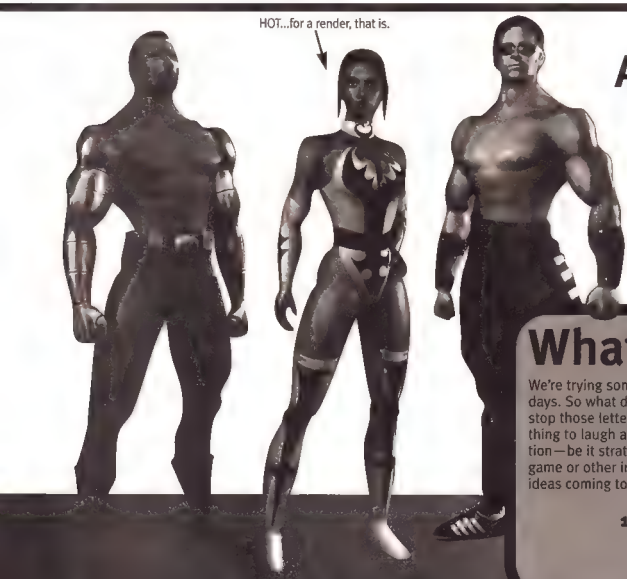
Did You Know?

Richard Divizio, the guy who plays Quan Chi in MK4 (and MK Trilogy consequently), is the same guy who plays Kano in the original Mortal Kombats. After his chilling performance in MK Trilogy, maybe now Hollywood will start calling.

News Tidbit...

To the consoles?

The question is whether or not MK4 is going to come to the consoles. Right now the official word is that MK4 is coming to the PlayStation in '98. If MK4 is coming to the N64 is another question though, but there's a good chance it will. You can count on one thing: When it comes out on the console end, it'll be less detailed than the arcade version. Hopefully Midway will come through.



A New Look...

It's no secret that the new Mortal Kombat is a little different than ones in the past. In fact, this is the first time Mortal Kombat is in full-on 3-D. The characters still have the same feel, but now are even more realistic than ever before. Instead of being digitized versions of actors, now the actors have been put into 3-D wire frames. The animation is still top-notch as usual, except now you can jump into the foreground and background. This is a whole new way to play MK.

What do you think?

We're trying something a little new with the Sushi-X Files these days. So what do you think? We still want your feedback, so don't stop those letters. The idea here is to not only give you something to laugh at or enjoy, but also present some useful information—be it strategy for a game, a move list for a new fighting game or other info to help take your gaming further. So keep your ideas coming to:

Sushi-X Files
1920 Highland Ave. Ste. 222
Lombard, IL 60148
(or)
e-mail: sushi_x@zd.com

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- ***PSExtreme***
January 1998

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- **PSM**
October 1997

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Tidbits...

Konami Heads West

Known as one of the biggest Japanese developers with plenty of titles under their belt, Konami is now expanding their expertise into U.S. game development.

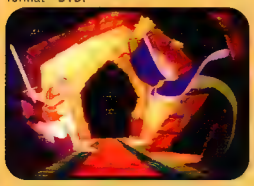
The company has transferred the few existing consumer development teams to the West Coast, and plans on ending up with as many as 10 (!) teams all working on consumer product for home systems such as the N64 and the PlayStation. The new Konami Computer Entertainment America studio, based in Redwood City, Calif., will split from the company's coin-op development teams which will remain in Buffalo Grove, Ill., with Konami's North American operations base.

Coin-op development in the U.S. is also being expanded, from the current two to three teams to about 10. Gamers probably won't see games come out of the new U.S. development teams until late 1998/early 1999.

Dragon's Lair Goes DVD

In the early '80s, games weren't as blessed with fancy graphics as they are today. Companies looked for a way to store video on a format that wouldn't degrade easily. They turned to laserdisc. The ability to skip to different video tracks made it possible to make a game comprised completely of video sequences that a player had to control to see the whole story as it played out.

Dragon's Lair has been released for just about every home video game console and PC system in existence, including the Super NES (as a side-scrolling adventure game), 3DO, Sega CD and Jaguar. Now the game is coming to a new format—DVD.



Digital Leisure, a Canadian company formed by ex-employees of Readysoft (the company that used to handle the Dragon's Lair titles) has acquired the rights to produce the games for the DVD-ROM and DVD-Video formats. The DVD-ROM version should be out by the time you read this, with the DVD-Video version following it in early 1998.

The company has also acquired the rights to produce DVD versions of Space Ace and Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp. Those will be coming in 1998.

Don't forget to visit GameSpot News for the latest in video game headlines!
http://headline.gamespot.com
videogamespot

PCs With Token Slots

The next coin-op you play may be a PC with a 'token drive'

Computers haven't always been serious competition for the attention of gamers, especially when it comes to arcade games. But if Intel and their group of supporters are successful, arcade gamers will be looking straight at the Pentium II processor when dropping quarters into the coin-ops of the future.

That's because Intel has formed a consortium called the Open Arcade Architecture Forum (OAAF) to put their PC architecture into arcades everywhere. If it succeeds, the coin-op industry could potentially see a big resurgence.

Since the OAAF was first announced in April, over 80 developers, arcade operators and manufacturers have lined up behind the initiative, and the first Pentium II-based coin-ops should be in arcades before the end of 1997.

At the AMOA Expo in Atlanta in October, Microsoft officially announced that they are backing the OAAF as a charter member, giving it the biggest weight of all. Microsoft said at the show it will encourage DirectX developers to help support the system.

The first games to be produced under the Intel OAAF were also shown at AMOA. The four titles shown there were the 3-D driving game Ultim@te Race Arcade from Hanaho APC and Kalisto Entertainment; the World War II flying game Plane Crazy from Inner Workings; and the soccer simulator Kick-It (where you kick a real soccer ball toward a virtual goalie) from Interactive Light. LBE Systems had an arcade version of Quake, which will allow multiplayer deathmatching using its SparkyNet OS arcade network software.

The idea is simple: Arcade games running on PC hardware are cheaper to set up, replace and operate than the expensive custom hardware commonly used now. Under the new system, games would not only be easier to maintain, but when a new game is released, replacing older titles means little more than installing a new game just like you would on a PC.

"A common PC infrastructure will lower our customers' cost of business, by providing reusable hardware for many different games," said Peter Betti, chairman of coin-op distributor H. Betti Industries. "It should allow us to offer our customers a wider variety of games."

Using a standard, it makes it easy for developers to use arcades as a test market for product that in a matter of a few months could hit shelves as a consumer product as well. Instead of having to port an arcade game made for proprietary architecture to PC hardware, the hardware would be the same.

"The equipment is getting so expensive that the market we can put it in is shrinking," says Craig Johnson, a past president of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA). "If we want to keep it available to the public, we have to go to a model that isn't so expensive every time we want to change it, and go to a model that allows for more creativity."

Intel's Open Arcade standard be used for stand-alone machines found in corner arcades, but also in big location-based entertainment simulators and games.

Intel's goals for the results are broad, but not unattainable: an open, non-proprietary PC-compatible architecture; investment protection through upgradability, reusability and reconfigurability; great graphics and video; realistic sound; flexible input device architecture; network connectivity; simple and unsubvertable user interface; maintainability; low cost and low wattage. If anyone can make it happen, it's Intel.

This brings into question the ability for developers to make games that fit the arcade mold. Command & Conquer wouldn't make a good arcade game, but Quake could. "Can every [computer game] fit into it? Absolutely not. Are there some that fit into it? There's been some that have been designed for the PC that are better adapted to a commercial environment."

With top names like Acclaim, Angel Studios, Eidos Interactive, Gremlin Interactive, GT Interactive, Interplay, Namco, Sega Gameworks, Sony Development and Ubi Soft behind the project, it's virtually guaranteed that the software will be there. The only thing that remains to be seen is if the top developers in the coin-op industry will embrace the standard. If the likes of Midway, Capcom, Konami and Atari offer the OAAF their support, then arcades will be more interesting places in 1998.

DO YOU HAVE THE BALLS?
'CAUSE WE'VE GOT THE GAME!

tennis arena

Your Racket Is Your Only Weapon

"Racquet-rocking action!"
-GamePro

"It's time for tennis to take center court!"
-EGM

Smart Dog

Ubi Soft

PlayStation

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

International News

インターナショナル ニュース

By John Ricciardi john_ricciardi@zd.com

Nintendo Gears Up For Space World '97

Preliminary Games List Unveiled, Many Surprises Expected

Nintendo Company Ltd. recently announced their plans for this year's Nintendo Space World exhibition (formerly known as Shoshinkai or Famicom Space World on the public days). Nintendo Space World '97 will take place from Nov. 21-23 at Japan's Makuhari Messe Convention Center, and will feature the long-awaited debut of Zelda 64 in playable form (now known as "The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time" in Japan), as well as several other marquee NCL titles, including F-Zero X, Yoshi's Story and more.

In addition to these games, there are over 30 third-party titles planned to be on display, not to mention several games that, according to Nintendo, "won't be announced until the first day of the show." Chances are good that most of these unannounced titles will be 64DD games, as one of the areas of the show floor is being called the "N64DD Corner," but we won't know for sure until the day of the show. In addition to the 64DD titles, there's a strong possibility that Capcom will finally unveil their initial N64 games (or at least plans) at the show as well.

Not to be outdone by its 64-Bit big brother, Nintendo's resurging Game Boy Pocket will be on hand as well, with an additional 20-30 games that are expected to be displayed. The most important of these, obviously, are the latest games in the wildly successful Pocket Monsters series, Pocket Monsters Gold & Silver. Word has it that some kind of new "Pak" for the N64 controller will be unveiled that allows gamers to send and receive data from Game Boy cartridges, and the Pocket Monsters games are surely the reason for it. On a related note, some Japanese game magazines have reported that the N64DD may have additional Pak ports (like the one on the back of the N64 controller) on the actual unit itself. As far as third-party Game Boy support goes, there will be several new titles that have a good chance of making it to the States, including Pocket Bomberman, Bugs Bunny Collection and a new Castlevania game by Konami (Castlevania: The Dark Knight Prelude), starring the first-ever female Belmont, Sonya.

Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time is expected to be the highlight of Nintendo Space World '97.

Even though the show will be wrapping up by the time you read this, you'll still be able to get up-to-the-minute updates on everything that has transpired at Nintendo Space World '97 by pointing your Web browser to VideoGameSpot's News site at the following URL: (http://headline.gamespot.com)

Confirmed Nintendo First-Party Games To Be At Nintendo Space World '97

(Note: These are Japanese names and release dates are subject to change)

N64:

Diddy Kong Racing (Nov. 21, 1997/128 Megabits)
Yoshi's Story (Dec. 21, 1997/128 Megabits)
Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time (December 1997/256 Megabits)
F-Zero X (Tentative Title/1st Quarter 1998/Size N/A)
Banjo & Kazooie's Great Adventure (March 1998/128 Megabits)
Vertical Edge Snowboarding (Tentative Title/No Date/Size N/A)
NBA Courtside (Tentative Title/No Date/Size N/A)

Game Boy:

Wario Land 2: The Stolen Treasure (January 1998/Size N/A)
Donkey Kong Land 2 (4th Quarter 1997/Size N/A)
Pocket Monsters Gold (4th Quarter 1997/Size N/A)
Pocket Monsters Silver (4th Quarter 1997/Size N/A)

New PlayStation Unveiled

Sony's Latest Model Includes CD Light Show, New Pad

Sony Computer Entertainment released a new model of the PlayStation exclusively in Japan on Nov. 13. The new model, SCPH-7000, retails for 18,000 yen (about $150), and comes with a couple of minor enhancements that weren't previously available. The first is SoundScope, a feature that adds a kaleidoscope-like light show to the PlayStation's CD Player Screen, and the second is the new Dual Shock analog controller that comes bundled with the unit. The Dual Shock is an enhanced version of Sony's analog controller that has dual left and right vibrating capabilities (the U.S. version of the analog controller that was released doesn't have the vibration feature that the original Japanese version had because it was buggy), as well as a sleeker, more comfortable pad design. The Dual Shock pad can also be purchased separately, and will work with any model PlayStation—new or old. Currently there are no plans for a U.S. release.

Top 10 in Japan

The 10 Best-Selling Games As of Oct. 26

1. Game De Hakken!! Tamagotchi 2 (Nintendo)–GB
2. Pocket Monsters (Nintendo)–GB
3. Japan Pro Wrestling Featuring Virtua (Sega)–SS
4. Moon (ASCII)–PS
5. Everybody's Golf (Sony CE)–PS
6. Street Fighter Collection (Capcom)–PS
7. Front Mission Second (Square)–PS
8. Dead or Alive (Tecmo)–SS
9. Super Robot Wars F (Banpresto)–SS
10. BioHazard: Director's Cut (Capcom)–PS

Info courtesy of *Weekly Famitsu* magazine

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PlayStation

TEEN T

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THE GALAXY IS FAR, FAR AWAY.

THE FIGHTING IS UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL.

STAR WARS MASTERS OF TERÄS KÄSI

- 64DD Games from Midway
- Dural power struggle?
- 64-Bit Sega in arcades?
- DKC64, KI3 coming soon?
- More LiDo 239 snippets
- The Masters of 2-D go 3-D

Quartermann

G'day quartermates. I've finally taken my long-deserved vacation in the Land Down Under, enjoying the sun, surf and scenery of Australia. While admiring my tan in the bathroom mirror of my hotel room, I decided to hop a plane over to the Land of the Rising Sun and give my man in Japan a hand. After rendezvousing with Terry-Aki at Narita airport, we scooted off to Terry's secret HQ/Batcave in Shinjuku. This gave me a chance to peer into his famous bag of tricks and test out his new *EGM* Mark II satellite communication device. With the SCD in hand, Terry and I can communicate in realtime with the Q-crew anywhere in the world, even while we're running away from Nintendo's trained Doberman Pinchers... ain't technology grand? I'm taking a little breather to report on what the Q-crew dug up this month...

MIDWAY'S SECRET RACER

(Chicago, Ill.) With games like GoldenEye 007, Mission: Impossible and the jaw-dropping Metal Gear Solid making headlines recently, it's no surprise that espionage games are suddenly en vogue. Spy Hunter Returns is one driving game Midway is said to be bringing to the N64 somewhere around 4th Qtr. '98 to 1st Qtr. '99. As one could expect of an N64 racer, SPR will be in 3-D, but the game will also feature adventure elements, fast action and, of course, gadgets galore. In fact, we hear that Midway is looking to license the *Peter Gunn* theme used in the original arcade game and will utilize different versions of that recognizable theme, GoldenEye 007-style. On a related note, Midway is looking to support the 64DD in a big way, and Spy Hunter Returns is thought to be one of their key games to utilize Nintendo's add-on.

SEGA'S DURAL ON THE HORIZON

(Tokyo, Japan) Terry and I have zeroed in on more info regarding Sega's new 64-Bit Dural console. As far as titles are concerned, Sega is working on several new, high-profile games including Virtua Fighter 3.5 (said to be a version of Virtua Fighter 3: Team Battle), Super GT+ and a brand-new Sonic role-playing game. VF 3.5 and Super GT+ are thought to be launch titles for the Dural (late 1998), and Sonic RPG will arrive sometime in 1999. The Dural is due in the States around the 4th Qtr. '98, and we now hear a modem will be built into the system. Although the unit should retail for under 30,000 yen in Japan (around $242 U.S.), Sega of America is trying to get the machine's price down to $200 U.S. Sega of Japan is also organizing a software team to develop games specifically for a coin-op version of Dural. On a related note, some of Sol's execs are said to be wining and dining the bigwigs at Capcom. Terry's informants claim Sega is trying to woo Capcom into developing games for the Dural coin-op board. Although nothing is etched in stone, apparently a gentleman's agreement between the two has been met. If this deal comes to pass, perfect home translations of these games (a la Star Gladiator and Street Fighter EX+ Alpha) should be a snap....Meanwhile, our international spies report that Microsoft has a much bigger role in the Dural project than was first realized. According to our sources, Microsoft is helping to fund the Dural project (perhaps even paying for the whole thing) and is the secret grand puppeteer behind this entire mega-deal. In return for funding the Dural project and designing the OS, Microsoft will get a cut on every Dural game sold...but wait, there's more...we hear it was Microsoft, not Sega nor NEC/Videologic, that caused the 3Dfx (Black Belt) deal to go sour. Why would they do such a thing? Well for one, NEC is one of the world's largest manufacturers of PCs, notebooks and handheld computers and as such are one of Microsoft's most-valued customers. Every one of the millions of computers NEC ships every year has some sort of Microsoft software (sometimes several) included as standard. Those in the know claim Microsoft used Sega to be the bearer of bad news in Sega's "choice" of the Power VR chip over the 3Dfx voodoo technology...can you say SCAPEGOAT? Think of it as Microsoft saying, "Thank you so much NEC for all your business." Where does this leave poor 3Dfx? Well, that is another story altogether...

DKC64 HITS THE HOME STRETCH

(Twycross, England) Our European agents have unearthed additional information on some of Rare's upcoming games for the Nintendo 64. First of all, a 64-Bit version of Donkey Kong Country has been confirmed to be in development at Rare. Due out the 4th Qtr. '98, DKC is a single-player, 3-D action game in the style of Mario 64 and Conker's Quest. Donkey Kong will be the main character and our sources said to expect to see cameo appearances of other Nintendo characters in the game. Rare has been working on the title for over a year now and is said to be using every hardware and software trick they know (and that's a lot) in this game. Supposedly, the game is a 256-Megabit cart and is the first N64 game to run at 60 frames per second while in high-res (640x480). Look for Nintendo to make mega-noise about this title at next year's E³ expo....Rare is also far into the development of Killer Instinct 3 for the 64DD. KI3, once again, uses prerendered characters in a pseudo-3-D background. A few of the older characters are already up and running on screen, and players may be able to use the 64DD writability feature to edit their own fighters. In addition to these games, Rare is also working on an ultrasecret project using the GoldenEye 007 game engine....Back in the States, we hear Toby Ferrand (formerly of 3DO and head of the M2 project) is meeting with the heavy hitters of NoA. According to Terry, Nintendo is in Turbo Mode on the LiDo 239 project and is shopping around for some established talent from the hardware industry. Could Toby be the newest member of LiDo 239?...stay tuned...

CAPCOM STUFF

(Osaka, Japan) Those busy Capcom guys are at it again. The newest game to hit the arcade scene is a game called Rival Schools United By Fate, a 3-D team-up fighting game with Japanese high school students and teachers duking it out. This game is the first to run on the newest version of Capcom's PlayStation arcade board. Unlike version 1.0 (Star Gladiator, Street Fighter EX), this new 1.5 PlayStation board is more powerful than Namco's System 11 board (Soul Blade, Tekken 1 and 2) which itself was basically an arcade version of the PlayStation...confused yet?...don't be...the new board is not as powerful as Namco's system 12, a board Capcom insiders describe as a version 2.0 PlayStation arcade board, hence the name 1.5...whew...I'm glad that's over....Capcom is planning to release more 3-D fighters on this new board including Star Gladiator 2, Akira Nishitani's newest game; Street Fighter EX 2 (which is said to feature Sagat and Blanka) and an unnamed secret 3-D fighter sporting brand-new characters. In other arcade news, Capcom is working on a sequel to Puzzle Fighter and yet another fighter using the X-Men fighting engine...

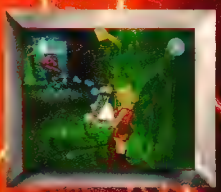
QUICKIES

Universal Interactive is thought to be branching out with a new sports line. Details are sketchy right now but the group is rumored to be working on a soccer title at the moment....Nintendo's long-overdue N64 basketball game finally has a name: NBA Courtside. As first reported in Q-Mann (*EGM* #95), NBA Courtside will be published by Nintendo and is said to be developed by one of the big N's second-party developers (possibly Angel Studios)....Bandai is working on two N64 titles in Japan. The first game is rumored to be a 3-D game set in the Gundam universe....Namco's next 3-D fighter on their system 12 hardware will be Soul Edge 2. Apparently the game will include all-new characters except for Mitsurugi....Talk is spreading like wildfire that Capcom is looking to rerelease their classic titles on a series of compilation discs, Namco-style....Well, that wraps it up for this month's installment of Q-Mann. Next month Terry is coming to the U.S. to camp out with me at Sony's U.S. headquarters in sunny Foster City, Calif., and spy on the white shirts at SCEA. Until then remember: No matter where you go, there you are...

The "Q"

The Future Is About To Become History

EXCALIBUR 2555 AD



Journey to the far future to save the distant past. Battle hand-to-hand. Solve intriguing puzzles. Wield powerful magic. Explore a huge 3D world. Your mission: retrieve the legendary sword Excalibur.

Featuring over 200 locations, 60 different characters, full speech, and incredible realistic light-sourcing, Excalibur 2555 is an absolute epic.

"...could well do for 3D action adventures what *Tomb Raider* did for 3D platformers"
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TELSTAR

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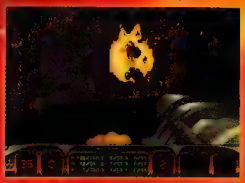
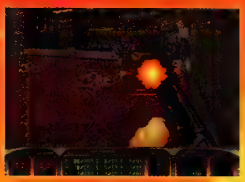


Bag some aliens with over a dozen hi-tech weapons!



An all-out overload of non-stop carnage!

DUKE NUKEM: TOTAL MELTDOWN

Duke's in town. And there's nothing he hates more than an army of alien punks crowding his space. 34 levels of freak-smashing 3D mayhem should see to it. Gigantic guns! Gruesome enemies! Total interaction! And all-out devastation! Don't mess with The Man!

HE'S C
TO GET

PlayStation

Developed by
3D Realms
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RP
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NINTENDO 64

GT Interactive Software

www.gtinteractive.com

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Classic Gameplay With An Olympic Theme

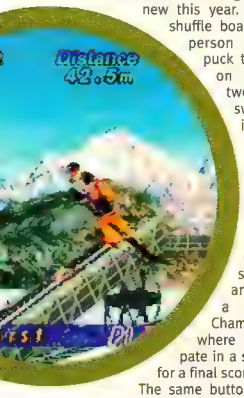
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Konami Konami	1-4 Sports	85	January 1998

Web Address: www.konami.com

Nagano Winter Olympics '98

Fans of Konami's Track and Field series have a lot to be excited about. Not only do they get a whole new line of cool winter events to play, they get to experience them like never before, thanks to the N64's polygonal punch.

Nagano Winter Olympics '98 features 12 real winter Olympic events: alpine skiing, ski jumping, freestyle skiing, snowboarding, speed skating, four-man bobsled, single luge and curling. While most of the events will be familiar, snowboarding and curling are new this year. Curling is like shuffle board on ice. One person slides a large puck toward a target on the ice while two teammates sweep a path for it to slide.



Players have 16 countries to choose from along with two different modes of play. They consist of Olympic, where single events are played for a medal or Championship Mode where players participate in a series of events for a final score.

The same button-tapping technique is used throughout the game only some events, such as speed skating, call for more rhythm than speed. Still others (snowboarding) require quick button combos to complete tricks. Button smashing aside, most of the events (bobsled and giant slalom skiing for example) simply call for the quickest time to win and don't require continuous button pounding. Needless to say, multiplayer is the most entertaining way to play this strenuous game. On the downside (no big deal), there is only one view available per event and the game is not Rumble Pak compatible, which is surprising.

It should be noted that the PlayStation version of this game was done by a different division of Konami Japan and has a few more events as well as a slightly different look to it. Differences noted, sports fans as well as anyone who played any of the Track and Field games of the past should definitely take a look at this game.

Bobsledding is one of the few events to use the Drum Roll Button smash to get started (top).

Game Directory

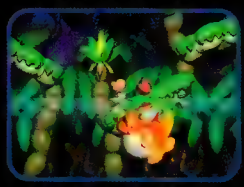
- Nagano Winter Olympics '98
- Chameleon Twist
- Quest 64
- WWF War Zone
- Hybrid Heaven
- Forsaken 64
- Z-Axis Basketball
- G.A.S.P.!! Fighters' NEXTream
- Olympic Hockey '98
- NBA In the Zone '98
- Puyo Puyo Sun 64

In Nintendo News...

With 1997 at a close, Nintendo is focusing their attention toward the new year. The N64 is entering the middle

of its second year in great shape. Third-party developers have become more familiar with the system, which is going to mean more high-quality games, less mediocre crap.

Nintendo, as well, has picked up steam and will be releasing a handful of games during the first quarter. Yoshi's Story, F-Zero X, Banjo-Kazooie, Ken Griffey Baseball and Legend



of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time will all appear within the first half of 1998. As far as the last half of the year goes, we'll be getting our first glimpse of what's in store at the Nintendo Space World '97 Expo in Japan. Check back next month for a full report.

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Sunsoft Japan System Supply	1 Action	N/A	December 1997

Web Address: titan.co.jp/jss

Chameleon Twist

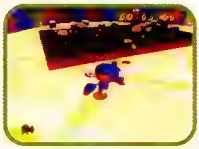
Just A Boy And His Multitalented Tongue

Chameleon Twist may be one of the most bizarre games to make it to the Nintendo 64 yet. Originally planned for release only in Japan, Sunsoft and Nintendo thought the kids in the U.S. might enjoy a 3-D action game starring a cute little creature and its multipurpose tongue...and who wouldn't?

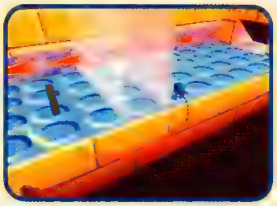
Basically you're set loose in a luminous 3-D atmosphere where you must make your way from room to room while avoiding a host of obstacles and strange creatures. Tons of smaller enemies nip at your heels, while the big Bosses require your attention and fighting concentration. The interesting part is that your only weapon is your long, talented tongue. Sounds tough, but when you consider how many things your tongue can do, it's much more fathomable. For most enemies you can hold down the B button and aim to lasso and swallow them whole. Afterward, you can spit them back as powerful projectiles. Other tricks the tongue can help you perform include vaulting over dangerous ground and swinging from platform to platform.

Fighting is not the only thing you will have to contend with while adventuring through the handsome 3-D environments. Puzzle solving also comes heavily into play. In addition to remembering which rooms have already been explored.

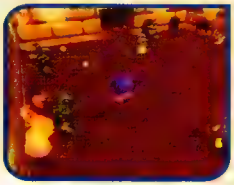
Multiplayer will be an option and should prove to be a lot of fun due to the search-and-destroy theme of the game. So limber up that tongue and get ready for action, soldier.



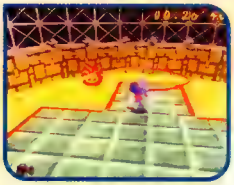
Replays can be interesting to watch from any angle.



Getting by obstacles is half the challenge. Master the tongue and everything will fall neatly into place, Grasshopper.



An example of a few of the creatures our boy encounters on his adventures.



It's amazing just how talented the tongue is. Just look at that extension!

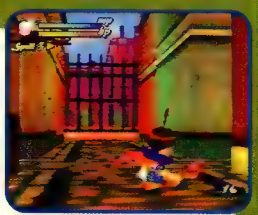
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release*
[illegible]	1 RPG	N/A	2nd Qtr. 1998

Web Address: [illegible]

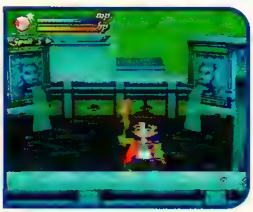
Quest 64

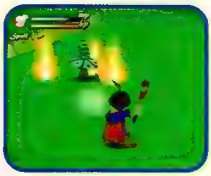
Thanks to T*HQ, N64-owning RPG fans will have a lot to look forward to early next year, as the company has already begun translating Imagineer of Japan's upcoming N64 3-D role-playing game, Quest 64. Quest 64 stars a gifted young lad named Shanjaque who can conjure up the forces of nature with a special power known as "Spirit Taming." With this power, he sets out to free the Island of Seltland from a strange darkness that is consuming the land. The gameplay takes place in an entirely 3-D world, and there are numerous characters to interact with, spells and items to earn, plus battles to fight. Hopefully we'll have more info on this one in the coming months, as it seems to be turning out quite nicely. (And hopefully T*HQ'll come up with a more innovative name before its release!)

As in any RPG, conversing with people in the various towns is a must.



As you can see here, Quest 64 has some incredibly sweet graphics for an RPG.





Magic spells are sure to be plentiful along the course of Shanjaque's journey.

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A Actual Packaging Design and Colors May Vary.

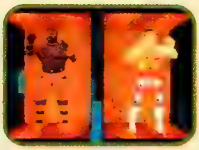
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Acclaim Iguana West	1-4 Sports	N/A	2nd Qtr. 1998

Web Address: www.acclaimnation.com

WWF War Zone

No *Really*, They're Not Acting!

Since the days of Pro Wrestling on the NES, armchair athletes have enjoyed plenty of wrestling action on console machines. While fighting games like Street Fighter II and Tekken have strayed from the drama and action that only wrestling can provide, there are still a few games that capture the style and technique of the real thing. Acclaim hopes that their WWF War Zone will capture the essence of the sport and please wrestling fans everywhere, giving them the ability to become their favorite warriors.



There are plenty of wrestlers to choose from in War Zone.

Taking full advantage of the N64's multiplayer capabilities, up to four players can duke it out in this wrestling battle royale. Acclaim has assembled a dozen wrestlers for players to take control of, including Undertaker, Goldust, Ahmed Johnson, Mankind, Steve Austin, Bret Hart, Shawn Michaels, British Bulldog, Faaroq, Rocky, Hunter and Shamrock (who will appear only in the N64 version of the game). Each character is armed with his signature fighting style and finishing moves. You can also create wrestlers from scratch, customizing them to be the ultimate brawling machine.

Goldust pins Ahmed to the mat as the crowd goes wild!

The game's 3-D environments and polygonal wrestlers are highly detailed with photorealistic texturing, making it look just like the real thing. Hoping to capture the essence of the sport, Acclaim is putting an extra emphasis on fighting technique, assuring that instead of a "hit-the-buttons-as-fast-as-you-can" game, War Zone is a game where skill and combos will determine the victor. There's a handy Training Mode so you can hone your skills before beginning the road to the championship.

True to form, War Zone pits the good guys versus the bad guys—resulting in feuds, grudge matches and gimmick matches like the ladder and cage. On the N64, players can also duke it out in a royal rumble or gauntlet match. What wrestling game would be complete without weapons? In War Zone you can grab a variety of props and weapons to clock your opponent when he's not looking.

War Zone also has multiplayer options as well, allowing up to four people to choose a wrestler and get in the ring. Now you can gather a bunch of your buddies, choose your favorite character and duke it out when there's no WWF action on cable.

The action heats up as Shawn Michaels and Mankind square off in the ring like manly men.

Ah, one of the best of the classic moves in all of wrestling—the almighty belly flop!

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Konami Konami	N/A Action/RPG	N/A	4th Qtr. 1998

Web Address: www.konami.com

Hybrid Heaven

Konami has started work on a potentially exciting action/RPG, Hybrid Heaven. Unfortunately, very little is known about the game at this point.

What we do know is that gameplay takes place in full 3-D worlds (similar to Nintendo's own upcoming action/RPG, Zelda 64). Hybrid Heaven takes place in a dark and distant future. Early screen shots of these environments look extremely realistic and promising.

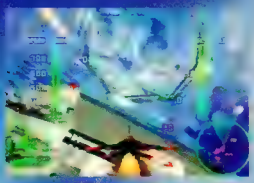
As you explore the open worlds, you will run into some not-so-friendly creatures. The game will then shift to a separate screen to act out the battle sequences. Here, you'll be able to punch, kick, shoot or use any number of other moves and techniques to win (the game will also include a special Two-player Battle Mode).

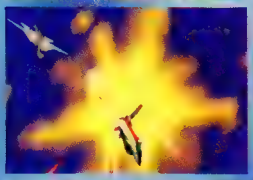
We will keep you updated on this interesting title as the game progresses.

From early looks, the graphics in Hybrid Heaven look incredible.

You will have full 360-degree freedom of movement.

"SAY HELLO TO MY LITTLE FRIENDS"





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K-A
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And watch your opponents soil themselves.

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INTERACT
GAME PRODUCTS

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Acclaim Probe	1-4 First-Person	N/A	February 1998

Web Address: www.acclaimnation.com

Forsaken 64

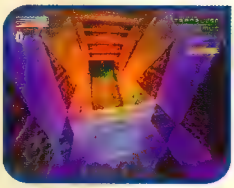
Prepare For Descent To A Lovely Post-Apocalyptic Earth

Fans of the PC and console title Descent will immediately find plenty of similarities between that game and Forsaken 64. An experiment gone awry sends a shockwave tearing through the solar system, leaving Earth a barren, lifeless planet, pounded by the sun's radiation. The system is deemed "up for loot," and so bounty hunters and the scum of the universe show up to rob the planet of any redeeming value it has left.

You control one of 15 characters, each with its own attributes and bikes. Take control and fly through 15 different levels, grabbing weapons and items and blasting those who would stop your progress. The game moves at a speedy 30 frames per second, even though the levels are amazingly detailed and complex. By lightsourcing individual objects, Forsaken allows you to detect enemy shadows around corners by firing your weapon down the game's corridors.

Levels include a Nuclear Research Center, Ancient Temple, Bio-Sphere, Military Research Base and a Thermal Power Station. You'll find yourself blasting through doors (some of which grow back), avoiding traps and pitfalls and other obstacles to survive. Add to that plenty of computer-controlled enemies that adapt to your strategy.

There are also eight unique multiplayer levels so you and three friends can battle to the death, stealing your friends' weapons after they're dead.



Watch as Forsaken's dynamic lightsourcing effects make the corridor light up.

Up to four players can jump on pioncycles and square off on a desolate Earth.

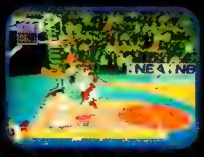
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Z-Axis Z-Axis	1-4 Sports	N/A	1st Qtr 1998

Web Address: N/A

Z-Axis Basketball

Not much is known about Z-Axis' unnamed basketball title, which is one of only two shown N64 basketball games (although Nintendo's NBA Courtside has been announced, and EA's Live 98 is rumored). For a first effort, the graphics look very good—especially the highly detailed texture-mapped player faces. Which company will publish the game and when it will arrive are both up in the air, and once that is decided, a real title for the game should follow shortly. Of course, we'll keep this round-ball title, and let you know more about it as soon as we do.

The detail on the players' faces is quite impressive.



As it should, the motion-captured action gets frantic under the hoop.

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release*
[illegible]	[illegible]	N/A	[illegible]

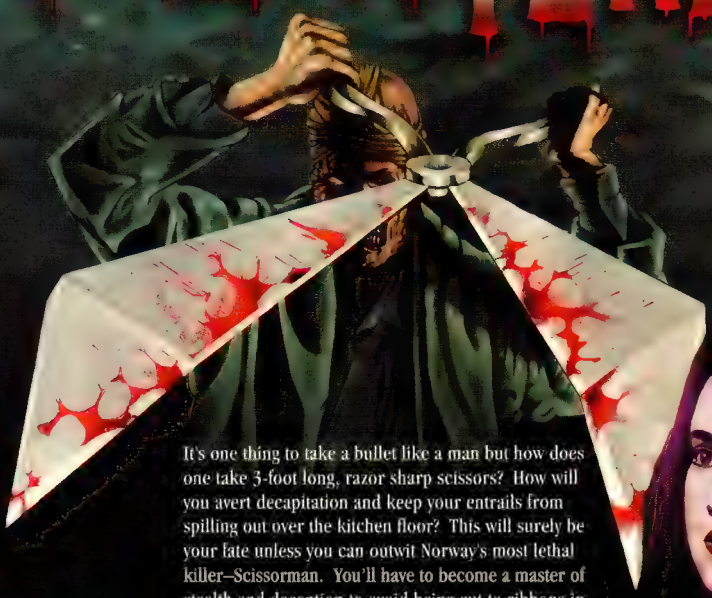
Web Address: [illegible]

G.A.S.P.!! Fighters' NEXTream

This N64 game is still very early. In fact, the name of this Konami 3-D fighter isn't even set in stone! The game puts players in a variety of three-dimensional environments ranging from the back streets of an inner-city to the aisles of what seems to be a church. The arenas have items scattered about them, but instead of just being stagnant background objects, players can use them to bash the opponent's head in. Another nice feature is customizable characters which you can save onto a memory pak and then challenge friends with your very own fighter.

After the fight, jump in your Winnebago and take a much-needed cross-country trip.

SHEAR TERROR



It's one thing to take a bullet like a man but how does one take 3-foot long, razor sharp scissors? How will you avert decapitation and keep your entrails from spilling out over the kitchen floor? This will surely be your fate unless you can outwit Norway's most lethal killer–Scissorman. You'll have to become a master of stealth and deception to avoid being cut to ribbons in this blood-soaked horror adventure.

- Five playable characters and ten different endings for super-extended replay value.
- Amazingly detailed, horrific graphics and special effects.
- Bone-chilling sound effects.

So grab your copy of Clock Tower™ turn out the lights, and pray.

CLOCK TOWER™

ASCII ENTERTAINMENT

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PlayStation

MATURE M ESRB

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Midway Trey Arch	1-4 Sports	N/A	January 1998

Web Address: www.midway.com

Olympic Hockey '98

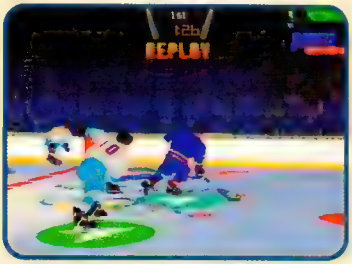
Midway Makes Their Own Olympic Contribution

Yeah, it really does look a lot like Wayne Gretzky 3-D Hockey.

Midway has dazzled us with some of the fastest, most exciting N64 sports titles to date. NBA Hang Time as well as Wayne Gretzky's 3-D Hockey have shown us that arcade hits can be ported to the N64 while keeping all the necessary elements of good gameplay and graphical splendor under the hood. Now Midway is taking one of its best game engines from Wayne Gretzky's 3-D Hockey and making yet another hockey game just in time for the '98 Winter Olympics.

Olympic Hockey '98 will take everything that is good about Gretzky 3-D Hockey and mix it up with an international lineup of hockey hopefuls to create one "beast" of an Olympic hockey game. Most of the same maneuvers as well as the glow-puck should be included. It's safe to say that if you are good at Gretzky 3-D you'll be good at this game as well.

All that fast gameplay coupled with such a large selection of teams will create quite a few interesting match-ups. We're looking forward to the France/Sweden clash but we also understand that not every team has been confirmed for use in the game, so we won't get our hopes up too high. It's also unclear as to exactly how many teams and if all the players involved will be actual licensed players (amateur or pro all the way?). We do know one thing for sure, if it plays as well as Wayne Gretzky 3-D Hockey, it should be another competent title from the folks at Midway.



Each country sends its best pros to represent their people. (Above)

The USA vs. Russia matchup should be popular. (Right)

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release*
[illegible]	1-4 Sports	95	[illegible]

Web Address: www.konami.com

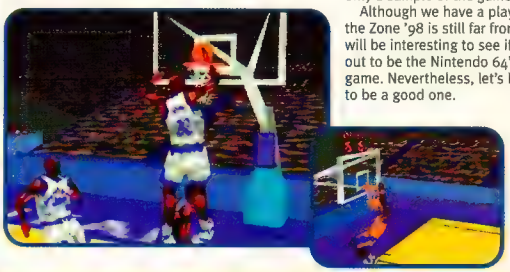
NBA In The Zone '98

For two years, Konami's In the Zone series has delivered an arcadish brand of fast-paced basketball to the PlayStation. Finally, it's almost ready to arrive on the Nintendo 64.

We have finally received our first playable version of In the Zone '98, and it seems like there won't be any surprises. The gameplay appears conceptually similar to the past editions of the series, with perhaps a few more realistic elements. Players now move around on the court more like those on an NBA team (unlike previous ITZs where offense consisted of nothing but one-on-one match-ups). Also, just about every rule is being enforced (and is togglable on and off).

The 3-D graphics are still in their preliminary stages. Right now they look nice, but the camera angles and animations are still being worked on. Also, only two teams (Bulls and Jazz) could be used, along with only a sample of the game's options.

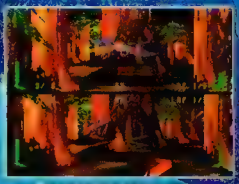
Although we have a playable version, In the Zone '98 is still far from completion. It will be interesting to see if this game turns out to be the Nintendo 64's first basketball game. Nevertheless, let's hope it turns out to be a good one.

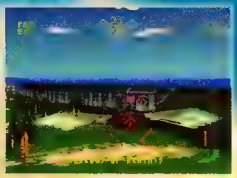


The intro of In the Zone '98 shows off some of this game's dunks.

The gameplay seems more realistic than its predecessors. We'll see.

Lock-on with guided missiles and lightning-assaults.





Control speed by cropping and reining.

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Leptus is dying. The tournament is on. And everyone wants a chance to succeed the great Emperor of Entymion. Twenty-two bug-back warriors will enter a true-3D race to the death on their freakish mounts around 6 otherworldly tracks. And you will be one of them. Stunning weapons. Multiple attacks. 6 degrees of movement. Deathmatches. Time trials. And, of course, the ultimate Tournament. Enter the hi-resolution hive of insane insect racing! Bugriders: The Race of Kings...it's the real sting!

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THE RACE OF KINGS™

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Designed for Microsoft Windows 95

PlayStation

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n SPACE™

GT Interactive Software

www.gtinteractive.com

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Compile Compile	1 or 2 Puzzle	100	Now Japan

Web Address: www.compile.co.jp

Puyo Puyo Sun 64

A Classic Puzzler Revisited

One of our favorite puzzle games is making a reappearance on the Nintendo 64 in Japan. Puyo Puyo originally came to the U.S. in the form of Kirby's Avalanche (Super NES) and Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine (Sega Genesis). This classic formula hasn't really changed in the 16- to 64-Bit transition.

If you've played any of the old Puyo Puyo games, then you know how to play Sun 64. The concept is simple: Move and rotate cascading pairs of colored blobs in order to form colored matches of four. The matches don't have to line up—four pieces of one color simply have to be touching. It certainly sounds like a boring and stale concept, but it's not until you learn the combo system that the game gets interesting (hey, you wouldn't play Tetris without trying for a "Tetris," would you?).

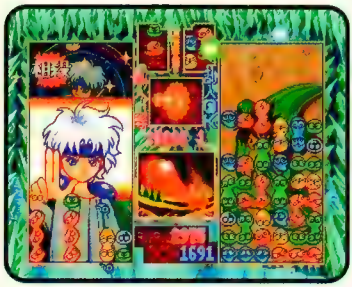
Combos are a breeze. Simply place the colored blobs in a formation such that disappearing matches will cause blobs sitting on top to make further matches. The more chain reactions, the better the combo. If you're playing a Vs. game (against the computer or another human), then the combos will throw garbage blobs onto the opposing field of play. These garbage blobs serve only one purpose: to inhibit gameplay. Here's where you'll find the first major difference in the new Puyo Puyo. Unlike prior Puyos, Sun 64 now has three garbage blob options (see sidebar).

It also offers a myriad of game options, like one- or two-player matches, Survival Modes (where you last as long as you can), 16 player tournaments and Tokuton Nazo Puyo, a Practice/Puzzle Mode where the CPU will show you how to set up combos up to 16 times big (that is, if you can successfully mirror what the computer wants you to do).

In Japan, this game has already come out on the Saturn and will be coming out shortly for the PlayStation. Puyo Puyo Sun 64 differs only with its support of the Rumble Pak (which is there to give you a friendly vibrating reminder that garbage blobs are actively being thrown in your direction). Don't expect this game over here, but if anything further develops, we'll let you know.

The player on the right is in some serious trouble.

Don't ask us what these two frisky characters are up to. Apparently, this stuff happens all the time in the Story Mode.



Puyo Puyo Sun 64 awards large combos with flashy background character animations.

The Training Mode has shadows to show you exactly where to place blobs for maximum efficiency.

Gamer's Edge

Taking Out the Garbage

The Puyo Puyo Sun games introduce a new kind of garbage blob...that isn't exactly garbage. If you choose to play with sun pieces, you'll start out with a row of them at the bottom of the playing field. Removing them (which is done the same for all garbage blocks: combo away regular pieces adjacent to them) will cause mega damage to your opponent. They will throw a ton of normal garbage blocks on the opposite side. In fact, a small combo done next to a couple of suns can drown out your opponent almost instantly. Once in a while, new suns will find their way into the mix to make things interesting.

The second type of garbage block is the two-hitter, which was introduced in Puyo Puyo Tsu (Puyo Puyo 2 to you and me—it was never released here). These need to be hit twice to be removed.

The third type is just the normal clear garbage blob that we saw in the original Puyo Puyo.

Warning: This is a preview of a Japanese title that may or may not be released in the U.S. It is designed to run on a Japanese system. **Import at your own risk**

Get the point? This magazine is loaded with reasons why you need the SA-VA7 speakers—a sound system that can rattle your inner organs. It's 17 inches of the most realistic sound projection you'll ever drool over. Bib sold separately.

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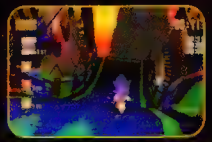

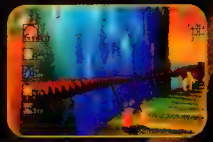

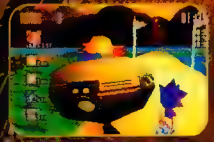

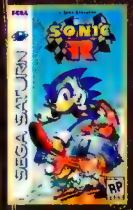

SEGA SATURN

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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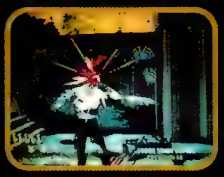
Game Directory
- Panzer Dragoon Saga
- Burning Rangers
- Falcom Classics
- Lunar Magic School

In Sega News...

Sega's Saturn is still going strong overseas, despite being a third-place contender in the video game hardware wars in 1997. Luckily for Saturn fans, Sega is still supporting the system with new games (though support will be dwindling as we get further into the year), but third-party support is vanishing quickly. Capcom's last few Saturn titles will probably take a bow during 1998,



Sega's House of the Dead has been officially confirmed for Saturn.

and it's unknown whether the U.S. will see X-Men Vs. Street Fighter with the 4 MB RAM cartridge upgrade. Working Designs has also bowed out of supporting the Saturn, leaving fans wondering which game will be the company's last.

Sega's attention will turn to Dural around the beginning of April, and if all goes well, Sega of America will show the Dural at this year's E³. That will leave the Saturn with a few more solid games before the system is pronounced dead.

Speaking of the dead, Sega recently confirmed that House of the Dead will be arriving on the Saturn early on in 1998, as will a winter edition of DecAthlete.

Role-Playing On The Edge

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Sega Sega	1 Action/RPG	50	March 1998

Web Address: www.sega.com

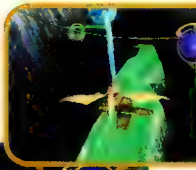
Panzer Dragoon Saga

The Panzer Dragoon series set new standards in 3-D gaming with fantastic visuals and simple gameplay. Now, Sega is taking the popular Panzer Dragoon story line, graphics and game mechanics and putting them into a brand-new action/RPG.

We have a little information and a few screen shots to share with you. So far we know that the game takes place in the Panzer Dragoon universe, but this time, you'll have full 360-degree flight and freedom of exploration. You won't have to play the game on predetermined rails like you did in the first two games.

As Edge, a young hunter who is saved by a dragon, you can explore 12 levels in the sky, on the ground, on dragon or by foot. You can pick up a variety of different weapons including locking pulse guns and lightning strikes. The dragon itself can morph into several possible forms (each with its own special abilities) with time and experience.

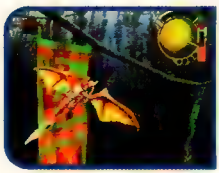
On the E³ demo we played in early 1997, combat was handled with a menu-driven system. Now, Sega is telling us that the battles will be in realtime 3-D. Either this means fighting will be done in the vein of Final Fantasy games (realtime with menus), or it will be in a shooting style like in previous Panzer games. We're also not sure at this point how exactly



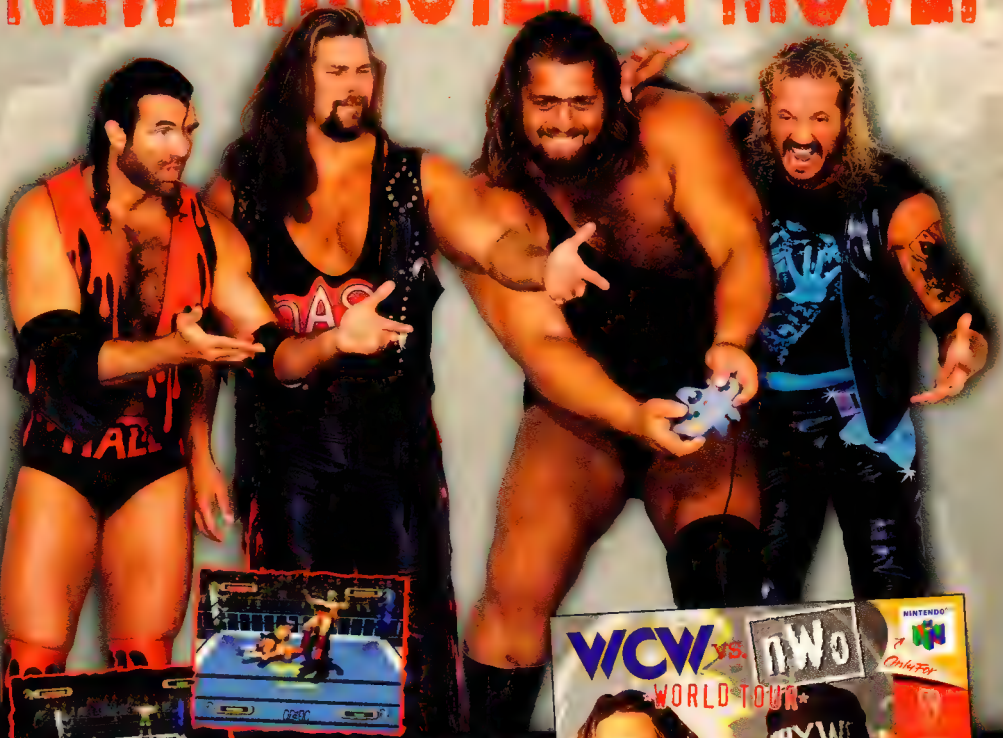
Graphically, Panzer Dragoon Saga doesn't look much different from the first two games in the series.

role-playing will work its way into a traditional shooter game. Panzer Saga will have characters to fully interact with, but as to what extent, we don't know yet. We'll have an update and let you know as soon as we get our hands on a playable demo.

Considering this enormous game will be packed on four discs, we can't help but get excited. More of Panzer Dragoon can't possibly be a bad thing, and if Panzer Saga has many of the same elements as the previous two installments, then Sega will have a huge hit on their hands. More on this game to come.



GIANT DEMONSTRATES HIS MOST DEVASTATING NEW WRESTLING MOVE.



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– GamePro, July 1997

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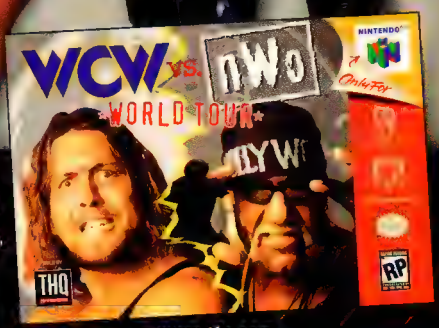
- Tag Team and simultaneous four-player action
- Five different play modes.



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THQ

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Sega Sonic Team	1 Action	60	February 1998

Web Address: www.sega.com

Burning Rangers

Can This Scorcher Save The Saturn?

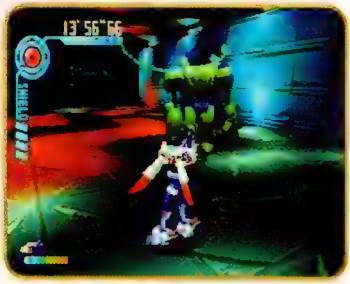
His name is Yuji Naka, and he's the game designer responsible for some of Sega's finest hours on the consoles—namely, the Sonic games and NiGHTS. Naka's next game, Burning Rangers, looks to be another bright spot on his track record, as well as a departure from his characteristically cutesy projects.

Burning Rangers has you controlling either a male or female member of a futuristic rescue squad charged with scouring the maze-like interior of a burning space station for survivors. You use an assortment of firefighting weapons to battle the blaze, which acts as intelligently as regular enemies in other games (plus, the fire makes a cool backdraft sound just before it blasts through a wall to get you).

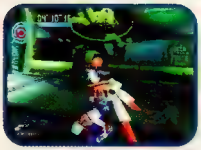
The station is made up of four main levels, each with two stages and a Boss stage. And with between 50 and 80 rooms in each stage, this game isn't tiny. Fortunately, you'll have access to a Maps Screen.

Running off a highly modified NiGHTS engine, the graphics in Burning Rangers are extraordinary. You'll see plenty of software transparency and dynamic lighting effects, making the game the best-looking on the system yet.

You can charge up your guns to battle bigger blazes.



Fire ain't all you battle. You'll also come across roving robots and at least four Bosses.



The rangers have jetpacks that let 'em pull off double jumps. Control is perfect.

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
ESP Game Arts	1 RPG	100	Now Japan

Web Address: www.tokyoweb.or.jp/gamearts/index.html

Lunar! Magic School

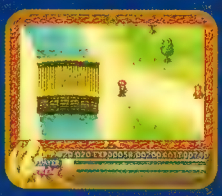
Even though there are no more Lunar games scheduled for release on the Saturn in the U.S., Japanese gamers are still getting plenty. The latest Lunar game, an upgrade/remix of the popular Game Gear RPG, Lunar! Magic School, has just been released for the Saturn in Japan, and so far, it looks great. Like Lunar: The Silver Star and Lunar: Eternal Blue, Magic School offers classic overhead 2-D graphics and traditional RPG gameplay mixed with a compelling story, lots of voice acting and loads of full-screen, fully animated sequences. The character designs are a little bit more childish by nature (after all, this WAS a Game Gear game at one point), but the overall quality of the game just screams GameArts. Sadly, it may be too tough for U.S. gamers to play because of all the Japanese text.

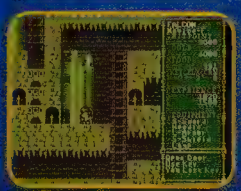
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Victor/JVC Falcom	1 Compilation	100	Now Japan

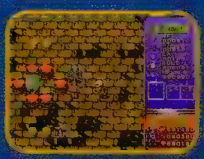
Web Address: www.falcom.co.jp

Falcom Classics

The Japanese Saturn RPGs just keep coming! This one is a compilation of three truly classic Falcom games—Dragon Slayer, Xanadu and best of all—Ancient Ys Vanished Omen (otherwise known as Ys Book I). All three games are available in their original modes, or with updated text and graphics (and some other little surprises, we're sure) in the new Saturn Mode. There's also a special second CD in the package that includes a Voice Drama, a special Promo Movie, Character Illustrations from the three games and more. Why can't WE get these kinds of RPGs here in the States?







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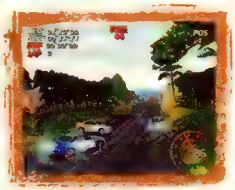

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In Sony News...

More than two years after its release in the U.S. (and three since its release in Japan), the PlayStation has captured the attention of gamers worldwide. At first there was skepticism that as a newcomer to the video game industry, Sony wouldn't be able to compete with the likes of Nintendo and Sega, much less take the lead.

Twenty million units later, Sony has collected the largest library of game titles of all the 32-Bit and higher systems. In 1998, Sony expects to increase their lead, hoping to fend off Nintendo's strong advances by touting low-priced, quality games. The first few months of the new year will be a turn-around from the onslaught of software that showed up in the last quarter of '97, but there are still a few games that will satisfy the most demanding players.

In the first months of 1998, there are Final Fantasy Tactics, Resident Evil 2 and Blasto—three of the more anticipated games for the system that were supposed to originally be out at the end of '97.

Whether you've just bought a PlayStation or have been with the system since the beginning, this year should prove to be one of the system's best. Heated competition with Nintendo will only benefit players.

Square's Latest Gem Is Almost Here

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
SCEA Square	1 Simulation/RPG	60	February 1998

Web Address: www.playstation.com

Final Fantasy Tactics

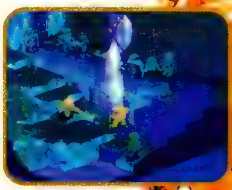
Now that the Final Fantasy VII phenomenon has finally died down (well, has it?), Square is preparing to stun the gaming world yet again with their latest release: the incredible new simulation/RPG, Final Fantasy Tactics. This time around, they've enlisted the help of several members of the design team behind Quest's enormously popular Ogre Battle and Tactics Ogre games, including heralded director and script writer Yasumi Matsuno, to help create the game.

Utilizing many of the features that made Tactics Ogre such a big hit in Japan, Final Fantasy Tactics is poised to become one of the most engrossing sim/RPGs ever. The game plays similar to Vandal Hearts, but with better graphics, a deeper story line and, best of all, an enhanced version of Square's Job/Ability system that was first used in the Super Famicom game, Final Fantasy V. By earning Job Points (JP) in battle, players can raise their Job Levels, allowing them to learn new Abilities in any of the over 20 Jobs that become available during play. There are four different types of Abilities that can be learned and over 400 Abilities in all.

By mastering different Jobs and combining different Abilities (which remain with you throughout the game), you can create all different kinds of characters, from Knights that can cast White Magic to Dancers that can summon beasts. The possibilities are endless, and it adds to the strategy element of the game in immeasurable ways. In addition, you can buy and sell equipment for your characters, hire new soldiers and best of all—you can go back and re-view any of the key story scenes from earlier parts of the game, in case you need to refresh yourself as to what's going on. This innovative feature should be available in all RPGs—it's amazingly helpful.

There are various elements that come into play that can affect the pace and outcome of battles, but rather than try to explain it all (it'd take several pages to do so), we'll just tell you this: Although complex, once you get into them, you will NOT want to stop. The gameplay is so addictive it's scary, and Final Fantasy fans who can deal with (or even better, prefer) a taste of strategy in their game will be in total heaven with FFT. Watch for it this February—it's gonna be a hot one.

An involving story unwinds as you progress from chapter to chapter.



As is the case with any Final Fantasy game, magic plays a big role in FF Tactics' battles.

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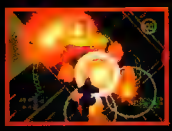

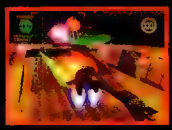

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
SCEA Kronos	1 or 2 Fighting	80	January 1998

Web Address: www.playstation.com

Cardinal SYN

This Time, Fighting's Not a SYN

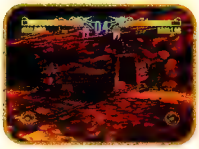
If you take a quick glance at Cardinal SYN, you just might swear you saw Soul Blade being played. The game features the same type of fighters, backgrounds and style of play as Namco's fighter.

The graphics in this one resemble Soul Blade in that the characters are from a fantasy-type realm, full of different types of warriors. The game features eight fighters at the beginning, with more selectable after they are unlocked.

One thing that stands out about Cardinal SYN is when characters are far away from each other. Like most games, the camera zooms back, but in Cardinal SYN, it can go back what seems to be a half of a mile, creating a huge environment. This isn't all that useful though, since it's nearly impossible to see the enemy or your character, but it sure does look cool.

During a fight, you can pick up items by breaking little crates inside the arena. These crates (which are in every stage) have various items that can be used, like some that give more health. Each player has his/her own unique stage that resembles the attitude of the character. The warrior's stage is dark and has torches on the wall—like something out of *Conan*.

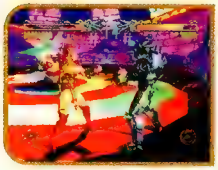
The environments have items in them which can do damage to your character. In one stage mining carts roll by and can run down your character. In another stage, little lava trails can take some of your life bar away if you're not careful.



Look out for objects in the environment that do damage.

When the camera zooms out, it really zooms out. So much so that you can hardly see your character.

Like many fighting games of late, Cardinal SYN features cool lighting effects when you slash at an enemy.



Spawn

All seems calm while exploring these dungeons until an enemy appears and the game turns into a fighter.

Spawn's mood is one of doom with added exploration and action elements. Everything from the moody music in the background to the strange sky above gives you kind of a creepy, gritty feeling. (Think of the first Tomb Raider but with more action.) In fact, Spawn allows players to explore, but when they encounter a bad guy, the game turns into a fighting game—side view and all—until the enemy's dead. You can take the role of Savage, Medieval and Street Spawn. Each of these different Spawns has its own unique levels with enemies created for the game or ones from the popular comic book. The game also allows you to control the camera manually and go into a first-person view. You can't control Spawn in either of these Viewing Modes, but it helps when finding enemies and secret areas.

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Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Namco Namco	1 or 2 Light Gun	90	January 1998

Web Address: www.namco.com

Point Blank

Best Light Gun Game Ever?

Point Blank has been a long-time arcade favorite with *EGM* editors, and now that we've gotten a chance to play the unfinished U.S. PlayStation demo, we're drooling.

Point Blank is known as GunBullet in Japan (previewed in issue #100). It is a light gun game that looks extremely childish and simplistic next to today's polygon-intense gun games. It involves nothing more than shooting various sprites on a screen.

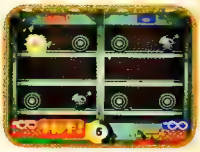
But it's the delivery that sets Point Blank apart from the rest. Instead of going through stage after stage, shooting bad guys (and not the good), Point Blank puts you up to a series of small challenges that requires speed, coordination and accuracy.

For example, you might have 15 seconds to destroy a helicopter or you might have 30 seconds to shoot beer bottles off a shelf. Or, the game may simply give you one bullet to shoot an apple off some poor schmuck's head. Point Blank even has levels where you have to shoot the numbers 1 through 16 in order, or type out words by shooting typewriter keys on the TV screen. Some games give you a time limit, some an ammo limit. But the stage is unique and different enough to keep you coming back for more.

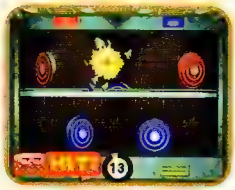
In addition, the home version of Point Blank will include Eight-player Tournament Modes (perfect for parties), extra training missions (with never-before-seen challenges) and an RPG-type Quest Mode (where you defeat enemies and earn experience points by shooting through several minigames).

This one- or two-player game will only support Namco's own Guncon (one will be packed in with Point Blank, but you'll need another for two-player games).

Be the first to shoot all the numbers (in order, mind you).



Shooting bombs will cost you one heart.



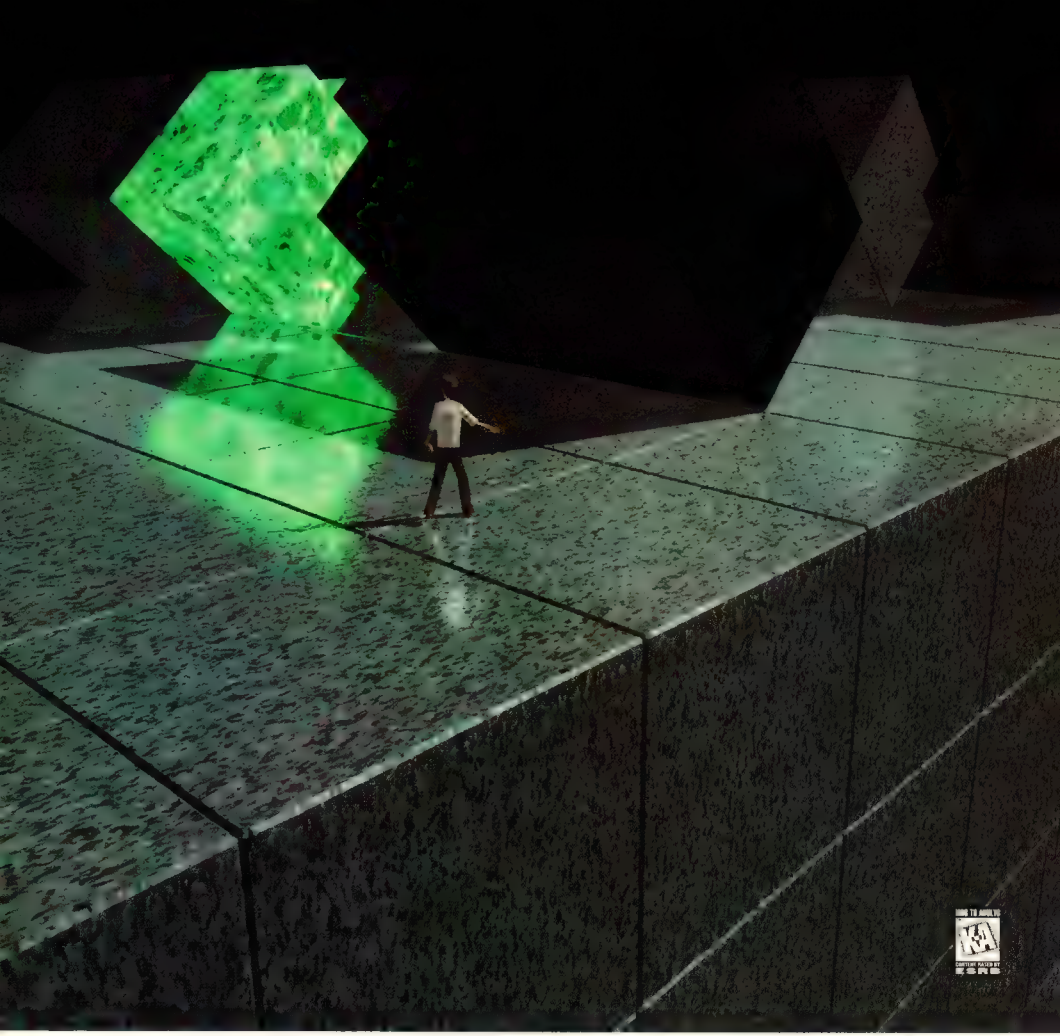
You must shoot the fiery volcano rocks before they hit the panicking doctor.

You have exactly six bullets and 15 seconds to shoot each side of this spinning cube once.

My 2 Cents

[illegible] my local arcade. I was past Super [illegible]. I skip by Tokyo Wars, Tekken 3? Time Crisis? House of the Dead? Who cares!?! It's Point Blank my friends and I are looking for. This is my favorite light gun game of all time. Don't let its simple looks fool you. Cheers to such a basic and fun game (but jeers to it only being compatible with Namco's Guncon. Talk about greed.)

blocks
thatkill



IF YOU'VE GOT A QUICK MIND AND EVEN QUICKER THUMBS, YOU CAN OUTWIT THE GEOMETRIC TERRORS IN THIS 3-D BRAIN TWISTER AND EARN A SCORE THAT'LL HAVE YOUR CHUMS KNEELING AT YOUR GENIUS FEET. OF COURSE, THERE'S ALWAYS A FLIP SIDE: FAILURE EQUALS DEATH. AND ETERNAL DUMBNESS. HAVE FUN.

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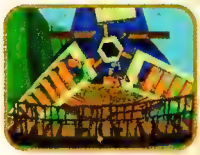
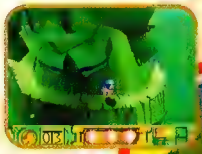
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Namco Namco	1 Action	85	February 1998

Web Address: www.namco.com

Klonoa



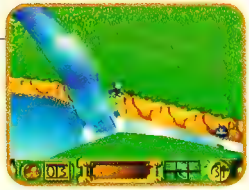


Everything in Klonoa has a clean, colorful look, and the hi-res visuals are incredibly sharp.

This 3-D platformer caught our attention way back at E³—where it was shown on tape—mainly because it's not the kind of game we expected from Namco. Of course with cutesy games like this one, Point Blank and the forthcoming Pac-Man Ghost Zone, Namco's lineup looks as diverse as ever.

The game has you guiding Klonoa, a kitty who proudly wears a Pac-Man cap and whose ears are topped with hands. Accompanied by his ball-shaped buddy, Huppo, Klonoa travels through nearly 30 stages reminiscent of the scrolling 3-D levels in Pandemonium!, except he'll stop once in a while to chat with various characters.

Klonoa can use his ears to grab enemies and bounce them off the wall or lob them at other baddies. He can also flap his ears to extend jumps and reach out-of-the-way platforms. The levels are filled with slides and winding tracks, and Klonoa will battle at least six Bosses during the course of his adventure. Although Klonoa doesn't seem particularly easy, Namco is gearing the game toward a younger audience.



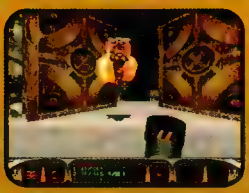
Like in Pandemonium!, you'll do a lot of slidin' down steep, slick surfaces.

Klonoa's later levels get pretty crazy with lots of platforms and enemies your character's handy ears can nab. And to think Namco claims this game's for kids!?!

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release

Web Address:

Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown



Here's what fighting aliens in Lara Croft's world looks like.

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Z-Axis Z-Axis	1-4 Sports	N/A	2nd Quarter 1998

Web Address: N/A

Z-Axis Soccer

Just recently, a start-up developer in California called Z-Axis has begun showing off its wares. The game nearest to completion is a yet-to-be-named soccer game that will launch in Europe and then in the U.S. It is entirely possible that the game will use teams from across the world in its European release, while sporting the American Major League Soccer license when it arrives in the States. Not a whole lot is known about the game yet, and all we can show you are these screen shots taken from the PC version. Undoubtedly, the PS version of the game will be in a lower resolution.

The graphics on the PC version seem good—hopefully they will be on the PS version too.

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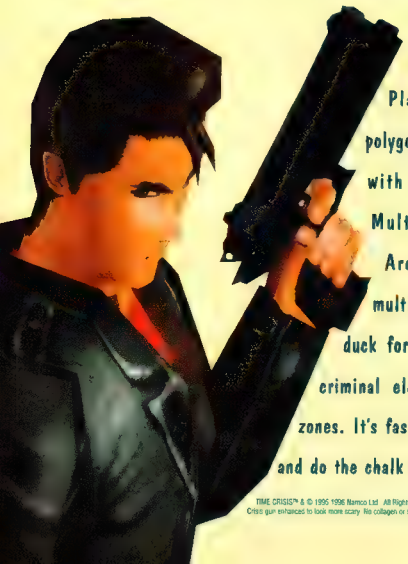

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Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Konami Konami	1-4 Sports	60	January 1998

Web Address: www.konami.com

Nagano Winter Olympics '98

Get Your Fingers Ready For The Olympics

Konami's Track and Field series takes on the events of the Winter Olympics in Nagano Winter Olympics '98. There are 13 different events that consist of several variations of skiing, snowboarding, speed skating, bobsled, luge, ski jumping, freestyle skiing and curling make their appearance in the game. Players have 16 countries to choose from as well as varying difficulty levels to select. Applying the classic button crunching gameplay pioneered by the T&F series has taken on a slightly new twist in Nagano Olympics '98. Many of the events only require a few taps to get started and then it becomes a race against the clock using only the directional pad and forward momentum. In fact, the only events requiring speed tapping are speed skating and just a small portion of the bobsled/luge events.

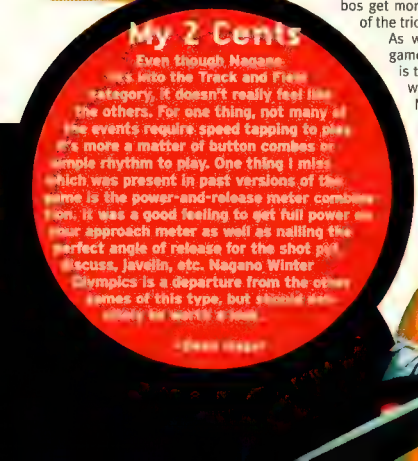
Being released simultaneously with its N64 counterpart, this version holds up pretty well against its 64-Bit brother. Naturally the 3-D graphics are not as pretty, but most of the animation is good. To its credit, this version has an extra speed skating event, but unfortunately does not have the cool snowboard half-pipe competition present in the Nintendo 64 version.

Different gameplay elements are present in the freestyle ski event. To complete a jump, a long button combo must be completed in a small amount of time just before the skier leaves the ramp. If done quick enough, the trick will be executed properly; if not, your player suffers the agony of defeat. In the N64 version the same principle applies to the snowboard half-pipe competition. It gets downright challenging when you need to hit a 12-button combo in about two seconds. The combos get more challenging as the difficulty of the trick goes up.

As with all the Track and Field games of the past, multiplayer is the best way to play. And while all the events of Nagano Olympics '98 are competitive, speed skating is the only one that enables you to see all four players on the screen at once. The shortage of on-screen multiplayer events is disappointing, but hey, there's nothing wrong with a good curling match against friends. It's just a little more cerebral and a little less frantic. Look for a full review on Konami's Olympic hopeful in the March issue of *EGM*.

It's no curling, but downhill snowboarding is fun just the same.

Ski jumping uses these unique power-release meters. They are difficult to master.



My 2 Cents

Even though Nagano fits into the Track and Field category, it doesn't really feel like the others. For one thing, not many of the events require speed tapping to play. It's more a matter of button combos or simple rhythm to play. One thing I miss which was present in past versions of the game is the power-and-release meter combination. It was a good feeling to get full power on your approach meter as well as nailing the perfect angle of release for the shot put, discuss, javelin, etc. Nagano Winter Olympics is a departure from the other games of this type, but should definitely be worth a look.

—Dean Hager

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Namco Namco	1 or 2 Compilation	100	Now

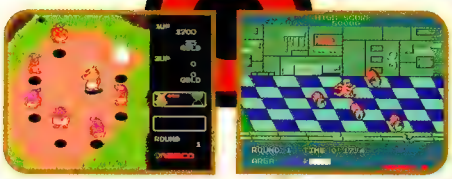
Web Address: www.namco.com

Namco Museum Vol. 5

The Last In the Series... Unless There's An Encore

There has been so many Namco Museum compilations out that it's become customary to get one every few months. Namco Museum Vol. 5 is the last in the series (probably because they've run out of notable arcade games), unless Namco decides to bring over the Namco Museum Encore that has been recently released in Japan.

Namco Museum Vol. 5 won't bring back as many nostalgic memories as some of the others, because the games contained on it aren't really considered classics. The games here represent a transitional period of gaming when companies were struggling to figure out how to use their more powerful arcade hardware. As a result, many of the games in this volume stress graphics over substance. For example, Pac-Mania is essentially Pac-Man in an isometric environment. Some of its levels are even identical to the ones found in the original game. Metro Cross is a shallow futuristic racing game that uses pseudo 3-D graphics to impress. Others such as Baraduke (a side-scrolling shooter) and Legend of Valkyrie (an action/adventure) were innovative in many ways, but still not excellent games. Dragon Spirit was probably the best (and most difficult) of the bunch because it was a high-quality, great-looking shooter when it arrived.



Legend of Valkyrie kinda reminds you of Legend of Zelda, doesn't it?

Because of the questionable quality of these games, the best thing about this volume may be the extras and not the games. Reference cards, arcade art and 3-D mock-ups of the game's world are all available to be browsed. In the Pac-Mania "world" ghosts can be floating around in a house, until you eat a power pill on a table, which makes them scurry away, blue with fear. There's even an "Opera House" that allows you to view slide shows of the game's art in addition to listening to its music and sounds. Namco certainly did a great job of presenting the games by giving you a 3-D museum and other virtual worlds to explore. Also, like many of the games in the Namco volumes, you can customize the arcade game to your liking by modifying it via dipswitches and other menu toggles, just as arcade owners would.

This slide show viewer, accessible through the "Opera House," allows you to view the sights and sounds from the games contained on the disc.

Though it may not be packed with the best old games, Namco Museum Vol. 5 still serves the purpose it was made for—nostalgia. Whether that's worth purchasing this bundle of memories is solely up to you.

Dragon Spirit was one of the best shooters of the time.

Baraduke's action and exploration bears a striking resemblance to Metroid. Coincidence?

A fully rendered 3-D museum is available for you to browse.

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ISSUE #1

CHECK OUT OUR HOT NEW GAMES AND PREPARE TO GET ROCKED!

IN THIS ISSUE:

MACE: THE DARK AGE

Pandemonium 2

The NHL & NHLPA Present WAYNE GRETZKY'S 3D HOCKEY '98

San Francisco RUSH: EXTREME RACING

Mortal Kombat Trilogy SUB-ZERO

MAXIMUM FORCE

TOPGEAR RALLY

MIDWAY PRESENTS GREATEST HITS

THE MIDWAY COLLECTION 2

RAMPAGE WORLD TOUR

NBA FASTBREAK '98

eat.

burp.

eat.

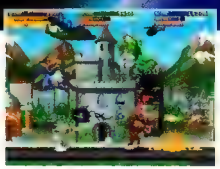
burp.

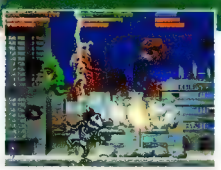
eat.

burp.

puke!

These guys know how to party.





RAMPAGE™ WORLD TOUR

Midway Rocks the House

PlayStation™

SEGA SATURN™

TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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CHOOSE FROM 9 RIPPIN' POLYGON CARS! ALSO, LOOK FOR HI
VEHICLES - YOU WON'T BELIEVE 'EM!
TEST YOUR DRIVING SKILLS ON 5 INTENSE TRACKS: DESERT, JUNGLE, STRIP MINE, MOUNTAIN AND COASTLINE.
Developed by
BOSS GAME STUDIOS
Produced by
KEMCO
Midway ROCKS HOUSE
MIDWAY
NINTENDO 64
Designed For N64 Rumble Pak
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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Midway ROCKS THE HOUSE

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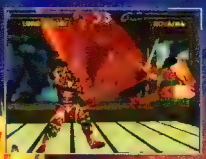
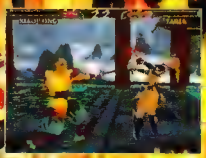
MEET LORD DEIMOS. HE'S GOT LOOKS THAT KILL. HANDS OF STEEL. A ROTTEN DISPOSITION.

(AND HE'S ABOUT TO GET MEDIEVAL UPSIDE YOUR HEAD.)





Lord Deimos is just one of the vicious warriors you'll go against in Mace - The Dark Age. Each fighter comes with his or her own deadly weapon and so many different moves and combos that inflicting pain will be easier than ever before. And thanks to the arcade development of the "Voodoo Graphics" chipset, you'll get 3-D fighting like you've never seen before. So pick up Mace - The Dark Age today. But be careful of Lord Deimos - he's looking for his next victim.

MACE
THE DARK AGE

EVERYTHING'S A WEAPON.

Midway Rocks the House

MIDWAY

MATURE M

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PlayStation

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ID EGO LIBIDO

Satisfy all your needs, wants and desires.

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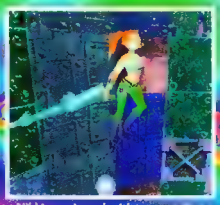
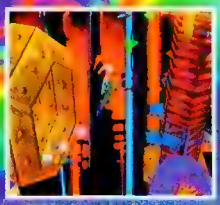
Fargus is a [illegible]



Nikki–equipped with powers [illegible] big bad girls have.

[illegible] mech through [illegible] 3D tunnels.



[illegible] bonus levels take you [illegible]

Pandemonium 2

Our programmers found a way to create the most authentic basketball game around.

NBA Fastbreak '98. The most realistic, full-motion 5-on-5 sim you'll ever play. We've duplicated the NBA's hottest players and their moves. You call the shots: use Rodman's rebound or O'Neal's power dunk; make Stockton shut down Kerr; have Hill take it to the hole and Hardaway shoot the three! There's only one way to play a more realistic game of basketball – get drafted into the NBA.

Bonus inside game! NBA Fastbreak '98 playbook. A Midway exclusive! Authentic inside tips on NBA team plays and individual player moves. And they're yours to call.

i love this stuff!

OFFICIAL NBA PRODUCT LICENSED

NBA FASTBREAK '98

The fastest way into the NBA.™

Midway ROCKS the HOUSE

MIDWAY

CD-ROM

PlayStation

RATING PENDING

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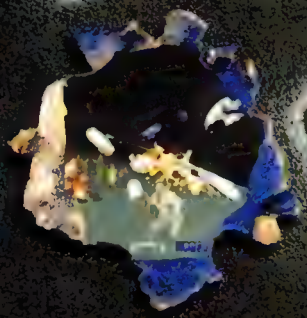
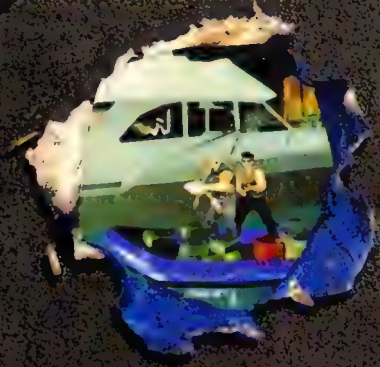
5603-97R3

ADMIT IT.

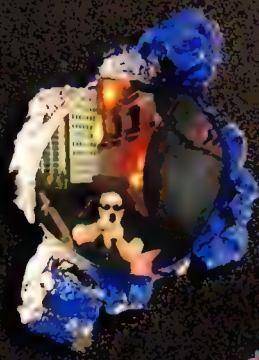
Sometimes you'd feel better if you could just shoot every damn thing in sight.





(BUT THEN THERE'S THAT DEATH PENALTY THING.)

Time to lock and load, pal. Straight from arcades everywhere, here comes Maximum Force. It's you against elusive terrorists and you control the body count. You'll board helicopters, ATVs, underwater vehicles and shoot literally everything in sight. Gun down skinheads on three completely different missions. Blast your way into more than 15 secret rooms (three times as many as Area 51) and blow everything away with reckless prejudice. With Maximum Force, there's no such thing as too much firepower. Go ahead, pull the trigger.



MAXIMUM FORCE

PULL THE TRIGGER

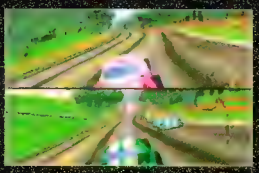
Midway's Blocks House

MIDWAY

MATURE 17+ ESRB

THIS COULD HURT.

Okay, so you're flying through the city of San Francisco hitting a heart-pounding speed of 160 mph. But up ahead is Lombard Street – famous for its many curves.



Should you slow down? Or push the pedal? We suggest you nail it. Because you're in San Francisco Rush, the most awesome racing game to ever come home. There

are shortcuts. Hidden keys to help you find cool cars and even more shortcuts. And, of course, speed, air and totally awesome crashes. So bring home San Francisco Rush today. It won't hurt as much as you think.

San Francisco RUSH
EXTREME RACING

"What makes San Francisco Rush a great game is it's pure, raw, unadulterated fun."
Ultra Gameplayers

"San Francisco Rush is a game that's all about air. Not hot air...but real air."
Game Informer Magazine

Midway Rocks House

MIDWAY

CD-ROM

NINTENDO 64

PlayStation

KIDS TO ADULTS

K-A

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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- OLYMPIC HOCKEY '98™

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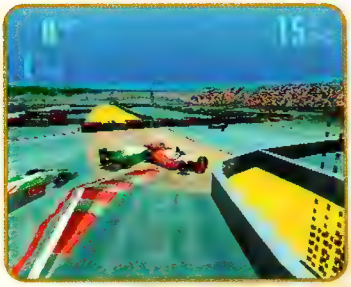
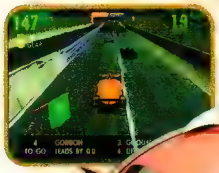
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Psygnosis Studio 33	1 or 2 Racing	N/A	March 1998

Web Address: www.psygnosis.com

Newman/Haas Racing



Wrecks are not spectacular roll-overs but more of the spinout fare.



Newman's Own Flavor Of Racing

Psygnosis has recently taken its talents as a Formula 1 race sim developer and applied it to the U.S. equivalent of that racing sport: CART racing (Championship Auto Racing Teams). Teaming up with American Newman/Haas Racing, featuring drivers Michael Andretti and Christian Fittipaldi, Psygnosis hopes to capture the U.S. racing sim crowd just as handily as they did the European with last year's F1 and F1 Championship.

The game will feature around 15 licensed CART drivers including the likes of Arie Luyendyk, Jimmy Vasser and Robby Gordon, not to mention their actual cars and '96 stats. Along with the drivers, 11 licensed tracks: MidOhio 200, Road America, Leguna Seca—to name a few—will be available including CART's newest race for 1998, the Texaco Grand Prix of Houston. The course styles range from the deep fast curves of Laguna to the nasty hairpin corners of The Toronto Indy. Some great oval tracks are present as well: Nazareth Speedway in Pennsylvania, Kahoona Massive in Florida as well as the Cheese-head, ahem... Milwaukee mile.

Like F-1, a ton of options will be at your fingertips. Vehicle setup will involve all the usual wing, fuel and tire adjustments as well as turbo, auto steer, auto brake and transmission select. Variable weather, race length, damage, crashes and One- or Two-player Mode are all selectable options. There's even an option to read driver bios if you so desire—or are just bored.

The game is similar to Psygnosis' F1 Championship both in general appearance and gameplay characteristics—not a bad thing. In fact, F1 was and is one of the sharpest-looking racers for the PlayStation to date. And if some of that "pretty" rubs off on Newman/Haas Racing, you won't find us complaining. As for differences, car control is markedly more responsive, especially with the ability to turn sharper and faster than was ever possible with F1. Additionally, the actual vehicles look a little bigger on screen and possess a deeper-sounding motor than the high-pitch whine of the Formula 1 cars. Beyond that, we'll have to wait until the game is further along in development to know how it all stacks up. But at this early date it's safe to say that Newman/Haas Racing could give CART World Series and Andretti Racing a real run for their money.

A cool overhead view of the pit is a nice touch in the game.

In the Simulation Mode, even marginal contact can cause race-ending damage.

The in-car view is usable, but not the best to use during the game.

My 2 Cents

...it was a fuzzy, but I can remember telling my associates here at *EGM* headquarters that F1 and F1 Championship would be a lot better if you could actually turn the cars sharper and faster. Well low and behold, Psygnosis must have been listening because Newman/Haas Racing features cars that not only look and handle well, they can turn on a dime. Hip hip hooray! Three cheers for these crafty Brits.

—Sean Mager

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Activision Activision	1 or 2 Action	N/A	March 1998

Web Address: www.activision.com

Vigilante 8

Twisted Metal Meets The '70s

On the PC, Activision has had good success with a '70s driving/combat game, Interstate '76. The formula worked so well, they decided to bring that funky retro feel to the PlayStation.

Vigilante 8 will be Activision's answer to Sony's Twisted Metal series. The difference is, this newer game is graphically superior (from early looks so far) and it takes place in the '70s.

The 12 super-charged muscle cars are all armed with high-tech weaponry, like side-mounted laser guns. All of the combat takes place on off-road terrains, which contain secret areas and power-ups.

Activision is currently tweaking V8, to insure that car and off-road terrain physics behave realistically, but at the same time, keeping the game speed fast enough to provide gamers a good time. If V8 can keep up with Twisted Metal 2 like Activision thinks it can, then people won't help but have fun playing it. After all, the game offers muscle cars, guns and off-roading...how can you go wrong with that formula?

Two players can battle it out via horizontal or vertical split-screen action.

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Web Address: [illegible]

Punky Skunk

You may have noticed that the PlayStation really doesn't have any kids' games. So what are kids' games anyway? Some say all video games are for kids, but we don't listen to them. The fact is, young lads seem to be drawn to cutesy mascot games with relatively simple objectives. Punky Skunk easily fits the bill, providing all the above elements and several more old-school attributes guaranteed to keep junior busy for a while.

Punky is basically a cute little skunk who knocks out his enemies by shooting a cloud of stinky gas in their general direction. Beyond that special talent he can also jump, and depending on the power-up, bounce around on a pogo stick or float about catching wind thermals with his parachute. Other special power-ups available to Punky are Rollerblades, jetpacks and snowboards, just to name a few.

Clearing a level is completely old-school side-scrolling action: Gather some stars, find power-ups, shoot enemies and move on to the next. The game itself draws (indirectly) from many old classics: Dig Dug, Sonic, Mario, etc. Nothing original to speak of, just a lot of the good stuff that worked well in the past recycled for the Skunk. It sounds like a cliché, but kids probably will like this game a lot. Heck Beav, you may even like it too.

Using the pogo stick to reach some of those out-of-the-way goodies.

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PlayStation

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ALPS Interactive

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
EA EA Sports	1-8 Sports	N/A	February 1998

Web Address: www.easports.com

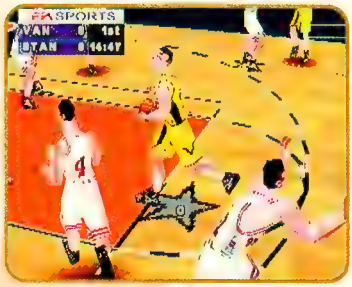
March Madness 98

EA Finally Makes A 32-Bit College Basketball Game

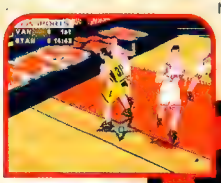
Given the popularity of college basketball these days, it's surprising that EA hadn't put out a 32-Bit college basketball game until now. Nevertheless, the wait is finally over as March Madness 98 is well under development.

EA's college basketball game uses a revamped version of the NBA Live 97 engine. Thus, the 3-D graphics and look of the game will be nearly identical, aside from a few new motion-captured moves (from the likes of Tim Duncan). On the other hand, the atmosphere of the game will consist of a rich college flavor. March Madness 98 will have the real basketball courts, teams, players and even many of the authentic school fight songs.

There are a few features that make this game stand out. Among them is the Dynasty Mode feature (also in NCAA Football 98) that lets players manage and play with a team throughout many years. One of the biggest challenges is keeping your team competitive by restocking a team's talent with freshmen players as junior and senior players graduate or leave for the pros. This involves player recruitment and choosing who is red-shirted. No word yet on whether the game will involve under-the-table deals and shady "gifts" to influence players to come to the school.

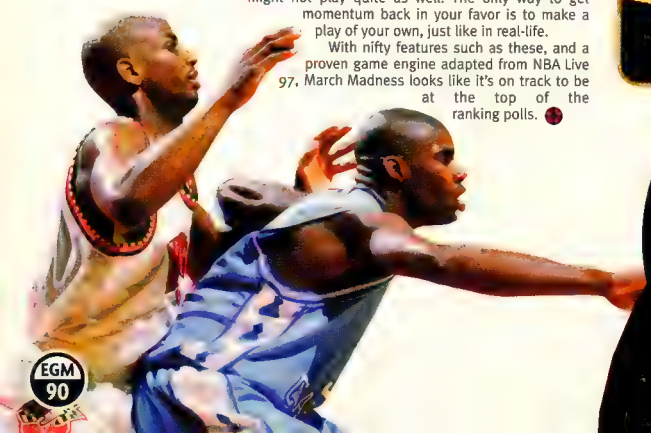


If you've played NBA Live 97, you'll know what to expect graphically in March Madness. EA has improved the engine somewhat, however.



One thing always missing from sports games is the effect the crowd and momentum has on the game. March Madness 98's "Momentum Meter" changes that by gauging the momentum felt on the court. If a team scores consecutive baskets or makes a big play, the crowd roars and the team gains confidence. Confidence is portrayed by a temporary boost of each player's abilities while momentum is on their side. If momentum is against you, your players might not play quite as well. The only way to get momentum back in your favor is to make a play of your own, just like in real-life.

With nifty features such as these, and a proven game engine adapted from NBA Live 97, March Madness looks like it's on track to be at the top of the ranking polls.



My 2 Cents

I really liked NBA Live 97, so I'm guessing I'll like this game too. Right now, the game is very early in development, making it difficult to form an opinion. If anything, I just wish they were able to use the NBA Live 98 game engine, which is even better. Regardless, I'm hoping we'll get a solid college basketball game with March Madness.

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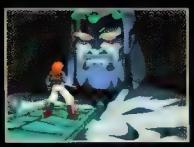
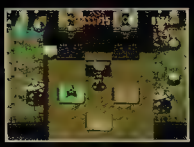
Between the Worlds of Light and Dark,
Between the State of Conscious and Unconscious,
Lies the Realm of the Dream Walker Alundra.

ALUNDRA™

PlayStation

TEEN
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
SCEI SCEI	1 or 2 Racing	75	December 1997 Japan

Web Address: www.sony.co.jp

GT Gran Turismo

Sony's New "Driving Simulator"

At the recent Tokyo Game Show, Sony unveiled their brand-new racing game, GT Gran Turismo. Billed as a "Real Driving Simulator." Gran Turismo is more than just your average racer. In addition to sporting several tracks and a variety of real cars (like a Mazda RX-7, a Toyota Castroll Supra GT, a Nissan R32 Skyline GTS25 Type S and literally dozens more), Gran Turismo allows you to take part in many unconventional tasks that you wouldn't expect to find in a racer. Tasks like obtaining a driver's license, buying and customizing cars (whether they be new, used or special-order cars) plus even going to the car wash to get your car washed! Talk about innovation!

In addition to all of these features, Gran Turismo sports a GT League Mode (with racing championships in four different Cups), a nifty Two-player Mode, a Special Event Mode and, of course, Time Trials. Perhaps best of all, Gran Turismo is the first game to fully support Sony's new Dual Shock Analog Pad that was recently released in Japan. In addition to the dual analog support of the pad (like our U.S. version has), the Dual Shock adds not one, but two-sided rumbling capabilities without the need for any batteries. Sweet!

Sony's Gran Turismo features over 100 cars and several awesome tracks.

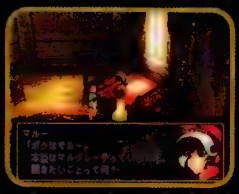
Sony is looking to "reinvent the wheel" when it comes to racers with their new racing sim, GT Gran Turismo.

Warning: This is a preview of a Japanese title that may or may not be released in the U.S. It is designed to run on a Japanese system. **Import at your own risk.**

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Square Square	1 RPG	N/A	January 1998 Japan

Web Address: www.square.co.jp

Xenogears



Xenogears is Square's first PS RPG that mixes anime with polygons.

As you can see here, the level of graphical detail in the game is extremely nice.

Square's latest RPG is coming along nicely, and due to a minor delay, the game (originally scheduled for a December release) will be available in Japan on Jan. 29.

Xenogears is a stylish-looking RPG that mixes polygons and hand-drawn anime style art to create an RPG world unlike any other. The story revolves around ancient robots known as "Gears" that were recently unearthed, and the quest is expected to be huge. The game's battle system looks phenomenal, with a fight style somewhat similar to FFVII's, but with more technique. For example, you have a bar similar to FFVII's Limit gauge, but when it fills up, rather than just selecting your attack, you choose it by performing certain button combos on the pad. Cool!

Sadly, because of religious overtones, it's doubtful that the game will ever reach the U.S.

Warning: This is a preview of a Japanese title that may or may not be released in the U.S. It is designed to run on a Japanese system. **Import at your own risk.**

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release*
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Web Address: [illegible]

Tenchu

Tenchu Music Entertainment, the developers of the Kileak series, Beltlogger 9 and Kowloon's Gate, are back with their latest title—the surprisingly intriguing ninja action-adventure game, Tenchu. Not much info on the game has been revealed yet, but it's expected that the game will be shown at the PS Expo in November in Japan. From what we've seen, the best way to describe it seems to be as a cross between Metal Gear Solid and...a ninja. We'll have more on this one as the [illegible]

Warning: This is a preview of a Japanese title that may or may not be released in the U.S. It is designed to run on a Japanese system. **Import at your own risk.**

RAYSTORM

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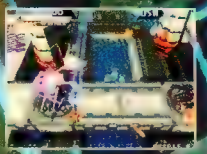
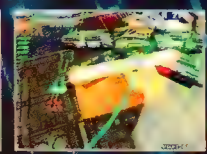
PlayStation

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB





SPAZ
Twitch Games Nothing Else!

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Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Namco Ltd. Namco Ltd.	1 or 2 Compilation	100	Now Japan

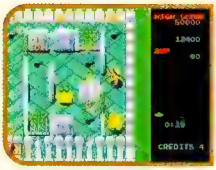
Web Address: www.namco.co.jp

Namco Museum Encore

A Fitting End to a "Classic" Game Series

What's this? Two Namco Museum games in one issue of *EGM*? Again? Well, as long as Namco keeps cranking out the hits, we'll keep covering 'em. Namco Museum Encore is the final addition to the long-running series of classic arcade ports, and judging by what we've played of it, the series is going out with a bang.

Namco Museum Encore features seven classic Namco arcade games from between 1980 and 1990, as well as the good old Information Desk with the robotic info babe we've all come to know and love. (OK, maybe I'm going a bit overboard there.) The Museum feature that the series is based around is no longer present in Namco Museum Encore, but you can inspect the arcade cabinets and boards for each game, as well as check out a list of every Namco arcade game ever released.



Rompers (above) and Motos (right) are two of the seven classics found on the disc.

Here are the seven games featured on Encore, followed by brief descriptions of the games: 1) King & Balloon (1980): A shooter similar to Galaxian, except you play a tank shooting down hot-air balloons that are after a king. 2) Motos (1985): The object is to bump your enemies off of varying playfields before they bump you first. Simple, but addictive. 3) SkyKid (1985): The classic comical flight shooter where you carry out mission objectives in your trusty 360-pulling aircraft. 4) Rolling Thunder (1986): What more do we need to say? It's the classic side-scrolling spy action game. 5) Wonder Momo (1987): Strange game where you fight evil on a stage in front of a crowd of cheering fans. 6) Dragon Saber (1990): The sequel to the awesome vertically scrolling shooter, Dragon Spirit (found on Vol. 5). 7) Rompers (1989): A cool puzzler where the object is to knock walls down onto unsuspecting opponents.

Let's hope for a U.S. release soon!

Behind The Screens

The Namco Games Chronicle

[illegible]

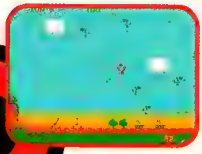
The Namco Games Chronicle is a cool little collectors item that (admittedly) only the hardest of the hardcore gamers will take interest in. It does make for a handy carrying case, but for such a nice-looking product, you have to wonder why it's only made out of cardboard and plastic. (D'oh!)

My 2 Cents

I've collected all of the Namco Museum games from the start, and while some were certainly better than others (Vol. 3 is still my favorite...Dig-Dug, Ms. Pac-Man and Galaxian all on one CD!), Encore definitely stands up as one of the best. Even though a few of the games are unknowns, they're all quite playable. Then of course there's the one that we've all been waiting for—Rolling Thunder. Right now Namco has no plans for a U.S. release, but judging by the success the series has enjoyed so far, I'd say it's a safe bet we'll see it here sometime soon.

[illegible]

More than likely, Rolling Thunder (above) will be the main selling point of Namco Museum Encore to classic arcade fans with this 100 percent accurate port-over.



NES owners may remember the first-gen shooter SkyKid (above, top), while arcade fans will surely be delighted with the only perfect port of Dragon Saber around (above).

Warning: This is a preview of a Japanese title that may or may not be released in the U.S. It is designed to run on a Japanese system. Import at your own risk.

4 A.M., TALLAHASSEE, FL—

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inset photos

Top: The Second Coming, slated for this fall. **Bottom:** Preparing for her return.

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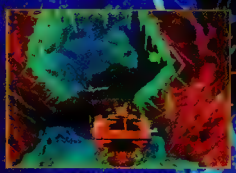
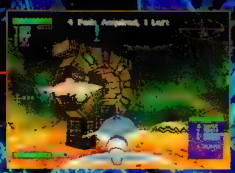


10 TOTALLY DIFFERENT HULL-CRUSHING ENVIRONMENTS.



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Don't worry. You'll know you're in too deep when the water pressure caves your head in.

Looks like you're in deep ship.

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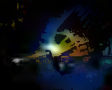
ARCHIPELAGO

LA GRITE

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Game Directory

- SF Rush: The Rock
- Solar Assault
- Motor Raid
- Road's Edge
- Samurai Shodown 64

All's Not Well at AMOA

There was a major problem with the AMOA this year. One of the two major annual arcade shows (the other being ASI, if you don't count smaller, theme-based shows such as the IAPPA), the AMOA was held much too late in the year for the likes of Namco and Sega, two of the biggest companies in the coin-op industry. In fact, those two companies were official no-shows. They instead presented their games under the Greater Southern Distribution Company. Regardless, Blitz by Midway was the buzz of the show with its simple gameplay and extraordinary 3Dfx graphics. Konami FINALLY showed a playable version of Fighting Bujitsu on their Cobra hardware, and it definitely gets the vote for best-looking fighting game ever. Capcom was especially disappointing: no SFA3, Marvel vs. Capcom or SFIII: 2nd Impact. All they had was Gem Fighter and Marvel vs. SF. This year's AMOA seemed to focus more on technology than the games themselves. For example, computer companies such as GT Interactive, Intel and Quantum 3D were showing how PCs could benefit operators and consumers alike with arcade boards that boast stunning graphics and are easy to upgrade.

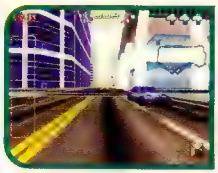
No Rush To Escape From The Rock

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Atari Games Atari Games	1-8 (Link) Driving	100	Now 1997

Web Address: www.midway.com

San Francisco Rush: The Rock

SF Rush is one of the most innovative driving games ever released in the arcades, and it went on to become the most successful driving game in Atari's 25-year history. With a realistic driving model, force-feedback steering, awesome jumps and shortcuts, not to mention gameplay that mixes the play mechanics of Sega's Daytona USA or Super GT with Atari's own Hard Drivin' series, Rush was much more than a simple driving simulation. The graphics were extremely crisp and clear (thanks in no small part to 3Dfx technology) and the levels showed some of the coolest areas of San Francisco.



The Rock's corkscrews and loops maintain the Hard Drivin' feel.

Now, timed with the release of Rush for the N64, Atari has released an arcade update called San Francisco Rush: The Rock, Alcatraz Edition. What does this new title add to the mix? Well, quite simply, more of what you loved. You get four new cars, including a taxi cab and pick-up truck for starters. And there are additions to the existing tracks in the form of shortcuts and mirror versions.

Of course there are brand-new tracks as well. The Rock track is a figure-eight tour around the infamous prison island. And you get four other tracks that are based off those in the N64 version. SF Rush: The Rock is an excellent update that gives you a reason to go to the arcade even if you have the original at home. It's likely to be as big a hit for Williams as its predecessor.

For lefties, righties, nose pickers,
shark attack survivors,
folks with poison oak,
avid porn fans,
pissed off New York taxi cab drivers,
a certain mid-80's hard rock drummer,
that clumsy kid in shop class,
people who gave their right arm for something,
and Sabrina Whitehead,
who wrote down absolutely everything
Mrs. Dinklemeyer said in History 101.

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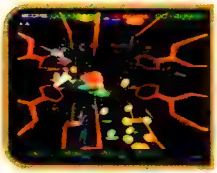
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Konami Konami	1 Shooter	100	Now 1997

Web Address: www.konami.com

Solar Assault

Gradius Gets A Star Fox-Style 3-D Makeover



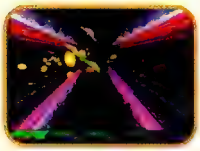
Gradius and its subsequent sequels were extremely popular in the arcades and home market. The idea was fairly simple, yet revolutionary. Instead of nabbing set power-ups, you get a token for destroying a group of enemies, and that token can be added to others to earn a power-up of your choice. Now the shooting classic gets a facelift in the style of Star Fox. There are still all the same weapon types, including laser, ripple and options (you can still have up to four option drones that hover around you shooting and acting as shields), but the graphics have been totally redone in 3-D.

Solar Assault is a continuation of the Gradius story line—unfortunately there's nothing available about the story at this time. What is known is that many aspects of this game are from Gradius, such as the characters Vic Viper and Lord British, as well as enemies such as Tutankhaman-attack and more. The game packs many options, as well. For instance, you can set power-ups to auto or manual. Auto means that you get each power-up in order. Manual means you can choose what power-ups you want at any time.

Each ship has its own set of power-ups, and its own super weapon, such as a "Splashing Laser"—a laser that sprays the entire screen. The only problem with the super weapon is that you have to charge it for a few seconds, a task you'll find well nigh impossible in the later levels.

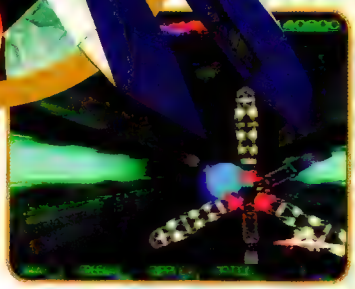
There's a wide range of terrain to traverse throughout Solar Assault. The first level has a *Star Wars* feel to it. Set in space, it has you dodging asteroids and dogfighting with spacecraft. The second level (which was just added to the game to make a total of six levels) looks like it takes place in Hades, with you flying over molten lava and fighting strange pterodactyl/phoenix enemies. This level really shows off the graphics of the game, with huge dragons that seem to disappear in a heat mist as they grow closer. The rest of the levels take you through ice, a statue park and futuristic space stations on your way to defeat the final "Ball" energy source of the game. The difficulty of the game is operator adjustable—and the harder difficulty levels up the amount of enemies you'll face.

In an arcade dominated by the same old genres, this game is not only cool—it's highly refreshing. ●



The last level takes place on what looks like a space station.

The power-ups are probably the coolest option in the game.

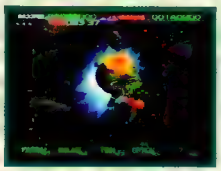


The Bosses are all very cool and range from a large spaceship to pharaohs to a big bug-shaped creature.

My 2 Cents

Gradius is one of the best shooters ever. Its sequels–Gradius 2 and 3 as well as the Lifeforce series–are something of a legend. We simply need more games of this type in our local arcades. It is a testament to Konami's ingenuity and pride that they would take a chance on a deluxe shooter game such as Solar Assault. The only problem is what I've said time and time again: If it's not a fighting, a driving or a gun game, it is likely to fail in the American market. This is very, VERY sad. Solar Assault will have an uphill battle, but if it works, perhaps we could see a new R-Type, Rygar, Rastan, Cadash–heck even A.P.B.!

–Mark Hain



The levels come in a wide range of styles, from a fiery Hades to space to an ice world. You get six levels in all.

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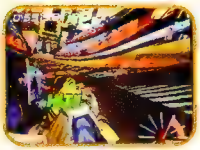
Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
Sega of Japan Sega of America	1 (links) Driving	33	N/A

Web Address: www.sega.com

Motor Raid

It's WipeOut Meets Road Rash



Not only do you use weapons, you can also kick!

Road Rash may not have been the direct inspiration for Sega's newest driving simulation—but you wouldn't know it from playing this cycle-smashing racer. Road Rash is one of the most successful driving games ever released on the home systems for one simple reason: It's not just another driving sim.

Using sophisticated motorcycles, it has you racing with others using weapons such as chains, whips and clubs to smash your opponents and civilians along the way. Motor Raid borrows from the same idea: Use futuristic bikes that can go in excess of 300 mph and weapons such as lightsaber-like blades, maces, etc., to smash your opponents on your way to the finish line.

This game may only be on Model 2 hardware, but the graphics are incredible. The bikes themselves are beautifully rendered and the whole game has a very WipeOut feel about it. It's hard to even tell what the hell is going on at top speed, but believe it or not, you get used to it.

Sega did an excellent job in putting you on the bike and keeping the twists and turns obvious enough to not make it impossible. The cabinet features a sit-down bike with buttons on the handlebars to control your weapons. You can also kick or punch if you don't have a weapon. Each character has his or her own stats, including speed, acceleration and attack. MR is an all-around entertaining racing game.

This Road Rash-style game looks incredible and the weapons are the best part. Not only do you use them to beat the snot out of opponents, you can also charge them for a super attack!

Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
SNK SNK	1 (links) Driving	N/A	1st Quarter 1998

Web Address: www.SNK.com

Road's Edge

The backgrounds are full of SNK endorsements and cool buildings.

SNK is not exactly known for their intense driving simulations. That's what makes Road's Edge such a spectacle. RE's graphics are simply stunning. Again utilizing the Hyper Neo•Geo 64 technology, the game is a "round-trip race on the roads of the world." RE looks every bit as good as Sega or Namco's best driving sims and even has force-feedback handling, making you feel as if you're really driving on a bumpy road or trying to make a sharp turn. Another perk in RE is the chance to drive real vehicles from real auto makers (most game developers often opt to create their own car models). There are two modes of play: Championship, where you try for the best time or Trial, where you can take on up to four players simultaneously. This is an impressive title, for being SNK's first driving game.

You don't just race each other in Road's Edge. You are constantly dodging trolleys, cars and other obstacles in your mad dash to the finish.

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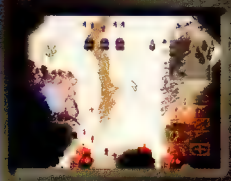

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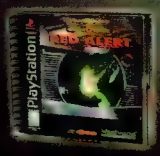

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Publisher/Developer	Players/Genre	% Done	Release
SNK SNK	1 or 2 Fighting	NA	1st Quarter 1998

Web Address: www.SNK.com

Samurai Shodown 64

SNK's First Foray Into 64-Bit 3-D

It's been quite some time since Samurai Shodown first entered arcades. At the time there was not a lot of competition. Street Fighter II was still hot, of course, but fighting games were just going nova and gamers were starving for more. Samurai not only introduced us to a brand-new story with new characters and abilities but it also gave us a new innovation—WEAPONS!

Weapons had been attempted before but never on this scale and never as successfully. Samurai 2 was more of the same and an excellent game in its own right. When the third game was released, it was getting a little old and the engine was not nearly as good as in two, but it did introduce good and evil sides (Slash and Bust) of your favorite characters. Samurai 4 was back to the basics and was a very good game. Now, this fifth installment has given the graphics and game engine a major facelift.

With the power of Hyper Neo•Geo 64 behind it, the game looks incredible. The rendered character models are beautiful and their animation is extremely fluid. There are still Slash and Bust versions of each character, and many of the characters who appeared in the previous games return for the latest installment of the series. There are new characters in the game as well. Shiki (pictured lower right) is a mystical ninja and Kazuki Kazama is a Dragon Ball-style character who uses a samurai short sword.

The one downfall of the version shown at this year's AMOA was the gameplay. It seemed a bit slow, even by Samurai standards. All of the Shodowns moved at a pace all their own, but this 3-D version simply feels like it's underwater. The good news? It's still being tweaked. The game has appeared on test and the feedback was optimistic. SNK America is actually taking a more active role in the production of games due in no small part to the newest addition to the SNK team: Darryl Williams. A Capcom ex-patriot, Williams knows what it takes to make a game a success. With his intelligent cries muffled at Capcom, he has much more room to advise SNK on what they need to do to make a hit game. This is very encouraging for us, the gamers, and means that perhaps we will see better and better things from the sequel-spawning company.

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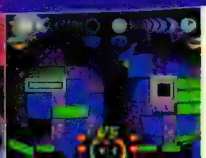

TEEN
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PlayStation

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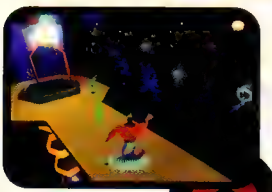
Coming soon

Compiled by: John Stockhausen

PLAYSTATION

Atari Collection 2	Midway	Jan	Compilation
Auto Destruct	EA	Jan.	Action
Batman & Robin	Acclaim	Jan	Action
Cardinal SYN	Sony Computer Entertainment	Jan	Fighting
Deathtrap Dungeon	Eidos	Jan.	Adventure
Gex: Enter the Gecko	Crystal Dynamics	Jan	Action
Lode Runner	Natsume	Jan.	Action
Nagano Winter Olympics '98	Konami	Jan.	Sports
NBA in the Zone '98	Konami	Jan.	Sports
Point Blank	Namco	Jan.	Light Gun
Power Soccer 2	Psygnosis	Jan.	Sports
Ray Tracers	T*HQ	Jan.	Racing
ReBoot	EA	Jan.	Action
Resident Evil 2	Capcom	Jan.	Adventure
Shadow Master	Psygnosis	Jan.	Action
Tactics Ogre Battle	Atlus	Jan.	Sim/RPG
Theme Hospital	EA-Bullfrog	Jan.	Simulation
WCW Nitro	T*HQ	Jan.	Sports
Youngblood	GT Interactive	Jan.	Action
Broken Sword	T*HQ	Feb	Adventure
Clay Fighter Extreme	Interplay	Feb.	Fighting
Constructor	Acclaim	Feb	Simulation
Crime Killer	Interplay	Feb.	Act/Driving
Dead or Alive	Tecmo	Feb	Fighting
Final Fantasy Tactics	Sony Computer Entertainment	Feb.	Sim/RPG
Kanoa	Namco	Feb.	Action
NCAA March Madness 98	EA	Feb.	Sports
Pitfall 3D	Activision	Feb	Act/Adventure
Punky Skunk	Jaleco	Feb.	Action
Risk	Hasbro Interactive	Feb	Simulation
Road Rash 3	EA	Feb.	Act/Racing
San Francisco Rush	Midway	Feb.	Racing
Skullmonkeys	EA	Feb.	Action
VR Sports Powerboat Racing	Interplay	Feb.	Sports
X Men: Children of the Atom	Acclaim	Feb.	Fighting
Blasto	Sony Computer Entertainment	March	Action
C	Konami	March	Action
Diablo	EA	March	Act/RPG
Elric	Psygnosis	March	Adventure
HardBall 6	Accolade	March	Sports
Jack Nicklaus Golf	Accolade	March	Sports
Mega Man Neo	Capcom	March	Action
NBA Shoot Out 98	Sony Computer Entertainment	March	Sports
Newman/Haas Racing	Psygnosis	March	Racing
Ninja	Eidos	March	Action
Running Wild	Universal Studios	March	Racing
SaGa Frontier	Sony Computer Entertainment	March	RPG
Sentinel 2	Psygnosis	March	Strategy
TNN Motorsports Hardcore 2	ASC Games	March	Sports
Vigilante 8	Activision	March	Action
Wreckin' Crew	Sir Tech	March	Action

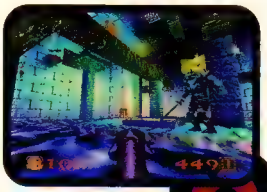


The long-awaited and often-hyped Blasto is on its way to Sony's baby sometime in March. Sure, it has Phil Hartman doing the voice for Captain Blasto, but can the game itself make the cut? We'll have to wait and see.

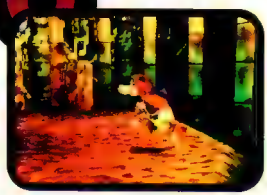
Intense driving action and lots of cool transparent crosshairs await you in Auto Destruct coming from Electronic Arts. The mile-a-minute driving game pits you against the terrorist group Lazarus.

NINTENDO 64

Mission: Impossible	Ocean	Jan.	Act/Adventure
Nagano Winter Olympics '98	Konami	Jan.	Sports
NBA In the Zone '98	Konami	Jan.	Sports
Olympic Hockey '98	Midway	Jan.	Sports
Robotron 64	Crave Entertainment	Feb.	Action
Yoshi's Story	Nintendo	Feb.	Action
Banjo and Kazooie	Nintendo	March	Action
Conker's Quest	Rare	March	Action
GASP	Konami	March	Fighting
MLB Featuring Ken Griffey Jr.	Nintendo	March	Sports
Mystical Ninja	Konami	March	Adventure
Quake	Midway	March	First-Person
Twisted Edge Snowboarding	Midway	March	Sports



Quake is almost ready for the consoles. The Nintendo 64 version promises to have some nice 3-D graphics and cool-looking effects, but will that be enough to make gamers happy?

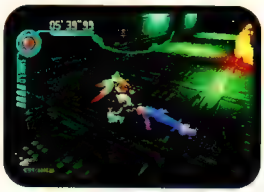


Some call Banjo Kazooie a Mario 64 clone, but we have yet to play this March release at length. Chances are it'll be pretty sweet. Keep an eye out for more coverage in upcoming issues.

SATURN

Magic Knight Ray Earth	Working Designs	Jan.	Action/RPG
Winter Heat	Sega	Jan.	Sports
Burning Rangers	Sega	Feb.	Action
Dead or Alive	Tecmo	Feb.	Fighting
Ninja	Eidos	March	Action
Panzer Saga	Sega	March	RPG

From the Sonic Team comes Burning Rangers. With more quality software like this one, the Saturn may just come back from a long-time lull. Now what we need is a longer release list—six games just doesn't cut it these days!



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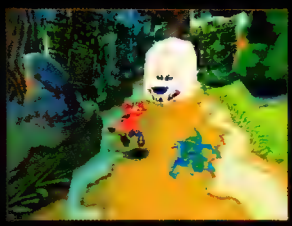
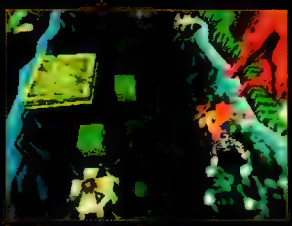
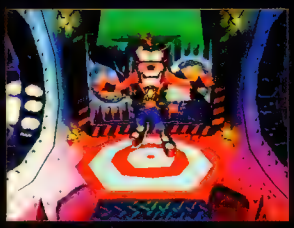




Crash is back. And he's all pumped-up and ready to rumble.



This time, Crash will have to work his way through huge, all new 3-D environments. He'll fly with a jetpack, surf on a jetboard and saddle up a polar bear cub. He's got new moves, he'll meet new characters and he'll face plenty of dangerous new obstacles. It won't take long to realize: Only the strong survive.

CRASH 2

PlayStation

Video Game timeline

Pong, Mario and Everything Else...

By the editors of *Electronic Gaming Monthly* and VideoGameSpot

If you compress the 25-year history of video games into a single day (while ignoring the decade of building-block events that predate Pong), you'd see the rise of the Atari 2600 and Intellivision in the wee hours before breakfast. Pac-Man and Mario would make their debuts by mid-morning. Coleco would see its fortunes rise and fall just before noon. Then the entire industry would crash in time for lunch.

Things would pick up again in the late afternoon, when Nintendo has the industry firmly in its grasp—at least until Sega unleashes the Genesis. By bedtime, most of the modern systems will have hit the U.S., leaving only the Nintendo 64 to begin its troubled run long after lights out.

The point is, unlike the history of the universe, video game history has a definite beginning, middle and...well, at least one near ending. It's made up of pioneers, smash successes, career-ruining failures, hot technology, lawsuits and, of course, lots and lots of great (as well as plenty of not-so-great) games.

But to fully understand the industry's history, you have to look back before the big games and famous names, back before Pong, as far as 1958. The following timeline presents a chronology of the major events that have shaped the gaming industry since then.

1958-1965

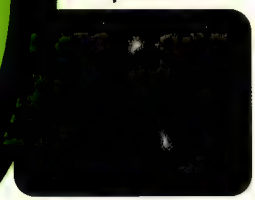
The Evolution will not be Televised

This feature is also running on VideoGameSpot WWW.VIDEOGAMESPOT.COM, where you can find stories on the history of Konami, the evolution of Street Fighter II and other in-depth features.

1964

Rosen merges his company with Nihon Goraku Bussan, taking that company's Sega brand name (Service & Games) and adding it to the Enterprises, Ltd. of his own company. The resulting company, Sega Enterprises, Ltd., opts to develop its own amusement devices after importing them for several years.

Spacewar



1962

MIT student Steve Russell creates Spacewar, the first interactive computer game, on a Digital PDP-1 (Programmed Data Processor-1) mainframe computer. The game has two players controlling spaceships and trying to blast each other while avoiding the gravitational pull of the sun. Limited by the computer technology of the time, ASCII-text characters were the "graphics" and people could only play the game on a device that took up the floor space of a small house. Fellow students love the game and begin tinkering with its programming.

Nolan Bushnell, later recognized as the father of the video game industry, enrolls in engineering school at the University of Utah, where he is first exposed to Spacewar. The game is still only available for play on million-dollar mainframes, which only large universities and corporations can afford.

1958

Korean War veteran David Rosen recognizes a growth of leisure income in the Japanese marketplace and starts a small photo booth (and later amusement device) company in Japan known as Rosen Enterprises Ltd.

1956

Willy Higinbotham designs a simple tennis game on an oscilloscope screen to entertain visitors to the Brookhaven National Laboratory, a nuclear research center operated by the U.S. government. He never patents the game. Had he done so, the federal government would have owned the rights to all video games.

1966–1972 Birth of an Electronic Nation

1966

- Ralph Baer, an engineer working for a defense contractor, decides to find a secondary use for television sets. He begins researching interactive television games.
- Sega Enterprises Ltd. releases an electronic shooting gallery game, its first arcade game (using no monitor), called The Periscope. Its success helps Sega work on a number of similar titles in coming years.

1967

- Baer's television gadget is adapted to play a simple tennis game where two flat sticks bounce a square ball back and forth on the screen. This is not Pong; there is no English (twist/spin) put on the ball as it rebounds off the flat sticks, so it just bounces back and forth until someone misses.

1968

- Bushnell graduates.
- Bushnell moves to California after accepting a job at Ampex, based in Sunnyvale, Calif., where he works as a researcher.

1969

Computer Space

- Magnavox purchases Baer's television technology from Sanders Associates and begins developing the first home video game system, the Odyssey, which plays a simple Pong-type game.
- Bushnell, meanwhile, turns his daughter's bedroom into a workshop where he—along with fellow Ampex researcher Ted Dabney—can build an arcade version of Spacewar. Because mainframe computers still cost too much to use as arcade machines, he develops a much-simplified, dedicated machine that can only perform one task: Play Spacewar. He calls his game Computer Space and attempts to sell it.
- Nutting Associates hires Bushnell to oversee the manufacture of Computer Space.

1971

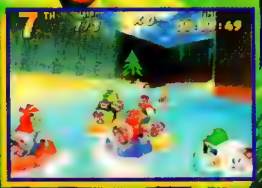
- Computer Space fails in the arcades, so Bushnell develops a simpler coin-op, as well as his own company. On June 27, he and fellow former Ampex employee Dabney file papers with the Office of the California Secretary of State to establish a company called "Syzygy." That name was already taken, so the two settle on "Atari," which translates to "check" in the Japanese game Go.
- Magnavox releases the Odyssey, the world's first home video game system, in May. It plays variations of ping pong and reportedly sells about 100,000 units in 1972.
- Bushnell hires Al Alcorn—a former Ampex intern—as Atari's first engineer. Since Bushnell wanted to ease the young engineer into his new position, he had Alcorn develop a simple video ping-pong game. It becomes Pong, the first blockbuster coin-op and the game that turned Atari into the fastest-growing company in America.

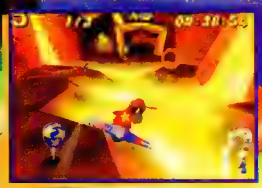
1972

FLY INTO BIG SAVINGS

NINTENDO 64

DIDDY KONG RACING™





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1973–1976 And Then There Was Pong

Pong

1973

- Atari releases Tank-8, the first arcade game to use a microprocessor instead of hardwired circuits.
- Exidy Games releases Death Race 98, a driving game in which players earn points by running over stick figures. Public outcry against video game violence gains national attention.
- Seeing no other way to stay competitive in a growing market, Bushnell sells Atari to Warner Communications. At this point, the company is producing arcade and home games.

1974

- As Atari struggles to improve its arcade distribution channels, several of the company's executives mysteriously defect to Kee Games, Atari's first serious competitor. Kee releases Tank, the top game of the year, and surpasses Atari in sales, while opening distribution routes that Atari could never have opened on its own. Kee is later revealed to be a subsidiary of Atari and merges back with its parent company, successful in having widened the reach of the biggest game maker in the arcade industry.
- Harold Lee, an Atari employee, proposes Home Pong, an Odyssey-like console that attaches to televisions. Lee, Alcorn and an engineer named Bob Brown develop the product. Because of the Odyssey's poor sales record, no retailers are interested in carrying the Atari Pong console, a tiny black-and-white box with two mounted paddle controller dials.

Home Pong

- As Pong becomes an arcade phenomenon, Ramtek, Nutting and several other companies create similar games.
- Atari establishes contact with Namco in Japan.

1975

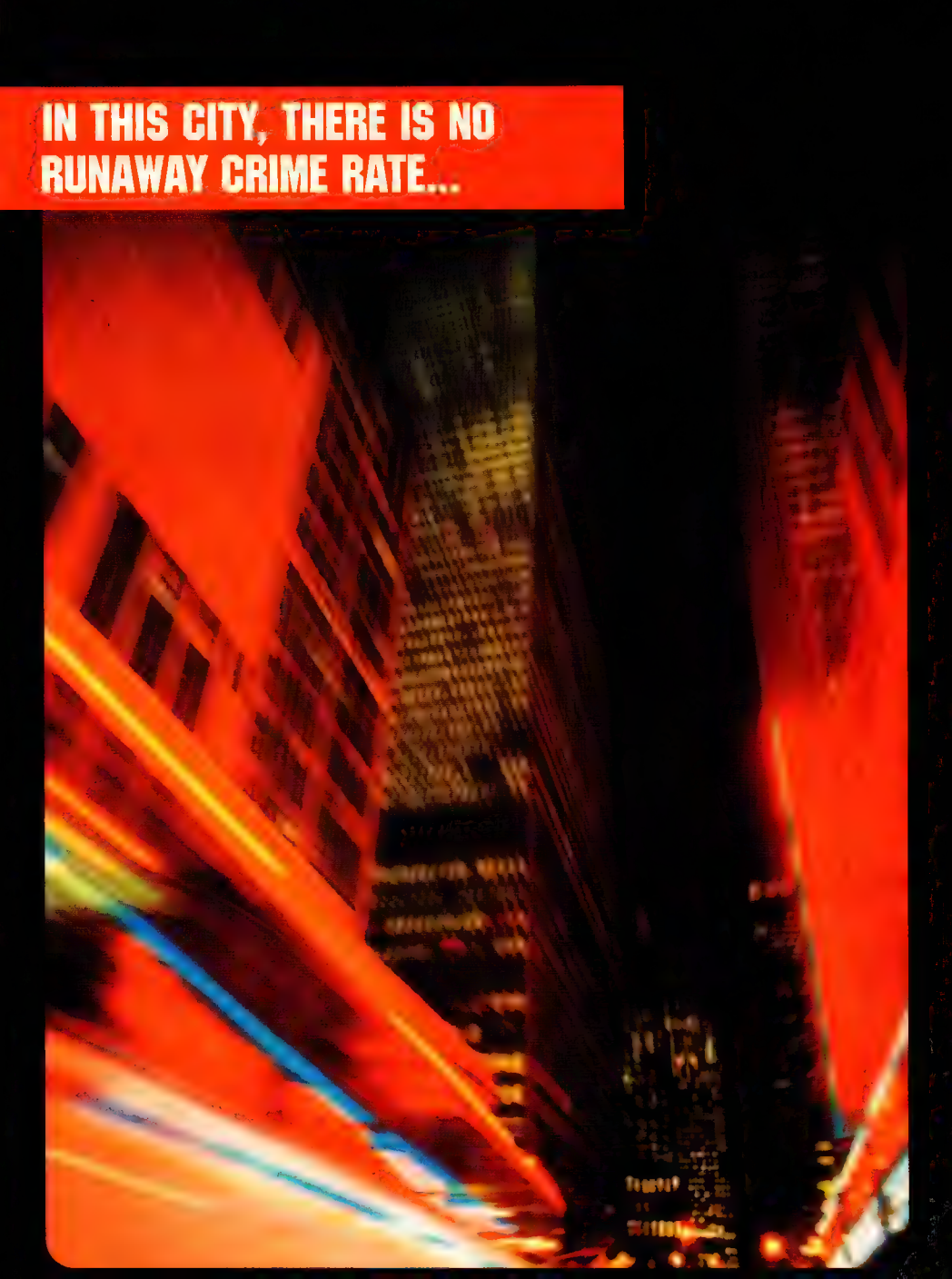
- Atari contacts Tom Quinn, a sporting goods buyer for Sears Roebuck, and invites him to California to see the Pong system. After further negotiations, Sears orders 150,000 units—far more product than Atari has the capacity to build. The console is badged with the Sears Tele-Games logo.
- Bushnell gets backing from venture capitalist Don Valentine and opens a $10 million line of credit to expand Atari. By Christmas, Home Pong becomes the best-selling item in the Sears Catalog.

Fairchild Channel F

1976

- Attracted by Atari's success, several companies release home video game consoles. Because of a rush on circuits, only Coleco (short for the Connecticut Leather Company) receives its full order in time for Father's Day. Based on technology largely similar to the Pong machine, Coleco's ovular Telstar Pong machine debuts.
- Fairchild Camera & Instrument releases the Fairchild Channel F, the first cartridge-based home game console (it uses large, banana-yellow cartridges). Its joysticks differ from later Atari controllers in two ways. There is no "button" to press (players press down the head of the joystick instead), and joystick's tip can be rotated like a paddle. Consequently, the machine's built-in Pong title allows gamers to move the paddle with the joystick and also spin it around on 15-degree angles to deflect the ball in different directions.

Coleco Telstar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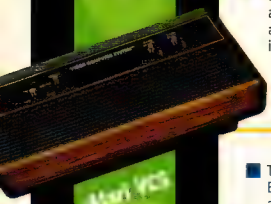
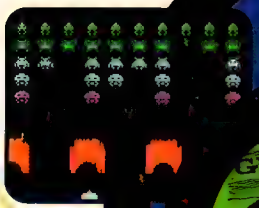
Dawn of the Atari Age (1977–1979)

1977

- Just missing the '76 Christmas season, RCA releases their Studio II cartridge-based console in January. The system can only produce black-and-white graphics and is far from successful.
- Atari opens the first Pizza Time Theater (later to be called Chuck E. Cheese), a new arcade/restaurant combination that features animatronic animals, arcade games and family compatible meals.
- Midway Games releases Gunfight. Developed by Taito, Gunfight is the first imported arcade game.
- Under Bushnell's direction, Atari releases the Video Computer System (VCS, later known as the Atari 2600) in time for Christmas at $249.95. The VCS is Atari's first cartridge-based game system, and initial software is based on Atari arcade translations and original titles designed exclusively for the home market. Sales are unimpressive and tension grows between Steve Ross, president of Warner Communications and Bushnell.





Gunfight

1978

- Tension with Warner executives leads Bushnell to leave Atari and sign a five-year agreement not to compete with the company. He purchases the Pizza Time Theaters franchise. Ray Kassar becomes Atari's CEO.
- In March, Nintendo, still very new to the video game industry, releases a simplistic arcade cocktail table game based on the board game Othello. One-hundred yen per play, a price that has remained reasonably steady for Japanese arcade games, Computer Othello had no joystick, only 10 colored buttons per player.
- With Midway's Gunfight doing well at the arcades, Bally opts to enter the home gaming market with their Bally Professional Arcade. With its then-powerful Z-80 processor and optional keyboard add-on, the system promises to offer more than Atari's VCS.
- Magnavox releases the Odyssey^2. By the end of the year, it's a two-horse race between Atari and Magnavox.
- Cinematronics launches Space Wars. Based off the original Computer Space, it's the first vector-graphics arcade game and is a hit.
- Atari releases Atari Football (the first trackball game) and Midway imports Space Invaders (which, incidentally, introduces the "High Score" concept) from Taito. Both games break all known sales records and have almost equal earnings. Powered by such success, video games enjoy new levels of popularity in the United States.
- The football season ends, and so does Atari Football's popularity. Space Invaders' success, however, continues, causing coin shortages in Japan and becomes a huge franchise in America.

Bushnell & Pizza Time

1979

- Atari releases Lunar Lander, its first vector (line-drawn) graphics game. Although the game enjoys some success, Atari quickly switches production to its new game, Asteroids, which becomes the company's all-time best seller. Nearly 80,000 units are sold in the United States, but the game is less popular in other countries.
- Sega releases Monaco GP, an overhead driving game, which was later followed by the similar Pro Monaco GP in 1980 and the popular Super Monaco GP in 1989.
- Atari has strong year-round sales of the VCS, proving that home games are not just a seasonal product. Translations and original games continue to emerge exclusively on the VCS, and Atari negotiates to get VCS publishing rights to popular arcade titles such as Space Invaders.

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16 Tracks, 22 Drivers, 11 cars...
Pure Pulse-Pounding Formula One Action!
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1980

The Golden Age of Arcades 1978-1983

- Atari releases its exclusive home version of Space Invaders for the VCS. The system's sales skyrocket.
- Atari's policy of crediting the design of a game to the company as a whole, rather than to individual employees, spawns the first "Easter egg," or hidden feature within a game. Warren Robinett, the creator of Adventure, designs a hidden room that has his name in bright rainbow letters. To access the room, players have to find a gray pixel and carry it back to the beginning of the game. A decade later, secret features will be the norm.
- Mattel introduces the Intellivision home game console. The first serious contender to the VCS, the Intellivision has better graphics and a steeper price—$299. Like Atari, Mattel is its own best software developer, but Mattel has no access to Atari arcade hits and little ability to make inroads with other arcade firms.

- Atari VCS programmers leave Atari in a dispute over game credits and form Activision, the first third-party developer and now a rival VCS software house. Where Atari programmers were forced to credit all of their work to the larger company, Activision's individual game developers were glorified for their ideas in the packaging and marketing of games. Bob Whitehead designs Activision's Boxing and Skiing, sports that have not been tapped by Atari.
- Atari coin-op designer Ed Rotberg creates Battlezone, the first 3-D first-person game. Rolling around in a tank on a virtual battlefield, players had to take out targets in a war-like scenario. The U.S. government later commissioned an enhanced version of Battlezone for military training purposes.
- Namco releases Pac-Man, the most popular arcade game of all time. Over 300,000 units are sold worldwide (not including all the counterfeit machines). More than 100,000 units are sold in the United States alone. Originally named Puck Man, the game was retitled after executives saw the potential for vandals to scratch out part of the letter P in the game's marquee and labeling.
- Bushnell's Chuck E. Cheese becomes a major success as new arcade games boom and families with children are increasingly drawn to the robots and electronic games.
- Eager to leave the video game business, Bally sells its Professional Arcade to a company called Astrovision, who sticks the machine with a new moniker, the Astrocade
- Sega obtains the rights to manufacture and release a Japanese version of Atari's Missile Command, an immensely popular game in the United States.
- Minoru Arakawa, son-in-law of Nintendo's Japanese chief Hiroshi Yamauchi, opens Nintendo of America in New York City, then moves it to Seattle.
- SNK releases Sasuke vs. Commander in Japan, an early shooting game with relatively detailed background graphics. It pits a samurai (Sasuke) against a horde of commander-led ninjas bent on reaching and assassinating the Shogun.

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY and EGM²

have 3 BONUS magazines coming your way this fall!

Hey Gamers!
This time of year there are so many cool games coming our way it's hard to find enough space to tell you about 'em all. That's why we have *EGM* and *EGM²* special issues like the ***1998 Video Game Buyer's Guide***, ***Guide to Sports Video Games*** and ***Video Games for the Nintendo 64***. Although these mags are created by your favorite *EGM* and *EGM²* editors, they contain lots of information **not found** in the pages of *EGM* and *EGM²*. Let me tell you a little about each...

1998 Video Game Buyer's Guide
Put together by Dan Hsu and the rest of the Review Crew, this mag tells you our pick for this year's best system and which games you should buy! We also have our Good, Bad and Silly look back on the gaming industry, along with a massive trick index and game review chart with over 1,300 games listed and rated! Plus, go behind the scenes with Shigeru Miyamoto on the future of Nintendo, and take a top-secret look at the world of video game-controller design.

Video Games for Nintendo 64
Written by brand-spankin' new Review Crew guy (and Nintendo-book veteran) John Ricciardi, this mag has everything you've ever wanted to know about the N64. It's packed with reviews of all the new N64 games, previews of more than 20 hot new titles, a huge tips-and-tricks section and—best of all—strategy guides for all of your favorite games. John just got back from Japan with the latest Nintendo news, and he's itchin' to unload it all in this special issue.

Sports Video Games
Tired of watching the other team make all the big plays? Want to know which sports games you should even bother playing? *EGM*'s guide will satisfy all of your sports-gaming needs with comprehensive strategies, interviews, in-depth previews and a hard-hitting review lineup of the ultimate sports titles. Watch for the huge Madden 64 behind-the-scenes blowout and an interview with legendary Q-back Brett Favre. *EGM*'s armchair jock Kraig Kujawa is writing this sucker, which focuses mainly on football, basketball and hockey titles. Watch for it!

Crispin Boyer
EGM Review Crew
Features Editor

1998 VIDEO GAME BUYER'S GUIDE
On Sale Nov. 11, 1997

VIDEO GAMES FOR THE NINTENDO 64 Volume 3
On Sale Nov. 25, 1997

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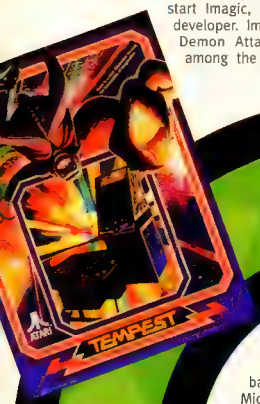
Donkey Kong

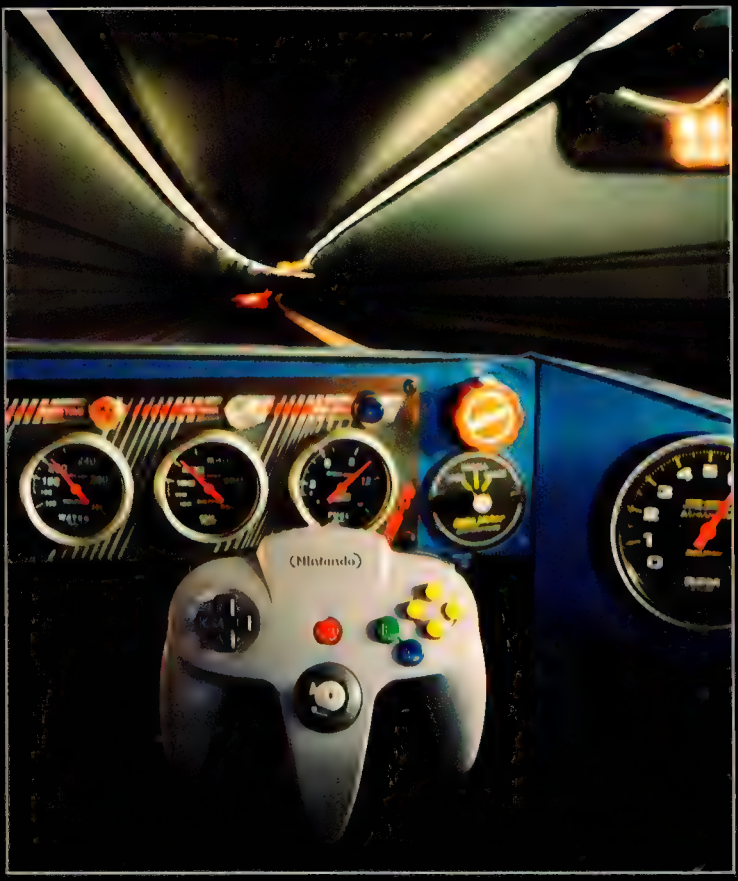
- Nintendo artist Shigeru Miyamoto creates Donkey Kong. The game's hero, originally called Jumpman, is a squat carpenter racing to save his girlfriend, Pauline, from a crazed monkey. Jumpman is later named Mario by Nintendo of America's staff, in honor of his resemblance to their landlord Mario Segali.
- Konami releases Scramble, a side-scrolling shooter that inspires their Gradius series and other games.
- More Atari programmers defect and start Imagic, another VCS software developer. Imagic's titles, including Demon Attack and Atlantis, are among the system's best-looking games. Meanwhile, the other Atari-defectees at Activision release Freeway, Kaboom, Ice Hockey and Tennis. Atari negotiates the rights to release more hit arcade titles such as Pac-Man for the VCS.
- Atari releases Tempest, a color vector arcade game based on still unstable graphics technology prone to early failure. The machine attracts crowds of devoted players.
- Sega releases the U.S. version of Konami's Frogger, which, like Crane's Freeway (above), has the player maneuver an animal through hazards from the bottom of the screen to the top. Where Freeway is a play on the "Why did the chicken cross the road?" joke, Frogger has the player both cross a freeway and jump on platforms to cross a river.
- U.S. arcades reach their highest revenues—$5 billion. Americans spend more than 75,000 man-years playing video games.

1981



1982

- 1982 was the year of new game systems. Milton Bradley breaks new ground with the Microvision, a portable, cartridge-based system. Unfortunately for the Microvision, Milton Bradley also releases the Vectrex—the first and only console based on vector-graphics technology—that same year and puts most of their marketing muscle behind the system, while the Microvision fades into obscurity. The Vectrex, developed by General Consumer Electronics, includes a built-in game (the impressive Asteroids clone Minesweeper) and a four-button joystick.
- A man dies of a heart attack while playing Berzerk—gaming's only known fatality.
- Emerson brings out the Arcadia 2001, which packs more power than the Intellivision but suffers one major flaw—little software support. Emerson learns the hard way that no matter how powerful a system is, it'll die without good games (a lesson later learned by Atari with their technically superior Lynx and Jaguar and Sega with their Master System).
- Coleco releases the ColecoVision, a console buoyed not only by superior graphics and sounds, but also support from Nintendo. Coleco releases excellent translations of Donkey Kong and Donkey Kong Junior for the ColecoVision, as well as reasonable versions for the Atari VCS. Realizing that Atari has Namco's support, creator of Pac-Man, Coleco involves itself heavily with Sega, Konami and Universal (Mr. Do!).
- Atari releases its ill-fated Pac-Man and ET cartridges. Shipments of both end up in a New Mexico landfill, while original games such as Activision's Pitfall: Pitfall Harry's Jungle Adventure sell well.
- Atari releases the 5200 game console. Based on the graphics and audio chips found in Atari home computers, 5200 games are essentially aesthetically improved rereleases of 2600 titles and sell poorly. Atari later releases an adapter for the system so it can play 2600 titles.
- Midway creates Ms. Pac-Man in-house. It's a smash hit, with over 115,000 units sold in the United States, but Namco has nothing to do with it and instead develops the improved but radically different Super Pac-Man for Japanese consumption.
- *Electronic Games* is founded as the first magazine entirely devoted to video games.
- On Dec. 7, Atari announces that VCS sales did not meet predictions. Warner Communications stock drops 32 percent in a single day.



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NINTENDO 64

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1983

- Cinematronics releases Dragon's Lair, the first arcade game to feature laserdisc technology.
- Coleco releases the Adam home computer and nearly bankrupts itself; the expensive computer includes a tape recorder, large printer, keyboard and game console in a coffin-sized box, and software plays in both cartridge and cassette tape formats. Only the company's Cabbage Patch Doll division keeps it alive, and Cabbage Patch ColecoVision software is introduced. Expansion Module #1 is developed for the ColecoVision, enabling it to play Atari 2600 games and use extra 2600 joysticks.
- Commodore releases the Commodore 64, an inexpensive but powerful computer that outperforms any video game console.
- As the video game industry collapses in the United States amidst a huge glut of similar-looking and similar-priced software, Nintendo releases the Family Computer (Famicom) in Japan in July. Intentionally designed to look like a toy, the Famicom is released with Nintendo arcade hits Donkey Kong, Donkey Kong Junior and Popeye. By the end of the year, enhanced two-player versions of the latter two games are released alongside a baseball game, the original Mario Brothers, a Go game and an adult title. Nintendo solicits support from major Japanese arcade game makers.

- Nolan Bushnell becomes eligible to enter the video game industry again. He joins Videa and renames the company Sente Games, another Go reference (this time, to "Checkmate"). Sente forms a partnership with Midway games and releases arcade titles such as the simple but addictive hockey game Hat Trick, but the partnership never creates a niche in the market.

The Great Crash

Popeye

- Mattel and Coleco leave the video game industry. The year becomes known as the "Great Crash" for the games business, and 2600 software is being dumped for sale in supermarkets. Some predict that the video game "fad" has come to an end.
- Nintendo approaches Atari about marketing the Nintendo Advanced Video System, later to be known as the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). Atari executives express interest while secretly developing a new console of their own. Nintendo eventually opts to go it alone.
- Ousted from the company he built, Jack Tramiel leaves Commodore and purchases his main competitor, Atari Corporation, from Warner Communications. Tramiel and his family, who dislike the home game console market and prefer home computers, nevertheless take possession of the Atari 2600, 5200 and home computer 400, 800, 1200 lines. Warner retains Atari's coin-op division, which becomes Atari Games. The Tramiels immediately announce that the old Atari is gone, sweeping their old consoles onto the floor in a dramatic press conference after taking over. The company begins work on new hardware, which ironically includes less expensive versions of the 8-Bit VCS and home computers, in addition to a new 16-Bit computer line.
- After canceling Warner's XL series of Atari 8-Bit home computers, which were essentially old Atari 800s with new metal/plastic cases, more RAM and newer ROMs, the Tramiels introduce the Atari XE home computer series, including the Atari 130XE (a flimsier plastic Atari 800) and later the 65XE with less memory.

1984

Donkey Kong Jr.

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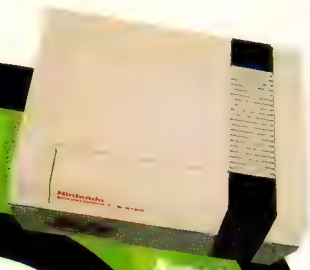
1985-1989

Famicoming to America: The Industry's 8-Bit Jumpstart

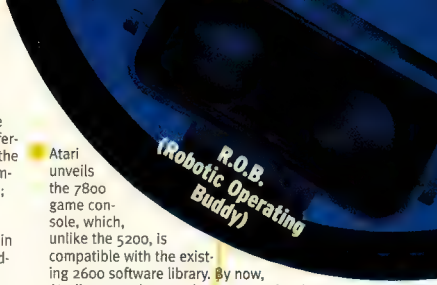
1985

- Nintendo test-markets the NES in New York. Retailers are so skeptical about video games that Nintendo has to agree to buy back all unpurchased inventory, and the company goes through a number of plastic case redesigns before settling on a shell it can sell to the difficult U.S. market. Unlike the Japanese, Americans are perceived as wanting to buy a gameplaying machine that does not look like a toy, but instead an inexpensive video component to sit alongside a VCR or television. Nintendo is also forced to dream up a way to sell the NES to stores that hate video games, so they create R.O.B. the Video Robot and offer NES packages to some stores as "Robot Games," not video games. (Nintendo produces a total of two robot-compatible software titles, knowing that R.O.B. is little more than a Trojan horse to get its toy into stores.) A light gun is available in Japan and prepared for American release for games such as Wild Gunman, Duck Hunt and Hogan's Alley, already arcade and Japanese Famicom successes. Armed with a large number of Nintendo-developed original and arcade games, conversions of third-party hits (Irem's Kung-Fu Master) and a brand-new arcade port, Super Mario Bros., the NES is a hit in limited market release.
- Following Apple's lead in releasing the Macintosh, Tramiel's Atari mounts a challenge with the 16-Bit Motorola 68000-based 520ST, internally dubbed the "Jackintosh."

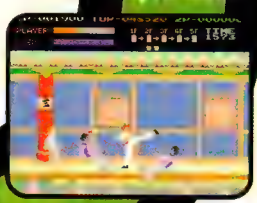


1986

- Satisfied by the system's success in New York, Nintendo hires Worlds of Wonder, makers of Teddy Ruxpin and Laser Tag, to help market the NES nationwide. The system debuts as two different bundles: one at $249 with the R.O.B. unit, the light gun and the games Gyromite (a R.O.B. compatible title), Duck Hunt and Super Mario Bros.; the other at $199 with Super Mario Bros.
- Convinced that it might have a shot at success in the U.S. market after releasing a system to modest success in Japan, Sega releases its Sega Master System into U.S. toy stores with toy truck company Tonka as distributor. Backed by the strength of the Sega arcade name and a number of original games, Sega's Master System games suffer from looking markedly worse than Sega's ambitious arcade titles and offering less gameplay value. Even though the Master System is touted as an arcade experience at home, everyone else is using the same line and doing a better job of capturing the essence of the arcade originals. A light gun and expensive 3-D glasses, both lean on software support, do little to help the Master System's mainstream appeal.



- Atari unveils the 7800 game console, which, unlike the 5200, is compatible with the existing 2600 software library. By now, Atari's reputation as a home game developer is thoroughly shot, and magazines snicker at many of the aged titles Atari grabs for release.
- Nintendo outsells its competitors 10-to-one in the United States. It unveils a disk drive peripheral in Japan for the Famicom, along with the Legend of Zelda, and golf and soccer games.
- Several companies sign on with Nintendo as third-party developers, and most of Atari's old supporters, such as Namco, are now making their best games for Nintendo's system.



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1987

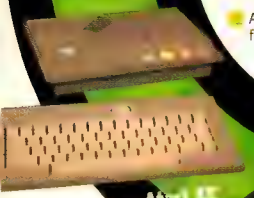
Nintendo's hold on the market grows, crowding out Sega and Atari. Atari releases several 2600 and 7800 titles, which are all but ignored by the press. Nintendo releases The Legend of Zelda on a cartridge in the United States, opting to avoid a Stateside release of the expensive disk drive peripheral. Games such as Kid Icarus and Metroid offer enhanced NES graphics and the use of passwords to save player progress.

Capcom debuts an arcade game called Street Fighter. No one guesses what's in store for the series.

Atari releases the Atari XE Game System, attempting—for the second time since the late '70s release of its 8-Bit computers—to repackage old technology as a cutting-edge game console. Unlike the 5200, the XE uses cartridges compatible with Atari's dying 8-Bit computer line. It includes two games (Barnyard Blaster and Flight Simulator II), a light gun and keyboard, which oddly make the unit more expensive than an NES. The machine sparks little interest.

Bomberman

NEC releases the PC-Engine in Japan, touted as being more powerful than the NES and based on chips created by Bomberman developer Hudson Soft. Hudson forges publishing agreements with smaller software houses and shifts much of its development work away from the NES (Bomberman, Star Soldier, Faxanadu).



1988

Atari discovers a way to bypass the lockout chip in the NES and, under the label Tengen, begins releasing games that have not been licensed by Nintendo. Several major lawsuits and countersuits follow. Atari gains NES publishing rights to Sega's Shinobi, Alien Syndrome and After Burner II and develops its own arcade titles as NES translations as well.

Nintendo and Atari battle for the video game rights to Tetris. Atari creates a superior two-player game, but Nintendo eventually wins the lawsuit and Atari recalls its inventory. A warehouse full of Tengen Tetris cartridges is said to have been destroyed, and retailers with extra copies sell them with $100 price tags.

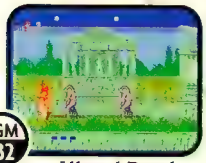
Nintendo releases the Game Boy ($149.95). The system comes with Tetris and begins to build a historic sales record. A GB version of Super Mario (SM Land), a Breakout clone (Alleyway) and a baseball game are released quickly.

Steve Harris, a former manager of an Iowa arcade, finds the finances to turn his video game newsletter, called *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, into a full-fledged magazine.

NEC brings the PC-Engine to the U.S. and calls it the TurboGrafx-16 ($189.95). Despite negotiating large-scale agreements with publishers in Japan, NEC is among only a handful of companies willing to invest money in manufacturing TurboGrafx games to compete with the NES. The forthcoming TG-16 CD peripheral, priced at $400, is short on quality software in the United States.

Still depending on Tonka and a small but growing Sega of America subsidiary, Sega Enterprises Japan releases the Genesis in the United States after limited Japanese success, packing in a conversion of the arcade game Altered Beast for $249.95. Early marketing efforts push the system as a true arcade experience that's substantially better than previous home game machines.

Atari releases the Lynx ($179.95), a 16-Bit color portable game machine developed by the financially ailing Epyx. After publishing a handful of great Epyx games, Atari begins to develop a number of 7800 game conversions and Atari Games arcade ports for the system. More expensive—and, with its rotation and scaling effects, more advanced—than the Game Boy, the Lynx is plagued by rumors that Atari will stop supporting the system.



Altered Beast

1989

Securing agreements with third-party companies such as Irem and Namco, NEC relies very heavily on the work of better developers to make the PC-Engine succeed. In this year alone, Hudson publishes Irem's R-Type, Capcom's Street Fighter (Fighting Street) and original games such as Power League baseball for the PC-Engine. Namco publishes Galaga '88, a baseball game, a tennis game and a port of its successful overhead arcade shooter Dragon Spirit.

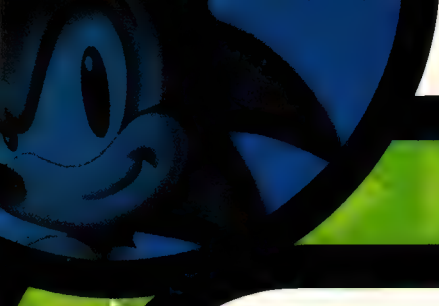
Atari takes Nintendo to court claiming that Nintendo has an illegal monopoly on the video game industry, one achieved through illegal practices such as price fixing and use of computer chip lockout technology to prohibit unlicensed development of NES software. Led by the Tramiels, who have seen the rapid decline of their ST "Jackintosh" computer and all of their home endeavors, Atari releases 7800 versions of 1981's Donkey Kong, 1982's DK Junior and 1983's Mario Bros.

Tetris is released worldwide, building a huge following for the previously untapped puzzle game genre.

Nintendo releases The Adventures of Link (Zelda 2) and Super Mario 2.

Game Boy

Sega Genesis



1991

Nintendo releases Super Mario 3, an instant blockbuster. Despite competition from the Genesis and TurboGrafx, the NES has its best year, as companies release games with more powerful graphics chips. Meanwhile, Nintendo in Japan unveils its Super Famicom, a 16-Bit system with better audio and graphics than the Sega Genesis and TurboGrafx. Super Mario 4: SM World is shown to Japanese gamers, who rush to stores to buy the game.

Nintendo and Blockbuster go to court over video game rentals, with Nintendo maintaining that rentals ruin sales. Blockbuster later wins the right to continue rentals.

With Game Boy sales soaring and Atari's Lynx doing well, Sega jumps in the color portable market with its Game Gear. Featuring 8-Bit Master System-quality carts, a low-res screen and unbelievably short battery life, the GG sells adequately but never matches the Game Boy's numbers.

SNK, a long-time Nintendo developer, releases the 24-Bit Neo•Geo in arcade and home formats. Its graphics and sound capabilities crush the Genesis and TurboGrafx, but the Neo•Geo's price crushes its own sales.

Sega continues to bring home its successful arcade games. After Burner II, E-SWAT and other arcade games hit the Genesis. Sega secures the rights to Capcom's unknown but amazing arcade platform game Strider for the Genesis (Capcom published a stripped-down NES version earlier).

NEC releases the TurboExpress ($299.95), a handheld TurboGrafx with a separately sold TV tuner. This is the second time a handheld system can play a non-portable console's games, and it's the first time such a portable includes its own screen. (An earlier "portable," the TV Boy, was an Atari 2600-compatible device that lacked a screen and cartridge slot but worked on batteries and with over 100 built-in games.)

1990–1992

Sega's Genesis: The Growth of the 16-Bit Market

Nintendo releases the Super NES (the U.S. version of the Super Famicom) in the United States for $249.95. Journalists begin to wonder aloud whether Mario will be enough to convince NES-dedicated parents to make the investment in a new machine.

Sega unveils Sonic the Hedgehog, which it hopes will be a force that will one day conquer the NES and Super NES. Charmed by the character, magazines flock to support it but call the choice between Mario and Sonic a toss-up. Most pick Super Mario World as the better title.

Sony and Nintendo announce plans for the PlayStation, a CD peripheral for the Super Famicom. Sony works to develop the device as a much-enhanced accessory that improves the Super Famicom's storage and audiovisual abilities.

Galoob Toys unleashes the Game Genie in the United States—nearly one year after Nintendo won a temporary restraining order against the device's release. The pass-through cartridge peripheral allows players to cheat on NES games and win more easily. Nintendo in 1990 saw the Game Genie as a tool that reduces the long-term value of NES games.

Capcom releases Street Fighter II and brings new life to arcades filled with walk-and-punch clones and shooters. Teenagers flock to play Street Fighter II, and arcades purchase multiple machines and similar clones and begin to invest in more sophisticated racing simulations as well.

Atari announces development on a new 16-Bit game system, known as the Panther, to compete with Sega and Nintendo.

Super Mario 3

1990

1992 3DO Please: The 32-Bit Market's Origins 1993 1995

Despite increasing friction between Nintendo and its third-party developers, Nintendo gets a one-year exclusive contract for Street Fighter II on the Super NES, as well as Konami's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Turtles in Time for the machine. Capcom and Konami talk with Sega about development for the Genesis and ultimately release games but never devote their best teams to work on Sega software. Realizing that Mario's franchise was secured only after blockbuster sales of Super Mario Bros. 2, Sega hurriedly prepares Sonic the Hedgehog 2 for a holiday release. The game sells like mad, and Sonic becomes a serious contender for Mario's king-o'-the-mascots crown.

TMNT: Turtles in Time

Philips enters the video game market with its CD-based system, the CD-i. Boasting a new standard in FMV, the CD-i is able to play full-length feature films on standard-size CDs, in addition to video games. Alas, poor marketing and retail distribution—as well as no-name software and a high price—kill the system.

Sega releases the Sega CD ($299.95) but denies developers easy access to development tools that would allow the system's special graphics abilities (sprite scaling and rotation) to be used. The company's U.S. subsidiary focuses on development of several dismal FMV titles. A number of major arcade game translations are thought to be in the works for the peripheral, but something's amiss in Japan, where no one seems to be working on hot games for the machine.

Sony and Nintendo abandon their joint CD peripheral, which Sony had reportedly completed in prototype form. Rumors surface that Sony lawyers have crafted an agreement that allows Sony to reap publishing profits from Super NES/Super Famicom CD-based titles—profits Nintendo sought to retain. Nintendo announces plans to work with Philips to create a CD-ROM unit compatible with the Philips CD-i. Sony, disgusted, finishes work on a number of Super NES games, scraps the old "PlayStation" developed for Nintendo, and sets its engineers to work on developing a 32-Bit CD-only game machine to unseat Nintendo in Japan and the United States.

Night Trap

Panasonic begins marketing 3DO hardware, which is offered as the first 32-Bit video game device in history ($699). Backed by a huge consortium of developers from around the world, including the largest Japanese and American developers outside of Nintendo, NEC and Sega, 3DO initially looks invincible.

Having scrapped its Panther machine as "old technology," Atari launches the Jaguar, billed as the first 64-Bit game console in history. While technically a 64-Bit system, the overall power of the hardware is actually only a step above the current crop of 16-Bit systems, and it receives limited support from developers. Atari also plans CD-ROM and virtual-reality headset add-ons, but only the toilet-shaped CD player sees the light of day in late 1995. The Jaguar is far from a success.

Panasonic 3DO

1993

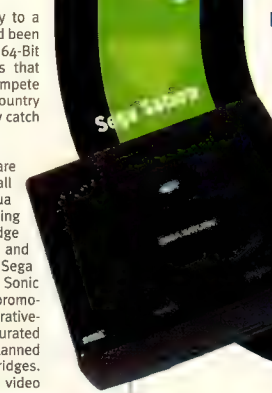
Atari Jaguar & CD

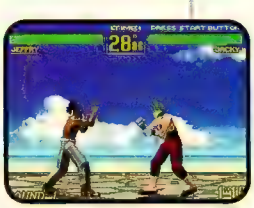
Nintendo and Sega announce their next-generation systems, Nintendo calling its 64-Bit system the Project Reality, Sega its 32-/64-Bit system the Saturn. Sega, once thwomped by Nintendo 10-to-one, now controls more than 50 percent of the video game market. Sonic 3 is under way from Sega; Nintendo hasn't released a new Mario game since Super Mario World and Sonic 1 locked horns. Curiously, Sonic the Hedgehog CD is released for the Sega CD as perhaps the only title that can save the system from death, and despite its unique premise and spectacular execution in Japan, Sega of America changes the game's music and underpromotes the title.

Incensed by the violence in Mortal Kombat and Night Trap, Senators Joseph Lieberman (D-Connecticut) and Herbert Kohl (D-Wisconsin) launch a Senate "investigation" into video game violence, threaten to somehow effect a ban on "violent" games, and eventually soften their demands to an industry-wide rating system. Game companies use the occasion to attack each other over releases of Night Trap and Mortal Kombat, then leave the hearings, develop a joint rating system, and release even more violent games than before.

1994

- Nintendo releases Super Metroid and begins a push to regain control of the 16-Bit market. New Super FX chip games such as Star Fox aid Nintendo's efforts against Sega and the forthcoming 32-Bit machines.
- Sega releases 32X ($179.95), a peripheral that enables the Genesis to run 32-Bit cartridge games, in an attempt to stave off early adopter sales of the Jaguar and 3DO machines. Ports of Virtua Racing and Star Wars are favorable, as is a good version of id Software's Doom, but Sega licensees remain mysteriously noncommitted to the format, and all Sega games announced for release bear the frightening fingerprints of Sega of America marketing and development efforts: No one seems to know what the company is planning to do with the machine. Sega seems unprepared to release the machine in Japan.
- Nintendo releases Super Game Boy ($59.95), an adapter that lets the Super NES run Game Boy cartridges and Super Game Boy-enhanced games with color frame artwork and improved extra features.
- Nintendo releases Donkey Kong Country to a stunned crowd at a trade show (which had been expecting news on the new Nintendo 64-Bit game machine) and thus demonstrates that even the Super NES' slow CPU can compete with the 3DO and Jaguar. Donkey Kong Country is a best-seller, and Nintendo sales nearly catch up to the Genesis.
- The Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation are launched in Japan, the Saturn with a small number of so-so games (including Virtua Fighter), and the PlayStation with a growing number of successful arcade hits (Ridge Racer), good original titles (Toshinden) and mediocre home releases (Space Griffon). Sega launches its fourth Sonic 16-Bit cartridge, Sonic & Knuckles, and despite massive cross-promotional efforts, the game's sales are comparatively poor. Titles similar to Sonic have saturated the market, and massive giveaways are planned for millions of Sonic & Knuckles cartridges. Despite Donkey Kong Country's success, video game sales are low overall.





Virtua Fighter

- After announcing that the Saturn will be released in the United States on Sept. 2, "Sega Saturn Saturday," Sega releases the 32-Bit system in May for $399.99. Early adopters are overjoyed as Daytona USA, Panzer Dragoon and Virtua Fighter come home early. Yet overall sales are low, and few titles are released for the machine as developers are taken off-guard by the early debut.
- Sega and 3DO are ready to announce a joint hardware venture on 3DO M2 64-Bit technology. Although the deal is broken off at the last minute, talk continues throughout the year. 3DO development slows in anticipation of a 64-Bit announcement, and Panasonic ultimately acquires the M2 technology for use in home games and other devices. Panasonic reportedly pays $100 million for it.
- Nintendo releases the Virtual Boy ($179.95), a 32-Bit portable game console to tide people over until Project Reality, now called Ultra 64, is ready for release. Critics swarm to smash the system, while Nintendo points out that the Game Boy's sales have been strong despite its limitations and the Virtual Boy should see similar success. Media criticism is muted until the Virtual Boy's sales fall dramatically below Nintendo's own projections.
- Sony releases the PlayStation in the United States for $299, $100 less than expected. Sales are strong, and a collection of good release titles receives praise from consumers. Meanwhile, the Atari Jaguar continues to decline, despite the release of a CD peripheral that raised Jaguar supporters' hopes but was most likely dead on arrival.
- Nintendo delays the launch of the Ultra 64, telling fans of Nintendo products to keep on supporting the Super NES for another few months. Nintendo eventually demonstrates the Nintendo 64, the new name for the Ultra 64, at Shoshinkai—its own Japanese trade show. Super Mario 64 is playable and impresses gamers, but rumors persist that few other games are in development.

1995

- Sega drops internal plans for The Neptune, a system that would have combined the Genesis with the 32X peripheral.
- Another bad year for video game sales comes to a close. Several Japanese companies close their U.S. offices and a few U.S. companies go bankrupt. Sega and Sony's early skirmishes reveal Sony to be the winner, and Sega ends the year by releasing three excellent arcade translations (Virtua Fighter 2, Virtua Cop and Sega Rally) in rapid succession as a countermeasure. Meanwhile, Sega abandons support for the Sega CD and 32X.

1996 Present

Nintendo Powered: The 64-Bit Era Begins

1996

■ Sony drops the price of the PlayStation to $199, forcing Sega to follow suit. Word from developers continues to be negative on Sega's future—rumors persist that the company is going to stop developing hardware and focus on home translations for other systems. Panasonic, which now possesses 3DO's M2 technology, does not show the machine but allows 3DO to talk about upcoming games. All the while, CDs appear to be the only option for the future of home games, and doubts are strong as to the viability of cartridges.

■ Sega releases Virtua Fighter 3 in Japan and the United States, shattering previous polygon performance records for a coin-op. A Saturn version is immediately announced. Japanese sales of the Saturn are high, but U.S. sales are disappointingly low. Though Namco's Tekken series and Soul Edge games do relatively well in arcades and even better at home, Capcom's late '96 arcade release of the 3-D Street Fighter EX mostly bombs, probably because it's the nth game in the line not to bear the number or marketing clout attached to the magic number three.

■ A number of simulation games begin to enjoy popularity in arcades, including skiing, snowboarding and Jet-Ski games from Namco and Sega, as arcades face another period of decline.

Street Fighter EX

Fighting game clones have saturated the market previously saturated by shooters and Final Fight clones, and arcades turn to more expensive combinations of ride-and-video entertainment as home consoles catch up with arcade machines across the board.

■ Nintendo sells its 1 billionth cartridge worldwide, an announcement made as stores begin to dump stocks of 16-Bit cartridges at large losses. Sega takes huge losses worldwide on warehouses full of unsold 16-Bit games, and Acclaim, once the darling of Wall Street, takes a similar but apparently more damaging loss on warehouses full of critically panned 16-Bit games.

■ The N64 is released in the United States. Over 1.7 million units are sold in three months, and suddenly third-party developers rush to embrace the cartridge medium they had previously questioned, if only to cash in on the immense popularity of the new machine.

■ After a number of online news magazines discover plans for a 32-Bit color handheld device, Nintendo acknowledges that "Project Atlantis" is a RISC-based game machine that has been under development by European and Japanese contractors. Launch plans are quickly eclipsed by the impending release of the Nintendo 64.

■ Nolan Bushnell re-emerges in the industry as the president of Aristo Games, a company that makes Internet stations for arcades and bars.

1996 cont.

- The launch of the N64 in Japan supposedly nearly causes riots, but because of a much-improved system of distribution, people are able to buy N64 machines through local convenience stores without problems. Nintendo sets record sales and sells out of initial stocks of hardware, but after a few weeks, N64 sales practically vanish due to lack of software. Starved as they might be for software, people refuse to purchase the third Nintendo 64 launch title, Saikyo Habu Shogi, because it's not appealing enough. Rumors of too little software in development prove correct, and new releases are few and far between for several months.

- Atari Computer merges with disk drive manufacturer JTS on July 30, officially announcing the discontinuation of the Jaguar line that had been discussed unofficially for months.

- Sony sales are said to top $12 million per day through the Christmas shopping season, and the PlayStation holds on to its worldwide place as the number-one next-generation game console. The video game industry has a highly profitable year, and software prices on 32-Bit games begin to show exceptional volatility.

1997

- Sega releases its second super-polygon arcade machine, Super GT Scud Race, in Japan and America. No Saturn translation is announced. Capcom releases its long-awaited Street Fighter III in Japan, calling the game simply "Three" in America, and initial reaction seems to be underwhelming. The company's history of similar fighters has taken its toll.

- Sony drops the price of the PlayStation to $149. Nintendo follows suit. Sega holds the price of the Saturn at $199, as the machine includes three free CD games (Virtua Fighter 2, Daytona USA and Virtua Cop without a light gun). The total number of Nintendo 64 releases is roughly equivalent to the number of good games released for the PlayStation. Nintendo reveals it has scrapped plans for the Atlantis.

- Sega GameWorks SKG opens a new super arcade in Seattle, relying on high-end simulation games, Internet access, on-site food and cross-demographic appeal to lure crowds to play expensive arcade games.

- Sony releases the Net Yaroze ($750), a matte-black PlayStation that enables budding game programmers and designers to develop their own PS titles using some developers' code libraries, the C programming language and a specially designed PlayStation in conjunction with a PC for keyboard input. While this is the first time that a game hardware manufacturer has opened the gates to allow average end-users to create games for a console, a similar (but third-party, limited release) technology (the MagiCard) enabled Atari 2600 users to make their own games using the system's keypad controllers for entering commands.

- Today, Atari—the company that started it all—exists as Atari Games, a subsidiary of Midway that develops arcade titles (such as San Francisco Rush and Maximum Force). All that's left of the original company (the one behind the VCS and Jaguar) is Atari JTS, which recently sold the rights to Atari's classic games to Activision. Sony's PlayStation is the clear leader in the console wars, while the Nintendo 64 is firmly in second place (although the Saturn and N64 are neck and neck in Japan). Sega's Saturn is a distant third and continues to slip in the race, with every gamer's rapt attention turned toward their next 64-Bit system, the Dural, which looks likely to once again raise the bar in console technology.

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ASCII ENTERTAINMENT

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You want a new super-charged machine to play the hottest games, but which do you choose: PC or console? *EGM* helps you make the big decision

2 Ways to Play

By Tasos Kaiafas and Dan Hsu

You can make a huge list of pros and cons in trying to decide between buying a PC or a video game console. Anyone can argue that one is better than the other. You can find good games of any kind on either system, but the selection and quality of them largely depends on what kind of platform you're playing them on. What can help you decide is knowing the typical characteristics of the games in each genre for the PCs and consoles.

PC or Not PC?

If you're considering spending that big wad of cash on a personal computer, you're probably planning to use it for something more than just playing games. That has to be the biggest benefit to buying a PC (if it's games you're into, forget about a Mac—it's not even worth considering anymore). Unlike console systems, a computer is not a dedicated game machine. It can give you easy access to the Internet and e-mail, it probably comes with a word processor and spreadsheet program (always useful for school or work), and

it can run all kinds of other productivity software—thousands of programs of all types and purposes.

But we're talking about games here, and the PC has plenty to offer in that department, too. Its hardware is also upgradable, making access to the latest technology easy—although certainly not cheap by any means.

The flip side is you better know your way around your machine, because plug-and-play is still far from living up to its name—that is assuming your machine meets the minimum system requirements for that newly released game. And even if you have a 17- or 21-inch monitor, it's still not as comfy to use as your living-room television. Let's face it—you still can't play your PC from your couch. And although you can always track down people online at almost any time of the day or night to join you in a multiplayer PC game, you can't slug the jerk in the arm for taking you down in an all-out Tekken 2 battle.

But the biggest issue with the PC is still cost. You're going to need at least $2,000 to even smell a worthwhile computer, and then you'd better plan to spend another $200 to $500 each year if you want to keep up with the newest in hardware technology. If you can afford all that and a couple of games once in a while, you'll be one happy gamer. If that kind of spending to play games to their fullest potential sounds a little foolish, there's still another way to go.

I Just Wanna Play

Do you want to head down to the local store with a few hundred bucks and be back home playing video games before dinner? Then you'll want to check out a console, meaning a PlayStation, Saturn or Nintendo 64 these days. You probably already own a TV, so all you have to do is open the box and plug in a few cables. Pop in the game of your choice, power on and soon you'll be seeing lightning-fast frame rates and some of the best 2-D and 3-D technology around. No mess, no fuss—and no installation or troubleshooting.

Of course, there's a downside to consoles too. In a few years, that state-of-the-art gaming machine might be collecting dust when you decide to buy the latest, greatest system on the market. Just try to sell the old one to a less-fortunate friend for even half of what you paid for it. The big wigs at Sony, Nintendo and Sega surmise in their business model that their systems should have a shelf life of about five to six years. Let them tell you that after you've played on your game machine for a couple of years and start drooling over their competitor's new high-horsepower system.

FPS Football (PC)

It's in the Games

Still undecided? Sure you are, because what matters most are the games, regardless of what kind of machine you play 'em on. There are thousands of good ones to consider. So let's just take a look at a select few, the standouts in their respective genres, and set them up side-by-side, to see what they have to offer and where they excel and fail. By looking at the games considered tops for their type, you should get a good sense of which one is right for you.

Sports

PC: Game companies like EA Sports are just now starting to try to bring the same arcade qualities already found in console sports games to the PC. Up until now, PC sports games have always been more simulation than action—stat-heavy and cerebral are the operative words—and it may be what the computer gaming crowd wants. The reality is that many PC sports gamers would rather have both: good managerial and coaching control AND good arcade gameplay.

Some games already provide one or the other, but few have successfully pulled off both. NHL 98, for example, has some of the most amazing 3-D graphics on any system (especially with a 3-D video card)—it only modestly participates in off-ice activities. In fact, this year is even the first time you can call different strategies. NHL 98 does contain lots of stats and you can trade players, but you won't find the same level of detail and options like in more simulation-heavy games. Sierra's Front Page Sports: Football Pro, for example, characterizes what is meant by a good simulation that provides some arcade play (although not as good as on the consoles), and also typifies the complexity that the PC has to offer.

Part of the problem with arcade play in PC sports games is that many sports game developers have for some reason refused to support eight-button controllers, such as the Gravis Gamepad Pro and the Gravis GrIP. In fact, this is the first year that EA Sports games (with the exception of FIFA Soccer) will allow more than two buttons in their control scheme. And while the PlayStation supports up to eight simultaneous players in many of its sports titles, the best you'll get from the PC (with a gamepad for everyone) is four, at least if you have a Gravis GrIP. There is network and Internet support in a lot of these games, however, adding to the number that can play. FIFA 98 will support 20 players in the same game on networked machines.

Jimmy Johnson's VR Football 98/GameBreaker 98 (PlayStation)

Plus, there are only a few worthwhile sports games to choose from for each sport, but more are starting to cross over from consoles, where sports games account for almost half the market. This year has already seen a big boost in this genre.

One advantage the PC gains from rewritable data and Internet connectivity is the ability to update its software. For example, Madden NFL 98 lets you (assuming you have Internet access) hook up to EA's Web site to download the latest NFL rosters. Handy, isn't it?

Console: Consoles have always been known for their easy-to-learn, arcade-like sports games. Take the Genesis—it's a system that built its wide user base in large part because of this genre.

Although features and options are all well and nice, the emphasis of games is the gameplay. Here console games clearly shine, as nothing beats the responsiveness and intuitiveness of their sports games. PC games are almost all, as a whole, sluggish, and even the best of their control pads don't match up to the ones standard on a PlayStation or Saturn.

Unfortunately, for the longest time, console sports games provided nothing but action, giving them a bad rap in PC gaming circles. Fortunately, this is something that has quickly changed. Ever since game consoles made the leap to 32- and 64-Bit (in addition to acquiring CD-ROM technology), their sports games have quickly closed the gap between themselves and PCs when it comes to features and statistics. Scrutinize just about any sports game, and chances are they track just about every imaginable statistic. Furthermore, console games now allow you to also

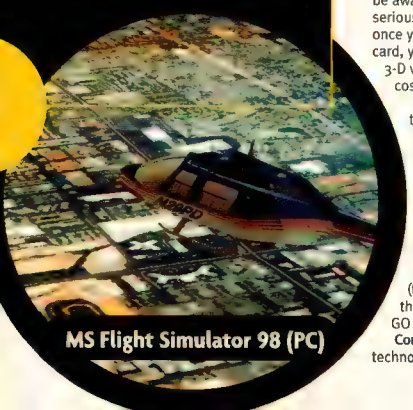
No Comparison: Simulators

If there's one area in which PC games clearly excel, it's in the simulation department. Consoles simply can't handle the complexity that a PC keyboard and a large hard drive can.

Activision's MechWarrior II perhaps best sums up the duality. The original PC Mech 2 had a slew of advance controls, inputted via keyboard. You can cycle through enemies, turn on night vision, group weapon systems, chain fire, zoom in, shut off power, etc., all with a simple keystroke. Knowing the PlayStation's and Saturn's limitations, Activision dummied down the console port to play more like an arcade game and less like a "realistic" 'Mech sim.

This also is the case with flight sims. Most popular flight games on the PC are meant to model real-life controls and physics, hence a simulation. Microsoft Flight Simulator 98 is an example of a flight sim so realistic, it is the only one of its kind to be endorsed by Learjet and Cessna (two of the largest manufacturers of private and commercial aircraft). To further help the PC's cause, you can buy all sorts of peripherals to enhance your flying experience, like 15-button analog flight sticks, throttle sticks and rudder pedals. If you want authenticity and realism, then get a PC.

On the flip side, if you're searching for something lighter on realism and heavier on action (i.e., something more arcadish), then consoles have what you need. Games like Ace Combat 2 (PS), Wing Arms (Sat) and Pilot Wings 64 (N64) are the closest thing consoles have to a flight sim, and neither of those are terribly realistic (unless you work in a circus, in which case Pilot Wings 64's human cannonball would seem like child's play). Looking for fast-paced flying action without the intricacies of piloting a real airplane? Get a console.



MS Flight Simulator 98 (PC)

play the roll of general manager as you can create, trade, sign and release players. Such features are no longer "special," as they've almost become requisite as of late. Now, games such as Interplay's Jimmy Johnson and Sony's GameBreaker are attempting to add intuitive playbook creators, thus raising the bar when it comes to features. This wilinevitably force their competitors to follow suit.

Duke Nukem Forever (PC)

First-Person Shooters

PC: This is a genre that was invented on the PC and is still one of its most popular sellers. When Duke Nukem 3D came out last year ahead of Quake, factions of fans of the two games formed almost immediately as people argued in chat rooms and in newsgroups on the Internet about which one is better. But when you strip them down to their bare bones, what you find is that Quake uses a true 3-D engine—allowing polygonal monsters, 3-D objects and overpasses—and a control scheme that has turned gamers into the cyberathletes of the online world.

Quake 2 (PC)

What this means is that Quake set a new standard for the first-person shooter in key areas, and the games that will follow will almost have to have as advanced an engine, or at least a highly compelling story and setting (as in the case of Duke Nukem 3D).

There are already a number of amazing titles—Quake 2 and Duke Nukem Forever among them—ready to help boost this still fairly new genre, almost all of them taking advantage of 3-D accelerator technology. But be aware that you are going to need some serious hardware to run these games well, and once you see them running on a 3-D accelerator card, you won't want to go back. Unfortunately, 3-D video cards aren't cheap; most, in fact, cost as much as a console system, or more.

What really sets these games apart on the PC, besides the way they look and play, is their Multiplayer Modes. Playing over a LAN (local area network) has made many an office worker miss out on a beer down at the corner pub after the five o'clock whistle and instead, stick around the office for a couple more hours to battle it out with fellow co-workers. Other options, for the rest of us without LAN access, include playing modem-to-modem (two players only) or on the Internet or through online gaming services like DWANGO and Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone.

Console: With the current 32- and 64-Bit technology, first-person shooters look really awesome on the home systems...usually. Poor PC-to-home ports aside (Dark Forces, Saturn Doom, etc.), Doom clones, as they are popularly called, are all the rage now.

GoldenEye 007 (N64)

The Nintendo 64 gets perhaps the best of the bunch with megahits GoldenEye 007 and Turok: Dinosaur Hunter, plus an excellent version of Doom (Doom 64). GoldenEye 007 singlehandedly raised the bar of quality for the entire genre, showing all first- person shooters don't need to involve mindless and repetitive action.

007 breaks the mold by involving players in various covert missions. Tired of shooting everything in sight? Do that in 007, and you'll suffer the consequences (more often than not, stealth and silencers are the keys to victory). Plus, GoldenEye is one of the best multiplayer games ever. Many gamers who hop on both sides of the fence (i.e., who play both PC and console games) prefer GoldenEye 007's frantic four-player-shoot-your-friends-while-hanging-out-with-them party to the loneliness of deathmatching on a remote computer.

Duke Nukem 64 (N64)

Other first-person shooters to look out for include home editions of Duke Nukem 3D (most of them with new features, levels and special effects) and great-looking, ultra-smooth versions of Quake.

Role-Playing Games

PC: Role-playing games can take advantage of fast CD-ROM drives and the huge storage capacities of hard drives in today's PCs. Virtually unlimited memory allows for vast and epic adventures. Take Bethesda Softwork's Daggerfall for example. This first-person adventure is set in a lush 3-D world full of monsters, traps, castles, dungeons and even varying weather. It's a far cry from the early Ultimas and King's Quest games, that's for sure.

Speaking of Ultima, Origin has finally put out Ultima Online. This monumental project lets gamers role-play in its true definition. With the

$50 software package, a $10 per month fee, an Internet Service Provider (costing anywhere from $10 to $20 per month) and a recommended hefty 500 Megs of hard-drive space, you can get online and meet and fight thousands of other human-controlled characters in Lord British's famous fantasy world. Forget about linear quests and story lines; in Ultima Online, you create your own saga.

Console: On console systems, role-playing games are as plentiful as they are distinctive. For more than a decade, Stateside gamers have grown more and more faithful to that unique RPG sub-genre, the Japanese RPG. Characterized by their cutesy characters, turn-based battles and colorful graphics, these RPGs are more about character development and story line than stat building and exploration, although leveling up your party is still a big part of each game.

The best and latest example of a Japanese RPG is actually the biggest departure from the genre's standard formula. Final Fantasy VII, for the PlayStation, is a grand adventure whose story line does the famous series proud, but this time around, the game gets a graphical update with the addition of phenomenal cinemas and prerendered backgrounds. (On a side note, Final Fantasy VII is coming to the PC.)

Consoles offer plenty of other great, exclusive RPGs, each with its own unique flavor and playing style. The Saturn is still thought of as the king of the genre, with recent greats Shining the Holy Ark (Sega) and Albert Odyssey (Working Designs) serving as bright examples of Japanese-RPGs. Upcoming games like Magic Knight Rayearth (Working Designs) and Panzer Dragoon Saga (Sega) will keep role playing fans happy for quite a while.

Action-RPGs are another popular console sub-genre that you'd be hard-pressed to find on the PC (the closest you'll get is Blizzard's Diablo, which is coming to the consoles and Activision's Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain, which was originally a console title). These games mix role-playing elements with action-oriented combat, making them well-suited for the console market. The most famous examples of action-RPGs belong to Nintendo and their master game designer, Shigeru Miyamoto. The Zelda adventures (whose next installment will be Zelda 64, expected to hit the N64 early next year) revolutionized video gaming by combining unprecedented depth in gameplay with puzzle solving and more importantly, fun.

Strategy

PC: Turn-based strategy games have always been popular on the PC side. Titles like MicroProse's Master of Orion and Civilization (and their respective sequels) have appealed to the hardcore PC gamer. They both demand thinking and patience from the gamer, without ever losing sight of the fun factor.

But recently, turn-based games have been taking a back seat to the real-time strategy genre, with literally over 40 new titles (Command & Conquer clones, if you will) planned to be released before the end of 1997. Some of these will make their way onto a console, but most of them are being designed strictly for play on the computer.

Recent hits like Activision's Dark Reign and upcoming surefire hits like StarCraft (from Blizzard Entertainment, makers of Warcraft I and II) will keep realtime strategy gurus up late at night.

One advantage that personal computers have over consoles is that strategy games are intuitively controlled better using a mouse (very few console games are supported by the few mice that are out

No Comparison

Action Games

The PC may have the market cornered in the simulation department, but a few genres are dominating on the console side of video gaming. If you are a big fan of fighting games, side-scrollers or light-gun games, then you need to get a home system.

Although you can play a few fighting games on the PC (FX Fighter, Super Street Fighter II Turbo and Virtua Fighter 2 for example), you just can't get the same playing experience that you can on a console, with its comfortable and responsive joypads and arcade sticks. Some of the latest fighters, like Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha are console exclusives.

PC side-scrollers are also a rarity. You can find a few titles like Mega Man X and the Sonic & Knuckles Collection, but you won't find any Super Mario Bros. (or Castlevania or Metroid...) games for your PC! Can life truly be fulfilling without having played Super Mario Bros. 3?

Light-gun games also stink on the PC, that is, if you can even find any (or a light gun, for that matter). Since no one really makes PC light guns anymore, most modern PC shooting-type games require you to aim with a mouse and cursor. Can you imagine playing Virtua Cop (called Virtua Squad on the PC) without a Sega Stunner? Blasphemy!

Finally, one of our favorite series of all time, Bomberman, is only worth playing on the consoles, whether it'd be the classic four-player Super Bomberman on the Super NES or the giant 10-player Saturn Bomberman. Interplay released Atomic Bomberman for the PC, but it just isn't the same. Our own West Coast Editor Kelly Rickards reviewed the game for our sister magazine *Computer Gaming World* (whose editors, especially Elliot Chin, must have a thing or two to say about this article...). Kelly said, and we quote, "This game bastardizes the series." Ouch.

there). The PC also has the advantage of supporting modem, Internet or LAN play to allow you to play games like Westwood Studio's Red Alert or MicroProse's CivNet with several other friends at the same time (either cooperatively or competitively).

Console: Similar to role-playing games, strategy games thrive on PCs and consoles, but in very different forms. Besides having great ports of some of the most popular PC hits (Civilization, Command & Conquer, SimCity 2000 and WarCraft II, to name a few), consoles have several other exclusive strategy titles worth mentioning.

The PlayStation has bragging rights to some of the most popular games to come out of Japan. Most predominant are the three-quarter viewed fantasy types, like Vandal Hearts and the soon-to-be released Final Fantasy Tactics and Tactics Ogre Battle (which are both strategy games based on a popular gaming series). These games all offer tactical turn-based combat full of fancy spells and addicting gameplay, all with the same Japanese flavor that made RPGs so hot on the consoles in the first place.

The Saturn also has a few winners, thanks to their now ex-partner, Working Designs. Dragon Force (a realtime masterpiece featuring massive *Braveheart*-esque army-to-army battles) and Iron Storm (a World War II tactical war game) have converted more than one die-hard PC gamer who thought consoles offered nothing but mindless action.

Dragon Force (Saturn)

Our Summations

If you haven't figured it out already, it bears repeating. Console systems typically deliver action-oriented arcade-type games, sometimes referred to as "twitch games" because of the fast reflexes required to play them. But that doesn't mean you'll have to forget about hardcore strategy games and simulations (flight, driving or sport). Consoles actually deliver enough of each genre to satisfy most gamers' needs. Consoles also offer social multiplayer gaming in comfortable environments (no need to crowd around a tiny monitor on a desk, or play against faceless opponents over the Internet).

If you opt for a PC instead, you better buy a good computer book for beginners, if you don't know anything about them already (or at least know someone who's willing to help you tinker with your sometimes not-so-user-friendly machine). And even if you do, until true plug-and-play happens, you better expect to figure out why a game won't work from time to time (and you better be ready to call tech support). But you will also get to be a part of the growing and exciting world of multiplayer gaming on the Internet and can always choose to upgrade your system as you see fit to keep up with the latest that technology has to offer.

In the end, it's all about how you like to play games. You'll find plenty of games out there. You'll have to decide which ones you want to play the most and why. Of course, plopping down a couple hundred bucks for a console gaming system won't buy you a computer anyway, and if you buy a computer you can always try to scrape together a few extra bucks for a console system. It's really all up to you, and—especially—what you have in the bank.

Ask Someone Who Knowles

Jon Knowles is LucasArts' co-designer of Shadows of the Empire for both the Nintendo 64 and the PC. He talked with us about some of the differences in developing the same game for both platforms.

Jon Knowles

EGM: What are some of the differences when designing a game for a console system and for the PC?

Jon Knowles: *The two biggest differences between the N64 version and the PC version is that the N64 version is running at a resolution of 320x240 pixels, and because of the unique blending and antialiasing [capabilities] built into the N64, you don't notice that it's running at a resolution [that low]. The [3-D accelerated] PC version runs at a full 640x480 pixels, so it's twice the resolution with the same frame rate and the same special-effects features.*

The other major difference is that because we have all that added storage space [with a PC], we're able to use full-motion video or spooling cinematic sequences, where on the N64 version we can only use still images. So we spent a few months doing cinematic sequences and 3-D people [for the PC version] and we were also able to use a lot of speech. There wasn't any speech in the N64 version other than stormtroopers and various other bad guys saying, "Hey, stop! Who are you?!" But in the PC version, we can have a lot of dialogue, a lot of radio chatter. For instance, as you're flying the Snow Speeder, you'll hear instructions come from Luke [Skywalker] or your co-pilot droid Lebo, which are just text messages in the N64 version. Had we had more time, we could have done all of the cinematic sequences for the N64 using the game engine, but then it would be rolling out now instead of when the machine came out.

EGM: What are some of the obstacles you encounter designing for each system?

Knowles: *If you're doing a game that requires a lot of high-speed polygon drawing, like a realtime 3-D action game, you know going into the project how many polygons per second per frame the machine is capable of drawing. For instance, in order to achieve 30 frames per second on the N64, you need to have roughly 4,000 polygons or less in any given frame at any given moment on the screen. The PC cannot handle that without 3-D acceleration; you wouldn't even design a game like that for the PC without hardware acceleration.*

EGM: Which system do you prefer to develop for?

Knowles: *I don't really have a preference. In this day and age, PCs are catching up to the consoles in terms of the amount of polygons you can draw. The technology is changing so fast that PCs can hold their own against consoles. And console games—you develop one, and it lasts for a few years. The Super NES was strong for a few years and the Nintendo 64 will be strong for a few years, where for the PC, every year or six months, someone comes up with a brand-new card that blows away what somebody else did. But you'll sell a lot more games for a console because more people can afford to buy a console system.*

Bang for the Buck

Sure PCs are great, as are consoles. Both sides play awesome and addicting games. Both sides will cause you to lose countless hours of sleep. And both sides cost money. On that note, we thought it'd be fun to do a little shopping. Many people see a PC as a good buy and with just cause, but most people forget about just what else they could've bought with that same money.

"If we were to spend $2,500 on the ultimate gaming setup, what could we get?"

Personal Computer

Gateway 2000 G6-233 ..... $2000
- Intel 233 MHz Pentium II Processor w/MMX
- 32 MB SDRAM DIMM, expandable to 384MB
- Internal 512K L2 secondary write-back cache
- EV700 17" color monitor (15.9" viewable area)
- nVidia 4 MB AGP graphics card
- 2.0 GB Ultra ATA hard drive
- 3.5" 1.44 MB floppy drive
- 12X min./24X max. CD-ROM drive
- Ensoniq wavetable audio card
- Altec ACS-41 speakers
- TelePath Modem w/X2 Technology and speakerphone
- G-Series Mid Tower
- Multi-function Keyboard
- MS IntelliPoint Mouse
- Gateway mouse pad
- Microsoft Windows 95, MS Money 97, Quicken SE

Righteous 3D $150
- 4 MB EDO-DRAM 3D accelerator (3Dfx)

Microsoft 3-D Sidewinder Pro $150
- Force Feedback Joystick

Games:
- Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II $50
- Command & Conquer: Red Alert $50
- NHL 98 ..... $50
- Microsoft Flight Simulator 98 ..... $50

Total: **$2500**

For the layman and/or the PC-shy: The above gives you everything you need to get started. The hardware is state-of-the-art and *fast*.

We give you a speedy processor at 233 MHz (as of this writing, the fastest Pentium II chip is clocked at 300 megahertz, so our fantasy computer is not the best one on the block). The 32 Megs of RAM is about standard now (look to get more in a year or two). The 17-inch monitor is a comfortably big screen (any bigger, and the price jumps up exponentially). The AGP (Accelerated Graphics Port) video card has a faster bus speed than normal video cards, allowing faster data transfers—again, it's just more speed. The 2.0 gigabyte hard drive should be plenty of room to store many games. The 12X CD drive allows fast loading. The wavetable card gives you true music and a full range of sound effects. The X2 modem is the fastest standard modem around (short of an expensive cable or ISDN modem). The 3Dfx board gives you the 3-D acceleration we talked about throughout this feature; it basically makes 3-D games run smoother and faster (and with more special effects). The force feedback joystick lets you play most flight games with analog controls (the force feedback gives you actual feedback depending on what's happening on screen, assuming the game supports it, which many do not yet).

Jedi Knight is a Star Wars first-person shooter. C&C: Red Alert is a realtime strategy game. NHL 98 is a hockey game. MS Flight Simulator 98 is, you guessed it, a flight simulator.

Console

Choose one of the following three options:

Nintendo 64 core system	$150	Diddy Kong Racing	$60
Extra control pad	$30	GoldenEye 007	$60
2 Controller Paks	$40	Star Fox 64	$60
2 Rumble Paks	$40	Madden 64	$65
Super Mario 64	$60	Extreme-G	$70

32" Sony stereo TV $800
picture-in-picture, surround sound, 2 A/V inputs, S-video input

Sony Dolby Pro Logic System $1000
100 watts (on 4 channels), Digital AM/FM tuner with 30 presets, 50-disc CD changer + single disc drawer, Dual Auto Reverse Cassette Deck, 3-way front speakers, Center channel speaker, Rear speakers.

Electronic Gaming Monthly two-year subscription $35

Total **$2,470.00**

Sony PlayStation core system	$150	Twisted Metal 2	$40
Dual analog controller	$33	Castlevania: SotN	$50
2 Memory cards	$44	Tomb Raider 2	$55
Four-player multi-tap	$40	Crash Bandicoot 2	$40
Final Fantasy VII	$56	Tekken 2	$50
NFL GameDay 98	$40	Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee	$50

32" Sony stereo TV $800
picture-in-picture, surround sound, 2 A/V inputs, S-video input

Sony Dolby Pro Logic System $1000
100 watts (on 4 channels), Digital AM/FM tuner with 30 presets, 50-disc CD changer + single disc drawer, Dual Auto Reverse Cassette Deck, 3-way front speakers, Center channel speaker, Rear speakers.

Electronic Gaming Monthly two-year subscription $35

Total **$2,483.00**

Sega Saturn core system	$150	Sonic Jam	$45
Memory Card Plus (8 meg)	$40	Madden 98	$47
Six-player multi-tap	$40	Albert Odyssey	$50
NiGHTS (w/Analog controller)	$50	Dragon Force	$50
Virtua Cop 2 (w/Sega Stunner)	$50	Saturn Bomberman	$40
Fighters MegaMix	$50	World Series Baseball '98	$50

32" Sony stereo TV $800
picture-in-picture, surround sound, 2 A/V inputs, S-video input

Sony Dolby Pro Logic System $1000
100 watts (on 4 channels), Digital AM/FM tuner with 30 presets, 50-disc CD changer + single disc drawer, Dual Auto Reverse Cassette Deck, 3-way front speakers, Center channel speaker, Rear speakers.

Electronic Gaming Monthly two-year subscription $35

Total **$2,497.00**

Well there you have it. Not only can you get an awesome gaming setup (complete with memory cards, extra controllers and a bunch of games), but you can get a huge TV AND a complete stereo surround-sound setup (with a 51-disc CD player, dual-cassette deck and five huge speakers).

If you wanted to forego the nice TV and/or stereo system (because you don't need them/you already have them), then you can save yourself up to another $1,800. With $1,800, you can buy just about every game system in existence, or you can buy another 35 or so games. See what not buying a PC can get you? (By the way, we're not anti-PC. All of us *EGM* editors own one, and we love 'em. But we also have all of the above stuff. We're also broke as hell.) Plus, you get two more years of your favorite gaming magazine. Life can be such bliss with 2,500 disposable dollars (plus tax).

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Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

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SOFTBANK company

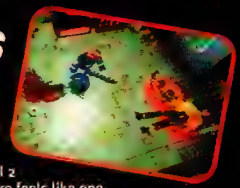
ZOMBIES ATE MY PLAYSTATION

BRAIN-EATING ZOMBIES

TITANIC ALLIGATORS

By Shawn Smith

BUCKETS O' BLOOD



OK, maybe Resident Evil 2 isn't a movie, but it sure feels like one when you're playing it. With the kind of history zombies have on the big screen—dozens of flicks, hundreds of victims—it's no surprise that both the intensity and intestines of this midnight-movie staple would be transformed into a video game. Leave it to Capcom, one of the big players in the video game industry, to come up with the definitive "zombie game."

When Resident Evil first came out, it took PlayStation owners by storm. Not only did the game leave all of us on the edge of our seats with its suspense, it was just plain fun to play. With numbers in the millions in worldwide sales, Resident Evil is easily the most popular game on the PlayStation. In fact, it was picked best game on the PlayStation by our readers.

So how can this sequel top the original? Even the best games have a few things that can be improved upon, and Capcom has done just that with Resident Evil 2. By the way, what you're seeing in this feature is from a preview beta of the Japanese version of RE2, so things may very well change in the U.S. final.

Take Me Down To Raccoon City

Although it has been well over a year since the first game was released, Resident Evil 2's story is set only two months after the original. Business is just starting to thrive in Raccoon City, ever since the Umbrella Corporation

Continued on page 150

CONTRARY TO WHAT SOME MAY BELIEVE, THE CRANBERRIES' TOP 40 TUNE WASN'T THE FIRST TIME ZOMBIES CLAWED THEIR WAY INTO THE WORLD OF POP CULTURE. PRIOR TO THE SONG, THOSE UNDEAD HUMANS HAVE STARRED IN DOZENS OF POPULAR HORROR FILMS. THEY'VE COME A LONG WAY, CONSIDERING ZOMBIES WERE NOTHING MORE THAN VOODOO LEGEND AT ONE TIME. NOW IN RESIDENT EVIL 2, THE FLESH-EATING DEAD ARE UP TO THEIR OLD TRICKS. WILL YOU SURVIVE?

moved into town. There are more jobs, a general sense of happiness, and the city's beginning to look more like Mayberry, less like Amityville. And then the madness that, in the first game, was limited to a mansion in the outlying hills spills into town. We're talking zombies, zombies everywhere.

Leon Kennedy, one of the main characters, has just been hired onto the Raccoon PD. He tries to contact the captain of the force but has no luck. Leon then decides to make a trip into town, but little does he know what's in store for him.

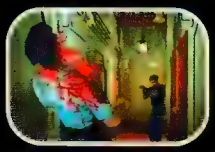
Meanwhile, Claire Redfield is desperately trying to find her brother (you know, Chris) and thinks Raccoon City is a good place to start. It turns out both Claire and Leon suffer a serious case of bad timing, and you spend the rest of the game guiding either Leon or Claire from one horrific encounter to the next.

So, besides the new story and the game being on two CDs instead of one (a disc for Leon and the other for Claire), what makes this one different from the first?

Battle Of The Sexes

Thinking back to when you played the first Resident Evil, do you remember blasting any female flesh-eaters? Believe it or not, the first Resident Evil only featured male zombies. Capcom couldn't discriminate against women in the sequel, so they opened up membership to the undead to both men and women.

On the flipside, look for a large cast of characters (both male and female) that you can either control at some point or at least interact with. Besides being able to control Leon and Claire, you'll also assume the role of Ada Wong (when controlling Leon) and Sherry Birkin (when using Claire). Don't look for old members of the S.T.A.R.S.—they've all been missing since they returned from the first game's mansion. There's a good chance Umbrella's behind the disappearances.



Code Name: The Zapping System

Another new feature is something Capcom has labeled the Zapping System. Simply put, it's a method for players to experience the game differently depending on how they beat it and who they play as the second time around and so on. For instance, say you finish the game with Leon. After saving the finished game to a memory card, you then start with Claire. The doors you opened, items you found and how long it took you to beat the game (among other things) are transferred over to Claire's game. The game can essentially be different every time you restart it.

We Did The Monster Mash

In case you were worried, Resident Evil 2 still allows you to take out zombies the old-fashioned way: by either squashing their heads or kicking 'em with your boot. But for those who don't like to get their feet dirty, the game offers plenty of big guns. Just as the first Resident Evil featured seven different weapons, this time around you'll find at least 10, including a shotgun, an M-16, a gatling gun and a flame thrower.

Resident Evil 2 also features weapon enhancements. These are items that can be added to existing weapons. Some will turn your semi-automatic weapon into an automatic for some teeth-rattling fun, while others simply boost the power of that particular weapon.

There also may be an auto aim feature where, by hitting a particular button, players can "lock" onto the nearest zombie. Then, by hitting the lock button again, a player can cycle through any zombies nearby. This way, they won't waste bullets when being handicapped by an awkward camera angle.

Just like the zombies, the main characters show damage when they're hurt. For example, Leon dons a bandage after being shot. On top of this, when the characters' health gets low, you can see that they're hurting; they'll be holding their side and limping. That's when you know it's time to use some Health Spray or a few healing herbs.

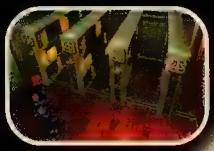
Zombies On The March

Another major change in Resident Evil 2 is the way zombies attack. Sure, a lot of them are slow—but a few can get pretty speedy. Also, be careful when walking close to a zombie, since they can lunge at you. If they do get a hold of you, though, you can just shove a zombie off. Instead of him just continuing to lunge back at you—like in the first game—he'll tumble to the ground. And if there's another zombie in his path as he falls back, he'll knock that one over, too. It's like playing with rotting dominoes.

The zombies in REz are tougher than ever before. Some zombies will take about six or seven bullets before going down for good. And unlike the original RE, don't even think about the knife being all that useful.

Another addition is a variety of different zombies. Look for undead resembling civilians, cops, females—even ones that apparently play basketball. And like in the first game, you'll run into other monsters besides zombies. Some include

It wouldn't be fair to only give the spotlight to the zombies. Resident Evil 2 co-stars lots of weird monsters—some that have their brains exposed and rip your head off with their tongues.



an incredible giant alligator, a Buick-size plant, ferocious rabid dogs and many others.

Dirtied Shorts

Resident Evil wouldn't be Resident Evil without its share of chilling sequences. RE2 has plenty of suspenseful moments of its own. Some memorable scenes we've seen so far include a giant alligator that bursts out of the water and knocks you down a passageway. You'll also walk into a sewer and see two giant spiders crawling on the ceiling (no, the game's not for the arachnophobic). One other that we have to tell you about is when you open a door and the standard opening-door loading screen starts, only to reveal zombies waiting on the other side. All of a sudden, you have to kill them or be killed.

"I hope this isn't Chris' blood..."

OK, we have to admit that as bad as the voice acting was in the first Resident Evil, we liked it. Resident Evil 2 is a step better than the first, but it still has that B-movie feel. So I guess in a weird way we are thankful. After all, what would a Resident Evil game be without goofy dialogue?

More to Come

Fear not. This isn't the end of our Resident Evil 2 coverage. Every step of the way we'll show you more screen shots and info on this incredible, horrifying, decidedly R-rated sequel. Heck, we'll even hold your hand if you're scared.

MOOD MOVIES

Here's a few flicks that'll kick off any Resident Evil evening

Night of the Living Dead

George Romero's 1968 black-and-white horror classic laid out the three basic rules that all of Resident Evil 2's undead beasties follow: One, they apparently have a top speed of two miles per hour; two, they suffer an eternal case of the munchies for human flesh; and three, the only way to kill one is by blowing 'ts brains out. The finale's a real shocker, too, leaving you to wonder who's the bigger monster: the zombies or their human prey.

Dawn of the Dead

Romero's sequel is easily the best and most horrifying zombie movie of all time. This time around, the band of embattled humans seeks shelter in a mall. The world outside, meanwhile, is packed with zombies trying to claw their way into the survivors' massive retail fortress, and we suppose there's some message here about how consumers often resemble the walking dead. But don't worry about looking for underlying social commentary; just pay attention to all the exploding zombie heads and human disembowelments, and Resident Evil 2 will seem like Sunday school.

Return of the Living Dead

By far the silliest of the zombie movies, *Return of the Living Dead* not only spoofs Romero's flicks, it also breaks all his laws of zombiedom. Far from being clumsy dimwits, these zombies slam-tackle their victims and unleash cunning strategies (one even uses a CB radio to call in the police, who are promptly eaten). And head wounds won't stop 'em; the only way to kill these carnivores is by incineration, which in turn leads to more zombies because...well, you'll just have to see the movie. Best of all, the zombies chant "More brains, more brains" like a mantra, as they go about their unyielding pursuit for what is apparently the most nutritional portion of the human body.

Did you know

that Haitian voodoo suggests zombies are real? A magician called a Bokor who practices Black Magic can create a zombie by applying various poisons to a person's skin. After these are absorbed, the person falls into a coma state. After which, the Bokor gives the "zombified" individual hallucinogens and voilà...a zombie is created! Note that these zombies don't eat flesh.

Review Crew

Our Philosophy

This month's Crew is packed with more game and peripheral reviews than any other issue in *EGM* history. Each reviewer gives a game an overall score, which is displayed behind the review and based on how the game compares to other titles for the same system. In addition, the reviewers rate each game's graphics, sound, ingenuity and replay value. The averages of these scores are listed at the bottom.

Editors' Choice

Gold Awards go to games whose average score equals 9.0 or higher.

Games that average at least an 8.0 receive Silver Awards.

Rating Scale

10-Perfection
An absolutely flawless experience. It doesn't get any better

9-Virtually Flawless
Drop what you're doing and buy this nearly perfect game

8-Semradical
Delivers everything you'd want in a game, despite minor flaws

7-Worthy
A solid title that you won't regret buying

6-Good, Not Great
Sure, it has its problems, but it's still fun to play

5-Average
Not great, not crap. A ho-hum title that isn't for everybody

4-Rent First
We have problems here. Definitely try before you buy

3-Time Waster
Playing it for more than 10 minutes gives you a migraine

2-Don't Even Rent
The only point in playing this garbage is to make fun of it

1-Flush It
Run for your life if you see it, or use it as a coaster

Guest Reviewer

Howard Grossman
EGM² EIC

Howard is the editor in chief of *EGM²*, but his Sendai/Ziff-Davis experience all started in *EGM* #39. After working on several issues, the opportunity arose to stand out and work on two smaller magazines, *Super NES Buyer's Guide* and *Mega Play*. While these two popular titles didn't have the clout that *EGM* did, they presented a chance for him to become more involved in the company. Later when Steve Harris started the idea of *EGM²*, he quickly clung to its principles of strategy and arcade. After several years as managing editor, Howard became the EIC of *EGM²*, beginning with issue #23.

Current Favorites
Abe's Oddysee
Street Fighter EXPlus α
Beastorizer
Dungeon Keeper
Favorite Genre: Unique Titles

Shawn Smith

Shawn has finally managed to make it past 21. It took him a year, but he has completed his task. Now he keeps thinking of all the cool things he'll be able do now that he's 22. "Let's see," he says, "I can rent most high-powered drills, purchase M-Rated video games and grow my beard *extra* long." Ahhh...if only we could all be 22 again.

Current Favorites
Resident Evil 2
Tomb Raider 2
Frogger
Colony Wars
Favorite Genres:
Action/Adventure

Dan Hsu

"Shoe" dressed up as his favorite mascot this Halloween (yes we know this is the January issue...don't ask). Shoe made a cute PaRappa the Rapper and Wendy, his significant other, went as Sunny Funny. The couple, along with John and Kraig, hit downtown Chicago pretty hard. Too bad no one outside of *EGM* knew who PaRappa was.

Current Favorites
SF Collection
Point Blank
C&C: Red Alert
Intelligent Qube
Favorite Genres:
Strategy/Puzzle

Crispin Boyer

Cris was bummed all month long that the best IQ he could muster in Intelligent Qube was a 70—which, according to the real IQ scale, places him at the same level as your average moron. So, to build his self-esteem, everyone lets him win at Wheel of Fortune. "See," Cris said afterward, "me real smart. Me buy vowel and whup all you dummies."

Current Favorites
Tomb Raider 2
Colony Wars
Resident Evil 2
Burning Rangers
Favorite Genres:
RPGs/Action

Kraig Kujawa

Now that he's finally finished *EGM's Player's Guide to Sports Video Games*, Kraig has decided to relax a bit. How? Playing more sports games. Lately, he's taken a liking to beating the bejesus out of his fellow *EGM* staffers when it comes to playing Madden NFL 98. At least they keep coming back for more.

Current Favorites
NBA Live 98
Madden NFL 98
Castlevania: SotN
Colony Wars
Favorite Genres:
Sports/Strategy

John Ricciardi

Now that the horror that was last month is over for John, things have been looking up. Still, he's not happy about Shoe whooping him in SF Collection and taking all his lunch money, so he's been using his lunch hours to carefully plan his revenge. How will he win back his hard-earned pennies? We heard him say something about Saturn X-Men Vs. SF...

Current Favorites
Final Fantasy Tactics
Resident Evil 2
Street Fighter Collection
NHL 98
Favorite Genres:
RPGs/Adventure

Kelly Rickards

EGM's Jamaican gamer is all caught up in the hype over Sega's 64-Bit Dural. He keeps ignoring us anytime we point out that the system is still vaporware at this point and Super GT is still a long way off. It's gotten to the point where Kelly counts Mclaren F1s instead of sheep as he drifts off to sleep. What's next Kelly? Bobsled tryouts?

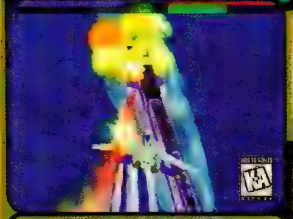
Current Favorites
F1 Championship Edition
Castlevania: SotN
Diddy Kong Racing
Street Fighter EXPlus α
Favorite Genres:
Fighting/Racing

Sushi-X

Happy New Year! Sushi sends his warmest salutations for 1998! Here's his New Year's Review Crew Resolutions:
1) I will continue to not be biased in any review, EVER. If I don't like a game, I'll say why and rate it accordingly.
2) I promise not to make TOO much fun of Shoe in 1998.
3) I will make every effort to be first in line to play SF4!

Current Favorites
Tomb Raider 2
Street Fighter Collection
Street Fighter EXPlus α
GoldenEye 007
Favorite Genres:
Fighting/RPGs

AEROFIGHTERS ASSAULT



Publisher: Video System USA

Developer: Paradigm

Featured In: *EGM* #98

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Flight Models

Worst Feature: Choppy Graphics

www.paradigmsim.com

This N64 installment of the multiplatform Aerofighters series is both fun and intense—once you get past its few glaring flaws. Namely, the game suffers from a choppy frame rate and some of the most frustratingly tough levels this side of Blast Corps. The choppiness is a surprise, considering Aerofighters Assault was developed by the sim gurus at Paradigm. (In their defense, the game packs at least triple the graphics punch of PilotWings 64, Paradigm's previous N64 offering.) Still, the **flight models of the four selectable fighter jets are fantastic** (they were designed by a former Navy fighter pilot), making for excellent control, and the third-person dogfight view is a nice touch. You get three Practice Modes and seven mission-based levels, most of which have you taking out dozens of targets that surround a mammoth Boss—all while engaging in the occasional dogfight and covering your wingmen's tails. And although early missions are a bit ho-hum, later ones have you protecting the space shuttle, zooming through narrow caverns—even dogfighting in outer space. Score high enough and you'll earn access to four cool but brief bonus missions, including a landing attempt on your airborne carrier. You can even earn extra planes for use in the Two-player Dogfight Mode. This mode didn't hold my interest for very long, though. **Crispin**

AFA has come a long way since the rather forgettable preview version shown at E³. The game has been polished up quite a bit, and while the finished product isn't exactly perfect, it's still a lot of fun. **The missions are diverse and interesting**, and the enemy AI is very nicely done. Control is tight, and the multiple camera views are a welcome feature. On the downside, the frame rate is pretty choppy, and the Two-player Mode is boring. **John**

Aerofighters doesn't look mind-blowing, but it's a fun game. There are lots of jets to pick from, and a large variety of interesting missions. The game is very challenging, and **sometimes the missions seem impossible**, but after practice, each can be completed. It's good to play a difficult game when many are too easy nowadays. While Aerofighters isn't as polished as Ace Combat 2, it should satisfy gamers who like arcade flight sims. **Kraig**

I think Aerofighters Assault looks pretty good, but looks don't go all that far. **It's a fun game, but that's for a short time.** After that, it's just the same thing: enemy jets, maybe some ships and a big Boss in the middle that has these powerful twin cannons. The levels are cool (especially the third level in the sky), but that just isn't enough for me. It's a good mix of standard flight sim and arcade action, but it's really nothing new. **Shawn**

Graphics	Sound	Control	Fun
8	6	7	6

AUTOMOBILI LAMBORGHINI

Publisher: Titus

Developer: Titus

Featured In: *EGM* #96

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Realistic Play

Worst Feature: Not Enough Cars

www.titusgames.com

Of all the N64 racing games released thus far, I'd have to say that Titus' new Automobili Lamborghini (formerly Lamborghini 64) has surprised me the most. I didn't expect to be anywhere near as satisfied with the final product as I am, especially considering that Lambo hasn't received nearly as much hype as some of the other, more inferior N64 racers. The gameplay could be most likened to Namco's Ridge Racer series (arcade/PlayStation). The cars handle more realistically, there are better graphics and best of all, there are six tracks (the entire Ridge Racer series combined doesn't even have six tracks!). There are only a couple of cars to choose from at first, but after racing in the various modes (like the Arcade Mode and the Championship Mode), you'll pick up newer, faster cars. That's when the gameplay really begins to pick up. Still, the main reason I've really gotten into Automobili Lamborghini (say that three times fast!) is the game's Multiplayer Mode, where you can race a full season against a friend and two computer opponents. Sure, this option has been available before (like in San Francisco Rush, for example), but it just isn't nearly as fun or more importantly, realistic. For me, that's what put this one over the top and made it **my favorite N64 racer so far** (narrowly edging out Top Gear Rally). Overall, it's an excellent racer. **John**

At first I wasn't all that impressed with Automobili Lamborghini, but that was the Multiplayer Mode. It seemed like the AI cars were far too smart. Then I played the one-player game and was pleasantly surprised—it played really well. **This is my favorite racer on the Nintendo 64 thus far.** The graphics are excellent and the levels are quite long. The secret cars were a nice touch, too. I'd say pick this one up if you're into racers. **Shawn**

Despite its weird name, Automobili is a pretty fun game. **Driving different types of Lamborghinis is a cool concept**, although there aren't too many different ones to take for a spin in this game. The action is pretty simple, with a few things thrown in (such as the pit stop where you must thrash your joystick to get out quickly) to add some variety. Overall, this is the most realistic N64 racer. Given the competition, it wasn't a difficult feat. **Kraig**

While it certainly looks nice, Automobili is pretty average in all other departments—average number of cars and tracks, average gameplay, etc. I will give it a slightly higher score for the Four-player Split-Screen Mode, but still, I wish the game had more courses. Another minor annoyance is a lack of configurable buttons (I wanted easier access to the hand brake). Otherwise, **you won't be disappointed (or thrilled) with this one**. **Dan**

Graphics	Sound	Control	Fun
8	7	7	8

CLAY FIGHTER 63 1/3

Publisher: Interplay

Developer: Interplay

Featured In: *EGM* #96

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Awesome Party Game

Worst Feature: Choppy Scene Transitions

www.interplay.com

Typically spoof games have never been very successful, but the Clay Fighter series is a rare exception. Right from the start, you know you have to play this game with a tongue-in-cheek attitude. For starters, I didn't particularly like the gameplay. It was very choppy, where each hit causes a forced pause for emphasis. I know this is intentional, but it's a distraction from the rhythm of battle. Another irritation is the scene transitions. They aren't composed very well and look rushed. This is my biggest complaint. The idea—borrowed from Mortal Kombat—is so disjointed and poorly executed. It feels out of place. Once you realize this isn't a great one-player game, you'll be fine. As a tournament-style game, it's a blast. Any party with this fired up on the ol' N64 will be filled with laughter. The Claytalities are exceptionally funny for most of the characters, especially Sumo Santa. I can't go into many details here, but rest assured that **you'll never look at that retail store Santa in quite the same light**. On top of that, the voices are perfect. I've never heard so many spoken taunts. What's really special is that Boogerman is voiced by town drunk Barney of *The Simpsons*! If you don't bust a gut playing Clay Fighter 63 1/3 with friends, I'll have to wonder how many diamonds you can squeeze out with the coal Sumo Santa will bring you this year. **Sushi**

I'd give Clay Fighter a higher score, but I know the game doesn't have much staying power. As almost everyone knows by now, Clay Fighter is a parody of fighting games. Although the game does an awesome job at that, **what we have underneath is a barely average fighting game**. Plus, there are several graphic problems and the animation is blocky and choppy. Overall, the game is pretty funny but really doesn't present anything solid. **Shawn**

With its mix of Street Fighter, Mortal Kombat and Killer Instinct play mechanics, this goofball game isn't revolutionary. But we didn't expect it to be. We expected it to be darn funny, and it is—especially if you're a fan of fart jokes. Most moves and Claytalities are hilarious, but **it's the dialogue that'll really crack you up** (Interplay rounded up several recognizable voice actors). Still, when the jokes get old, so does the game. **Crispin**

Clay Fighter 63 1/3 turned out to be a pretty decent fighter after all. The fighting engine is really solid (believe it or not), and the tongue-in-cheek humor is quite funny (where else can you perform "Little Girlie Combos" anyway?). **Some of the moves and Claytalities are just hilarious to watch.** Unfortunately, the animation is a little too choppy, and the graphics are overly dull and dark. I wouldn't call it a "must-buy," but if you're a fan, check it out. **John**

Graphics	Sound	Control	Fun
6	7	6	7

DUKE NUKEM 64

Publisher: GT Interactive

Developer: Eurocom

Featured In: *EGM* #99

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Killer Weaponry

As a long-time fan of Duke Nukem on the PC, I was quite intrigued at the prospect of a Nintendo 64 version. Even on a cartridge-based console, Duke doesn't disappoint. He has retained nearly all his distinct personality in this conversion, with the exception of certain forms of violence—namely, smearing the babes. Nope, that's a no-no, and unfortunately, you're regulated to saving them instead. The cocooned babes no longer whimper, "Kill me" when approached, but are rescued instead. I also haven't been able to find any little steaming piles of alien-pies, but I'm not gonna cry about that. Rather, I'll choke back the tears with the horribly limiting controller choices, as you cannot individually configure each button. Another awkward, yet manageable difference is the resolution. On the PC, you can get a crisp 800x600 view. Here, you're limited to 320x240 interpolated (quite nicely) to 640x480. Smaller details get lost on the N64. **In Multiplayer Mode, I've found a keeper.** The biggest problem is the oversized gun graphics stealing valuable screen space, but it's something I can live with. The new weapons add flair—my new favorite is the grenade launcher. Nothing's better than silently bouncing a few timed/contact grenades around corners and stairways. You'll have a blast playing Duke with your friends. **Sushi**

Worst Feature: Censored

You're not gonna find a better console version of Duke. The revamped weapons are very cool, as are all the extra areas that have been added to the levels. Sure, the game has its little problems. I wish it gave you more control options, and your weapon often obscures too much of your tiny screen in Four-player Mode (which, while fun, isn't nearly as cool as multiplayer GoldenEye 007). If you've never played Duke before, this is a must-buy. **Crispin**

www.gtgames.com

Duke 64 provides the same generic action found in 99 percent of the "Doom clones." The difference, however, is that **this game has style and personality.** Many of the weapons (including new Duke 64 ones) do more than just shoot (trip mines and pipebombs are a great idea). The realistic-looking locales (modified from the PC version) make for interesting exploration. The best part? Deathmatching. Not as good as 007's, but fun. **Dan**

I'm a fan of Duke on the PC, but on the console side, this is the best version out so far. The graphics look great, although the blurring gets a little annoying sometimes. **I especially like the explosions.** The special N64 deathmatch arenas are pretty nice, too. The control can be a little tricky at times, but the different styles help (it's not easy to look around in one of the Control Modes). One more note, they could've made the AI Bots more fair. **Shawn**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
7	7	7	7

EXTREME-G

Publisher: Acclaim

Developer: Probe

Featured In: *EGM* #100

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Excellent Sense of Speed

Early looks at this one had me excited just because I like the whole futuristic wasteland racing theme (i.e., WipeOut XL), and the finished product comes through with flying colors. The graphics were incredible with just a tad of slowdown in Multiplayer Modes and a bit of fog in some areas. What made the graphics even more impressive is the speed at which they whizzed by. **The bikes in the game reminded me of the ones in Tron,** except the graphics were much better in Extreme-G! The one-player courses were nicely designed, with their huge drops and jumps, but the multiplayer battle ones left a lot to be desired. In fact, some arenas were no more than three ramps, some power-ups and an area the size of a football field. Those get old real quick. Luckily, there are Multiplayer Modes besides the straight-out "Battle" one. In all of the modes, the power-ups you pick up can be tricky to identify, but they look pretty darn cool after you launch them. One thing about the explosions that really got on my nerves big time was the fact that even though they look cool, if you don't fire them off just right, they'll end up putting you in fifth place (when you were just in first). It's better not to use them at all! Overall, it's a solid game that's a lot of fun and looks great, but it really didn't do much for me in those Multiplayer Modes. **Shawn**

Worst Feature: Lame Battle Mode

Pardon the cheap pun, but this game is extremely good. **Picture WipeOut with really ingenious track design** that consists of loop-de-loops and corkscrews, and you know what Extreme-G is like. The tracks are very diverse and keep the gameplay interesting and fun. Graphically, Extreme is fast and detailed—it had to be to pull some of the tracks off convincingly. Extreme-G is the type of N64 racing game that should've arrived long ago. **Kraig**

www.acclaimnation.com

Wow. Two really good Acclaim games in a row. Extreme-G is one of the best, and definitely the most unique, racers on the N64 thus far. The course layouts are dizzying (corkscrews, loops, huge drops, etc.), and **the sensation of speed you get is just awesome.** My only complaint is that the weapons are way too effective (close-range attacks will usually hurt you just as much as your opponent), but otherwise Extreme-G is definitely a keeper. **John**

No other racing game delivers the raw speed found in Extreme-G. **Kick on your turbo and watch the scenery blur.** Better still, the 12 levels pack amazing corkscrews, jumps and inverted sections, making the game part WipeOut, part S.T.U.N. Runner. You also get a huge selection of racing and Battle Modes, and the music, a thumping techno beat, is surprisingly good for an N64 title. The Four-player Modes are choppy, though. **Crispin**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
8	8	7	7

FIFA: RTWC 98

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: EA Canada

Featured In: N/A

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Tons Of Options

The first FIFA title on the N64 was a disaster, which made me leery when I got my hands on the newest entry of the series: FIFA RTWC 98. Suffice to say, I was extremely pleased when I got some solid playtime on this game, because it is remarkably improved over its predecessor. There are a lot of improvements in FIFA 98, but the most important one is that the game is very fun. There is a variety of realistic moves, and some are quite dramatic when they involve shots on goal. Multiplayer is where this game excels, but the One-player Modes are fast and challenging. For a change of pace, you can even try some frantic indoor soccer. There are only two major flaws with FIFA. First, the goalie A.I. in the game is a little flaky. For example, sometimes the goalie will walk by a ball that should be picked up, or will dive at routine catches. It'll cause you to grumble "cheap goal" more than a few times, I'm sure. Next, the frame rate is suspect at some points during the contest. It doesn't hurt the pace of the game much, but you'll notice it occasionally. FIFA 98's 3-D graphics are excellent. The players are very detailed, and they have a variety of realistic moves. The atmosphere of the game just feels right, and if you like you can dampen it with the rain, sleet or snow options. Though not as good as ISS64, **FIFA is well on the road to redemption.** **Kraig**

Worst Feature: Goalie Intelligence

FIFA 98 is a huge improvement over last year's version. FIFA 64's engine has been totally overhauled for the better. The stadiums are more detailed, the player animations are much smoother and the gameplay is much more intuitive and friendly. Multiplayer games are a blast and the whole experience reminds me of ISS64, and that's a good thing. The goalie AI is braindead at times, but other than that, all is peachy. AI Sports: it's not in the game. **Kelly**

www.easports.com

Soccer games are getting better and better. This year's FIFA slaughters last year's, an easy task considering how shoddy FIFA 64 is. **A few flaws prevent FIFA 98 from reaching stardom.** 1.) Inconsistent goalie AI (they don't seem to know where the ball is sometimes); 2.) Poor frame rates (even in 4-on-4 indoor soccer) and 3.) Poor passing mechanics. Overall, the game is fairly entertaining. I hope EA keeps improving the series. If so, FIFA 99 will be king. **Dan**

What a difference a few months can make! **Besides Konami's ISS64 (still the king), FIFA RTWC 98 is the best soccer game I've played.** The game controls really nicely, the graphics are awesome (the frame rate could've been better, but it's hardly bad), and the play-by-play is excellent. Where the game really shines though is in 4P Mode—it's just TOO much fun. Indoor Soccer is a blast too. My only gripe is that goalie AI can get flaky at times. **John**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
8	9	7	9

GRETZKY HOCKEY '98

Publisher: Midway

Developer: Atari

Featured In: N/A

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Arcade Action

Worst Feature: Same Game As Last Year

Gretzky '98 comes as a welcome break from all the serious hockey titles we've been seeing lately. Although I'd much rather play NHL 98, I still had a great time with Gretzky. You can set up this game to play as a "real" hockey game (i.e., penalties, offsides, line changes, etc.), but I found it more fun to play it like it is meant to be: as a fast and unrealistic arcade game. Five-on-five (not counting goalies) is great, especially with all the penalties turned off and the puck streaking on. The frame rate suffers a bit in this mode, which is a tad bit annoying. Three-on-three is my preferred game. Here, the frame rate is silky smooth. The best part, however, is the open ice. Remove a couple of in-the-way players, and the game becomes much more exciting—that is, if you've never played Gretzky 3D before. This game is pretty much the same as it was last year, except with noticeably tougher goalies. In fact, the goaltending is so solid, **you'd think Midway was attempting to lose the high-scoring, arcade feel of last year's edition** of Gretzky. Still, compared to the competition from EA and Acclaim, this hockey game is still unrealistic (in terms of high scoring, exaggerated body checks, etc.). That's perfectly fine by me. It's a refreshing change from the FaceOffs and All-Stars and Breakaways. Just don't expect anything new this year. **Dan**

Recognizing that there was no real N64 hockey simulation, Midway concentrated on beefing up that portion of Gretzky. Unfortunately, that is the only substantial improvement in the game. While I appreciate computer AI enhancements a lot, **I don't think that the adjustments they made warrant buying this game if you have last year's version.** However, if you're looking to buy your first N64 hockey game, you should give this a try. **Kraig**

Gretzky '98 looks almost exactly the same as last year's game but the control feel is more precise. The pace of the gameplay is fast and furious but the biggest change comes in the form of improved goalie AI. I found it was much harder to score goals against the CPU. As a hockey game, **Gretzky still isn't a match for the top games from EA and Sony**, but if you're looking for fun arcade action rather than a sim, this game is for you. **Kelly**

www.midway.com

This one isn't all that different from the first one, but I don't think it's a problem. The graphics look great and the control is nice. Lucky for me it has an arcade feel. If it didn't, I wouldn't really have had as much fun. That's probably what I like the most about this game. It may have the real players and what not, but it's arcade enough to have the same appeal as the NBA Jam series had. **It attracts both sporty gamers and unsporty ones.** **Shawn**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
7	7	3	8

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Publisher: Gametek

Developer: Gametek

Featured In: N/A

Number Of Players: 1-3

Best Feature: Classic Game Show License

Worst Feature: Not Very Cohesive

Look out world, Vanna is coming to the N64 whether you can stomach it or not. I'm sad to say I've seen better versions of Wheel of Fortune on the 16-Bit platforms. Don't get me wrong, the graphic renderings are excellent, and the usage of video cut scenes are perfect for injecting a TV show feel, but the whole thing comes across so badly, I can't help but be repulsed by it. Let's see a couple of examples, shall we? First, since when does Vanna no longer even touch the letter light panels? On the N64, she just walks across the screen without pause. Now she REALLY looks like a shooting gallery duck. Where's my Remington? Even on the over-budgeted television show, our favorite hostess is still supposed to touch the backlit tiles. Well, that's a minor point anyway. Two, the voice acting must have come from the late-night janitorial staff. I can't envision much money going into this game, but rather most of it lining the pockets of the sellers of the *Wheel of Fortune* license. Overall, **Wheel of Fortune tries to be a game show more than it tries to be a video game**, and perhaps this is where it really falls short. There is no immersive feel that I've come to expect on most N64 games, and I miss that here. The various camera angles and swoops need a better director to be believable, and it's far too easy to stumble over the interface. **Sushi**

This has the authentic gameplay that you'd expect from the popular name. However, it's the rest of the game that lets down the simple fun. From the awkward voices to the blurry or grainy graphics, it really subtracts from the experience. The cut scenes and familiar expressions make a great attempt to bring you the feeling of the show, but instead they come off as cheesy. If you can overlook these flaws, **it is a fun game with lousy trimmings.** **HG**

If Wheel of Fortune is to be done on a console, this is about as good as it's going to get. **Gametek did a good job tailoring this game for the N64** by rendering the entire Wheel of Fortune "stage" in 3-D. As a result, the game is livened up by a variety of TV-style camera angles. The use of the analog control to vary the strength when spinning the wheel is a great idea as well. Although not the standard N64 fare, this is a great family game. **Kraig**

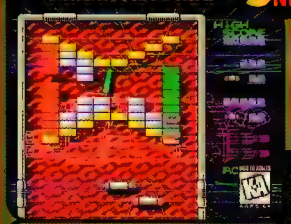
www.gametek.com

I'm a fan of the show so **I was mildly excited to hear about this one, but then I played it and that changed.** First, the voices were really lame. They were often too dramatic for no apparent reason. Next, there were a lot of strange camera movements and cut scenes that came out of nowhere. Finally, the intro was grainy and although the snippets of FMV were a nice touch, those looked rough as well. Overall it's just not a tight game. **Shawn**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
6	5	6	7

ARKANOID: D.I.A.

Super NES



Publisher: Nintendo

Developer: Taito

Featured In: N/A

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: The Two-Player Modes!

Worst Feature: No Special Controller

It's been over 10 years since the last Arkanoid game was released in the U.S. (for the NES, in August of 1987), but the classic brick-breaker is finally back, and it's better than it's ever been before. If you're unfamiliar with the game, Arkanoid is similar to the classic game Breakout, but in a futuristic setting with tons of options and gameplay enhancements to really beef up play. I've always been a huge fan of Arkanoid, and with 99 different stages in the One-player Mode (yes, 99!) as well as three different ways to play two-player (all of which are cool, although the Split-screen Head-to-head Mode takes the cake), **Arkanoid: Doh It Again is easily a worthy sequel to its predecessor**. There are Bosses on every 11 stages that are particularly cool (but tough to beat if you're not playing two-player co-op with a friend), and some of the new power-ups (taken straight from the arcade Arkanoid Returns) are sweet. Unfortunately, there's no special controller this time, which IMO is a necessity in a game like this, but you can use the Super NES Mouse if you want. Also, some of the background elements (particularly the things that swallow the ball and release it somewhere else) can get on your nerves after a while. All in all though, Arkanoid: Doh it Again is a must-own for any fan of the NES classic, and an overall great game. **John**

Arkanoid is Arkanoid. You can rearrange the blocks all you want, but the gameplay's still the same. But put in cool Two-player Modes **(competitive is fun, but cooperative is a blast)** and a ton of levels, and you have yourself a reviewer who's rehooked on a classic formula. I wish I could've suggested to the developers to put in different Bosses other than the two you keep seeing over and over. Otherwise you can't go wrong with Doh It Again. **Dan**

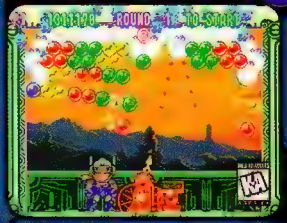
I've always been an Arkanoid fan, and this game reminds me why. **There's just something really cool about crossing Pong with lasers and other weapons.** The simplistic gameplay is a little repetitive, but you'll enjoy it if you're into this type of game. The Two-player Mode also adds a dose of variety to the game. The bottom line here is if you liked previous Arkanoids, this game will satisfy your craving. Other gamers may get bored quickly. **Kraig**

www.nintendo.com

The classic Arkanoid and its sequels were some of my arcade favorites. So years later, is it still worth it? The "yes" comes from the Two-player Modes, especially split-screen Vs. Mode and cooperative play against the CPU. After going through the 99 levels, **I would still play it...but only with someone else.** The only downside are the same old Bosses and the dated sounds. Still, this offers good nostalgia in a relaxing and fun puzzle format. **HG**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
6	6	7	8

BUST-A-MOVE 3



Publisher: Natsume

Developer: Taito

Featured In: *EGM* #101

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: New Characters

Worst Feature: Same Old Game

N/A

I'm as big a puzzle game fan as the next guy. But to me, the Bust-A-Move games only serve as a trivial (but fun) distraction. Why? Succeeding in Bust-A-Move requires careful aiming, not brainpower. It takes very little skill and strategy to play this game, whereas most other puzzle games demand thinking and planning to score high. What it boils down to is this: If you can gauge the placement of the balls well enough, you will kick butt. If not, you will get frustrated. The two-player games are fun, but they aren't without their problems. First, all you really have to do is stack balls on one skinny extension, then cut it off at the top. Doing this will throw lots of extra balls in your opponent's court. It's too easy and mindless. Second, once players figure this strategy out, games are over really quickly. More often than not, it's first-to-strike equals first-to-win. Crispin and I played against each other, and none of the matches lasted over a minute (we took turns slaughtering each other). I prefer a balanced game with long, back-and-forth battles. Bust-A-Move 3 is fun—don't get me wrong—but **I just prefer more mentally challenging puzzle games**. Plus, even with the few extra features in 3 (best one being multiple characters with unique attacks), it's still the same game at heart. If you've played 2, then 3 won't hold your attention for long.

Dan

I may be in the minority here, but I like the Bust-A-Move games more than Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo, Baku Baku and other combo-heavy puzzle titles. The gameplay is faster and more exciting—especially in Two-player Mode. (Plus, it's one of the few puzzle games at which I can beat Shoe.) **This new installment is the best yet**, with selectable characters and some cool new gameplay twists. You even get hundreds of archived puzzles.

Crispin

This is basically more of the same, which is just fine to most Bust-A-Move fans. The gameplay that gave this series such a cult following is back, with a few gameplay changes. In addition to its new levels and characters, with this comes a Bust-A-Move anthology that has hundreds of levels taken from Bust-A-Move games through the years. This game has about every thing one could ask for from a sequel that keeps the original gameplay intact.

Kraig

Bub and Bob return in a successful sequel to their puzzle adventure. Sporting improved graphics, new competitors and a few additional power-ups, **Bust-A-Move 3 is a must for fans of the original**. Probably the best new feature is the enhanced Puzzle Mode, now with the ability to launch off the ceiling, sticky blocks and more. While not a major improvement in gameplay, it's a lot of fun. You'll love the hundreds of sample levels.

Sushi

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	6	8

CROC

Publisher: Fox Interactive

Developer: Argonaut Software

Featured In: N/A

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: 3-D Graphics

Worst Feature: Lack of Variety in Gameplay

www.foxinteractive.com

The Saturn version of Croc suffers from the same problems that plagued the PlayStation version. Namely, the control and the game's likeness to Mario 64. The control was the biggest problem easily because of the nature of the game. Too often I'd jump and have a real hard time telling if I'm going to land on a platform or not. Sure, Croc may have a little shadow underneath him, but it's still tricky. Also, when too close to an edge, **it's tough to turn around without my little crocodile friend slipping into hot lava.** Next we have the Mario-ness of the game. This is a tough one—it may have plenty of Mario-esque elements, but it still has been done on the Saturn and not on the N64. If we forget about that, and focus on the fact that it's on the Saturn, Croc is a pretty nice-looking game. It's amazing that they did it on the Saturn (as well as the PlayStation for that matter). When comparing Croc to other 3-D games on the Saturn there really aren't many games that can even hold a candle to Croc—even with its sometimes difficult control. If we scored in .25 increments, I would've given Croc a 7.75. Why? Because although it may be almost identical to the PS version, it's not on the PS. It's more of a technical achievement as far as I'm concerned. Its gameplay is more or less average. I say give it a try; you may be pleasantly surprised.

Shawn

Croc is making his rounds on the CD platform consoles, and now Saturn gamers can join his quest. Not much has changed since the PlayStation version, except the load times, but not enough to notice. The action is similar to Mario 64, but contains many elements found in Sonic, Gex and Crash Bandicoot. Most features seem borrowed from other titles, but the mixture works pretty well. **It may not be original, but it's good nonetheless.**

Sushi

The Saturn version of this game is identical to the PS version, but I recommend this game more to Saturn owners because of the system's lack of good platformers. Croc shamelessly borrows elements from many popular platform games, but at least it translates into solid gameplay. The game control has a refined feel to it, which is a must in a good platformer. Unfortunately, **Croc is a little too repetitious to be considered a great platform game.**

Kraig

From a technical standpoint, Croc is pretty impressive, considering most Saturn developers have had a hard time doing good 3-D on the system. For whatever reason, the music doesn't sound as good as it did on the PS version (weird), but otherwise this is exactly the same game. The gameplay is solid, the graphics are nice and the control, while a little bit rough around the edges, is solid. **I just wish there was more variety in the stages.**

John

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	7	6	7

NASCAR 98

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Developer: EA Sports

Featured In: *EGM* #95

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Bob Jenkins—He's The Man

Worst Feature: The Honky-Tonk Music

www.easports.com

There are very few racing simulations on the Saturn and even less good ones. Adding a much-needed title into this genre is NASCAR 98, EA's very competent simulation. Fully licensed, NASCAR 98 features all of the tracks, drivers and cars present in the sport. There's even the unstoppable commentator, Bob Jenkins, who gives you the lowdown on each track's nuances. This is one of the more entertaining racing simulations because the gameplay is as good as its attention to realism. Sure, you can adjust your car's rear spoiler and gear ratios, but it's also a lot of fun to wedge your way in a pack of cars, and be one of the few that doesn't slam into the wall. You can even rub 'em into the wall, and see the grueling after effects on each car's chassis. The 3-D graphics are good, and look better when a lot of cars are on screen. There is some polygonal pop-up, but most of it consists of track details on the side of the road. Occasionally some of the bends of the track in the distance will also instantly appear. The sound effects are aver age, but the country rock music played during the game is funny—and annoying. It does suit NASCAR racing, but this is a classic example of overdo ng the game's atmosphere. Though it's not as fun as arcade racers such as Sega Rally or Daytona, **NASCAR 98 is the best racing simulation on the Saturn.**

Kraig

NASCAR 98 for the Saturn is an above-average racer, but it's certainly not without its flaws. There's a lot of pop-up during play, the frame rate is less than stellar, and **the grating music will make your ears bleed.** If you can put all that aside however, the gameplay is solid, and there are a lot of tracks, cars and options to keep the sim fans satisfied. Personally, despite the lack of depth when compared to NASCAR 98, I'd rather play Daytona USA.

John

Now I know what many of you might say to the score being a half of a point lower than the PlayStation version (see issue 100), but hear me out before you jump to any conclusions. **The one single thing that made me drop the score was the annoying pop-up.** As you drive around the various courses, some have major pop-up problems. Other than that, the graphics are a tad blockier, but not really bad enough to affect the gameplay.

Shawn

You don't have to be a fan of NASCAR to enjoy this game. **I don't follow the sport, but I can appreciate all the good things EA did with this game.** Graphics-wise, NASCAR 98 is as clean as a whistle, and the racing action is hot and heavy with plenty of on-track adversaries to deal with. True to the sport, drafting is a key to success in NASCAR 98, and it's done in a way that makes it fun. This isn't a hardcore sim like F1, but I like it nonetheless.

Kelly

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
6	4	6	6

NBA ACTION '98

Publisher: Sega

Developer: Visual Concepts

Featured In: *EGM* #101

Number Of Players: 1-10

Best Feature: Player Animations

Worst Feature: Gameplay is a Little Slow

www.sega.com

Basketball games haven't been very good on the Saturn (even NBA Live 97 wasn't), and of the ones that are out, this is the best one. That isn't to say this game doesn't have flaws—it actually has many. **Although NBA Action '98 is much improved, it still suffers from some of the sluggishness that plagued the '97 edition.** The 3-D graphics have been upgraded, with the highlights consisting of some really cool post-up moves and running shots. Some players even have their own signature moves. Evidently, game speed was sacrificed to accomplish this, since its players seem to sleepwalk through some of their actions. Any basketball fan knows the NBA is all about fast-paced action—and thus, the game should be too. Also, the graphics are surprisingly low color. Despite these problems (and to my surprise), I still found the game fun. The computer opponent is moderately challenging (moreso than EA's Live 98), and the gameplay is above-average (even if it is a little too easy to drain three-point shots.) NBA Action has plenty of features and options, including stat-tracking season play and player creation—but nothing that stands out aside from the Practice Mode. All things considered, Sega's new basketball game is a solid title that should satisfy basketball fans, but won't sweep them off of their sneakers.

Kraig

Although graphically NBA Action is no match for a hoops game on the PS, this game plays and controls well and (better yet) has no glaring AI faults. **As a one-player game, NBA Action is too easy**, but the game comes into its own when playing against a friend. Like I said before, the graphics look muddy when looking at objects far away and some of the player animations are a bit stiff, but this is the best basketball game for the Saturn.

Kelly

NBA Action '98 took me by surprise. The game moves a little slowly, but it's still the best Saturn basketball game to date. The graphics are nice (although again, things move a bit slowly), the sound effects and play-by-play are good, and the amount of options and features offered are second to none. **The AI could've been a little bit better, but it's not terrible** (definitely better than past NBA Actions), and overall the game is fun to play.

John

This is the best basketball game on the Saturn, though it's not without its problems. The animation is fairly impressive, but **I can't help but think that the Saturn is capable of better.** I also had a very tough time avoiding the CPU's intentional fouling—it didn't give me a chance to pass, shoot or run away at all. Overall, if you wanted to play hoops on the Saturn, this is the game to get. Just don't expect anything fantastic.

Dan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	7	8

SF COLLECTION

Publisher: Capcom

Developer: Capcom, Japan

Featured In: *EGM* #100

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Arcade-Perfect Conversions

Worst Feature: No SF2, SF2:CE, SF2 Turbo

www.capcom.com

I admire the job Capcom did with the Street Fighter Collection. I do question the selection of games chosen for this collection, though. Let's just ignore the fact that Super Street Fighter was the weakest version of SF2 and take each game one by one. 1) Street Fighter Alpha 2 Gold: Now although SFA2 is one of my favorite SF games, SFA2 Gold is too similar to SFA2 to warrant its inclusion on this collection in my eyes. 2) Super Street Fighter 2: This game arguably represents the low point of Street Fighter. After all, Super was the Super NES game gathering dust in Capcom's warehouses. 3) Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo: Although this was one of the best Street Fighter games ever, Super Turbo—like Super before it—failed in arcades. Now, it's cool that we finally have arcade-perfect versions of these games, but **I feel Capcom would've been better off releasing the more popular games of the series** (SF, SF2, SF2:CE, SF2 Turbo Hyper-fighting). At least that's what I would have liked. And it's not as if these games haven't been released on a console before (SSF2 anyone?). As far as arcade conversions go, each game is just about perfect. The graphics and sound are exactly the same and best of all, the gameplay has been left intact. As usual, the Saturn is better suited to these games with its six-button controller.

Kelly

This is a class A compilation. I'd recommend it to any Street Fighter fanatic (like me), UNLESS you already own SF Alpha 2 (I don't think the Super SF2 games are worth purchasing on their own, and Alpha 2 Gold is basically the same as Alpha 2). I love playing this game with the newer Saturn pad too; it's an almost perfect SF experience. This version boasts a faster Super SF2, but I'd rather play SSF2 Turbo anyway, so it won't affect my score

Dan

The Super Street Fighter series was one of my favorites, and now I can play it at home, perfect in every detail. I really enjoy the Saturn version, with decent load times and several options to keep the experience fresh and exciting. This is definitely perfect for tournament situations! The graphics are still outstanding, even with today's standards. Plus, **it sports the most solid fighting engine ever created!** SFA2 Gold is just icing on this cake.

Sushi

Let's face it, **if you're a fan of Street Fighter (like I am), you owe it to yourself to get SF Collection.** Personally, I'd rather have had SF2 CE or SF2 Turbo than both Super SF2 AND Super SF2T (SSF2T would've been plenty for me), but still I'm not gonna complain. Both games are excellent ports, and the new SFA2 Gold is an awesome update for Alpha 2 fans. Not only are there a ton of classic (CE) characters hidden within, but Cammy is too!

John

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
8	8	2	9

BUG RIDERS

Publisher: GT Interactive

Developer: n-Space

Featured In: *EGM* #100

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Nice Graphics and Levels

Worst Feature: That Lame Cropping Thing

www.gtinteractive.com

The idea behind Bug Riders is innovative—something that is different from the norm—but in this case, change is bad. I absolutely hated the cropping of the bug to gain speed. In case you don't know, cropping is when you hit an animal for it to gain speed (i.e., like a horse). **Let's just stick with a standard "press the button and hold it" acceleration** that practically EVERY other racing game has. It's what we're used to as gamers. When something like this comes along, we don't know what to do. Even with repeated tries I had trouble getting used to it. Aside from that major annoyance, the game is pretty fresh. The graphics are very nice—everything from the lighting effects to the level design is sweet. The music fits the game well and does a good job of setting the mood. The sound was good, but when you over-cropped the bug it would make this annoying yelp noise that sounded like a dying dog (just another annoying thing I associated with the control). It makes me mad that the control is the way it is because the game has some real promise. The characters and story development are pretty cool and the different courses are done well, but then you use that weird cropping acceleration technique and all that good stuff falls apart. It's too bad. I'd say rent it first and if the control doesn't bug you, then go for it.

Shawn

I really wanted to like this game, since it tries to be so different from all the other racing titles. Trouble is, **it's too different for its own good.** The nove. acceleration system, for instance, has you whipping your bug with a riding crop to make it go faster (just as in the intellivision classic Horse Racing). Beat your bug too much, and it slows to a near hover. It makes flying through the tiny checkpoints that much more frustratingly tough.

Crispin

What were they thinking when they made this game? The redeeming features in Bug Riders are few and far between. The graphics are about par for the PS but this game isn't very fun. Talk about limited gameplay. You ride a dragonfly, shooting enemies and flying through floating checkpoints in a race to the finish...boring. Whoever came up with the idea for BR needs to be smacked harder than the bugs. Dude, this game sucks!

Kelly

Here's a game that I've looked forward to for a while, but it ended up being a disappointment in the end. The music is pretty good, enough that they even cut a short CD demo. **The gameplay, however, lacks stability.** It's weird enough to have to slap your bug around to go faster, but requiring loop pass-throughs with a crazy time limit hurts the experience. You spend more time fighting the control and less time enjoying the game.

Sushi

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	8	6	5

CAESARS PALACE

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Publisher: Interplay

Developer: Beam

Featured In: N/A

Best Feature: Tutorials and Online Help

It's rather depressing to put down the efforts of hard-working programmers, but there's simply no excuse for such a poor attempt. Where shall I begin? Let's get the one good point out of the way: Caesars has an excellent tutorial system. Video demos will walk you through learning each game; you won't have to read any boring manuals. Once you're in the game, you can press a button wherever your cursor lies, and the computer will explain in very simple terms what you're pointing at. This can be of great help for those trying to learn tricky games like craps. Now, on to the bad. The dealers' voices, although well-done, are lethargic, boring and monotonous. Once in a while, they'll get excited with silly lines like, "Wow! Cool! Good for you!" Luckily, you can turn the bothersome voices off. It's also very hard to see any numbers in the game (on the roulette wheel, dice, cards, etc.). **It's not a good thing when you have to squint at a TV from three feet away.** Finally, Caesars just isn't fun. It doesn't offer enough games (how about some poker, or more than just three slot machines?), and it doesn't give you any story line or goals. Very uneventfully, I turned $5,000 into $1,000,000 over time. Where's my reward? Where are the high rollers' tables? Where's the fun? Not here. You just keep blindly gambling till you fall asleep from boredom. Yawn. **Dan**

Worst Feature: Not Enough Games, No Goals

Gambling games aren't my thing, but **even I can admire the attributes of Caesars Palace.** All the games are straightforward and easy to learn with a minimum of fluff. I've never played baccarat before, so I really put the Training Mode to the test and found it to be simple and to the point, yet comprehensive. The voice samples were a mixed bag; some of the stuff they say are funny (particularly when you lose) but they can get repetitive at times. **Kelly**

Sure, this game features gambling tables that have been digitized from the real Caesars Palace. Trouble is, I don't care about that stuff. All I want in a gambling game is a little personality and a bunch of different tables, and Caesars Palace offers neither. **You only get five gambling games**, and poker isn't even one of them (although, strangely enough, it's in the PC version). Aside from the sharp hi-res graphics, there's just not enough. **Crispin**

www.interplay.com

I was extremely unhappy after my experience with Caesar's Palace. Needless to say, the options available to you are incredibly limited, and certain games are cumbersome, **thanks to the clumsy interface**. I don't get the feeling of being in a gambling facility, like I'm risking it all on a hunch. With the handy save feature, making millions just requires a little patience at the roulette wheel, saving and loading. I also can't believe poker is missing. **Sushi**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
5	6	4	5

COLONY WARS

Number Of Players: 1

Publisher: Psygnosis

Developer: Psygnosis - LP

Featured In: *EGM* #99

Best Feature: Killer Visuals

Put simply, Colony Wars is a breathtaking epic. The intense missions (set in five solar systems, including our own) make you feel as if you really are part of a galaxy-spanning struggle, and the game is right up there with Final Fantasy VII as one of the PlayStation's best-looking titles (wait until you blast apart one of the big capital ships—talk about a big bang!). My gripes are minor. Your ship's 3-D radar can be a bit confusing in the heat of battle, and, like most Psygnosis games, **some levels are so tough they'll make you swear like a drunken sailor**. The problem is that many missions have you protecting space stations or capital ships from overwhelming swarms of attackers. There's nothing worse than getting caught in a long dogfight, only to see the ship you were supposed to protect get nuked behind you. Of course, the game's novel system of branching missions keeps the difficulty from being too frustrating. Screw up and you get tossed into another branch of the story line until you see one of five endings. Still, I wish I could save after every mission instead of after every three; it would make getting the best ending less frustrating. Colony Wars controls fine with the standard joypad, but the analog pad's a little touchy. You'll have the best luck with Sony's hulking dual-analog joystick, which is worth buying just for this game. **Crispin**

Worst Feature: Extreme Difficulty

All too often a game excels at graphics or gameplay, but not both. Such is not the case with Colony Wars, which is **top-notch in just about every way possible**. Psygnosis' gorgeous title makes others look utterly amateurish by pushing the PlayStation's hardware in amazing ways. Play this game with a surround sound, a good TV and the lights off, and prepare to be blown away. This is an epic game that no PS owner should be without. **Kraig**

Wow! I was pleasantly surprised by this latecomer. I was one of the few who were unimpressed by earlier betas, but now that I've ravaged the final, **I must agree that Colony Wars rocks!** I like the automatic difficulty settings, controlled by whether you complete or fail missions –failing sends you on an easier path I also enjoyed the smooth control and truly mind-blowing cinematic special effects. I only wish there weren't flight boundaries. **Sushi**

www.colonywars.com

As I've said, I'm not the biggest fan of flight games, but Colony Wars is done so well and is so fun to play, I couldn't help but get into it. The missions are pretty tough and in some areas there's some minor slowdown, but **it's still one of the best games on the PS.** In fact, I'd say the graphics in CW *are* the best on the PlayStation to date. Plus I like the different databases included and the interface screens. Overall, an incredible game. **Shawn**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
10	10	8	7

COOL BOARDERS 2

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Publisher: SCEA

Developer: UEP Systems

Featured In: *EGM* #100

Best Feature: All of the Cool Tricks

I've always thought skateboarding and snowboarding was kind of a cool activity, but I would never really do it just because I don't want to take the chance of breaking any bones. **So Cool Boarders is a nice way to try the sport without the hurt.** What's nice is that the game isn't only for fans of snowboarding—it's arcade enough for everyone to enjoy. The graphics are decent but I've definitely seen better. I'm surprised that they didn't throw some more lighting effects in there or at least sharper polygons. Another touch that would have been nice are snow effects (i.e., flurries, drifts, etc.). A lot of the tricks you could pull off were very cool, and I liked that I had to do them with complicated button taps. If they were too easy to pull off, then you'd get first place every time! I liked the mode that lets you practice the tricks—one after another—until you run out of time. There isn't a huge amount of courses, but enough to keep you going, and the freestyle and trick courses make for great replay. I will say that my initial reaction wasn't all that great, but once I played more of it, I ended up having a decent time. One other point I wanted to bring up are the stereotypical voices. I've heard plenty of catch-phrases from Mountain Dew commercials to last me a lifetime, so the ones in Cool Boarders didn't do much for me! **Shawn**

Worst Feature: Substandard Graphics

I wasn't a big fan of the original, but Cool Boarders 2 surprised me with its depth of gameplay. **There are just too many cool tricks** (about 100 combinations, in fact) and play modes. The 10 race courses are fun enough, but so is the practice slope that lets you perfect grabs, spins and other stunts. Of course, all the game's tricks and techniques mean Cool Boarders 2 takes a little getting used to, but they're what kept me playing. **Crispin**

www.playstation.com

This is the best snowboard game I've played on a home system. Cool Boarders 2 conveys a convincing sensation of speed and momentum, not to mention a feeling of peril when you're screwing up on the downhill courses. The lush, 3-D graphics really impressed me, as did the tons of moves, but it was the solid gameplay that really sucked me in. Best of all, CB2 is a blast to play for fans of the sport as well as casual observers like myself. **Kelly**

No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get into CB 2. The gameplay is a little frustrating, but once you learn how to do the different tricks, it grows on you a bit. **Unfortunately, the game is so sloppy, that it prevents CB2 from being a good game overall.** The 3-D graphics look alright, but suffer from polygonal breakup. Also, the menus are ugly, and the music and sound grate on the nerves. Only get this if you MUST have a snowboarding game. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
6	6	7	6

CRITICAL DEPTH

Publisher: GT Interactive

Developer: Single Trac

Featured In: *EGM* #100

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Nice Graphics

Worst Feature: Sluggish Gameplay

www.gtgames.com

Critical Depth is a nice addition to the Twisted Metal type of game Single Trac is known for. The graphics are a bit better than Twisted Metal 2 but still aren't incredible. But that's what's weird about Single Trac games so far, including this one. They may not be the best-looking games around, but they sure are some of the most fun. At first, **I wasn't sure if I was going to like more of the silly characters,** but then once I started getting into the game, I wouldn't want to play the game without them! The weapons were mostly cool, but others were kind of lame (i.e., the silly piranha missiles). The levels were well thought-out, and the enemy AI worked just fine. One problem that could get kind of annoying is the whole idea of strategy. What's to stop you from waiting for all of the enemy ships to kill each other off, while you pick up loads of power-ups? Then you can just take out the last enemy who has all five pods, thus beating the level with little or no trouble at all. Of course, there's the idea of will power, but when it comes down to it, this is a problem they could've addressed. Why not throw in a time limit of some sort, or something else that would have alleviated the problem. Overall, with the Battle Mode, loads of undersea levels and cool characters, this one is well worth the money...there's only that problem of winning too easily. **Shawn**

Sure it's just like Twisted Metal, but that's a good thing. The addition of a few cool features, like the shield usage and the solid engine of TW, make it a great game. The Story Mode is cool and the **multiplayer is nothing short of head-to-head mayhem**. I wish they'd used the Critical Depth concept more, but the open 3-D field can get a little confusing. Still, it plays tight and is very hard even on medium. BTW: This would make a great PC game. **HG**

Critical Depth is made by the same developers of Twisted Metal, and obviously, this was designed to offer the same type of gameplay. I love Twisted Metal, and the novelty of underwater warfare kept me interested in Critical Depth for a little while until I realized one important thing: Fighting with sluggish subs isn't nearly as fun as decked-out cars. This isn't a bad title, but **it's too slow and unexciting** for the action game it tries to be. **Kraig**

Critical Depth seemed nothing more than an underwater version of Twisted Metal 2. The graphics are decent but the frame rate suffers when the on-screen action gets hot and heavy. Cruising around the ocean and blowing other watercraft to smithereens was vaguely fun at first but **the novelty wore off quick the further I played into the game**. Keep in mind, I wasn't a big fan of Twisted Metal 2 either so take my words with a grain of salt. **Kelly**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
8	8	7	7

FORMULA ONE C.E.

Publisher: Psygnosis

Developer: Bizarre Creations

Featured In: *EGM* #100

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Realism

Worst Feature: Cheesy Arcade Mode

www.psygnosis.com

I've been a hardcore fan of Formula One racing (the sport) since I was about 9 years old and I feel F1 Champion Edition really conveys an accurate look and feel of the sport on the PS. Compared to last year's version, it's much easier to assume the role of an F1 driver with the new in-car view. Other than the deletion of tobacco ads and the odd exclusion of Jacques Villenuve, every driver, track, sponsor and team has been painstakingly re-created. This game is an F1 fan's wet dream. The sense of speed is so great in F1 that you have to really learn the track before using the in-car view. The graphics are impressive in their detail but there is some pop-up which makes it hard to see far in the distance. Ironically, this adds realism as it's difficult to see far away in a real F1 car at speed. The steering control in the GP Mode is perfect with pin-point accuracy and responsiveness but the Arcade Mode is another story altogether. In this mode realism flies out the window as the game turns into "F1 Off-Road" with powerslides, dirt sorties and bumper-car antics. If you follow the sport, avoid the Arcade Mode like the plague. I do wish Psygnosis hadn't simplified the Option Menu so much as I prefer to tweak my car to death but you can't have everything. The frame rate bogs a little when there's a lot of cars on screen, but it's no big deal. Awesome! **Kelly**

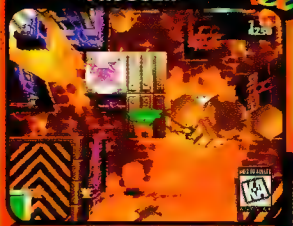
I was pleasantly surprised with this game. It has an ultradetailed Simulation Mode for the hardcore racing fan (like Kelly) and a totally unrealistic action-oriented Arcade Mode for everyone else (like me). The frame rate and sense of speed is blazingly fast. Plus, F1 has tons of everything: lots of tracks, lots of cars, lots of options. **If you like racing sims, get it. If you're looking for more arcade action, you can find better elsewhere.** **Dan**

What makes this one such a winner is that **it's the most authentic racing sim on the planet**, yet you can totally tone down the realism to suit your tastes. I think the cars are much too difficult to drive with all the realism settings maxed out. So I switch on steering and braking assistance—or just play the simplified Arcade Mode—and the game becomes much more fun. The incredible sound effects and sense of speed only add to the realism. **Crispin**

This is an incredibly in-depth racing simulation that offers just about everything an F-1 fan could hope for. Real tracks, real teams, loads of options and some really cool modes of play available through codes. Like most Psygnosis games, **the 3-D graphics are cutting-edge and serve the game very well**. I do think that the gameplay, while good, could use more refinement to make it an even more entertaining game. Otherwise, a very solid racer. **Kraig**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
8	8	8	8

FROGGER



Publisher: Hasbro Interactive

Developer: Millennium

Featured In: *EGM* #99

Number Of Players: 1-4

Best Feature: Retro Gaming

Worst Feature: Difficulty

www.hasbro.com

Call me nostalgic but I really got a kick out of Frogger. In truth, even the original version of Frogger would've satisfied me enough, but Hasbro went the extra mile and reproduced the game in 3-D. The fact that Frogger is still a blast to play is a convincing testament to the appeal of the original game. A good game is a good game whether it's in the '80s or the '90s. The best part of the new Frogger is that the game also has an identity of its own with new levels and worlds to conquer. Although the game is now fully polygonal, the gameplay is still in 2-D (as it should be). The one main problem with the game is the difficulty. All the courses have a time limit, and while this doesn't pose much of a problem in the classic levels (which are still harder than the first levels in the original Frogger), it does in the new levels. The new levels are so different from the retro stages, they almost invite exploration. Of course you can't explore them too much because you only have a finite amount of time to achieve your goal. This was the most frustrating aspect of the game by far. Frogger is one of those games you must learn through trial and error. Although the new levels are interesting, **I do wish there were more than just three levels of the original Frogger.** In the end, Frogger doesn't rewrite the rules but it's a fun-to-play and challenging game for Frogger fans. **Kelly**

What's this?! An enhanced retro game that is actually good? Yes, it has finally been done. Frogger is a lot of fun to play. **The graphics are great, even with some nice-looking lighting effects.** I have to admit that it took me several times of playing to get used to the control (only because I was expecting old-school Frogger style). This version of Frogger is excellent—a sure buy. It even has a retro level (like the original) but now it's in 3-D. **Shawn**

I'll admit that I thought an updated Frogger game was a good idea. I'll also admit that maybe I was wrong—even if this game was done right. Hasbro's Frogger tries to take the classic arcade game's gameplay as far as it possibly can, but in the process it makes the game too confusing. Most problematic is the camera view which is zoomed in too far to tell where you're supposed to go. **As far as retro games go, this is one of the worst.** **Kraig**

Like the original, **this version is all about speed and learning the patterns**. This time, however, there are numerous level varieties and variations on the classic "get across the road" as well as power-ups. The Two-player Mode is a great addition as well but seems to have a limited number of levels to race on. The enhancements are definitely profound. Yet even with the diversity of levels, it sometimes gets the lagging feeling of repetitiveness. **HG**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
7	7	6	6

NCAA GAMEBREAKER 98

Publisher: SCEA

Developer: Sony Interactive Studios

Featured In: *EGM* #100

Number Of Players: 1-8

Best Feature: Offensive Play Editor

Worst Feature: Horrid Playcall Screen

www.playstation.com

At first look, GameBreaker 98 appears to be GameDay 98 with college colors. And for the most part, it is. But after further review, the game shines because of its own merits. In addition to having the fancy 3-D graphics first pioneered by GameDay 98, GameBreaker 98 has some original features of its own. **Most impressive is its offensive play editor** that lets you make your own play from scratch. You can also create entire playbooks from new plays you make or old plays. There are also three default playbooks that are simply titled "running," "balanced" and "passing." Ironically, the playbook is also the biggest weakness of the game. The play diagrams are absolutely horrible, and are almost unreadable. I have a feeling that some of the aesthetics were sacrificed to accommodate the play editor, but that's no excuse. The plays are drawn horribly; they don't even show where your defensive linemen will go, which is a big part of a defense. Luckily, the gameplay is good enough to overcome the bad playcalling interface. In some ways, GameBreaker 98's gameplay surpasses GameDay 98's because of the exciting option plays and new formations. Since there are only two college football games out, the question is which one is better. Because of its superior graphics and AI, NCAA GameBreaker 98 beats EA's NCAA Football 98. **Kraig**

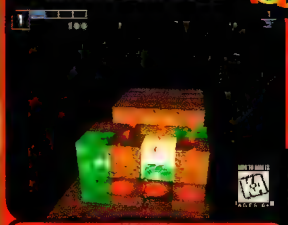
This game has its share of flaws—namely, an ugly Play Selection Screen that I'm sure everyone else on the Crew is griping about—but it's still plenty of fun (especially when paying multiplayer). With its hyperactive tackles and crazy plays, GameBreaker seems like a quick-and-dirty football game. As in GameDay, **it's more about arcade-style action than true-to-life football.** The play editor's a nice touch, but one only hardcore fans will use. **Crispin**

This game is well-suited for the football fan that demands great graphics and animation but doesn't demand realism. GameBreaker plays like an arcade game, with exaggerated tackles, numerous big plays and high scores. The Play Selection Screen is among the worst in the business, and the play-by-play is lacking in some areas (how long was that punt return for?). Still, it's fun if you're looking for an action-oriented football game. **GO BLUE!** **Dan**

GB 98 is a great game, but it doesn't come without its flaws. The Play Call Screen is terrible (hope you've got good vision and a lot of patience), and **the lack of many football essentials (like play recaps after each play, the ability to decline penalties and other silly little omissions) is just ridiculous.** Still, the gameplay is a LOT of fun, and the AI is much improved over last year's version. With the right work, GB 99 could be killer. **John**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
8	7	7	8

INTELLIGENT QUBE



Publisher: SCEA

Developer: SCEI

Featured In: *EGM* #100

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: "Ohhh!"

Worst Feature: No Variety

www.playstation.com

Frankly, I thought this game looked boring and stupid the first time I saw it. After I played it for 10 minutes, I thought I was right. Then one hour passed, then another. Pretty soon, I was hooked (and majorly surprised, needless to say). I couldn't believe this simple-looking game could be so challenging and addicting. Intelligent Qube isn't artificially difficult. That means you'll never get frustrated at the game for your boo-boos, only at yourself. The gameplay is also excellently balanced, rewarding you for good performance (by adding room on your short plank) or punishing you for screwing up (by taking valuable playing space away). It's simply a wonderful concept that is well executed. Puzzle fans, make sure to give IQ a chance (i.e., play it for more than 10 minutes). I do have a few minor complaints. First, what's with the slowdown? Are cubes that hard to render? Second, many of the cubes are laid out in the same patterns (because only a few combinations are possible). This makes IQ a bit predictable (and easy to beat) at times. Third, the game is too short I beat it in one night, and it didn't have enough cool modes to keep me coming back for a whole lot more. Fourth, I can't figure out why the game keeps telling me that my IQ is below zero. Just kidding. But make sure to try IQ out. You'll be surprised. **Dan**

IQ is a simple, relaxing, even classy puzzle game, so it sounds completely dull, right? Not at all. Despite its no-frills graphics, IQ puts a fun and novel spin on the genre. And completing each stage below the par score **takes more brain power than any puzzle game yet.** I only wish IQ had a Two-player, Head-to-Head Mode (as it is, each player takes turns), but then, that kind of fast-paced action would probably seem out of place in this game. **Crispin**

No falling pieces here! This game is both original and challenging (almost frustrating). True to its name, it's centered around planning and execution rather than simple fast reflexes. There are few last-minute saves and lucky combos to compensate for real "IQ." Visually the 3-D doesn't look too hot, but it does what it was intended to. **A Two-player Simultaneous Mode would've been welcomed,** but this is more about challenging each individual. **HG**

Wow, what's with all of the good games this month? **IQ is a refreshingly unique puzzle game** that is both highly addictive and a nice change of pace from all the "me-too" block droppers that have been flooding the market lately. Once you get the hang of playing (it can be tough at first, but the game has a Rules option that explains it all), you'll be hooked for a good long while. Also worth mentioning is the game's fantastic musical score. **John**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
7	8	8	8

JET MOTO 2

Publisher: SCEA

Developer: SingleTrac

Featured In: *EGM* #100

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Interesting Tracks

Worst Feature: Cheap Track Design

www.playstation.com

I've been trying for about an hour now, but I can't think of any other way to open this review than to just say it: **I don't like this game.** The sloppy, "you-need-to-screw-up-once-in-order-to-figure-out-the-right-way-to-do-it" design of the tracks is frustrating (and totally cheap, too). Having to learn tracks is a normal process in any racing game, but when you can't even tell where the track leads (as is the case many times in Jet Moto 2), it just becomes a big pain in the butt. The floaty movement of your bike is annoying too—it's not horrible, and some people probably won't mind it—but it's just not for me. I hate to bag on the game like this because the concept is great, and the potential for a really good game is here, but unfortunately the execution just isn't. The Two-player Mode isn't very much fun, and to make matters worse, there are no CPU racers in the 2P races, which IMO is a big no-no. To the game's credit, the Turbo bar has been improved (now you get one bar per lap that can be drained little by little, rather than just having one quick boost each lap), and the graphics and music are a bit better (no more *Pulp Fiction*-esque tunes, thank God), but overall, there's just not enough here to keep racing fans satisfied. I suppose if you were a fan of Jet Moto, you'll like this one, but otherwise—save your pennies and rent it. **John**

As with the original, Jet Moto 2 is a solid racer with decent control and slick graphics. It's also **just as frustratingly difficult as its topsy-turvy predecessor.** The fault here lies not so much in the control but in the courses—some of which are confusing, while others are just plain unfair. I don't know how many times I slipped from first place just because I took a turn a little too wide and flew off the track. You need patience to master this game. **Crispin**

It can't be a good thing when, while playing this game, all I can think of are ways to improve it. **Jet Moto 2 has some of the most original racing tracks around,** but they were designed with looks in mind, not functionality. The tracks usually punish you for going too fast...but this is a racing game! I don't like jumping a ramp full speed, only to crash into a poorly placed sign. The control also needs a lot of work. For patient gamers only. **Dan**

First off, I'm not a big fan of racers. JM2's bumpy-and-jittery control made it tough for me to get into it. Granted this one's an improvement over the last game, but **it seems like more of the same** rather than anything new. However, the levels are large (even sometimes quite confusing) and present a good challenge. Fans of Jet Moto will surely like this game, but its polygons and control just weren't enough to keep me playing. **HG**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
6	6	6	6

MDK

Publisher: Playmates
Developer: Neversoft
Featured In: *EGM #97*

Number Of Players: 1
Best Feature: Nonstop Action
Worst Feature: Too Short
www.playmates.com

This heavily hyped shooter/platform hybrid is intense, fun, funny, over the top—and over way too soon. What's ironic is that the game's ultrafrenetic pace is what sets you up for a disappointing finale. Every level forces you to hustle or be vaporized by an army of some of the goofiest-looking goons ever assembled out of polygons. You're kept moving throughout the entire game, whether you're on foot or launching napalm death from a bomber or darting down a gully on a snowboard (gameplay variety is one of MDK's strengths). Then, just as things are getting interesting, you beat the final Boss and that's it. Despite the addition of a few warp areas not found in the PC version, **you can easily whip through this sucker in a weekend**—especially since MDK's not particularly difficult. As long as you keep moving and shooting, you'll do fine. The game's a blast while it lasts, though. Neversoft has packed this port with all the style and humor of Dave Perry's PC original. You get all the wacky weapons (including your inflatable-doll decoy and an explosive simply called "The World's Most Interesting Bomb"). And then there's the Sniper Mode. Used mainly for taking out Bosses and solving puzzles, this mode is useless 80 percent of the time, but it looks great and is fun to use. MDK has all the right stuff, it's just too short, too easy. **Crispin**

Yeah, the Sniper Mode is cool...blah, blah, blah, but what about the rest of the game? It can be summed up like this: **MDK could've been great.** It's a very unique action game with very original ideas. In fact, I kept wanting to go on to see what the next stage had to offer. I can't help but think, however, that MDK was rushed. The poor control, polygon break-ups and (some) awkward level designs take away from what should've been a great game. **Dan**

Visually MDK's graphics show an impressive array of transparency, reflection and all-around polygons. Accompanying these techniques are equally innovative and action-packed gameplay. **This PC port has retained everything** and even added the warp rooms per each .evel. With all these attributes, this was heading for a top spot on my list until it was over so quickly. The rooms are rather linear and the whole experience is over way too soon. **HG**

Whenever a game comes along that breaks the mold (or at least cracks it a bit), I stop to take a look. MDK is one of those games. Even with its uniqueness, it still retains its fun factor. **The main thing that I didn't like about the game is the graphics.** I found them to be dirty-looking and crude. The whole idea behind the game is pretty damn weird, but I liked it. MDK may not be as original as Abe's Oddysee, but it can stand its own ground. **Shawn**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
7	8	8	5

NBA LIVE 98

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA Canada
Featured In: *EGM #100*

Number Of Players: 1-8
Best Feature: Multiplayer Gameplay
Worst Feature: Too Easy In Single-Player Modes
www.easports.com

NBA Live 97 was easily the best basketball game last year, and now Live 98 has done it again. Improving upon such an excellent basketball game is a challenging task, and EA did a great job of doing that, while not messing anything up in the process. The easiest way to do this is by adding more features. Live 98's most substantial new ones are a three-point competition, and the awesome radio style play-by-play performed by the TNT broadcast crew. EA didn't just do easy improvements, however. The 3-D player graphics are much more detailed, and look more like real players. Also, tons of new player animations juice up the realism such as fall-away and leaning jump shots and post-up moves. You can also perform a variety of new dribbling maneuvers through the use of new button combinations. Maybe EA put too many moves in, because some of the transitional animations are jerky. Luckily, they don't hurt the gameplay. What does hurt the gameplay is that Live's One-player Mode is too easy. I played the hardest mode with a horrible team, and had no problem turning the game into a lay-up drill. The only way Live 98 can be challenging is if you play against a human. In fact, **I want to personally challenge EA to ramp up the difficulty and computer AI on next year's Live** so that it can be a truly complete basketball game. **Kraig**

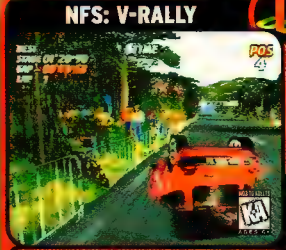
NBA Live 98 is awesome. The presentation is incredible—the interface, the graphics, the music, heck even the FMV segments are all fantastic. On the downside, the animation could've been better, and more importantly—**the game is far too easy in 1P Mode**. Only the hardest skill level provides a decent challenge. Still, multiplayer Live is where it's at, and with all the improvements (especially icon passing), there's not a better b-ball game out there. **John**

I'm not a hardcore sports game fan, but **I know a good basketball game when I play one**. Live 98 is easy to play, easy on the eyes and easy to have a roaring good time with your friends. While the visuals have been improved this year, Live 98 does lag behind some of its competitors, graphically. I know gameplay is king and Live 98 plays great, but it still would be nice if the graphics were the same quality as the rest of the game. **Kelly**

NBA Live is what I'd call a decent two-player game. It has loads of stats to peruse and several gameplay customization options like penalties, time and more. **Strangely, this is also the easiest basketball game I've ever played.** If you're not up against a human opponent, you won't lose (or at least shouldn't). This ease of difficulty, even at the hardest setting, really kills it for me. Also, the controls are awkward for switching players. **Sushi**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
7	8	7	8

NFS: V-RALLY



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Infogrames
Featured In: *EGM #101*

Number Of Players: 1 or 2
Best Feature: Lush 3-D Graphics
Worst Feature: Lacks Excitement
www.ea.com

V-Rally is the latest "Sega Rally Killer" for the PlayStation, and while the game looks great, the gameplay is not quite as advanced as the visuals proved to be. In all fairness, the graphics in V-Rally are very impressive. In fact, I would go as far to say V-Rally is the best-looking Rally game on the PlayStation so far. Each locale has been rendered meticulously, with complex polygonal scenes, rich textures, realistic weather effects and some of the best lighting effects of any PS racer to date. As far as gameplay goes, performing powerslides is not as convincing or precise as it should be and **the car physics are downright wacky at times**. You'll be driving along, minding your own business and if you either hit a trackside object or get hit by a car (which, after the bump, speeds merrily away), your vehicle slow bounds around the track as if somebody flipped a slow-motion switch. The game doesn't slow down but you bounce around like a rubber ball on the moon...weird. Also, the car settings aren't very in-depth. You can adjust the tire compound, gear ratio and the degree your car under steers/over steers, that's it. On the upside, V-Rally has a large number of cars to select and a whole slew of tracks to race on, more than any PS rally game so far. In the end, V-Rally is a solid, good-looking racer with a good amount of variety. **Kelly**

Beyond the graphics and the large number of tracks, **there really isn't much good about V-Rally.** The physics in the game are really weird—hit the side of the road and you're treated to a car-flipping demonstration. The gameplay is boring, mostly because the action is way too slow, even when you're at your car's top speed. The game also lacks a polished feel to it with shabby Menus and Options Screens. V-Rally is a racer to stay away from. **Kraig**

I'm always looking for a game that can unseat Sega Rally as my favorite rally racer. This ain't it. Sure, V-Rally looks great (the weather effects are especially cool) and packs a good selection of tracks. But, **simply put, the control bites**. Your car rides totally out of whack during sharp curves; it turns, then straightens, then turns, often sending you careening into a ridiculously exaggerated flipping crash. The generic music is annoying, too. **Crispin**

So far, I haven't been terribly impressed by many of the racing games on the PlayStation. V-Rally is no exception, as it lacks many of the features and standards I've come to expect. The options are somewhat weak, with little adjustments possible, and horrible collision detection when in the game. **The whole experience feels unnatural when I play**—sluggish and jumpy. The good number of cars and tracks don't hide the shortcomings. **Sushi**

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
7	5	5	5

C&C: RED ALERT

Publisher: Westwood Studios

Developer: Westwood Studios

Featured In: *EGM* #100

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Lots of Missions

Worst Feature: Complex Game Control

www.vie.com

Red Alert is by far the most complex realtime strategy game to hit a console system. Its complexity is a double-edged sword, because it makes the game beg for a keyboard or a mouse (you can use a PS mouse), instead of the standard PlayStation controller, which is ill-equipped for this type of game. After awhile, the controls can be mastered, but not before some frustration. If you're willing to stick it out, Red Alert is a rewarding game—and a very deep one. Red Alert's world consists of two combating factions known as the Allies and Soviets. You can play as either of them, depending on which of the game's two CDs you pop in. Red Alert has a wide variety of missions ranging from destroying bases to infiltrating them, and there's even an occasional raid that you carry out with the help of a naughty commando named "Tanya." There's plenty of missions to keep you busy because the PS version of Red Alert has some exclusive missions, in addition to also containing the PC expansion disc. Although the game supports link-cable multiplayer combat, it's impractical for most gamers. Fortunately, there's also a "Skirmish" Mode that simulates a one-on-one multiplayer battle with the computer. Although Red Alert isn't as good as its PC counterpart, **you won't find a better realtime strategy game** on the PlayStation.

Kraig

Red Alert is one of the best realtime strategy games around. I suggest you go get it right now, assuming you don't own it on the PC already (if you did, you wouldn't have reason to buy the PS version now, would you?). It's fast, frantic, deep and with a little practice, **you'll get the hang of the controls in no time**. Tons of challenging missions and the few cosmetic changes from the PC version make this a great deal. It's better than Warcraft II.

Dan

The original C&C was not a bad game by any means, but this one's better on every level. The graphics are more detailed (it's now easier to differentiate troop types), and **later missions offer an incredible variety of weapons and gizmos.** Plus, you get the same slick between-mission scenes and awesome music that gave the original so much personality. And if you're one of the 30 people with a Link Cable, you can battle against a pal.

Crispin

Every time I sit down and play a good strategy game, it's like a step into another world. I feel like the commander of that army—but that's only if the game is good. Red Alert is one of those games. This one is better than the first with a cooler story line, more professional FMV and really nice graphic effects and interfaces. The control can be tricky but the PS mouse solves that problem. **This one is well-made—solid from beginning to end.**

Shawn

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
7	8	8	7

SF COLLECTION

Publisher: Capcom

Developer: Capcom

Featured In: *EGM* #97

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Superior Game Engine

Worst Feature: Missing Pre-Super Street Fighter Titles

www.capcom.com

My biggest complaint: It took too dang long to get into my hands! Otherwise, what we have here is a beautiful translation, slightly better than the Saturn version, which suffered from minor visual glitches, but not enough to get a lesser score. Characters are rendered wonderfully and seem accurate in every detail. No animations appear to be dropped in favor of speed. Complementing this is the perfectly ported sound effects and background music, straight from the arcade. Nope, Capcom didn't miss a beat or detail on this one—which is good—considering how long this has taken to be released. Even the remarkable fighting engine is intact, with every last combo I can muster in the arcade being easily duplicated here. What surprises me most, however, is that this collection doesn't include the old games before the Super series, rather than the Street Fighter Alpha 2 Gold disk. Alpha 2 Gold is a cool game, and Cammy is a welcome addition to the Alpha family, but **I would have loved pounding away on the first Street Fighter**, on up to Street Fighter II Turbo: Hyper Fighting, even more. Call it a convenience thing, where I wouldn't have to drag out my TurboGrafx CD and Super NES in order to enjoy these classic titles. A true collection should have contained them, but I'll enjoy the games they included all the same.

Sushi

How can you go wrong with an SF2 compilation? With the addition of Super Street Fighter, that's how. Seriously though, these games are truly arcade-perfect conversions of the arcade titles in graphics and sound, but it pains me just to think about playing SF on a standard PS controller. **Hardcore fans might want to invest in an aftermarket controller or stick.** As always, the gameplay rules when compared to other 2-D fighters.

Kelly

SF Collection is a must-buy for any Street Fighter fan. Fortunately for PS owners, there's a bit more improved in this package, as SFA2 Gold now has the Survival Mode that used to be exclusive to the Saturn, as well as the real intro (not that FMV crud from the first SFA2 on the PS). The new Akuma Mode is a nice touch, but no big deal, and of course—the main benefit to owning this—SSF2 and SSF2T are here in all their arcade glory. Great game.

John

I could find very little wrong with this awesome compilation, except in Capcom's choice of games (I think Hyper Fighting should've taken the place of Super SF 2). If you have Alpha 2, I would find it hard to recommend this package to you. Very little new is added, and Super SF 2 Turbo alone is not worth the bucks. But **if you don't own an SF game yet, then this is an absolute must-buy.** See why SF is the best fighting game series around.

Dan

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
8	8	2	9

SF EX PLUS α

Publisher: Capcom

Developer: Capcom

Featured In: *EGM* #99

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Lots of New Characters

Worst Feature: Same Fireballs, Same Dragon Punches...

www.capcom.com

What should've been called Street Fighter III, this 3-D (or rather, polygonal) update to the world's most popular series of fighting games is excellent. I have more fun playing EX than any other 3-D fighter, including Tekken 2 and Tobal 2. A lot of folks think EX duplicates the SF 2-D engine in 3-D perfectly, but I disagree. If you have played enough Street Fighter, you can pick out a few differences, like floatier jumps, which can slightly throw off the timing of hardened SF veterans. Some of the manual and Super combos also behave differently between the past Street Fighters and EX (for example, Ken's Shoryureppa hits jumping opponents differently than it did in Alpha 2). But this is OK since it lets us learn a few new tricks in an old series. The addition of several new characters is also welcome, especially my personal favorite, Garuda. The downside to all these new fighters is that they all have traditional SF joypad motions (i.e., fireball, Dragon Punches, etc.). **Come on! At least rip off a few MK moves (tap, tap) or something.** I also don't understand the omission of certain SF features like air blocking or parrying. It's almost as though Capcom went back to SF basics...but in three dimensions. But if you're the eternal Street Fighter fan like me, you can't help but have fun with this title. It's a solid and very fun fighting game.

Dan

This a great arcade port and a great overall fighter! I'm usually not a fan of 3-D fighters in the SF style, but **they sure did this right.** From two-in-ones to cross-ups, the gameplay is definitely SF. Although the jumping is a bit sluggish, this has the attraction of 3-D looks, 2-D playability and great options! My only complaint is that the combos, moves and collision are a bit too forgiving and allow for too much damage. SFIII should've gone this way.

HG

SF EX Plus α turned out to be quite a surprise for me. **I didn't expect it to play so well with the 3-D graphics** (the gameplay is still basic 2-D, thank God), but the transition is made almost perfectly. There's a lot of new technique to the gameplay, and the new characters are all well-balanced and have a ton of cool moves. The floaty jumping can get annoying sometimes, but otherwise this is easily my favorite polygonal fighter thus far.

John

I still think Street Fighter III should have gone this route, but with better polygonal counts, shading and texture mapping. For a new SF game, SF EX Plus does more for 3-D fighting games than any other title. For one thing, it retains nearly all the combos you're used to in the 2-D series. **The game plays very solidly, and I feel right at home.** Everything runs at a very high frame rate, just like the arcade. Overall, it's a great translation.

Sushi

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
9	8	7	8

MASTERS OF TERÄS KÄSI

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Cool Star Wars Tunes

Worst Feature: Sporadic Control

www.lucasarts.com

Publisher: LucasArts

Developer: LucasArts

Featured In: *EGM* #97

Luke vs. Chewy? Han vs. Leia? Star Wars: MoTK is a valiant attempt at creating a fighting game using *Star Wars* characters, but it falls short in not only playability, but believability. I can't see how anyone could block a lightsaber attack with their forearms. I mean, these fighters should be sundered! Weapons such as these shouldn't even be a part of this game. Even worse, the controls are not accurate, as the Practice Mode proves. To pull off a combo, you need perfect timing plus a lot of luck. After several hours of practice, you might be good enough to take on the computer, but don't try anything but the Easy setting, unless you're a glutton for punishment. You see, Star Wars: MoTK is loaded with cheapness and cheese combos. Unblockables are far too damaging and unavoidable to make for decent gameplay. The computer can unleash these beasties at any time, with split-second timing, **rendering you to little more than a quivering heap of bantha poddo.** What ends up happening, to my dismay, is that you end up in boring patterns to win. You're better off only playing in Two-player Mode. I will give LucasArts credit for one thing though: The music is excellent. Taken right out of the movies, the music sets the mood nicely, even for a fighting game. Also, I find it strange that many hidden characters are missing, like the Emperor.

Sushi

When you get past the strangeness of pitting a Tusken Raider against Darth Vader, Masters of Teräs Käsi becomes a decent fighting game. **Besides the whole *Star Wars* motif, the graphics are easily the best part of the game.** The control can be a little tricky and I found that the enemies aren't really balanced that well (forcing you to start using cheap moves and ring-outs to win). Overall, this one is pretty nice but needs some work.

Shawn

I'm really disappointed with Teräs Käsi. The game is such a marvel to look at—the backgrounds are fantastic and the character animation is top-notch. The ability to take control of so many different *Star Wars* characters is totally cool, but **unfortunately, the gameplay just doesn't cut it.** The control is poor and the combo system is more about memorization than actual skill. It's too bad, because this game really could've been a classic.

John

Masters packs great graphics (the lighting effects from your saber are killer), an awesome soundtrack and—of course—a cast of the most famous fighters in the *Star Wars* galaxy. It's the gameplay that's a little sour. Control for most special moves is imprecise, although combos are easy enough to pull off. **AI opponents aren't too bright**, either (just nail 'em with uppercuts until they ring out). I wish the rendered endings were longer, too.

Crispin

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
8	8	6	6

TEST DRIVE 4

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Fast Gameplay

Worst Feature: Cheesy Computer AI

www.accolade.com

Publisher: Accolade

Developer: Pitbull Syndicate

Featured In: *EGM* #100

In a sea of me-too racing games on the PlayStation, **leave it to Accolade to bring something different to the table**. With Test Drive 4, Accolade's angle is to clash today's modern supercars with the legendary American muscle cars of the late '60s and early '70s. The best part is, this melding of muscle works fairly well as a game. Although I do question some of the performance figures of the cars (a '69 Camaro ZL1 that goes 205 mph?), the cars are pretty evenly balanced in the game. This is the game Need for Speed II should have been. The cars are detailed enough to be immediately recognizable and in a game with licensed cars, that's important. I am a bit bummed out about the gameplay. It's decent at best. The cars do control well but it's basic stuff. No refined powerslides like in Rage Racer and it's too easy to flip your car over. Even worse, the computer-controlled cars are jerks. Every time I would gain an advantage in momentum, they would ram me until I bit it big time. The inclusion of police cars and oncoming cars spices up the action a bit and the 1/4-mile drag strip was a nice touch. Graphically, Test Drive 4 is better than average but that's it. The textures are clean and the locales have a diverse look. Plus, everything scales at a fairly fast pace, but I've seen better on the PS and so have you.

Kelly

I have no complaints about TD 4's graphics or control. It's just that **this game's a little on the dull side**—a surprise, considering how much fun I had with the previous installments in the series. The five courses (which reverse in some game modes) just roll on and on, and some stretches of track nearly put me to sleep. Still it's fun to dodge traffic and cops, and there are some cool jumps. A Head-to-Head Two-player Mode would have helped.

Crispin

The mix of cars in the latest installment of Test Drive is puzzling and intriguing. **You can race state-of-the-art supercars versus the old muscle cars of the '60s in this game.** The idea is very cool, but unfortunately, the game becomes boring very quickly. There are plenty of different options and modes of play, but no matter which I tried, the action didn't draw me in. This game has all the extra depth, but doesn't concentrate enough on gameplay.

Kraig

Test Drive 4 is a solid racer with some minor problems. The courses are designed really well, the graphics are nice (minus the random unsightly pop-up) and the engine sounds and music fit the game well. The problem is it seems like if you crash just once during a race—not even a really bad crash—you're guaranteed at least fourth place or worse. That just seems unfair. It's a good game, but may not endure the test of time.

Shawn

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
6	5	6	6

TOMB RAIDER 2

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Super-long Adventure

Worst Feature: Some Awkward Camera Angles

www.eidosinteractive.com

Publisher: Eidos

Developer: Core

Featured In: *EGM* #98

Lara Croft's second outing may seem similar to the first, but TR2 actually packs a lot of subtle—and some not-so-subtle—differences that make it better than the original. At 18 levels, this sequel is about 30 percent larger than the first game. **Playing through TR2 is like running a marathon** (indeed, after each level you're shown how far you've traveled; by the very end, I had jogged 86 kilometers). And even when you think the game's done, you get an epilogue adventure (with Lara wearing her skimpiest outfit yet, by the way). Where Tomb Raider's emphasis was on exploration, this one is all about traps, traps and more traps. Lara faces spiked pits, compacting spiked walls, rolling spiked disks and...well, just lots of spiked stuff in general. She's going to die—a lot—but now you can save the game at any point so you can immediately retry the tricky parts. Lara also drives two vehicles, a boat and a snowmobile, during the course of the game, and you'll need both to solve some of the puzzles. She faces a few more enemies, too, but the lethal environment (as well as a few awkward camera angles) still remains her greatest adversary. With the exception of a few new moves, most notably her ability to climb, Lara controls the same as before (nope, no analog support). You'll need to be a Tomb Raider master to pass the later levels.

Crispin

I'm just as sick of hearing about Lara Croft as the next guy, but I gotta admit—Tomb Raider 2 is pretty cool. Adventure game fans will be in heaven—the game is LONG, there's a lot to do and see, and the story flows very nicely. On the downside, **the control is still very poor** (some say it's a style thing—if so, fine—I don't like the style), and the game can get quite frustrating at times. Still, if you like TR and you've got a lot of patience, this game is for you.

John

Man, I'm glad this one turned out to be everything we hoped—I mean, we covered it enough! **Tomb Raider 2 is simply incredible.** It may not be a whole lot different from the first, but if it ain't broke, why fix it? The graphics are still a little rough, but for the levels being as huge as they are, it doesn't matter too much. The "save at any point" feature is the best addition as far as I'm concerned, but the Bosses were far less than amazing.

Shawn

The sequel of the year is here, and I've definitely put this one on top of my shopping list. Graphics are improved, with awesome lighting effects. Lara now has several new tricks to perform, from climbing, harpooning, gliding on outleys and more! She can also drive vehicles to reach her goals. **Probably the only letdown of this wonderful sequel is the lack of a whip for a weapon and Indiana Jones-style swinging.** Now, that would be perfect!

Sushi

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	
8	8	7	7

VS.

Publisher: T*HQ

Developer: Polygon Magic

Featured In: *EGM #99*

Number Of Players: 1 or 2

Best Feature: Cool Tunes

Worst Feature: Insane Difficulty Without Pattern Usage

www.thq.com

VS. is one of the more confusing titles I've had to deal with this month. I mean, I still can't figure out what VS. is trying to do. It's a lackluster fighter that seems to glorify gang fighting, yet each gang is only comprised of four people? If anything, VS. is trying to be something it's not, and instead of focusing on the gameplay, we've got a game that relies on flash and effect. The music really saves much of the game for me, and **the over-the-top martial arts really shines at 30 frames per second.** That's where the fun ends though, as the computer must have a red belt in butt-whuppin'. Your paltry orange belt won't cut it here, so you'll be relegated to playing with friends to gain much enjoyment. Like most games with incredibly high difficulty—even on Easy settings—you will degenerate into lifeless patterns of block, counter, dodge, counter, sweep, counter. While the game is easy to complete, this pattern requirement sucks the fun out of it. Don't even get me on character design. I won't say much about that other than they lack imagination and originality. I've seen them all before. Sadly, VS. is yet another awesome attempt at gaining a respectful place in the fighting game genre, but it just tries too hard, merely annoying any who play it. On a positive note, getting ring-outs is done well, with power blows required to do it.

Sushi

I'm probably the only one here who likes this game at all. **The key to enjoyment of VS. is not taking it so seriously.** Although performing super-long Chain Combos are as easy as rapidly pressing the buttons, the moves have that certain Shaolin "Kung Fu Theater" quality to them. I really don't think VS. was meant to be a serious Tekken killer but a fun and silly diversion. The graphics are a little blocky but the killer music makes up for it.

Kelly

I can't say I'm very impressed with VS. I mean it's nothing more than average. With games like SF EX Plus α and Star Wars: Masters of Teräs Käsi out there, **I can't find a good reason to buy this one.** I mean the moves are cool and all, but then the graphics look too blocky. I liked the game much better in Two-player Mode since the one-player games are nearly impossible –maddeningly so. I wouldn't spend any more than $25 on it.

Shawn

VS. tries to capture the magic of games like Tobal and MegaMix. It does a decent job but never reaches the quality of those two titles. **VS. is held back by a lack of variety.** Although the game has 16 fighters, most of them behave pretty much the same. Keep slapping your buttons, and you'll pull off one combo or another. The game's best features: the offensive/defensive evade button and the incredible animation. Not bad, but could've been better.

Dan

GRAPHICS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY
7	7	6	6

ASCII ARCADE STICK

Publisher: ASCII Entertainment Software Inc.

Developer: ASCIIWARE

Available For: *PlayStation*

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Arcade Feel

Worst Feature: No Turbo Switches

www.asciient.com

I'm a big fan of ASCIIWARE's higher-end arcade joystick, the Specialized ASCII Stick, and this new one offers the same durable arcade feel—except at a cheaper price. At $40, the Arcade Stick is constructed with a sturdy metal base and joystick shaft, so **it has a satisfyingly heavy feel;** you can tell this thing's built to take abuse. Sure, the Arcade Stick lacks the turbo and slow-motion switches that grace more expensive joysticks, but I never really used those functions anyway. After all, you're going to use this sucker primarily for fighting games, where turbo-powered high jinks aren't exactly appreciated by human opponents (the joystick also works well with the games in classic arcade compilations). I tested the Arcade Stick with several fighters, including Tekken 2, SF Alpha 2, SF EX Plus and Soul Blade. The layout of the extra-large buttons worked perfectly with every game I played, and the microswitched, bat-shaped joystick is very responsive. If, like a lot of gamers, you've become used to playing fighting games with standard joypads, you can probably live without the Arcade Stick. But if you're looking for a stick that can take a pounding, won't bust your budget and, best of all, just feels right—you must buy this peripheral. Its simple design may not be much to look at, but it's a cheap way to bring the arcade home.

Crispin

Now this is a grade A joystick...assuming you desperately need an arcade-style stick to play Street Fighter-type games with. I like the straight-across layout of the buttons (as opposed to the diamond-shape layout of other PS controllers). **It's perfect for any SF game**—once I used it to play SF Collection, couldn't go back to the standard joypad. But outside of SF, I couldn't find many other good uses for this stick. For fighting games only.

Dan

The ASCII Arcade Stick is a well-made, no-frills controller for the PlayStation. The ASCII stick is perfect for games like SF EX Plus α or the SF Collection. I especially liked the super high-quality buttons which took even the most abusive pounding in stride. The only bummer is that the arcade stick doesn't include auto-fire or slow-mo, but its robust construction more than makes up for this. **If you want basic design and high quality, this is it.**

Kelly

As a big fighting game junkie, I need a good joystick with perfect button alignment and responsiveness. The ASCII Arcade Joystick is just that. **The buttons are positioned perfectly, and configuration is a snap.** I wasn't totally comfortable with the stick right away, but it wasn't too hard to get used to after a few rounds of battle. ASCII is plainly one of the leaders of joystick design, and this will make a nice addition to their lineup

Sushi

MSRP	DESIGN
$39.95	8

DRIVING HOTWHEELS

Publisher: Platinum Sound

Developer: SC&T International

Available For: *Saturn, PlayStation, N64*

Number Of Players: 1

Best Feature: Versatility

Worst Feature: Complexity

www.platinumsound.com

The Hot Wheels Racing Wheel is one versatile driving peripheral. This is one of those full-featured wheels that works well on either the Saturn, PlayStation or Nintendo 64. Each button (there are a whopping 17 in all) can be individually set to the player's preference. While this may be good for gamers who like to tweak a racing game to death, it can become a bit tedious at times. I did find that it takes a lot of patience and some maddening trial and error to get the wheel setup just right, but at least it can be done. SC&T claims this wheel has the most accurate steering response of any driving peripheral on the market. **When put to the test in a demanding racing game like F1: CE, I found the wheel to be very responsive and totally linear in feel once I got the setup right.** This is not one of those wheels you can plug in and go and expect good results right away. At first I tried to "wing it" and set it up without reading the manual but that didn't work. You need to sit down and take it step by step to get the most from this wheel. The build quality is decent but it's difficult to see which button does what. They're all marked, but since these markings are opaque, it's hard to tell if you pressed the Z button or the X button. For the price, this wheel represents a decent value since you can use it with all the new systems.

Kelly

At $70, this wheel isn't cheap, but then it does work with all three major systems. Of course, such broad compatibility raises its own set of problems. **You'll have to punch in a few button combos to get the controller to function correctly** with particular games on each system a process that gets old pretty quickly. Still, the controller does emulate analog control for digital-only games, and it adds a lot to racing titles once you get used to it.

Crispin

As far as functionality and design go, this is a well-made steering wheel. **The biggest problem lies (surprisingly) with its multiplatform compatibility.** Several combinations of button presses are used to tell the wheel what system you are using it for, and more configuring is occasionally needed to make the pedals work. If you lose the instructions that describe the button presses, you're out of luck. It's a good wheel, but the cost is steep

Kraig

It's good to see innovative multiplatform peripherals like this one, but I wish the setup was easier. Switching from system to system forces you into a contortion of button presses just to configure it properly. Once you get past this pitfall, you're in for a treat. **The wheel is impressive, responsive and sports a cool design.** Probably the only other disappointment is the expensive upgrade to better pedals. The standard pedals are fine

Sushi

MSRP	DESIGN
$69.99	7

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Eidos (Adventure)
Release Date: 11/97 PSX $49

'BREATH OF FIRE III' Immense environments allow viewpoint rotation to reveal hidden pathways, items, secrets and powerups. Find the secret of the Dragon shrines or become an apprentice to learn magic and special abilities
Capcom (Roleplaying)
Release Date: 1/98 PSX $44

'POWER WHEEL' was designed to bring realism and playability to the video game player. Provides smooth four direction shifting. Brake and gas pedals provide a realistic feel and are ergonomically designed to be used either sitting or standing. Steering column can be adjusted for correct height.
Game Source (Hardware)
Release Date: NOW PSX/SAT $56

'SEGA AGES' The hottest hits of the 80's arcades are finally available on a home system. On a single cd, 'Sega Ages' features the blasting sci-fi madness of 'Space Harrier', the tune-rockin' tour race 'Outrun', and the top gun action of 'Afterburner II'.
Working Designs (Bundle)
Release Date: NOW SAT $40

'MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH' Three Japanese school-girls must save a Princess to restore peace to the land. Breathtaking animation with over 90 minutes of audio. When you talk to characters in the game, they reply!
Working Designs (Roleplaying)
Release Date: NOW SAT $52

'MLB FEATURING KEN GRIFFEY JR. N64' comes packed with over 1500 motion-capture animations and a stadium full of stats. Pinpoint control and a fistful of specialty pitches. Four modes of play, including exhibition, half or full-season Pennant race or World Series
Nintendo(Sports)
Release Date: 3/98 N64 $74

'GOLDENEYE 007' Look and shoot in any direction as you navigate 12 interactive 3D environments. Use stealth and force as you see fit in matters of national security. Battle intelligent enemies with numerous Q gadgets and weapons
Nintendo (Adventure)
Release Date: NOW N64 $69

'DELUXE DIPLOMACY' Set in pre-WWI Europe each player takes on the role of one great power and through careful strategy and even more careful negotiations, seeks to dominate the continent. Winning demands the ability to survive in the mix of shifting alliances, compromise and cooperation, and double-dealing
Avalon Hill (Board Game)
Release Date: NOW BG $42

'MAGIC THE GATHERING 5TH EDITION' This deck contains 60 tradable game cards, randomly assorted plus a rule book. Each player must have a deck. This deck may be enhanced with more cards sold in booster packs.
Wizards of the Coast (Card Game)
Release Date: NOW CG $7

'DEADLANDS' The year is 1876, but the history is not our own. In this *Weird West* Roleplaying game players take on the roles of hexslinging Hucksters, Mad Scientists armed with weird steampunk gizmos, deadly Gunfighters, fearless Indian braves and wizened Shamans
Pinnacle Entertainment (Pen/Paper RPG)
Release Date: NOW RPG $26

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EGM'98

TOP 10

Jan. 1998

OVERALL

1		Colony Wars	
2	2	Diddy Kong Racing	
3		Tomb Raider 2	
4		SF Collection	
5	4	Madden NFL 98	
6		SF EX Plus α	
7	4	GoldenEye 007	
8	2	NHL 98	
9		NBA Live 98	
10	3	Castlevania: Sotn (PlayStation/Konami)	

PLAYSTATION

1		Colony Wars
2		Tomb Raider 2
3		SF Collection
4	4	Madden NFL 98
5		SF EX Plus α
6	2	NHL 98
7		NBA Live 98
8	3	Castlevania: Sotn
9		NCAA GameBreaker
10		Intelligent Qube

NINTENDO 64

1	2	Diddy Kong Racing
2	4	GoldenEye 007
3		Extreme-G
4	3	Madden 64
5		Duke Nukem 64
6	2	Mischief Makers
7		FIFA: RTWC 98
8	7	Int. Superstar Soccer 64
9	11	Mario Kart 64
10	2	Top Gear Rally (Midway)

SATURN

1		SF Collection
2	3	Madden NFL 98
3		Bust-A-Move 3
4	3	Marvel Super Heroes
5	3	Saturn Bomberman
6	2	Duke Nukem 3D
7	2	Mega Man X4
8		Croc
9	5	W.S. Baseball '98
10	4	Sonic Jam

HOW TO READ THE TOP 10 CHART

5 5 Name of Game (Publisher's Name)

- Editors' Choice Award
- # Consecutive Months On The Chart
- Rank Number

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Answer These Questions Correctly and You Could be at the 1998 Comic-Con!

1. Name three characters from the comic book that are in the game.
2. What are the three different Spawns you play in the game?
3. What is the name of the last level you play in the game?
4. What is the name of Al Simmons' wife and daughter?
5. Do you own a PlayStation game console?
6. If so, how many PlayStation games do you intend to purchase this year?

COMIC CON

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Send your answers, your name, address and telephone number to:
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Entries must be received by Jan. 30, 1998. Please allow four weeks for delivery of winners list.

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See EGM² 42/43 For A Complete BlowOut

By *EGM²*'s Andrew Baran (special thanks to Tim Davis and Mark LeFebvre)

Crash Bandicoot 2

Crash Bandicoot 2 has plenty of secrets and techniques to set this one above the original. There are more gems than the first, with new secret ways to find them. Add the mysterious warps and you have plenty to explore.

Crash has four new moves added to his character. He still has the spin which can take out most of the enemies and boxes. He has a special Splash attack that can destroy those pesky metal boxes. Crash can now crawl on all fours. He also has a cool new Slide attack. It's even better when you combo that with a jump. This will launch you to new heights.

The overall gameplay is more of the same, but the levels have quite a bit more diversity to them. You'll find that the instant hits are not as plentiful. There are anti-gravity sections where Crash uses a jet pack, plus all sorts of craft that the bandicoot can ride on. The island design of the first game has been replaced with level "hubs" similar to Mario 64. From a single room, you can enter several levels.

Overall, the key to beating Crash Bandicoot 2 lies within memorizing the patterns and timing of each level. Crash 2 is like riding a bicycle: Once you know how things go in a certain spot, you'll have a much easier time going through. If you wanted more side-scrolling action, Crash will not disappoint.

General Strategies

Here are some tips that should get you well on your way to beating this game completely.

1. The first 15 levels are spread across three Warp Rooms. These Warp Rooms have five levels each, and are followed by a Boss. Warp Room 1: Jungle; Warp Room 2: Glacial; Warp Room 3: Sewer.

2. The game has a total of 25 crystals.

3. By collecting 100 Wumpa fruits, you can acquire a 1-Up.

4. Each level has a 2-D bonus area. These areas are a little different than the rest of the game because the items you acquire aren't tallied up until the level is done. If you lose a life, you can start right over at the bonus level.

5. Throughout the game, depending on your overall status, a holograph will show up in the hub area, giving you clues to the game.

How to Acquire Gems

There are several ways to acquire the gems. You'll need all of the gems to receive the best ending. Here's how to get the basic gems:

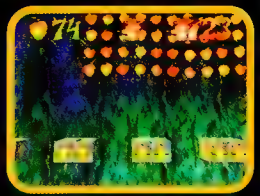
A The easiest set of gems to acquire are the Box Gems. These can be obtained whenever you smash all of the boxes in a level. Consult the list below for the total number of boxes found in each area.

B The Colored Gems can be found in either the secret areas, or by completing a level without smashing any boxes whatsoever.

C The third set of gems are the Clear. These are most often found by completing a level within a set period of time. You've gotta be fast. There will be a timer on the screen that will appear to inform you how fast you have to go.

D The Purple Crystals can be acquired by finding them during the course of the level, usually in a difficult area.

2



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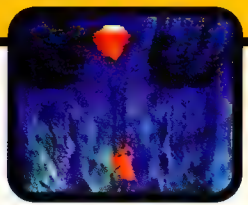
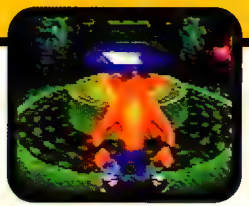
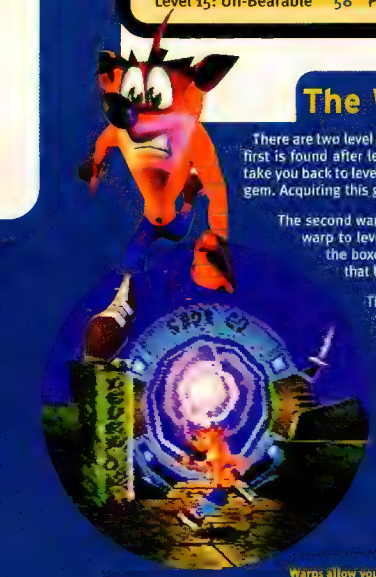




Level Information Pt1

3

Levels:	Boxes	Gems
Level 1: The Turtle	102	Purple Crystal, Box Gem, Blue Gem
Level 2: Snow Go	74	Purple Crystal, Box Gem, Red Gem
Level 3: Hang Eight	74	Purple Crystal, Box Gem, Clear Gem
Level 4: The Pits	53	Purple Crystal, Box Gem
Level 5: Crash Dash	44	Purple Crystal, Box Gem
Level 6: Snow Biz	124	Purple Crystal, Box Gem
Level 7: Air Crash	102	Purple Crystal, Box Gem, Clear Gem
Level 8: Bear It	48	Purple Crystal, Box Gem
Level 9: Crash Crush	57	Purple Crystal, Box Gem
Level 10: The Eel Deal	80	Purple Crystal, Box Gem
Level 11: Plant Food	53	Purple Crystal, Box Gem, Yellow Gem
Level 12: Sewer or Later	56	Purple Crystal, Box Gem, Clear Gem
Level 13: Bear Down	51	Purple Crystal, Box Gem
Level 14: Road to Ruin	89	Purple Crystal, Box Gem, Clear Gem
Level 15: Un-Bearable	58	Purple Crystal, Box Gem



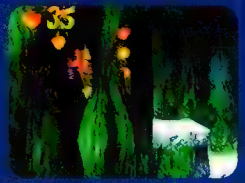
The Warps Tactics

3

There are two level warps found in this section in the game. The first is found after level 5. Skip to the warp in level 7. This will take you back to level 2 so that you will be able to acquire the red gem. Acquiring this gem will let you find the Box Gem in level 6.

The second warp is just after level 10, skip to level 13, and warp to level 7. Once there you will be able to collect the boxes needed in order to get the box gem from that level.

The purpose of warping is to ensure that you have acquired all of the gems possible from a given level. Warps are found as single platforms.



Warps allow you to reach gems that would be impossible to get.

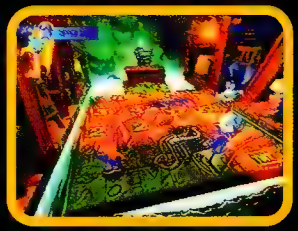
Boss: Ripper Roo

4

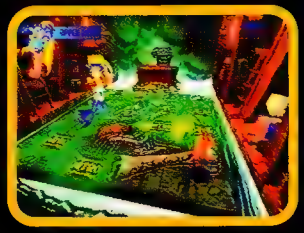
1. Ripper Roo's first attack is bouncing across the floor, dropping timed TNT crates. Do not attack, simply dodge.

2. Ripper Roo's second attack is similar to the first, but he will drop Nitro Boxes instead. After the last one is dropped, Roo will bounce on the box and become dizzy for a period of time.

3. When he's dizzy, you can use the spin attack to take away his life bars. This Boss is pretty easy to kill, as he only has three bars of life.



Dodge the TNT by avoiding the ones with the shortest fuse.



When Ripper Roo is dizzy, spin at him to remove one bar of life.

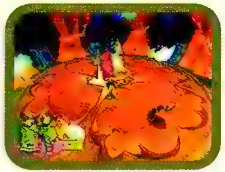
Boss: Komodo Bros.

5

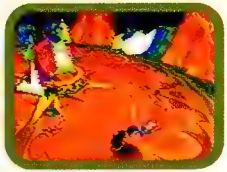
There are two brothers, Moe and Joe. Moe is the guy in the middle. You'll want to avoid him at all costs.

1. After fighting off Joe's multiple attacks, he will spin himself dizzy. When he hits the floor, it's time to make your move. Spin him into his brother to remove a bar of life.

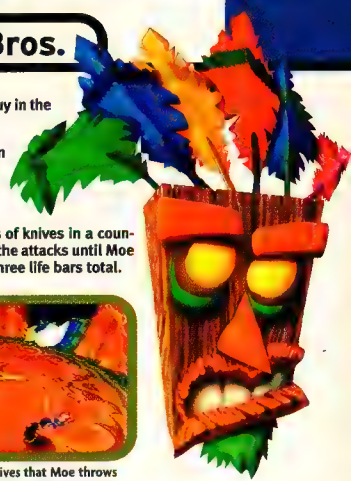
2. Be alert! Moe's next move will be to toss a series of knives in a counterclockwise position. Stay on the move, and dodge the attacks until Moe sends Joe spinning at you again. The Bosses have three life bars total.



The two brothers work together as a team. Keep moving or else...



Dodge the knives that Moe throws in a counterclockwise direction.



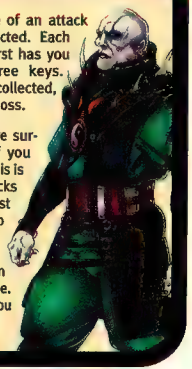
MK Mythologies: Sub-Zero

By EGM's Andrew Baran

MKM:SZ takes the ninja Sub-Zero from the popular fighting game and plants him in a side-scrolling adventure. You have all of the moves that you had in the normal game, though you must earn your specials. Air juggles do not work, so trying to combo opponents in the air will do you no good. Combos will net you experience, that will in turn give you new special moves.

The gameplay of Mythologies can be pretty cheap. It's a matter of learning the placement of the instant-kill traps and the timing of getting around them. Worse yet, the collision of some of the characters is really off. For example, Sub-Zero's Ice Clone attack should freeze any opponent that touches it. However, any enemy that is either throwing or in the middle of an attack will not be affected. Each level after the first has you seeking out three keys. Once they are collected, you will meet a Boss.

The Bosses are surprisingly easy if you remember that this is not MK. Neck Kicks will nuke almost any opponent. Do not confront the opponents as if they are in the fighting game. The AI will kill you every time.



Gaining Experience And Powers

Mastering Kombat with Sub-Zero: When you start the game, you only have the bare minimal set of punches and kicks. You can earn Sub-Zero's trademarked moves by building up experience from defeating enemies. If you can do some combos, you will get a bonus to the experience you earn from each kill.

An easy combo to pull off is to run up to an opponent (or freeze once you have the ability) and hit High Punch over and over. It's a simple way to get a bonus of 14 points. In the higher levels, the experience you receive will be higher.

Although it's neat to earn the moves, they are not essential to winning; all you need are the Neck Kicks. Pausing to try a move can very well cost you your life, especially when playing on the "Medium" game setting.

See EGM² 43 For A Complete BlowOut

The Neck Kicks: There is one move in the game that can beat even the toughest Boss. In fact, it seems as if the AI cannot handle what you're doing. First, jump over your opponent, then before you land, hit High Kick. The resulting blow will knock your enemy over. Jump over him, and kick again.

1

Gain experience points to earn Sub-Zero's special moves.

The Temple 2

Mission: Steal the Map of Elements: The toughest part of the Temple is the traps. They can crush you before you can react. The trick is to do a Crouching Punch to trigger it first. Then run past when it raises.

How to Beat the Boss: Awaiting you is Scorpion. He's simple to kill if you have earned the first Ice attack. Stand far away and freeze him. Uppercut him, then freeze him before he can recover. Repeat.

Trial of Wind 3

Mission: Collect the 3 Keys: Wait by any large chasm, and sooner or later a gust of wind will blow upward. Leap into it, and guide yourself to the next area. Use the keys to open the doorways and at the pentagram.

How to Beat the Boss: You can catch the Air Elemental in a series of Neck Kicks. Just prepare to run away from his tornado once he's defeated.

Trial of Earth 4

Mission: Steal the Map of Elements: The Earth area has a series of pits that open up. You will have no choice but to explore each pit. Some give you items and others will kill. Memorize which are good.

How to Beat the Boss: You can defeat the Earth Elemental the same way you defeated the Air guy. Just do Neck Kicks all the way. He's a snap! Don't bother freezing.

Trial of Water 5

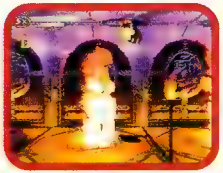
Mission: Collect the 3 Keys: The time you use the second key, start running to the left as soon as you trigger the door. If you are too slow, you'll get trapped and drown. Once this door is triggered, you'll be able to cross the pit in the center of the level. Cross from the left side.

How to Beat the Boss: The Water Elemental can drop into the ground. When he appears, start neck kicking him.

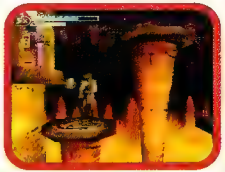
Trial of Fire

6

Mission: Collect the 3 Keys: The fire level is pretty easy as long as you keep moving. The guards move with lightning speed, so you'll want to avoid them altogether. There are a great many fire pits to cross. You will have to take damage from them, but the loss will be the least if you hop onto the sections between them. Make sure you keep moving, via jumping while doing this. DO NOT STOP! There are switches that look like skulls. If you flip them, they will lower a platform for a short time. Make your way onto the platform as fast as possible.

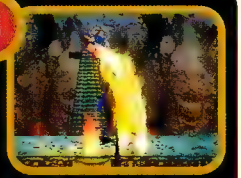


When jumping over the pits, keep moving or you'll start to burn.



Flip the skull switch to lower the platform for a short period of time.

The Boss:



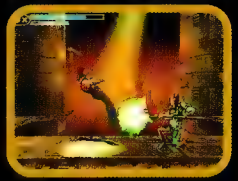
The Fire Elemental is an easy adversary. All you have to do is Neck Kick him to death, and you won't even get scratched. If you pause, you should be wary of his Flame Grab which hits you if you are close. He also has a Burning Swipe that can stun you. If you are knocked back, turn around and start up with the Neck kicks again.

Escape From the Prison of Souls

7

Mission: Escape from Prison: This level is short but tough. You have three hazards. The enemy troops are tough, but Neck Kicks will keep them from hitting you with projectiles. A single strong hit is all it takes to knock a weapon out of their hands. There are giant smashers. Time your runs to get past. And lastly, there are force fields. Kill the nearby guards, and they'll deactivate for a short period of time. Run past. Midway through, you'll get captured, and will have to brave the same obstacles all over again. Take heart that it's almost over, but your troubles are just starting.

Jump Kick the enemies here to disarm them of their weapons.



You can kill the opponents by forcing them under the smashers.

Passwords

If you use the memory card on the PlayStation version, you will eventually run out of continues. So it is actually better to use passwords, as every time you start, you'll have your continues refilled.

Level 2: **THWMSB**
Level 3: **CNSZDG**
Level 4: **ZVRKDM**
Level 5: **JYPPHD**
Level 6: **RGTKCS**
Level 7: **QFTLWN**
Level 8: **XJKNZT**

Bridge of Immortality

The bridge is probably the hardest level, and unfortunately no amount of strategy will help you out. The problem lies within the three giant mechs that can be found. First, you cannot freeze them with your attack. Second, you cannot block their hits. Worse still, they can infinitely juggle you against the force field walls. It can be a cheap death without you being able to do anything about it. There is one chance you have. Jump in and start High Punching. After awhile the mech will block and hit you back. Jump back in and start punching again. Beat each mech for a key segment. Be sure to save your herbs—you'll need to use them later.

8

Quan Chi's Sanctuary

In Quan Chi's Sanctuary, the toughest opposition you'll find is the series of guards that you must defeat before taking on their master. They are tough, cheap and way too deadly. To beat them with the minimal amount of life loss, run along the ground and take a few punches in the face. Then when you are staggering back, lob an Ice attack at them. Hopefully you've earned the ability to smash bad guys into Ice chunks. Do that here. Whatever you do, do not jump at these guys. They can kick you out of the air every time, and will often get in an air juggle (though you cannot do them). This area will try your patience as well as your skills.

9

Tricks of the Trade

A new year means resolutions for Trickman Terry!

Will this be the year that Trickman Terry uses what's left of that brain of his? It's too early to tell, but all we can say is that he is making a list of New Year's resolutions that he claims is going to be carried out in '98. One of them is to get organized so he doesn't forget where he left his keys, car, cat, etc. Another one is a new-style haircut; most likely a buzz and possibly lightened (if he feels brave enough). Last, but definitely not least, is to make this the best year for tricks! That's where his loyal readers come in. Buckle up, trick fans! It's time to make a resolution of your own and send in the best of the newest codes and tricks to:

Tricks of the Trade
1920 Highland Avenue, #222
Lombard, IL 60148
or send e-mail to:
tricks@zd.com

Win Games and Accessories for your Tricks!

If your trick is selected as the Trick of the Month, you will win a free GameShark provided by the kind people at InterAct. If you are given credit for submitting a hot trick in this section, you will win a free game. Gaze at the tiny text below, so you can get all the details on the free stuff.

NOTE: If you send your trick by e-mail you must include your real name, address, city, state and zip code.

Contest Rules

1 **No Purchase Necessary**. To enter, send a letter or standard size postcard with your hand-printed name, address, and video game "Tricks of the Trade" entry to: Tricks of the Trade, 1920 Highland Avenue, Suite 222, Lombard, IL 60148 USA. Or e-mail us at tricks@zd.com. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number. No purchase or payment of any money is necessary to enter. One entry per household. Entries must be received by January 30, 1998. All entries become the exclusive property of Sponsors and will not be acknowledged or returned. Sponsors assume no responsibility for lost, late, mutilated, illegible, incomplete, postage-due or misdirected entries. Sponsors reserve their right to cancel this contest at any time with appropriate notice. Only one prize per family, organization or household per issue. Winning entries may be printed in EGM and on EGM². However, on a one prize basis, no one will be awarded more than one prize per year.

2 **Prizes**. Four Prize winners will have their name and trick published in the magazine and will receive a video game cartridge selected by Sponsor (see Prize Pool for approximate value of $80.00). The best trick each month of the first 3 months will be declared the Grand Prize Winner. One Grand Prize winner will receive a cash prize of $500.00. Grand Prize awards and Game Shark Prize Pack have an approximate retail value of $999.00. Winners will be notified by mail or phone. Winners may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility and release of liability prior to prize award within 14 days of receipt of affidavit or prize may be forfeited. By accepting prize, winners agree to the use of their name and likeness for purposes of advertising, trade and promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Prizes are awarded on an "as is" basis. No warranty or guarantee, express or implied, is made with respect to prizes. Winners are responsible for all taxes and other costs associated with receipt or use of prizes. Acceptance of prize constitutes permission for Sponsors and their agencies, affiliates, subsidiaries, divisions and advertising agencies to use winner's name, likeness, photograph, voice, hometown and prize won for publicity purposes in any and all media now or hereafter known, without additional compensation, notification or permission, except where prohibited by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply.

3 **Odds of Winning**. The number of winners and the odds of winning will be determined by the number of qualified entries received.

4 **Eligibility**. Contest open to residents of United States and Canada (void in Quebec). Non-compliance with the requirements contained herein or return of prize as undeliverable may result in disqualification. Employees and immediate family members of Sponsors and their respective parent companies, affiliates, subsidiaries, divisions, and advertising agencies are not eligible to enter or win. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply.

5 **Winners List**. For a list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Tricks of the Trade Winners List, 1920 Highland Avenue, Suite 222, Lombard, IL 60148 USA. Requests for winners' lists must be received by the 5th day of the month following the one in which the prize was awarded. Allow 4 weeks for delivery of winners' list.

6 **Restrictions**: Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply.

7 **Sponsors**. This contest is sponsored by Ziff Davis Inc. and InterAct Accessories, Inc. © 1997 Ziff Davis Inc. A. All Rights Reserved. Printed in USA.

Trick of the Month

Extreme-G

CODES GALORE

Go to the Bike Selection Screen and press the R button to go to the Controls Screen. Move up to the Name Option and access it. Now clear the current name and enter one of the codes shown below for various results. Then just choose your bike and go!

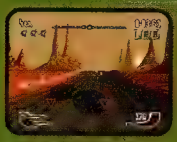
MAGNIFY: Puts the view closer to the bike.
NITROID: Unlimited Nitros.
ROLLER: This turns the bike into a boulder.
UGLYMODE: Graphics are pixelated.
ANTIGRAV: Turns the screen upside down.
ARSENAL: Infinite number of missiles.
STEALTH: Bikes will now be invisible.
XTREME: Super speed.
FISHEYE: Bike is further away on screen.
GHOSTLY: The graphics are transparent.
WIRED: Everything is in Wireframe Mode.
BANANA: The track will be more slippery.

From the Bike Selection Screen, press the top R button.

Go to the Name Option and put in one of the passwords as shown.

Go to the Options Menu, choose the Enter Password Option and enter this awesome code:
61GGB5: This will open up all tracks and give you access to the Roach and Neon bikes!

Joseph M. Rojas
Oak Lawn, IL



With the "ROLLER" code, you will turn into a boulder!

Nightmare Creatures

CHEAT MENU CODE

On the Main Menu, access the Enter Password Option.

The Password Screen will appear. Enter the one shown.

Before you start your game, you'll have a new menu!

On the Main Menu Screen, move down to the Enter Password Option and access it. Enter the code: Left, Up, Triangle, Down, Circle, Triangle, Square, Down. Then press Start. Move up to "Start Game" on the menu and access it. A new menu will appear that allows you to turn on or off unlimited continues and weapons, the option to play as a monster and a level select cheat. Choose any one of these before you begin your game.

Matt Barnes
Willoughby, OH

Marvel Super Heroes

PLAY AS THE BOSSES

You must first beat the game and save it in the Back Up Menu. Now play Arcade Mode with the Shortcut Options off, so you can see the players' pictures. Now go to the Player Select Screen and do the tricks as shown to access the secret Bosses (The default config for the buttons are used):

Dr. Doom: Press Down, then hold Down and press and hold X. With X held, press and hold Circle. With X and Circle held, press and hold R1. Do this in succession with Down held at the same time. You must do this code quickly. The picture will now change to Dr. Doom!

Thanos: Press Up, then hold Up and press and hold L1. With L1 held, press and hold Triangle. With L1 and Triangle held, press Square. Do this in succession with Up held at the same time. You must do this code quickly. The picture will now change to Thanos.

Ben Rosko
Pittsburgh, PA

Once you beat the game, save it in your Back Up Menu.

Now at the Arcade Player Select Screen, do the codes.

Dr. Doom and Thanos will now be playable characters!

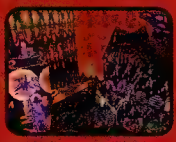
Pandemonium! 2

MANY INCREDIBLE CHEATS

From the Title Screen, access the Password Option. On the Password Screen, enter one of the codes as shown below.

GETACCES: This code opens up all the levels.
SKATBORD: Get Speed Greed after every level.
HORMONES: Gives you maximum health.
IMMORTAL: This code maxes out your lives.
MAKMYDAY: Gives you a permanent weapon.
NEVERDIE: Invincibility throughout the game.
GENETICS: Gives you Mutant Mode.
GONAHURL: Access to camera roll.
JUSTKIDN: Monsters regenerate.
ACIDDUDE: This gives you cool psychedelic textures.

On the "Enter Password" Screen, enter one of these.

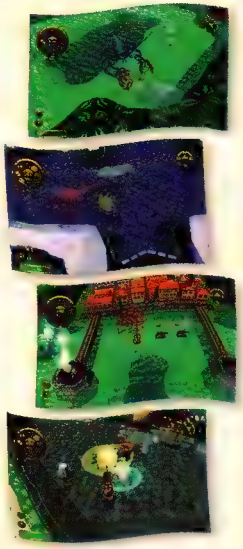


The code ACIDDUDE will give you a weird Graphics Mode.

Visit www.psygnosis.com and enter the Shipwrecker's Treasure Quest Sweepstakes.

The upside:
WENCHES.
The downside:
THE PLANK.

The salt spray hits your lips as you look into the deep blue. The frigate creaks and the plank bobs. Will this be the end? Welcome to Shipwreckers! Life on the high seas at its swashbuckling best. Wield flame throwers and hurl lightning bolts as you man cannons and command great vessels under the Jolly Roger. Battle one to five other players. The rewards are great, the puzzles daunting and the excitement high—just watch your step. The plank is a cruel mistress.



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MACE: The Dark Age

CHARACTER CHEATS

These tricks will give you extra characters in the game! Just follow the methods for the results shown below:

War Mech and Ichiro: When the Legal Screen appears, press Down, Right, Up, Left. You will hear a sound, and you may now choose them from the Character Select Screen.

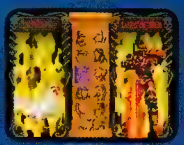
Grendal: Win three matches against three human opponents. After three wins, go back to the Character Select Screen and press and hold Start on the Executioner. Choose him with button A or B.

Ned the Janitor: On the Character Select Screen, press the Start button on the following characters in this order: Koyasha, Executioner, Lord Deimos. Then go to Xiao and press the A or B button.

Pojo the Chicken: Choose Taria and defeat a human opponent with her Execution move (stand about Foot Sweep-distance away, hold the Strong button and let go). Before the next match, press Start on controller two. Back at the Character Selection Screen, move down to Taria's profile and hold the Start button. Pojo will appear in place of Taria! Keep holding the Start button and press A or B to choose the chicken. On this screen, player two may also pick Pojo by holding Start on Taria's profile.

After three wins, go back here and hold Start on Executioner.

Go to the characters shown above and you can play as Ned!



Do Taria's Execution and here, hold Start on Taria for Pojo.

Clay Fighter 63 1/3

HIDDEN BOSSES REVEALED

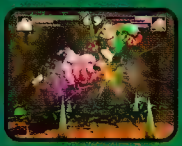
All of these codes must be entered at the Character Select Screen. Highlight character in the upper-left corner of the screen. Now do any one of these codes to get the secret characters as shown:

Sumo Santa: While holding the top L button on the controller, press L. Kick, M. Kick, H. Kick, H. Punch, M. Punch, L. Punch. The Santa icon will appear in the lower-left box.
Super Move: Down, Down-Forward, Forward, Down, Down-Forward, Forward+Punch.

Dr. Kiln: While holding the top L button on the controller, press L. Punch, M. Punch, H. Punch, H. Kick, M. Kick, L. Kick. The Dr. Kiln icon will appear in the lower-middle box.
Super Move: Down, Down-Forward, Forward, Down, Down-Forward, Forward+Punch.

Boogerman: While holding the top L button on the controller, press Up, Right, Down, Left, Right, Left. Boogerman's icon will appear in the lower right-hand box.
Super Move: Down, Down-Forward, Forward, Down, Down-Forward, Forward+Punch.

On the Character Select Screen, hold R and enter the codes.



Three new, hilarious characters are now yours to master!

Street Fighter EX+α

HIDDEN CHARACTERS REVEALED

This code has now been confirmed on the U.S. version of the game, but the commands have changed slightly. On the Mode Select Screen, highlight the Practice Option and press Select, Up, Right, Down, Right, Select. You will see "Here Comes a New Challenger" on the bottom of the screen. You now have access to Cycloid Gamma, Cycloid Beta, Killer Hakuto and Evil Ryu!

Curtis Bunch
Norfolk, VA

At the Mode Select Screen, highlight "Practice" and do the trick.

On the Player Select Screen, you'll get the new characters.

Dragon Ball GT: Final Bout

SIX EXTRA FIGHTERS

This code will increase your character count to 16. At the Title Screen, press Right, Left, Down, Up, Right, Left, Down, Up. You will hear a sound to confirm that the trick worked. Now press Start and go to the Character Select Screen. You will have six additional fighters at your disposal. Each one varies in strength and abilities.

At the Title Screen, press the button sequence as shown.

Instead of the normal 10, you can choose from 16 characters.

Final Fantasy VII

INCREASED ITEMS TRICK

This will boost up the amount of items within your inventory. Once you have equipped a character with the W-Item Command Materia, you should be able to perform this trick. Just begin your game and when that character enters a battle, select the W-Item command by pressing the Circle button when it's his/her turn to fight. Now choose the item you wish to increase by pressing Circle again. Then select the character in the menu you wish to use the item on by pressing Circle. When you return to the Item Screen, choose a different item than the one you chose before by pressing Circle once again. Finally, press X (to cancel), Circle (to activate), X, Circle, X, Circle and so forth. By pressing these buttons continuously, you should see the number of the first item you initially chose increase steadily.

Enter the code in the middle of battle, when a character has W-Item Materia

Triple Play '98

MORE VOCAL CREDITS

More credits have been found! In the middle of a game, hold the top four L and R buttons and enter these codes:
Eric Kiss: Up, Triangle, Up, Triangle.
Duncan Lee: Left, Square, Left, Square.
Tony Lee: Right, Circle, Right, Circle.
Jon Spencer: Up, Triangle, Up, Up.
Gary Lam: Left, Square, Left, Left.
Kirby Leung: Right, Circle, Right, Right

Marquis Davis
Warner Robins, GA

When you are batting or pitching, hold the top L and R buttons and do the trick.

PlayStation Underground No. 3

HIDDEN PREVIEW MOVIES

Put in the second CD of PlayStation Underground No. 3 and you will get to a Menu Screen (shown below). From here, you can access the hidden preview movies via a few cool codes:
Blasto: Press R1+R2. Hold them and press L1+L2. You'll get a Blasto preview movie.
Crash Bandicoot 2: Press Circle, Triangle, Square, Circle for the preview movie.
Spawn: Press Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Circle to get a Spawn preview movie.

On the second CD, go to this screen and enter the codes for the hidden movies.

Formula 1: CE

MANY GAME CHEATS

Enter any of the following cheat codes at the "Edit Driver" Option to receive various results within a race. Begin your race to see the results.
For Four Bonus Tracks enter:
BILLY BONUS
For Helicopter View enter: ZOOM LENSE
For Background Music/New Sound Effects enter: SWAP SHOP
For Sprite Commentators enter:
BOX CHATTER
For Huge Tires enter: LITTLE WEELZ
For Wipeout 2097 Mode enter: PI MAN
For Virtual Graphics enter:
VIRTUALLY VIRTUAL
For Raining Frogs enter:
CATS DOGS (Note: Be sure to switch the Weather Option to view this code).

You'll have fun watching these two talk up a storm when you enter "Box Chatter."

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Trickman's Reference Guide

This guide is a reference to all of the game codes printed within the last six months of *EGM*. Note: This does not include GameShark codes or any other codes that use a peripheral attachment. Look for the update in next month's Tricks of the Trade.

Issue #96

Ball Blazer Champions	SAT	Star Fox 64	N64
Command & Conquer	PS	Tigershark	PS
Fade to Black	PS	Tobal 2	PS
Independence Day	PS	War Gods	N64
MechWarrior II	PS	WCW vs. the World	PS
Mega Man 8	PS/SAT		
Nanotek Warrior	PS		
Need for Speed 2	PS		
Soviet Strike	PS/SAT		
Spider	PS		

Issue #97

Blast Corps	N64	Independence Day	SAT
Brahma Force	PS	Mega Man 8	PS/SAT
Bug Too!	SAT	Need for Speed 2	PS
Buster Bros. Collection	PS	Norse by Norsewest	PS
Descent Maximum	PS	Peak Performance	PS
Die Hard Arcade	SAT	Triple Play '98	PS
Die Hard Trilogy	SAT	Turok: Dinosaur Hunter	N64
Disruptor	PS	War Gods	N64
Doom	SAT	Wing Commander IV	PS
FIFA Soccer 64	N64		

Issue #98

Codename: Tenka	PS	Test Drive: Off-Road	PS
Daytona USA: CCE	SAT	Thunder Truck Rally	PS
Die Hard Trilogy	PS	TNN Hardcore 4X4	PS
Hexen	N64	Tobal 2	PS
Machine Head	PS	Twisted Metal 2	PS
Magic Carpet	SAT	War Gods	N64
P.S. Underground No. 2	PS	Wild Arms	PS
Robotron X	PS		
Star Wars: SotE	N64		
Ten Pin Alley	PS		

Issue #99

B. A. Toshinden 3	PS	NHL 97	PS
Broken Helix	PS	Peak Performance	PS
Cool Boarders	PS	Pitball	PS
Darklight Conflict	PS	Star Wars: SotE	N64
Dark Rift	N64	S.F. EX+Alpha	SAT
Dynasty Warriors	PS	Three Dirty Dwarves	SAT
Jet Moto	PS	Triple Play '98	PS
K-1: The Arena Fighters	PS	Turok: Dinosaur Hunter	N64
Namco Museum Vol. 4	PS	Xevious 3D/G+	PS
NBA Hangtime	SNES		

Issue #100

Battle Monsters	SAT	NBA Hangtime	PS
Carnage Heart	PS	NCAA Football '98	PS
The Crow	PS	NFL Gameday '98	PS
Excalibur 2555 A.D.	PS	Ogre Battle	PS
GoldenEye 007	N64	Pandemonium!	SAT
Herc's Adventures	PS	Street Fighter EX+Alpha	PS
Kl: The Arena Fighters	PS	Tetrisphere	N64
Machine Hunter	PS	Warcraft II: The Dark Saga	PS
Marvel Super Heroes	SAT		
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	SAT		

Issue #101

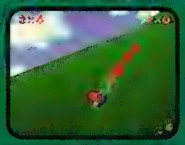
Excalibur 2555 A.D.	PS	Triple Play '98	PS
Fantastic Four	PS	Warcraft II: The Dark Saga	PS
Lost World: Jurassic Park 2	PS		
Manx TT	SAT		
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	SAT		
NFL GameDay '98	PS		
NHL '97	SAT		
NHL Powerplay '98	PS		
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee	PS		
Tetrisphere	N64		

Super Mario 64

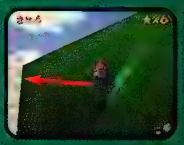
GET ON THE CASTLE WITH NO STARS

Even though the game isn't that new, there have been an incredible amount of requests for the correct method to do this trick and we thought we should clear this up. It's not a rumor. The method is best explained with the pictures shown below.

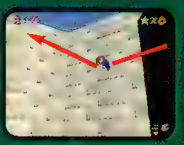
Get to this area outside the castle and do a Triple Jump here.



After getting high enough with the jump, you'll start to slide.

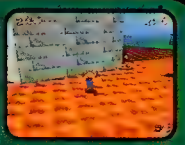


Do a jump immediately off the hill and toward the left wall.



When you reach the wall, do a Wall Jump to the left again.

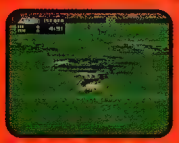
If you're high enough, you'll grab onto the wall's top ledge.



Yoshi is not here yet, but your reward is three extra lives.

On the menu, access the Enter Cheat Option.

Enter the code here. You will hear a sound to confirm.



The JPNSMWR code will flatten and widen the players.

NFL Quarterback Club '98

CHEAT CODES

At the Main Menu Screen, move to the Enter Cheat Option. Inside the Cheat Screen, enter one of these codes for various results:

Fumble Mode: GTNHNDS—Players constantly fumble the ball.

Slippery Play: SPRSLYD—Players slip all over the field.

Sticky Hands: STYCKYHNDS—Players will always catch the ball.

Unlimited Downs: DWNDRV—Enables an unlimited number of downs.

Extra Fast Players: MCHLJNSN—Gives a speed boost for players.

Small, Wide Players: JPNSMWR—All players are short and flat.

Benjamin Yavitz
St. Louis, MO

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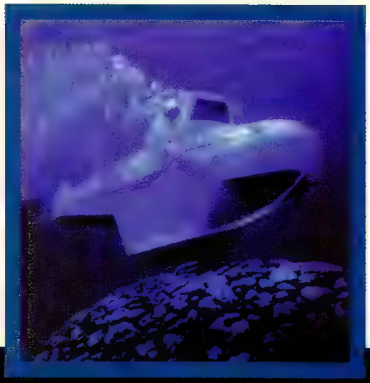

Swim With The Fishes

Imagine the respect you will get from members of the opposite sex when you tell them that in your off hours you double as a submarine commander! This sounds fine and dandy, but remember, when all is said and done a sub pretty much putters around in a big fish toilet! You can probably skip this little fact when scamming some chick into riding in this crazy thing. This electric-powered sub can dive to 130 feet below the water surface and cruise at speeds up to four knots for about two hours at a time. Operation is very simple to learn and the sub can be carried and launched from a standard boat trailer. The only hitch is the driver must be a certified diver—but hey, if you can afford one of these pups, you can probably buy your way into anything. If any readers buy this sub, the review crew would love a ride!

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It's no secret that *Star Wars* damn near touches the lives of everyone—well at least the men and boys of this world. So now that there's a large exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute's National Air and Space Museum, as well as being pleased, we wonder how we can afford the airfare. Since it may be nearly impossible for most of us middle-class folk to get out to Washington, a new book from Bantam Publishing gives us an in-depth look at the exhibit. Written by the curator of the show at the Smithsonian, Mary Henderson, the book tells us how the Trilogy draws heavily from Classical Mythology. On top of the text presented in the book, it also gives you a look at many of the original costumes, props, ships and models being shown in Washington. There's no doubt that this book is an invaluable piece of any *Star Wars* fan's library.

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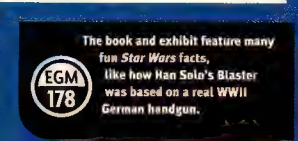

The book and exhibit feature many fun *Star Wars* facts, like how Han Solo's Blaster was based on a real WWII German handgun.

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***Correction from last issue: The correct Web address for Tiger Toys is www.tigertoys.com**

Madden Schmadden

This is the kind of stuff we had to play with before video games came along. Miggle Toys/Tudor Games, reintroduces a classic toy from the '60s and '70s to the hopelessly nostalgic, as well as a whole new generation of kids eager to play this simple but fun game. ABC Monday Night Football features two NFL teams (Packers and Patriots) a large 2' X 3' electric playing field, a full "in the round" stadium complete with working lights and scoreboard. The premise hasn't changed: Set your team in a formation, flip the switch and hope they vibrate toward the right end zone. You really have to use your imagination but for board game freaks as well as those looking for something new, this is a must-have game.

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REVIEW CREW MEMBERS AND BLIMP NOT INCLUDED!

EGM: ed

by Ed Semrad
ed_semrad@zd.com

EGM's own gaming guru shoots from the hip

Retro gaming brings back memories but fails to impress players of the '90s

The old games of the '80s appear to be making a comeback. Namco has a series of discs, as does Midway, and some companies are also working on 3-D updates of their old favorite titles.

I guess it had to happen. When anything gets old enough, it eventually makes a comeback as a classic. Nick at Nite seems to be doing quite well with the old TV shows, but why video games?

That was the question my son Michael asked me after we "bonded" with our father-son video game marathon last month. This time, I thought it'd be good to show him what gaming was like when I was a teenager. I got out my old Atari 2600 and found the box of carts I had filed away for whatever reason back then. I put in Pac-Man and started to play. Immediately, memories of the "good ol' days" flashed through my mind, but not for long. Michael asked if there was more to the game than running over dots and avoiding the ghosts. I tried to explain how revolutionary the game concept was and how popular it became.

Ed was a grand master of video games back in the day—and he has the patches and high scores to prove it

He just stared at me and again asked if there was more to the game.

Hmm. I thought perhaps I picked the wrong game. I went back to the box and dragged out Dragster by Activision. Surely this would get his interest. I showed him how to shift the gears and gave him a few pointers. Five minutes later he said he was done; he was bored. Back to the box again, and I pulled out Pitfall. That one had variety and required thinking. Thirty minutes later, he claimed he finished the game.

"Good," I said. "Now try for a perfect score. You missed some of the gold bars."

"I beat the game; I'm done," he said without hesitation.

I went back into the closet and brought out another box. I showed him the certificate I got from Activision for getting a time in the low five-second bracket.

"Cool," he said, as he looked up for an instant from his game of GoldenEye.

I dug deeper into the box, looking at all the memories and brought out all the Activision patches, Imagic gold stars and other hard-earned rewards.

"Nice," he said. "Why did you get all these things?"

Ah, I finally got his interest, so I showed him the various company newsletters and high-score tables in the video game magazines.

He looked at them and said, "You were a pretty good player back then. You had quite a few records and won a lot of prizes. But look at those games; the graphics are simple, the sounds are poor and in most cases, you play the same screen over and over. Look at games now. The graphics are almost as good as video. The sounds are CD-quality, the AI of the opponents are real and the game lasts for hours without repeating. Didn't it get boring to sit and play the same game for days on end just to try to get a high score?"

He has a point. I could've gone on and on about how game system technology was in its infancy back then. That games did repeat themselves because of the small amount of cartridge memory to work with, and that a high score was the only measure as to how good a player you were. But I didn't continue the history lesson. I got up, put the Atari 2600 and games back on the shelf, looked at the memories one more time, shut off the light and came back to the '90s and a game of GoldenEye with Mike.

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Next Month

January 1998

EGM²

Feature Story

Tomb Raider 2: You've heard about the game for what seems like ages. Now we'll show you how Lara Croft (and you) can beat the baddies to reap those rich rewards in our two-part strategy guide.

Nintendo is starting out the new year with a bang: Diddy Kong Racing, Bomberman 64, MK Mythologies: Sub-Zero and Crash Bandicoot 2 are what's in store for you in 1998. We'll be there with awesome guides for all these hot Nintendo 64 and PlayStation games!

Sega gamers won't be left out either: *EGM²* finally gets its hands on one of the hottest games for the Saturn, Sonic R! We'll blow out all the secrets and race tactics.

You've heard the hype; now learn how to play the games for real. *EGM²* shows you the ins and outs of Tomb Raider 2 and Star Wars: Masters of Teräs Käsi.

Also, *EGM²* continues its year-end tricks special with more codes for new and old games.

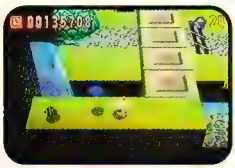
For sports gamers, the new year brings two major events: college bowl games and NBA hoops. *EGM²* covers both fronts with in-depth analysis of NCAA GameBreaker '98 and NBA Live 98—just to name a few!

EA Sports adds unprecedented player control to NBA Live 98.

After seeing our Diddy Kong Racing strategy guide, you certainly won't be calling it a Mario Kart clone! It's just one of several Nintendo 64 games we'll be covering in detail next month.

February 1998

ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY



The long-running Bomberman series has long stood as a shining symbol of console multiplayer gaming.

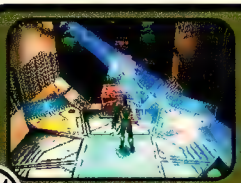
There are only a few notable shows a year when it comes to video games, and the Nintendo Space World '97 in Japan is definitely one of them. There promises to be a host of new Nintendo 64 games shown there including F-Zero X, Yoshi's Story, Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time and the first playable 64DD games. It's certain that a lot of Nintendo 64 news will be made there, and *EGM* will be the first to give you the in-depth scoop.

Most are familiar with the history of console systems (you should be after reading the video game history timeline in this issue!), but it could be said that arcades have evolved very quietly, and perhaps not enough. Check out the next *EGM* to find out how those coin-op Pong machines have evolves into the monstrosities found in arcades today.

And, of course, you can also always count on *EGM*'s accurate reviews. We'll put games such as One, Monster Rancher and Spawn to the test.

Feature Story

Formerly known as Shoshinkai, Nintendo Space World '97 promises to be one of the most exciting shows of this year and next. Here, suffice to say, you won't want to miss our coverage of this important event.



ASC's One was a sleeper hit at E³ that turned some heads. Is this visually impressive action game as good as its 3-D graphics? Find out in next month's *EGM*.

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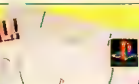

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Mystery Word Grid

	H					MYSTERY
		E				
P	I	N	C	H	W	
	R					WORD
S						

WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

PINCH .....W	PRESS.....K	BLAST .....A	WRECK.....D
BREAK.....Z	PUNCH .....S	SPRAY C	TURBO.....V
STOMP .....T	STAND.....R	PRESS.....E	DREAM....O
CRUSH.....I	SCORE .....H	SLANT L	CHASE.....P

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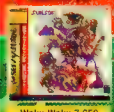

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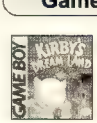

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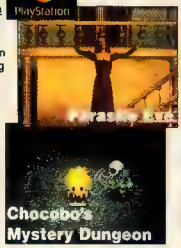

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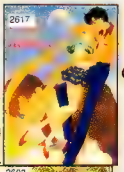

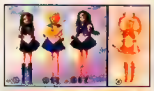

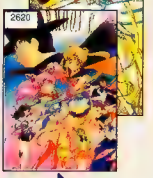

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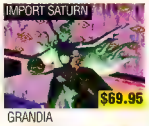
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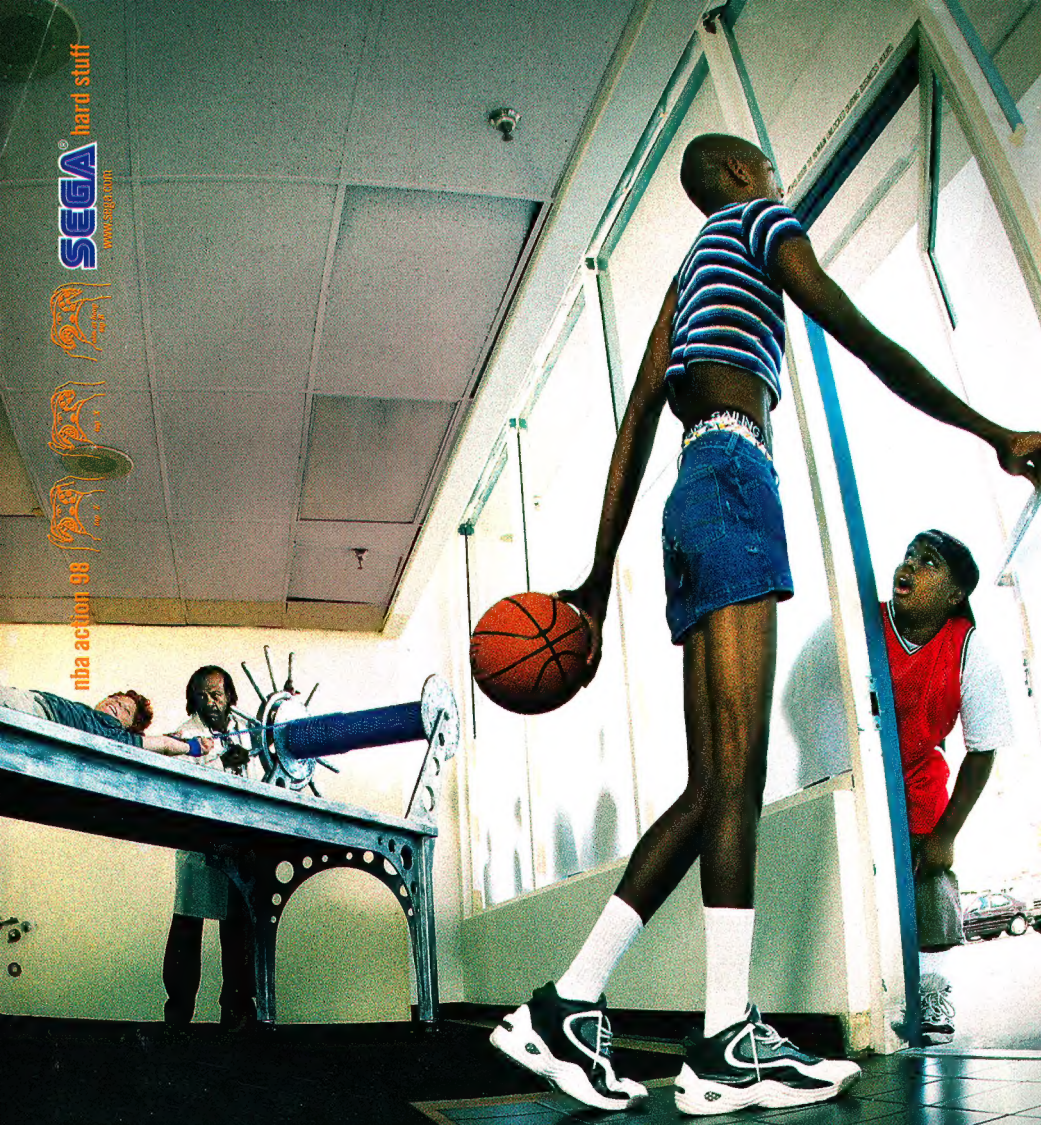

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