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HYPERR

AUSTRALASIA'S ONLY INDEPENDENT GAMES MAG

MAY '94

ISSUE #6 \$4.95 NZ\$5.95 inc GST



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HYPER is now 6 issues young

and pumping along thanks to all you beautiful readers. We've been shocked at all the support you've shown us in the last few months, and I mean everything from buying the mag, subscribing, writing letters, faxing us cheats, entering the competitions, and generally being very HYPERinteractive.

In return for all your support, we've got another big issue for you. Not many great games I'm afraid, but it's still hot in its own special way. We have a special fashion feature for all those who have to look good while gaming, and also talk to some of Australia's best new video clip directors, about their favourite techniques and the future of music video.

On the game front, the hottest one at the moment would have to be **Ultima 8** for the PC, and all Avatar fans can breathe a sigh of relief - you've got another world-beating game waiting for you. There's heaps of **Super Nintendo titles** this issue (where are you Sega?), with the pick of the crop being **Young Merlin** and the long-awaited **Mega Man X. Mechwarrior** made our cover though (it was originally going to be in conjunction with Mechwarrior 2 for the PC but its release has been delayed until September), and while it's not bad, it's not particularly good either. But it makes a nice cover, don't you think?

Anyway that's enough crapping on from me. Next issue we'll have lots of great stuff, including a review of Sega's biggie **Streets of Rage 3** and an Internet and hacking special. And remember - believe what you like, but just don't believe the hype.

Stuart

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6 News

Sega Saturn goss, Project Reality rumours, Jaguar delays, NBA Jam secret players, NSW game show for June, and the latest in Virtual Reality...

14 Features

Clip Art - MARCUS LEADLEY talks to some young Australian music video directors about editing tricks and the future of the video image. Fashion Phreaks - we take some photos of some models who are wearing clothes that you may or may not want to be seen in. Hmmm, groovy.

26 Previews

- Another World 2 **Mega CD**
- Subterranea **Mega Drive**
- The Lawnmower Man **Mega Drive/SNES**
- Theme Park **PC/3DO**
- Shock Wave **3DO**
- BioForge **PC**
- System Shock **PC**
- Wing Commander II **Mega Drive**
- TIE Fighter **PC**
- Stunt Race FX **SNES**
- Entombed **PC**
- Star Trek: Deep Space 9 **Mega Drive/SNES**
- Star Trek: Starfleet Academy **SNES**



41 More Reviews

- 41 Pink Panther **SNES**
- 60 Blake Stone **PC**
- 61 Fields of Glory **PC**
- 62 Quantum Gate **PC CD-ROM**
- 63 Elder Scrolls **PC**
- 67 Starship **PC**

68 Byte Size

- Bill Walsh College Football **Mega CD**
- NHL '94 **Mega CD**
- Chuck Rock 2 **Mega CD**
- Lethal Enforcers **SNES**
- Alfred Chicken **SNES**
- T2 - Judgment Day **SNES/Mega Drive**
- Wolfenstein 3D **SNES**
- Yoshi's Safari **SNES**
- John Madden '94 **SNES**
- Kronolog **PC**
- Microcosm **PC CD ROM**

72 Sonic 3 Play Guide

78 Letters

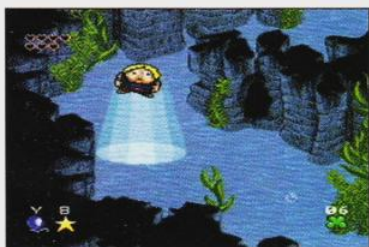
74 Cheat Mode

82 Hypermart

36 Reviews



36 MechWarrior
SNES



38 Young Merlin
SNES



42 Jamm it
Mega Drive



44 Barkley Shut
Up & Jam
Mega Drive



46 Biometal
SNES



48 The Jetsons
SNES

50 Choplifter 3
SNES



52 Mega Man X
SNES



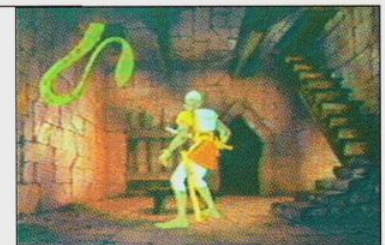
54 X-Kaliber
SNES



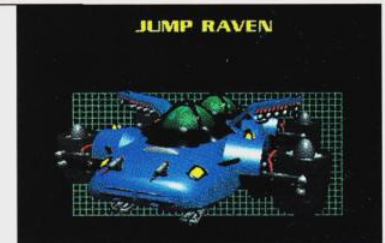
56 Lufia
SNES



57 Dragons Lair
Mega CD



58 Jump Raven
Mac CD-ROM



64 Ultima 8
PC



Atari's *Jaguar* Delayed

Bad news for lovers of hip, happening, and hot hardware. Atari's new 64bit wonder console, the Jaguar (or the "Jag" as it's affectionately known around the HYPER office), will not be released in Australia until November. Worse news for some: Atari's Australian subsidiary has gone into liquidation and it looks like it won't be reopening until the November Jaguar launch. Sigh. But if you were saving your pennies for a Jag, try and look at the bright side: at least you've got more time to save them.

Of course, software development for the Jag should be well under way by November so you'll have a much better idea of what the machine can and cannot do and more importantly, you'll be able to judge it on the quality of its games and not its specifications - which is what we've been encouraging you to do all along. So in some ways, the delayed release might turn out to be a blessing in disguise.

While you're waiting, have a look at these screen shots from two Jag games currently being developed by English lads, Rebellion Software. The less complete of the two is a *Virtua Racing* clone currently titled *Chequered Flag II*. Like *Virtua Racing*, all the graphics will be generated using plain polygons and there's a choice of perspectives as you motor around a variety of tracks. But how does it look when it's moving and how does it play? We have no idea.

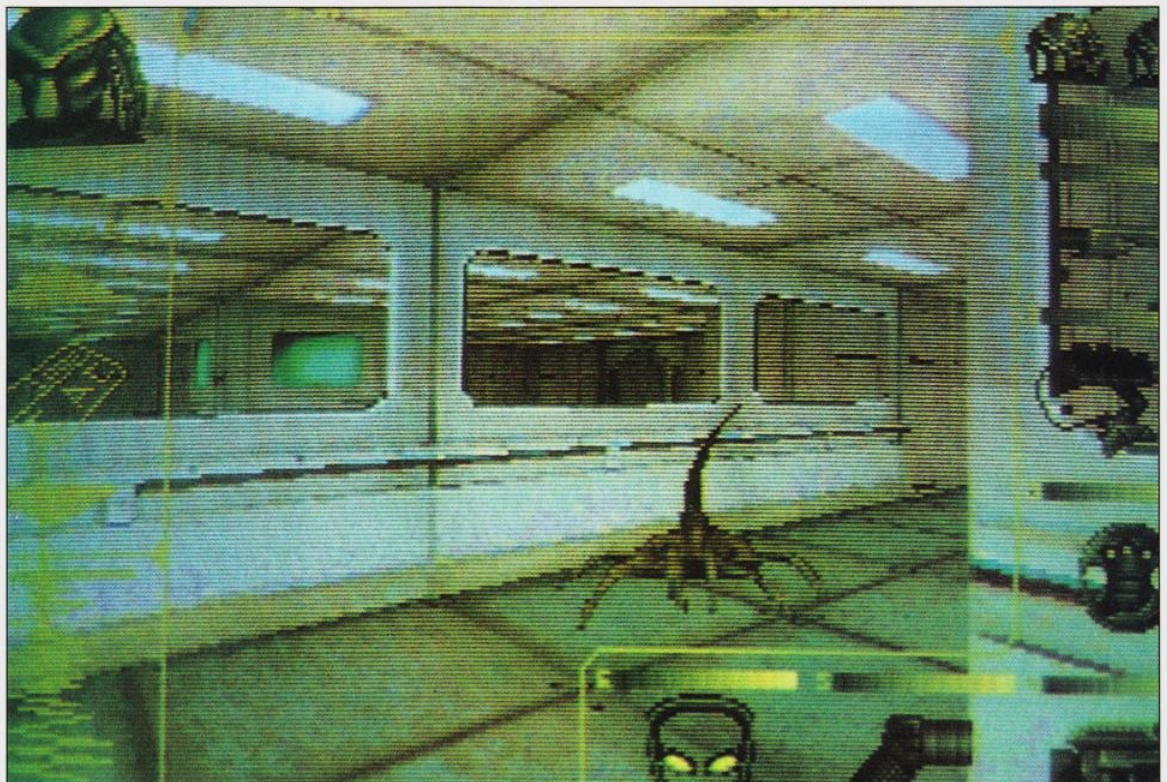
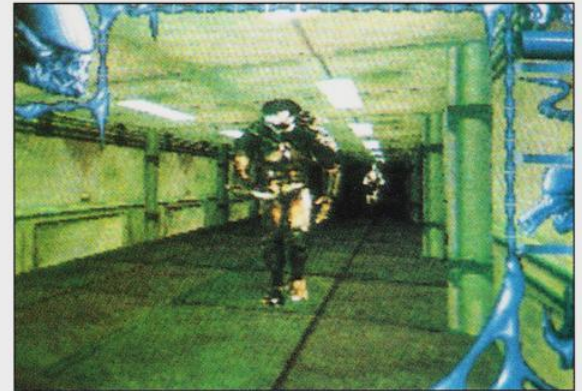
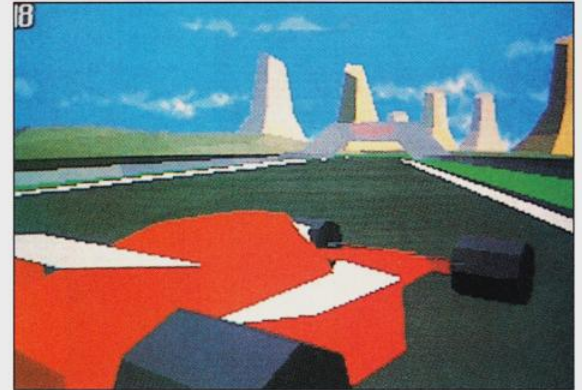
The second game (which is closer to a US release) is another *Aliens vs Predator* title, but unlike the sad SNES beat 'em up, the Jag game looks decidedly tasty. It's essentially a *Doom*-like first person, 3D shooter with seven levels full of texture-mapped rooms and corridors to explore and of course, loads of Aliens/Predators/humans to kill. You can play as one of three different characters (an Alien, Predator, or a Colonial Marine) with three different objectives so it should take quite a while to get bored of this one.

The screen shots look great, don't they? A lot of the scenery was constructed using genuine architectural models and the latex flowed

freely when they made the little alien thingies. The in-game screens use 16bit colour (that's about 65000 colours on screen) and the static screens will use true 24bit colour (over 16 million colours!). Some heavy duty data compression is going to be needed to whack it all onto a cart but it looks like it's going to be worth the effort.

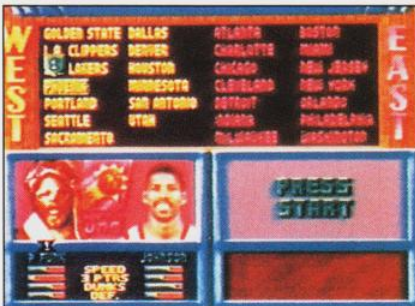
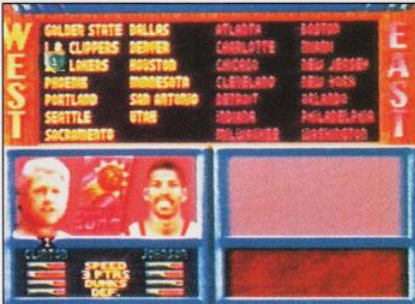


While the Jag may not be coming for a while, you've got these treats in store. The racing game is *Chequered Flag 2*. The other is *Alien vs Predator*



The Clintons Jam!

It's the Clintons! Bill's on top, and below is the REAL President, George.



Stop the Presses! It's the **secret characters** for NBA Jam! For Both versions! It all happens at the "Enter Initials" screen. We've got a complete list for the Mega Drive version (we think) and 7 confirmed SNES players. We didn't have time to try all the extra players out for the SNES but there's nothing to stop you giving it a go.

Mega Drive

Select "Yes" when you're asked if you want to enter your initials. Enter the first two letters of the character you want to play then place the cursor over the third but don't enter it! Instead, press and hold START and either A, B or C simultaneously as shown below. For example, if you want to play as Bill Clinton, enter A, R then place the cursor over K and press and hold Start and button A together. Easy, isn't it?

Here's all the players initials and the buttons to hit:

NSW Games Show

New South Wales game fans (and any other freaks who want to travel the distance) are going to be in heaven on June 24, 25 and 26 when the 1994 NSW Electronic Games Show takes place at the Hordern Pavilion. Modelled on the CES's in America and the Future shows in England, this is the first event of it's kind in Australia, and is being run by Indigo Marketing (who put on the huge *Streetfighter II* competition in Melbourne last December). This time it won't be so heavy on competitions, but they'll still be a big part of the fun, with anyone attending able to go up on stage and strut their stuff on a variety of games.

Of course, Sega and Nintendo will be there in force, and if you haven't had a go on a 3DO yet, this might be your best opportunity. With any luck there will also be an Atari Jaguar to test drive. But the biggest highlight of your day will no doubt be running into the HYPER crew and the very spunky HYPER stand. We'll be the ones in the Beavis & Butthead face masks.

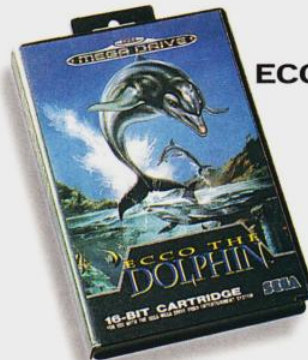
Bill Clinton: **ARK**, button A/AI
Gore: **NET**, button B/Mark Turmell:
MJT, button A/Air Dog: **AIR**, button A/Chow Chow: **CAR**, button C/DiVita: **SAL**, button C/Rivett: **RJR**, button B/George Clinton (P-Funk): **DIS**, button C/Weasel: **SAX**, button C/Warren Moon: **UW**□, button A/Kabuki: **QB**□, button A/Scruff: **ROD**, button B.

SNES

Select "Yes" and go to the "Enter Initials" screen. Enter the first two letters of the character you want to play then place the cursor over the third but don't enter it! Instead, press and hold the L button, R button, START and A or X (depending on your player).

Here's all the buttons to push:
Bill Clinton: **ARK**, button X/AI
Gore: **NET**, button A/Mark Turmell:
MJT, button A/Air Dog: **AIR**, button X/Chow Chow: **CAR**, button X/Di Vita: **SAL**, button X/Rivett: **RJR**, button X.

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Sega's Saturn **Makes an Entrance**



Sega of America used the Winter CES at Las Vegas to introduce the snazzy new Sega Saturn system to the gaming world. The machine itself didn't make an appearance - all anyone saw on Sega's giant video wall was footage of the Saturn's outer casing and games in development (including arcade perfect conversions of *Virtua Racing*, *Virtua Fighters*, and Sega's new arcade racer, *Daytona*) - but it was an impressive (and particularly reassuring) entrance nonetheless.

There's still no concrete release date, but the Saturn will almost certainly be a cartridge-based machine with an optional CD-ROM drive (that's right, just like the Atari Jaguar). Sega are aiming at a price of around 50 000 yen (that's \$600 Australian, depending on the exchange rate) for the console alone.

Will the Saturn be compatible with Mega Drive and Mega CD software? Backwards compatibility has

been Sega's way in the past and a series of extra chips in the Saturn could make it run Mega Drive/Mega CD software, but manufacturing and installing these chips would make the machine more expensive. We reckon Sega will try to keep the price as low as possible, so we'd be very surprised if they included the extra chips, which will probably disappoint some Mega Drive owners.





As for the tech specs, Saturn programmers will have 16.7 million colours to play with, with either 2048 or 1024 colours on screen at any one time. The main CPU will consist of two modified Hitachi SH2 32-bit RISC processors. There'll be a 68EC000 chip for the sound, a 24-bit DSP chip, and another 32-bit RISC chip (Hitachi SH1) to control the CD-ROM.

All this makes for one powerful console, capable of sprite scaling, rotation and deformation and custom effects like flat shading, glow shad-

ing, texture mapping and translucency. It can also display and animate around 900000 polygons per second. And if that doesn't confuse the hell out of you, nothing will.

Below: Sega's Saturn as displayed at the Las Vegas CES.

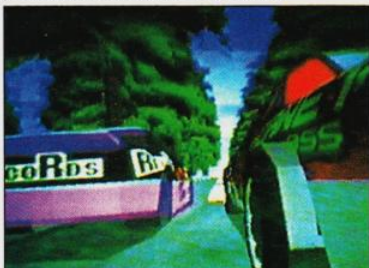


IF YOUR  IDEA OF A GOOD TIME
IS SITTING ALONE IN THE DARK,
 FIGHTING OFF EVIL FORCES
'TIL THE SUN  COMES UP 

Meanwhile over at Nintendo HQ...

The hype on "Project Reality" is still big time but industry insiders doubt the sincerity of the Nintendo/Silicon Graphics alliance. Nintendo did run some very impressive demos at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, but it turns out that these scenes were being generated by a high-end (and super high cost) Silicon Graphics Onyx workstation. Can they rip the guts out of this technology, whack it in a console and sell it for under (US) \$250 by 1995? Hmm... Despite rumours that the home version of the potentially revolutionary technology is on shaky ground, SGI executives are confident of getting the machine out at the right time (ie, some time in 1995) at the right price. And who knows, with Nintendo's money and marketing muscle, anything could happen over the next few months. We'll keep you posted.

The Project Reality will have to be pretty good to beat these sort of graphics from the Sega Saturn. Below is the game *Daytona*.



HYPERWINNERS!

Giveaways Issue 4

Beavis & Buttthead CD The winners of the B&B CD are: Melanie "Legend" Neofitou, VIC; Christopher Danvera, NSW; G. Freeman, WA; Matthew Chan, NSW; D. Zander, QLD; Jamie Smith, NSW; Rohan Kirkby, SA; Fiona Sutton, VIC; Logan Hard, WA; Jolon Larter, NSW.

Adidas The winners are; Scott Hudson from South Australia with "Attention! Does Intelligence Decline After Sega?" and Matt Foster from Tasmania who sent in a whole list. Our favourites were "Acronyms Demand Intellectual Durability and Skill", "Another Day Is Due At Sunrise" and one for our very own Andrew, "All Day I Delightfully Annoy Stuart". Ahh, how true.

Hyper 0055 Winners from Jan '94

Late Show Videos T Marellan VIC; S Komnacki ACT; J MacMurray QLD; P Wiggans ACT **Fantasy Empires** J Wilson QLD; J Olsen QLD; C Brownly

NSW; D Spelleman NSW; Mr Wilson NSW **Shampoo Planet** S Campbell NSW; D Janet WA; M Peak NSW; D Liddy SA; J Martin VIC; R Freeman WA; G Wagner SA; N Walker NSW; J Thomas VIC; L Hibberd NSW **Defy Streetwear Caps** N Fitzpatrick NSW; S Lake QLD; A McPherson NSW; A Marsh NSW; M Dalton QLD; M Noss NSW; K Smith VIC; P Truman QLD **Spaghetti Incident CDs** M Stewart SA; C Lewis SA; G Ellis NSW; J Gateskell WA; K O'Sullivan QLD; J Watkins NSW; M Darwen WA; C Moffitt NSW; N Tarlec ACT; A Easedown NSW.

Subscription Winners from Issues 1 & 2 (0001 & 0002)

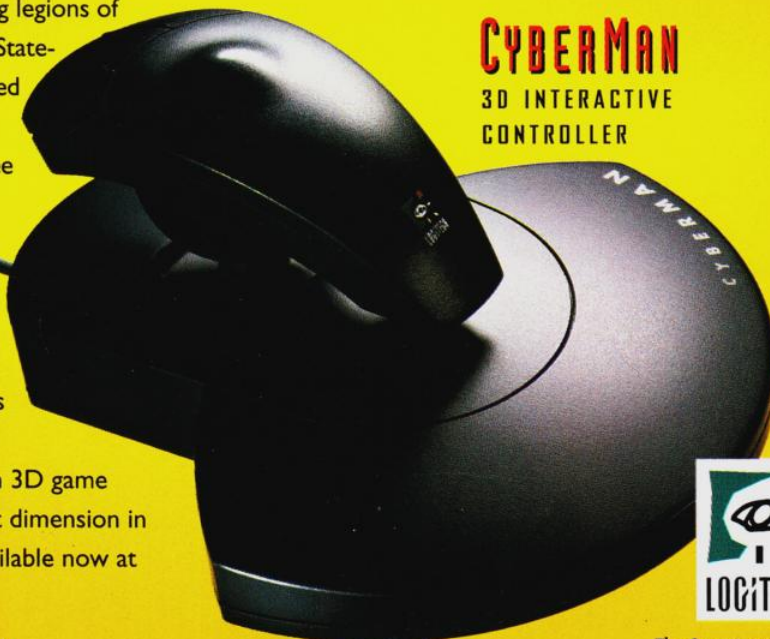
Mega Drive 2 & Mega CD Brett Pullinger NSW **Lost In Space Videos** John Davies QLD; Cameron Messer QLD; Luke Findlay VIC; Stephen Clarke QLD; Michael Van Den Eynden NSW; John Tsellos ACT; Dean Ashton QLD; Thorsten K Gehrke SA; Andrew Smith NSW; AW Curnow WA.

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Game Charts

Hyper's game charts supplied by the Gamesmen

Mega Drive

- NBA Jam
- Lethal Enforcers
- Sonic 3
- John Madden '94
- Jungle Strike
- FIFA International Soccer
- Winter Olympics
- Gunship
- Robocop vs Terminator
- F1



SNES

- NBA Jam
- Super NBA Basketball
- Winter Olympics
- Wolfenstein 3D
- Last Action Hero
- Incredible Crash Dummies
- Alien vs Predator
- Mortal Kombat
- Sensible Soccer
- John Madden '94



PC

- MS Flight Sim v5.0
- Elder Scrolls - Arena
- Mortal Kombat
- Rally Network
- Terminator 2029
- Privateer
- NHL Hockey
- Alone in the Dark 2
- Carriers at War 2
- Space Legends



Mega CD

- Ground Zero, Texas
- Microcosm
- NHL Hockey '94
- Thunderhawk
- Bill Walsh College Football



HYPER's May Chart Predictions

Hmmm, there's not a lot out there. What will Stuart choose?

- Mega Man X (SNES)
- Prince of Persia 2 (Mac)
- Pacific Strike (PC)
- Entombed (PC)
- System Shock (PC)
- Subterrania (Mega Drive)
- Bio Forge (PC)
- Streets of Rage 3 (Mega Drive)
- World Cup '94 Soccer (Mega Drive/SNES)
- Mystic Towers (PC)

Having Nightmares?

Remember all those TV ads with that guy dressed up like an idiot for *Nightmare*, the "interactive" video board game? Some of you may have even bought a copy. In fact, a lot of you probably bought a copy. *Nightmare* notched up sales of 130 000 units (plus almost 100 000 sequel games) to make it the biggest selling board game in Australian retail history. What, bigger than *Monopoly*? No!?! Yes!

Nightmare was developed locally by "A Couple 'A Cowboys", otherwise known as former *Simon Townsend's Wonder World* reporters, Brett Clements and Phillip Tanner. Brett is also memorable for his work on the rather ill-fated *Just For The Record*. They had talent, they had drive, and *Nightmare* became a world-wide success - it's been translated into

7 languages already! Who would ever have thought that such nice-looking young men would become the global tycoons that they are today?

Now *Nightmare* is coming to a video game system near you. Our good friends at Beam Software are coding the Super Nintendo version while English team, Epic, have picked up the rights for the PC CD-ROM and CD-I versions. Will this be interactive entertainment at it's finest or will it just be another silly game starring an even sillier man in too much makeup who yells at you a lot? We should know sometime after July.

This guy looks about as scary as a half-eaten sausage, doesn't he?



What's New In the Virtual World?

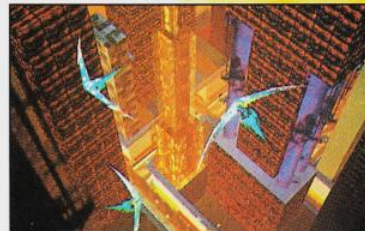
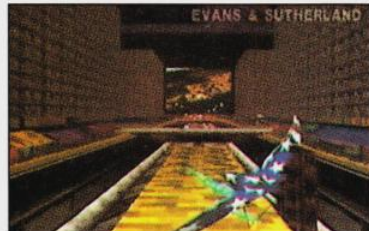
Fan Boys

We've all been told a thousand times that the future of video games lies with "Virtual Reality" - 3D environments for players to immerse themselves in, generated real time. So what's happening in the big business world of VR? Real improvements will only come with increases in processing power and specialised VR hardware. We thought we'd take a quick run through the new developments - who's doing what, and who are they doing it with?

Sega's VR headset peripheral for the Mega Drive will supposedly be the first "big step" in turning the mind-blowing potential of VR into viable, affordable, consumer electronics. Featuring a head-mounted display with stereoscopic vision, motion detectors (to move the image as you move your head) and 360 degree "Q Sound", the unit was meant to be on the streets last Christmas. Whilst the release date for the headset and games bundle has been put off (probably due to the less than enthusiastic response early demos received), Sega are still hoping to bring the whole package in for under \$200 (US) and there are at least six games in development for the system. Sega are also planning to open hundreds of "VRcades" worldwide, with some truly mind-shaking fun looking like being on offer, but unfortunately none have been confirmed in Australia as yet.

Japan's Ono-Sendai Corporation are currently working on one of the smallest and lightest VR headsets

These graphics are all from Evans and Sutherland's VR simulators. The top two are from a virtual hanglider ride and the bottom one's a US military sim.



ever and have licensed their new sensor technology (to complement a head-mounted display) to "a major video game company". Your guess is as good as ours.

Elsewhere, "location based VR" (ie, you sit in something that shakes a bit while you watch a screen) is all the go. Sega is still developing scenarios for its AS-1 machine and California's Visions of Reality Corporation are set to release their Vision Immersion Module pod and head-mounted display across America (that is, if they can find the money). Up to thirty six pods can be networked to allow "virtual pilots" to interact in the space battle to end all space battles.

Evans and Sutherland, one of the earliest VR developers (they wet their feet making high-end combat simulators for the US military), are also branching out into the entertainment field. They're currently working with Namco on 3D arcade machines and with Iwerks Entertainment on Virtual

Adventures theme park rides. The first "ride" involves rescuing the Loch Ness monster from extinction. Four pods, each holding six people, are linked together to provide an undersea experience so real it's positively wet.

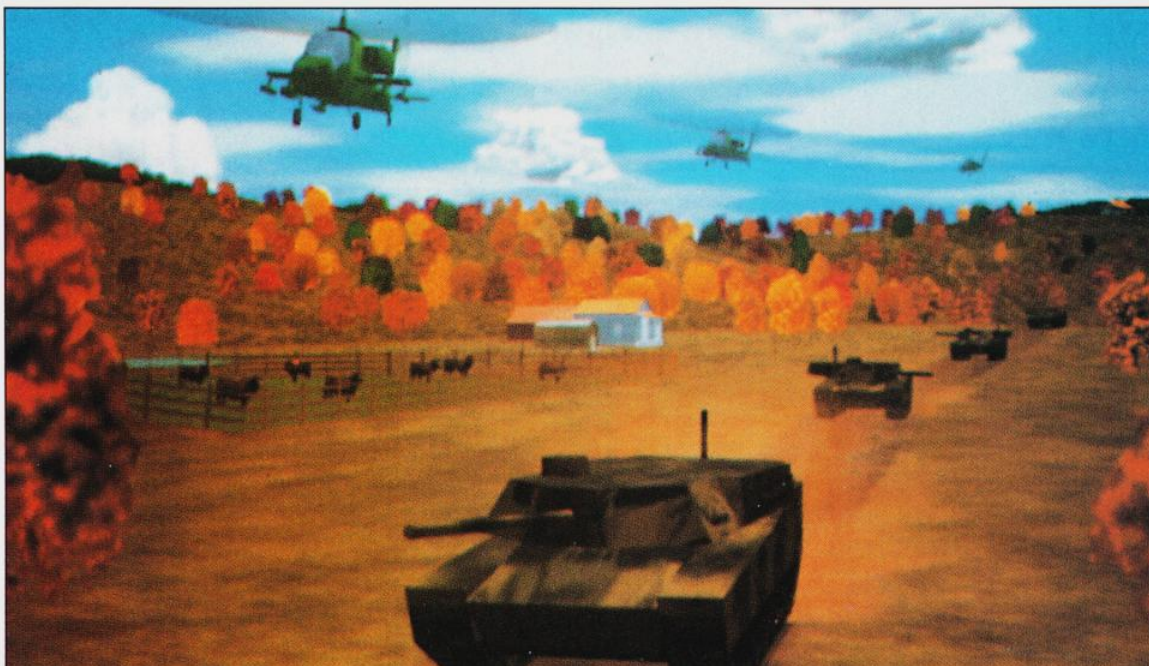
In Australia, the Virtual Reality Corporation is the exclusive distributor of the Virtuality VR system, which is the only system currently available for commercial use out here. There are currently 19 installed locations around the country, in such locations as Sydney's North Ryde RSL and Canberra's Virtual Reality Cafe. But if you've played *Dactyl Nightmare* a few times, you probably don't care about these machines, because while it is fun, the graphics are by no means "realistic". However the good news is that the next generation of machines and headsets are due on our shores in May, so we should be seeing some exciting things in cyberspace real soon.

A small but worthy news piece this issue goes to the persistent (some might even say plucky) **Michael**

Napieralski, who puts together a Mega Drive fanzine (you know the ones - no typesetting to speak of, self-indulgent copy, but not without a certain painful enthusiasm) by the name of *Neotech*. Of course, it's nothing like the high gloss, high content, totally professional publication that is *HYPER*, but fanzines like *Neotech* do serve a purpose (mainly as an outlet for sociopathic FREAKS!) and can prove infinitely more accessible than newsstand mags.

The second issue (for all we know, Michael's probably into issue #3 by now) contains reviews of *SF2*, *Gunstar Heroes*, *Shining Force* and *Aerobiz*, and includes a column full of letters, all of which were written by Michael himself. Now we can't let this happen again, can we? Write to *Neotech* at **15 Sycamore Court, Woodridge, Brisbane, 4114** and get yourself a copy (the cover price is \$1.00). Then you can write to Michael and hopefully, he'll stop writing to us.

By the way, if you're producing a fanzine and you want a bit of coverage, send it in to *HYPER* and be prepared to be bagged mercilessly. We won't be making fanzines a regular feature or anything, but we'll do what we can to keep you all happy and contented.



NEOTECH.

HUGE STREET FIGHTER 2 REVIEW INSIDE

WITH THIS ISSUE

- STREET FIGHTER 2 BURNS ON TO THE MEGADRIIVE. GREATEST GAME EVER?
- WE REVIEW SHINING FORCE GUNSTAR HEROES FIFA SOCCER JOHN MADDEN 94 FOOTBALL NOBREAT 2
- PLUS THE LETTER PAGE SUPER STREET FIGHTER AND OUR JOHN MADDEN COMPETITION

DO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR NEOTECH ? SEE INSIDE.

HYPER» 11

FREEBIES

Sam & Max

For those of you who have been hiding under a large slab of concrete, Sam & Max are the furry stars of one of the best adventure games ever released, *Sam & Max Hit the Road*. The LucasArts PC masterpiece earned a 93% from this very magazine ("arguably the best adventure game on the market" is what we thought), and was voted the "Adventure Game of 1993" by the American magazine, Computer Game Review.

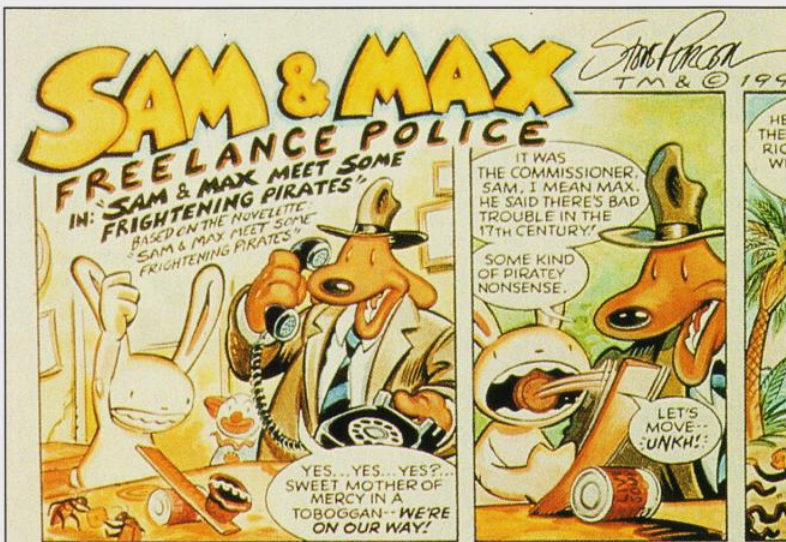
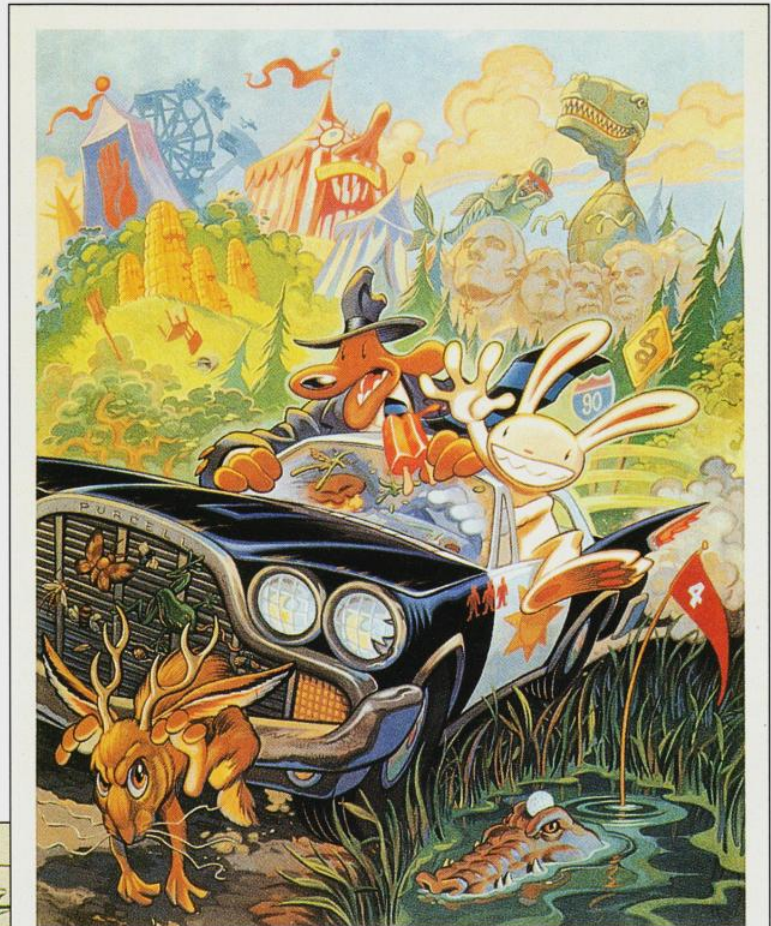
To celebrate the release of the full talkie CD-ROM version of the game, the wonderful people at Metro Games have given us 3 huge framed pictures (2 comic strips and 1 print) to give away, plus 5 copies of the CD-ROM. Now these are truly special prizes, as the comic strips had been created exclusively for HYPER and there are only 500 of the prints in the world. And all three have been signed by Sam & Max's creator, Steve Purcell! Woah!

Collector's items! So you'll have to do pretty well to stop the HYPER crew from decorating their bedroom walls.

To win this most excellent of prizes, you have to get your pencils and paper out and draw Sam & Max in the most outrageous (yet tasteful) situation possible. You can draw a whole strip with dialogue, or just one frame - it's up to you, and while looking good is important (isn't it always?), it probably better to be funny and clever.

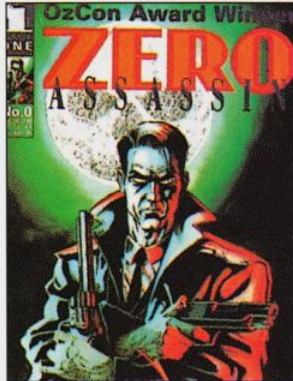
There will be 3 first prizes, and these lucky buggers will win a print and a *Sam & Max* CD, and 2 runners-up who will get a copy of the CD-ROM. So get drawing (you have until the first week of June) and send your artworks to:

**SAM & MAX COMP / HYPER / PO
BOX 634 / STRAWBERRY HILLS /
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Zero Assassin

The freebies just don't stop, do they? Our good friends at Issue One comics have put together a little pack especially for HYPER readers. Zero Assassin (an OzCon award winner) is currently their number one hero, and we've got Zero comics, posters and T-shirts to give away to five lucky people who get drawn out of the bag. All you need do is send



Sonic Overload!

an envelope with your name and details on the back, along with the answer to this question: Who drew HYPER's first two covers? (Hint: you're going to win their comic pack if you get it right). Send your entry to: **ISSUE ONE COMIC COMP / HYPER / PO BOX 634 / STRAWBERRY HILLS NSW 2012.**

Love him or hate him, Sonic The Hedgehog is one of the biggest stars of the video game universe. And if you love him, we're about to put you in Hedgehog Heaven. Thanks to Sega-Ozisoft, we've got a super-spiky Sonic Pack that one of your lucky sods can win. The pack includes the original *Sonic The Hedgehog* game, *Sonic 2*, *Sonic 3* and *Sonic Spinball* (all for Mega Drive), plus a groovy Sonic 3 enamel pin. That's four Sonic games, worth over \$400!

What do you have to do to win this fabulously blue prize? First, get an envelope, address it to **SONIC PACK / HYPER / PO BOX 634 / STRAWBERRY HILLS / NSW,**

2012, put your name and address on the back and tell us (again, on the back of the envelope), in 20 words or less, why hedgehogs are useful to the community at large. Now put a stamp on the envelope, pop it in the post, and hope that we pick your answer as the funniest/most informative of all the entries. Simple really.



GAMES GAMES

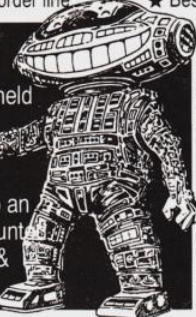
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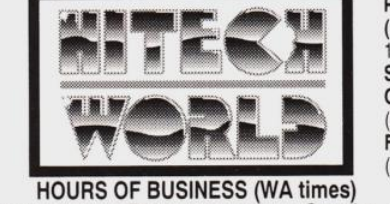
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Music Video



Moves Into An Interactive Future

earnt

There was a time, believe it or not, when music stood on its own, and there were no video clips to go with songs. These days it seems, a good video can sell just as many records as a good song. Rock videos came to Australia on a large scale back in the 1970s when overseas record labels were faced with a problem: how to promote acts in Australia which would never make it over to tour or play 'live' on TV? The solution was to get them to mime while someone pointed a camera. The idea quickly caught on. In the '90s hours and hours of television are devoted to music clips. MARCUS LEADLEY talks music video and new technology with some young Australian clip makers and wonders where the image is moving in an attempt to keep our interest.



» Kriv Stenders

Kriv Stenders studied cinematography at film school and started making clips in 1989. One of the first clips he worked on was The Go Between's Streets Of Your Town . Among his most recent work you'll find clips for Rat Cat and Single Gun Theory.

HYPER What do you think makes pop video exciting?

KRIV Music videos are one of the things which probably got you into music in the first place - they're meant to provoke and make you feel excited. Music video is exciting when it isn't just about promoting a song but when it's an expression of that music and of the art of clip making as well. Another exciting thing about the medium is the idea of constantly turning it on its head. I'm more interested in that kind of work.

HYPER Are there any images you like to avoid?

KRIV Record companies still want to see the band playing - especially shots of the guitar. For a clip maker this is just so dated and it often looks totally unreal anyway. I remember doing a 1927 clip in a field outside Broken Hill - there's a guy with a keyboard and we're trying to work out where we should put the power cord...

HYPER So does this mean performance clips are a real no no?

KRIV Not at all. If you shoot a band playing it doesn't necessarily have to look fantastic - what you're trying to capture is personality. In this case the clip maker has to take on some of the responsibility of being a stylist.

HYPER Do you think people are as interested in clips as they used to be?

KRIV Back in the '80s magazines would always mention the new video when they talked about a band, but no one does any more. We've been saturated with MTV style clips. Some change has to come to take us out of this phase.

HYPER What do you imagine will happen with clips in the future?

KRIV In the short term they will be refined - new technology will influence them. Something that might happen long term is that you'll buy the latest 'album' and it will be piped directly into your home, video and all. The fact that technology's changing means the medium itself will change.

Another interesting development

is the way music and images come together with CD-ROMs. I know I'd go out and buy a Peter Gabriel CD if it had all the videos on it; it would be like owning a beautiful book. I like the idea of a whole package. Interactive video will be good because everyone will have the option of cutting their own images into an existing structure.



The clip to Single Gun Theory's *I am What I See* by Kriv Stenders.

» Tim Gruchy

Tim Gruchy is quick to point out that he's not directly involved with pop video, however as a multimedia artist he's been working with sound and images for more than 15 years. Many people will know him best for the visual edge he's contributed to many large events, like Sydney's legendary RAT parties. As part of the group Vision Four-5 he mixes electronic music, computer graphics and video live on stage.

HYPER Am I to take it that you're not a fan of the traditional pop clip?

TIM I did make some black and white clips when I was young but the novelty soon wore off. I've always worked with sound and image together. What interests me is applying the ideas of music theory to visuals. In a pop video you might, for example, edit so the frames change with the beat - I'll work in polyrhythms and more sophisticated relationships to the audio. However, because of the difference in nature between audio and video I try not to be too literal.

I don't see single screen video as all that interesting either - I'm more interested in creating interactive multimedia environments like the one I've installed in Adelaide for the festival.

HYPER Can you describe this environment?

TIM The room is bathed in an infra red light. When you walk in a camera picks you up and a computer generated image of your silhouette is projected on to a screen. A separate

screen jumps to a set of menus and a big question mark - when you touch it you're told that when your image on the screen collides with computer generated icons things happen.

There's are about 20 scenes to navigate through. When your screen image collides with an icon you go to that scene. In each there are a

number of layers. The more you play with the system the more you're likely to find. I've set it up so there are layers which only a very few people will ever get to.

The second part of the work contains a whole lot of Vision Four-5 material and you can recreate the music through body movements.

The environment is very playful and popular. There's a very strong sense of psychological emersion so people let go of inhibition very quickly and become quite happy to jump around waving their arms. That's an aspect of this kind of interactive technology I really like.

HYPER How is your live work with Vision Four-5 different?

TIM We try to create a genuinely live experience - not just present pre-produced material. We also like to involve the audience; to have people as passive observers is no longer acceptable. If we had complete control of a gig we might have two Mandala systems - one out front so the audience could control things as well.

HYPER What is Mandala?

MANDALA: It runs on an Amiga computer. It takes incoming video signals, digitises them in real time and puts the image into a computer graphic scene. Collisions with icons trigger events. An event can be anything from triggering a sound to closing a door.

Unfortunately you need specific hardware to run Mandala - it will cost you about \$20,000. Other systems will come along but right now it's really difficult for people who want to get into this area.

HYPER How malleable is this technology?

TIM It depends on the interface. A whole new generation of games machines and entertainment centres are coming along and with them a whole new range of interfaces. Sega have already got a system called the Activator - a solid ring you put on the floor and stand inside of. It senses your body movements and a character on the screen moves accordingly.

HYPER Do you think that pop, video and games are all blurring together at the edges?

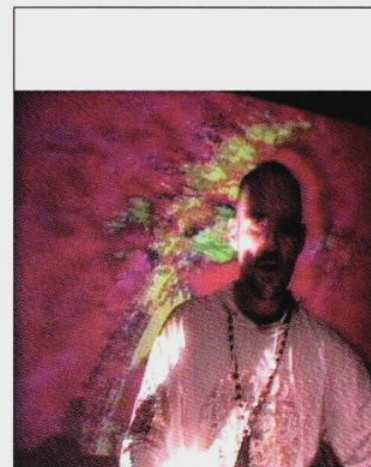
TIM Look at it this way - the games industry in America is now getting bigger than the movie business. As someone who's consumed a lot of popular music I'm aware that we've reached saturation point. All the things we've taken for granted for a long time are no longer straight forward. I think the breakdown of popular music as the dominant cultural form is very interesting. It means the possibilities for the future are greater.

HYPER Do you really think interactive technology will have the impact people are predicting?

TIM We're beginning to see CD-based video take over from VHS. Soon we won't be tied to linear tracking any more - you will be able to jump around quickly. That makes the medium perfect for games but it also means the arrival of interactive music - CD-ROMs like Peter Gabriel's *Explora*. We're seeing the first generation, so it's rather basic but it suggests great things to come.

It's a bit too early to say what's round the corner because it's only as the medium grows that people will create the new ideas. We're not far enough down the track to guess what the possibilities are.

Tim Gruchy gets interactive with Vision Four 5.



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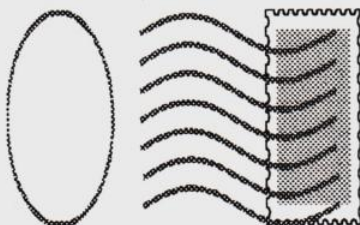
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Died Pretty's Ron Peno looking glamorous in Marcelle's stunning clip.

» Marcelle

Marcelle Lunam is one of Australia's best know clip directors. Originally from New Zealand, she's had a remarkable career so far - it's led her from textiles, through TV animation to a record company art department and now to a clip maker. Marcelle not only directs clips but also paints her sets and makes props. Her first clips were for Sydney band *The Clouds* and more recent work includes *Died Pretty*, *Cleopatra Wong* and *Caligula*.

HYPER Where do you get your ideas from?

MARCELLE If I like the song it's generally easier to come up with ideas but I can end up tearing my hair out. Sometimes they come when I'm asleep - I'm interested in dream imagery and what you can create with visual tension.

Some ideas are very time specific. I was going through a bit of an animal phase when I did the *Tears of A Clown* clip for *Caligula*. To me elephants are incredibly majestic - they have a lot of pride and intelligence. People also see them as being sad. The music was kinda heavy so I wanted a way of visually expressing weight. I went to talk to an elephant trainer about their personalities. Initially I had no idea of how we were going to use them - I actually thought the whole thing might look a bit silly.

HYPER That clip has a particular 'look' to it - how did you achieve the dream like quality?

MARCELLE Well for a start we laid tracks in a reserve and I got the camera right down with a wide angle lens - so we could shoot just the band, the animals and sky. I also had the idea of using a special rotating filter made from two

sheets of optical perspex with glycerine injected between them. This was mounted against the front of the camera and had a motor so I could spin it both forward and reverse. I lit the band with a purple back light and an orange one from the side. As the filter moved it kinda painted the image out of focus. The filter was constantly moving so you never got the sensation that the glycerine was dribbling in straight lines - so you're not aware of how the effect's achieved. I also speeded the track up, got the band to mime fast and then slowed the film down - the image is in sync but dreamy.

HYPER So technology plays an important part in your work?

MARCELLE Everything is a tool as far as I'm concerned - it's the ideas I'm more interested in. I'll happily use the latest technology but people forget that you can do fabulous in-camera effects.

I still prefer to shoot on film - video's not as organic and there's not as much control. I do a lot of things like double exposure and I'll explore something like, say, hanging miniatures - a very old film technique. You have a set you'd like to be 30 foot high but can't - so you make it 15 foot high and in front of the camera you put a perfect scale model, hung, resting in the frame just above the set - it appears to be a continuation of the set. You can corrupt ideas like this and become quite inventive with their application.

For the *Died Pretty* track *Harness Up* I used some special wildlife lenses.

They're put together in a tube which enables you to have a caterpillar and the harbour bridge all in one frame and in focus at the same

time. For the clip I shot through a fish tank - so the fish swam through the frame with Ron sitting beyond the tank and the band members behind him. I wanted it to look quite strange - at one point the crayfish in the tank are so perfectly in focus it appears they were added during post production - not so.

HYPER How do you imagine clip making will change in the future?

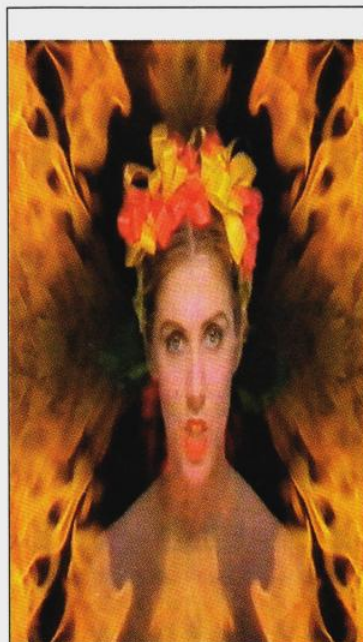
MARCELLE There will probably be albums released with all the respective video as well, especially if video CD takes off. Directors may be faced with doing a 6 - 12 video package. Technology is moving in such a way that people will soon be able to edit on computer at home.

» Lisa Stonham

Lisa Stonham is a computer graphic artist and one of a small band of people who work with the editing computers known as *Harry and Henry*. Without these two machines we wouldn't see many of the eye catching visual effects which define video in the '90s.

HYPER Can you explain what *Harry and Henry* can do?

LISA With *Harry* all the information is digital and you can pick it up and move it around. With *Henry* you can get five layers of video information and crush it all together. These com-



puters can hold 15 minutes of digital image. *Henry* was used for the *Single Gun Theory* clips - and more people will have access to this technology in the future as it gets cheaper.

People usually work with a combination of 2D and 3D. You go and shoot some live action, put it into the computer and work on it. Then you send it to a 3D program to get some additional enhancement.

In 3D you're generally building objects inside the computer. Morphing is a cross over where you shoot something in 2D and then manipulate it in the computer. It's still a 2D effect - like an XY grid and you're basically taking the coordinates of one shape and making them go to somewhere else.

HYPER Effects can look dated if they get over used, how do you get round this?

LISA One of the problems is that computers have a specific look - you can tell what was used. People are now using three or four different systems in conjunction to try and create new looks.

HYPER Do you think pop video is having a hard time keeping fresh?

LISA Sure, but the problem doesn't just apply to clips. Culturally we're in a real stalemate at the moment. The film industry's making sequels and turning sixties TV programs into films. Radio's totally nostalgic. We're about to start rehashing the 80s already and it's only the 90s. Something's going to bust when people realise we're reviving '93 and it's only '95. We're going to need original new ideas eventually.

HYPER Do you think technology will come to the rescue?

LISA Actually there's very little new technology - we're just refining what we have. There's digital rather than analogue but it doesn't do anything new. How long have we had TV for? People are far more important than technology. We now have a generation of clip makers coming along who've been watching clips all their lives. That's bound to have an effect.

Cheaper technology will make a big difference because access is really important. You get good photocopy art everywhere now because kids can get into the medium. Video 8 is going to do a similar thing for visuals.

Lisa did the *Harry* work for *Single Gun Theory's I am What I See*.

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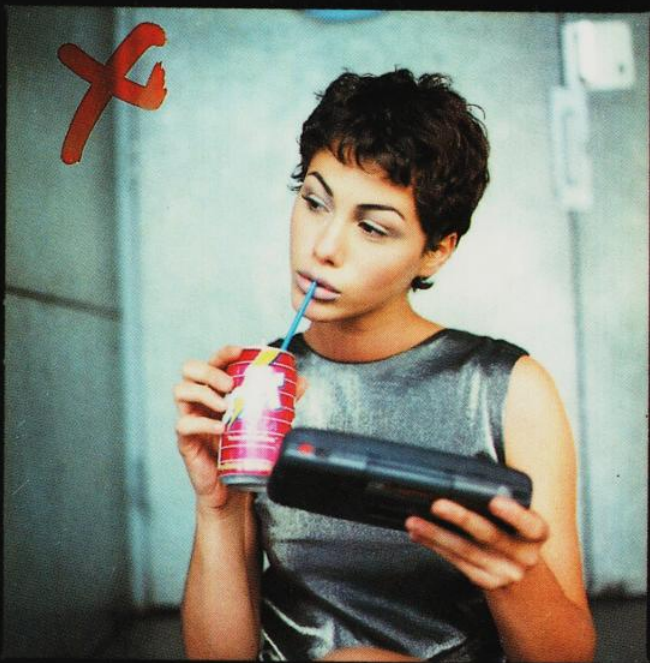
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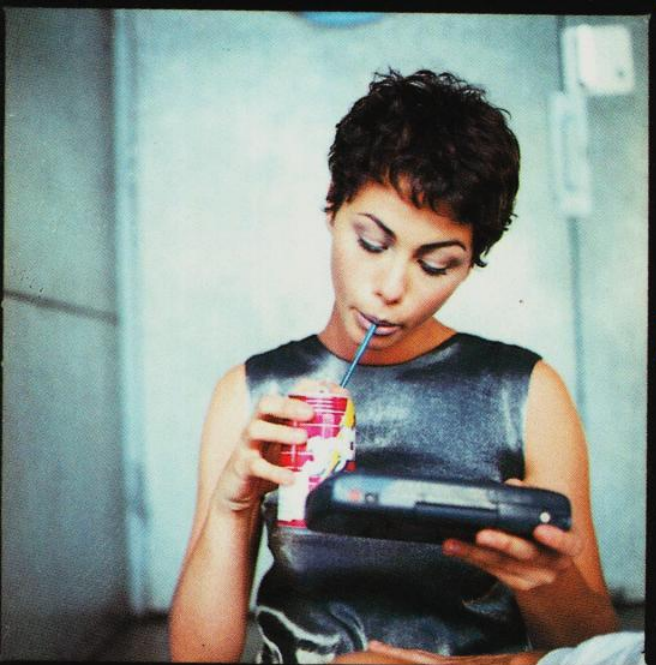
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Make Up Glen Jackson
Co-Ordination Sharna McKenzie
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AnotherWorld2

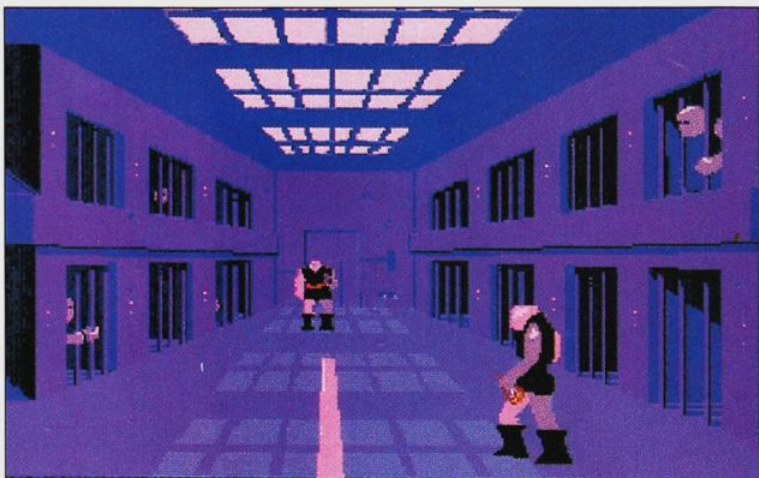
Another World was a big hit on all gaming formats but, and we're being brutally honest here, it was never really *that* good, was it? Sure the intro was superb, but it was all downhill from there: the playability (thanks to the sluggish controls) needed work and once you'd sussed out all the puzzles, you could romp through the game in about fifteen minutes. It was a commendable effort but it certainly left a lot of room for improvement.

And with a bit of luck, that's exactly what we'll get with *Another World 2* (does that make it *Another Another World?*). Both graphics and the basic gameplay are looking very similar to the original game, but this time around, instead of playing as nerdy scientist Lester, you control his blobby alien friend, fondly known around the HYPER office as "Maxirooba".

Another World 2 promises more puzzles and a few more moves to

MEGA CD
Available: July
Category: Action/Puzzler
Players: 1
Publisher: Virgin

master and they've even included the original cart game on the CD to keep you happy. Mega Drive and Super Nintendo conversions can't be too far off either and, as always, as soon as we play it, we'll tell you all about it.



Sub-Terrania

MEGA DRIVE
Available: May
Category: Shoot and Rescue
Players: 1
Publisher: Sega

Sub-Terrania has had a fairly low-key build up (have you ever heard of it?) but it's supposedly shaping up as a bit of a rip snorter (yes, we are all children of the 70's here at HYPER) on the gameplay front.

The concept (which is heavily reminiscent of the ancient but venerable *Thrust* on the C64) is simple: you've got a spaceship and you fly it around a series of levels blasting alien scum and rescuing captive allies. But rescuing your buddies is never a simple matter of shooting big holes in things and picking up the survivors, oh no - it's all about puzzle solving. Which will probably come as a welcome relief to all that blasting.

If the gameplay is as good as we suspect it might be and the graphics and sound are up to scratch too, we could all be in for a very pleasant lit-

tle game indeed. Will our suspicions prove correct or will *Sub-Terrania* be just another crappy space shooter? These mysteries and more will be answered in the very next issue.



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ShockWave

3DO

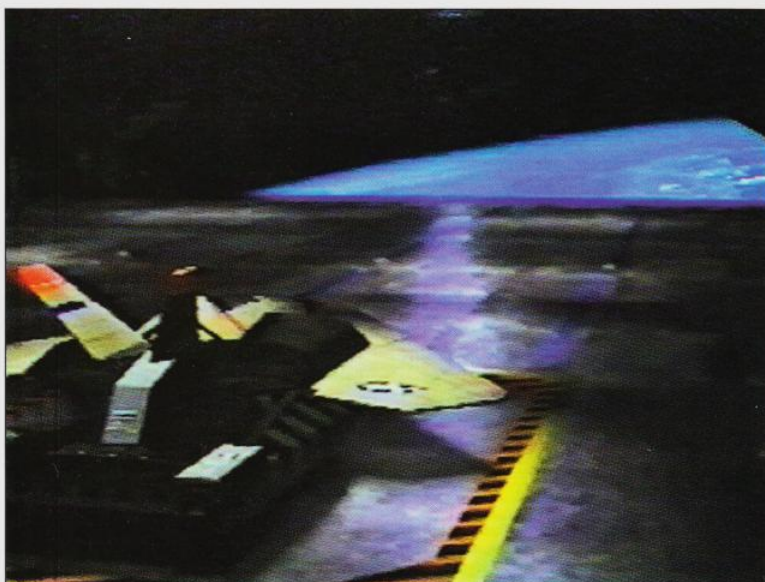
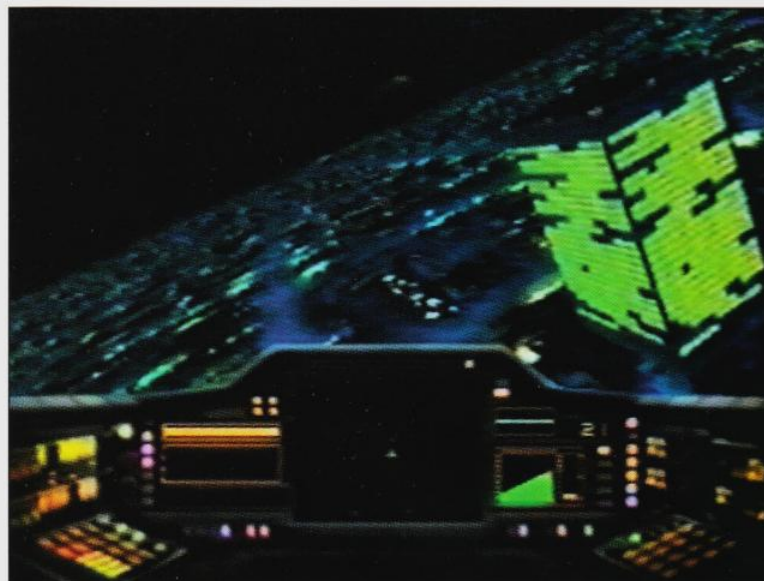
Available: TBA
 Category: Shoot 'em Up
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Electronic Arts

The latest demo we've seen of *Shock Wave* looks very, very impressive. The intro is amazing - crystal clear, full screen, Full Motion Video - and, surprisingly, the in-game action looks like it's going to be pretty hot too. The sound is missing, and there's still a few things to be added, but the texture-mapped, photo-realistic landscapes are amazing. If *Shock Wave* has the gameplay to match its presentation, then it could well be a very tasty game indeed.

One thing it's not going to win any awards for is plot development. It's your standard aliens-invading-earth-with-only-you-to-stop-them routine. But at least the plot is revealed in true Hollywood cinematic style. After the intro, news bulletins and video mission briefings

keep you up to date on all the aliens' moves.

As for the gameplay, it looks like it's going to play pretty much like the Mega CD's *Thunderhawk*. You fly around the various landscapes (with full freedom of movement) trying to find things to shoot and destroy. You can even go into full 360 degree rolls if you're a hot-shot. But will it play well enough to get the HYPER Big Rubber Stamp of Approval? All will be revealed as soon as we get it.



The Lawnmower Man

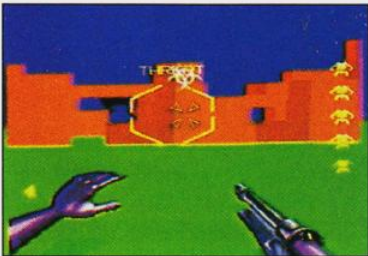
SNES/MD/MEGA CD

Available: September
Category: Action
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Tengen

The movie was a big pile of poo, so why should the game be any different? Well it probably won't be, but we should wait and see before jumping to any hasty conclusions (that's got us into trouble in the past). Actually the movie was very good in the computer animation/virtual reality sections, and this is also the hope for the game. In general it's just a side-scrolling shooter, but it's also interspersed with "virtual"

levels which contain some mad flying scenes (although nothing near the movie's standard). You are in your Cyber Suit and fly and shoot through war zones and trippy backgrounds shooting enemies ala *Microcosm*.

The Mega CD version does look a bit different and apart from the action flying bits, there are lots of puzzles and strategy sections. It will have the obligatory digitised bits from the film, and using the power of the CD it will try and recreate cyberspace at a far more realistic level than the SNES and Mega Drive. Whether it succeeds or not is another question.



Wing Commander 2

PC owners are probably wondering what all the fuss is about over this one. They've all fiddled with *Wing Commander II* by now. Mega Drive owners are probably wondering what the hell happened to *Wing Commander I*. Don't stress yourself so. All you need to know is that the *Wing Commander* series is truly wonderful and you'll be able to experience the joys of being a computer nerd space ace very soon.

Vengeance of the Kilrathi continues the saga of the Terran Confederation's war with the ruthless Kilrathi Empire. As a recently disgraced Terran pilot (just what were you doing in that broom closet?), you discover a traitor amongst your ranks. If you can uncover the traitor and scorch a few Kilrathi fighters, you might just re-gain a bit of self respect. You could even rescue the Confederation and face the heir to the Kilrathi throne.

Wing Commander games are all about thrilling space combat and the Mega Drive version will be no excep-

Vengeance of the Kilrathi

MEGA DRIVE

Available: July
Category: Space Blaster
Players: 1
Publisher: Origin

tion. With forty seven missions, five different starfighters with silly names, elaborate storylines, dogfights galore, and talented wingmen to give you a hand (so *that's* what went on in the broom closet!), *Vengeance of the Kilrathi* promises to be more fun than you could possibly imagine - that is, if you're not very imaginative.



Theme Park

PC/3DO

Available: June
Category: Simulation
Players: 1-8
Publisher: Bullfrog

Bullfrog don't make simple games. Great games, yes, but simple games, no. The sheer depth of classics like *Populous* and *Syndicate* is unbeatable. Now they're aiming at recreating every detail of the business/management world, with their latest sim, *Theme Park*, in which you build and manage your very own theme park and compete for profit with 40 other parks around the globe.

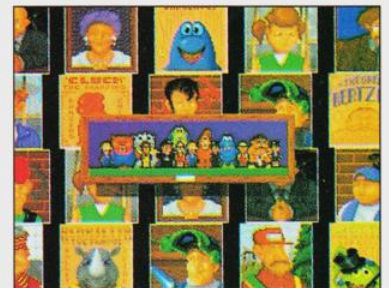
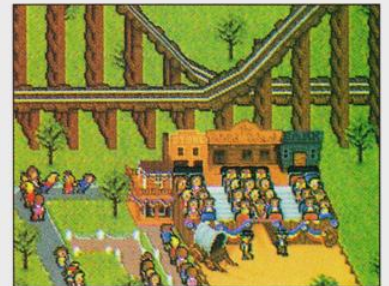
Like *Populous*, it's the level of detail that will really astound you, but a simple icon based interface makes the game accessible to all but the thickest of morons. You start with an empty field, then you pick an icon and start building. And if you build it, they will come - not dead baseball players, but thousands of little visitors to your park, each one bristling with high-end Artificial Intelligence.

Each visitor has a distinct, individual personality. Each character's traits take up about 15 lines of game code. They can all get hungry, thirsty, happy, or bored witless, so it's up to you to keep them entertained if you want to keep the money flowing in.

The graphics are looking rather nice and the sound effects (sampled

from real theme parks) will all be event driven. For example, the little visitors will scream in fear as the rollercoaster turns them upside down and kids will cry if they're unhappy. The programmers are even hoping to include a sound feature which would allow you to place a microphone on anyone in the park to drop in on their conversations. Now *that's* detail.

Theme Park should be released on PC in June, with PC CD and 3DO versions to follow.



BioForge

PC

Available: May
Category: Interactive Movie
Players: 1
Publisher: Origin

Origin have always been big on games with complex and involving storylines - take the *Ultima* and *Wing Commander* series as examples - and now they are one of the leading computer game companies trying to pioneer true interactive movies. But we've been conned before by the description of interactive movie, so why should we believe that Origin will produce anything different? Well for a start, they have clearly stated what they believe an interactive movie should be and it sounds pretty spot on. Here is Origin's Interactive Movie Manifesto for your edification:

1. An Interactive Movie employs the conventions of film to tell a story, including the use of synthetic or video-based actors, cinematic camera and editing techniques, dynamic action-sensitive musical scores, and digitised speech and sound effects.

2. In an Interactive Movie, the evolution of the story - including the tempo with which it unfolds - is directed by the game designer, sweeping the player along with it.

3. Interactive Movies strive to deliver a seamless integration of the passive and interactive portions of the game, and require a high degree of player interaction to advance the story.

4. An Interactive Movie totally

immerses the player in the story and provides an emotional context for the gameplay.

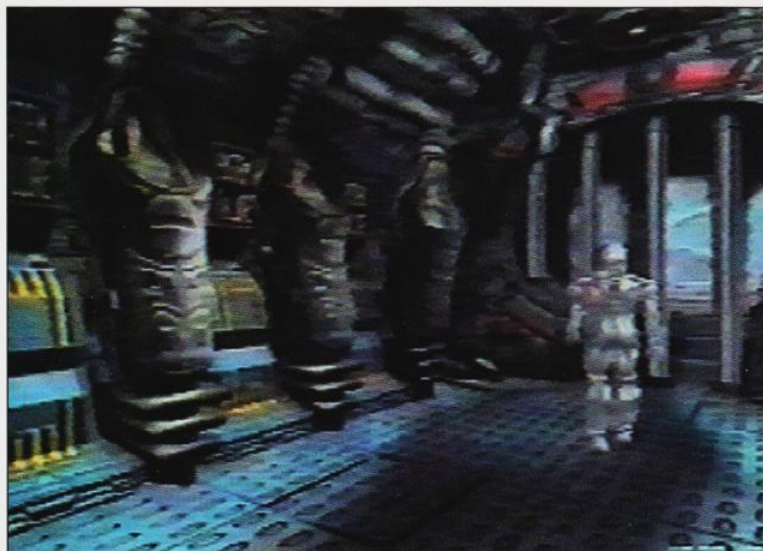
According to Origin, the sci-fi adventure *BioForge* contains all these elements and will lead the new genre "into the next century". And from what we've seen of the game in action (although we haven't interacted with it yet), they might just be right.

As the main character, Lex, you awake from an operation to discover your mind has been erased and your body is half-machine. Only the vague realisation that something is not as it should be makes you take control of your destiny. Breaking free of your security cell, you will journey through a laboratory, the ruins of an alien city and finally to a fateful launch into outer space.

You have total control over Lex's

actions, such as walking, running, fighting and falling, and as he moves the "camera angles" will switch automatically. The 3D world he inhabits looks painfully detailed and the 4-channel digital sound effects are apparently cued by distance, so you will hear more than one character's footsteps grow louder as they approach the "camera".

So, interactive movie or not, this looks like being an outrageously good adventure. Watch out for it soon.



StuntRaceFX

SNES

Available: TBA
Category: Race 'em Up
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Argonaut Software

Remember all the hype about *FX Trax*? Well, now it's been renamed *Stunt Racer FX* and the hype has reached fever pitch. It's only the second SNES game to use the Super FX chip (the first was *Starwing*) and it's being developed by Argonaut Software (the company responsible not only for *Starwing*, but for the SFX chip itself).

As you can no doubt tell from the screen shots, it's a polygon-based car racing game. What the shots can't show you is how quickly and smoothly all those polygons move and we can't tell you how quickly and smoothly they move either, because we haven't seen it. Of course, we could make it all up, but we're honest to a fault. Anyway, the general idea is that it's meant to be both smooth and fast.

Stunt Racer FX will certainly move a lot faster than *Starwing* because it uses the all new, all singing, all dancing version of the SFX chip, the creatively named SFX2, which supposedly doubles the speed and power of the original. The SFX2 chip is based on the latest RISC based technology and it allows the programmers to enhance overall graphical definition as well as speed. Sounds like a nifty little chip, doesn't it?

There's four different play modes, all based around the word "Trax" (Speed Trax, Stunt Trax, Battle Trax, and Free Trax), a choice of cars, and there's a simultaneous two-player mode too. Argonaut are in the middle of tweaking the little buggler to perfection as we speak, but will it be as good as Sega's *Virtua Racing*? We'll tell you as soon as we get our hands on a copy.



TIEFighter

System Shock

PC

Available: May
Category: Action/RPG
Players: 1
Publisher: Origin

System Shock is another one of those first-person, 3D, super-smooth scrolling blasters that have become so popular of late. You know the ones - *Doom*, *Terminator Rampage* and the like. But (and this is, as Sir Mix-a-lot would say, a big, juicy but) there's more to it than frantic arcade action. According to Origin, *System Shock*, with its real-world physics and involving storyline, is a true "thinking person's" game.

That involving storyline goes something like this... You've been in a "healing coma" on board the space station Citadel. You wake, only to find yourself in the aftermath of a mutiny. SHODAN, the station's central computer, has taken over the ship. Your companions have been mutated beyond belief and they're not real happy about it.

Of course, you need to take out SHODAN to save humanity. But how? Roaming around you'll find lots of hardware to graft onto your power suit - weapons galore, infrared vision, laser-targeting, plasma shields and the like - and with your neural implant you can jack in to cyberspace to steal info and combat cyber-creatures.

But the best thing about *System Shock* promises to be the degree of movement you get out of the first-person perspective. You can lean around corners, jump, look up and down, climb ledges, crawl through air shafts, float (in zero gravity) and even fly (with rocket boots). All in all, it's looking very promising indeed.

PC

Available: April
Category: Space Action
Players: 1
Publisher: LucasArts

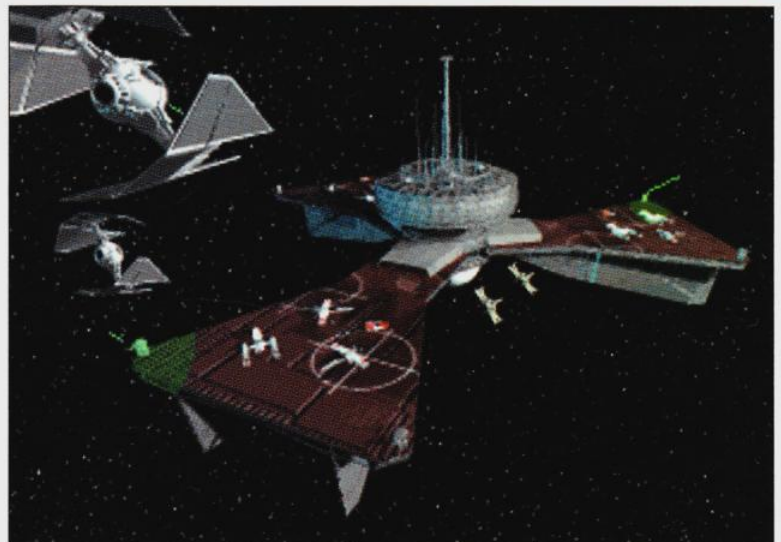
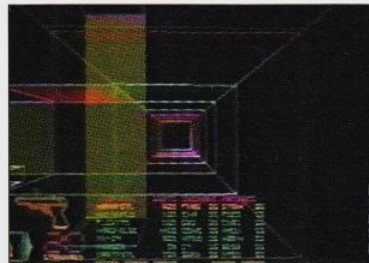
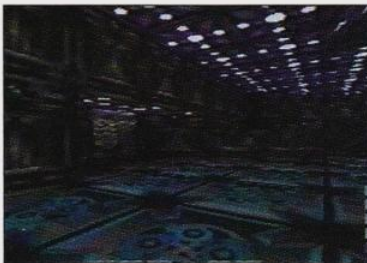
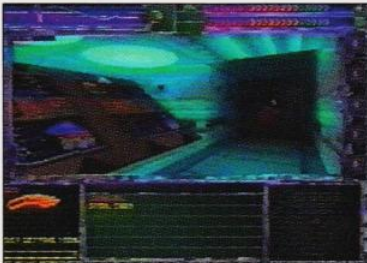
This is the one all you *X-Wing* freaks have been waiting for! Following the mission disks and the amazing *Rebel Assault* CD, the long-awaited sequel to the best-selling *X-Wing* is now hitting the shelves. And for those that don't already know, *TIE Fighter* positions you on the Dark Side as a pilot for the Empire. For the first time ever, you will be putting your life on the line for Darth Vader and the Emperor Palpatine in an attempt to bring law and order to the galaxy and crush the annoying rebel insurgency.

Like *X-Wing*, *TIE Fighter* will allow you to hone your skills in training courses and historical campaigns before taking on the real missions, but this time there is more non-linearity in the structure of the missions and greater strategic insight as to what you're actually doing. You can question briefing officers and access on-board computers to gain clues and suggestions on how best to complete each mission.

TIE Fighter begins just as the Rebels are evacuating their base on

the ice planet Hoth (around the time of *The Empire Strikes Back*), and your missions will be led by the Empire's top commanders such as asthma victim Darth and Vice Admiral Thrawn. In the beginning you will have access to four Imperial starfighters - the TIE fighter, TIE bomber, TIE interceptor and the Assault Gunboat. Later on, as the plot deepens, you will have access to the TIE Advanced starfighter, personally designed by old helmet head, and an even more powerful but mysterious TIE craft.

With three levels of difficulty, improved graphics (like Gourand shading to enhance the realism of the ships), great MUSE sound and the superlative cut scenes that we've come to know and love, *TIE Fighter* looks like putting a huge smile on the face of *Star Wars* fans everywhere. Look for it at the top of the game charts very soon.



Entombed

Ahh, a home made game! Chaos Concepts is a new Australian entertainment software company based in Sydney. *Entombed* is their first big release and just from the graphics it looks good enough to take on the best. It boasts a 640 x 480 hi-res game interface, some stunning ray traced graphics, digital audio and five detailed levels, the first of which will be released as shareware, so start searching the BBS' now.

Entombed takes the form of a Puzzle Adventure where you play the role of an archaeologist who becomes

PC/PC-CD ROM
Available: April/May
Category: Puzzle/Adventure
Players: 1
Publisher: Chaos Concepts

trapped in an ancient tomb. You must navigate your way through deadly traps, intricate puzzles and involved mazes, as you try to escape from the harsh prison.

Deciphering information from the hieroglyphic inscriptions, you will discover that the previous civilisation was

StarTrek: DeepSpaceNine&StarfleetAcademy

MEGA DRIVE/SNES
Available: November
Category: Adventure/Simulation
Players: 1
Publisher: Interplay/Playmates

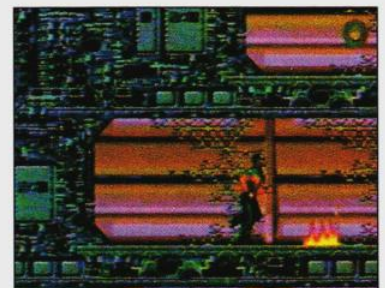
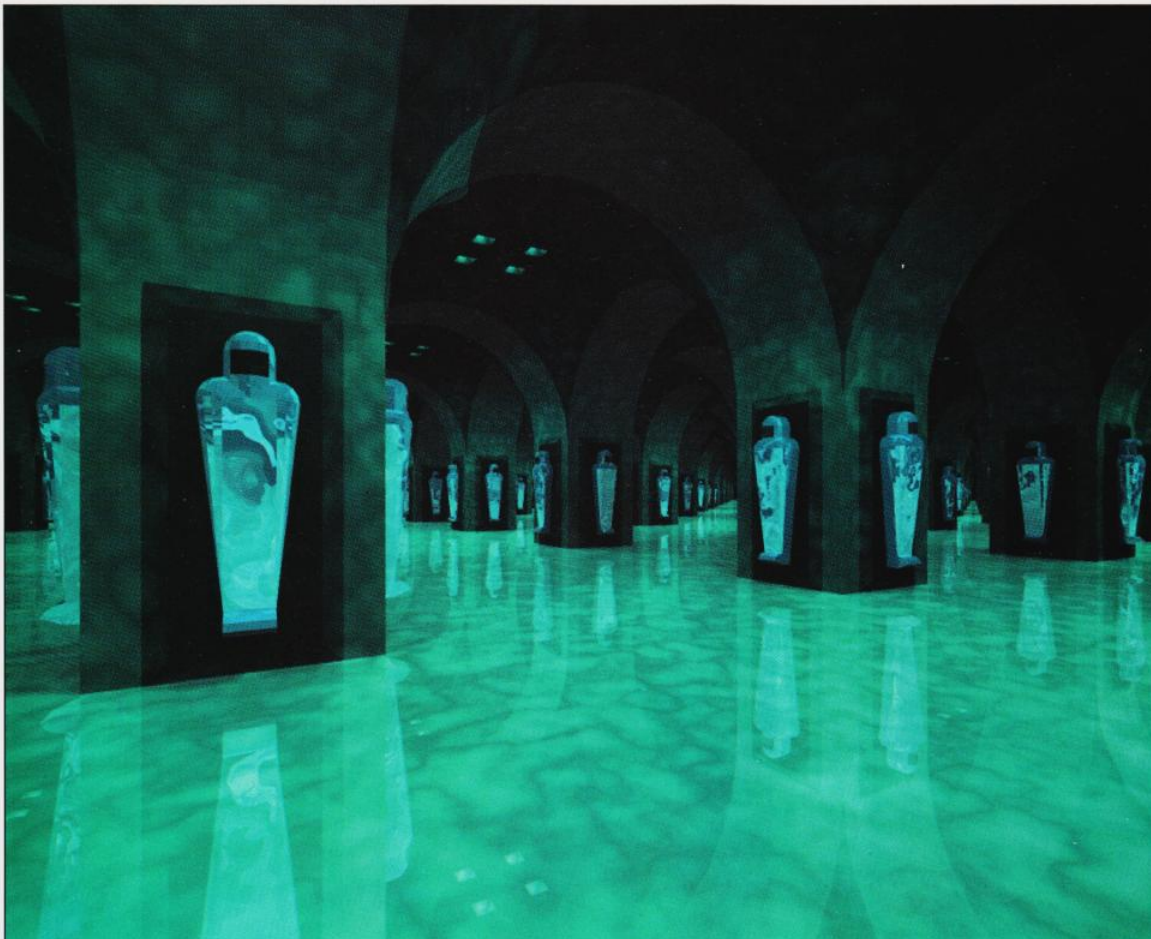
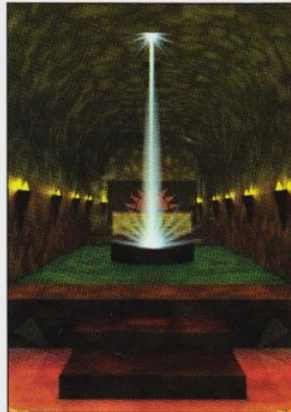
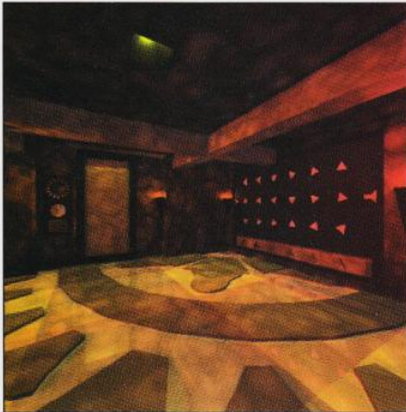
highly advanced. Maybe it's not a tomb after all. A diary of another explorer who also became trapped in the tomb many years ago, will prove to be invaluable in your quest to solve the mysteries. And there are quite a few. What did become of the race that created this vast underground metropolis? What is its purpose? Communication with another realm? Time travel? Is the game any good?

Beats us. We'll tell you next issue.

Coming too late for last issue's Trekkie special, we now have info on two more Trek-based titles that are set to be released late this year. *Deep Space Nine* is based on the new series, and you get to play one of three characters from the series, Sisko, O'Brien or Baskia, in this high tension adventure. It's already being compared to *Flashback* in the style of gameplay and animation departments, and it also looks set to be action-packed. There are several different events, like Sisko's encounter with the evil Borg, negotiating and fighting with Quark and the Cardassians, as well as protecting a nearby wormhole. It will be available for both the Mega Drive and Super Nintendo before the end of the year. Let's just hope the show is on by then!

The SNES is also getting another Trek game, and this one looks like it's for the full-on fanatics. *Starfleet Academy: the Starship Bridge Simulator* is just that - a starship simulator. You can pilot several starships from scientific vessels to constitution-class heavy cruisers, and can undertake all sorts of missions, such as exploration, scientific discovery, diplomacy or battle. Who knows, you may be lucky enough to get advice from the big man (James T. Kirk) himself?

But if the Federation really isn't your scene (these humans - so kind, thoughtful and disgustingly nice - let's kill them), you can take the role of a Klingon Captain or Romulan Commander and take on the best of the Federation starfleet. With polygon graphics and nice cinematic cut scenes it all looks very nice, but really, this looks like it's for freaks only. But we could be mistaken.



Devy



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Skitchin' and Ultima 8 are supplied by Electronic Arts. Clayfighter is supplied by Metro Games. Thanks guys!



Mechwarrior

There's nothing quite like 70 tons of armour and weaponry to make an insecure young man feel good. ANDREW HUMPHREYS is as secure as they come, but even he can't resist the lure of a big, mechanical, metal thingy...



Mechwarrior is all about Mechanical Warriors. But then, you've probably all guessed that by now. It's a game with an interesting pedigree. Like *Shadowrun*, it's based on a FASA board game/RPG system (called "BattleTech") and it's been coded by our very own Beam Software. There's a PC version of the game too, but I've never played the board game and I've never seen it on PC so I'll just have to judge this one on its own merits.

And the merits of *Mechwarrior* on the SNES are considerable. It's a nice, semi-original concept, it's been well programmed, and it's very tough. But it's not as good as it should be. *Mechwarrior* suffers from a lack of variety, and while you'll be blown away when you first plug it in (probably literally), the thrill won't last all that long.

Dead Daddy This is another one of those games where you have to overcome the burden of a silly name. You

play a guy called Herras Ragen. It's 3027 AD and Herras is a freelance MechWarrior with a sizeable chip on his shoulder. Ten years ago his family was murdered by a group called the Dark Wing Lance. Naturally, Herras wants revenge. So while he's chasing money in his metal suit, Herras is also trying to track down the members of the Dark Wing. When he finds them, he kills them. That's just the kinda guy Herras is.

You can't find the four members of the Dark Wing unless you know where to look. That's where the game's role-playing element comes in. As role playing elements come, it's a small one (there's only one location to visit and there's not exactly a cast of thousands), but hey, at least they've tried something a little different.

Here's how it all fits together. You start out by visiting the Club Zero Zero, where you can talk to the waiter (Cearle), fellow Mechwarriors and assorted spies, playback a



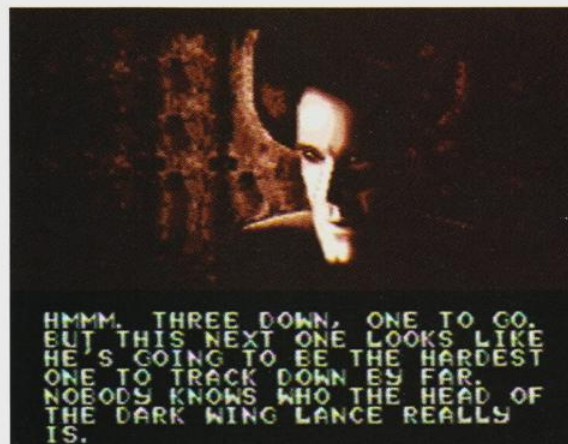
Ooh, it's dark out there. Spooky!



Enemy Mechs are attacking your base. Kill!



This is Cearle the waiter. He's very annoying, isn't he?



You look like a nice guy, but you're really a killer.

holovid message, or watch the NewsNet. You'll get a clue as to which planet you should check out. Then you go to G.H.Q and pick up a contract for a mission on that planet. From G.H.Q you can either go straight to the battle, or you can head to the Mech Complex to repair and reload, customise your Mech, or even buy a new Mech - providing you've got enough cash. When you're done, it's blasting time.

Blasting time is the fun part. Just you and your Mech on a hostile planet, with lots of other Mechs trying to shoot you. It's a first person, from the cockpit perspective, and it's very impressive. The Mode 7 programming is excellent - everything rotates around you nice and smoothly and the scaling on the other Mechs is great. The promo blurb say it puts you right in the middle of the action, and it's right.

Controlling your Mech is easy, thanks to tight, comprehensive con-

trols. You can shoot, run, and even fly with the greatest of ease.

There's lots of different missions too, but basically they come down to a) destroying enemy Mechs, b) destroying enemy bases, c) finding things, and d) protecting bases from enemy attack.

More Please You start off in a wimpy little Mech (the Nexus), but the introductory missions are straightforward and you'll soon have enough money for improvements (guided missiles are the go) and even new Mechs. You'll need them too - the missions get progressively tougher. The "Protect Base" missions are the toughest of all.

When it's you against nine other Mechs, most of which are bigger and stronger than yours, things start to get annoying. The computer controlled Mechs are very smart. They attack as a team and can over-

whelm you in a matter of seconds. In fact, sometimes it's all over a little too quickly for my liking.

But with a bit of practice and luck, you can overcome the difficulty. What you can't overcome is the repetitiveness. Essentially, you're doing the same things, over and over. After a while (once you've seen the snow and done a few night missions) everything - the Mechs, the planets - starts to look the same too. The role playing is too inconsequential to be of any real interest so it's up to the blasting to hold your attention. If you're like me (ie, a stunningly good-looking, discerning gamer), it won't.

Mechwarrior is a very solid game, but it's definitely one to try before you buy. It looks nice, sounds great, and there's a big challenge involved, but the repetitive gameplay will get to you. Blasting mechanical men is a lot of fun - but only for a little while.

SNES

available

MAY

category

ACTION/RPG

players

1

publisher

ACTIVISION

price

\$99.95

visuals

A lovely example of Mode 7 programming techniques, but the lack of variety is a downer.

87

sound

Great weaponry effects (the lasers are particularly noteworthy) and suitably heroic music.

85

gameplay

Excellent controls, but the initial blasting excitement wears off a bit too quickly.

69

longterm

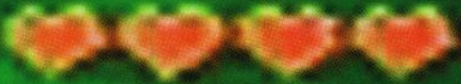
If you don't get put off by the difficulty and the monotony it'll take you a while to finish.

70

overall

BattleTech freaks may well love it. Unfortunately, I'm not a BattleTech freak.

75%



YoungMerlin

When you're young you can get away with murder. At the very least you can drop your pants and run around screaming in public places. That's what ANDREW HUMPHREYS

liked to do when he was young. Pity we can't get him to stop doing it now that he's a bit older.



Thankfully, little Merlin doesn't have the personality quirks that I do. He's a clean living, hard working boy who wants to be a magician. He's caring, polite, respectful of his elders, and he lists his favourite pastime as "rescuing fair maidens in distress". In short, he's a wanker.

Everybody in the village knows that his selfless devotion to helping others will get him into strife one day and sure enough, when a rescue attempt goes wrong and Merlin is swept away by a raging river, they all mutter, "I told you so", and quickly forget he ever existed.

But Merlin isn't dead. He's been swept into a strange and magical world. It turns out that he's in the land of the evil Shadow King, who, along with his army of Meanies, is out to destroy all things of beauty. Young Merle doesn't think this is such a hot idea, so he sets out to find the King's cave and give him what for. If he's successful, he'll save the enchanted land, find his way home, and learn some valuable magical skills on the way.

Big and Sexy Young Merle might need a tad more street cred, but *Young Merlin* is an excellent adventure game. It's a massive and involving quest, packed to the brim with *Zelda* rivalling gameplay. And when I say massive, I mean massive. The gaming area is HUGE and positively overflowing with spells to find, objects to manipulate, ankle-biting



Above: This is the fountain that will give you your magic powers throughout the game.

Left: What are you doing just hanging around? Don't you know we've got fair maidens to rescue?

Young Merle has lots of problems besides going through puberty. You need a bit of logic and a lot of patience to help him on his merry way.



Pick up the spanner...



and use it on this cart to get the wheel.



Use the balloon to float up broken ladders.



Put the wheel on the cart...



give it a push...



and it's cart ridin' time.



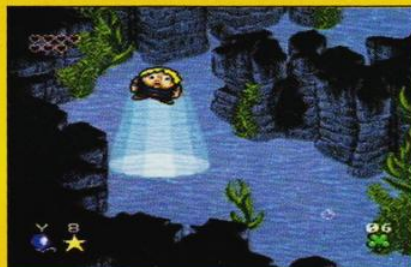
The cart smashes through here...



which leads to here. Dive in the water.



Give the mermaids a tonguey for air.



When you get to here, inflate...



and you wind up here. Grab the gem.



The gem will give you an air bubble.



Back on dry land, this guy wants a key...



It's in here somewhere.



Don't forget the secret passages!



Now he wants a pet goldfish. Pushy huh?



Get him one and you get a spring. Jump!

Meanies to step on, and ugly creatures to dispose of.

The Shadow King's world has been wonderfully detailed and beautifully drawn too. From the dark caverns of the mine shafts to the mysteries of the undersea regions, the overall game design screams Quality with a capital Q. The 3D perspective works well and the sprites have been animated to perfection. Merlin, the friends he meets along the way, and all of the Meanies are full of wit and character.

A lot of effort has gone into the sound as well. Virgin's programmers at Westwood Studios devoted 4 of the cart's 16 megs to the music and effects. The soundtracks are appropriately magical and the effects are crisp and clear (although I'm sure I've heard those Catfish noises before). The digitised speech (it's actually digitised mumbling) provides a nice comical touch. All in all, you couldn't ask for better atmosphere to play around in.

Tool Fiddling But the best thing about *Young Merlin* is the gameplay. There's so much to do, and generally, it's a lot of fun doing it. To make your way through the game you need the right items and you need to use them all in the right places.

One of the first areas you'll encounter is a mine shaft. Without the lantern, you won't see a thing, so you have to find that first. After some heavy duty exploration you'll find a mine cart, but it's missing a wheel. You can take a wheel off the broken cart at the entrance of the shaft, but only if you find the spanner first. Every area presents you with problems of a similar nature. To solve them requires patience and a lot of wandering back and forth.

You also need to keep working on your magic. Merlin picks up new skills as he goes. You'll find spells hidden in gems. To unlock the spell,

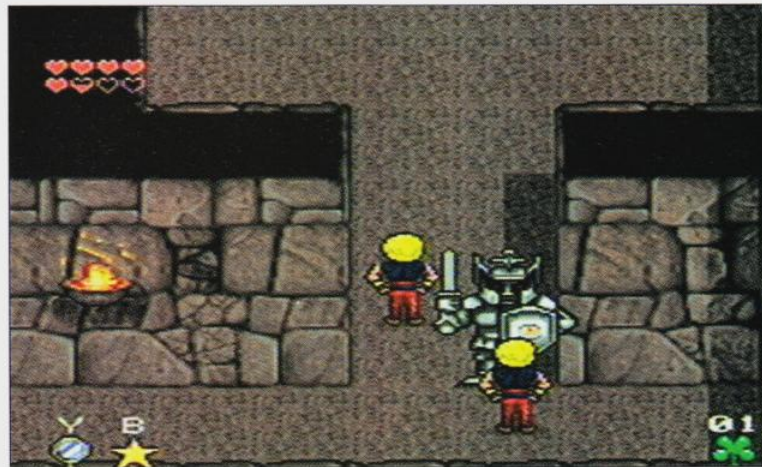
you have to return to your starting point, and throw the gem in the water. This can be tedious, but it's almost always worth the effort.

My only criticism of the gameplay is that it's very linear (which is fine in itself - I just thought you should know) and that, initially at least, the pace of the game is too slow to really drag you in. And whilst the layout of the controls is excellent, the responsiveness is a bit sluggish at times. You can't save the game when you want to either - you have to get to the next password. But if you persevere (and all but the lamest gamers out there should),

you'll find a game with enough twists and turns to keep you hooked till the very end.

Young Merlin, for all its magic, doesn't quite have the charm of *Zelda* or *The Secret of Mana*. But this is one adventure that should appeal to just about everyone and it will provide more hours of gaming fun than you could possibly deserve. It looks lovely, sounds great, and it's more playable than... er, something very playable. How could such a nice young man turn into such a crotchety old bugger?

Use the mirror to get past the guard.



Watch out for the ugly, green blob and the smelly, fat, pink pig.



SNES

available

APRIL

category

ADVENTURE

players

1

publisher

VIRGIN

price

\$109.95

visuals

Young Merle falls into a world of great beauty, colour and detail. Nice character animation too.

sound

Excellent effects and music that doesn't suck. A welcome change from most adventures...

gameplay

If object manipulation/ puzzle solving is your thing, you'll be in heaven. The controls are good and there's lots to do, but the pacing can be slow and it's very linear.

longterm

Depending on your puzzle skills, you'll be at it for a very long time. A huge game with some replay value.

overall

A big, playable adventure that should appeal to just about everyone.

85%

Pink Panther

Pink Goes to Hollywood

Yet another cartoon animal gets a platform adventure. Does this one sink the Pink? STEVE POLAK goes down to Tinseltown...



Pink Panther can probably claim to be one of the coolest characters ever to appear on the SNES. He has the most ridiculous fashion sense married to one of the smoothest and most recognisable theme songs, and this colourful 8 meg release, *Pink Goes to Hollywood*, makes the most of these attributes. But has it got the game to go with it?

Swish Touches I really wanted to love this cart. And on the positive side, PP has some extremely swish touches, like the intro sequence where Pink is chased by a typically outraged Frenchy, and the continue screen where Pink gets to pick which stage door he will exit, all to the accompaniment of some very cool jazz tones. The non-linear approach to gameplay is also great, as you can choose your route by entering different worlds through the "Honey I Shrank the Pink" central stage. This means you get to see all of the splendiferous cool bits at your leisure.

Now onto the dude himself. The Pink sprite is a little handicapped by his very nature. He is too tall and elegant, which means that the game sprite ends up looking a bit gangly and awkward. However there is a nice touch where he swishes his tail and looks ever so coyly out of the screen when you leave him alone for too long.

The stages on offer are cute, and the music usually manages to incorporate the '60s jazz feel with the

theme of each stage. And the stages are worth at least one decent laugh, regardless of gameplay. There are the Pinkbeard, Pink-in-Hood and Cat on a Hot Pink Roof stages to give some variety and fun. Each segment is also well introduced with a director's cut screen, where the title and episode you are up to is shown on one of those movie chalk board things.

There are some rather well produced cartoonish touches, one of the best being the Clueso character on the Honey I Shrank the Pink stage, who has a spy glass and follows Pink's every move on the screen with one enlarged pupil. Bright, powerful colours abound and with Pink himself, the game has a look which is reasonably distinctive.

Uncool Aspects So, there are some really decent aspects to the game, and it has lots of potential, but (and I bet all you fluffy pink feline fans could smell this one coming), there are some really uncool aspects to Pink Panther. Number one; you die far too easily, and often it is due to opponents or objects which are unscrupulously hidden off screen until it is too late. Number two; the control of the Pink sprite is at times very average, particularly in the way you cannot change direction easily when using your spray gun weapon to ward off foes coming from both directions. Number three; the number of moves that Pink can perform is below what



you would expect from the slinky dude who always knew how to slip, slide and slither out of any sticky situation. He can only run, jump and walk, and it would have been nice if he could have performed a few more moves (especially a crawl!). He's also hampered by his height, in that a jump will sometimes result in you being hit by something unseen on the level above.

Having said all that however, I still enjoyed tinkering with this one. It had a fair bit too offer in terms of varied gameplay, and is faithful to the feel of he who prowls with pink pigmentation. Check it out if you're a fan.

FORMAT: SNES

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: PLATFORM

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: TECMAGIK

PRICE: \$109.95

visuals

If you like Pinkness, you'll like this. Cartoony and colourful in a bent 60's way. A bit blocky at times.

77

sound

Smoooooth. Excellent.

84

gameplay

Our feline friend could use a little more acrobatic training. Awkward and difficult at times, when it really needn't be.

66

longterm

Good for initial novelty value, and better than just any old platformer because of its non-linearity.

69

overall

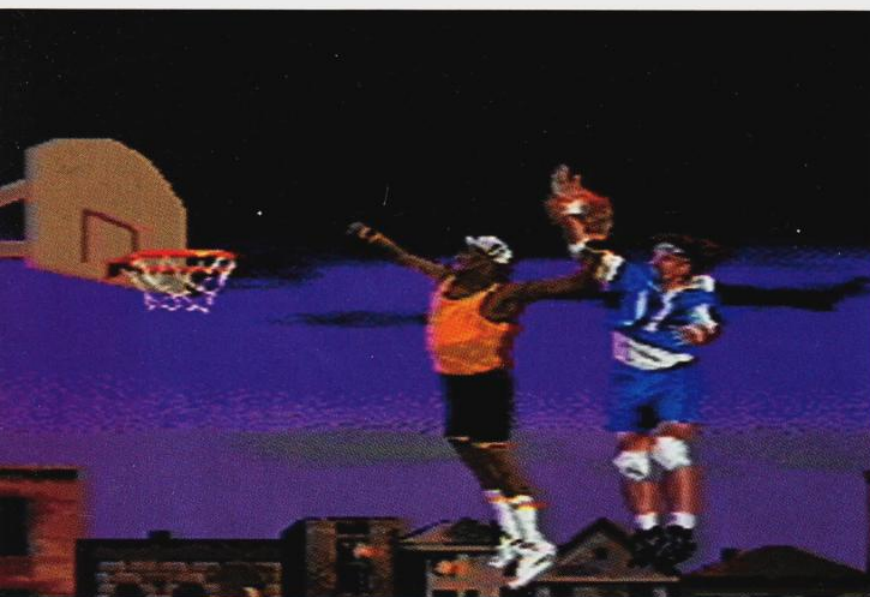
With a character as cool as Pink, this cart should have been perfect rather than just pretty and pedestrian.

69%

Jammit



With a name like “Jammit”, this game’s just asking for trouble, isn’t it? ANDREW HUMPHREYS is the only guy we could trust to keep it dignified.



Close-up action. Nice socks!

Jammit? Jam it? Just where am I supposed to jam it? Now I’m no medical expert, but it seems to me that the irregular shape of a cartridge couldn’t be jammed anywhere with any degree of comfort. Maybe I’ll just stick it in the Mega Drive and review it instead. Yes, that sounds like a sensible, if somewhat unadventurous idea...

Jammit is another basketball game. Don’t yawn. This one’s different. No, really it is. It’s one-on-one street ball with plenty of “attitude”. Not a good start, is it? One-on-one basketball games have been pretty woeful to date. Think about *Jordan vs Bird* or *NBA All Star Challenge* for more than a second and you’ll probably puke. And we all know what happens when “attitude” gets programmed in to a game, don’t we? But *Jammit* isn’t as bad as it first sounds and after playing it for a couple of hours I can tell you one thing for certain: I don’t hate it.

Woody Harrelson Remember *White Men Can’t Jump* - you know, “Wesley, Woody, balls”. Personally, I thought it lacked a bit in genuine sentiment and artistic merit. But somebody at Virgin obviously liked it because *Jammit* is based on *White Men Can’t Jump*. It’s all about playing for money. You get a choice of three characters - Chill, Roxy and Slade - and then you hustle for money in a series of one-on-one matchups. Lose all your money and you’re out. Keep winning and you get to play a rather tall man called “Judge”, who likes to spout lines from LL Cool J songs.

There’s seven variations on the one-on-one theme. Shots inside the key are worth 1 point. Shots outside the key are worth 2 points.

1 on 1 First to 21 wins. Loser’s outs. Fouls can be called.

Sweat First to 21. Winner’s outs. No fouls.

2 Hot First to 21, “Hot Spots” are worth double. Fouls.

Poison First to 21, but 20 is “poison” - hit 20 and your score goes back to 10.

Slams Only First to 21, but only slams count. Winner’s outs. No fouls.

In 2 It First to 21, but you can only score from the “Hotspots”.

Frenzy First to 10. Two balls, from “Hotspots” only. No fouls.

Shooting is easy - you hit button A to jump, and hit it again to release the ball. If you’re close to the hoop you can go up for a slam where the screen cuts to a close up, just like *Super Real Basketball* did all those years ago. There’s lots of other “street moves” too, like using the elbow, holding a dribble and pushing your

way to the basket. Computer opponents play you pretty tight too. The controls are good, but everything feels a bit sluggish. Overall, the game just doesn’t seem to move fast enough.

Takin’ it to the Streets So how did they try to capture that elusive, street-tough image? For a start, they dressed all the sprites up in funny clothes. Then they digitised them. The digitisation actually works quite well, so while the players aren’t the biggest sprites around, they move smoothly and they’ve got some nifty reverse moves up their Nikes. The courts have been nicely detailed too. There’s only a choice of three (Slamhaven, Snakepit and Fisheads) but they’re all dark and mean enough to turn your lounge room into an inner city ghetto.

The sound is also very “street”. There’s a hip-hop soundtrack (it was pretty ugly on the test version we had, but it should be improved) and plenty of digitised “Trash Talkin’”. You can set the level to your liking. Fortunately, you can turn it off completely. The quality of the speech isn’t great, and after you’ve heard “Give it up baby”, “You want some” and “Get out of here” a hundred times, it starts to grate.

Overall, *Jammit* is playable enough (especially with two players) and it’s certainly the best one-on-one title around. Yes, I know that’s not saying much. It doesn’t have the thrill-power of *NBA Jam* or the options of *NBA Showdown*, but if going one-on-one with a close personal friend (or even an electrical appliance) is your thing you should check it out. Just try to rent it first.



MEGA DRIVE

available

NOW

category

STREET B-BALL

players

1-2

publisher

VIRGIN

price

\$109.95

visuals

78

The digitised funky characters move pretty well and the courts are nice but some of the close ups are dodgy.

sound

70

Lots of "Trash Talkin'". Pity the quality is scratchy and it's basically annoying. The music needs work.

gameplay

71

The controls could be more responsive and the speed needs pumping, but there's some good moves in there and it is fun.

longterm

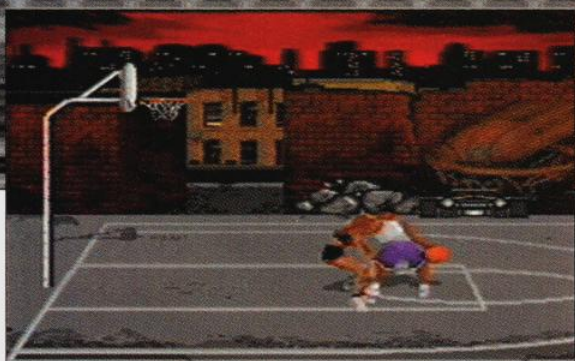
69

The two-player option should keep you jamming it in your Mega Drive occasionally.

overall

Nothing spectacular but it might just get your balls bouncing.

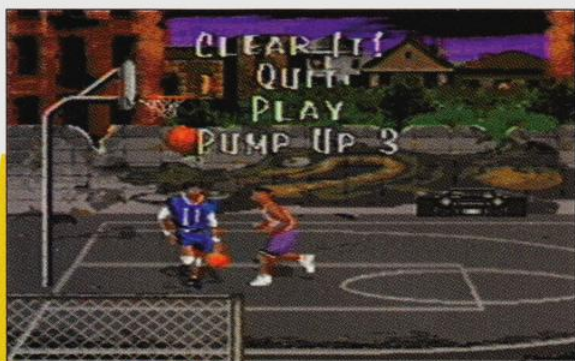
70%



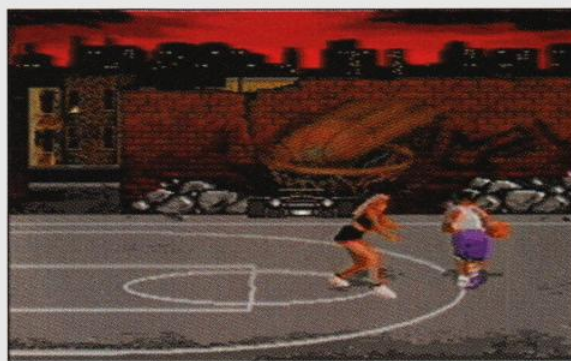
Go on, stick the elbow into the girl.



Dribble, dribble. This caption is a load of old dribble.



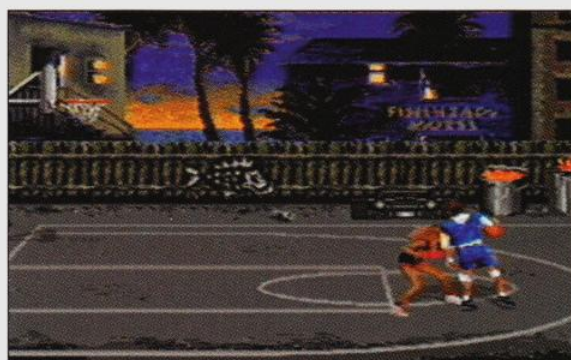
The pause menu. Pump it up when you're behind.



Yet more dribbling. Sounds like Stuart...

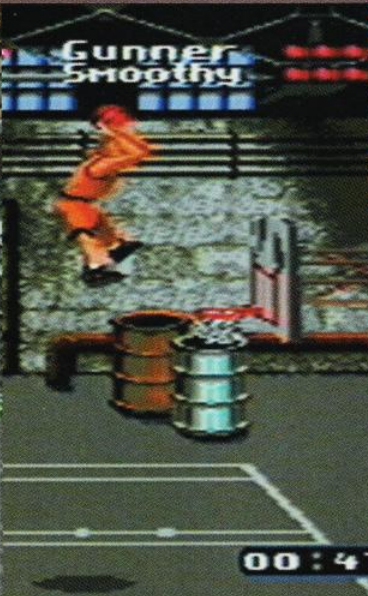


Looking cool at the free throw line.



Roxy cops another elbow. It'd never happen in Summer Bay

REVIEW»



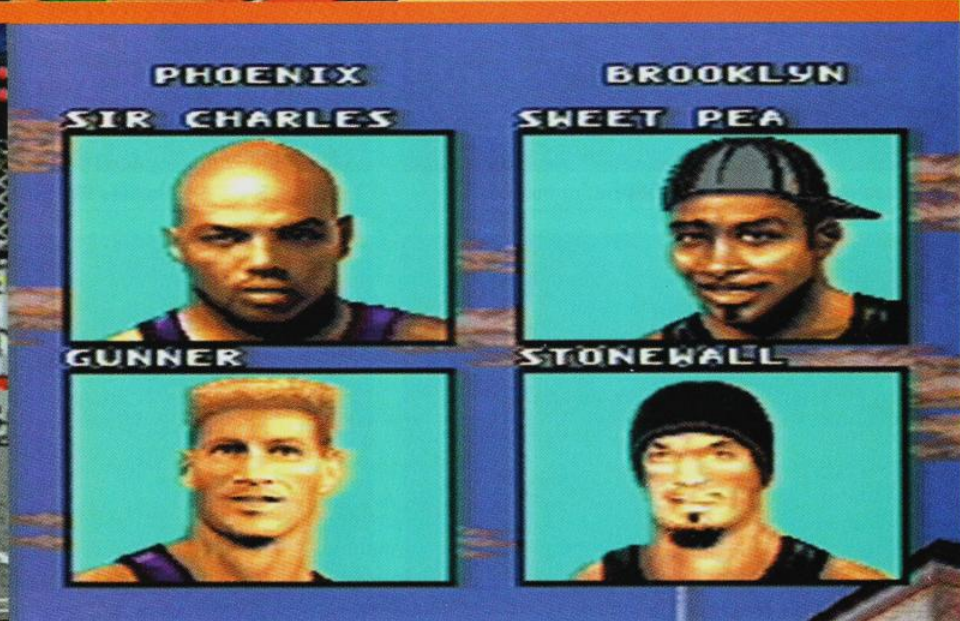
PHOENIX 36 VS SEATTLE 36

SIR CHARLES	
POINTS	28
2 PTS	14-19
3 PTS	0-6
DUNKS	13-13
STEALS	3
BLOCKS	2
REBOUNDS	1

STONEWALL	
POINTS	16
2 PTS	9-11
3 PTS	0-2
DUNKS	9-11
STEALS	3
BLOCKS	0
REBOUNDS	1

GUNNER	
POINTS	10
2 PTS	5-6
3 PTS	0-1
DUNKS	5-6
STEALS	0
BLOCKS	3
REBOUNDS	0

CHILLY	
POINTS	16
2 PTS	9-11
3 PTS	0-0
DUNKS	9-11
STEALS	0
BLOCKS	2
REBOUNDS	3



Barkley *Shut Up* and *Jam*

Charles Barkley makes really good television commercials. He plays basketball too. But can the mere presence of his name make a bad game better? ANDREW HUMPHREYS doubts it.

Oh joy. It's another basketball game. Two in the one issue. Whoopee. What the hell am I going to say about this one? Maybe I'd better play it first.... OK, I've played it, now what can I say about it? Well, it's a basketball game, it's got Charles Barkley in it, and it's not very good. Stuart, I've finished. What do you mean I'm fired? Alright, alright, I'll do it properly. Just don't expect my customary style and wit.

Good Things About This Game

1 It's got Charles Barkley in it. He's on the cover and he's in the game. Madonna follows him around. If you're very, very stupid, you can shave your head and pretend you're him. Don't worry about that series loss to Chicago - you've got millions of dollars.

2 It's got fifteen fictional "Street All-Stars" to play with. They're at least as cool as the characters in *Jamm It*. They've got funny names like "Sweet Pea", "Wildman", "Chilly", "Smoothy" and "Funky-D". Some of them wear bandanas. Some of them wear sunglasses. Almost all of them have ear-rings. Cool.

3 It's a four player game, so when you're suffering, at least you can gain some comfort from the knowledge that three of your friends are suffering with you. And as we all know, nothing binds humanity together quite like good, old-fashioned suffering.

4 If for some strange reason you do decide to buy it and you want to experience the joys of group suffering, then you can use either Sega's Multitap thingy or EA's 4 Way Play adaptor. That's right, it's compatible with both, just like *NBA Jam* should've been.

5 It's not totally unplayable.



Bad Things About This Game

1 It's got Charles Barkley in it. Only joking Charles. I mean, Sir.

2 It's an *NBA Jam* clone and it's a bad one. Just like *NBA Jam*, it's two-on-two basketball with a side-on court perspective and lots of dunking. The controls bear an uncanny similarity; instead of a Turbo button, you get a "Power" button. Use of the Power button is limited (six bursts per quarter), but if you use it in conjunction with the shoot button you can do "superdunks". There's even somersault dunks tucked away in the program. Trouble is, they look awful.

Because it's so similar to *NBA Jam*, there is absolutely no reason in the world why you should buy it - it's inferior in every way. If you want a four-player, two-on-two basketball game then you should buy *NBA Jam*. If you want a five-on-five game as well, buy *NBA Showdown 94*. Even *Jamm It* is different enough (because it's one-on-one) to warrant consideration. *Barkley Shut Up and Jam* just isn't in the running.

3 The graphics suck. Want to see some ropey animation? Check out any of the superdunks in *Shut Up and Jam*. Watch in awe of the programmers' talents as players mysteriously rise into the air and head towards the basket with just four frames of animation! Talk about economy of movement. This really is a sorry looking game. The sprites are small and ugly, the courts have

absolutely no detail, and the stills of Sir Charles are anything but pretty.

4 The sound sucks. The tacky in-game music is enough to drive you clinically insane within ten minutes. Thank God you can turn it off. Then all you have to put up with are the sound effects. The back of the box says there's digitised commentary from Charles himself, but there isn't. The last time I checked, a garbled voice that says "timeout" every time you pause the game didn't meet the dictionary definition of "commentary" (and that's "a description of a public event... as it happens" if you must know).

5 It's not even fun to play. All of this wouldn't matter too much if *Shut Up and Jam* was fun. Because it's so familiar it is initially quite playable. You pass, you shoot, you score. But in a one-player game, control over your computer team mate is limited (you can make him pass but not shoot) and there's none of the gameplay subtleties that make *NBA Jam* so great. Sure, there's a tournament mode and no four-player is totally without merit, but when you can do better, you should.

A Very Short Conclusion That's all I've got to say about *Shut Up and Jam*. Five good points, five bad points, but if I'm not mistaken, the bad points outweigh the good ones. Don't buy it.

MEGA DRIVE

available

NOW

category

BIRD WATCHING?

players

1-4

publisher

ACCOLADE

price

\$129.95

visuals

Charles is not a pretty man and this is not a pretty game. A sad lack of detail and animation.

sound

Ugh! The music is horrible and the sound effects (you know, crowd noises, commentary) is practically nonexistent.

gameplay

The pace is OK and it does have all the rudiments of basketball - running, shooting, dunking and the like.

longterm

Find three other people who have never seen *NBA Jam* and you just might be able to convince yourselves you're having fun.

overall

There's only one two-on-two basketball game you should buy. This isn't it.

Biometal

Techno, techno, techno, techno! STUART CLARKE gets pumped up by 2 Unlimited and gets ready for maximum overdrive in a space shooter with no limits (except maybe originality)...

There's really nothing to differentiate *Biometal* from the whole host of other shoot 'em ups that are available for the SNES, apart from the fact that it's got a soundtrack by those Belgian techno whiz-kids 2 Unlimited. Now if commercial techno isn't really your thing, then you're going to get absolutely nothing out of this game (as it really isn't that great), but if you're a fan of "Twilight Zone", "Get Ready for This", "Tribal Dance" and all the other 2 Unlimited hits (which all sound the same really), then *Biometal* may hold your interest for a while. But I somehow doubt it...

Fast and Relatively Hardcore It was only a matter of time before games started getting soundtracks from big name bands. 2 Unlimited is a good choice to start the ball rolling (I'm not counting Eric Martin from the unbelievably awful Mr Big who did some numbers for *Spiderman vs Kingpin* - that effort deserves to be ignored). Not only is their music popular, fun and reasonably groovy, but it's fast and rela-

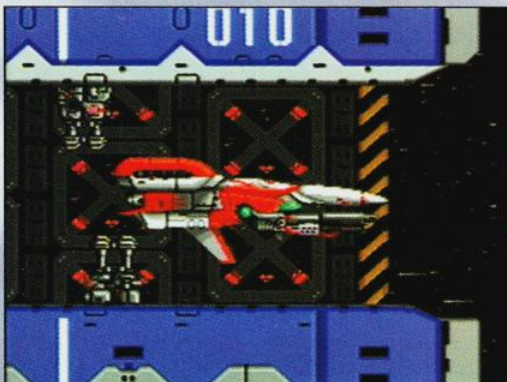
tively hardcore - perfect for the manic blasting action which *Biometal* contains. *Biometal* is nothing if not fast. In fact, it's almost too fast. There are several points in the game where there are about twenty enemies on screen, plasma weapons firing and you're racing and dodging so fast that it's almost impossible to keep up with your position on screen. Keeping the finger firmly on the fire buttons will sometimes save you, but there's also a lot of luck involved in surviving the intense alien onslaughts. But high speed and lots of enemies doesn't change the fact that *Biometal* is wildly unoriginal. It's a

left-to-right scrolling shooter that any video game fan would have played hundreds of times before. There's nothing particularly special or memorable about it, and therefore no real reason to get excited about it. It's even got the same old plot. The human Galactic Federation is about to be destroyed by the rapidly growing *Biometal* organisms, and you (Kid Ray) with your trusty co-pilot Anita, are flying the revolutionary new fighter, the MF92GX Halbard in a last ditch effort to save civilisation as we know it.

Secret Biological Weapons You'll start in a spectacular Metal Storm (nice clouds), and you should use this first level to get the hang of the Halbard's weapons. There is the standard plasma fire, which of course can be upgraded by shooting and passing over the randomly floating pods, plus the Halbard's secret biological weapon - the Gel Analog Mutant (GAM). Like all special weapons, GAM drains your energy so it can't be relied on all the time, but it is absolutely

essential on many occasions. It can be used both offensively and defensively. You can just let it circle your craft, and it will protect you from most enemy hazards, or you can make it's radius larger, and it will take out enemies all around you (although some will make it through it's circle). You can also send GAM straight out in a cluster against big enemies, but this leaves you vulnerable to attack. All in all though, it's a very tasty weapon and you should use it carefully. But that's really all there is to say about *Biometal*. The graphics are lovely, with beautiful backgrounds and some weird and wonderful (as well as big) enemies to fight. But when it comes down to it, there's just not enough new here to keep you interested. With all the speed and enemies though, it's a pretty tough challenge, so hardcore blasting boys and girls will probably make the effort to get right the way through. I couldn't be bothered though....does that mean I'm not hardcore enough? Mum?

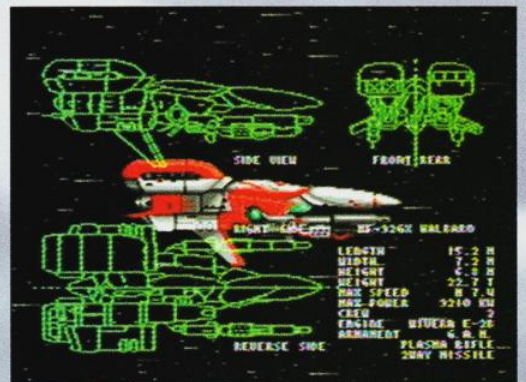
Getting ready to shoot off!



The similarities with Ray and Anita from 2 Unlimited are astounding. Not!



The groovy specs of your MF-92GX Halbard Fighter. Mmmm, exciting!



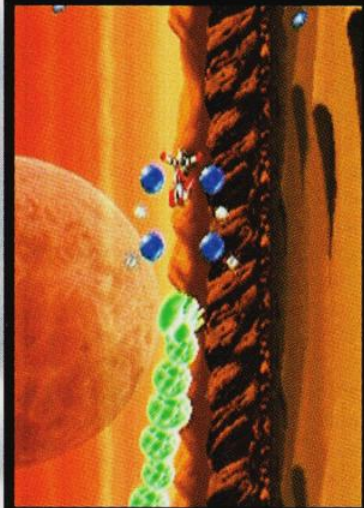
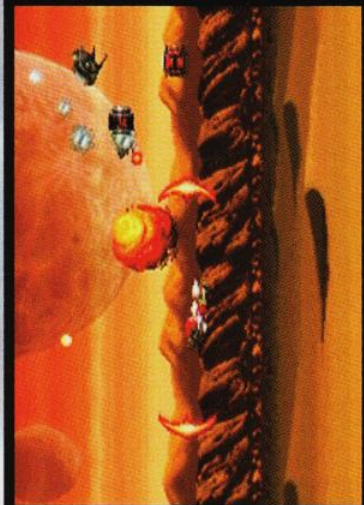
Stage One Metal Storm

You have reached the front of the BioMetal forces. Enemy attack is still not severe. Now is the time to master the Halbard control panel before the real action begins! Your main objective is to clear this stage with maximum fighter regenerations to help you through the more treacherous stages ahead.



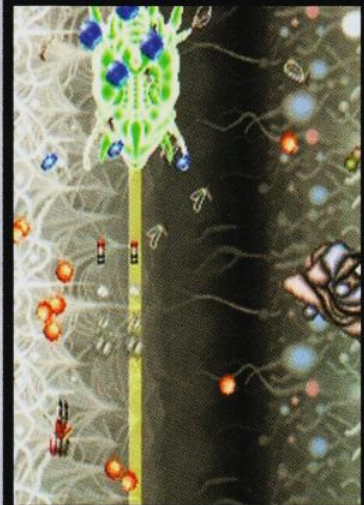
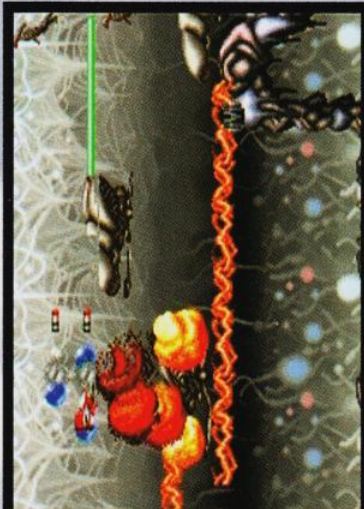
Stage Two Desert Rave

You have succeeded in entering planet UP457. A faster and larger BioMetal force intensifies your intergalactic challenge. You have to think as fast as you fire! Mastering your GAM weapon is crucial in this stage. You must be prepared to use your GAM spread and attack with reflex like reactions.



Stage Three Psychedelic Cave

The BioMetal force attacks fiercely with fluttering spores and passageways that may lead to dead ends! The terrain challenges Halbard maneuvering in this stage. Enemies are colossal and you must battle them to the end! Collect three weapon pods for maximum laser power against more than one BioMetal at a time!



SNES

available

MAY

category

SHOOT 'EM UP

players

1

publisher

ACTIVISION

price

\$99.95

visuals

Great backgrounds, some groovy effects and piles of enemies on-screen at once make this a very impressive looking blaster. **86**

sound

If 2 Unlimited get your adrenalin going, you'll be raving along to this one. If not, you won't be. Simple. **88**

gameplay

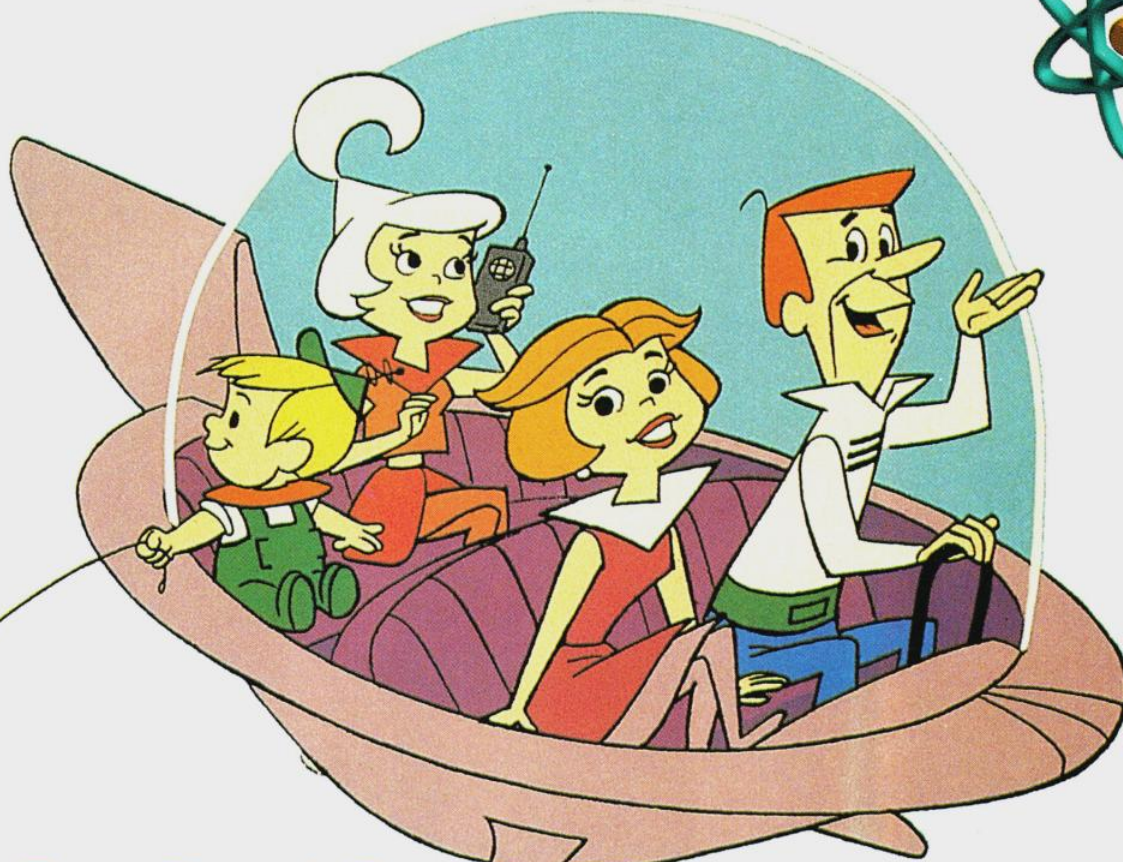
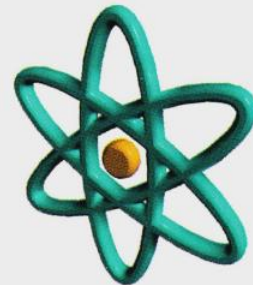
Tried and true old shoot 'em up style. Very fast, and quite hard, but there's so much happening on screen at once that it's almost more luck than skill. **70**

longterm

If you like basic shoot 'em ups you'll play this to the end, but that's about it. **64**

overall

Great looking space blaster spoilt by lack of originality. Short term fun for fast-action techno heads. **71%**



The Jetsons

Invasion of the Planet Pirates

Meet George Jetson, his boy Elroy, daughter Judy, Jane his wife (cue saxophone solo). **STRETCH ARMSTRONG** finds new and exciting uses for the humble vacuum cleaner with the spaced out family from the future...



Somehow, of all the famous 60s and 70s TV shows, the Jetsons seemed to pass me by. I know they're like some cartoon version of *Lost In Space's* Robinsons, they live in an impossibly futuristic city and geeky dad George has a couple of spunky anime-style children, but that's about the extent of my knowledge. Except I now recall, that the theme music was pretty cool too. But, like any characters who ever had an audience of more than 10 people, they're now the subject of a new video game. Never mind that the target audience probably weren't born when the show was at it's peak, just get the thing out there and maybe their nostalgia-gripped

parents will buy it for Christmas.

So, taking the commercial stance, this has got to succeed in one of two ways: either the licensed characters have got to be strong enough that kids will buy it regardless of the quality of the gameplay, or it's got to be such a great game that it sells on its playability merits alone. For the reasons I've already explained, I can't see this succeeding on the first basis and, for reasons I'm about to explain, I think this will struggle on the second as well.

Future Platforming Despite the fact that it is the future, platform games are still all the rage, and to make matters worse, you are in one. You are George Jetson, suburban dweeb, and you must travel through various levels (of your city I think, but

it's not entirely clear) with your trusty sucker (or is that a vacuum cleaner of the future?) dispatching evil aliens, mechanical bulldogs and other apparently unrelated undesirables as they come across your path. You should also grab diamonds, hamburgers and other apparently unrelated desirables which give you the points, power you up and generally help you on your way. The backgrounds look good and are suitably futuristic (although suspiciously Sonic-like at times) and George is a responsive and good-looking little sprite with some neat moves.

However *The Jetsons* suffers the classic platformers problem. That is, it looks fine, is fun to play and has some small touches which are very impressive, but at the end of the day it has little which is grippingly



original. Basically, I can review this cart for a couple of days and certainly have fun, but there's no way in the world (this world, the Jetson's world or any other world) I'd part with upwards of 100 clams to call it my own.

On the positive side, climbing walls with your sucker is novel and fun (with ace sucking noises), the game looks a treat and the big boss gorilla at the end of stage one is a suitably enjoyable challenge. The teleporter, which sends George zipping through the S-bend at light speed, is also a neat touch, as is the battle through the wheels and cogs of the second level. The introduction, with George flying to his house, also looks very cool (even vaguely 3D like), but unfortunately this viewpoint doesn't carry through into the game.

Really, what sinks this game at the end of the day is what sinks so many of its ilk - the formulaic game style owes as much to the Johnsons and the Jacksons as it does to the Jetsons and while it'll fill in a rainy day or two, with a handicap as fundamental as it has, it can't ever lift itself from the ranks of the merely mediocre.

Stuart says... This game really sucks. And I mean that literally. If there's one thing you'll need to learn how to do in the Jetsons, it's suck. You'll suck up enemies, weapons, bonuses and even walls and rooftops. In fact, good sucking technique is essential. Sucking, as a game weapon/tool, is not quite revolutionary, but it's always a bit of fun, so I was happy blowing air

about for a while. Unfortunately, nothing else really happens, and after a while sucking does get tedious, even for people who are used to it (hi Aaron!).

And after a while (and we're talking hours and not days), *Invasion of the Planet Pirates* does indeed become very tedious and frustrating. It's also quite easy (once you get your sucking technique down right), so it's not going to make even hardcore platform fans happy. The Jetsons cartoon show with the spaced out family of George, his boy Elroy, daughter Judy and Jane his wife was always an enjoyably camp bit of fun, and so is the Jetsons video game. But the cartoon only lasted around twenty minutes, and so will interest in the video game.

SNES

available

JUNE

category

PLATFORM

players

1

publisher

TAITO

price

TBA

visuals

Pretty good looking, especially the opening, but nothing to fax home about.

72

sound

Adequate sucking noises do not a good game make, even with the Jetson's theme music.

60

gameplay

Responsive and fun, but unlikely to cure the narcoleptics out there.

65

longterm

Not super easy, which is good, but once you've done it, provided you have a life, it's unlikely you'll be back.

68

overall

Serviceable, but could someone please wake me when the programmers have a new idea?

65%

REVIEW»

LEVEL ONE

00011050



00007700



LEVEL TWO



LEVEL THREE



LEVEL FOUR



CHOPLIFTER

Choplifter is a certified classic that older gamers will no doubt have fond memories of. A big fan of the original, BRIAN COSTELLOE, checks out the latest sequel for the Super Nintendo.



Once upon a time there was a milkbar. In this milkbar a crowd of the local kids would gather, pockets full of twenty cent coins, lining up to have a go at cracking the hi-score on their favourite games (remember when a hi-score meant something and seeing your initials on the screen was a thrill?). One of these coin-ops was *Choplifter* and I can tell you one thing, and that is that this game went off!

The aim of the game was simple. You flew a state-of-the-art helicopter and had to rescue hostages and missing-in-action personnel, bring them back to the American base. Now, more than ten years and two sequels later, we are faced with the same situation. Who it is that we're fighting isn't an issue, but what we have to do is get our homeboys back before they bite the bullet, literally! So has all those years gone by affected the simplistic but playable legend of a game? Hmm...

No Friendly Fire Deaths This is a title that I was quite looking forward to seeing, as I had more than just a few goes of this as a kid. The big thing about the game then was the way the helicopter manoeuvred so well. Plus the many ways those hapless little guys could be killed! Unfortunately you can't kill any of the MIA soldiers in this 16-bit sequel and I'm wondering if it's thanks to those people at Nintendo with their crusade against violence?

Anyhow, in *Choplifter 3*, we get 4 rounds each with 4 missions. You'll have to rescue at least 10 or 20 hostages in each mission to complete the areas. The gameplay is pretty much the same but there are some exciting new extras. You now have special weapons to pick up from parachuted boxes that appear from time to time. These vary from heat-seekers to napalm bombs, which are handy when there are too many shrimps on the BBQ! Also a rope can be picked up from these boxes to pick up hostages without the need to land!

The caves from the original game are nowhere near as dangerous as these new dark caverns, and you'll have a tough time in the subterranean world. But when things do become too tough, you will often find repair facilities that will increase your helicopters armour value back to maximum. Another previously unseen feature are end of level bosses that really do cause havoc, but they can be dealt with in the appropriate manner! One of the more obvious new features, however, is the absence of the left right restrictions that were in the first version. The screen follows the action vertically as well as horizontally. No big deal I know, but this does seem to add a new dimension.

Local Programmers I was pleased to see the good quality of the graphics that went into this title. I was even more surprised to find

out that Beam produced it, and Aussie gamers should be proud to see our boys mixing with the best. There are also some chunky sound-waves to give you that extra satisfaction once you've blown something to smithereens! Music-wise this game is OK but the tunes do repeat themselves a little too often for my taste.

Choplifter has always been a simple war game of death and destruction, and I had a lot of fun destroying anything that looked remotely destructible. You may also get a warm gooey feeling inside when you've just saved one of your fellow comrades. Unfortunately that nice glowing feeling is all but shot when you realise that those same hostages can't be killed anyway which makes you wonder why you're saving them! I really do miss landing on them and wasting a whole cargo full of hostages once I've gone down! But if you get over that small gripe (and I haven't to be honest) you'll find a game here that you'll love to have in your collection. Plus the password feature allows you to avoid the boredom of repeating a level more often than needed.

It's a game like this that makes all these new words like "multi-media", "interactive" & other such new terms seem like wasted jargon. *Choplifter 3* is a pure and simple arcade shooter that shows what games are really about.

SNES

available

APRIL

category

ACTION

players

1

publisher

EXTREME

price

\$109.95

visuals

Nice background detailing. Nothing extra-ordinary but nothing horrible either! **78**

sound

Beefy explosions mixed with some nice atmospheric music. **81**

gameplay

Excellent and addictive action that doesn't grow tiring. **86**

longterm

The use of passwords will keep this in your SNES that little bit longer! **82**

overall

A classic has been given new life! I want another sequel like this soon. **82%**

MEGA MAN X



Mega Man X is a robotic humanoid with special powers. BRIAN COSTELLOE is a moronic humanoid who thinks he has special powers. We put both of them together and got this review.



Oh! Looks like a bit of mystic babbling.



But these pods are very useful. They contain all the power-ups you need.



What are you waiting for? Step inside.

Platform games are now very much the standard format for game manufacturers wanting to produce effective sellers. In reality, this is an easy way out as very few of these titles can be described as brilliant. With some titles bearing the playability of a Take That album, it's no wonder so many game players are sick and tired of the Mario and Sonic clones littering the shelves. Other platforms however can prove this rule wrong, like *Gunstar Heroes* for the Mega Drive (88% in HYPER #2) for example. Does Mega Man, the old NES hero, cut the mustard on the 16bit? Let's have a gander.

X-tra Playability Coming from a mainly Sega background I didn't really get into the Mega Man series very much at all. But from investigating the now smelly NES I have discovered that I missed out on a very playable series. I was caught playing Mega Man 1 & 2 for ages until I completed them both and I am pleased to say that the SNES does capture that unique atmosphere that is Mega Man. The story goes that several years have passed before Dr Thomas Light's capsule (which contained "X" the humanoid) is discovered. It was a Dr. Cain, a biologist, who made the finding. He also found blueprint plans in the lab to recreate these humanoids, but he made a "slight" change to them due to his lack of understanding. Basically, to cut a long story short, he stuffed up big time. He created humanoids ('replods') that realised what a waste of time real humans are! Their answer to the human problem is simple - genocide.

As X, you must attempt to wipe

out the armies of humanoids to put a stop to this seek-and-destroy nonsense. Your main goal is Sigma, the latest model and the meanest mutha this side of the Terminator. You will be helped throughout the game by fellow humanoids and holograms of Dr Light that contain pearls of wisdom, as well as cool power ups. Your speed and other abilities will be increased in these holotubes, and throughout the game, capsules will float out of an enemy after it has become history! Most of the time these capsules will only contain life potions but sometimes you will get more special weapon ammo.

X-tra Hard In other words, the gameplay is pretty much your run-of-the-mill platformer with no real innovative ideas to be found. But what's really out to impress you are the bosses at the end of the levels. Some really give the SNES' abilities a workout with their demanding graphics, such as the "water blob" boss. They are also hell hard to pass, and in fact are the hardest part of the entire game. You can hit them easily but you have so little energy to beat them with and it can get quite annoying.

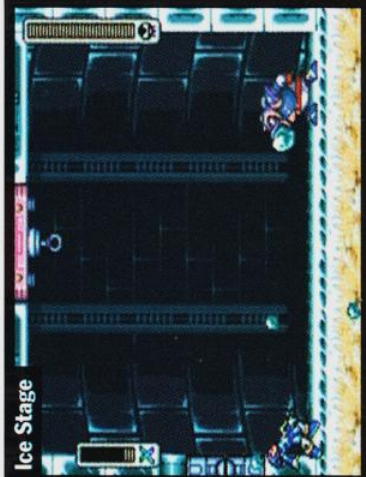
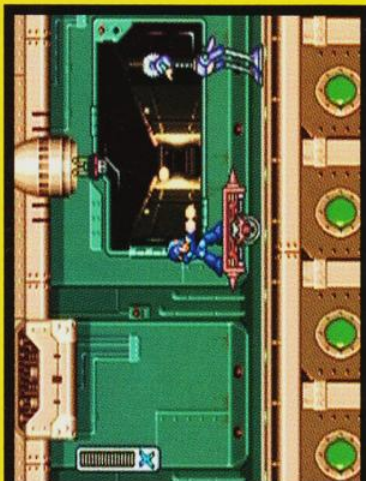
But it doesn't completely piss you off like other titles in the same genre and once you beat a boss, you get powered up with a new weapon. The game has 9 levels that are all quite a handful to master, but there is the added bonus of a password save so you don't need

to play for hours in a concerted burst of concentration. There are also certain fun bits to be had. In some rounds you can hitch a ride in an armoured robot suit that packs a powerful punch. It really is pretty useless but it's heaps cool to use. Now you can get an idea of how Ripley felt in *Aliens* in that classic robot fight scene (well maybe it's not quite that cool).

Some bad features of *Mega Man X* are in the moves (or lack of moves) of your main character. The controls are excellent and very responsive (and I love all that jumping up walls stuff) but X can't duck nor has he the ability to shoot diagonally or straight up. This may add some points to the difficulty level but it also adds to a high frustration level as well. Overall though, that would have to be my only problem with this title.

Mega Man fans are going to love seeing their hero in glorious 16-Bit surroundings, but others should have a peek at Sony Imagesoft's *SkyBlazer* for another good SNES platforming romp. *Mega Man X* does not do for the SNES what *Gunstar Heroes* does so beautifully for the Mega Drive, but on it's own it is a good purchase that will have you wanting to see more of the X man.

Thanks to the Gamesmen (02) 580 9888 for the cart.



SNES

available

NOW

category

PLATFORM

players

1

publisher

CAPCOM

price

TBA

visuals

Some cool looking bosses and neat backdrops.

84

sound

These sounds pretty well serve the purpose. No real thrills though.

78

gameplay

Fairly neat game let down slightly by a lack of moves.

80

longterm

The password adds a lot, and you will probably want to come back to it now and again. It's tough as too.

79

overall

A good 16 bit addition to this now aging series. A challenging title but not as good as some other platformers around.

83%

X-Kaliber 2097

I suppose I can handle a game with a soundtrack by 2 Unlimited - at least I know who they are. But who the hell are Psykosenik and why is there a photo of them on the back of *X-Kaliber 2097*'s box? They're not very attractive men and one of them wears a hat like Jughead from *The*

What's this? Another game with a techno soundtrack - that makes two this month! ANDREW HUMPHREYS scratches his leather-clad groin and wonders whatever happened to rock 'n' roll...



Archies. If you're going to try to flog a game on the strength of its soundtrack, at least you could use recognisable, vaguely attractive artists. You could try to use good tracks too. Whatever Psykosenik's virtues are on CD, the "5 Slammin Tekno Tracks" on *X-Kaliber* are dull, repetitive, and anything but pumping.

Having A Slash in New York

Now that I've got that little rant out of my system I can get on to ranting about the game. *X-Kaliber 2097* is not a bad game but it's not a good game either. It's just another playable but otherwise exceptionally mediocre title to add to the pile.

You've heard the plot a hundred times before too. The year is 2097 AD. Only two agents of the Neo New York Special Forces remain to stand in the way of the warlords. That's Slash (you) and Alix, your beautiful partner. I bet you all think that Alix is just another one of those pretty but

vulnerable female characters and she's going to get kidnapped, right? Right. Alix is kidnapped by a guy called Raptor, and you have to rescue her. Lucky you've got a mystical sword called X-Kaliber, isn't it?

It all ends up as a scrolling, platform hack 'em up, with six levels of foot soldiers, Morphs and robots to slice up, the occasional mid-boss, and a boss at the end of every stage. It turns out that Raptor is only a stooge for an evil alien called Krux, so there's really seven bosses to deal with. Oh, and did I mention that Raptor is also Slash's brother? Whoops! I've spoiled the surprise. Now there's no reason for you to play it for yourself. Silly me.

When you're taking on the bosses, *X-Kaliber 2097* turns into something like a one-on-one fighting game. It's sort of like *Mazin Saga* on Mega Drive, only much less successful. You don't have any extra-moves - it's just you and the boss slugging it out

until one of you dies.

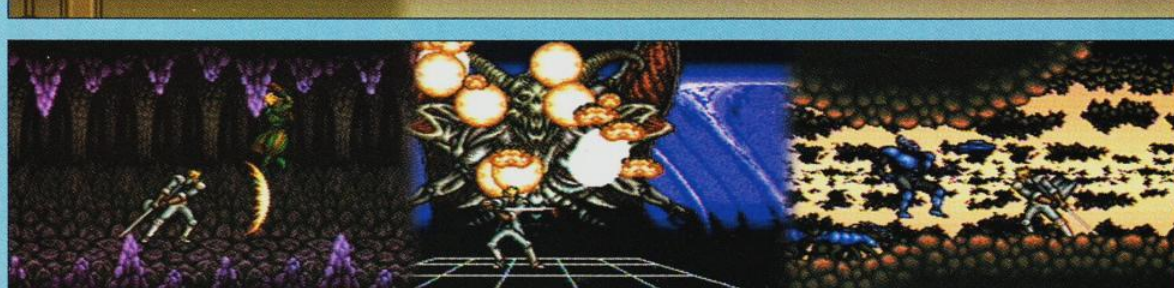
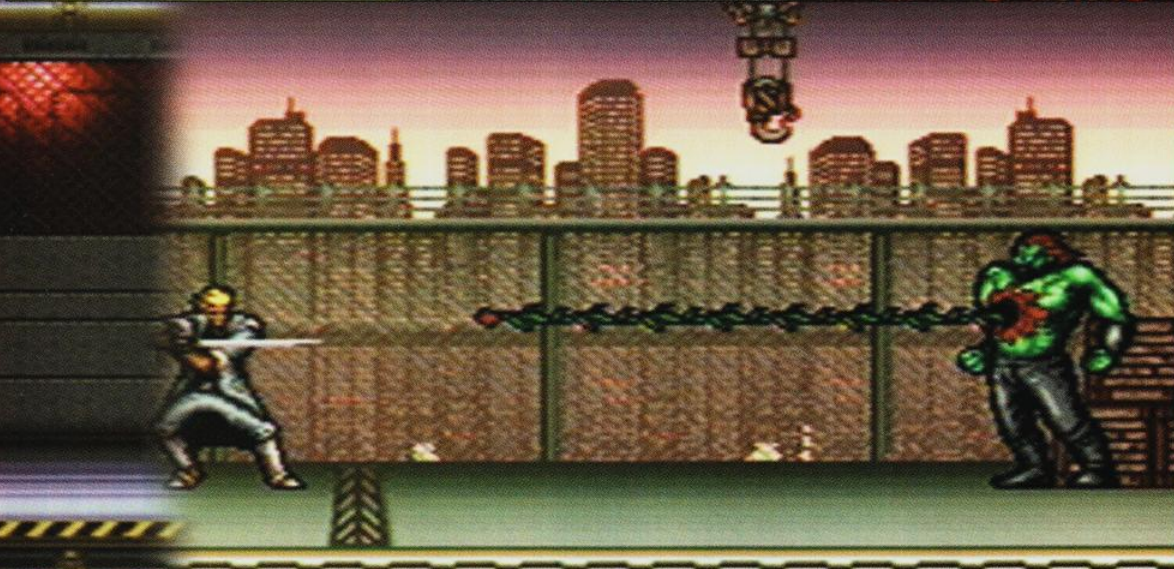
These one-on-one bits form the basis of the head-to-head two-player mode too. You and a friend pick from seven characters (Slash and all the bosses from the story mode except for Krux) then start hitting each other. With limited moves, small sprites and slow game speed, the two-player mode isn't exactly up there with *Streetfighter II* or the *Turtles*, but it should give you a few more minutes of game life if nothing else.

Ordinary Graphically, *X-Kaliber 2097* is a bit of a mixed bag. There's some nice character stills, some great background effects and the animation on Slash is generally very good, but there's a lot of average scenery to go with it and a few too many "disappearing tricks" when you hit an enemy for my liking. And all of the boss sprites (bar the final boss) are just too small to be menacing.

The real strength of the game (well,

it's not really that much of a strength) is the gameplay. It's nothing spectacularly innovative, but it's OK. The basic walk/jump/slash game style has been done to death but the controls are tight and responsive and with the right difficulty setting (there's eight difficulty levels in all - but don't play it on anything less than "normal") there's lots to do and you won't be totally miserable doing it. You get three different attack buttons (including one special swipe of the sword that leaves you very vulnerable to attack but makes your overcoat flutter in a suitably block manner), a jump button and a block button so you complain about a lack of buttons to push, can you?

Overall though, *X-Kaliber 2097* is a very ordinary game. Because it is playable and vaguely enjoyable you probably won't mind it the first few times you take a Slash, but will you even bother to plug it in after that? In a word, it's fodder, but you might as well rent it and see for yourself.



SNES

available

MAY

category

HACK 'EM UP

players

1-2

publisher

ACTIVISION

price

\$99.95

visuals

Lots of nice bits but lots of ordinary bits too. Good overall style but little else.

77

sound

Well at least now I know what Psykosonik do: dull, repetitive, crappy techno.

69

gameplay

Good controls and lots of moves make it playable enough, but it's not exactly knuckle-scorching action.

75

longterm

The two-player mode is something of a bonus and it is challenging on the harder settings, but will you bother coming back to it? No.

65

overall

Vaguely enjoyable, platform hack 'em up fodder that's more ordinary than a chicken, lettuce and mayo sandwich.

70%

Lufia and The Fortress of Doom



Andrew: You know, there's nothing I like more when I'm in the shower than having my back scratched with a nice, soapy loofa, but I never thought they'd make a game about one.

Stuart: It's "Lufia", not "Loofa", you idiot.

Andrew: Oh. I best shut up and review it then.

Lufia is not a sponge. She's a little girl with an over-sized head who's handy with a sword and even handier with magic spells. When Lufia finished school (she was the only girl in her class with blue hair) she found her career choices somewhat limited: she could either become a circus freak or a role-playing game character. She chose the latter and after a string of bit parts she is now a star, with her very own game: *Lufia and The Fortress of Doom*.

In Japan, *Lufia* was called *Estopolis* and it was a bit of a hit (*Estopolis II* will be released very soon). Then again, what RPG hasn't been a hit in Japan? In the English speaking world, RPGs are less successful - those that love them really love them, but the vast majority of the gaming public just aren't interested. And *Lufia* isn't going to change anyone's mind. It's a very traditional, solid RPG that'll please the fans, but won't convert the unbelievers.

Party On, Dudes The game starts with a prologue ("The Battle of Doom Island") with a difference - you actually play it. You control a party of super-charged heroes (Maxim, Guy, Selan and Artea) as they battle it out with

the evil Sinistrals. You destroy the Sinistrals and peace reigns the land once more. Next thing you know it's one hundred years later and you meet Lufia and have a bit of childhood fun. Nine years after that, the game proper begins. Monsters have been spotted and it looks like the Sinistrals are back. Only you (whoever you are), a warrior with the blood of Maxim flowing through your veins, can save the land.

From there, everything is very familiar. You roam around on a map screen, battling monsters, talking to

villagers, completing standard RPG tasks (there's lots of caves, towers and people to rescue), earning money, and building up your strength. You start the game alone, but soon Lufia joins your party (try and stop her) and eventually (with Aguro and the half-elf/half-girl with a big head, Jerin) you have a party of four. Everyone follows you in a nice, straight line.

The combat system is similar to many other RPG's (Sega's *Shining Force* for example): monsters attack you, the game pauses, and the combat menu pops up. Each member of



your party can either fight, cast spells, defend, or run like hell. The control system is excellent (it's all done with the joystick and two buttons) so giving monsters a good kicking is both quick and easy, but after a while, it does get a tad repetitive and you begin to wish they'd just leave you alone to get on with it.

The graphics are nice (in that very Japanese RPG kind of way) if not outstanding, the task at hand is sizeable (there's lots of towns to visit and lots of things to do), it's very playable and it can be quite charming, but *Lufia* is let down by a lack of imagination and innovation in both its plotting and gameplay. Compared to the likes of *Zelda* and *The Secret of Mana*, *Lufia* is just a bit ordinary.

FORMAT: SNES

AVAILABLE: MAY

CATEGORY: RPG

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: TAITO

PRICE: N/A

visuals

Cute, big-headed sprites, well drawn bad guys and plenty of complicated labyrinths to explore.

80

sound

The effects are good (especially the magic) but the music is repetitive and ultimately annoying.

69

gameplay

Lots to do and lots of places to do it in but it is all a bit run of the mill.

82

longterm

Like I said, it's a big 'un, but it's reasonably straightforward.

77

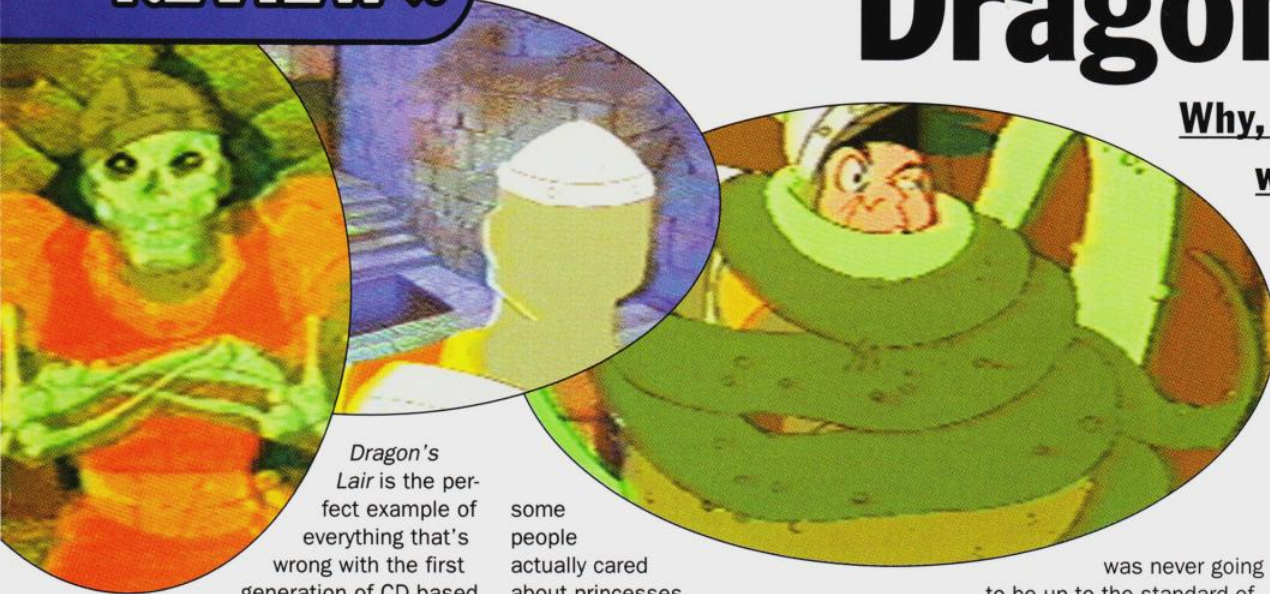
overall

A solid, playable RPG that just fails to stand out from the crowd.

79%

Dragon's Lair

Why, oh why, would anyone want to play a game as dated as this? As usual, ANDREW HUMPHREYS has no idea.



Dragon's Lair is the perfect example of everything that's wrong with the first generation of CD based games. It looks lovely, but

it's really not a game. Games need something we like to call "game-play" - you know, player involvement, control over a character, that sort of thing. *Dragon's Lair* has none of that stuff.

The original laser-disk coin-op (which was released so long ago I can't even remember the date) may have fooled a lot of people into parting with their cash (many gamers still regard it as a classic and it even spawned a TV series), but games like this just won't cut it any more. Or will they? *Dragon's Lair* is coming soon for the 3DO too, and home conversions of *Space Ace* (another old laser-disc game) are also imminent, so someone obviously thinks they will.

A Dork Named Dirk If you haven't seen the coin-op, you might want to know that the Fair Princess Daphne has been kidnapped by an evil dragon called Singe. You "play" (for want of a better word) a knight called Dirk the Daring. Dirk travels to the dragon's castle to rescue the princess. Younger HYPER readers might find such a sequence of events puzzling, but believe it or not, in the days before Fergie and Di,

some people actually cared about princesses.

The game (again, for want of a better word) is divided into a series of short, animated scenes. You can only affect Dirk's movements at certain critical points in each scene - if you don't move him in the right direction, or make him swing his sword (button B), he's dead. Just like *Road Avenger* or *Time Gal*, timing is everything. In fact, it's more than everything - even once you know exactly what you're doing there's no guarantee you'll be able to do it twice in a row.

Of course, it was the wonderful cartoon visuals that made *Dragon's Lair* so popular and, for the most part, they're just as wonderful on the Mega CD. The picture quality

was never going to be up to the standard of the laser disc original, but it's close enough. It's not full screen (we've cropped the black border from the screen-grabs) and it's got that slightly grainy feel that we've all come to know and love from the Mega CD. But Dirk is so well drawn and animated that it really doesn't matter.

Popcorn Because the animation is so good, you will want to see every single scene and that fact alone will keep you playing *Dragon's Lair* until the bitter end. But with unlimited continues, anyone with a half-decent memory and three-quarters decent reflexes should finish the game in a hurry. And once it's over, why would



you ever want to see it again?

Before you read the score (or now that you've read the score, whichever way you do things is fine by me) you should know that I've never liked *Dragon's Lair*. I played the coin-op once: two minutes and two dollars later I was a very disillusioned young man indeed. But if you're one of the many Dirk fans out there (nostalgia plays funny tricks with our brains, doesn't it?) you'll love this version of the game. It's a good conversion. Just don't say I didn't warn you when you wonder why you spent \$100 to watch a cartoon.

FORMAT: MEGA CD

AVAILABLE: MAY

CARTOON ADVENTURE

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: READYSOFT

PRICE: TBA

visuals

Lovely animation taken straight from the laser-disc original with only a small loss of quality. **85**

sound

Again, it's straight from the coin-op, but this time there's no dip in quality. **84**

gameplay

What gameplay? **25**

longterm

You'll want to finish it just to see all the scenes, but it won't take long. **38**

overall

A good conversion of the arcade original. Pity the arcade original was always a One Wow Wonder.

44%



Jump Raven is the sequel, of sorts, to the highly awarded *Lunicus* which came out on the Macintosh CD last year. I didn't play *Lunicus*, but after having a go at *Jump Raven* I wish I had, because this game has some very nice touches indeed. While it doesn't break any new ground with gameplay innovation, it's a very professionally put-together package and the options and intro sections are so clever and involving that you can't help but fall into the created universe and become quite addicted.

Gameplay comes second I never thought I'd be saying this, but the gameplay is almost peripheral to the extraordinarily well thought-out lead-in to the action. *Jump Raven* is set in a *Blade Runner*-esque nightmare world of post-Greenhouse flooding and ecocide. It's not really that far in the future either. The Greenhouse effect really kicked in during the last Clinton administration (Hillary's not Bill's), and cities such as New Orleans, London and Yeltsingrad (St Petersburg) are underwater, while tsunamis, plagues and starvation

have killed millions and wiped out most animal life. What's left of Earth's biological heritage survives only as genetic samples, frozen in liquid nitrogen "pods" and secured in zoological reserves.

Unfortunately, a fascist group of Skinheads (the Cyber Bund) have hijacked the pods and taken them back to the decaying and neo-feudal New York. You are the legendary mercenary pilot Jump Raven, and it's your job to get them back. Luckily, you're not alone and in fact, your co-pilot (you can choose from 6) will take a big role in the action.

Choices, choices, choices And here's where it really gets fun. The background is all explained with some great 3D animation, humour and speech, but you get to interview co-pilots yourself. You can choose from all sorts of criteria - capabilities, political viewpoints (measured on the Quayle-Kennedy Paradigm of Political Correctness), experience or looks. All the actor's voices are great, and the character's really do take on a life of their own. I ended up choosing the

skatepunk Thrash, and all throughout the mission he'd throw in gems like "Butthead on our ass!" or "Don't be a wuss, dude". However if I had chosen the Texan spunk Nikki, she would have been quoting Shakespeare when things got tough.

Co-pilot chosen it's time to meet the wonderful Weapons Lady. She's a fabulous British technocrat who will tell you about all the weapons you can purchase for your craft. This includes Cruise missiles which are the most powerful non-nuclear weapons currently available, and they come in 3 designer colours - tangelo, autumn heather and classic rust. Then you can choose the music for your mission, either Def Soul Tribe (hip hop), Sphexus (techno), Planet Flannel (grunge - which has become a quasi-religious belief system known as the Cobain, or Way of the Grunge) and Deathkiller (death metal). So unless you're a classical buff or a country and western freak, then you should be right.

It's almost time to actually play the game now, but before you do, you can have the metallic Perobot comprehen-

sively go through your crafts controls with you, as well as give you some incisive political comments. You can have your co-pilot look after hover control, navigation or weapons (all three if you like), so it's important to interview them carefully and see where their specialties lie. Basically though, it's an easy, and fairly intuitive control system, with your flight direction controlled by the keyboard and your weapon targeting with the mouse.

Playing the Game You start out in the Bronx, to take on the vicious Skinheads. You fly through the grid of streets with the main aim of finding the pods but downing enemies is also really important because you get a bounty for each kill which means you can upgrade weapons and repair your craft. The radar tells you where the pods and enemies are, so basically it's a full-on action chase and shoot 'em up until you're dead or all the pods are rescued. You'll no doubt run out of fuel, shields and weapons, but you will then be asked to rendezvous with the relevant supply craft. Don't forget you'll have to pay



Chablis



Cheesestick



Nikki



Dogstar

JumpRaven

Your co-pilot will chat constantly to you, but the video channel can also be hijacked by your enemies who will hurl useless insults.

The radar shows enemies in red, friends in blue, and pods in green.



You choose which of Jump Raven's controls you want the co-pilot to handle. You can give them any or all of them.

When support craft come to help you need the direction finder to get to them.

for everything, so keep an eye on the money situation.

Once the Bronx is cleared, you'll get to take on the "Da Kuan" (gene counterfeiters and smugglers) and clear up Brooklyn. Then comes the toughest enemies of all, the Cyberpunks, half-human half-machines who rule the ruins of Manhattan. The Read Me notes describe them as "a cross between *Seinfeld's* Kramer and the Terminator", so you can sort of see what crazies you're up against. Actually, all your enemies will try to get on your video channel and taunt you, and this adds a nice flavour to the action, especially when you blow them away right after cutting them off.

With only three missions it shouldn't take any reasonable gamer too long to complete, but there are three levels of difficulty so it can provide a challenge. The game itself is nothing special, and could have actually been a lot better. It looks OK, and the action can get quite tense, but somehow it doesn't grab you like it should. After the stunning intro and selection screens you are really immersed into the cyber gameworld and it's a bit of a disappointment to find only an average game tacked on. Still, an average game is better than a bad one, and I'm sure (especially with the great pre-game action) that lots of Mac owners will get some enjoyment out of this one.

The Greenhouse Effect became a reality during President Clinton's last term (that's Hillary's not Bill's), and the resulting flooding and starvation causes an anarchic mess. As a crackshot mercenary, you're not having a bad time of it all, but now it's time to do your civic duty and save the world's biodiversity. STUART CLARKE tries to remember that global warming is no excuse for an untidy home.

MAC CD

available

NOW

category

ACTION

players

1

publisher

PARAMOUNT

price

\$99.95

visuals

Intro, cut scenes and selection bits are stunning, and the in-game play, while not mind-blowing, doesn't look too bad either. **88**

sound

Speech is brilliant, and giving you the choice of techno, death metal, grunge or hip-hop to back your game is truly inspired. **94**

gameplay

It's fairly simple and you may find it dull straight away, but persevere and it may just grab you. **78**

longterm

You'll have a lot of fun selecting co-pilots, weapons and the rest, but with only three missions, the game itself won't keep you hanging around for that long. **75**

overall

One of the cleverest games around (in terms of backgrounding) and the gameplay's not too foul either. **79%**

Blake Stone Aliens of Gold

Everyone seems to have a Wolfenstein clone out on the market right now. I suppose it's time that Apogee released a sequel. Guess what? They have, and BEN MANSILL has reviewed it...



What a brilliant game *Wolfenstein* was. It achieved cult status almost overnight and quickly became the source of inspiration for game developers everywhere who were short on original creative ideas. The first person perspective of a fluid and believable 3-D world was a revelation. The realistic violence and acute sense of being there was a fresh and happy change.

Apogee gave the world a winner, and they knew it. It's been years now since we started wasting evil Nazi scum in gloomy stonewalled dungeons, and with only passable platform efforts from Apogee in the meantime, it seems they must have been working on something really special to follow up this gaming gem.

Much Anticipated *Blake Stone - Aliens of Gold* is the much anticipated sequel to *Wolfenstein*, and if not for two significant factors, would be a rather special game. Firstly and worstly, this is just a variation on the theme - the scenery is a new space station sort of world, but the game engine is identical. It is no improvement on the countless shareware clones which also used this engine. Secondly, releasing this game at the same time as the vastly superior and conceptually identical *Doom* must rate as one of the most

inept marketing decisions of all time.

The *Wolfenstein* game engine - which *Blake Stone* uses, restricts it's world to only flat levels. No stairs to go up or down equals severe limitations in the architectural possibilities of the world. Also limiting, is the need for each angle to be a flavourless 90 degrees. All the walls and rooms have boring right-angle corners and are predictable and weary. A further downer is the inability to have any decent graphics tart up the floor or ceiling. The occasional yellow blob up high is a light, it's associated dim blob on the ground it's reflection, patchwork patterns above redeem slight-

ly but the effect is shallow. In contrast, *Doom* is a lavishly complex world of split levels, mezzanines, bridges, over-looking balconies and more. *Doom* has a massive range of design styles, a complete sense of being within a huge sprawling complex and the most effective 3-D environment modelling yet seen.

New Wallpaper *Blake Stone* really only gives a player *Wolfenstein* with new wallpaper and guards with new uniforms, and while that in itself is not such a bad thing, it should have been something revolutionary after all this time, considering the creative talents at Apogee.



Naturally, the friendships we made with the horny WWII-era guns must be rekindled with a new range of space-age weaponry. Taking your new toys to work though, is unfortunately a lame and unsatisfying affair. The half a dozen different guns shoot with a most unmeaty pop, nothing as satisfying as the flesh tearing rip of the old *Wolfenstein* armoury or the potent and sexy stopping-power *Doom* offers. Still, your poor victims do collapse in a bloody and screaming heap when blasted, so that's surely worth something.

Buy *Blake Stone* if you are totally Doomed-out and want more but are prepared to deal with less. Just don't expect what it should have been.

FORMAT: PC

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: ACTION

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: APOGEE

PRICE: N/A

visuals

As good as *Wolfenstein*, a millionth as good as *Doom*. It's odd that Apogee couldn't do better after all this time. **72%**

sound

Crappy. Futuristic space guns should have oomph and sex appeal, but they don't. Pained death screams are OK though. **68**

gameplay

You know the routine, run around shooting and picking up health and ammo. If it ain't broke... **76**

longterm

60 new levels of *Wolfenstein* in space, buy it and you WILL play it through. See you in hell sucker! **78**

overall

Fond memories of splattered Nazis from its magic predecessor linger, and this is more of the same. Cutting edge it is not. **73%**

FieldsOfGlory

Military strategists used to play on big tables with little soldier figurines. Now they play on small screens with sprites for troops. BEN

MANSILL puts on his Napoleonic uniform and sits down for a long campaign.



It was a time of chivalry. Of honour, gallantry and of dashing derring-do. A mostly pleasant time for a soldier. The Monarchistic Feudal system heaped lavish reward and babes aplenty upon the brave young men who stoutly defended King and Country from evil aggressors. Snappy uniforms in Super-Omo bright colours spread across the pristine landscape, following the will of a few power hungry individuals.

Sadly though for the hapless soul who found himself in combat, the task at hand involved the most gory and barbaric method of warfare. Hand to hand and face to face with a huge variety of generally sharp and pointed implements which were cleverly designed to render the human body inoperative.

Testing Microprose, masters of the grand intro and so-so gameplay have come up with *Fields of Glory*, which simulates the second and last coming of Napoleon Bonaparte through six scenarios - four historical and two fictional. In each, the French, English or Prussian armies are commanded in historical formations or user-defined layouts, and in a rarely seen blessing, the computers artificial intelligence offers some fresh and properly testing tactical opposition.

Also tested will be patience of a player prepared to tolerate some slight (and

one extreme) shortcomings which persistently annoy while you try and get on with an otherwise first class game. The most unforgivable crime of having a war unavoidably end just when you are really enjoying yourself is the game's biggest problem. Each scenario has predefined victory conditions, and the very moment each is achieved, a screen pops up to inform you of your cleverness or stupidity. It's an abrupt ending with no warning or option to continue. Victory conditions include moving units to a certain location - which the computer player usually attempts to do at the first opportunity, thereby rendering worthless your carefully contrived battle plans and minor victories. It also stops you from slaughtering every single enemy left alive. This is an essential delight in a strategy game and it's absence is sorely missed.

Perspectives On the plus side though, *Fields of Glory* offers a genuinely fresh set of perspectives and challenges. The Napoleonic theme is not a new one, nor is the attempt to simulate the close encounter of individuals. Microprose have successfully done away with the need for representative icons, and have depicted the various units types as lots of colourful little men marching and waving swords at each other. Three levels

of close ups provide just enough tactical scope for happy and efficient warring. The most distant is a complete map overhead, there's the main field view in between and a dirty fighting zoom-in at close range. The close in view is only really useful for untangling congested units, so don't expect any truly explicit sword thrusting. Overall this game's main strength is the fascinating and different tactical and strategic challenge it presents.

The three main unit types - Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery (divided into Light and Heavy for the latter two, and four scaled infantry types), are moused into position across a lush green countryside with hills, valleys and other useful terrain features. Units are either given their orders directly, or for larger actions through a chain of command system with enough variety to allow large offensive or defensive actions to be performed without much fuss. The various talents each unit type has for certain kinds of combat must of course be fully appreciated. *Fields of Glory* lets the player get on with exercising pure strategy in a real-time situation with weapons only effective at extreme close range.

Because it's Microprose and mainstream, *Fields of Glory* is designed to be rewarding for any level of PC strategist, and there's not much wrong with that.



FORMAT: PC

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: STRATEGY

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: MICROPROSE

PRICE: \$99.95

visuals

A typically professional effort from Microprose. Clear, cute and colourful. Watch each man die!

79

sound

Lame combat effects with only a few basic sounds. Moody and mostly non-irritating background music.

70

gameplay

Very tough and truly enjoyable tactical warfare. Sharp mouse dexterity and creative strategy are required.

84

longterm

Only six scenarios may seem skimpy, but each can be played over and over with a different game resulting each time.

81

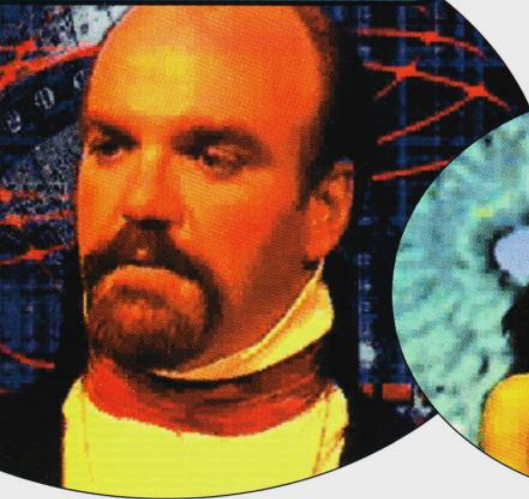
overall

A quality strategy game with sprites! Bloody good I say. Can you succeed where Napoleon failed?

78%

QuantumGate

It is the future and the Earth's environmental crisis has finally reached a critical point. What's GRANTLEY DAY going to do about it? Join Greenpeace? No, he's going to play this new game from Media Visions...



The year is 2157. Through the mismanagement of the world's resources by its past and present inhabitants, it has been forecast that the planet Earth will die in five years time. To halt this devastation, a program known as the Eden Initiative has been put in motion by the United Nations. The key to saving the Earth is a precious rare mineral known as Iridium Oxide, which exists in very small amounts on Earth, but in abundance on the planet AJ3905. Your task is to help the UN Task force to secure large amounts of Iridium Oxide and transport it back to Earth. Welcome to the world of *Quantum Gate*.

Don't be fooled Sounds exciting, but don't be fooled by a good story and an interesting introduction, as *Quantum Gate* needs close scrutiny before any real evaluation can be given.

You play the part of a soldier gathering the Iridium Oxide Ore, which will save Earth. This is not an easy task. Planet AJ3095 is inhabited by three giant mutant bug creatures, who will stop at nothing to keep their Iridium Oxide away from you. Because its atmosphere is

unbreathable to humans, special machinery has to be employed to clear these bugs away, so that mining equipment can come in.

The game is a mix of both interactive video and action. The story parts of the game are a series of video sequences, linked together by your actions. The action part of the game takes place in what it known a virtual simulation. Through a process known as Virtual Reality Augmentation, you can directly link your mind to the vehicle you're using to battle the mutants. Thus when you get killed, you don't actually die, but your cerebral link with the battle vehicle (which looks like a pawn piece in a chess game) is severed. The action is fast and furious and there are hundreds of creatures to kill. But you're not alone in the task force, as there are many other soldiers to back you up, and you must back them up in return.

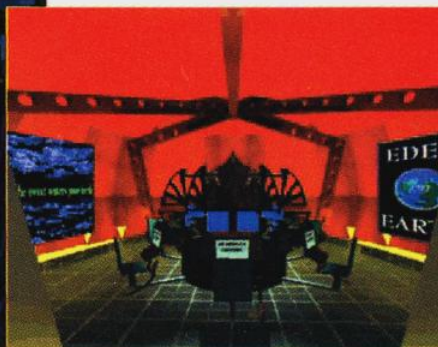
Technical Difficulties

Unfortunately *Quantum Gate* has both the story and the makings to be a good game, but it fails in the important points that are critical to PC gamers. For example, how many people have 24bit True Colour cards that can display 16 million colours

at once? To play it effectively you're going to need one. It can be played in 256 colours using a standard 16bit card, but the graphics are appalling. All screen shots you see are from the true colour mode. Don't think it's the same in 256 colours, because it's not.

Quantum Gate also runs under Windows 3.1. While this is not a bad thing, in the process it messes up your sound drives by installing new drivers that are incompatible with other software. It also likes to rewrite important system files. When you actually get the game working well, the actual size of the video images are only 20% of the main screen, with the surround area being in black. The action part of the game though does appear in full screen.

On a high note, *Quantum Gate* has excellent digital sound and music, with enchanting scores at certain times, and chilling effects while in battle. It also boasts lots of new technology, such as Virtual Cinema and Virtual Reality simulations, but what do these actually mean to the PC game player? Granted, it has excellent graphics (in True Colour), excellent digital sound effects and must have taken years to design and create, but people who play games on the PC expect more. Until a game like *Quantum Gate* can look great in 256 colours and has decent sized action on a 640x480 screen, it's something that PC owners should look hard at before purchasing.



FORMAT: PC CD-ROM

AVAILABLE: NOW

INTERACTIVE MOVIE

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: MEDIA VISION

PRICE: \$109.95

visuals

Visuals are great in 16 Million colours, but you should forget it for 256 colour displays.

80

sound

Enthralling digital sounds effects add to the realism.

87

gameplay

Difficult to master and slow in many sections.

40

longterm

It really depends upon personal preference. Some people will enjoy playing it, while others will get bored.

55

overall

Big on novelty, small on gameplay.

58%

The Elder Scrolls-Arena

Fantasy is fun. Role-playing is fun. Put them together and you've got double the excitement. GRANTLEY DAY ventures into the latest sword and sorcery RPG...



While quite a few recent games have tried to bring the 360 degree rotational movement to the fantasy role playing circuit, most have failed. However *Arena*, which is the first adventure in the Elder Scrolls Trilogy, seems to come quite close to success.

Bethesda Softworks have created the hugest game world I have ever seen in any FRP game, to base their adventure. There are more dungeons, castles and towns here than you could poke a half-elf paladin at, and exploration will take you months, not weeks.

Danger and Dark Magic The plot is fairly standard. You must venture forth into a world of danger and dark magic to recover the Staff of Chaos which has been broken into six different parts. Once found, you must re-forge the Staff to release the king who has been trapped in another dimension by a terrible demon. While this may seem rather cliched, the plot is encouraged by other points in the game to make it likeable and interesting.

Arena has an excellent character creator. It is both accurate and intricate in detail. The only disappointment is the same disappointment that I have with all fluid movement games of this type - you only have one character. I miss the days of four players like in *Eye of the Beholder* or six as in *Bane of the Cosmic Forge*. In the character generator, you can choose from eight different races, including five new races, like Bretons, a tall dark-

haired people, highly intelligent and bred on magic, or the Argonians, a highly evolved race of reptilians, bred with strength and agility. There's also 16 different character classes you can choose from. Six are of the thief class and range from Acrobats to Assassins, five are from the warrior class and range from Knights to Monks, and the last five are from the mage class and range from Spellswords to Nightblades.

Swords and Spells The combat system is standard for this type of game. Your weapon, whether it be a sword or a mace is hurled out in front of you as you attack and you actually see it as you attempt to strike the monster. Unlike other combat systems, *Arena* has many different types of attacks depending on which way you move your mouse. It takes a bit of getting used to, but once you have learnt it, you are on your way to successfully winning at combat.

Of course, no fantasy RPG would be complete without magic, and *Arena* has plenty of it. Every combat spell has a different graphic effect, coupled with a different sound. Learning new spells can also be fun, as *Arena* comes with a spell creator,

that enables you to create your own specialties for your Mage. Choosing from 80 different effects, you can create different levels of different types of spells that effect different monsters in different ways. In all, there are thousands of spells combinations you can create.

The only problem with *Arena* seems to be its speed. The game was fast enough on a 486DX33, but when testing it on a 386DX33 it was markedly slower. It was still playable however so don't be too put off.

Arena has everything to offer the fantasy role-player. Its not just an action game, as many of the fluid systems available on the market today seem to be, but a genuine RPG. Bethesda Softworks have definitely entered into the arena of fantasy role-playing with a bang and I'm sure, given the quality of the first chapter of *The Elder Scrolls*, that they will be around for quite some time.



Mojath Stormbinder		
Dark Elf	Health: 31/31	
Assassin	Fatigue: 111	
Level 1	Gold: 25	
Str: 64	Damage: +1	Max Hit: 35
Int: 63	Spell Pts: 0	To Hit: +2
Wis: 51	Magic Def: +0	
Mag: 55	To Hit: +1	To Defend: +1
Spd: 45	Healch: +0	Wood Mod: +0
End: 48	Chaos: -1	
Per: 43		
Luc: 45		
Exp: 0	BONUS PTS: 0	
Fire: +0	Poison: +1	Magic: +0
Gold: +0	Shock: +0	
Done		



FORMAT: PC

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: FANTASY RPG

PLAYERS: 1

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS

PRICE: \$99.95

visuals

Great fluid 360 degree motion, combined with good special effects.

82

sound

Heart pounding sounds of terror, magic and monsters really involve you.

80

gameplay

Average story coupled by an excellent role-playing game engine, make the gameplay interesting and effective.

78

longterm

With over 8 million square kilometres to explore, does this world ever end!

95

overall

Move over Ultima Underworld II, here comes Arena. Fantasy role-playing fans should definitely check this one out.

85%

ULTIMA PAGAN



There seems to be a new Ultima game or add-on every few months, and the amazing thing about it is that their quality never seems to deteriorate. Ultima 8 is the latest, but is it the greatest? GRANTLEY DAY goes adventuring into a whole new world with the Avatar...



Gameplayers of Australia, your wait is over. The God of Fantasy Role Playing games, *Ultima 8*, is finally here, and it has arrived with the biggest explosion ever, literally knocking over all other fantasy RPGs in its path.

History For those of you who remember, we left *Ultima 7 Part II - The Serpent Isle* with the Guardian, the evil demi-god from another dimension, lifting us not only out of our known universe, but out of the time stream itself with the promise that "maybe you should visit my world for a change". With the deliverance of *Ultima 8*

from Origin, the Guardian's promise is being fulfilled, and we are tossed into the mystical world of Pagan. A new land, new world, new monsters, new spells, new people and most importantly a new Avatar.

Just in case you are new to the Ultima Adventures, and have had your head under a rock for the past 12 years, Ultima is the best progressively advancing computer FRP game of all time. In all Ultima adventures, the gameplayer takes control of the central character known as the Avatar. He is a being from the mystical world of Planet Earth, brought to Britannia, home of Lord British (also from Earth), to constantly save it from destruction.

Due to the fact that it is hard for game designers to continually put the same world in danger to be rescued by the same hero, *Ultima 8* is following in the footsteps of *Ultima 7*, and continues the saga of the Avatar vs the Guardian, who is hell bent on destroying not only Britannia but also Earth and other surrounding dimensions. Since we have thwarted the Guardian's attempts at domination three times now, he is getting extremely annoyed by our continual disruptions.

Changes Starting this new adventure, it is easy to see the changes Origin have made to not only the game interface, but also to the gameplay itself. The Avatar is bigger and better with

the incorporation of over 1200 frames of animation. He can now jump, climb, run and throw, as well as walk and fight. The screen has a smoother scroll, and the angle we view the isomorphic world of Pagan, is slightly different than of *Ultima 7*, giving a greater display of scenery.

The spells in *Ultima 8* are fantastic, giving you the ability to summon monsters and demons from the depths of hell to aid you in battle, ignite areas in towering flames, render yourself invisible, walk on air and to enter the ethereal void. The animation sequence the Avatar shows as he cast spells are a joy to watch. You can see him groaning with concentration as he summons energy from the mystical plane of power.

There is no choice in the sex or colour of the Avatar as in previous games, we now have a white male as standard. Gone are all the portraits used when conversing with other characters in the game, which is due to the fact that each different character and monster has at least 400 frames of animation. This looks great without having to provide a blown up version of their face. Criticisms that Origin received regarding *Ultima 7 Part II*, have also been taken into consideration, and there is less emphasis on the daily necessities such as eating and sleeping which were constant annoyances.





Pagan So why has the Guardian decided to drop us into Pagan? Well, while we are busy trying to stay alive in a world in which he has supreme power, his forces will take over both the Earth and Britannia. Once conquered, he will parade the Avatar as a degraded idol of a fallen and diminished ideal. But, as before, you must do your very best to stop him.

Pagan is very different to Britannia and Earth. Forging bonds with the people under the Guardians power will not be easy. Most importantly though, you must discover the secret of the four elemental titans that are worshiped on Pagan. Pyros lord of fire, Lithos lord of the Earth, Stratos lord of the air and the forth mysterious elemental. Once these titans have been brought under your control it just might be time to turn the tables on the Guardian and bring the battle to him for a change!

Technical

The game requires a massive 32 MB of free space on the hard disk.

As with all modern computer games, *Ultima 8* requires a 386 as minimum. But even on a 486DX33 which was the computer I tested the game on, it only ran at an average pace. The media hype that *Ultima 8* would be a hi-res SVGA game running a resolution of 640x480 was wrong, and it still uses the standard MCGA 320x200. An extra speech pack will be released after the game which I find a downside and I am quietly sorry that the whole speech pack money making idea has now found its way to the Ultima series. The game costs \$109.95 which is very reasonable for a game of this calibre, but a speech pack for an extra \$60.00 is getting a little outrageous.

So what if you have to start your character from level one again. So what if its another Ultima adventure. So

what if your character is called the Avatar and that name is become old and decrepit. *Ultima 8 - Pagan* is a statement in this world of never ending fantasy role-playing clones. It heralds a new beginning in not only the FRP genre but also in computer game design. If you have played the previous Ultima adventures, or even if your haven't, *Ultima 8* will surely give you hours or enjoyment, and is a worthy addition to any gamer's collection. Take the plunge into Pagan and become involved in the adventures of the Avatar and I guarantee that you will never look back!



PC

available

NOW

category

RPG

players

1

publisher

EA/ORIGIN

price

\$109.95

visuals

94

The most superb graphics I have ever seen in a fantasy Role Playing Game.

sound

NA

Hard to tell as there were no sounds in the Beta version reviewed.

gameplay

95

Easy to control, easy to master and easy to play, Origin have thought of everything for this one.

longterm

96

With an intricate plot and detailed story line, *Ultima 8* will last for hours, days, months...

overall

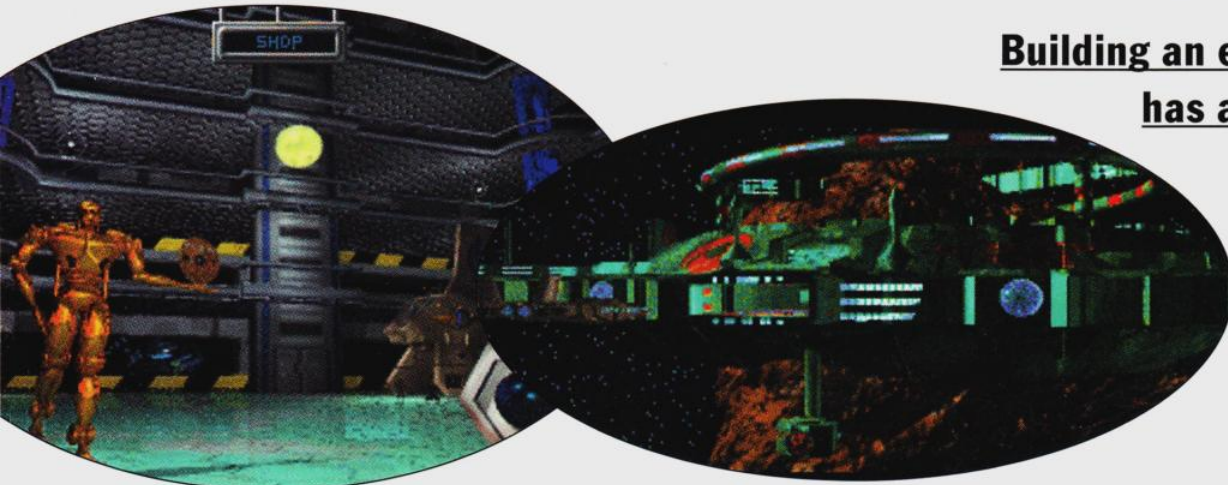
If you have ever played a fantasy role-playing game of any type and enjoyed it, buy *Ultima 8* and experience the best.

95%

Starship

Building an eternal galactic empire has always been a dream of

BEN MANSILL's. Pity he's never going to realise it, even with this games help.



I was pretty excited as I watched *Starship* install. The screen shots on the fabulous looking box promised much as I eagerly anticipated my imminent dynasty of galactic domination. I recklessly cast aside my protective shell of objectivity and readied myself for a big new game experience. At last, I naively thought, some new fun after so many barren months.

Wrong! My hopes crashed heavily to the ground within a short 30 minutes, followed by a character building re-assessment of the power of point-of-sale marketing and the sheer laziness and lack of creativity that game designers are capable of.

Asteroids Re-hash The core game of *Starship* is like an inferior rehash of *Asteroids*, with *Galaxian* graphics

clicking it where you want to go or shoot. This means you must abandon the helm and trigger for crucial periods in order to access other ship essentials on the abysmally designed control panel. All I can say for this method is that it really sucks!

This farcical bit of arcade tripe is dressed up by 30 Megs of irrelevant cut scenes and numerous ship building options. A minor distraction from the whole folly is an equally lame ground combat option. Land on a planet and an overhead view shows your comical sprites rampaging through waves of aliens with the ultimate goal of claiming the planet as your own, and adding another yellow dot to the starmap.

Half of the grand plan is to build up to the best starship by picking up credits and hardware from destroyed enemy ships. The other half involves claiming planets with the ultimate aim of turning all the dots on a two dimensional map yellow. I gave the game a decent run in case there were

hidden qualities deep within, but it was not to be. Readers, I can confidently proclaim that this game is one big-time fizzer.

Basic Elements The great tragedy is that *Starship* has elements which could easily be transformed into something much better. It has most of the basic requirements in place, except they're peripheral to the disastrous main game. The intro and cutscenes are pleasant, and a ship configuration section is good but utterly wasted on this arcade garbage. While it's possible to build the ultimate killer starship and ground combat teams, the huge costs involved mean you need serious wads of cash to become any sort of threat. The dreary method of gaining said riches is so demotivating that I doubt many will bother. The benefit of equipping with the best is that it makes a dull time pass quicker.

It is sad to see the efforts of talented programmers and artists totally shot at the last. Granted, making a good interstellar exploration and conquest game has proven to be a difficult thing, but it's pitiful to see such a promising base for a decent game wasted on such arcane arcade nonsense.



for colour and the worlds worst mouse interface for control. The overhead view of your little sprite ship shows your patch of space steadily invaded by a stream of alien baddies. Your ship controls are laid out across the bottom with the style and ergonomics of a really cheap VCR, and the damage indicator will move rapidly into the red as you scramble frantically to click the tiny buttons spread out haphazardly which control weapons, speed and shields.

A mouse is the only control method available, and it's used to move your ship around the screen and fire your selected weapon by



FORMAT: PC

AVAILABLE: NOW

PLAYERS: 1

CATEGORY: ARCADE

PUBLISHER: MERIT

PRICE: \$99.95

visuals

Chunky style VGA in garish colours. The stunning screen shots on the box are tiny to hide coarse detail.

78

sound

Mundane elevator music, guns which make gun noises and fuzzy digitised speech during the intro. It's passable.

74

gameplay

A lavishly dressed piece of arcade crud. Boring, repetitive and just not fun. Your average demo disk is better.

48

longterm

The final scene would have to be utterly incredible to justify the long haul in this one.

52

overall

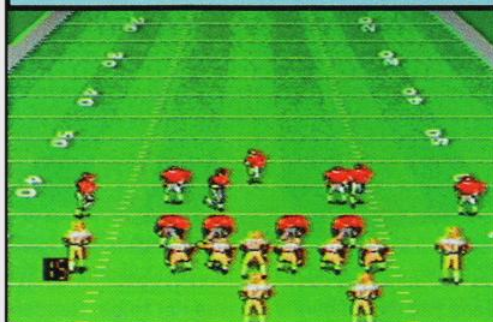
If you are really rich, buy it to display the sharp looking box and hope no friends ask to see the game.

60%

BYTE SIZER

BILL WALSH COLLEGE FOOTBALL MEGA CD

Available: Now
Category: College Football
Players: 1-4
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: No RRP



I vaguely recall doing a Byte Sizer on the cart version of *Bill Walsh College Football* for the very first issue of *HYPER*. It was a happy time for us all and I liked it a lot - I may have called it "the best Gridiron game I've played on any system". But that was before *Madden NFL 94* came along. *Madden 94* is unarguably better and if you're a first timer, then that's the game to get. *Bill Walsh* on Mega CD remains a game for hard core footie freaks only. It also remains essentially the same game as *Bill Walsh* on cart.

That's right, it's one of those "let's take a cart game, add some crappy full-motion video and whack it on a CD" Mega CD titles that we've all come to know and love so well. But at least they've whacked on a lot of crappy full-motion video. It's all of Bill himself, in a tiny little window in the middle of the screen, sharing his wealth of knowledge on all sorts of topics, like "Third Quarter Strategy", "College Life", and "What To Do If Your Testicles And/Or Nipples Catch Fire On The Field" (*um, are you sure?* - Stuart).

Apart from the Walsh Video option, some truly awful music (including "authentic CD-quality College songs and sports soundtracks") and some new crowd noises read straight off the CD (and even the quality of all this white noise is pretty bad), there's nothing on the CD that you won't find in the cart game. There's meant to be "enhanced graphics throughout the game" but I saw no evidence of any such thing.

Bill Walsh was a good game on cart, so the CD conversion can't be all bad. Like all of EA's sports games, it plays very well and it's got a lot of depth, and because it's college football, it moves along at a quicker pace than *Madden*. There's still 48 teams to play with and it's still 4-Way Play compatible too. But if you're after a Mega CD Gridiron game, you'd be better off checking out *Joe Montana CD* first - at least it makes some attempt at using the Mega CD's hardware.

Andrew Humphreys

VISUALS	79	SOUND	78	GAMEPLAY	92	LONGTERM	90	OVERALL	82
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NHL HOCKEY 94 MEGA CD

Available: Now
Category: Sports
Players: 1-4
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: No RRP



"Memories, from the corners of my mind. Pretty, water-coloured memories, of the way we were..." Sob. This issue is just full of reminiscences from the past, isn't it? First *Bill Walsh*, and now *NHL 94*. I reviewed the cart game way back in *HYPER #2*, when we were young, happy, and carefree. Like *Bill Walsh*, this is another case of whacking a cart game on a CD and adding a few improvements, but the presentation of *NHL 94* is way cooler.

So what's new? For starters, there's a nifty intro, with full screen (yes, full screen), full-motion video of NHL action. The quality is as good as I've seen on the Mega CD. There's more video (in a much smaller window) in the Player Cards screens too. And speaking of Player Cards, now you can check out every player's stats in more detail than ever - the stats stretch back for seasons!

Surprise, surprise, you get CD quality sound too. Mmmm, CD quality organ music. The effects are excellent, from the swish of the puck, to the body checks into the boards, to the roar of the crowd. The cart sounds good, but this is a lot better. There's heaps of pre-game digitised commentary from Ron Barr too (which is missing from *Bill Walsh*). Ron runs through team match-ups and takes a look at every individual match-up on the ice. It's a great feature, and there's enough information in there to make the fans go wild.

The only other improvement over the cart game (and it's a doozy) is a hefty speed boost. *NHL 94* on CD is very fast and as far as I'm concerned, faster means better. Yesiree, those one-timers really zing! With the speed boosted, that classic *EA Hockey* gameplay is more intense than ever and with a 4 Way Play thingy, it's so much fun it should be illegal. If you do own the cart, there's no reason to own this, but true hockey freaks are going to love it.

Andrew Humphreys

VISUALS	89	SOUND	94	GAMEPLAY	96	LONGTERM	92	OVERALL	94
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CHUCK ROCK II

MEGA CD

Available: Now
Category: Platformer
Players: 1
Publisher: Core Design
Price: \$109.95



Brutal honesty is a lot of fun. Just the thought of reviewing an incredibly crappy game (like *Last Action Hero*) thrills me no end. Even mediocrity excites me. And that's where Chuck Rock comes in. *Chuck Rock* was one of the most overrated, mundane platformers ever released for the Mega Drive. *Chuck II: Son of Chuck* continued the tradition of out and out mediocrity. It was just begging for a Mega CD release, wasn't it?

Notwithstanding his huge and rather unattractive gut, Chuck has managed to father a child. But Chuck has been kidnapped by the evil car manufacturer, Brick Jagger (I know it sucks, but it's better than Gary Gritter), so Chuck Jr, armed only with his trusty wooden club and a slightly soiled nappy, has to rescue him.

This is exactly the same game as the cartridge version. All that's been added is an animated intro (and it's not a bad one), "CD quality sound and music", and an extra level (to make a not very whopping six levels in total). The graphics are bright and colourful, with lots of cartoony dinosaurs roaming around, and just like the cart game, if nothing else, it is at least a playable little platformer.

But there is absolutely nothing about this game that is in any way remarkable. It's one of those games that you've played before, even if you've never actually laid eyes on it. I'm not talking about past life experiences either, it's just that you know exactly what's going to happen before it happens. You collect things, hit things, jump on things, and before you know it, you're fighting an end of level boss.

I suppose that *Chuck Rock II* is no worse than the millions of other platform games out there, but the point is, it's no better either. I can't think of a single, solitary reason why you'd want to buy it. It might be fun for a few minutes, but, do you really want to wallow in a sea of mediocrity? Oooh, I've come over all literary.

Andrew Humphreys



LETHAL ENFORCERS

SNES

Available: Now
Category: Shooting
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Konami
Price: N/A



One look in your local arcade will prove that there's a whole load of video shoot 'em ups being released at the moment. This "shoot at the live actors" thing was started off by the mediocre *Mad Dog McCree*, but thankfully the games are becoming less restricted to purely video footage. *Lethal Enforcers* is the first mega big title of this nature to hit the home consoles and it's pretty damn good.

The Mega Drive and Mega CD versions were excellent, and changed very little from the arcade, and the SNES conversion is also up to scratch, but it isn't without a few flaws. The main problem in this otherwise excellent conversion is the absence of blood and the innocent victims don't die. Now is it just me or are Nintendo missing the point of the new ratings system? If a game features violence then let the rating reflect that. Censorship is not the solution. The way they're going, their next console looks like being incapable of producing the colour red! Get over it Nintendo - video games are not just for kids!

Anyway, my other problem was that it plays too slow (although I was playing an imported copy) but other than that, this game is great, with interactive backgrounds that have shattering glass, shootable security cameras and more. Plus they've managed to get all the arcade atmosphere, if that's possible. The gun (which is included) is super accurate, so there's no excuse for a lame shot. It can also be adjusted to satisfy your need for absoluteness. All in all, this is good, harmless shooting fun that does what the Superscope should be doing!

Brian Costelloe

Thanks to the Gamesmen (02) 580 9888 for the cart.



T2 - JUDGMENT DAY

SNES/MEGA DRIVE

Available: Now
Category: Action
Players: 1
Publisher: LJN
Price: \$109.95



Remember our review of *Last Action Hero*? No? Well get the February issue and read it, only change the name of the game to *T2*.

It's makes me really sad to see crap games like this, and even sadder when I have to play them long enough to review. Up until this point, I have had the good fortune of reviewing only the good carts for HYPER, but I suppose the law of averages was bound to catch up with me.

The thing that annoys me most about this cart is that unlike *Last Action Hero*, *T2* was an incredible cinematic creation, and it would have been nice for the game to have followed suit. But sadly this is not the case, and the "let's pay a fortune for the license, run out of cash and only have the budget for a shit cart" mentality seems to have prevailed again.

OK, well the game seems to follow the plot of the movie quite closely, and when I first got my hands on the cart and looked through the book before plugging it in, I was actually almost eager in anticipation. What a sad fool I was, but in my defence, it does look half good on paper. Yet this is where the design for the game should have stayed. The basic gameplay is this: a jerky Arnie sprite shuffles around retardedly, throwing pathetically underanimated punches at the wobbly and repetitive biker dudes that are wandering about aimlessly. 'Nuff said.

I actually wondered if *T2* was a breakthrough in 16bit technology in that this cart worked in both 16 and 8 bit modes, and that I had mistakenly turned it on with the switch set to 8bit. No such luck! It does attempt to have some variety in gameplay, as it also contains a frustratingly unplayable motorbike section and who knows what else to follow. I certainly don't because at that point some fascinating patterns of paint peeling on the ceiling had grabbed my attention.

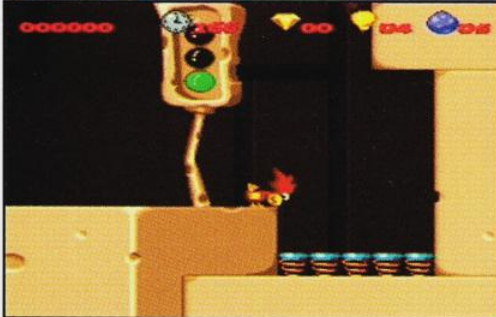
Steve Polak



ALFRED CHICKEN

SNES

Available: Now
 Category: Platform
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Mindscape
 Price: \$109.95



A mental chicken with a desire to save the universe, and a seriously out of date 'new wave' hairdo reminiscent of Duran Duran, are the ingredients for another in the long list of platform games available for the SNES.

Alfred takes what is known as the cutesy and comedic route through platform land (much like *Bubsy*, *Tiny Toons* and a host of other carts). So what does he have to offer? Well he can jump and sort of glide/fly which isn't all that new, but Alfred can do one thing others cannot, and that is beak bash the hell out of the foes he faces. He can do a "beak dive bomb" move, as well as the standing peck.

There are some fairly creditable aspects to Alfred, as the game is visually well presented, with lots of bright backdrops. Alfred himself has a nice stupid look about him which makes it hard to hate the little guy, but there is nothing outstanding about him. He just walks along, looks dopey, and dive bombs the occasional opponent.

The game also rates reasonably high on the frustat-o-meter in that Al's principal weapon (the dive), is a little tricky to execute quickly, as you have to push down when just above a target, and if you miss, the little Red Rooster reject is stuck prostrate with beak embedded in the ground for just enough time to make you very vulnerable.

Otherwise there are plenty of varied, yet uninspired powerups, and Alfred has balloons and other bonuses to pop on the way. It also has password support, which is always good. The cartoonish graphics reflect a valiant attempt at giving the cart a bit of a distinctive style and they do work quite well. But the music! UUU-UGH! Who let the composer of this synth driven crap out of the playschool kiddie music workshop? Still, whilst not being peck of the month this cart is a creditable effort.

Steve Polak



WOLFENSTEIN 3D

SNES

Available: Now
 Category: Action
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Extreme
 Price: N/A



There's many a boss out there who has walked past offices or work areas with the suspicion that what was shown on the monitor was not entirely work related. One of the main offenders in reducing productivity for PC users was *Wolfenstein 3D*, which has been around on computer for a couple of years now. The long-awaited SNES version is now upon us, and wouldn't you know it - it's not what we wanted!

The box cover should have a warning looking something like this: "This game contains absolutely no blood thanks to the censorship-mad cretins at Nintendo". That's right, there's no blood! And you can add blocky graphics to its downside too. The images must be enlarged off a very small master sprite, because the Mode 7 stuffs this game up big time.

The game (for those that don't know) involves being stuck in a Nazi warcamp. Unfortunately, with the SNES version you wouldn't know this, as the swastikas have been changed and the pictures of Hitler have had the moustache taken off. Censorship strikes again. You only have a hand pistol to start with but there are chunkier weapons around. You play in a fast-moving first-person viewpoint, and you go around shooting Nazis, looking for treasure and trying to escape.

I was really waiting to see this game become a console success, but it looks like PC owners can laugh at their SNES owning friends on this one. While it does play quite well, nothing here can compete with the PC *Wolfenstein* experience. The voices aren't as well digitised, the graphics aren't as nice, and I'm sorry to say it again, but there's NO BLOOD! *Wolfenstein 3D* is not a complete waste of time on the SNES, but I doubt the game will gain any new fans from this version.

Brian Costelloe



YOSHI'S SAFARI

SNES

Available: Now
 Category: Shooting
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Nintendo
 Price: N/A



Yoshi's Safari is without question the best light gun title available, but this isn't necessarily a high recommendation, as other Super Scope titles have been fairly unimaginative efforts, with painfully simplistic and repetitive gameplay. And herein lies the problem with *Yoshi*, as it is hard to put much variety into a light gun style game because there is only so much you can do with the basic concept of target practice.

Also in keeping with Nintendo's sanitisation policy regarding the representation of violence in video games, all of the enemies in *Yoshi's Safari* are so cute, resplendent in their Mario-esque pastel colours, that you don't know if you should kill them or cuddle them. However this isn't necessarily a major problem, as the cart is clearly aimed at the younger end of the games market. But the 'cult of cute' that is characteristic of the Mario series does sort of take the edge off the adrenaline rush that could be possible if you faced foes who looked less like cuddly toys.

There is a two player option, where the second player has a limited control over Yoshi, who has to occasionally jump, and guide Mario through the trails, and you can also blast Yoshi in the back of the head when you are bored which provides a few laughs. Overall though, there isn't the usual depth of gameplay that we have come to expect from the normally brilliant big N team led by Miyamoto.

Otherwise the gameplay is quite polished, and there are plenty of bright, fluffy things to blow away, as well as quite a few different powerups. But I also found this game rather easy to complete, which is a bit of a concern for those Mario enthusiasts who want a decent long challenge. So if you ever wanted to go on the offensive against the cuddly toy section of your nearest toyshop, then your golden opportunity has now arrived, but I wouldn't rush out and buy a Scope without having tried this game first.

Steve Polak



MADDEN NFL 94

SNES

Available: Now
Category: Sports
Players: 1-5
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: No RRP



Before you say anything, yes I know that I reviewed this game in our NFL special way back in HYPER #3. Page 37 to be exact. But that was the NTSC version and it was only available on import. Now that EA have officially released a PAL version of *Madden NFL 94*, we thought we'd give you a little reminder of its greatness. Besides, we need to fill up the space.

The *John Madden Football* series is, quite simply, the best bunch of American footy games ever written. But *Madden* on the SNES has never been quite the cult hero that he has become on the Mega Drive. Why? Well, for some reason, the SNES conversions just haven't been up to scratch. *Madden NFL 94* changes all that - it's certainly on a par with its Mega Drive cousin and is definitely the only American footy sim worthy of your hard earned kopeks.

It's got all the features (you can play a full NFL season, playoffs, and maybe wind up in the Super Bowl), all the teams (all 28 current NFL rosters, 38 Super Bowl teams since 1966, 12 All-time franchise teams, and two All-Madden teams), and all the plays you could ever want. And with a Super MultiTap, up to four of your closest, boofiest friends can join you in the lounge room for fun and games on the astroturf. How many other five-player sports games do you know of?

I won't go in to the differences between this version and the Mega Drive *Madden* (I did that on page 37 of issue #3), suffice it to say that it's not quite as playable (but if you've never played *Madden* on a Mega you'll never know the difference), but it makes up for this slight flaw with its sexy Mode 7 instant replays. I've never seen so much rotating in all my born days.

Andrew Humphreys



MICROCOSM

PC CD-ROM

Available: Now
Category: Shooter
Players: 1
Publisher: Psygnosis
Price: \$99.95



I watched in amazement as *Microcosm's* intro unfolded. Glorious full-motion video with the sci-fi feel of a industrial-tech future world. A rich and compulsive plot is revealed, and an intense mood established courtesy of Rick Wakeman's atmospheric soundtrack. Ten mightily impressive minutes later and it's game time! This is going to be a winner, methinks.

Disaster strikes! Some bloody minded trickster has somehow inserted some poxy arcade shooter where the glorious *Microcosm* should be! Treachery! But hang on, the lame images I see do resemble the screen shots on the box. No, it couldn't be. Surely Psygnosis would come up with something better after almost a year of pre-release hype. The awful truth sinks in. One of the most lavish and exciting intro's ever is only a glittering facade to a truly bland bit of arcade nonsense.

The Plot: a corporate kingpin has been injected with miniature robotic controlling devices. You are reduced to microscopic size and sent in to rid the boss of these infestations. Sounds good? Probably seemed like a very clever idea at the initial development meeting too. Tragically though, it's execution has filtered out any worthwhile element of gameplay, leaving a sensational intro and some incredible cut-scenes as the games only redeeming features.

The forward view from your cockpit shows an endlessly scrolling sequence of whatever vein or bodily part you are in. Unfortunately you have no actual control over where you go, the veins branch off into various directions but the computer steers you along a pre-set course. The only gameplay involved is pointing your sight at where you want to shoot at the oncoming hordes of globule-type things.

At the end of each level there's the obligatory boss. Each must be disposed of with a steady barrage of shots aimed at a particular weak spot. It just isn't satisfying for any length of time. Psygnosis have a reputation for innovative and highly playable games, but *Microcosm*, while it might be fun for arcade fans, is sadly devoid of any fresh concepts or enjoyable gameplay.

Ben Mansill



KRONOLOG: THE NAZI PARADOX

PC

Available: Now
Category: Adventure
Players: 1
Publisher: Castleworks
Price: \$99.95



The evil disease of fascism is currently on the rise in many parts of the world, but *Kronolog* paints a much grimmer picture with its scenario. The not entirely incredible premise around which Castleworks bases its graphic adventure, is that Germany and its ally Japan, were victorious in World War II. Fast forward to the year 2020, 75 years since the Nazi triumph, and America is part of the Nazi German Empire. You play the white-haired and besuited Mark Hoffman, a biochemist and member of the anti-Nazi movement, the "Unknowns". But that's enough of the plot.

I nearly enjoyed *Kronolog*. The story is fantastic, intricately detailed and overflowing with that elusive substance known as atmosphere. The pace is set by the player, and you're allowed to wander around and discover things in your own time, which is a welcome change. But then everything is ruined by the most hideous control system I have ever seen in an adventure game. Unintuitive, unfriendly, pedantic, obtrusive and a complete pain in the arse only begins to describe how awful this interface is. My the-saurus isn't big enough for the rest.

One other complaint concerns the graphics. All the characters have been filmed and then digitised to supposedly create the full interactive movie experience. Crap! *Another World* and *Alone in the Dark 2* both possess silky smooth animation, the former has gorgeous close-ups and cut-away scenes and the latter boasts startlingly inventive view-points. *Kronolog* is an average adventure with duff scratchy graphics and bad speech. Which sounds more like a movie to you?

David Wildgoose



Sonic 3

Play Guide

The Hedgehog, the Fox and the Fat Bastard are back again, and for some reason you all wanted a Play Guide. So take off your pointy red shoes, kick back, and enjoy the HYPER Helping Hand to Sonic 3...

The Basics

So you've played *Sonic* and *Sonic 2* to death and you're still having trouble with the basics, are you? Well, this section's for you. Oh, and by the way, if you are having problems with this sort of stuff then you're hopeless, worthless, and probably very stupid too. Why are you reading this magazine?

Rings

This is the most basic of all the Sonic basics and it's really not very difficult - always make sure you have at

least one ring. As soon as you get hit, your rings will fly all over the place but you'll be invincible for a short time, so get them back. If you're smart, one ring is all you need to get through the game (and most of your adult life too). But by collecting lots of rings (50 or over) you can get into the bonus stages or get an extra Sonic (100 rings). Finish a level with 100 rings or more and you'll get a continue.

Exits

If you can't find an exit to a level, just remember that this is a Sonic

game - just steadfastly head to the right and you can't miss it.

Breathe

When you're underwater, unless you have one of the new bubble-shields that can be found in *Sonic 3*, you have to breathe. Every time you pass some bubbles, wait till a big one comes up, and suck in that air. If the timer starts counting down, don't panic, look around for bubbles first. Then panic. In the Carnival Night Zone, burst the balloons for air bubbles.

Special Stages

If you want to finish the game properly, you're going to need all the Chaos Emeralds, so you'll need to find all the Special Stages. Explore every level thoroughly. Once you finish the game (without all the emeralds) you can go to any level you like. Then all you need to do is practice.

The Double Jump

Sonic's new flash-kick like double jump makes him invincible for a brief moment. With the right timing, it's a very handy attack.

Aqua Island Zone

Act 1: Mid-Boss

There are no words to express how easy this pissy little mid-boss thingy is. Just do it.

Act 2: Boss

The only problem here is the

collapsed bridge - fall into the water and you're dead. So if you want to be cautious, wait till he appears over solid land before you attack. Then it's just a matter of jumping over his fire and hitting him. Use the double jump for extra protection.



Hydro City Zone

Act 1: Mid-Boss

When he first appears, he'll spin at you quite quickly along the bottom of the tank. Don't be afraid; jump and hit him (again, double jumping is best). When he starts up the whirlpool cycle, just spin around happily. When it stops, jump up and hit him underneath when he's above you.

Act 2: Boss

At the start of this Act, you'll need to motor it to avoid being crushed. Go flat out and use the

superspin a lot and you should have plenty of time.

Running comes in handy when you get to the boss too. When he starts sucking you in, just stand at either edge of the screen and run to avoid it. When he drops the bombs, use their explosions to propel you up to hit him. You just need to time your jump. Hit him when he comes down too.



Marble Garden Zone

Act 1: Mid-Boss

Another one that's too easy: hit it when you can (either from underneath or above, depending on the direction of the spikes) then avoid the falling rubble.

Act 2: Boss

Robotnik will make a couple of appearances during this level. Just hit him once and move on (but you'll need to run like hell the second time - everything starts closing around you).

When you get to the boss, stay

on the far right hand side of the screen. You should be able to hit him up to 5 times as he's coming down. When the flying fun starts, if you're playing as Sonic, use the direction pad to move Tails around. Jump and hit Robotnik when it's safe (don't worry about falling - Tails will catch you). You can tell which direction Robotnik will be coming from by watching where he disappears. If you're playing as Tails, it's slightly trickier: you have to use the direction

pad and the jump button and make him hit Robotnik's craft from underneath. Again, keep a close eye on Robotnik so you know where he'll be.



Carnival Night Zone

Act 1: Mid-Boss

If you move quickly, you can jump on to the top of this floor-eating thingy and keep bouncing on it until you destroy it. Otherwise, only hit it (on top) when it's not generating electricity and stand on the other little thingy that spins around it - jump off before you fly into the picker though.

Act 2: Boss

Before you get to the boss (The Big Whirly Thing With The Green Ball), you might find yourself stuck

on one of the red and white striped barrel thingies. To move it up and down, DON'T JUMP. Just move the direction pad up and down in some sort of rhythm.

At the boss, stand in one corner and run on the spot to avoid being pulled in to the big green ball. When he comes down, jump on him and hit him. To finish him off quickly, stand underneath him and double-jump before the whirling starts up again.



Ice Cap Zone

Act 1: Mid-Boss

This thing may look frightening, but it's another pushover. Stand in either corner of the screen until the ice balls spinning around it are gone, then attack. Avoid the falling icicles and repeat the pattern until it's gone.

Robotnik underneath. Make sure you get well clear of him when you bounce off.

Act 2: Boss

The key here is to watch the pattern of the ice-squirts carefully. Jump onto the lower platform when it's safe (ie, just after the top squirt has finished) then jump up and hit



Launch Base Zone

Act 1: Mid-Boss

Possibly the easiest mid-boss in the history of video games. Just avoid him when his arms are spinning and nail him as soon as they retract. For extra thrills, try hitting him from underneath when his arms are spinning too.

right, one from the left. Use the double jump to jump over his hands and hit him. Stay in the centre of the screen. He'll start zooming back and forth above you. Keep moving so he doesn't grab you when he comes down. He'll then zap along the floor. Don't try and hit him - jump over him. Be careful and you'll soon be watching the credits. But if you're lazy (like us) you won't get to see the real ending until you get all the Chaos Emeralds.

Act 2: Final Boss

Just like *Sonic 2*, you'll need to take on two bosses, one after another, to finish the game - but this time, you can take some rings with you. Try not to lose any rings on the first Robotnik to give yourself a fighting chance at taking out the second one. The pattern of the first Robotnik is quite simple. Wait till he fires a ball, jump onto the platform that comes down and hit him. Watch out for rebounds and the high shots.

The final Robotnik is tougher. You need to break him down, piece by piece, by hitting the glass dome on top of the ship. Careful though, you have to time it to avoid the little spike circling the dome. Oh, and watch out for the lasers too.

Once you destroy the ship, the sky turns black, and Robotnik returns in his spiked armour. He'll make two passes, one from the



CHEAT MODE

ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES MEGA DRIVE

CRAZY HARD LEVEL

We printed a code for the Very Hard Level in HYPER #4, but that wasn't good enough for **Peter Brodie**. He's sent in yet another cheat for us. We appreciate all your help Peter, honest we do, but don't you think it's about time you put down the joypad and went outside to play? Remember what the sun looks like, eh Pete?

Anyway, here's how it's done. As the KONAMI LOGO starts to come up, press LEFT FOUR TIMES, RIGHT FOUR TIMES, LEFT SEVEN TIMES,

RIGHT ONCE, LEFT ONCE. If you hear Sparkster's yell you're in. Go to the Options Screen and the fourth level, Crazy Hard, will be there along with the Very Hard Level, so you only need one code to get all four levels of play.

Oh, and Crazy Hard means exactly what it says - you start with one life and if you take only one hit, you're dead. The only possible way to get anywhere in this mode is to find every possible bonus life. Talk about tough...



MECH WARRIOR SNES

INVINCIBILITY

We've only just reviewed it, but we've still managed to find you a super hot cheat. How do we do it? We're Gods, that's how.

Get to a battle planet (you know, when you're in the metal suit) and PAUSE the game. While you're paused, hit these buttons in this order: A, L button, L button, Y, A, L button, L button, Y, A, L button, L button, Y. The screen will read "Invincible" if you've done it right. Now unpauses the game and get into those pesky enemy Mechs.



SPEEDBALL II MEGA DRIVE

PASSWORD

Peter Brodie has been a busy little gamer, hasn't he? He's sent us in this tip too.

This is an old game, but it's only just scored an official Australian release as part of the budget priced "Sega Classics" range. It's well worth the cash too. Peter says "it's one of the best ever sports games, not least because you don't have any stupid codes of behaviour to follow. Just kick the

goalie in the goolies while whacking that spheroid home for good measure". Settle, Peter, settle.

Anyway, here's a code to enter the Second Division with enough sponduliks to buy any players you want. That should make getting into first division a breeze.

LKaQ C86K Ko8Q M6QH
MbSs -2ww 7vVC MBMO
(note: No Zeros in Code)

SIM CITY 2000 PC/MAC/CD-ROM

MONEY MONEY MONEY

At any stage during the game, type the word "porntipsguzzardo". This will automatically give you an

additional \$500000. Once you've done that, you can type in "ardo" for another half a million!



POP N TWINBEE SNES

Peter Brodie of Cronulla, NSW, reckons this is one of the best shooters ever and if you're lucky enough to already have it, here's a heap of cheats.

LEVEL SELECT

At the Options Screen, enter this code: UP, LEFT, UP, LEFT, UP, LEFT, LEFT, LEFT, RIGHT, RIGHT, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT, DOWN, LEFT, DOWN, B. You also get a number of new levels to play!

EXTRA DIFFICULTY SETTING

At the Options Screen enter UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, B, A and an eighth difficulty level will appear.

INVINCIBILITY

Play the game, PAUSE it, and press A, Y, A, Y, L button, R button, L button, R button, X, B, B.

EXTRA CREDITS

Play, PAUSE, and hit A, B, Y, X, R button, L button, UP, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, A, A, A.

EXTRA TWINBEEES

Play, PAUSE, and hit DOWN, DOWN, UP, UP, B, B, X, X, RIGHT, LEFT, A, Y and you'll start the next stage with a full load of four Twinbees.

LOST IN TIME

SOLUTION (CONTINUED...)

HOLD

Take the pincers. Climb on the copper floats to insulate yourself. Make a shunt with the copper wire. Cut the hot wire with the pincers. the lock is free. Take water in the puddle with the pipette. Pour it on the lock. Chill the lock by pouring on it what is inside the extinguisher. Break the frozen lock with the hardened hose.

BETWEEN BRIDGES

Take the oar. Remove one of the blocks using the pincer. Take the spring next to Melkior.

HOLD

Open the trunk using the spring. Take the clothes and the ribbon. Take the nail under the stool.

BETWEEN BRIDGES

Connect the oar and the block with the ribbon. Put the twisted nail with the pincer. With the boathook that you just made, pull the halyard. Stick the corkscrew on the wall. Attach the halyard on it. Look through the open port. Catch the rope of the bucket. Look three times in the bucket. Take the rostrum of the saw-fish. Cut the rope that holds Melkior prisoner.

CAPTAIN

Go on the terrace. Take the flag. find the silver key of the dresser under the desk chair. In the dresser located in the room, take the bottle with smelling salts and the bowl. Find the brass key of the drawer under the rug. In the drawer of the desk, take the dagger and the blotter. In the room, cut the rug that blocks the trap-door using the dagger. Open the trap-door and go down.

HOLD

By the upper bridge, go back down in the hold. With the dagger, open the double bottom of the trunk. There, find the beauty powder and the perfumed handkerchief.

UPPER BRIDGE

Find the pass. Open the room with precious merchandise. There, pick up the golden cage and the ring with the seal on it. Open the pantry. Take the polish. Use the beauty powder to climb the mast and come back in the Captain's cabin.

PC CD-ROM

CAPTAIN

Using the seal, open the dresser that hides the secret passage. Go down to the music room.

UPPER BRIDGE

This room is locked from the inside. When inside, pick up the record and the phonograph. Go out in the hallway. Go back up in the Captain's cabin.

CAPTAIN

Place the phonograph on the round table. Put a record on. Place the cage on the pedestal table. On it, place the bananas found in the room. Place the bowl on the tray. Use it to mix muriatic acid + ammonia salt. When the parrot is in the cage cover it with the flag. Shine up the sink with the polish and the handkerchief. Write down the combination. Move the painting. Repeat the combination on the safe. Take the little box. Open the little box and take the gun. Open the dresser with the silver key and take the iron key from the jewellery case. Take the cage and go back down between bridges.

BETWEEN BRIDGES

Activate the ring with the floor-cloth. Place the cage in the hiding place. Remove it right away. The trap-door bar that leads to Yoruba's hold is unstuck. Open the lock with the iron key and jump.

YORUBA'S HOLD

Locate the door in the mast. Maintain it open thanks to the pincers. Find the cotton bale, place it at the bottom of the mast, under the shelf. Using the hook, make the bottle of rum fall. Regain the magnet that fell in a crevice in the floor using an object made out of steel (gun, pincer, corkscrew...). Make the revolver work to break Yoruba's chains.



WATERFALL

Piece a hole in the coconut using the corkscrew. Take some water with the pipette. Give it the manicou. Wrap it in the flag. Use the parrot on the passage.

MAKANDAL

Use the little key on the cage. Put the golden coins in the slot.

DELIA

Take the grimoire while Delia looks for her glasses. Take advantage that she is out to use the mirror on the spider. Take the jacket.

MAKANDAL

Place the hologram on the table. Make the window open. Start the hologram. Pour the potion in the left glass. Once Makandal has seen it, take back the glass.

IN FRONT OF THE MANSION

After meeting with VELVET and CELEUCIE, go back to DELIA and Makandal to take the "privarole" and the "inverter". Mix both Use the "Iogorheus" obtained on SERAPION. Talk to him a second time and take the coarse salt. Use the inverter on the coarse salt - Give the sugar to the dog.

KITCHEN

Take the bag on the table. Take the flower out of it. Use the bag on the ambers. Put it on the stool, the snake will crawl inside.

RAVINE

Use the flower on Jarlath. And now you've done it!



CHEAT MODE

NBA JAM MEGA DRIVE

POWER UP DEFENCE

Andrew's been hard at it to find as many cheats for *NBA Jam* as he can. This one will let you goal tend all night. At the "Tonight's Matchup" screen, TAP ANY BUTTON 5 TIMES. On the fifth time, HOLD the button down until the court appears. By the way, this also works on the SNES version.

JUICE MODE

If you've already defeated all 27 NBA teams, you probably know this cheat by now (it tells you how to do it between quarters). JUICE MODE gives you a superfast, supercharged game.

Here's how to toggle JUICE MODE: at the "Tonight's Matchup" screen, TAP ANY BUTTON 13 TIMES then HOLD DOWN B and C until the court appears.

POWER UP TURBO

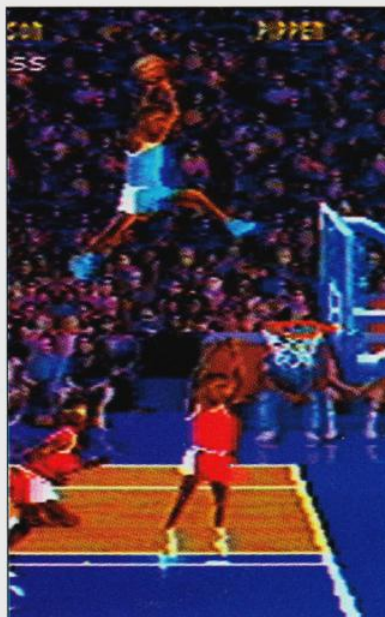
Want unlimited Turbo? Here's how to get it. At the "Tonight's Matchup" screen TAP ALL THREE BUTTONS 7 TIMES. On the seventh time, HOLD the buttons down until the court appears.

POWER UP INTERCEPT

At the "Tonight's Matchup" screen, ROTATE THE CONTROL PAD CLOCKWISE and TAP button B (or A) as many times as you can (I do it with autofire).

SHOT PERCENTAGE DISPLAY

At the "Tonight's Matchup" screen TAP B ONCE then HOLD buttons A and B plus DOWN on the direction pad until the court appears.



NBA JAM SNES

We've already printed the cheats for Power Up Defence and the Shot Percentage Indicator for the SNES, but we haven't printed these ones...

JUICE MODE

At the "Tonight's Matchup" screen TAP A 13 TIMES then HOLD DOWN B and X until the court appears.

POWER UP INTERCEPT

Ross Linto of Wooroloo, WA, reckons you get this cheat to work by rapidly pressing ALL THREE BUTTONS and ROTATING THE D-PAD CLOCKWISE at the "Tonight's Matchup" screen (until the court appears, if you haven't guessed).



MICROCOSM

MEGA CD

PASSWORDS

Don't you just hate passwords that use funny symbols instead of easy to write down letters or numbers? Anyway, here's the symbols and all the passwords to boot.

BOLN a: Bone, Bone, Bottle, Head
 Chase: Bottle, Heart, Bone, Syringe
 BOLN: Head, Heart, Bottle, Bone
 End Sequence
 The End: Syringe, Bottle, Heart, Bottle

LEVEL 1

Vein: Heart, Bottle, Head, Bone
 BOLN: Bone, Syringe, Head, Bottle
 Portal: Bottle, Bone, Syringe, Bottle



Bone

LEVEL 2

Chase: Syringe, Heart, Bottle, Head



Bottle

LEVEL 3

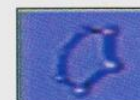
Vein: Bone, Head, Bottle, Syringe
 BOLN: Head, Bottle, Bone, Heart
 Portal: Bottle, Syringe, Syringe, Heart



Head

LEVEL 4

Chase: Head, Syringe, Heart, Bone



Heart

LEVEL 5

Vein: Bone, Bottle, Heart, Syringe



Syringe



PINK GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

SNES

LEVEL SKIP

There's a review of this mediocre platformer in this very issue. If you're smart, you'll hire it for a night, use this cheat, and never want to play it again.

All you have to do is play the

game, PRESS and HOLD down START (to Pause it) then press SELECT. Bingo! Next level. But you'll have to get to the last level using your own natural skill and talents - the cheat won't get you there.

TMNT TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS

SNES

We've got a stack of new cheats for this excellent fighting cart (we printed the extra speed setting last issue). Oh, and Konami have confirmed that there IS a code that allows you to play as the Bosses - Rat King and Karai - but they haven't released it! If you find it, send it in!

TEN CREDITS

At the Title Screen, enter this code with CONTROL PAD 2: B, B, B, A, A, A, X, X, X, X, X, X, X. Go to the Options screen and now you can push your credits up to 10.

ULTIMATE ATTACK IN STORY MODE

To get the second power gauge (which allows you to perform your Ultimate Attack) in Story Mode, enter this code at the Title Screen with CONTROL PAD 2: UP, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, X, Y, B, A, X, Y, B, A, X.

EXTRA STAGES

This cheat will let you access the Metro Train stage and Studio 6 stage (the Boss stages) in the Versus Mode. At the Title Screen, enter this code with CONTROL PAD 2: L button, R button, L button, R button, L button, R button, A.



TAZMANIA

SNES

LEVEL SELECT

At the Options Menu (press SELECT at the Title Screen) hit these buttons in this order: A, Y, A, Y, X, Y, B, A, R button, L button. The screen should shake and a level select option pops up.

20 CONTINUES

At the Options Menu hit these buttons: Y, X, B, X, A, X, L button, R button, B, A, Y, A, X, A.



REN AND STIMPY: VEEDIOTS!

SNES

LEVEL SELECT

It's not the greatest game in the world, but this cheat makes it just a bit better. At the Title screen, wait until the word "Veediots" starts to come up. When it does, enter this code with control pad 1: L button, R button, A, L button, R button, L button, B, R button, and X. If you've done it right a set of numbers will appear at the bottom of the screen. Select away!

SONIC 3

MEGA DRIVE

LEVEL SELECT/DEBUG MODE/OTHER STUFF

OK, before you get too excited about this one, you're going to need a Pro Action Replay cart to get these cheats to work. BUT, if you can do it with an Action Replay cart, then you can do it without one too - we just don't know how yet. It's obviously got something to do with the Sound Test, so if you're willing to fiddle, you might crack it.

All of these lovely codes have been sent in by first-time HYPER reader **Kevin McAulay** of Brisbane, Qld. And here they are...

Put in **FFFFD 00001** as your parameter, flick the switch up then highlight the Sound Test option (pull DOWN at the Title Screen) and HOLD DOWN button A and push START for the Level Select screen. Highlight the level you want to visit, press Start and you're there. If you HOLD DOWN A and push START you'll get the Debug Mode too. It works exactly the same way as it did in Sonic 1 and 2.

Take a close look at the Level Select Screen and you'll notice three extra worlds! They are Flying Battery, Sandopolis and Mushroom Valley. The downside is you can't go into these worlds. Is there a way?

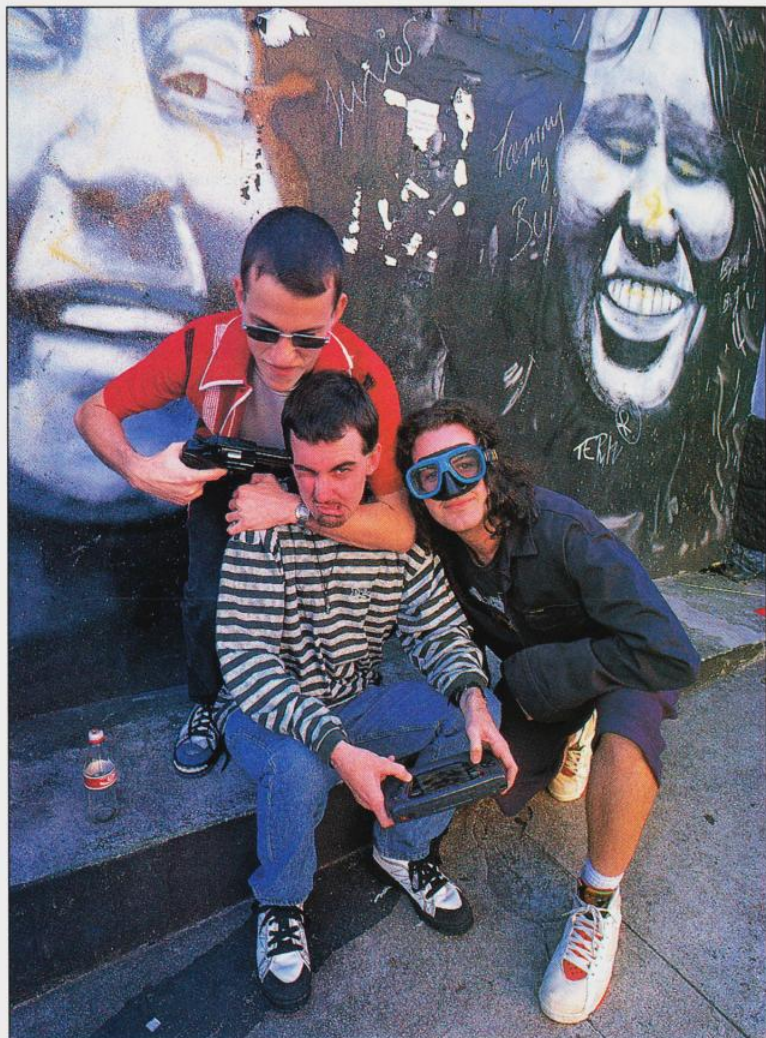
If you put in **FFE43 90004** when you go to a Special Stage you only need 4 blue spheres to complete the stage and collect the Chaos Emerald! Get them all and it's Super Sonic time. To make it work you need to flick the switch on the Action Replay cart DOWN once the Special Stage starts. When you finish the Special Stage, flick it back UP.

FFE2 10063 will give you 99 rings at all times.

FFE2 40005 gives you unlimited time.



Letters...



“What do you mean my layout’s crap on a stick” — Aaron gets upset at Stuart’s constant nagging. “It’s like working for your bloody grandmother!” he said before pulling out his pistol. Andrew was coming to save his beloved editor but got distracted by the camera, and decided to look pretty instead. Strange idea of pretty huh?

If you have anything to say about anything, like how attractive the HYPHER crew are, just send your letters to:

**HYPHER Letters
PO Box 634
Strawberry Hills
NSW 2012**

Try and make them under three hundred words (and legible). There’s not many other rules. We’ll just throw them out if they’re crap.

Trash Talkin’

Dear Flat-Footed, Gravity-Bound, Nike-Wearin’, Donut-Dunkin’, Ball-Hogin’, Trash-Talkin’, Homeboys from HYPHER

I love basketball! How dare you ask the blasphemous question in Issue#4 where you are reviewing *Hyperdunk — The Playoff Edition*, “Is there any reason the world needs another basketball game?” Of course we do!

Now, I have seen the before mentioned game, and I really think it stinks, but there should be more quality basketball games (e.g *Michael Jordan : In Flight*, *NBA Jam*, *NBA Showdown 94*). When you look at all of the baseball, American football, golf and soccer (it makes me ill just to type that word) games that are out at the moment, I think it is justified that there is now a rash of basketball games coming out.

After that little gripe, I now have some questions:

1. Will *NBA Jam*, *NBA Showdown 94*, *Charles Barkley Basketball*, etc, be coming out in PC version?
2. Will any other new basketball games be coming out for PCs? (I am currently wearing out *In Flight* and refuse to touch my ancient version of *Lakers vs Celtics*)
3. When you guys reviewed *Doom*, did you play it with Gamma Correction ON or OFF (it’s the F11 key if you can’t remember), because I can’t see a fetcin’ thing without it ON.
4. How come in my *Doom* manual it says that you need a network card to run multiplayer *Doom*, but in all the ads for it, it says all you need is a modem or serial cable?

To finish up, congrats on a slam-docious magazine (The Larry Johnson poster in Issue #3 was cool, and the *NBA Jam* poster in Issue#4 was in-your-face). A few more PC reviews, however, would be appreciated.

Yours with a backboard-swayin’, game-delayin’, rump-roaster, bun-toaster, kick-shaker, baby-maker, if-you-ain’t-movin’-you-best-get-groovin’ HYPHER dunk,

Hydrolic Dunk Machine
Brisbane QLD

You’re obviously a b-ball freak (with the emphasis on FREAK), but even fans are going to get sick of all the crap basketball titles that are coming out following *NBA Jam*’s big success. As for your questions 1. I

doubt it 2. None are scheduled for release in the near future, but surely it won’t be too long 3. We toggled it on and off. Basically it just makes dark rooms bright. 4. You can use a modem or serial cable for two players, but for more than two you’re going to need a network card.

What I Like Most

Dear Hyper,

Congratulations on your great magazine. It is the best Australian game magazine I have ever read. Some of the sections I like most are the Cheatz, News and Letters. So can you please put a few more pages on News and Letters sections as I am sure other readers would also like it too.

Now I have a few questions to ask you and I am sure you’ll answer them for me. Can you please tell me how many HYPHER magazines you sell in Australia and which states sell the most and the least? Also do you sell Hyper to overseas besides NZ?

And a final question, what are the percentages of your readers age groups as I am a 21 year old male who sometimes wonder if there are readers who at my age read this magazine.

Yours faithfully

E. Limas
St James NSW

P.S Please don’t let other people stop you from writing on more controversial issues such as the Virtual Sex in Issue 1. I think it is very informative.

No one’s stopped us from writing anything, and you can be sure that if it’s relevant to HYPHER readers we’ll cover it. Don’t feel all alone reading HYPHER at 21, as well over a quarter of our readers are over 18. Apart from NZ, HYPHER goes to most of South-East Asia, including Hong Kong and the Philippines (and we’ve got a subscriber as far away as Sweden). As for our sales figures - I can’t tell you because I don’t even know. As soon as we’ve had 6 issues out (this is the 6th) we’ll have much more of an idea. All I can tell you now is that we’re probably the biggest selling games mag in Australia - not bad for six months. And that’s thanks to you, dear readers.

Questions & Suggestions

Dear Hyper

I have questions and suggestions for your exceptional publication.

1. You could have a world news bit which doesn't have to be all about games eg gismos and crazes from Japan and the US

2. In Byte Size you could review Game Gear and Game Boy games to give a broader spectrum to your mag

3. I heard on TVTV (ABC) that there will be a show about video games and do you have anything to do with this (I'm crossing my fingers)

4. Will there be NBA Jam 2?

5. When will the new shows of Ren and Stimpy be here?

6. Have a comic section or else. Comics are really big again.

Nenad Tarlac

Canberra

1. I'll think about it 2. No 8bit systems or black and white crappy graphics are allowed in this magazine 3. That TV show you heard about is "The Zone" which is on 9am Saturdays on the Nine Network, and yes, Andrew and myself are letting our ugly mugs be shown. 4. Judging by the success of the first one, there probably will be, but what can they do differently? 5. Not confirmed yet 6. Or else what? Come on freak, do your worst.

Letter Etiquette

To the people of Hyper,

I could go on and on complementing your mag until my 300 words are up, but I won't. I could say your game reviews are very very in-depth and helpful, but I won't. I could write all about how I started reading this mag, but I won't do that either.

I write this letter to plead with you before it gets out hand. The suck up letters. How I loathe them with people writing "that article on CD-consoles just oozed brilliance" or "Your review on *Ground Zero* was absolutely amazing". (No offence to them, they were just examples).

Letter sections are not ego-lifting sections, they are there to 1. Answer any questions to the best of their abilities. 2. Voice any complaints and 3. To congratulate the mag on any effort worth congratulating it on. I hate to see good space wasted with crap like that (but all

said and done they are worth a laugh).

To fulfil section 1 have a few questions:

1. Is *Dune: Battle for Arrakis* coming to SNES?

2. Is the PC game *Civilisation* coming to the SNES?

3. When is the Super - CD arriving in Australia, and roughly how much does it cost?

Section 2 of the "Functions of a Letter Section" is complete. As for #3, please keep up the surprisingly decent work you have been churning out.

Yours Faithfully

Dean Mackenzie Brisbane QLD

Your ideas on what makes a good letter were spot on, so why did you crap on so much in the first paragraph? Anyway 1. It's a crime if it doesn't 2. Not that I know of 3. There's no more Super CD for the SNES. Those plans were shelved for the upcoming "Project Reality" machine.

Jag Questions

Dear Hyper

It's great to see an Australian mag rival the best in the world. It's so disheartening to fork out the big bucks for a 3 month old import mag where all the competitions and events have no relevance to you. There is just one thing about your mag, its not big enough. We need more news, reviews, previews, more everything. Otherwise HYPER is tops.

Anyway now that it seems like the Jaguar has a real future (with heaps more top publishing companies signing up all the time and the machines affordable price) I'm considering buying one (when it appears) There's just a few questions I have.

1. When will the PAL version appear

2. Will it have a 50 Hz/60Hz switch (I think Atari should think long and hard about putting one in)

3. Will foreign carts plug straight in or will adaptors (groan) be needed. (They should just have universally compatible games with identical worldwide release dates)

4. When will CD Rom and the MPEG2 cartridge appear

5. Does Atari have a no gore pol-



Someone's been fiddling around with old HYPER covers! It's Kim Lee from Surfer's Paradise in Queensland. Very pretty Kim, now what's the point? Oh I get it - you got published and you'll be getting a game for your SNES very soon.

icy ie Does MK2 seem likely to appear including all the blood and the fatalities (with all the great specs, it seems it would allow the best conversion)

6. Because the Jag has a serial port for modem, cable TV and network connections, does this mean that if your mate had a jag, you could connect to his system and TV allowing 2 player separate screen action, 2 player racing games are so annoying in split screen and separate screens would be so much better.

7. Will a keyboard really come out for the Jag if so what would be the benefit of it.

Thanks for your time

D.A. McDonnell
Geraldton W.A.

I printed your letter only because it's one of many asking for more details on the Jag. Unfortunately they are details that we just don't have. The Jaguar's release date is not even confirmed, but it now looks like being very late in the year (read our news piece for more details). Atari in Australia have gone into liquidation for a while, so it's very hard to get any info at all. I could crap on for a while as to what I think will happen but really, I just don't know. Rest assured though, as soon as we get concrete facts we'll tell you.

Letters...

Nice One

Dear Hyper(ers),

The mag is great. Each ish seems about twice as good as the previous one. I like the way the reviewers are getting rid of the childish 'tits n toilets' approach so beloved of the UK rags.

The best aspect of your mag is your (seemingly) revolutionary idea of comparative reviews. Wonder why no one did this before? Being able to compare alternate screen grabs is fab.

I'm sure your article on the impending demise of the 16-bit machines will engender a number of complaints from weeping willies that you've spoiled their enjoyment of their toys. For myself, I'll keep enjoying my Mega Drive and SNES until I feel it useful to update.

With a couple of good years left in the 16 bitters due to DSP and SFX chips, this gives me time to save and suss. As ever, gameplay will be the only thing that matters. And I'm still not convinced CD is the thing. Super-compressed carts ala the Jaguar look promising.

I note that the rabid nut-crunching feminist desperates are starting to make their appearance in your letter-col. Don't make the mistake of knuckling under as some other mags have. Don't get me wrong. I personally think females are the better gameplayers if they can be bothered to learn how to play, but most have more sense than to waste their time on vid games. Males are far more content to wallow in the abstract areas. Chess is a good example.

Summing up, HYPER is already giving serious competition to the o/s mags and only EDGE compares in approach. And how much money do they have to play with? Nice one.

Peter Brodie

I totally agree with what you said about the demise of the 16 bitters. They are still the best value and will be highly enjoyable for a long time to come. It's probably a very wise thing to wait for a while and see which of the super consoles (Sony PSX, Sega Saturn, 3DO, Jaguar) looks like taking off. As for the "rabid nut-crunching feminist desperates" I'm not really sure what you mean here. We've had a couple of great letters from women reminding us that they're into games and the magazine, and they were spot on in what they were saying.

No Stupid Questions

Dear Ed,

Congratulations on an excellent March issue. It's good to see an Australian magazine dedicated to PC, SNES, Mega Drive etc on the shelves.

I won't bore you with stupid questions about the availability of games etc. however, I do have one suggestion. Regarding the pictures sent in by Tim St Clair on the LETTERS page (March issue) - how about making this section a monthly competition and awarding the best of each month a choice of software for the winner's computer/console?

Thanks,

B Young

OK B, I'm not bored and in fact I agree with your suggestion, so from now on the reader who gets their artwork published on the Letters page will get a free bit of game software for their favourite system. Happy now? Start creating.

Elle and Cindy

To our lovely ED!!!

1. I have a problem, a very big problem.

My problem is I just sold my Super NES and Street Fighter 2 Turbo and bought a Mega Drive. I love SF2 and I really miss it (BOO HOO) would it be worth getting again on Mega Drive or not?

2. How much is SF2 on Mega Drive

3. How much is the 6 button control pad?

4. How much are you for the night?

Yours,

Elle MacPherson and Cindy Crawford.

You certainly do have a very big problem, especially if you want me to believe you're Elle and Cindy. Of course you should get SF2 on the Mega Drive if you really miss it, as the two versions are basically identical 2. Around \$170 3. \$50 4. A hell of a lot more than you girls can afford. Now if you were Claudia Schiffer, then we could talk.

More Megs, More Money?

To all at Hyper,

Have I been led astray? I thought that the more megs a game had the more expensive it was, eg.

Streetfighter 2 on the Mega Drive. I believed it until in Hyper #4, I read that *Eternal Champions* was \$139.95 and 24 megs, and *Sonic 3* was \$149.95 and only 16 megs.

Has Sega added an extra \$10 just because the game carries the name *Sonic The Hedgehog*, because if they have, it stinks.

Also while I'm at it; will there be a *Landstalker 2* in the future, and perhaps an *Ecco 2*? I hope so.

Thanks, and keep up the good work.

Chris Phelps
Casino NSW

Well Chris, you've picked a very good example of game profiteering and marketing. As a general rule, the more megs of memory you pack in a cart, the more expensive the cart will be, but what it really comes down to is how much Sega (in this case anyway) think they can get away with charging without putting consumers off. With SF2 and Sonic 3, they can get away with charging a fortune, because they are titles that everyone wants (although that said, most retailers are selling Sonic 3 for a lot less than \$149). With the unknown Eternal Champions, a high price would undoubtedly result in low sales, so they miraculously found a way to price it lower. Games are becoming massively over-priced anyway, and I'd have to agree with you, that the practice of marking up popular titles just because they know it will sell, stinks. Perhaps the Pricing Surveillance Authority will have something to say about it.

As for Landstalker 2 and Ecco 2, I hope they're on their way too, but I haven't heard any word. I'd be surprised if we didn't see another Ecco game pretty soon though.

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