

WIN MEGA
DRIVES AND
EA SPORTS PACKS

HYPER

AUSTRALASIA'S BEST INDEPENDENT GAMES MAG

JULY '94

ISSUE #8 \$4.95 NZ\$5.95 inc GST

SUPER METROID

CONSOLE GAME OF THE YEAR?

CHAOS ENGINE

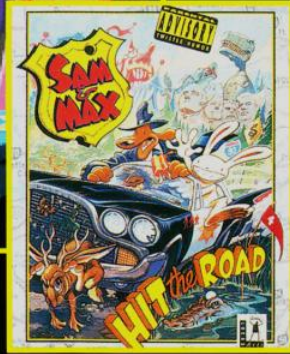
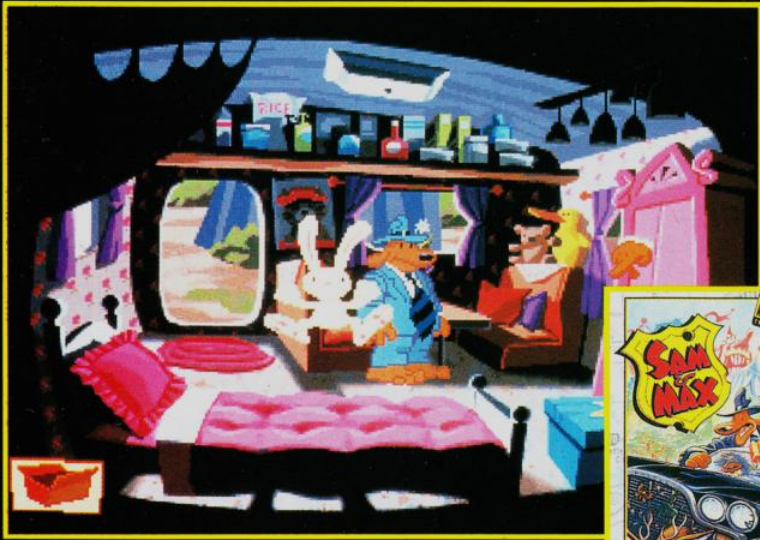
THE RUNNER UP?

GAME ART

DEATH OF A HEDGEHOG &
DOOM

WILLIAM GIBSON





Sam & Max 'Hit the Road'

Follow those two lovable freelance police as they adventure through America. A graphical adventure filled with humour and intrigue.

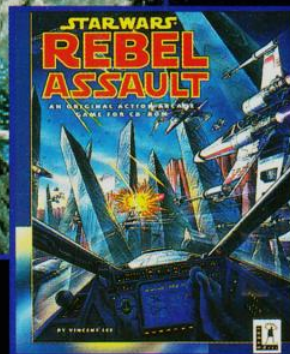
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Video and computer games

are fast becoming the latest battleground in the fight for freedom of speech. Misinformed politicians and reactionary rappers are jumping up and down against the supposed violence and sex in video games and are basically saying that the classification system that we've just had put in place isn't good enough. Not only are games classified 'X' banned, but now they want to ban 'R' rated games as well! What this would mean is that even people over 13 (able to vote, join the army, have sex etc) won't be able to decide how to entertain themselves. This goes against the eminently sensible movie rating system (which is one of the best in the world I'd have to say) and means that while you can watch adult entertainment on the TV or movie screen you won't be able to do it on your computer monitor. It's a joke, but a pretty bad one. I think you'll agree. And it's all got to do with that fabulous word "interactivity". That click of the mouse and the press of the button apparently makes all the difference when we're talking about perverting "immature minds". I think it's about time some politicians started to interact with reality, because they sure haven't got a grip on it at the moment.

But that's enough for now. Inside the issue we've got a bumper crop of games for you. All systems have got some winners. SNES owners have the outrageously good **Super Metroid** to look forward to, as well as **Chaos Engine**, **Plok** and **Desert Fighter**. **Mega Drivers** have **Subterrania**, **Chaos Engine**, **Marko's Magic Football** and **Pete Sampras Tennis** all looking tasty, while **PC** people get **Mega Race**, **UFO Enemy Unknown** and **Pacific Strike** to keep them entertained. And that's just naming a few. Apart from that we have a chat to **Mr Cyberpunk**, **William Gibson**, and look at some art inspired by the video game world.

Get into it and remember, you gotta fight the power.

Stuart

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6 News

Censorship strikes!, Sega go rental, Gaming with Def Rhyme, World Video Game Championship, Manga Manga Manga and much more more more!

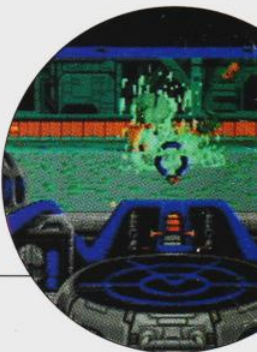
16 Features

WILLIAM GIBSON The science fiction writer who inspired the cyberpunk movement has a chat to HYPER about his upcoming projects and thoughts on being a "visionary prophet".

CATHODE RAY ART The look and feel of video games is now inspiring all sorts of other mediums. We asked a few young artists to get inspired by the subject.

28 Previews

- Lemings 2 Mega Drive/SNES
- Legend SNES
- Outpost PC
- Dragon Mega Drive/SNES
- Soulstar Mega CD
- Battlecorps Mega CD
- MLPBA Baseball Mega Drive



32 More Reviews

- 53 Dark Wizard Mega CD
- 56 Entombed PC
- 57 UFO Enemy Unknown PC CD-ROM
- 58 Fury of the Furies PC
- 62 Aegis PC CD-ROM
- 63 Reunion PC

65 Byte Size

- Mad Dog McCree Mega CD
- Racing Aces Mega CD
- Battleclash SNES
- Alan Border's Cricket PC
- Warlord 2 - Scenario Disk PC
- Cannon Fodder PC
- Sam & Max PC CD ROM
- SimCity 2000 - Great Disasters PC
- Goblin Quest 3 PC CD ROM
- The Complete Ultima 7 PC CD ROM
- Vegas Games PC CD ROM
- Battle Isle 2 PC CD ROM
- Evasive Action PC
- Sango Fighter PC

78 Letters

72 Cheat Mode

82 Hypermart

32 Reviews



32 Super
Metroid
SNES



36 Chaos Engine
Mega Drive/
SNES



40 Subterrania
Mega Drive



42 Desert
Fighter
SNES



44 Sylvester +
Tweety
Mega Drive



46 Marko's
Magic
Football
Mega Drive

48 Plok
SNES



50 The Lawn-
mower Man
SNES



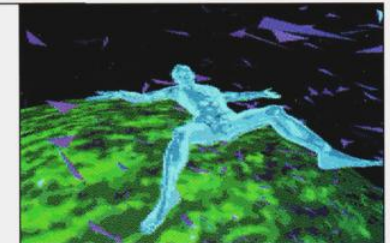
52 Pete Sampras
Tennis
Mega Drive



54 Mega Race
PC/CD-ROM



59 The Lawn-
mower Man
PC/CD-ROM



60 Hell Cab
PC/
Mac CD-ROM



64 Pacific Strike
PC



Attorneys-General in Narrow Minded Games Ban Shock!

Just when we were all getting used to the idea of a classification system for video games, along come the State Attorneys-General to stuff it all up.

Following the recommendations of the Senate Committee (headed up by the ever-lovely Senator Margaret

Reynolds), State Attorney

Generals will introduce legislation to ban the sale (and in some cases, even the possession) of games which attract R and X ratings. The result: if games

are rated R or X, you won't be able to play them, no matter how old and emotionally prepared you are. That's straight out censorship, not classification, and it sucks hard.

Only the ACT will retain the original "model" legislation unmodified, allowing the sale of R and X rated material. All other States and territories will outlaw the sale, display or demonstration of R and X-rated computer games. Descriptions such as "ignorant, knee-jerk, reactionary fools without any grasp of historical processes" spring to mind.

In NSW, the Attorney-General, smilin' Johnny Hannaford has introduced the Film and Video Tape Classification (Amendment) Bill to



Games are already being censored. Take Nintendo's handling of Wolfenstein 3D - where's Hitler's moustache?

ban R and X-rated games.

Companies who breach the legislation will be fined \$10 000. Individuals will face a fine up to \$4000 or 12 months in gaol.

Why? Smilin' Johnny is concerned at the affect that such material could have on "immature minds". But isn't the whole point of setting up a classification system to make sure that products classified R or X are not available to children (presumably, the reference to "immature minds" is a reference to children) anyway?

Banning R and X rated games will do nothing further to protect children; the impact is on adults, who will be robbed of the freedom to make their

own decisions.

What will the consequences of such a ban be? If the ACT does not buckle to State pressure, there will obviously be opportunities for the supply of R and X-rated games by mail order. But what if, as has been suggested, State legislation goes on to ban even possession of R and X-rated games?

Furthermore, it's not unreasonable to assume that classifiers (all classification will be carried out by the Office of Film and Literature Classification) will be tempted to classify certain games as MA 15 in order to avoid the ban. The result: games which should have been clas-

sified R will be available to anyone over 15 years.

Mr Hannaford's sole justification for singling out video games for special treatment is that video games are "interactive and repetitive" and therefore obviously more "impactful" than other "passive" forms of entertainment.

This is the very same argument the Senate Committee used to bolster its recommendation that the classification of video games should be stricter than the classification of film and video. Ever since then, every politician hoping to wow the media with their impressive grasp of the topic has trotted out the old "interactive and repetitive" line, secure in the knowledge that it says everything there is to say.

Well, we've got news for you John - it's a lame argument, it's totally unsupported, and there is much, much more to say. We're going to say it, and we want you to say it too. Write to HYPER, write to your local State member, write to your State's Attorney-General and tell them exactly what you think. Don't just sit there and take it - make a noise. Show them that gamers aren't just a bunch of kids too unmotivated and too unorganised to show any opposition. As the immortal Beastie Boys once said: You've got to fight for your right to party.

The People To Tell Off

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Winners Winners Winners!

A couple of issues back you may remember our fantastic Sonic competition where we had all the Sonic games (numbers 1, 2, 3 and Spinball) to give away. The lucky winner was Bill Hibble of St Ives, NSW who not only came up for some useful suggestions for the spiky blue rodent, but by sheer weight of entries he was far and away the best (read, most desperate to win).

And the winners of the Issue One comic competition were: Ryan Thistlewaite (Strathfieldsaye VIC), Jason Sue (Sunnybank Hills QLD), Robert Corcoran (Blaxland NSW), Callum Grant (Moranbah QLD) and Richard Lansbury (Freemantle WA).

A big, hearty congrats to all those lucky people.

Sega Go Rental

In a dramatic shift to their entire marketing policy, Sega Ozisoft have announced that all new Sega titles will be released straight to rental. They'll be released for sale through major retailers some six to nine months later under the Sega Classics label, probably at the \$69.95 price point. But don't panic - Sega aren't switching to a rental-only philosophy; you'll still be able to buy new-release games from smaller, specialist stores (who Sega classify as "Independents"). Expect to pay big money if you want to own, not rent. *Mortal Kombat II*, for example, will set you back \$190.

Other Sega game distributors like Electronic Arts, Sony and Playcorp will continue to support retail sale. They're not convinced that switching their core business to rental is the way to go. As a business strategy, it's

unproven (it hasn't been tried anywhere else, so in a sense, the eyes of the world are on Australia), and many players fear that it will do more harm to the market than good.

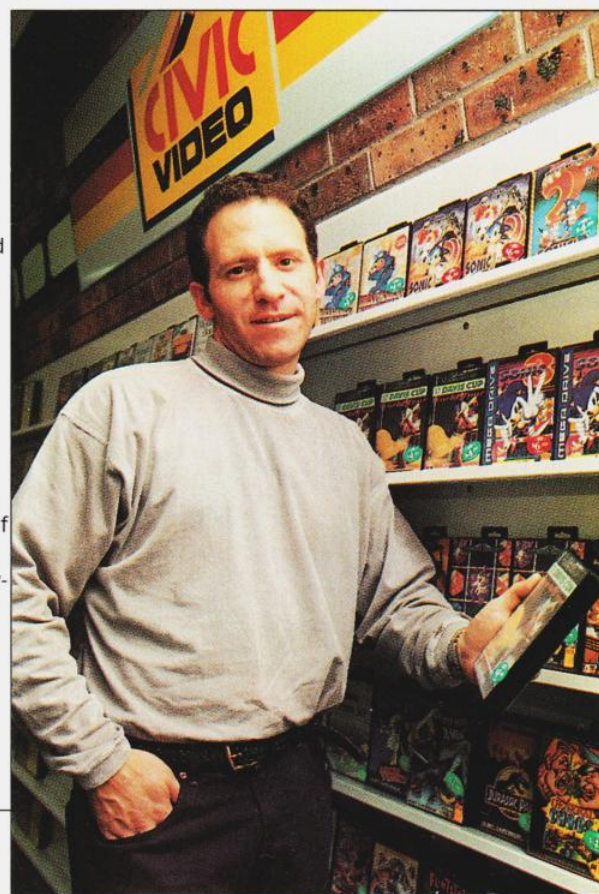
But Sega Ozisoft have done their homework, and they're convinced that the "Rent now, buy later at a cheaper price" approach is the way to go - and, of course, the way to make the most money. With cart prices the way they are now, people just aren't buying games. Meanwhile, games rentals are booming.

Kevin Bermeister, Head Honcho of Sega Ozisoft sums it up this way: "The rental plan with its on flow to our low-cost Sega Classics label is what customers have been waiting for. Players get new games for \$3-5 a night, rental shops' business will boom, and retailers will see

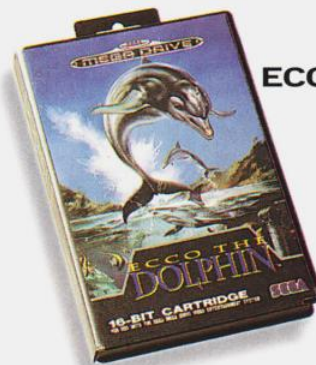
their sales return to the previous record highs as players eventually purchase their favourite games at the right price."

Apparently, the majority of retailers support the plan. If Sega's figures are right, everybody wins. But the big question is, are they right? Our crystal balls are blank; only time will tell.

Kevin Bermeister.
Nice polo neck!



NOW YOU
CAN AFFORD
A SEGA
CLASSIC.



ECCO THE DOLPHIN
MEGA DRIVE
\$49.95
RRP



CHAKAN
MEGA DRIVE
\$49.95
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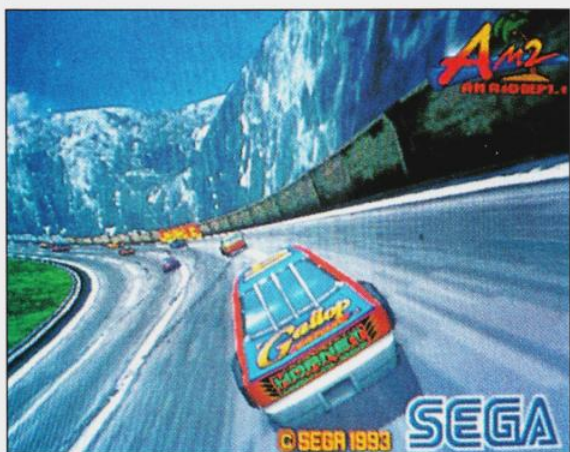
SEGA CLASSICS. An on-going range of the best Sega video games ever, all at specially reduced Sega Classic prices. New Classics are available all the time but the best ones always go quick. Sega Classics available at leading retailers now!

More News on Mars

Last issue we ran a news piece telling you all we knew about Sega's new Mars/Son of Saturn technology. You remember - the add-on that plugs into your Mega Drive's cartridge port and transforms it into a 32-bit powerhouse. Good. Well now we know a little bit



Here's some gratuitous shots of *Daytona* and *Virtua Fighters*. Two of the first games for the Mars.



more, though we're still not sure of the precise relationship between the Mars and the upcoming Multimedia monster, the Sega Saturn.

The official name for the add-on will be the Mega Drive 32 (in the US, it'll be the Genesis Super 32X). Sega Ozisoft expect to be able to launch it around February 1995. They're still hoping for a \$300 price tag.

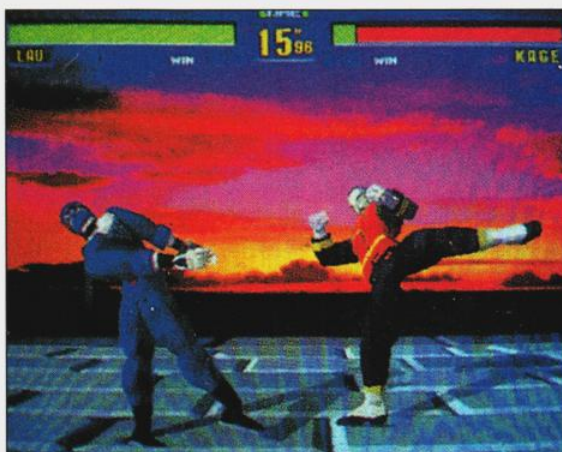
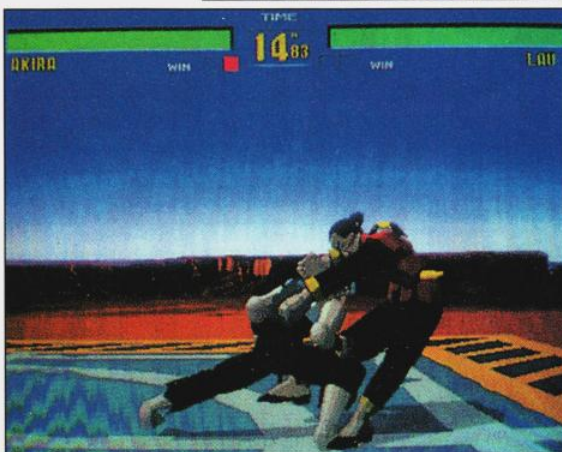
Tech heads will be interested to know that the Mega Drive 32 will contain the same Hitachi SH2 RISC chips as the Saturn as well as a newly designed video digital processor chip (VDP). It'll give your Mega Drive a faster processing speed (obviously), high-colour definition, texture mapping, enhanced scaling and rotation, impressive polygon generating capabilities, full-motion video and CD quality sound. The benefits will extend to the Mega CD too. Currently, Sega has over 30 titles under development, but the names and details have not been released.

The Mega Drive 32 will be able to display 32 000 colours via special cables and will come with its own

power supply. So if you're planning to run your Mega Drive, Mega CD and a Mega Drive 32, you'd better invest in a heavy duty power board.

Sega America's President, Tom "Can Do" Kalinske had this to say: "This is great news for consumers because Genesis Super 32X gives gamers some of the basic experiences our yet-to-be-introduced 'Saturn' hardware will provide, at a low cost, and in a way that still lets Genesis owners use their existing systems".

Tom thinks the Genesis Super 32X will provide Sega users with a "migration path to the next generation of technology". We think he might be right.



Super Game Boy

With all this talk about Sega owners transforming their Mega Drive's into 32-bit powerhouses, Nintendo lovers are probably feeling a bit left out. Never fear, you'll soon be able to transform your Super Nintendo too - into a raging, 8-bit monster. We've already told you about the Tri-Star adaptor which allows you to play old NES games on your SNES. Now Nintendo are releasing the Super Game Boy - so now you can play Game Boy games too.

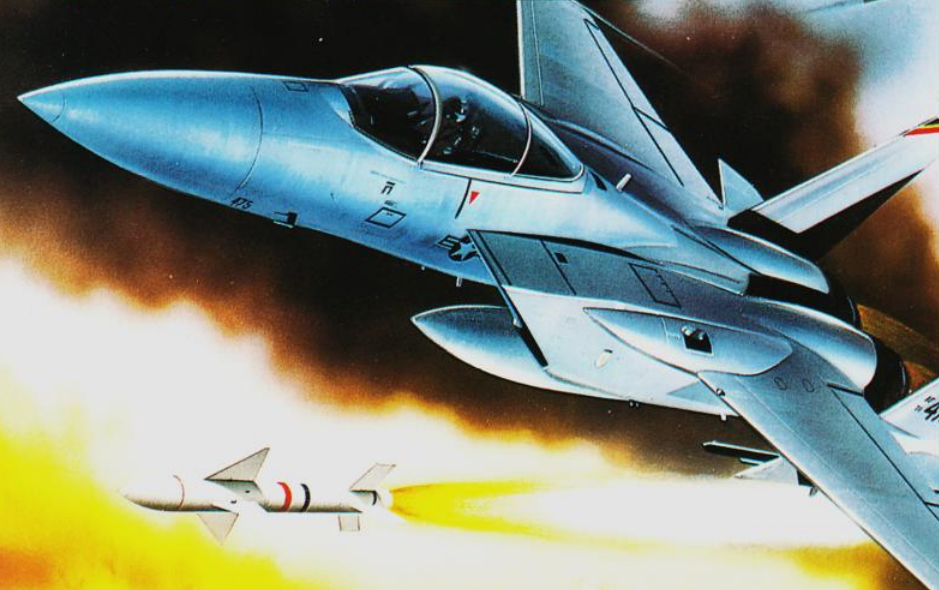
It's launching this month in the US for just (US) \$59.99, the Super Game Boy will give SNES owners access to a library of over 350 Game Boy titles. It's basically a standard SNES cart with a Game Boy adaptor built in. Now you might be thinking, "Whoopee - who wants to play cruddy, old Game Boy games anyway", but take it from us, there's more than a few of them that are well worth a play or two. Top of the list would have to be the incredible *Zelda IV: Link's Awakening*. It might not look the part, but it's every bit as good a game as its SNES counter-part, *Zelda: A Link to the Past*.

And they won't be black and white. Because Game Boy games use four shades of grey, the Super Game Boy allows you to assign colour values (the colours are your choice) to these shades. Better still, all future Game Boy software - like *Tetris 2* and *Donkey Kong* - will support up to 256 colours! You'll also have full stereo sound.

The benefits for Game Boy are obvious: no more eye strain from trying to see that pissy little screen, better controllers, and more money to spend on games instead of batteries. But does it mean a new, full-colour Game Boy is on its way? Who knows. For now, just sit back and enjoy the ads.



DESERT FIGHTER



"Command HQ to Attack 1.
You ready for the next mission?"

"Hey Captain,
I've always been ready."

"Roger that Attack 1.
Best of luck, you'll need it"

94% C+VG

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It's *Manga* Mayhem!

We've been wanting to cover Manga (Japanese animation) for a while, and now we've got no excuse not to, as some quality Manga videos are finally being released in Australia. You're probably all aware of *Akira*, and if you had any sense you would have caught the recent "Manga Manga Manga" festival which went around to a few Australian capital cities. But even if you haven't seen any of the films you still would have come into contact with the infamous Manga style through video games. Most of the game heroes that come out of Japan are very Manga influenced (take Samus from *Super Metroid* for example) and other games have come straight from animated films, like *3x3 Eyes*, *Ranma 1/2* and soon, *Akira*.

Manga literally translates as "irresponsible pictures" and if you think animation doesn't get any sicker than *Ren & Stimpy* and *Itchy and Scratchy*, then you are in for a big surprise. Most of the recent Manga films (and the videos that are being released) are rated MA 15 or R, so they're definitely not for kids. One film, *Urotsukidoji - Legend of the Overfiend*, never even made it onto Australian screens as it was the first animated film to be banned in this country because of the graphic sexual violence it supposedly contained.



Anyhow, while Manga is almost always visually interesting, some of the plots are fairly corny (ie crappy) so you have been warned. Here is a short overview of the first batch of releases:

3x3 Eyes

Yakumo Fujii, who was abandoned as a child, is a schoolboy who works as a transvestite at a gay bar to support himself. One day he meets Pai, who looks like a young girl but is actually a 300 year old Triclops, a legendary tribe who can use magic to gain eternal life. She carries a letter from Yakumo's dead father which urges him to help Pai become human. What follows is an intense supernatural struggle to wrest the mythical Statue of Humanity from the hands of evil. Lots of gratuitous death scenes and blood.

Battle Angel Alita

In the future, the Earth is a rotting scrap heap inhabited by cyborgs and ruthless bounty hunters. However the rich and powerful have survived and live in a germ-free paradise that floats above all the pollution. Alita is a centuries old cyborg who is found and restored to life by the cybernetic scientist Dr Ido. She turns out to have extra-ordinary special powers but will need all of them to survive in such a harsh and violent world. Quite a lot of violence and other gross bits.

Dominion Tank Police

This is an epic 4 part story, set in the year 2010. It's an Earth that's strangled by noxious pollution and violent crime. The story revolves around the criminal cat sisters Annpuna and Unipunna and the Tank Police, led by "Mr Squad Commander" Britain. The sisters are sexy and the police are ultra-violent - what more can you want!

Crying Freeman - Chapter 1: Portrait of a Killer

This is the first of a 6 part series



based on famous Japanese comic books and graphic novels. It tells the story of a young man called Yoh (a 29 year old virgin to be precise) who is trained to be a Chinese Triad killer, but doesn't want to be. His situation is worsened when he is told to kill the beautiful Emu (not a bird, it's a girl's name) who also happens to be a virgin. Can he kill her after doing the rumpy-pumpy? Will the Triad bosses let him fail? What sort of stupid name is Emu? All these questions and more will be solved in *Crying Freeman*. Lots of drugs, violence and some gratuitous nork shots.

If you want any more information about the Manga videos that are being released in Australia you can contact Siren Entertainment on ph. (03) 826 6911 or fax (03) 826 8719. Otherwise wait for the HYPER Manga special which will be comin' at ya real soon!

Road Rash Goes Grunge

Early demos of *Road Rash* for the 3D0 weren't exactly promising. In fact, we were a little worried. But it looks like all that worry was premature - *Road Rash* 3D0 is getting better all the time. With texture-mapped tracks, frame rates approaching 24 frames per second and extensive cinematics, *Road Rash* is shaping up to be very hot indeed. They're even going to release a special MPEG (video compression) version for higher than high quality intermissions, intros and outros.

Best of all, the music's not going to be wimpy/soft-rock/widdly-widdly guitar crap. EA has signed a deal with A & M records, so the soundtrack will feature the soothing riffs of Soundgarden, Swervedriver, Paw, Monster Magnet, Therapy? and Hammerbox. Andrew insists that Soundgarden are sounding more and more like second generation Led Zeppelin clones, but he's an idiot. Who cares what he thinks anyway? *Road Rash* should sound truly gnarly. Dudes.

Soundgarden will be rockin' *Road Rash* on the 3D0



Game Charts

Hyper's game charts supplied by the Gamesmen

Mega Drive

- NBA Jam
- FIFA International Soccer
- European Tour Golf
- International Rugby
- NHL Hockey 94
- Sonic 3
- NBA Showdown
- Barkley Shut Up & Jam
- Eternal Champions
- Gunship



SNES

- Super Mario Kart
- Super Strike Eagle
- NBA Jam
- Turtles Tournament Fighters
- Zombies
- Space Ace
- Streetfighter 2 Turbo
- Ren & Stimpy - Veediots
- Rock 'n Roll Racing
- Mystic Quest



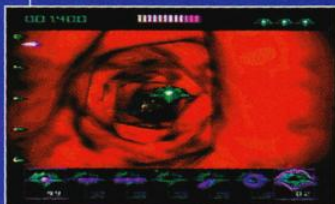
PC

- Alan Border's Cricket
- Doom
- Seawolf
- Gabriel Knight
- Frontier - Elite 2
- Fields of Glory
- Pacific Strike
- Sam & Max
- F1 Racer
- Premier Manager 2



Mega CD

- Microcosm
- Sonic the Hedgehog
- Lethal Enforcers
- Spiderman vs the Kingpin
- WWF Rage in the Cage



HYPER's July Chart Predictions

Stuart takes a stab at what will be the hot July releases (if they stick to the schedule)

- Super Metroid (SNES)
- The Incredible Hulk (Mega Drive)
- World Cup Soccer '94 (Mega Drive/SNES)
- Flashback (Mega CD)
- Desert Fighter (SNES)
- Battlecorps (Mega CD)
- Dragonsphere (PC)
- Outpost (PC)
- Marko's Magic Football (Mega Drive)
- Serf City: Life is Feudal (PC)
- Jungle Book (Mega Drive)
- Soulstar (Mega CD)
- Claymates (SNES)
- Chaos Engine (Mega Drive/SNES)
- Space Hulk (PC CD ROM)

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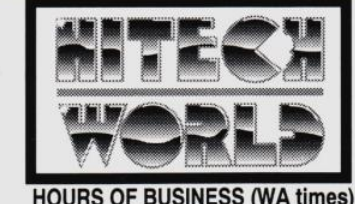
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Def Gaming

We have even more proof that rock 'n roll and gaming lifestyles mix. Def Rhyme are such big game-heads that they actually buy HYPHER.

When I brought the latest issue out, the interview stopped for a time, while they had a group reading exercise and then all the questions started.

When is *Super Street Fighter* being released for the Super Nintendo? Have I played *Doom*?

Should they buy *Dune 2* for the Mega Drive?

Hang on, wasn't the interview supposed to work the other way around? I tried to talk about their music (a mixture of rap/hard rock/funk that sounds sorta like the Chili Peppers and Faith No More if

we were into comparisons, but we aren't), but the band seemed more interested in the games.



When they go on the road, Quinn (the lead singer) has got a Super Nintendo but the whole band have Game Boys which they link up for multi-player mayhem. To relax they play video games, read video game magazines and hang

out in video game shops (that's what they said, but I think they were exaggerating just a bit). But maybe they were sincere as they complained bitterly about going to America and not finding games any cheaper; "They're still a \$100, so we wait until they go on sale here before we buy. You can pick up some good

It's the World Video Game Championship!

bargains if you wait. I picked up *Populous* for \$35!" (that was Michael, the bass player). They're a well rounded group too, in terms of games - their favourites are *Alien Rebels*, *Streetfighter 2*, *Aladdin*, *Populous*, *Wolfenstein 3D*, as well as role-playing games when they have the time.

We finally got around to their music, and when asked about their motivations for being in a rock band, Quinn said, "well, we weren't good at anything else. We're not particularly good at this, but we're better at this than selling shoes and things like that." So what bands inspired you to make your sort of music; (Quinn): "Living Colour. I always wanted to be in a band, but when I heard their song, "Cult of Personality" I knew that's what I wanted to do. It's such a groundbreaking song, especially coming from an all-coloured band". (Michael): "Devo definitely pointed me in the wrong direction...but basically we all just do our own thing and whatever feels good."

Def Rhyme have gained an infamous reputation for their song lyrics - their single "God Inside a Man" was seen by some as being sexist and their debut album's title track "Pure Killer" is about how murders and rapists should be put to death. I asked them how they come up with their subject matter; (Michael) "Things that piss us off mainly. There's too many people singing about driving around in a Corvette with your hair blowing in the wind...."

(Quinn) "...and a babe on your arm. That's a load of crap."

(Michael) "At the same time we don't want to end up too political either. It's just everyday things that piss you off really. We just want to get things off our chest really and we can do that in a song. It doesn't have to mean that much to anyone else as long as it means something to you and you feel better at the end of it."

Well, now you know everything you need to know about Def Rhyme. If you don't run into the boys in an arcade or games shop, look at for their debut album *Purekiller* which has just been released by BMG.

The huge world-wide chain of Blockbuster video stores are just starting heats for the inaugural World Video Game Championship. There are two separate competitions - one for Mega Drive players and one for Super Nintendo players, so no one is left out. First to the good news - Australia is getting it's own heats and championships and everyone who enters gets a prize. Now to the bad news - Blockbuster video stores at the moment are only in Victoria so unless you live in Victoria or want to get there you may have to wait until next year's comp to enter.

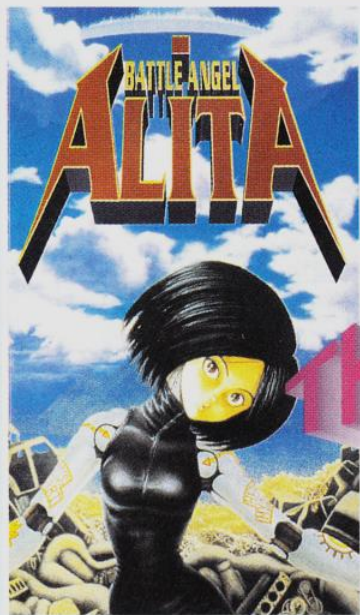
Actually if you do want to enter you had better get down to a Blockbuster store really quickly because heats are starting soon (the official cut-off day for entries is June 14). The heats are going on for 4 weeks and the final challenge to represent Australia takes place at Melbourne Central on July 23. Entry is open to players up to 20 years old (just a tad discriminatory we think - what about the oldies!). There will be three games for each system for would-be champions to battle it out on. For Sega it's *NBA Jam*, *Virtua Racing* and *Sonic 3*, while SNES owners will battle it out on *NBA Jam*, *Turtles Tournament Fighters* and a specially released *Clayfighter: Tournament Edition*. The two winners (one Sega, one Nintendo) will be flown to the USA for the World Finals in Florida on August 19-21.

The prizes are pretty bloody major as well (well it is a World Championship so you expect some goodies). The two Australian Area winners will get a trip to the US from Qantas, a \$250 Virgin voucher, 2 Melbourne concert tickets, a Coca Cola leather baseball jacket, a Sony Walkman and a live interview on Triple M. If you manage to win the World Comp you'll get a trip for four to San Fransisco where you'll be the honorary Editor of GamePro for a day (well, that's not so hot, believe me), you'll get a luxury box at a sporting event and a tour of Capcom and Electronic Arts headquarters. Both World Champs will also be digitised and put into EA's upcoming Strike series game. How exciting! So get into the competition (either enter or go and watch the finals) and even if you don't live in Victoria, start practicing your skills for next year when it will hopefully be run nation-wide.



The hard Gaming boys from Def Rhyme

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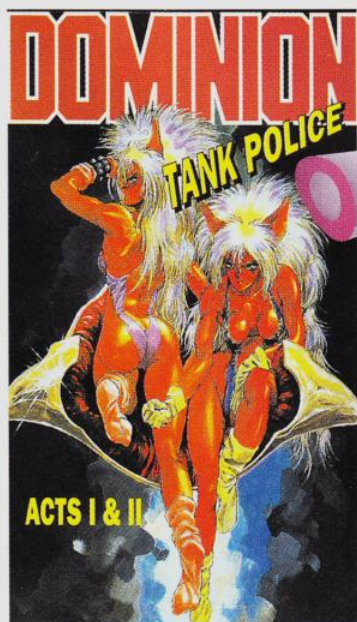
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FREEBIES

TIE FIGHTER COMP

TIE Fighter is one of this year's most eagerly awaited PC titles and we've got an awesome competition to get you into LucasArt's latest masterpiece. You all would know the Star Wars story and most of you would have seen or played *X-Wing*, which was the first in the Star Wars series of PC games from LucasArts. Well, in *TIE Fighter* you can throw all your knowledge out the window, because for the first time ever, you're on the side of the Empire and fighting against the Rebels. That's right, you'll be taking orders from old helmet head himself, Darth Vader as well as the fiercely evil Emperor Palpatine. This should provide a whole new perspective and piloting the Empire craft for the first time will be a challenge to all PC pilots.

The game is due for release any second now, and HYPER, along with the fabulous people at Metro Games thought we'd give you a chance to win some copies, along with some very, very special other prizes. The big special prize is a limited edition and numbered Yoda figurine, which was sculptured for the 10th anniversary of *The Empire Strikes Back*. There are only 50 in the world and it's valued at \$800. We also have three finely detailed pewter Star Wars space-craft - a TIE

Fighter, a Millennium Falcon and an X-Wing which are valued at \$250 each. How about that Star Wars freaks!

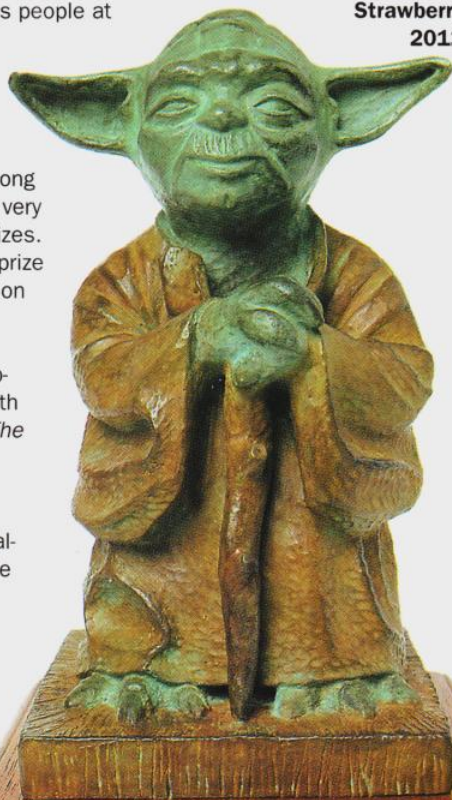
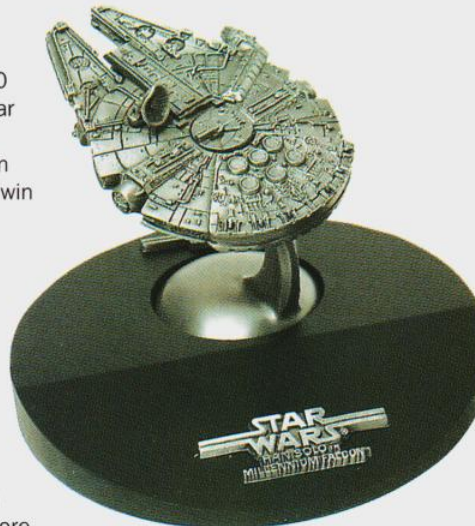
So we have 4 prizes in total. The big winner will win Yoda and a copy of *TIE Fighter*, while the other winners (it sounds better than runners-up, don't you think?) will get a pewter ship and a copy of the game.

To enter you'll have to tell us in 50 words or less why you'll enjoy fighting for the Empire in *TIE Fighter*. And do it before the 19th of July. Easy, huh!

Send your entry to:
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Subs Winners Issues 3 & 4

The Official Sega Mega Drive Power Tips Book 2: S Bird, VIC; P Stewart, QLD; P Wiggins, ACT; R Redman, QLD; G Denning, QLD; L Van Haasteren, SA; J Elliott, NSW; D Doe, SA; P Skellern, NSW; G Hutchinson, TAS. **Super NES Power Tips Book:** J Poultney, WA; C Reimers, WA; D Coker, WA; D Owen, WA; J Salter-Duke, NT; R Arnott, SA; J Priest, ACT; D Williams, NSW; J Lee, NSW; C Monin, QLD.

Subs Winners Issues 5 & 6

Skitchin': L Clifford, QLD; GM Inall, QLD; M Carroll, QLD; D Burns, NT; M Wildoer, SA; J O'Brien, NSW; G Holloway, NSW; S Lark, NSW; M Bottrell, SA; D Laing, QLD. **Clayfighter:** P Gray, QLD; G Payne, NSW; V Lewis, WA; B Phegan, NSW; CE Anderson, NSW; F Kwan, NSW; S Montgomery, QLD; S Coker, NSW; P Czupak, SA; R Lachlan, NSW. **Ultima 8:** G Meligonis, NSW; D Corey, QLD; J Gilbert, WA; C Myers, VIC; V Ho, NSW; G Bachmayer, NSW; R Wintle, VIC; M Sallaway, QLD; T Munro, QLD; M Sproule, NT.

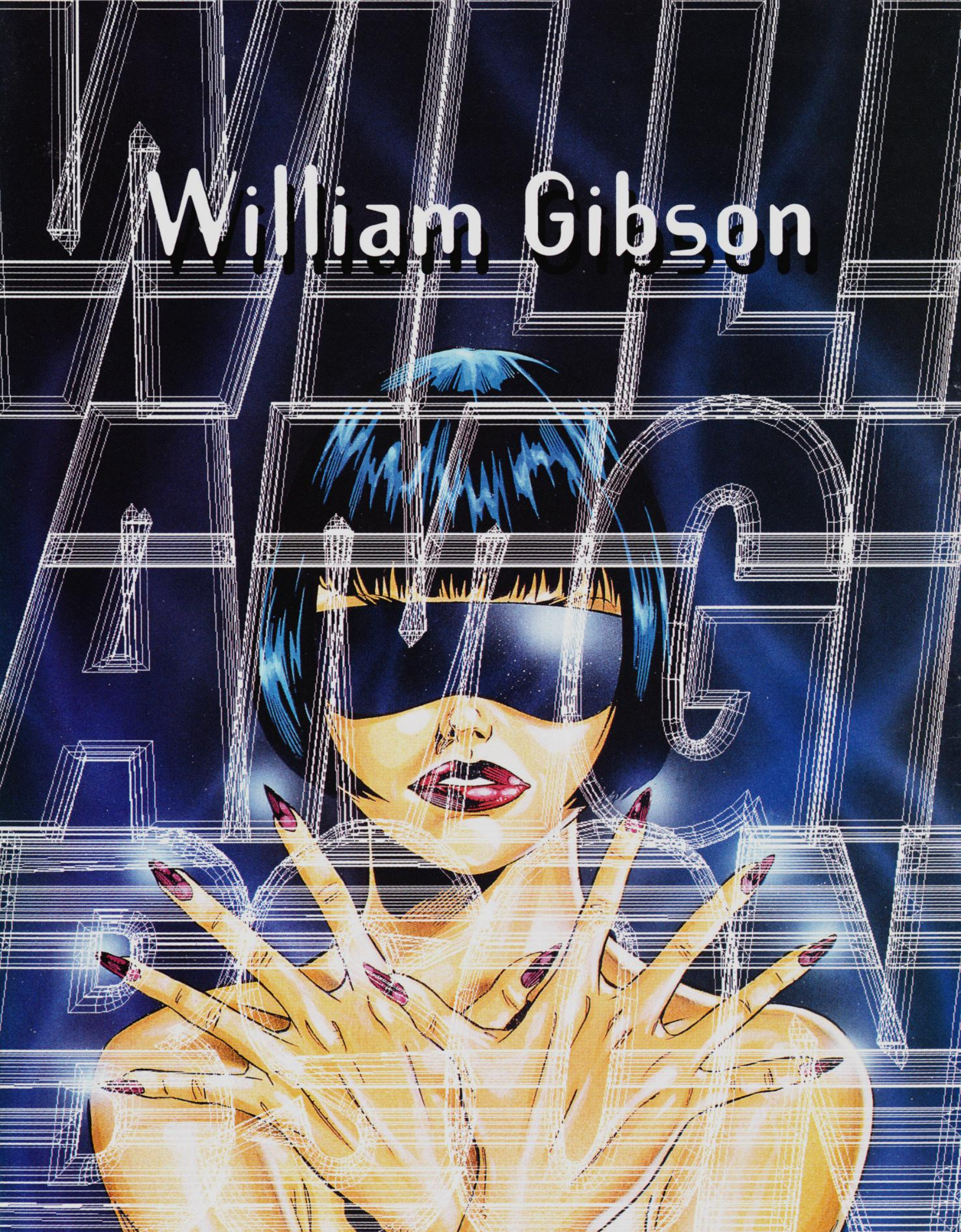
A man with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is lying on a yellow sofa. He is holding a Game Boy in his hands and looking at it with an excited expression. A ferret is visible in his blue denim jeans, which are pulled down to his ankles. The background is a dark blue wall with a shelf containing various items like a teapot and cups. The text 'Game Boy. More fun than a ferret down your trousers.' is written in a yellow, pixelated font in the upper right corner.

Game Boy.
More fun
than a ferret
down your
trousers.

GAME BOY

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William Gibson



There is nothing high tech about William Gibson's appearance. Apart from the mobile phone which he keeps hidden in his nylon sportsbag, he looks just like any other Joe in the hotel cafe; another Trekkie who had come to attend the Constantinople Science Fiction convention which was held this year at the prestigious Melbourne Southern Cross hotel.

Not the expected image of a man whose novels have almost single-handedly spawned a generation of "cool" computer nerds who would go on to call themselves cyberpunks. In the decade since Gibson's first novel, *Neuromancer*, was released, over ninety per cent of Gibson's virtual world has become real, with researchers, programmers and development houses using the *Neuromancer* trilogy as part of a larger blueprint for the future...

Part of the theorised cyberpunk future is a world ruled by heartless multi-national corporations, but with the real power lying with those who have access to information, such as computer hackers. That's why computer boffins and gamers the world over have jacked into Gibson's universe. The cyberpunk influence can be seen in many recent films, books and of course, computer games such as *Shadowrun*, *Blood Net* and *Syndicate*.

HYPER's star reporter, AUTOHEAD talked to the science fiction writer who has somehow managed to change the world...

HYPER You've had a busy schedule over the past few years. Can you tell us what's been happening?

WILLIAM GIBSON Well for the last five years or so, on and off between books, I've been working with Robert Longo the painter and sculptor in an attempt to get out a Longo directed, Gibson scripted science fiction movie. We're scheduled to wrap principle photography on *Johnny Mnemonic* in Montreal in May 5th. The budget's 27 Million dollars and it stars Keanu Reeves, Dolph Lundgren, Ice-T, a wonderful new actress called Ena Myers and Henry Rollins of the Rollins band, and that's been pretty much everything I've been doing while I wasn't writing *Virtual Light* and touring to promote it. Between those three things it's been a pretty full card.

HYPER How did you meet Robert?

GIBSON We had some mutual friends who are some kind of East Village techno muso types who did music for some of his pieces, and I knew them and they did some music for a couple of performance pieces that I had done years ago and it sort of came together. Robert's dyslexic, and always has been, and he got to a point in his life where he learned to read, and the first thing he read was *Neuromancer* (laughs) which is lucky for me, and anyway then he read *Burning Chrome*. Initially it was going to be a two million dollar black and white art movie but it hasn't worked out that way.

HYPER What happened to Bono's role in the movie?

GIBSON He was nervous about doing his sly impression as a TV Evangelist... I know Bono a bit, spent a little time with him and he knows my work but I think he didn't feel that it was quite the right role, and it probably wasn't... I think he would need something more of a centre piece in the film, and this was like a character that wasn't a very really big role and he couldn't do it so we wound up going with Udo Kier the German actor who was Dracula in Andy Warhol's *Dracula*. A very funny guy. He did a brilliant job.

HYPER I've noticed that a lot of pop icons have credited you as an influence to their work, whether it's artists, musicians or other writers. Vernon Reid (from Living Colour) for

example, is very public about the effect your novels have had on both his music and designs...

GIBSON Yeah, that's always flattering... particularly Vernon Reid. I'm very happy. Science fiction and American science fiction in particular hasn't done a hell of a lot for black Americans so it's always been great to get that kind of feedback.

HYPER How do you feel about scientists and corporations who are working towards the future based on the world of *Neuromancer*?

GIBSON Well, I'm easier with the admiration of rock musicians (laughter) and other writers than I am with scientists and techno types because people are trying to give you VR and the so-called information superhighway which is a really bogus metaphor.

They don't seem to realise that there could possibly be some sort of metaphorical or cautionary aspect to what I do, they completely miss the irony of it. They don't realise that a lot of what I do is comedy, very *black* comedy sometimes, but by and large, it's comedy. I intend very little of what I do to be any sort of blue-print of the future. And I categorically deny visionary capacity. It's a really grave mistake to think of science fiction writers as visionaries. I think you should think of science fiction writers as charlatans, professional charlatans, but hopefully benevolent ones. But y'know, it's all a bit more of a circus act than most people would imagine.

HYPER At your address at the Constantinople sci-fi con in Melbourne you stated that you likened what you do to that of the Boxmaker in *Count Zero*...

GIBSON Yeah, very much so. My art, such as it is, always appears to me as one of assemblage. I don't feel that I have a lot of native narrative, I just put bits together and it's in the juxtaposition of the bits that it starts to happen. I took William Burroughs' (*Naked Lunch*) cut-up method really seriously but that's not exactly what I do. I sort of cut the bits up in my head and put them together on the page and then air-brush them together in a stylistic technique. When I look at my books I perceive the bits pasted together. Part of my job is to make it seem like a seamless narrative.

HYPER How do you feel about other adaptations to your work in other medias? I noticed that there was a *Neuromancer* Comic book that was floating around in the late Eighties...

GIBSON Well yeah, that was actually the first of a projected three volume set. I understand that the two subsequent volumes are finally going to be produced. I thought that the first volume of Tom De Haven's adaptation was scary... it was really, really excellent. The artwork was not everything that it could've been though. But I don't really have any aesthetic participation in that particular project.

It's a difficult decision. A big part of late capitalism is recommodification and you either allow the recommodification of your intellectual property or you don't. Or you try to maintain control over all of it. I can't afford to not allow the recommodification but I don't have the creative time or energy to hang in there and try and supervise and control every bit of how it's done.

HYPER You've stated how you feel about some other movie adaptations of your work, and you didn't sound entirely confident about the project "Rose Hotel".

GIBSON Well... it's kinda possible that it won't be bad, but I had no direct aesthetic responsibility for the product; a product based on the work that I've created, and I simply can't guarantee what it's going to be like. I mean look at the adaptations of Stephen King, y'know...

HYPER What kind of world will your kids grow to see?

GIBSON It's actually something that I don't think about very much, but I don't particularly think that it will be the world of *Neuromancer*. I think that's very much wishful thinking though. There are millions and millions of people that would emigrate at the drop of a hat to the world of *Neuromancer*!

People say that I'm writing dystopian fiction. But there are more real dystopias in the world today than anything I've ever written about. Particularly if you think that *Neuromancer* was written in '82 and '83 and the Soviet Union was still happening and the Cold War was still happening. In a way I felt I wanted to write something that was optimistic actually. I thought I gave people hope. There had been a nuclear

war but it hadn't been very big and everybody decided not to do it anymore y'know. That was a really optimistic fantasy at the time.

HYPER So what are you working on currently?

GIBSON I've just started writing... well, I'm preparing to start writing a novel called "The Idol Singers"...

HYPER Not named after Billy Idol!

GIBSON No, no. Actually I'm not sure if I'm going to call it that or "Ikodoru". It's the Japanese pop expression for those cute little Tokyo girl singers. I was fascinated a couple of years ago to read that one particular Idol Singer in Tokyo, who was in effect a Virtual construct. Apparently they used one girl's voice, one girl's face, another girl's hair, one girl's figure and this one really got off the ground and she actually held several art shows of her paintings and published a book of her poetry. I thought at the time that this was such a brilliant concept that I would write a book about a crazy charismatic western pop star who is touring through what used to be the Soviet Union to Budokan and announcing to the press on the way that he's going to marry the most popular of the Idol singers. But everyone knows that she's the product of Tokyo Information designers and that there is absolutely no girl there at all. Somehow in this book I have to have this marriage consummated, but I haven't figured out quite how to do that yet.

HYPER I'm curious about your opinion on the Japanese Royal wedding that was held just over a year ago. Did that give you any inspiration for the "Ikodoru" also? (At this point Gibson looks confused)

HYPER Did you hear about that particular event?

GIBSON No... No...

HYPER They had to simulate the wedding for television in three dimensional computer graphics for cultural reasons. Most people around the world saw a computer simulated version of the event.

GIBSON The imperial wedding? Really? No I didn't see that. That's fantastic! I don't know how I missed that. That's quite extraordinary, really interesting. (Pauses) They should do that with Clinton

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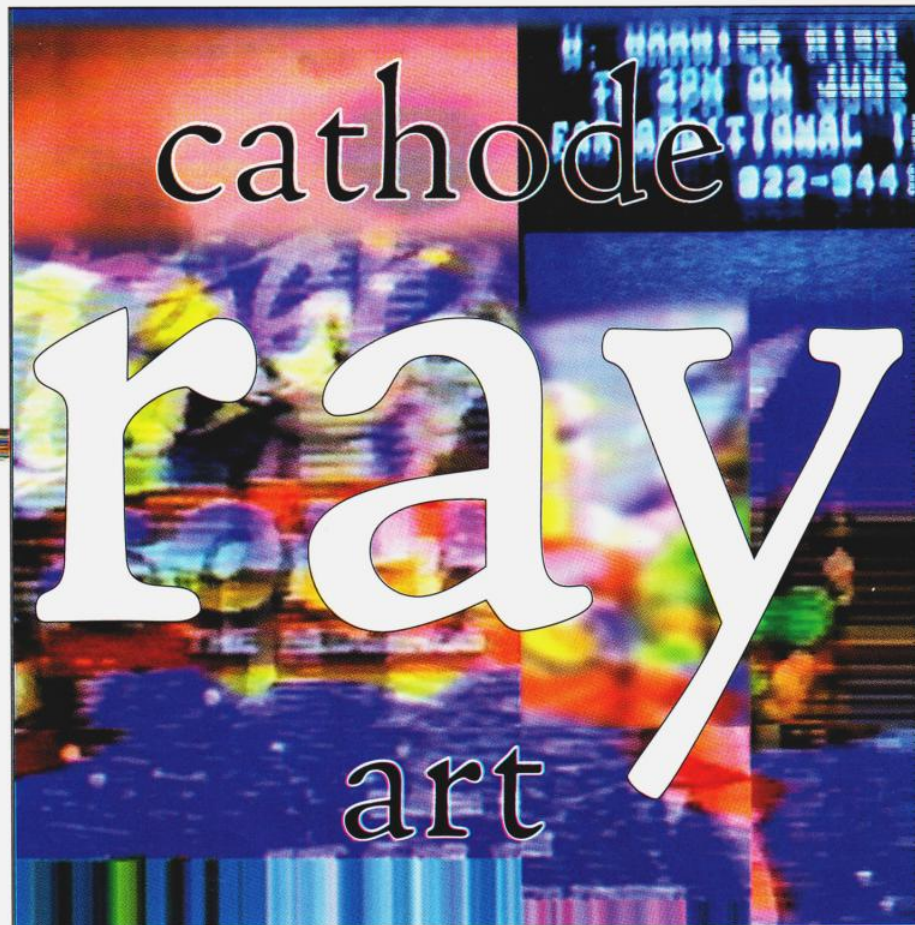
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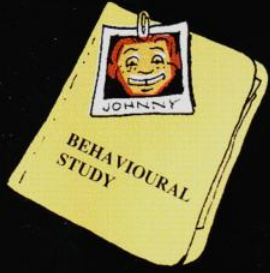
You won't find Sonic or Mario hanging on the walls of the National Gallery, but who are we to say they're not Art.

The video game aesthetic is increasingly influencing mainstream



artforms such as music, television and film. Hyper asked some of our favourite young artists to get inspired by their favourite video game or the culture that surrounds it.

IF ONLY IT
WERE JUST
A GAME



Tony Thorne "If only it were just a game" inspired by the violence in video games debates.

USE that 2
dollar eye



LOOK

A MAN OF VISION



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pump dum
jump jump
jump jump
pump jump
mp jump

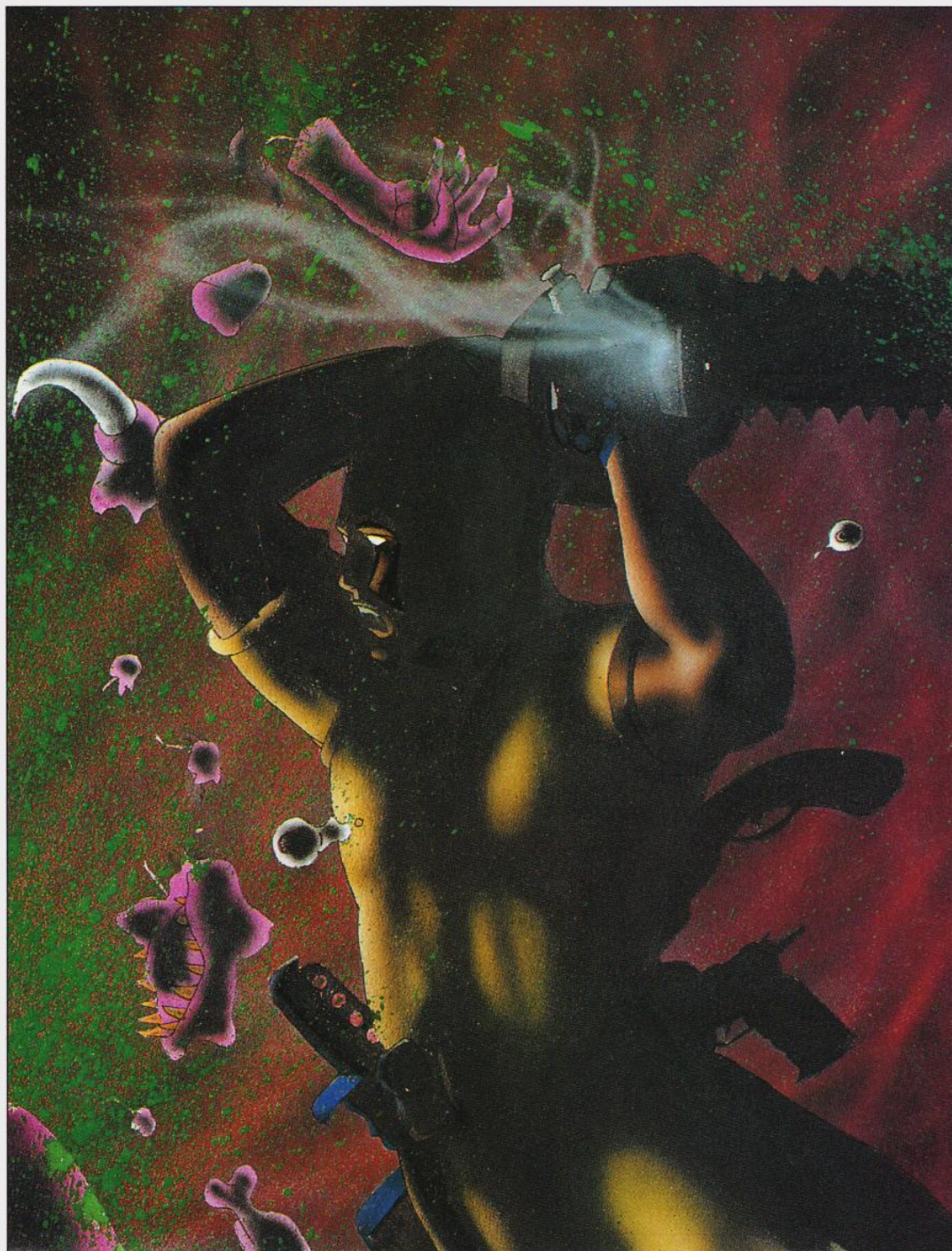
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KILLALEA

Left Michael Killalea "Trog" inspired by the arcade game Trog



This Page Autohead "Doom" inspired by the PC game Doom

death of a hedgehog

©1994 RYAN O'LOUGHLIN *REL*



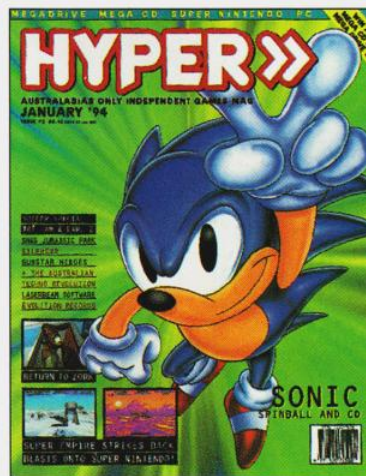
Ryan O'Loughlin "Death of a Hedgehog" inspired by almost everyone's favourite rodent Sonic

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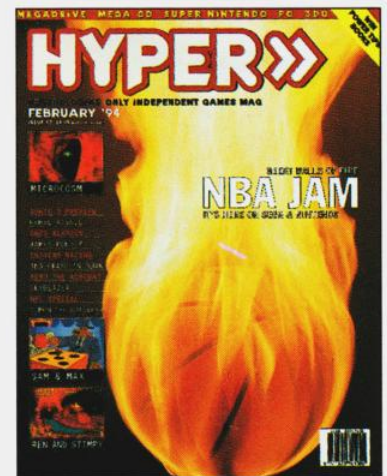
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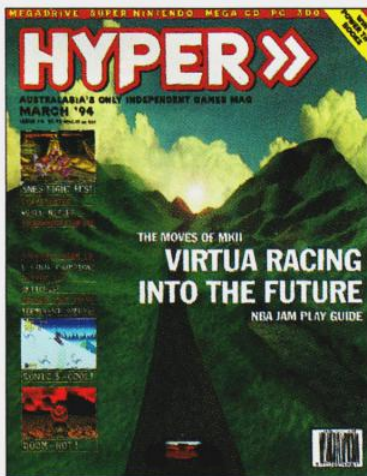
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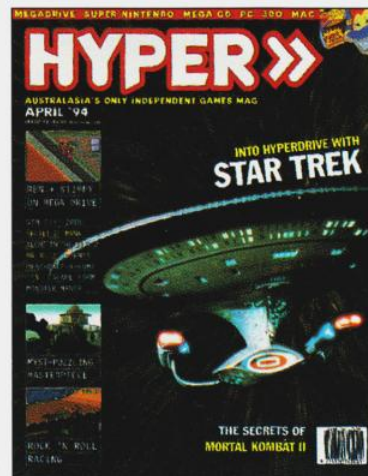
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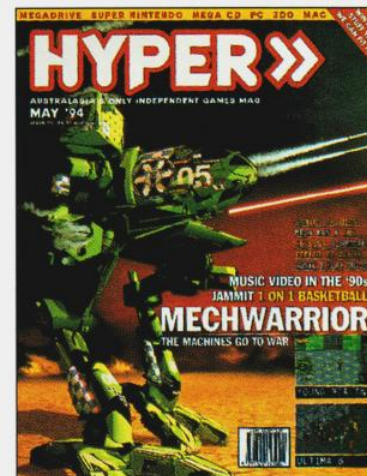
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Each pack contains a shiny new Sega Mega Drive, three of EA's finest sports games - NBA Showdown 94, FIFA International Soccer, and



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0007

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Battlecorps

MEGA CD
Available: June
Category: Action
Players: 1
Publisher: Core Design

Most Mega CD owners love Core Design - and no, it's not for *Chuck Rock 2: Son of Chuck*, it's for *Thunderhawk*, which we reviewed (and loved to pieces) in the very first issue of *HYPER*. *Thunderhawk* proved that, despite the well known limitations of

the hardware, clever programmers could use the Mega CD's strong points (ie, its scaling and rotation chip) to produce excellent games. Well, those clever programmers are at it again with *Battlecorps*.

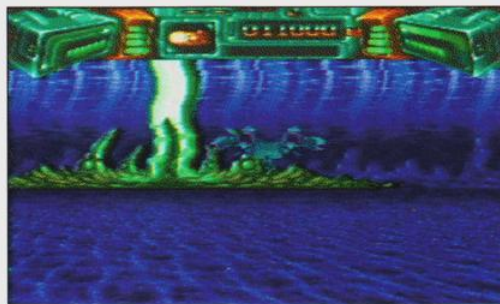
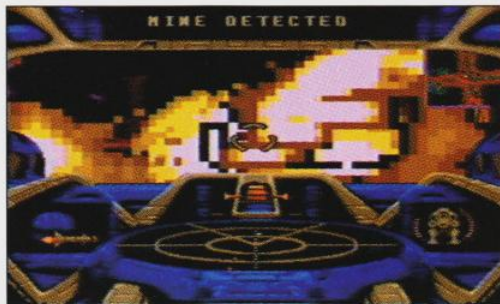
Battlecorps is shaping up to be the game that *Mechwarrior* (on the SNES) should have been. The basic scenario is very similar. You're in control of a rather large, hulking BattleMech kind-of-thing. It's got lots of guns and stuff which you use to blow things up. You've been hired by

the Interplanetary Mining Corporation (remember them from that old Carpenters' song?) to take out the rival Biomech Corporation's mining installations over six different planets. Don't you just love resource wars?

Like *Thunderhawk*, the game revolves around ten simple lines of code that control the Mega CD's graphics sizing chip. But this time, they've managed to use all 64 on-screen colours. *Thunderhawk* used just 16. The texture-mapped terrain scales and rotates all over the place

as you lumber from installation to installation, exploding everything in your path. Full-motion video sequences link the missions together.

The preview disk we've been playing looks very impressive. The controls are good, the weapons make big BOOMS! and the first person perspective works well. We had some trouble getting caught up on rocks and things, but we're sure that's our fault, not Core's. As soon as we get a finished version, we'll give it the treatment.



Another Mega CD title from Core that's almost finished is *Soulstar*, which uses basically the same game engine as *Battlecorps*. This time it's more of a fast action shoot 'em up, with first person perspective levels as well as full 360 degree romps ala *Thunderhawk*. You get to choose your attack vehicle (a sub-light strike craft, a tank or a turbo copter) and go into action against the dreaded alien race, the Myrkoids. These interplanetary killers have been on the run from

you and your Cryo-Commanders for centuries, but now you've chased them through the Hypergate and you've got them in your sights, and you're not about to stop blasting until they're all sticky puddles on the ground.

With 3 difficulty levels, 40 game missions, a two player option and spoken commentary, this looks like being more than a little bit enjoyable, but the demo disk we played was far from finished so we can't say for certain. What we can say for certain is that as soon as we get it, you'll read about it.

Soulstar

MEGA CD
Available: July
Category: Shoot 'em Up
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Core Design

Lemmings 2-Tribes

SNES/MEGA DRIVE
Available: August/November
Category: Puzzler
Players: 1
Publisher: Psygnosis

As you are no doubt all aware, *Lemmings* is one of the most frustratingly addictive puzzle games in the world. *Lemmings 2 - The Tribes* (which was released on PC and Amiga last year) took the classic concept and made it bigger and better (which is what all good sequels are supposed to do). Now it's time for Mega Drivers and SNES owners to start frying some brain cells as the little green haired critters are coming to your console real soon.

In case you've never seen *Lemmings*, the aim of the game is to guide the stupid and suicidal creatures over diabolical obstacle

courses to safety. *Lemmings 2* has 12 different tribes of Lemmings, including Space Lemmings, Circus Lemmings, Egyptian Lemmings and Beach Bum Lemmings. Each tribe comes complete with their own graphically unique environment and different skills which you'll have to use to save their lives. If you're at all into puzzle games then you should be eagerly awaiting this tasty offering, and even if you can't be bothered saving Lemming lives, you can always have fun with the mass suicide option.



Legend

SNES
Available: August
Category: Hack & Slash
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Arcade Zone

Calling a game *Legend* is just asking for trouble isn't it? I mean, it'd be better to call a game, say, *Loser* or *Crap on a Stick*, and then surprise everyone with how good it is. Anyway, the daringly titled *Legend* (I wonder if it has anything to do with the Tom Cruise movie flop from the early Eighties?) is coming soon for the Super Nintendo, and basically it looks like a *Golden Axe* game, only with bigger sprites.

One or two players can embark on a quest to save the land of Sellech from an evil curse by defeating the many monsters and nasty people who roam the land. There are 14 levels and you'll fight your way through forests, cathedrals, mills and monasteries, meeting 10 huge bosses and 10 (yep, count 'em, 10) different types of enemies like zombies, skeletons, archers and wizards. But you've got magic, a shield and a number of different attacks at your disposal. The



Outpost

PC
Available: July
Category: Strategy
Players: 1
Publisher: Sierra

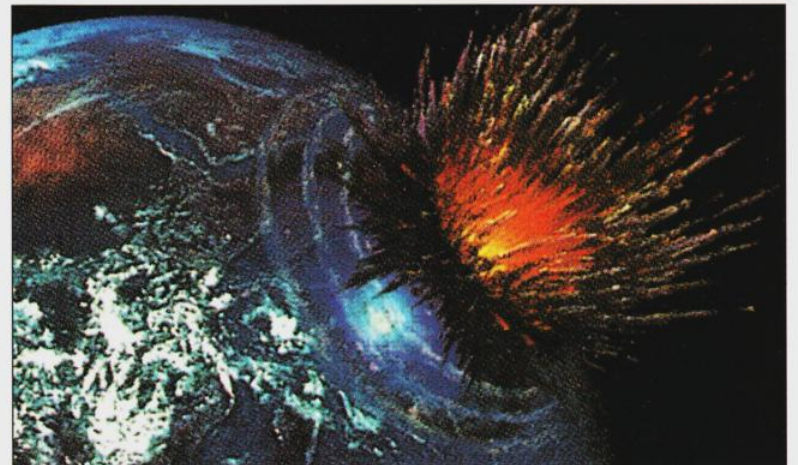
For those PC'ers out there who absolutely must use Windows, some decent entertainment for your operating system is about to arrive. Sierra have been producing super-high quality kid's learning games for a while now, and are finally about to treat us growing-ups with some proper fun to have when we're not multi-tasking.

Outpost is a strategy world builder, with your aim to make a happy and productive world from an uninhabitable planet. Looking simply fantastic in

Super VGA, *Outpost* promises big time scope in gameplay. The job starts while your colony ship is still being constructed in orbit around Jupiter, probes are sent out and eventually the new world is chosen. Bad luck if your destination turns out to be a lonely rock of ice, but you only get one choice so make the best of it.

Your colonists seem to have come originally from a *Sim City*, they complain constantly and are very expensive to keep happy. Actually, quite a lot of *Outpost* smells very much like *SimCity* in space, with various facilities to be built and managed over the long haul.

The game looks stunning, and will hopefully be great fun to play as well. We await patiently.



graphics look nice (there's a bit of Mode 7 stuff thrown in for good measure) and the press release guarantees there will be no slowdown, so

we'll have to hold them to that. It doesn't look too inspiring at this stage but we'll tell you for sure as soon as we get it.



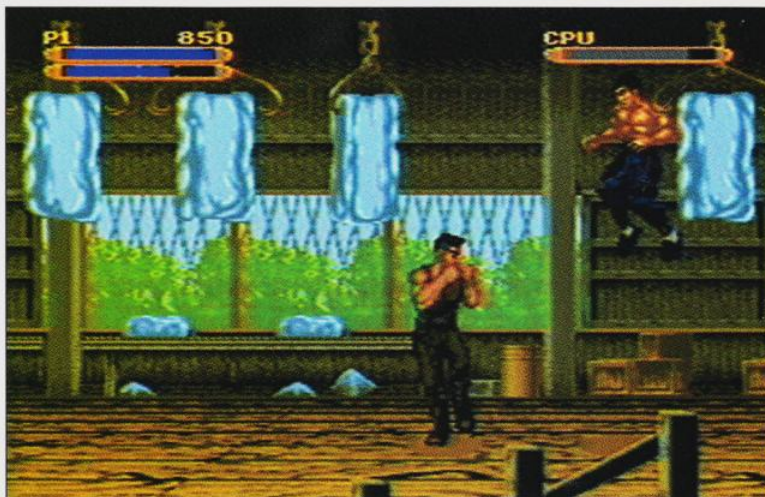
Dragon

Bruce Lee was a legend. Streetfighter 2 is a classic. Put the two together and what do you get? A rather lame fighting game, going from the demo version we've played. Actually, *Dragon*, which was the name of the movie that dramatised Bruce Lee's life story, wasn't a real fire-breather either, so it's probably no wonder that the game isn't better than it is.

Maybe we're being a bit harsh though (What, us? Harsh?), as the graphics are certainly very nice, it's got a half-naked Bruce kung-fuing the living daylight out of various nasties and there are lots of moves and different enemies. But what it

MEGA DRIVE
Available: August
Category: Fighting
Players: 1-2
Publisher: Virgin

hasn't got is originality. And there's nothing we hate more at HYPER than lack of imagination (except maybe good looking people who are also intelligent). Still, we're not going to write it off until we see the finished version. Who knows, it may surprise us, and even if it doesn't, it's still got Bruce Lee in it and that's got to be worth a few points.



MLBPA Baseball

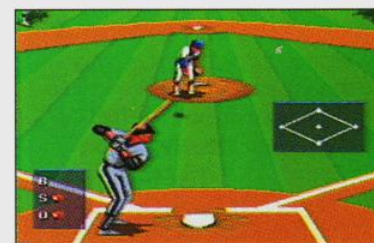
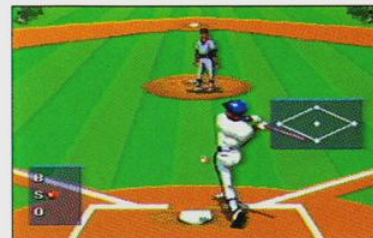
Electronic Arts love making sports games. That's why they came up with the whole EA Sports thing. Somehow though, we've always got the feeling that they never know when enough is enough. Now they're adding another baseball cart to an already large pile, including EA's own excellent *Tony La Russa Baseball*. But adding more lumps of plastic to the world's fragile environment doesn't really matter if there's a decent game contained inside, and *MLBPA* looks like it might be OK.

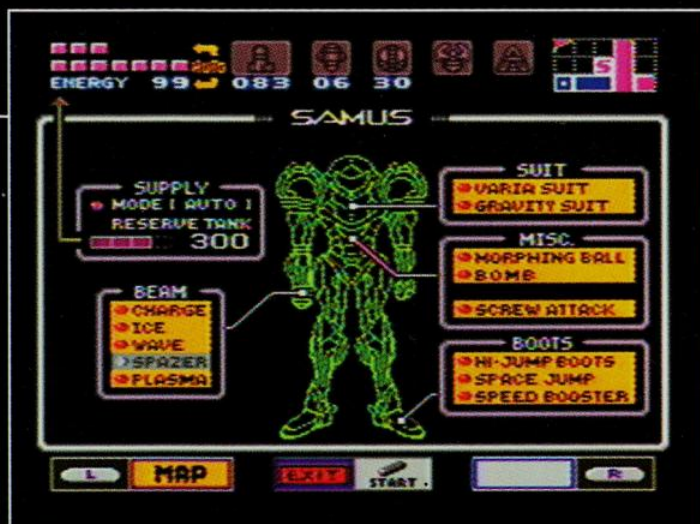
Just like all good baseball carts, this one's got loads of mind-numbingly confusing options, you can play one-offs, playoffs, a full 162 game season or go straight to the World Series, and it's full of real life baseballing superstars because MLBPA stands for Major League Baseball Players' Association (just in case you were wondering). With EA's 4-Way Play

MEGA DRIVE
Available: June
Category: Sport
Players: 1-4
Publisher: Electronic Arts

thingy it's a four-player game too.

On the almost finished-but-not-quite-finished-enough-to-review version we played the sprites were nice and big, the speech was OK, and the gameplay seemed to revolve squarely around pushing button C, which makes it very playable indeed. And of course, every time we hit a homer, we cheered like hell. There's also a rather funny intro screen which obviously won't be included in the final version (we hope)... but you'll see it below if you look. But how will the finished game shape up? And will Michael Jordan have to grow a bigger arse now that he's become a baseball player? We'll tell you real soon.





Level One

This is the first level in *Super Metroid*. It acts as a prologue of sorts. Samus descends into the Research Centre. She finds the last Metroid missing from its glass case, and the scientists dead. When she finds the Metroid she gets a nasty surprise. Then she must exit before the centre explodes.

SUPER METROID

How good is Super Metroid? Real good.

A candidate for Game of the Year. In fact, it's so good we can't think of anything remotely amusing to say about it. Except for this: ANDREW HUMPHREYS was so impressed he stained several pairs of under-pants...



SUPER METROID

Super Metroid is more than a game. From the moment you plug it in, it sucks you headlong into its 24 meg mass. After a hard day at the controls it'll spit you out - battered, bruised, and totally exhilarated - but a part of you will always remain inside the world of *Super Metroid*. Until you finish it, there's no escaping its unearthly pull. And when you do finish it you'll want to play it all over again.

Super Metroid really is that good. I honestly can't remember the last time I was so excited by a game. After all, we're all hardened gaming professionals here at HYPER - for a game to impress us as much as *Super Metroid* has it has to have almost magical qualities. It does. I woke up early just so I could get to work and play it. I couldn't stop thinking about it.

But don't expect to be blown away when you first see it - *Super Metroid*'s strength is not fancy graphics. The graphics are rather lovely - dark, stylish and very Japanese - but they're certainly not the most eye-popping visuals you'll ever see on a SNES. The truly impressive thing

about *Super Metroid* is that it manages to be so all-consuming without fancy effects. This is not a game you look at while others play it; this is a game you experience, and the best way to experience it is alone. Lock yourself in a bare room with a television, a SNES, a copy of *Super Metroid* and a four day supply of food. Come out when you're done.

Metroid 3 *Metroid* marked a milestone in 8-bit gaming. Released a decade ago in Japan it was a huge hit both there and overseas. Gamers the world over were startled by its complexity. The game's hero was Samus Aran. Samus had an armoured suit that could be powered up to dangerous levels. Samus had heaps of nifty moves. Samus was a bounty hunter. Samus was a woman. In a video games world populated by over-muscled Neanderthal heroes, Samus was a refreshing change - and she still is.

Super Metroid follows directly from the first two 8-bit games (it's subtitled *Metroid 3*). For those of you not in the know, the *Metroid* saga is rather like the *Aliens* saga. The

Metroids are ugly, face-sucking creatures and Samus is hired to wipe them out. After her second run-in with the Metroids on their home planet, Samus is convinced she's seen the last of the Metroids. Only a Metroid larvae is left alive. When it hatches it thinks Samus is its mother. But Samus isn't quite ready for motherhood, so she delivers the Metroid to the Galactic Research Station at Ceres. Maybe they can use the sucker for cosmetics testing.

As Samus blasts off from Ceres she's looking forward to a nice hot bath and a soothing mug of Bonox. But the Research Station is attacked, the baby Metroid goes missing, and Samus has to hang a U-turn to finish off the Metroid menace once and for all. There's only one place a girl with a big gun and a Metroid fixation can go: planet Zebes.

Soooper Dooper When Nintendo of Japan get serious they're capable of producing some of the best software around. *Super Metroid* is the result of the labours of Nintendo's top team of developers, the fabled R & D

1. It shows - *Super Metroid* is quite simply a masterpiece of game design. Planet Zebes is a huge, complex, labyrinthine world full of secrets and menacing creatures. An excellent Automap feature shows you where you've been and at certain points throughout the game you'll find terminals which allow you to download entire level maps, so you'll know where you haven't been too.

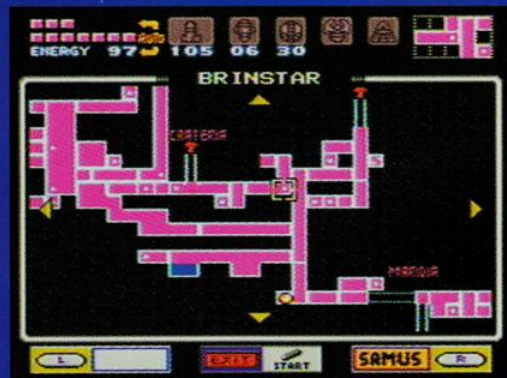
You start the game with a trip to Ceres. As you descend into the Research Station you'll be overcome by a sense of atmosphere like no other you've ever experienced. I thought the atmospheric of *Flashback* couldn't be bettered, but *Super Metroid* makes *Flashback* feel about as exciting as the prospect of watching a week of *Home and Away* episodes in the one sitting. Through a combination of spartan, eerie music, realistic sounds and dark, moody graphics, the programmers have created a sense of foreboding evil and tension that lasts throughout the entire game. Dim the lights and *Super Metroid* will creep out of your television and take over your life.



Grab the morphing ball and this dude appears.



Download the map from here



Map screen



Remember this spot!



It's Kraid from the original Metroid. He gets bigger... and uglier.

Your visit to Ceres serves as a prologue. The game proper begins as you land on planet Zebes. At the beginning, where you go is up to you, but you'll need to overcome an ever-increasing number of obstacles to make any real progress. Blue doors, for example, are easy to open, but how do you open the pink ones and how do you get through the small gaps you find all around you?

There's a solution to every problem and most of them involve gaining new skills by powering up Samus' suit. The Morphing Ball will let you get under gaps and missiles will help break down the pink doors.

The design of the game is so good that it allows a degree of individual exploration, but all the time it's gently prodding you in the right direction. Every power-up seems like a major achievement and opens up vast new avenues to explore. You may find yourself perplexed in places, but you'll never be frustrated - the next goal is always within your reach.

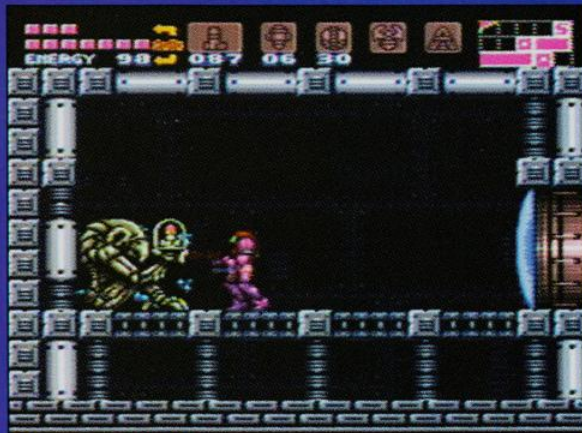
I could go on for pages about the wonderfully instinctive controls (and you can change all the button functions to suit your style), the sheer depth of the gameplay (it gives *Zelda* a good run for its money), the fabulous sounds and the fearsome

bosses, but you'll never know just how good this game is until you experience it for yourself.

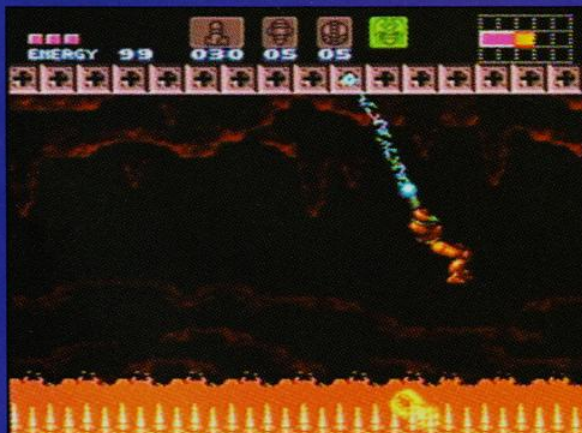
You must play *Super Metroid*. You should buy it (and at only \$99 for a 24 meg game you'd be stupid if you didn't), but if you can't, borrow it, rent it - whatever you do, just play it. And if you don't have a Super Nintendo, this is as good a reason as any I can think of to get one. Games as good as this show that there's a lot of life left in 16-bit consoles; I don't care how many bits a machine's got, you can't beat gameplay like this. *Super Metroid* is an experience you'll never forget.



Shoot him when you can see his mouth.



Mmmm... missiles.



Andrew shows what a swinger he is!



With speed boots you're faster than the \$6 million man.



A save point. 3 games can be saved to battery backup.



Lights, camera, action!

SNES

available

NOW

category

PLATFORM/PUZZLER

players

1

publisher

NINTENDO

price

\$99

visuals

Simple yet highly effective. I'm glad they didn't waste any of the 24 megs on flashy graphics - these are great, and they suit me just fine.

87

sound

Very sparse but the effect is almost hypnotic. The quality is excellent and the atmosphere is superb.

94

gameplay

Instinctive controls, a huge range of moves and power-ups, brain-teasing puzzles and unstoppable action. Too compelling to be good for you.

94

longterm

Because it's so compelling you won't stop until you finish it - but even then it'll take a while and you won't discover all the game's secrets with just one go.

85

overall

Calling *Super Metroid* a "classic" doesn't even begin to do it justice. This is a wonderful, truly compelling gaming experience.

94%

Chaos Engine

We've always found Chaos theory to be a valuable scientific tool in the search for truth.

Honest - we think about the social ramifications of science a lot. But what on earth is a Chaos Engine and what kind of car can you put one in? In our Head to Head round-up, BRIAN COSTELLOE gets chaotic on the SNES version and the ever reliable ANDREW HUMPHREYS cleans up the drool and dusts off the bad guys in the Mega Drive game.



Opposite Page:

① Mercenary

A good all rounder. He is quite mad, and enjoys nothing more than experimenting with a collection of unsavoury weapons.

② Scientist

The smartest of the six characters. After years of painstaking research he is the master of many ingenious devices.

③ Brigand

Another well rounded talent, and a cut throat bandit to boot.

④ Navvie

The strongest of the six characters. A good fighter with heavy weapons. Although he only has a few specials they are all very destructive.

⑤ Gentleman

A lean and clever character. He is a dapper chap without a doubt. What he lacks in muscle he makes up with wit.

⑥ Thug

When it comes to characteristics he could pass for the Navvies brother. The thug is a mammoth of a man. A little stupid but very powerful.

Chaos Basics

Besides fast action blasting, *The Chaos Engine* is all about careful exploration. You'll need to find all the keys and activate all the nodes before you can open the exit. The pictures following are an idiot's guide to the gameplay basics.

For a more detailed exploration of Chaos and non-linear mathematics see the book *Chaos* by James Gleick. Available at all good bookstores.



Keys are scattered everywhere. Pick them up to open passages.



Shoot the nodes to open up new areas and exits.



A secret power up stash. Food for energy, special weapons for blasting and money for buying.



The Yin and Yang symbol is a save point. The telephone will bring Player 2 to you.



An exit opened. Walk through to the next level.

SNES

Amiga owners have been boasting about their range of games for years now. If you have been unlucky enough to be affected by this ritual of console trashing by a friend who owns an Amiga and isn't afraid to use it then you may have seen some games that you secretly lusted after. But you didn't let it show, as your SNES just didn't have the goods at the time. Well now it's high time you turned the tables on your Amiga owning friend as *The Chaos Engine* has made it to the console scene and being both a SNES and Amiga owner myself, I can safely say that it's every bit as good. For those wondering what the hell I've been talking about up to now (and that's probably a lot of you) I'll let you in on the facts.

Just the facts, ma'am...

The Chaos Engine takes place in the year 1887. A dead dinosaur is found in England, and it turns out that it's come from somewhere other than this planet. Meanwhile, people are being transformed into wolves and other various nasties and going about the countryside killing people, eating the tasty ones and basically giving everybody a hard time. Even the Statue of Liberty is wandering about crushing innocent people (somebody took *Ghostbusters 2* the wrong way).

The people of England weren't happy, so they gathered up some of the bravest, smartest and dumbest characters around to »

Mega Drive

When a game is as good as *The Chaos Engine* it doesn't really matter what system you play it on - my advice to you all is simply to play it. It might matter if one of the conversions wasn't up to scratch, but both the Mega Drive and the SNES conversions are excellent, so (and I hope you're following my incisive logic here) in the end, it doesn't matter, does it? Of course, there are some piddly little differences between the two versions and it's my job to tell you all about them, but underneath it all, the two games are virtually identical. So you can all heave a little sigh of relief and hug and kiss each other in a symbolic display of gaming bi-partisanship. Or maybe not.

The more aware of you will have

already realised that I'm going to give the Mega Drive version the same mark as the SNES version (go on - take a peek at the scoreboxes if you don't believe me) so you're probably running for the door already, but if you stay with me I promise I'll try to say something interesting.

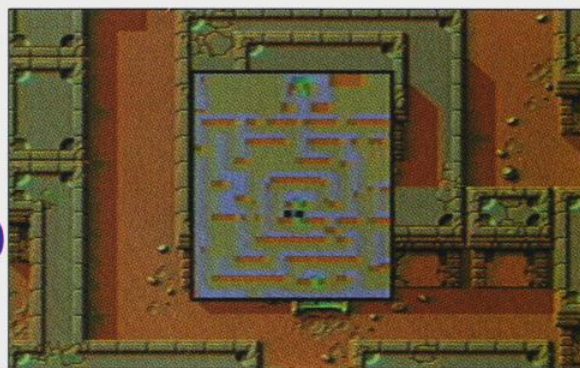
Interesting Things The capital of Zaire is Kinshasa. Mikhail Lermontov, the principal proponent of Romanticism in Russian literature, died in a duel at the age of 21. Many composite wood products aren't really made of wood at all. There you go - three interesting little factettes already. What's also interesting is that *The Chaos Engine* was renamed *Soldiers of Fortune* for its US »

Head2Head

Super Nintendo

Mega Drive

The Gentleman can read maps.
Other characters can learn to.



Equipping characters is very important.



Check out the difference in colours.



As you can see the level design is identical in both versions.



Detail and sprite size are the main differences.





try and tackle the problem head on. The person behind all the hassle - the charmingly named Baron Fortesque - had to be terminated. Otherwise people were just going to have to learn to live with murderous mutants and 10 000 tonne killer statues.

I don't know who these programmers are trying to kid but these game plots are getting worse aren't they? As for the game itself, it's really a case of *Gauntlet* meets *Rambo*. You run around a maze-like setting looking down on a 45 degree angle while shooting oncoming creatures, finding keys to gain access into further sections of the round, and picking up money as you go. Simple eh! But what makes this game different is the quality of the graphics, especially the sharp sprites. Plus the fact that when you're playing a single player game you travel with a CPU controlled partner who attempts to help you. But he can also sustain damage so you can't rely totally on him.

You have six players to choose from. They've all got good points and bad points: the Scientist is fast and he carries healing packs but his weapons are relatively weak whilst the Thug is powerful but relatively slow and downright stupid. The levels are fairly big and getting through them can be a task in itself.

When you chuck in all the mutants and mechanical hazards then shooting up the jungles becomes even more dangerous with progress being bogged down at times to a crawl. You don't get many lives to play with and your energy is quite low when you first start so beginning the game can become a chore, but the passwords are there to fix the problem. Various power ups and life boosters can be found at given points in the game but none of these do anything we haven't seen before, so you'll know what to expect. The gameplay isn't really original, but *The Chaos Engine* plays fast enough and well enough to more than make up for it.

Amiga Amigos The SNES conversion has been translated very well but it does suffer from "The Curse of the 3.5 MHz Processor". When the action hots up, the game slows down to handle all the moving sprites at once. But every other detail remains the same. If you've played any Bitmap Bros games in the past you'll be right at home with the ability to save coins and

buy power ups to increase certain attributes for each character. You should also be familiar with their crisp graphics. Sound effects do the job well but the music is a case of continuous bass line with some samples chucked in for the heck of it.

And there we have it - nice, senseless violence moulded into a highly playable cart with a fresh look sprinkled on top. *The Chaos Engine* has a few problems but if you make the investment you'll be at it for some time. Just ask any Amiga owner!

FORMAT: SNES

AVAILABLE: JULY

CATEGORY: ACTION

PLAYERS: 1-2

PUBLISHER: MICROPROSE

PRICE: \$109.95

visuals 86

Great graphics all round. Shame about the lack of animation.

sound 83

Boring music but solid sound effects and the Bitmap's usual high quality speech are a plus.

gameplay 88

Quite simply an addictive title.

longterm 83

I suppose this is always the hardest to judge. I'd say you could keep coming back to this.

overall 87%

A good conversion of a hugely playable game.



release. So if you see a copy of *Soldiers of Fortune* on import, then you're actually seeing a copy of *The Chaos Engine*. That means that everything I say about *The Chaos Engine* applies to *Soldiers of Fortune* too. Obvious really, but interesting nonetheless.

It's also interesting to note that *The Chaos Engine* was developed by English coders, The Bitmap Brothers - responsible for such classics as *Speedball 2* and the rarely seen *Gods* as well as not-quite-classics like *Xenon 2*. The same team that did *Speedball 2* did *The Chaos Engine*. You might be able to pick out the distinctive style of the graphics designer, Dan "The Man" Malone. The sprites, for example, are immediately recognisable as big Dan's.

What wouldn't be interesting would be if I needlessly rehashed *The Chaos Engine's* plot. Instead, I'll tell you about a couple of minor quibbles I have with the game.

First up, it's not quite big enough - there's only 16 levels in all (divided into four "Worlds" of four levels each). All the keys, all the powerups, all the treasure, and all the mutants are always in the same place too, so after a few plays you should have it well and truly sussed. As a one-player game then, it's not going to last forever - but then, what one-player game does? On the up side there's six characters to try out and most of the later levels have multiple exits and lots of secret bits so there will be some more ground to cover once you finish it.

Where *The Chaos Engine* really shines is as a two-player game. Grab a friend, give them a control pad and a polite squeeze and you'll be at it forever - or at least until the next hot game comes along. You'll need to co-operate too, so you'll be learning valuable social skills as you play.

Cosmetics The only differences between the Mega Drive and SNES versions are purely cosmetic. The sprites in the SNES version are slightly bigger, the graphics are a touch sharper and the speech is a bit clearer too. But the Mega Drive version has a more lengthy intro and a choice of three difficulty levels - the SNES game, like the Amiga original, only has one difficulty setting. Funnily enough, the US version (*Soldiers of Fortune* for the Genesis) has only one difficulty setting too. Sega Europe thought the game was too hard so the difficulty levels have been added for the PAL release. It's still tough as nails though.

What really matters is the game-play and it's exactly the same - in fact, every level is identical. Both versions play beautifully - the controls are smooth, the action is truly chaotic, and the overall design is excellent. *The Chaos Engine* takes a simple concept and turns it into an excellent game. The design is brilliant, the playability is spot on and it's as addictive as all hell. The Bitmap brothers have mustered up enough style and quality with this one game to keep me happy for months. Every one who's ever wanted to play with a big gun will love it.

FORMAT: MEGA DRIVE

AVAILABLE: JULY

CATEGORY: ACTION

PLAYERS: 1-2

PUBLISHER: MICROPROSE

PRICE: \$109.95

Well designed levels and cool sprites. But they're not quite as big or as sharp as the SNES version. 84

Hey, I like the music! Great FX and speech too - even if it does remind me of Megalomania. 83

Just as addictive and maybe a bit faster than the SNES game. Classic blasting fun. 88

Six different characters to try out in the one-player game and endless combinations for two-players. 83

Six big meatheads. Lots of big, shiny weapons. Explosions. Mutants to blast. Big fun. 87%

Subterrania

When you go down, deep down, down underground, it's dark, it's wet, it's dangerous and probably very smelly. STRETCH ARMSTRONG dives in head first...

With only three regular seasons to go, the below-form Bulls, with no Michael Jordan, will have to stay undefeated to have any hope of making the *NBA Showdown* playoffs. What's this got to do with *Subterrania*, I hear you ask? Nothing actually, but with this type of late season drama unfolding on the Mega Drive it was going to be tough to drag myself away for some underground shoot 'em up. But our fearless leader had told me it was a beauty, so I plugged in, settled back and you know what? He was right! That bloke Stuart, he's not the editor for nothing! (*I know* - Ed)

Plot Time We (Earthlings) appear to have colonised the outer reaches of space and commenced mining operations. Aliens, either because they hate Earthlings or because they hate mining, have attacked and you must save the mines and the trapped miners, not to mention a partially assembled submarine (makes sense to me). You will, it goes without saying, have to kill an inordinate amount of aliens to achieve this, but hey, life's cheap in outer space and at least no one can hear you scream.

You will scream a lot as you begin this game, because you'll have to struggle with the very tricky controls (this is not a criticism, just another fine and difficult feature). Not only must you chase aliens and avoid explosives and big horrible swinging things, but gravity will also be your enemy, as it relentlessly drags you to the mine floor and certain death. That's right, there's no simple sitting in hyperspace with your hands on your hips having a breather. You must be alert at all times, caressing the thruster like a lover (or whatever it is that you like to caress), checking for aliens or power-ups, with the other eye on the gauge to the very small fuel tank.

Multiple Missions And even with all the extra control skills required, when you get to the gameplay itself, this is no ordinary shoot 'em up. In fact the tactical aspects and planning required to complete each mission owe something to *Desert Strike* \ *Jungle Strike*. At the beginning of each mission (the early ones at least) you get a look at a radar screen of the area that you have to enter and instructions on the details of your mission. You'll have to save some miners, grab a sub part, maybe locate part of the nuclear core

and then guide your way back to the home base.

But it's not nearly as easy as simply scrolling left to right and blowing the crap out of whatever heads your way. You'll have to navigate your way around the mine or whatever area you happen to be in and it won't always be an easy task to get where you want to go. The problem solving skills required are a long way from the base senseless violence required in most shoot 'em ups (though a good dose of that won't go astray here) and certainly help to lift this game way above the ranks of the merely pedestrian.

Functional & Effective Down in the game itself, after a very attractive graphical introduction (which sees our hero enter the attack ship down a long tube ala Batman), is where the real action begins. The graphics couldn't be described as mind-blowing (unless your mind is particularly small), with the ship itself resembling something from an old *Galaga* game. However, the scenery is functional and very effective, in a very ice-fortress, New Age crystal kind of way, and when you combine it with the wide array of aliens, other random threats and the occasional freaky boss it takes on a somewhat surreal character.

The fact that the boss on mission two looks something like Henry Rollins' "Search & Destroy" tattoo is very fine indeed. Gameplay wise it's great - once you get the hang of the controls they're very responsive and in no time you'll be zipping through mines, solving puzzles and wasting outer space creeps. The added fact that time is short means the game's action packed from start to finish and that, as they say in the trade, is a good thing.

Also, and this is important, there's no princess to save, a fantastic innovation. I've always hated the royal family and would much rather spend my valuable spare time saving honest, working class, interstellar ditch diggers. Sure miners have screwed the environment, but at least they don't wander around children's wards pretending to be interested, when they'd rather be out fox hunting.

Subterrania is an excellent game. You have to use your brain and you get to kill lots of things. You'll love it, republicans of tomorrow.



Attach yourself to the rail lines to save fuel.



It's a good idea to pick up fuel when you need it.



This is you. Very 80's ponytail.



The Henry Rollins bit...



The little dots are the miners you need to rescue.



Read these things carefully.



MEGA DRIVE

available

NOW

category

SHOOT 'EM UP

players

1

publisher

SEGA

price

\$119.95

visuals

80

Not state of the art, but simple, effective and not without considerable charm.

sound

65

Uneventful in the extreme.

gameplay

85

Tricky to master, challenging and responsive. Three cheers!

longterm

83

If you're not a hopeless joke like me, you'd probably prefer it longer.

overall

I like the bloody thing and you will too.

85%

Kuwait was "liberated" quite a while ago, but getting the oil flowing again isn't enough for some people. Here's another game that cashes in on the Middle East conflict. STRETCH ARMSTRONG tries to ignore all the collateral damage...

DESERT



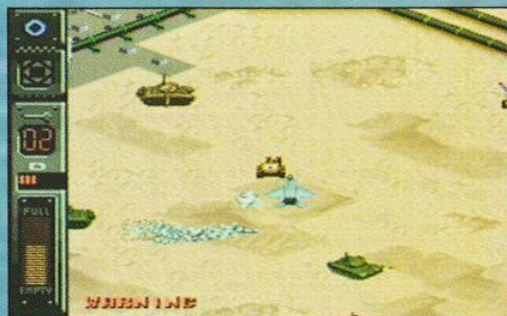
Massacre a few thousand innocent civilians... just like the real life war!



Destroy the satellite dishes to prevent anyone except the heavily censored American press getting information out of Iraq.



What's worse than one nasty tank?



Four nasty tanks.



Destroy oil pipes. Create an enviromental disaster.

We got *Desert Strike* just as Saddam went quiet. *Jungle Strike* was at the height of its popularity when Pablo Escobar took a bullet. So does life really imitate art? What do we get now? What world conflict will a video game put right next? Balkan Blitz? Somali Stakeout? Rwandan Rout? No, nothing quite so current (read, tasteless) as that. *Desert Fighter* takes us back to those famous days when Kuwait needed to be protected and the fact that it had a very large amount of oil really didn't have anything to do with it. Sure, the game doesn't actually tell us we're bombing the crap out of Baghdad, but with a

mad Middle East dictator, live "GNN" newscasts and human shields of unfortunate UN captives, you don't have to be Norman Schwartzkopf to work out that we're not in Toowoomba.

Old War The fact that we are dealing with a conflict that's now about seven wars old does date this game to an extent (programmers take note: Korea for Christmas is my hot tip) but that's not really the point. In this game, as in *Desert Strike/Jungle Strike*, to which it bears a seriously close resemblance, it's realism, strategy, depth and difficulty that counts. And, of

course, if you're really going to enjoy the game, you must put all your ideological concerns aside and just start shooting. Certainly, these games have all the sensitivity and subtleness of having a SCUD missile rammed up your bum, but if you're a card-carrying member of the International Socialists and you're out buying combat games, you've really only got yourself to blame.

The game itself is fine. You, in one of two fighter planes, must complete eight missions to save the world, each increasingly difficult. At the beginning of each mission you'll be briefed on the targets

which you have to attack and given a radar map of the zone in which you'll be operating. Not surprisingly, it's not simply a matter of entering the zone and completing the mission - the very essence of war is that, as surely as you try to kill someone, they will try to kill you back. With guns, mortars, anti-aircraft fire and whatever else they can get their hands on. The graphics are good and shot from the diagonal, top-down perspective that you'll know well from *Jungle Strike*. The layout on each mission is very good and the briefing screens and (especially) the GNN updates (which give you hints and which

FIGHTER



Get the hospitals and schools first!



Do the dogfight... (and the mashed potato).



Technical specs.

may necessitate a change in tactics) are excellent.

The Clock's Ticking Two points that *Desert Fighter* has in its favour at this point, are that it specifies a "completion rate" on the mission that you can target and it sets a time in which you must complete the mission. In *Jungle Strike* you can, subject to fuel supplies, fly around forever trying to complete a mission. Not so here, as every movement you make will impact on your time clock. While the time allowed is relatively generous early in the war, as time goes on things become harder and harder. You'll start off with a rela-

tively easy romp through the desert taking out some radar stations, but as missions go by you'll be asked to locate and destroy SCUD launchers, biological weapons plants and crack Presidential units, and the stakes will rise appreciably.

I must say that the big problem I have with this game is the controls, which I don't find nearly as logical or as smooth as in other games. Certainly, I haven't sat down and played this game for four days without eating, and I'm sure it gets easier, but I don't believe they are as good as they could be. The addition of the afterburner feature is excellent and adds another "weapon" to your

arsenal. Had the controls been more responsive, though, this feature would be even more impressive.

All in all, this is a very fine game. Because of the controls and the greater graphical detail of the similar EA games, I prefer those games, but there's only a bee's donger in it, and I'm sure there'd be plenty out there who would take me to task on the question. It's not a flight sim and it's not a classic style shoot 'em up, but combat game fans will love it, and those who complain that these games capitalise on the horrifying brutality of war are undoubtedly correct - but they should still lighten up.

SNES

available

NOW

category

ACTION

players

1

publisher

SYSTEM 3

price

\$109.95

visuals

Desert is never too exciting, but even with that it looks good, and has some cool extra sequences. **81**

sound

Lots of things blowing up. **80**

gameplay

Very well put together, but there are some controller problems as far as I'm concerned. **85**

longterm

Long detailed missions and lots of info to absorb. **86**

overall

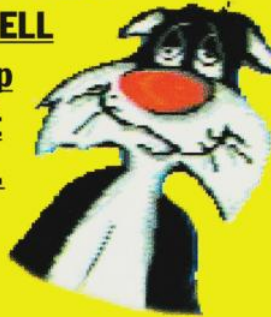
Not quite as good as the competition, but damn fine anyway. **85%**

Sylvester & Tweety

in Cagey Capers



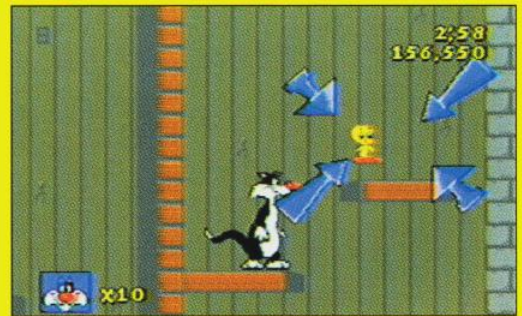
At the risk of sounding like a moron, "Suffering succotash, I thawt I thaw a puddy tat!" RUSSELL HOPKINSON develops a lisp and goes off with the cat and the canary...



Look out for Granny. She's got a serious broom!



Father and son looking smug.



The end of the level. Grab that canary!

When the word came from the Hyper Command Centre that I was to inspect this brand new cartoon tie-in from TecMagik my mind immediately went back to all the fun I had playing *Taz-Mania* (Mega Drive Version) and a huge grin broke across my face.

How Could They Go Wrong?

How could they go wrong with such a winning formula as Tweety and Sylvester? Well they can't really, but *Sylvester and Tweety*, for all its smart graphics and happy zappy cartoon style, is a bit bland. It's ridiculously short (it ends abruptly after seven medium length levels) and there are no End of Level bosses, No Special/Bonus Stages or any Play Options at all. Even the plot is as basic as it gets: Chase Tweety

and Catch Him. In the whole time, Sylvester never gets to eat the stupid Canary and offer real satisfaction for your hard earned game dollar. The game finishes with Sylvester marooned on a desert island, doomed to chase Tweety for the rest of his days. WHAT KIND OF COP OUT IS THAT!!!

I wanted blood, I wanted vengeance but most of all I wanted Sylvester to get that dumb bird and show no mercy. I wanted the final screen to be a shot of Sylvester, mouth full of feathers, grinning bloodily. But no, TecMagik have gone for the "soft option", saving the bird's hide for the sequel and that all important Basketball tie in. Booorrrring! I say nuke the Canary and get Sylvester to go and help Wil E. Coyote sort out

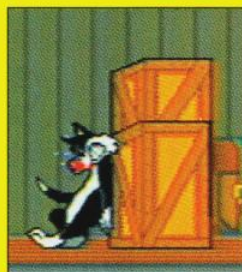
that bastard Roadrunner. Haven't these people heard of the food chain?

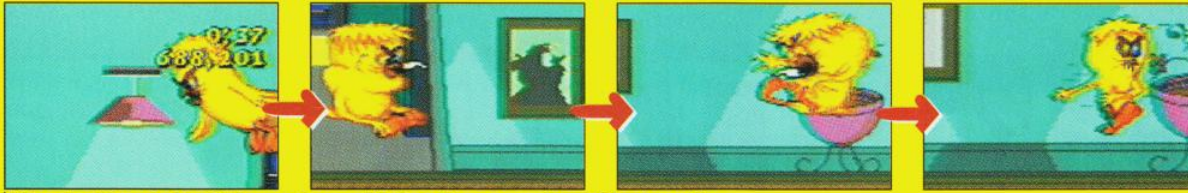
Cool Character Quirks

But I digress, *Sylvester and Tweety* is good fun and it looks great, with 16 megs of pure cartoon bliss that has all the cool character quirks you'd expect from a Warner Brothers affiliate. The sprites are a good size, are animated well, and the whole shebang scrolls smoothly. For the most part the backgrounds are bright and colourful and look cool. They lack depth but give the game its zappy, loony toon feel. The soundtrack is great, loads of cool muzak and plenty of sampled sound effects and speech. The voices don't all sound authentic but as Mel Blanc has been dead for a number of years, this can be forgiven.

Like I said, you play Sylvester on a quest for Tweety. As Sylvester you can jump, run, scratch, sneak, push furniture around, stack and climb said furniture and find Tweety with the Tweetyoscope (made by Acme, I presume). He tends to be a bit slow response-wise and getting him to do exactly what you want takes a bit of practise (but not too much). Tweety simply flutters along, usually just out of reach, and does little else except act as bait. To get to this bait however, you have to go through a load of platforms, traps and adversaries, all of whom will gladly beat nine lives out of you without mercy.

There's the Bulldog, Robot Dog and the Alleycat who are all nasty enough, but you can scratch or bash them (with the Mallet or Boxing

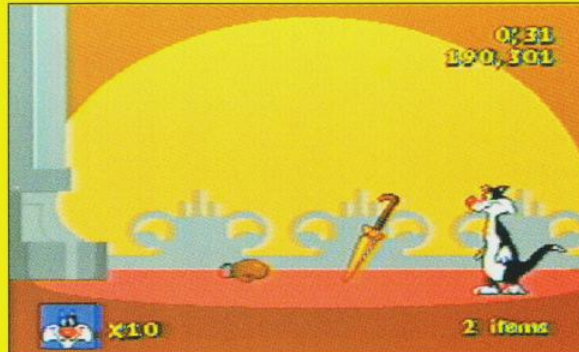




Monster Tweety lookin' monstrous. Makes Roseanne Arnold look pretty.



A good bone always comes in handy.



Pause the game to bring up the items screen.



Put on the gloves and take out the dog.



The cat gets the bird. What follows is too horrible to show.

Gloves) or distract them with a tasty fish or yummy bone. The Joey is cute but indestructible, although his powerful Kangaroo feet can be used to bounce you to hard to reach places, and Granny is just plain indestructible and highly protective of Tweety. She has a rather large broom and knows how to use it!

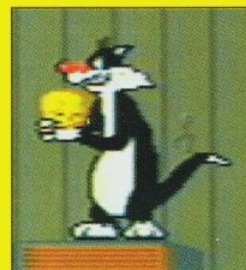
Monster Tweety But by far the worst adversary is Tweety himself in the "Hide and Shriek" zones. After drinking some of Dr Jekyll's world famous monsterism formula, he changes from a lovable songbird to seven foot killing machine and charges straight back to wherever Sylvester is and eats him. You can use an antidote to change Tweety back (temporarily) but if you can't find

any you're dead meat. Every time Monster Tweety eats you, you lose a lot of hit points and if you don't struggle hard enough you die right there.

That's the hardest this game gets, as the other zones for the most part are easy enough once you learn all the different patterns involved. The first two zones (in and around Granny's house) are just too easy and although "Mayhem Express" (level 3) presents some problems (you will fall off the train and get sucked back to the start), you'll get the hang of it after a couple of tries. "Back Alley Blues" is my favourite level, with it's jazz fuelled soundtrack and cool tenement building graphics, but it doesn't pose any challenge at all. "Hide and Shriek" 1 & 2 are next and like I said, they'll have you

sweating (finally) as you run around a laboratory trying to avoid the yellow death. The final zone involves an Ocean liner and all the gang battling it out in one last free for all. Then after not too much of a struggle, you're finished. That's all Folks!

Ultimately though, this game is good for a laugh and is eminently playable. The cultural strength of characters like Sylvester and Tweety cannot be denied and the fact that they're indelibly etched into my brainwaves makes it hard for me to dislike this basic platformer. I can't really recommend you purchasing this though because it's too short and lacks any gameplay options beyond difficulty adjustment. Hire it instead and have a night of Cat vs Canary hijinx and you won't feel cheated.



MEGA DRIVE

available

JULY

category

PLATFORM

players

1

publisher

TECMAGIK

price

TBA

visuals

Cool, cartoon style graphics with loads of character.

90

sound

Some of the best muzak I've heard in a platform game plus good, clear sound effects and speech.

91

gameplay

Eminently playable but a bit on the basic side.

78

longterm

It's too short and too easy... end of story.

60

overall

I liked Sylvester and Tweety and you will too, but hire it don't buy it.

78%



THE STERLING TOYS TOWER LOOKED LIKE NO OTHER TOY FACTORY.



WITHIN AN EVIL MASTERMIND WAS AT WORK. COLONEL BROWN OWNER OF STERLING TOYS HAD A PLAN.



WITH THE HELP OF A CRAZED SCIENTIFIC GENIUS, AN EVIL SUBSTANCE OF UNIQUE GENETIC QUALITIES WAS ENGINEERED.



INNOCENT ANIMALS WERE USED AS TEST SUBJECTS.

NOW THE FINAL TEST WAS UNDERWAY.



Marko's
COLONEL BROWN
WAS GOING DOWN!!

Magic Football

You know, we could easily start this intro with some line about magic balls, but it'd be just too easy, wouldn't it? Besides, we leave that sort of thing to ANDREW HUMPHREYS...



This woman is the save point.

Let's get this straight from the start. Marko has a magic ball. That's ball, singular, not balls, plural. So any opportunity for smutty jokes is severely limited. Besides, it's too easy even for me. Ball-talk aside, *Marko's Magic Football* is an excellent little platformer. It just goes to show that with a bit of effort and lots of polish, even tired old game genres can offer a few new thrills.

I won't go into the story line here. Suffice it to say that the evil Colonel Brown is up to no good and Marko, with his magically transformed football (a soccer ball to you and me) is out to put a stop to it. It all makes

for a lively platform romp as Marko makes his way from the Suburbs of North Sterlington, through the Cellar, the Sewer (I hope he's got a magic nose-peg too), the Industrial Zone, the Forest, the Circus, and finally into Colonel Brown's Toy Factory.

Cartoon Mavericks *Marko's Magic Football* has been coded by an English team calling themselves The Cartoon Mavericks (they're a division of The Kremlin apparently) and they've more than lived up to their name - the game really does look like a very slick cartoon. The background graphics are top notch



Nasty boss. Praying won't help.

and the animation on Marko and his gooey enemies is topper than top notch. Just take a look at the screen grabs and you'll see the colour and detail - what you can't see is the fluid movement. There's over 300 frames of animation on Marko alone and every one of them shows.

Underneath the lovely graphics there lurks a very playable game. The central idea of a platform hero with a football as his weapon is newish enough (Amiga owners will notice that the whole game bears a striking resemblance to their own *Soccer Kid*, which is coming soon to CD32) and different enough to be

instantly appealing. Ball control is the key to mastering *Marko's* and after a couple of games coming to grips with the controls you'll be kicking it with the best of them.

Marko's moves are varied and easy to master. He dribbles a lot and kicks a bit as well as coming up with the odd header. The overhead kick is very impressive, as well as being the only way to knock out some of the harder to reach bad guys. I swear I did a very cool flying header once, but I have no idea how I did it - and besides, you certainly don't need it to get through the game.





COLONEL BROWN AND HIS ACCOMPLICES NOW HAD THE ABILITY TO TRANSFORM ALL LIFEFORMS...

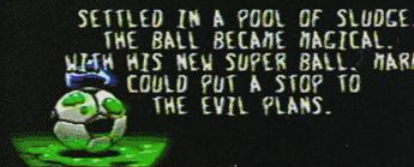


INTO MUTANT SLUDGE MONSTERS !!

IF THE COLONEL COULD SPREAD ENOUGH SLIME AROUND THE TOWN, NORTH STERLINGTON WOULD BE HIS!!



MARKO CAME ACROSS THE COLONEL'S WORKERS POURING SLUDGE INTO THE SEWERS.



SETTLED IN A POOL OF SLUDGE THE BALL BECAME MAGICAL. WITH HIS NEW SUPER BALL, MARKO COULD PUT A STOP TO THE EVIL PLANS.



Marko hitches up his pants to tackle the flamethrower.



Special boots can give you a gun.



Map screen.



Oh look... special boots.

Take away the soccer ball and you're left with a fairly standard, though certainly well designed, platformer. You know the sort of thing - you jump from here to here, climb ladders, ride the odd swinging ball and all that. There's meant to be loads of hidden rooms and some bonus levels too. I didn't come across any (either I'm hopeless or they weren't included yet) but I'll take Sega's word for it.

The designers have made some attempt at breaking things up though. Some levels are just straight left to right, find the exit things; others are more complicat-

ed, requiring you to find and destroy all the slime containers before you can exit. Above all else, it plays very smoothly and it is a lot of fun. No matter how many platformers you've conquered in your time, *Marko's* has enough of the magic stuff about it to make you want to conquer another.

Putting The Boot In Yesiree, this is a very good game. The only problems I can see with it are that, given the fact that it's not the biggest game in the world and the password system is rather generous, it's probably a bit too easy (make sure you play it on hard) and it might lack the

pace to pull you in. Even when he's running, Marko's a bit on the slow side, so Sonic lovers could be a tad disappointed.

Those small nobbly bits aside, *Marko's Magic Footie* is definitely worth having a look at. It really is very impressive graphically and the gameplay is everything it should be. Given a bit of exposure, I think Marko is destined to be a bit of a hit. He's a non-threatening, friendly little bloke who enjoys healthy outdoor exercise and has a nice smile to boot. Or should that be a nice ball to boot? Oh never mind, just read the scorebox...

Marko's Moves
From left to right:
Overhead kick
Head Dribbling
Fancy Foot Work

At this rate he'll be playing for Manchester United.



MEGA DRIVE

available

NOW

category

PLATFORMER

players

1

publisher

DOMARK

price

TBA

visuals

The closest thing to a cartoon I've seen since Aladdin. Great detail and superlative animation. **91**

sound

The effects are excellent (I love that Goosaurus roar in the sewers) but the music is bit nondescript. **78**

gameplay

Solid platforming fun with a few soccer skills thrown in for good measure. Good controls and good clean fun even if it lacks a bit of pace. **84**

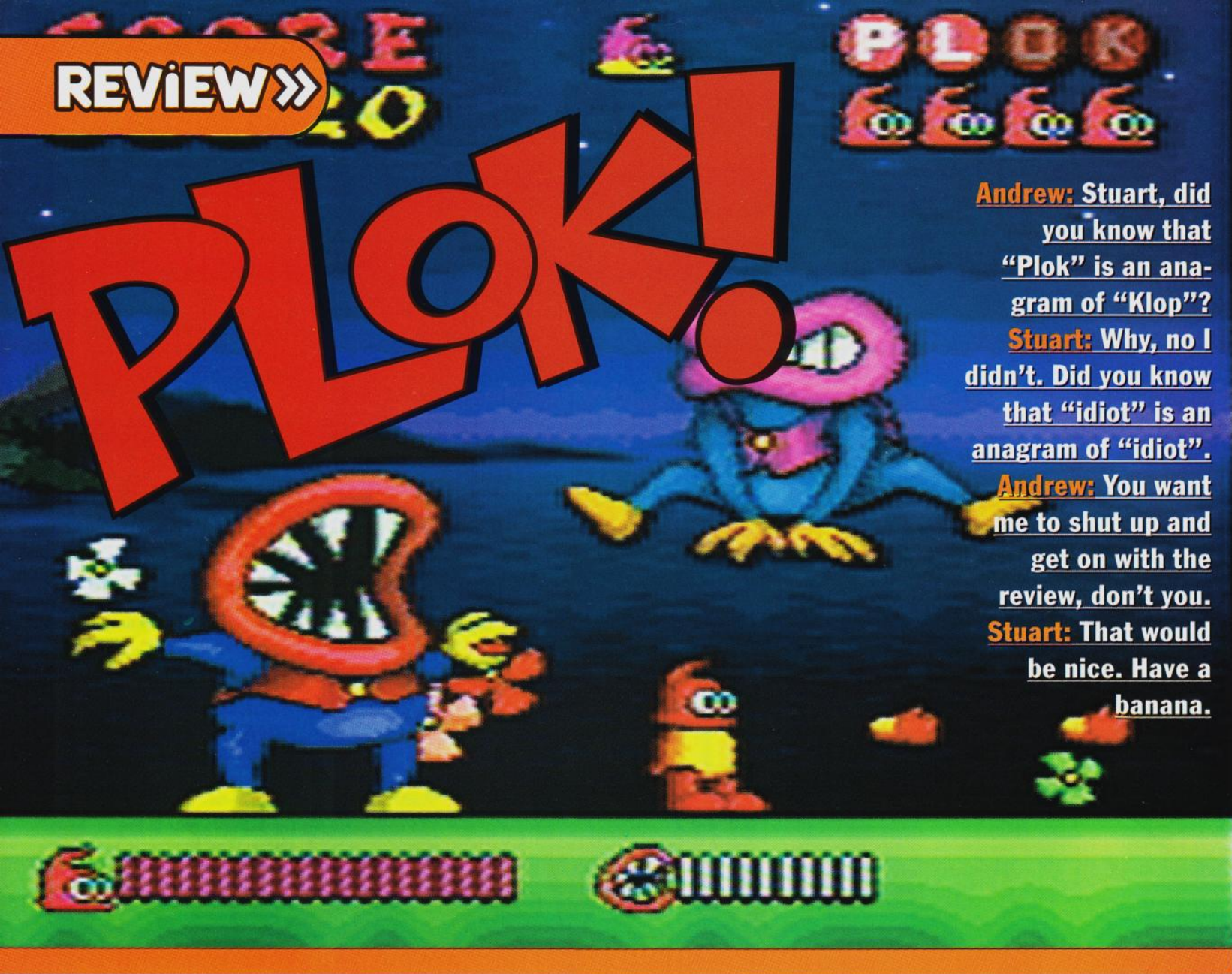
longterm

With the password system as friendly as it is you'll finish this one in a hurry. It's fun enough to come back to though. **75**

overall

One of the slicker, more enjoyable platformers to come along in quite a while. Give it a kick. **83%**

PLOK!



Andrew: Stuart, did you know that “Plok” is an anagram of “Klop”?

Stuart: Why, no I didn't. Did you know that “idiot” is an anagram of “idiot”.

Andrew: You want me to shut up and get on with the review, don't you.

Stuart: That would be nice. Have a banana.

To be honest, I wasn't really looking forward to reviewing *Plok!* Whoopee (I thought to myself, silently brooding in a dark corner of the HYPER office), another platform game. But Stuart gently reminded me in his inimitable editorial way that he could give both *Plok!* and *Super Metroid* to someone else if I wished, so I figured I'd make do. I plugged in *Plok!* and after the first few levels, something strange began to happen - I was actually enjoying myself. *Plok!* had me charmed. Why? It's big, colourful, well-designed, and full of original touches. *Plok!* is no ordi-

nary platformer. It's actually a very good game.

Let Your Freak Flag Fly Plok! is another blobby platform hero. Like all of them, he's basically very familiar, but he's also different enough to be a “whacky/lovable individual”. Plok!'s got removable limbs (which he fires as weapons) and he comes complete with his very own exclamation mark. He's also very versatile and handy with petrol-powered machinery. He's got a motor-bike, a car, a tank, and a little spaceship-type thingie to get around in. It's Plok!'s versatility

that makes this such a good game. Like all platformers, there's a lot of jumping and shooting going on, but with *Plok!*, there's much more to do besides.

The Plok Plot (not to be confused with former Cambodian dictator and all-around psychopath, Pol Pot) goes something like this: Plok! likes flags. He likes to run them up poles and he likes to watch them flap about in the breeze. He wakes up on his island one day to discover his big square flag missing. Enraged, Plok! heads off to Cotton Island to find it.

That's where you come in, guid-

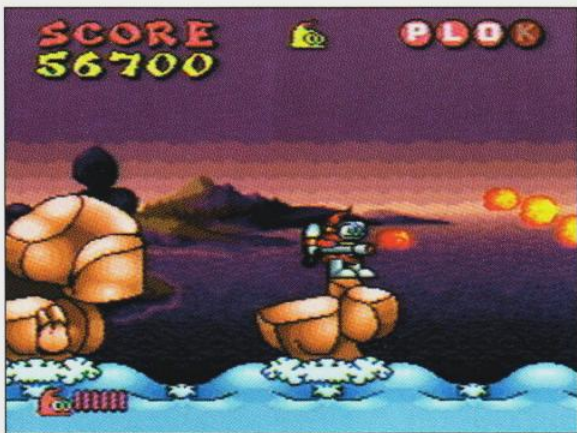
ing Plok! through several shortish levels until you get to the Bobbins Brothers (two big sets of lips). You beat them and you get the big square flag. But when you get back to Plok!'s island, all his flags are missing and the game begins in earnest. The dreaded Fleas are to blame, so it's time to kick some Flea-butt and liberate the remaining flags.

Plok! is a huge game - 64 levels in all, plus secret bonuses and even secret levels. It's quite tricky and quite tough too. There's no passwords and you have to earn continues, so it'll take you more



Plok in Action

Four of Plok's many faces and abilities from left to right:
 Boxing Plok
 Flying Plok
 Duck Hunting Plok
 Limbless Plok



Flame throwin' Plok!



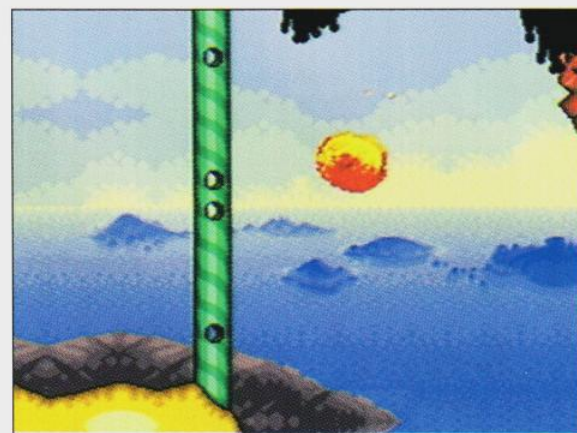
A hatched flea. The little buzzy thing is a friendly wasp.



The map screen of Cotton Island.



The atmosphere was electric...



...Plok was a whirl of activity.



A cute little enemy. Kill it anyway.

than a spare weekend to work your way through it. But the best part is, because of the variety to the gameplay, it's never tedious. *Plok!* is actually enjoyable - you'll keep playing it because you want to, not just because you feel you have to finish it.

Plok! Style Aside from Plok!'s vehicular prowess, you'll find several mysterious presents lying about that give him special powers. My favourite bit is where he turns into a duck hunter, complete with silly cap and shotgun. The flamethrower comes in very handy at times too.

Plok! has also enlisted the help of a friendly wasp or two. They're very good at cracking flea eggs and providing the odd sting to enemies here and there. But perhaps the weirdest bits in the game involve Plok! firing a limb or two at a target, only to pick them up later from a coat hanger. If you don't pick up Plok!'s arms and legs, he has to jump around as a little limbless, defenceless blob.

Someone obviously had a lot of fun making this game and it's this sense of humour that makes *Plok!* a winner. Even the most jaded platform gamer (and I include myself

among their ever-growing number) will find something in *Plok!* to hold their attention.

Add a unique visual style with great colour, intricate level design, excellent effects and tacky, yet very cool at the same time, music and you've got all the essential ingredients for weeks of fun. You may get a tad annoyed at having to play through all the earlier levels every time you play and no platformer, no matter how big it is, is going to last you forever, but aside from that, the times you spend with Plok! will be happy times indeed.

SNES

available

NOW

category

PLATFORMER

players

1

publisher

NINTENDO

price

\$79.00

visuals

Bright, glowing colours and a cool-ish overall style. There's nothing spectacular in the way of animation, but there doesn't need to be.

84

sound

From the get-down and boogie theme right to the bitter end, the quality of the music is excellent. Good effects too.

89

gameplay

Good controls, lots of secrets, lots of fun. The pace might be too slow for some, but hang in there for the best bits.

88

longterm

64 big levels of flag-rescuing fun. No passwords and it's a bit on the tough side too.

83

overall

If you like 'em big, colourful and friendly, then Plok!'s your man. Or blob. Whatever...

84%

The Lawnmower Man

Jobe is a simpleton. They call him "The Lawnmower Man". ANDREW HUMPHREYS is a simpleton. We call him "The Deputy Editor".



Two player mode.



This is Pierce Brosnan. Can't you tell?



This is an angry petrol pump. Super or unleaded?



You pilot this helicopter for about 4 seconds.



Cyber Run stage. This is more like it.



Blasting chimps in the Cyber Run.

Confession time: I've never seen the movie. Pierce Brosnan excites me as much as any man does, it's just that I never quite got around to it. So what sort of spokesperson for a new, VR based generation does that make me, eh? I'm humbled. A mere shell of a man. But I'm certainly not going to let it stop me from reviewing this game. In fact, I'm not even going to let it stop me from making totally unfounded references to the movie.

Unfounded References *The Lawnmower Man*, the game, doesn't have much to do with *The Lawnmower Man*, the movie. How do I know? I don't. But Stuart assures me that this is the case. How do I know that Stuart is telling me the truth? I don't really, but trust is an essential bond between workmates, and if you don't start trusting someone somewhere along the line,

you're going to be in for a rather miserable life.

But how many film tie-ins can you think of that follow the movie religiously? That's right - none. That's not to say that the game isn't inspired by the movie. Obviously, some guy in a suit at The Sales Curve was inspired enough to shell out for the rights. Or did the inspiration really come from the prospect of making thousands of dollars off hapless gamers who, for reasons beyond the HYPER crew, thought the movie was cool? Who knows. Certainly not me.

So, my only real option is to review this game on its own merits. Of course, it would help an awful lot if the game actually *had* merits. Perhaps, I'm being a little harsh - it's not that bad. But after playing *Super Metroid*, I think I've been spoiled. From now on I'm going to be totally ruthless - as ruthless as my sunny

disposition will allow - when it comes to games of, shall we say, "lesser quality". *The Lawnmower Man* is one of those games.

The game itself is a bit of a mish-mash of styles. It feels like it's been put together rather carelessly, without any overall design. There's the obligatory platform bits (which are dodgy to say the least), a few puzzles to solve (a couple of "pick-the-next-bit-in-the-sequence" things), an overhead perspective road racing shoot 'em up (of all things), and lots of attempted VR bits. These VR bits are the game's saving grace. The scaling is fast and smooth, and once you get the hang of the controls (they seem overly touchy at first), they're actually quite fun to play, if not overly taxing.

But the platform bits really are pretty bad. The sprites are tiny, the controls are sluggish, and the graphics, especially for the end of level bosses, are just too plain. It's also

a bit too easy to lose a life. Without a "Virtual Cyber Suit" (which you can pick up along the way by collecting a certain number of tokens), you're a One Hit Wonder, and with the controls the way they are, it's not hard to take a bullet. With two players, things are a bit better, but not much. In short, these sections are uninspired (as well as uninspiring) and just plain boring.

Trim the hedges while you're at it The high points, in terms of both graphics and gameplay, are the first person, flying VR bits. To get to them you simply go through a Virtual Reality Portal (in a two-player game, only the first player to enter the portal gets to play these sections). At first, all you have to do is guide your way through obstacles. It's not as easy as it sounds - the movement is actually very fast and if you hit something, you're out of there, minus a



Virtual Reality?

The first person flying sequences provide the high points of the game.

From top to bottom:

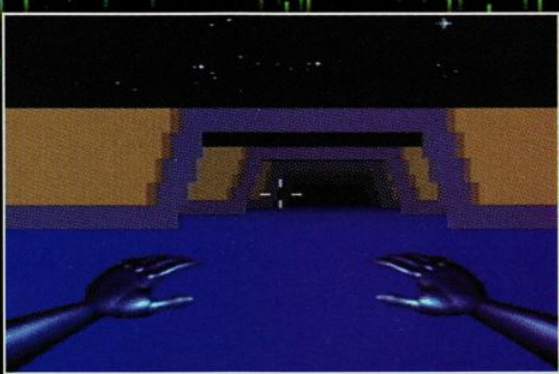
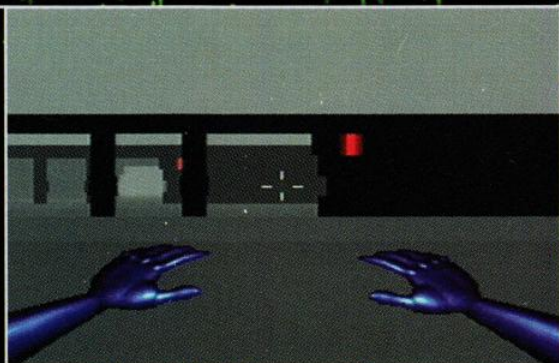
Shoot the portal to get access to the VR stages

At first all you have to do is negotiate your way through a 3D landscape to the exit. Use the cross-hair to guide your movement.

The second VR stage is more of the same.

When you get a gun, you stop to shoot angry cyberchimps...

...then you fly on your merry way to the exit.



life. Further on in the game you get to shoot things in these stages too - sometimes you come to a stop, sometimes you shoot on the fly. Things start to really hot up in the Cyber Run and Cyber Tube sections.

But the question is, do these good bits make up for the bad bits? To my mind they don't, but if this kind of first person, 3D stuff appeals to you (and it must be said, it is a bit of a technical achievement), it might be worth a go. As the game progresses, it gets very challenging too - partly as a result of the dodgy controls, partly by design (at least that's what I like to think). There's no passwords either, so be prepared for a few day's intensive playing.

Overall, *The Lawnmower Man* just doesn't come together as a package. Like I said, it's a mish-mash - a mish-mash certainly worthy of a rent or two, but nothing more. And that's as ruthless as I'm willing to get.

SNES

available

NOW

category

PLATFORMER

players

1-2

publisher

STORM/SALES CURVE

price

N/A

visuals

This is a combination of marks: 89 for the first-person VR bits; 59 for the crappy platform sections.

74

sound

Few effects to speak of, but there's some nice speech and the music (by London band REAL) doesn't suck too hard.

83

gameplay

Sometimes it's fun, most of the time it's not. Again, it's the worthless platform bits that let the side down.

69

longterm

If you're willing to stick it out, it is quite tough and you'll probably want to play all the VR bits. But once is enough.

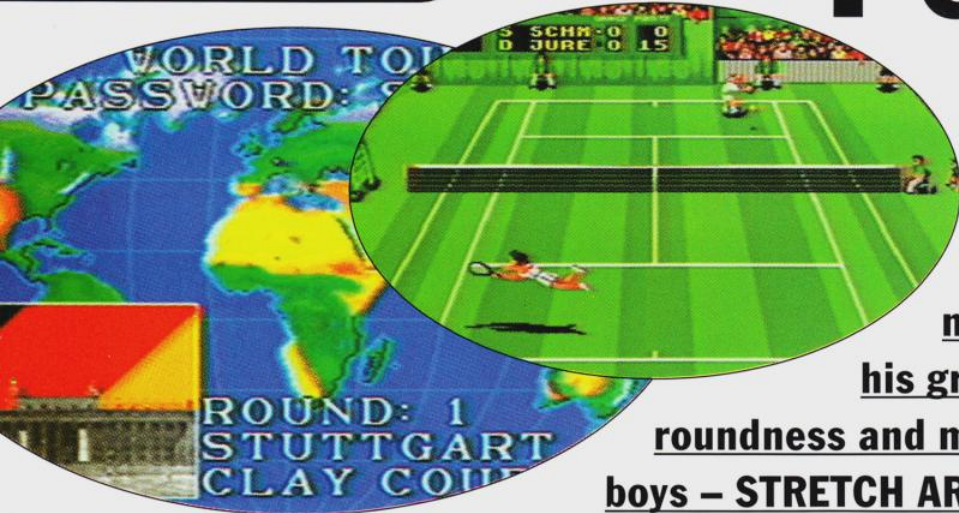
67

overall

There's some good bits hidden away between tacky platform stages, but as an overall package, this is lacking.

65%

Pete Sampras Tennis



Balls, balls, balls. This issue's just full of them. First Marko and his magic ball and now Pete Sampras and his green felt balls. Only one man has the roundness and masculinity to match it with the big boys – STRETCH ARMSTRONG.

There's always been a few tennis games floating around the ether of the Mega Drive and they've all had one thing in common - they were crap. This all changed with the emergence of Davis Cup World Tour, an ace (if you'll excuse me) game with a computer opponent so unrelenting and steely in it's resolve it made Bjorn Borg look like an over-emotional father at an Italian wedding. Now you can pull out that list from under the bed, that one marked "Excellent Tennis Games", and add Pete Sampras Tennis to the list, in very bright crayon.

I guess that Pete was an obvious choice for the game - best male player in the world, and all. Certainly, Monica Seles Tennis would be a dud - players would be too busy looking over their shoulder for the knife-wielding, Steffi Graf-obsessed, German maniac to actually concen-

trate on the game. And the plural of "player" is relevant here because of Pete's revolutionary feature. In a master stroke, this game allows for four player action without the need for any tap or adaptor, the extra controllers simply slot into extra jacks built into the top of the cartridge. It's a fantastic feature, and with cool graphics and nice sounds, a full on, four player game of doubles is one of the most enjoyable uses of four player technology to date.

The graphics are not a million miles away from Davis Cup, although the sprites are slightly smaller and the raised perspective removes the need for a split screen in two (or more) player mode. The controls are fluid and easy to operate, and after only a few games you'll have mastered the intricacies of drop shots and lobs, if not the scorching, cross-court, passing shot.

The "automatic serve" option is excellent as it allows you to get straight into the game, with the power serve coming into play as you become more confident with the controls.

There's also, as you would expect, options galore, with Exhibition, Tournament and World Tour games to choose from, on all major surfaces and in a variety of countries. The sound is also excellent, with sampled crowd noises, computer generated judging calls and the like. The occasions on which the referee requests the rowdy crowd to be quiet are particularly cool. The computer is nowhere near as tough an opponent as its Davis Cup equivalent but that's okay, especially when you consider that the real thrill here is the multi-player option. This is great. Check it out, sport fans.



FORMAT: MEGA DRIVE

AVAILABLE: July

CATEGORY: SPORTS

PLAYERS: 1-4

PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS

PRICE: \$129.95

visuals

The sprites may look like cartoons, but there's heaps of variety in courts and surfaces and it's all smooth as silk.

85

sound

Excellent crowd noises, a computer ref and squeaky shoes make for top excitement.

87

gameplay

Very responsive, easy to operate. What more do you want?

83

longterm

Four players at once, no gizmos needed - genius at work.

92

overall

The four player option makes it the best tennis game out there. A winner!

88%

DarkWizard

Andrew: You know Stuart, if I was a wizard I'd be pretty dark about it too. Long hours, crappy pay, no glory, and worst of all, you have to wear all those funny robes and the pointy hats with the moons and stars on them.

Stuart: You really are an idiot, aren't you? Just take your Prozac and review it for the kids.

Andrew: Duh....OK.



Dark Wizard is another one of those games that's snuck up on us unannounced. No advance hype, no word it was coming even - but all of a sudden it's on my desk and now I have to review it. Straight up, I have to tell you that *Dark Wizard* is going to be a game of very limited appeal - that doesn't mean that it's bad (it's not at all), it's just that most gamers aren't going to like it.

Why not? Because it's a strategy game, and it plays a bit slow. Actually, it plays real s-l-o-o-o-w. To get anywhere, you're going to have to: (a) read the instruction book; (b) persevere; and (c) have a lot of patience. If you don't like the sound of this already, turn the page now.

The Cheshire Cat? At first I thought *Dark Wizard* was going to be a straight RPG, but it's not. It does have RPG elements (a quest to free a mystical world from evil, building up experience points and character levels, visiting towns, buying equipment and weapons, blah, blah, blah), but they're really only a peripheral part of the gameplay. Occasionally you'll need to send out search parties for certain items too, but as I said, traditional RPG elements play only a small part in the game.

At its heart, *Dark Wizard* is a strategic combat game. You've got an army (albeit a small one to start with) and you use it to fight other armies. All the combat is grid-based, and heavily based on statistics - you know, hit points, attack points, defence points, magic points and the like.

The story goes something like this. The people of Cheshire (and all their cats) are fighting a losing battle against the "forces of darkness". Only the appallingly named Kingdom of Quentin remains defiant. But the King of Quentin carks it, so you (playing as any one of four characters - two girls, two guys) step in to duke it out with the forces of the Dark Wizard. It's all introduced and linked with some beautiful Manga-style animation.

The controls give you lots of options but the basic idea is simple: each army takes turns moving their fighters around (you move each little guy around individually); when the fighters are close enough

they can slug it out. It's all very similar to the combat sequences in *Shining Force* and other RPGs, only on a much grander scale. Once you conquer an enemy castle, you go to the World Map and move on to the next one, with the ultimate aim of reclaiming all of Cheshire. Your army grows as you progress, but unless you leave a strong defence force behind at each castle, you'll soon be overrun. It's all about careful planning and strategic thinking - and for that reason alone, it's not going to be a best seller.

Attention to Detail The presentation of *Dark Wizard* and its meticulous attention to detail are its strong points; the pace (or lack thereof) of the game is its downfall. Each battle



takes a matter of hours, not minutes, and there's over thirty castles to conquer (and maintain) before you're even close to finishing it. You can save your game at any point as you go, but any way you look at it, it's a long haul.

But if you like things slow and drawn out, then *Dark Wizard* might just be the game for you. Personally, I'd go for *Dune 2: Battle for Arrakis* any day, but strategy games aren't exactly a dime a dozen and you take your fun where you can get it, right? If you do give it a whirl you'll find some lovely graphics, a huge world to explore, and an eerily atmospheric soundtrack to soothe you as you play.

FORMAT: MEGA CD

AVAIL: NOW(IMPORT)

CATEGORY: STRATEGY

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER : SEGA

PRICE: TBA

visuals

A huge world of detailed battlefields to explore. The animated intros are top notch too.

85

sound

A conspicuous lack of speech, but the freaky-styley music comes straight from an old *Lost in Space* episode.

84

gameplay

It's as slow as a particularly slow tortoise, but strategy fans probably aren't going to care.

70

longterm

You'll either give up after the first hour, or play it through to the bitter end. You could be 90 before you finish it.

81

overall

A well made, well presented strategy game that you'll either love or hate.

75%

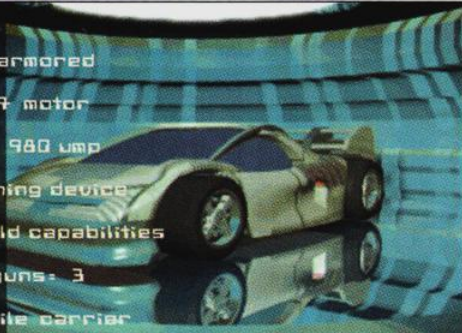
mega race



The Cars

MARIA

Medium armored
Flat v29 motor
Weight: 980 ump
No warning device
No shield capabilities
Laser guns: 3
No missile carrier



OMEGA

Lightly armored
High beam reactor
Weight: 875 ump
Warning device
Shield capabilities
Laser guns: 2
No missile carrier



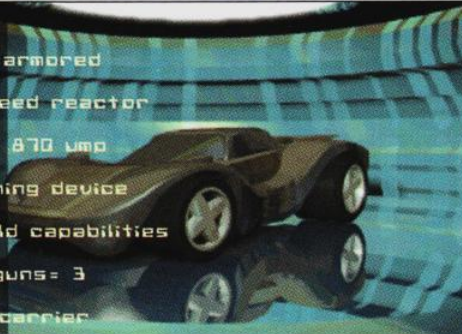
LUIS

Medium armored
Multiturbo motor
Weight: 710 ump
Warning device
Shield capabilities
Laser guns: 3
No missile carrier



RAMON

Lightly armored
High speed reactor
Weight: 870 ump
No warning device
No shield capabilities
Laser guns: 3
Missile carrier



This ain't just a race, this is a Mega Race. BEN MANSILL goes cruising for a bruising on some virtual speedways from the future...

Without doubt, the greatest tragedy the world has experienced over the last few years has been the agonisingly slow development of the potential of CD ROM. Misguided software developers have long been confused about the right ingredients for a proper CD game. Beautiful looking and sounding games with little or no decent gameplay are regularly released and have scammed many hapless gamers out of countless better-spent-elsewhere dollars.

Winning concepts arrive with mundane regularity on floppy disk but are rarely seen on the silver disc. The only real interest lies with re-released titles with fabulous intros or compilation sets of still playable classics. Filling 600 megs with brilliant game is a big ask, but developers need to realise that

massive doses of full-motion video and digitised speech are no compensation for a game which can't actually be played with any satisfaction.

Sooner than you think, CD ROM will be the vehicle for almost all new releases. And thankfully some fairly incredible new games are emerging to lead the charge. Shouting and waving from the front row is *MEGA RACE*, new from The Software Toolworks and a winner in every way.

Immensely Slick and Professional

An immensely slick and professional effort, *MEGA RACE* has it all; the dreaded full-motion video, sexy graphics and most surprisingly, pure good fun gameplay.

The opening sequence showing two very cool flying jet things weaving

through a city of the future is supremely cool, the switch to a servant robot making it's owner comfortable and turning on the TV rather pleasing, but hang on tight because tonight's main viewing is the bizarre Lance Boyle, and he's about to invade your mind.

Lance bounds onto your screen in all his smarmy glory, resplendent in his shiny blue suit and loud red shirt. He's proudly presented as the host of your favourite show *MEGA RACE*, which "squashes reality like a bug" and is brought to you by the makers of *Bleed* - "the candy bar poor people love to be a part of". Then Lance thoughtfully informs us that *MEGA RACE* is the "action show where violence only happens once every few seconds".

Virtual World Broadcast TV has built 14 virtual racetracks in various loca-

tions around the world. Each week, "anybody with a death wish" can be selected to race against vicious street gangs for the right to the gang leader's hot car, his personal music CD and the opportunity to race another gang on a different track. Each gang has it's own story which Lance will excitedly tell you, although one gang leader couldn't be interviewed because when they tried "he just kept right on bonking". When the enigmatic Lance has finally said his intro piece - which lasts many long and entertaining minutes, it's time to hit the track with your first car and an attitude to burn.

Virtually Racing MEGARACEing is not about crossing any finishing line ahead of your competitors, instead you go out and "virtually" waste the bad



You'll be Mega Racing on four different tracks.



Some are in surreal environments, others are realistic.



Some of the racetracks are like rollercoasters...



...while others are fairly boring.



Wasting opponents is the main aim...



...but you can always look at the pretty views.



guy's evil henchmen one by one, then hopefully the big guy himself before an allotted three laps is up. A technical win is still possible by passing the leader and finishing first, but that happens once in a blue moon and is mostly attributable to sheer luck - and it's the bad variety because you missed out on a kill. Your car will carry short range guns and possibly missiles with a farther reach. There are usually around half a dozen cars to destroy, the first few are easily caught and killed while the leader's car is usually that precise fraction short of impossible, which will please hardcore gamemasters no end.

Getting within firing range in a race has almost nothing to do with clever driving, most cars are evenly matched and a leader's car has the uncanny ability

to stay just so far ahead the whole time. The caper is to run squarely over certain symbols which are spread along the track in various patterns. Each provides a different benefit like weapons, energy, or most usefully, a big burst of speed. The white symbols are good, but to make it interesting, the designers have spread darker symbols everywhere, and they are bad. They drain your guns, take away your fancy weapons, slow you down and spin you out.

To win a race at harder levels means repeated efforts to memorise where the right symbols are and what to avoid. The time limit is three laps so mucking around early on is a big no no. All the way you must keep your guns charged by hitting the power spots and avoiding the energy drainers. It's tricky going and all the races

are incredibly close and difficult in the funnest way possible.

But by far the biggest jaw dropper comes from checking out the most incredible scenery and track design. The raceway twists, loops and dives through the most amazing worlds yet seen through a car windscreen. Cities of the future and crazy fantasy zones are simulated beautifully and provide a dynamic change to the usual dull scrolling backdrop. It's a flight sim on wheels, and the artists are to be applauded for their creative talent.

Simple fun it is, but *MEGA RACE* is a razor sharp piece of electronic entertainment that will have you laughing out loud at the irrepressible Lance Boyle and white knuckling your sturdiest joystick with deep satisfaction at the gaming action.

PC CD-ROM

available

NOW

category

RACING

players

1

publisher

SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS

price

\$99.95

visuals

The sensational graphics are a new standard for this genre and utterly amazing in any other. It's perfectly smooth on your double-speed CD and fast 486.

92

sound

Lance talks like his life depended on it and the funky driving backbeats take some mileage before the inevitable tedium sets in.

88

gameplay

Send your brain on a holiday jump into this virtual TV show as the star driver in a world of acid fantasy.

84

longterm

When a better fantasy driving game arrives, *Mega Race* will still be dragged out for stupid fun and friends who need impressing.

83

overall

Top quality arcade fun and with astounding graphics. A rare and fantastic combination of art and silly pleasure.

88%

Entombed

Joy, an Australian game! All home grown games are a bit special, even if they're crap. DAVID WILDGOOSE digs the dirt on the latest local effort...



All games should be sold like this. As with *Doom*, *Entombed* is essentially a shareware game. You can download the first level from your local bulletin board and then, if you so desire, you can order the remaining four levels for just \$49.95. This is great news for the consumer because if you fork out for a dud game you've really only got yourself to blame. It also indicates a high degree of confidence from the developer as only something pretty special will sell in significant numbers. So is *Entombed* something pretty special? Well, um... maybe you should read on.

It's Dr Who! Billed as the "ultimate puzzle adventure", *Entombed* is in fact a collection of snazzy graphic stills, an Indiana Jones-style plot and (wahoo!) some puzzles. You play an unnamed archaeologist digging around the Turkish city of Tarsus when, suddenly, you fall down a hole. I know that sounds a bit crap, but it does make sense in the context of the introductory sequence. Anyway, this apparent slice of bad luck reveals itself instead to be quite extraordinarily fortuitous, as the hole leads straight into a vast, ancient tomb. A brief search results in the discovery of a diary of Dr Henry Who (no relation to the other Dr Who, I'm sure), an archaeological bod of

some repute who has been missing for years.

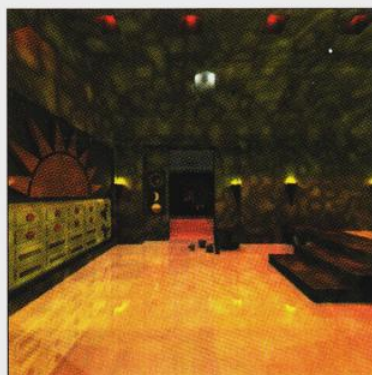
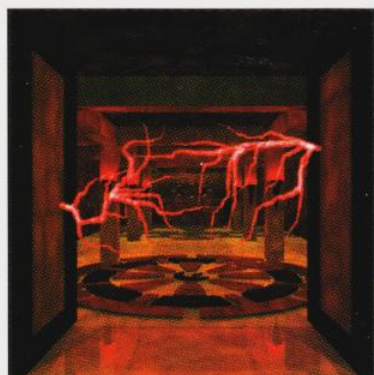
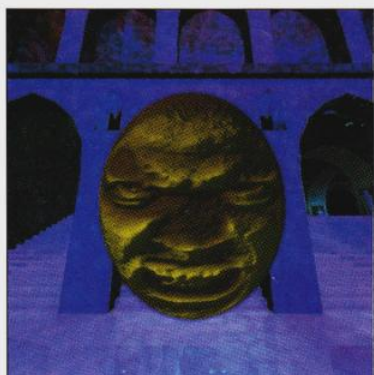
Further investigations lead to various strange and intricate contraptions and designs found throughout the many chambers of the tomb. These are the puzzles. How they work and what to do with them forms the overwhelming majority of the gameplay. Luckily, the kindly doctor scribbled down descriptions of each puzzle as he went through and these provide a rough guide to how each device functions, but not, obviously, how to solve them. This is not cheating, despite what it sounds like. It is utterly necessary to refer to the diary when you come across any puzzle as, not only does it deepen and add credibility to the plot, some of the puzzles have such obscure solutions that you would be lucky to get out of the first room without at least a peek inside its dusty pages.

Thoughtful & Cerebral So, without giving too much away, that's about all there is to *Entombed*. You wander around, solving the numerous puzzles, and gradually the storyline takes shape and the tale of the mysterious tomb unfolds. There's no real action to speak of (the only things to interact with are the puzzles themselves), lightning fast reflexes are to be cast aside in

favour of a more thoughtful and cerebral approach. Thus, due to its very nature, I found the gameplay fairly limited and generally lacking in excitement. On the other hand, I can see how this would appeal to some people (just look how well *The 7th Guest* did), but it's still a specialised sort of game.

While I expect most people would agree with my points on the gameplay, I could be in the minority when it comes to discussing the graphics. The graphics are clearly the major selling point of *Entombed*. I could rattle off a whole list of terms like ray-racing, high resolution, separate palettes, light-sourcing, rendering, etc to try to impress you and make the images sound fantastic, awesome, mind-blowing etc, but I won't. Instead I'll tell you that I didn't really like them. Take a look at the screenshots. They seem nice enough at first glance, but in the game they're a bit dull. Nothing moves, nothing scrolls, it's simply cold static screen and that gets boring very quickly. But, as I said, perhaps that's just me.

Entombed, for me, is a moderately entertaining puzzle game linked by some nice pictures. But you don't need me to tell you this, you can find out for yourself for free. As long as you have a modem, that is. And a telephone.



FORMAT: PC

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: PUZZLER

PLAYERS: 1

CHAOS CONCEPTS

PRICE: \$49.95

visuals

Very impressive, but they're only stills.

82

sound

Not a lot, but what's there is, is quite good.

75

gameplay

I could call it slow and boring, but if puzzles get you off you then you could well be stimulated.

65

longterm

If you're a manic puzzle solver you'll be stuck on this one for some time.

66

overall

If you dug the slow pace and puzzles of *The 7th Guest*, then you might dig this. (Geddit?...dig...archaeology...oh, forget it!)

68%

UFO Enemy Unknown

Shock. Horror. Aliens are invading Earth. Hang on, haven't we been through this a few hundred times before? BEN MANSILL picks up his trusty mouse and defends the planet again.



Marge Simpson once said "I fear the unfamiliar", and faithfully reflecting this human trait, the world reacts with hostile xenophobia when alien spacecraft are observed with increasing frequency in the world of *UFO Enemy Unknown*, Microprose's latest strategy game. In this case however, our paranoia seems warranted as the aliens are far more the Alien variety than cuddly ETs.

Defending the World You are the boss of Xcom, an internationally funded organisation dedicated to countering the invaders by learning as much as possible about their technology, then stealing the best bits to use against them. You have to both protect the Earth and satisfy the bickering demands of the countries which pay you. It's a big job this, defending the Whole Wide World with only a mouse and a sharp strategic mind, but some carefully thought out game design makes the challenge most excellent fun.

The main overview screen is the "Geoscape", a rotatable globe accompanied by a menu and status bar which provides basic information and leads to the other screens. Every so often a blip will appear over some part of the world, usually moving rapidly towards somewhere

important. The idea is to shoot it down over land so it crashes and can be investigated.

Don't expect to leap into a sexy cockpit and go it alone with the UFO, it's not that sort of game. Instead an interceptor is ordered to take the invader out. With luck and forethought your good blip will catch up to the bad blip and bring up a small radar screen showing your blip shooting smaller faster explosive blips at the invading blip. Ideally, the bad blip will crash somewhere conveniently close to an Xcom base, enabling it to be investigated by a ground team of commandos.

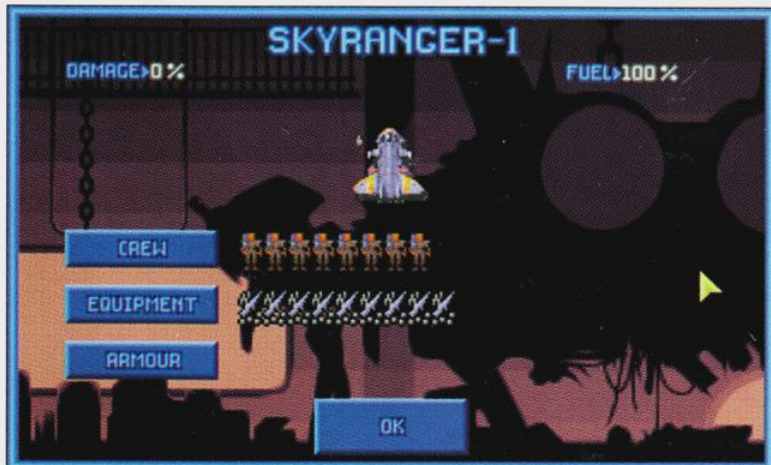
The Killing Bit When the ground team arrives the view switches to an isometric display. Surviving aliens are usually around, angry about their expensive flying saucer being destroyed and eager to exact revenge. In a *Syndicate* way of doing things (although turn based instead of the far more enjoyable real time method), orders are given to each of the dozen or so soldier dudes to move forward and attack

particular targets with the most appropriate weapon they carry. Hopefully you will kill more of them than they of you, and exciting scientific treasures can be extracted from the alien wreckage for your boffins to do something useful with.

Back at the base is where the real strategic planning happens, and bases can be built anywhere on the globe, budget permitting. Research stations, long-range scanners, soldiers barracks, and airbases are the sort of practical features all good Xcom bases should include, with many more enhancements available to make your bases truly threatening and effective.

Initially your budget will require lean and efficient strategic decisions, and this must be balanced with satisfying political demands from your funding countries. Often bases must

PERSONNEL AVAILABLE		PERSONNEL TOTAL	
Soldiers	0:8		
Engineers	10:10		
Scientists	4:10		
SPACE USED:SPACE AVAILABLE			
Living Quarters	28:50		
Stores	36:50		
Laboratories	6:50		
Work Shops	0:50		
Hangers	3:3		
Defence Strength			
Short Range Detection	1		
Long Range Detection	0		



be built in strategically valueless areas to ensure a steady flow of cash at the end of each budget year. There is an overriding atmosphere of political skulduggery which eventually develops into plot and becomes a major factor at later stages. But if you cleverly deployed enough Xcom bases and have researched alien technology to the point where your fighting force is the most potent on the planet, nothing should be a problem.

An extremely open ended and fluid game, *UFO* can be as satisfying as *Civilisation* as an empire builder, while challenging your strategic skills in fun new ways.

FORMAT: IBM PC/CD
AVAILABLE: NOW
CAT: STRATEGY/ACTION
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: MICROPROSE
PRICE: \$99.95

visuals 80
 Low-res VGA ain't the best, but this sort of game depends on substance. Sensible menus and controls.

sound 79
 Atmosphere music and minor effects are done well enough. Meatier guns would have better.

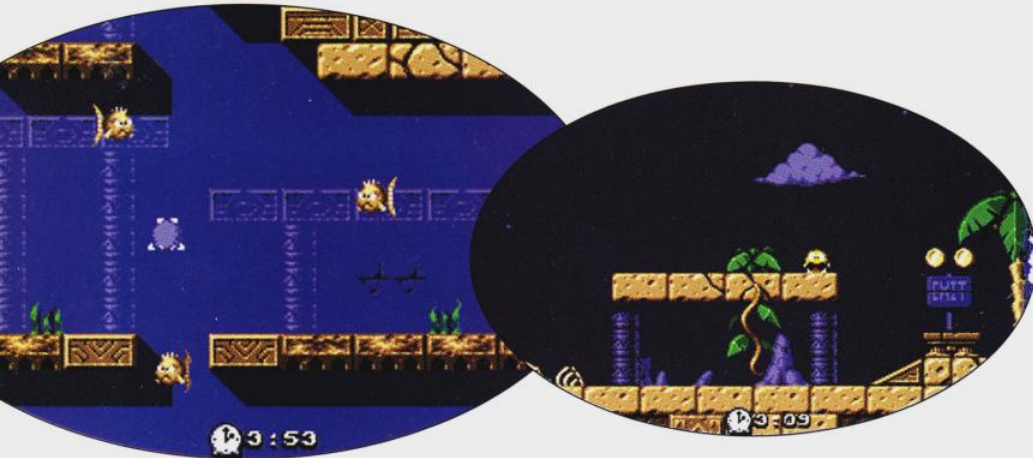
gameplay 86
 A breeze to get the hang of and big enough in scope and flexibility to ensure many differently played games.

longterm 84
 An open playing field with countless options and strategies to put to work makes it fun, not a chore.

overall 84%
 This game gives you the big picture along with fine detail. UFO is a great piece of work and should be investigated.

Fury of The Furries

Stop the Presses! It's a PC platform game! And it's a good one!
DAVID WILDGOOSE tries to recover from the shock...



Get this. The Tinies are the most mischievous creatures in the galaxy. They live on a distant planet called Sklumph. A devious attempt to invade Earth (plotted by rebel Tinies) has only just been thwarted and the King of the Tinies, fed up with the antics of his naughty subjects, decides to restore order to the chaotic society. However, everything goes completely wrong. The machine that was to be used to turn all the Tinies into sociable beings is seized by an evil Tiny, known as the Wicked One, who instead uses it to transform everyone into mindless zombies.

Tiny Magic You play a Tiny. But not just any old Tiny. Your Tiny has a magic ring, and will have to use it to rescue the King and save Sklumph from the Wicked One! By implementing a cunning combination of the power of the ring coupled with your curious talent to change colour, your Tiny is capable of some fairly incredible feats. Let's say you have been backed into a dead end by the pursuits of some unspeakable nasty, what do you do? Simply change into a yellow Tiny and through the powers of your ring you can blast the hideous mutant with a fireball.

But what if your path was impeded by a texturally aqueous obstacle?

This is easily negotiated with a swift pigment alteration to the appropriate blueness, allowing our podgy hero to breaststroke to safety. Once attired in a lovely green, your Tiny has a grappling hook at its disposal, which enables access to otherwise restricted areas, and the hue of scarlet affords a not inconsiderable proficiency in digesting solid earth. In addition to these ring-emanating facilities, the spherical protagonist can run and leap in a surprisingly adept manner for one who, in all honesty, is merely a head supported by six stumpy digits.

Essentially, *Fury Of The Furries* is a bit like *The Lost Vikings*, except that you only control one character, instead of three. Other than that though, it's a similar combination of dexterous platforming frolics and thought-provoking puzzles which somehow manages to gel together to create a seamless whole. That is, both the joystick agility and problem solving prowess needed to progress

gradually and smoothly escalate, but never at the expense of the other.

Clear and Cute The graphics are clear and very cute (in keeping with platform tradition, your Tiny does all sorts of amusing things when you leave him alone), but they hardly stretch the PC's limits. More impressive is the scrolling, usually the bane of the PC platformers, yet here it's smooth and capable of travelling at a fair speed. So, it sounds great, eh? The first real PC platform game?

In a word, no. *Fury Of The Furries* has almost everything going for it - a cuddly main character, a few original ideas, nice graphics, simple accessible gameplay, plenty of levels and secret bits to guarantee a long life, and loads of neat minor details as



well, but it left me feeling a tad cold. I liked it, but several annoying aspects, like having to press UP to jump (I mean how many people have got a single-button joystick, eh?), as well as the fact that you not only have to solve the puzzles and negotiate the occasionally quite tricky platforms, but there's also a time restriction AND a limited number of lives to contend with. It also feels slightly empty and too stop-start, and if I said the music was terrific, well, I'd be lying wouldn't I? These reasons all conspired to prevent me from loving it. So, while I can recommend *Fury Of Furries* (PC platform-starved freaks will love it), I do so with a couple of minor reservations.



FORMAT: PC

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: PLATFORM

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: METRO GAMES

PRICE: \$89.95

visuals

Perfectly functional and quite appealing, but they're not fantastic. **80**

sound

The usual bland electro-nonsense. Nice FX though. **50**

gameplay

Falls down on occasions, but generally it's great fun. **82**

longterm

It's big, so if you do get into it you will be there for a while. **84**

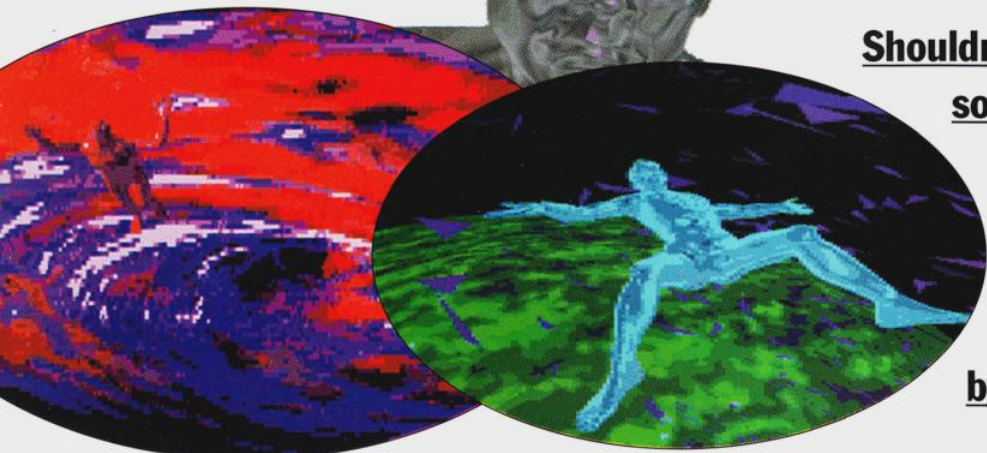
overall

Could have been a superb game, instead it's merely a very good one.

84%

The Lawnmower Man

Shouldn't there be some sort of limitation period on the time you can take to churn out a movie licence? Surely the whole "Lawnmower Man" thing (and Pierce Brosnan for that matter) is past its use by date. BEN MANSILL cuts the grass.



The only thing stranger than the name of the company which made this game is the game itself. With a corporate image seemingly designed to attract retailers instead of customers, The Sales Curve(!!!) grabbed the gold plated licence rights to make a game of the movie all gamers love. Disowned by Stephen King and bucketed in some circles for lacking in substance, *The Lawnmower Man* nevertheless provided some of the sexiest computer graphics yet seen, all in bulk dosages held together by the bare minimum of plot.

VB - Virtual Brick Jobe was the man with the mower, dim but well meaning until Pierce Brosnan introduced him to the thrills of mind expanding VR. Conveniently for Jobe, the experience provoked an evolutionary leap of intelligence and bestowed powers unimaginable to normal folk. As the supreme life form within a new virtual world, Jobe seized immediately upon the opportunity to exact dastardly revenge upon all who had laughed and pointed cruelly. There's a lesson there readers.

The game, like the only watchable bits in the movie, takes place entirely inside the cyberspace which Jobe has created. Fondly recall the astonishing graphics of the film,

razor sharp, fluid and big. Nod approvingly as you find the screen shots on the box virtually the same, then sit down and prepare yourself for another packaging induced let down. Chunky to say the least, the albeit full-screen and full-motion video sequences which make up most of the play are rendered in virtual brick, and do little to promote Sales Curve as a group which cares about the consumer.

But wait! Hidden within is a game of satisfying substance. *Lawnmower Man* is highly playable and addictive, as well as being a clever and attractive front for the latest MENSA intelligence test. The whole caper is to successfully complete a sequence of challenges, which in most cases make their demands entirely on the cerebral level. A few are dependent on sharp dexterity and timing, but even these require far more thought than any platform game.

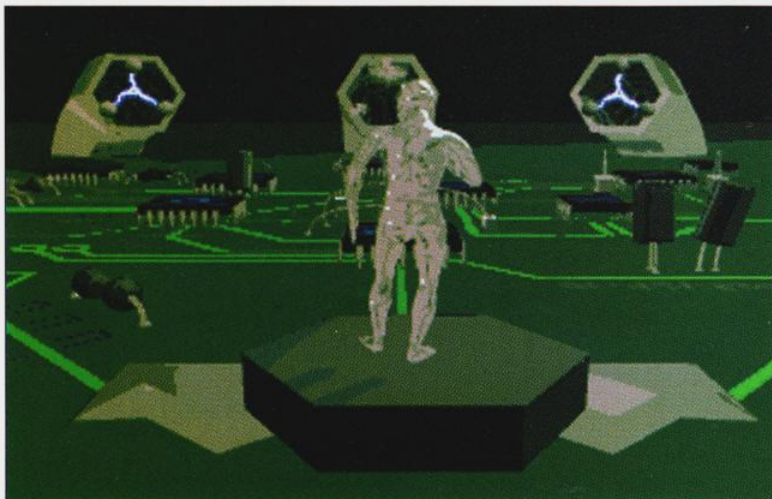
The catch is that there is no save game facility and aside from a paltry three lives during play, each playing session starts from scratch. This is not an entirely bad thing, for the pace is fast and for at least a little while interesting enough to withstand repetition. Once initially impossible tests have been mastered, it takes little time to race through to where you are currently stuck, although a slight madness will set in if too many attempts are made at a particular toughie.

Sewer Shark? The gameplay is nothing if not varied. Perfectly timed leaps onto floating orbs, gauntlet runs through 3D nightmares and *Sewer Shark* style tubular rocketing in your



metamorphised form as a jet-being - this sort of fun requires only those well developed hand-eye skills and some patience for success. Mind crushers like the rarely enjoyable "pick the odd-one out" IQ test and musical note repetition tests, ask only a sharp and fast mind. Strict time limits are imposed on most, usually just barely enough to do your thing at maximum speed and efficiency.

Playing no other game but *Lawnmower Man* will soon send you mad. It's true value, however, is as a perfect distraction from whatever full-time epic you're currently involved in. Just be prepared to sit 5 meters from the screen for decent resolution.



FORMAT: PC CD-ROM
AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: LAWN MOWING
PLAYERS: 1
PUB: THE SALES CURVE
PRICE: \$99.95

visuals ??
 The movie's beautiful images have suffered awfully. Very blocky.

sound 90
 Hot techno backbeats and eerie cyber symphonies are of the highest order.

gameplay 84
 It's saving grace. Quite difficult but satisfyingly achievable.

longterm 76
 The entertainment should be savoured occasionally when a fresh spell is needed.

overall 82%
 When we all have Pentiums they can make Lawnmower Man II, and it will be perfect. Enjoy this in the meantime.

Hell Cab



Most taxi drivers are freaks, right? They'll either bore you senseless with their opinions on the world, the government, the weather, the other drivers on the road etc, or ask you highly probing questions about your own life and then laugh at your problems (well they laugh at my problems any way). According to all reports, New York has the freakiest cab drivers in the world, so I suppose it's only natural that *Hell Cab* is set in the Big Apple.

Trainee Devil Your driver doesn't look too scary at first - he's young, polite and good-looking (if you're into that type of thing). The only problem is that he's trying to steal your soul. You see, Raoul (that's his name) is a trainee devil, and in order to get his horns he's got to take you to some of the biggest hell holes in history and get you to sell your soul to Satan. Maybe the 666 on the numberplates should have given you some warning, but no matter, you're stuck with him and he's going to take you on a wild ride to the Roman Colosseum (79 AD), the French trenches during World War I, the Jurassic Age (about 65 million years ago, but you should all know that by now) and finally to an apocalyptic New York sometime in the future.

The aim of the game is quite simple but at the same time refreshingly original - you have to save your soul. When you don't have enough money to pay the fare (and no matter how much money you take out from the ATM at the beginning, you'll never have enough), Raoul will make you sign an agreement which basically pledges your soul to Beelzebub if you can't pay him enough by the end of

Getting stuck in a taxi cab with a horny devil may not be the worst thing in the world, except when the devil really is in the service of Satan and wants your soul as payment. STUART CLARKE tries to keep his morals even though he's surrounded by temptation everywhere he looks...

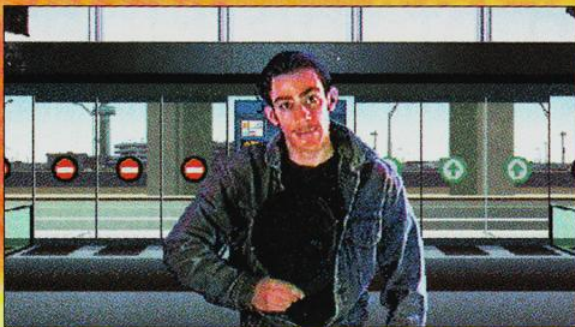
the tour. You'll also have to fill out a questionnaire, which acts as a morals check, and this works out how hard Satan has to work to grab your soul. If your answers are nice and sweet (dare I say it - Christian), you'll have a high soul meter reading, and if they're low-down and nasty, then Raoul's job is easier.

Save Our Souls As you go through the game, there will be various situations which will effect your soul meter, but making a "morally incorrect" decision may mean the difference between living or dying (you have three lives to lose). You'll have to weigh up the options and make the moral/intellectual/comical decision (often it'll be all three). Other choices will damn your soul straight away. For example, in Rome, Nero imprisons you but gives you three ways to entertain him in order to be released. If you choose to throw women to the lions you can kiss your eternal soul bye-bye - it's hellfire and brimstone for you! If on the other hand you choose to fight the gladiator and manage to defeat him, you can either kill him (harming your soul meter) or let him live (which could mean losing your life or spending a long time locked up). It's a tough one, but then life's like that I suppose.

It's all very visually and historically

exciting, intellectually stimulating and often quite amusing, but there's not much gameplay to speak of. It's all played by the tried and true point and click method, but it all progresses in a very linear fashion, and when you are left on your own to explore the Empire State Building, there's nothing much to do. And it moves slower than a snail on Rohypnol. The only things that keep you going are the absolutely superb graphics and the little groovy bits that appear at various locations, like the animated "Dead Sullivan Show" and "Space Boy" cartoon. They have absolutely nothing to do with the overall game, but are cute and quite funny (for the first couple of times at least).

There is the odd time when the action hots up, like fighting for your life against a well-oiled gladiator in the Colosseum and going for a Terminator 2 arcade style shoot 'em up in the WWI trenches, but these don't last long enough to save the game. *Hell Cab* is, without doubt, an immensely impressive production that makes full use of the power of CD ROM, but as a game it just doesn't quite make it. If it gained a bit of speed and lost a bit of its linearity, it could have been a gem. As it is, it deserves a look for the fresh ideas, humorous approach and stunning graphics. But if you're looking for a good game, look elsewhere.



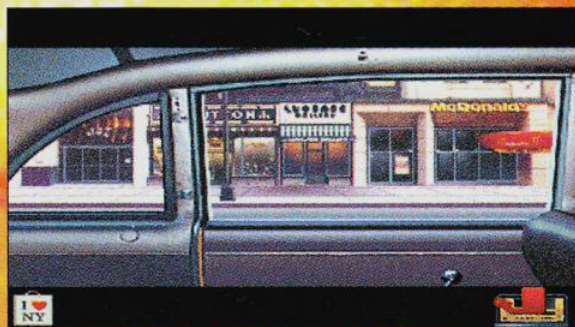
Raoul picks you up at the airport...



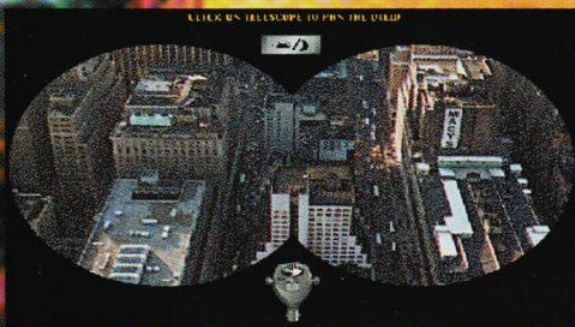
...and puts you in the backseat of his cadillac.



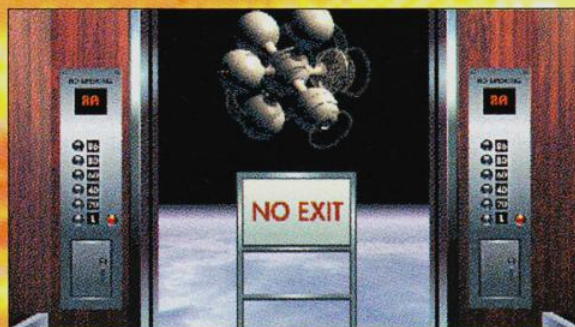
Make sure you get some money first...



...so you can go to Macca's. Mmm processed bone & buns.



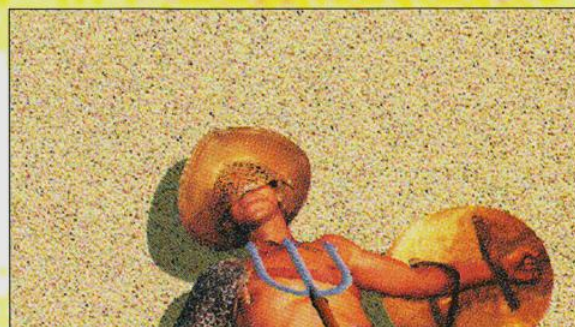
View from the top of the Empire State. Look for Madonna!



Looks like Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator.



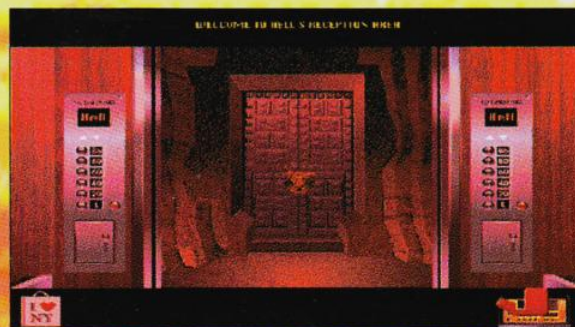
A well oiled Gladiator. Ancient Rome or downtown Sydney?



Looks like it's ancient Rome.



The one part of the game that's close to fast action.



Welcome to Hell baby.

MAC/PC CD

available

NOW

category

ADVENTURE

players

1

publisher

TIME WARNER

price

\$159.95

visuals

92

Photo realistic backdrops, fantastic digitised characters and some groovy special effects make this game a joy to look at.

sound

80

It's very good, and the actors all try very hard but it's on CD-ROM so you don't expect anything less. The sound effects are sparse.

gameplay

60

Um, there's not much to report here. Sorry...

longterm

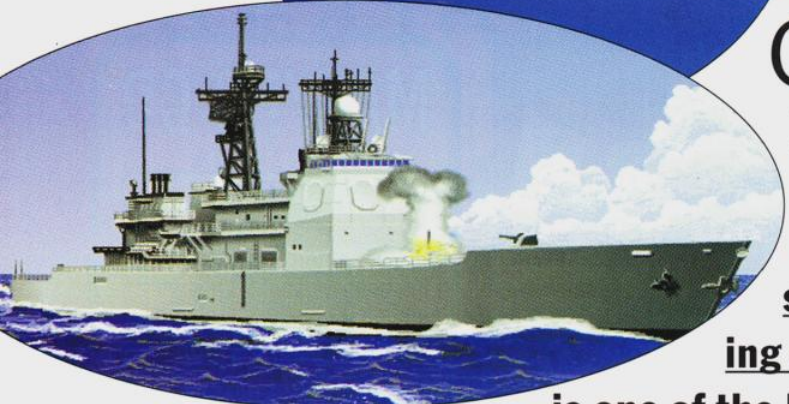
67

The graphics and humour will keep you here for a while, and you may even want to finish the game, but it's not a totally satisfying experience.

overall

A very impressive CD ROM, it's just a pity it's not a very impressive game.

68%



Aegis Guardian of the Fleet

When Americans get serious about something the results are usually quite spectacular, and over the last few decades the cream of America's scientific genius has been devoted to the building of bigger and better weapons. The Aegis system is one of the biggest and best and now there's a game to simulate it in action.

BEN MANSILL goes to Def Con 1.

Chief amongst America's military showpieces is the Ticonderoga class missile cruiser with its fantastically sophisticated Aegis weapons control system. Designed primarily to protect those floating superpowers - the Carrier Battle Group, an Aegis ship is capable of targeting and destroying targets in the air, on and under the surface and on land. It can do this at great range and can deal with dozens of targets simultaneously. It was almost inevitable that a game would simulate the workings of this marvellous toy, and it's fortuitous that the result is of such high quality and absorbing playability.

The Combat Information Centre

The Ticonderoga's Aegis computer system is basically the worlds most advanced and expensive computer game. Buried deep within an armoured titanium shell, the Combat Information Centre houses Aegis and its array of screens. Simulating this system on a PC is best achieved by faithfully depicting the action through the same functions the big toy has, while avoiding the peripheral nonsense games of

this nature usually throw in for colour.

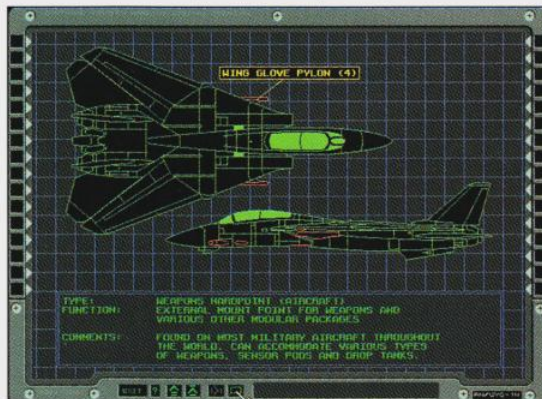
Aside from a mostly useless bridge screen, the game is played almost entirely from the almighty Fire Control station. Here a summary of the information gathered from all ship sensors is displayed neatly and comprehensibly. Also here, are the controls for targeting and firing the ship's weapons. There are separate screens for each of the ships sensors like radar and sonar, but the only reason to visit these is to turn these devices on or off.

A graphic representation of the action is always available at the Tactical Plot.

Surprisingly well depicted, the Plot shows everything involved in the conflict. Zooming in or out can give a new perspective on the big picture or close checking of individual units. General orders can also be given to friendly units. Your Ticonderoga is the big gun of the fleet and

absolute control is available at the Fire Control station, but for full effect a co-ordinated attack or defence must be employed. Bearing and speed for ships and altitude and depth for subs and aircraft are ordered here, as well as basic sensor controls. Weapons on any unit can also be enabled and set maximum firing ranges.

Missile Lovers Unite Lovers of military technology and readers of Tom Clancy's *Red Storm Rising* will know what sort of war to expect - a war of missiles and missile defence systems. Many, many missiles of vari-



ous design and purpose. You'll know them all by heart before too long and the Phalanx defence system will no doubt save your ass a few times. With all weapons there is always the option to pass control over to the computer. With the Phalanx this is an absolute necessity but everything else should be done by hand for the best possible efficiency. The interface used for targeting and firing is not perfect but it's easy enough to get a grip on, although a few weeks of playing *Aegis* will wear a hole in any mouse pad.

Aegis looks beautiful in the increasingly standard Super VGA and for fans of things military it is a sheer delight. So stop playing the *Harpoon* scenario's you've won countless times already and get *Aegis* for thrills. It's brilliant.

FORMAT: PC CD-ROM

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: STRATEGY

PLAYERS: 1

SOFTWARE SORCERY

PRICE: N/A

visuals

The best wars are fought in super VGA and have video clips of missile launches.

89

sound

Great militaristic speech. Missile launches thunder happily and hits rattle with flying debris.

88

gameplay

Aegis is easily understood and great fun.

84

longterm

If you like it, you'll play Aegis for ages...

86

overall

It's really only for strategy and military fans, but Aegis is close to perfect in this difficult genre.

86%

REVIEW»



Reunion

Get the sci-fi strategy part of your brain working because it's time for an outer space communion with GRANTLEY DAY...

When I first laid eyes on *Reunion*, I was very interested in it, mainly because the graphics on the box reminded me of *Dune II - The Building of a Dynasty*. Well this is a classic example where you must not judge a book by its cover and although *Reunion* has good points, it also has bad points, and it's most certainly nothing like *Dune II*.

Finding the Plot The game's introduction, which consists of the initial plot, has a sequence of black & white pictures that fade in and out, with very low quality digitised voice reading the text at the bottom of the screen. It tells a story of the future Earth, where there is initially peace and goodwill amongst fellow humans, but something has gone wrong. There is a strange uprising all over the Earth and people are becoming hostile and overthrowing the establishment. Explorer 2, which uses humanities new found warp drive, is launched in a last minute emergency, but when the ship passes through an uncharted asteroid belt the warp field generators are damaged and the ship cannot return to Earth. Now New Earth is a thriving colony and for some unknown reason, the governor of this new society (that's you) wants to find the old Earth and have a meeting of old and new, hence the name *Reunion*.

You take control of New Earth from a main control chamber, where you have access to all the different facets of the game. You must hire advisers, which also join you in this chamber. Other actions you control include the building of equipment as you invent it, designing and constructing your own off-world colonies, visiting the bar to get the goss from the bar tender, as well as monitoring the New Earth solar system and other solar systems you will discover.

Lack of Interaction *Reunion* has some good graphics which help the game to progress. Unfortunately the game has two major downfalls. Firstly,

there is absolutely no player combat intervention; all you do is select how many ships you want to enter the battle, and away it goes all by itself. The only pseudo-intervention is from the war adviser you can hire, and funnily enough the best adviser has a positronic brain (positronic brain, warp field generators - either *Reunion's* creators are *Star Trek* freaks or can't generate original science fiction ideas). Secondly, most strategy games I have played allow a large element of user control over what and when things happen. *Reunion* is very linear; the game never changes its course or plot as you play it, either a second or third time, and you cannot even have an input in the research and



development of your inventions, they are all story depended. For example, you cannot create transport ships until the story predicts that you need them. Apart from *Reunion's* downfalls, it does have interesting graphic sequences that show different parts of the story and different actions along the way.

Reunion is not a game for people who would like to enter into the science fiction strategy game arena, because it wouldn't give the best impression, and there are other games on the market that are far better. Having said that, gamers who have played all the rest and want a new challenge might find it interesting and maybe even enjoyable.

FORMAT: PC

AVAILABLE: NOW

CAT: SPACE STRATEGY

PLAYERS: 1

PUBLISHER: GRANDSLAM

PRICE: \$99.95

visuals **75**

A mixture of hand drawn and computer generated graphics works well.

sound **62**

Initially the music and digital sounds are good, but they get very boring very quickly.

gameplay **70**

Good interface and player interaction, but it lacks important aspects, such as player input in combat.

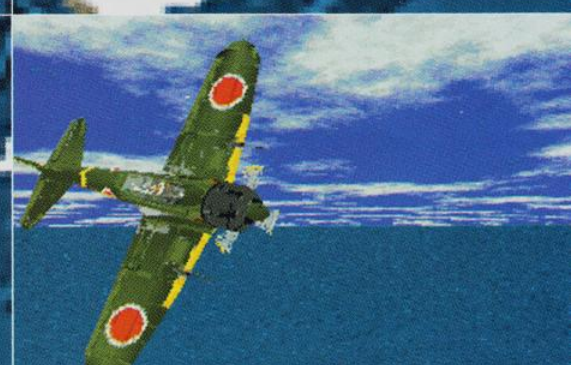
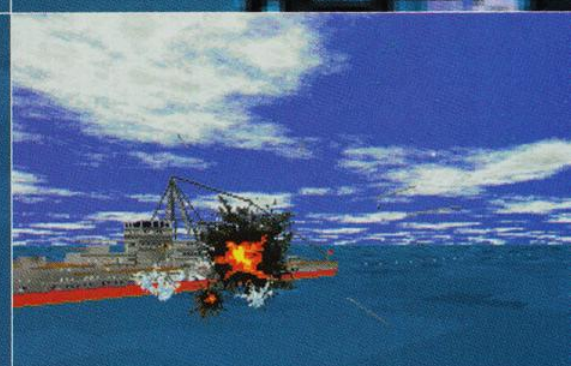
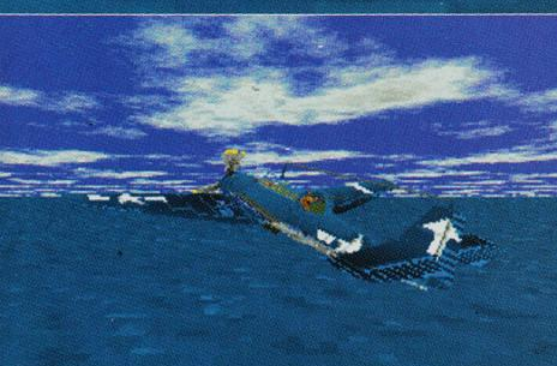
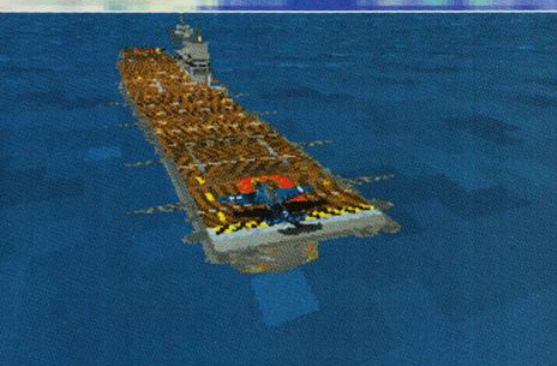
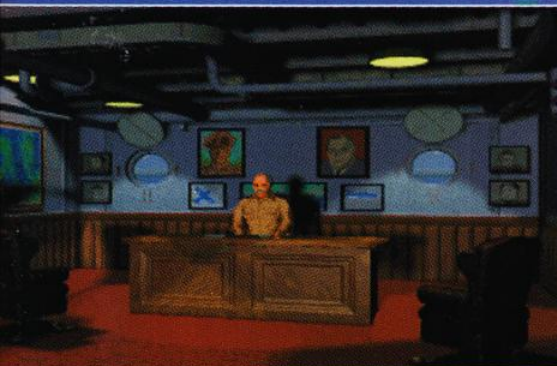
longterm **60**

Your lack of ability to influence the plot in the game isn't a good thing.

overall **66%**

An interesting look at the space strategy genre, but not one for first timers to try.

REVIEW»



Pacific Strike

I stand in attention when a new Origin game arrives. They are always lavish in the graphics and sound departments and usually magnetically playable. A traditional format has remained joyously consistent throughout the series of arcade sims which made Origin famous: short, exciting and difficult combat missions interwoven with colourful "cinematic" sequences where the ongoing plot reveals itself. Although strictly linear, these cut scenes are so irresistibly entertaining that they usually become the main motive for playing, and whilst the action is mad fun one usually tends to rush through it to discover the next story-line development.

Flight Problems Conceptually, *Pacific Strike* is identical to *Aces of the Pacific*. This is the air-war against Japan which is fought mostly from carriers, with a standard range of American fighters and light bombers from the era. The mission profiles and sequence are virtually the same, but the two Pacific games are worlds apart in an area so fundamentally important - the flight model. It's *Ace's* strongest point and *Strike's* weakest. While Origin's effort never claims to be a flight sim - it's focus more the "interactive movie experience", the flight dynamics are just so awful that only the quality of the couple of minutes of plot which reward you after each successful mission keep the frustrating madness at bay.

The most hair-tearing feature of *Pacific's* cockpit is the rudder, which every hot PC pilot relies on for perfect dogfighting and accurate ground attack. For starters there are no increments; it's either full left or right and worst of all, when the rudder is released the plane springs back to the way it was pointing before the turn. It makes *Strike's* planes fly differently to any other PC plane ever flown, and bears no resemblance whatsoever to the real world. It also makes shooting an enemy down with guns an agonisingly frustrating game of mostly luck,

Origin's latest "interactive movie" is here, and this one takes the form of a World War II flight sim. But is it a real flight sim, or just an excuse for some gorgeous computer graphics. BEN MANSILL investigates...

thanks also to a joystick routine which is the jumpiest and least intuitive I've encountered.

A few hours into *Pacific Strike* and it's sadly apparent that Origin favoured the beautiful graphics as a priority over satisfying flying, with the movie-style cut scenes being the game's main focus. The terrific looking clouds and ground terrain are truly magnificent, but surprisingly reveal another major problem with the combat. Without radar, a target must be seen to be killed and at most distances the little dots which are planes become hopelessly lost amongst the plentiful bitmapped backgrounds. With all graphics turned on to maximum, the game ran fluidly on an 8 meg 486/50 and was perfectly bearable on a slower 4 meg SX, but in order to overcome the initial handicap of the flight model it is tragically necessary to turn off the clouds and sea texture during play to actually find and destroy your enemies!

With all this to endure, Origin put the boot in with a final insult by incorporating the worst sound effects design I've ever heard. While the sounds emanating from your speakers are a perfectly acceptable rendition of the regulation engine drone and ratta-tat-tat, only one effect is played at a time, so when you pull the trigger the engine noise disappears until you're done. Throttling up results in the sound cutting out entirely for a second to be replaced with a higher engine pitch. In an all out dogfighting frenzy

with continuous bullet impact effects and explosions, the situation is an impossible barrage of sound effects coming at you one at a time on a half-second delay. That Origin think we won't mind this pathetic and lazy effort is staggering.

Saving Graces Although *Pacific Strike* flies like a dog, Origin's programmers have shown their talents in other areas which surprisingly compensate for such a gameplay disaster. The redeeming aspect of the dogfighting sections is the intelligent performance of enemy aircraft. They aggressively perform according to circumstances and in full-on dogfighting do far more than the usual boring turning circle battles. Enemy aircraft tactics are clever, dangerous and unpredictable. In this area *Pacific Strike* outshines most other combat flight-sims, but this quality only serves to underline the wasted potential because dull turning battles are all most of the provided planes are capable of.

In keeping with the family tradition, *Pacific Strike* puts you in the shoes of a dumb and macho looking young leather-jacketed male fighter jock. Your buddies are of a similar variety and as the era is WWII, tend to mostly comprise scared young Iowa farmer's sons, or arrogant and over-confident city boys. After a mission your chats will reveal news of the war, technical advancements, friendships and rivalries. Unusually for these games, yet unfortunately true to life, the attrition rate is very high; charismatic pilots who you are sure will be there till the end regularly perish on even your best flown missions.

Progress will eventually lead to promotion and the need to plan missions yourself, although the only real planning required is selecting the number of planes to attack a set target and choosing who goes.

Regardless of how demanding you are, *Pacific Strike* will entertain thoroughly, it's just a pity that some bad design holds it back from the perfection it is within reach of.

PC

available

NOW

category

FLIGHT

players

1

publisher

ORIGIN

price

NO RRP

visuals

The Strike Commander world with prettier clouds - it looks fantastic. Sea textures flicker annoyingly but provide a true sense of altitude. **91**

sound

Quality background music adds to the atmosphere of the era, but is let down miserably by the amateur sound effects design. **76**

gameplay

It's possible to get good at this, but it will send you mad in the process. Play *Aces* if you want to fly, but this one if you like old war movies. **74**

longterm

In all likelihood, you'll fight through the crappy gameplay to find out what happens next. It'll keep you off the streets for weeks. **81**

overall

It looks amazing, it's amusing and colourful, yet it's painfully weak in critical areas. **80%**



HAIR by Perry Farrell, EYES by Kurt Cobain, LIPS by Courtney Love, JACKET by Bono, NOSE & EYEBROWS
by Smashing Pumpkins, BOOTS by Juliana Hatfield, HAND used to hold Janet Jackson's left breast.

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BYTE SIZE

MAD DOG MCCREE FORMAT MEGA CD

Available: Now (Import)
Category: FMV Shooter
Players: 1-2
Publisher: American Laser Games
Price: N/A



If you've read HYPER #5 you may have stumbled across a little review I did for *Mad Dog McCree* on the 3DO. You may have gathered that I didn't like the game much. Well, I like the Mega CD version a little better. It might not look as good (in fact, it looks really ugly) but it plays a whole lot better, and that's what really counts.

The problem with the 3DO game was that it was basically unplayable. The control pad was useless, moving the cursor around the screen at the pace of a run-down snail. It also refused to stop where you wanted it to. But the Mega CD game is quite playable. Using a control pad actually works quite well and there's the option of using your trusty Menacer. I find the Menacer as clunky and unappealing as the Super Scope, but if you've got one and you've got the budget for batteries, you'll probably rejoice that there's another game you can use it on. The packaging also says it's compatible with the Sega Mega Mouse and "most Sega compatible light guns". If that means you can use Konami's "Justifier" from *Lethal Enforcers*, then that's even better.

The gameplay is simple: people move, you shoot them. It's a straight conversion from the arcade game, so all of the footage and all of the audio is exactly the same. The audio is good, but the Mega CD is just not capable of handling full-motion video. The quality is awful: blocky, colourless, and just plain ugly.

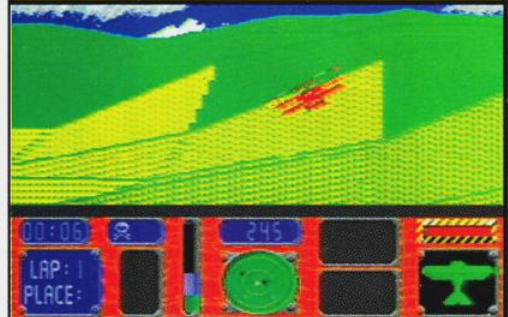
You don't need me to tell you whether or not you're going to like this - you already know. All you need to know from me is whether or not the arcade to Mega CD conversion is any good, and it is. It looks bad, but the gameplay remains intact. Hi Ho. Uh... Silver.

Andrew Humphreys



RACING ACES FORMAT MEGA CD

Available: Now (Import)
Category: Aerial Combat/Racing
Players: 1
Publisher: Sega
Price: n/a



Surely this is some sort of cruel joke, isn't it? Well, the joke's over - come on Stuart, you can tell me now, this is a Master System game, isn't it? Hang on a minute, I'll see for myself. Hmm, it's on a shiny silver, little disky thing and it goes in to the Mega CD. This really is a Mega CD game, isn't it. Oh dear.

Oh dear, oh dear, oh, dear, oh dear. Deary, deary me. This is one of the most appallingly crappy pieces of software I've seen since the last appallingly crappy piece of software that had the misfortune to cross my desk. And that bit about it looking like a Master System game - I didn't just put it there to make some sort of dramatic point; this really does look a Master System game, and not a particularly good one at that. Basic, blocky sprites (they're supposed to represent various types of aircraft) and the most under-realised attempt at creating a 3D space I've ever seen help to make this one majorly ugly son-of-a-bitch of a game.

I suppose I owe you some sort of explanation as to the game's mechanics. You're a pilot, you've got a choice of planes, you race them around "tracks" (mapped out on the ground in yellow). You can shoot down all the other racers if you like. There's weapons powerups and all the standard racing powerups too. The perspective is from behind your plane but it's so poorly executed you'd never know if I didn't tell you.

And did I mention the playability? No, I didn't. That's because there isn't any. The controls are overly touchy and because the 3D modelling is so bad, most of the time you have absolutely no idea where you are. Sure, there's lots of tracks to race around (in planes mind you - a stupid idea if ever there was one), but when none of them are even remotely enjoyable, why bother?

Andrew Humphreys



BATTLECLASH

SNES

Available: Now
 Category: Shooter
 Players: 1-2
 Publisher: Nintendo
 Price: \$69.00



OK, I know this one's been out for a while, but we've only just been given a copy and, as the old cliché goes, it's better late than never, isn't it? In this case, I'm not so sure. But there's a chance that some of you might've been sucked in by the TV ad with that idiot jumping around and destroying his lounge room. You might be thinking about buying *Battleclash*. You might even be starting to think that the Super Scope might not be such a bad bit of plastic to have around the house. All I can say is SNAP OUT OF IT!

Battleclash pits you against eight giant robots in a series of one-on-one shootouts. Defeat all eight and you face the boss-bot, Anubis. It's kind of like a shoot 'em up version of *Streetfighter*: your opponents taunt you, then you kick their butts with a heightened sense of satisfaction. At least, that's how it should work. But using the Super Scope has never been pleasurable and once you find each bad guy's weak spot, what little fun you were having quickly comes to a grinding halt and it's game over.

This is not a recipe for success. Even if the Super Scope worked perfectly, even if it wasn't such a cumbersome and ugly piece of industrial design, and even if you didn't feel like such a dickhead when you were using it, *Battleclash* still wouldn't be a good game. It's just a run-of-the-mill shoot 'em up. The basic gameplay (ie, you squint through the sights of the Super Scope and blow things up) is just too basic and whilst the graphics are nice and the sounds are good too, if you're not bored witless after ten minutes then you should consider seeking medical help. Maybe there's something wrong with your all important boredom-inducing gland.

Andrew Humphreys

ALAN BORDER'S CRICKET

PC

Available: Now
 Category: Sport
 Players: 1-2
 Publisher: HES
 Price: n/a



Remember how *ET's Rugby League* was simply *World Class Rugby* with a different title screen? Well, *Alan Border's Cricket* is just *Graham Gooch's World Class Cricket* with...you guessed it!...a different title screen.

Cricket is certainly not the easiest of sports to attempt to convert to the home computer format, so, bearing this in mind, I think the guys at Audiogenic have done a pretty good job. You can choose to play as England, Australia, New Zealand, the West Indies or any of the Sheffield Shield sides, in games ranging from a 20 over one-dayer to a full-blown 5 day Test Match. You can pick your team from the list of players supplied or, if you desire, you are able to create your own using the editor (no, not you Stuart).

Bowling is fairly easy. Once you've selected your bowler, it's just a matter of guiding a small inertia-heavy square to where you want the ball to bounce and then waggle the joystick for pace, swing or spin. Batting is much harder as you have to consider not only which shot to play, but the exact timing of that shot. And then there's running between the wickets to worry about as well. You tend to get run out a bit too often.

I really enjoyed *Alan Border's Cricket*, much to my immense surprise. The control system is very intuitive despite the constant waggling while you bowl and the graphics are not at all bad if you ignore the occasionally dodgy animation. The sound isn't quite there though. Yes, the game does get a tad repetitive, but in two player mode it's ace. Naturally.

David Wildgoose

WARLORD II - SCENARIO BUILDER

PC

Available: Now
 Category: Strategy
 Players: 1
 Publisher: SSG
 RRP: \$69.95



For today's adventure I am going to play the Elemental Crux, in which I will represent the element of water and do battle against my three elemental brothers. But wait, just before I begin, I'm not too happy about the distribution of armies, I don't seem to have enough. Ahh, that's better. Now I have more troops and more weapons that the other three put together. Thanks scenario builder, you save my day yet again!

Yes folks, step right up and check out the new scenario builder to *Warlords II*, in which you can modify every scenario supplied with the original game, or the 24 new ones supplied with the Builder itself, or create your own realms. Oh boy, what fun! The original *Warlords II* was OK, but the scenario builder really hits the spot and makes the game more complete. It's a great pity that it wasn't a part of the original package, and had to be distributed as a separate game, because don't forget the most important thing - this builder requires you to already own *Warlords II*!

The Builder's delicious editing system will initially have you quite stumped as to how it works, but it takes no time at all to get up and rolling. You can create new armies, modify existing graphics, edit heroes and magical equipment. In fact it's limitless within the framework of the existing product! Just wait until you enter into the scenarios that are supplied with the game, 24 in total, that will take you to mythical kingdoms, or perhaps to the not so mythical America and England.

So if you don't mind playing a game in 16 colours (although the resolution is 640x480), take a look at *Warlords II the Scenario Builder*. If you own *Warlords II* and felt the product left you a little high and dry, then quench your thirst with this tantalising addition to the game.

Grantley Day



CANNON FODDER

PC

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



It's really great to see game designers considering the needs of the handicapped amongst us (*that should probably read "differently abled"* - Ed). For those poor unfortunates born without any form of brain, Virgin have made *Cannon Fodder*. The basic requirement of being able to click your mouse on what you want to kill and some darned cute sprites has inevitably attracted fans of measurable IQ in the UK, where less discerning magazines have been so impressed they rated it in the high 90's.

We save those marks for games which are truly exceptional, but that's not to say that *Cannon Fodder* is completely without charm. A few minutes play and you begin to understand. It's a stupid form of fun with just enough thought and planning to shoulder aside that guilt you're feeling for playing it in the first place.

An overhead view of one of five terrain types follows the movement of your mini-platoon of rampaging dudes as they wreak their havoc. Baddies pop out from their hiding places and you do the deed by clicking them. Complicating an already strenuous task is the need to blow up the occasional building or free captured buddies, but great excitement is added by using various vehicles to hasten your rate of movement and firepower. There is human interest too; follow the careers of your soldiers as their promotions entitle them to bigger and shinier gravestones.

Each of the missions takes only a few minutes and is a surprisingly enjoyable experience, you know, the simple things in life...blah blah. The number of killers you can take hunting depends on the mission, and your previous success. Four is typical, and for the thinkers among you they can be separated from the normal "follow the leader" routine and steered individually for tactical effectiveness.

Take a break from the serious and check it out, you might just have fun.

Ben Mansill



SAM & MAX CD ROM

PC CD ROM

Available: Now
Category: Adventure
Players: 1
Publisher: LucasArts
RRP: \$99.95



LucasArts released *Sam & Max* late last year, and it was one of the most fantastic adventure games I have ever played, full of wit, humour and most importantly, sarcasm. It was a breath of fresh air for the PC game world, allowing everybody to enjoy kid's stuff for adults.

LucasArts have now released the CD ROM version of the game, which is titled *The Full Talkie*. I must admit that once I started to play the game, it was impossible to stop, and the speech brings a fantastic element to the actual gameplay, as the characters really do come to life; almost springing out of the screen to grab you and pull you right back into their adventure of mammoth proportions. In actual fact this version of the game is so good that I can't even remember the disk based version; its text has faded from my memory, only to be replaced by Max's taunts and Sam's quirky quotations.

The CD ROM version also comes with five tracks of digital music, which are some of the favourite pieces found within the game. These can be played by your CD player as regular music and sound great!

My only disappointment with the game, was that it included a Hint Book! *Sam & Max* is such a fantastic game, that it is sad to tempt game players to take a quick peek at the hint book to work out what to do next, because this of course reduces the long term aspect of the game.

If you own *Sam & Max* already and loved it, then buy the CD ROM version and be prepared for a new experience. If you don't own it, then buy the CD version and experience the best CD ROM adventure I have ever played.

Grantley Day



SIM CITY 2000 - GREAT DISASTERS

PC

Available: Now
Category: Add-On Simulation
Players: 1
Publisher: Maxis
Price: No RRP



This is the sort of thing a reviewer dreads. The add-on disk surely ranks (Surely Ranks? Isn't he a homophobic ragga star?) highly on the League-Of-Things-To-Avoid-Reviewing-At-All-Costs. Just behind Yet Another Crap Platform Game, no doubt. I mean, what exactly can you say about them and, more importantly, how long can you stretch it out for? Okay, let's get it over with.

I liked *Sim City 2000* a lot. I gave it 96% in *Hyper* #5 in fact. I still play it, you know... The other day I decided to create the most inhospitable city imaginable. Huge ten-lane highways, pollution out of control, no public transport, hopelessly underfunded schools, a laughably inefficient water system, dense unpoliced residential areas walled by deadly industrial estates, 99% income tax, etc, etc. And when I'd finished and could think of no more torturous ways to make my vastly depleted population suffer before they could arrest me, I destroyed everything with earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, aliens, the lot. Until finally there was nothing but a charred, smouldering wasteland of remorseless death and despair.

It was great fun. Why? Because I built the entire social and environmental catastrophe from scratch by myself. It was all mine. You couldn't do that with the original prepared scenarios in *Sim City 2000* and you can't do it with these either. For me, this makes the "Great Disasters" add-on exceedingly dull and a complete waste of time and money. I can understand the need for add-on mission disks with, say, *Comanche: Maximum Overkill*, but here it's totally unnecessary.

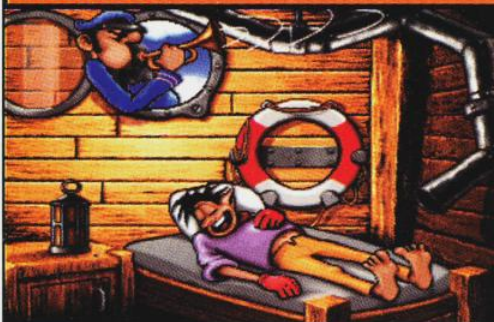
David Wildgoose



GOBLINS QUEST 3

PC CD-ROM

Available: Now
 Category: Funny Puzzler
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Sierra
 RRP: \$59.95



Goblins Quest 3 would have to be one of the funniest game that I have ever played on the PC. You take on the role of Blount, a reporter for the *Goblin Times* who wants to try to get an interview with Queen Xing of Xina and King Bogg of Bodd (you can see the type of humour), who have competed fiercely to conquer a labyrinth called Foliandre in the bowels of Mount Foliandre. There is a legend that the goblin who completes the test of the labyrinth would win eternal benefit for his people.

But Blount has much more on his hands. Due to the recent developments in the Labyrinth, namely Behorn the guardian dying, Wynonna his daughter has disappeared and the key to the entrance has gone missing. So Blount has quite a number of tasks to complete as he attempts to interview the opposing King and Queen.

To complete these tasks you'll have to solve very complex and sometimes completely illogical puzzles. These puzzles occur on two very smoothly scrolling screens, that have been drawn with intricate detail. To give you an example, Blount's first puzzle is to get out of a flying ship that is crashing. To do this he must rescue a parrot (who becomes his companion), find an umbrella, a tooth and a plunger. Its actually far too complicated to explain here in detail. But don't worry if you get stuck, as there are cheat sheets included with the game.

The illogical puzzles are rescued by the humour. I was in stitches for half of the game, constantly laughing out loud. Blount is continually getting hit on the head. Among the different reactions; he will pop out an aspirin and proceed to suck on it or to point to his newly acquired black eye and make some noise like "thanks a lot!". Blount hits his head on bars, falls down holes, gets cut into little pieces and the list goes on, each causing belly loads of laughter.

As the cover of the box says "Quality fun for the whole family" and believe you me it is.

Grantley Day



THE COMPLETE ULTIMA 7

PC CD ROM

Available: Now
 Category: Fantasy RPG
 Players: 1
 Publisher: Origin
 RRP: \$99.95



When *Ultima 7: The Black Gate* was released onto the market it heralded a new beginning in the computer Fantasy Role Playing (FRP) arena. Actually each *Ultima* game has introduced a new level of game play, new level of graphics and a new involved, in-depth storyline. The first three *Ultima* adventures were titled the "Three Ages of Darkness" the second three were titled "Three Ages of Enlightenment", and *Ultima 7* began the "Age of Armageddon", in which the Avatar, your hero in the *Ultima* series, begins his battle against the Guardian, a powerful being from another dimension.

The Complete Ultima 7 CD ROM, doesn't only contain the game *The Black Gate*, but as the title indicates, it is the complete *Ultima 7* series, which consists of *The Black Gate*, *The Forge of Virtue* (an add-on disk to *Black Gate*), *The Serpent Isle* and *The Silver Seed* (an add-on disk to *Serpent Isle*). So in essence it actually contains two major titles and two minor titles. *The Serpent Isle* was known as *Ultima 7: Part 2*. Confused? Well all you really need to know if you haven't played them before, is that there's over 500 hours worth of gameplay in these four games.

Be warned though. There is no new animation sequences or special effects in any of these games, and they must be installed onto your hard drive, so don't think you will be able to save disk space by playing directly from your CD-ROM drive. Another disappointment is that you cannot load your previous save games into any of the four games, and must start new.

So, if you haven't yet played *The Black Gate*, or *The Serpent Isle*, or want to fully understand what's happening in *Ultima 8: Pagan*, I would give these games a look in. They are both excellent games, and with the add-on games included they incorporate new aspects and will enlighten you as to why the Guardian is so hell bent on destroying Britannia and Earth.

Grantley Day



VEGAS GAMES - DELUXE CD ROM

PC CD ROM

Available: Now
 Category: Gambling
 Players: 1 to 4
 Publisher: New World Computing
 RRP: \$89.95



I have known New World Computing for their *Might and Magic* series, and I was quite surprised when I realised that they have quite a diverse range of products to offer the PC game world. Take *Vegas Games*, a CD ROM with 10 standard gambling games that you can play without losing a cent, or winning one!

The games include single player versions of Poker, Blackjack, Keno, Slots and Roulette, and there are also multi-player versions of Baccarat, Blackjack, Craps, Horseracing and Poker. Which makes for some interesting gambling, or least pseudo gambling, because the only person who really wins or loses is the computer.

As soon as you register for either a single or multi-player game, the computer credits you with \$1000 dollars, which it keeps for you as you traverse between the different games, assuming of course that you use the same identity. I must tell you that the odds of winning really do seem to be correct mathematically, so the computer doesn't always win or cheat.

Initially the games were fun, although my interest seemed to wain after I had played the games a number of times. But then, I'm not a gambler. After showing the game to a friend who IS a gambler, and is constantly wasting money on slot machines in pubs, he was hooked for hours, and I literally had to tear him away. I promptly instructed him on where to buy a CD ROM drive and a copy of the game, instead of spending all his money on other machines.

Vegas Games is an interesting computer package and is really marketed for a specific type of computer user; those who probably should be attending Gamblers Anonymous, people who don't have access to gambling machines, or those who just want to learn how to play the games before actually attending a casino. If you fit into any of those categories, then *Vegas Games* will probably serve a worthwhile purpose.

Grantley Day



BATTLE ISLE II

PC

Available: Now
Category: Strategy
Players: 1
Publisher: Blue Byte
Price: \$79.95



Take pride in yourselves gamers - when you talk, developers listen! Proof of this magnificent theory lies in the form of *Battle Isle II*, from Blue Byte. *Battle Isle* the first, its scenario disks and WWI cousin *Historyline* were colourful and fine looking strategy games hopelessly ruined by the least friendly interface yet devised. For a start, half the screen was utterly wasted with an "enemy view" perfectly accessible from your remaining portion, and a truly unpleasant set of keyboard commands mixed woefully with the worst mouse control ever.

Thanks to your apparent flood of suggestions, the world now has a substantially revised edition to amuse itself with. Think of the great *Dune II*, but imagine it turn-based instead of in real time. How about a look down view of a bright sci-fi world populated by your array of cool units, all warring in a well designed tactical environment with a vaguely interesting plot to carry it all along? The element of strategy has been adequately catered for with thoughtfully designed battlefields, all in glorious full screen with a marginally better interface.

Many exciting new toys are provided to play with, but beware - your enemy is equally well equipped. More effort than an all out attack is necessary, with the use of special units required to build supply lines, repair damaged units and transport the stuff of war. The huge variety of unit capabilities allows many tactics to be explored, so there is much life in this game if you take a liking to the style.

Battle Isle has finally cast aside its training wheels and can now rightfully be classed amongst the "pretty goods" of this wonderful world of gaming. Executing your wishes is still a cumbersome process though, and the cockney English computer voice will soon have you screaming. Oh well...

Ben Mansill



EVASIVE ACTION

PC

Available: Now
Category: Flight Sim
Players: 2
Publisher: Mindscape
Price: \$89.95



If you hanker for some aerial combat and have never seen a flight sim of any variety before, then *Evasive Action* will probably impress you. If however, you've played just about anything else available, you'll wonder hard about just where a game like this is supposed to fit in.

Evasive Action is a training wheels, "my first flight-sim" sort of a game. Being unbelievably simple can often be a virtue for games of this genre. For example, both of the *Aces* games rate low in the game manual and average player thickness department, yet provide satisfaction and thrills. This package though, had me bored and frustrated after only a few minutes.

One-on-one, last-man-alive-is-the-winner combat is the go here, against either the computer or a willing chum. Four "scenarios" are available to make things really exciting: WWI, WWII, the present and space fantasy. To get going, a time period is chosen and your cockpit pops up, pressing fire gets you moving and airborne, another press and your gear is raised, thereafter it shoots. Got that?

Off is the distance is a little dot with a big red "enemy" sign over it. Steer your plane with the truly yucky joystick routine towards it and open fire when the shape resembles an aircraft. If you miss, wiggle the joystick a lot so the bad guy can't shoot you, then come around for another pass. The computer plane has an annoying tendency towards altitudes low enough to show off the programmers creative use of a few economy size polygons, so try and remember which way is up.

A win brings up a screen saying "winner". Hmm, I don't think so. Buy it if you have kids under five, they'll flog it hard for a week before demanding a new toy.

Ben Mansill



SANGO FIGHTER

PC

Available: Now
Category: Combat
Players: 1 or 2
Publisher: Panda Entertainment
RRP: \$69.95



The PC is not very well catered for when it comes to one-on-one fighting games. There was the pathetic *Street Fighter* conversion, the average *Mortal Kombat* conversion and the OK *Fatal Encounter*, but now a new kid has arrived in the PC action stakes, *Sango Fighter*.

Sango Fighter's greatest achievement is that it comes supplied with two (yes two!) digital joysticks, very similar to the Nintendo key pads, and they are compatible with other games that use a standard analog joystick. What a great deal!

There is a total of 12 different warriors, each with an average of four secret moves. Each of these warrior takes the form of a different ancient Chinese knight or kung fu artist. Each character comes with his own specific story to explain why they are in the game and their own reasons for wanting to achieve victory. These characters include Lü Bu with his devastating Fireball Fist. I found him to be the easiest character to learn, the most powerful and the quickest to complete the game with. Other characters include Huang Zhong with his Shoot to Kill special move and Ma Chao with his Tidal Waves special move.

Apart from the standard battle between you and another opponent or you and the computer, *Sango Fighter* has also incorporated a storyline into the game, which seems to work! You can choose five of the twelve characters and enter into a struggle against the other seven characters in a miniature war to capture the territory of your opponent. Instead of each battle scene being a standard fight between you and your opponent, you also have to battle the opponent's weaker guards.

In my opinion *Sango Fighter* is the best one-on-one fighting game available for the PC at the moment, but you can be sure that pretty soon there will be more games of this style for us to play!

Grantley Day



CHEAT MODE

ETERNAL CHAMPIONS MEGA DRIVE

OVERKILLS

We've had a few letters regarding the Overkills for Sega's champion fighting game. So what are the Overkills? They're basically special finishing moves. If you pull one off, your opponent will meet a particularly grisly end.

Each stage has a different Overkill move - in a few of them, the backgrounds come to life. In every stage, the key to a successful Overkill is making sure your opponent lands in the right spot. If that happens, the Overkill is triggered. It can be very, very fiddly, so don't be too put off if you can't get them to work - just keep trying, we know they're in the game.

To do an Overkill, make sure you're on the last round of the fight. Get your opponent's energy down so they'll be defeated with just one hit. Throw them so they land in the spot indicated in the pictures. We could only get five of them to work, using Xavier and Shadow. Here they are from top to bottom:

Slash's Stage: Position her just to the left of the volcano's centre.

Throw her left off the screen.

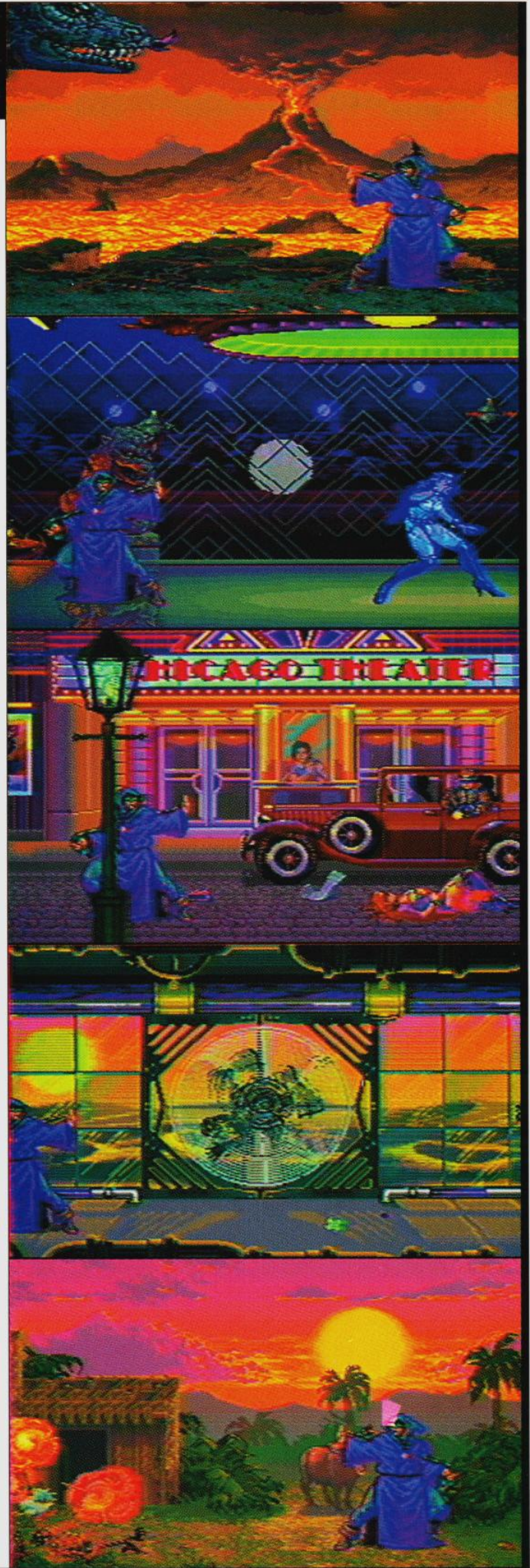
Rax's Stage: Get to the left of the statue and throw her.

Larcen's Stage: Make sure you're both to the left of the lamp-post.

Throw her so she lands underneath the word 'Theatre'.

Blade's Stage: Throw her so she lands just past the fan (either right or left). She'll bounce into it.

Midnight's Stage: Throw her so she lands under the door of the hut. The helicopter will blow her to pieces.



AERO THE ACROBAT

SNES AERO THE ACROBAT

MEGA DRIVE

LEVEL SKIP

Aero can be a tough little son of a bat to crack, so here's a level skip to help you on your merry way.

At the Start/Options screen, enter this code: DOWN, A, DOWN,



Y, DOWN, A, DOWN, Y. You should hear some tones to indicate it's worked.

Now start the game, PAUSE it, and enter this code: UP, X, DOWN, B, LEFT, Y, RIGHT, A, L button, R button.

Now every time you want to skip a level, just PAUSE the game and press SELECT. Of course, just playing the bugger through is far less complicated, but it's not half as sneaky, is it?



CHEAT SCREEN

We've seen a few import copies of Aero on Mega Drive, so if you've got it or fancy hiring it, you might be interested in this cheat.

On the Start/Options screen, press C, A, RIGHT, LEFT, C, A, RIGHT, LEFT.

Now start playing, PAUSE the game and hit UP, C, DOWN, B, LEFT,

A, RIGHT, B.

PAUSE the game again and hold down buttons A and C. Keep holding them down until the Cheat Screen pops up. It'll give you a level select, infinite life, infinite stars. You can even turn off the collision detection so you won't... er, collide with anything.

TOTAL CARNAGE

SNES

ARCADE VOICES

Here's a rather silly cheat for a rather silly (if fun in a mindless, totally moronic kinda way) game. It's a bit tricky too, but here goes. Play the game until you get a score that will put you in fifth position (that's position 5) on the High Score list. The next bit's easy: die and don't continue. Now enter your name as "YAWDIM". Press RIGHT and you'll come to a school blackboard. Press Y, B, X or A to hear the arcade voices that didn't make it to the home game. That's it - we told you it was silly.



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CHEAT MODE

NBA JAM TOURNAMENT EDITION

ARCADE

NBA JAM

SNES

SECRET CHARACTERS

Just like the original arcade game (and the home versions), *NBA Jam Tournament Edition* is packed with secret characters that you can play as by entering the right initials and birthdates. Even the elusive Cheerleaders have been included! Some of these characters may only appear on Version 1.0 machines though - you have been warned.

KER OCT 10
Kerri Hoskins Cheerleader
LOR FEB 20
Lorraine Olivia Cheerleader
KNG JAN 16
Congo Gorilla
GRM OCT 31
Grim Reaper Death
SUB DEC 5
Sub Zero Mortal Kombat Nasty
RAD JUL 9
Raiden Thunder God
REP NOV 11
Reptile Secret MK Nasty
PIP SEPT 25
Super Pipman Scottie Pippen
BRK FEB 20
Super Barkley Bald Dude; wears Nikes
DC JUN 21
Super Coleman Derrick Coleman

PAT AUG 5
Super Ewing Patrick Ewing
HAK JAN 21
Super Hakeem Hakeem the Dream

There's a stack of new programmers too. Try these for size:

LTD APRIL 30
TOB AUG 24
PCB MAY 9
ML MAY 25
ROG AUG 1
MDP JAN 13
DOZ DEC 31
JMS FEB 22
JFC APR 16
GNP OCT 8
CMM JULY 2
TON JULY 3
TJC OCT 11
JCV JUNE 27
TJC OCT 12
CRL JAN 1
DIE FEB 23
GET OCT 19
SAN JAN 1
EJB FEB 23

And don't forget to try out your old favourites from the original *NBA Jam!*

ACTION REPLAY CODES

In the very last issue of *HYPER* we gathered together all the *NBA Jam* cheats for you to peruse and use at your leisure. But what if you want to combine the cheats? Wouldn't it be nice to play with Powerup Defence, Powerup Intercept, Powerup Dunks and Powerup Turbo all at the same time? Yes it would, wouldn't it. Well thanks to **Mathew James** of Cessnock, NSW, you can - but only if you've got a Pro Action Replay 2 cart.

The basic code is **7E07D6(**)**. The two ** are the last two numbers that give the different powerups.

Here's the best of Mathew's codes.

OF:
Defence/Intercept/Turbo/Fire
1B:
Defence/Intercept/Dunks/Fire
1D:
Intercept/Dunks/Turbo/Fire
1E:
Defence/Dunks/Turbo/Fire
1F:
Defence/Intercept/Dunks/Turbo
Happy jamming!

MORTAL KOMBAT MEGA DRIVE

REPTILLIAN SONYA

We weren't sure about this one, but it was published in an American mag (that shall remain nameless) and we've had a few letters claiming it works. We haven't had the time to try it out, but if it doesn't work, blame **Chris Phelps** of Casino, NSW.

Use the DULLARD code on the Game Start/Options screen (Down, Up, Left, Left, A, Right, Down) to get to the cheat screen. Now set the Plan Base to 3, the First Map to The Pit, and turn on Flags 2 and 3 (turn on Flag 0 to make it easier).

Fight your way to the second Endurance Match. You should be in the Pit - if you aren't, let the computer opponent beat you and keep continuing until you are in the Pit. Get a double flawless victory, do your Fatality, and out pops the Reptile. Being an endurance match, you'll have to fight two Reptiles. If Sonya is the second person of the second endurance match (as she should be) then the second Reptile will be the secret, Reptillian Sonya.

She's a glowing green colour,

WOLFENSTEIN 3-D

CHEAT CODES

Fancy a bit of invincibility? Unlimited Ammo, Weapons, etc? Then you'll want to follow these instructions.

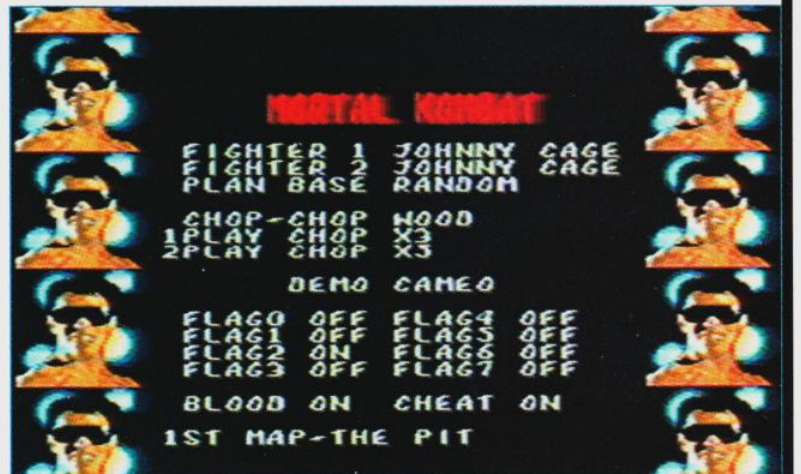
Turn on your machine and immediately hold down the top R button on controller 2. Keep it held down until the Title Screen appears. Now you can let go. Take controller 1 and start the

game (make sure the skill level's set to Normal). Once you're into the game, press START to bring up the map screen. On the map screen, you can enter any one or all of these codes (with control pad 1):

SNES

Invincibility: B, UP, B, A.
Entire level map: A, A, UP, B.
Exit level: UP, B, button R, B.
Ammo/Weapons powerup: R, UP, B, A.

with awesome moves like a ring attack that freezes her opponents and a shadow punch that changes into a harpoon upon contact!



SUPER MARIO KART

SNES

Where would we be without **Peter Brodie**? Sure, we'd all probably be a lot happier knowing he was doing something vaguely useful to the non-gaming community at large, but then we wouldn't get the benefit of his game tips, would we? Peter, you're truly a freak and we love you.

This month, old Indoors Pete reminds us that *Super Mario Kart* has been re-released for the SNES at the absolute bargain price of \$65.00, so loads of people will be getting their first taste of this classic racer. What better time to print these handy little tips then?

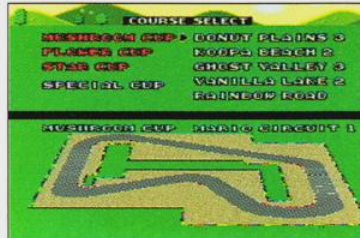
TURBO START

A bit tricky to learn (it's all timing) but worth persevering with. According to Peter, it does work. As the race starts, as soon as the first red light comes on, HOLD button B. When the second red light comes on quickly release B then press again. Hold until the green light then briefly release and press again. You should now shoot off the starting line in a blazingly fast Turbo start.



GO STRAIGHT TO THE SPECIAL CUP

So you want to take a spin on the Special Cup course without having to win all those other Cups first, do you? Here's how. Select a one or two-player Time Trial and move the cursor to Mushroom Cup at the top left. Enter this code: L button, R button, L button, R button, L button, L button, R button, R button and A. You can now choose from five normally unattainable courses.



SHELLS AND BANANAS

During a race, if you press DOWN as you release a Green Shell it'll drop onto the ground behind you rather than zooming off at random in front. If you press UP as you release a banana it'll do the opposite and lob out ahead. These two little tricks could prove the difference between victory and defeat in the heat of battle.

CIVILISATION

PC

PLAYTEST MODE

Herman Toothrot (and if that's your real name Herman, we extend our deepest sympathies) tells us that to access the "Playtest Mode" for this fabulous game, you hold <shift> <1> <2> <3> <4> <5> <6>. This will enable you to access all of the computer player's cities. Experiment with function buttons for other, no doubt wonderful, benefits.

ECCO THE DOLPHIN

MEGA DRIVE

DEBUG MENU

Oh, oh - **Peter Brodie's** back, and this time he's got a dolphin. He's found a fantastic Debug Menu for this undersega classic (Ho! Ho!) that lets you skip to any level you like, be invincible, speed up the music, etc, etc.... So how do you do it?

Start playing the game (any level, any time) and put Ecco into a U-turn so he's facing you directly. Hit START to pause the game and enter RIGHT, B, C, B, C, DOWN, C and UP. If you've done it right, out pops the Debug Menu.

Peter admits it's a tad tricky at first, but if you get Ecco looking directly into your beady, little eyes, you'll get it.



REBEL ASSAULT

PC CD-ROM

LEVEL SKIP/DAMAGE CONTROL

Mark Milner of Tuggeranong, ACT, wasn't sure if we were aware of this cheat for Lucas Arts' excellent, yet slightly flawed, space shooter. Thank you Mark, we're now more aware than ever.

Once you've finished calibrating your joystick (a joyous task if ever there was one) and the "Lucas Arts" logo is revolving in front of the Death Star, quickly press: up, down, left, right on the joystick (you may

also have to press the fire button after each direction; we're not really sure from Mark's directions - try it yourself and see). You should hear "Lucas Arts" to indicate the cheat has worked.

Now you're able to skip levels simply by pushing the Esc key. You can also increase or decrease your damage on the damage bar by pushing + or - on the numeric key pad. That should make your assault a piece of cake.

ALLAN BORDER'S

CRICKET

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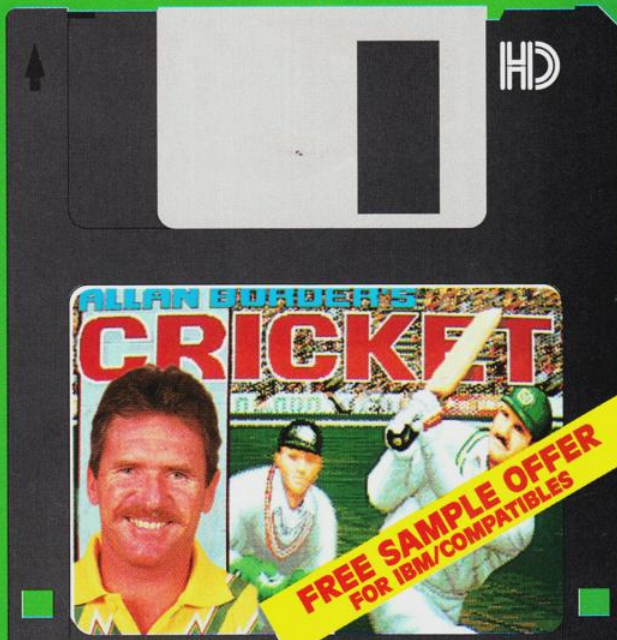
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- Apple Mac
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 POSTCODE: _____ PHONE: _____

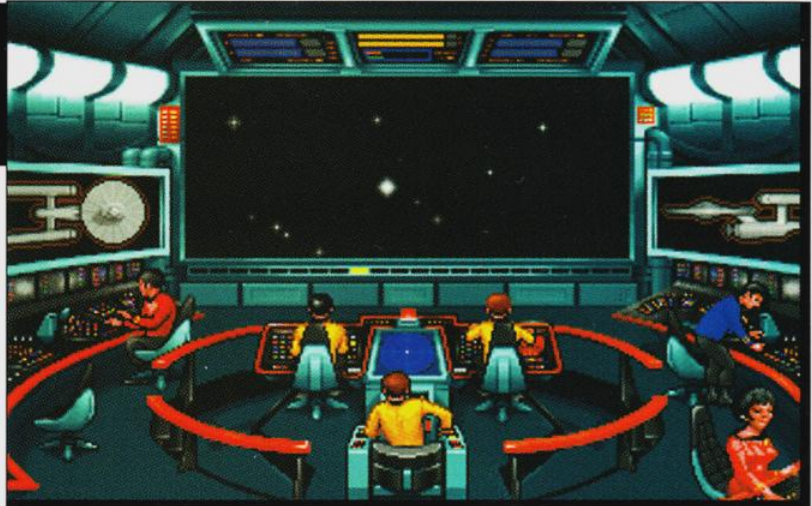
CHEAT MODE

STAR TREK - 25TH ANNIVERSARY PC/PC CD ROM

MISSION 1

Fight the U.S.S. Republic in the mock battle, and hopefully win. Even if you don't, go to Pollux V and beam down. Once on the planet, go up one screen, and, using the stun phasers (the green ones in your inventory), shoot the Klingons and get the detached hand that came off the Klingon. Go up one screen and using the hand icon, get the berries on the right hand side of the bushes in that screen. Again, go up, and using your fatal phasers, (the red ones) shoot the TOP LEFT BOULDER followed by the top right, bottom left, then bottom right to uncover an injured person. Use the first aid kit in your inventory to heal him, then go as far south as you can. Enter the bottom door on the complex to the left hand side, and use your medical tricorder, (the thing that looks like a microphone) on the injured man to discover the importance of the berries. Leave the room through to door, and enter the door at the top part of the complex, near the lower one. Once in there, use the berries on the weird looking machine in the top right hand corner of the room to get the medicine. Use the machine in the top right hand corner of the room to get the medicine. Use the detached hand you got from the Klingon on the desk/workbench located in the middle of the screen to fix it. Use anybody on the display case easily seen in the middle right part of the screen and tell the man you are interested in them. Talk about something else, then using the hand on the case to get the skull and the encrust bit of metal identified as a long bit of twirly rust. Leave to room, and again enter the bottom part of the complex and give the medicine to the injured man. Exit the complex and go as far north as you can, then use the detached hand on the panel to the right of the big door to gain access. Enter the door to find a big machine. Use Spock on the three levers under the eclipse silhouette/s. Set the dials all in the middle which should awaken an alien. Talk to him nicely & professionally, and offer the skull to him and let him keep it. After that offer the encrusted bit of metal (really a key) so he can turn off the sentient machine.

MISSION COMPLETE



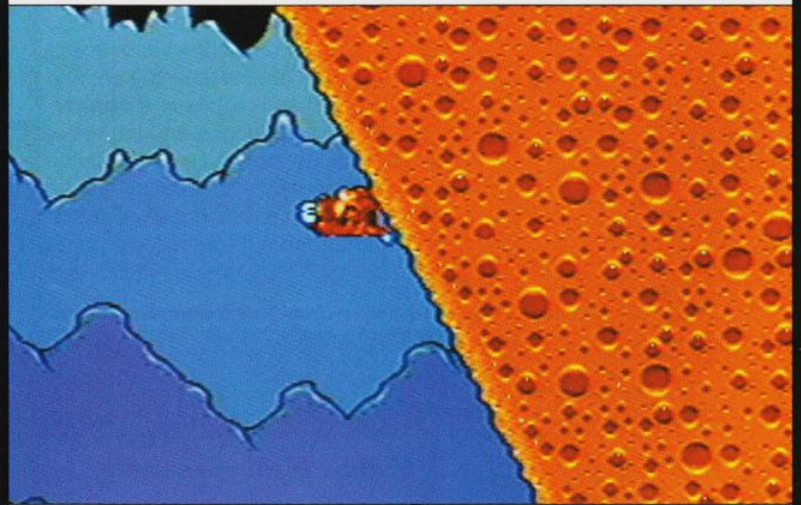
JAMES POND II

MEGA DRIVE

LEVEL SKIP

This fishy little tip comes to you courtesy of **Rene Bird** of Risdon Vale, Tasmania. If you want to skip a level, all you have to do is PAUSE the game and press A, A, A, B. You'll go straight to the barber pole at the end of the stage.

Of course, on levels with continuation poles on them you'll have to do it twice, but nevertheless, this is a very handy tip and all Pond lovers should get down on their knees and give Rene a hearty cry of "Ta".



ROLLING THUNDER 3 MEGA DRIVE

RISKY WOODS MEGA DRIVE

PLAY AS ELLEN

Some people around here are unkind enough to call this game "Rolling Chunder" (not a pretty visual image I'm sure you'll agree) but the arcade original was wildly enjoyable and this isn't too bad either. If you want to play as Ellen (and we thought she was just another token female partner) then enter GREED as your password.

LEVEL SELECT

Not a great game, but it's worthy of a play or two. This level select will help you get through it. Play the game and when you've got enough points to make the high-score table, die. Enter your initials as EOA. Now go to the options and you'll find a level select (if your not totally blind, that is).

If you think you're a bit of a game master, then send your best cheats into Hyper for national and maybe international recognition. (What this really means is that we're not giving out prizes or anything, but we'll credit you with sending us the juicy hint.)

After making sure it's correct and that we can follow the instructions, send your cheats to:

HYPER Cheats
PO BOX 634
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

POPULOUS 2: TWO TRIBES MEGA DRIVE

CHEATIN' PASSWORDS

These excellent cheats have been sent in to us by **John Burden** of Bairnsdale, Vic. All you have to do is type in the following passwords for the desired effect:

WIBBLE All the effects in your current game; fire, earth, etc.

HUMANOID Maximum Mana

EXPERIMENT Maximum experience

NOT HALF Next game is World 999

LOTUS 2 MEGA DRIVE

SECRET GAME

Who would've guessed that under the rather dull and tedious exterior of Lotus 2 there lurks a nice little shoot 'em' up game called "Pod"? We would. To play it, all you have to do is enter your name as POD PLEASE and press START.

SONIC 3 MEGA DRIVE

LEVEL SELECT

Now before you wee yourself with excitement, you're going to need a *Sonic 2* cartridge to get this to work. Oh, and you're going to have to be willing to go against a few of Sega's warning thingies. It sounds weird, but it WORKS! Trust us - **Darren Farmer** of Eagleby, Qld, sent it in (God knows how he figured it out) and we tried it out, so here it is!

Plug in your *Sonic 2* cartridge and enter the Level Select and Super Sonic Cheats: pull DOWN on the Title Screen to get to Options, then enter (by pressing button C) 19, 65, 09, 17 on the Sound Test. Press START to get back to the Title Screen, then hold button A and press START again to bring up the Level Select. Once you're on the Level Select screen, go to the Sound Test there and enter the Super Sonic cheat: 04, 01, 02, 06. Hold button A and press START to begin the game.

Now take the cartridge out leaving the power ON (we know you're not supposed to, the choice is yours) and put *Sonic 3* into the cartridge slot and press RESET.

When the *Sonic 3* Title Screen comes up, press UP once to get to the Sound Test option. Press START and there you have it - the *Sonic 3* Level Select! If you want the DEBUG mode too, hold A and press START after you select your level. Keep them held until the game starts.

We've also heard rumours of another *Sonic 3* level select, but try as we might, we couldn't get it to work, which leads us to the



conclusion that it might be complete and utter crap. But we'll print it anyway.

This is how it's supposed to work: at the very start of the game, when the big Sega logo starts to fade out and the big, rendered Sonic starts to zoom in, quickly tap UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, UP, UP, UP, UP. You should hear a noise if it's worked. Now, at the Title screen, pull down to see a Sound Test option. Highlight it and press Start and there it is - at least, that's how it's meant to work, but as we say, we tried for ages and couldn't get it to happen. If you can, drop us a line.



VIRTUA RACING MEGA DRIVE

MIRROR MODE

What the hell is the "Mirror Mode" I hear you ask? It's where you get to race all the tracks (yes, all three!) backwards. If you want to do it properly (ie, without cheating) you'll need to finish first on all three tracks (and you can't play on Easy either). Once you've done that, go to the Main Menu and you'll see a mirror image of "Virtua Racing". Select it, and you're away.

But why bother winning when you can cheat? Here's how to do it: when the Sega logo appears, press and hold UP and button A. Keep them held then press and hold button B. Still holding all three (UP, A and B), press START. Now when you get to the options screen you'll be able to choose the Mirror Mode. Cool.

Letters...



After last month's disastrous photo of the HYPER crew, where, due to an unfortunate printing error, Andrew disappeared (we've been trying to perform the same feat of magic for the last eight months without any luck), we've decided to print a hand-drawn facsimile of the HYPER crew instead. Andrew insisted on a full page glossy of himself to make up for last month's injustice, but after Aaron and Stuart beat him over the head repeatedly with a copy of *Last Action Hero*, he saw the light.

The artwork was provided by one *Justin Madden* of the ACT. As far as we know, he's no relation to Big John, although he'll probably suffer the same flabbiness in his old age. We must say that Justin has done a remarkably good job in capturing the effervescent bubblyness that marks the HYPER crew out from the crowd. Although Stuart and Aaron are far less butch than the drawing suggests (*that's just about enough from you - Ed*), he's just about got Andrew down pat: those avian features, that strong jaw-line, those flowing curls... You can tell I write this bit, can't you?

Anyway, write to HYPER LETTERS
PO Box 634
Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012.

Strength in Honesty

To the HYPER crew,

Man, you guys have really got me in. I've been through a few computers over the years and collected their relative mags and I can honestly say that HYPER is the best yet. The cherry is that I know why it's the best and it's simple. HYPER doesn't pretend it's writing from a magazine's perspective.

It is written (and quite well I might add) from a brutally honest user's perspective.

I read a review about a game I'm not even interested in just so I could be entertained by the straight forward honesty that the game had been handled with. I tell ya - it's refreshing! None of this fake sympathy bullshit for boring and unoriginal nogs who create equally boring and unoriginal games, no way.

And you swear a little! Not enough to be considered vulgar, but enough to prove that you are serious about what you say. Talk about waiting years for this kind of stuff! This is a genuine thank you going out to you people. Keep your edge, you have a satisfied reader here.

I also noticed that you have thrown

in a trendy fashion shoot for whatever reason and that's fine - no objection here. I only suggest that you don't become a bunch of self-obsessed pretentious assholes because of it.

I say this only because it would end up transforming the magazine in exactly the same way as it would have changed you. Because like I said before: You aren't people pretending to be a magazine, you are people who write down your honest opinion that happens to be printed in a magazine, and that has made all the difference.

That's strength in honesty and it's very noticeable. Cheers.

Matthew Brady

What!?! Us? Self-obsessed pretentious assholes? Never!

Pommie Mags Aren't Crap

Dear HYPER

I'm writing to complain about the idiots who keep saying English magazines are crap. They're NOT!!!! Australians don't get the British way of thinking or their humour, that's because the magazines are not made for the Australian community. All those Australians say British mags are crap, but I said that about Australian mags when I came to Australia 5 years ago

(I'm English by the way). But now I've got adjusted to the Australian way of life I understand the Australian way of thinking and the jokes made in the magazines, so to all the idiots out there who say British mags are craps - WE DON'T ASK YOU TO READ THEM SO DON'T. And if you think I'm just saying I don't like Australian mags, I've just subscribed to HYPER.

Yours Truly

Shane Anderson
Green Valley NSW

Typical bloody Pom. No sense of humour whatsoever (just like your mags).

Winners Use Drugs

To HYPER,

I am usually the type of person who stands in the newsagent for hours reading mags, and then not buying them. But on this occasion I bought your 4th issue (for the MKII moves). After reading the section several times I decided to read the rest of the mag. I was going through the letter section when I noticed how

much everyone who sends in mail sucks up to you incredibly (partly just so their letter might get printed). I'm not going to tell you how good your mag is, because you should know by now. All I wanted to do is say five things;

1. I wish everyone would stop sending in "Suck Mail" - you know the type "I think your mag is totally cool and I have wet dreams over it every night."

2. All the people who want the news section increased can go out and buy a newspaper if they want news.

3. How long until MKII comes out on SNES?

4. I think it was really great the way you shut down The Drug Preacher (Issue 4 Letters) I'm so sick of people saying how bad drugs are, I don't play games that have that "WINNERS DON'T USE DRUGS" logo, because most of them are crap games anyway - so they're the losers.

Matthew Woods

I totally agree about the "suck mail" - we don't ask for it (although it does give us a warm, gooey feeling inside) and we don't print letters just because they say we're good. As for question 3 - September (and that's the last time I'm answering that one) and number 4 - thank you, and it's an interesting point about those nice "moral" messages at the beginnings of arcade games because the games themselves are often brutally violent (Lethal Enforcers is an example). A bit of a confused message I think - drugs are bad but killing people is OK.

Movie Rumours

Dear HYPER people,

First of all I must say that your mag is the best I've read. The posters are cool and the cheats are cooler. HOT MAG MAN!

To the point now. I am obsessed with Mortal Kombat and Streetfighter 2 and I have heard a few rumours.

1. Streetfighter 2: The movie
2. Mortal Kombat: The movie
3. Mortal Kombat Vs Street

Fighter 2 which is supposed to be in preparation and due out at the end of the year. Could you tell me if this is true or am I just getting pissed on.

Thanks

Phillip Mulloy

I'd love to tell you that you're getting pissed on, but while details are

still sketchy both Streetfighter 2 and Mortal Kombat movies look like going ahead. Jean Claude Van Damme is apparently playing Guile in the SF2 movie. As for MK vs SF2, yes it's a popular rumour, but I don't think it's true. Another unconfirmed rumour is that they will be digitising the actors from the SF2 movie to make a more Mortal Kombat-style game. We'll just have to wait and see.

Sporty Questions

Dear HYPER,

I won't bore you with stupid questions about the availability of games so here I go;

1. Why have Sega Sports games Wimbledon Tennis and NFL Football 94 Starring Joe Montana not been released in Australia? The latter game is regarded in the US as a better gridiron game than Madden.

2. I've played NBA Jam to death and I'm 63 games into the full season of NBA Showdown 94 but the basketball game I'm really waiting for is Sega's NBA Action 94. When is this due for release in Australia (if at all)?

Finally, I was amused to read that the Jaguar had signed up Accolade. Now they can play all Accolades great games such as Pele, Barkley and best (ha!) of them all - BUBSY. Ha! Ha! Ha! (Laugh hideously to fade....)

Thanks for your time
Chris S.

Glen Alpine NSW

1. I don't know, they probably knew they wouldn't sell well, but the Montana games aren't better than the Madden games, although the Mega CD version is pretty hot 2. It's not on the schedule at the moment but I'd say that it would be out some time in '94. DOH!

Super Cool

Hail HYPER,

This is the best games mag I have ever laid on. I mean "laid eyes on". Yes, that's it! The cover captures my attention all the time. It saves me the trouble of looking for it in the newsstands. I just look for the one with the most colourful and extraordinarily set cover and "wallah!", it's the super cool HYPER magazine!

Now, would you be so kind as to give me a minute of your time and answer my fairly simple questions.

1. I've been buying an English PC

SAM & MAX
freelance Police



We had such a huge response to our Sam & Max Competition that we thought we'd publish some entries even though we haven't decided the winner yet. Above is Wyatt Hartman's entry, from Queanbeyan, NSW. Over the page is Anthony Olsen's fantastic effort. These two may or may not win. Stay tuned for the winners next issue.

magazine for a long time. The reason (apart from it's PC games' reviews, previews and news) is because it included demo disks. The question is are you going to do the same thing in your future issues?

2. Mega Drive-v-Super Nintendo. Which one has more reasonably good games.

3. Are you going to have a competition that gives away prizes like an IBM compatible Personal Computer? Maybe a Pentium... NO? Fair enough. Would you please? It doesn't have to be a Pentium, maybe a 486 DX666... No? forget it then.

4. How about giving us more news about IBM compatible PC's?

That's all Congratulations on your ongoing success not only here but also around the globe. Keep up the good work.

Your Filipino follower,
Joel Butao

We'd love to have demo disks Joel, but they cost a fair bit of money

and neither HYPER nor most Australian distributors have the cash to spare 2. I know this sounds like a cop-out, but they've both got some excellent games. I would say the Mega Drive has a slight edge though, only because it's been out two years longer 3. OK, it's forgotten 4. Why? Buy a computer magazine.

NBA Jammin' Dudes

To the most JAMM'N dudes at HYPER!!!

I've got a Sega Mega Drive 2 and I went out and bought NBA JAM! Yes, it's an awesome game and I saw the secret character codes in Issue 5 and yes they work, but who the hell are these guys!

Of course I know who Bill Clinton is but who the hell is : AIR DOG, WEASLE, KABUKI, CHOW-CHOW etc...etc

I mean are these real life people or just stupid names. All I ask is that

Letters...

if they are real life people could you please tell us who they are.

Goodbye For Now

Rip Dan Pimple

OK, Bill Clinton and Al Gore are fairly straight forward (President and Vice President of the US for all you dorks) and P-Funk is the psychedelic funk musician George Clinton. Moon is Houston Oiler's quarterback, Warren Moon. Mark Turmell, Jamie Rivett and Sal Di Vita all worked on the original Midway coin-op, and we assume all the other names are part of the Iguana team who programmed the Mega Drive and SNES versions. We could be wrong...can anybody tell us?

Game Rip Offs

Dear HYPER

I'm writing to you about the prices of gaming carts and the expected prices of the new consoles. It seems to be that the companies releasing these consoles care about nothing more than getting your hard earned cash. Gaming carts are now averaging about \$120 to \$140 with the latest rip off being Virtua Racing at \$200. With that amount of cash you could buy a whole SNES or Mega Drive system. I know it has the DSP chip in it but does it really warrant that kind of price tag?

The new range of consoles being touted for release also seem to have this attitude in mind. The new Sega Saturn and Atari Jaguar are going to be cartridge based with the option of an add-on CD drive. Could this be just another ploy to get your cash? My personal opinion is that this completely sucks with Sega, Nintendo and other companies placing their emphasis on getting the cash rather than thinking about the player who has to try to save up for these machines which will probably have crap games. Well enough of that, here's three final questions.

1. What are the results of your reader surveys? I'm an 18 year old student so how many readers are there over 18? And how many readers are female?

2. How about doing a story on the development of Video CD's as most of them, when they come, will be played on the new range of gaming consoles.

Thanks for answering my questions and keep up the good work.

Yours Sincerely

Bruce T Heselwood

Thanks for your opinions and I'm sure most people would agree. As to your questions 1. We've got a lot of readers over 18 - I'm not sure of the exact percentage but believe me there a lot of them so don't feel left out. As for female readers, well I'm sad to say that our reader's survey didn't find too many of them, but we've got a dedicated core of game girl fans 2. What's the story in Video CD's? When MPEG 2 is released we'll be able to watch movies on CD and your 3DO, CD32 and various other machines will be able to play them. That's about all there is to it.

No Mucking Around

Dear HYPER

No mucking around, just straight to the questions:

1. Shouldn't you re-evaluate your prediction of the Jaguar being released in November? C'mon, March-April '95 seems more likely!

2. How much interest is there in import 3DO's? How much would I pay? I might not be able to wait until Xmas for a local one.

3. Would Nov '95 be a good prediction for a local release of Nintendo and Sega's new mega machines?

4. Speaking of mega-machines, ya reckon we'll see Sony's PS-X and NEC's FX-32?

5. How about a Manga-Japanese animation feature?

6. What's the HYPER p.o.v. on games censorship? I'm sick of sensationalist crap we see on TV.

7. Finally, ever thought about a tips book (I'm working on it - over 200 Mega Drive titles so far) or a give away CD of game music? There's some funky tunes in a lot of games.

Thanks heaps for your time, and thanks for a brilliant local mag
Leo Yarnold

1. Why? We might re-evaluate in November, but you can already get import Jaguars from a few places 2. Quite a lot, but you'll pay a fair bit (over \$1000). I'd wait a few more months. 3. It would be good for Nintendo's machine but the Sega Mars add-on should be out a bit earlier 4. We'll definitely see the PS-X but NEC's FX-32 is doubtful as their PC Engine was never released here 5. OK, you're on. Keep a look out.

6. We're fairly sick of censorship in the HYPER office and we'll be doing our bit to stand up for the long suffering and much maligned gamers of Australia whenever we can. Everyone's got to fight this if you don't want to play kids games for the rest of your life 7. Good ideas - send us your tips.

Console v IBM

Dear HYPER,

I am writing in regards to a letter by Josh Edge in issue 6. I think that this so-called technologically superior person should have his facts put straight. Quite simply, stop thinking about yourself and think about others who aren't as fortunate as you, ie. to have a computer like yours.

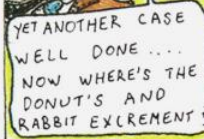
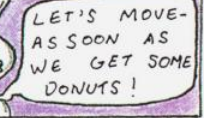
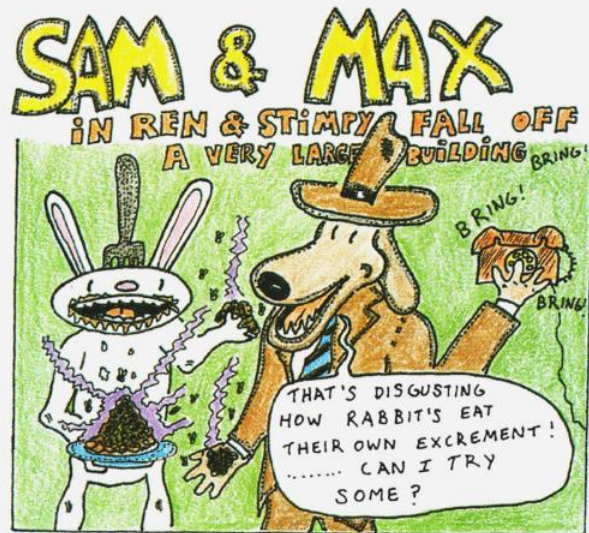
Firstly, you said that an IBM is up to the same standard as CD32, 3DO and CDI. If you were up to date with the world of video games you would know that these machines absolutely steamroll IBM's. This is true in both the graphics and sound department. Also, a 66Mhz console (although none are as fast) would be faster than a 66Mhz IBM because a games machine uses it's processor mainly for graphics and sound, whereas an IBM uses heaps of processor power for vast number crunching etc. An example of this is MK on the Super Nintendo. It is much faster than the IBM version even though the processor inside a SNES runs under 5Mhz.

Secondly, not everyone has a 486DX2, so designing MK2 for this type of processor exclusively would mean that a lot of people would miss out on this magnificent blood-fest. Finally, an IBM could not handle *Virtua Racing* and *NBA Jam* better than a console. For the first game a fairly fast machine would be needed and *NBA Jam* on both the SNES and MD could destroy anything that an IBM could choke out. You must realise that with the advent of the super consoles the IBM's will never match the quality of games that is available to console users.

Yours Sincerely,

Andrew Montesanti

I'm staying out of this one, but let's just say that both "super consoles" and new PC's with video cards and Pentium chips will have mind-blowing games.



Tired Lips

Dear HYPER,

Amazing (I'm shaking my head now)... that's what I do every time I pick HYPER off the racks at the local newsagent. That you could get it right from day one is sheer genius. I'd mumble on a bit more with praise but my lips are getting tired.

I bet there are zillions of dudes out there breakin' wind to get involved with creating games, not just playing them (I'm holding my nose now). I'd love to see regular reports on development systems, game design methods, programming techniques and companies (or collectives) looking for programmers, artists, sound techs, etc.

I know that Australian creative talent is out there - it just needs a channel to focus it. HYPER could be that channel. EDGE (a UK mag) is packed to the gills with such info for their local industry. The new systems - Jag, 3DO, Saturn, Project Reality, etc offer superb platforms to create some real kick-ass software to knock sets of gamers eyeballs out of their sockets (a la Ren and Stimpy).

By the way, when you review poxy games, maybe you could get another rad cool dude (yeah... the guy/gal sitting at the console across from you) to check it out too, and average up the ratings. Or even better, assign the review to someone who salivates at the mention of a particular game's genre. For eggzample, a Battle Tech freak may have rated *MechWarrior* a 90 rather than 75.

By the way, do I win anything for best letter?

Yours Sincerely
Michael Wilder

There is a lot of Australian creative talent out there creating games already, and we did a profile of Beam software in issue #2, and we will be doing more local profiles soon. If you are making a game, make sure to tell us and we'll do our best to promote it and help out. As for the second reviewer question, I think I've been through that before. While you won't always read a second opinion in the mag, rest assured that the game has been seen by more than one person, and the score averaged out.

Oh, by the way...no.

I Want Arcade Games On PC

My dearest HYPER,

Yours is easily the best magazine on the Australian market. It's good to see an Aussie mag on the international scene but why not sell it in England? It'd blow the crappy English mags (well most of them are) out of the water! In regard to Josh Edge's letter (HYPER #6), apart from being up himself badly he had a good point for discussion. Where are all the PC arcade games? Oh yeah, SFII. SLOW or what? And it's meant to run on a 286! If puny consoles with almost zilch specs can handle conversions of games like MK or *Virtua Racing* why can't our beloved PCs? Just think about it everyone.

Here's a few questions for you.

1. What are the minimum specs for *TIE Fighter*?
2. When will *Wing Commander 3* be released?
3. In issue 5 in your *Star Trek* article you mentioned a new *Star Wars* series in '96. Is this true? It'd be an opportunity for LucasArts to flog more excellent *Star Wars* games to the gameplaying public.
4. Have any new LucasArts games been announced and when will *The Dig* be released?
5. How come *Mechwarrior 2* has been delayed? It looked wicked!

Yours Sincerely
Graeme "The Gray" Low

1. *TIE Fighter* will definitely need a 386/33 minimum, 1 Meg EMS, MS DOS 5.0 or higher and a joystick but I don't have any firmer details than that

at the moment 2. It's due in December and some of the actors lending their voice and faces are Mark Hamill (*Star Wars*), Tim Curry (*Rocky Horror Picture Show*) and Jason Bernhard (*Herman's Head*). It should be big! 3. Yes, apparently George Lucas is making three more *Star Wars* movies to be released before the year 2000 4. *The Dig* has been delayed and will not be out until early in 1995, and there are no other LucasArts games scheduled for release in the near future. 5. I'm not sure - it either had some bugs or the gameplay had some other problems. Don't worry, it'll be here soon.

Fighting Girls

Dear HYPER Crew

Congrats on a great, cheap, Australian magazine that covers a large section of the computer market. I own an Amiga (which is in its death throes, I know but I still buy my monthly HYPER). I've sucked up so now it's time to trash other peoples letters!

I had great fun reading letters in issue #3. Anonymous really has some valid points. NOT! It was good to learn that looking at a set of nudes leads to child abuse. So, to all the boys who watched 'Swimsuit Illustrated' - you're doomed! I'll see you in prison in about 10 years time! Mrs K Mears also did a morally wonderful job of protecting me, saving me from Satan.

In issue #4, "Game Grls" was an OK article but gave a catch 22: if not enough 'politically correct' females are in a game, it's sexist. If there are

girls in it, the game is still sexist because 'They are only brutalised and/or degraded'. Really. Many new games are being released with strong females in the cast (*Virtua Fighters*, *Mortal Kombat 2*), and anyone can see these aren't the 'Bimbo' types. (Yes, those are only fighting games. But those are the only type that count, aren't they)

Now, Anthony C Peet said that *Mortal Kombat* and *Streetfighter II* can't be compared. He's right. *Mortal Kombat* kicks SFII's weeny butt around the local arcade. People say, "SFII is better. It has strategy and move combos." What the hell are they talking about? The idea of beat 'em ups are to beat the living crap out of someone else! Where does 'strategy' come into that? And as for combos, well let's face it - people who play MK are good enough not to need them. Finally, I just have to beg someone to put Gideon Bunder (Issue #5) out of his misery.

I'm outta here
AD

I think the MK and SFII debate has gone far enough - they're both good games, so pick your favourite and then shut up about it. As for the women in games comment, I think that you answered yourself when you said your examples of "non-bimbo" women were all in fighting games ie taking over traditional male roles. When we see positive female heroes of all types (and not scantily clad for the titillation of men) then there will be no need for articles like "Game Grls"

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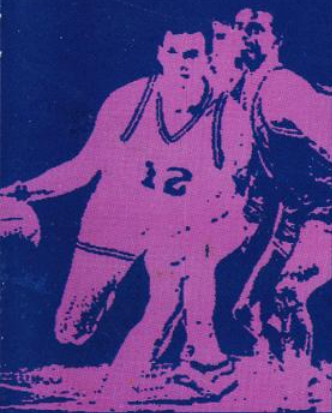
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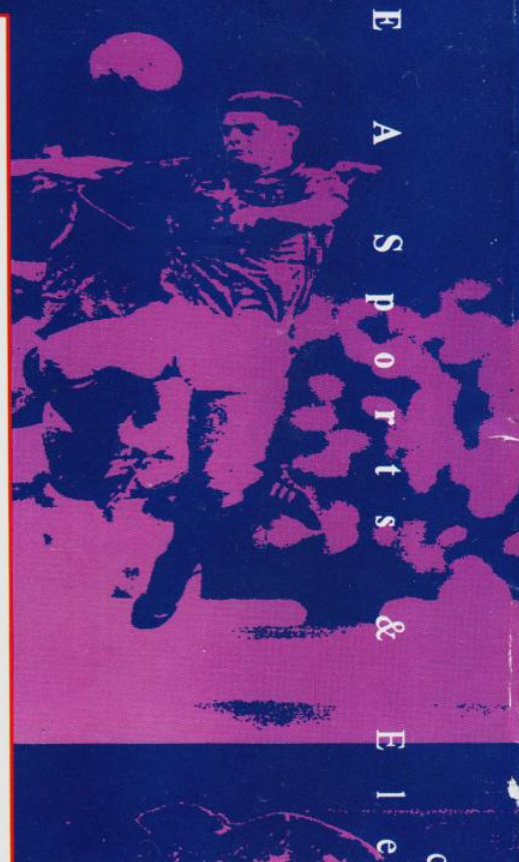
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