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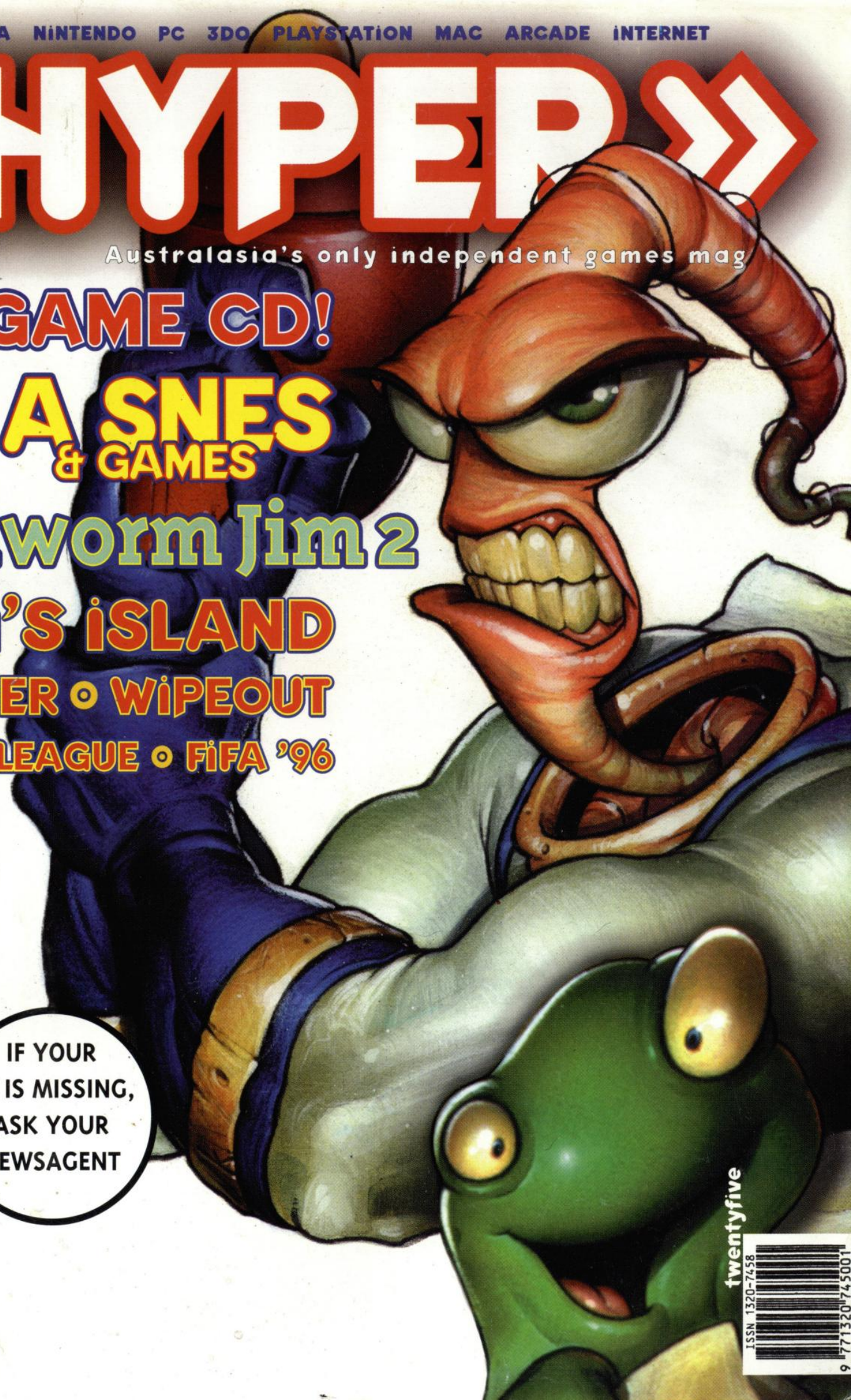
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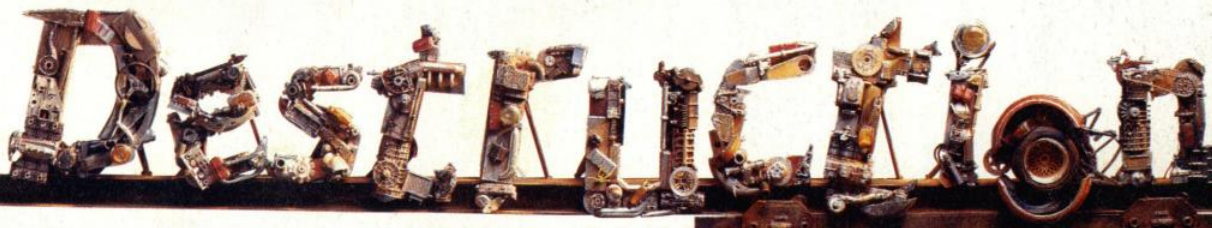
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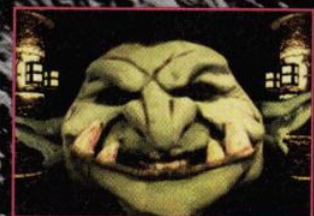
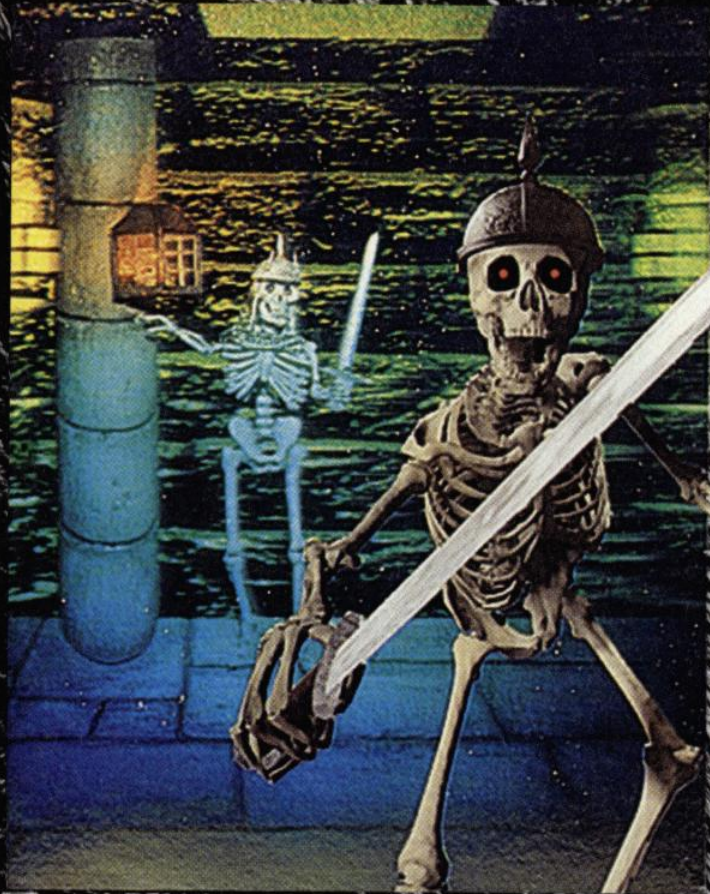
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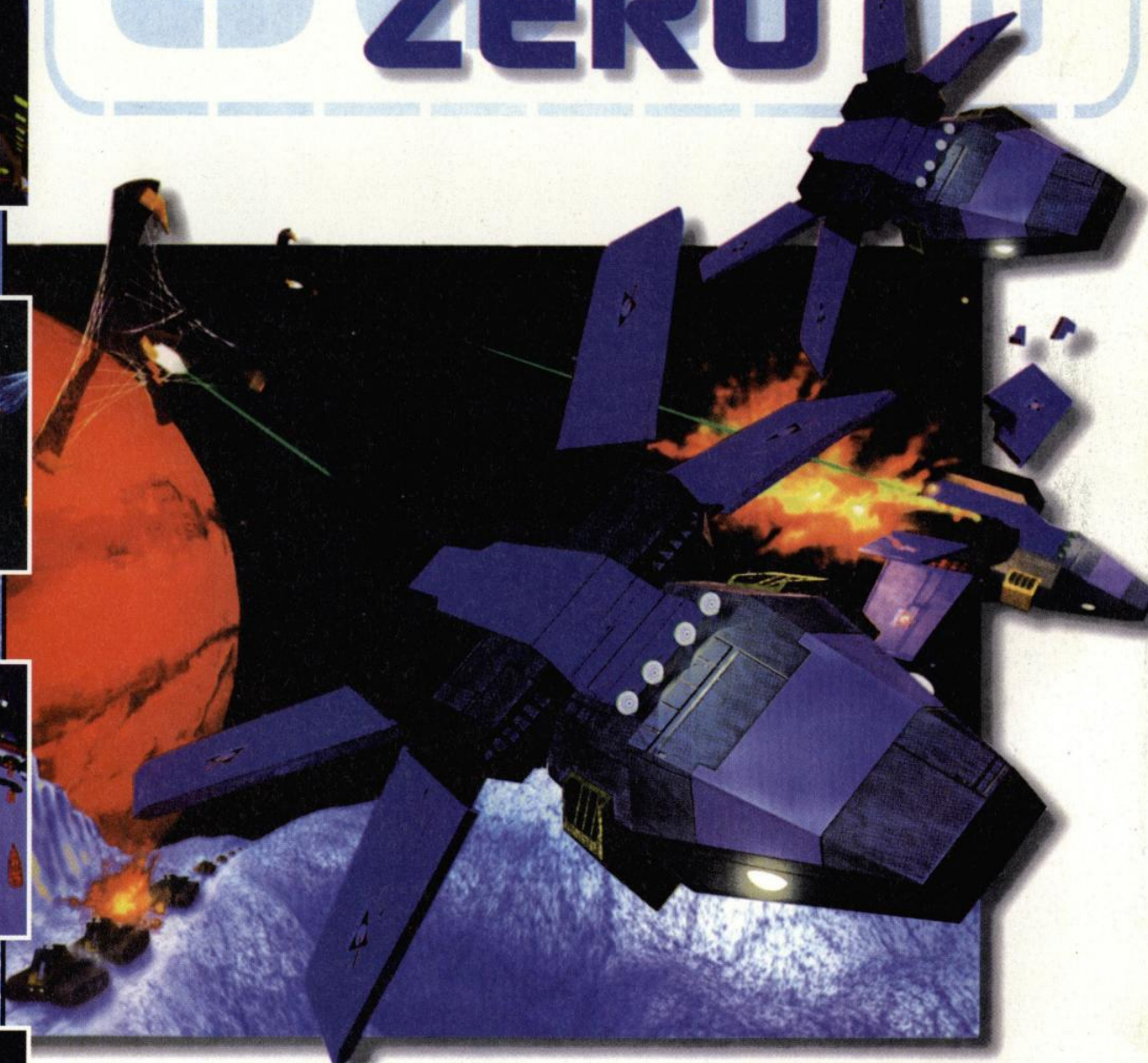
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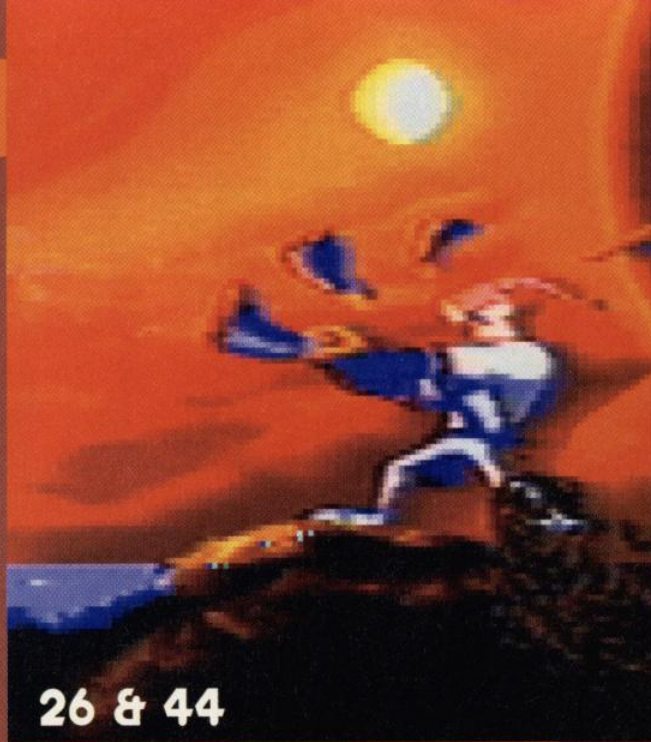
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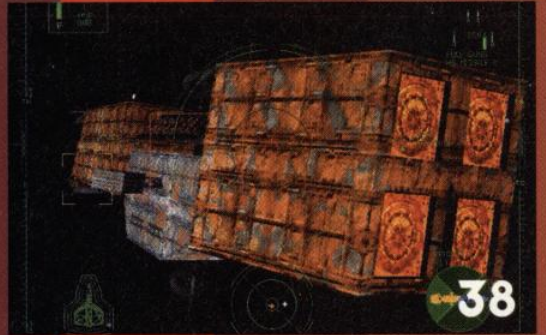
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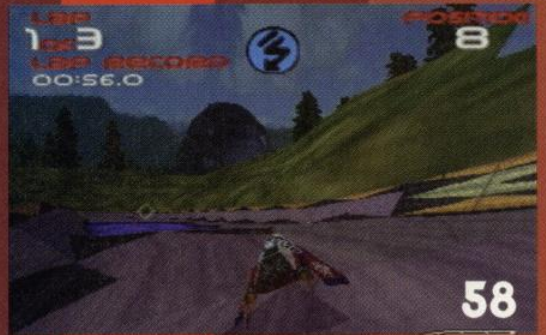
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ECTS Report

Christmas comes around faster and faster every year, don't you think? Watching your life flash by with no remote control to pause on the excellent bits is fairly depressing but we can always rely on a pre-Christmas rush of hot games to keep us shiny happy people. This Christmas season is no exception...

We got so many good games in the last few weeks that we're doing this issue in a state of gamus interruptus...all we want to do is keep on playing and playing. But we stopped playing and put this bumper pre-Christmas extravaganza together so you too can join in the good times.

Actually we received so many games that quite a few missed inclusion in this issue so don't think that these are all the big releases - there's a lot more to come.

Let's start with the cover game. **Earthworm Jim**. We love the worm and now he's back in his second adventure which thankfully keeps the insanely high standard of his first outing. Legendary fun. **Mario's** also made his way back to the SNES and **Yoshi's Island** doesn't do him any harm at all. In fact, it's another classic so check that one out. On the PlayStation my current favourite is Psygnosis' superb anti-grav racing game, **Wipeout**. Everyone should make the effort to see this gem in action as it's a truly stunning game. PC people have an embarrassment of riches this Christmas. **Wing Commander 4** is nearly here and looking good but it's going to have some stiff sales competition from **Hexen**, **FIFA 96**, **Need For Speed**, **Crusader: No Remorse**, **Magic Carpet 2** and many of the other hot titles that you'll find within these pages. It's going to be a hot summer that's for sure...

Stuart



I am the ghost of Christmas Present... I bring tidings of joy for this years silly season.

The ECTS (European Computer Trade Show) was the last trade convention before Xmas and therefore the last chance many publishers had to demonstrate their potential hits.

What this year's ECTS effectively displayed was that the publishers and development houses are terrible at keeping secrets. Most of the product on display were titles that we had been expecting. We had already seen the screen shots and played the demo and all that was left to do was to test the final product. Not to say that products on display weren't good, or brilliant in some cases, it was that it wasn't that exciting. Mind you, there were a few secrets that were let out of the bag to certain special journalists.

Last year's show was very much PC dominated. This year, with the release of the Saturn and Playstation, a more balanced show was expected. What was delivered in real terms was the surprising level of commitment to the Playstation. The humble grey machine was everywhere. It was very much the star of the show with the PC following closely behind.

Three important names were missing, those being Sega and Nintendo (who seemed happy in being represented by third party developers), and iD. Quake was slated for a Christmas release and it was surprising not to see them there. It seems like we'll have to wait until 1996 now...(sigh).

The big news came from a prominent Playstation supporter's stand where the big news is that Ridge Racer for PC is due out in March '96. The source said that it was pixel perfect and should blow away any racing game currently out or due out in the next six months.

Speaking of racing games, car sims were flavour of the show with just about every major publisher having their own one. Psygnosis had Demolition Derby for PC and Playstation which is as good as it looks. Virgin had Screamer but a stand out was Gremlin's Fatal Racing which can best be described as a combination of Mortal Kombat and Stunt Car Racing.

There was Wing Commander IV (EA) which is beginning to sound like the Star Trek movies and Silent Steel (Ocean) which are both movies which you can control rather than being a game where you can shoot things. Together the budget of these films go over ten million dollars. And, surprisingly, they look like it too.

Last year the game's industry grew up. This year it got serious.

Mark Lingane

#3



Behold the
ravenous beast.
Born of
man and horse.
Poured from
earth-blood.
Cooled by night
And terrible
in his swift rage.

-Scih



SNES® Megadrive™ Game Boy® Game Gear™



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Quaking in Anticipation

These new Quake grabs came our way recently, and unlike the last lot we showed you these ones have moving parts. One moving part that is, a mother of a huge evil ass-kicking hell beast if you want specifics.

These are the latest in a tantalising trickle from iD. They're not giving any of their juiciest secrets away just yet and probably won't reveal anything really meaty before the game itself is released. Still, we're grateful for this wee tidbit... Like hell! Come on iD! We want Quake now! ...please?

Doom Your Monitor

It didn't happen overnight, but it had too...and now it has. Yes kids, you can now get a little closer to the complete Doom experience with the Doom II Screen Saver.

It's an official product from the house of iD, so if you're the sort of freak that collects this stuff then feel assured because it's kosher. Four modules are built-in. None of them seem to do your monitor's phosphorous much of a favour, as the action is usually restricted to a just a small part of the screen. But we don't give a damn and neither should you, screen savers aren't about saving screens any more - they're about watching cool stuff without the bothersome inconvenience of interaction.

In Barrels-O-Fun random barrels spread out over the screen,

then a Cyberdemon marches through blowing them all away. Boring. The Duel is better, two randomly selected beasties go the long until one is dead, then it happens all over again. We had fun betting on which beast would win... we're suckers for dumb stuff like that. Skeet Shoot flings beasties up from the bottom of the screen, with our old friend the shotgun despatching them near the top. Best of all is the Fireworks module, a handful of beasties at a time are launched skywards, exploding fireworks style in pretty patterns of blood and offal.

It's about the most useless bit of software we've seen since the last screen saver we saw. That hearty recommendation should be enough to help you make up your minds. It retails for \$49.95.

Springfield Massacre



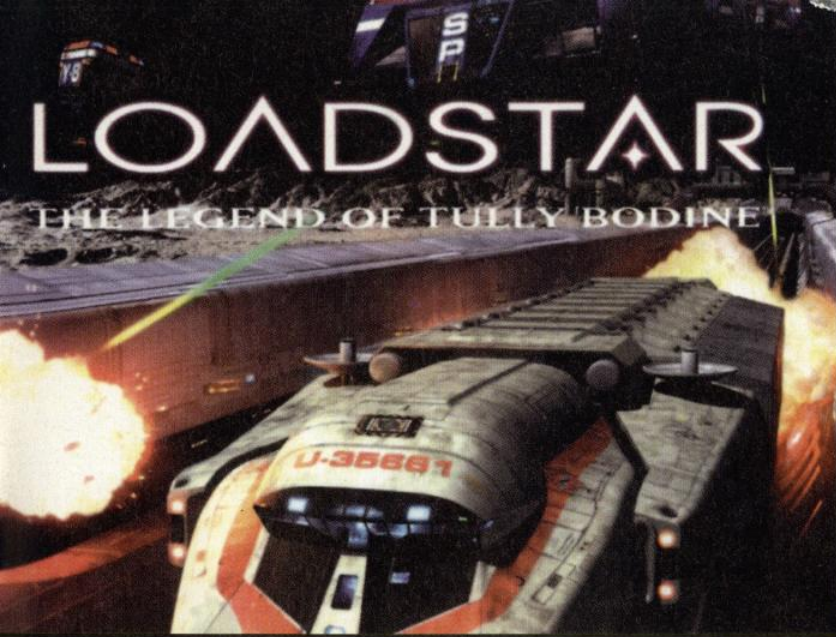
We all know the beauty of the Doom WAD. Thanks to the patience of a select few Doom freaks, all new levels — some including wildly different graphics and sound — are constantly appearing on the Net. Who could forget the first Aliens WAD or the awesome Raven WAD? Well, dust of your BFG one more time, because it's time to send a fresh ball of plasma into the glaring yellow face of Mr. Burns and all your other favourite Simpsons characters. This one is almost too good to be true!

Every monster has been carefully replaced with a walking, talking, wise-cracking Springfielder. Swing yer chainsaw into Barney's belly! Send a rocket into Ned Flanders' god-lovin' mug! All with the accompaniment of some of the funniest Simpsons dialogue you've ever heard. And the deaths are hilarious! See Patti and Zelma explode into a pile of cigarette butts, gasp in awe as Moe the bartender's eyeballs roll out of their sockets, recoil in horror from the undead power of Mayor Quinby...

You take the role of Homer, and even a baseball bat swinging Bart isn't safe from your super shotgun. Simpsons, Simpsons, Simpsons. We love it. Of course, if you don't... then why not check out the new Star Trek WAD? Next Generation style Deathmatch on the Enterprise is very cool indeed. An Imp in a Klingon Starfleet uniform has to be seen to be believed! Of course, this one is choc-full-o samples to. So, where can you get a copy? You can download them both (including other hot WADs) from our glorious Hyper@ctive website. Too much fun is never enough.

LOADSTAR

THE LEGEND OF TULLY BODINE



LOADSTAR

THE LEGEND OF TULLY BODINE

"There is tons of video, a good story and more action than you've ever before experienced in this type of game"

BMG

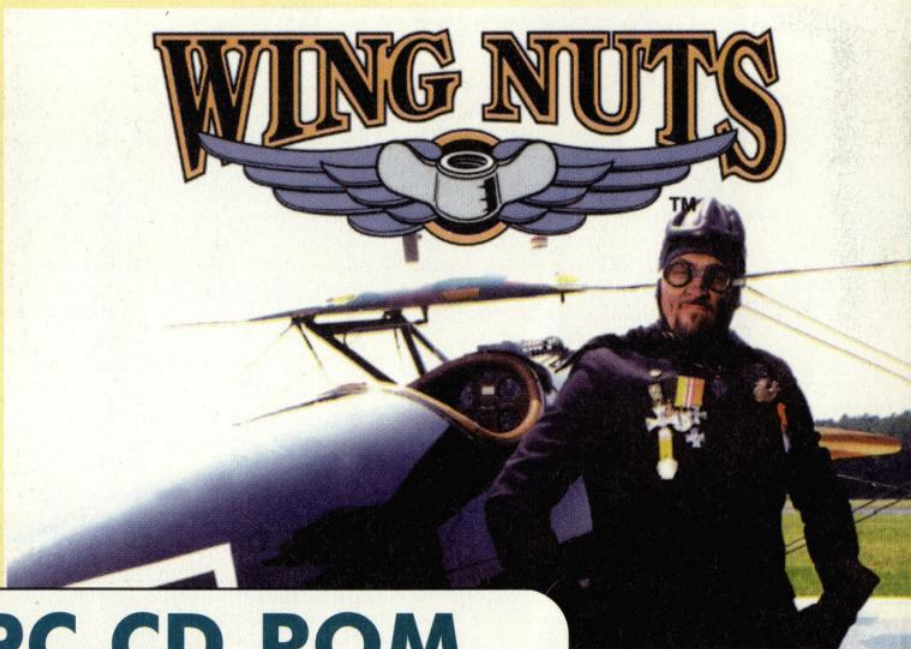
INTERACTIVE



WING NUTS

"What would happen if Hogan's Heros had been a World War 1 flying squadron?"

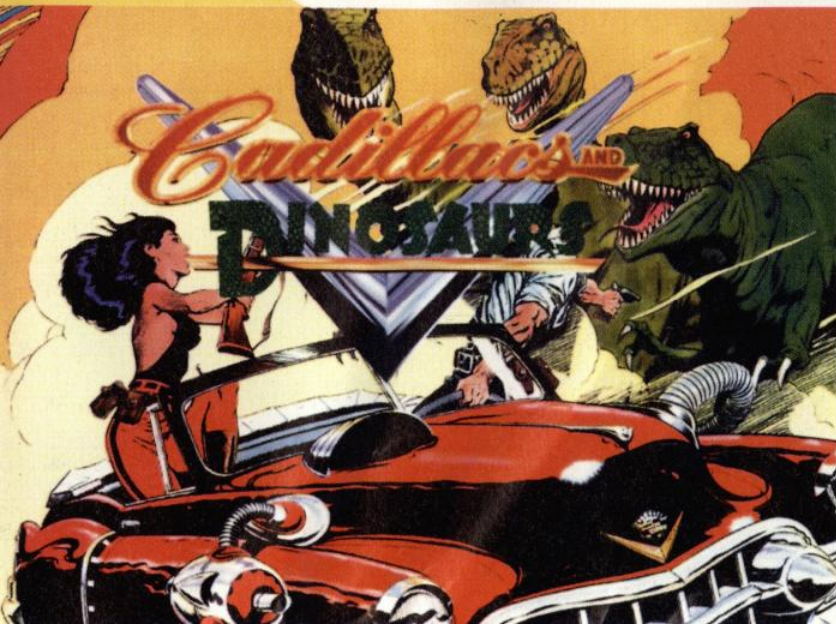
WING NUTS



NOW ON PC CD ROM

CADILLACS & DINOSAURS

"The 3-D effect is wonderfully speedy and detailed...the graphicnovel feel comes through loud and clear



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NetCafe

A Special Blend of Cafe

Sad But True Fact #1: not everyone has a Pentium PC or PowerMac with internet access through a speedy 28800bps modem. Think that's bad? It gets worse; there are people out there who don't have a clue what the internet is all about, despite our best efforts at community education. There are several solutions, most of which involve forking out wads of big time cash and enduring days of painful learning curve navigation. But wait! Now there's a better way. Welcome to the age of the internet cafe.

These funky places are popping up everywhere. For the most part, they resemble your traditional cafe in all the important ways - you know, great coffee, fab snacky foods and that certain special ambience. Your average 'net cafe though, also has new and fast PCs hooked into the 'net just waiting for you to sit down and surf. Friendly over the shoulder tuition is commonly available for newbies, and if you couldn't give a damn about the 'net you can just play deathmatch Doom.

Melbourne is especially well catered for, it boasts Australia's first 'net cafe: the CyberNet Cafe. At 789 Glenferrie Rd Hawthorne, CyberNet is festooned with books and mags covering funky cyber stuff and they specialise in running comprehensive training sessions. Also in Melbourne is

the NetCafe; 94A Acland St is where you'll find it and expect sensational yummys and a convenient closing time of midnight. Virtual Access is at 129 Maroondah Hwy Ringwood, we don't know a thing about it but it's probably real cool. Last up for Melbourne is the Milano Coffeenet, and if you hang around Shop 28-29 Ringwood Market with both eyes open, you'll probably notice it. Their deal seems to be a huge range of sensational coffees, which is a good thing.

Sydney surfers can do their thing all over the place. Earthlink gets the honours of being the first in Sydney. Wednesday night chat forums are something they'd like you to be a part of, as well as lots of other fun activities. 254 Pacific Hwy Hornsby is Earthlink HQ. Well Connected at 35 Glebe Point Rd is a particularly cool place to hang out, it's a typical Glebe cafe with computers, which is all you need to know. In town you can visit the imaginatively named Internet Cafe, a dedicated ISDN link is the major drawback, cruise into Hotel Sweeney's at the corner of Druitt and Clarence Sts and check it out.

Up the coast a bit in Newcastle is Planet Access. An earthy environmental theme is a good thing, free coffee an even better one! 22 Beaumont St Hamilton is where to look.

Another Internet Cafe is in Canberra. Sniff around the 4th floor of the National Library to find it. Brisbane and the Gold Coast have a couple of cafes in the works, but nothing official yet, so ask around or check directories.

Perth has the Net Trek Cafe at Shop 8, 3 Bannister St Fremantle, and the Cafe Aria at 7-9 South Tce Fremantle. Both offer the whole gambit of 'net cool stuff, so check 'em out.

In Adelaide you'll find Cafe.On.Net (love those dots) at 187 Rundle St. PCs named after Blake's Seven characters are an indication of how warped they are, so beam over now! In the 'burbs is The Cyber Net Space (leaving no buzz word unturned). Look for it at Shop 12 Bay Mall.

Our New Zealand friends can get a piece of the action at the Cyberspace Internet Cafe. 31 Panama St Wellington is an excellent place to shelter from the bitter cold, with great food and training courses to further entice you.

And when our many HYPER readers in Hong Kong aren't playing the latest games, they're cruising the 'net at Cyber Cafe Club at the Rickshaw Club, 22 Robinson Rd.

So there you have it. If a 'net cafe isn't within walking distance of home right now, chances are one will open real soon - hey, it might even be an entrepreneurial you that gets one off the ground in your area. Just remember to use words like cyber, net, virtual and link in the name. It's the go.

Readers Review

Our reader's review this month comes courtesy of Tomas Keraitis who has reviewed a Mac game we've never even seen. Onya Tomas!

Sensory Overload (Mac)

Tired of Doom? Finished Marathon? Well try Sensory Overload, the work of Reality Bytes software. Sensory Overload is set in the year 2010 and you play the part of an undercover CIA agent investigating the Biotex research labs for "superwave broadcasters". Apparently the naughty people at Biotex have been jamming communications signals with these things and you've got to stop them!

Sensory Overload is a 3D shoot-em-up in the Doom tradition and you are stuck inside the Biotex lab complex for the majority of the game, running around finding weapons and items to help you unravel the mystery of what Biotex is really up to. Now, onto the good stuff! A .45 is just behind the first door, so grab that and your ready to do battle with the terrorists. Sort of. The screen is split up into areas, one for left hand, one for right and one for items, plus your message window, and of course, your "Viewport" in which you play the game through.

"But does it have something that Doom doesn't?", I hear you say. Sensory Overload's strongest point is that it is VERY atmospheric. Dare I say even more than Doom? Blasphemy! But the haunting background music and claustrophobic little rooms really add to the feeling, and you always get a sudden rush of adrenalin when a Ninja pops out only to have his head blown off with your electrogun. The game has the same sort of interface and items as others of others in its style ie: armour, health points, ammo so nothing much new in the originality area.

Now, all this is fine and dandy until you realise your gonna need a Mac with at least 33mhz 030 processor. And even then you'll have to turn off floor and ceiling textures and reduce the screen size. The thing I disliked most about SO was the speed. Not that my computer was slow, but you walk incredibly slowly, and there is no "run" key. The other letdown was that you must explore every inch of a level. If you miss a room that contains a passcard or item, certain disaster awaits on the next level. But you can progress forwards and backwards through the levels - if for some reason you wanted to take the lifts all the way back to level 1 to get that .45 clip you left behind, you could. Other than those complaints, Sensory Overload is great fun. Not everybody will like it however, so grab the demo and see what you think.



The end is near...
You're DOOMED!

HEXEN

Beyond Heretic

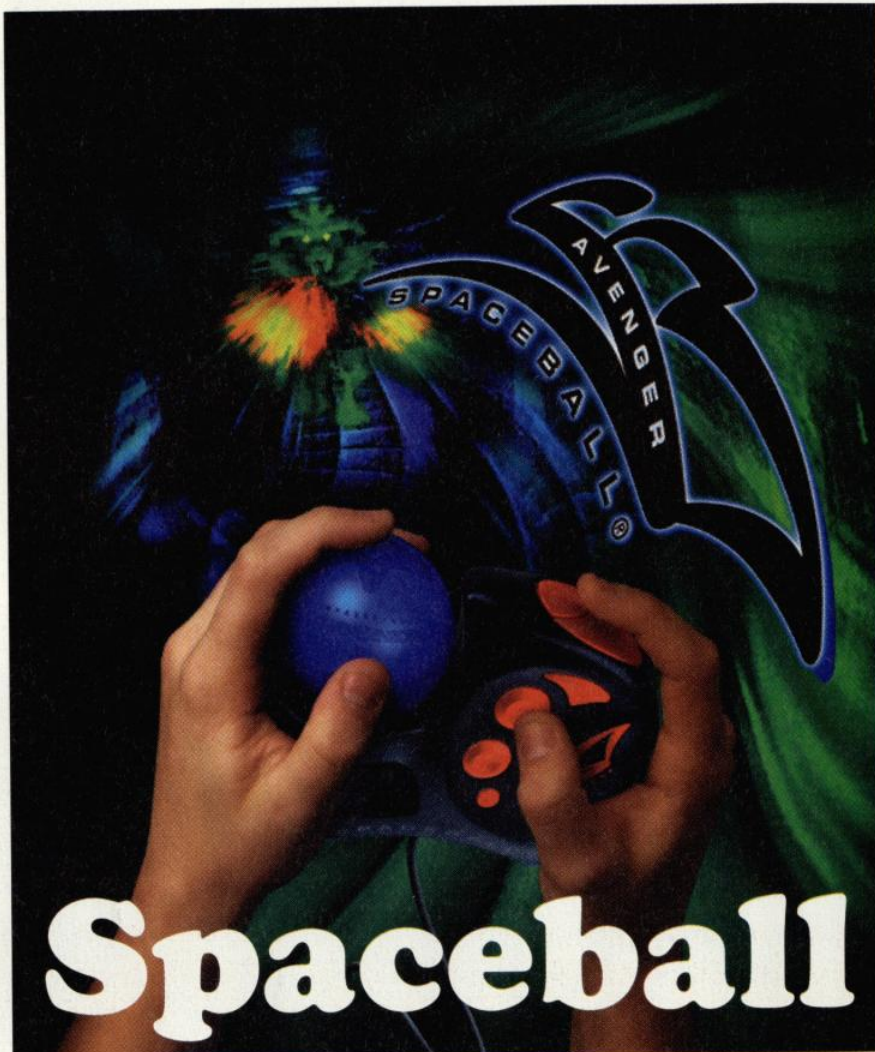
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Spaceball

3D Gaming Made Easy

Spaceball. It's a word. Up 'till now it meant the World's Worst sci-fi parody movie. Not any more! Now it means the Worlds Finest 3D action game controller.

The ungainly looking device is the revolutionary change these games so desperately needed. Moving around efficiently in a 3D world of death like Doom takes considerable dexterity; new muscles grew in our hands as we struggled to deal with the un-intuitive keyboard controls, mousing offered little salvation and it soon became screamingly clear that something totally different was needed.

Welcome the Spaceball age. We've been road-testing the thing and it really works. Like so many of life's more enjoyable pursuits, it's a two handed operation. The obvious bit are the buttons; your right hand rests comfortably over the bulbous bit, with a bit of easy thumb action to manipulate the six buttons. For games with built-in support like Doom, Heretic and Descent they do

useful stuff like select weapons, open doors and shoot.

So far, so-so. The radical bit is the big blue sphere on the left. You twist, turn, push and pull it to steer your Space Marine in ways never before possible. It takes some getting used to, but if you invest the time and figure it all out you'll be untouchable in deathmatch. The manoeuvres you can pull are amazing, you can rotate around an enemy and remain facing him the whole time, combination strafing, running and turning is no problem at all either. With a Spaceball Avenger you'll literally run rings around anything you come up against. Because the Spaceball's special moves can't be duplicated with the keyboard, the Doom world looks weirdly different. The walls float past you smoother than ever before, with a new sensation of movement that's way more real than the old way.

The Avenger does games like Descent a major favour too. It's normally a hard slog to control, but with the Avenger it all comes naturally. Future games that are just as complicated as Descent won't be a problem either, as native support for the device is becoming more and more common, so it's unlikely that the Avenger will go the way of the Logitech Cyberman - that is, a premature death through lack of software support.

As good as it is, the Avenger still has a little way to go. The sphere is (in my opinion) a little too large to hold comfortably. It could also do with just a bit more movement. As it is, the ball barely moves at all, this means for very precise movement, but it doesn't quite feel right with only a couple of degrees of "play". Still, what we have now is a huge leap forward and it's a hell of a lot better than anything else.

Need another reason to buy? Cop this then: it's an Aussie innovation! The Spaceball Avenger, tell your folks you want one for Christmas or you'll never eat you vegetables again. That should do it.

Master Blaster

If you've got a PC it's time to make an emergency revision to your Christmas wish list. Take a pen and scratch out whatever was at the top of the list and write in "3D Blaster". This is something PC gamers must have.

Graphics accelerators are nothing new, but up till now the term has been applied to almost any old video card, with speed increases of around 20%. Good old Creative Labs have upped the ante, the 3D Blaster delivers a boost that clocks in at a grunty 1000%! We've seen it in action and it's for real. Creative showed us a bog standard 486 with the 3D Blaster installed running next to a Pentium 90 without one. Running the same games the old 486 ran smoother than any PC we've ever seen, while the Pentium chugged along at about a quarter the 486's frame rate. Amazing stuff.

The 3D Blaster works its magic by way of several custom graphics chips. They take the load of the CPU, so incredible results are achieved from slotting one of these babies into just about any old PC - although Creative recommends a 486DX2/66 as the minimum. Games need to be written to get the most out of the card, but existing games will also see a small improvement, say Creative.

Blistering speed isn't the only cool thing about 3D Blaster, as Creative claim that the card delivers superior graphic quality to the current breed of super consoles. This means higher resolution and no warping. The 3D worlds Creative showed us looked more solid and real than anything we've seen so far.

The first versions of the card still need a standard video card in your PC, but Creative are working hard to develop a 3D Blaster that replaces your video card entirely. Other enhancements to the technology will follow over the next couple of years, Creative are planning a version that incorporates real time speech transmission, so deathmatch Doomers can shout mean things at each other amidst the carnage.

First off the rank will be the Vesa Local Bus version. A PCI bus model will follow early in the new year. At \$649 it's not cheap, but compared to the upgrade cost of fast Pentiums, it's a blessing.

This is the advance PC gaming has been waiting for since the word go. What it'll do for your PC is truly miraculous.

Pick Your Accelerator

The 3D Blaster isn't the only 3D kid on the block, other video card manufacturers are due to release their own 3D boosters right about now.

Already available is the Matrox Millennium. Matrox cards are traditionally dead slow so it was surprising to see the Millennium hit the shelves first. We haven't seen it run, but apparently it's performance falls short of what the others offer.

Big time vid card makers Diamond are getting in on the act too. Their Edge card uses acceleration techniques completely different to the others, with the big question being how well it'll be supported by developers. The Edge has built-in sound, as well as a digital gameport.

Number Nine make a funky range of hot cards and will shortly be releasing their Rendition 3D booster. Those in the know say it offers the biggest bang, but like the Diamond may suffer from a lack of developer support.

Only time will tell, a new age of PC gaming is dawning and the next few months will show which way this new world is heading. What we really need is a 3D standard like the Vesa super VGA standard, but getting so many competing manufacturers to agree on a compromise is not exactly the most likely thing in the world. That's why we like the 3D Blaster. Microsoft are supporting their standard and because it comes from the makers of the Sound Blaster, the support of the industry is almost guaranteed.

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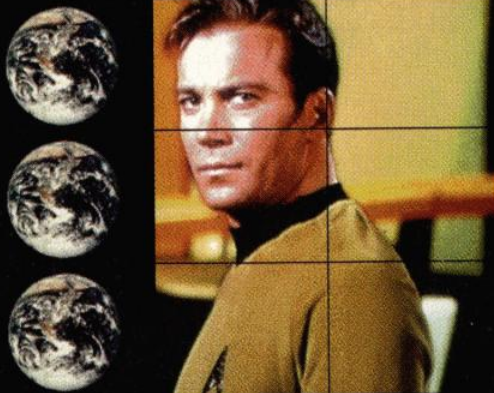
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The Ultimate Trek

I'm not quite sure whether to call this the work of brilliant or insane minds, but I suppose it really doesn't matter. What does matter is that this is one seriously intense database. Intense enough to have Trekkies rolling hopelessly about on the floor, faces contorting with indescribable joy. Honestly! Star Trek Omnipedia lists and cross-references every conceivable fact from the TV series' and films, and I mean every single one. The result is an almost staggering amount of detail presented in a very slick and accessible package.

You can find a list of every alien food and beverage ever

consumed or mentioned in Star Trek, from the pilot episode up to the first series of DS9, along with a short description and the episode/film where it appears! Watch and listen to short doco's on Kirk, Picard or the history of the Enterprise, run a check on all the babes in Spock's life, or relive in glorious FMV that historic moment when the logical one delivered his first Vulcan Nerve Pinch. It's ALL there, and more...

Detailed illustrations of Federation weapons, Romulan starships, medical equipment, 69 FMV clips (69?), a full production history with clips from the pilot episodes. The producers have even computer animated a demonstration of the famous "Picard Manoeuvre", something he perfected while trapped on the brothel planet Vulva (joke). The Catholic church can only hope for followers fanatical enough to put together a reference work such as this!

The Omnipedia is on both Mac and PC CD ROM and comes with voice recognition software. Star Trek fans simply have to have this, it beats every other reference work hands down, and then some.

George Soropos

Winners

Pee Wee CD
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Stuart Russell
Mark Young

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Next Issue we
Announce the
Winners of
our Ultimate
Playstation
Comp.
START
GETTING
EXCITED!!!

PC Revenger

Here's the situation: you've got a PC and you love it, you just picked up a new game that neither joystick or keyboard work well with - let's say it's a platformer like the cool Pitfall: Mayan Adventure. What's a gamer to do?

Well, just head on down to your games shop, stare the shop-person firmly in the eye and say "sell me a Revenger Programmable Joystick Interface right now!"

The Revenger works a very special kind of magic, with one of these babies you can plug a Sega Mega Drive 6-button controller into your PC! Better still, you can plug two in and go the tong with your bestest buddy. Unbelievable but true! The good news doesn't stop here, because it's got the word "programmable" in the name, you can customise the buttons on the Sega pad to suit whatever game you're using it for. Doomy games are particularly nice to drive with a Sega pad, and if you plan to pick up any of the Mega Drive games Sega are porting to the PC, then this is something you just gotta have.

You can use the old fashioned 3-button Sega controller too if you want, but why you'd want to is beyond our limits of comprehension. If for some reason you don't like the standard Sega pad, then any third-party pad with Sega-standard connectors will work.

Kaylee Computing are the folks to call if your games shop is too hopeless to carry the Revenger. They're on (09) 310 1962.

Overflow

All the bits we couldn't fit anywhere else...

Great news gamers! An Australian study commissioned by the Office of Film and Literature Classification has found that playing video games doesn't do the harm certain wowers would have us believe. In fact the only negative they could find was that the hanging out in arcades was probably not a great way to develop a peaceful and loving personality - but that's only because of the arcades themselves, it has nothing to do with the actual games. Their conclusion was that instead of breeding rapists and murderers, video games tended to encourage phenomenal hand-eye co-ordination. Tell us something we don't know

Nintendo are a happy lot at the moment, on the very first day the new Mario platformer Yoshi's Island was released in Japan, it apparently sold an astounding one million copies. What, them worry?

Microprose are porting some of their older classics to the Playstation. First up will be the highly revered Gunship 2000 and the equally well loved UFO: Enemy Unknown. Sure, these games are no spring chickens, but for legendary gameplay you don't need to look much further.

Excellent Pommie games mag Edge is getting into the meat of the business. They'll be developing their own games, with the plan being for 18 of them to be released over the next three years. We can't wait to see what sort of reviews Edge give their own games...

American Laser games are about to release a PC-based version of their GameGun. It'll plug into the PC's parallel port and be supported by the range of FMV shooters the company already markets. Demo versions of Crime Patrol and The Last Bounty Hunter will be included.

Acclaim have acquired both Probe Entertainment and Sculptured Software. The takeover adds 250 creative minds to the Acclaim family. Acclaim's taste for playing the corporate game began with their buyout of Iguana Entertainment.

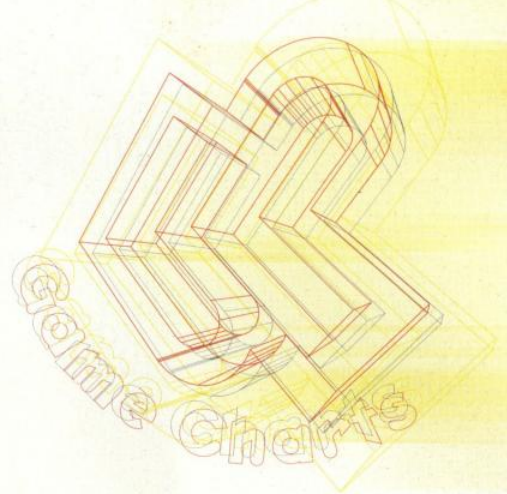
Gex is the sort of winner title the 3DO needs right now. Over 1 million units have been sold to happy 3DOwners. Next on the list is a Playstation port. Looks like the little dude will go the distance after all.

Tekken, Street Fighter, Ridge Racer and Mega Man are all heading to the PC, thanks to some aggressive negotiating by Microsoft.

Another weird Ultra-64 rumour... we told you about the radical controller design in the last issue, allegedly the unit also includes a memory card slot for saved games.

Need for Speed for the PC proclaims loudly on the box that it fully supports the Thrustmaster T1 steering wheel.. well, it doesn't, unless you have a little white adaptor that converts the normal two joystick input into one. Most T1's sold here didn't include the adaptor, if you need one give Thrustmaster distributors Playcorp a call on 03 329 2999.

HYPER's charts are supplied by The Gamesmen



Mega Drive

1. NHL 96
2. The Lion King
3. Theme Park
4. Micro Machines 2
5. PGA European Tour
6. Mortal Kombat 2
7. Brian Lara Cricket
8. Primal Rage
9. NBA Live 95
10. Sonic & Knuckles



SNES

1. Killer Instinct
2. Stunt Race FX
3. Donkey Kong Country
4. Mario Kart
5. Illusion of Time
6. Super International Cricket
7. Indiana Jones
8. Batman Forever
9. Mortal Kombat 2
10. Sim City



Mega CD

1. Double Switch
2. Dracula Unleashed
3. Snatcher
4. Jurassic Park
5. Dragon's Lair

PC CD ROM

1. Command & Conquer
2. Need For Speed
3. Mechwarrior 2
4. Dark Forces
5. Fade to Black
6. Myst
7. Werewolf vs Comanche
8. Full Throttle
9. Space Quest VI
10. Discworld

PC

1. SimCity 2000
2. TIE Fighter
3. Super Karts
4. Lode Runner
5. Doom 2

Saturn

1. Panzer Dragoon
2. Clockwork Knight
3. Pebble Beach Golf
4. Daytona USA
5. Victory Goal



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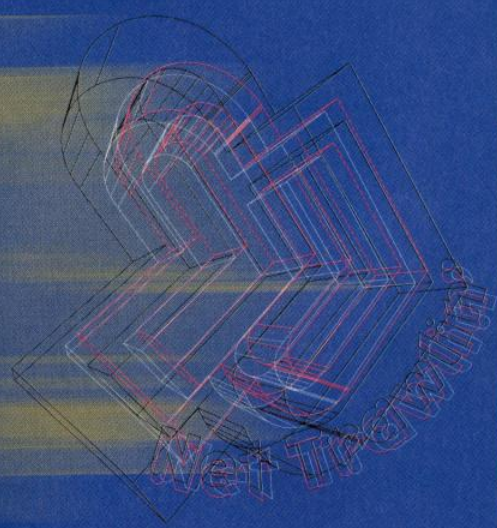
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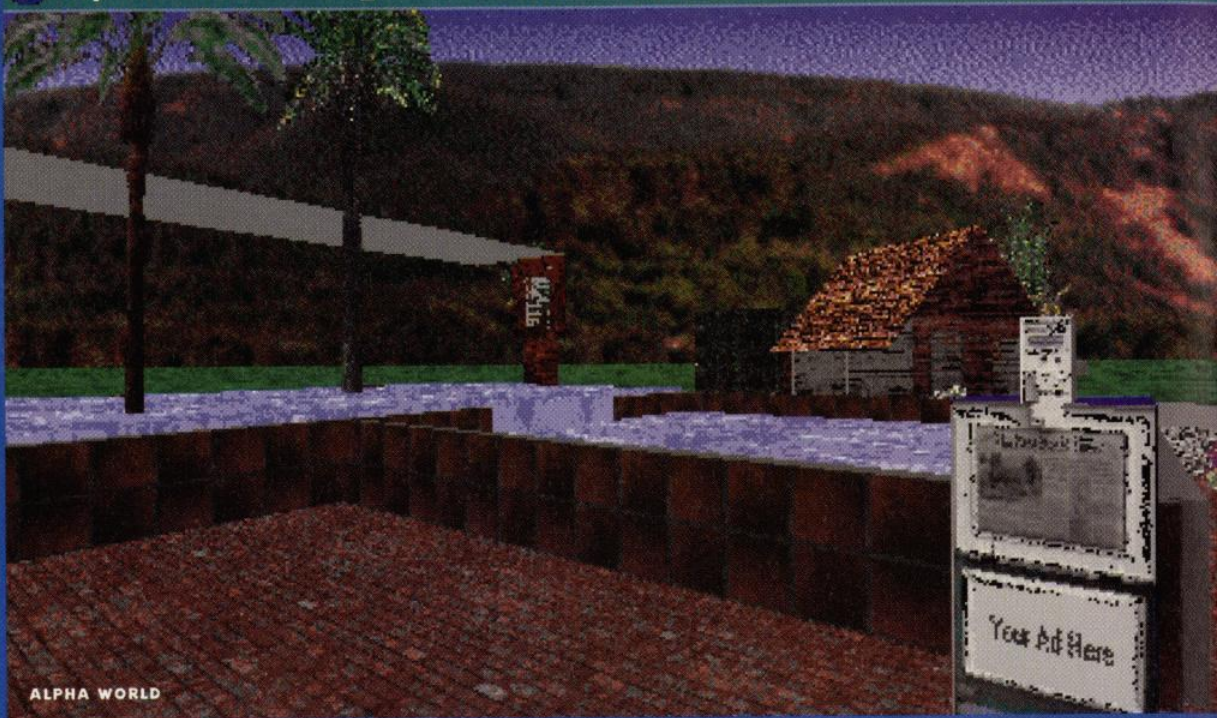
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AlphaWorld 31 at ground zero facing NW



**This month
ROGER BOLTON
takes a trip into
the future of the
Internet, down-
loads iD's latest
game and helps
out all you Mac
users. Thanks
Uncle Wodgie!!**

Alpha World

If you want to see the future of the internet, then this is one of the happening places to see it. AlphaWorld is written by Worlds Inc, the same guys that did "World's Chat", the 3D chat program that got mentioned a few issues back. AlphaWorld takes the idea just a few steps further. To view AlphaWorld you must have a fast PC (486 DX50 or better) and the 32 bit extensions (or Windows 95), then log onto the AlphaWorld site and download the special browser program.

Once you've got it, run the Aworld browser and you instantly parachute down into the middle of Alpha World. This is a true 3D environment where you can walk (and fly) around a virtual world, chat to other people all over the internet and even build your own house, hovel or palace. Alpha World has it's own newspaper, bar, shops, palaces, castles, hidden caves, parks, ancient ruins and LOTS more to find. This site is seriously one of the best to appear on the net ever. If you've got the PC, go download it now.

<http://www.worlds.net/alphaworld/>

Hexen

It's not Quake, but it's the next coolest Doom-like thing to come along until then. Hexen is the sequel to Heretic, the medieval Doom game from Raven and iD software. The full game should be available for purchase by the time you read this, or you can download the free beta four level version to test it out. Among the many enhancements over Heretic are amazing atmospheric effects (lighting and wind), loads more spells and a choice or playing a Cleric, Fighter or Mage.

<http://www.idsoftware.com> or for a site in Australia try <http://hyperactive.com.au/games/dump/>

Spike Webb

Spike Webb is a net detective, a digitally wired crime buster

roaming the infobahn on the lookout for assorted bad dudes. This site lets you follow his adventures with a new episode added weekly. Following the trail of clues through the site and assorted related sites and solving the puzzles and codes in the

tale puts you in the running for prizes. A good idea that has been well executed, the story reads well and it looks pretty cool too. For fans of crime stories and puzzle solving this site is a winner.

<http://www.spikewebb.com/>

S.P.Q.R. The Quest Begins

Another interactive net game, S.P.Q.R takes you back to the blood, dust, and decadence of Roman times and lets you wander the streets of Rome. You must search for scrolls containing clues to preventing the fall of Rome and discover secrets within the hidden catacombs beneath the streets. Hmm, well it looks pretty but the download times to Oz may stop you solving the whole game. Well designed and worth a look if you've got the patience.

<http://www.pathfinder.com/twep/rome/>

Mac Games Sites

Macintosh owners who for years have been pitied and laughed at in school playgrounds because of a lack of any decent games, your revenge has come! Doom II and Dark Forces are out for Mac and Descent is coming! For more Mac related games info, check these sites out.

MacPlay <http://www.macplay.com/>

One of the biggest Macintosh games publishers, working on Descent for Mac.

Macintosh Doom Page

<http://www.eecs.wsu.edu/~rkinion/macdoom.html>
Pointers to loads of info for Mac Doom players.

Happy Puppy Mac Games OnRamp

<http://happypuppy.com/games/mac/>
This page has pointers to virtually every Mac shareware game on the internet ever made.

Macintosh Entertainment Software Page

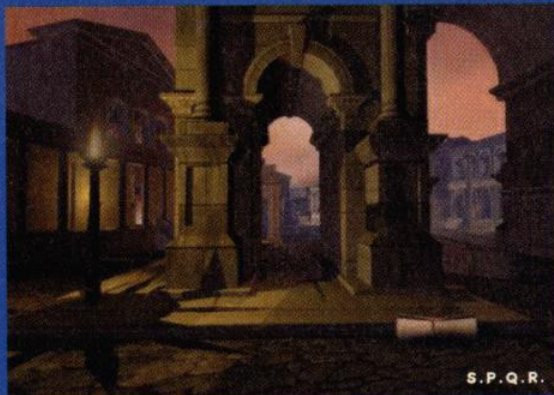
<http://www.usyd.edu.au/~dchallis/MacES.html>
Local Australian list of Macintosh entertainment products and publishers.

Local Australian Archive for Mac Shareware Games

<ftp://archie.au/micros/mac/umich/game/>
This mirror of the University of Michigan Macintosh archive has hundreds of Mac games.

Macintosh: The Final Frontier

<http://www.astro.nwu.edu/lentz/mac/software/mac-trek.html>
Pointers to many neat toys which Trekify your Mac. Icons, sounds, screen savers, fonts, the works.



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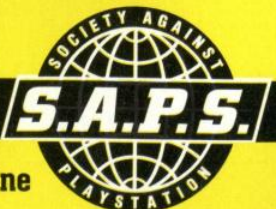
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Reviews by Max Autohead



BABEL 2

Babel 2 - volume 3 & 4

The story goes something like this... Many years ago an alien accidentally crash landed on Earth. Unable to fix his space-craft, the alien starts to erect a tower which provides means to hide his technology. The alien dies but prepares all for the coming of the "CHOSEN ONE"; a successor to his power.

Crash cut to today, as a day dreaming school boy, Ko-Ichi, is troubled by weird-arse nightmares. Shunned by all his friends, Ko-Ichi stumbles upon a group of psychics headed by a leader who covets world domination for his own sinister ends. Funny

things start happening to Ko-Ichi and as he faces peril he is revealed as Babel 2, the chosen one! With his protector side-kicks Rhodem, Poseidon and Robross, Ko-Ichi fights the mother of all battles to protect the Earth from evil psychic domination.

Babel 2 is generic anime. It is quite possibly one of the cheesiest and most boring animes I've ever seen. The animation is that tacky, stilted kind that we've come to love from budget animation, and it moves about as smoothly as the Tinman in a rock quarry. The story is pretty bland too and requires you to ignore some pretty huge holes in the plot.

I've had better times watching ABC test patterns.

Rated MA15. Distributed by Kiseki.

4/10

Project A-Ko

I know, I know. Project A-Ko came out ages ago and some of you may have already seen it. However, for some reason our friends at Siren never sent me a copy when it was first released, but the images of a Japanese schoolgirl running into the sky on a stream of missiles is too good a thing not to review.

After Tokyo has once again rebuilt itself from the ruins of mass destruction, two schoolgirls (A-Ko and her dizzy friend/side kick C-B-Ko) start their first day at a new school. There they are spotted by B-Ko, an ultra smart but ultra vicious waif of a girl, who decides that C-Ko must be her best friend. However, for her plans of friendship to succeed she must eliminate all possible competition... being A-Ko!

Building twenty story high robots and tanks of doom, plus weapons of massive destruction, B-Ko wages an all-out war on A-Ko, who somehow is so fast and so strong she manages to always destroy everything B-Ko throws at her!

Meanwhile, on the other side of the solar system, a huge and mega alien force approaches Earth to retrieve their long lost princess to rule their entire empire; none other than C-Ko!

Project A-Ko is an anime that had me in stitches with its fast hitting cheesy humour. It's original and fresh and is so immersed in trash anime culture that any Manga patriot would be proud. There are times of idiocy, but these blur into moments of comic trash genius.

If you haven't seen Project A-Ko before then I highly recommend that you do. A must for all anime freaks.

Rated PG. Distributed by Siren Entertainment. 8/10



PROJECT A-KO



PROJECT A-KO



PROJECT A-KO

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Core Design make cool games, Sega make a nice machine to play them on, it's called the Saturn and if you own one you'll be wanting to enter this fab comp. The incomprehensibly lucky winner gets:

- 1 copy of the amazing Thunderhawk 2 for Saturn
- 1 copy of the equally amazing Shellshock for Saturn
- A cool Shellshock T-shirt, a Shellshock wallet to stick in your pocket, a sticky Shellshock sticker and a big Thunderhawk 2 poster.

Think that's cool? Well sit down 'cause we've got three of these bundles of joy to give away.

Having three first prize winners doesn't seem quite right, so we've rounded up the equation by making seven second prizes, each of the seven slightly less lucky winners gets:

- 1 Shellshock T-shirt, the Shellshock wallet, the Shellshock sticker and the big Thunderhawk poster.

We had a look at Shellshock as part of the 3D games preview in HYPER # 23, it's homeboy Doom and looks real cool. You can read about Thunderhawk 2 right here in this very issue, it smoulders.

Thanks to Sega Ozisoft for these cool goodies. To have a hope in hell of winning this rip snorter of a competition, write the answer to the question on the back of an envelope and send it in.

What company makes both Shellshock and Thunderhawk 2?

Core Design Comp.

HYPER
PO Box 634
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Rocket Science

Sure, we've given away the odd T-shirt and cap. You may have even won one or three. But the day the Rocket Science gear arrived we all chorused in unison, "geez, this stuff is real quality". Really we did.

The glacially cool Rocket Science logo looks particularly superb on the cap, which comes complete with a gen-u-ine leather peak. Video tapes of the Cadillacs and Dinosaurs cartoons Rocket Science based their games on look equally hot, as does the game Loadstar which features super-fast graphics that'll blow you away.

We're not telling you this for nothing. Yes kids, we can feel a competition coming on.

The five first prize winners get:

A Rocket Science T-shirt and cap, the Cadillacs and Dinosaurs video and a copy of the PC version of the Loadstar CD ROM game.

The twenty five (25!) runners-up get a Rocket Science T-shirt.

Do the back of an envelope thing with this question:

What TV show is the game Cadillacs and Dinosaurs based on?

Rocket Science Comp.

Hyper
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I Wanna Be Just Like Tom...

Spectrum Holobyte know a thing or two about flight sims. Their Falcon 3.0 is still about the best there is and they've been beavering away at Top Gun for ages now. It's due out right about now and thanks to our chums at Sega Ozisoft we've got some choice Top Gun goodies to throw around.

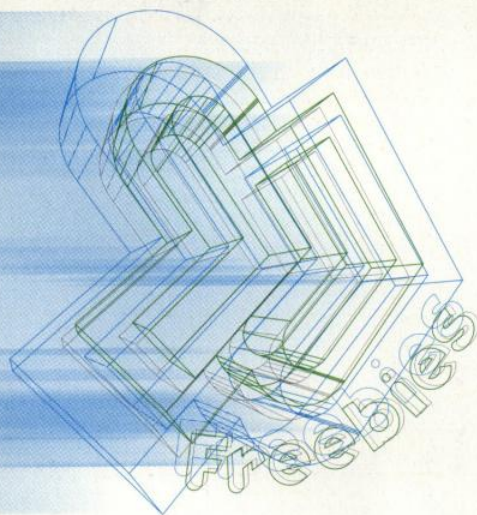
There are five lots of this Top Gun pack to go around, so we'll be drawing one winner from each state. Each winner gets a copy of the Top Gun game for PC CD ROM (natch), the Top Gun video, the soundtrack and a truly trendy Top Gun jacket.

Entering will improve your chances immeasurably, just put the answer to the question on the back of an envelope and send it in.

What was Tom Cruise's call sign in the movie "Top Gun"?

Top Gun Comp.

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PO Box 634
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Logical Giveaway



We've got some new friends in Western Australia. They're called Logical Computers and Entertainment and to celebrate our new found love for each other, we're giving away some choice goodies from their monster mail order catalogue. That's what they do you see, their big thing is fast delivery and an extensive catalogue. They're total game freaks too, so give them a buzz on (09) 227 5266 and have a yarn about the latest stuff they've got to sell you.

The winner of this comp. gets to pick two games from the following PC titles: Rebel Assault 2, Wipe Out, Destruction Derby and 3D Lemmings. Write which ones you want on the envelope.

What sort of business are Logical Computers and Entertainment in?

Logical Computers Comp.

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Command Get It

Command & Conquer is one of the better games we've played lately. Because we love it so much it seems only fair to spread the joy around. Sega Ozisoft have given us five copies (all PC CD ROM) to give away, if you want a chance at winning then answer the question and send it in.

What game is Command and Conquer the unofficial sequel to?

Command & Conquer Comp.

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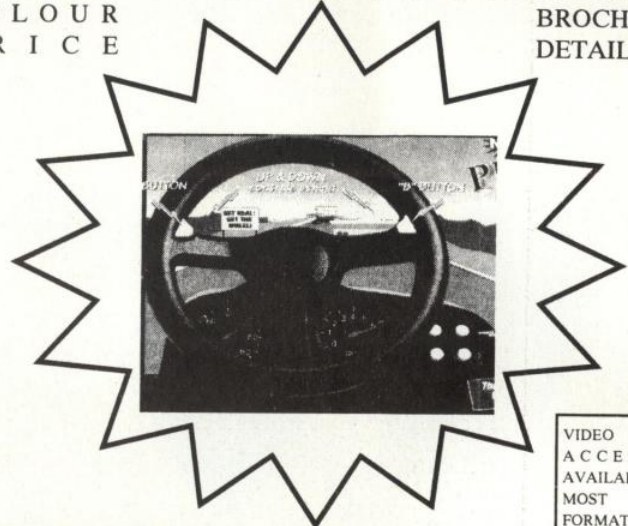
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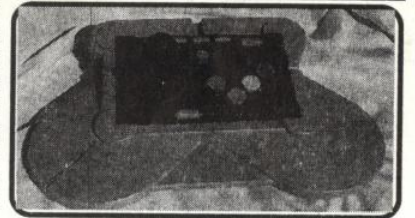
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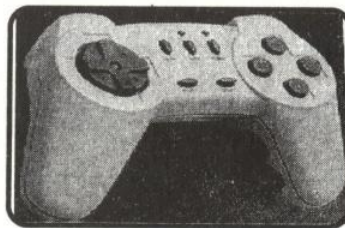
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(which we love and respect so much we awarded it 92%). Haven't got a SNES to play it on? No worries, we'll give you one of those too!

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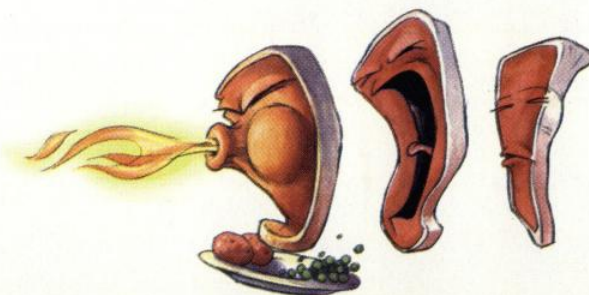
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Shiny

As you can probably tell from our cover, Earthworm Jim is back and he's looking better than ever!! Despite some changes at Shiny HQ over the last year (Jim creator Doug TenNapel and some other programmers left to start their own game company, Neverhood), Dave Perry and the boys have come up with another masterpiece of video gaming.

HYPHER caught up with one of Jim's master programmers, NICK "Captain of Coding" JONES and asked the following stupid questions...

Cows play a major role in Jim 2. We think that's great. What led you to give your meaty bovine friends the attention they so richly deserved?

The game was designed in many meetings with the entire team. If somebody suggested something in the meeting and everybody laughed, it was added to the game scenario. Our first cow gag was obviously in Jim 1 when you make the fridge fall onto a branch which launches the cow into space. I guess we got cows stuck on our minds after that!

What are the major differences between EWj2 on Mega Drive and on SNES?

For Jim1, I felt that the Mega Drive version was slightly better, but this time I think Jim2 is better on the SNES! The graphics were upgraded, the colours are sharper and better defined. There are more sound effects, more parallax's and you also have the ability to both collect, and select the weapons you want on the SNES. However, I

think that both versions are much better than Jim1. I think we have now reached the limit of what these machines can do in terms of performance.

Jim 2 plays as a totally different game for every new level. Where do you get all your ideas and have you got any left?

Everybody likes to categorise a game, and Jim has been labelled as a 'Platformer'. In truth though, we try to keep a basic 'Platform' feel to the game so that there is some consistency, but we also try to bring in something new wherever we can for variety. This means that when you complete a level, you're not going to see just the same gameplay with new graphics; you really have no idea what is going to happen. You might suddenly be a Flying Blind Cave Salamander, or you might be able to inflate your head, or carry a marshmallow to bounce puppies with. This huge variety of ideas and playing techniques is achieved by having the entire team design the game. Everybody has a different vision of what the game is going to play and this is reflected in the final game.

We're really dumb and don't understand the quiz at the end of the Salamander Level. What's it all about?

This was making fun of American TV Game shows. You get asked one question for every worm token



Happy People

you find in the level so search around for them. Every time you answer a question correctly, you get the bonus object next to the trophy, and the bonus object gets upgraded to a more useful one. If, however you get a question wrong, it goes back to the basic energy atom object (pretty useless). So the idea is to answer consecutive questions correctly. The answers are all nonsensical but they are always the same. So, for example, when you are asked the colour of Jim's Red gun? and the possible answers are yellow, green, blue, the answer will ALWAYS be green. So it basically makes you learn totally useless trivia. Also, a lot of the answers can be gleaned from reading the manuals from both Jim1 and Jim2!

We haven't got the Earthworm Jim cartoon in Australia yet - what does Jim's voice sound like? Butch, nerdy, assured self confidence...?

Doug TenNapel was the voice of Jim in the game. But Universal Studios decided to use a Voice actor for the cartoon series. Dan Castanella (the voice of Homer Simpson) was the final voice of Jim. He's definitely put a new slant on our favourite superhero and his catch word is the good old 'Gerr—Roovy'. I think it would best be described as assured and self confident in situations when he shouldn't be.

When is Jim coming to the Playstation, Saturn and Ultra 64?

Jim is currently being developed for the Saturn and Playstation. Shiny currently only develops original games, and we leave the ports to other people. We have an excellent team called 'Screaming Pink' who are developing it. I've been informed that the Sega Saturn version will be available first just after Christmas with a Playstation version following shortly afterwards.

Any top secret Shiny projects underway featuring revolutionary new gaming concepts you'd like to tell us about? We've heard you're doing a game for the Ultra 64?

Shiny has now established itself as a top games developer. Now that we've finished Jim2, we have to look to the future which means the new machines coming out. Shiny will in future be developing two games simultaneously. One project will be exclusively for the Ultra-64; the other will be for the Sony Playstation and the Sega Saturn. I can't tell you anything about the Gaming or Idea concepts but needless to say, you can be assured that they will be incredible!

What's your opinion on the state-of-play in the video games industry at the moment? Who's winning - Sega/Sony/Nintendo/PC and what have we got to look forward to in the next couple of years?

If I had to bet my money on a winner, I'd place it 50/50 on both Nintendo and Sony. My experience of the Saturn and the Playstation is that the Sony machine is quite significantly more powerful. This is the machine that all developers are really talking about or want to be working on at the moment. However the Ultra 64 promises to far out-class even the Sony. My forecast is that Nintendo will definitely deliver the goods they've been promising for so long.

The other big issue is CD versus Cart. I've heard so much talk about how much cheaper it is to put a game onto CD instead of a cartridge. A CD costs about 50 cents for the actual disc whilst the cart costs nearly \$30 (before you've even thought about creating a game to put onto it). But the reality is that games for the Sony Playstation are still in the range of \$90 - \$100. So where is this promised saving?

The other thing to remember is the target audience for our games. I still expect teenagers to be the main games players. You can take a cartridge and drop it, wack someone round the head with it, throw it across the room and it'll still work. But a CD is another matter altogether. Chances are that someone's baby sister or brother might get hold of it and have a good chew on it, or you might spill something on it or you could get some grit on it and scratch it. Now what! You have an expensive coffee coaster, and need another \$90 for a replacement CD.

What games do you play when you're not playing or working on Jim?

I keep an open mind on all games. I don't try to classify the games I like into Racing Games or Fighters or Platformers. I just play them for what they are and see if I like them.

I think secretly I've had a yearning for multi-player games ever since I played Bruce Lee on the C-64. So DOOM on our PCs with 4 people playing simultaneously was good. DESCENT was an incredible experience. I found RIDGE RACER on the Sony tedious to start with, but after a little practise I became addicted.

However my all-time favourite game is without a shadow of a doubt MARIO KART for the Super Nintendo. The gameplay is absolutely perfect. It just goes to show that the best games are based on their gameplay and not their graphics.

One thing about the new machines, is people are expecting to see more realistic graphics, and this tends to make you head for more realistic movements which really hampers your ability to fiddle with gameplay mechanics. After all, if you're playing with a perfect looking human, and you press the jump button, you don't expect the player to jump twice their height on-screen, even if you may need to do that to make it playable.

Is there life outside Jim? What do you guys do for kicks? Do you have lives, or is it all work work work?

A game currently takes about 1 year to create from initial design concept to completion. The first six months are OK and we lead normalish lives, but the last six months are always hell. This is usually when we realise how much work we still have left to do, and so the very late nights start! In our normalish period, we are all dare-devils and will pretty much have a go at anything. I've tried my hand at Scuba-Diving, Water Skiing. We have a mountain range 1 hour outside L.A which is great for Skiing/Snowboarding in Winter. Next month I'm going Sky-diving which I'm really looking forward to!

Is it really great to see your hard work and creative brilliance lead to untold wealth and the respect of your peers?

Actually, programming video games does have these benefits. But that's not why I do it! I've been programming video games for 12 years. I started when I was 18 years old and there really was no video games market. Home computers were just starting to become popular, and I was totally hooked on them. My first game took 15 months to create (I programmed the game, drew the graphics, and did the music/sound effects too). I eventually sold it for about \$400. That's right, four hundred dollars! I used to dream about computers like the Sony Playstation and the Ultra-64.

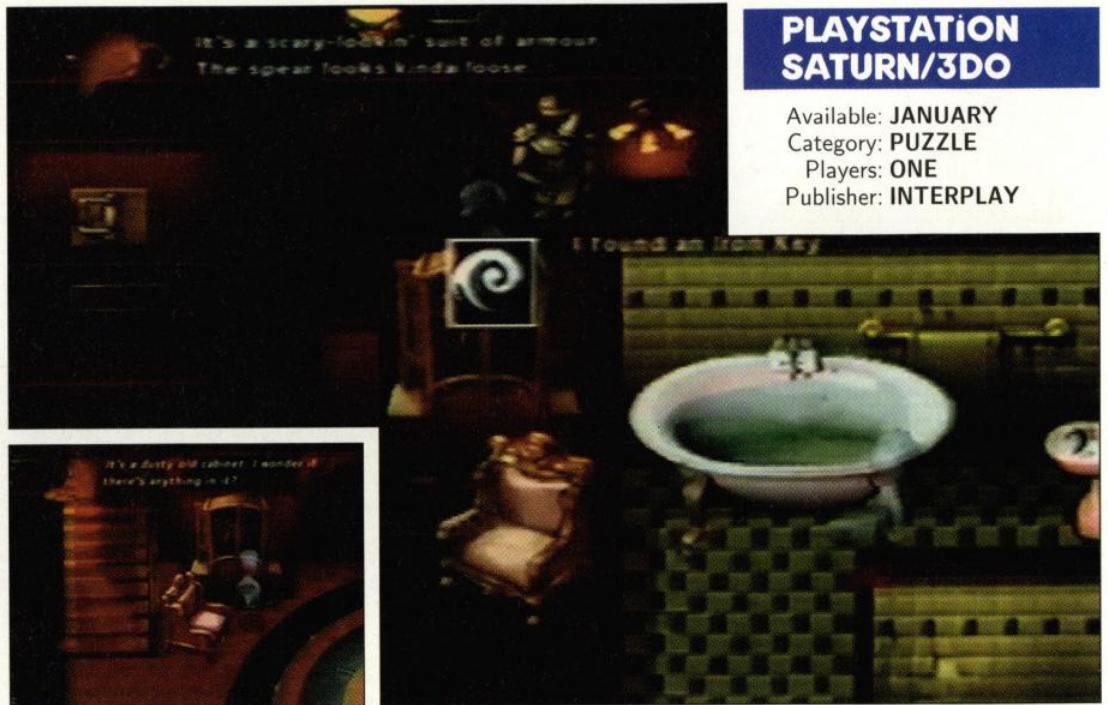
Video games fascinate me as much today as they did then. The really great thing for me is to put every ounce of energy I can into my game; adding things right until the last minute so that when the game finally goes out, I know I did everything I could to make it the very best. Then I sit back and wait for the reviews. Picking up the magazines and reading about what they have to say is my one moment of indulgence. I really don't care if they say good or bad things about my game; if they have something bad to say and they have a point then I should have fixed it anyway!

Casper

Hmm, this is a dilemma. Normally we do these previews to hype you all up, get you all excited about these amazing new games coming your way, to give you a glimpse of The Future. It's easy to do when it's something that actually looks good (like Wetlands or Firestorm), but when it's something like, ooh say, Casper, it's bloody difficult. So we won't bother.

This looks like cack. When we first saw the rolling demo of Casper we immediately thought it must have been for the Mega Drive. Casper wanders around this very brown building, searching through bookcases and the like for jigsaw puzzle pieces. Everything is shown in that useless slightly-raised topdown perspective which means all the furniture has to be lined up against the back wall for the player to be able to see anything. And it's very brown. Yuck!

Having said that, Casper himself moves quite nicely. But gee, we expect a bit more than that in a video game. It might do OK with the younger gamers and the Casper fan club but that's about it. Still, we won't write it off totally until we see it so expect a review shortly



**PLAYSTATION
SATURN/3DO**

Available: **JANUARY**
 Category: **PUZZLE**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **INTERPLAY**

Druid - Daemons of the Mind

Bored with the same tired old RPG fantasy nonsense? Fed up with stats and stats getting in the way of a good adventure? Hate Dungeon Master 2 as much as we do? Well, what all need is something like Druid - a simple-to-play action RPG with a uniquely Celtic flavour.

The world is made up of islands, each one ruled by a powerful Druid. Things are going well until one of the Druids (the improbably named Lawson), vanishes. For reasons too complicated to repeat here, you, as the grandson of one of the Druids, must search for Lawson. This will take you through lots of lovely-looking isometrically-viewed scenery which Sir-Tech claims doesn't suffer from the sterile 3D Studio graphics disease. Yet after a brief glimpse of Druid in action we're not totally convinced - the animation is stilted and the whole environment feels very empty. The interface, however, is a dream, employing only the two mouse buttons and a heartening lack of menus and icons. Druid also promises multiple endings and a story that stays true to the legends of the Druids themselves.

Let's just hope it's better than Ultima: Pagan, eh?



PC CD ROM

Available: **DECEMBER**
 Category: **ACTION RPG**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **SIR-TECH**



Wetlands

Following the lead of Full Throttle, Wetlands is a cartoon-styled animated action adventure that looks fantastic. The animation is super-smooth, the characters are big and beefy, and the action is fast and furious - and I don't think you can say that about too many adventure games.

Plot details are a bit thin on the ground, but the general gist we picked up from the demo disc goes something like this. Lantern-jawed Hero gets into all sorts of seemingly undefiable situations often involving armoured soldiers and menacingly-directed firearms, makes an improbable escape using a combination a brute strength, guns, a cunningly concealed flick-knife, and a speedy vehicle with the keys left in the ignition. Lantern-jawed Hero then finds himself in a 3D shoot 'em up sequence, hurtling down various tunnels or across the bottom of the ocean and blowing things to pieces. And it all looks beautiful. Detail has been sacrificed in favour of speed and fluidity, which is surely a wise move because Wetlands is clearly the most attractively presented adventure yet.

But how it plays is a different matter. We've no idea how the actual adventuring mechanics work (the puzzles and things), though we suspect it would be fairly simple stuff. And the shoot 'em up segments were very easy and not exactly thrilling.

Still, we've only seen a demo thus far, so it would be unfair to make any further comments until we've got our hands on the real thing. We await Wetlands with an air of excitement tempered somewhat by the cool breeze of reservation.



PC CD ROM

Available: **DECEMBER**
Category: **ACTION**
Players: **ONE**
Publisher: **NEW WORLD COMPUTING**



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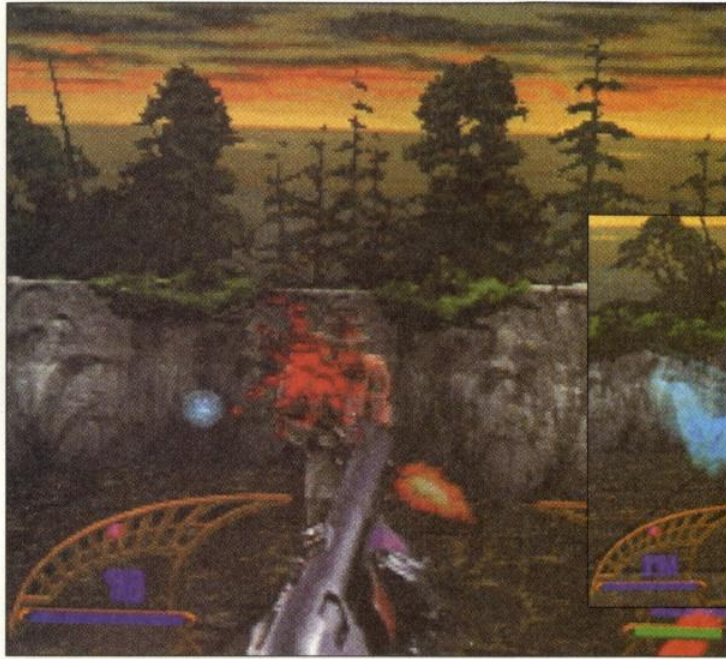
Killing Time



Just looking at this new 3DO title, you might think that it's a standard Doom clone. There's the chunky 3D graphics for starters, as well as the range of weird'n'wonderful yet viciously violent monsters, and the obligatory gun poking up from the bottom of the screen. Yes, it certainly has all the hallmarks of your run-of-the-mill Doom-alike.

But it isn't. Oh no, Killing Time is more than a bloody, mindless and bloody-minded gore-fest, although it is just that too. With its bizarre 1930s haunted mansion (Alone In The Dark-esque) setting, its cleverly unravelling plot involving stolen clocks in the Middle East (no, we didn't make that up), and its emphasis on interaction over violence, Killing Time has "graphic adventure" pretensions, believe it or not.

3D is the future of adventure games - hell, it's the future of ALL games - so with Killing Time, Studio 3DO appear to be taking a step in the right direction. Let's hope they don't trip and, er, sprain an ankle or something.



3DO

Available: **DECEMBER**
 Category: **3D**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **STUDIO 3DO**

Tekwar



This one's full title is actually "William Shatner's Tekwar". That is because it is actually based upon the Tekwar series of books written by none other than William Shatner himself - the man who, for some of us, will always be the true Captain of the Enterprise.

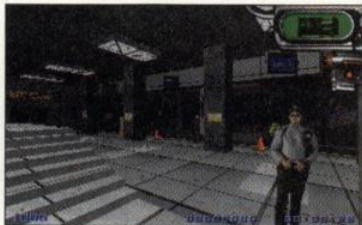
It seems that a couple of clever and well-respected cyberneticists have mysteriously gone missing. One was an expert in the "Matrix", the other was similarly talented in the field of "Tek" itself. The suspected culprits are the evil "Tek Lords". (Oh, Tek is a drug by the way) Anyway, in the FMV intro Bill (yep, the man himself) is a bit worried that this situation could cause a few problems. Indeed, he says that if the Tek Lords start broadcasting Tek via the Matrix then there will definitely be some big problems. This is where you come in. You have to find out what exactly is going on, and stop it basically.

Tekwar is essentially Doom. With a plot. It's a crazy idea, we know, but who knows, it just might work. First impressions are favourable - the graphics are realistic and detailed, the action takes place over a vast city and the buildings within which is a nice change, and you can get run down by speeding lorries. Which we like too. And Bill says "You're the best" to you as well. Which is even better.



PC CD ROM

Available: **DECEMBER**
 Category: **SHOOT'EM UP**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **CAPSTONE**



Hexen



Whooooa! Pinch me gently and tell me I'm not dreaming, this game is goood! Hexen - Beyond Heretic pushes the Doom engine just about as far as it'll go, according to Doom god John Romero and we're all nodding vigorously in agreement.

The starting point for any respectable Doom clone is the level design, here Hexen excels. Aside from the outstanding architectural creativity that sucks you in instantly, the worlds also make extreme use of devices. You like moving parts? You'll like Hexen. We're not just talking plentiful elevators and platforms, Hexen also features revolving doors, falling columns and earthquakes that shake the screen and shatter great bridges. This is just the shareware beta too, so expect some pretty incredible stuff from the full 41 level final.

Another advance is the utter lack of any linearity in the game. Hexen's 41 levels are in no way merely progressive stages, the portals that seemingly herald the official end of each level can in fact be used to revisit the earlier levels. This isn't just a gimmick, as the shareware's last level is called "seven portals" and apparently this level is just one of many central hubs which you'll be popping back to for access to higher levels as they become accessible. Switches may open doors in completely different levels too, so to get your mind around the concept, think of it all as one monster level divided into 41 linked sectors.

Where Heretic had a vague whiff of RPG about it, Hexen jumps in head first. From the outset you'll have to decide whether you want to play as either a Fighter, Cleric or Mage. Each has their own set of weapons and each specialises in a particular flavour of combat. The idea is to choose the one that suits your style. Fighters use only close range hacking weapons, although some of them cast forth flung fireballs. The Cleric is the compromise character, it mixes close-in weapons with long-range ones, while the Mage packs only long-range weaponry.

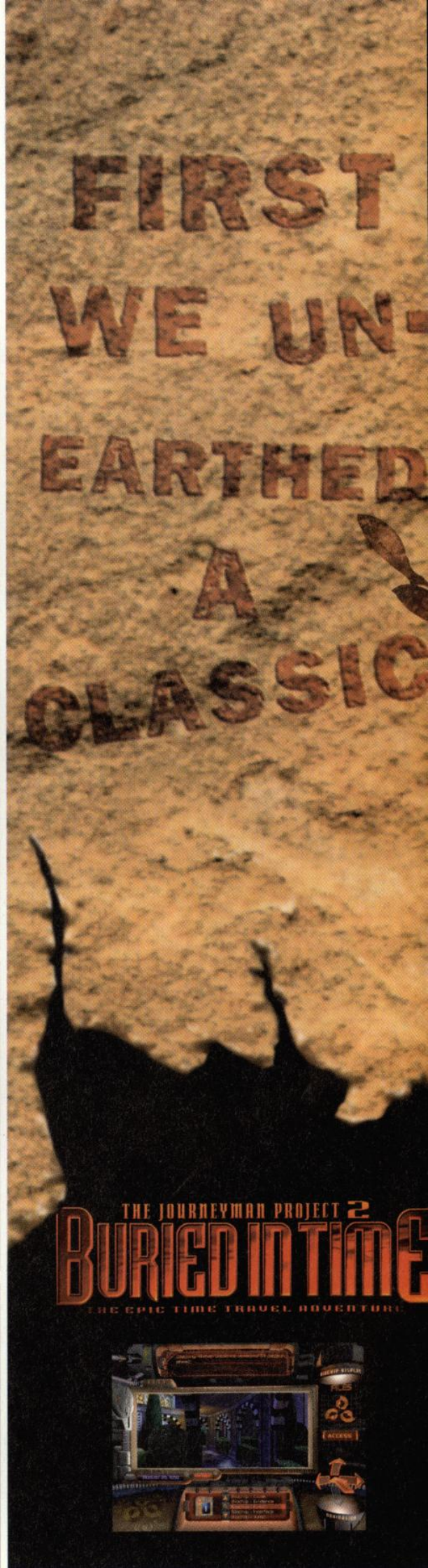
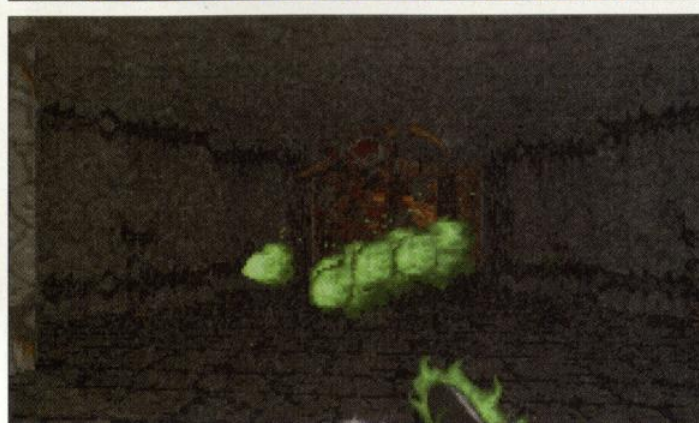
Hexen should have been released on October 30th. The promotional campaign includes the World's Biggest Deathmatch Competition. We're not exactly sure what form it'll take, but whatever it is, we'll be in it.

Grab the shareware game from Hyper@ctive's Dump area, then buy the thing when it comes out. It's awesome.



PC

Available: **NOVEMBER**
Category: **DOOMY RPG**
Players: **1-4**
Publisher: **iD**



Disappointed by *Daytona USA* on the Saturn? Yeah okay, who wasn't, right? Well, Sega obviously think they've learnt from their mistakes (or they think we'll buy any old crap as long as it's got a road and several wheels in it, no matter how many visual glitches there might be), because they have not one, but two brand-spanking new racers lined up on the grid, engines revving, waiting for the green light to come on.

Hang On GP '95



Hang On GP '95 is the latest in Sega's Hang On series of bike racers. The original Hang On was the first arcade game to boast the now ubiquitous, sit-on-bike form of control, if our memories serve us correctly. This new version should be lightning fast, like all the Hang On games, very bright and deliciously pretty to look at, and hopefully, as playable as it is in the arcade. It features two views - a "looking-out-over-the-handlebars" view, and a "peering-over-your-own-shoulder" view. And, personally, I love these things and can't wait to get my hands on this one...or maybe the one below.



SATURN

Available: DECEMBER
 Category: RACING
 Players: ONE
 Publisher: SEGA

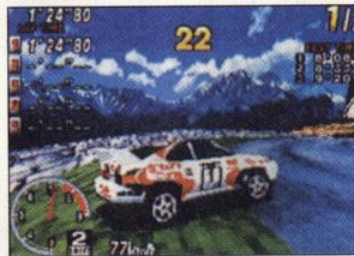
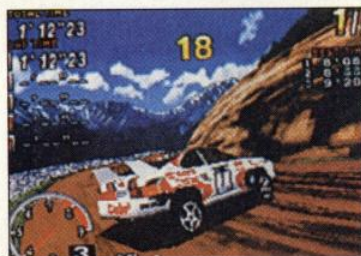


Sega Rally



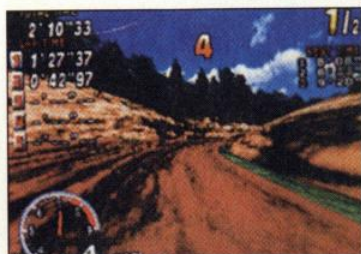
Sega Rally, a direct conversion of the rather good coin-op of the same name, is the second new Saturn racer. Just how accurate Sega Japan's AM3 programming team manage to get this new home version will be a matter of no small interest. In terms of graphics, we don't seriously expect it to match the coin-op (as *Daytona* as proved to us), but as long as the speed is up and the re-draw is down, the loss of background detail will be easy to swallow. However, what they should be able to achieve is getting the "feel" - yes, the "feel", perhaps the most important aspect of any decent racing game - arcade perfect. This'll be a beauty if they can.

Considering the limitations of *Daytona* though, I have a sneaking suspicion that Hang On, rather than Rally, may be the title to watch out for. You'll only find out in HYPHER anyway, after we've given them both a "test drive". Sorry.



SATURN

Available: DECEMBER
 Category: RACING
 Players: ONE
 Publisher: SEGA

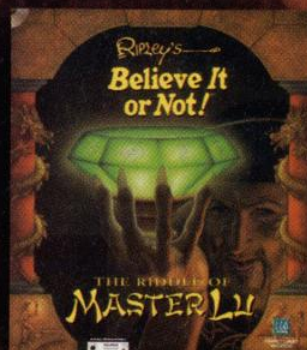


*..and you
thought the
woods were
full of trees*



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The Riddle of Master Lu



This is something that we're quite excited about, and hopefully you are too - HYPER's very first cover mounted CD is here. No doubt some of you ripped it off the front, played it through before even opening the mag, and thus know all about it already. For those of you who possess a little patience, The Riddle of Master Lu is a point-and-click adventure developed by the same smart people who brought us the acclaimed Buried In Time.

This is the first of a series of games based around Robert Ripley, and his cartoons called "Believe It or Not!". Ripley was a man who loved travel and adventure - he was, in fact, a bit of a real-life Indiana Jones. In this game you play Ripley, and the plot revolves around the mysterious tomb of Chin Shih Huang-Di, the first Emperor of China. For the purposes of the demo, you, accompanied by your companion, Mei Chen, begin in the Chinese city of Peiping (now Beijing), and your task here is to gain entry to the Hall of Classics.

Normally in a preview, we'd go into details about how the game works, what the graphics look like, and so on, but there seems little point in this case. You can judge for yourself. We will say though, that it does indeed look lovely...

Okay, instructions. Once the demo is underway (see box for more info) you should take a look at the Game Intro. Then you can select the Demo. Here you'll see yourself (in the hat), Mei Chen, and a bald guy. The icons at the bottom are Pick Up, Use, and Look, respectively. To the right of them is your inventory. And the Finger icon takes you back to the menu screen. Enjoy.

Oh, and if you get a bit stuck there's a Walkthru text file on the CD. Simply quit the game, and at the DOS prompt in the demo's directory, type EDIT WALKTHRU.TXT to get some assistance.

How to play your HYPER Cover CD

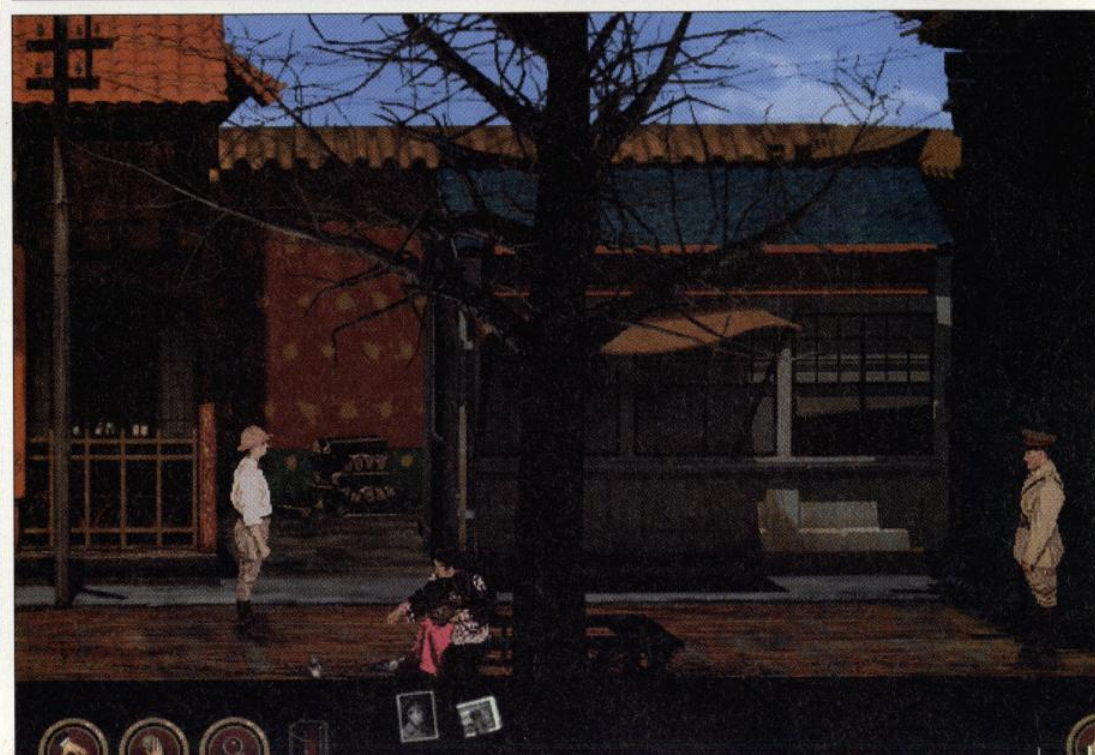
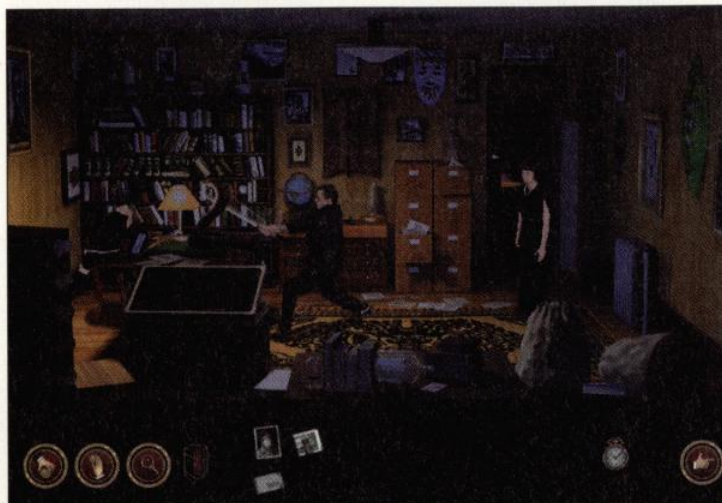
1. Remove CD from cover of mag. Sorry.
2. Turn on your computer and place CD in your CD ROM drive.
3. At the DOS prompt, type D:
(or what ever your CD ROM drive is).
4. Type INSTALL and the very easy-to-use installation program will pop up.
5. Follow the install through until it is complete.
6. At the DOS prompt again, type DEMO to start your Riddle of Master Lu demo.
7. To start the demo, type DEMO at the C: prompt and press ENTER.
7. If it doesn't work, go back and select the Normal installation, and make sure you read through everything. For more info, see README.DOC in the \RIPDEMO directory.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

- 486/25 (486/33 recommended)
- DOS 5.0
- 8 MB RAM
- 8MB Hard drive space
- Double speed CD ROM drive
- VESA compliant Super VGA video card (with VESA driver installed)
- Sound Blaster or compatible sound card
- Mouse

PC CD ROM

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **ADVENTURE**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **SANCTUARY WOODS**

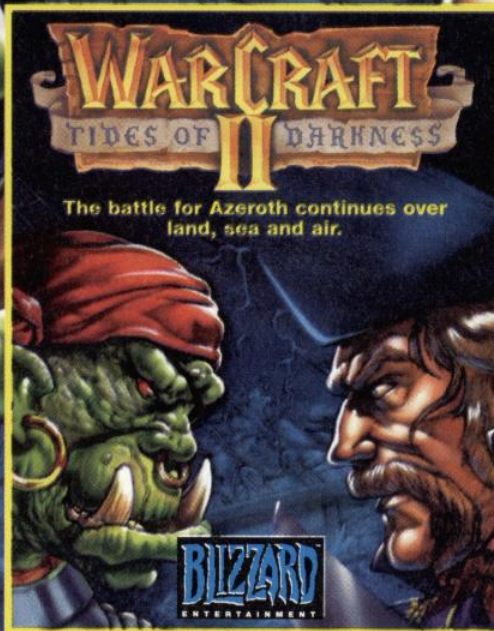


WARCRAFT

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—PC Gamer



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Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2

The first Thunderhawk was a BIG hit - well, it was on the Mega CD at least, and even though that was probably because it's the only good game on the damn thing, there's no doubting that it was a GOOD game. In fact in the very first issue of HYPER it scored the not inconsiderable score of 94%. Anyway, the sequel is here, and Core are promising that it will be "faster than anything you've seen". What the HYPER crew is waiting for is a game that is just so fast you can't even see it at all. Now that would really enhance the gameplay, don't you think?

Firestorm is, like the original, a 3D helicopter arcade combat simulation shoot 'em up type experience, but with the obligatory all-new graphics and other innovations. Like the potentially cool "virtual cockpit" which allows the player to swivel around 180 degrees, making it much easier to track the enemy. A particularly useful feature whilst in combat I would anticipate. And there looks like being quite a bit of combat too, as 37 missions make up the game.

Core are promising to have Firestorm out by Christmas, and we'll do our best to review it by then too.




**PC/SATURN
PLAYSTATION**

Available: **DECEMBER**
 Category: **SHOOT'EM UP**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **CORE**



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Annihilate
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Out Now!

 **Start** In a remote galaxy, a mutant strain of genetically engineered insects produced a honey so toxic it wiped out all life on the planet. Quarantined for decades, the planet has recently been inhabited by the Black Nexus Mob, who genetically re-engineered the insects and turned the toxic honey into a deadly biological weapon. You must infiltrate the Black Nexus, save a compatriot, annihilate The Hive, and exterminate the Hivasects. True 32-bit autoplay. Killer graphics and 18 levels of awesome action/arcade gameplay that takes place on two planets - developed exclusively for use with Windows®95!



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THE HIVE



Wing Commander 4



It took three monster games, three spin-offs and more mission disks than we can remember, but we finally got those Kilrathi beat. So what's a space fighter jock to do with his new found spare time?

In the case of Christopher Blair (your character in the games, played with animated flair by the man of a thousand expressions, Mark Hamill) it's back to farm boy status. Your life is a simple one and that's the way you like it. Not even the temptation of a womp rat shoot in Beggar's Canyon could draw you from your hard earned existence of uncomplicated peace... or so you thought.

Origin had to spoil the party by giving another \$10 million to Wing Commander producer Chris Roberts, so it's back to the cockpit for you, my boy. It seems a bunch of trouble makers are stirring up some grief for the peace loving citizens of Earth and civil war has broken out. The Confederation vs. the Borderworlds are the teams and guess whose help the Confed needs?

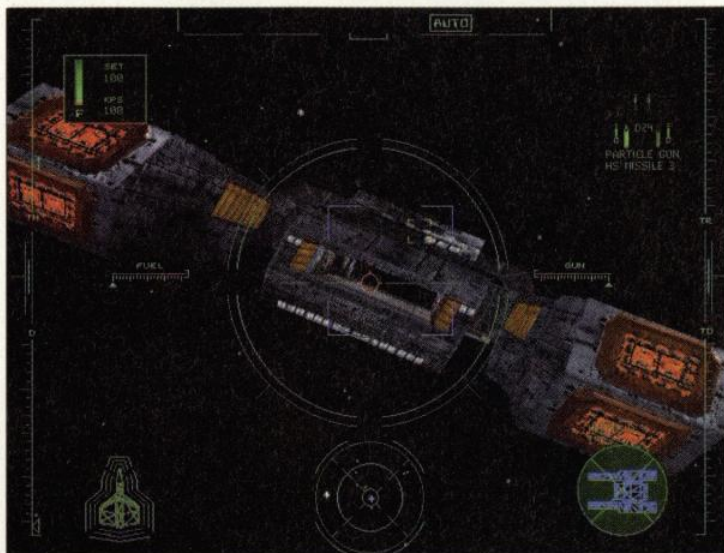
Wing Commander 4 features quite a few evolutionary enhancements to the game engine that's remained basically unchanged since the beginning. The most obvious is the shedding of the cockpit graphics, in favour of a full screen view with cool looking and highly functional HUD graphics. The full screen option has always been there in the Wing games, with its selection being the first thing most serious pilots do at the start of a mission. It seems the Origin team had a look at the way people play their games. It also seems they had a look up into the night sky and realised space is pitch black, instead of the irritating navy blue of Wing 3.

Aside from these subtle changes, the graphics remain mostly unchanged. Explosions are better, but that's about it. We're not complaining though, Wing 3 was the best looking space combat sim ever, Wing 4 is better still.

New ships to fly and new ones to destroy are naturally included. The preview copy we played revealed improved dogfighting AI. They'll pull some serious manoeuvres now, instead of making predictable and repetitive head-on attacks. We're yet to see the sort of missions Wing 4 will have us flying, but cool mission design is a solid feature of the Wing series, so we're pretty confident.

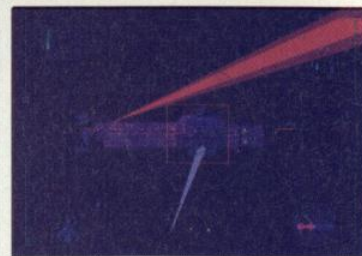
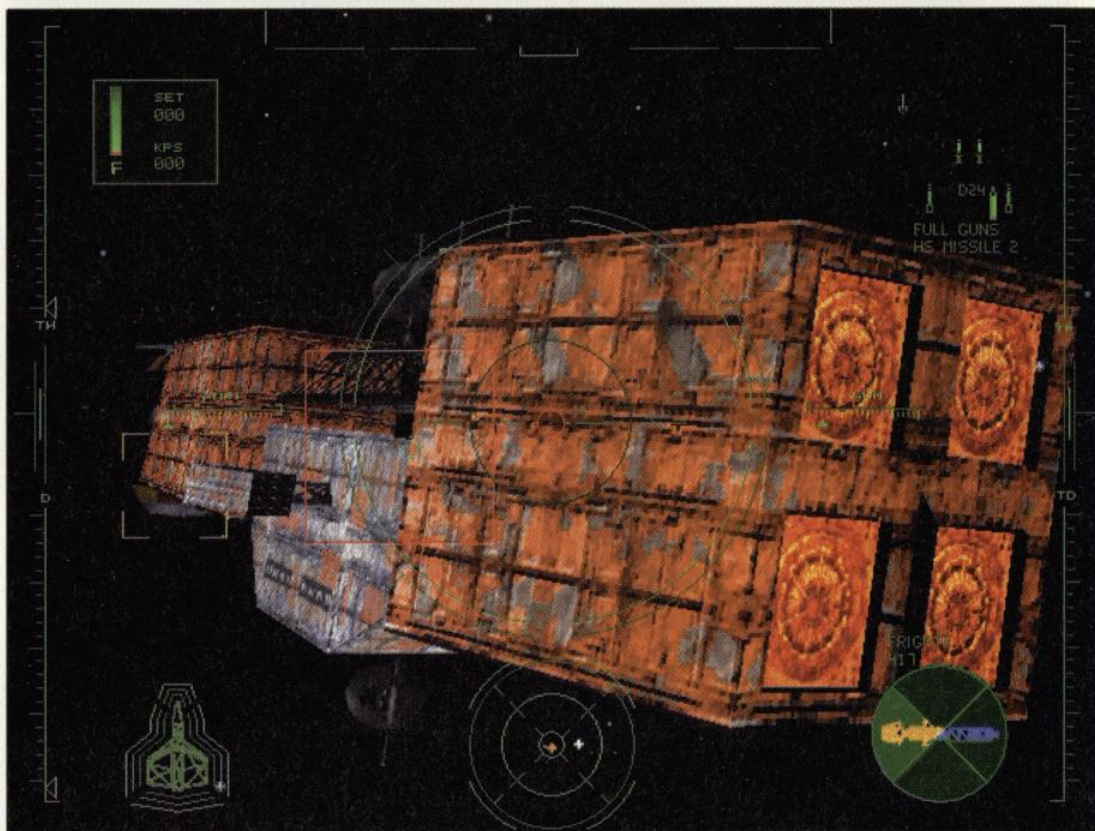
Truckloads of interactive movie bits should please fans of this sort of thing. Wing 3 used computer generated backdrops for Mark, Malcolm and co. to do their stuff against, whereas Wing 4 has twice the budget so it has real sets. Big time drama and a gritty storyline make for some entertaining viewing between dogfights.

Start getting excited now kids, and we'll tell you the full story next issue.



PC CD ROM

Available: **DECEMBER**
 Category: **INTERACTIVE
 MOVIE/ACTION**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **ORIGIN**



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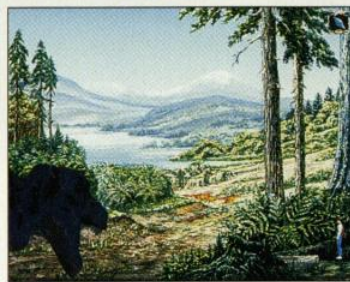
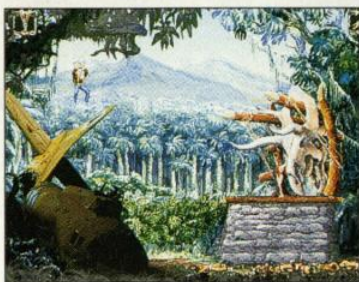
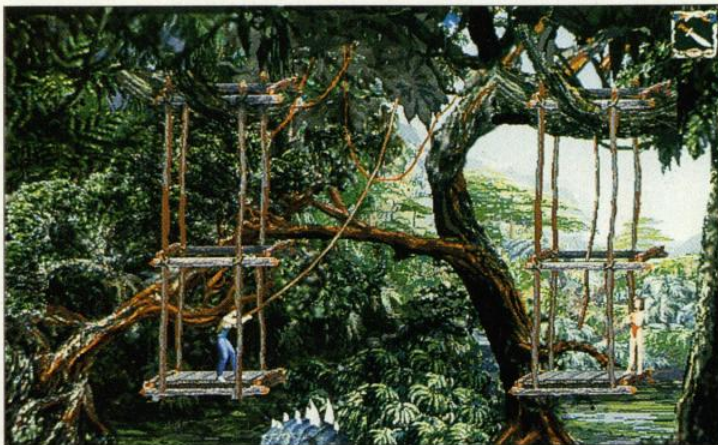
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Bermuda Syndrome

You are Jack Thompson. No, not the sun-baked larrikin Aussie actor, but J.J.Thompson, an American bomber pilot on a secret mission over the Bermuda Triangle. And we all know how weird and mysterious the Triangle is... woooo! Sounds like an action/adventure to me. And a very scrumptious looking one too.

If you harbour amazing powers of deduction, you may be able to tell from the screenshots that things look a bit Flashback... and you'd be right. The in-game action looks like a pumped-up, Flashback of the future, with the digitised characters leaping about in a very familiar fashion. Of course, being a CD-ROM, the amount of data they've crammed in means that the level of animation is far superior. Very life-like indeed. The dinosaurs look fantastic — in a 3D rendered kinda way — and it all looks set to be a pretty damn yummy-looking game in the final version. The wow-o-meter is throbbing violently. It seems that being trapped in an alternate time-space dimension has never been so much fun! 250 locations, 70 enemies and up to 50 levels of play is certainly nothing to sneeze at. We can't wait.



PC CD ROM

Available: **DECEMBER**
 Category: **ADVENTURE**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **BMG INTERACTIVE**



EA Sports International Cricket

Thwack! The meaty sound of leather on willow has resonated forth from PC speakers in more than a few forms over the years. Oddly though, none of the cricket games we've played has captured the feel of cricket accurately. No PC game yet has bothered to do more than duplicate the basics of chucking a ball and having it pelted by the bloke at the other end of the pitch.

Enter International Cricket from EA Sports. It started life as Super International Cricket for the SNES, but the hormone treatment it's undergone has transformed the game into something different entirely. This is a good thing. The SNES game was OK, but had the misfortune to be released at the same time as the vastly superior Brian Lara Cricket on Mega Drive.

International Cricket features loads of FMV. Normally this would bother us a bit, but here it works. Do something incredible and the shot of a bunch of cricket jabs cheering madly warms your insides. As does the hammy performance of the Wide World of Sports style commentators - complete with grossly misguided dress sense.

We only had the beta to muck around with, but the potential for a gem of a game was plain. You can actually see most of the oval during fielding. The player animations are also revolutionary, the bowlers especially move beautifully. You can even go the bodyline approach and chuckle with glee when the batsman goes down screaming.

International Cricket is shaping up to be a right boomer. We'll give you a full commentary after the break.



PC CD ROM

Available: **DECEMBER**
 Category: **SPORTS**
 Players: **1-3**
 Publisher: **EA SPORTS**



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Rave Racer

❖ Namco

Hurray for Rave Racer! Namco has finally upgraded the classic Ridge Racer and left it in its own cloud of ozone depleting exhaust. Carbon dioxide doesn't exist in Rave Racer. These cars are propelled by pure lollipop. Rave Racer feels totally artificial which is the reason it's so cool.

After getting over the tacky biker girl on the promo screen, you are confronted (again) by scantily clad females. Then there is the standard auto or 6 speed manual and the choice of tracks. Choice of tracks is subject to the decision between 'Link' or 'Solo' play. Make sure you choose link over solo (even if you're playing solo) as the track options are more interesting. The selections for solo are: Ridge Racer (easy); City (medium); Mountain (hard); and Mountain Expert (really hard). For multiplayer (link), the tracks are: Ridge Racer Short (novice); City (intermediate); Ridge Racer Long (advanced) and Mountain (professional). If you haven't guessed already, the Ridge Racer tracks are duplicates of the original RR tracks. But now it's far more exciting as you're in control of a Toyota Supra, which drives like a dream. The soundtrack in some parts is truly excellent, with the manic beats and melodies totally enhancing the game's dreamy playability.

Both City and Mountain courses are truly excellent with the graphics being almost faultless. It is easy to predict the type of corner approaching as road signs and visual clarity enable you and your vehicle to get the most (sideways action) from both tracks. But not only are the corners challenging, there are now bigger jumps. This reviewer found himself power fish-tailing out of a few corners - just like in real life. Yeee Harr!!

That's enough from me -you know what you have to do. Get out of the house and summon the crew. After all, there's a lot of killing and racing to do. Just make sure you're doing it at the arcade - it's safer for everyone!

★★★★ 1/2



Indy 500

❖ Sega

The picture: Indianapolis 500, a sun scorched four sided racetrack, huge horsepower engines, thousands of macho beer-chugging Americans and mandatory flag-waving babes. So what! What's the point in a rectangular track? We came to the conclusion that it's all in the accidents. Accidents are exciting - especially at 300kph. But there are no ferocious fireballing accidents, no screeching of tires, no deep throated engine howl, no shuddering crash barriers. None of it - just a smooth ride with sun bleached colours whizzing by. Suddenly the game becomes pointless.

Behind all this fancy packaging and superb graphics is a game in which mastery of gear changes, breaking and fine tuned cornering all add up to make every time check a close one. Many times you'll find yourself just mere metres short of a check point or finishing line. Otherwise the game is in the tradition of all good car racing games, ie auto / manual, gears; variable view points and of course track selection (Indy 500- boring, Highland raceway - medium, Bayside Street-hard)

A highlight of the game is the driver's viewpoint in which one can see the spinning front wheels, dashboard and the driver's arms. Add this to a pumping guitar solo track (very ZZ Top inspired) and a few friends and the game can finally be in a league of its own. For pure fun though, it doesn't touch Daytona or Sega Rally.

★★★ 1/2

Rail Chase 2

❖ Sega

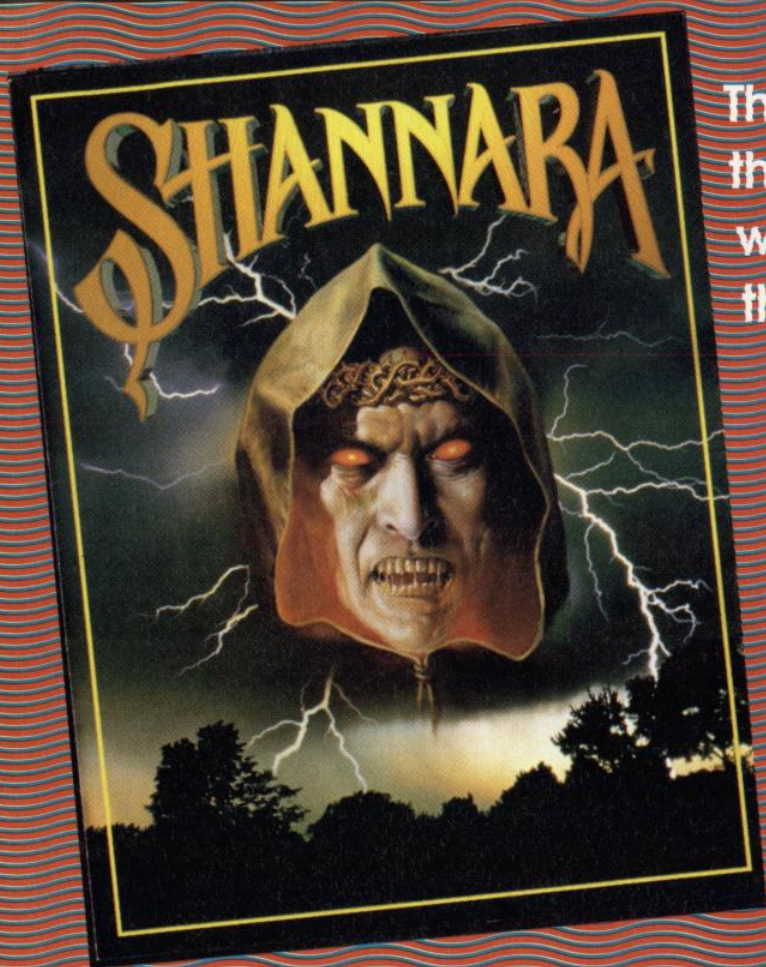
You've just escaped from a giant fortress deep in the heart of wartime Bavaria and your final objective (an airfield) is at the bottom of a really long hill. Conveniently, a discarded rail car with two machine guns and 29 million rounds of ammunition has been obtained- and from here it's all downhill. So the plot has been set for a scenic trail of destruction. You and your beautiful blonde female companion (alternately; you and your ruggedly handsome male companion), will be plummeting through mines, factories, forests, villages, canyons, towns and of course- a shrine. The whole game doesn't just smell, but reeks of the mine car chase from the film 'Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom'.

Even though this game is a polygon upgrade from its predecessor, it still fails to give me the weapon control I lust for. The fighter pilot joystick just doesn't cut it. Nor do the (at times) barely legible crosshairs. I want to see those cursed Nazis running from the flaming barrel of a giant machine gun.

As for realism, the graphics flow fairly smoothly, though at times they could encourage vomiting as the track has so many twists and turns that sometimes the pixel outrun themselves. Nonetheless, this game is still beyond just novelty value and will definitely satisfy your Indy fantasies. Make sure you check it out with a friend who hates Nazis-but loves a great adventure.

★★★★ 1/2

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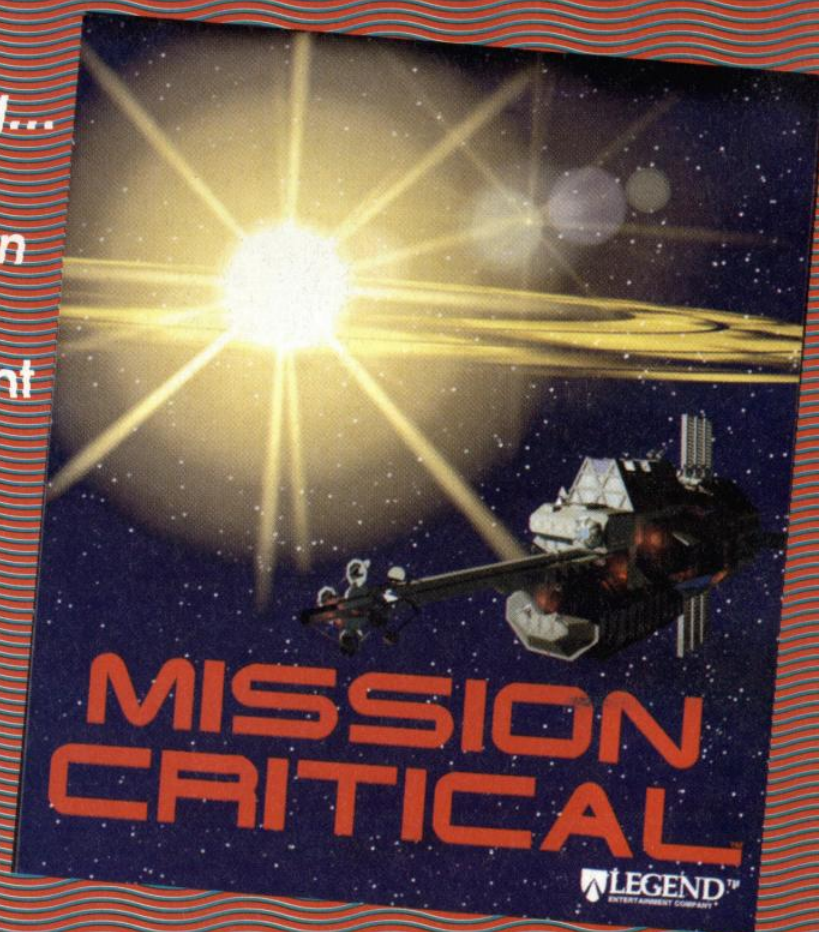
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EARTHWORM

SNES



AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: ACTION/PLATFORM ■ PLAYERS: ONE ■ PUBLISHER: SHINY ■ PRICE: \$19.95 ■ RATING: G8



ANYONE WHO THOUGHT ALL THE GOOD IDEAS HAVE BEEN HAD SHOULD PAY ATTENTION. EARTHWORM JIM 2 IS A MASTERPIECE AND BEN MANSILL HAD TO BE DRAGGED KICKING AND SCREAMING FROM THE GAME TO WRITE THIS REVIEW...

Let's talk worms. Jim 1 was a winner because it set an outrageously cool worm of action in a world of starkly black humour, which in turn was crammed with just about the finest platform action we've ever seen. For Jim 2 we want exactly the same please, but heaps more if it's not too much trouble...

A FRIEND CALLED SNOT

They delivered! Thanks to the talented Shiny team, our Jim is back, packing a whip of his own and attitude to burn. He's got a new pal too, and we'd like you to meet Snot. 'cos he's (it's?) about the most useful lump of green ooze we've ever come across. Snot stretches forth from his home in Jim's backpack to do either his stretch and cling Tarzan swing thing, or his amazingly helpful parachute impression. It's good to have friends like Snot, because the world of Earthworm Jim 2 will soundly test every skill you've got... or wish you had.

Like Jim 1, the sequel changes its tune dramatically with each new level. Nothing's boring here, as each time you start a new level it feels like your jumping into a whole new game.

Jim 2 opens to a traditional platforming level called Anything But Tangerines that'll have you feeling right at home. Get cracking with that whip and let loose with Jim's rapid-fire plasma gun - it's the same main weapon Jim packed originally, and it's possibly the coolest thing you can shoot in any console game. There's plenty in this first level to practise with and find your Jim form again. Ultra-potent weapons are lying around everywhere, there's a homing-in missile launcher that'll dispatch anything (with little homes), or the amazing screen-clearing smart bomb gun called the Barn Blaster that unleashes a massive burst of energy and leaves Jim on the ground scratching his head in bewilderment.

RADICAL U-TURN

But where level one is as traditional as an Earthworm Jim level can be, each one after takes a radical U-turn. Take the Flying Cave Salamander level; it smells a lot like the Mega Drive classic Subterrania, but instead of a cool spaceship exploring some deep caves, you control a kind of sausage larval thing with almost non-existent wings. This is presumably a Flying Cave Salamander and holding down a button gets it flapping madly, ever so slowly it inches in your desired direction, gravity taking over once you let up. The cave walls are plastered thick with a wriggling amoeba sort of substance, get too close and it'll suck you in. The caper is to manoeuvre carefully through the cave maze, not so easy when most narrow gaps are surrounded by pinball bumpers that'll shoot you straight into the sucking walls if you so much as breathe on them. The pace is way slower here than on other levels, but the gameplay is compelling and the concentration you'll need is intense.

Get through and you're in for a few minutes of Puppy Love. This wee interlude shows up between most levels, with your job to move an exhausted Jim back and forth, saving falling puppies by getting the big cushion thing Jim is carrying under them before they splatter. It's pretty damn silly, but it's so much fun lesser companies could have gotten away with releasing it as a stand-alone game.

Another thing that you'll get at the end of a level is a warm "well done" from a big and happy looking cow. A small touch that makes a big difference.

COWS, UDDERS AND UFOs

Shiny appear quite fond of our bovine friends. Cows play a big role in the level called Udderly Abducted, where you must collect cows as they grow from cow plants (you knew that's where they came from, didn't you?), then a heavily overloaded and appropriately slowed Jim has to lug each cow a hefty distance to the milking shed. Once there, the milk weighs down a huge pail, which in turn raises a gate by way of a pulley. Watching Jim stagger along under the weight of a cow three times his size is a hoot, as is trying to fend off the UFOs which continually harass. You just don't put cows in a game without making the old UFO cattle mutilation joke - even if you're as cool as Shiny.

In other stages, Jim literally blasts through an underground maze (called Lorenzen's Soil), or inhales the contents of a gas tank (contents unknown) for an inflated head flight, he'll do the Zaxxon thing in an arcade scroller and take on the invincible might of the killer filing cabinets. There's heaps more too, this is a big game and every bit of it is magic. There's life in the old 16-bit machines yet!!

Jim's real funny too, and as we all know, games that make you laugh out loud are rare. This, plus gameplay to die for, makes Jim 2 a game you simply have to own. As for me, I'm off to play it again for the zillionth time. It's tough work, but I need to keep at it so I know when it stops getting better each time...



THE MEGA DRIVE



RAMBLING

MEGA DRIVE



GRAPHICS 94 - JIM'S GOT THE MOVES, THE WAY HE GETS AROUND GIVES "FLUID ANIMATION" A WATERY NEW MEANING. FOR SHEER STYLE NOTHING CAN TOUCH THIS. ■ SOUND 92 - GREAT MUSIC, HILARIOUS EFFECTS AND MEATY WEAPON NOISES. THESE ARE GOOD THINGS. ■ GAMEPLAY 94 - THE GAMEPLAY SPARKLES WITH AN ETHEREAL SPECIALNESS THAT'LL HAVE YOU TINGLING ALL OVER WITH MAGICAL JOY... IS THAT CLEAR? ■ LONGTERM 90 - OF COURSE! IT'S A BLOODY GOOD GAME AND YOU'LL NEVER GET SICK OF IT, OK? ■ OVERALL 93 - BUDDING GAME DESIGNERS SHOULD HANG OUT WITH THIS JIM GUY FOR A WHILE - THEY MIGHT LEARN SOMETHING. ONE OF THE BEST GAMES IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD.

PARADE



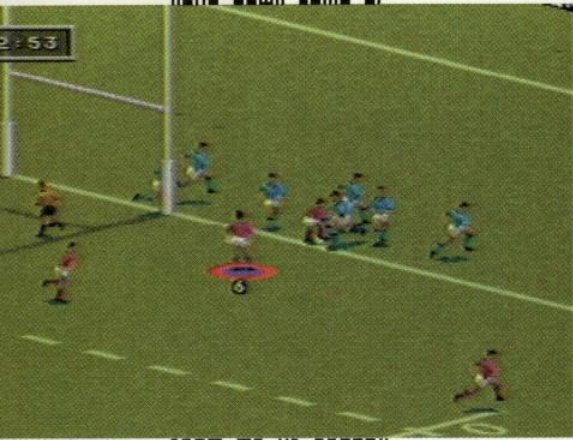
HEAD DOWN BUMS UP



MEN, WHITE LINES AND SOME GRASS



BUFFALO BOY GOES 'ROUND THE OUTSIDE



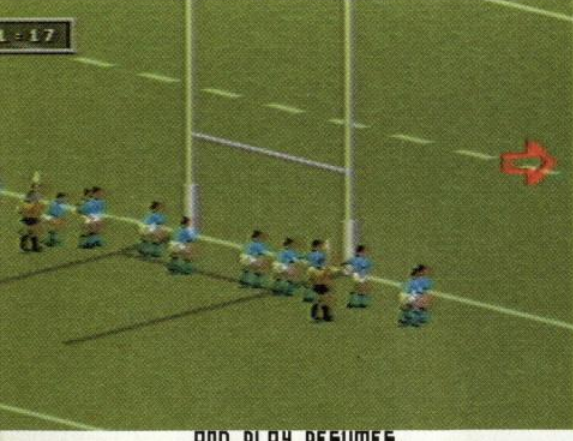
BEAM ME UP SCOTTY



AND THE CROWD GOES WILD... 'WILD'



HEY MATE, YOU DROPPED YOUR SOAP!



... AND PLAY RESUMES



THAT PAIN REO GIBB IS STILL FIGHTING ME!



MAKE THE BREAK...

VISUALS 88 - A TOUGH ANIMATION TASK AND THEY'VE DONE A FINE JOB, THE PLAYERS HAVE TO BE SMALL, BUT THE DETAIL MAKES UP FOR IT. ■ **SOUND 80** - STANDARD SPORT NOISES, ALTHOUGH THE SOUND OF THE PLAYER HITTING THE GOAL POST IS A HIGHLIGHT. ■ **GAMEPLAY 88** - LOTS TO DO, BUT ALL VERY LOGICAL, FASTER AND TOUGHER THAN RUGBY WORLD CUP ■ **LONGTERM 90** - IN TWO PLAYER MODE, WITH A FELLOW FAN, YOU'LL BE PLAYING THIS FOR A LONG TIME. ■ **OVERALL 87** - I LOVE THIS, AS WILL FANS OF SPORTS GAMES GENERALLY. NON-FANS MAY WANT TO CHECK IT OUT FIRST.

MEGA

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: SPORTS ■ PLAYERS: 1-4 ■ PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ RATING: G

EA SPORTS HAVE FINALLY TURNED THEIR ATTENTION TO AN AUSTRALIAN SPORTS LICENSE AND WHADDYA KNOW IT'S A WINNER. STRETCH ARMSTRONG IS THE MAN WITH THE BALL...

Well, first up I had better declare my interest. I am a card-carrying, season ticket-holding, Footy Show-watching rugby league nut. Yeah, yeah. I appreciate that it's a sport developed by, played by, watched by and administered by boof heads, and that its reportage carries more cliches per column inch than any other sport, but I love it all the same. I cried when Artie Beetson left the Roosters, I laughed when Don McKinnon became concussed and pissed on the field and I despise the Brisbane Broncos with a passion that's somewhat unnatural. I am, from the comfort of my lounge, prepared to go the hard yards, to put self preservation on the back burner and, at the end of the day, I'm just happy to come away with the two points. At my place, rugby league is always the winner.

And, given that I love the league, that I love sports games and that the league has now transported itself to the digitised arena (sans Tina Turner, I'm glad to say), I'm as happy as a steroid dealer at a Gladiators' barbeque.

TAKING IT UP THE MIDDLE

Dreamtime is a local company and, in conjunction with EA, they've taken the engine from EA's Rugby World Cup (a game we loved here last Christmas) and converted it over to the league format. Along with that, they've snagged the official ARL licence and so all the current Winfield Cup teams, British teams, State of Origin and international teams (though not the real players) are at your disposal. How those teams will all stack up after the ARL/Super League court case remains to be seen, but that, as they say, is another story.

While it does use the rugby union game as its base, this game has some significant advantages: first, the nature of rugby league as a sport lends itself more readily, I think, to game conversion. Two less players per team opens the field up considerably and the game doesn't get bogged down in interminable rucks and mauls, my one major gripe about Rugby World Cup (RWC). Also, the pace of the game itself has been stepped up significantly and the passing is much more reliant on your skill as a player, making the game altogether more challenging and hectic as a result.

Graphically, it will look very familiar to players of RWC. Yes, the players are small but with 26 of them to fit onto the field that's inevitable. Given their smallness, the detail is excellent - you will now notice an ability to fend and to throw the dummy (a necessary option for all you ball hogs out there) as well as to simply munch the opposition in defence. The occasional one on one tackle looks more like an Alfie Langer trip, but that just tends to generate greater verbal abuse among participants when you're in multi-player mode.

OUT PACING THE COVER DEFENCE

Option-wise, there's plenty going on as well. You can play a full 22 round ARL premiership, along with an English premiership or an international tournament. Apart from that, of course, there's exhibitions available between all teams as well. So if you've long argued that the Papua New Guinean Kumuls would be too good for the NQ Cowboys (and who hasn't?), here's your chance to put that theory to the test. Allowing for that, a lot of work has gone into emulating the various strengths and weaknesses of each team and it's a big improvement over RWC, where the teams were largely generic. So here, when the Manly second rower breaks through and out paces the cover defence, he may not have "S. Menzies" written on his back but we all know that's who it is (unless it's actually HYPER's ex-deputy ed Andrew Humphreys. That boy can play!). This, and the fact that the players have their number at their feet as they play, will impress real students of the game.

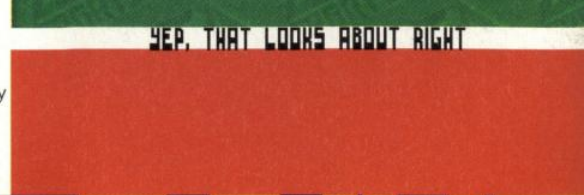
Do we have complaints? Well, some. The dummy half can occasionally take an age to arrive and sometimes the computer defence is so eager its hard to get yourself moving (Eddie Ward must be reffing) but we're told this has been corrected from the Beta version we reviewed. Also, I've had some trouble getting clearing kicks away but that may just be due to the fact that I insist on playing as the Roosters. The downside of accurate team emulation is that my beloved team are as big a joke on the Sega as they are in real life. Why is life so cruel?

All up though, the negatives are very minor and this is a top notch Christmas contender. If this is to be a franchise, my wish list would include real player names, more individual player stats and season play leaders, as in the US baseball games, but right here and right now this game is a big winner in one player mode and an absolute hoot with two or more. League fans are sure to embrace this, and now there never need be an off season again. See you on the paddock.



CANT GET ANY BETTER THAN THAT

Score Record		
Manly		Cronulla
2	Tries	0
1/2	Conversions	0/0
1	Drop Goals	0
0/0	Penalty Kicks	0/0
11	TOTAL	0



MEGA DRIVE

AVAILABLE: DECEMBER ■ CATEGORY: PLATFORM ■ PLAYERS: ONE ■ PUBLISHER: NINTENDO ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ RATING: G



CUTE CUTE CUTE CUTE...



MR MARIO BUBBLE-HEAD



A NON-THREATENING GHOST

THE ITALIAN-AMERICAN PLUMBER AND HIS FAITHFUL MOUNT, YOSHI HAVE FINALLY REAPPEARED IN AN OLD-STYLE PLATFORM TITLE. BUT THERE'S NOTHING OLD-STYLE ABOUT THIS GAME. STEVE POLAK PULLS ON AN OVER-SIZED RED CAP AND DOES THE MARIO THANG...

If there was one character who symbolised Nintendo's success as a gaming superpower it would be Mario. The feisty little plumber who was named after Nintendo of America's first landlord has been Nintendo's biggest money magnet. That said, it's been a touch quiet on the cap and ridiculous moustache front recently. But finally something new is here, and Mario fans can expect to be totally enraptured for hours on end when they get their mitts on the latest instalment in the saga.

APPEARANCES ARE DECEIVING

First impressions of this game are deceptive, and you might even feel like Nintendo have taken a step backwards. Yoshi's Island doesn't have the SGI factor of recent Nintendo hits Killer Instinct or Donkey Kong Country. Neither does it appear to be a revolutionary new game formula like the innovative Unirally. But this game is still quite a gem, which definitely deserves a place in your collection.

"WHY?", I HEAR YOU ASK.

Well, Yoshi's Island is one of the few games to receive the Miyamoto treatment. And it is fair to say that this one man has contributed more to Nintendo's coffers than any other individual in the company, due to his insightful genius when it comes to finely crafted fun. Were it not for Miyamoto, Yoshi's Island (and the whole Mario phenomenon for that matter) would have never existed. And it seems that the man has done it again as Yoshi's Island is so beautifully playable that it's hard to fault. There are heaps of new special weapons, and the way you control Yoshi (with the young Mario riding on top) is so intuitively easy it is a joy for experienced Mario maniacs as well as initiates who haven't touched digit to joypad yet.

BACK IN TIME

Yoshi's Island takes the player back in time, as you steer an adolescent Mario (complete with oversized hat, baggy pants, and minus the all important moustache!) through a vast world of platform levels in search of his kidnapped brother Luigi. Mario was on the way to his parents (in the stork's beak if you don't mind), but unfortunately the delivery bird was mugged by one of King Koopa's cronies, and Mario was only saved from certain death by Yoshi's intervention. Mario now has to save his brother and deliver the prerequisite comeuppance to Koopa. OK so its not much of a plot, but at least it is better than Melrose Place (what isn't).

Yoshi's Island is the first Super FX technology based cartridge to be used for 2D sprite based graphics (rather than the 3D polygons of Stunt FX or Vortex), and as such you might wonder at first why Nintendo bothered with the RISC processing power of the chip to produce a conventional title such as this. But Yoshi's Island does benefit from the technology, it's just not so obvious from the start. Firstly the sprites animate, and 'morph' with a degree of fluidity which previous Mario titles were simply not capable of. Also the end of level bosses are huge, and extremely well animated.

In contrast to the starkly realistic SGI rendered images of more recent titles like Killer Instinct and DKC, Yoshi's Island marks a return to the 'good old days' of user friendly cartoon visuals. However don't think that this is a step backwards in terms of visual sophistication, as the style may be a return to the past, but the way that the visuals are implemented is very tasty. The SFX chip seems to handle graphic tricks like parallax scrolling and even 'morphing' with relative ease and there are even a few 3D bits which would not have been possible without SFX.

TECHNICAL BRILLIANCE PLUS ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY

However all of this technical brilliance would be no use if the game lacked the all important addictive gameplay factor. Yoshi's Island does backflips in this critical department, as there are heaps of well thought out touches which should bring a wry smile to most players faces. In particular check out the cheesy subgames, where you play scratch lotto, and other great culturally enriching pursuits in order to gain extra lives and bonuses. This sort of comic entertainment is synonymous with Miyamoto's style, and Yoshi's Island delivers lashings of it. There are also multiple routes through the worlds (a Miyamoto trademark), and a wonderful sense of varied and eclectically constructed game worlds which are a mile away from the boring "left to right" platform scrolling fare most other games companies seem content to release.

Yoshi's Island delivers an eminently playable package, which somehow breathes life into a genre which most people are finding rather dated these days. Therefore it's a must for all SNES owners when it finally hits the shelves in December.



AND SUPER MARIO WORLD 2 REVIEW



YOU KNOW IT'S A POISONOUS PLANT IF IT TRIES TO BITE YOU



NICE CANYON WORK



THE WORLD'S FIRST MIRROR BALL



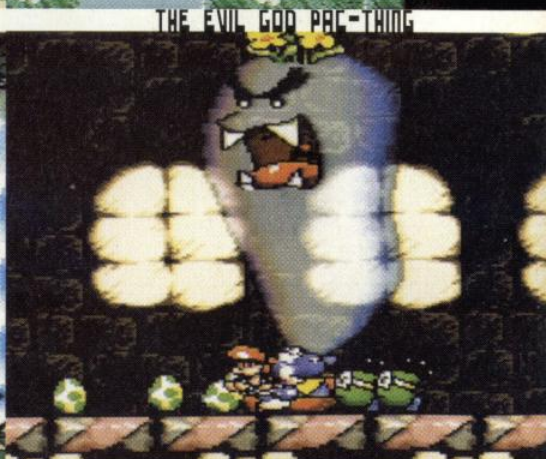
100% COTTAGE



COVER CUTS MENEXES...



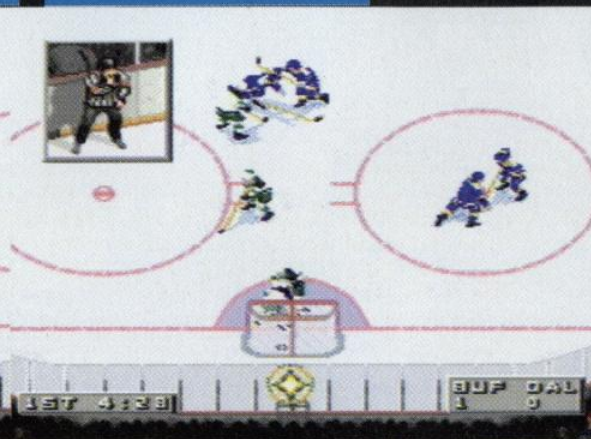
THE EVIL GOD BELONGS



GRAPHICS 93 - BRIGHT, COLOURFUL, CARTOONY - THE GRAPHICS MIGHT LOOK CHILD-LIKE BUT THEY'RE NOT, THERE ARE SOME VERY SEXY GRAPHIC TRICKS USING THE SFX CHIP. ■ SOUND 89 - IT'S VERY ZELDA - SYNTHY, AMBIENT STUFF WITH SOME CHEESY MARIO CHOONS THROWN IN FOR GOOD MEASURE. ■ GAMEPLAY 91 - THE CLASSIC MARIO GAMEPLAY IS HERE IN BUCKETLOADS AND IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU'RE A VETERAN OR NOVICE - YOU'LL LOVE THIS GAME. ■ LONGTERM VALUE 10 - IT'S A MARIO GAME!! YOU'LL BE SPENDING WEEKS AND WEEKS TRYING TO CRACK EVERYTHING WIDE OPEN. ■ OVERALL 92 - WE LOVE MARIO, HE'S NOT DEAD YET AND NEITHER IS 16BIT.



SECOND PRIZE IS DINNER WITH TONISH HARDING



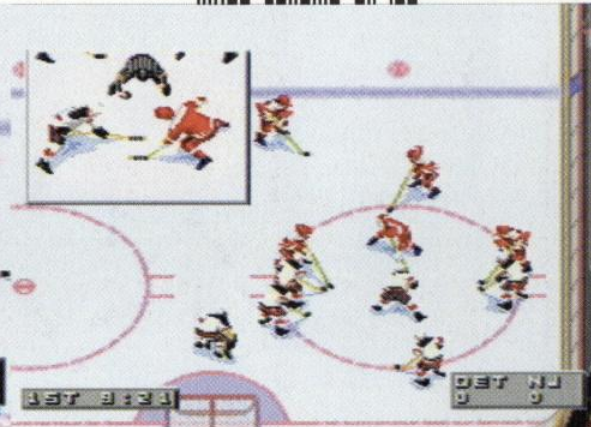
MAKE BONDING ON ICE



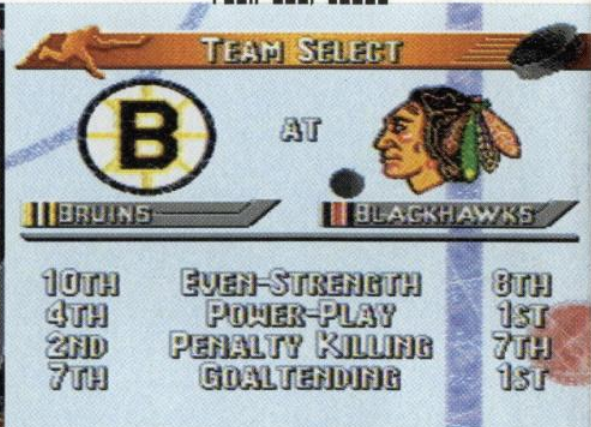
PUCK YOU, BUDDY



SLIPPIN' AND A SLIDIN'



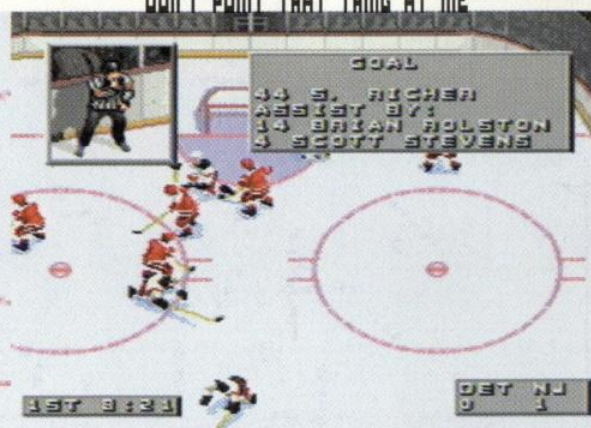
DON'T POINT THAT THING AT ME



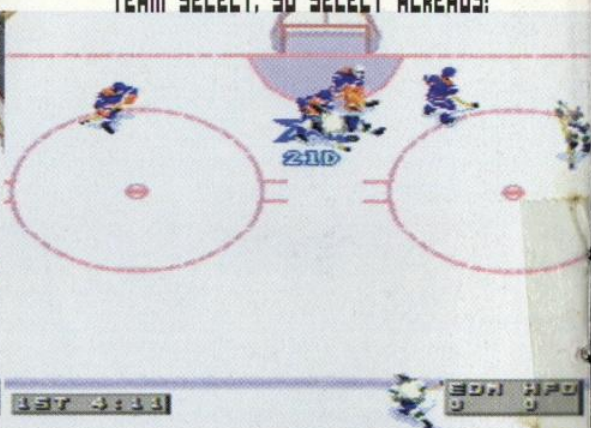
TEAM SELECT, SO SELECT ALREADY!



CARNAGE



GO FLASH GO!



MILKY WHITE GEARIES WITH PINK PATS IN THE MIDDLE

GRAPHICS 89 - SPUNKY FIFA-ESQUE "VIRTUAL STADIUM" GRAPHICS. VERY NICE INDEED. ■ SOUND - 85 THE CROWD ROARS, PUCKS SLAM INTO RIB CAGES AND PLAYERS SLAM INTO EVERYTHING JUST LIKE THEY SHOULD. ■ GAMEPLAY 95 - COMPLEX BUT REWARDING, AND AS A MULTI-PLAYER GAME IT'S ALMOST UNPARALLELED. ■ LONGTERM 90 - THERE'S A LOT INSIDE THAT THERE CART THAT WILL KEEP HOCKEY FANS OFF THE STREET FOR AGES. ■ OVERALL 90 - A DEFINITE MUST HAVE. RENTING NHL '96 WILL ONLY MAKE YOU WANT IT EVEN WORSE!

AVAILABLE NOW ■ CATEGORY: SPORT ■ PLAYERS: 1-4 ■ PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS ■ PRICE: \$89.95 ■ RATING: G8

WE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING; "YAWN, JUST ANOTHER EA SPORTS ANNUAL UPDATE" NO WAY! NHL '96 IS A WHOLE NEW BALL...ER, PUCK GAME. RUSSELL "GET THE PUCK OUTTA HERE" HOPKINSON PUTS ON HIS PADS AND BLADES...

Whilst most of Electronic Arts' sports series tend to rehash, reinvent and sometimes ruin older ideas (that didn't really need tweaking in the first place), NHL '96 burst forth as a totally new game that had me in a gibbering state within moments of the first punch-up. That the reinvention is so complete and so utterly brilliant, left me stunned and a little bit excited about the prospects of 32bit hockey in the near future.

If you have even the remotest interest in Ice Hockey (the best and stupidest of America's big league sports) or Sports Simulations or just life, you will put down this magazine and rush out and find this absolute gem of a game. It doesn't matter if you're packin' a Mega Drive or a SNES, as both versions are identical (with the SNES looking a tiny bit sexier but not significantly so).

OVERWHELMINGLY FAST

Phew....where to begin? We'll start with the "FIFA-esque" game view, smaller yet better animated sprites and some truly cool sound effects. The players literally storm into the sinbin, throwing down their gloves with righteous indignation! The fluidity of the game is better than ever and it gets so fast that it will overwhelm you on the first couple of attempts. The game really simulates the extremity of Ice Hockey's gameplay; drop your guard for even a moment and you'll pay dearly.

Of course NHL '96 is a trainspotter's paradise with all manner of statistics and game modes to muck around with. You can trade and create players and keep records of your team's progress. That's the thing with this series, there's so much in here and the game itself is so chocka-block with intricacies that you'll be kept busy right up until NHL '97! There's no easy way to play this and even in "rookie" mode it gets pretty hot. Learning control and accuracy are the first major hurdles, and although it's a hard, unrelenting game you never feel like throwing in the towel.

When the Gretzky game came out a lot was made of its "Fighting" mode, with some feeling that it encouraged bad sportsmanship. E.A. circumvent this dilemma by making the "Fighting" mode an option so those pacifists out there can feel at ease by switching this funniest of modes off. Personally, I feel a Hockey game without a fight is like a cheese sandwich without the cheese. Besides, the incidental animation of the players throwing their gloves and sticks down and partaking in a bit of biff is quite hilarious. Add to it the over excited roar of the crowd, and you'll feel like all you need is a warm mug of cheap Yank beer and a couple of hot dogs to make you believe you're really there.

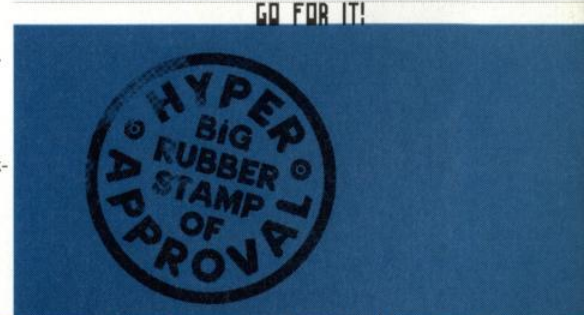
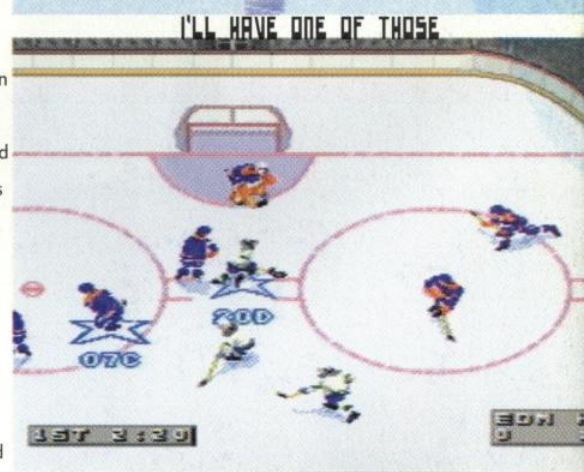
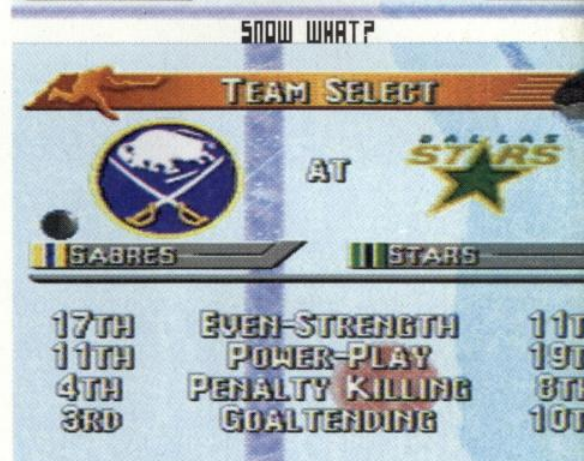
A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Like all of the great E.A. sports games, NHL '96 really takes off as a social exercise, with 4 way play being a religious experience on a par with any of the great sport games. The playoff modes are excellent as well and with a lot of hard work you'll find yourself hoisting aloft the Stanley Cup in an end ceremony that only appears when you win the tournament. Don't hold your breath though, there's a lot of hard work to be done before you have that privilege!

Are there any downsides to this kind of violent sport simulations? Well, the puck is very small and it can be quite hard to work out where it is and if you add to this the complexity level of the gameplay, then some might feel it's a task too great for them. The music is quite bad but it doesn't really interfere, as great games can never be ruined by bad muzak. Apart from that I can't really fault this game.

In an age where the cash-in is king, it's nice to see someone taking a bit of time and care with an established "franchise" game like NHL '96. What could have been just another ho-hum sequel (a few new players and some snazzy packaging) is a triumph for all concerned. You can no longer doubt that Electronic Arts are the undisputed Kings of the sport sim. If the mooted Rugby League and Aussie Rules games are anywhere near as good as this, I will most probably join a religious group because I will have realised there is a God after all.

I can only repeat: Get this game now!



BATMAN FOREVER

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: PLATFORM/BEAT 'EM UP ■ PLAYERS: 1-2 ■ PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ RATING: G8



BATMAN FOREVER HAD JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING GOING FOR IT: FLASHY VISUALS, JIM CARREY BEING FUNNY, A SEXY ROBIN, AN EVEN SEXIER DREW BARRYMORE AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, NO MICHAEL KEATON. CAN THE GAME POSSIBLY COMPETE? STRETCH ARMSTRONG IS THE HYPER BOY WONDER...

Just how long is forever? Surely they don't expect us to believe that, for the Caped Crusader, this really is it? Forever? Perhaps they should have called it Batman Until The Next Sequel. Whatever, and no matter how long "forever" turns out to be, you can be sure they'll keep milking this baby until forever finally arrives. And this, dear reader, is the next instalment in your trip to the Batman Forever dairy. But, as we always say here at HYPER, "it's okay to get milked if the hands on the udder know what they're doing". Well, at least I think that's what we say here at HYPER, though I could be thinking of somewhere else.

Which is a roundabout way of saying that it's okay for the Bat-moguls to cash in as long as they do it in a way that we can enjoy. Here, and for the most part, they have done that. While the fact that I think this has more style than substance (like the movie, huh?) will prevent me getting quite as excited as we did in the preview of the game (see HYPER #23), there's no doubt this definitely has a couple of features to recommend it.

NO CARTOONY BATS HERE

The game's greatest recommendation is, as you already know, its graphics. Though we also dug the graphics in the recent Batman & Robin on the Mega Drive, there's no mere cartoon animations for these bats. No, here you get the full MK style digitised experience. The pictures in the booklet and the packaging may lead you to think that the real cast pulled some Kung Fu poses and are living in the cart, but I have my doubts. Let's face it, it could be Stuart and Ben under those masks (you know, I've never seen Stuart and Batman in the same room hmmm) and the red haired Riddler may well be Fatty Vautin, but that's no big deal, because it looks damn fine anyway.

The game, of course, is a scrolling beat 'em up. Lazily, these games usually concentrate more on one aspect than another and in my experience it's the platforming, with the beating often little more than a button pummelling exercise. Here it's the opposite: The fighting is pretty cool, with the usual combo based moves and a heap more flexibility and enjoyment in fighting than is usual in the genre. It can't truly compete with the top line fighting games, but I guess it's not supposed to. Most of the combos are described in the booklet, which detracts somewhat from the joy of discovery and the toughness of the encounter, but seeing as you lot seem to love cheating so much you'll probably be happy about it. The platforming aspect, it must be said, is pretty bloody basic. For all the gadgets and weapons available to you, and the odd puzzle, it comes across as an afterthought and is really little more than a device to get the next fight.

CINDY BRADY ON DRUGS

Level wise, there's eight to get through, in addition to a most welcome training level. The challenge couldn't be described as easy, and eight levels, even if it's a bit on the light side, is not a bad whack. The real drawback is that, apart from cosmetic differences, the levels are not all that dissimilar, so the thrill of reaching a new level may not exactly bring you the new and sexy thrills you're looking for. Speaking of allegedly sexy, fans of the midget-Cindy Brady-on-drugs genre of womanhood, will find a digitised Drew Barrymore in Level Four. What that means to you is an individual matter, but if you can't find the special move you're after or your taste tends more to willowy Scientologists, you'll have to get through to Level Eight before the world's best dressed woman (ie Nicole Kidman) shows up.

Yes, you will have fun with this one, but whether the initial romantic flush will blossom into a fully fledged love affair remains to be seen. We say, enjoy it while it lasts, 'cause this baby doesn't really have the staying power you're after.

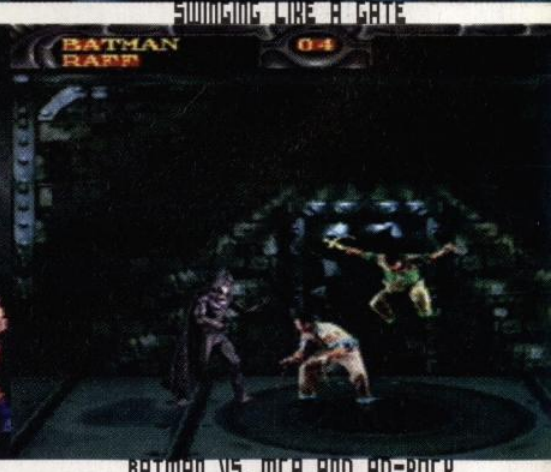
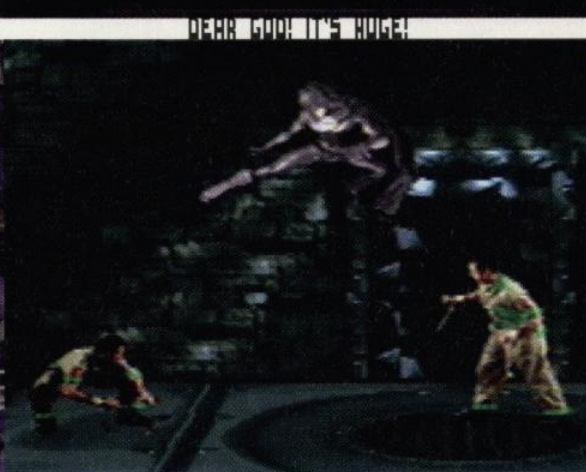
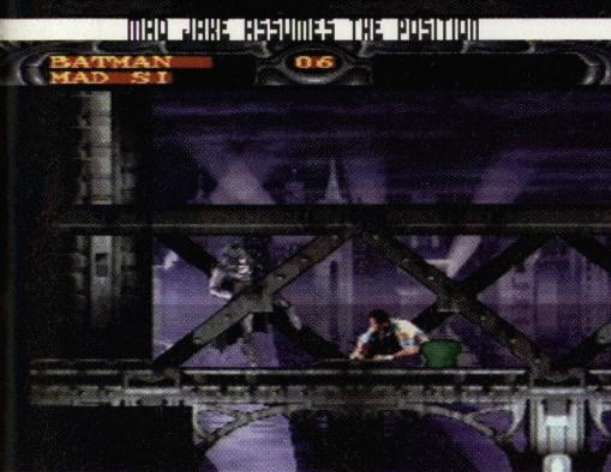
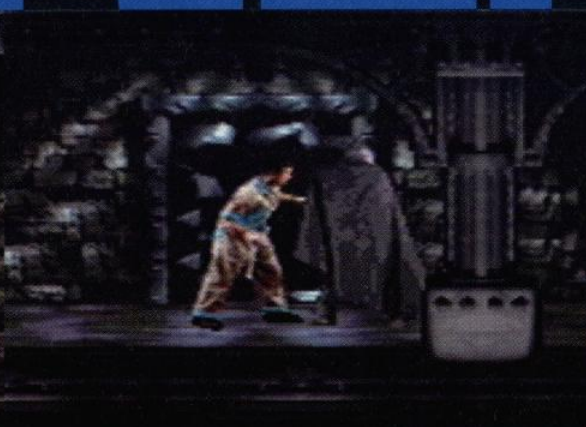


BATTE: BATT: BATT: BATTAP

BATMAN FOREVER

UNREVEALED

REVIEW



VISUALS 88 - BY FAR THE BEST BIT, WITH DIGITISED SPRITES AND A FEEL THAT'S SUITABLY REMINISCENT OF THE MOVIE. ■ **SOUND 70** - RATHER HO HUM, IF TRUTH BE TOLD ■ **GAMEPLAY 72** - THERE'S SOME GOOD FIGHTING TO BE HAD BUT THE REST IS DULL PLATFORM FARE. ■ **LONGTERM 60** - THIS IS THE GAME'S MAJOR FAILING, I'VE GOTTA SAY ■ **OVERALL 70** - GOOD LOOKING BUT THE FUN WON'T LAST, A TAD SHORT ON INNOVATION AND REAL EXCITEMENT.

MEATHEAD



THE CASE OF THE MISSING HISS ROOTS - SPINER



PROTONIC WAR IMPROVES HIS TRAINING



ZARAK'S FIGHTING SECRET: NO DEATHCOUNT



ZANVAX TAKES THE BIGGER HAMMER SOLUTION



TWO MEATHEADS GO THE BIFF



KORR WEATHERS HER LEFT SHIN DISASTE INFLU



THE GREAT VEGETARIAN



KORR GETS A NEW WEAPON



ZANVAX GETS A NEW WEAPON

VISUALS 88 - BIG, COLOURFUL AND LOVINGLY ANIMATED, THE GAME LOOKS VERY TASTY IN ACTION. ■ **SOUND 85** - THE MUSIC DOESN'T IRR, THE VOICES ARE SUITABLE BEEFY AND THE FX ARE OK. ■ **GAMEPLAY 86** - A CHALLENGE TO LEARN AND A SOLID BEAT 'EM UP, NOT THE EASIEST TO PICK UP IF YOU'RE A NEWCOMER. ■ **LONGTERM 75** - EVEN THOUGH IT'S HARD TO BEAT, YOU'VE ESSENTIAL PLAYED THE GAME A MILLION TIMES BEFORE IN THE GUISE OF STREETFIGHTER. ■ **OVERALL 82** - PRETTY DARN GOOD, BUT POSSIBLY AN UNNECESSARY PURCHASE. YOU'VE SEEN IT BEFORE... SO ONLY FOR THE FIGHTING-GAME ADDICTED AND THE UNINITIATED.

WORLD PREMIERE

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: FIGHTING ■ PLAYERS: 1-8 ■ PUBLISHER: OCEAN ■ PRICE: \$89.95 ■ RATING: MIS+

IT'S ANOTHER FIGHTING GAME! WOO-HOO! OR BOO-HOO AS THE CASE MAY BE. DO WE REALLY NEED ANOTHER STREET/KOMBAT/INSTINCT CLONE? IF ELIOT FISH HAD A PENNY FOR EVERY TIME HE MENTIONS STREETFIGHTER IN THIS REVIEW...

It seems the beat 'em up genre will just never go away and die. I can see us all in the year 2000, taking a break from our space-flight simulator to give Blanka a good belting up the backside in Streetfighter VI: the revenge of Cammy's daughter's son. Like the platformer, endless streams of titles get released, all regurgitating the same formula, each one touting to be the "final word". In most cases, the "final word" was the first title that came along – and all subsequent games are just desperately cashing in on the former's success. There have been some shocking beat 'em ups released, and I'm happy to announce that Weaponlord isn't one of them. What we have here is a solid, tough as nails, interesting fighting game. But original it's not. And better than Streetfighter it's not. And it's certainly no Killer instinct. But don't turn that page yet... Weaponlord is no smelly stinker! It's just that if you pass it on the shelf at your local gaming store, you're not missing out on anything new. This one's for you insatiable hardcore beat 'em up fans.

MEATY, SWEATY AND PISSED OFF

Step aside weaklings! Welcome seven new meaty, sweaty and perpetually pissed-off fighters into the arena! Four dudes and three scary-looking gals, all packing iron (the long, sharp, pointy type) are here... well... to bust heads, basically. All the classic character-types are present, from the Zangief-type brutal muscle in the form of Bane and his big stone club to the tree-top jungle-maiden Talazia and her Chun-Li-like speed and agility. There's Korr, the Ryu "Mr. Average", and there's Zarak, the big M. Bison-like Boss figure.

The novelty though in this case, are the character's use of weapons to do the talking, instead of their hands. In Weaponlord, it's axe to sword, pike to club warfare, but when it comes down to the controls, there's no real difference – the characters may as well be punching and kicking – because the moves are still stock-standard beat 'em up moves. Sure there are a bundle of special moves – like the Axe-wielding Zorn's twirling throw – but they're just different graphical versions of the classic dragon punch and spinning attack.

Admittedly, I saw some pretty damn cool feats of biff in there, but it's nothing new enough to make you wanna invite all your friends around for an eight-player tournament (which the game allows). The actual control-pad execution of these special moves is all new though, so that in itself provides a new challenge for all you diagonally dexterous beat 'em up hacks. Your control-pad prowess is out the window, with new button combinations needed to perform all the tasty moves. Throw in a few hit combos ala Killer Instinct, a few fatalities ala Mortal Kombat and some spurting blood, and wham, bam thankyou person (politically correct cliché) and you have a contender for beat 'em up of the year. Well at least that's what the programmers think. But us gamers can't be fooled. This is nothing new. And now that Killer Instinct is available, Weaponlord looks like last night's leftovers. Albeit, very delicious-looking leftovers!

BATTLE CRIES AND MAGICAL INCANTATIONS

The cart is a fat 24 megs of biff, and it shows in the big sprites and all round lush graphics (on both the SNES and Mega Drive). Each character is extremely detailed and the animation is smooth. The fighting moves along at a fairly decent pace, but unfortunately there is no speed setting!! That is a BIG minus. Four levels of difficulty are available, and even on Adventurer (the easiest setting) the game is no wimp. Anyone who can finish the game on Warlord setting is a true master. The sound is all there too – nasty battle cries, magical incantations and clanging metal. The voices are loud and clear and the music chugs along in a nice, terrifying way. But my final word on Weaponlord has to be so... it's a great fighting game and a challenge even for beat 'em up champs. But sadly, it's just the same old thing dressed up in different duds. For fanatics only.



BANE IS DISQUALIFIED AS THE URINE TEST RESULTS ARRIVE

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OFF WORLD INTERCEPTOR EXTREME

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: SHOOT 'EM UP ■ PLAYERS: 1 ■ PUBLISHER: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ RATING: 68



CONSIDER A CAREER IN GAME FAN - NOT!



MR BLUE BRUSHES AGAINST A BIG PILE



MR BLUE MOUNTS A HUMP



IN THE 21



MR BLUE GETS HIS MOUTH FULL OF STUFF



MR BLUE GETS HIS MOUTH FULL OF STUFF

CRASH TEST

VISUALS: 77 ■ SOUND: 70 ■ GAMEPLAY: 80 ■ LONGTERM: 68 ■ OVERALL: 80

WANT SOME FAST, VIOLENT, 4 WHEEL DRIVE RACE/SHOOTING ACTION? GOOD, BECAUSE DAVID WILDOOSE HAS GOT A REVIEW HERE THAT SHOULD BE RIGHT UP YOUR ALLEY...

Here we have a conversion of a 3DO title that was called, unsurprisingly, Off World Interceptor. Yet for reasons known only to themselves (actually, because they've tarted it up a bit), Crystal Dynamics have decided to tack an extra "Extreme" onto the name for the Playstation and Saturn releases.

First impressions of OWIE might lead you to believe that it is a racing game. For one, you drive a buggy-type vehicle, and you can do so at very high speeds. However, only a small amount of play-time would reveal that this is indeed a shoot 'em up.

I've no idea about the story behind OWIE, and I've no intention of finding out either because it really doesn't matter. What it boils down to is this - you drive a buggy-type vehicle around various terrains full of suspension-destroying hills, shooting at other buggy-type vehicles, collecting some of the seemingly endless array power-ups, getting shot at by the numerous big-grey-buildings-that-shoot-at-you, and attempting to reach the posts at the other side of the game area which kinda act like a finishing line. Then you can do some shopping for extra missiles, shields and other improvements for your buggy-type vehicle. Or even a completely new buggy-type vehicle, if you like. And then you go out and do it all again.

It is great fun for the first few goes, but I can't see it lasting - in single player mode anyway. The gameplay is very shallow, and it doesn't change at all - it's just drive and shoot the whole time, with the occasional Boss to break things up. It isn't significantly different from the 3DO version (the graphics though are markedly sharper) and they've had almost a year to change things around. The Playstation especially is capable of better than this and graphically this can't compete with the likes of Wipeout.

The two player mode works surprisingly well though for a split screen race, so grab a friend and there's little doubting you'll have some fast, adrenalin charged fun. In fact, Off World Interceptor Extreme is by no means a bad game. What it does do, it does very effectively. It's just, well, a bit limited. A "fast, frenetic, exhilarating blast" kind of limited, but still limited all the same.

WIPEOUT



VISUALS 91 - FEEL THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION!! THIS GAME IS STUNNING TO LOOK AT AND FAST AS WELL! THE DESIGNER'S REPUBLIC ALSO LEAVE THEIR STAMP OF CLASS WITH ORIGINAL TYPE AND LOGOS. ■ **SOUND 92** - THE WICKED BEATS OF LEFTFIELD, ORBITAL AND THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS PLUS SOME EXCELLENT EFFECTS EQUALS SONIC BLISS. ■ **GAMEPLAY 90** - THERE'S NO ESCAPING THE FACT THAT THIS IS JUST ANOTHER RACING GAME BUT IT'S THE SLICKEST COMBAT RACING TITLE AROUND. ■ **LONGTERM 88** - IT TAKES TIME TO GET GOOD AT THIS GAME WHICH MEANS THAT YOU'LL BE SPENDING A LOT OF TIME IN FRONT OF IT. THE TWO PLAYER LINK-UP OPTION WILL INCREASE LONGEVITY INDEFINITELY. ■ **OVERALL 90** - WIPEOUT IS YET ANOTHER SUPERB PLAYSTATION TITLE FROM PSYGNOSIS, A MUST HAVE FOR ALL PLAYSTATION OWNERS WHO LIKE THE ODD ROCKET WITH THEIR RACING.



REVIEW

AVAILABLE: NOW • CATEGORY: RACING • PLAYERS: 1-2 • PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS • PRICE: \$99.95 • RATING: G

PSYGNOSIS HAVE OBVIOUSLY GOT A HANDLE ON WHAT THE PLAYSTATION CAN DO AND THEY'RE DOING IT LIKE THERE'S NO TOMORROW. STUART CLARKE TESTS OUT THEIR LONG-AWAITED RACING GAME...

This is one seriously sexy looking game. But hey, I could probably say that about most of the current crop of PlayStation releases. Luckily this plays as good as it looks. Imagine Mario Kart crossed with F-Zero, spiced up with amazing graphics and sound and you can imagine something very close to Wipeout. But don't imagine too hard... go out and find a PlayStation with Wipeout and play it yourself because if you don't then you're missing out big time.

21ST CENTURY FORMULA ONE

Wipeout is Formula One racing for the mid 21st century. Transportation has been revolutionised by the discovery of stable anti-gravity devices and the Formula 3600 Anti-Gravity League races are now the highlight of the global racing calendar. Of course, by the middle of the 21st century everyone's a bit bored with old-style round and round and round (and round...) the track racing, so weaponry and defences have been added to the equation to make things that bit more exciting.

Your craft is equipped with weapons and shields at all times but they can only be activated by a Weapon Grid (ie running over a coloured tile on the track). The Weapon Grid will give you a randomly generated power-up which include mines (laid in a burst of five these are good for knocking out opponents who are hot on your tail), Shockwave (causes craft to stall and become uncontrollable for a few seconds), heat-seeking missiles (rockets that lock-on to target and cause loss of power and speed) and rockets (similar to the missiles but without lock-on, so carefully aiming is needed for use). A shield and Turbo speed can also be picked up through the Weapons Grid. You'll have to always keep an ear out, as you are warned as to what an weapons an opponent behind you is packing. For example, if you hear "Rocket" then it's time to get a shield or time to start dodging.

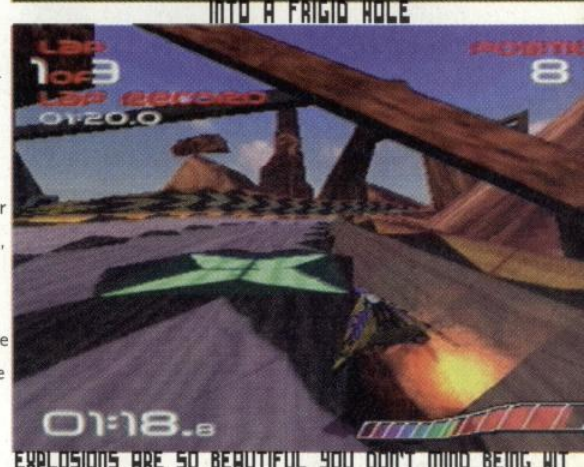
There are two classes of racing craft; Venom and Rapier. You can't race a Rapier class until you've qualified for all the Venom tracks. The only difference is speed but because the learning curve for Wipeout is so steep (the intricacies of the control system take a while to master), there's no way you'll be ready for the speed of Rapier until you're good at Venom so don't be too impatient. The speed of the Rapier ships is truly incredible and the PlayStation shows off its grunt by the sheer feeling of speed it manages to convey. The frame rate is incredible - these babies can fly!!

UNBEATABLE PACKAGE

So far there's been nothing too revolutionary about Wipeout, right? I mean look at Mega Race, Hi-Octane and the Saturn's Cyber Speedway - all futuristic combat racers with similar features. Wipeout doesn't really have anything that these racers don't but at the same time it has everything that these game are lacking. The many elements needed for a classic game all come together to make Wipeout, as an overall package, unbeatable.

The graphics are truly amazing (right down the way cool Designers Republic logos and type) and the sensation of speed is stunning (there are no screen refresh problems as with Saturn's Daytona even though it seems to go much faster). The courses are well designed and vary in difficulty. The controls, while initially difficult, are superb and very responsive (it's just a matter of getting familiar with them - especially the air brakes). And finally, the music seriously kicks. Three of the best "techno" acts in the world, Orbital, Leftfield and Chemical Brothers, are included on the soundtrack, with Orbital recording a track especially for the game. The track you're listening to can be changed even during a race and personally I can't go past "Chemical Beats" from the Chemical Brothers for sheer adrenalin surging excitement while racing. Check out the warped effect on the music when you go through a tunnel too! This is one game that you'll be turning up, not down.

Add all these elements up and you've got a racing game that comes close to being perfect. I've got to admit that initially I thought Wipeout was just another fabulous looking round-the-track racer. After sitting down for a few laps and getting a grip on the controls though, I realised that this is the futuristic combat racer that everyone's been trying to make for ages but never quite got there. Congratulations Psygnosis - this is what 32bit systems are all about!



CYBER SPEEDWAY

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: RACING ■ PLAYERS: 1-2 ■ PUBLISHER: SEGA ■ PRICE: \$89.95 ■ RATING: G



CYBER SPEEDWAY IS SEGA'S ANSWER TO THE PLAYSTATION'S WIPEOUT. IT LOOKS VERY, VERY SIMILAR BUT AS WE ALL KNOW LOOKS ARE ONLY SO DEEP. HOW DOES THE BIGGER PLAY? JASON SERDA AND JULIAN BORES STRAP THEMSELVES IN...

Some say the PlayStation has the edge on the Saturn when it comes down to the beef under the bonnet. But when Sega pulls out titles like Cyber Speedway it's time to step back and have a second look. This could be one of the best Saturn releases so far; it looks fast, fun and very addictive.

The idea behind the game is simple, fly your cool looking anti-grav sled around the 5 courses and beat your opposition through skill mixed with quick thinking, and we mean quick thinking. Cyber Speedway is one of the few games that succeeds in giving the feeling of breakneck speed, and lightning reflexes are needed in order to control your craft, let alone be part of the race.

DETAIL PLUS HARDCORE SPEED

Sega has devoted much energy into putting loads of impressive detail into the backdrops for Cyber Speedway, whether the sled is skimming across the water sending up jets of spray or fanging through a city landscape whizzing past trains, the game's emphasis is on real, hard-core speed. The track itself widens and narrows, and is full of twists, turns, and tunnels. On some worlds the track floats in the clouds (a really nice touch), where on others there are icicles, stalactites, flaming volcano spurts and mines to avoid.

Initially (if you're playing Story Mode and not just single races), you start on Earth then move on from planet to planet, always starting last out of five, with the aim being first to qualify (not a problem) then finishing each planet with enough points to proceed (a bit more of a problem). Flying the sled requires you to learn to use the boosters which don't propel you forward, rather sideways, to help you take those tight turns. Use your boosters wisely for if you run out, you'll have the manoeuvrability of a brick.

Out of the two viewpoints you have, external and internal, we strongly recommend internal, as the perspective is much improved and a hell of a lot easier to navigate with. The better you fly, and the better you are placed, the better upgrades you can choose from; booster (cool), shield (useless) and weapon (very cool).

In the music and sound effects department, Cyber Speedway is a game that has blessedly avoided a boring or repetitive soundtrack and no annoying and unnecessary effects. However, although the FX and sound can be described as good there's nothing special which is really a shame as the Saturn has huge sound potential.

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Since the invention of computer related entertainment, an eleventh commandment has been added to the slightly dated ten: "There is nothing more satisfying than a good solid missile strike".

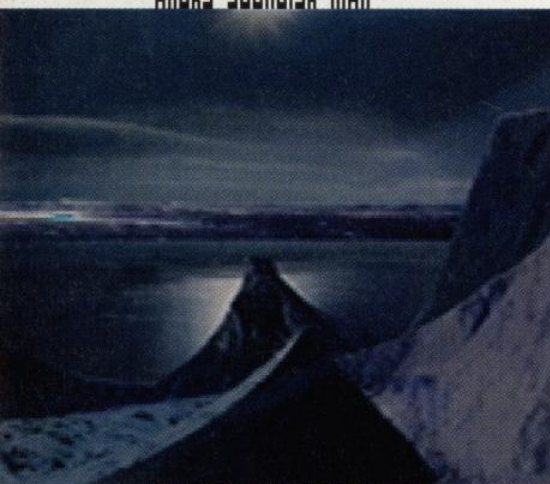
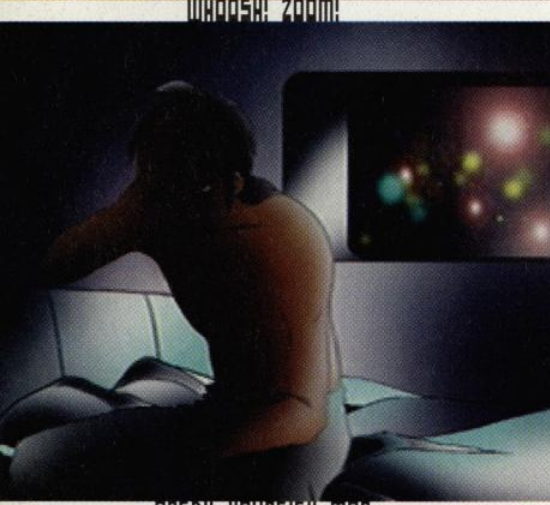
And Cyber Speedway obeys the commandment. How often when you're at the wheel of the car in second place and you can see the car in first place about to cross the finish line; he's in your sights, it's a straight road, and then you can't help yourself: "Why the hell aren't these cars armed!! C'mon just one missile!"

Such incidents are fixed here but that doesn't mean you get off that easy....Your only weapons are missiles, you start with none, you can only carry five, plus they are few and far between, slow and unguided, and have poor detonation strength. Added to this is the difficulty of picking one up at 300+ Kph and then finding a long enough straight to fire one. You're probably saying "well what's the bloody point in having them???" Well, remember the eleventh commandment! You've got to be quick, accurate, know the missile speed and how much ahead of the target you must fire. Trust us, the one hit out of ten misses will make you very proud of yourself (and just make sure someone's watching).

Although you do not destroy your target with your shot, the missile scrambles their systems like a massive EM burst, knocking them out of commission for a few seconds, which is ample time to scream past and get a decent lead.

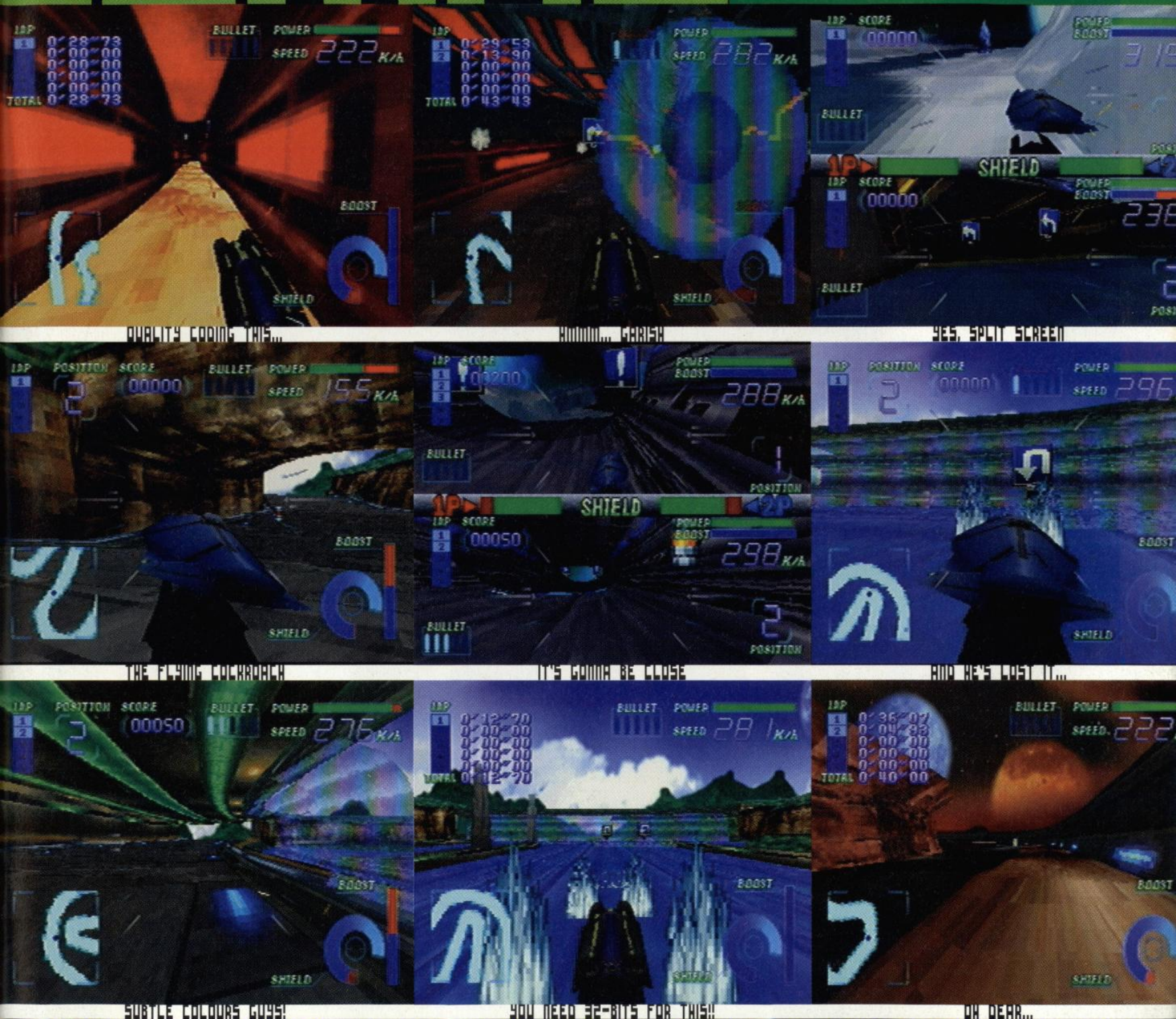
Although Cyber Speedway has been well thought, nothing's perfect. Although each of the levels are awesome there are too few of them, so just when you think you're doing really well the game's over. Also, although at the beginning you have a choice of normal or advanced tracks, that's the limit to how you can affect the game. There's also the occasional loss of edge detail which is noticeable when close to a wall, and although this is fortunately rare, it's not forgotten. The courses themselves could have possibly been a bit more interesting too, and a few more canyon drops or some loops and upside down sections would have made this game extra slick. But the only really annoying thing is that out of the 5 different sleds at your disposal, each with different attributes, only the default sled can be used for the championship. As far as the two player mode goes - the horizontal split screen looks like you're driving with tunnel vision - forget it.

So the game has a few problems, but it really does deserve a good look. However, as it was originally named Gran Chaser by the boys at Sega in their attempt to compete against the forthcoming release of Sony's awesome title Wipeout, perhaps they should have kept the word "chaser" in the title.



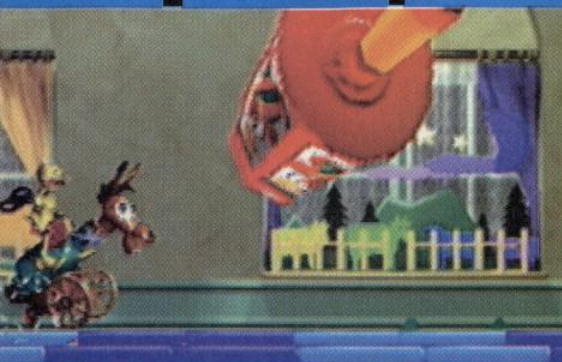
SATURN

ADRENALIN REVIEW



VISUALS 76 - THE GAME'S MOST COMPLIMENTARY FEATURE; A FEW GLITCHES BUT STILL VERY SMOOTH. ■ **SOUND 59** - MUSIC'S SLIGHTLY CATCHY AND THE FX'S ARE SUBTLE, BUT THERE'S STILL HEAPS OF ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. ■ **GAMEPLAY 72** - THE SLEDS ARE TOUGH AT FIRST, BUT PERSEVERE, AND THE FUN WILL START. ■ **LONGTERM 60** - A SHAME THE GAME IS TOO SHORT - THIS IS A REAL SORE POINT. ■ **OVERALL 70** - OVERALL, THIS IS A TIGHT LITTLE PIECE OF WORK. A FEW BUGS BRING IT DOWN, BUT IT'S STILL GOOD FUN.

REVIEW



TAKE ONE DOLLOP OF SUGAR-SWEET CUTSIE...



CAREFULLY FILTER OUT ANY GAMEPLAY...



SHOW IT TO SEGA AND WALK OUT WITH A MILLION \$'S



IT LOOKS PRETTY DARN IMPRESSIVE THOUGH



IT SPARKLES! IT ROTATES!



I DON'T THINK I'LL BE COMING BACK TOMORROW NIGHT



HEY SPARKLES!



SEARCH UP! GET THE SEGA!



DON'T BE SAD BABY, IT'S JUST A GAME...

GRAPHICS 85 - BIG 'N BRIGHT BOUNCY BALLS 'N BLOCKS. LOOKING GREAT IS THIS GAME'S MAIN PURPOSE AND IT DOES THE JOB NICELY. ■ SOUND 67 - TINKLE FAIRY MUSIC THAT'LL HAVE THE FOUR YEAR OLDS HOWLING WITH DELIGHT. THE REST OF US WILL BE HOWLING TOO, BUT FOR OTHER REASONS. ■ GAMEPLAY 40 - NOPE, I COULDN'T FIND VERY MUCH, BUT THIS [WHETHER INTENTIONALLY OR NOT] IS JUST A BUNCH OF INTERACTIVE GRAPHICS PERFECT FOR PLEASING BABY. ■ LONGTERM 40 - NOT AS CHEAP AS A TONKA TRUCK, BUT I'M YET TO SEE A BABY DESTROY A CD ROM. ■ OVERALL 65 - AS LONG AS SEGA DON'T TRY AND MARKET THIS AS A REAL GAME FOR REAL GAMERS, THEY'LL BE OK AND SO WILL THE HAPPY TODDLERS.

REVIEW

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: PLATFORM ■ PLAYERS: ONE ■ PUBLISHER: SEGA ■ PRICE: \$89.95 ■ RATING: G

WIND ME UP AND LET ME LOOSE! THERE'S TOY SOLDIERS THAT COULD DO WITH A TASTE OF MY PRODDIN' KEY! BEN MANSILL SLIPS INTO HIS GOLDEN ARMOUR AND TRIES TO GET LOST IN THE SHAG PILE...

If I were young again, would I do it all differently? I don't care and neither should you, but if I were young again I'd probably enjoy Clockwork Knight 2 a lot more than I did. We're talking no older than 10 here, and that's probably stretching it. This game is designed for the less sophisticated and skilled gamers amongst us - game grommets, if you like. Nothing wrong with that, nothing at all; quality games that don't alienate younger players with their demanding challenges are thin on the ground, but the effortless simplicity of Clockwork Knight 2 may even bore the newest of gamers.

NICE AND SAFE

To keep things nice and safe, Pepperachou (the character you control) strolls around most leisurely. The snail's pace he moves at happily minimises any chance of accidentally blundering into dangerous situations. Pepperachou can run, but where walking is too slow, his trot is too fast. So you alternate, running where it looks clear and sauntering along when trouble may be lurking. This gets mighty painful real quick. Impatience sets in well before you start enjoying yourself. While wee kiddies may not mind or notice, experienced gamers won't give Clockwork 2 more than a few boring minutes because of this.

If you can tolerate Pepperachou's lack of velocity, you'll soon be put off by the lack of anything interesting or fun for the Golden Wind-Up One to do. While the concept of being a miniature among common household stuff may offer great potential for designers, no particularly clever ideas made it to the game. Up and over again and again. Players needn't be especially gifted in either the dexterity or real smart departments. He walks, he jumps, he prods, he does it all over again - and again and again... yawn, I'm getting sleepy now...

Prodding is the politically correct attack Pepper uses. His big key jabs anything that gets in the way, with baddies eventually going up in a nice clean balloon pop. No blood or screams in this fantasyland. 99% of Pepper's attackers are as non-threatening as it's possible to be. They don't attack aggressively or move quickly. The most common variety of baddie hunches down in a turtle defence after just one hit, leaving you free to finish him off at your leisure and with absolutely no risk. They're unbelievably predictable too, just one encounter with a new foe is enough to pick what they'll do every time you meet them again - and that includes bosses. BORING!

DULL AS DOGFOOD

So unless you can call Clockwork Knight 2 "my first computer game", it'll be as dull as dogfood. I'm old (over 10) and an experienced gamer (more than one), so Sega's latest platformer bored me silly. Only the responsibility of reviewing it drove me on, but after three or four hours I discovered why they still build control pads with cords attached, instead of the perfectly viable infra-red - it's so you can't chuck the thing across the room in a spontaneous fit of murderous frustration.

Don't get the idea this game is a complete waste of time, there are kiddies out there who'll be joyously suckered into the toyland Sega has built. Despite an almost complete absence of gameplay, the graphics have a cutsie warmth that's probably great to get lost in if you're still chewing on the ears of your teddy bear. Pepper's key opens boxes you can jump in for a quick warp to somewhere as dull, yet pretty as all the rest. It'll also wind up extendable bridges to reach the far side of whatever minor chasm stands in your way. This bit is stupidly obvious and must only have been included to address the almost complete lack of anything to actually do.

Clockwork Knight 2 isn't so much a "game", it's more of a carefree romp through a shiny rendered world of living toys. Perfect for the youngsters who are tiring of their plastic baubles and want something new to muck around with.



DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE STUNNING GRAPHICS...



EVEN THE BOSSES ARE BORING



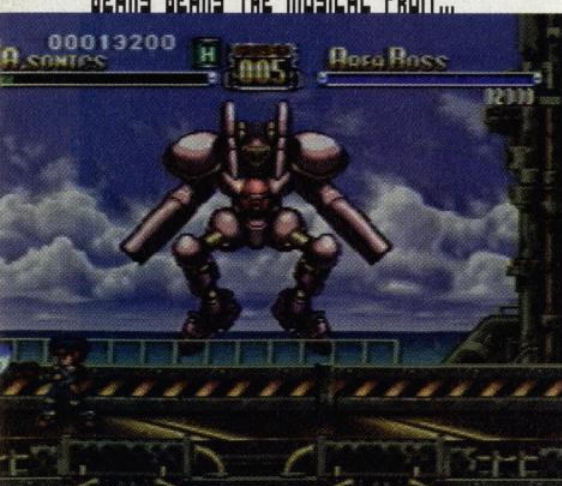
BORING BORING BORING...

REVIEW

RAPID RELOAD

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: SHOOT 'EM UP ■ PLAYERS: ONE ■ PUBLISHER: SONY ■ PRICE: \$89.95 ■ RATING: G8

GRAB A BIG GUN AND GO SHOOTING BIG BULLETS IN THIS NEW BLAST FEST FOR THE PLAYSTATION. JASON SERDA AND JULIAN BURES FIND THAT MINDLESS VIOLENCE DOESN'T HAVE THE APPEAL IT ONCE DID...



Once in a while a game comes along that stands for pure mindless slaughter. This is one of them. You control a guy (or girl) with a gun and proceed to go on a psychotic rampage though some bizarre domain with your finger on the trigger until there is absolutely no movement. Sounds like your cup of tea? Welcome to Rapid Reload, a 32bit update on the Mega Drive's Gunstar Heroes and the latest game in the very long line of 2D horizontally scrolling action blast fests. And I seriously mean action, as there's not one moment when you wouldn't be firing in every direction and hanging on for dear life against totally ridiculous odds.

There are some of you who I can practically hear salivating over such a chance; you've beaten Sonic, Mario and a host of other nauseating do-gooders, now is your chance to control a dude who actually shoots, kills and apparently enjoys the whole affair. Rapid Reload does however stand apart in more aspects than death, it does sport some of the nicest cartoony colour schemes for games of this type, and the boring 16-bit environment has been revamped with more advanced sprite methods.

Both of the characters available to be controlled have a host of weapons at their command to slash their way through the opposition, each with it's ups and downs (surprise, surprise). Unlike other games though, you start with all four so there's no excuse about not having the goods. The guns are pretty cool and you'll find that you'll have to keep the pace on because the powerups you grab last only a few seconds, which is OK considering there are so many of them. This is a bit of a bonus because without the boosters, your chances of winning are as good as hauling your 90 pound puny carcass into the Sumo wrestling finals. Your life level meter goes down quite slowly, which is a plus, so you last just that little bit longer than you deserve to.

RAPID REQUIEM

However, sometimes we have to take the good with the bad, and unfortunately the bad in Rapid Reload overshadows the game's better features. Rapid Reload has several deep and very troubling flaws. First off is the lack of two player option. Surely a game which looks perfectly designed for two mindless fools (you and your mate), should have this a major priority, for any staying power. Gunstar Heroes on Mega Drive (which is probably the closest game to RR) had two players and that's what made it a classic.

OK, let's assume for a moment that it was designed this way, then that means Rapid Reload would be far superior to other of its kind, right? How sad that this is not the case and there's nothing more demoralising than finishing a level, only because you have memorised the identical attack patterns of your hundreds of opponents; "stop here, wait for them there, fire now, wait, hey don't I jump.... no how silly! now I have to do that entire level again for the 956th time." It is our humble opinion that this format of game has really, really worn out its welcome.

There is also my pet hate evident in Rapid Reload; the eight direction firing. It's simply too crude; unless the cannon fodder is directly in front or above, you've got buckleys of hitting them before they bop you one, and when you encounter large numbers of them (of course they can fire any direction they please), you're certain to take a pounding. This is particularly bad when facing aerial opponents.

The Bosses at the end of various areas are either a pushover or just too damn hard, and seeing as Rapid Reload has only six levels you want to make sure they count. Regardless which boss you're facing, using the targeting laser gun makes life a hell of a lot easier, as all you have to do is dodge whilst the beam finds its mark. It takes the fun out of it, but at least you get through it.

There are times when you can get too much of a good thing, and Rapid Reload, while technically OK, is not a stand out game at all. However, we do understand that there are those of you out there in Ga Ga land who are probably now screaming for blood. If that's you, then Rapid Reload may just push your buttons.

RAPID RELOAD

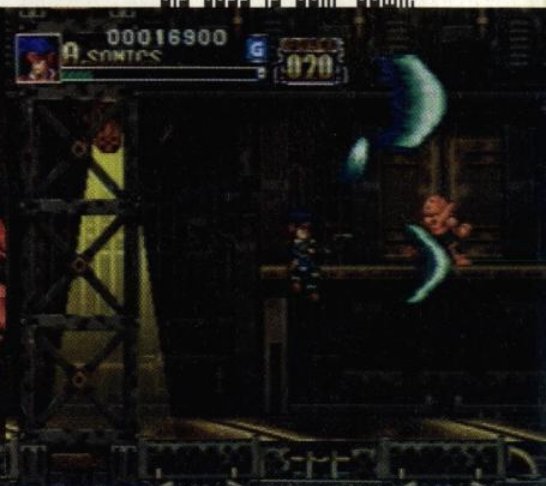
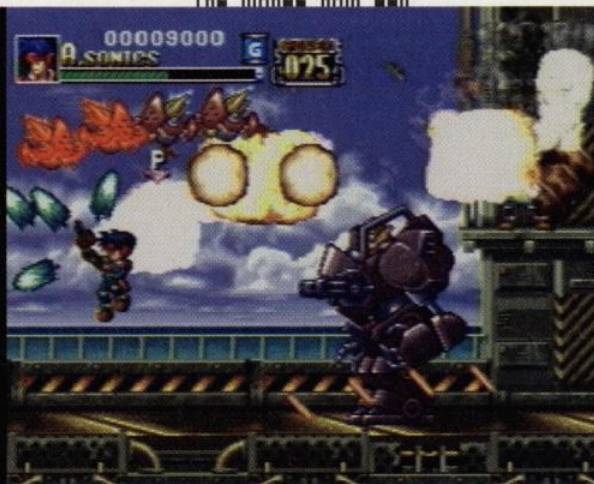
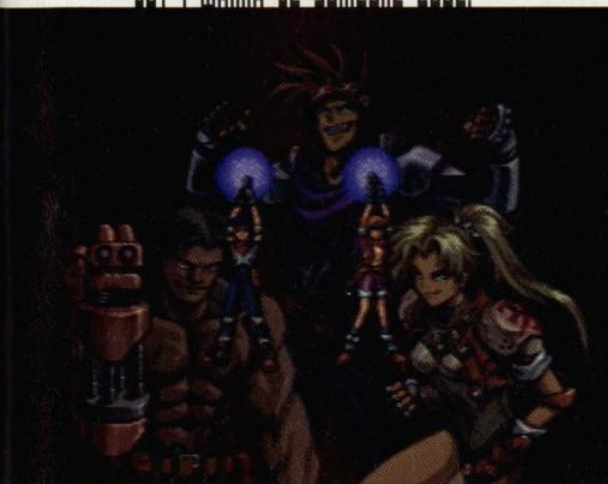
CHARACTER SELECT



AXEL
SONICS



RUKA
HETFIELD



VISUALS 66 - SURPRISINGLY GOOD BUT NOTHING THAT WILL MAKE YOU WET YOUR PANTS. ■
SOUND 54 - I DON'T REMEMBER IT, BUT IT WOULDN'T HAVE MADE THE TOP 40. ■ GAMEPLAY
53 - THE GAME'S WORST FEATURE, UTTERLY FRUSTRATING AND ONLY ONE PLAYER - WHY???
■ LONGTERM 57 - THIS REFERS TO THE LONGTERM PERIOD YOU'LL BE WISHING YOU'D READ THE
OVERALL RATING ■ OVERALL 56 - GOOD THAT YOU'RE READING THIS, 'CAUSE RAPID RELOAD IS
REALLY ONLY FOR A PARTICULAR BREED OF GAMER. DON'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YOU...

BLOOM

REVIEW

AVAILABLE: NOW (IMPORT) ■ CATEGORY: NINJA PLATFORMER ■ PLAYERS: ONE ■ PUBLISHER: SEGA ■ PRICE: \$89.95 ■ RATING: TBA

EEEEYOWWWW!! WOOOOO!! HEHEE!! NYUCK NYUCK NYUCK NYUCK!!
AS YOU CAN SEE, IT'S DIFFICULT TO REPRODUCE THOSE GROOVY
LITTLE NINJA SQUEALS WITH THE WRITTEN WORD, SO WE'D
RATHER NOT GO ON, BUT ANDREW HUMPHREYS WILL INSIST,

There's always a few routes to travel down when you're starting a game review. First, and most obviously, I could make a pun on one of the words from the opening sentence. In this case, "route" is just asking for trouble. "Travel", on the other hand, provides more of a challenge. Then again, I could always begin with an appraisal of the hardware, rather than the game. That would go something like this: "A few more dud releases and we'll be forced to officially declare the Saturn dead in the water. So far, only Virtua Fighter and Panzer Dragoon have distinguished themselves and compared to the Playstation, the machine appears to be a bit of a barker. The Saturn needs a winner blah blah blah..." Which, of course, leads you all to wonder, "Is Shin Shinobi Den that winner?" But that's probably overly dramatic. Instead, I might opt for a run-down of the Shinobi series, from Master System to Mega Drive, pointing out that Revenge Of Shinobi (one of the earliest Mega Drive carts Sega released) is rightly regarded as a classic of the Ninja platformer genre. Or I could just crap on endlessly to fill the space. Guess which option I prefer?

MASKED IDIOTS IN BMX GEAR

Unfortunately, Shin Shinobi Den is not a breakthrough in 32-bit gaming. Even by 16-bit standards it looks a little tired to say the least. You might even say it's up way past its bed-time. Staying faithful to the original concept (a Ninja with a nifty moves jumping here, spinning there, whacking this, slashing that) is one thing, but it would have been handy to throw in just an ounce of originality. Sure, it looks a little nicer, but when it comes down to it, Shin Shinobi Den does nothing that Revenge of Shinobi didn't do (and didn't do better) in 1988.

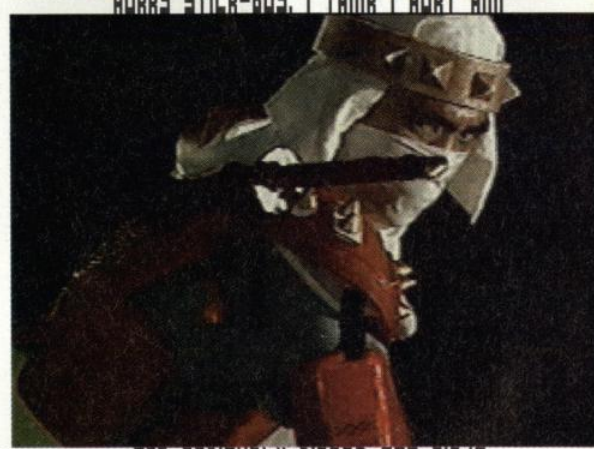
Mind you, they didn't have full-motion video intros and cut scenes back in 1988. And if Shin Shinobi Den is anything to go by, all I can say is, "Thank God". A couple of masked idiots in BMX gear straining to lift their under-exercised legs for the cameras as they attempt to look heroic and/or sinister does not make for attractive viewing. It does, however, provide a few laughs and presumably sets the scene for the game to follow. (Wouldn't you know it, someone's stolen Joe the Ninja's girlie, causing a bit of irritation in the old Ninja chaps.)

What follows is this: a bog standard platformer (there's even a mine-cart section ferchrissakes) in which Joe (or Trevor, whatever his name is) runs, jumps, chucks and slashes his way from level to level and boss to boss. He still throws those Ninja stars around with gay abandon and he's as handy as ever with the ginsu carving knife, only this time he's (wait for it) digitised! Not that you'd notice, given that the sprites (Trevor and his enemies) are unforgivably puny. If it wasn't for the liberal splashes of the sauce whenever you slice someone in two, there'd be nothing much (visually and otherwise) to hold your attention.

THE POKE IN THE EYE WITH A BURNT STICK

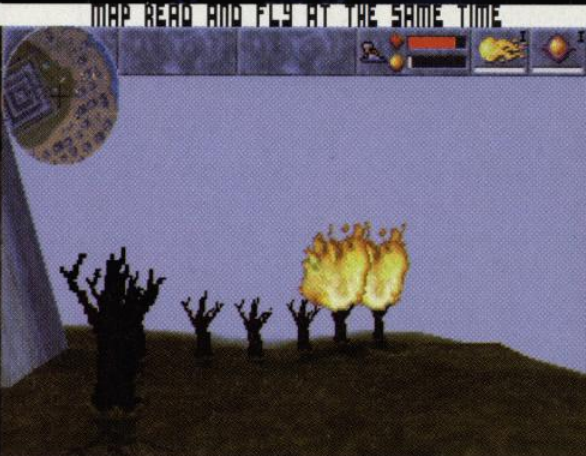
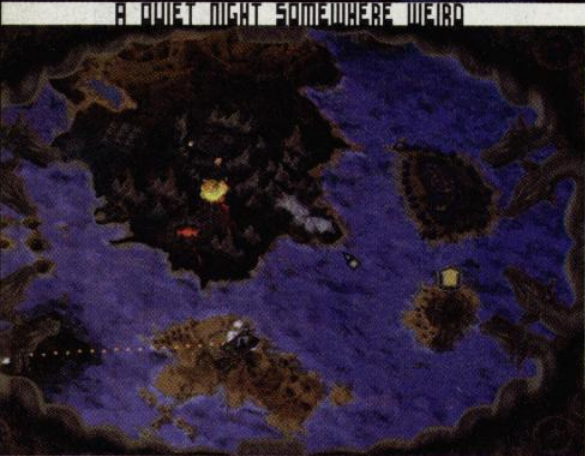
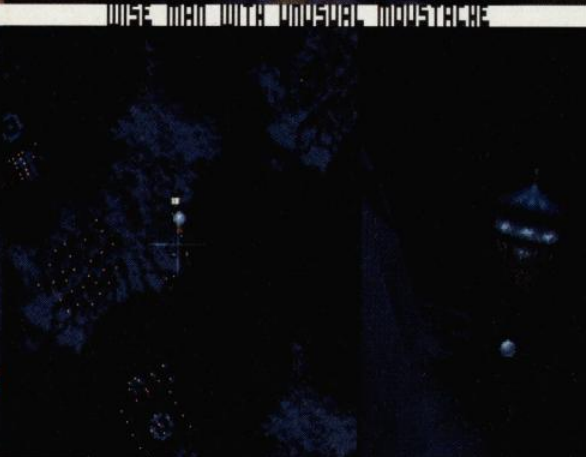
As for the sound, I can't even begin to pretend that I even noticed it. Which (in case you're wondering) is not a good thing. A few beeps, a few whistles and that's that. Needless to say, like the rest of the game, it's hardly pushing the boundaries.

Still, it's not a total loss. Despite its general sloppiness, the familiar controls are tight and responsive and it's hard not to enjoy pulling off that famous Trevor the Ninja "double-jump and chuck five stars" move. In fact, it's hard not to enjoy pulling off, full stop. It's predictable and only slightly challenging, but there's something reassuring about the whole misadventure and — for an hour or so at least — you'll probably enjoy it.





MAGIC



VISUALS 90 - ONE DAY YOU'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY IT IN SVGA, BUT THE STANDARD VGA IS SO GOOD YOU'LL WON'T REALLY CARE. YOU WANT FAST 3D? YOU WANT MAGIC CARPET 2. ■ **SOUND 90** - REALLY, REALLY GOOD. THE FIRST GAME MUSIC I'VE LEFT ON FOR AGES AND EFFECTS THAT'LL HAVE YOU PUMPING IT RIGHT UP. A SPECIAL MENTION FOR THE CAVE WATER DROP. ■ **GAMEPLAY 90** - A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING IN EXACTLY THE RIGHT DOSE. VERY TOUGH IN PLACES, BUT COMPELLING ENOUGH TO DRIVE YOU ON. BRILLIANTLY DESIGNED MISSIONS. ■ **LONGTERM 84** - YOU'LL FIGHT LIKE HELL 'TILL YOU'VE BEATEN IT, THEN SHELVES IT FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS BECAUSE THE EXPERIENCE COMPLETELY DRAINED YOU. THEN YOU'LL PLAY IT AGAIN. ■ **OVERALL 90** - ONE OF THOSE RARE GAMES THAT JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY LOVES. NO MATTER WHAT FLAVOUR OF GAMING TAKES YOUR USUAL FANCY, THIS ONE IS GUARANTEED TO PLEASE.

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: FLYING CARPET SIM ■ PLAYERS: 1-8 ■ PUBLISHER: BULLFROG/EA
PRICE: \$99.95 ■ RATING: G8 ■ MIN REQUIREMENTS: 486 DX2/66; 8MB RAM; 5-SPEED CD

CARPETS ARE GOOD FOR ALL SORTS OF THINGS. YOU CAN DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING ON THEM, AND IF YOU'VE GOT A MAGIC ONE THEN YOU REALLY ARE LAUGHING. BEN MANSILL LIKES A BIT OF CARPET ACTION...

Ahhh Magic Carpet, welcome back to my PC. Bullfrog's masterpiece of 3D fantasy combat has entered its second incarnation and vast hordes of gamers (including me) couldn't be happier. The gaming gods at Bullfrog didn't mess with the meat of the game, instead they've enhanced (a most overused word, but spot-on in this case) the gameplay elements we liked most. An abundance of new landscapes are part of the spruce up, but best of all is the tweaking of the game engine. It now runs 75% faster and in my book that makes it just about 75% better.

TAKING TO THE SKIES

The new game engine features another nice improvement. It'll now run in SVGA on machines with a mere 8 megs of RAM, compared to the 16 that was needed for high-res in the old version. Things as good as this should be taken with a grain of salt (like chips or baked potatoes for example, which should actually be accompanied by several grains of salt, but I waffle on... waffles aren't so great with salt incidentally). The ancient gaming adage "all the best games just don't work in high-res mode with existing PC technology" is still as true as ever. We took to the skies on a Pentium 100 and switched to SVGA... it was sloooow. Not a jerky frame rate slow, it was still as smooth as a recently Mr Sheened™ teak table, but compared to the sumptuously fast VGA mode, it was unplayable plod. Where the VGA mode throws the screen around at amazing speeds, SVGA's rate of progress is on par with digging through a city block made of plasticine using only a Paddle Pop™ stick for excavation. It's actually kind of helpful when you're overwhelmed by attackers, flicking to SVGA lets you fight accurately and carefully - as long as you don't mind the complete lack of excitement.

So it's back to low-res. No problem that, it looks so fantastic that the usual disappointment of an out of bounds screen quality is quickly forgotten. The new worlds differ wildly from the steady brown and green of the original. Sunny outdoor meadows are still abundant, but you'll also find yourself whipping through underground caverns with molten lava floors, or sneaking around stealthily in the dead of night, or perhaps skirting towering mountain ranges... you wanted variety, you got it.

Your task in this fast and pretty land is unchanged - accumulate Mana (a magical substance that contains the life force of the world and is essential to the equilibrium of the spiritual and mortal planes - but that's not important right now, think of them as Sonic's rings - just get 'em OK?) and dispatch whatever evil beasties come your way. This time around the world of harmony you worked so hard to create is threatened by Vissuluth the Dark One, a Master Demon who's bright shade of crimson suggests he didn't apply the SPF 15+ that sunny summer day. Vissuluth brought seven of his demon chums along to help out too. They appear from time to time over the game's 25 levels and it's no great surprise to discover that they get progressively tougher. Ultimately you'll face off with Vissuluth himself.

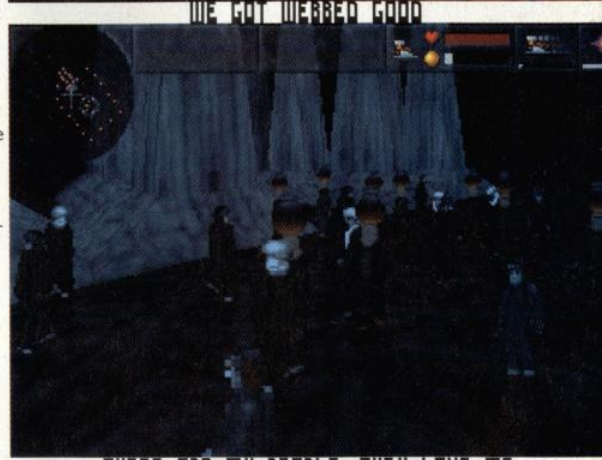
SKILLS AND SPELLS

I've heard some criticism from uninformed quarters (hi Roger!) that the Carpet series is just a colourful arcade shooter... wrong! From the very first mission you're in for serious grief if you're not going to use your head. Multiple objectives are the norm, with the way through never clear. The monsters you'll face each have particular strengths to avoid and weaknesses which must be exploited for success.

Mastering spells is essential for survival. There are 25 basic spells to be found through the game, each of which can be upgraded twice as you gain experience. Each upgrade adds new features, so it could be said that 75 different spells are there for your casting pleasure. This abundance of spells is not so you can pick your favourite and stick with it, as situations will arise that can only be dealt with by casting a particular spell. In the course of the game you'll use every one - from the lowly Fireball to the impressive stage 3 Volcano.

In the heat of an intense battle you'll be busy changing between spells as quickly as possible. This means for some frantic keyboard work; no support for 4-button joysticks like the Thrustmaster or CH Flightstick is a weakness that is only barely forgivable thanks to the customisable keyboard layout. The default layout is good enough, but you'll still be taking your eyes off the screen at critical moments.

It's a small bug in an otherwise perfect game. Like it's predecessor, Magic Carpet 2 offers adrenalin-charged gameplay with a hefty dose of tactical challenge. The worlds are a magically beautiful place to be a part of, zipping around on your flying rug that handles like it's been given the triple-Scotchguard™ treatment. The first game won just about every gaming award last year, the sequel is far superior and that makes for a hell of a play. Get it.



FADE TO BLACK

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: ACTION/ADVENTURE ■ PLAYERS: ONE ■ PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ PRICE: \$39.95 ■ RATING: MIS ■ MIN REQUIREMENTS: 486DX2/66; 8MB RAM; 0/SPEED CD ROM

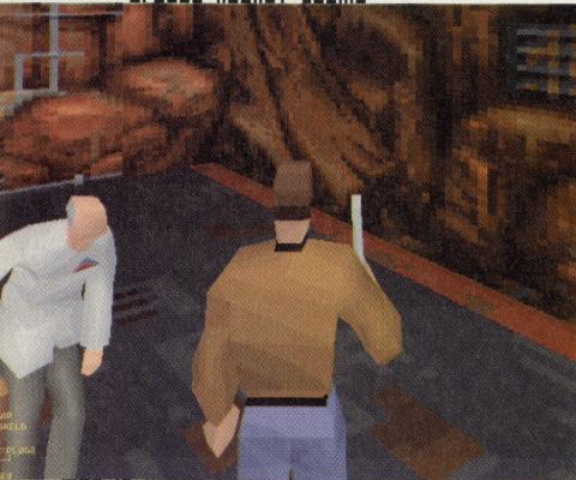
CONRAD, THE HERO OF FLASHBACK, IS BACK AND LOOKING VERY SO. JULIAN SCHOFFEL HAS A POLYGON ADVENTURE...



MAN ADMIRER: UNUSUAL ART



SPACEY: RUMBLE ZOOMS



MAN IN WHITE COAT: PROBABLY BAD

While Fade to Black is touted as the sequel to Flashback, the two titles are very different games. Flashback was essentially an arcade game in the Prince of Persia style and Fade to Black really has more in common with Bioforge and Alone in the Dark than its arcade predecessor.

The player will have one major question from the outset of Fade To Black: will I be able to get used to these funky camera angles? If you give the game a chance and play a couple of levels the camera angles really present no major problem. For those of you who haven't played Alone in the Dark or Bioforge and are wondering what the hell I am talking about, let me elaborate.

FUNKY CAMERA ANGLES

In FTB the player views the action from a series of different angles. It's as though there was a tiny helicopter complete with camera crew flying around Conrad. After a couple of hours play you learn how to adjust the viewpoint by re-positioning Conrad. The only time these camera angles present a problem is when Conrad flies his spaceship: in these instances the camera has a tendency to swing around to a side-on view when the ship goes under or over a bridge. This can be very disorienting and usually results in the player sending Conrad's ship into a wall. Why did Delphine use this technique? Well if they didn't they would have had to choose between Doom style 3D or boring 2D viewpoints, both of which have already been done to death.

OK now I've got that viewpoint thing sorted out I can tell you about the game itself. In FTB Conrad has been floating through space in suspended animation for the past fifty years. At the start of the game he has just been picked up by some Morphs, thawed out and imprisoned. Conrad's first goal will be to break out of prison with the help of a weird looking guy who looks like a cross between Thomas Dolby, Robert De Niro and a thunderbird puppet. Once Conrad has won his freedom he then links up with some human fighters who are out to eliminate the Morph presence in our Galaxy. The game is divided into levels and Conrad has a specific mission goal on each one. They range from stealing plans, to rescuing old scientists (complete with Colonel Klink accent) culminating in the destruction of the Morph super brain on Earth. The levels themselves are not comprised of bare walls and Morph cannon fodder, instead they are intricately designed deathtraps chock full of puzzles.

In his travels Conrad will come across a wide variety of shields, scanning devices and weapons. The main question plaguing the player's mind will be - when is the right time to use them? For example, some traps can only be seen using the Field scanner, but the Field scanner also happens to drain a lot of power thus weakening Conrad's shield. Similarly the superior devices like the Camouflage shield also use lots of power, so making good use of your resources while not leaving yourself vulnerable forms the backbone of any successful strategy in FTB.

HEAVY DUTY HARDWARE

While FTB does have a SVGA mode, it requires some heavy duty hardware. I only just managed to get through the game in this mode and that was with a Pentium 120 with 16 MB of RAM and a fast PCI graphics card! Even then the game would go into slow motion if a lot was happening on the screen. What's it going to take before we can be confident our PC will run a new game fast and at its optimum detail settings? This system requirements issue has always been the bane of the game player and it's about time somebody came up with a solution. Maybe all our prayers will be answered by the new generation of 3D accelerator cards (see News section for more details).

One of the best parts of FTB are the absolutely incredible rendered cut-scenes. They appear often and will blow your mind (yes, even the minds of jaded reviewer types who think they've seen it all). The second most impressive aspect of the game were the sound effects. Delphine have given the game a sort of 3D audio effect and the player can hear which direction a sound is coming from and how far away it is.

FTB is a solid game which plays a lot like Alone in the Dark and Bioforge. The graphics are good (great in SVGA) and the sound effects are excellent. The only negative aspect of the game were the spaceship levels: they really look pretty crappy and don't allow the player a great deal of control. But don't let this put you off as there are only two of them, the second one being the final level of the game. FTB is also very large and extremely challenging, Delphine have managed to use some of the best rendered footage I have ever seen to great effect. Be prepared to spend some time getting used to the dynamic viewing angles, but if you give the game a chance you won't be disappointed.

CD ROM

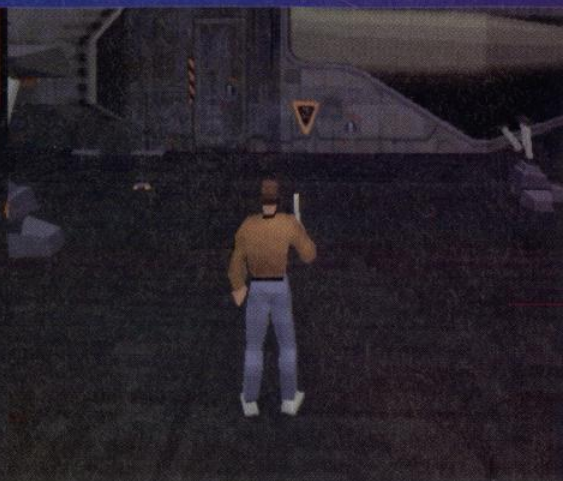
BLADE REVENGE



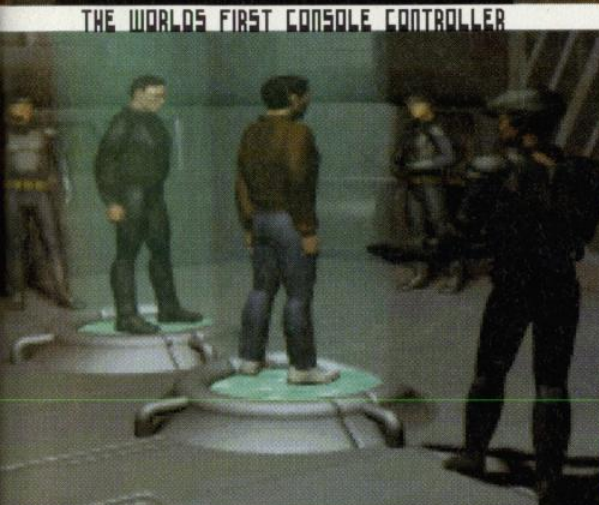
THE WORLD'S FIRST CONSOLE CONTROLLER



WANT YOU HATE PEOPLE TAKING OVER YOUR SHOULDERS



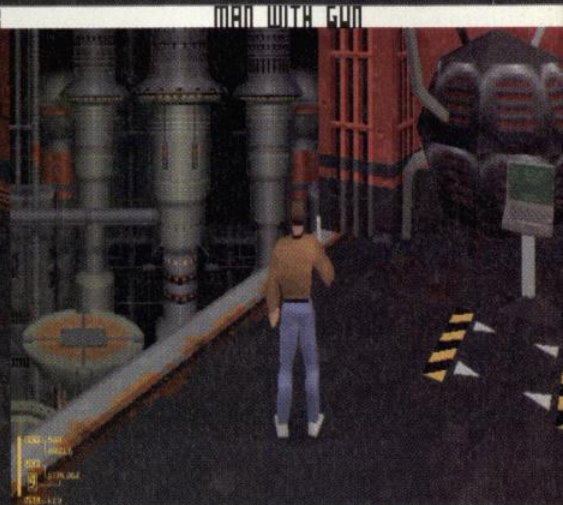
MAN WITH A PLAN



MEN STANDING IN STRANGE GREEN LIGHTS



MEN PONDERS NEXT MOVE



COOL TECHY BITS



HAHA HAHA HAHA

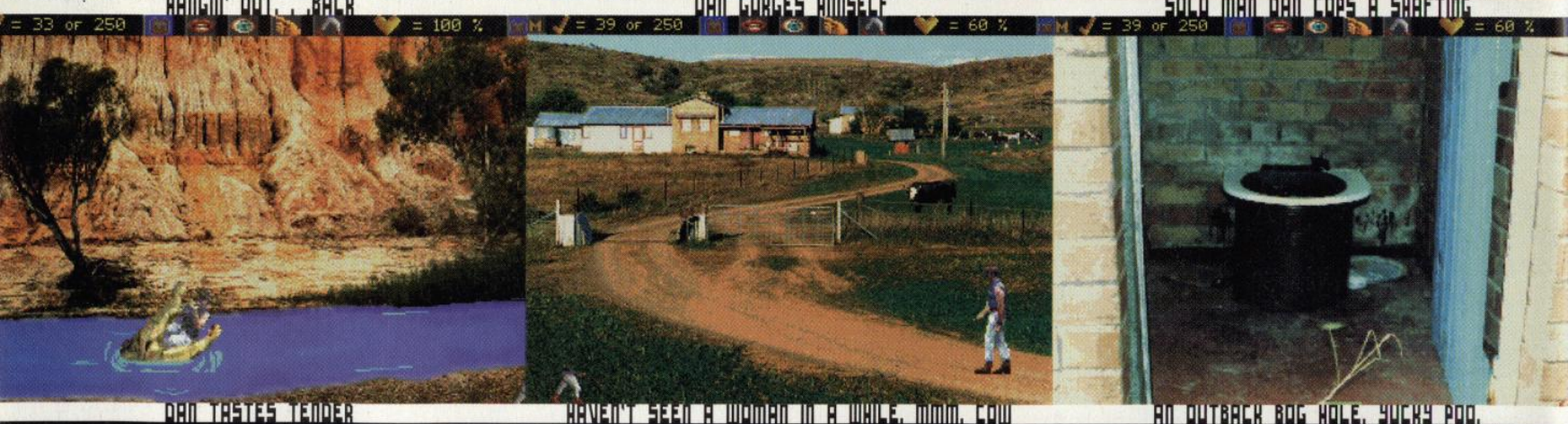
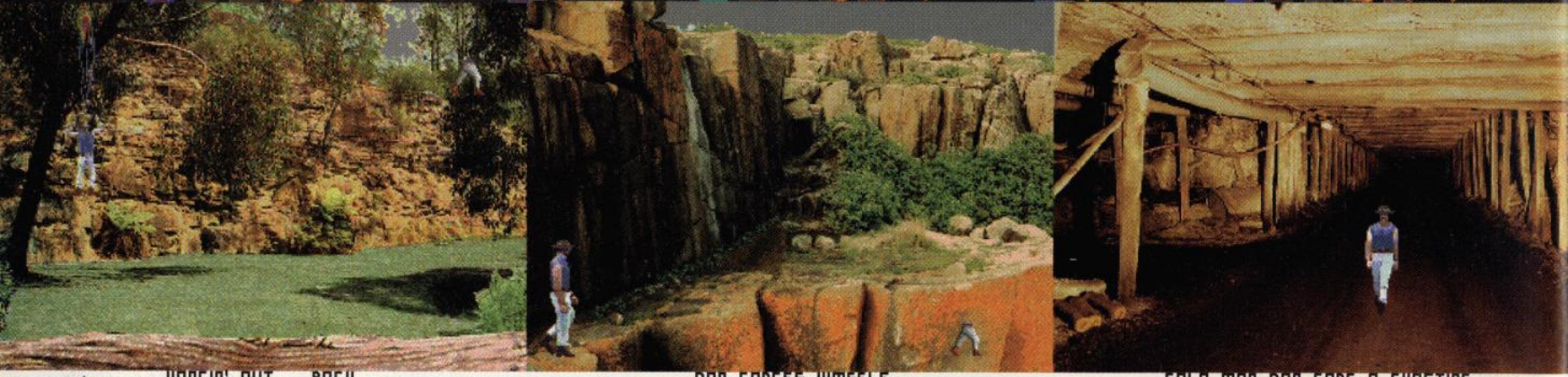
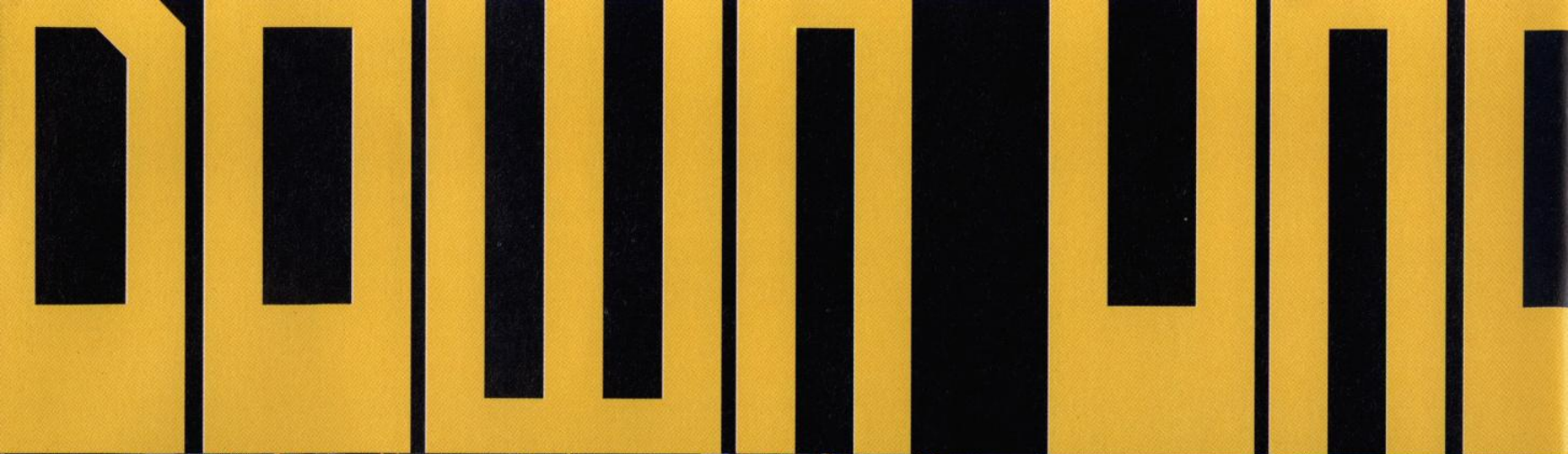


PURPLE MAN STEALER



PURPLE MAN STEALER

VISUALS 85 - INCREDIBLE RENDERED ANIMATIONS REALLY SPICE UP THE GAME. THE IN-GAME GRAPHICS ARE GREAT IN SVGA. ■ **SOUND 90** - SIMPLY FANTASTIC. THE AUDIO IN THE GAME HAS A 3D QUALITY WHERE YOU CAN WORK OUT THE DIRECTION AND DISTANCE OF DIFFERENT SOUNDS. ■ **GAMEPLAY 80** - THERE'S A LOT TO DO IN THIS GAME. LOADS OF TRAPS, PUZZLES AND NUMEROUS MORPHS TO VAPORISE. ■ **LONGTERM 90** - VERY LARGE LEVELS, LOTS OF MISSIONS, LOADS OF NASTY PUZZLES AND TRAPS. ■ **OVERALL 85** - FADE TO BLACK IS ONE OF THE BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE GAMES OF THE YEAR. IT'S EVEN BETTER IF YOU HAVE THE HARDWARE TO PLAY THE GAME IN SVGA MODE.



VISUALS 78 - GREAT IMAGES OF THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH AND THE LAMINEX AND LIND KITCHEN,
■ **SOUND: 80 - WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HEARD A LINE LIKE "HE'S SO UGLY HE'D MAKE A PIG VOMIT" IN A COMPUTER GAME?** ■ **GAMEPLAY: 75 - PERPLEXING PROBLEMS PROCREATE PROFUSELY,** ■ **LONGTERM: 60 - MOSTLY PLAYS THE SAME WAY EVERY TIME SO ONCE YOU'RE THROUGH, IT'S ALL OVER, THE GAME IS QUITE BIG HOWEVER,** ■ **OVERALL: 76 - AT FIRST GLANCE IT SEEMS A BIT TACKY, BUT THIS ONE WILL PROBABLY SURPRISE AND ENTERTAIN YOU.**

DOWN UNDER DAN

REVIEW

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: ADVENTURE ■ PLAYERS: ONE ■ PUBLISHER: POWERVISION/MANNACOM
PRICE: \$69.95 ■ RATING: G ■ MIN REQUIREMENTS: 486 DX2/66; 8MEG RAM; DOUBLE SPEED CD

THIS GAME MAY SOUND AS DAGGY AS THE BIT THAT HANGS OFF A SHEEP'S ASS, BUT AS GEORGE SOROPOS DISCOVERS, IT'S A JOY TO PLAY AN ADVENTURE GAME THAT USES AUSSIE LINGO AND LOCATIONS...

Strewth Shirl, it's a fair dinkum, you beaut, pearler of an Ozzie game! But with a name like Down Under Dan what else could it be? Resplendent with box art depicting kangaroos and boomerangs you could be forgiven for mistaking it as some sort of "Keating grant" inspired Japanese tourist guide, but don't let the cringe worthy packaging scare you off as it belies the fresh and amusing game that lurks beneath.

OUTBACK SKY SURFING

Dan is a bush pilot down on his luck, flying to Fifteen Mile Ridge to try and cash in on an opal strike in the area. Of course, in the interests of plot development, his Cessna blows a gasket forcing you to bail out somewhere over the Outback, sky surfing and Pelican dodging on the way down. What pelicans are doing flying over inland Australia is beyond me, but if you let too many of them slip you the beak your tinnie cracking days will swiftly be over. To further complicate matters, Dan's parachute gets tangled, leading to a nasty bash on the head and some 'Young and the Pointless' style amnesia. "Duh, where am I? What am I doing here?" That sort of thing.

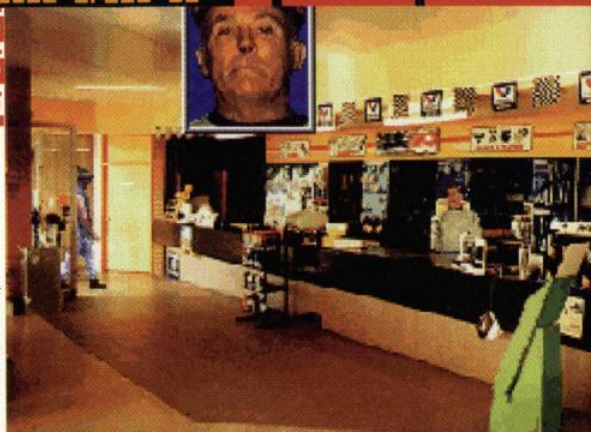
From the moment the game starts you'll notice something strange, almost eerie; Australian accents, real ones and loads of 'em. You know the real meaning of the term cultural imperialism when the sound of your own language can seem so alien and refreshing amid a vast sea of American dross. Thousands of lines of speech have been sampled for Dan, and the program has a different response for almost everything you do, adding more than enough variety to keep you interested from go to woe.

TRAIL BIKE RIDING AND RABBIT SHOOTING

All the action takes the form of video captured sprites animated over photographic backgrounds. The interaction between the two is seamless and, unlike a lot of games, doesn't add to the already complex problems you have to deal with. A peeled eye is an important thing to have too, as some objects are cleverly hidden or disguised. As Dan you'll get to take part in many quintessentially (country) Australian activities, such as eating witchetty grubs, hooning about on a trail bike, shearing sheep and, my favourite, rabbit shooting! The programmers (who claim to have funded the project with a winning entry in Funniest Home Videos) obviously have their eye on the novelty value of Australian culture overseas, using it as a lever to try and push their way into an overcrowded market, and why not?

The interface is straightforward enough with icons selectable from an onscreen toolbar or with button two on your trusty rodent, a few more keyboard 'hotkeys' would be handy though. Saving games is quick and easy and you'll need to do it often. Smart On-line help trickles out hints on request to stop you throwing your little brother out the window or stabbing the neighbours cat when you reach that infuriating, dead end puzzle. Good for people with low boiling points and ready access to firearms.

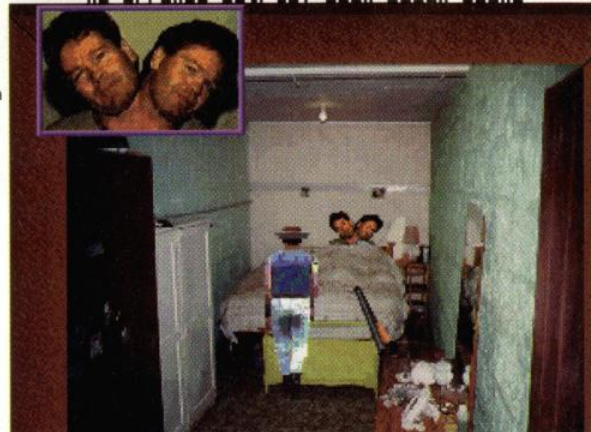
The overall neatness of the game impressed me, and while there's nothing remarkably innovative about Dan, it's a great first effort for Powervision and, not wanting to sound too cliched, stands up well against any comparison.



I'LL TAKE FOUR PLATYPUS POSTCARDS THANKS COBBER



NO OFFENCE LUV, BUT YOUR DECOR SUCKS

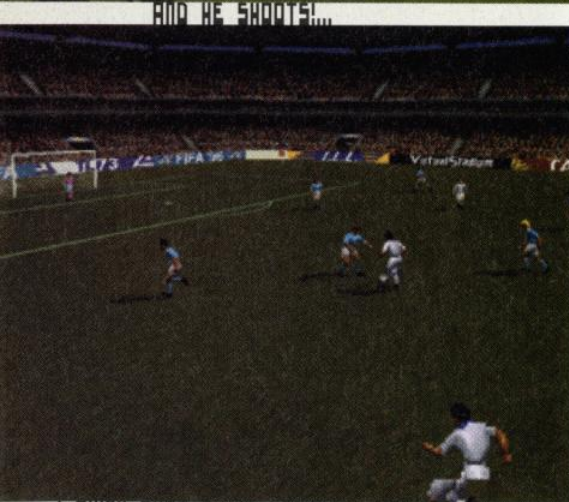


WHEE! 445 88 THESE THINGZ BINEDZ

DOWN UNDER

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: SPORTS ■ PLAYERS: 1-4 ■ PUBLISHER: E.A. ■ PRICE: \$89.95 ■ RATING: G ■ MIN. REQUIREMENTS: 486 DX23, 2X CD ROM, 8MB RAM, PENTIUM REC. FOR SVGA

GOODAAAAAALLOOOO!!! E.A. JUST KICKED ANOTHER ONE WITH THE UPDATE OF FIFA. SOCCER HAS NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD ON PC BEFORE. DAVID WILGOOSE IS THE MAN WITH THE BALL...



For me FIFA Soccer has always been just a small-time kick around the park compared to the mighty Sensible Soccer. Sensi is a true football game - a San Siro Stadium to FIFA's Leichhardt Oval. But FIFA '96 is something else again. It is an incredible game.

FIFA '96 is Tony Yeboah thundering a volley from 25 yards into the net. It is a Boban-Savicevic one-two splitting the Inter defence. It is Romario gliding past defenders. It is George Weah scoring with a spectacular bicycle kick. It is Eric Cantona...simply existing. FIFA '96 is everything that makes football truly majestic and the greatest sport in the world.

The original FIFA looked vaguely like a real football game, but it didn't play like one. Sensi played so very nearly like real football, but sadly looked nothing like it. FIFA '96, however, does both. Nearly everything has been executed perfectly - from the feel of each match to the presentation and options, it is a stunning achievement.

BEAUTIFUL, FLUID, ATMOSPHERIC

Let's begin with the graphics. They are beautiful, each player is rendered in lovely Super VGA and the animation is remarkably fluent. The matches are all played inside a huge stadium that looks magnificent and, with the cheering fans so close to the pitch, it ups the atmosphere stakes no end. FIFA's big gimmick though is the variety of camera angles offered. There are seven from which you can play the game, plus a couple more used in the Instant Replay feature. They all look fantastic, but sadly only about three are of any real practical use - and the Sensi-style overhead view is, quite unforgivably, only available for replays.

Then there's the speech. Wow. Commentary is provided throughout the match with every incident (goals, near misses, fouls, etc, even the name of each player who touches the ball) being mentioned. This is all the more astonishing when you consider that there are teams from the first divisions of countries such as Holland and Malaysia as well as the more well-known Italian and English leagues. International sides are also included - Australia to Zambia, they're all there.

But still I haven't mentioned the greatest feature of FIFA '96. I'm talking about the gameplay, of course. E.A. can be deservedly proud of themselves in achieving what so few football games ever manage (in my opinion, only Sensi has come close before this); that is, making the player really feel like they're actually playing a game of football. As opposed to some sort of bizarre pinball-esque arcade game. The player dictates the pace of the game, you're given plenty of time on the ball, so you can opt for a measured passing game. Or if you prefer, a brutal dogs-of-war approach, or a swift one-touch style. It's entirely up to you since you're not forced into playing in a particular way.

SIMPLE, INTUITIVE, INTELLIGENT

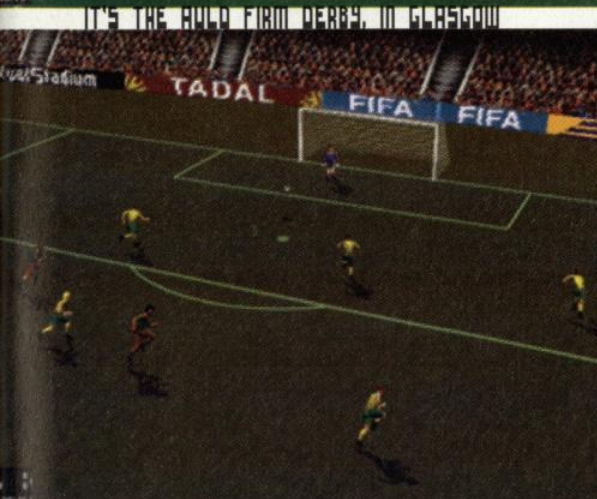
Passing is simple, intuitive and intelligent. Smooth, flowing passing movements and sweeping length-of-the-field attacks soon become second nature. Defending is not as futile or hit-and-miss as it usually is, thanks to the realistic computer AI - defenders usually hang back a bit, instead of diving in as soon as a player gets the ball. But don't be deceived, despite this FIFA '96 remains a difficult opponent. True, you won't get hammered 10-0 to begin with, but scoring yourself is not easy and therefore far more rewarding when you finally do so. Shooting is as easy as passing, the after-touch is good and not as hopelessly exaggerated as in other games. And thankfully, there are no mathematical flaws in the goalkeeping routines for you to exploit (well, none that I found, at least).

Clearly, this is the ultimate soccer sim, and possibly - oh, what the hell - definitely the best sports sim you can get. In fact, I may as well go the whole way; FIFA '96 is one of the best games ever, and certainly my favourite release this year.

Hmm, but perhaps you don't like football that much, or sports sims aren't usually your thing? If so, then I implore you to brush aside any Misgivings you may have, look Doubt sternly in the eye and say, "Away with ye!" in a threatening manner, and give Hesitation a forceful clip around the ears. This is a game for everyone. What other game presents such a unique and long-lasting challenge? What other game can provide within minutes, the thrill and exhilaration of levelling the Cup Final 3-3 deep into the second half, then the frustration and inconsolable despair of losing the same match 4-3 with just seconds to go? (God, how I hate Germany for that). What other game looks so beautiful and plays so angelically? None.

Like I said, FIFA '96 is an incredible game.

CRUISE REVIEW



Formation



Strategy



VISUALS 94 - AMAZING. THE SVGA WILL TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY. ■ SOUND 87 - THE SPEECH IS VERY IMPRESSIVE, BUT PERHAPS THE CROWD NOISE COULD BE BETTER. ■ GAMEPLAY 96 - THIS IS THE STUFF, SO GOOD, YOU FORGET YOU'RE PLAYING A COMPUTER GAME. ■ LONGTERM 95 - THE EARTH WILL DIE EVENTUALLY, I GUESS. ■ OVERALL 96 - THE SPORTS GAME OF THE YEAR, NO QUESTION.

REDEMPTION



RED MAN SHAPES UP TO TAKE ON THE NEW CHALLENGE



RED MAN GOES TO WORK ON THE NEW CHALLENGE



RED MAN GOES TO WORK ON THE NEW CHALLENGE



SILVER MAN RUSHES TO RED MAN'S AID



RED MAN GOES TO WORK ON THE NEW CHALLENGE



RED MAN GOES TO WORK ON THE NEW CHALLENGE



RED MAN GOES TO WORK ON THE NEW CHALLENGE



RED MAN GOES TO WORK ON THE NEW CHALLENGE



RED MAN GOES TO WORK ON THE NEW CHALLENGE

VISUALS 98 - IT JUST DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS. ■ **SOUND 95** - GREAT MUSIC AND WICKED EFFECTS SET OFF THE GLORIOUS VISUALS. ■ **GAMEPLAY 96** - COMPREHENSIVE INTERACTION WITH YOUR SURROUNDINGS, HUGE ASSORTMENTS OF WEAPONRY AND AMAZING PYROTECHNIC DISPLAYS WILL HAVE YOU GRINNING FOR WEEKS. ■ **LONGTERM 96** - MISSIONS ARE HUGE AND HARD AND THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO DOUBT YOU'LL BE STICKING IT OUT RIGHT TO THE END OF THE GAME. ■ **OVERALL 96** - ONE OF THE BEST GAMES YOU WILL EVER PLAY.

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: ACTION/STRATEGY ■ PUBLISHER: ORIGIN ■ PRICE: \$99.95
RATING: MIS+ ■ MIN REQUIREMENTS: 486/DX266; 8MB RAM; D/SPEED CD; 30MB HARD DRIVE

THE LATEST GAME FROM ORIGIN IS ALSO ONE OF THEIR GREATEST. LET'S NOT WASTE TIME HERE BECAUSE JULIAN SCHOFFEL IS GETTING VERY EXCITED...



About two years ago Origin released Ultima 8. While this game featured some very fancy animation it really wasn't well received by the RPG community at large. The reason for this: it was too arcadey. At that time Origin had plans for an add-on for Ultima 8 called The Lost Vale, but with all the negative vibes they decided to shelve this and concentrate on developing an entirely new engine for Ultima 9. But if you're a smart company (and Origin is definitely a smart company) you don't waste a good game engine. The truth is that the game engine of Ultima 8 was very good, it just wasn't very well suited to a hardcore RPG. So the folks at Origin enhanced this engine considerably, changed the theme to sci-fi and the result is one of the most incredibly good looking and fantastically addictive strategically oriented action games I have ever had the good fortune to play.

GAME OF THE YEAR?

When Origin release an Ultima or Wing Commander product they really hype it for all it's worth. So it's very surprising that Crusader was released with so little fanfare. Just when Command & Conquer looked to be the hot item on most people's playlist, along comes Crusader and the multitude of messages on Compuserve and the Internet seem to indicate it is many players' prime contender for "Game of the year".

Crusader: No Remorse is set on Earth in the not too far distant future. The planet is controlled by a sinister force known as the World Economic Consortium (WEC). The WEC rule is one of terror, violence and intimidation. Their most lethal weapon is a group of elite shock troopers known as the 'Silencers'. After all you can't make trouble if you can't talk and you can't talk if you're dead, hence the name 'Silencers'. The player character is a Silencer who has fallen victim to the dark voices of his conscience. Filled with remorse for all the innocent people he has slaughtered in the name of the WEC he decides to join the Resistance movement in an effort to atone for his sins. As a Silencer you can turn the fear generated by your nasty reputation back on to the WEC. Unfortunately this reputation also means that it will take some time for others in the Resistance to learn to trust you.

Crusader is viewed from the top down angled perspective. The player controls one character on a series of missions for the Resistance. Each mission is split up into a series of levels and sub-levels. Mission goals include the destruction of WEC equipment, stealing WEC documents, rescuing Resistance prisoners and so on.

GORGEOUS, INCREDIBLE, ASTOUNDING...

The most astounding aspect of Crusader are the graphics and detail of the game world. The game is in glorious SVGA and features the most incredible looking explosions I have yet seen in a PC game. You can comprehensively interact with your surroundings and this includes satisfying demolition on a grand scale: shoot a video screen and it shatters just like real glass, chairs spin with the force of an explosion, barrels fly down at you and explode. The sprites themselves move with astounding fluidity: I've never seen animation of this quality before!

There are a huge array of weapons and equipment for you to use. Some of these can be picked up in the field, while other equipment can be bought from a dubious character known as 'the Weasel' back at the resistance base. The game features the usual assortment of medikits and powerups (for your body armour), but there are also landmines, spider mines and rocket launchers along with loads of different guns. Nothing beats sending a spider mine around a corner into an unfortunate WEC soldier and then watching the poor fellow run screaming in flames! Blood seeps from dead enemy soldiers and oil drips from shattered droids, giving the game a further sense of realism.

Enemy soldiers aren't your character's only adversaries though. There are also automated machine and laser guns, vicious droids, electrical fields, laser beams, pools of acid, exploding barrels, hidden flame or rocket traps, clouds of lethally hot steam from broken pipes and the list goes on and on. On occasion you can even use some of these to your advantage: wait for a WEC soldier to walk in front of that pipe and then release the steam, take control of a gun or killer droid by remote control and clear out a room full of WEC shock troops etc. Apart from the traps there are a fiendish array of puzzles to solve if you are to successfully complete your mission. There are also plenty of secret rooms and alternate routes to mission objectives if you look hard enough. Thankfully the game features a proper savegame feature, in contrast with titles like Dark Forces.

FOAMING AT THE MOUTH

Each mission is punctuated with a fantastic animated cut sequence and/or a list of mission goals from your commanding officer (there is digitised video of the human actors in these sequences). Between missions you go to the Resistance base, where you can talk to other Resistance characters, heal yourself and buy weapons or equipment. While the acting isn't particularly good, I didn't really care as the rest of the game is superb.

The sound effects and music are excellent and serve to compliment the glorious visuals. The game is best controlled using the keyboard and there is no joystick option (although I have heard Origin are working on a patch for joystick play because of the incredibly positive response to the game).

This is by far and away the best game I have played all year and possibly the best game I have ever played! It ran with no slowdown on full detail settings which makes a nice change. If you like heaps of action garnished with large amounts of real-time strategy then this game will have you foaming at the mouth! One of the best for 1995!



OH, YOUR BOSS: RED MAN



RED MAN CONSIDERS KILLING SOMETHING NEW

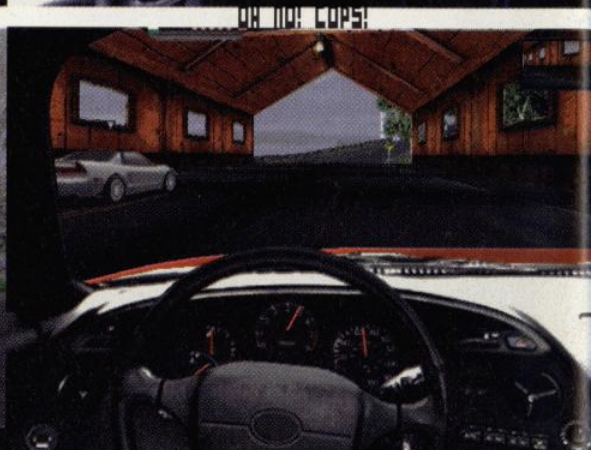
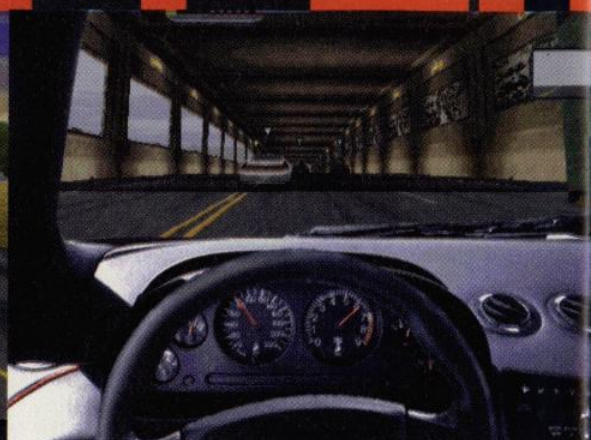
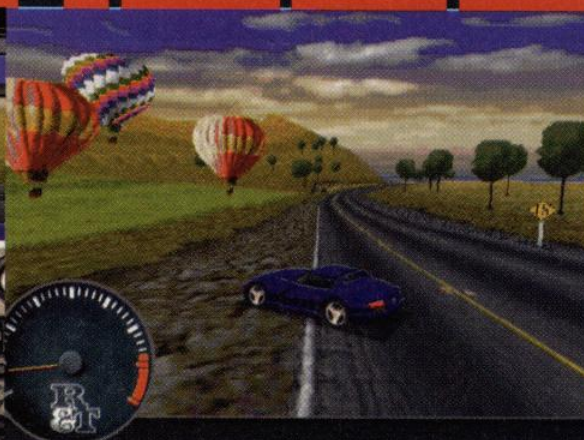
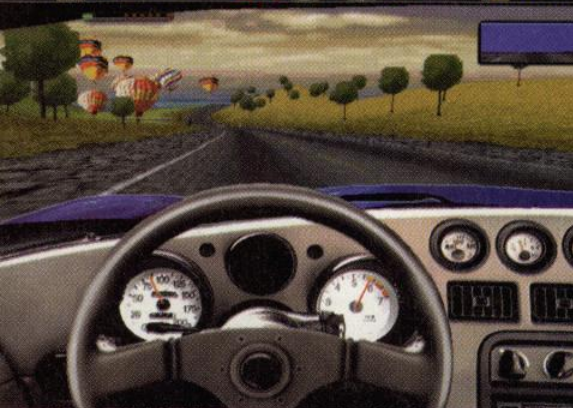


THE WORK HERE IS DONE



THE NEED FOR

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VIPER AIRBORN, FERRARI ABOUT TO BE...

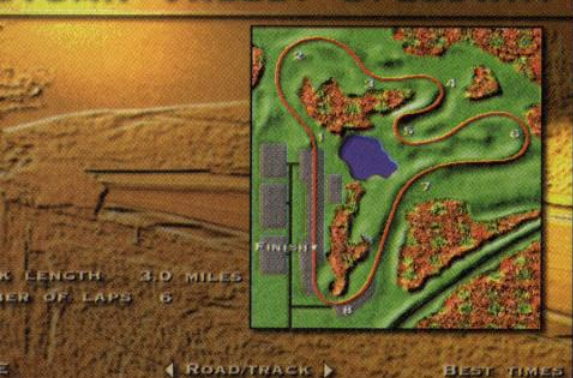
THE TYPIC LOUSES IT BACK...

BY IS ABOUT THE MOST CAR TO DRIVE

AUTUMN VALLEY SPEEDWAY

DODGE VIPER RT/10

LAMBORGHINI DIABLO VT



PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION	0-60 MPH	4.8 SEC
	0-100 MPH	11.1 SEC
	0-1320 FT. (1/4 MILE)	19.1 SEC / 109.0 MPH
	TOP SPEED	160 MPH

MECHANICAL

ENGINE TYPE	3000 cc V8
DISPLACEMENT	348 CU IN. (5707 CC)
BORE & STROKE	3.49 x 3.15 IN. / 89.0 x 80.0 MM
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.0:1
HORSEPOWER (SAE)	492 BHP AT 6800 RPM
TORQUE	428 LB-FT AT 4200 RPM
MAXIMUM ENGINE SPEED	7500 RPM

ROAD/TRACK BEST TIMES DONE

NEXT CAR

DONE NEXT CAR

VISUALS 92 - FOR THOSE IMPRESSED BY LENGTH, THESE ROADS STRETCH ON MANY GENEROUS MILES AND LOOK BETTER THAN ANYTHING ELSE. DASH DIALS ARE CLEAR AND FUNCTIONAL. **SOUND 89** - WHOA! SAMPLED ENGINES AND DOPPLER-EFFECTED OPPONENTS. THE FERRARI SCREAMS, THE LAMBO RUMBLES, THE HONDA WHIRRS, THE VIPER FWUMS, FWUM FWUM FWUUM! **GAMEPLAY 91** - VICIOUS CORNERS AND SENSITIVE CONTROLS NEED CONSIDERABLE SKILL, BUT THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT, AS CLOSE TO DOING IT FOR REAL AS THERE IS. **LONGTERM 88** - YOU'LL BE DRAGGING NFS OUT FOR A BURN YEARS AFTER YOU BUY IT. MODERN PLAY ADDS EVEN MORE. CAR AND SCENERY DISKS PLEASE EA! **OVERALL 91** - AN UNNATURALLY IMPRESSIVE GAME, YOUR FRIENDS WILL BE AMAZED, BUT YOU'LL JUST WANT THEM TO GO AWAY SO YOU CAN GIVE IT THE CONCENTRATION IT DESERVES AND NEEDS.

SPEED REVIEWS

AVAILABLE: NOW ■ CATEGORY: DRIVING SIM. ■ PLAYERS: 1-2 ■ PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ PRICE: \$99.95
RATING: G ■ MIN REQUIREMENTS: 486DX2/66, 8MB RAM, 2 X CD ROM

SLINK GRACEFULLY INTO THE HID-LEATHER RECLAR, ONE HAND ON THE MOMO, THE OTHER ON THE SHIFTER, TAKE A BREATH AND TURN THE KEY, THE TAMED CACOPHONY BLATting AROUND YOU IS NEED FOR SPEED, THE ROAD AHEAD YOUR GREATEST TEST. BEN MANSILL SLIDES OUT OF THE PIT...

'Tis the season of the 3D sim. Whether it be flying, driving or futuristic jet-sledding, there has never been so much that's so damn good. Driving fans have an especially pleasing Christmas in store. If the hype is to be believed, Grand Prix 2 from Microprose will be the hottest driving sim ever. For now though, that title has been soundly claimed by the new PC version of Need for Speed.

When we first played the 3DO version we were comprehensively blown away - to the tune of 89% Overall and a whopping 95% for Graphics, in fact (Hyper #16). Impressive as the 3DO game is, it can safely be said that the PC version is exactly twice as good. Twice the resolution, twice the number of tracks and support for proper controllers, which means twice the fun in my highly flexible book.

THIS IS NOT A GAME

Let's get one thing straight from the start, Need for Speed is not a game, it's a sim. The dynamics of the driving model are about the best ever, an equal first with the great Indycar methinks. But where Indycar models just one vehicle, Need for Speed gives you 8 to choose from and they're way more fun to drive than America's diluted flavour of Formula 1.

The beautiful thing about NFS is that it lets you drive the most desirable cars on the planet. Better still, you can fang along at speeds most of us will never experience in anything that hasn't got wings. Better still, the roads are the finest stretches of virtual bitumen yet made. Roller coaster hills with perfect camber and massive jump-ramp potential. All this is far from a new concept, Accolade's Test Drive series had the very same noble goal, but what started as a good intention ended up losing the plot hopelessly with the final instalment, Test Drive III.

NFS brings it all together perfectly. It was knocked up under the astute guidance of Yank car mag Road & Track. These folks love their cars as much as we love our games, and wouldn't settle for anything but total realism. This means digitised engine sounds with software-driven 3D sound, it means photo-realistic car interiors, it means stunningly beautiful 3D landscapes and naturally, it also means that the cars handle just right.

You've just bought and installed the game, odds are the first thing you'll do is choose the Lamborghini Diablo and try and break the land speed record. Wrong attitude! This is an excellent way to build a few caves in the mountain walls with the front end of the Lambo. The right way to treat NFS is with the same respect you'd have if these cars were sitting in your garage. Drive them like you'd drive a real car and you'll get places fast. Each car handles completely differently, so your driving style needs to accommodate the car's characteristics.

DISTINCTIVE ASS-SQUAT

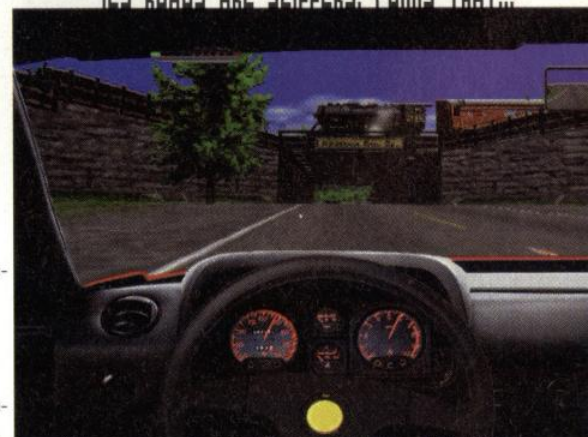
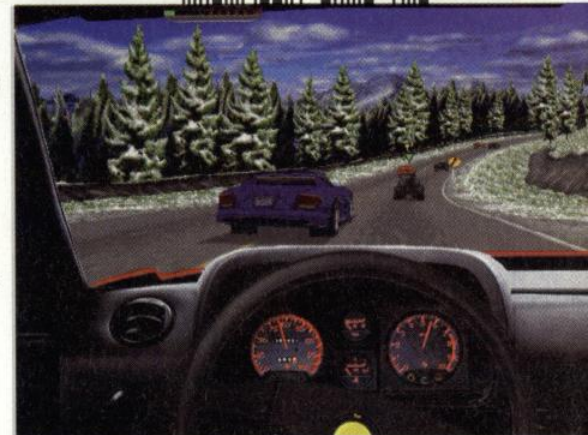
True to life, the Porsche 911 accelerates madly and handles superbly, with a distinctive ass-squat each time you plant it. Also true to life, the Porsche will spin out in a flash if you floor it mid-corner, or even lift-off in the same situation. The big Viper V-10 has the power of a freight train, but doesn't much like being revved, it also has extremely nimble handling. Driving the Viper well is tough; the chassis is magic but the engine belongs in a tractor. Smaller sporties are modelled too, the Honda NSX, Mazda RX7 and Toyota Supra Turbo are surprisingly fun to drive. Their handling is smoother and more predictable than the big Italians, with the Supra Turbo's engine a high-revving screamer that's pure joy to push hard. Being a turbo though, means ineffectual engine braking. Small touches like this make all the difference. Mastering each car's individual traits is what it's all about, and for \$99.95 it's a pretty appealing way to savour automotive thoroughbreds that would normally be out of reach.

There are several ways to take your fun to the road. CPU opponents can be set to drive anything you want, with a choice of going up against just one or the whole parade. Tournaments can also be entered, or you can go for timed quarter miles and standing start 0-100mph dashes. Before getting into all that, it's best to just cruise and get the feel of it. This is something you'll come back to do anyway, as just driving along these beautiful roads in equally beautiful cars is something that needs to be experienced without spoiling it by rushing madly.

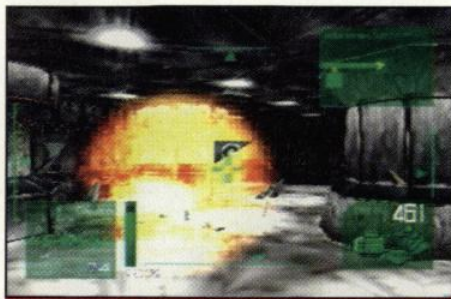
A warning though, these powerful cars need to be fuelled by an appropriately powerful computer.

Don't even think about SVGA unless you've got at least a Pentium 90. For plain vanilla VGA a local bus DX2/66 is bare minimum.

NFS is an exceptional piece of work, it's hard to master but ever so rewarding when you do. Superb.



Kileak the Blood



PLAYSTATION

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **ACTION**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **SONY MUSIC**
 Price: **\$89.95**
 Rating: **TBC**

Out of the many PlayStation productions to be presented to us, one game just had to be bad. This prize falls to Kileak the Blood. After a hard day's work sitting at the very prestigious and highly sought after desk at HYPER headquarters we wanted satisfaction, and that didn't come in the form of Kileak the Blood.

Here comes another Doom-like game, which promises much from its packaging yet does not deliver the goods. An action adventure game which moves at a blistering pace of one centimetre per hour. Doom clones should be terrific because of their fast pace and constant killing. Kileak is slow and cumbersome with only a few impressive graphic sequences to lighten up the experience. A game for the more patient and adventure seeking game player with much mind-numbing plodding along in between fighting sequences. The game has various puzzle challenges, with levers and lights that trigger secret passages but these aren't much fun.

A barrage of alien creatures await you though, but they lack the frightening elements that bestow aliens I know. An armory of weapons also lies in your path and these vary in firepower, speed and spread. The weaponry also varies between energy weapons, projectiles or flamers. The idea of the game is to make it through each level presented before you, killing everything that comes even remotely close. Watch the radar for any aliens coming up behind you.

Sound resembled bleaks and crashes, and there's not too much to get the adrenalin pumping. The fact that you can only save your games at the end of each level was rather frustrating. Controls are easy to see and mapping is like a walk in the park.

In conclusion, Kileak looks good yet it lacks playability and simply cannot be enjoyed for any extended period of time.

Julian Bures
& Jason Serda

VISUALS

70

SOUND

45

GAMEPLAY

35

LONGTERM

35

OVERALL

40

Digital Pinball



SATURN

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **PINBALL**
 Players: **1-2**
 Publisher: **KAZe**
 Price: **\$89.95**
 Rating: **G**

There's a Japanese pinball game out there called Last Gladiators. It's a fairly good effort, very realistic but not terribly exciting. This same pinball game is being released in Australia, but it will be called Digital Pinball. Anyone like to explain that one to me? How could anyone think Digital Pinball was a superior name to Last Gladiators. Not that it matters greatly, but it's an unwelcome trend that's becoming tiresome.

Anyway, Digital Pinball then. There are four tables. Warlock is the best, by virtue of there being so much more to do than the other three. Dragon Showdown is pretty good, with a nice arrangement of ramps, though it is a bit top heavy. Knight of the Roses is alright too, it's several traps and single ramp used to good effect. Strangely, Last Gladiators is the worst of the four, with a ramp and a couple of rollovers that don't do anything interesting.

The best thing about Digital Pinball is the realistic ball-movement. I didn't spot a single glitch or odd bounce the whole time I was playing. Unfortunately, there are several problems. The graphics look dreadfully second-rate, and although the 3D works, the colours are gaudy and very unpleasant. My eyes even began to hurt after a short while. Bonus messages are also handled poorly, with these dirty black boxes leaping into the middle of the screen during play to inform you that this or that has just occurred. They look ugly and obscure the play area - what's wrong with just using speech? Yet, importantly, the sound is excellent - good FX and speech.

In all, a reasonably good pinball game. If you like a bit of realism with your pinball this might be a good buy.

David Wildgoose

VISUALS

60

SOUND

84

GAMEPLAY

70

LONGTERM

72

OVERALL

70

NBA Live 96



MEGA DRIVE

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **SPORTS SIM**
 Players: **1-4**
 Publisher: **EA SPORTS**
 Price: **\$99.95**
 Rating: **G**

You already know that EA's NBA Live 95 was a quantum leap from NBA Showdown in terms of digital basketball excitement, making it unquestionably the best sim on court (our line being that NBA Jam, great as it is, isn't a sim). Well, you'll be disappointed, though not surprised, to learn that the leap from NBA Live 95 to NBA Live 96 is, as leaps go, the exact opposite of a quantum leap. It is a leap of the kind customarily made, with all due respect, by the severely disadvantaged in our community. That is, one that goes not very far.

You've still got the excellent isometric viewpoint, loads of options, season play, customisable teams and more stats than an actuaries convention, but not a whole lot that's new. Yes, all the line-ups have been updated and the new teams included (Montreal Grizzlies and the Vancouver Raptors) and the action has been pumped up a little faster but there's not much else. There's a shot map, which shows you where all of your shots have been taken from and which ones were successful (which is particularly cool) but on the debit side, the player's pictures have been removed from the pre-game show, the run onto the court and the player awards (well at least they were on the Beta version I played). The crowds are more vocal and the sprites are a tad bigger but, while all this is positive, it's hardly revolutionary stuff.

I know I shouldn't be complaining as this is still the best basketball game going around but am I alone in thinking that EA would be better served if they missed one Christmas and gave us a truly new game every two years. But hey, while Santa's still keeps ringing those registers, the sequels will keep on coming.

This is a great game, but it's the same great game as NBA Live 95.

Stretch Armstrong

VISUALS

88

SOUND

84

GAMEPLAY

89

LONGTERM

85

OVERALL

88

Garfield



MEGA DRIVE

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **PLATFORM**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **SEGA**
 Price: **\$99.95**
 Rating: **G**

Oh dear, it's that time again - the time we all dread. It's film/cartoon/comic (circle where applicable) conversion time, where Mr Games Maker takes a successful film/cartoon/comic and turns it into a completely unremarkable platform game.

This time it's Garfield getting the treatment. And, to nobody's even mild surprise, it's very dull. Garfield leaps and bounds through numerous levels of caves and mountains and hell-fire pits and probably some other ones, but I couldn't be bothered playing that far. On the way he collects dead fish, which he can throw at lobsters and odd vulture-like birds. Or if you prefer you can hit them instead. There are obstacles like water, falling coconuts, small inexplicable bursts of flame, and pits of sticky yellow liquid. As you can see, it is a faithful re-creation of the comic original. I mean, Garfield was always off on similar Indiana Jones-style adventures, wasn't he?

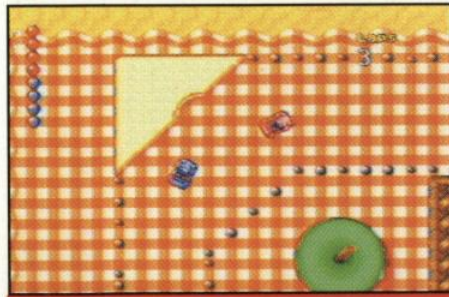
Still, it's all done quite efficiently. There's nothing particularly bad about Garfield. He is smoothly animated, the graphics are pretty, and the sound is full of appropriate noises. There are no horrible, frustrating flaws in design. No stupid nothing-the-player-can-do ways of dying. No leaps of faith or the old deadly-water trick.

Nup, this is pure and simple platforming action, and it is not without a curiously perverse appeal. It has all been done before and will no doubt be done again. You already know if you like this type of game.

David Wildgoose



Micro Machines 96



MEGA DRIVE

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **RACING**
 Players: **1-4**
 Publisher: **CODE MASTERS**
 Price: **\$99.95**
 Rating: **G**

I'm going to recommend this game to every single one of you. Even if you already own Micro Machines or one of its follow-ups, which I'm sure most of you do. Micro Machines 96 is a classic game, and no home should be without a copy.

These are the bare facts. MM 96 has 54 tracks (plus a delightful track editor which allows you to make your own or alter the standard ones), 17 different kinds of terrain (from baths to workbenches, swamps to school desks), 16 characters (including a girl called Tits), 15 types of vehicle (from cumbersome trucks to super-speedy jets and hovercraft), a four player option, plus as many leagues and knockout competitions you could possibly cope with.

These are more bare facts. MM 96 is a breathtaking, and breathtakingly good game. It is incredibly fast, much more so than previously, and especially when you're racing the jets. The feeling of speeding around the twisting circuits, driving at the limit, attempting to ram your opponent off the edge of the track, while your veering within millimetres of the precarious drop yourself, dodging the multitude of bizarre obstacles, trying to anticipate the devilishly tricky corners, all at the same time, is an absolute joy. It can bring a tear to the eye. You begin to believe that the world is truly a beautiful and wonderful place, and that video games are undoubtedly man's greatest invention.

It doesn't get much better than this.

David Wildgoose



Witchaven



PC CD ROM

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **DOOMLIKE**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **CAPSTONE**
 Price: **\$99.95**
 Rating: **M15+**

There are some people who like to do their slaughtering from a distance, using cowardly weapons of mass destruction, and others to whom a battle is not a battle unless you're close enough to cop a squirt in the eye from a ruptured artery. Until now, Doom clones (both good and bad) have offered an assortment of ranged weapons (guns) with which to dispatch your enemies from a nice safe distance, preferably ducking out from behind a wall and back again.

Witchaven offers an extra challenge to jaded Doomers by setting the action in a medieval/fantasy world and providing you with various hack and slash weapons, most of which can only be used by getting right up in the face of your opponent and risking a rather unpleasant disembowelment of your own. Short swords, Morning Stars, Broadswords, Halberds and Battleaxes will be your main carving implements, with Bows and Pike Axes being the only ranged weapons (and these are few and far between). Of course, what homicidal fantasy world would be complete without spells, and Witchaven offers eight but don't get too excited as only three of them are for combat.

This game is no pushover, needing to get intimate to kill your foes is alright when there are one or two of them, but things get a little sticky when you're surrounded by a whole host of partially nude monsters (I only mention this because the game box has a warning about partial nudity and I find it most amusing that someone out there thinks people's minds are going to be warped by Goblins in loin cloths!) The music of Witchaven has a genuinely spooky feel, and the sound effects are nicely done too. Add good level design to that as well as some SVGA graphics and you end up with one of the best Doom clones around.

A fun game and a real challenge.

George Soropos



Caesar 2



PC CD ROM

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **STRATEGY/EMPIRE BUILDING**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **SIERRA**
 Price: **\$79.95**
 Rating: **G**

Wrap yourself in an old, white, non-designer sheet, scrunch a bunch of garden leaves around your head then fire up your PC and enter the world of ancient Rome.

Caesar 2 is a hell of a sequel. The first Caesar was a promising game with untapped potential, but the follow up is a monster. Anyone who thought SimCity 2000 was a neat idea, but was quickly bored by the lack of scope will go wild with this. The meat of the game is city development. Ancient Rome was a city with a surprisingly advanced infrastructure, the game models it beautifully and asks you to balance the citizen's needs for many different amenities. Keeping your flock happy is a staple for this sort of game, and the Romans were kept at their happiest by having everything essential within walking distance. This means if you're aiming for a sizeable city you'll be erecting several of each of the basic structures.

Happy Romans like to keep clean, so you'll need bath houses which are also connected to the aqueduct system you'll also be building. Clean and happy Romans like to watch gladiators hack themselves to bits in the colosseum, so you'll need one of those too. After a hard day sitting around, your average Roman likes to visit the local basilica to pay a bit of homage. There's way more to worry about, this is a complex and demanding city building game, but the balance is perfect and the work is always intriguing, never a frustrating or dull pain.

Caesar 2 takes its world far beyond the city walls that usually herald the limit of lesser games. A click expands the scene to show the entire country, with your city a wee speck in the middle. Other towns are out there too, just as you'd expect. If they're friendly you'll be building vast road networks to get the trade rolling, with the building of a decent army part of the plan for when hungry Barbarians come a visiting. Shipyard and ports can be knocked up too, for overseas trade and naval warfare.

It gets bigger still. Successfully build up one area and you'll be tasked with moving onto another, campaign style. Any surplus wealth is carried over too. Big, fun and perfectly balanced - a bloody good game this. Vini vidi vici.

Ben Mansill

VISUALS

80

SOUND

75

GAMEPLAY

88

LONGTERM

87

OVERALL

86

Heroes of Might & Magic



PC CD ROM

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **STRATEGY**
 Players: **1-4**
 Publisher: **NEW WORLD COMPUTING**
 Price: **\$79.95**
 Rating: **G8**

The last time I met Might & Magic it was a sprawling, enjoyable yet flawed, first-person RPG. Two years later, having ditched the unfashionable Dungeon Master-saddo outfit in favour of the hipper, more stylish Warcraft-esque guise that is Heroes, I find it completely unrecognisable - and all the better for it.

Heroes is a very simple game. You, and the other four players, each begin with a castle, a few troops and one of the eponymous Heroes. The general aim throughout most campaigns is to conquer your enemies and hold all of the land's castles. To build up your forces you have to find and take over the various mines and mills which provide those essential resources such as gold, wood and ore. Then you can begin to upgrade the facilities inside your castle and produce more troops. As you can tell, this part of the game is exactly like Warcraft et al.

However there are two major differences. One, the Heroes themselves. They come in four varieties: Barbarian, Knight, Sorceress, and Warlock, and each must have a selection of troops assigned to him or her when they venture into the lands surrounding your castle. You really get to know these guys too, you really care about them and pick favourites to lead you into vital battles. Two, the combat is phased. This works surprisingly well considering the current trend for everything to be done in "real-time". It is definitely the best turn-based combat system I've ever used.

Another big plus is the graphics, everything looking superb in wonderful SVGA - the Heroes world is far more pleasing to the eye than the drab Command & Conquer landscapes. The music is equally as impressive, with some lovely melancholy medieval tunes.

Heroes is a relatively unambitious game that knows it's not going to set the world alight. Rather it has kept its goals at an achievable level, and made damn well sure that it attained them. And it has done so. This is one of those rare games that just feels right the whole time you're playing.

David Wildgoose

VISUALS

84

SOUND

82

GAMEPLAY

85

LONGTERM

88

OVERALL

86

Loadstar: Legend Of Tully Bodine



PC CD ROM

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **SHOOT'EM UP**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **ROCKET SCIENCE**
 Price: **\$79.95**
 Rating: **G**

Tully Bodine is a crusty unshaven 21st century truckie hauling cargo between human colonies on the moons and planets of our Solar System. He does this in his obsolete but well armed 'truck' which travels between colonies with rocket engines and around colonies on magnetic tracks. Tully is offered a somewhat dubious cargo while visiting a colony on one of Pluto's moons and your first mission is picking up that cargo before the Police do. In your way are numerous law enforcement 'droids who take great exception at your constant flouting of the speed limit. Unfortunately this is very annoying as you have no control over the speed of your vehicle and it's a very thin premise to make them angry enough shoot at you!

Fortunately you can shoot back, and while this obviously won't ingratiate you with the local constabulary, it will keep them at bay for long enough to get your cargo and get the hell out. Use your mouse to control the target cursor on the screen, point, shoot and gosh, its all so easy. You will also have to watch out for slow drivers getting in your way (move them along by blowing your horn) and sections of track that have been blocked by accidents, as these two traps are fatal. Movement is restricted to a simple left or right when a split in the track presents itself. This is the only way of avoiding accident situations as there is always a turn to take before they appear. Very convenient this!

This is also a major limitation of this sort of FMV graphics engine, as the game is literally "on rails" and relies on streaming out pre-rendered graphics with limited interactivity. Because of this, the game may become too tedious for some gamer's tastes. Try it though, you may just like it.

George Soropos

VISUALS

80

SOUND

70

GAMEPLAY

60

LONGTERM

55

OVERALL

68

Windows 95 is here. And it's really terrific.

Except for one thing: it doesn't include any anti-virus protection. And your old anti-virus software won't work in Windows 95 either. But thousands of old viruses will.

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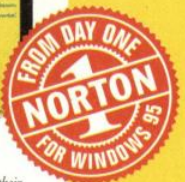
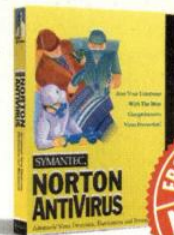
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Empire 2: The Art of War



PC CD ROM

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **STRATEGY**
 Players: **TWO**
 Publisher: **NEW WORLD COMPUTING**
 Price: **\$79.95**
 Rating: **G**

Lovers of the original Empire games rejoice, for Empire II is to them what Naomi Cambell is to Dame Edna. Hot, sexy, smooth and pliable. Ooh ooh, bring me a soggy chux, 'cos I've made a mess on my keyboard again!

The presentation of Empire II is a great improvement over its stodgy looking parent, the spunky SVGA graphics making it easier to use as well as look at. The new icon system makes play a lot more intuitive, and much more information regarding all aspects of your current campaign is readily available at all times to help in planning the most suitable tactics for crushing your enemy.

Another new and interesting feature is the parallel turn system intended for modem/network play (fully supported by EII), which basically allows manic, real-time head to head play.

New World have taken the versatility of the Empire system and stretched it even further. Scenarios included with the game range from Norse legends to alien invasions and stop off at most points in between; Waterloo, the American Civil War, Battle of the Bulge etc. Of course, Empire II includes a great scenario editor which is easy to use and gives the imaginative gamer the ability to create or recreate almost any type of combat he or she may desire. Coupled with the icon editor which lets you import graphics to use as your unit symbols the possibilities are almost limitless. Scan in pictures of your footy heroes and recreate the Grand Final with 155mm howitzers and motorized infantry or conduct search and destroy missions on your least favourite politicians - cool!

The computer AI is still pretty thick and much more enjoyment will come from mercilessly subjugating friends and rubbing their noses in it, as I'm sure you well know. This is a bit of a must for Empire fans and those who lust after a solid, versatile combat system.

George Soropos

VISUALS

80

SOUND

75

GAMEPLAY

82

LONGTERM

85

OVERALL

90

Fury3



PC CD ROM

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **ACTION**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **MICROSOFT**
 Price: **\$69.00**
 Rating: **G**

Fury3 is 3D Realms' Terminal Velocity, after being bashed up by Bill Gates and left in the gutter to die. I realise this unwholesome image may disturb some of you (the thought of Bill in a violent rage is certainly more than enough to put me off my tea and crumpets), but it pretty much sums up this entire review. I'm only going to keep writing so I don't get yelled at when I send this in.

Obviously keen to show off the gaming potential of Win95 ASAP, Microsoft have licensed (or maybe just stole, I don't know) the engine for the spiffy Terminal Velocity and renamed it Fury3, that's Fury x Fury x Fury = lots of Fury. 'Hurry, We'll Miss the Boat' may have been a more apt title, as this is what Microsoft would have been worried about when they put this together, and it shows. The game looks, feels and plays just like Terminal Velocity, but what Microsoft have done is change all the targets and enemies so that you have a completely different set of flying, walking and stationary things to obliterate.

The new graphics aren't as sexy as the originals as far as I'm concerned, and look a bit rushed. The design of the levels, like so many of the Doom WADs, leaves a lot to be desired as well. Again it seems as though very little time was spent thinking about all the aspects of the layout and consequently Fury just doesn't have that compulsive quality which makes Terminal Velocity so addictive.

In the world of the cinema Fury would be called an exploitation film; knock it out cheap and watch the suckers walk through the door. The computer game industry has been around far too long for people not to know better. Exploitation films killed the 3D movie process back in the 50's and who knows, if enough gamers get ripped off they may just decide en masse to take up bowling instead. Then where would we be !?

George Soropos

VISUALS

80

SOUND

78

GAMEPLAY

78

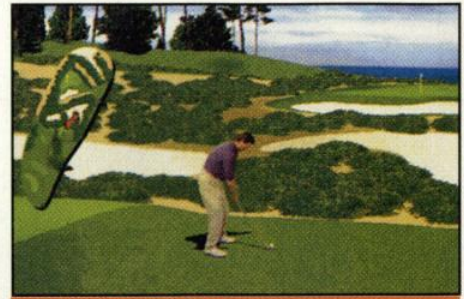
LONGTERM

70

OVERALL

75

PGA Tour 96



PC CD ROM

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **GOLF**
 Players: **1-4**
 Publisher: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
 Price: **NO RRP**
 Rating: **G**

The popularity of golf simulations is something I've always found curious. I mean, "Why?", basically. It simply must be the dulllest sport you could ever think of converting to computer, with the possible exception of tenpin bowling. Or Rugby Union.

Having said that, I can't avoid the undeniable fact that some people really love it. So I suspect there's a few of you hanging out for the latest PGA Tour update. Well, here it is. And it's PGA Tour 95 - except it's called PGA Tour 96. OK, that's a bit unfair, as there ARE a few "enhancements", though most are all but negligible. For one, it's speedier than before (see warning further on), you can also now play up to four rounds (72 holes) of either of the two available courses, in the one competition, and there's a host of presentation gimmicks, including a video "Fly-By" of the current hole complete with voice-over. A new "Waggle" feature also makes an appearance. This detects the actual contact of your club on the ball, and has a significant effect on your shot. So, a few enhancements as I said, but it's nothing new, and certainly not enough to warrant purchase if you already own PGA 95.

However, if the allure of playing with Fuzzy Zoeller or Davis Love III proves too much and you insist on buying it anyway, heed this warning - YOU NEED A PENTIUM. The box says a 50MHz 486 is the required system, but I would suggest that this is an absolute minimum. EA actually have the gall to recommend a Pentium with 16MB RAM plus a triple-speed CD drive...this is really getting out of control.

David Wildgoose

VISUALS

78

SOUND

58

GAMEPLAY

82

LONGTERM

80

OVERALL

80

TOPGUN

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NOVEMBER '95

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Command Aces of the Deep



PC CD ROM

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **SIMULATION**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **SIERRA/DYNAMIX**
 Price: **\$79.95**
 Rating: **G**

Command Aces of The Deep is the Win 95, SVGA'd, speech recognising, expansion disk including bastard son of Dynamix's Aces of the Deep. For those unfamiliar with the title, imagine "Aces of the Pacific" underwater. All of Dynamix's trademarks are there; Single Missions; a Career; choose realism options, along with a wealth of historical detail about U-Boat operations and design in WWII.

IBM's "breakthrough" speech recognition software is actually quite good once you get used to it. Some people, however, may find it too embarrassing to yell "Dive! Dive!" at their computer, and, to be honest, who could blame them?

The feel of U-Boat warfare has been captured nicely, anxious moments waiting for the depth charges to drop, tense claustrophobia, the thrill of your torpedoes hitting their mark and the smell of twelve men who haven't had a bath in six weeks. Sing ancient Germanic sea shanties as you send hundreds of Allied scum to their watery grave. Oh what joy!

Well, it's a bit tedious for my tastes, really. Flying about shooting things willy nilly is one thing, but lumbering about at six knots in a cast iron coffin trying to line up torpedo strikes is something else altogether! But, this is a matter of personal taste, and if you like the idea of surfacing next to an English battleship, screaming that their soccer team plays worse than a record covered in mud and promptly launching off a salvo of torpedoes, then may be this is for you.

George Soropos

VISUALS

75

SOUND

80

GAMEPLAY

70

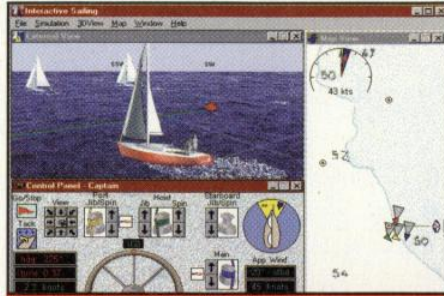
LONGTERM

78

OVERALL

78

Interactive Sailing



PC CD ROM

Available: **NOVEMBER**
 Category: **SIMULATION**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **SWIFTE**
 Price: **TBA**
 Rating: **G**

Hoorah! Shout with glee, A jolly old life for me, my shorts are so tight, I give seagulls a fright, so let's set sail for the open sea.

Ahh, there's nothing like the sound of canvas cracking in the wind to bring back those pungent memories of my glory days at the helm of numerous America's Cup challengers, Solo around the world voyages, and Apex lamington drives. There was no easy way to learn the ropes back then. My first captain was a Zen Buddhist who instructed me to "be the sail". This led to me having multiple piercings down two sides of my body and a permanent case of whiplash. My next captain had just finished a world tour with the Leaping Lesbian Knotters of Romania and encouraged me to free myself of the shackles which bound me to my inner "mast".

As you may imagine, all this left me more than a little bemused and a long time passed before I could face the Sea again. Fortunately, however, such trials can now be completely avoided with the use of Swifte's excellent new sailing simulation. Interactive Sailing sits comfortably in Win 95 and presents a very easy to understand interface with everything you need always onscreen.

Select whether you want to steer or crew the boat, set wind conditions and course type and off you go. The on-line help is excellent and a complete Glossary of sailing speak will have you luffing with the best of them. For all of you that have been itching for a real sailing sim (there must be someone out there), this will disappoint however. The first few races are fun but the lack of different courses and the poor skill of the computer opponents quickly makes the game tedious. A great educational tool, not a great game.

George Soropos

VISUALS

65

SOUND

62

GAMEPLAY

60

LONGTERM

40

OVERALL

60

US Navy Fighters Gold



PC CD ROM

Available: **NOW**
 Category: **FLIGHT SIM**
 Players: **ONE**
 Publisher: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
 Price: **\$99.95**
 Rating: **TBC**

It's a gaming truth that the better a flight sim looks, the worse it is to play. U.S. Navy Fighters looks fantastic, but is at odds with the laws of nature because it's not altogether bad to fly. It's far from perfect though. There's plenty about it that bugs me, like the planes not having any cockpit for example. Sure, the HUD tells you just about everything you need to know, but I like my knobs and dials because they make it all seem real. Besides, the HUD in this game is nothing like those in any other flight sim. It'll tell you the percentage probability of a hit and give you a big arrow telling you what rudder direction to apply if you're in a spin. Useful sure, but horribly unrealistic.

Campaigns aren't very true to life either. The style of the missions compliment the arcade nature of the flight model, with success or failure in any mission having absolutely no bearing on the following ones. A dynamic battlezone this is not. Still, lot's of people love this sort of simplistic stuff. For them U.S. Navy Fighters is just about perfect. The graphics are the best thing about it, although no PC yet exists that'll run in it's maximum resolution with all the detail on.

The latest way to play U.S. Navy Fighters is the Gold CD. It includes the recently released U.S. Marine Fighters as part of the deal. You get a few new planes to play in the Marine pack, they're the vertical takeoff variety and present a slightly different challenge for pilots. Among others, you get a couple of different of Harriers and the dodgy Russian Yak-141. This last one is a real pig to fly, but mastering this particular challenge is what it's probably all about. The Harriers are nicer, you can pull the VIFF (Vectoring In Forward Flight) manoeuvre for a bit of dogfighting fun. It works by swinging the swivelling thrusters around to face forward during a fight. If it worked right the rapid loss of speed means anything chasing you overshoots and you get a safe and clean shot as your opponent zooms helplessly past.

If you like flight sims that let you get on with the simple business of shooting stuff, then this Gold version of U.S. Navy Fighters belongs on your PC, just make sure it's a fast one to keep up with the flash graphics.

Ben Mansill

VISUALS

85

SOUND

76

GAMEPLAY

66

LONGTERM

60

OVERALL

70



EF

2000

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HEXEN: BEYOND HERETIC PC

Cheat Codes

Now this is what we like to see, cheats for a game made public before the game is even released! Hexen is about the Doomiest game yet, use these to take all the fun away:

- QUICKEN** - Repeat three times and die
- RAMBO** - Lose your weapons
- BGOKEY** - God mode
- CRHINEHART** - All weapons and full armour
- SGURNO** - Full health
- BRAFFEL** - All items
- MRAYMONDJUDY** - All keys
- RJOHNSON** - Walk through walls
- BPELLETIER###** - Level warp (## = 01 -41)
- REVEAL** - Map toggle
- EBIESSMAN** - Pig mode
- RRETENMUND** - FPS ticker
- JSUMWALT** - X, Y, Z coordinates
- MWAGABAZA###** - Run script (## = 01 - 99)

EARTHWORM JIM MEGA CD

Passwords

Peter Brodie reckons the Mega CD version is the fabbiest of them all, so he sent these level codes in so you can all share in the joy of the extra levels.

1. SUPER SUIT, SUIT POW, GUN, COW, COW.
2. SUIT POW, WATER, GUN, COW, SUPER SUIT.
3. SUIT POW, SUPER SUIT, SUIT POW, COW, WATER.
4. WATER, TV, SUIT POW, COW, HYDRANT.
5. HYDRANT, SUIT POW, GUN, HYDRANT, EWJ.
6. COW, SUIT POW, GUN, WATER, GUN.
7. SUPER SUIT, HYDRANT, WATER, GUN, COW.
8. COW, EWJ, TV, TV, SUPER SUIT.
9. COW, COW, WATER, COW, WATER.
10. HYDRANT, HYDRANT, SUPER SUIT, SUIT POW, SUPER SUIT.
11. WATER, HYDRANT, SUIT POW, SUPER SUIT, SUIT POW.
12. COW, EWJ, COW, HYDRANT, WATER.
13. GUN, SUPER SUIT, HYDRANT, COW, TV.
14. GUN, SUPER SUIT, WATER, GUN, TV.
15. SUPER SUIT, COW, SUIT POW, SUIT POW, COW.

WEAPONLORD MEGADRIVE/SNES

Special Attacks

It's new, we like it a bit and so does Mr Brodie. These will give you a vicious new range of moves to impress your mum.

- Ken-Tai** - ANY KICK, FORWARD LOWER DIAGONAL, DOWN, FORWARD
- Bane** - ANY KICK, BACK, FORWARD, FORWARD UPPER DIAGONAL
- Korr** - ANY KICK, UP, FORWARD UPPER DIAGONAL, DOWN
- Divada** - (Frenzy): ANY KICK, UP, FORWARD UPPER DIAGONAL, BACK (Take down): ANY PUNCH, BACK UPPER DIAGONAL, BACK, DOWN
- Talazia** - (Frenzy): ANY PUNCH, UP, FORWARD, FORWARD UPPER DIAGONAL (Take down): ANY KICK, BACK, BACK LOWER DIAGONAL, DOWN, FORWARD LOWER DIAGONAL
- Zorn** - (Frenzy): BACK, FORWARD, ANY PUNCH (Take down): BACK, FORWARD, DOWN, BACK LOWER DIAGONAL, ANY KICK
- Zarak** - (Frenzy): ANY PUNCH, FORWARD, UP, FORWARD UPPER DIAGONAL (Take down): FORWARD, FORWARD LOWER DIAGONAL, BACK LOWER DIAGONAL, ANY KICK

SKELETON CREW MEGADRIVE

Level Skip

Pete proclaims this to pretty cool fun, if dead easy. We won't print what he said about the sort of people that need help with this one, but if that's you then here's your salvation: START the game then PAUSE it. Enter C, UP, LEFT, LEFT, B, A, RIGHT, DOWN, C, LEFT, UP, B. You'll now be able to select levels by using LEFT or RIGHT on the controller.



PANZER DRAGOON SATURN

Cool stuff

These are Peter Brodie™ cheats, treasure 'em. Enter these at the NORMAL GAME, OPTIONS screen.

- Invincibility** - L, L, R, R, UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT
- Episode Select** - UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, X, Y, Z
- Unlimited Continues** - UP, X, RIGHT, Y, DOWN, Z, LEFT, Y, UP, X

NEED FOR SPEED PC CD ROM

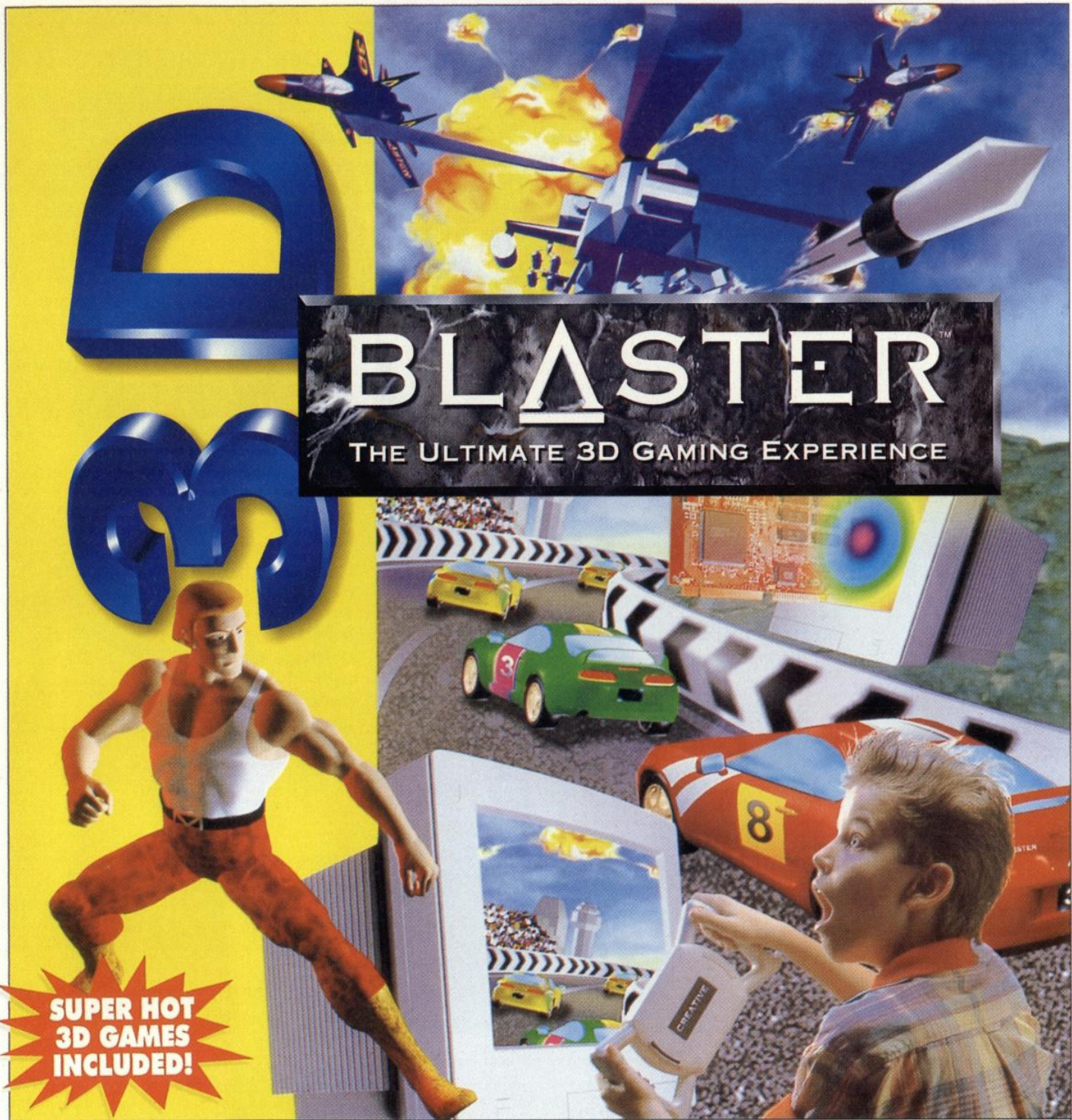
Bonus car and tracks

Top game this. Access to the extra tracks and a new car the easy way. You need to win the tournament once before the extra track is available, twice for the new car and other stuff to work. Enter these codes (in caps.) where you normally enter your name, don't forget the space.

- EAC POWR - bonus car
- EAC WARP - speeds gameplay
- EAC RALY - makes Rusty Springs a rally dirt track

The following are mystery codes, they probably do something but we don't know what.

- TEST SCAR, 4X4R, WACK, RULE, QAQA, TIME, SLOW



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Cheats



KILLER INSTINCT SNES

Codes Codes Codes...

You can choose your character by pushing left and right. You can choose their COLOUR, however, by pushing up and down. There are 8 different colour schemes for each character.

To select the stage you wish to fight on (can't be done in 1-Player mode), push up or down and a certain button to select your character. Which button you used and the direction you pushed, determines where you'll go. In 2-Player or Tournament mode, the first person to choose picks the stage. The second player chooses the music. (ie, you can get to the Lava Pit with the music of Glacius's stage if the first person to choose does D+FP and the second U+QP)

These are the selectable stages and the button/direction you use to get there:

- U+QP - Glacius's stage
- D+QP - Chief Thunder's stage
- U+MP - Dungeon stage (secret!)
- D+MP - Riptor's stage
- U+FP - Ice Shrine stage
- D+FP - Eyedol Lava Pit stage
- U+QK - Spinal's rooftop stage
- D+QK - Street stage
- U+MK - Orchid's rooftop stage
- D+MK - Sabrewulf's stage
- U+FK - Cinder's rooftop stage
- D+FK - Fulgore's stage
- BOTH players D+MK - Sky rooftop stage (secret!)

More Codes!

These are codes that are entered on the screen showing the VS. pictures. You should do them only AFTER the announcer says "Fight On", so that you don't end the screen. You can't do any of these in Practice mode. You can do all or some of these at a time if you're fast enough.

Turbo Modes These let you speed up or slow down the rate at which the game is played. In 2-player or Tournament, both players must enter the code for a specific speed, while in 1-player mode you only need to do it yourself. For slow motion, hold left and all three kicks. For slight turbo, hold right and all three punches. For Turbo, hold right and all three kicks. For Super Turbo, hold left and all three punches. You'll hear a punch sound if you've done it properly.

Eyedol Yep, there was a misprint last issue in our rush to tell you the code. Here's the real deal. If you've got Cinder, you can hold right and push L,R,X,B,Y,A to become Eyedol! Both players can become Eyedol if they want.

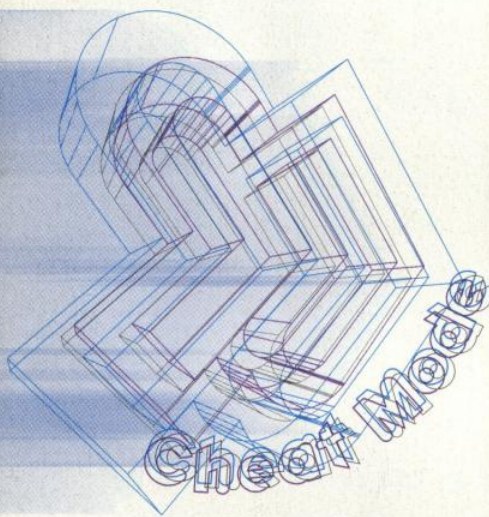
Options screen. If you push select, you'll get to go to the options screen. The nice thing about this is that in Tournament mode the game remembers the configuration for each player!

Last Chance

After the announcer says "Danger", you might think that it's all over. However, if your opponent is farting around, you can break out of the Danger state for one last try at killing them!

To do this, as soon as you start convulsing, rotate the control pad and push the buttons rapidly. If you do it fast enough, you'll break out of the Danger state! You only have enough energy to barely survive. If your opponent hits you once, or you block a special move, you're a goner. BUT, you do over TWICE your normal damage in this state! So get in quick!

FOR MORE KILLER INSTINCT MOVES CHECK OUT HYPER'S HINT, CHEAT & PLAYGUIDE SPECIAL ISSUE - OUT SOMETIME REAL SOON!!



The Dame was **LOADED**

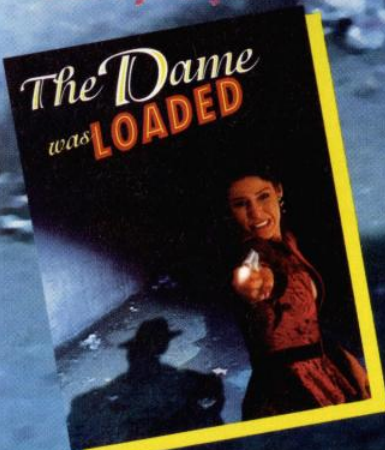
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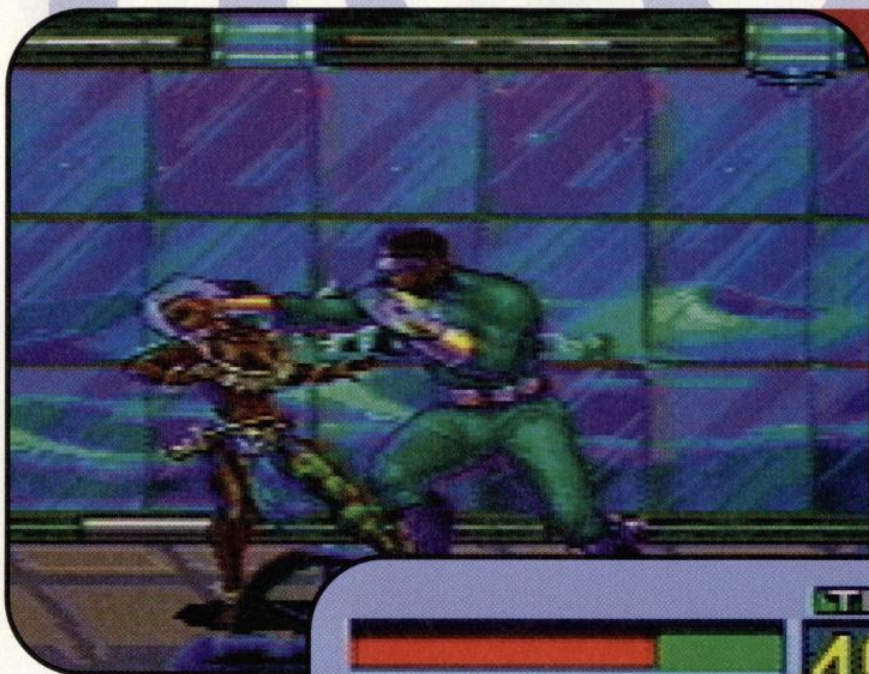
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Cheats



ETERNAL CHAMPIONS MEGA CD

See Gory Bits

To view any Cinekill scene you wish, follow this fairly convoluted cheat. In a 2-player vs. game, set the speed to fastest, wins to one-out-of-one, choose Slash's stage, and turn off Inner Strength. Player 1 should select Raven and Player 2 anyone they like. Start your game. Get Raven to use his most powerful kick on Player 2, until they begin to get dizzy. Raven then must jump over Player 2 and repeat the same kick rapidly. When Player 2 is near death, Raven will disappear, and the Eternal Champion will pop up instead. Then sit back and watch with malicious glee as some very nasty things start happening to Player 2.



VIRTUA FIGHTER REMIX SATURN



SLAM'N'JAM '95 3DO

Big Heads

As soon as you have viewed the Scouting Report, start repeatedly pressing the L and A buttons. As soon as the tip-off occurs pause the game. When you resume play, the players will all have inflated egos. Yes, even more than usual.

GEX 3DO

Cheats Galore

This bizarre cheat allows you to do pretty much anything. While the game is paused, hold R then press Left, C, Down, Left, Right, A, Down, Right, Left. The game will resume playing. Now you can start experimenting, try pressing different button combinations on both controllers 1 and 2, and you should access all sorts of strange options. Being the kind souls we are, we'll tell you the trickiest one. Using controller 2, hold L and use the directional pad to scale Gex. Using controller 1, pause the game, hold R then press Left, C, Down, C, Down, Down, C, A, Left, Right, to make Gex remain in whatever unnatural shape you scaled him into. Also, to get to the secret Planet X level, you must complete every single bonus level. And not only that, you must finish them all with a perfect score. It's not meant to be easy, my friends.

To play as Dural in 1-player mode, cycle the player select through to Akira, then press Down, Up, Right, Left + A before you select him.

To play as Dural in 2-player mode, player 1 should do as above, while player 2 should enter the same code, at the same time, but while selecting Jacky instead of Akira.

There's also a stage and character select mode. After you've won a vs. mode fight and "Winner" is being triumphantly declared on screen, hold L and R simultaneously to activate these selection modes.

And finally, one last cheat to alter the size of the ring. When at the Title screen, press Up twelve times before pressing Start. Choose Options next, and go all the way down to Exit. Press Down once more and the bar will vanish. To access the Option+ Menu simply press A.

BASEBALL ACTION SO REAL IT HURTS

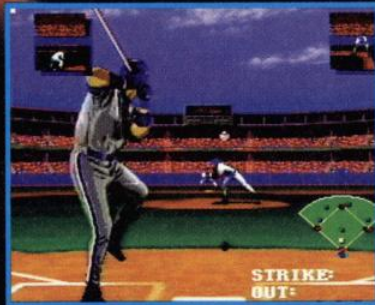
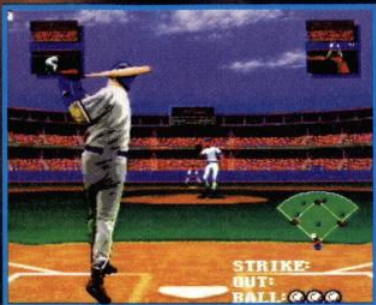
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HURT**



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Letters

SONY RESPONDS TO PRICE CRITICISM

Dear HYPER,

I am writing this letter in response to two of your readers' letters, Steve Goodwin and Ryan Kinsman (Pissed Off With Sony 1 & 2). Printed in your November issue, these letters regarded the price of Aus\$695 for PlayStation in Australia versus the US retail price of US\$299. The answer to their question on the price difference involves several issues.

First of all, they are comparing NTSC systems to PAL systems. All PAL consumer electronic products, not just PlayStation, are more expensive than NTSC, not only in this country but also in Europe where the PAL format is standard. This is the case with TVs, VCRs, Audio CD players, camcorders etc. One reason for this is simple. When you put America and Japan together, they form the largest consumer markets for electronic products in the world. Since both countries run NTSC systems, the production runs and related efficiencies are so much greater.

Another reason for the higher price in Australia is the tax rate for PlayStation. In Australia the sales tax rate for PlayStation is 22%. This tax is factored into the wholesale price the retailer buys the PlayStation for and then the retailer calculates its margins including this high rate tax. This is considerably higher than the tax rate in the US of 8% which is often added on only at the time of purchase (ie, on top of the quoted US\$299). This alone adds significantly to the price.

Other contributing factors include the higher cost of running a business in Australia, where population is one fifteenth that of the US, in a country which is almost identical in size. All aspects of business is more expensive which includes freight, rent etc. These high costs are also experienced by our retailers. If we now look at the price comparison between the UK and Australia, both PAL territories, we have a truer comparison of costs. In the UK PlayStation retails for £299 which converted to Australian dollars is approximately \$640. All games, which retail in Australia for \$89.95 and \$99.95 equal the UK prices and in some cases, will even be less expensive

here in Australia. We will also ensure that software titles will be launched in the UK and Australia at exactly the same time.

I hope this letter clarifies the pricing issue and I will be more than glad to answer any further questions on PlayStation from your readers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you at HYPER for publishing a great video games magazine and appreciate all the incredible support from you and consumers that we are receiving for the PlayStation.

Thanks a lot.

Michael Ephraim
General Manager

Sony Computer Entertainment

ULTRA CART QUERIES

Dear HYPER,

After reading two articles in your news and Net Trawlin' sections I wasn't sure if the Ultra 64 was still a cartridge based machine. If so, is it possible that Nintendo chose this path so that they could keep their US price point at \$250. Also is it right in suggesting that were not likely to see the Ultra 64 in Australia until about this time next year.

B Hearne
QLD

Well B, the Ultra 64 certainly is a cartridge based machine and yes, that is one of the reasons why they can probably launch at the low price of US\$250. As for the Australian release, well it's certainly not going to be any earlier than April 1996 but I'd guess closer to the middle of the year.

EA (AUSSIE) RULES

To HYPER,

I heard Electronic Arts is making an Aussie Rules game. If they do, it will be bigger than Mortal Kombat 2. I'm writing to see if it is true.

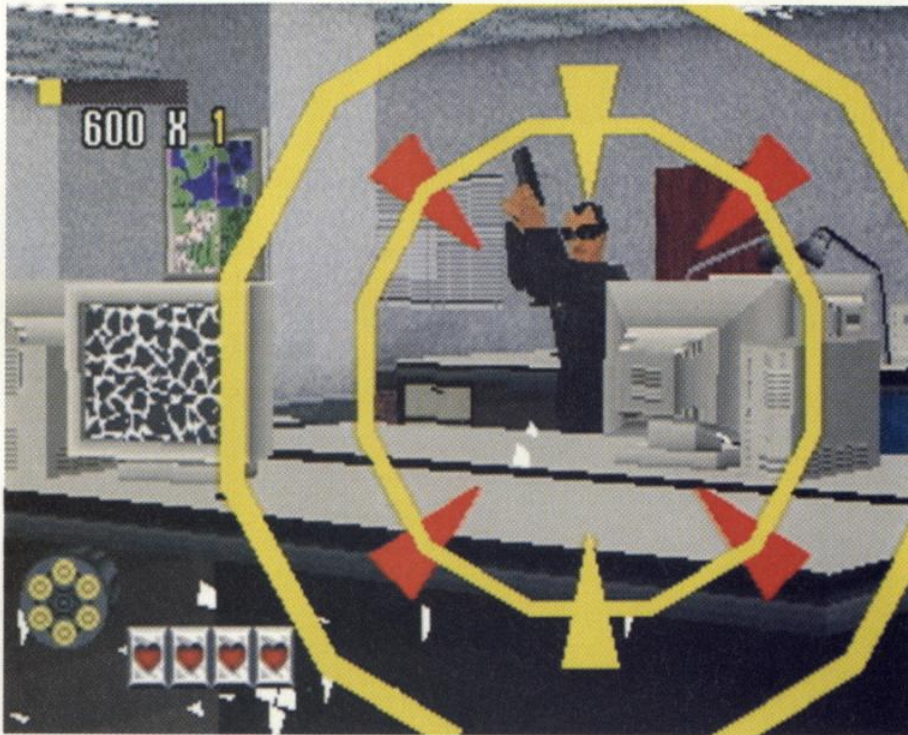
Stephen Beaney

Well the grapevine has been certainly been working overtime and yes, it's true but don't hold your breath (or you'll give yourself brain damage from lack of oxygen). It probably won't appear until well into 1996.

PC PROBES

Dear HYPER,

Your mag is the coolest and greatest mag of all time. It's got



A hell of a huge one was the year that's been. Normally we laugh in the face of stress, but our office security camera captured this exclusive shot of Stuart leaping from behind his desk in a fit of chronic over-workingness. He was last seen running naked through the office, shouting "I'm taking an extended holiday and I won't be back for three days!"

Geez we're troopers. Actually it's a shot of Virtua Cop for the Saturn (had you going there!). We'll be doing the inside-out thing on this surpassingly hot conversion soon. Ditto for Virtua Fighter 2, which looks equally special.

In the meantime, settle down with the biggest and bestest HYPER ever. Read it through a few times to pick up all the subtle comic genius. Read it in the bath with your favourite CD turned up loud. Cry and look pathetic if your Xmas presents weren't up to scratch, maybe it'll get you something extra. See you in '96!

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blab, blab, blab

all the latest news, previews and reviews. I could go on and on kissing your butt but I've got some questions (surprised? Thought so).

1. I own a Pentium with a CD ROM and I am wondering if I should splash out for a Playstation?
 2. Will either Tekken, Virtua Fighting or Tohshinden be released on PC?
 3. Are Mechwarrior 2 and Dark Forces as good as people say it is?
 4. What's your all time beat 'em up on the PC?
 5. I play Ridge Racer all the time and have to know if it's scheduled for release on the PC?
- That's all for now. Until next time

Tom Guerrini

1. If you've got money to burn, yeah sure. Otherwise stick with the Pentium because you'll be able to play lots of PlayStation games soon like Destruction Derby, Wipeout and Assault Rigs. All the Psygnosis PlayStation games should come out on PC CD ROM as well 2. We might see Virtua Fighter on PC sometime next year 3. Yes 4. Probably Mortal Kombat 3 - reviewed next issue 5. Yep, should be out in 1996, but look out for a title called Screamer as well - it's very similar.

WHERE'S GAME BOY??

Dear HYPER,
I would like to congratulate you on a great magazine which is a pleasure to read. I'd just like to talk about one quick thing. I personally read every issue of your magazine. (That's probably because I have a subscription!!) and I am disappointed most times that you don't have any Game boy reviews and when you do they're only Byte Sized. I have many friends who all buy your magazine as well; and they too are disappointed with your lack of Game Boy reviews. A lot of people think that Game Boys are crap, but even more think that they're pretty good. All we're asking is that in each magazine you put in a couple of full sized Game Boy reviews. I am sure that many other HYPER readers feel the same way.

Yours sincerely
Simon Hudson VIC

Simon, we do include the odd Game Boy reviews and I have been getting quite a few letters recently

requesting more GB coverage. Unfortunately we already cover a lot of formats and handhelds are not really our priority. Having said that, I don't want to ignore all you GB owners, because I know how upset you get, so we'll try and do some more regular reviews (of the big titles) next year.

TRUST NO ONE

Hi there,
I am a PC aficionado who has been swayed by the wicked screenshots in HYPER to invest in a Sony Playstation. I have made some enquires and have been told that an imported NTSC machine is the way to go, since the local release PAL Playstation will be graphically inferior to the import version, as NTSC has a faster screen refresh rate than the PAL format.

I had some concerns about forking out for an imported machine, particularly that the NTSC format games available on import may not be in English. The dealer assured me that the majority of discs had been converted from Japanese to English, the exceptions being some RPGs (which I loathe & despise, and quite frankly couldn't give a toss about!) With this assurance, I gave the dealer my details, ordered his latest catalogue, and told him I'd make my decision after perusing it.

Some days later, while drooling over the Playstation article in HYPER 22, it occurred to me that the release schedule published in said issue were Oz PAL releases, and furthermore these games wouldn't work in an imported machine. I also had a vision of my recently purchased Playstation transforming into an albino pachyderm that greeted me with a bow, said Konnichiwa & then proceeded to stomp me to death. Bad trip huh? A second later I have the dealer on the line. No problem, he informs me, there will be an adaptor released at some stage that will allow PAL discs to be played in NTSC machines.

Fine, well, I don't know about you, but I'm aware of several cases where things have supposed to have been released in Australia & have simply never materialised. I was hoping from HYPER's combined contacts, powers of deduction, lateral



HAYDEN MILLS HATES PLAIN OLD ENVELOPES, SO HE DID THIS TO ONE AND WE LIKE IT

thinking abilities & liberal advice (who, had to take a breath there) that you'd tell me the truth. In the meantime, I will adopt a true X-Phile spirit & TRUST NO ONE. (And if you don't publish my letter, I'll know you're one of THEM.)

D. Ram

No, we're not one of THEM, we're one of YOU. PAL PlayStation's will not be graphically inferior to any detrimental level - it all depends on the game conversion anyway (check the answer to PAL vs NTSC letter for more info). Having said that, an NTSC machine will run faster for most games and the games will generally come out earlier on NTSC (for the Japanese and American markets). As for the adaptor, yes, there will be one to allow PAL discs to be played in an NTSC machine but I haven't seen it yet so I can't say if it's 100% effective. That's the God honest HYPER truth, but always remember, the truth is OUT THERE.

MIXED BAG

Dear HYPER,
Congratulations on creating the best games mag ever to grace the newsagent shelves. I have every copy (except #1) and have subscribed! I would also like to congratulate Matthew Hatton on his terrific art work. Anyway, I have a couple of questions for you and I'm sure such brilliant people like yourselves

can answer them.

1. Why do some overseas games have different names to our Aussie PAL carts?
2. With the Ultra 64 being released what will happen to my old faithful Super NES?
3. In an issue of another games mag I read that the Ultra 64 will have resolution that exceeds NTSC and PAL televisions, is this true?
4. Have you been to Zone 3?

Name Illegible

I couldn't read your name but you sucked up so professionally I just had to include the letter. 1. That's the way of the world. Why do some American movies have different names in Australia? It's all got to do with marketing and there's probably a different reason for each case 2. It'll still be your old faithful Super NES 3. It will supposedly support resolutions of 1280x1024 which will only be able to be viewed on the new HDTV (High Definition TV). No one has confirmed this 4. Yes. It's fun.

POLITICAL STUNT

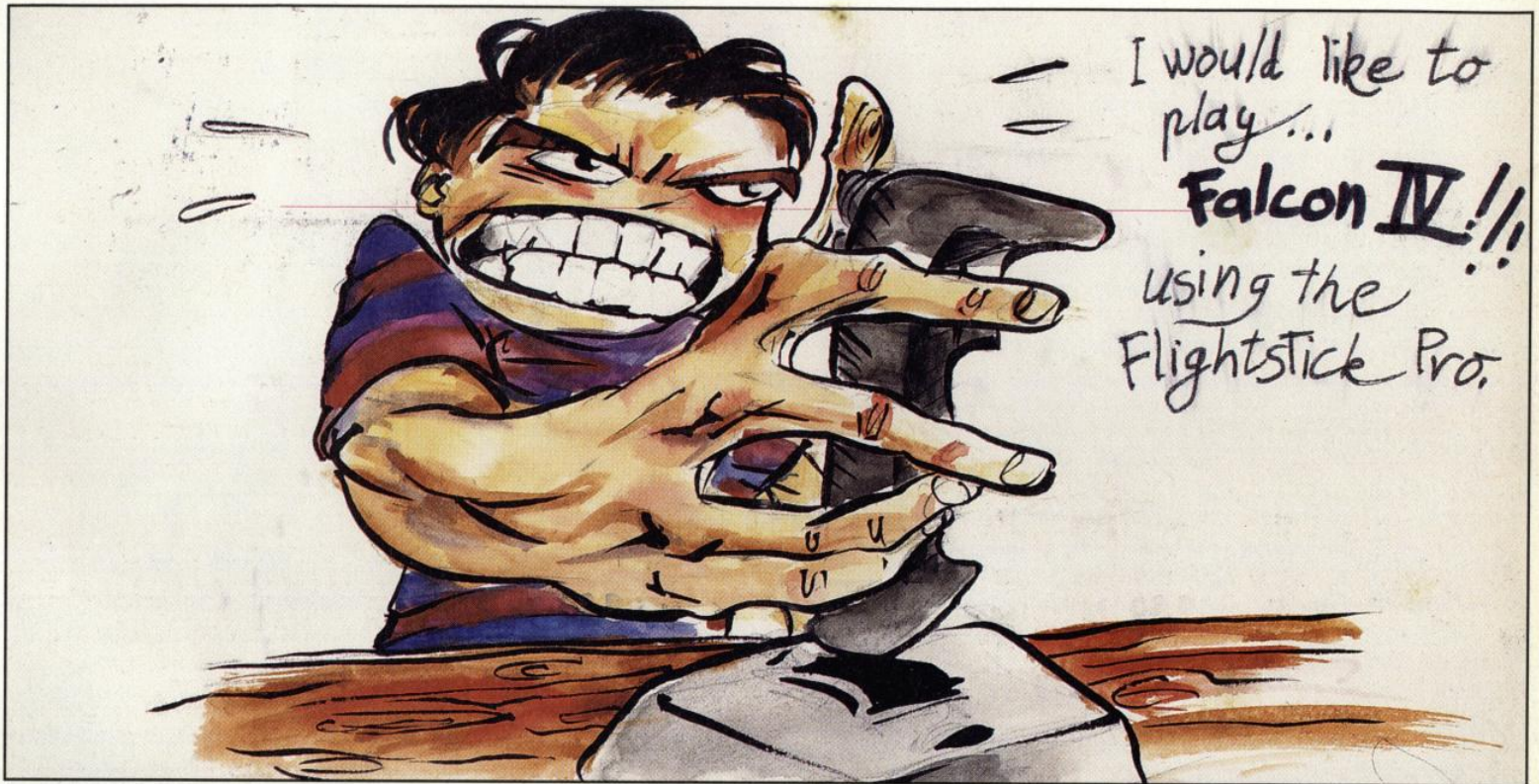
Hello HYPER People,
Greetings from the back blocks of Fishing Point NSW where the sun shines only when it wants to. I'm taking up the offer of writing about the software ban because it really is pretty stupid. If I'd just knocked up a new hit game I'd be mighty peeved if it got taken off the shelves for no apparent reason. Possibly two or

three years work down the drain. Why though, is this stuff getting banned in the first place? To stop kids getting a hold of it, that's why. What a stupid and pathetic reason. How do kids get this stuff anyway? Via the adults who are responsible for them. Anyone who gives a game like Phantasmagoria to a kid who can't handle what's in it would be a total moron anyway. Who's to stop a kid from watching an R rated pornographic flick late on night on SBS anyway? No one! That's why I think this whole thing is a political stunt to win some votes from parents sick of watching their kids play Doom for a while and then go and exorcise the cat. In your Quake preview it looked really excellent but where are the weapons in the pictures? By the way I think you should use the HYPER WOW-O-METER on all of your preview/reviews.

See you next time
Rod Campbell

Thanks for your opinion Rod. As for Quake, the screenshots we printed a couple of issues back were the first ones released and just show the architecture. There are a couple of shots in the News section this issue which show some of the Quake monsters so I'm sure weapon shots will be out soon. You'll see them very shortly after we see them. And yes, I like the Wow-o-Meter too so you'll be seeing more of that in future.





RENÉ PFITZNER IMPRESSED US MIGHTILY WITH HIS ENTRY TO THE JOYSTICK COMP WE RAN A COUPLE OF ISSUES BACK. UNFORTUNATELY HE DIDN'T WIN, BUT THAT'S LIFE...

WAKE UP & BUY A SATURN

Dear HYPER,
From reading the letters section of your magazine, especially in recent issues, it seems there is a modest percentage of the gaming public that would die for Nintendo. You know, the type of people that pee their pants in excitement whenever they see the latest drawing of Mario chopping Sonic's head off in their favourite, outrageously biased, Nintendo-only magazine. And what almost makes me feel sorry for them is the fact that this lets them get sucked in by Nintendo's ridiculous, intelligence-insulting marketing ploys, particularly in regard to the Ultra 64. So to give them something to do before they take up knitting waiting for it to arrive, I have a suggestion. Buy a Saturn. Come on, wake up to yourselves, unless you're still that immature.

Andrew Monk,
Springwood NSW

Well that letter's sure to start another little war but you're right in pointing out that there are some very hard core Nintendo fans out there who don't seem capable of playing a machine not manufactured by the big 'N'. Still, if you're having fun with what you got, why bother changing?

3DO KICKS SATURN

Dear HYPER,
I am writing this letter in regards to the super console battle. I bought a Panasonic 3DO (FZ-10) about three months ago and I have been very happy with its performance. I bought The Need for Speed, Wing Commander 3 and Road Rash. I recently went to our nearest city (Townsville) the other day and just about in every computer store, the Saturn is there. Out of about 5 shops, I found one game for the 3DO and it was a crap one. Why does the Saturn take the rap as the best console when the 3DO absolutely kicks its behind. In one of the shops (Harvey Norman) you could play Daytona USA. I compared it with The Need for Speed and Need for Speed kicked its scrawny ring. NFS has much smoother graphics, better car sound and is cheaper. You could have more fun on "The Need for Speed" by wiping out the Police car. And with Daytona USA all you could wipe out was a stupid construction barricade.

The 3DO makers to get their fingers out of their arses and into programming to show the world how much the 3DO rules! But my friends' and my eyes, the 3DO clearly kicks the Saturn's arse. You just haven't given it a chance to build up. Oh yeah, and

just a reminder, look at how many games the Saturn has got out and then look at how many the 3DO has got out. You will find that the 3DO tips the scales by a mile! Do me and the rest of the country a favour, splash the news around that the 3DO is coming to stay! Show us every single thing of what the 3DO is bringing out.

Questions:

1. Where the hell do you use a mouse for the 3DO?
2. Where does Mark 2 upgrade go?

Mark MacDonald
Home Hill QLD

The Saturn's going to get much wider promotion in Australia (so get used to it) because Sega have a local distributor whereas Panasonic have never officially released their 3DO unit and Goldstar haven't done much to support it either. We do our best by covering 3DO games but as you may have seen over the last few issues, there haven't been too many released recently. Still, there are more 3DO than Saturn titles available. 1. You'd plug a 3DO mouse in the same place as a 3DO controller 2. On a Panasonic FZ-10 the M2 should slot into the back (see the port marked "Extension").

PAL vs NTSC

To HYPER,
I read in a brochure that the PAL Playstation, is inferior to the

NTSC version. I know that it will not be full-screen, which doesn't bother me, but I also read that it will be up to 30% slower. Is this true? So do you think it would be better to invest in a NTSC or a local PAL version?

A few people have said that the Playstation cable for the control pad is too short. Is it really that bad? I've heard that there are cable extensions to make the lead longer. Why didn't Sony just make the cable longer? A bit silly me thinks? Seeing as though there is no pack in game with system, out of the following, which game would you recommend. Toshinden, Ridge Racer, Tekken or Wing Commander 3 (if you have seen it yet). As you may have noticed I really want a Playstation, and your answers to these questions would be appreciated.

Regards
D. Noppert
Newsborough VIC

A PAL machine, whether it be a Saturn, Playstation or a SNES, will run slower than an NTSC machine. Simple as that. It all comes down to the game's PAL conversion as to whether a PAL game is "inferior" to an NTSC game. Sometimes it is noticeably slower (and letter-boxed) and at other times (as with the Playstation's Wipeout) there is hardly any

appreciable difference. Only get an NTSC PlayStation if you have an NTSC compatible TV otherwise you'll be fiddling around with (and paying for) a converter all the time. The Playstation cable is fairly short but yes, you can get extensions. As for the games you mentioned - they're all good. I'd go for Toshinden or Wing Commander 3 myself but don't take my word for it - go and test them out yourself.

SOCCER

To HYPER crew,
I'm askin' you know all's about Soccer Games on PC. I would like to know what Soccer games are available and which ones are the best. The best soccer games must include good sounds, game play and graphics (which I haven't found). I still enjoy old school games on SNES like Super soccer. I have World Cup USA 9T4 on PC and it's a big pile of dog shit!. And I cannot find any better Soccer games. Please help me!!

Thank you
Alan Dorado

Take a look inside this issue Alan and you'll find a review of FIFA Soccer '96 on PC. That's our pick for the best soccer game. Sensible Soccer is also a classic but the graphics are not good.

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Penpals

Hi! I'm a 19 year old chick looking for a penpal to feed my mailbox. I own a SNES & Mega Drive. I'm into action and SC-Fi movies and love to dance to music. It doesn't matter if your male or female. Just drop me a line. Benita Green, 17 Wilga Avenue Warwick QLD 4370.

Hi, I'm a 13 year old boy who's looking for a good penpal (preferably girl). All I do all day is play my Mega Drive and watch the latest movies. If you think you're good looking send a photo. If you want hints, tips, cheats or a date, write to Chris East 26 Leslie Road Glenbrook NSW 2773. Ph (047) 392974.

Hi, My name is Brett Stevenson and I'm looking for a male or female penpal aged between 10 and 12, who is interested in video games, listening to music and playing sports. My address is 63 Broshan Drive Capalaba QLD 4157. Ph (07) 245 5774.

Hello anybody who wants a penpal with a PC-CD ROM, SNES and Gameboy. I'm Stephen and my hobbies are reading Hyper mags and playing violent video games. Write real quick to 20 Thomas Street Netherlands. WA 6009.

Hi! I'm a 14 year old guy looking for a male or female penpal(s). I have a Gameboy, NES, SNES & PC CD ROM. I like Mariah Carey, Boyz II Men, and Meryl Bainbridge. I also love watching movies and playing games. I will return every letter I receive. Write: Don Sirikhant 3 Eastleigh Drive Glenside Waverley 3150 Melbourne VIC.

Hey anyone who has a brain (or not!!!) I'm a 14 year old girl who likes video games and alternative music, and loves having fun. I'm also very bored. If you're looking for fun, please call or write to Anna 30 Elocia Circuit Wallington VIC 3221 Ph (052) 501061.

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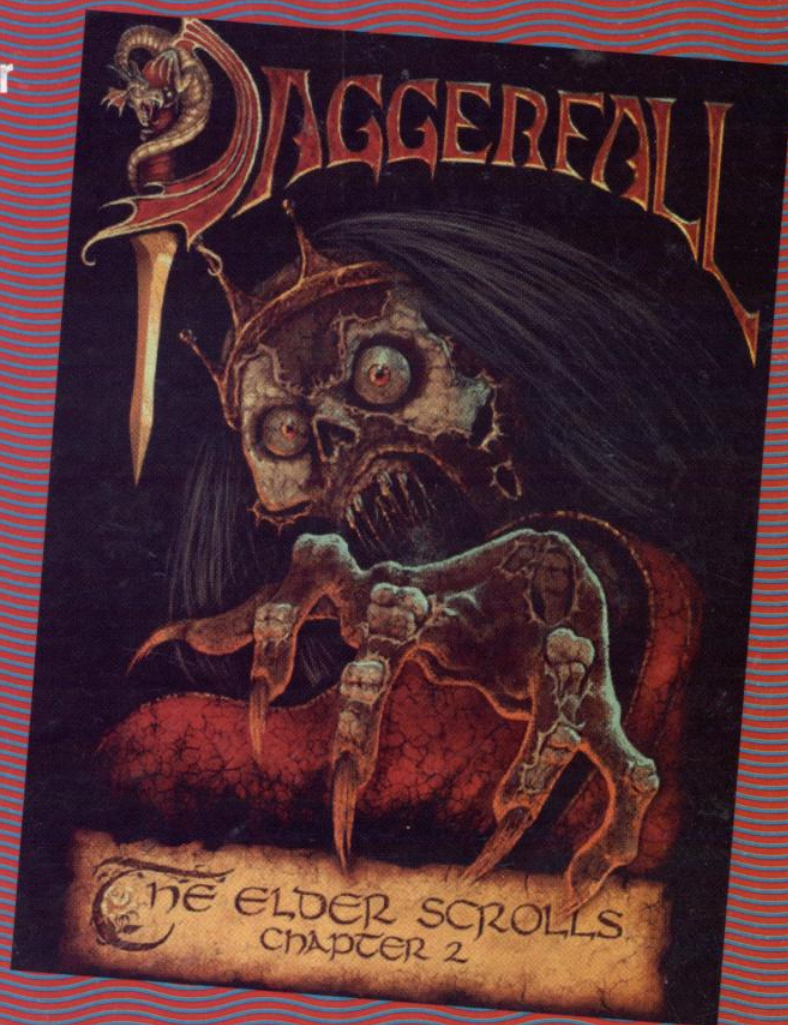
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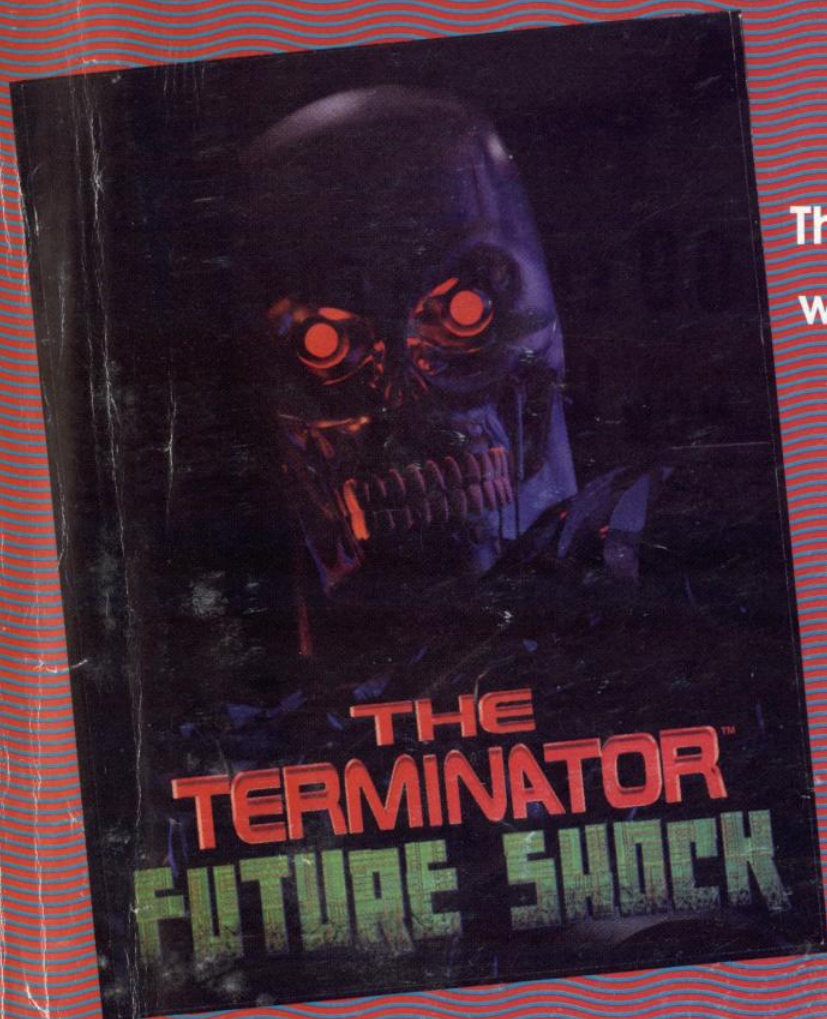
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