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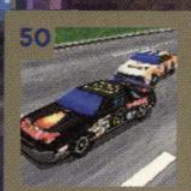
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OH CRIPEN VERE 434

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Hype It Up

Well kids, it's time to say *goodbye*. This is my last issue in the **HYPER** editorial hot seat so it's the last time you'll have to suffer me writing these crap editorials. Why am I leaving? Well a lot of people have asked me that, because after all, *I play games for a living*. What could be better than that? Well, to tell you the truth, not much, but there comes a time in every young man's life (and I'm still young - true!) when you have to move on and attempt something fresh. And that's what I am going to do (after an extended holiday season). I'll still be doing the occasional bit for **HYPER** so I'm not going very far at all, it's just time for a change, that's all.

We've had some great times here in our three and a bit year history and **HYPER** has certainly established itself as Australasia's gaming Bible, which was the original plan way back in the beginning. I'd like to thank everyone who has been involved with the mag while I've been here, most especially the three deputy editors (Andrew Humphreys, Ben Mansill, Dan Toose) and the two art directors (Aaron Rogers, Mark Gowing) for helping make **HYPER** one of the spunkiest and funniest mags around.

Of course, **HYPER** isn't going to stop pumping just because I'm not here and the plan is that you won't even know I'm gone. 1997 is shaping up to be a "BOOM" year for video gaming as the PlayStation, Saturn and Nintendo 64 will be slugging it out to the death and the PC programmers will start taking advantage of the new 3D accelerator cards. This will mean big competition for your dollars, but hopefully awesome product as well. Stick with **HYPER** and we'll sort out the shit from the Play Doh (TM).

Anyway that's enough from me (and I mean it this time), so thanks for getting in to **HYPER** and remember, *I love youse all...*

stuart



HERE'S A SHOT OF MARIO KART 64 AND DOOM 64. YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO PLAY THESE IN THE DEMONSTRATION TRAILERS BUT WE THOUGHT WE'D TEASE YOU ANYWAY...

Nintendo Goes on the Road

Now we know a whole bunch of you are hanging out desperately to get your hands on a Nintendo 64, but apart from buying an import machine from Japan or the US, there's not much hope of playing Mario 64 before March. Well, maybe there is...

Nintendo Australia has started a nationwide demonstration program which will be bringing the Nintendo 64 to shopping centres, amusement parks and Big Day Outs near you. That's right, five mobile gaming units are on the road right now, spreading 64bit gaming joy wherever they go. How will you recognise these units? Easy, they're bloody huge trailers (6 metres long) with 8 Nintendo 64s and 8 68cm TVs inside. They'll also probably have Nintendo logos plastered everywhere near by. Check your local paper for a Nintendo 64 demonstration unit visiting a mall near you throughout January and February or have a spin at Mario at the Big Day Outs around the country (which you all should be attending - last one, folks!).

Competition Winners

Earthworm Jim 2

Jason New NSW, Brad Taylor WA, Sam Martin VIC, Peter Andrews WA, Trent Cooper NSW

Spot Goes To Hollywood

Scott Richards SA, Justin Low WA, Martin Corbyn VIC, Adrian Biddel QLD, D. Kempe SA

Screamer 2

Brendan Murphy NSW, P. Marciana WA, Andy Co NSW, Luke Durrington NSW, Peter Burrows NSW

Street Fighter Alpha 2

Mark Agate NZ, Denny Chow NSW, Adam Higgs QLD, Shane Eddy VIC, Alisha Doherty QLD

Fighting Vipers

Michael Shard QLD, Jimmy Eng NT, Jared Gillard NSW

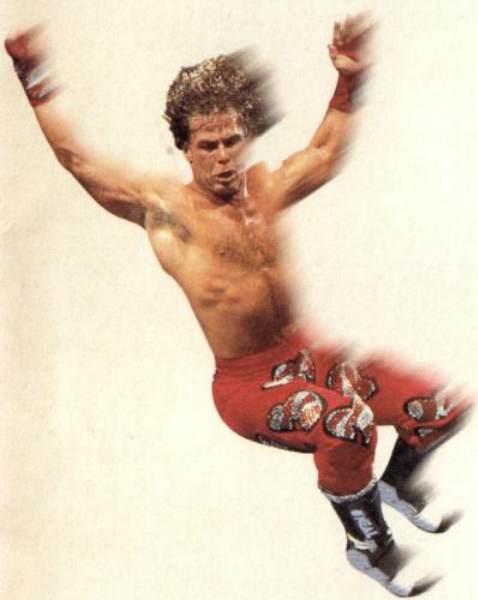
Crusader, No Regret

Fionn Colvin NSW, Adam Smith WA, Mark Lord NSW, David McBurney QLD, Jason Barnett VIC, Evan Crawford NSW

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We dig TV... We dig remote control

The Poppies had it right... remote control is rather funky, especially when it comes to playing video games. Don't you hate it when you have to untangle a whole mess of cords? Or when your dog chews on the controller lead, and then all of a sudden you can't move left anymore? Well, Saturn owners who have been suffering these traumas can now rest easy, because Sega have released their own infra-red remote controllers for the Saturn. The box includes two controllers and a receiver that you plug into your Saturn. Both controllers can be set to be either left or right, to save people getting up or swapping controllers when they want to swap sides.

The controllers themselves are very similar in nature to the original Saturn controllers that came out in Japan (which are quite a bit better than the ones you get with your Saturn nowadays out here), having a great feel to the D-pad, and nice chunky buttons that perfect "you just clicked me" feeling to them. There's only one drawback to remote controllers, and that's the fact you have to aim the things in the general direction of your console. This really isn't a problem for most gamers, since they tend to have fairly steady hands, and the area of reception is pretty big, but new gamers (especially parents for some reason) who move their hands, arms, bodies, etc as they try to control themselves, may find they unconsciously aim away from the Saturn, which causes loss of control. The receiver is a little better than most though, and a bit of arm wobbling and stuff won't ruin the flow of play. Of course the rays don't just appear like magic... you need to get two AA batteries for each controller. Battery life should be quite long, considering how little power it takes to power a remote.

The bottom line, two great controllers that will suit just about everyone, except those that flail their arms everywhere as they play games. The controllers retail for \$89.95 (2 controllers & a receiver).

Beavis and Butthead Cheap Clicks

Here's what you need - three new cheapies to make you giggle, from THE man Mike Judge. All new (almost) interactive mayhem from the school of Beavis and Butthead in three separate and distinct packages.

'Wiener Takes all' takes you into a TV gameshow, Beavis and Butthead style. Invite your friends around and subject them to the silliest questions they'll ever have to answer, then make the loser commit unspeakable acts upon the neighbour's chickens. 'Little Thingies' is a collection of games, most of which can also be found on 'Virtual Stupidity' There are three new ones however, made especially for this CD: 'Thankyou Drive Through', 'Wrecked 'em Ball' and 'Change It' And lastly, probably the most useful of the three CD's is 'Calling All Dorks'. Aptly titled because it's full of utilities and desktop themes for your computer. The good thing is that you don't need Plus! Installed to use the eight themes as there is a very good program included to allow you to fiddle about with them to your hearts content. The themes are all very good at changing the 'personality' of your machine in strange and delightful ways and take no effort at all to use.

A good selection of 'gift ideas' for the Beavis and Butthead fan or anyone who needs to lighten up a bit!



overflow

Many have been wondering why on Earth the Saturn hasn't been selling like it should, and understandably so. Now after a sales ploy in the US that saw Saturn units come with three pack in games, the retail sales have risen approximately 500 percent! Apparently the Saturn's sales figures have remained at levels equal or higher than its competitors due to the pack in games (at least at time of publication). Whilst Sega of America and Sega Ozisoft have absolutely nothing to do with one another, it prompts the question, will Sega pull a similar sales ploy in Australia?

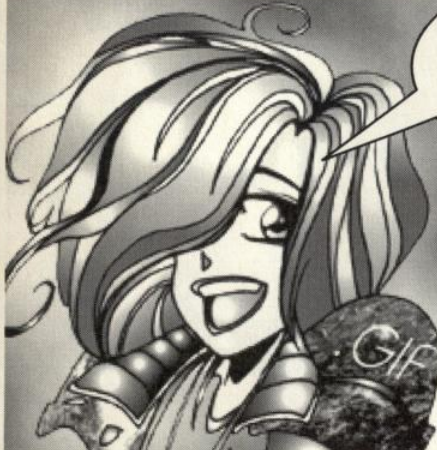
A little more news for Sega fans... Suzuki (he who made VF3) has confirmed that after three months of investigation as to exactly what the Saturn can pull off, Sega have found no reason that the VF3 conversion will not be of an exceptionally high quality (no doubt with the graphics cart previously speculated). Also, the surprise news of Fighters Megamix is apparently only half of the story... Suzuki claims the AM2 team have another title scheduled for release around the same time as Fighters Megamix, that no-one else seems to know about. By the time you're reading this, the game may be released in Japan, so stay tuned for a big title out of the blue for Saturn.

After bids as high as US\$300million, the world's in form software development company, Psygnosis, has been taken off the market and is no longer up for grabs. Many wondered what the hell Sony were thinking when it came to letting Psygnosis go. Psygnosis were very keen to expand their efforts onto all formats, and this was the main cause of tension. Sony have decided that dealing with Psygnosis's desire to work on whatever platform it wants is a small price to pay for having ownership of the company responsible for the best selling PlayStation games to date, and the two companies are reported to be getting on a hell of a lot better right now. It will be interesting to see what happens with possible Saturn conversions of F1, Wipeout 2097, Destruction Derby 2, and future titles. The previous Psygnosis Saturn conversions have been abysmal, and one would doubt that this would be the case had Psygnosis handled the conversions themselves.

Those interested in what Nintendo has been up to in the way of peripherals for the N64 will be happy to know something of consequence is actually happening. They've unveiled the 64DD (the bulky drive as it has been referred to), and it could well be out in the US and Japan by the time you're reading this. Also, Nintendo have been busy working on extras for their already impressive controllers. There will be an add on with a light sensor lens out the front. Due to the shape of the controller and the trigger underneath, this will turn the controller into a light gun. There's also a force feedback device coming out called the Jolt Pack, which will make the controller vibrate in certain situations for certain games. Both controller add ons will plug into the memory card slot on the controller.

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The 3rd Age of the PC Dynasty?

Those that have been gaming for years will have noticed that there seems to be this trend in the gaming world, where console games have the edge in graphics for a while (like when the 32-bit consoles arrived and everyone stood around gaping in awe), and then PC technology takes a shot in the arm and all of a sudden the PC has the leading edge. It happened when the C64 made the Atari and Intellivision look lame, and again when the 16-bit consoles made the old 8-bit computers (and some Amiga and Atari ST titles) look like a joke. Well, the 32 bit consoles might be taking a back seat real soon, because we're now starting to see the arrival of top quality 3D graphics accelerator cards.

The problem with 3D accelerators for the PC to date has been the fact that they've all been terrible at running standard 2D DOS games, which really, is the vast majority of games at the moment. This problem is disappearing now that 3D accelerators are coming out that work alongside your existing video card, so you still get the reliable 2D DOS and Windows performance of your current card, and your new 3D card just kicks in when it's needed. Many developers are now catering for these 3D technologies, especially with the appearance of Windows 95 Direct3D (it would seem Windows 95 is turning out to be a decent gaming platform after all).

Cards like the Matrox Mystique, the Creative Labs 3D Blaster are stand alone cards that take on 2D & 3D applications, while cards like the PowerVR VideoLogic or the Righteous 3D work alongside your existing card (for the best of both worlds). These cards have all just arrived on the scene, and are making games like Quake, Mechwarrior 2, and practically any other 3D polygon game that supports the cards, look 10 times better. Some of the cards are running 64 bit graphics and this means that PCs will be capable of running games that are as graphically impressive as Virtua Fighter 3 (whether anyone will manage to code it in the near future is another matter). Keep your eyes peeled for new 3D cards in the stores... and choose carefully, as one card might be strong in one area, but weak in another.

Trek Your Computer

You want everyone to know you're a hard core Trekker and wearing the Federation uniform constantly just isn't enough. What do you do? You dress your computer up with these new Star Trek accessories, that's what.

Network Entertainment have just released their new range of Star Trek computer fun bits. Now you can type on your Trek keyboard, move the cursor with the Trek mouse over the Trek mouse pad, hold your disks in the Trek disk holder and make your computer look pretty with the Trek monitor mask. Now all you need to do is to fall through a temporal displacement and end up in the 24th Century and you'll be happy!

Only for the hard core Trekkers, but we all know there are heaps of them!

Phantasmagoria 2 Test Censors

Phantasmagoria caused a hell of an uproar when it hit our shores. Due to its graphical depiction of violent and sexual scenes, it brought the discussion of game censorship to the fore (even though it would have been unlucky to have been given an "R" classification if it were a movie). Now with the US release of Phantasmagoria 2: A Puzzle of Flesh, the issue is about to come bounding back in our faces. Here's the lowdown...

This time around, players will cast off the role of the female character, and will take on the mantle of Curtis Craig. Fresh from a mental institution, Curtis, with the help of his girlfriend, is trying to rediscover normal life. Unfortunately, it just doesn't seem to be on the cards for our hero. Blood pours from photographs, rats start talking, and to top it off, a hellish horror by the name of Hecatomb shows up. Not satisfied with simply scaring the hapless Craig, Hecatomb opts for emotional torture, taking Craig on a miserable trip down memory lane to Craig's own malignant childhood. Using a cast of over 30 actors to produce the macabre story, Sierra has put together five CD-ROMs worth of spine-tingling action.

The US version includes an option for those who would like to get into the game but leave the gore behind. The editing feature makes it possible to take out the more graphic scenes and replace them with less startling footage. To protect the integrity of your games, and to keep away those who shouldn't be playing, the game is also password protected.

Will we get to see and play Phantasmagoria 2 in Australia? It's up to the OFLC...



charts

SATURN

1. Tomb Raider
2. Nights
3. World Series Baseball 2
4. Daytona Championship Edition
5. Alien Trilogy
6. Sea Bass Fishing
7. Shining Wisdom
8. Virtua Fighter Kids
9. FIFA '96
10. Gun Griffon

PLAYSTATION

1. Die Hard Trilogy
2. Crash Bandicoot
3. Wipeout 2097
4. Tomb Raider
5. Formula 1
6. Final Doom
7. Raging Skies
8. Big Hurt Baseball
9. Jumping Flash 2
10. Motor Toon GP 2

PC CD ROM

1. Syndicate Wars
2. Star Control 3
3. Rally Champion
4. LucasArts Archives 2
5. FI Manager
6. The Pandora Directive
7. Grand Prix 2
8. Time Commando
9. Triple Play '97
10. Quake

MEGA DRIVE

1. NHL '97
2. Madden '97
3. Worms
4. Soleil
5. Judge Dredd
6. Earthworm Jim 2
7. Lost Vikings
8. The Tick
9. Sonic Compilation
10. Toe Jam & Earl 2

SNES

1. Donkey Kong 3
2. Toy Story
3. Worms
4. Earthworm Jim 2
5. Donkey Kong 2
6. Doom
7. Super Mario All Stars
8. Urban Strike
9. Spawn
10. Micro Machines 2

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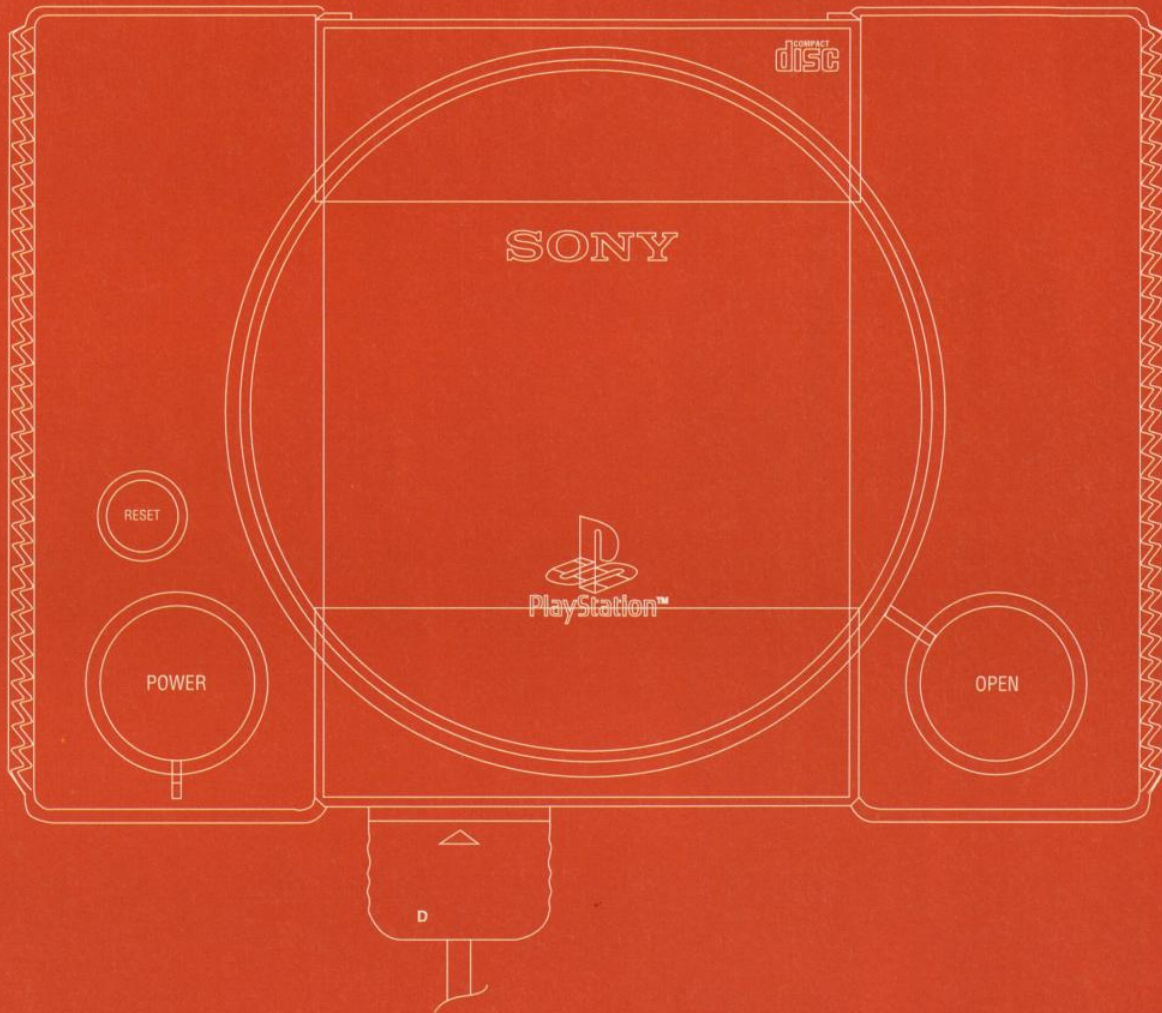
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Donkey Konging One More Time

Nintendo certainly know when they're onto a good thing, and when Donkey Kong Country first came out on SNES, it was a very good thing. Since then we've had Diddy Kong starring in Donkey Kong Country 2 and now Dixie Kong is strutting her stuff in the brand new Donkey Kong Country 3. The platforming fun you all know and love is back and looking better than ever.

So if you're a die-hard Nintendo lover just hanging out for the N64, save your cash and try and win a copy of what could well be the SNES' last smash hit title. To win, answer this question...

In DK3 who is Dixie Kong's side-kick?

Send in all envelopes to: DKC3 Comp, HYPER, PO Box 634, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012



Daytona Rides Again

"Daytonnnnnanaaaaaaaa, Daytonnnnnnaaaaaaaa." Yes, you all know and love that theme song if you're a chronic arcade hanger. Well now you can experience all the thrills and spills of Sega's aging but still impressive racer at home with Daytona Championship Edition. Split screen racing is now possible (bugger, you're going to have to go out and make friends), there are new tracks to hoon around on and several faults from the original Saturn Daytona have been removed. So if petrol head action is your thing, try your best to win one of 4 copies of Daytona CE (thanks to Sega Ozisoft) by answering this question:

Which two well-known Sega characters are featured in Daytona's background graphics?

Send answers to:

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Cool Boardin'

Snowboarding is fun. Snowboarding is also rad, extreme, gnarly, mad, stealth, filth, righteous, cool, fat, wicked, bitchin', sick and every other trendy word used to describe good.

if you've never actually gone 'boarding in real life, then Cool Boarders for the PlayStation is probably a bloody good place to start. it's got all the tricks and speed you need to feel like your really rushing down the slopes. Sony have kindly given us 5 copies of this snow fest for lucky HYPER boarders. Answer this question:

Name somewhere in Australia or New Zealand where you can go snowboarding...

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-GAMEFAN



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Expected Classification Low Level Animated Violence

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DEATHTRAP

DREAMWORKS

DreamWorks is the new mega-company that Steven Spielberg has unleashed upon the world, and DreamWorks Interactive is their development label for games. Their website is great and is well worth a browse... <http://www.Dreamworksgames.com/> You can check out stuff on their hot-looking adventure title, Neverhood and check up on action titles like The Lost World for PlayStation.

PANASONIC

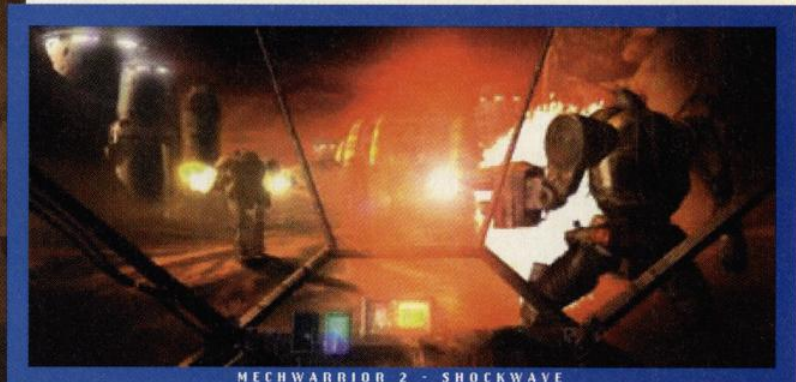
If you're still curious as to the whereabouts of the mysterious M2, then have a snoop around at Panasonic Interactive Media to see what's on their schedule. They're the folks who brought us some great 3DO games like Ballz, Bust-A-Move, Isis and D. The URL is <http://www.panasonic.com/cool/>

WIPEOUT 2097

There's no doubting that Wipeout 2097 is one of the hottest games for the Playstation. If you haven't played it, then you can't possibly imagine just how fanatical some people get about it. Here's a homepage devoted to the game, providing hints & tips, a FAQ, codes and even a high score/best times table. <http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/4538/wipeout.html> is where you'll find all the info.

DAYTONA USA

It may not be the first thing you notice when playing the game, but there are some funky tunes in this hot Saturn title. This sicko has actually gone to the trouble of figuring out the words to all the "songs". The Daytona USA Lyrics page is at <http://www2.sva.edu/auto/bernie/Games/daytona.html> and before you know it, you'll be singing along next time you burn around the track. "Flyyyyyiinnggg Hiiiiighhhh....."



MECHWARRIOR 2 - SHOCKWAVE

*It's time to rack up those on-line hours!
ELIOT FISH once again serves up some actually useful websites...*

ADRENALINE

The Adrenaline Vault is a game fanatics site that provides some pretty interesting services. There's a Shockwave and Java Arcade here that lets you play games on your browser over the Net. They even provide a Mechwarrior 2 shoot 'em up using the Shockwave plug-in. Otherwise, there's also a chat room, newsgroups, links and games info. Drop in at <http://www.avault.com> for the action.

JAVA GAMES

Playing games using your browser is easy with the help of Java. The Dungeon is a nifty on-line RPG/Action game that pits you against the usual array of crazy beasts and magical warriors. Visit <http://www.realtime.net/dungeon/intro.htm> for all the instructions and access to the game. You'll need a fast modem to make it worthwhile - but it's good fun and worth a go.

TOMB RAIDER

Now there's a whole site devoted to this great action/adventure. It's been put together by Eidos Interactive themselves, so there's everything you could possibly want on the game provided. You can even download a demo for the PC! <http://www.tombraider.com/> is the simple URL and it's a tasty looking site.

EIDOS

Eidos Interactive have their own web site at <http://www.eidosinteractive.com/> and it's got the lowdown on upcoming titles like the PSX, Saturn, PC, Mac title Death-trap Dungeon (which is a hot-looking 3D action/adventure) and the brutal fury of the Incredible Hulk. They also have a page full of patches, hints and technical support.

TOMB RAIDER

Reviews/Quotes
Core Design Inc.

GAME FEATURES

SCREENSHOTS/DEMO

STORYLINE

TOMB RAIDER



Armitage III Vol 3

Welcome to Mars 2179AD. Here the population don't take to kindly to "Earthers". They have their own system of government; overgrown cities built from concrete and metal, where your normal everyday flesh and blood citizen integrates with heavy metal construct androids.

Inside the city there is android crime. The nemesis of crime is the Martian police force. The Martian police force has Armitage, a third generation type cyborg android. She's eighteen years old and wears skimpy clothing. She also packs an augmented punch and is a full on god with hand held weapons. Sound like your type of series?

Well last issue Armitage III was compared to Ghost in the Shell (That's pretty high cotton where I come from!), and with good reason too. Armitage III is one of the slickest anime series to date. The sci fi concepts are so advanced they can only be compared to a Bruce Sterling novel, and what surprises me is that they've been able to pull it off in an animation! The quality of the animation will make your jaw drop in amazement and it comes with an ultra cool and haunting soundtrack of synth music.

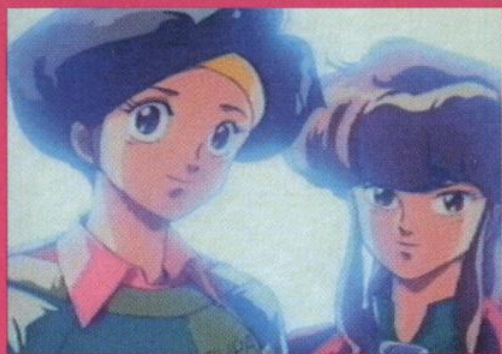
Whatever faults Armitage III does have (like the ultra stupid and pointless comedy relief of supporting characters) can easily be forgiven, and if you're into sci and cyberpunk, then I can almost guarantee that you will cream yourself over this.

9/10 FROM PIONEER AND KISEKI. RATED M

BY MAX AUTOHEAD



ARMITAGE 3



BUBBLEGUM CRISIS

Bubblegum Crisis 2 "Born to Kill"

"Welcome Knight Sabers! Join me as we toast....THE SUPER BOOMER!" So touts the corporate suit in Bubblegum Crisis 2: Born to Kill. What's a boomer? Well, they're like these super powerful androids built by those wacky fun loving dudes at the Genom Corporation. Androids designed to serve your every need, whether from general household/industrial jobs to the good old battery powered slap and tickle. Of course, once in a while Boomers get a few circuits crossed and all hell breaks loose. That's why the future city has AD Police to take care of the situation (See AD Police series for some pants pounding action).

But what happens when the flesh and blood police force can't stop psychotic android heavy metal? Well, call in the Knight Sabers! It stands to reason, doesn't it? Cute schoolgirl types who dress in high tech armour designed to battle and destroy rogue boomers. Makes sense that when you gotta fight machines, then you cover yourself in a machine. If not, think about the twenty million you get paid in the process.

That's what the Knight Sabers are thinking when a particle beam satellite goes down. Along the way they get to meet all the mean and nasty corporate scumbags that populate the city, as well as the ever growing Genom corporation with their new line of SUPER BOOMERS!!!

Bubblegum Crisis was a classic on its release in the eighties. It still holds up pretty well in some areas, but shows its age with the soundtrack and storyline. Still, if you're a technophile like me and you wanna go back to your roots then this is the series to do it with.

6.5/10 DISTRIBUTED BY MADMAN AND SIREN. RATED PG

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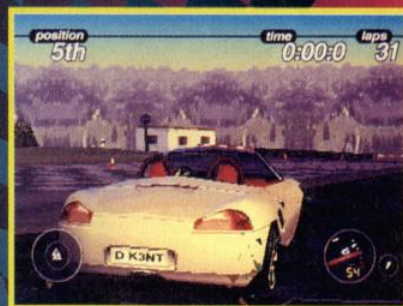
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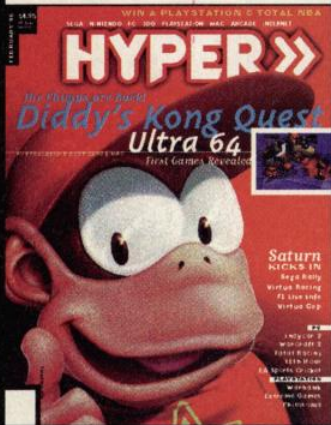
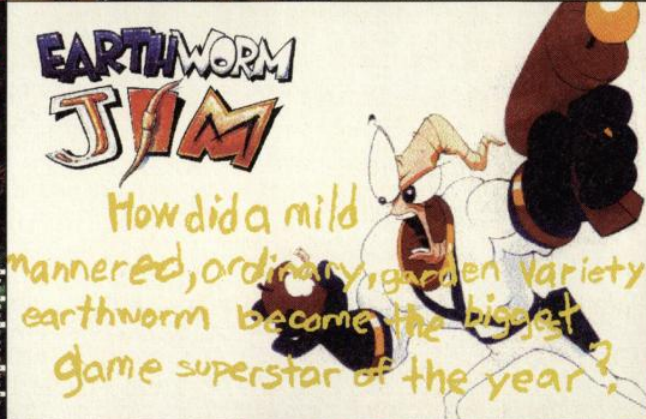
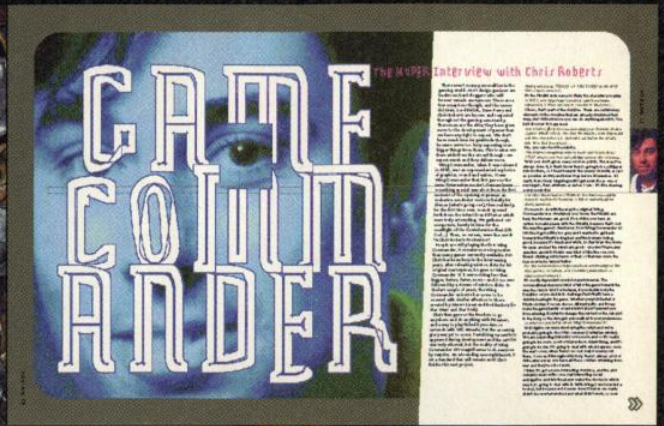
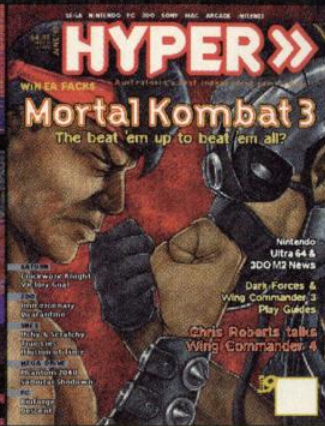
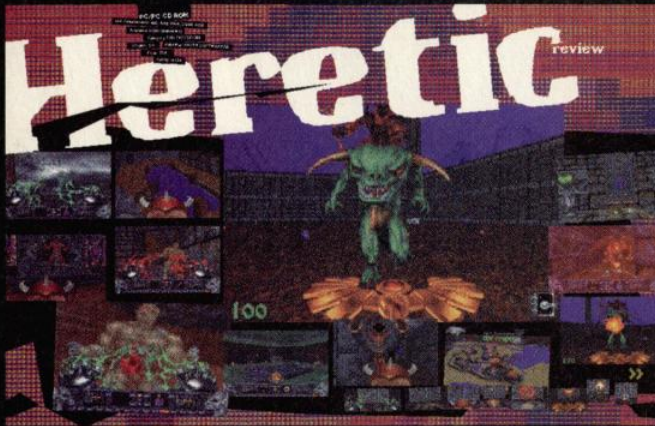
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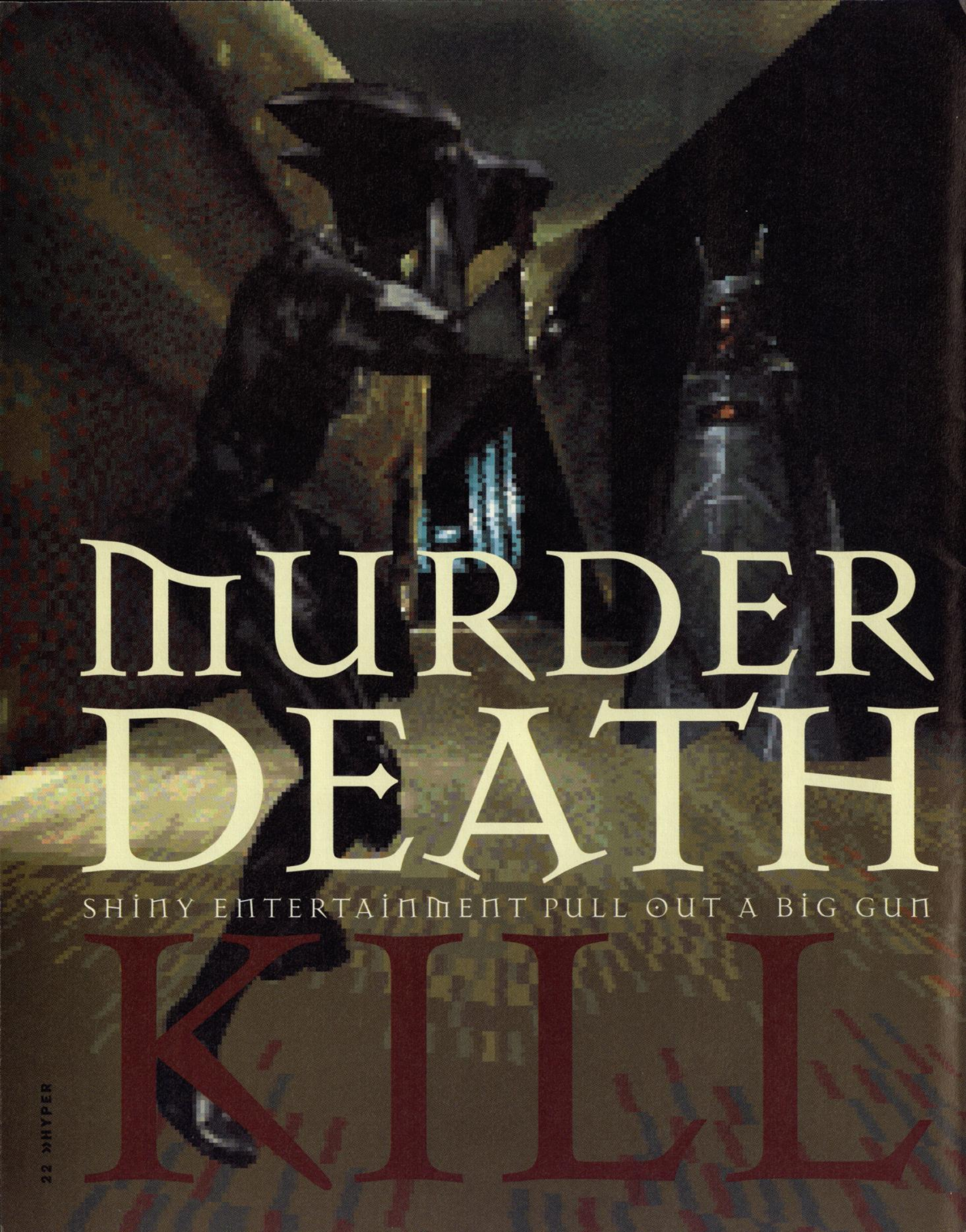
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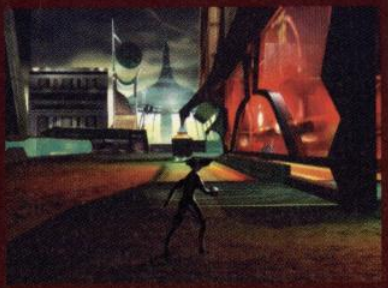




MURDER DEATH

SHINY ENTERTAINMENT PULL OUT A BIG GUN

KILL



EASILY ONE OF THE MOST ENIGMATIC FIGURES IN THE GAMING INDUSTRY, **DAVE PERRY** TAKES TIME OUT FROM HOOPING AROUND IN HIS V10 DODGE PSYCHOMOBILE TO TALK GAMES, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY THE LATEST SHINY ENTERTAINMENT OFFERING, MDK (MURDER DEATH KILL). *Steve Polak* CAUGHT UP WITH THE GAMES INDUSTRY'S COURT JESTER TO TALK ALL THINGS DESTRUCTIVE.

Hyper: What is the basic idea behind MDK?

DP: We have been waiting to make a game like this for years, but the 16 bit consoles were never strong enough to handle it. The game is set in the future, it has a real "Aliens" and "Predator" kind of feeling, however the twist is that there is quite a bit of humour in there as well. Earth is being rampaged by moving alien cities that steal our minerals by driving into major urban areas and breaking them down into component parts on a VERY large scale.

Hyper: Sounds like a serious dose of mass destruction?

DP: In a good day in MDK 2.5 billion people will die.

Hyper: How will the game be structured?

DP: We have built the game around 4 principle stages - Freefall, Traversal, Boss, and Blast-off. Freefall is controlled looking down as you fall at the speed of a bullet. Finally landing on the moving city. Traversal is when you run in full 3D above, below, around and through the moving city. During The 'Boss' section you find the driver/boss and kick his butt. This bit is usually funny as well as violent. Finally you blast off, flying back out into space through the plasma stream. But there are other modes of transport; there is snowboarding, sliding on your butt, hoverboarding, parachuting plus a few other things.

Hyper: Tell us about the weapons...

DP: We have the World's Most Interesting Bomb and The Human Mortar plus heaps more. These are the coolest weapons a PC gamer has EVER experienced... I really don't need to say any more... The objects and weapons in MDK are really unique and are fun to use.

Hyper: You have been often quoted as being a fan of high resolution games, as opposed to frame rate. What resolution options will MDK run under, and how have you managed to optimise the graphics routines so the game will run on less powerful Pentium PCs.

DP: MDK had many technical problems during development, when you can see for miles in high resolution there is a huge technical burden, all enemies are running around as well, finally we have bullet accuracy on the POLYGON level. We used to think a game like this would take a mainframe computer, however what we did was to write a lot of the code especially for the PENTIUM chip. It is AMAZING what a Pentium can do if you program PENTIUM code. Most developers have avoided doing this because it is really complicated. The result is that MDK runs REALLY fast. On my PC it is 30 frames per second.

Hyper: Will MDK 3D accelerator graphics cards supported?

DP: MDK will not be supporting 3D accelerator cards but the Pentium code is actually faster than many of the 3D cards out there already.

Hyper: Any favourites amongst the currently available 3D cards?

DP: Santa will be getting me a 3DFX.

Hyper: Where do you think the PC is going as a games machine?

DP: It is moving in swiftly, it is getting really strong. I think it will always have a different audience but it makes a GREAT games machine.

Hyper: What about using DirectX3 which is starting to make an impression on developers? What do you think of the Microsoft APIs (especially DirectX3)?

DP: I think it is bloody great, we are using it now. I did not believe that Microsoft could actually speed up a game, but believe me, on some video cards our game runs TWICE as fast under Windows 95.

Hyper: What about Microsoft's involvement, do you think they can simply buy their way into the market with their considerable financial muscle?

DP: Is the Pope Catholic?

Hyper: Do you have any preferred platforms to develop for?

DP: No, not really, we just know what our game requires and pick the best platforms. Considering the audience also!

Hyper: Shiny were reportedly at one point in time interested in M2. Are you still vibed about Matsushita's effort? Any news of the machine, or your decision to develop for it?

DP: Reliable sources say that the hardware is VERY impressive. I just don't believe that Matsushita (who make money selling hardware) are going to want to sell consoles at a loss. I think they will go the 3DO way. I, like you, wait to be surprised.

Hyper: Now talking about the jump to 32bit consoles. Has it really done anything to revolutionise or even significantly enhance gameplay? I remember a lot of great "must have" 16bit games whilst at this stage there are very few 32biters which stir a similar level of excitement? Am I getting jaded, or is it the case that we are seeing the same old ideas repackaged as the newest thing on the block?

DP: I enjoy playing classic styles of games, but what I care about is that they are REALLY WELL DONE. That is where most of the garbage gets in the way. Very few games are POLISHED. When one arrives like Wave Race then it stands out. I don't want some funky new ice cream, I like vanilla, I just want to taste REALLY REALLY nice vanilla.

Hyper: Tell us a bit about you next major console title "Wild 98"...

DP: It is a huge project (maybe too huge - I get no sleep these days), it stars a new character called WEX, he has a weapon that is completely new - it tortures his enemies before ripping them to shreds. The game is pure gameplay, action and humour.

Hyper: What games are you looking forward too in the next 6 months?

DP: I will be buying Red Alert today. I am disappointed in Tomb Raider, the controls totally suck. The game looks great, but the idiot that designed the joypad control should be shot at dawn.

Hyper: What do you see as the future for the industry? Are there too many players?

DP: I wish magazines would kill more crappy games and stop gamers getting jaded. There is really great stuff out there, but video game stores only really need ONE shelf. 3,000 new CD ROM titles a year - give me a break!

Hyper: Where would you like to be in the industry in 5 years?

DP: Small and making games without pressure.

» Fighters Megamix

Saturn

AVAILABLE: **APRIL**
 CATEGORY: **FIGHTING**
 PLAYERS: **1-2**
 PUBLISHER: **SEGA**

Now that the Virtua Fighter phenomenon is reaching the absolute heights with the arcade release of Virtua Fighter 3, arguably the most impressive arcade game ever... it's high time to see some sort of compilation of the Sega fighting games isn't it? Well while some PlayStation owners might be sated with the Mortal Kombat Trilogy release... Saturn owners really have something to jump up and down about. Sega of Japan had been keeping development of their latest fighting game title very hush-hush, but on the 21st of December they released Fighters Megamix in Japan. What is Fighters Megamix? Essentially it takes all the Virtua Fighter characters, and all of the Fighting Vipers characters, and bundles them into one huge fighting game tonkfest! Very little is known about the title at this stage, but we do have news that the Fighting Vipers characters will have their armour as they did in the standard game, and that there will be arenas from both classic games, so it'll be possible to have Wolf and Jeffrey battling it out in a cage! There's also word of completely new characters that have been developed specifically for the game (Rumour of use of the Virtua Cop characters), so we're looking at around about twenty or more characters. Fans of Virtua Fighter 3 will be pleased to know that the dodge function from VF3 will be included (as it was in Fighting Vipers), so it would seem gameplay has been tweaked as well. For those Virtua Fighter fans that are concerned that the Fighting Vipers characters will have an unfair advantage with their armour, rest assured that Sega are including armour breaking moves for the VF characters to even things up.

No confirmation of the PAL version as yet, but you could bet your Saturn that it'll happen. Look out for updates on a release date in Overflow over the next issue or two.



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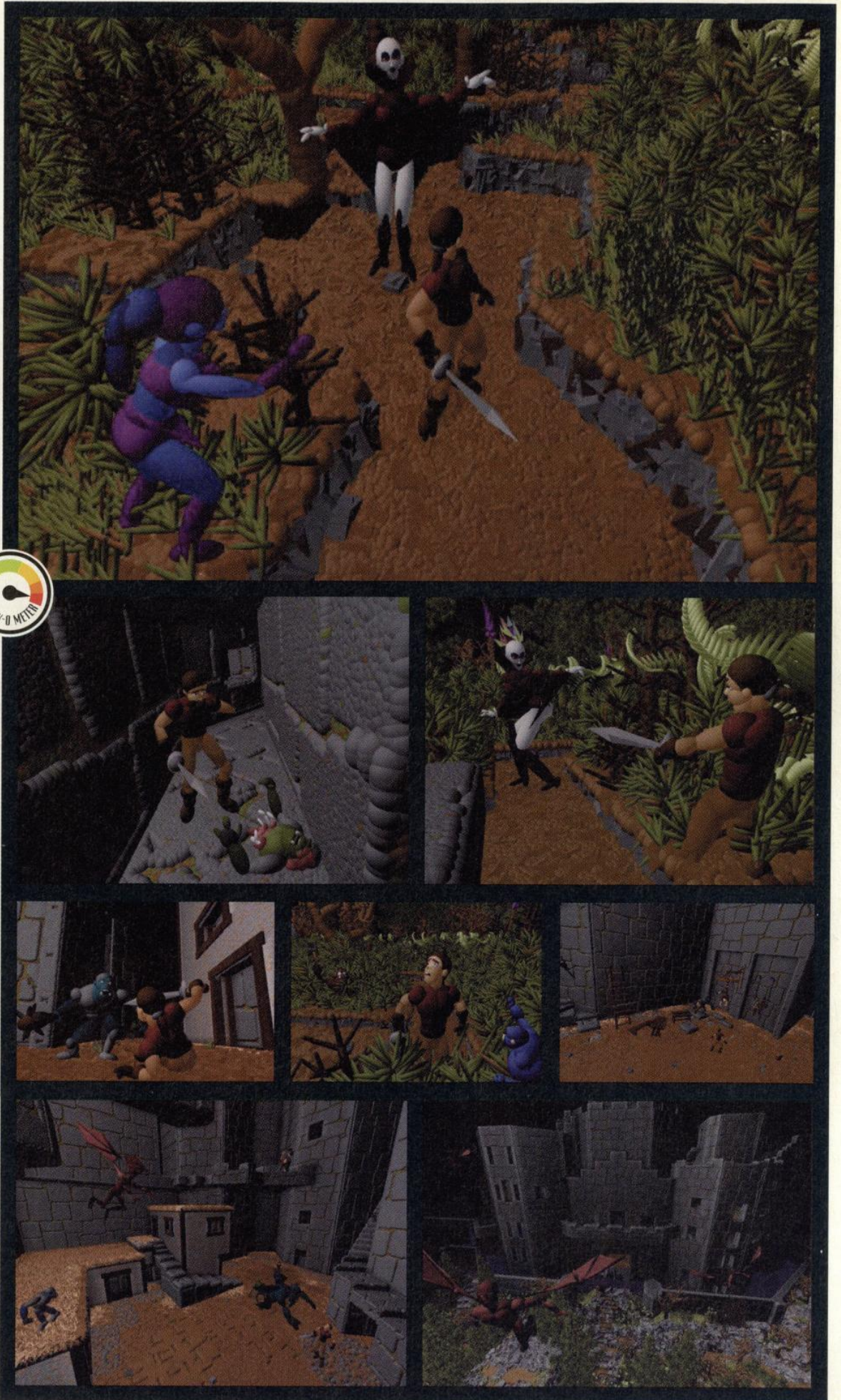
» Ecstatica 2

PC

AVAILABLE: MARCH
 CATEGORY: ADVENTURE
 PLAYERS: ONE
 PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS

Remember Joe? Little guy made up of ellipsoids? Okay, so maybe you didn't play Ecstatica, hard luck. Fortunately, Joe is making a comeback very shortly, returning with the damsel he saved in Ecstatica... but his castle has been over by a demonic sorcerer (well, you get that don't you?), and he gets captured in a monster ambush, awakening to find himself in stocks... and less on bride to be. It turns out that the demonic sorcerer and his four evil worshipers have broken this thingy known as the Elder sign (which just happens to be responsible for world order and that sort of thing) into several bits, which they plan to use in some rather questionable ritual in an order to reshape the world and summon the Lord of Demons. Of course a human sacrifice is required at the time as well (no prizes for guessing who's fiance is the likely victim), so you've gotta hurry up and do something about it.

Now this sort of scenario would usually be the scene for some sort of slow, generic adventure game, but Ecstatica 2 is anything but a slow cryptic adventure... we're looking at an epic action adventure of epic proportions. The interaction in the game will mostly be somewhat violent, as your task is really to defeat the four worshipers, then confront the sorcerer and rescue your girlfriend. There are a variety of weapons to collect and moves to master, with an interface that sounds like Time Commando, except with a few extra moves and options. The graphics are obviously high res, and all the characters are drawn in an ellipsoid style, which makes a refreshing change from the flat polygon trend we've all been subject to for ages now. Something to do with this way of handling the graphics helps makes things run smooth and fast, so expect some amazing animation in Ecstatica 2. There's a 1000 different views, compared to the 250 in the first Ecstatica game. Should be big, keep yer eyes peeled for a full review.





BRIAN PATCH

ENQUIRIES: (03) 9429 8457

» Ultima IX - Ascension

PC

AVAILABLE: MARCH-JUNE

CATEGORY: RPG

PLAYERS: ONE

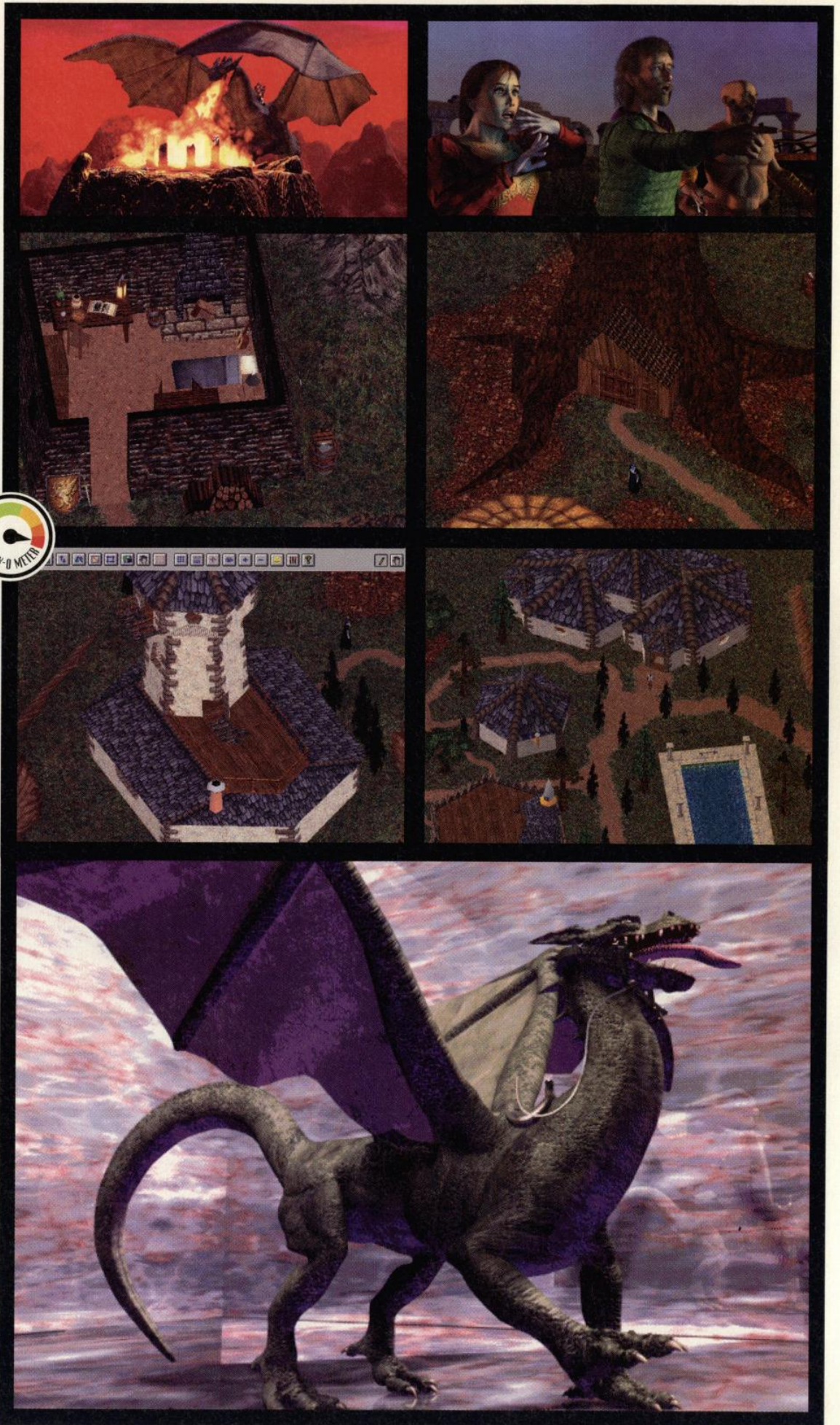
PUBLISHER: ORIGIN

The Ultima series is unquestionably the most successful computer RPG series ever. Richard Garriot (aka Lord British) cranked out the first Ultima game in 1979, without any idea that he was starting a phenomenon. It's going to be a great year for Ultima fans, because not only will we see the much anticipated Ultima Online, but also the final chapter in the trilogy of trilogies... Ultima IX - Ascension. The game will see the Avatar (that's you) return to Britannia to have the final confrontation with the Guardian (the big nasty from Ultima VII & VIII), and as the name implies, ascend beyond the mortal realm. Word from Richard Garriot has implied that there are plans for an Ultima X, but we will have seen the end of the Avatar, so there's going to be a new hero (or heroine) and possibly a new realm/world to explore. Origin want to keep their options open.

In relation to actual gameplay and new features, Ultima IX is expected to be the best yet. Origin have learned a bit of a lesson from Ultima VIII - Pagan, that being that pushing a game in the graphics department is not an excuse for a bad interface. While having a mostly isometric approach, the viewpoint can be spun around, and zoom in or out. The whole effect is supposedly seamless, which is quite a monstrous undertaking when you consider the size of the world of Britannia and the fact that Ultima IX is a 3D polygon based game, a first for the Ultima games.

Players will have the ability to position the viewpoint as they wish, panning around, zooming in and out, etc. Rest assured, that there won't be any cases of you not being able to grab some object once it's gone out of view, or any other such interface bungles. Richard Garriot has mentioned the possibility of a first person perspective being an option, although it was unconfirmed if this was going ahead. The plan is to pool the best features of the various Ultima games and churn out a virtually flawless game in the end.

This will no doubt be BIG, and should hopefully be something to rival Bethesda's 3D RPG, Daggerfall.



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Tokyo Wars NAMCO

I've always had a fetish for tanks. Just the idea of driving straight through buildings is enough to make me join the army and become a tank commander. Unfortunately there is no driving through buildings in Tokyo Wars - it's more like a game of skirmish in a tank.

Choose a side - white (Soviet block) or green (NATO). I found it best to go Soviet as the green tanks stand out more as their jungle camouflage seems to be more at home in the jungle of the botanical variety. The game is fairly basic. You have 16 tanks per side and you control one tank. Destroy all the enemy tanks before the time limit to go to the next stage.

It takes about 3 shots to destroy an enemy tank, and about 4-5 for your own. A damage-o-meter shows your energy levels which are magically restored in conjunction with not sustaining damage. A tip: try to travel in a pack as you will sustain less damage. Also, watch on the radar as to which way the enemy tanks are facing as this allows you to sneak up from behind and let loose a couple of shells before the enemy has the chance to traverse their turret around.

Although it is in no way a classic tank battle game, Tokyo Wars does make you realise that in a real life tank battle, your chances of survival are real low.



Dancing Eyes NAMCO

If you were a monkey, there couldn't be a better way to pass the time than to hang out on giant nubile girlies. Though don't think your existence would be as simple as that. Unfortunately, these lavish ladies are hiding their beautiful contours beneath typically common objects such as clothing, shower curtains and of course, clothing.

The object of Dancing Eyes is to control a tiny monkey and get him or her to "unpick" your hosts' apparel- which is divided into grid like sections. Once the outline of a grid is completed, that section disappears to reveal some flesh coloured pixels and some shaded contours. To increase the challenge of this soft porn game, enemies in the form of sharks, centipedes, and other insects attempt to kill you. To counter these upholders of common decency, the bugs may be dispatched by completing a grid whilst the nasties are travelling along the boarder of the soon to disappear piece of fabric.

Once the whole character has been revealed, it becomes show time, in which you control the 'camera' viewpoint and magnification, with that joystick of love. Hubba hubba. As there are 13 stages and three girlies to choose from each stage- that ends up being a lot of chicks to hang out on.

Dancing Eyes is not a game for the whole family, and for some strange reason, in the challenge stage when one has to 'unmask' a cow skeleton, the game's attraction level drops by at least 67%. Which in turn is why we rate this particular game on a sliding scale between 1 and 5 corresponding to the players gender (girls are going to find this most offensive), sexual disposition and of course, level of desperation (time between non inflatable sexual partners).

*** (MORE IF YOU'RE A DESPERADO)

San Francisco Rush ATARI

Atari, pioneers of the video game, have bought out an overly mild attempt at a racing car simulator. If you are in for the challenge of driving one of those big block V8's that can go too fast, then this is the game for you. However this is in no way full throttle action (if you choose the expert level mobiles) as too much acceleration will see your vehicle careering from the track. Careful handling and controlled driving is where this racer is at. Huge jumps (Dukes of Hazard style) appear along the way (thanks San Fran), along with fast sweeping corners, chicanes and all those bits of road you could die for.

The thing that makes SF Rush repeatedly enjoyable is the way the cars handle and the way one has to fight the wheel if the car starts to drift or powerslide out of control. Also the accidents are quite awesome.

If you enjoyed Hard Driving (released around 1984) then you'll dig San Fran Rush.

*** 1/2



DANCING EYES

Dead or Alive

TEMCO

Dead or Alive is sort of like a try-hard Virtua Fighter 2 1/2 but really, while not doing anything particularly wrong, it comes off as nothing more than a clone. The only thing that is truly superior (to VF3) is that the female characters have breasts that would make Pamela Anderson head straight to the silicon plant to get a gravity defying breast upgrade. Schlock Horror. Other characters are like the inbred cousins of previous fight sim characters such as the mighty Chun Li (SF2) and the irrepressible Shun (VF2).

All the fight cliches are in here and while some of the moves are cool, there's nothing that's really going to set you on fire, although the electrified and exploding boundaries (which replace ring outs) will give you some excitement. It's true that Dead or Alive is a decent game, it's just that the fighting game genre is in need of some fresh ingredients to really take hold of our neurons and our cash.

*** 1/2



CONVERSE.

★ BOARDERLINE SERIOUS RUBBER

Pandemonium

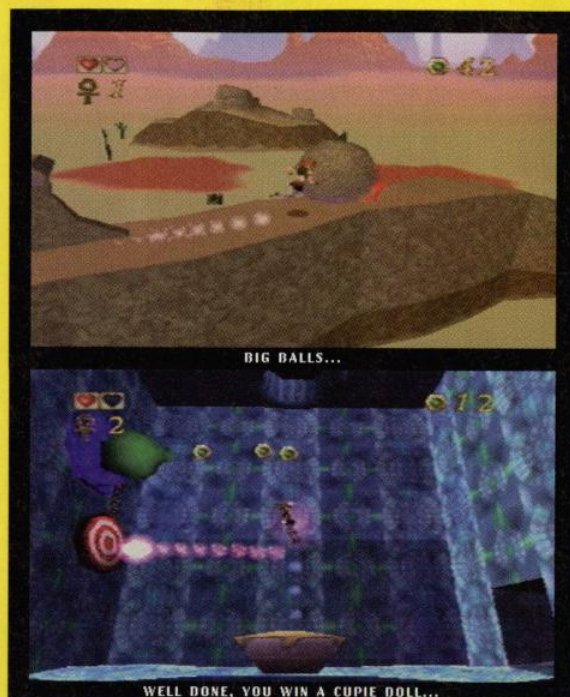
A 32bit platformer at Sonic speed? I'd like to see that... Well now you can thanks to Crystal Dynamics and Pandemonium. STUART CLARKE takes himself on a wild ride...



Crystal Dynamics are a pioneering games development house. They produced the first ever 32bit console title (Crash & Burn for the 3DO) and Gex (another original 3DO game) was probably the first 32bit platformer around. Unfortunately getting in first sometimes doesn't pay off and apart from the ugly demise of the 3DO, Gex didn't set the world on fire because it really wasn't that big a leap from 16bit platformers that everyone had played to death. A couple of years down the track though and Crystal Dynamics have released another 32bit platformer, this time taking full advantage of the new technology. And guess what? It's wonderful.

Charismatic Heroes

Nikki and Fargus are our charismatic heroes. At the beginning of the game and at the start of each new level you can choose who you want to play. Fargus is a slightly deranged harlequin/jester type who carries around Sid, his puppet-on-a-stick alter ego. I'm not sure of Sid's exact role in gameplay (I don't think he has one) but Fargus' special move is a spinning attack. Nikki is a sexy gymnast type with a hyper personality. She's actually a wizard's student and can perform double height jumps as her special move (and let me tell you kids, I'd take double jumps over spinning attack every time in this game). Throughout the course of the game though you will morph into animals (like a turtle or a rhino) to complete some sections.





YOU SHOULD SEE THE MOTHER THAT MADE THAT WEB...

WHERE ARE THE EWOKS?

THE GREASY SLIPPERY DIP...

DON'T FALL IN THE GREEN SHIT!

FARTING LUMPS OF FAIRY FLOSS...

JUMP AROUND... JUMP AROUND...

They are the stars of what is, if you scratch the surface, a standard platform game ie move right, jump on baddies, pick up coins/lives/bonuses, don't fall down holes, make it to the exit and beat any bosses you come across (after every five levels or so). Pandemonium has been implemented so well though that you can't help but love it. Camera angles play a major role in the enjoyment. The view changes constantly; one minute Nikki or Fargus take up most of the screen, the next they're specks in the distance. While you can't manually control the camera (a la Mario 64 and Tomb Raider), the programmers have done a great job to pick the most cinematic and useful angles possible. Sometimes you really do need to pan back and see what tricks and traps are ahead and luckily Pandemonium does all the work for you. And it all flows sooooo smoothly.

Fast = Fun

Apart from the most attractive camera work, the levels themselves are also rather beautiful and there are heaps of completely different environments so you won't be bored by 10 stages of boring desert graphics or the like. Because each world is completely different there are constant surprises to be had and new challenges to overcome.

Pandemonium has taken the best bits from games like Sonic and Mario and put them together to make something that can sit alongside the original classics without feeling too embarrassed. Sonic would have to be the biggest influence though, and Crystal Dynamics obviously were smart enough to realise that Fast = Fun. The game certainly does rip along (in 30 frames a second, no less), especially when you find yourself on a "slime slide" or you step off the edge and fall about five kilometres (well it feels like that far anyway). Quick reflexes are a must, although if you really want to you can take it slowly and surely and pick up all the treasure. Like Sonic, I'm sure Pandemonium players will be broken down into two camps - those who want to get through the fastest with the coolest stunts and those who want to take it carefully so they can see the lot and complete 100%. Like everything, it's a matter of personal preference and whatever way you play, you'll have fun.

Pandemonium won't change your life. It's not a Mario 64 or a Tomb Raider. It is however a great traditional platform game that uses the abilities of the PlayStation to enhance enjoyment. It's fast, it looks great and if you like platform games then you'll have a stupid grin on your face as you play this little bugger right through to the end.



TIMOTHY LEARY LAND...



ERM... NICE TIGHTS DUDE...



HEADED FOR GREEN ER PASTURES...

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: PLATFORM
PLAYERS: ONE
PUBLISHER: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: G

VISUALS

93

Solid, fast moving graphics and chock full of style.

SOUND

85

SFX are good and the character voices bring personality.

GAMEPLAY

91

Classic platforming fun in beautiful and constantly challenging levels.

LONGTERM

90

Lots of levels, bonus levels, alternate routes so even if you finish it once, you'll probably be back.

OVERALL

91%

A bloody great platform game. Old style fun, new style graphics.

Project Overkill

Does your mum tell you that video games are too violent? Give her a load of this one, then! HARRY MARAGOS fights violence with more violence...



You may have already guessed just from the title that Project Overkill is not your run of the mill, shoot-em-up type game. In fact, whoever said "violent games breed violent minds" should probably prepare for humankind's extinction when he/she sees this game. Reason being is the content material. If you cannot send your opponents reeling in all directions with blood spurting from every orifice, clutching fractured skulls, fist-sized holes in their chests, and depositing as much of their human bean sauce on the walls as possible, then you're probably not going to get far past the first level.

The story behind all this mindless violence is that for years, a large corporation has been purging planets of their populations just so they can exploit the natural resources. This is where you come in. You have been employed by Earth to put an end to the corporation's tyrannical reign. Your mission; take out the corporation by any means possible. If possible, you should take them out with extreme prejudice.

The game is played from an isometric (3/4 top down) view where you must successfully complete various missions to progress further into the enemy installations. There is no linear path through the missions and they can range from eradicating an entire base, to escorting a convict to safety, to finding a chemical component to poison the water supply. All in all, the main objective is to fight violence with violence.



Quirky Characters

Project Overkill, like Loaded, is predominantly a mission-based maze game, viewed from slightly above and featuring different characters, each of which is an expert in a particular field. You have a choice of four mercenaries, of which only one can be chosen for each mission. It's up to you to select which character is best suited for the task. Be forewarned though, should that character die, you lose that character for the entire game. Lose all four and you must start over from the beginning. With over forty missions nobody said killing was an easy business.

The characters you can select from have a wide range of quirks and personalities. Jendryk for instance is a human stealth bomber and carries a silenced 9mm automatic, whereas Quogg is a blundering Terminator character who cares little for finesse and likes nothing better than wading into the enemy like a bull in a china shop. Each character lugs around four weapons which can be used at any time provided you have the ammo. Everyone gets a machine gun, some form of laser, a hand grenade weapon, and a unique death device just to make it interesting. It also allows the player an element of strategy.

Instead of just blundering Arnie-style into a control room full of goons, it's possible to set up ambushes using, for example, Kreeg's self-sufficient auto-cannon to lure them in the required direction whilst you "suckerpunch" them from behind using your homing spider bombs. These non-standard devices will help give your team their own identities and strengths for particular missions.

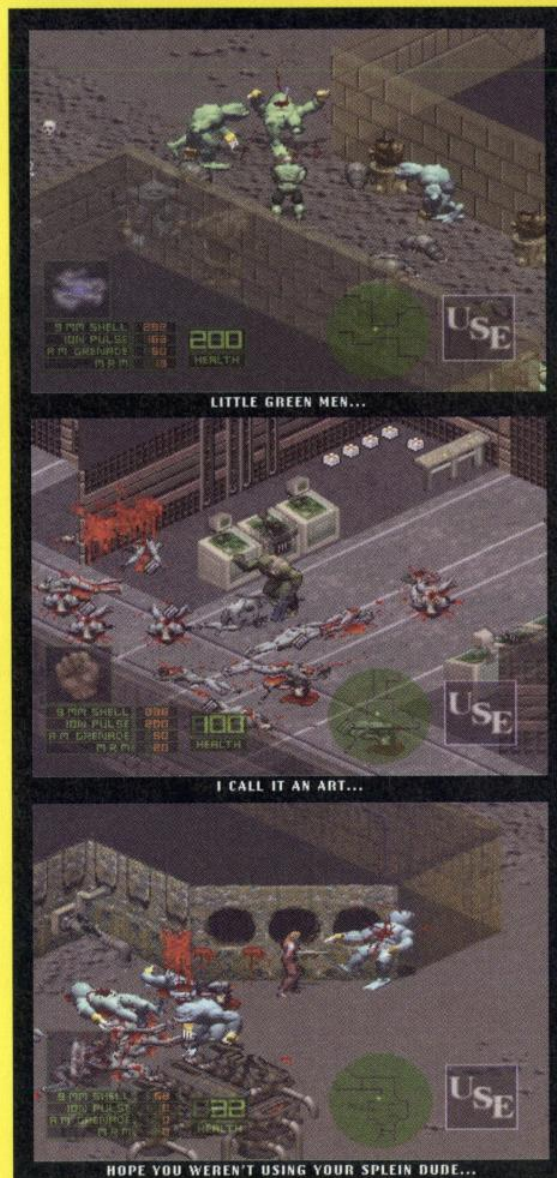
Another plus for this game is the variety in strategic thinking involved. For instance, not all doors are opened with a keycard, some are locked via retinal scans. So what do you do? Simply steal an eyeball from one of the corpses. In addition, if you just run around shooting you'll soon have a lot of enemies on your tail but if you take it easier and perhaps sabotage the surroundings, like taking out the lights, you stand a better chance of surviving.

The graphics in the game are excellent, and pay close attention to detail. The levels are very deep, with various upper and lower levels, and many hidden areas with powerups. This game contains a top down isometric view which implements a nice transparency feature, so that you can collect the hidden powerups that are close to walls out of your view. The backgrounds are well done too. Computers have little lights blinking on and off, as do wall panels and other objects. Every object (with the exception of walls) can be blown up and destroyed. The best though is all the neat little touches that have been thrown in. Walk over a corpse and you will leave a trail of blood with your footprints, for example.

Cumbersome Control

There is no shortage of enemies to kill in Project Overkill. However, the frustrating problem is trying to do it with ease. The controls are cumbersome and awkward, since you have to aim your guns with the four joystick buttons (ala Smash TV style). The direction of fire changes depending on what button you press and what position your character is facing. Quite often you will be surrounded by a pack of insatiably flesh hungry mutants, only to find your weapon shoot every which way but into the enemy. When this happens you basically end up sticking your gun barrel into their face and simply pump away until one of you hits the deck. Not very smart, but it gets the job done. Nevertheless with plenty of persistence you will eventually be strafing with the best of them.

Project Overkill is everything Loaded should have been and much, much more. It is intended for mature gamers who enjoy sick, all round messy fun in an amoral kind of way. Strip away all the blood and gore though and what you have left is still a quality exploration game with three recurring themes; sabotage, collection and assassination. It's an insane graphic orgy of blood-letting and it brings out the sadist in all of us. A must for lovers of all challenging, violent games.



AVAILABLE: EARLY 97

CATEGORY: ACTION

PLAYERS: ONE

PUBLISHER: KONAMI

PRICE: \$99.00

RATING: MA15+

VISUALS

84

Charles Manson would be proud. Plenty of ketchup flying around.

SOUND

73

Bone-crunching sound effects and cool 'splat' sounds

GAMEPLAY

62

Easy enough to get into but controls detract from the action.

LONG TERM

65

With plenty of missions and variety you should be finishing just as the sequel is complete.

OVERALL

78%

Fans of Syndicate, Loaded and red meat will love it.

Pitball

Here's another future sport video game, and like most future sports it combines ultra-violence with high technology. RUSSELL HOPKINSON goes a few rounds of Pitball...



SECOND OPINION - DAN TOOSE

Here was a title I was quite looking forward to, being a fanatical speedball player in years gone by. Pitball just seemed to lack sensible camera angles, playability, and excitement in general. The controls seemed really sluggish, which for a game that's meant to be high speed violent sport, just won't do. The graphics are a tad 16 bittish, and really don't move well either. Having teams of two also makes it very frustrating once one of your players gets downed, and detracts from the fun. A bit of a dud in my opinion... I find Rusty's review quite generous.



It is written in the stars that Pitball will be a popular game. It's simple and dips its feet into a few different genres with consummate ease. If you were to compare this game with anything, it would have to be a cross between N.B.A. Jam and Tekken, and it's done really well. Basically, Pitball is a futuristic sport game that features a whole bunch of alien races vying for supremacy. Each arena is on a different planet with varying physical laws (greater gravity will mean smaller jumps and so on). The contestants (two to a side) wear arm mounted rocket launchers that fire the "ball" (a glowing flying sphere) at a target (or goal) at either end of the court. Each player is capable of delivering mighty blows to their opponents and with power-ups can call forth wildly destructive special attacks.

Sporty Violence

The game itself is very fast and requires you to learn a few different manoeuvres to successfully compete. The target is small, so getting used to shooting with accuracy is of utmost importance. This is not a sports sim however; its eye is fixed firmly on the home arcade fanatic's wallet. The presentation is similar to most fighting games, the main camera angle has the "pseudo 3D" look of Tekken or Virtua Fighter and the action involves a lot of punching and kicking. Still, if you don't score goals you don't win, so it's definitely different to the aforementioned arena battle games.

The graphics are pretty lush with some excellent character animation and smooth scrolling. It looks like a 32 bit game should without letting the graphics get in the way of gameplay. The various alien races are somewhat generic but all of them look great and move really smoothly. Short FMV pieces illustrate the different team backgrounds, most of them are your typical alien ruffian types; as seen hanging out in the Cantina in Star Wars or hitchhiking around the Galaxy. With nicely detailed backgrounds setting the scene, Pitball is a very classy effort indeed. Of course the CD quality sound is fantastic with loads of bone crunching sound effects and character voices (the fish men sound just like Flipper!), and through a stereo system it really does shake the room. I'm not a fan of most video game music but I can't think of anything bad to say about the techno contained within - just be glad that you can turn it off if you hate it.

A Few Gripes

Pitball is not perfect however; it suffers from being a bit back and forward. You know; you score, they score, you score, they score and on and on. It tends to veer towards dullness in one player mode and the gameplay does take quite a bit of getting used to. I found the players a bit hard to control sometimes but after a few hours of play you get use to the vagaries of different arenas and their physical laws. A character that seemed lightning fast in one arena may be hellishly sluggish somewhere else.

But these minor gripes seem fairly pedantic when this is treated as a multiplayer game. It's one of those games that lends itself to group play and the mixture of sporting prowess and out and out violence blend well to form an enjoyable social exercise. It is insanely fast and you rarely get a chance to hold on to the ball for long before an opponent tries to take your head off! If you enjoy a fun, socially oriented game that will get you and your mates beating the crap out of one another then Pitball is the perfect way to spend an evening.



FIREWORKS OUT YER BUTT...



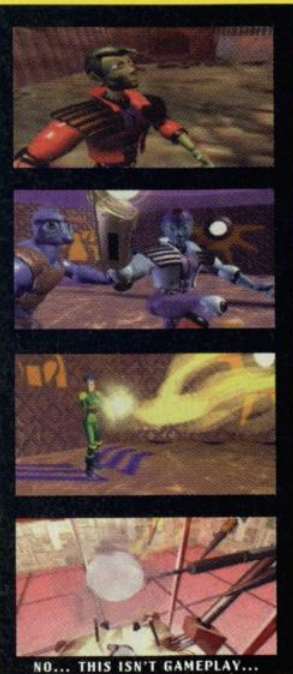
FANCY DRESS, FULL CONTACT BIFFO!



BAAAMMMMI



A COMBAT ARENA... OR A VEGE FARM?



NO... THIS ISN'T GAMEPLAY...

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: ACTION/SPORT

PLAYERS: 1-4

PUBLISHER: WARNER

PRICE: \$99.95

RATING: TBA

VISUALS

85

If it looks like a 32 bit game should and that ain't bad.

SOUND

85

Big sound effects, great character voices and non-offensive music. Wow!

GAMEPLAY

84

Difficult to master but fun once you have. A multiplayer dream.

LONG TERM

82

You and yer mates will be bashing each others heads in for quite a while after you start playing this game.

OVERALL

84%

Pitball is a classy arcade entrant in the super console war. Definitely worth a look.

Cool Boarders

It's time to hit the virtual ski slopes for some rad boarding action. STEVE POLAK decks himself out and does a Switchstance Frontside 360 (isn't that just a Frontside Cab?)...



Ever since I first slid down the spectacular slopes in Alpine Racer I have been an avid devotee of sub zero speed, and Cool Boarders makes sure that this peculiar fascination is one I can now take home with me. This most unusual PlayStation offering is a whole lot of fun, even if it is deceptively simple. The basic idea behind the game is to make it down the tortuously twisty ski slopes avoiding obstacles, and pulling stunts in the fastest time possible. Sounds simple but Cool Boarders turns this basic premise into a enjoyable jaunt.

Helmet Cam

The game runs nicely using two viewpoints, but you can pretty much forget the VR inspired helmet view, as you have to watch your Boarder from behind unless you want to get dizzy. This is because a lot of the tricks involve spins, flips and other contortions which look really bad if you are looking at things from your Boarder's perspective.

Cool Boarders has some rather unusual options in that you can dress your racer in shred fashion, changing outfits and other unnecessary accoutrements. However there are also a variety of boards which you can choose from which greatly affect your performance. There are boards which improve speed, but only work well in one direction. This means not only do you need to make sure that you don't wipe yourself out whilst performing a stunt, but that your guy lands facing in the appropriate direction. This becomes quite tricky when you are performing spins with up to 1540 degree revolutions!



Cool Boarders does have one major failing, and that is that the game doesn't run in a two player split screen simultaneous mode. Instead you can race a friend by competing against their ghost. This is a barely passable alternative, and it really doesn't compare to the two player split-screen intensity of games like Sega Rally.

Graphically Cool Boarders isn't anything to write home about, but then again neither are pictures of snowscapes so I suppose the visuals are only being realistic. The game would probably look damn silly if like Motor Toon GP the landscapes were a surreal wash of colours and fantasy surroundings.

High Speed Stunts

But visuals are nothing without good old Captain Gameplay, and the lad we all know and love is definitely in attendance on this one. As a racer CB would have been fairly dull if you just had the ability to slide at high speed down the steep slopes, but the addition of stunts really fires up the excitement. Just like the great Unirally the tricks help you pick up speed, and increase your point total.

To pull off a gnarly acrobatic manoeuvre all you need do is hold the D pad down as you approach a jump, and then go berserk on the joypad as you fly over the ramp. This takes a bit of practice, but the sheer 'assiness' (to coin a phrase) of some of the stunts is well worth the effort. However, fluff a move and your boarder will end up landing sideways and washing off all of his all important speed, or worse, stacking and coming to a grinding halt.

The game features only 3 basic tracks (Easy Medium, and Hard). It will take you a while before you have got the gist of all but the easy slope, as a great degree of control is required. Apart from the stunt side of things you have to be very judicious in judging the apex of a turn just right so that you can slide your way around it, washing off some speed, but keeping things tidy so that you don't end up looking shtoopid as you slide sideways to a ridiculously frustrating halt. This really is an art as it is so much easier to slide your Boarder when you realise there is no engine powering the proceedings here and you have use the geographical layout cleverly. This means balancing the right racing line with the best sections of steep down hill.

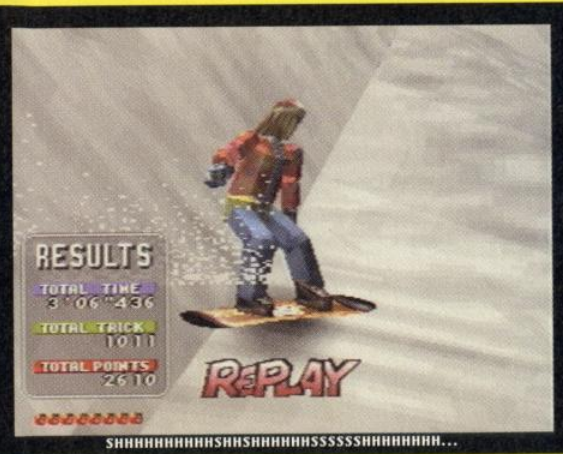
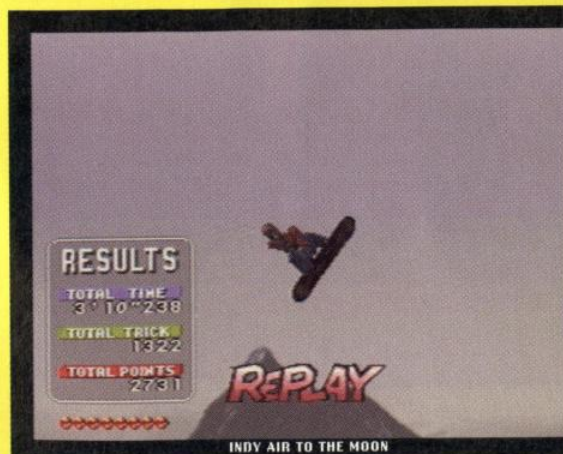
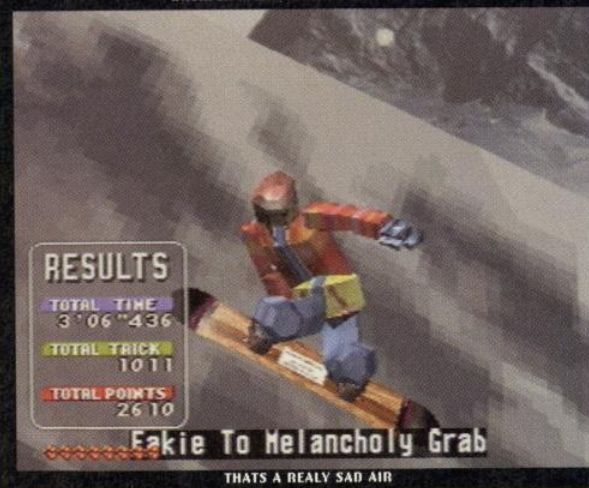
In many ways this is a bit of a purist's racing game. The visuals aren't really capable of competing with the eyecandy of Ridge Racer, Wipeout etc, and the snowboards really do take a bit of patience before you feel happy aboard 'em. That said, Cool Boarders is different, and by being so it really deserves a chance, as the feeling of controlled falling at speed really is exhilarating once you get to grips with the whole thing.



HEADING DOWN TO BASE FOR LUNCH... I'LL HAVE THE NACHOS



BACKFLIPING... JUST LIKE JIM RIPPEY



AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: SHRED SLEDS

PLAYERS: ONE

PUBLISHER: SCE

PRICE: \$99.95

RATING: G

VISUALS

78

Not the most colourful or the best, but you'll forget this once you pull off your first 360.

SOUND

75

Minimalist, but again not much of a detraction.

GAMEPLAY

84

Hard at first, but well worth slamming your boarder's face in the white stuff a few times, as proficiency leads to a lot of enjoyment.

LONGTERM

72

It depends on how much of a perfectionist you are. The tracks aren't radically different from each other, but you will have to try for quite a while to get 'em right.

OVERALL

78%

An odd yet strangely enjoyable offering. Snowboarders will dig it.

Fifa 97

FIFA returns to answer the recent challenge from Worldwide Soccer. DAN TOOSE was dressed in black, so he played referee...



FIFA 97 VS WORLDWIDE SOCCER 97

Whilst the question as to whether or not Worldwide Soccer was better than FIFA 96 was a fair one... it was unanimous in the Hyper office that it was a close one. FIFA 97 however has just that much extra to make the contest a little more one sided. FIFA 97 features three authentic commentators, which anyone who's watched an English soccer match will find familiar. Worldwide Soccer has commentary, but it's nowhere near the same standard as FIFA 97, being a bit more behind the 8-ball, and having a less authentic feel all round. FIFA 97 also features over 4200 players from over 12 international leagues, including ability ratings for different aspects of play for each player... once again Worldwide Soccer falls short, having no real players, and a lack of detailed stats for those that are there. FIFA 97 edges ahead in visuals, with a slightly higher resolution than WW Soccer, although WW Soccer does handle the player animations and fancy moves a little better. Overall, the gameplay comparison is quite even... FIFA handling the passing better, WW Soccer handling the footwork better. All these details aside, after playing both, FIFA 97 is the one that the Hyper crew will come back to.



SEGA WORLDWIDE SOCCER



SUPER EFFORT THAT...



HOW TO BE THE CENTRE OF ATTENTION...



BEEN WORKING ON YOUR BICEPS DUDE?



IS IT SQUASH OR SOCCER?

Sega Worldwide Soccer impressed a lot of people down here in the Hyper office, and the question of whether or not it was better than FIFA was asked many a time. That question has now become irrelevant, because we were thinking of FIFA 96, and now FIFA 97 has come along, and given us the answer.

EA have gone the 3D polygon approach (funny that), just as they seem to have with all of their 97 titles. Whilst keeping the player frames simple, the texture mapping has been done very well, and the players look great... right down to the numbers on their backs. All the old camera angles are there, and just as before, out of the eight or so views, only two are of much use, but that's okay, since you only need one. To go to the Nth degree of anal perfectionism, EA have taken David Ginola (Spiffy Euro soccer player), and done the whole motion capture bit, to help make the movements as realistic as possible. The screen grabs really don't do justice to how good FIFA looks running, especially with the little subtleties like the way your player slide tackles and smoothly gets to his feet.

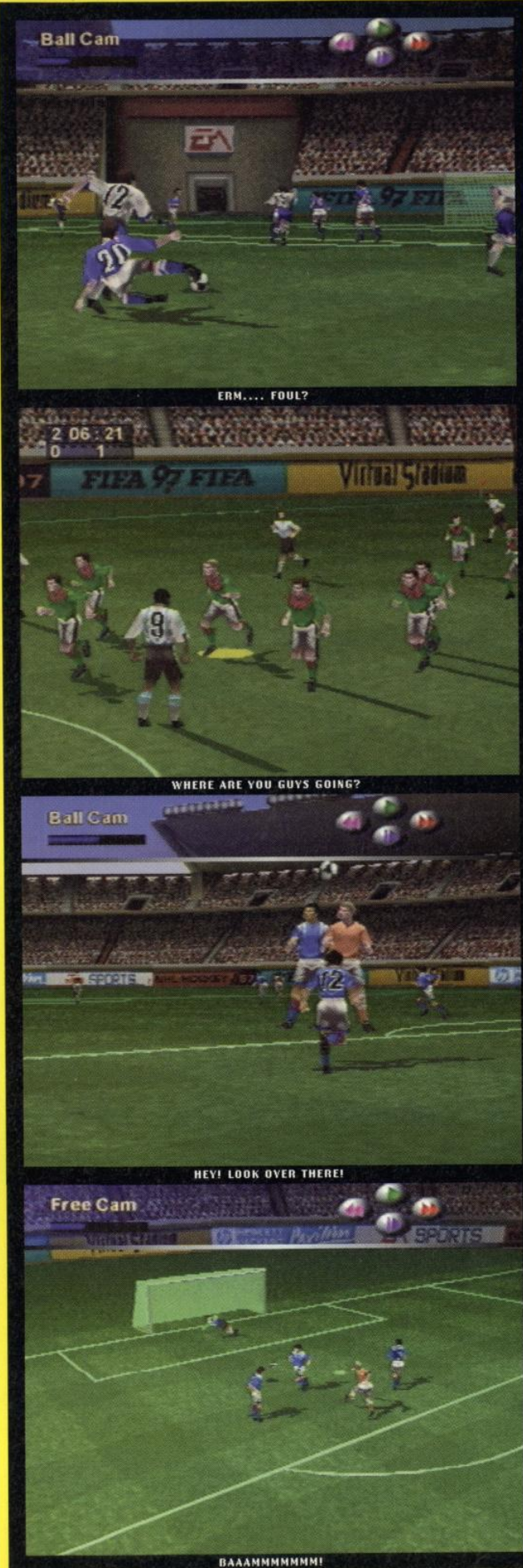
And now... over to John Motson...

The commentary in FIFA 96 was considered special, and many will be chuffed to know that it's even better in FIFA 97. John Motson now co-commentates the match with Andy Gray... with match presentations by Des Lynam. This really helps make the whole affair feel much more authentic, and adds to the game tremendously. Calls are usually right on time, however the occasional call is a little wonky... like Motson suggesting an imminent draw, when one team is several goals ahead, but that's about it. The music you get during options screens is hilarious, then annoying... so you'll no doubt switch it off after a few games. The crowd noise is great, and helps the atmosphere almost as much as the commentary.

Just like you'd expect from EA, it's possible to do virtually everything you could want to in a soccer game. In terms of actually gameplay on field, it's just about perfect, with every conceivable move available to you. You can sprint, pass, shoot, lob, back heel, perform one-two passes to get around those pesky defenders... whatever. Admittedly the controls are quite difficult to learn, so it will be a little while before you're pulling off the sort of attack runs that you might want to. You can orchestrate set plays, and have full control over what you're doing with throw ins and goal kicks. One problem however is that since you can control which way your goalie is facing when he takes a goal kick, it's quite possible to actually just boot the ball straight into your own goal if you're not paying attention, since you can be spinning him around whilst waiting to regain control of him to take the kick.

Soccer nuts will be ecstatic as they get to play their favourite players from their favourite teams from all around the globe. There are over 4200 players covered in FIFA 97, and they have been given ratings in virtually every aspect you could think about for a soccer player. You can also perform player transfers, etc. to make your own dream team.

There's replays, there's tournament play, there's league play, there's playoffs, there's three different playing modes.. heck there's everything. FIFA 97 just proves why EA Sports are regarded as the best sports game developers in the world... outstanding.



AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: SOCCER
 PLAYERS: 1-8
 PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS
 PRICE: \$99.95
 RATING: G

VISUALS
92
 Really nice texture mapped polygons... Smooth... Mmmm

SOUND
96
 The best commentary in a video game ever... except for one or two silly calls.

GAMEPLAY
95
 Not so simple that you're unchallenged.. Not so hard that you're discouraged... Just right.

LONG TERM
94
 Just like the previous FIFA games... you'll play it till you get FIFA 98.

OVERALL
95%
 The most complete and comprehensive soccer game that money can buy.



Tobal No.1

Could it be that a 3D fighting game has arrived that doesn't dwell on the impossible and actually looks good? DAN TOOSE finds out...



NORK THE MYSTERIOUS... OR, BIG NORK



OWI MY NECK



FLIP KICK TO THE NADSI



STREAKING FLURO TONK KICK

What makes a good fighting game? Well, fans of Mortal Kombat will probably insist it has something to do with showers of blood and the ability to remove your opponent's spine.... fans of Street Fighter Alpha will probably point towards the power meter at the bottom of the screen... and the average Tekken addict will mumble something about 10 hit combos. Well, Squaresoft don't seem to give a damn about any of that stuff, and it looks like it's a good thing. They've come up with something that plays a lot like Virtua Fighter 3... and it's Tobal No.1.

Pure and Simple

The whole essence of Tobal has got nothing to do with violence as such, it's really a game about fighting as an art. More than any other console fighting game to date, Tobal pays excruciating attention to detail in the actual combat mechanics. You may be looking at the grabs here and thinking they look a little too simplistic compared to something like Tekken 2 or Fighting Vipers... however, what you can't see is how smoothly things move in Tobal, and that's what captivates its audience. None of the polygons are texture mapped, which is a contributing factor to the smoothness of animation. Everything is in high resolution, being much sharper than Tekken 2 or Fighting Vipers. The backgrounds are dynamic (ie. things move around) and whilst being simplistic, do look cool.

The sound might disappoint a few people that are after a lot of pumping music and furious battle cries, but at least none of it particularly annoying or repetitive.



Tobal Control...

What makes Tobal No.1 really special is the amazing level of control you have over your character, and the amazingly realistic fighting model. Games like Toshinden and even the new Virtua Fighter 3, have featured a dodge button, which has really given you a very repetitive manoeuvre, which happens to get you out of the way of a lot of stuff. Tobal No.1 is different in that the direction pad constantly controls the players movement. If you want to move around your opponent, then you just move the pad the way you want to go, and you're off. You can make up your own dodging patterns on the spot.

There's a guard button, a jump button, and three attack buttons (high, mid, and low), and these essentially are all you need to pull off a host of moves. No... there are no fireballs... No... there are no ridiculous punches that send you flying at million miles an hour at your opponent. There is, however, a very realistic fighting engine.

Tobal treats every limb as an individual entity. For example, if you perform a leg sweep that hits your opponent in their right leg, they dip heavily to that side, stumble and regain their footing, whilst clutching at the spot you nailed them. If however you manage to catch both legs with the same move, you can be assured that your opponent will be landing flat on their back. The throwing system is very good, allowing players to grapple and reverse the throw, and even drag their opponent to a spot where they can try and throw them out of the ring. Jumping moves aren't so ridiculous as in other fighting games, your character only leaping a metre or so from the ground. There are eight starting characters, and a couple to unlock. While there aren't the same sort of amount as moves as in Tekken 2, the more realistic fighting model makes up for this. There's all the standard options as you'd expect in a fighting game, like tournament mode, Vs mode, number of rounds, etc.

All up, it's the most realistic 3D fighting game on any console. Whilst it lacks the immediate impact of Tekken 2 or Fighting Vipers, it will definitely put smiles on the faces of gamers sick of over the top fighting games.



AVAILABLE: MARCH
CATEGORY: FIGHTING - QUEST
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: SQUARESOFT
PRICE: \$99.95
RATING: M15+

VISUALS

92

Whilst being a bit simple, it is high res and silky smooth.

SOUND

83

Reasonable music... kind of dull SFX, but a tasteful lack of screaming.

GAMEPLAY

94

An amazingly true to life fighting game that should hopefully set an example.

LONGTERM

86

Great if you're going 2 players. A few more moves could have helped a bit.

OVERALL

91%

A fantastic fighting game, which will probably not turn as many heads as it deserves to.

A NOBLE QUEST...

Some people might say that the quest mode in Tobal No.1 is a little lame... and yes, if that's what Tobal was all about, then it would kinda suck. However, the quest mode is really just a bit of a diversion and a novelty, where you take your character through dungeon corridors, avoiding tricks and traps, taking on mutant nasties, and collecting potions and items to help you on your way. The rewards for completing these quests are a little more tangible than in most games, since it unlocks extra characters for you to play as, which is probably the coolest way of unlocking a character in a fighting game thus far. It's not something that will be of any special appeal to RPG fans, it's just a novelty add-on to a fighting game.



DKC3 - Dixie Kong's Double

Time to go bananas and pick fleas off the person next to you as DKC makes it to trilogy status. STEVE POLAK plays with the chimps...



Donkey Kong 3 was always going to be Nintendo's biggest game for 1996 (now that the N64 is sadly postponed until March 1997) and fortunately for the big N, Rare have managed to squeeze more improvements out of their ACM (Advanced Computer Modelling) software, with the end result being that the visuals are just that little bit better than the previous DK effort. This means, of course, that it's the best looking game you'll get on the SNES.

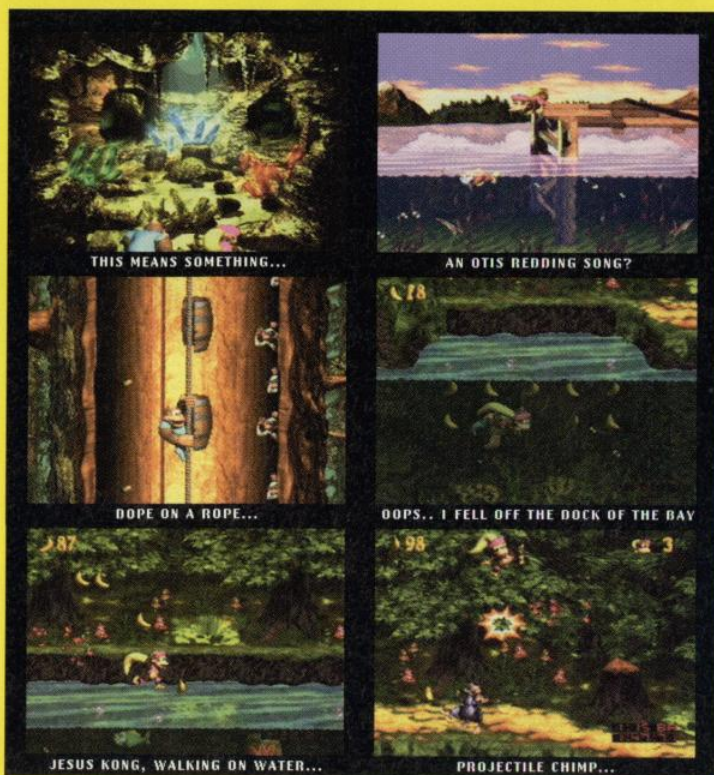
Dixie King's Double Trouble is not only one hell of a tongue twister of a title, it's also bereft of the original game's starting lineup. Both Diddy and Donkey Kong are not options for the player, as Dixie is joined by the portly toddler Kiddy Kong. Predictably, the two new adventurers are off in search of the original pair who may have been kidnapped by the Kremplings. Anyway all of this really means it is time to start jumping about the place again, picking up barrels and coins and staying out of the way of those belligerent bees.

Solid

DKC3 is a solid performer, and visually the game does manage to improve on the previous outings quite effectively. There are also a few new surprises, and game-play enhancements, although to be truthful the game really is a case of same shit, different wrapper. This isn't a bad thing though when you remember the fact that for two years running DKC has been arguably the best platform game on the SNES.

One of the first things you will notice is that the Donkey Kong milieu has been expanded, with more characters, and the older characters playing more of a gameplay role. New characters include a sickeningly cute elephant (named Ellie), who is terrified of the occasional mouse you come across. Thus when using her you have to find alternative route through what would otherwise be straightforward parts of the gameworld.

But DKC3 also introduces a pseudo RPG element in that you have to gather a number of special objects (often concealed within stages) in order to gain access to hidden parts in the game. There are DK coins, Bear Coins and Bonus coins which can all be used to get further into the hidden bits.



Trouble

Lush

DKC3 is a much 'lusher' looking game than its precursors, and some of the environments are nothing less than a kaleidoscope of colour. Areas of special note include the snowfields (which use a similar nightfall trick to previous games), the waterfall stages (where translucent water flows cover some of the platforms you need to negotiate), and the underwater sections.

The game world also uses an isometric map-board which looks a tad different, and certainly more detailed than the previous games. In fact to prove the point to myself, I decided to reboot DKC1 and 2 for comparative purposes. This was a bloody good idea, as I was surprised to discover that DKC3 really does look a lot smoother, a lot more colourful, and generally more realistic than its forefathers. In particular if you look at the movement in DK1 and compare it with 3, characters' arms in the original look like they are nailed on so that they rotate on a fixed point. Limbs definitely move more fluidly in the current game.

Cool

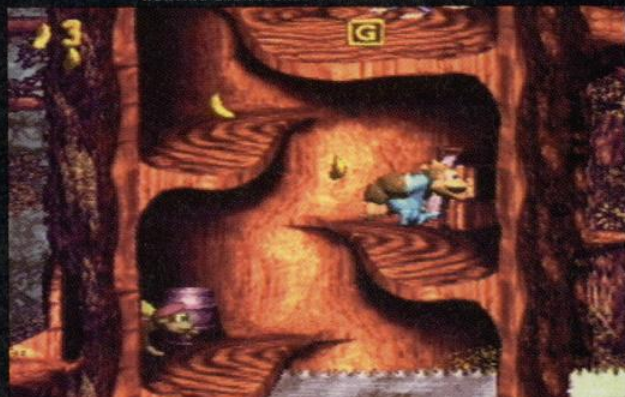
DKC3 also features a few new "side games" such as the shooting gallery at Swanky's parlour where you finally get to prove what a whingeing old sod Cranky Kong is by beating the old bugger at a shooting gallery contest. And do Bears shit in the woods? Well, not in this game. Instead, The Brother's Bear operate shops which are found throughout the game world. These salubrious establishments help you get some of the cooler items in the game, and add a role playing element to the game as you can often open the game up with side quests to hidden areas if you handle the bears properly. And speaking of cooler items the Kongs can now whiz all over the place in hovercrafts, powerboats and jet skis.

Dixie Kong's Double Trouble is, on the whole, an easier game to play than DKC2, and is pretty much on par with the first DKC when it comes to the level of challenge it offers. This may be because Nintendo are clearly going after the younger games market with this game (now that the N64 is just around the corner), and so it is best kept a little more accessible than DKC2, which was a real mongrel on later levels.

So perhaps it is worth making a Magilla of yourself one more time, as DKC3 is easily the pick of an admittedly small bunch of SNES releases that fill the gap between now and the appearance of that 3D plumber chappie.



HURTING ENDANGERED SPECIES... ALL RIGHT!



IT'S LOG... IT'S BIG IT'S HEAVY IT'S WOOD...



GAMBLING... GOTTA LOVE IT...

NEW BADDIES

The game features a menagerie of new baddies to contend with, including Ned Kelly wannabe Kremplings, with shields and metal buckets on their heads, who have to be hit when they aren't looking for DK coins. There are also new fish, and heaps of other different Kremplings, including a bazooka wielding variety. The variety of new bosses are definitely harder to beat than those from the first two games. Some of the best include the oversized killer barrel called Belcha who has this antiperistalsis attack (UUURGI!), a Super Metroid inspired giant sea urchin, and the final boss who resides in a mad-scientist's laboratory (and who we're keeping a secret, just for a tease).



CAP



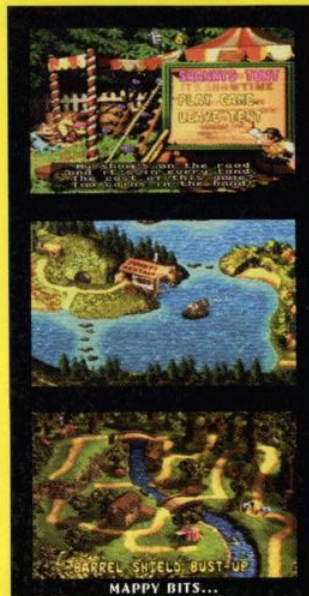
PIECES OF EIGHT! SQUAWWWWK!



THE BARREL BOSS...



SPLISH SPLASH I WAS TAKIN' A BATH...



BARREL SHIELDS BUST UP
MAPPY BITS...

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: PLATFORM
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: RARE/NINTENDO
PRICE: \$99.95
RATING: G

VISUALS

91

Still bloody excellent! That lil' ol' SNES just seems to stretch further every time.

SOUND

80

Same as it ever was, but that's not a bad thing.

GAMEPLAY

91

The environment is richer and more diverse, and the controls are just as malleable as before.

LONG TERM

86

A bit shorter level wise, but there are more levels. It's easier than DKC2, but then there are all of those "hidden" bits.

OVERALL

88%

A must if you are battling on with the beleaguered SNES. But the times they are a changin'...

Daytona USA - Champions

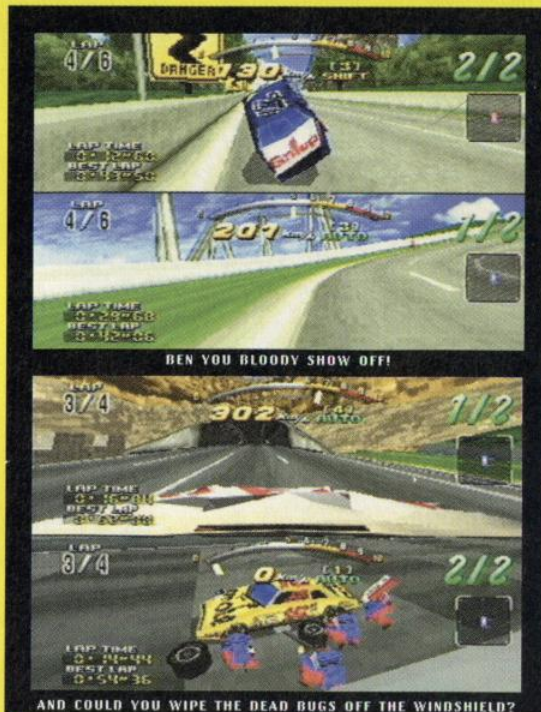
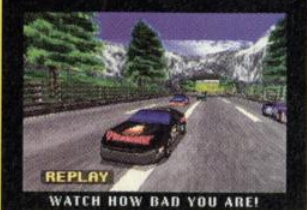
Sega spit out yet another racing game... Is it Daytona all over again? Or something new? DAN TOOSE grips the wheel and finds out.



If you haven't seen Daytona in the arcades, then you've probably heard it. It's that racing game in the corner that kept singing, "Daytonaaaaaa" over and over that drove you batty. Well, what was a great arcade game, turned out to be a real flop on the Saturn. Polygon break up, cruddy music and the like, spoiled what could have been a great arcade conversion... but now Sega have released Daytona USA - Championship Circuit Edition, a beefed up sequel if you will.

Those that were disappointed with the graphical glitches in the first game will be very pleased to see that Sega have taken great care to remedy this problem in the Championship edition. The frame rate is very fast, and the graphics in general are indeed very nice. Included for reasons we assume are your viewing pleasure, Sega have made the crashes a tad more "extreme", in fact they look downright Destruction Derbyish. While this may look amazingly good, it's exceedingly annoying when it happens, but then again... that's the drivers fault... isn't it?

Well, everyone's doing them now... yup, Daytona Championship features dynamic backgrounds, not to the same extent that a game like Wipeout 2097 does, but the effort has been made. The only real complaint about the visuals is the lack of impression of speed that the game conveys. There seems to be very little visual difference between travelling at 120 kph, and travelling at 300 kph. The only difference you'll notice is that you can take corners easier at the lower speed, even though you'll see them coming at around the same rate. Only at the very low speeds does the motion seem more realistic.



hip Edition

More than anything, we at HYPER are grateful that something was done about that god awful music in the original Daytona conversion. Not that there's anything spectacular about the new music... it's just a big improvement. The music is in essence the sort of widdly guitar nonsense that they play on Nine's Wide World of Sports as they crap on about what's coming up. Only complaint about the sound is the fact you can't shut up the guy who's yakking to you via radio. Yes! I know I'm burning up my tyres you moron... quit telling me! A few of his remarks are amusing, like, "Are you alright???" just after you've just done a triple somersault with a full twist due to introducing your stock car to a barricade at 300 kph.

Handles like a canine...

There was talk that this version of Daytona was going to feature a driving engine very similar to Sega Rally (we wish), but that doesn't seem to have been the case. Actually, after trying virtually every car, every difficulty setting, every handling speed setting, and every damn combination of controller movements, it seems that Daytona Championship is pretty much impossible to control properly. Admittedly, an easier difficulty setting makes things seem a bit more controllable, but otherwise, you can pretty much be guaranteed that on certain corners, there's almost nothing you can do about sliding out and belting into the wall. It feels like you're driving on dirt or clay, while you're actually driving on bitumen. The game should be about trying to find the best line and timing, not about struggling with the controls to just get your car around the track.

The main problem seems to stem from the way your car turns. Rather than actually turning, your car seems to just sway in the direction your steer, which, frankly, sucks. Of course when going very slowly, you do turn, but there seems to be no graduation between the subtle sway and the reasonably sharp turn, making it very easy to understeer or oversteer a long medium corner. The key to handling corners is going in cruising (no brake, no accel), turn hard, keep turning and hit the brake, you'll slide, let go and accelerate when you're facing where you wanna go. This is not the way it should work, but it does... kind of, anyway.

Not all bad though, Daytona Championship Circuits Edition features five tracks, and eight cars to choose from. The tracks range from ridiculously simple, to absolutely impossible, which all things considered, is a good thing. The cars all have different handling, top speeds and acceleration. A real bonus is the split screen mode for two players, although all the crap on your screen gets in the way of seeing the track, sometimes enough to make you crash. As you'd expect, there are replays for winning races, which you have some control over. There's no doubt secret stuff to find if you finish first on all the tracks and stuff... good luck, you'll need it.

A very challenging game to say the least, Daytona USA - Championship Circuit Edition is OK, but we really hoped had been a little bit better, especially in light of the brilliance of Sega Rally.



SLOW PEDESTRIAN CAM... OUCH!



TAKING A SMOKO...



VERY LONG EASY LEFT... MAYBE?



BEEN BANGIN' YER BONNET?



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

VISUALS
90
Good stuff. Various racing views make things the way you want them.

SOUND
78
Would have been better if the engine noise was clearer, and the commentator shut up.

GAMEPLAY
72
A challenging racing game... shame you need to struggle with the controls

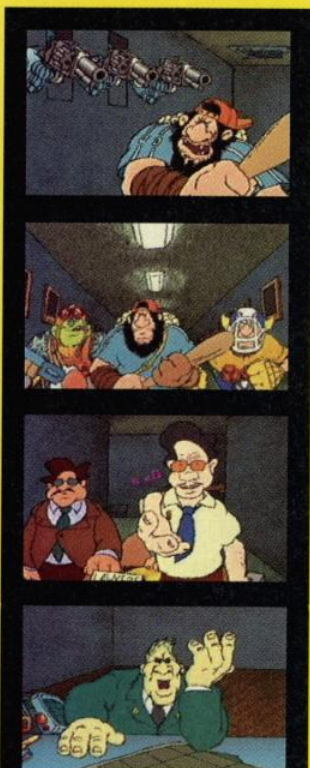
LONGTERM
75
Probably won't grab you, but if it does... decent longterm challenge.

OVERALL
77%
Better than Ridge Racer, but nowhere near anything like Sega Rally. A bit disappointing.

Three Dirty Dwarves

Small, dirty, and love beating the crud outta things...

No it's not DAN TOOSE, it's *Three Dirty Dwarves*.



COMES WITH FREE CARTOON...

The one thing that did get the HYPER office interested in *Three Dirty Dwarves* was the very stylish cartoon cut scenes. Rather than the sleek, angular style of cartoon styles such as Anime, Segasoft have gone for the chunky assed, rough approach, and it suits the game amazingly well. The over indulgence in the importance of a 20 sided die that the kids throw to make good things happen is a bit annoying, but otherwise the whole thing is really quite cool, and you look forward to the next cut scene all the time.

A few issues back we saw what may have been a taste of things to come in the 2D beat 'em ups on the 32 bit consoles, in the form of *Guardian Heroes*. Being an in house Japanese title, we saw lots of Anime style characters, with a typical "save the multiverse from the ancient demon gods" storyline. The latest Sega 2D beat 'em up, *Three Dirty Dwarves* is from Segasoft, not Sega of Japan, and difference in style is enormous. Just like the name implies, the overall look of the game is messy, and rough.

Three Dirty Dwarves is about a group of child prodigies playing a RPG, who get seized by some military knob, and as a last act of desperation try to summon the characters they were using in the RPG... three dirty dwarves, to come save them. You play the three dwarves, attempting to find and rescue the kids from the military, whilst beating off the orcish hordes that are hot on your heels.

Rugged Heads

The three main characters of this game aren't too pretty, and they're not particularly fashion conscious either. They start the game just after having landed on Earth in a sports store, and have armed themselves with a shotgun, a baseball bat (and balls), and a bowling pin and ball. After the cartoon style intro, the dirty, chunky artwork continues, with the roughly drawn backgrounds scrolling by, and the fat, ugly orcs strolling up in an attempt to beat the crud outta you. Sometimes things can get obscured by foreground scenery, which can be quite annoying, especially when one of your dwarves is down and you can't see them to get them back on their feet. Character interaction with the environment is pretty cool, with the dwarves being able to do things like hit switches, jump down manholes... even jump on play equipment and bob around.

The background music is somewhat appropriate, but hard to really call good or bad. Most of the sound effects you'd expect to hear have been catered for, even the mad cackles of Gaffer Tape Woman as she charges you with her sticky mess in hand.



SHITE! IT'S YOODOO KFC!



DWARVES GETTING DIRTY WITH A BED...



AN ACDC VIDEO CLIP?

NHL 97

A former twinkle toes on the ice, DAN TOOSE laces up his skates, grabs the nearest wooden thumping instrument and heads out onto the ice to face NHL 97.



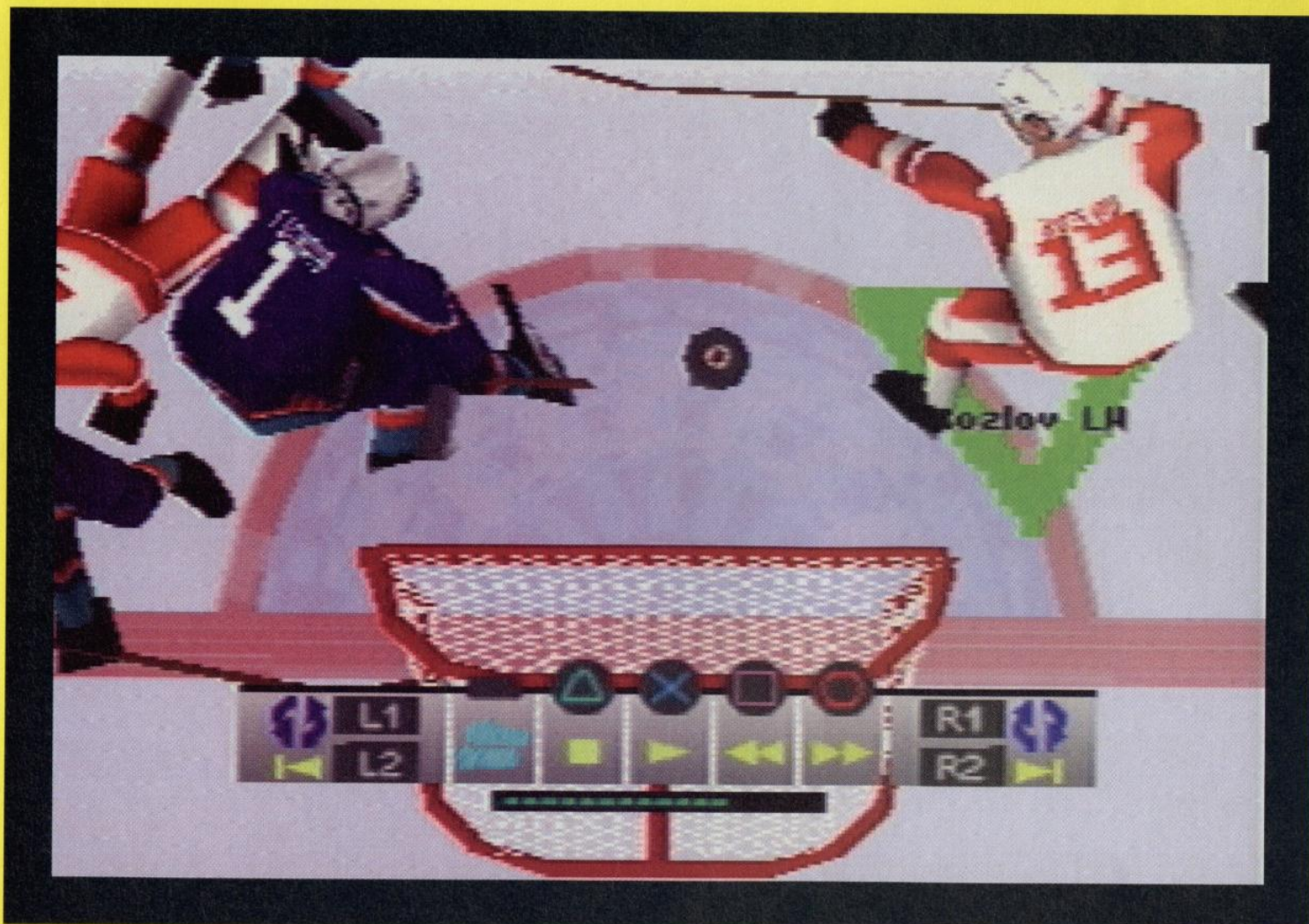
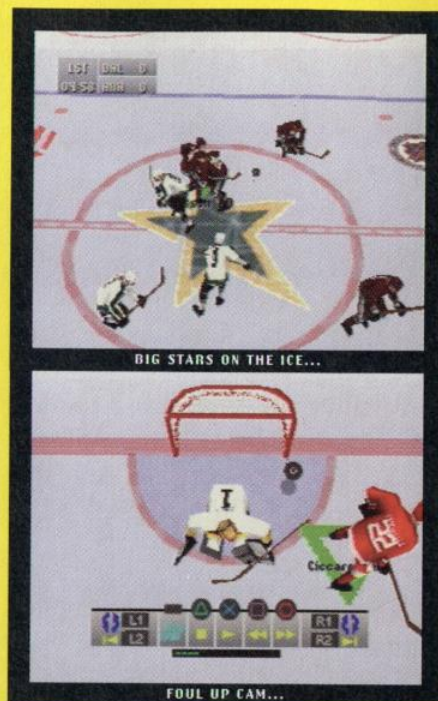
One thing there hasn't really been a shortage of since the 32 bit machines have come out is ice hockey games. A little less surprising if you lived in Europe, the United States, or Canada... but out here in Oz, it's not really a big sport is it? EA have been known to consistently pop out a good ice hockey game, and NHL 97 looks to be no exception.

Just like cable...

Like all EA Sports titles, NHL 97 is a rather pretty game to look at. The players themselves are completely polygonal, and they've been texture mapped to have very authentic looking uniforms, including the player numbers and the names scrawled above them. The ice itself looks fantastic, with the reflections looking dead set perfect.

The only thing that could have been done to make the ice look any better is to account for blade marks and a couple of wet patches late in the match. The animation is very smooth, and the way the players move over the ice definitely gives an accurate representation of proper ice skating. All the mug shots and mullet cuts are present, with photos of over 650 of the NHLPA players included.

Quite rare in a sporting title is good music, but EA have got it right with the very simple (albeit un-original) solution of taking that cheesy organ music, and playing all those classic tunes you thought you'd heard one too many times. The music just captures the whole feel of the game, and contributes to the sensation of actually being in the stands. There's also the basic commentary as well, mostly just for things like penalties, goals, substitutions, etc. Nothing like the sound of a big man wincing as the air's blasted out of his lungs as he's crushed into a barrier, is there? EA got all those sort of rough and tumble sound effects down pat.



Too realistic?

NHL 97 lets you do just about everything you could possibly want to do in an ice hockey game. Every type of pass, tackle, block, shot and fake has been accounted for. While this makes grasping the controls for NHL 97 a bit daunting, everything is customizable, and those that are proficient with the controls can do something a little more spectacular and stylish than one could expect to be able to do in this sort of game.

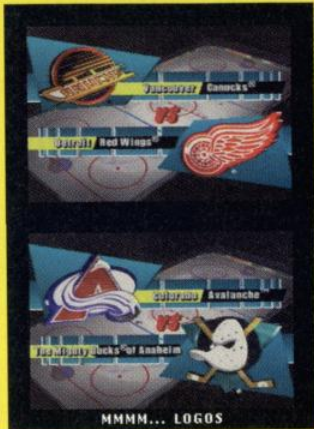
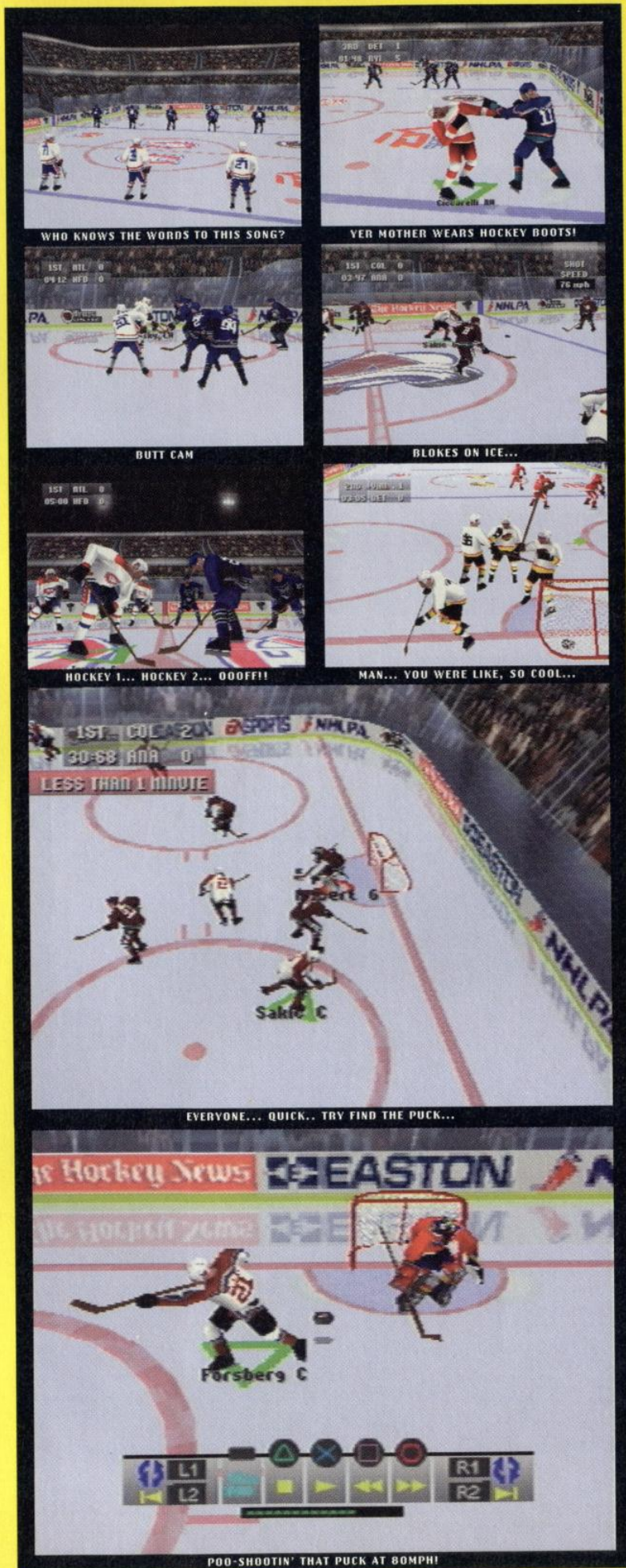
Some of the NHL players have had their signature move included, sort of like including a special move in a fighting game. All other players have a generic spin move in its place. You can even perform moves such as diving on the ice to block a shot, hip checks, body checks... the works. Like you'd expect in an EA Sports title, there's a squillion camera angles, even a first person perspective (helmet cam), although that one is completely useless and makes the game totally unplayable. Fighting game addicts will be pleased to know that when a brawl breaks out, there are distinct moves, so you can work on getting that uppercut and right hook to work as a combo. Of course there's a "show host", who's some former hockey great, and his comments between periods are actually based on what happened... amazing.

Incredibly Hard

Despite all this realism however, it would seem EA might have overlooked the fact that the game is incredibly hard, which of course is fine if you love the game straight from the start and want to become a grand master, but many will find it difficult to a point of frustration and disinterest.

It's not that you're on the lowest difficulty setting, playing as the best team in the game, against the worst team in the game, and you're losing... it's how the computer seems to get away with completely lame shots at goal that go in, when your shots from the same spot get blocked. The computer is beatable, but it would seem that it only happens when the computer lets you get away with the same crap it does. There are also times when you set something up wonderfully, which really takes quite a lot of skill and timing, only to have your player miss from about 50cm from the goal.

The appeal of this game is really probably going to narrow down to hockey freaks, not only because of the effort required to get a few wins here and there, but also because all the extra functions like player creation, player transfers, etc. are all very much for the hard core NHL fan, rather than your average Joe. A good game, that's possibly just a little too hard to get into.



AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: SPORTS
 PLAYERS: 1-8
 PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS
 PRICE: \$99.95
 RATING: G+

VISUALS
88
 Whilst looking very realistic, the graphics are a tad repetitive and dull over time.

SOUND
90
 The music, grunts, commentary, and roar of the crowd are about as good as it gets.

GAMEPLAY
84
 Very comprehensive controls, but sometimes made frustrating by inconsistencies.

LONGTERM
80
 It's either going to make you want to master it, or make you quit right away.

OVERALL
86%
 A good hockey game, that's really for the more talented gamers out there.

Down In The Dumps

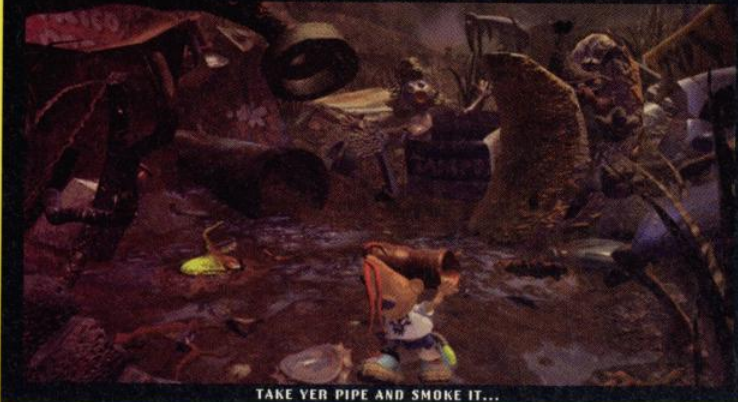
A funny adventure about a family of aliens stuck in a garbage dump. Sounds just the job for GEORGE SOROPOS...



EXCUSE ME... BUT WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU?



TAKIN' OUT THE TRASH...



TAKE YER PIPE AND SMOKE IT...



GRARRRR!

Could it be that Philips have finally abandoned their bastard child CD-I and found the plot? It certainly seems that way. After not hearing anything from them for a while and fearing that their staff had all leapt, Lemming like, off the nearest cliff, we were pleasantly surprised to find this nice little game shoved in between the milk bottles one morning and duly set ourselves the task of examining it more closely, just in case it was a bomb or something.

Meet The Blubs

Down in the Dumps is the tale of the Blubs, a ordinary American Sit-Com type family (Lazy Dad, whining Mum, nasty mother-in-law, eccentric grandpa, goody-goody daughter and mischievous son) who also happen to be small aliens from a distant part of the Galaxy. The poor old Blubs were on the way to their favourite holiday spot when a gang of intergalactic bank robbers happened by, crashing into them and forcing them to land in an old garbage dump on what sort of looks like Earth. Now your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to get their ship operational again and get the hell outta' there without falling foul of the mean green baddies who crashed along with you.

There are four separate 'cartoons' to complete, in sequence, to finish the game and each one is played from the perspective of a different family member. This not only lets you get to know more of the Blub clan better but keeps the game interesting too as each one has a very different personality. DITD uses the streaming video technique to move you around from location to location and places the characters and objects as sprites overlaid onto the CD video footage. It looks great because of this (and because the art work is fantastic), but it also means that the game runs a little slowly and getting around can get a bit tedious at times, especially when you're moving from location to location trying to solve a puzzle or looking for something that you've missed.

Charming & Cutesy

A lot of work has gone into making this game as charming and cutesy as possible (whether that's good or bad I'll leave up to you). It's all in the details they say and DID has a lot of attention to detail. When you try to use objects to complete tasks and puzzles, the designers haven't just created animations to portray the correct use of that object but for almost everything you could think of doing with it.

For example, using a jar of honey that you find on one of the baddies doesn't do anything to further your course in the game but the animators have done a little thing where you pour the honey over his head and your pet doggy jumps on him and licks it off! And, just to confuse you, not everything you can pick up has a use, and you'll find your inventory filling up with all this stuff and you won't be able to figure out what the hell to do with it! But not to worry, just as your pockets are filled to bursting point you'll solve the 'cartoon' and the next one will start you off with a new character and an empty inventory. The voice acting for the characters is also very good, helping to give them a lot of personality and adding greatly to the games sense of humour.

It's the little touches like that which make Down in the Dumps special. The puzzles are challenging but not mind-numbingly so. Even totally inexperienced gamers should be able to enjoy this. In fact it's probably the perfect introduction to adventure gaming for those who haven't indulged and those that are too young to be bothered with the likes of Myst and its ilk. The other good thing about Down in the Dumps is that, because it avoids all the macho swashbuckling adventure cliches, a lot of female types will probably think it's great fun too.



KEEP THAT TONGUE TO YOURSELKF...



THE OUTHOUSE...



WE'RE COMING TO GET YOU...



Honey! Can you help me strap Mother down? I think she drank regular instead of decaf this morning. Sweet-pie! I've got an itch that needs to be scratched.
A LUXURY APARTMENT...



OOOH... THERE'S SOME LOVELY FILTH OVER HERE HENRY...

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: ADVENTURE

PLAYERS: ONE

PUBLISHER: PHILLIPS

PRICE: TBA

RATING: G

REQUIREMENTS: WIN95,
P60, 16MB RAM, 2XCD

VISUALS

88

Great animation work and imaginative use of the medium make this one of the most unique adventures ever seen on the PC.

SOUND

80

Good voice acting, cartoony special effects and no dodgy music!

GAMEPLAY

82

Clever, mostly logical, puzzles will stump but not frustrate you. The slow game speed can get tedious at times though.

LONG TERM

78

Made up of four separate quests, DITD has variety but not longevity. Some people may think it's too short.

OVERALL

83%

A unique and entertaining adventure for those of you interested in the more frivolous side of gaming!

Lords of the Realm 2

Aristocratic, brave, a leader of men... Qualities one needs to be a Lord of the Realm. So why did we get DAN TOOSE to do this?



Lords of the Realm was a smashing success... lots of people loved it, there was rejoicing and all that guff. Well, all good games seem to sprout a sequel at some stage, and Lords of the Realm is no exception. Lords of the Realm 2 is essentially a cross between Warcraft 2, and Civilization. Due to some thick Pommy accents, the game has an overly British feel to it, and ends up having an air of Defender of the Crown about it. The year is 1268 AD, and the British Isles are anything but a united kingdom. This is little surprise considering there is no king upon the throne of England, and it's anyone's for the taking... best make it yours.

Lords of the Realm 2 is not a game that turns heads with staggering visuals. In fact, everything looks quite simplistic. The graphics are slightly different in the various different phases of play. There's the map screen, where you move your units around, and check out how your lands are being run, which is a fairly stock standard SVGA Civilization 2 style interface. For actual resource management, you're treated to very tasteful SVGA scenery, whilst for the combat, it's more like a low resolution version of Warcraft 2. Whilst the visuals are adequate, many would have expected a bit more emphasis upon the aesthetics during the combat phase, to help the game compete with titles such as Warcraft 2.





Whilst the visuals aren't amazing, the sound is definitely top notch. The music sounds like it has been composed by someone who isn't just another in house music programmer. Sierra have done their homework and made an effort to give the game more character through the speech of the various uni types (ala Warcraft 2). Your units aren't dumb either, and this is immediately evident once you send a unit out on anything that could be considered a suicide mission.

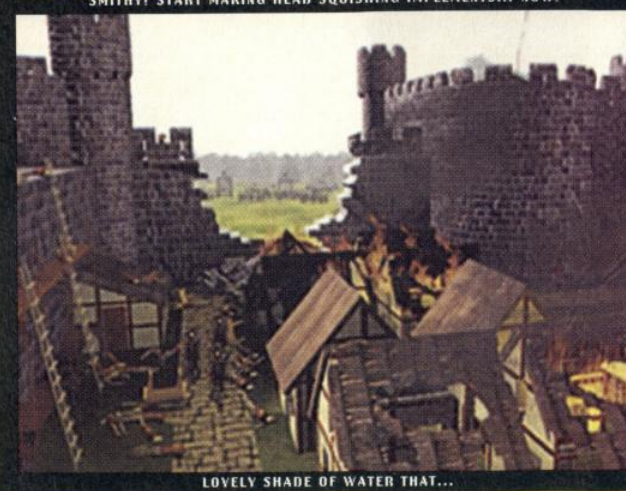
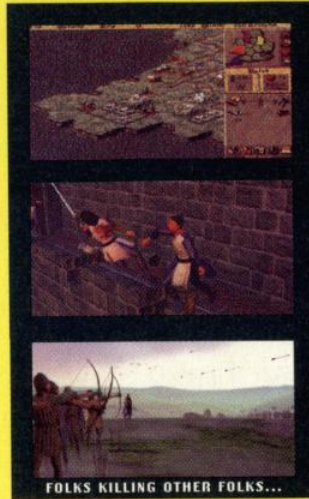
Telling folks where to go...

One cannot take over the realm without a bit of planning, and that's what much of the game is... planning and organising. The skills required to master the resource management in Lords of the Realm 2 are really mathematical ones, such as choosing how many peasants you're going to pull back from the mines so you can tend to your livestock properly. Just like in Civilization, the people in your various counties can either be happy, or unhappy, and it's up to you to ensure that everyone in your lands is busting a gut to make sure you're getting the most out of them... as long as you're not mistreating them to the point where they riot. You can "shut down" various parts of your communities, so that your population concentrates on remaining tasks at hand. Customising the way your peasants work within your town is reminiscent of Civilization, except you're dealing with mining, smithing, foresting, farming, field reclamation, and castle building (You can make crappy wooden ones, all the way through to vast stone strongholds). This area really needs careful attention, as the difference between making a good decision or a bad one can determine whether or not you're going to be prepared to raise an effective army when the time is right.

The actual process of building a big army is quite draining on your population, and as a result you'll need to hire mercenaries to raise armies quickly. This is costly, and you can only do it when mercenaries actually come to your lands and offer their services, but is well worth it, since hiring a competent group usually means capturing another territory.

Combat itself is where the Warcraft 2 style is prominent, since the interface is pretty much exactly the same. You simply move your troops to where ever you think they'll be used best, having only a few other simple commands, like flee and mop up. Simply watching combat a few times helps emphasise the best use of the different types of troops, and you'll soon be keen to raise proper armies as opposed to sending in masses of peasants armed with pitch forks. Most interesting of all the combats are the sieges, which you must prepare for by building siege engines and then attacking the castle in such a way as to avoid getting mindlessly slaughtered by burning oil and archers. The benefits of taking the time and resources to build a big stone castle can be seen here too, as laying siege to a wooden fort is nowhere near as time consuming or risky as attacking a vast stone fortress.

In comparison to the first Lords of the Realm game, it looks a bit nicer, and the intricacy of the game is a tad more user defined (less detailed being the default). A good strategy game that's not too hard to pick up, has some character about it, and with the 30 maps to conquer (some real world, some not), a long term challenge for all.



AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: STRATEGY
PLAYERS: 1-5
PUBLISHER: SIERRA
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: G
REQUIREMENTS: DX2-66, 8MB RAM, 34 MB HD

VISUALS
80
 A little bit plain, but effective and to the point.

SOUND
90
 Nothing like an array of British accents to liven a game up.

GAMEPLAY
85
 Challenging and reasonably thorough... not very original though.

LONG TERM
83
 Lotsa maps, and up to five player networkable makes for an even better game.

OVERALL
85%
 A good solid strategy game, better suited to those obsessed with efficiency than a quick fix.

Red Alert

It's just a jump to the left... and then a step to the ri-i-ight.
 DAN TOOSE is doing the Time Warp whilst playing Red Alert... Why...?



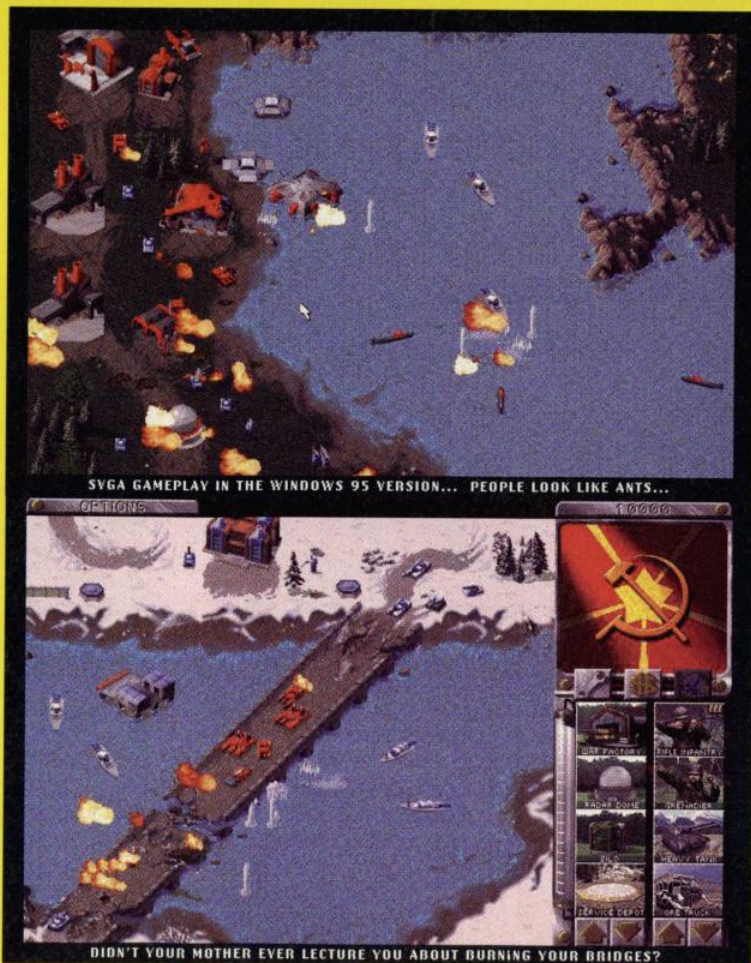
SO WHERE'S ARNIE?



The reason for the retro dance moves stems from the plot of Red Alert... which revolves around the use of time travel to change the course of history, in a rather selfish and generally nasty way. In case you've been marooned on a desert island for the past couple of years, Red Alert is the sequel to Command & Conquer... arguably the best real time modern warfare game ever. Most uncharacteristically considering the way the world is today, Russia is the nasty force trying to dominate the world... although a rather despicable character seems to be behind it all, and he ain't Russian. Opposing the Soviet Powers are the Allied Forces, who whilst being slightly outgunned, have a few other tricks up their sleeve to help in their defence of the free world.

People Look Like Ants...

Yes, I say that way too much, but this time it's really appropriate. It's a good thing though, because due to the wonders of Windows 95 (erm...), Red Alert is in SVGA graphics, so now everything looks much spiffier, but also much smaller at the same time. Apart from this, there has been very little visual change from Command & Conquer and Red Alert. This step up in resolution does however show you much more of the battlefield at once, and thus allows you to do a bit more, and keep track of what's going on. For those out there that haven't installed Windows 95, the game does run in DOS, but only in VGA graphics.



SVGA GAMEPLAY IN THE WINDOWS 95 VERSION... PEOPLE LOOK LIKE ANTS...

DIDN'T YOUR MOTHER EVER LECTURE YOU ABOUT BURNING YOUR BRIDGES?

Somehow, Red Alert seems to have acquired a little more character, with use of better speech samples from the troops. There's no drastic improvements, and it's nowhere near as funny as Warcraft 2, but just little things like the different accents (especially the spy unit in the tuxedo that sounds like Sean Connery), really help to make it just a little bit more atmospheric. All the weapons and explosions sound just about right, even the sound the dogs make as they take a bullet.

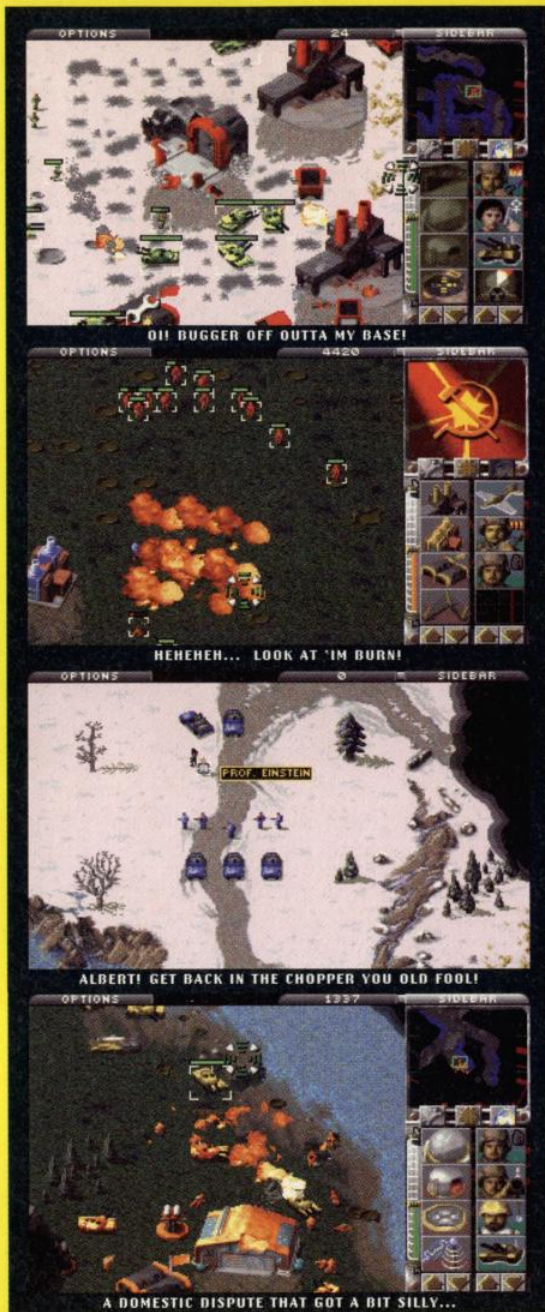
Complete Control...

Games like Red Alert have nothing to do with the audio-visual experience, it's all got to do with gameplay... and that's what makes this game so special. For those familiar with Command & Conquer, Red Alert is really just the same, except more. There are more structures, more units, more maps, and even more of a plot. Some of the new structures are quite interesting and cool, like the Soviet Tesla Coil, which is essentially a big metal thingy that sends out an arc of lightning to fry any enemy units that approach it. Or, for the pyromaniacs, there's the Flame Tower, which quite simply torches any enemies stupid enough to come close. Other simple base defences include pillboxes (bunkers), turrets, AA guns, and SAM sites. The difference in style between the two forces is much greater than in Command & Conquer. The Soviet structures are just straight up general defences and military structures. The Allied structures however include things such as a GAP Generator, which actually mask the area from your opponents radars, so they can only see the area when they have troops present. A couple other special structures for the Allies are the Chronosphere (allows temporary teleportation), and the GPS Satellite (for perfect surveillance).

The lineup of units is also quite different for both sides, with the Soviets having a superior air force, and the Allies having the more versatile sea units. There's also a difference in the general function of the ground based units... with the Soviet units relying upon heavy firepower, and the Allies utilising their speed and stealth. Naturally there are new units, like spies, mine layers, mobile radar jammers, medics, a variety of sea units, and more.

There are three difficulty settings, and naturally there's the option to play multiplayer over a modem, LAN (Local Area Network), or over the Internet. You can also play in "Skirmish" mode, which is kind of like playing multiplayer, except with only computer opponents (great for those with no friends!). You can make your own scenarios with the level editor that's included, so you're not stuck playing the levels on the disc.

The controls are straightforward, the interface is fine (except for the long lists of units and building you sometimes need to cycle through), you can make your units do pretty much what you want, and the whole experience is thoroughly engrossing. Superb.



BAH.. WHO NEEDS KALI?
Talk about user friendly! Red Alert comes with a program called Westwood Chat, which essentially allows anyone with a PPP connection to the internet, to find other people wanting to play multiplayer games of Red Alert. It's about as easy as this sort of thing gets. Registering only takes a few moments, and your password to log on gets emailed to you within a few minutes. Hopefully this is the start of a trend in ease of multiplayer gaming over the net.

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: STRATEGY
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: WESTWOOD
PRICE: \$99.95
RATING: MA15+
REQUIREMENTS: 486-66 DOS OR P75 WIN95, 8MB RAM

VISUALS
89
As long as you're playing in Windows 95, this game looks great.

SOUND
90
Really nice voice samples and SFX, the music is above average as well.

GAMEPLAY
94
Nothing wrong here sir... nothing at all.

LONGTERM
95
Just like Command & Conquer, this will be a permanent fixture on your hard drive.

OVERALL
92%
Not a huge leap from Command & Conquer, but the best of the real time strategy games thus far.

AFL Finals Fever

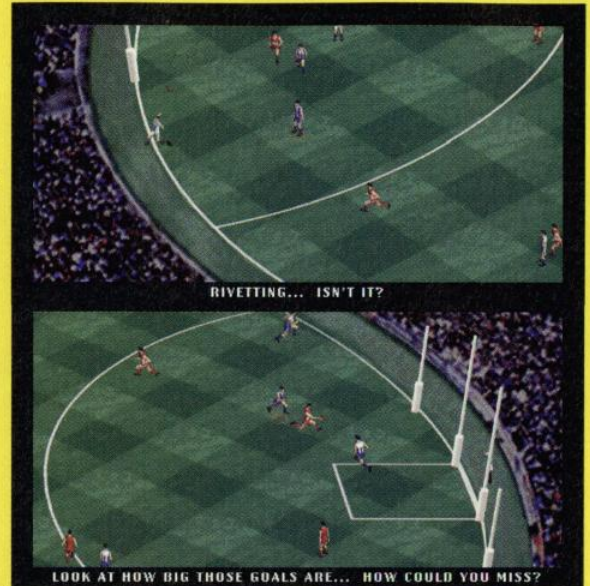
MARCH STEPNIK *was destined for the premiership until that unfortunate accident with a goal post. He now writes about the game instead...*

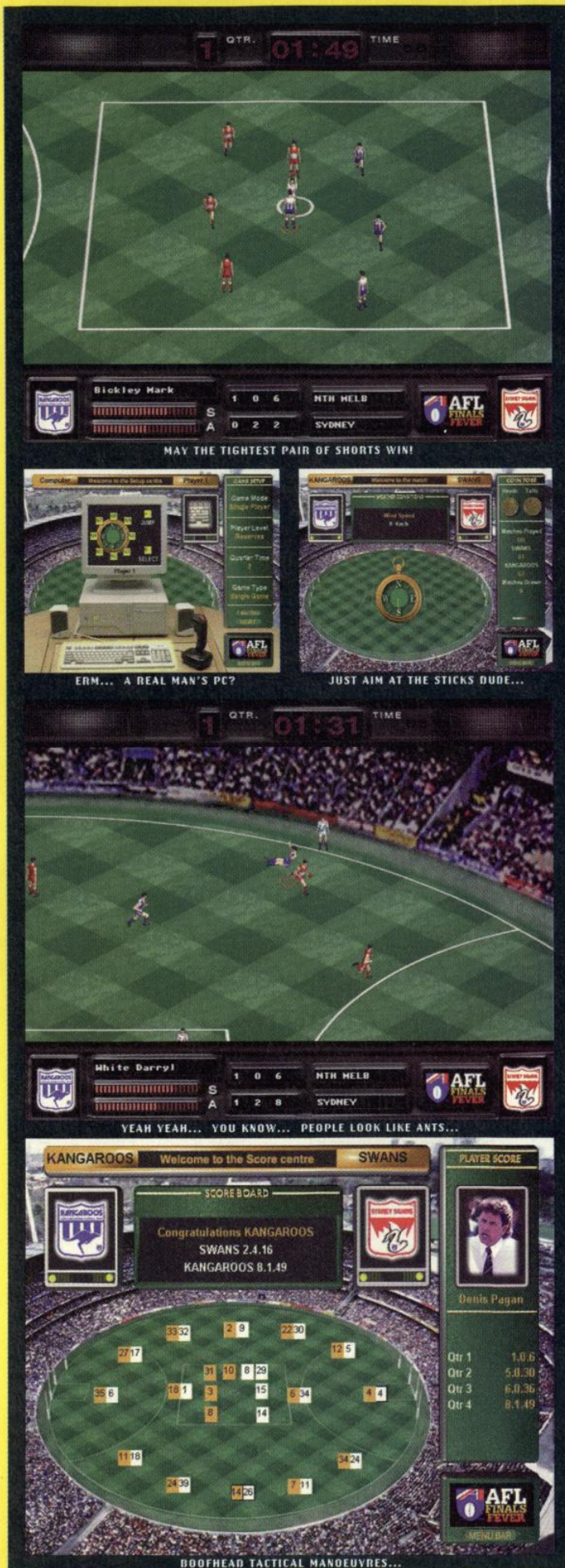
I'm not going to let this review degenerate into a petty argument to which code of football is better, which state is better, or even which city is better. Both Australian Rules and Rugby League have their own appeal and style. Being a New South Welshman, I've had more exposure to League than any other game, so naturally, I have a soft spot for the sport. EA's ARL Rugby League did the code justice, and was a whole lot of fun to play. It even captured some of the character of RL, thanks to Ray Warren's commentary. But if I were to sit down to watch a football match, it'd be Australian Rules. AR has a pace and degree of skill that makes it a more interesting sport to watch than any other. Cadability's AFL Finals Fever is the first game of its code for the PC, and has got a whole lot of people hungry for some AR action very excited...

Short on the top, long at the back...

The two sides of a successful sports title are gameplay and options. AFL Finals Fever, while not anything spectacular in the option's department, has enough to keep most people happy. There is the choice of quarter length - from either 3, 5, 12 or the full 25 minutes. You can play either a one-off exhibition game, a simulation (where you play the coach and make all the strategic decisions) or chase the premiership, choosing from a 6, 12 or 22 match season. There are three levels of play difficulty as well; Reserves, Seniors and Pro Squad.

But the thing most people are probably waiting to hear is whether or not Finals Fever is affiliated with the AFL. Yes indeedly, FF is a fully licensed Australian Football League product. So what does this mean? The odd team name and an official logo or two? Nope. FF has everything. All the teams are there (with appropriate team logo), all the player names (reserve players also), real coaches, even the winning team's song is performed (rather shabbily, I must add) at the end of a match.





A staggering number of 676 real AFL players are featured in FF. They have a rather unflattering mug shot next to their name on the team selection screen as well as heaps of stats, like weight, number, tackling, marking and kicking ability, etc. Prior to the coin toss (and during the game proper) there is the player selection screen. Using a representation of the field, you decide which player will play which position. To help you make the right choice, the previously mentioned stats fall into two main areas - speed and accuracy. Accuracy accounts for the ability to kick the ball through the uprights, kicking to another player or passing successfully. It also deals with the ability to tackle well and catching the ball. Speed is even more self-explanatory.

Could have been...

After all the pre-match decision making, it's off to play the real thing. FF uses the top down approach, skewed slightly to show more detail. Gameplay is the interesting bit - there are two buttons used, with a total of five functions made available during play. There's the select button and the kick button. The select button switches you to the player closest to the ball. The kick button kicks and hand-passes the ball or acts as jump (for a mark) without the ball. Tackling is automatic, but for an extra boost to prevent a goal, press both the select and kick buttons simultaneously. When you hold down the kick button, a little meter appears showing the power of the action. When it's red (and before it reaches the halfway point) it's a hand-pass, and when it's yellow and past the half-way point it's a kick. Kinda tricky, but it captures the feel of the game well - you need slightly more time to get a kick away.

The action on screen however, isn't all that it could have been. I played for ages and only managed to get one mark. Scoring was no problem, but most of these were in the form a running kick directly in front of the posts. Lining up for the kick is also rather flat - you mostly move up or down in front of the goals (diagonally too), and far too often will the ball miss an easy goal because you weren't facing the proper direction. Tackling is horrid. It's automatic, so all you have to do is basically chase people around. The engine also is abysmal in this area. You can't fend off a tackler, so when you get anywhere near another player, the ball changes hands. Guaranteed. A number of times in a short space of time. In this way, rather than being a balance of all the bits that makes the real game so appealing, FF is a kicking and chasing game. It's not that bad, but it could have been better.

Half of you (rabid AFL fans) will have already dropped the magazine and rushed out to buy yourself a copy. And, undoubtedly, AFL Finals Fever will sell a truckload of copies in the football loving states. It will definitely please the majority of people wanting to play Aussie Rules on their home computer, at least during the off-season, but a bit more effort could have gone into fine-tuning the play engine to get it just right.

FUNCTIONAL GRAPHICS

The graphics are far from special, but more than adequate. There's only one stadium to play in (the MCG) and the detail is purely functional. There are two graphics modes - low and high res. Low resolution is fine - but nothing pretty. On the box it says a P75 and 16MB RAM is recommended for high-res mode. However I'm afraid even a P150 with 32MB RAM won't do for this mode, as gameplay was too sluggish to be enjoyable. Thus almost all of us will be forced to play with the poorer graphical option.

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: SPORTS
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: CADABILITY
PRICE: TBA
RATING: G

VISUALS
75
Not the game's strong point, but good enough to get the job done.

SOUND
68
Not a great variety in the playing or crowd noises. The tunes, while authentic, literally stink.

GAMEPLAY
80
It's Aussie Rules football, and it's fun, but a little too simplistic.

LONG TERM
78
Fans will play this one until something better comes along, and the simulation/strategy option adds depth.

OVERALL
78%
An OK AFL Football title - just don't expect anything flash.

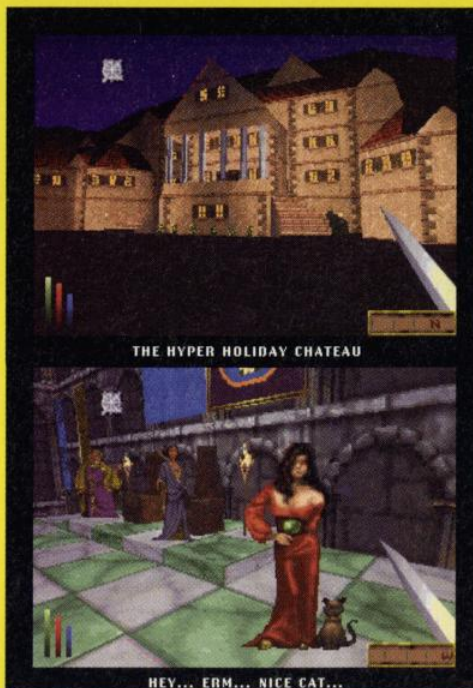
Daggerfall

The Elder Scrolls: Arena was a spiffy RPG so an excited DAN TOOSE grabs his knife, pulls on some tights, and heads off to tackle the sequel...



STATS STUFF...

All role playing games have character and inventory screen, and Daggerfall is no exception. Pretty much everything you could want to know about your character is right there for you, background, skills, the lot. Equipping and dressing your character is something not dissimilar to playing with a Ken or Barbie doll, it's that easy. One thing though... can anyone think of a RPG that featured nipple shots?



While many people wait for the coming of Ultima IX... perhaps they should be sparing a thought for a game they can get their hands on now. The Elder Scrolls, Chapter 2: Daggerfall, is the result of the very tasteful Arena game. Daggerfall is probably going to surpass many expectations however, since it's undoubtedly the biggest RPG ever. While not being that Holy Grail that everyone goes on about, it's pretty darn close, and will whet any RPG fanatic's appetite.

The plot is simple... You've been sent by your Emperor to go investigate the death of the king of Daggerfall, since his ghost is haunting the city at night. That's pretty much it... from there the story can go just about anywhere you take it. There are apparently several different ways the game can end, so there's no set things that you have to adhere to.

Quake meets Arena?

Of all the games you expect to compare a RPG to, you'd be forgiven for saying that Quake wouldn't be one of them. Well, Daggerfall actually has the option of handling like Quake, with the mouse being used to look around, and the keys to handle everything else. The other point of reference is Ultima Underworld, using the mouse to move around through the dungeon. Daggerfall can do either, and has a completely customizable control system, so there can be no bitching about an interface problem at all... in fact the interface is great. The graphics themselves are all VGA, but everything is so nicely drawn that the lack of SVGA is hardly noticed. It's really like playing Quake in low res, without the polygon monsters. Naturally the 3D engine will suffer a bit on a slower machine... Pentium is a bit of a must.

The music is really quite good, and the sound effects are just about there. The monster sounds are volume adjusted dependant on distance, etc. Maybe the music won't be so hot on your average sound card (we used an AWE 32), but it's certainly some of the best, themely RPG music in a while.

Dear God... It's Huge!

If you had to sum up Daggerfall in one word, it would have to be "Huge". This is one of the only RPGs ever to convey the feeling of being a tiny speck in a big world. There are hundreds of villages, towns and cities... and in each one there are countless people stalking the streets and inhabiting the buildings. You can talk to each person, and they'll react to you depending on your attitude, reputation, race, whatever... it's all accounted for. Many people have jobs/quests to complete, which could range from delivering a spell component across town, to traveling across many provinces and finding out the status on some foreign ruler, almost anything you could think of. Taking these quests helps you relise how big the game is, when some barkeep asks you to go into the woods and find a cave and go kill some monster that killed his brother... and you end up finding an utterly vast underground labyrinth, and there are hundreds of these labyrinths all over the place. There are guilds to join and align yourself with... and for a change, you can be a complete asshole, killing the innocent for riches or satisfaction, and you can still go on with the game. So playing through the game as an evil assassin is just as acceptable as playing the noble knight.

Combat is handled with the mouse, by holding down the button and dragging the mouse the way you wish to swing your weapon. In combination with moving, this lets you devise strategies for overcoming your opponents. There's also ranged weapons, in case you feel like playing Robin Hood.

Character creation is as intricate or simple as you want it, and as stat orientated or true role playing orientated as you'd want it as well. Along with the many character classes available, there's also the ability to make your own class up from scratch, determining it's abilities, strengths and weaknesses. Not only can you create character classes, but you can also make up your own spells, and even create your own magic items! This is the sort of stuff people usually expect to be left out of a computer RPG, but Bethesda seem to have taken the challenge on very well indeed.

It's all there: shops, horses, day & night, varying weather conditions, a free form plot, siding with whomever you want, the works. It doesn't quite have the same amount of character and richness the Ultima games have, but it has an amazingly comprehensive gaming engine, and is one of the best RPGs ever.



WHERE'S JIM, SPOCK AND SCOTTY?



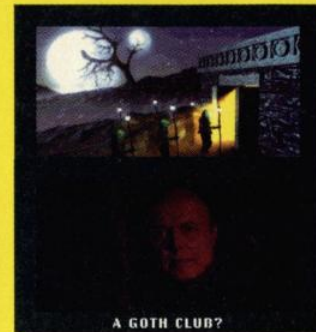
PREPARE TO MEET YOUR MAKER, YOU... CAMPFIRE, YOU!



WILBUR... GET OFF MY BACK...



NOW PUT AN APPLE ON YER HEAD!



A GOTH CLUB?



PIXELATED NIPPLES...

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: RPG
PLAYERS: ONE
PUBLISHER: BETHESDA
PRICE: \$99.95
RATING: MA15+
REQUIREMENTS: 486-66, 8MB RAM, 50MB HD, 2XCD

VISUALS

90

While it's VGA, the 3D engine is great and it feels like you're part of a world.

SOUND

90

A nice departure from a dodgy rendition of Greensleeves. SFX are good too.

GAMEPLAY

95

Utterly amazing. Any RPG lover will peak at the complete diversity of this game.

LONG TERM

95

Being the biggest RPG ever, it's going to keep you going for a long time.

OVERALL

93%

One of the best RPGs of all time. Can't wait for Elder Scrolls 3.

WHERE ARE WE NOW MAL?

Having an autopmap in an RPG is not a new thing anymore, but Daggerfall has a mapping system more comprehensive than most. The game remembers where you've been, which considering the absolutely enormous size of the game, is quite incredible. The maps for indoor/dungeon areas can be viewed from above, or at an angle, and even then can be moved around, rotated, etc. There's a map of all the provinces, and a find feature, so you can get to some far off place fast, without tedious searching. Cities are also mapped out for you, so you really can't get too lost in Daggerfall.





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GAMES ONLINE

World Series Baseball II

Saturn

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: SPORTS
 PLAYERS: 1-2
 PUBLISHER: SEGA SPORTS
 PRICE: \$99.95
 RATING: G

NBA Live '97

Mega Drive

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: SPORTS
 PLAYERS: 1-4
 PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS
 PRICE: \$75.95
 RATING: G

Command & Conquer

PlayStation/Saturn

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: REAL-TIME STRATEGY
 PLAYERS: ONE
 PUBLISHER: VIRGIN INTERACTIVE
 PRICE: \$99.95
 RATING: M15+



After last month's stunning effort with Worldwide Soccer, we all have high expectations of any product coming from Sega Sports, and World Series Baseball II is by no means a disappointing follow up title. Okay, it doesn't revolutionise sports gaming, but it's a great baseball game, and anyone looking for such a title should really look no further.

One thing that World Series Baseball II doesn't have is a huge variety of camera angles, which really, all things considered, isn't a bad thing. Whilst pitching/batting there are two views: straight from the batter, and at a slight angle from the batter. There's also a setting for how close up the view is when the ball is in the outfield. There have been prettier baseball games around, but very few have the immediate playability that World Series Baseball II does. There's no complicated controls to master in WSII, in fact you really just need good timing. Hitting early or late make you hook or slice, and hitting under and over make you fly or ground the ball... pretty straight forward. Pitching is simple, just pick a pitch, then use to d-pad to affect the flight of the ball. All fielding actions are intuitive, so when your fielders screw up, you know it was your fault, as opposed to some dodgy computer glitch.

An amazing 700 players are covered in World Series II, with photos, stats, the works. All 28 teams are present from both conferences, so you can play the full on World Series League if you've got nothing else to do. Each team has its own stadium, and they're all very good recreations of the actual venues. To really add to the feel of the game, the stadium announcer, referee, and the TV commentator can all be heard, and the mixing is just right to make it sound perfect.

While there is potential to become an absolute wiz at World Series Baseball II, most should find the game quite challenging for quite some time. A good solid, playable, enjoyable baseball game.

DAN TOUSE

VISUALS
82
SOUND
88
GAMEPLAY
84
LONGTERM
84
OVERALL
84

Is this the last gasp for the Mega Drive? One would assume so, and to be honest its even a little bit surprising that this latest version of EA's unconquered 16 bit franchise has emerged, given the overriding obsession with all things "next generation".

But if it is to be the last free throw for the Mega Drive, it's a damn good one. Until the arrival of the PlayStation and the Saturn, NBA Live, in its various yearly versions, was the unparalleled basketball king of the gaming world, and a must own for all serious sports gamers. Graphically it has now, to a certain extent, been put in the shade by its super system brother and by Sony's excellent Total NBA for the PlayStation. If, like me though, you still have a soft spot for the cartoon world of the Mega Drive and for spot on game play, this still burns.

The sprites are now larger and the controls remain freakishly intuitive. All current teams and players (incorporating off season trades - Shaq to the Lakers) are in there and a whole new host of signature moves have been added. Option-wise and statistically, it remains jam-packed and there's also a bunch of new game options - including half-court two-on-two and three-on-three (with the players of your choice) and free throw and three point shoot out competitions.

While this may get lost in the rush for the newest and brightest technology there's always room for a great game, on any platform. And the huge army of Mega Drive users who have yet to trade up would do well to check this out.

STRETCH ARMSTRONG

VISUALS
80
SOUND
75
GAMEPLAY
86
LONGTERM
82
OVERALL
84

The mighty Command and Conquer is finally here to provide some variety for those of you sick of the cutesy platformers, sports games and one-on-one fight fests that have made up the bulk of the releases for the PlayStation and Saturn. For those of you who've been locked in the bathroom for the last eighteen months Command and Conquer is a real-time strategy contest between the Global Defence Initiative and NOD (Nasty Obnoxious Dickheads).

Real-time means that there are no turns, everything happens as it happens, so to speak, and forward planning, speed and strategy are important for your ultimate success. Your forces (GDI or NOD) are given access to more and more sophisticated technology as the campaign progresses and it's important to manage your resources carefully. Money is obtained by harvesting noxious green stuff called Tiberium and it's just as important to ensure a constant supply of this material as it is to fight your enemy. Indeed it is often as good a tactic to fight your opponent by denying his supply of Tiberium to him as it is to attack directly.

Unfortunately there are problems with C&C in console format. The game was originally designed to be played with a mouse and works well with such a controller. However here the joypad is the only option, and it is no joy I can assure you. Trying to play with the pad at the speed at which the game is fixed (the PC version has variable speed controls) is downright annoying, especially when there's a lot going on. The PC version also allowed the player to group units and assign numbers to them so that they can all be called up with the touch of one button. This feature, applied to the shoulder buttons of the console pad, would have made non-mouse play far more enjoyable but unfortunately Westwood didn't implement it. The other disappointment is the fact that there is no link up support to allow you to play against a friend. This is by far the best way to play C&C, as human opponents are far more cunning than the machine AI, but again Westwood were asleep on the job and failed to implement this must-have feature.

Generally speaking though C&C offers something no other PlayStation or Saturn game has and if you can cope with moving your thumb around your joypad faster than the speed of light you'll probably love it.

VISUALS
74
SOUND
82
GAMEPLAY
78
LONGTERM
80
OVERALL
80

Blazing Dragons

PlayStation

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: ADVENTURE
 PLAYERS: ONE
 PUBLISHER: BMG INTERACTIVE
 PRICE: \$89.95
 RATING: G

Apart from Discworld and the recent Broken Sword, there really hasn't been many graphic adventures released for the PlayStation. While these styles of games aren't to everyone's taste, there are some die-hard adventurers out there just waiting for the puzzling action of games like Blazing Dragons. And if humorous unfolding storylines and often stupidly lateral puzzle solving is your thing, you could do far worse than to have a go at this one.

The standout feature of the game is the voice acting. If there's one thing the British do well, it's voice overs and the largely British cast of actors have done a fine job with filling the world of Blazing Dragons with personality and humour. Of course, the most noted voice is that of Monty Python's Terry Jones (most famous Python line: "He's not the Messiah, he's a very naughty boy!") and he is also responsible for creating some of the many wonderful characters that populate the story.

Flicker is the character we're mainly concerned with



though, as he's the character you control. He's a smart young dragon in old King All-Fire's Kingdom of Camelot who must earn the right to be a Knight and then save the kingdom from the scheming humans. Saving the kingdom naturally allows you to marry the King's daughter so there are a number of incentives.

The cartoon environments are fresh and colourful and there's some nice animation on display. You are free to explore as you wish but of course, you'll have to complete set puzzles to access further areas. The puzzles are sometimes obtuse but there'll always be a hint somewhere (like the Inventor's Notebook you carry around with you) and while sometimes frustrating, when you solve them it's usually satisfying.

Apart from the standard point and clicky adventure component, there are also several arcade sections thrown in for good measure, like thumb wrestling or throwing live cats at targets with catapults. These sections, while not essential for the success of the game, certainly break up the action a bit.

Blazing Dragons is a good little effort. If nothing else, it's guaranteed to raise a smile.

STUART CLARKE

VISUALS 76
 SOUND 90
 GAMEPLAY 80
 LONGTERM 78
 OVERALL 80

Moto X

PlayStation

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: BIKE RACING
 PLAYERS: ONE
 PUBLISHER: WARNER INTERACTIVE
 PRICE: \$99.95
 RATING: G



The number of great motorcycle games can be counted on one hand. In fact, for the 32 bit systems they can be counted on one finger (that's Road Rash for you ignoramuses out there). Unfortunately this simulation of the Motocross sport doesn't go very far to change that.

But just because it's not a genre bending meisterwork doesn't mean that it can't be fun. I had quite a few hours of motocross mayhem after getting used to the game and found Moto-X quite addictive. It's certainly not the world's most beautiful game, the polygonal motorcyclists break up quite a bit, and in anything but "close-up" camera mode the horizon is completely disconcerting.

What makes Moto-X so much fun is that it's easy to learn and play and each race is short, intense and chaotic. Those of you looking for speed thrills won't find anything to blow your minds here, as this is rugged mud biking on some extremely rugged terrain and consequently it's very hard to go fast.

The options are pretty much standard for a 32 bit sporting game; there's a variety of camera angles (although only one works really well), convincing sound effects (and a nearly inoffensive pseudo-jungle soundtrack), replay mode, heaps of tracks and a neat track editor where you can construct your own tracks.

I have to admit to quite liking this harmless little diversion of a game. It's not exactly the greatest title I've seen for the PlayStation and I don't think many will need to buy it, but as a rental game it would be worth a spin. I just really wish you could punch and kick the other riders though. A bit of violence never hurts! C'mon, it's a video game after all!

RUSSELL HOPKINSON

VISUALS 60
 SOUND 70
 GAMEPLAY 70
 LONGTERM 50
 OVERALL 60

Burning Road

PlayStation

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: RACING
 PLAYERS: 1-2 (LINK-UP)
 PUBLISHER: FUNSOFT
 PRICE: \$89.95
 RATING: G



The PlayStation already has its fair share of racing games, some of them good, some of them not-so-good. Broken Road is certainly not awful, but because it really doesn't better any of the other racers already out, or add anything remarkably different, we're going to have to lump it in the "not-so-good" pile.

Burning Road is a Ridge Racer/Daytona sort of racer, with non-stop, action packed gameplay and no real regard for an accurate driving model. The four cars you have to choose from (initially) all handle very differently however, and you'll have to make the usual decision: speed vs handling. You can try a practice course (Easy, Medium, Expert) or go straight into a Championship, where you'll have to earn good places to progress.

The graphics are solid and smooth, and there's a good sense of speed communicated by the visuals. The crashes are definitely highlights, and multi-car carnage is a regular event. Crashes are made even more likely by the appearance of "adverse" weather, like rain, ice and snow. To top that off, obstacles such as oil drums, tyres and road work signs will also get in your way and quick reflexes are often required to escape. Don't worry if you do crash though, as you're quickly thrown back in the race. The eight cars taking part in the race all stick fairly close together so it's a bit of a pack affair, and the winner is often decided in the final straight (which is good and exciting).

The lack of a two player split screen mode though is a crime, and while there is the option of linking PlayStations up, it's just not good enough when you consider that there are much better single player racing games out there (Wipeout 2097 comes immediately to mind). If Burning Road had had a two player split screen option it may well have been a recommended option, as some Sega Rally-like fun and mayhem could have ensued, but as it is, you'll take it for a few powerslides around the gravel corners and then retire.

STUART CLARKE

VISUALS 80
 SOUND 82
 GAMEPLAY 70
 LONGTERM 65
 OVERALL 70

Full Tilt 2 Pinball

PC
 AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: PINBALL
 PLAYERS: ONE
 PUBLISHER: MAXIS
 PRICE: \$79.95
 RATING: G



Ahhh, the pinball simulation. A genre that has produced more hits than misses. Pinball is an activity that should take place in darkened pinnacled parlours and it really doesn't transfer that well to the computer game format. That being the case, Full Tilt 2 is an extremely good example of the pinball simulation. Nice smooth graphics and beefy sound effects complement an excellent game engine.

The ball bounces around the table quite realistically and the isometric view point allows for a fair approximation of the pinball experience. However, the basic nature of the tables on hand (three generic machines that vary in difficulty), doesn't allow for much scope beyond a couple of games. It would be the kind of game that you'd have on your computer at work for a couple of games whilst the boss isn't looking. That is if your lucky enough to have a reasonably hefty enough computer to run this smoothly, because on slower computers it's a bit glitchy.

The easiest table on offer is 'Mad Scientist' which has you trying to find body parts for your unholy creation by shooting the ball up ramps and at targets. 'Alien Daze' is the second table and you have to abduct humans and animals by hitting the ball up, erm... ramps and at targets. The final pinball machine, 'Captain Hero', is very similar to the other two indeed.

If these were real machines you wouldn't really notice them as you rushed past to play 'Theatre of Magic', 'World Cup Soccer', 'Star Trek: Next Gen' or any other classic modern table. There is a chance that you'll be a virtual pinball fanatic and will be slaving to get this game but I doubt there are too many of you about (if there are, please get out a bit more will you?). However, if you stumbled across a spare copy of Full Tilt 2 lying in the road you may as well pick it up. There's multi ball, multiple flipper combinations and you can bump the table... but honestly, it's just not as good as the real thing. Also, this being a Maxis game, why are there no design capabilities? SimBall anyone?

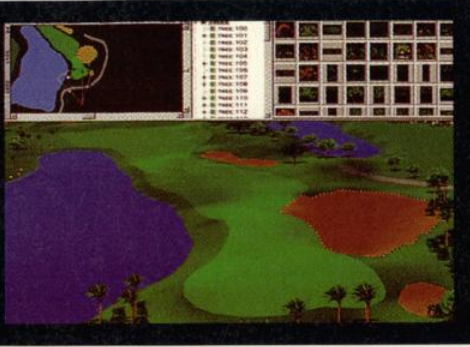
A bit of fun but ultimately you won't want this clogging up the hard drive for too long.

RUSSELL HOPKINSON

VISUALS 85
 SOUND 75
 GAMEPLAY 75
 LONGTERM 40
 OVERALL 68

Sim-Golf

PC
 AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: GOLF
 PLAYERS: 1-4 (NETWORK)
 PUBLISHER: MAXIS
 PRICE: \$99.95
 RATING: G



I loved the idea behind Sim Golf; not only is it a golf game you can play but you can design your very own courses as well. Unfortunately at the same time it's not very good at all. It's slow (an accusation I suppose you can level at most golf games really), and doesn't exactly trip you out graphics wise. The playing method (using the mouse to 'swing' the club) is unwieldy at best and, when compared to a game like PGA 96, the ability to fiddle around with course design is no bonus at all.

There are three courses present and I really think you'd need a mo-fo of a computer to get this game to run at any decent speed and resolution. All I can say is, on my 100mhz Pentium with 24 megs of ram, Sim Golf looked crap and it took ages to process each stroke. OK, that's the golf game out of the way, now what about the grandly titled "Course Architect" component?

Well, bewildering is perhaps the first word I can think off. You'd have to be so into golf to wanna try and get your head around this program that I think anyone but the most dedicated golf fanatic should steer well clear. This is the type of "game" that isn't really aimed at the gamers market. Maxis obviously have their eyes firmly placed on the wallets of bored golf fanatics who will shell out for this and then forget about it within 2 months. My life isn't long enough to delve into the intricacies of golf course development and the easy, self explanatory style of SimCity (a game I love) is nowhere in evidence. Add some fairly innocuous footage of an unknown golf pro (to me anyway), explaining the beauty of the game of and there you have it, a "multi media" experience for all you golf mad punters out there.

I thought this game might be cool, but I was wrong. Boy, was I wrong...

RUSSELL HOPKINSON

VISUALS 60
 SOUND 40
 GAMEPLAY 40
 LONGTERM 20
 OVERALL 40

War Wind

PC
 AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: REAL TIME STRATEGY
 PLAYERS: 1-8
 PUBLISHER: SSI
 PRICE: \$49.95
 RATING: G8+

It was to be expected... a clone of the Warcraft games. First glance at War Wind by SSI could lead one to believe that you were looking at something with a much vaster scope and vision. There appears to be more to War Wind than in perhaps any real time strategy war game yet. A little further probing though will lead one to discover that this game is really Warcraft 2, with a couple of tweaks and different ideas.

War Wind is set in a distant world called Javaun, where four races seek to gain the balance of power in the rebellion that is breaking out across the globe.

When making a clone it's important to make it look as good as the original, and SSI have got it right with War Wind, producing a stylish SVGA interface to play the game through. The units are fractionally smaller than they could have been, and as a result they lose a little bit of the character that they would otherwise kept with the



above average artwork. Your units sometimes bunch up in such a way that makes it hard to see exactly what you're in control of, but it's rare that it's of any consequence. Combat involves a lot of ranged attacks, which just look like pulses of energy, and things get a bit messy, so you need to be ready for combat before it happens.

Each race has seven missions/scenarios to complete to achieve victory. Throughout the game you control a group of troops, and their leader (you). Unlike any other game of this nature, you're on the battlefield, and if you die... that's it. There are basic units, like servants and mercenaries, which you develop into more powerful units by constructing "training" buildings. Unit advancement has been cleverly thought out. When you have a certain number of a particular troop type, you can then develop a superior version of that unit. You can also research bio-enhancements, which improve things such as vision, strength, speed, stealth and resilience.

Warwind is a challenging strategy game, which has tackled a few aspects of gameplay with a bit more intelligence than other games in the same genre. Doesn't have the same immediate playability of Warcraft 2 or Command & Conquer, but it has a little more depth.

DAN TOOSE

VISUALS 89
 SOUND 87
 GAMEPLAY 92
 LONGTERM 89
 OVERALL 89

Ace Ventura

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: ADVENTURE
 PUBLISHER: DATAFLOW
 PLAYERS: ONE
 PRICE: \$59.95
 RATING: GS



Dippy, corny, yet somehow funny is how I would best describe the film of Ace Ventura, and this tag also seems to fit the PC game offering pretty darn well.

One the visual side of the equation the game is pretty slick. 7th Level (who also brought you the misguided Battle Beast) do have one thing down pat. Their animated visuals are not only colourful but they move smoothly too. This is definitely the case with Ace who wanders about the screen with the mischievous aplomb that few could muster.

The game is also full of "Carey-isms", lots of prank phone calls, bodily function jokes and repeated use of the name 'Mr Shichakadance'. These things could be seen as either bonus features or irritations depending on what side of the "we love Jim, we truly do" debate you happen to side with. Personally the game's atmosphere wears thin pretty quickly, and certainly after repeated utterances you might be wondering how Mr Carey has managed to walk off with all of that Hollywood loot, but then again that's just my opinion.

In what seems like a misguided ode to Sam N Max the game also features an arcade section where you have to travel through an underwater effluent pipe avoiding the particularly solid waste products and picking up toilet rolls for energy. This is not only childishily silly, but irritatingly unplayable at times, with your best bet being to crawl through the thing at a snails pace.

The story does manage to move about a bit, and the intro is actually pretty pacy, and worth watching more than once. That said, at times some of the puzzles are nothing less than shitty in that they don't make sense, and the solution is always too easily achieved. Also the interface is too simple. At times some of the point and click commands are crudely linked to the in-game objects you are meant to be manipulating, and this can be a real drag.

Still fans of the platulent one, who is listed on the box as being an expert in the art of "butt yodeling", may find this package quite attractive. Personally my bowels are moved, but not in sympathy.

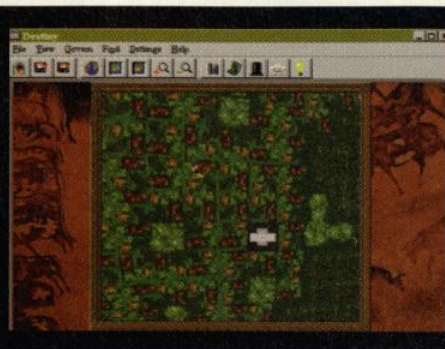
STEVE POLAK

VISUALS 85
 SOUND 83
 GAMEPLAY 68
 LONGTERM 55
 OVERALL 55

Destiny

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: STRATEGY
 PLAYERS: ONE
 PUBLISHER: INTERACTIVE MAGIC
 PRICE: \$79.95
 RATING: G



It is the destiny of this game to be sold in remainder bins for less than it costs to buy a bus ticket and given away free with \$4.95 Dodgy brand CD ROM drives at Harvey Norman. When the courier arrived at my door with this one, it smelt so bad I thought someone had surface mailed me a present from their Alaskan fishing trip.

Interactive Magic is the name of the company responsible. Magic? When Houdini escaped straight jackets, chains and strongboxes it was magic. When the Baywatch girls run around on the beach for hours without their Bikini bottoms disappearing up their bums it's magic, but when someone produces a game like this I'd just call it crap. Interactive crap maybe, but still crap.

To paraphrase the CD cover "Destiny offers a 'God game' with a difference - real 3D worlds." How about some honesty guys? How about "Destiny offers a God game with a difference - it's crap".

The '3D worlds' the designers breathlessly boast about have indeed been programmed with great skill. It takes a lot of technical savvy to make 16 colour EGA graphics run slower than an arthritic tortoise on a Pentium 133, I'm sure. The same sort of savvy it takes to sell a clapped out Gemini to a blind pensioner. On top of that Destiny has been so poorly finished that half the menus lock up or flip out when you try to use them, a very useful feature for gamers who don't like to play anything, just sit and stare at their computer.

Overall I was very impressed with this game, it shows what can be done with little imagination, no talent and even less ability. Anyone being forced to buy a gift for someone they have no respect for at all could do worse than consider this as an option.

GEORGE SOROPOS

VISUALS 70
 SOUND 30
 GAMEPLAY 15
 LONGTERM 5
 OVERALL 20

Hunter Hunted

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: PLATFORM/ACTION
 PLAYERS: 1-2
 PUBLISHER: SIERRA
 PRICE: \$89.95
 RATING: M15+



It's hardly an original concept, is it? Planet gets sodomised, you're one of the last remaining survivors, aliens use you as a pawn in their arena games, you gotta kill or be killed, etc, etc. Well, what is new is the fact that it's Sierra doing it for a change. A company normally renowned for its ability to pull out a spiffy adventure game is now churning out violent little numbers, so it would seem.

After perusing the box of Hunter Hunted, you'd be forgiven for assuming there was some sort of special 3D graphical edge to the game (how developers love to throw the term 3D in there). Unfortunately, Hunter Hunted is really nothing much more than a 2D platform/shoot 'em up, which let's you go to other parts of the level by scooting through a doorway going into or out of the screen. Sure, that Z plane effect looks nice, but it's not really a 3D game. Actually, the whole thing looks similar to something like Prince of Persia, or Flashback, except not as good.

As a single player game, Hunter Hunted is really quite dull. It seems someone told Sierra that lots of big explosions was the key factor to an action game, because that's about all there is to look at really. Yeah there are things on the wall that zap at you, and various baddies that try and blow you a second buttohole, but it really just doesn't have the same gripping storyline and gameplay that old games like Flashback did.

In defence of Hunter Hunted, there is the option to play a two player co-operative game, or even head to head, all on the one computer, thanks to the split screen gaming. Also, if you do happen to get a bit of a kick out of Hunter Hunted, there are a hundred missions there for you to play through (mostly single player, but many specifically for multiplayer).

There's better stuff around for a bit of action nowadays. Heck, go buy Tomb Raider or something.

DAN TOOSE

VISUALS 70
 SOUND 84
 GAMEPLAY 60
 LONGTERM 68
 OVERALL 64

Shattered Steel

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: MECH SIM
 PLAYERS: 1 - NETWORK
 DEVELOPER: INTERPLAY
 PRICE: \$89.95
 RATING: G8



This whole Mech thing is really starting to gather momentum. After creditable efforts from both Activision, and Sierra it is now time for Interplay to swagger into the squared circle.

OK so we probably know what to expect with this one. Lots of hard core blasting, a bit of waypoint based wandering, and a juicy FMV intro which helps give the player a sense of developing plot. Predictable? Yes, but this doesn't mean you aren't going to have fun carving a swathe in the enemy's ranks with hot plasma fire. Even though Shattered Steel doesn't do anything significantly different from its predecessors it's a definite contender, as the visuals are at least as good as its competitors, and it is only really handicapped by the minor fact that Mech fans will have seen most of what Steel has to offer before.

However Shattered Steel is well worth thinking about if you have already belted the clans about the place in the FASA universe. Firstly, the game is probably the most graphically advanced. The landscapes are nicely shaded, and you do get a strong sense of playing in a 3D environment (as opposed to a flat plain surrounded by unassailable cliffs). This gives Shattered Steel a sense of tactical diversity as you can use the terrain quite effectively for cover. The game also features a variety of craft, and the designers have tried to break away from the 'tower of power' moving office-block appearance of mechs in the other sims. Thus the exoskeletons in this game are smaller, and some of them don't even bear a vague resemblance to "traditional" Mechs. This is a good thing, even if some of them look like skulking rats rather than heavy metal warriors.

Shattered Steel also takes a leaf out of the brilliant X Wing's book as you have a variety of energy management options which can be used to cope with the different tactical requirements of a mission. Direct your power away from your shields and weapons for a quick hit and run assault, or rescue mission. Or crank up those shields and redirect power away from the engines if you are in for a long drawn out slugging match with the enemy forces.

So if you are looking for a pleasant orgy of laser fire, and huge explosions Steel is a worthy effort which might surprise a few of you Mechheads.

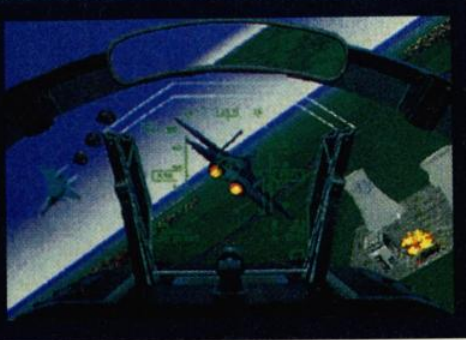
STEVE POLAK

VISUALS 89
 SOUND 86
 GAMEPLAY 84
 LONGTERM 85
 OVERALL 84

US Navy Fighters '97 Steel Panthers 2

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: FLIGHT SIM
 PLAYERS: 1-8 (NETWORK)
 PUBLISHER: JANES
 PRICE: \$49.95
 RATING: G8+



The sequel of the sequel to US Navy Fighters sees Janes floundering around with a tired game engine, boring missions and uninspiring graphics. A no-contest, in terms of gameplay and enjoyment, with Nova's F22 Lightning II. Sure there are more planes to fly but this begs the question, "What's the point of having a big choice of craft when they all fly like a Cessna?"

US Navy Fighters '97 is essentially the same game as its predecessor with a new set of missions and a few new aircraft. The main addition to this update is the inclusion of Vietnam era aircraft and missions to supplement the more modern fare usually offered by these Janes simulations. The trusty F4 Phantom and F8 Crusader are included in several variants, as are the F104 Starfighter, Mig-17 and Mig-21 along with period weapons and avionics (to a certain degree)

Aside from that, USNF97 is basically the same game as Janes' other current title, A.T.F., and it also shares all of that game's faults. Neither is a genuine simulation and, thanks to Nova Logic's F22, neither can claim to be the best 'Arcade' type flight sim around either. To put it bluntly, flying a Janes sim is like strapping a pair of wings to your Dad's lawnmower, sitting on it and then getting someone to push you off a cliff. In the hands of Janes programmers even the most graceful of aircraft become lumbering beasts with all the finesse of a 747 and half the acceleration! The Janes flight engine is in a state of advanced dementia; it's time to put it out to pasture and get a better one, dudes.

GEORGE SOROPDS

VISUALS 78
 SOUND 75
 GAMEPLAY 70
 LONGTERM 60
 OVERALL 70

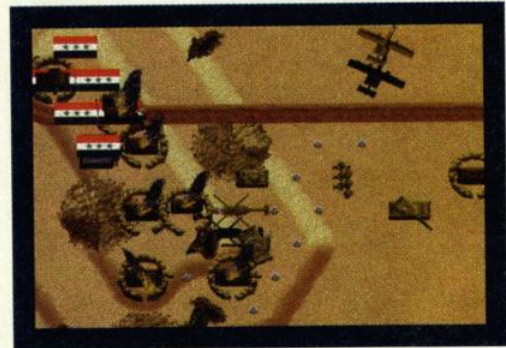
STEVE POLAK

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: STRATEGY
 PLAYERS: 1/ NETWORK
 DEVELOPER: SSI
 RATING: G8
 PRICE: \$49.95

Steel Panthers 2: Modern Battles is basically a simple extension of the WWII based original, except the battles are now set in the post war period. The show begins with a challenging Korean campaign (where the US forces didn't have the technological edge they now enjoy). The campaigns then move through history taking in the Arab/Israeli fracas, a few European cold war battles, and finishing in an Asian conflict which takes place two years from now.

Visually, Panthers 2 looks very similar to the first game. This isn't necessarily a bad thing as the game still looks OK in SVGA, but the relative lack of unit animation is starting to tell, and the static graphics only serve to heighten your awareness that this game is still stuck in the world of turn based combat.



That said, the fact that Panthers 2 is turn based gives the game an astonishing degree of tactical depth, and challenge on a grand scale which is virtually impossible for its real time cousins. Because you can pause to consider your moves means that you can attack with a greater sense of military sophistication, and this is the one advantage the turn based wargames have over the real time mob.

The interface has been given a mild sprucing up, and certainly there are more options when you look at issues like supply, weather, and enemy ability. The game also makes airborne support more prominent. Not only do you get a greater variety of strike aircraft, but there are even tactical ground support and scout craft like the dreaded AH64, attack chopper.

Steel Panthers 2 isn't a radical leap forward in wargame design, and it's time for SSI to look at new innovations if they are to stay at the leading edge of the genre. But for the meantime it's still an extremely solid offering which will keep the more serious strategy fans busy into those evil wee hours.

VISUALS 74
 SOUND 80
 GAMEPLAY 88
 LONGTERM 92
 OVERALL 83

cheat mode

Abuse

PC

GOD MODE:

Start Abuse with abuse -edit, then press **Shift-Z**. Be sure the cursor is in the window while doing this. Press Tab to start playing.

Alien Trilogy

PC

Type these in while playing
JUMPTOLEVEL?? - Level Skip
(?? = the level you wish to play)
THEIRONLADY - Invincibility
WEAPONASTIC - All Weapons

Might & Magic: Clouds of Xeen

PC

TELEPORT CODES:

Type these phrases at any teleport mirror for the desired effect.
LORD XEEN - go to Lord Xeen
COUNT DU MONEY
- go to the dragon's lair
SHOWTIME - go to the end of the game
SHANGRI-LA - find a hidden town
I LOST IT - get the magical sword

Magic Carpet

PlayStation

Go to the Options screen and enter:
△ △ ○ □ △ ○ △ □.

When you get into the game, Pause, then press:

△ - To access all spells
□ - To increase mana supply
○ - To complete the level you are playing

Magic Carpet

Saturn

Go to the options screen and play the following sound effects in this order:

11, 31, 15, 5, 26, 22.

The word cheat will appear at the top of the screen and a level select option should appear.

During the game, Pause, then press:

X - to access all spells

Y - to finish a level

Z - to get more mana

Syndicate

PC

Enter your name as one of following:

ROB A BANK - Gives you tons of cash

WATCH THE CLOCK - Speeds up the time when not in a mission. This allows for fast research (although it still costs the same)

COOPER TEAM - Totally kit out your agents. Level 3 mods and tons of weapons.

NUK THEM - Mega cheat. Full tech, loads of cash, etc.

Ultimate MK3

Mega Drive

CHEAT MENUS:

On the main menu, press **B, A, Down, Left, A, Down, C, Right, Up, Down**. Those familiar three menus from MK3 will appear.

PLAY AS HUMAN SMOKE:

Select the robot Smoke on character select screen. Then, before the fight screen comes up, hold **High Punch + Low Punch + High Kick + Low Kick**. Continue to hold these until Shao Kahn announces the round.

Syndicate Wars

PC

Enter your name as **POOSLICE**

Now during the game press:

ALT+C - to end the current level

ALT+T - to move the selected agent to wherever the mouse pointer is.

This is very handy for getting around fences. Try other letters with ALT for other cheats.

HINTS:

To persuade a Policemam you must persuade at least 20 citizens.

To persuade an Enemy Agent you must persuade 4 Policemen.

Rise of the Robots 2

PlayStation

Play as the boss, Vitriol. On the player selection screen press **Right, Right, Right, Up, Up, Down, Left, Left, Down, Down**

Toy Story

SNES

Invincibility: In level one, walk over to the dresser with the army barrel on top and jump into the first open drawer. Hold Down until your star begins to flash and spin.

Motor Toon Grand Prix

PlayStation

For greater control, hold **L1 + L2 + R1 + R2** while selecting the Options menu.

Want to race against the best players from Sony? Hold **R1** while selecting any saved game to load. You can now watch or race against the Sony team's best times.

Die Hard Trilogy

PlayStation

LEVEL 2

14"SPACE"JJ2JB144JL
289144JB"SPACE""SPACE"Fi"SPACE"
4JLKT3GS9"SPACE"138
F144JL289144J

LEVEL 3

SS"SPACE"XHKC5SW3DF
KQ6SW3F!QQISM
3DDQRNCCVDFJQ
2SW3DFKQ6SW3"SPACE"

LEVEL 4

F416QVMBF5NQL
VC9F5NNSLCHF9
NQMiW6TDP6LWC
FF5NQLVC9F5NJ

LEVEL 5

N"SPACE""SPACE"V38Y3N2JB1
85"SPACE"N2J955Y1NL
JB"SPACE"iL4Q7TV195
4N2JB185"SPACE"N2J"SPACE"

LEVEL 6

8N"SPACE"N8KL68P2NB
KB58P2RQ!L581
2NB698681NB1B
18P2NBKB58P2J

LEVEL 7

8D142J2"SPACE"8F1N6
JV38F1J3B"SPACE"8P
iN7BCCBSV46KV
78F1N6JV38F1J

LEVEL 8

N"SPACE"iB58Y3N2JB1
85"SPACE"N2JHHXP2NZ
JB"SPACE"76LXXNV195
4N2JB185"SPACE"N2J"SPACE"

Time Commando

PlayStation

For a secret level, enter the password "COMMANDO".



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Bases Loaded '96
PlayStation

Hit a HOMERUN every time you make contact with the ball. On controller 2 press **START** to pause the game. Press **△, □, ×, ○, ○, ○**. You will hear a sound. Press **L1**, and you'll hear the word "HOMERUN". If you want to disable the code, simply press **L1** again and you will hear the word "SAFE".

SKIP INNINGS: On controller 2 press **START** to pause the game. Press: **△, □, ×, ○, ○, ○**. You will hear a sound. Press **×**, and the words "Let's Go Inning" will appear on the screen. You can change the inning number by pressing **×**. Press **START** to return to the game

Zero Divide
PlayStation

Hidden game: On controller 2 hold both **SELECT** and **START** when turning on the PlayStation until the hidden game PHALANX loads.

Settlers 2
PC

SPEED ADJUSTMENT: While in the game, type 'THUNDER' and you will see a sphere with a '1' in it. Then you can adjust the game speed from **Alt+1** (MIN) to **Alt+6** (MAX).

Monty Python and the Quest for the Holy Grail
PC

Type **URANUS** at the screen just after you start a new game to travel anywhere immediately. Type **LOBSTERGIRL** at the screen just after you run away to get to the hidden sub-game.

Shining Wisdom
Saturn

99 LIVES: At the Main Menu, highlight Game Start and press **A, Z, B, Y, C, X, Start**.
999 SHURIKENS: Go to the Options screen and

highlight Shurikens. Now press and hold **L + R** and press **C, A, B**.

EXPERT MODE: Not hard enough? At the Main Menu, highlight Game Start and press **A, B, C, B, A, Start**. You'll start the game with 0 lives, no continues, and only one point of life!

LEVEL SELECT: To warp to any level while playing, pause the game and press **A, B, A, B, C**. A current level will appear in the lower-left corner of the screen. To choose a level, press **Left** or **Right** until you get the number you want, then press **Start**.

Madden NFL 97
Saturn

CREATE PLAYER TIP: After you give a player his name, height, weight, etc. and you go to the attributes screen the points number usually isn't enough to make a good player. To remedy this, cancel from that screen, go to the position and move it one space right or left, then move it back and press

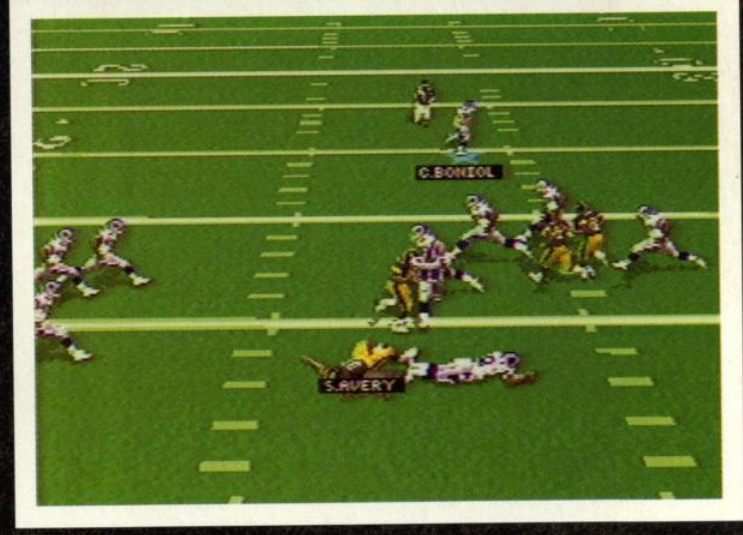
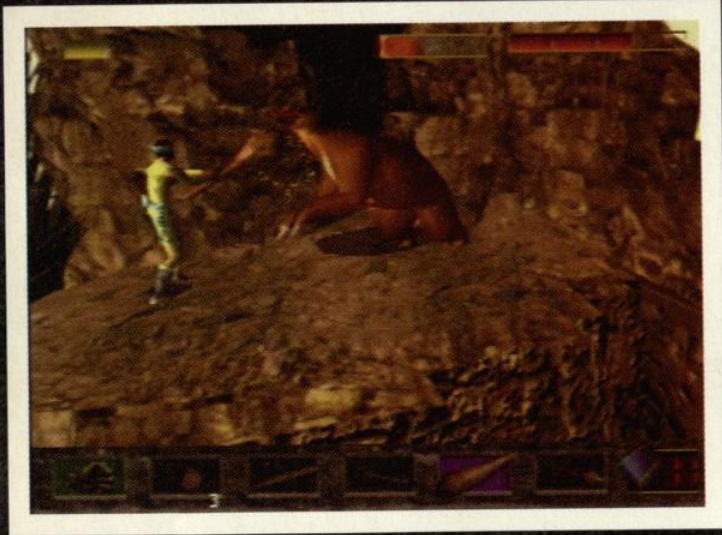
C. This can be repeated until you get a satisfactory number of points.

SECRET TEAMS: At the Select Team screen, hold **Z** and press **X**. This will do a random select. If done enough, some secret teams will appear. If you are having trouble getting the secret teams selectable try highlighting the 82 Dolphins or a team nearby.

VIEW FMV'S: To view all the video sequences, hold **Right Shift** while the game is booting.

The Tick
SNES

STAGE SELECT: At the title screen, press Start to go to the Options screen. At the Options screen, set "Arthurs" to two, "Lives" to seven, and "Continues" to four. Next, choose the Test Sounds option and select "Teleport." Press Start, and the word "Cheat" will appear. Start the game, pause it, and press Select. You now have a Stage Select mode. When your game is over, you can reactivate Stage Select by holding **L + R**.



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Here is how it works-all you've got to do is ring the number below then place your game in the swap shop then you'll get your own ID number to access the messages people will leave who want to swap games with you.

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legion

Universal Soldier

Mega Drive

Level 1-2: **CHSCM**
 Level 1-3: **MKSNS**
 Level 2-1: **SCGBY**
 Level 2-2: **JLCPH**
 Level 2-3: **JDRSD**
 Level 3-1: **PKSND**
 Level 3-2: **CWBPM**
 Level 3-3: **SFTNP**
 Level 4-1: **CMVDC**
 Level 4-2: **BYTCM**

Blackfire

Saturn

Enter any of these on the title screen while the words "PRESS START BUTTON" are flashing.

REPLENISH FUEL AND WEAPONRY: Press **Left, A, Z, Y, A, Down, Down**. You should hear a confirmation that the cheat has worked. Simply Pause, then return to the game to replenish your fuel and ammunition.

SKIP STAGES:

Press and hold in order: **C, B, A, Up, Left**. Now release in this order: **A, C, Left, Up**. You should hear a confirmation. In the game, hold **A+B+C+Up** then press **Left** to skip a stage.

INVINCIBILITY:

Press and hold in order: **A, B, C**. Now release in order: **C, B, A**. Press **B, A, B, Y**, hold **X, Up**, hold **Down** and release **X**. You should now hear the confirmation. You should now be invincible when you start the game.

WATCH ALL THE VIDEO SCENES:

Press **Z, A, Z, A, B, A, B, Y, C, A, C, A**. Press **A** to skip the scene and view the next scene.

Virtual On:

Cyber Troopers

Saturn

COLOUR SHIFT:

Press Left Shift to make a choice on the Select screen (Arcade Mode, Versus, etc.)

CROUCH ATTACK:

(Left or Right or Down) + Left Shift + Right Shift + (A or C or Y)

PLAY AS VR JAGUARANDI:

At the start screen, hold Down and press Left Shift + Right Shift. If you did this correctly a chime will sound and VR Jaguarandi will be selectable.

SPECIAL ATTACKS :

Temjim and Viper 2 can perform special high-powered attacks if their weapon gauge is full. To do so, jump and press Up, Up + Y, Y while you're in the air.

Alien Trilogy

Saturn

Enter any of these codes in the password screen:

FILLMYPoCKiTS - Unlimited Bullets

FLYTo?? - Stage Select (?? Means the stage number)

FVNKYGiBBoN - Invincibility

FISHiNGFoRCVNS - All Weapons

Spiderman: Web of Fire

32X

DEBUG MODE

Press **Up, Right, Left, A, Z, Y** when the Sega logo with Spiderman appears.

WHILE PLAYING:

press **X** for a Debug/Level Select screen
 press **Y** to display your co-ordinates
 press **Z** to refill your lives & Daredevils.

Centurion:

Defender of Rome

Mega Drive

To start the game at one of the most powerful levels with 11 consular legions and 35,000 talents enter the password **TAGY-V6P5-QAAA-AH3K-VKVA-MIES**
 To rule the empire, enter the password **QDUa-YQ25-5555-55NK-VKXW-IPJI**

Power Monger

Mega Drive

From the Title Screen, select Restore Conquest and enter the password **"2MN0A2WSD"**. Now select the Continue Conquest option and you'll find that every territory on the map can be selected.

Roar of the Beast

Mega Drive

LEVEL SELECT:

At the second title screen, press **Up, Right, A, B, A, Down, Left, A, Down, B, Up, B, B, A**.

X-Men:

Mutant Apocalypse

SNES

LEVEL CODES:

Hivebrood's Deserted Camp:

Xavier, Magneto, Gambit,

Cyclops, Apocalypse, Gambit,

Magneto, Magneto

Genoshan Prison:

Gambit, Beast, Magneto,

Cyclops, Cyclops, Gambit,

Magneto, Apocalypse

Apocalypse's Base:

Beast, Gambit, Beast, Wolverine,

Magneto, Beast, Cyclops, Wolverine

Danger Room (Omega Red):

Psylocke, Wolverine, Wolverine,

Gambit, Wolverine, Beast,

Psylocke, Cyclops

Danger Room (Juggernaut):

Gambit, Beast, Cyclops, Cyclops,

Wolverine, Cyclops, Psylocke, Beast

Avalon:

Beast, Gambit, Gambit, Wolverine,

Magneto, Magneto, Xavier, Gambit

Worms

Saturn

NEW WEAPONS:

At the weapon options screen press **C+Z** 9 times. A selection of new weapons should appear.

Gargoyles

Mega Drive

LEVEL SKIP

Pause the game and press **A, B,**

Right, A, C, A, Down, A, B, Right, A.

Super Bomberman 2

SNES

Go to the password screen and enter **1111**. This password enables you to drop six bombs with the maximum blast radius and give you a detonator. If you're blown up, the only item you'll lose is the detonator.

Blazing Dragons

PlayStation

Had enough? Well the final password is **"V?U5MK 4N6LUI OHW5CB"**.



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Judge Dredd

SNES

CHEATS GALORE

Enter this on the legal screen: **Left, Up, X, Up, Right, Y**. Wait until the Vid-Com link before the game starts, then: **Hold Y+A** for a level select, or hold **X+B** for automatic health replenishing.

Passwords:

- Level 1: **YVVP**
- Level 2: **QBCB**
- Level 3: **VFPD**
- Level 4: **CPRY**
- Level 5: **FCWZ**
- Level 6: **RLFJ**
- Level 7: **TDYT**
- Level 7a: **KKBC**
- Level 8: **VYRX**
- Level 8a: **CNRN**
- Level 9: **CRQF**
- Level 9a: **DXHG**
- Level 10: **QBTV**
- Level 10a: **TMKT**
- Level 11: **VMTB**
- Level 12: **XCWV**
- Level 12a: **TQZH**

Monster Truck Madness

PC

TREX:

Instead of racing in a monster truck you can race in a large car eating dinosaur. Hit **CTRL-3** to see a great chase-plane view of it.

Pandemonium

PlayStation

Try these passwords.

BORNFREE: Level Select

HARDBODY: Invincibility

VITAMINS: Gain 31 lives

CORONARY: Plenty of hearts to keep you health

EVILDEAD: Immortal enemies

TWISTEYE: Rotate the screen by

holding **L1 + L2** and moving the D-pad

INANDOUT: Quitting returns you to

the map

THETHING: Hold **L2** to mutate your

body. Press **L2 + X** to reset

BODYSWAP: Press Triangle to swap

characters in mid-game

OTTOFIRE: Special weapons never

run out of power

TOMMYBOY: Takes you to a pinball

screen when you finish a level

CASHDASH: Takes you to a "speed

greed" screen when you finish a level

Afterlife

PC

Type these in during your game:

\$@! Gives you 10 million pennies. You can only do this 5 times.

SAMNMAX Type it 3 times (in

capitals) to meet up with an old

Lucas Arts friend.

Virtua Fighter

PC

PLAY AS GOLD DURAL:

In the Character Selection menu,

press **Down, Up, Right** then

DEL+Left. You should hear a sound

to let you know the cheat worked.

ADD DURAL TO RECORDS SCREEN:

At the "Press Start" screen, enter **Up**

17 times then press **Enter**. Go to the

options screen. You should hear

"Ring Out". Dural's stats are now on

the Records screen.

RING SIZE AND STAGE SELECT:

At the "Press Start" screen, enter **Up**

12 times then press **ENTER**. Go to the

options screen. You should hear

"K.O". Move the cursor down to **Exit**,

then press down once more. When

the cursor disappears press **DEL** and

a second options screen will appear.

VIEW CREDITS:

Hold the **DEL** button down during

the opening demos to see the names

of the makers of VF.

SLOW MOTION REPLAYS:

At the end of a round, press and

hold **DEL+END+PgDn** and the replay

will be in "super-slow-mo".

CHOOSE THE VICTORY TAUNT:

Hold either **DEL, END,** or **PgDn** before

the character does his/her victory

stance and you will be able to select

your very own taunt (how adult!)

Virtua Fighter Remix

Saturn

DURAL IN RECORDS & VS. MODE:

On the "Press Start" screen, press **Up**

17 times, then Start. Now enter the

Options screen. Dural's stats are now

on the Records screen. You can also

play as Dural in Vs. Mode.

CHANGE RING SIZE & LEVEL SELECT:

On the "Press Start" screen, press **Up**

12 times, then press Start. Now enter

the Options screen, highlight "Exit"

and press **Down, A**.

PLAY AS DURAL:

At the character select screen, press

Down, Up, Right, A + Left.

RANKING MODE:

At the title screen, press

Down/Right+C+L+R+Start.

VS. MODE - LEVEL SELECT:

After a "Vs." match has been

completed, press **L + R** to access a

menu which allows you to select

your character and level.

Lone Soldier

PlayStation

While playing the game, Pause and

enter any of the following...

Invulnerability: **Up, Left, Circle,**

Triangle, Up, Left.

Skip Level: **Down, Right, Circle,**

Triangle, Down, Right.

Full Weapons: **Right, Down, Circle,**

Triangle, Up, Right.

Motor Toon Grand Prix 2

PlayStation

This ones a little complicated. Keep

at it...you'll get the hang of it!

DEBUG MODE:

Choose "Goodies" from the main

menu. Hold any one of the **L** or **R**

buttons and push **Select**. You

should see four numbers in the lower

right corner of the screen. Now

pressing **R1=1, R2=2, L1=4, and L2=8**.

By combining the button presses (eg

R1 + L1 = 5) it is possible to compose

any base 16 (hex) number (and they

say games aren't educational!) The

Goodies have the following codes:

EXTRA CHARACTERS:

(4e43): **L1, Select, (R1 + R2 + L1 + L2),**

Select, L1, Select, (R1 + R2), Select.

EXTRA TRACKS:

(4154): **L1, Select, R1, Select, (R1 + L1),**

Select, L1, Select.

MOTOR TOON R:

(4e31): **L1, Select, (R2 + L1), Select, (R1**

+ R2), Select, R1, Select.

SUBMARINE X:

(5358): **(R1 + L1), Select, (R1 + R2),**

Select, (R1 + L1), Select, L2, Select.

TANK COMBAT:

(5443): **(R1 + L1), Select, L1, Select, L1,**

Select, (R1 + R2), Select.

ADVANCED OPTIONS:

Hold **L1+L2+R1+R2** whilst choosing

Options to obtain lots more options.

Sony Replays & Ghosts:

Hold down **R1** when selecting any

saved game to divert the game to

the built-in replays on the CD. You

can now watch or race against

ghosts of the Sony team's best times.



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Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

It was a book...

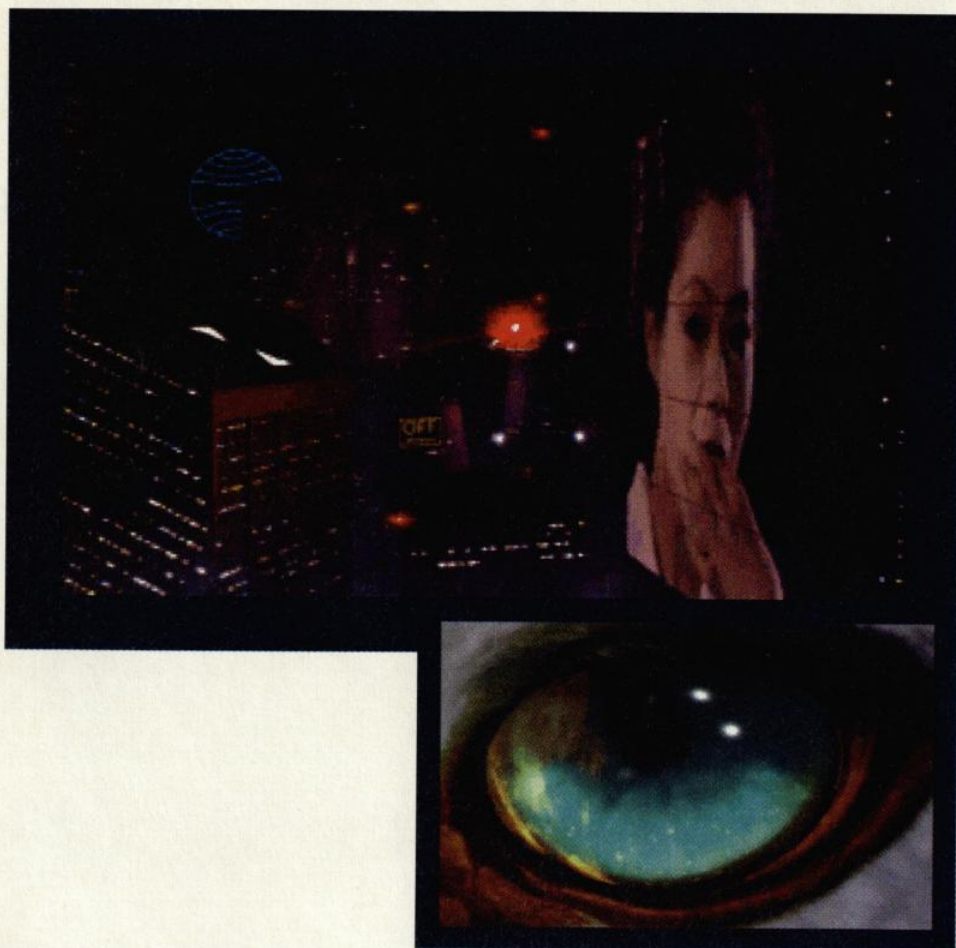
That became a movie...

That became the phenomenon that is...

Blade Runner

Deckard will be returning soon...

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N64 - NOT WORTH THE HYPE
To HYPER,

I'm upset with the hype and publicity that the N64 is receiving. From some of the reviews I've read in other magazines it sounds like it's going to change the world forever and almost persuaded me to wait for one. But now that I have played both games available on it, I hate to say that it's just another games system. It still needs good games to make use of all its grunt and it still needs consumer support.

When the first batch of super consoles became available it was a paradigm leap in gaming. Everyone sold their 16 bit consoles to get their hands on one because they could do things that 16-bit consoles couldn't do. They added completely new dimensions in gameplay with the 3D graphics that were available. But the N64 doesn't and can't do this, any style of game that is coming out on the N64 could be released with the same gameplay on the PSX but just not as sexy, and the leap in graphics isn't that great either, because with the limited resolution on a TV most games don't need that much power.

I'm just saying that the extra 32 bits doesn't justify selling a super console to go out and get one because it doesn't offer the leap in gaming that a lot of magazines have made it out to. Stop getting so excited.

STUART VAN EYSDEN
The first games on the N64 are truly amazing, but yes, you're right when you say that the N64 is not a paradigm leap from the PlayStation or Saturn (you only need to look at Tomb Raider for proof). However Nintendo games are legendary for their style and playability and the Nintendo 64 is worthy of all the hype it's getting, even though it isn't going to change the world. The machine is certainly getting consumer support in the US and Japan and now all it needs for success is a larger library of kick ass titles.

TOO MANY CHOICES

Dear HYPER,

I could go on about how awesome your mag is and all, but you already know that. Besides, my tongue is dry, and I don't think that licking genitalia is gonna do it any good.

The real reason I wrote was

because there's something that I really have to get off my chest.

It is quite obvious that the video games industry is more than a little disjointed with consumers. New systems are always in the pipeworks, and even before these reach the market, a whiz-bang successor has already been planned. All the while the humble gamer is presented with an astonishing array of hardware and software (both good and bad), to the extent that the purchase of any new system is no longer a secure purchase. I look back at when I bought my Sega Master System (ahh, those were the days!), when the only competition was the NES. I was confident that both could co-exist, and that either would provide years of enjoyment, and I was right.

Now however, there is so much competition that the video game industry has been forced to make technological advancement a priority, while the games take a ride in the back seat. How many people were coerced into purchasing a 3DO, with the belief that it would be number one in the end? Even I was tempted. However, they soon discovered that they had made a grave mistake, when new beasts from Sega and Sony appeared. And now, owners of these machines are presented with the same dilemma.

Sony plan to have their next PlayStation out in 1997, and Sega seem quite eager to improve their technology, in light of the apparent 'weakness' of the Saturn. They only consider it weak because it isn't based on the latest 128-bit nanotechnology computer architecture (you know, the type that God uses when he wants to play Quake!). But really, who cares? I purchase a games system with one thought in my mind - many, many years of enjoyable playing. Not six months of worrying about saving enough for the latest upgrades or, heaven forbid, a brand new system. I think that this is a great injustice to regular gamers everywhere, and something which I fear will only get worse until a company is prepared to take their system all the way. Personally, I'm gonna go with the N64, despite the wait, because Nintendo is the only company which I feel has real respect for its fans (the



JOANNE ARNOTT CAME VERY CLOSE TO NABbing ONE OF THE MOTOR TOON 2 PRIZES...
A STERLING EFFORT

wait IS worth it). After all, it will be released with lots of games, lots of support, and an honest and fair reputation behind it.

One point before I leave however, no disrespect to any 3DO, Saturn or PlayStation owners out there. They're all great systems with some phenomenal titles. It's just a shame about the competition that's driving them to their premature deaths.

ANDREW MONTESANTI
We live in a capitalist world and competition is the name of the game, unfortunately. In a perfect world Sega, Nintendo and Sony would get together and build a kick ass system and everyone would make games for it, but we don't live in that sort of world. In this world, everyone wants their slice of the pie and that means building their own proprietary system and charging licensing fees to publish on it, as well as keeping ahead of (or on par with) the rest by releasing new systems every few years. This situation is not going to change in the short term. If you want to look on the positive side, this cut-throat and multi-million dollar battle for market share is probably leading to superior games as no one is going to accept C grade product any more.

PLAYSTATION PROBLEMS

Dear HYPER Crew,
I am writing to you in the hope that you can address my

fears about the Sony PlayStation. Recently, while I was reading through a British PlayStation Magazine, I found a disturbing amount of letters claiming that the PlayStation has a problem that causes it to have a short lifespan. All these letters stated that the PlayStation "skipped FMV sequences, speech, etc," and after a while would not read CDs at all. The reason given for this was a very bad design fault that meant excessive use of the PlayStation (according to one company, over half an hour) made the plastic holder that holds the CD buckle from the heat. One of the companies that was questioned also claimed that 4 to 5 PlayStations were being brought back a week with this problem. This leads me to this question: How long can I expect to have a working PlayStation? Considering that the warranty only lasts 12 months, it concerns me that it is likely my PlayStation may break down, leaving me to cover the cost of repairs.

All the letters were from Britain so I would like to know how this problem happened to any Australian PlayStation owners and whether Sony plan to do anything to correct this design fault, which would seem more economically viable than replacing their machines every time they brake down. After all, there aren't many people who would use their PlayStation for periods less

than 2 and a half hours all the time. What's going on?

Thanks

CONCERNED

We've had a couple of letters saying that the PlayStation sometimes skips FMV etc and in fact my machine certainly does just that. Sony have not admitted any fault though but if you've got any doubts at all have your machine looked at during the warranty period.

OVER-THE-TOP CENSORSHIP

Dear HYPER,

I've been seeing a lot lately about the ridiculously over-the-top censorship of video and computer games which is currently occurring in Australia. And it seems when games are being banned here that are freely available in countries like the US, UK and Japan, you've got to wonder whether Australia is really the developed country it pretends to be. I can't personally imagine myself ever having the arrogance or the audacity for force my own view personal view onto millions of others - particularly if these views were to be so far out of touch with the rest of the developed world, as is obviously the case here. Now some questions:

1. I've read that 100s of software developers are completely by-passing the N64 (due to Nintendo attempting to force excessive regulations on them) and are instead committing to something called

the 'Bandai Powerplayer' which supposedly has an Apple CPU. Any news on this?

2. If you could live somewhere with the most relaxed games censorship laws, name some countries you might consider relocating to.

Future One-Way Ticket holder

HAMILTON, VIC

Australia has the strictest guidelines in the world for the classification of video and computer games, along with Germany, and the lack of an 'R' category for adult oriented material is a completely ridiculous. As for your questions, 1. It's not exactly true. Nintendo never wanted hundreds of developers for the N64, it wanted a select 'Dream Team' but even some of these development teams have been hesitant about developing because of high fees and regulation. As for them all developing for the Bandai Powerplayer (otherwise known as the Pippin), I doubt it, although you will see a few new games for that strange little beastie. 2. Almost anywhere but Australia - the US, England, France etc.

TOOL MAN TALKING

Dear HYPER,

You got the sickest mag of all time.. I remember the first issue, probably just a shit mag I thought. But I was wrong.

And one thing. F*ck Nintendo, they think their good 'cause

they got a 64 bit Machine. Ha. Big shit. PlayStation's got more contracts with Better Game Companies. I bet Street Fighter Alpha 2 isn't on N64. Who cares about the graphics? I mean yeah I wouldn't mind good graphics but the gameplay is more important. SONY RULZ!

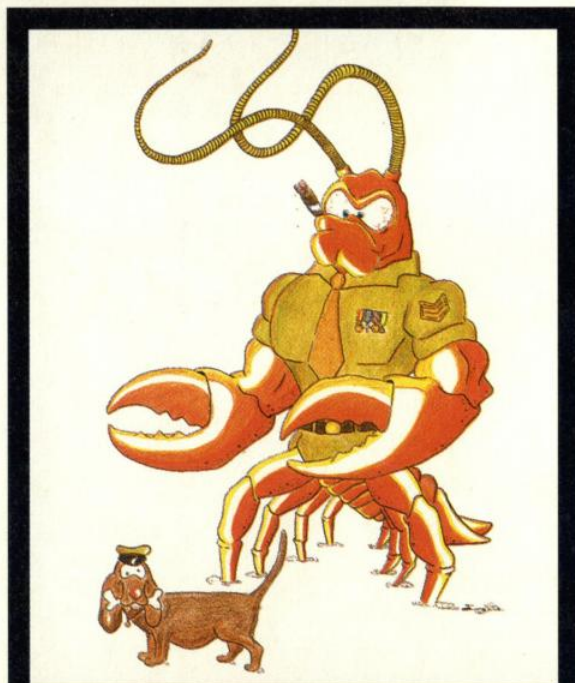
OK down to the questions.

1. What's the difference with Sim City 2000 CD and Disk?
2. How come Street Fighter Alpha series isn't on PC?
3. What do you think is personally better, Sony or Sega?
4. How much will the gun cost for Sony PlayStation? Does any game come with it?

Keep up the good work. Mad site too!

OLIVER CHAU BUI

Thanks for the compliments but how can you have been reading HYPER from issue one and still send in this ridiculous letter? Slagging off one game system just because you own another is immature and stupid and if you knew anything you'd know that the first Nintendo 64 offerings are awesome in both the graphics and gameplay departments. 1. One's on CD, the other's on disk. 2. It's probably on its way. 3. What do you think is better - your brain or your ass? Oh sorry, in your case they're the same thing. 4. You can get the Predator light gun which is PSX compatible for \$79.95 and Time Crisis will come with a gun when that is released.



SCOTT DUNGATE HAD ANOTHER GREAT BIT OF ARTWORK FROM THE COMP... BIT OF A CRUSTATION FIXATION EH SCOTT?

Letters

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Dear HYPER Crew,

As a third time writer, and long time subscriber to your fine magazine, I would first like to say, keep up the good work. Secondly, I would like to get something off my chest. As most readers know there has been a great deal of arguing and speculation between two games, Duke Nukem 3D and the iD sensation that is Quake.

I often buy the odd English PC Mag to check out what is up over there, and they too have idiots writing to them asking stupid questions about the two games, and people making ridiculous comments about one being better than another. When all is said and done, however, the obvious remains.

And that is? Differences.

That's all.

I personally love both. For different reasons. No one can deny the fun to be had by setting a trap of pipe-bombs for a victim and watching them blow to bits. Just as no one can deny the coolness of firing a grenade into the wall behind your target and blowing a hole in their back. They're different, but they're both fun!

Am I wrong? No one can deny the light sourcing in Quake is dynamic to say the least, and the same goes for the humour of Duke. When are people going to stop being so narrow minded? Why can't they see the best of both worlds? I just can't see anything to piss and moan

about either game. So what if you can't crouch in Quake, big deal. Duke 3D isn't fully configurable. There is no Zoom in Duke, is that any reason to hate is over Quake? Of course not!

So what if the characters aren't 3D in Duke, that only fits with the Comic style of it. The gloominess of Quake does likewise.

For all those idiots who have to love one or the other, I say get a life, there is heaps of fun to be had with both. It's a wonder any of you can see past your noses to play either.

There, I've had my say.

BRAD J AMEER BEG
Victoria

Finally, an oasis of sanity in this gaming desert of madness. As we've always said here, you

play whatever game you like and as long as you're happy, we're happy.

DON'T COMPLAIN

Dear HYPER,

I'm writing in response to every other letter that criticises certain categories, and has complaints of games eg: "Doom sux, it's old and boring" or "Beat 'em ups are all too much like Street Fighter". It's all wrong. You see, people like that expect something new ALL the time (lots of people do), but some things you just cannot have. Since the beginning of the 90's, there has been a great leap in the gaming technology, from the old Atari 2600's to the Next Generation platforms and N64. During those few years, heaps of new categories have been made for games such as 3D shoot 'em ups, 3D fighting, all sorts of simulators, etc.

Now, you people really have to understand, that no matter what game comes out, it's going to fall under one category. There will be a point in time where all gaming comes to an end because of the fact that soon, all game companies will run out of ideas. Now I know that the HYPER crew might say things like "Yeah, and that time might be 1 000 000 years" or "Those guys WILL always have some trick up there sleeve!" Not always. It will not last forever. Games are just going to keep coming under each category until all the games are only slightly different.

People will be biting their hats, with frustration and boredom. I guess that what my message is, is that you should stop complaining. You make me sick. All your dumb arguments

make me sick: "Is PSX better than the Saturn", "Is DN3D better than Quake?", "Doom is the best and it still rules!" or "Doom sucks, it's old and crap". Who cares! All that you're doing is making fools of yourselves. Just enjoy the games that you like, and keep the whingeing to yourselves. It's about time that there were some letters in HYPER that actually asked questions, and not complaining and moaning and groaning about nothing but negative opinions.

Come on! HYPER should be a mag where you buy your money's worth, and not have to worry about looking at other people who have had too much pride in themselves. The letter section of HYPER makes things look slightly dull. How about some positive opinions for once? Regards,

DAN TYRE
Nerang, QLD

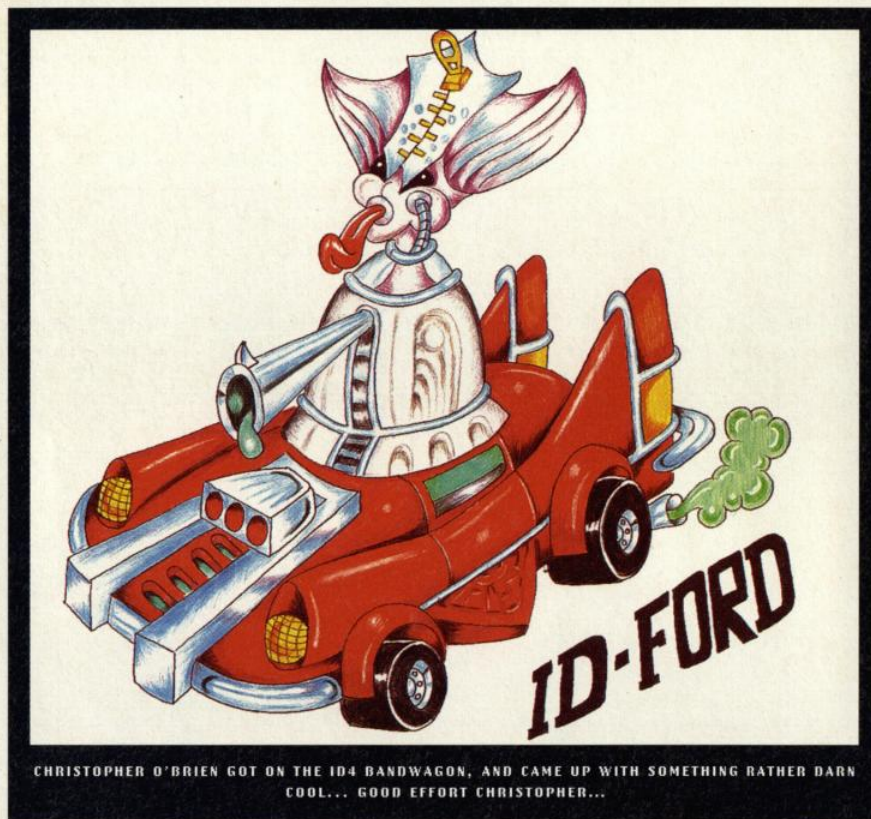
Thanks Dan, but that was just a big whinge about whingers. Where were your positive comments? Where were your questions? How about leading by example...

AMIGA RESURRECTION?

Hiya Guys (and girls:), I enjoy reading your magazine and am an owner of a Super Nintendo and an Amiga 1200. I was just wondering if the Amiga gets back onto its feet (and we all hope it does) would you ever consider covering the Amiga games scene?

ADAM CANTWELL.
Victoria

addy@ozemail.com.au
Well Adam, we're sorry to say that there doesn't look like much hope that the Amiga will come back but if it does then we'll be here to cover it and it's games.



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Sega Mega Drive 2 with 2 control pads and 5 games: Toy Story, Krusty's Super Fun House, Columns, James Pond 3 and Mega Games 1 (Super Hang On, FIFA Soccer and Columns). Call Sean Foley on (06) 297 5181

Manga Videos: Fist Of The North Star - \$15, New Dominion 9/10 - \$12. Will swap for other Manga titles. Both brand new, both PAL. Call (02) 9528 6079. Sydney Only.

Dungeon Master 2 - \$40, King's Quest 7 - \$40, Rise of the Robots - \$20, Shadowlands - \$10. All games except R.O.T.R and Shadowlands are boxed with manuals. Call (03) 9571 4160 ask for David, Victoria only.

Sony PlayStation Inc. Demo Disc, 2 Controllers, Mem. Card, 7 Games: Resident Evil, Alien Trilogy, Total NBA, Wing Commander 3, Phisic Detective, Disc World, Street Fighter TM. (Everything PAL!) Paid \$1500, Sell for \$800! Call Fin: (042) 975 247.

SNES, 2 pads, Action Replay 2, Super Game Boy & 5 games (MK3, DKC) all with boxes and instructions. \$400 or swap for PlayStation with one controller. Call (052) 312 213, ask for Luke.

SNES 2 control pads, 18 games ie, DK 1 and 2, Flashback, Super Metroid, Syndicate, etc. Also Pro Action Replay, all boxed with Ins. plus 100s of cheats. As new, \$700, ph 051 55 3883, or write J. Macklin, 1/5 Barkes Ave, Lakes Entrance VIC 3909.

NTSC Nintendo Going Cheap! 2 controllers, Nintendo Advantage joystick, Zapper gun, Game Genie, and 35 games including Battletoads, Super Mario Bros 3, and Ninja Turtles 3. Any offers considered. Phone Scott (07) 5578 8513.

NTSC PSX games with instructions and boxes, \$50 each. FIFA 96, Air Combat, MK3, Ridge Racer and Toshinden. Crash Bandicoot \$40 (no instructions). Will also swap for almost any PSX game (NTSL or PAL). Phone Jeremy on (03) 9434 4802

PlayStation Games: Need For Speed - \$65, Road Rash - \$65, Warhawk - \$55, Wing Commander 3 - \$50. Will negotiate prices, or swap. All PAL, all brand new. Call (02) 9528 6079.

NES with Mario 3, AFL, Mario 1, Turtles 2 + a couple more. Phone Jeremy on (03) 9434 4802.

SNES, 2 controllers, Adaptor, 7 games include: Judge Dredd, Loony Tunes, Bubsy 1 & 2, Mario All Stars, Mario World and Battletoads in Battle Maniacs. Phone (09) 307 5478 and ask for Anthony. (Perth only)

SNES games - Super SF2, Samurai Showdown, Fatal Fury Special, DragonBall 2 Art of Fighting and converter for \$250 the lot. Contact Danny on (02) 9579 5083.

Mega Drive Games: Streets of Rage \$25; Streets of Rage II \$35; Green Dog \$25; Tas Mania \$20; Mickey Mouse (CO I) \$20; Ghost Busters \$20; Jurassic Park \$30; Lion King \$45. The lot \$200 o.n.o. Contact Tim on (02) 9896 4943 between 4 and 9 pm weekdays.

SNES with 3 control pads (2 normal, 1 arcade). Scope with 6 games and Battle Toads In Battle Maniacs. Most come with instruction manuals and all come with boxes. Worth about \$330 but I'll sell it for \$200. Phone Bryce on (091) 921 936.

PlayStation games: NBA Jam T.E. \$40; Total NBA '96 \$55; Tekken \$45; Tekken 2 \$60; Doom \$65; Wipeout \$40; 3D Lemmings \$30; Worms \$60; Loaded \$70; ESPN Extreme Games \$60. All games in perfect condition with instructions. Phone Matt Clifford on 0412 004 410 after 4pm.

SNES games: MK2-\$50, Sim City-\$40, The Lost Vikings (US Version)-\$30, Mario World-\$30, or SNES with afore mentioned games, Doom, Yoshi's Island, MK3, 2 controllers, Program Pad, cheats - \$500. Call Kaj (pronounced 'Ki') on (070) 65 33 54.

One Must Fall 2097 registered version, 101 games PC CD ROM, Sherlock Holmes PC CDROM, 80 games PC CDROM. Each for anything more than \$40. Contact Dinesh on (066) 85 74 51.

Sega Mega Drive, 2 pads (1 fighter pad) and cool games : Sonic & Knuckles, The Jungle Book, Aladdin, NBA Jam and Jurassic Park (Rampage Edition Only) - for \$200. Call Robert after 4pm on (02) 9542 2220.

3D Blaster VLB, Plug 'n' Play. 1mb VRAM, 1mb DRAM. Comes with Hi-octane, Rebel Moon, Magic Carpet Plus, Nascar Racing and Flight Unlimited -\$210. Call Aaron after 6pm on (077) 707 142.

Mega Drive 2 with 2 pads (1, 6 button) excellent condition in box with all cables, 9 great games in boxes with instructions. \$250. Call Adam on (091) 448 8933.

MS 2 with 9 games incl. MK \$155. MD gun 'n' games, Flashback, P. Rangers, Sonic 'n' Knuckles, MS converter -\$195. Call Michael on (02) 9609 7906.

For PC-CD ROM. Zork Anthology, Return to Zork & Zork Nemesis - all for \$80. Negotiable. Call Sara on (02) 9564 6295. Will sell Games separately.

Mega Drive 2, one control and NBA Jam for \$85.00 ono. Call Luke on (03) 9796 2252 . VIC Only.

MAC CD Games: Journeyman project 2 - \$55, SimCity 2000 CD Collection - \$55, Spycraft - \$75. All boxed with instructions. Call Andrew on (02) 9825 0813.

Mega Drive Urban Strike game, will sell for \$50 ono. Boxed with instructions and cheats. Call George on (049) 594 127 (after 4pm).

Mega Drive & Mega CD with 2 Joy Pads, 5 Mega Drive Games & Mega CD Games : Road Rash 2, NBA Jam, Another World, World Cup Rugby 95 & Aladdin. Mega CD Games - Road Avenger & Ground Zero Texas. Will Swap for PlayStation with 1 game or the lot for \$320 - negotiable. Call (054) 871 420 between 4.30pm - 10pm Sunday - Friday.

PlayStation Games: Battle Arena Toshinden 2, Street Fighter alpha - \$60 each or will swap for any decent PlayStation game. Both games in excellent condition. Call Daniel on (08) 8373 5172

PAL SNES - 2 pads, 4 games, including Mario All Stars, NBA Jam TE Starwing and Zelda. \$200 or will swap for a left handed electric guitar. Call Mark on (053) 823 184 (AH - VIC Residents only)

For Sale: Sega Gear, 2 games and 1 adaptor - \$160 ono. Worth \$349. If you buy before 23/12/96, you will only pay \$124 (ono)!! Call Chris on (03) 9583 2120 (after 6.30pm)

DKC \$50, Super Int. Cricket \$50, NHL '96 \$49, Jimmy Connors Tennis \$35.

CHEAP!! Sega Mega Drive 2 for sale. One Turbo control pad, 7 excellent games: Urban Strike, Road Rash 2, FIFA soccer, NHL 94, Sonic 1, Sonic 2 and Mortal Kombat. Great condition. \$200. Ph (076) 321 727 ask for Rhys (I will not sell separately).

Sega Mega Drive 2 and Mega-CD 2, 2 control pads, 19 games - all for \$700 or I will sell separately. Call (099) 71 1229 (WA callers only)

Super Nintendo with one control pad and 10 games: DKCII, Mario's Kart, NBA Jam, Mortal Kombat, Zelda III and Street Fighter II, The Mash, Mario All-Star, Battletoad, Bubsy. And Super Gameboy (if you have a Gameboy) Ring Michael Ducat on (054) 435 735. \$350 or ono.

Sega Mega Drive II with games. Road Rash III, Mortal Kombat I & II, Rugby League, Columns and Alex the Kid. Plus joystick and pad. \$175. Phone 063 683 304.

Mega Drive with 6 games. Includes Master System Converter and 11 Sega games. 2 joysticks (6 button) plus 1 control pad. Titles include Sonic 1, Road Rash, Outrun 2019 and more. \$300 (ono). Ph (02) 9972 3770 ask for Josh.

SNES, 2 games, Mario Kart and Nigel Mansell's World Championship, one controller, only 2 months old!! All in immaculate condition boxed with instructions. \$110. Call Pete after 4:30 pm on (076) 303 895.

PC CD-ROM game Descent 2. \$70 price negotiable. Will also swap for good PC game. Call (02) 9671 7085 and ask for Nash.

WANTED

PSX Games: Raiden Project, Resident Evil, BA Toshinden 2 or The Need For Speed will swap with Bust a Move 2 or Ridge Racer Revolution. but if you have SFA2, Die Hard Trilogy, Soul Edge or Marvel Super Hero will swap with Tekken 2, Crash Bandicoot, Wipeout 2097 or the 2 games above. Call on (02) 9360 6629.

Monkey Island and Monkey Island 2 for PC on disk or CD. Preferably boxed. Will pay good money. Call Luke (02) 9528 4684.

Alien vs Predator on SNES. Must be in good condition. Ask for John on (09) 293 4847. Must live in Perth

Help!! 1 Gameboy wanted. Must include power pack and at least 1 game. Will pay \$55 maximum. Phone (087) 231074, ask for Kodie (must be in Lowr South East of SA).

SWAPS

I will swap Need for Speed on PlayStation for Total NBA '96 or will sell for \$75. One month old. Ask for Andrew on (02) 621 7467.

NTSC PSX Games: Fifa 96, Crash Bandicoot, Ridge Racer, MK3, Air Combat and Toshinden for almost any other PSX games (NTSC or PAL). Phone Jeremy on (03) 9434 4802.

I'll swap the Lawnmower Man (SNES) for Sonic 3. Will sell for \$40 as well. Call David on (02) 9868 5037 after 4pm

I will swap Epic Pinball CD ROM (Shareware) for Shareware of any doom. Call David on (02) 9868 5037 after 4pm.

Swap Extreme Games on PlayStation for one of either Hi Octane, Destruction Derby, Road Rash or Ridge Racer Rev. Must be between Sydney and Newcastle. Call Luke on (043) 881 1852.

Wanting to swap PAL version of Resident Evil for Die Hard Trilogy or any other good offers. Will consider Discworld with another game. (Gold Coast only). Ask for Jason on (07) 5529 5702.

PENPALS

Hi, I'm looking for a female penpal aged between 11 and 13 who has a PC and likes the X Files and music. If you are interested write to Lachlan at 34 Harrabrook Ave, Five Dock Sydney NSW 2046.

Are you sick of writing to penpals that never write back? So am I! I'm looking for M/F penfriend around 13-15. I own a PlayStation and computer. I will reply. Please write to Kim Dixon, 1 Outlook Drive, Werribee VIC 3030.

Hi my name is Paul. I am 10 years old. I am looking for a penpal who has got one of these systems: N64, PlayStation, SNES, Lynx, Saturn, computer. It has to be a male aged 10-11. We could swap cheats and codes. My favourite games are Nights, Doom, Mario 64, Theme Park, MK3 and heaps more. Write to Paul Abrahams at 27 Sheppard Drive, Scoresby VIC 3179.

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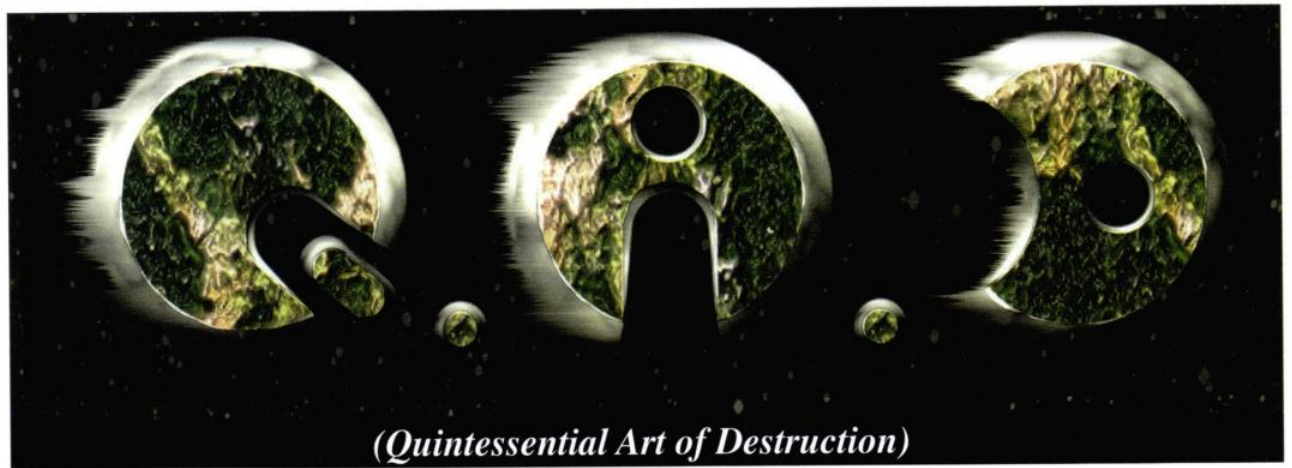


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