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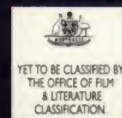
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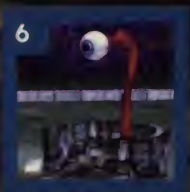
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AURAN



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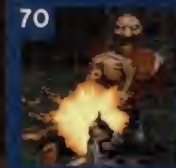
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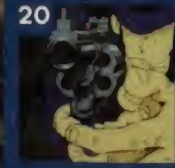
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AURAN - The Future of Game Development

Dan Toose investigates Aurant, makers of Dark Reign. Has Australia become the land of real time strategy games?

Hype It Up

Well, it's winter now... that time of year when you can use the cruddy weather as an excuse to stay inside and play video games. It's also that time of year when the game development companies of the world get together and show their wares at E3, and next issue we'll be looking at what was hot at the show.

Again, a Nintendo 64-less issue, so we'd better hope that the games start rolling in soon (although Mario Kart has been keeping us all content anyway). There's an interesting bit on the **DOCTOR 64** this month, which could prove to give the Nintendo 64 the same sort of piracy problems that any CD based system will have. Interestingly, Nintendo do seem to be taking care of their customers however, since they not only lowered the price of the N64, but also offered a free game to anyone bought the system before the price cut, which was awfully decent of them... although the offer is over now.

The PlayStation has had quite a decent showing this issue with **MICRO MACHINES V3** being the star of the cast. Another racer rolls in, as we get **RAY TRACERS** from Taito. Retro gamers will have something to smile about with **BALLBLAZER CHAMPIONS**, and Namco's **XEVIOUS 3D**. Rugby fans finally get a PSX game to meet their needs, Jonah Lomu's Rugby. Also, everything you need to know to get on top of **SOUL BLADE** is covered in our playguide.

Saturn land was pretty quiet, with the fairly average **TORICO** being little to satisfy the Sega fans out there.

The really exciting breakthrough is the new strategy game, **DARK REIGN**, which is a very hot contender for PC game of the year. We not only look hard at the game, but also the Aussie company behind it, Auran. **NEED FOR SPEED 2** arrives, which will no doubt make a lot of people happy, and while we're on racing, we're running a huge **INTERSTATE '76** comp, so all you road rage psychos can prove their skills online.

Sadly, this is George's last issue with us, as he's heading upstairs to take over Hyperactive, so he's still a Hyper crew member, just online. So send in your farewell gifts to George, and your welcoming gifts for Eliot, as he's tekken up the position.

I'm off to play more Dark Reign... later!

DAN



Not Just an Aftershock...

Even though Quake is still going strong in the world of multiplayer PC gaming, id are not simply resting on their butts collecting money. Oh contraire, the masters of first person shooters are now well underway with Quake 2, and just to prove it, we've got a bunch of screen shots here. The engine itself is not 100% complete, which will supposedly have amazingly sexy light sourcing compared to the original Quake, including coloured lighting, which should make everything look much more realistic (as if Quake wasn't realistic enough!). This is by no means a preview, since id aren't really telling anyone anything much about the game. Those that may think it looks just like some more Quake levels should think back to the release of Doom 2... it rocked much harder than its predecessor. More news on the Quake front (does it ever end?), a new Quake patch/add-on is on the way, called Quake - the Dark Ages, which essentially sounds like something that'll turn Quake into Hexen, with multiple character classes, and all sorts of neat magic items that add a lot more depth to the game. To check out the development of Dark Ages, go to <http://www2.telefragged.com/darkages/index2.htm>, where hopefully you should be able to download a demo from soon. The Dark Ages team claim that the monster AI they've been working on is far better than in Quake, and actually handles more like Quakebots so things should be much tougher and more entertaining... More news on both Quake 2 and Dark Ages later...

DT



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Multiplay Dedicated Games Network.





Nintendo might be feeling sick, thanks to the Doctor.

It seems that modern technology can only be an aid for video game pirates these days with the relatively new system on the market, the Nintendo 64, becoming the latest to fall victim to video game piracy. Many thought Nintendo's move to adopt cartridges and avoid the CD market would prove a safe decision as Sega and Sony fight a continual battle against CD software piracy that costs them millions of dollars each year, but only 8 months after the N64's Japanese launch cartridge, copiers have already appeared in Hong Kong.

The most widely known of these copiers is Bung Enterprises 'Doctor 64'. Including an 8 speed CD rom drive and 16 megabytes of ram, the Doctor 64 allows up to 70 games(in fact more than the whole N64 library at the moment) to be stored on one CD with a short wait to load individual games into the systems memory. As well as storing games on CD the Doctor 64 can

be connected to a PC enabling games to be loaded from the hard disk and even making them available for transfer over the internet. The Doctor 64's ingenious design reflects not only the advances in today's technology, but also the determination, size and seriousness of the growing problem of videogame piracy. As mentioned, Sega and Sony are fighting their own battles with PC CD rom copiers (now widely available at affordable prices) with various computer chips that disable the Saturn's and Playstation's copy protection systems selling overseas for as little as \$30 Australian.

While the option of cheap games may seem exciting to most people it is very important to recognise that videogame piracy effects the profits of the companies that make the games we love to play. Basically it robs the game makers of their rightful income and can adversely affect decisions to make any future games.

50



Even though video game piracy is illegal its still hard not to marvel at the design and ease of use of the Doctor 64. Here the unit shows its ability to copy cartridges to the PC via the parralel port connection (middle). Today it seems that no matter what the games format, pirates will always manage to duplicate and sell software. Combine this with the fact that technology and the distribution capabilities of the internet are ever increasing, is not hard to see that software pirates will be around for some time.



The N64 sits underneath the Doctor 64 allowing connection through the N64's expansion port which was designed for the N64 writable hard disk drive. The unit contains a 8-speed CD rom drive and can also be used to play video CD movies under the M-PEG format. Its possible to replace the current CD rom drive with a faster unit(up to 20 speed) for those who lack the patience to wait for the games to load (about 30 seconds for a game like Turok which is 8 Mb)

50



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NINTENDO⁶⁴

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Just Puttin' Around

After bringing us the Ultra 3D Pinball series for the PC (with Ultra 3D Pinball: The Lost Continent still to come), Sierra have applied their Ultra 3D concept to the adrenalin-charged, extremely masculine world of... Minigolf? It may sound completely lame-o, but after knocking the small ball around for a while, we decided that it's a winner! What really got us grinning was the True Putt mode, where you control the strength of your putt with actual physical movement of your mouse. Unlike the Easy Putt mode which is set up with an energy bar like more traditional golf games, True Putt means that the faster you slide your mouse - the harder your putter swings. What this means, is that Ultra 3D Minigolf is rather addictive indeed. There are about 18 different holes ranging from the classic Windmill to bizarre greens like Moonbase and Haunted House. Each hole has various interactive objects which do different things to your golf ball, from firing cannons which can launch you to a different area to animals and aliens who either help or hinder your shot. The 3D courses are quite visually spanking, with stacks of variety requiring a tad of puzzle solving in some cases. There's also a time-attack mode for some dextrous gamers to race the clock and most of your other standard golfing options are here too. Pure and simple fun, folks. EF

OVERFLOW

Squaresoft have been cooking up some tasty things back at their magical labs. They've been developing a brand new RPG called Parasite Eve, which is rumoured to be a cross between Resident Evil and Final Fantasy VII! Based on a piece of Japanese horror/science fiction, the plot seems to be based around a Frankenstein-style experiment gone wrong, which results in a new not-very-nice-at-all species which threatens to destroy humanity. Ouch. At this stage it's all ultra-secret but we'll dig up more info as it comes to hand.

The Nintendo 64 has just received an awesome new dual-arcade joystick from Mad Catz. Featuring a flightstick-style joystick with a trigger, hat switch and four buttons, a classic arcade-style joystick and eight buttons set into the unit, this looks like a very versatile beast. Perfect for upcoming N64 titles like Wild Choppers and Ultra Combat, we want one now! It's already in US stores, so it shouldn't be too long off...

It gets worse. Virtual Pets are taking over the world! It looks like the Tamagotchi was just the beginning. Sony have released a Playstation game in Japan called Gambare Morikawa-kun 2 which allows gamers to grow, nurture and teach a virtual pet. There are a number of stages your screwed-up little beastie must go through to acquire knowledge and manners, and it's entirely up to you to teach it right from wrong. Ah, just thinking of all the twisted pets Hyper readers could create sends shivers up my spine.

Maxis are readying to release the highly anticipated sequel to SimCity 2000. Dubbed SimCity 3000 (duh), the game will boast photo-realistic graphics and give gamers the chance to view their creations anywhere from street-level to 50,000 feet in the air. This time around, you'll also be able to observe your SimCitizens go about their daily routines (sitting on the bog, picking their nose... maybe), and receive feedback from them on your current progress. Sounds like a great game made even greater.

On the Hyper "Ooops!" front... Hopefully none of you were traumatised by Picky's appearance in the Fighters Megamix review. Apparently he's decided that life as a drag queen was over rated, and is strappin' the pads back on. The other oops was the F50-6 cylinders thing in letters... which got enough email complaints to warrant Dan never listening to George again for info on cars.



Virtua Pets

Got that problem where Mum and Dad won't let you have another dog because you tested to see if you could make it fly by placing a king sized firecracker up it's date and lighting it? Or maybe you thought the cat would be warmer after 20 minutes in the clothes dryer? Well Bandai have come up with something that's perfect for all those who either can't handle (or don't want) the responsibility of keeping a real pet, by coming up with the perfect solution...

Tamagotchi, the virtual pet. Essentially, you have to take care of this little alien blob that emerges from an egg, all on your little LCD screen. Naturally there are the basic things you have to do, like feed your pet, play with it so it feels loved... but also some more menial and degrading tasks for you to do, like clean up it's crap, give it shots when it gets sick, turn the light out when it goes to sleep. However you do get the added pleasure of disciplining your Tamagotchi, which is both

helpful to it's growth, and good fun.

Everything's done with just three buttons, making the whole process ultra simple. How you treat and take care of your virtual pet will affect what it grows into. What I had ended up looking like Mick Jagger's sperm (which is probably best if you don't try to dwell upon it), due to some maltreatment in the earlier stages of it's life.

Apparently the Tamagotchi is the biggest craze in Japan nowadays, with car accidents being caused by people attending to their Tamagotchi whilst driving through busy roads. We imagine the RTA hope the Tamagotchi never gets that popular in Australia.



“I can race against 3 friends.
What use is that?”

SCOTT NO-MATES



Go head to head to head to head in the greatest game for the human race, Mario Kart 64.

- Up to 4 players race against each other at the same time.
- All action appears on your TV in magnificent split-screen vision.
- This unique act of software magic comes courtesy of the only piece of hardware with 4 ports, Nintendo 64.
- It's a 4 player, 64 bit, go-karting fun-fest.

MARIO KART
64



One For Control Freaks

The Playstation Analog Controller will finally be available here in Australia around September. As soon as your hands wrap themselves around this sexy piece of hardware, you'll love the smooth, precise feeling of the two analog sticks. As opposed to the Nintendo 64 analog stick which is smaller and springier, these two babies glide effortlessly and are much more comfortable for your thumbs. You may also notice some other minor changes, such as the top Left 2 and Right 2 shoulder buttons being slightly larger, and the inclusion of a new switch in the center of the pad which allows you to select between the classic digital mode and the new analog and analog joystick modes. So which games will support this wonderful new creation? Porsche Challenge, Rally Cross, V-Rally, Ace Combat 2, Colony Wars, Crash Bandicoot 2 and the very funky Rapid Racer are all confirmed to be compatible, and no doubt there will be some spunky new games in the works to make full use of the new joypad. One intriguing title which spun our heads around exorcist-style, was a mysterious game called Croc which looks very much like a Super Mario 64-inspired creation. Sony have kept this one pretty well under wraps for now, but we'll preview this hot-looking game for you next issue. From the screen shots we've seen, it seems obvious that Croc will utilise the new Analog Controller and maybe even beat Nintendo at their own game. Sony are definitely onto a winner here, so let's just hope the software doesn't let them down.

EF



SATURN

1. Tomb Raider
2. Die Hard Trilogy
3. Manx TT
4. Sega Rally
5. Ultimate Mortal Kombat
6. Command & Conquer
7. Virtua Cop
8. Sonic 3D Blast
9. NBA Jam
10. Virtua Fighter 2

PLAYSTATION

1. Porsche Challenge
2. Soul Blade
3. Crash Bandicoot
4. F1
5. Tekken 2
6. Destruction Derby
7. Die Hard Trilogy
8. Cool Boarders
9. Destruction Derby 2
10. Tekken

PC CD ROM

1. X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter
2. Need For Speed 2
3. Interstate '76
4. Diablo
5. Magic the Gathering: Battler
6. Heroes of Might & Magic 2
7. MDK
8. KKND
9. Outlaws
10. Comanche 3.0

NINTENDO 64

1. Super Mario Kart
2. Killer Instinct Gold
3. Shadows of the Empire
4. Super Mario 64
5. Cruis'n USA

CHARTS SUPPLIED BY HITECH WORLD & KMART AUSTRALIA

Competition Winners

The amount of paper cuts the HYPHER staff sustained in drawing all of these miserable comps will no doubt go unnoticed and unappreciated. Are ya Happy?!

See Letters for **Soul Glo** competition winners

Terminator: Skynet
Rob Finlayson (QLD)

Simon Chapman (SA)
Chris Seeto (NSW)
S. Gillespie (QLD)
Neil Wickman (NSW)

Interstate '76
Bill Lasgis (VIC)
Liam Moore (NSW)
Calum Winning (WA)
Brad McCormick (VIC)
Josh Kautto (NSW)
R. Anderson (QLD)

Porsche Challenge
Michael Green (NSW)
Travis Jones (VIC)
Darren Treeby (WA)
Cameron Shea (NSW)

Quake Mission Pack 1
Jacob Lyons (VIC)
Kai Sinor (SA)
Ryan O'Connor (SA)
C. Magrath (NSW)
Ben Sochan (NSW)
Greg Petchkovsky (NSW)

Independence Day Pack
Luke Daniel (NSW)
Chris Mulholland (NSW)
Rachel Webb (NSW)
Josh Hobbs (QLD)
Michael Warner (SA)
Brian Kealley (WA)
N. George (TAS)
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T. Sime (VIC)
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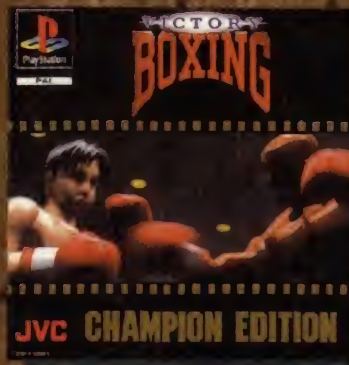
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Got a Thirst for Blood?

3D doom-clones don't get much more gratuitous than this. This game would put most splatter films to shame with its pitchfork wielding, flare-gun lobbing, voodoo-doll stabbing action. Based on the Duke Nukem 3D engine, Blood is up there as one of the better doomers around and will surely satiate any blood-thirsty gamer. Thanks to Roadshow's boundless generosity, you could win one of the 20, yes that's right folks, 20 copies of this game that we just so happen to have here at HYPER HQ, and you'll be in shotgun heaven. Just answer us this simple question:

How many undead, cult-worshipping gunfighters does it take to change a lightbulb?

Etch your answer in blood on the back of an envelope (No wait! I'm just kidding!!) and post it off to:

But I thought It Was Beetroot Juice, HYPER, PO Box 634, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012.



inbred Gamers

Breeding amongst the HYPER readership is actually something we should be trying to prevent, but anyhow... EA slipped us six copies of the hilarious Redneck Rampage for all you PC users to dribble over. So grab ya pardner and dosey-doh or whatever. Just generate enough intelligence to answer this question:

You know you're a redneck if... A) None of your cars have wheels, but your house does, B) your mother has more facial hair than you do, C) everyone in your suburb has the same last name or D) your wife rides shotgun.

Scribble a response on the rear of an envelope and post it to:

Yeehaw Grandmaw, HYPER, PO Box 634, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012.

Who the Hell are You?

He's a bloody sci-fi legend. Who? Yes, that's who. Confused? Doctor Who has got to be one of the best things to come out of England since the Beatles. The TV series consistently provided the world with some of the funniest looking b-grade monster costumes you will ever see. "Hmmm, we need another villain for this week's episode... I know... Grab that bucket, those rubber gloves, and that large green texta... Now just hold still... Ahh! Truly terrifying!" Of course, at the time we all thought it was a special effects showcase. The Time Lord lives on and Village Roadshow have given us two vids to just simply give away! The Monster of Peladon (Jon Pertwee as the Doctor) and The Hand of Fear (the awesome Tom Baker) are two classic episodes that could be yours, all yours...

Where is the safest place to stick your Sonic Screwdriver?

Fling your answers our way on the back of an envelope.

I watch Dr Who just for the sidekicks, HYPER, PO Box 634, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012.



win win win



Manga Madness

Polygram Video dropped by the other day, and while they were looking the other way, we nabbed five copies of Secret Of Mamo, Castle of Cagliostro and Goodbye Lady Liberty out of their briefcase. Anime fans everywhere, this is the comp for you. Actually Polygram wanted you to have 'em, the whole set! All you have to do to kick back in front of your TV with your very own Lupin series, is tell us...

Which SNES RPG had a very similar title to Secret of Mamo? A) Secret of Mana, B) Secret of Mango, C) Secret of Dwango or D) Secret of Dapto?

Just send your response on the back of an envelope to:

Bizarre Manga Sandwich, HYPER, PO Box 634, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012.



i Feel the Need...

...The need to breed. Well not exactly, but you can hoon around in some horny sports cars on your Playstation instead. EA have lobbed six copies of Need For Speed 2 our way, and they're looking for a good home. We can't guarantee you success in the department of physical-needs, but your hands sure will get a workout. Now before this innuendo gets out of control, answer the following...

If you were caught out in a paddock doing donuts, would you:

A) be involved in illegal drug taking, B) be spinning in circles, C) mating with confectionary bread products or D) be grossly overweight?

Stick your answer on the back of an envelope and send it to:

Mmmm Donuts, HYPER, PO Box 634, Strawberry Hills, NSW, 2012.

"A must for fanatical fighting game freaks and well worth a look for everyone else."

9 out of 10

The Official
Australian
Playstation
Magazine



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BY TIM LEVY



THE HYPER CREW CHOOSE TO GAME AT TIMEZONE, WHO HAVE THE LATEST AND GREATEST SELECTION OF ARCADE GAMES IN THE COUNTRY. A BIG THANKS TO TIMEZONE!

Rampage World Tour MIDWAY

Not as much as a sequel but an equal to the classic arcade game of the same name - RAMPAGE.

The story so far... Somehow you- Joe/sophine Citizen, have become involved in a biological experiment in which you have taken on the form of giant animals, which coincidentally resemble three of the all time, on screen reluctant anti-heroic monsters- Godzilla (Lizzy), King Kong (George) and the Werewolf (Ralph). Escaping from the evil S.C.U.M Laboratory was easy and now one finds oneself in the medium density city of Pretoria. After making the joint decision (using a series of grunts, growls and roars) to "wipe S.C.U.M labs from the face of the Earth", you set out on your path of destruction. But don't think that this is going to be an easy task as those humans don't take kindly to strangers in these parts. With the ability to punch, kick, jump and of course eat, you take on everything that mankind can throw at you.

The armed forces have responded to the threat with attack helicopters, tanks, mortars and enough soldiers to create an army with. To make matters worse, the local vigilantes and heavily armed police have teamed up to increase firepower and are rapidly becoming more than just a thorn in your monstrously large side.

The object in each of the 63 stages/cities is to destroy all the buildings whilst dodging the incessantly annoying attacks made by the human defenders. Make sure you don't get caught in a vicious crossfire whilst climbing buildings. If cross-fire becomes totally overwhelming, make a run for it and start destroying another part of the city.

A health O-meter keeps a check on vitality and ranges from "excellent health" to "deaths door". Bullets, grenades, mortar shells etc, all slowly take their toll on your tough hide and once energy is totally depleted you return to your original human state (V. humorous). To increase vitality, just bend down and scoop one of those delectable human beings (serves them right for not fleeing the battle zone). Each human eaten only adds oh so slightly to vitality, therefore when health is looking low forget the buildings and concentrate on munching.

The building height ranges from 2 to 6 stories and up. In each building, which also vary in width, lies a smorgasbord of hidden bonuses. This is where it is important to see actually what you are going to eat. Hamburgers, French fries and eggs are safe to eat and increase vitality. Stay away from eating electrical goods, as your character will become electrified and lose some health points. Bottles with skull and cross bones (poison) and are also bad for your stomach. Furniture can be grabbed and partially eaten and used as projectile vomit to take out city defenders directly below. Look for the hidden bonuses in rooms with half-drawn curtains or flower-boxes on the windowsills. Other bonuses include more time, more power, a mega food dose and most importantly a "world tour" ticket. On each ticket is a flag representing the country of your next destination. After obtaining a ticket and making it to the next round, you will find your self flying through the air on the back of a Boeing 747. The flight to the next unfortunate city doubles as a challenge stage. Point bonuses are awarded for piloting the 747 into colourful balloons randomly drifting in the air. Avoid the balloons carrying missiles (ouch). At the end of every stage, a score board shows the amount and types of damage you have inflicted on the previous city. Obscure bonuses, such as "pig out" and "twisted metal" are awarded for eating and destroying exceptional amounts of people and vehicles. Buddy bashing is also encouraged by point bonuses.

Overall, Rampage World Tour is an often amusing comic book inspired multi-player adventure which will bring out the monster in you. And remember- watch what you eat.

❖ ❖ ❖ (extra ❖ if you play with a couple of friends).



Street Fighter EX plus CAPCOM.

Ah subtleties, subtleties. Undoubtedly everyone has heard of street fighter and its adventures in the 2D realms. SF EX (the step up to 3D - Virtua Fighter style) was released only a couple of months ago and ALREADY they are releasing, true to style, a PLUS version... which means new characters.

Characters to choose from are: Guile, Ken, Ryu, Chun Li, Zangief, M. Bison, Akuma, Dr Dark, Skullomania, Captain Jack, Pullum, Kairi, Allen, Blair, Durun and Garuda.

Nothing seems to be seriously upgraded although some of the throws appear to be slightly smoother than before. The super K.O.s are very impressive in which the opponent is knocked into outer orbit.

At the moment SF EX plus is not shaping up well as opposed to either Tekken 3 or Virtua Fighter 3 in the graphics department. Nonetheless the irrepressible Street Fighter has enough street cred to last the distance and considering the hordes of fans, will probably make all others retire to the hall of fame.

Operation Thunder Hurricane KONAMI

At the end of the Twentieth Century, the world is in the grip of international terrorism...A terrorist group by the name of AXIS is in possession of a nuclear weapon. Your mission parameters are as follows- you are to man one of the door-guns on a state of the art assault helicopter. Your mission will take you over enemy infested (and they mean infested) terrain in a search for the nuclear weapon. Basically Operation Thunder is a polygon machine gun shooter on "rails"(the flying is left to the computer) and if you dug "Gun Blade" then you'll definitely dig this hell ride.

Thunder is original in the fact that it is one of the first shooters to use an M16 assault rifle- the weapon used predominantly by U.S troops in the Vietnam War. Using the M16 with "endless ammo belt" is most fun and different handling techniques are required to deal with different situations. For example, in some stages one has to spray wildly at large formations of enemy soldiers, whilst in other stages concentrated accurate fire is needed to shoot at a fast moving jeep in the distance. Unfortunately Hurricane has realistically included the fact that bullets can take some time to reach a distant target. This slight time lag is exceptionally annoying (or should we say challenging) whilst fighting, for example, grenade throwing frogmen, who are only visible for a split second as they emerge from the water. This slight time lag is also no problem if there is only one target, but if there are multitudes of bad guys it could be a little while before you realise whom you have hit or missed. So as the screen becomes progressively filled with soldiers, tanks, helicopters, boats, planes, field cannons, boats, gun emplacements, frogmen etc, you will have to deal with projectiles fired from each target that you have failed to hit within the allotted time that it takes for these scumsuckers to aim their missiles. As the game progresses, missile aim time

decreases. The missiles fired at you have between a one and two second flight time in which you must shoot the "incoming" before it hits your helicopter and receives DAMAGE. Surprise, surprise- this flight time of the missiles decreases correspondingly to the depth of your mission. So before you know it, missiles will be flying at you from all directions, giving you literally next to no time to shoot all those missiles AND somehow find the time to take out the enemy soldiers, helicopters, tanks etc, etc. you'll be wishing for back up or a Ö. GRENADE LAUNCHER. -(See: Smart Bomb) Ka Blam!! No need to aim the grenade launcher as everything on the screen becomes stunned and very injured per grenade or should we say mini atomic bomb. How you get more of these skill-free weapons still eludes us. N.B. Save the grenades for the end of stage battles.

The trail of destruction set before you will take you through a wide range in topography and climates ranging from rainforest to desert to terrorist training camp to city. The enemy has a vast array of weaponry at their disposal. Soldiers, artillery, tanks, boats, trains, planes and frogmen will unleash a barrage of shells and missiles at your copter. The incoming missiles can/have to be dispatched prior to impact by shooting them in flight. Watch out for shells fired from tanks as the missiles trajectory changes in flight. To combat the tank missiles, shoot at the tanks gun barrel.

The graphics are nothing ultra or even super amazing but somewhere just above very acceptable. Soundtrack is negligible as walkman headphone jacks are not standard issue in Sydney arcades unlike Tokyo's and it is almost impossible to hear yourself scream let alone hear an arcade machine.

Operation Thunder Hurricane, although at times a little over challenging, is a great moralistic bonding carnagefest which should be undertaken by all those serious about ridding the world of totalitarian power freaks, who in all likelihood would destroy games like this one.

*** 1/2

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NET TRAWLIN'

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POD

Ubi Soft have their own website at <http://www.ubisoft.com/> and are currently featuring their new futuristic racer, Pod. If you already have a copy of the game, then cruise on in for some cool updates and stuff. Soon you'll be able to download entirely new tracks and even new vehicles... of course if you haven't even seen the game in action yet (and it looks very tasty thanks to Intel's new MMX technology), then try out the Demo that's available online.

COMICS

Marvel! DC! Dark Horse! All the rockin' comics you can think of! This comics site has the latest news, price guide, top 10 list, soapbox for your rants and raves and even an industry insider's column. Perfect web browsing for the collector or even the casual comic lover. Point your pointy-thing towards <http://www.comics-page.com/> for a serious comics-fest.

HOW SAD

Just for a laugh, you may want to read about what happens to unlucky collectors of Star Wars memorabilia. You may even want to email your thoughts on the matter. Check out <http://www.pitzer.edu/awall/ackbar.html> for the sad, sorry tale of the Admiral Ackbar experiment - gone wrong.



JERKY BOYS

Have you heard about the Jerky Boys? A couple of American dweebs who went from prank phone-calls to Hollywood movies. They also have a high-tech website which is solely devoted to glorifying themselves and their exploits. There's stuff on their movies, CDs and merchandising and other cool, extra stuff. You'll need the Shockwave plug-in to view the site, but it's worth it! Get Jerky at http://www.polygram.com/jerky_boys/phone.html and watch their cool Macromedia intro.

ANIMATION

Visit the Animation Nerd's Paradise for all your nerdy needs. They cover everything here from the classic hand-painted gel animation of Disney to the new techy, computer-generated extravaganzas. There's animation news, FAQs, reviews of films and even an Art Gallery which features artists and their work. Surf over to <http://www.zcowherd.net/catseye/anp/> and get geeky.

X-WING VS TIE-FIGHTER

Yes, it's taking the multiplayer gaming universe by storm! X-Wing Versus TIE Fighter from LucasArts has got people jumping up and down and crapping on about how goddamn amazing it is over the Net. Grab a copy and then join a player league, download new missions, get the editor and make some levels of your own, update your copy with some patches, view the movies of some other multiplayer game where something wierd and cool happened... whatever, just do it at <http://outpost.simplenet.com/xvt/> or at least use this as a launchpad for other cool XVT sites. May the Horse be with you... oh hold, on... that's for Outlaws.

subscribe

WIN a Sony Playstation and V Rally!



Okay, so dad's not gonna let you borrow the car anymore because you figured a car so expensive would surely be able to handle a bit of off road action... Well who needs dad's wheels when you can hoon around in the world's sexiest rally cars, with no risk to your life, or your chances at having dad ground you for a year? How's this possible?

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT have, in their infinite wisdom and generosity, decided to give us a **SONY PLAYSTATION**, a copy of Infogrames **V-RALLY**, which looks to be the most naff rally driving game to come along, and a special V-Rally poster so your wall can look that extra bit cooler than your mates' walls. Not only that, but Sony have also given us another four copies of V-Rally and another four V-Rally posters for some lucky runner up prize winners.

How can you win????

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Even if you don't win, you'll still be getting Hyper sooner, and **37%** cheaper than you otherwise could... (or **44%** cheaper if you subscribe for two years!) and that makes you a winner for sure!

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Prize: Playstation + Total NBA '97



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Goodbye Lady liberty

How could you steal the Statue of Liberty. More importantly, why? Well, if you had an evil world domination cult on your tail who killed a close friend of yours it might give you a reason. But if you're told by that dying friend that he's hidden the world's largest diamond in Lady Liberty, then it's all systems a-go-go....that is if your name happens to be LUPIN THE THIRD!

That's right! You'd be the world's most ingenious and wanted criminal. Only the promise of a quickie with a beautiful woman can break your concentration....or the fact that your celibate ninja friend is getting laid, or that a pesky adolescent prodigy can calculate all your moves with a simple laptop!

We first saw him in action in Castle of Cagliostro, breaking up an international counterfeiting ring whilst dodging worldwide police forces. In The Secret of Mamo we saw him fighting evil clone dwarves whilst preventing a global nuclear war! And now, in GOODBYE LADY LIBERTY, you can see Lupin kidnap the Statue of liberty!!!

That's right, the third Lupin film is out! You don't need me to tell you how ingenious and entertaining this Anime is since I've already raved on about Lupin in other reviews. If you want a guarantee of entertainment, then Lupin is your man!

10/10

TBC. DISTRIBUTED BY POLYGRAM



RANMA 1/2- The movie

Once a boy and his father went walking in the mountains of China and fell into some puddles. Sounds innocent enough, but the Father and son are martial artists, and the puddles are cursed. That boy is Ranma, and now every time he gets splashed with water, he turns into a girl! (His father turns into a panda!)

There's a boy that turns into a pig, a girl into a mouse, a big grey/white chi powered elephant, a sex crazed midget pervert amongst many other weird and wacky characters.

Based on the comic book of the same name by zany Manga based creator Rumiko Takahashi, the Ranma 1/2 animated series quickly became one of my all time faves, capturing all the humour and craziness of the original comic books.

So why does RANMA the movie fail so dismally?

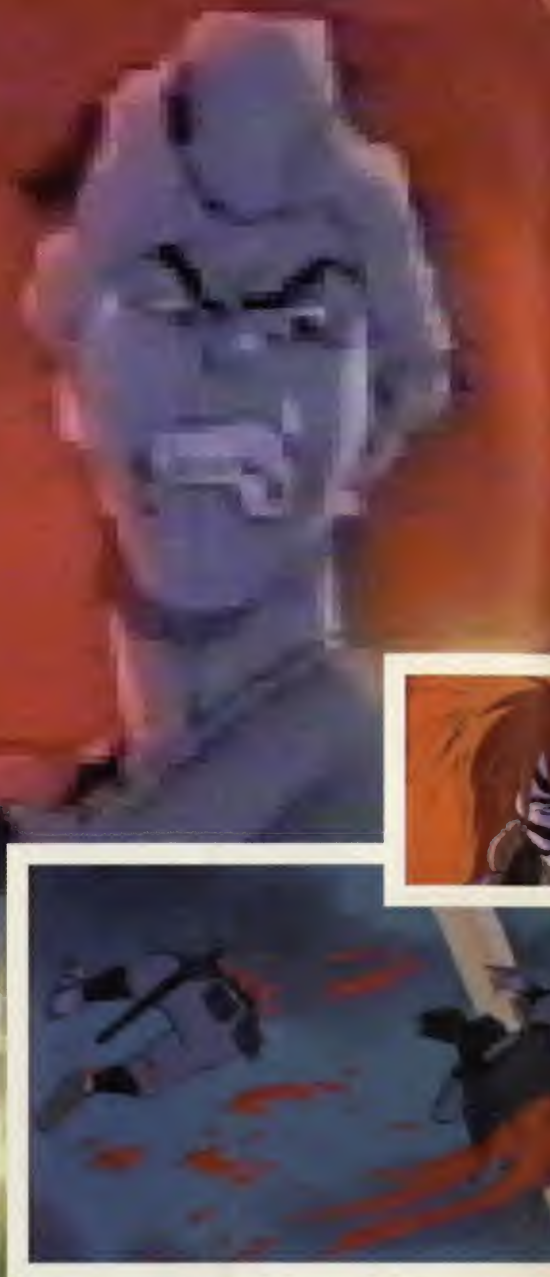
Could it be that since this was a theatrical release feature film I was expecting better quality writing and animation? Or perhaps the fact that the characters all seem to be thrown together in what can only be described as an excuse for a plot? Maybe it was the fact that the narrative seems to lose itself about thirty minutes in, trying to milk more laughs but failing dismally altogether.

Bugger.

For me Ranma 1/2 the Movie will go down as one of the big anime disappointments of 1997. Fingers crossed that the ARMITAGE feature won't follow suit.

6/10

RATED M15+. DISTRIBUTED BY KISEKI FILMS



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The Hakkenden- Legend of the Dog Warriors

The time is the fifteenth century. The place? Feudal Japan. As an unnatural battle between two clans is fought and won, a strange marriage takes place between a dog and a samurai princess, who later becomes pregnant to the beast. Caught in a nightmare of such an unnatural union, the princess is freed when her ronin lover destroys the dog, risking the honour of the clan he abandoned. But even as the dog lies dying, a cruel trick of fate robs the princess of her life. With her last breath, the woman begs her ronin lover not to follow her into death. She commits seppuku, and is forever joined with the spirit of the dog.

But from the horror comes hope. Eight buddha beads around the princess's neck come to life, and are scattered to the winds. One year later, eight children are born; they are destined to be the Dog warriors. Hakkenden is amongst the best ninja anime series I've seen to date. What surprised me most was the seemingly western influence to the anime; the creators moving far beyond what we've come to associate the style of anime to be. There is an emphasis to style and movement, yet the world of Hakkenden Japan is firmly set in realism, strangely mixed with a frightening blend of supernatural horror.

The closest comparison I can come up with is the 1995 anime smash hit NINJA SCROLL, yet Hakkenden is different in that the narrative follows a braver, more experimental style of storytelling.

There's no doubt that Ninja Scroll now has a worthy successor.

10/10

TBC. DISTRIBUTED BY KISEKI FILMS AND PIONEER.

RG VEDA

The first thing you'll notice about RG VEDA is...the cover sux! Sorry, I know you can't judge things by the cover, but there you have it; a completely heinous piece of artwork that barely resembles the style of the animation within. Many of you would've probably passed this one by on the shelves, being forced to look the other way in order to maintain your sanity as well as the cellular integrity of your optic nerve. (But I digress)

Many years ago in a faraway land, a battle was fought between good and evil. Evil conquered, when the treacherous general Taishakuten raised the severed head of the mighty ruler Tentei to the heavens in defiance to the gods.

Many, many years pass. Taishakuten now rules the land in an iron fist of terror. Black magic is his ally; all who oppose him his enemy.

Yet there is hope. It is said that six warriors will come together to form six points of a star. They will possess mighty powers, and when united will stop Taishakuten and end his reign of terror!

Ho-hum. It all sounds too familiar. The animation itself is pretty much that stock standard, generic, production line style that we've all pretty much seen before. In these cases, it's only the outstanding quality of the plot and script that can save these animes from becoming another waste of 60-90 minutes. Sadly for RG VEDA, this hasn't been the case.

5/10

RATED PG. DISTRIBUTED BY POLYGRAM



Distributed by PolyGram Video, PO Box
17, Millers Point, NSW, 2000.

PolyGram Video

You think you're the best? The Australian Interstate

So you think you're pretty darn good at **Interstate '76** eh? Never found anyone that you'd call your better? Well, there's one way to prove it, and that's enter the **Australian Interstate '76 Championships**. Hyper, Multiplay and of course Activision have gotten together to give you that chance to win the title of being the best Interstate '76 player in Australia. The games will be hosted on the Multiplay servers, allowing players to be playing off against people from all around Australia.

Drivers will compete in a melee game of Interstate '76 with only one survivor going on to win each round in a big knockout tournament. All details and round results will be posted on the Multiplay web site <http://www.multiplay.com.au/>.

Good luck, and may the funkiest driver win...

The prizes up for grabs include: 1st place: National Champion

- Dark Reign
- Hexen 2
- Mechwarrior Mercenaries
- Quake Mission Pack 1
- Quake Mission Pack 2
- Time Commando
- Hyper Blade
- Legacy of Kain
- Twinsen's Odyssey
- 2 year subscription to Hyper
- Free time on the Multiplay network

Finalists: Runners up

- Dark Reign
- Hexen 2
- 12 month subscription to Hyper
- Free time on the Multiplay Network

What you'll need:

Minimum Requirements of entrants:

Pentium 90 MHz processor
VESA local bus or PCI video with 1 MB RAM
Windows '95
256-colour SVGA
Quad-speed CD-ROM drive
16MB RAM
14.4k bps Modem (28.8 kps recommended)
use of an e-mail account
Interstate '76
(of course having better hardware will serve as an advantage)

win win win

ate '76 Championships



Entrants must be:

Australian Residents

Registered members of Multiplay.

(No cost for registration)

How To Enter:

Entry to the comp is free! Just call Multiplay and register, give them your details, and you'll be notified of when your first game is on you'll receive further instructions by email.

Freecall 1800 359 200

E-mail info@multiplay.com.au.

Entry Deadline:

July 15th '97



ACTIVISION®

»» Heavy Gear

PC

AVAILABLE: DECEMBER
 CATEGORY: MECH COMBAT
 PLAYERS: ONE-MULTI
 PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION

The idea of Activision doing a new Mech game that isn't Mechwarrior 3 is a little weird to some people but, due to the vagaries of licensing and such, they no longer have the rights to FASA's BattleTech universe and so Activision's relationship with Mechwarrior is at an end. Do not fret though Activision aren't resting on their laurels just yet, not to be put off by this unexpected turn of events their team has latched onto another popular Mech combat game to form the basis of their next monster machine title. Heavy Gear, by Dream Pod9, is that game.



One of the major innovations in the Heavy Gear engine, being modified from the mech2 and I'76 engines, is the use of much smaller, more agile Mechs which are capable of fighting inside buildings and structures as well as out in the open. These more compact Mecha will be faster than Mechwarrior fans will be used to, probably more along the lines of Terra Nova, which (in my opinion) will make the game much more fun to play. While not having the speed of Virtual On, it will still be more realistic than driving around in those giant sitting ducks.

The new graphics engine increases the polygon count of each mech from 400 to 700 improving their appearance dramatically and also allows for higher resolution textures, Direct 3D as well as 3Dfx and Power VR native support! All sorts of spunky effects like transparencies, mip mapping, bi-linear filtering and real time fogging should make this the best looking mech game ever. Hollywood explosions, flying mech bits and true 3D sound will all add to the fun.

Network and internet play will be supported straight out of the box too. Some specific multiplayer missions are rumoured, as well as much more emphasis on co-operative play on top of the usual deathmatch type stuff. Recently some developers have seemed to use the multiplayer option in their games as a way of skimping on single player action, Activision are including a long and extensive single player campaign for those of you who don't have/can't afford a network or Internet access to avoid the 'we was robbed' reaction created by the likes of X-Wing v Tie and SkyNet. 65



»» G Police

PSX/PC

AVAILABLE: OCTOBER
 CATEGORY: ACTION
 PLAYERS: ONE (MULTI ON PC)
 PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS



Earth's resources are running out, people are forced to re-use toilet paper and eat their own snot while the race is on to claim every ore-bearing rock in the Solar System. Tension grows as opposing nations compete for the dwindling amounts of useable stuff still remaining until war breaks out and governments fall. The G Police are created to keep order in the outer colonies as the government's hold weakens and guess who's just enlisted?

G Police is being released simultaneously for the Playstation and 3D accelerated PC's (have you harassed your parents enough to get you a 3Dfx card yet?) and, as you can see from these grabs, looks pretty darn sexy. Complex light

sourcing techniques have been employed by the game's designers to evoke a Blade Runnerish feel and to make the cityscapes more convincing. Gameplay takes place in a variety of urban landscapes, which you fly through, around and over in your well endowed gunship. According to Psygnosis

there will be a huge variety of weapons available for your slaughtering pleasure, to be used in the 35 or so missions within the game. The flight model used for the gunship is fast, accurate and highly manoeuvrable, allowing you to flit between skyscrapers and under overpasses with ease. There are also a variety of camera views to allow you to keep track of everything around you. G Police also has a plot! Nestled in between each mission is a gradually unfolding story that binds them together. It's a story full of love, romance and old fish heads, ok I just made that up but it sounds cool.

All up this looks like an interesting blastathon from the reliable Psygnosis, hopefully we'll have a review in a couple of issues. 65





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HOW IT WORKS



The Interactor is easy to use. Simply strap on the adjustable Interactor vest, plug it into the audio out of any gaming system and start playing. It comes with its own set of sensitivity controls, so you can filter out certain sounds and adjust the intensity of the vibrations. Which means that the Interactor will not affect the TV picture or sound level.

BUT IT WILL DEFINATELY AFFECT YOU!!!

As the action breaks out on the screen, the Interactor vest translates the bass sound waves from the game into your body as vibrations which you feel, transporting you straight into the middle of the excitement. Whats more you can even use it for CDs and television. Crank it up and you'll feel everything from the boom of a hard driving music soundtrack to the thump of a hard uppercut to the jaw.

WHY IS IT SO CHEAP:

The Interactor was released last year for \$249. All the big retailers stocked them but they sold slowly because of the high price! Too high!! The importer had a fairly large quantity, so he sold them all to Jaycar at a fraction of their cost. We want to clear them out, so hence the unbelievable price.

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» Falcon 4.0

PC

AVAILABLE: 4TH QUARTER '97
 CATEGORY: FLIGHT SIM
 PLAYERS: 1 - NETWORK
 PUBLISHER: MICROPROSE

Falcon 4.0 is a flight Sim as you probably already know. It's the fourth game in Spectrum Holobyte's Falcon series. It's set in the Korean Peninsula with a real-time war in progress, in which the player takes on the role of a F-16 fighter Pilot, but who really cares about the plot of a flight sim anyway, we just want to fly around & shoot things!

Reality seems to be high on Spectrum Holobyte's agenda. The game includes the most Authentic F-16C flight model to date, this will include highly detailed models of avionics systems, weapons systems, threat environments & AI. As well as all this detailed AI & flight model, the game should look great. The terrain, planes & other objects in the simulation will be rendered with 3-D Texture-Mapped Graphics using digitized aerial photography to add to the realism.

Falcon 4.0 will contain a complex Campaign Manager, which creates a living, evolving air-land-sea battle within which players can fly their missions. Players can also choose which missions they would like to fly based on the context of the battle which allows pilots to actually make a difference in the Campaign.

With more than a million copies of the Falcon flight Simulators sold to date, Falcon flight Sim software is the highest selling air combat flight simulator ever. It will run under the Windows 95 O/S & should be available in the fourth quarter of 1997. Could be one to look out for if you're a flight Sim fan.

45



» Secret of the Black Onyx

PC

AVAILABLE: NOVEMBER/DECEMBER
 CATEGORY: RPG
 PLAYERS: ONE - MULTI
 PUBLISHER: BLUE PLANET



Blue Planet Software, a new game company based in San Francisco, are producing an RPG with an unusual twist. Instead of using the usual point-and-click mouse interface, their "Secret of the Black Onyx" uses on-screen "cards" to control your character's actions, as in Magic: The Gathering. If you want to talk, you play the Talk card, to buy something, you play the buy card. That's putting it all very simply, things do get a bit more complicated than that - especially in combat mode. In a typical Black Onyx combat sequence you and your opponent start by facing off. Time to make a decision - do you run at him with repeated overhead blows from your sword, or you do dash in and attempt a thrust to the mid-section? You make the decision, and you play the card for the move you want. The action plays out using movement choreographed by Roald Knutson (a Sixth Dan Kendo master and champion doily hurler who specializes in medieval European weapon techniques) and motion-captured using professional athletes. During the battle you may notice that your opponent reacts more slowly to low swings than to head shots so you may decide to work on that weakness by swinging a few high ones for distraction then going in low for the kill!. As the game

progresses, your character will pick up new cards that let you execute more complex moves in combat.

Russian company Animatek International has created the engine for the game (it's called Caviar) and has the greatest scientific minds in that country on its payroll (who else is going to pay them, the Mafia?)

Animatek's engine converts very complex polygon-based 3D figures into objects made of voxels, or volume pixels - the same kind of building blocks used to create the terrain in NovaLogic's Comanche 3 and Armored Fist 2. Voxel technology uses pixels that not only have values for colour and brightness, but also their positions in a simulated 3D space. Since only the visible surface of a voxel object has to be rendered, the result is that highly detailed characters can be animated very smoothly without requiring an ultra-fast PC.

The development team consists of an all-star cast. The artwork comes from Roger Dean, well-known in the rockworld for the album covers and stage sets he's created for Asia and Yes, and Michael W. Kaluta, an award-winning fantasy and science fiction artist. Comic book writer

Elaine Lee is writing the storyline, based on an idea created by Henk Rogers, the president and founder of Blue Planet Software.

The company's current plan is to create a six-game series based on the world of Black Onyx, with each game focusing on a different aspect of the world.

65



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» Dark Rift

PC/N64

AVAILABLE: TBA

CATEGORY: FIGHTING

PLAYERS: ONE-TWO

PUBLISHER: VIC TOKAI

No matter how popular it was, Killer Instinct sucked as a fighting game on the N64, and everywhere else for that matter. Nintendo aren't a company known for their punch 'em ups and they're paying for it now in the Japanese market, where sales of the N64 are still barely above that of the Saturn. Vic Tokai want to change Nintendo's cutesy image with their spectacular new 3D fighting game Dark Rift.

Motion capture animation techniques such as the ones in Killer Instinct have been used in the game but with a greatly increased frame rate and variety for much smoother, more realistic results. It also features varying gravity on different levels and projectile fighting (throwing things around)

Dark Rift will be the first true 3D beat 'em up available on the N64. Side stepping attacks and blocking moves, get-up combos, multiple grab moves, chain combos, combo breakers and an individual soundtrack for each of the eight characters will help to take this title to the cutting edge of fighting game design. Vic Tokai are not very well known in the beat 'em up genre but could easily make a name for themselves in the Nintendo market with this title, heck the only competition they've got is Mortal Kombat and Killer Instinct so they should have a pretty free run. PC heads will also be pleased to hear that Dark Rift will be released on their system one month after it comes out for the N64, with full 3D and MMX support, and it could end up being the best slap-a-thon on that system too.



» Mageslayer

PC

AVAILABLE: OCT-DEC

CATEGORY: FANTASY SHOOTER

PLAYERS: 1-NETWORK

PUBLISHER: RAVEN SOFTWARE

One could be forgiven for typecasting Raven Software as a medieval fantasy game designer, because the latest word from Raven is that they're going to release another sword and sorcery title, Mageslayer.

Mageslayer essentially looks like a Gauntlet clone, which is not really a bad thing considering how damn addictive and cool that game was. Like Gauntlet the player can select from one of four different character classes: Worlock (Generic mage), Earth Lord (dwarf), Arch Demon (nasty fire mage), Inquisitor (evil cleric). Like Hexen 2, which should be coming out sometime soon, Mageslayer allows the player to build up their power, by advancing levels as they earn experience by killing things. Players will also be able to improve their characters by acquiring items, and using them when they see fit (just like in Heretic and Hexen). To add a bit of a Doomy edge to it, Mageslayer supports LAN and internet play, and has both co-operative play and deathmatch play. To take it that extra bit further Mageslayer will also come with "Capture the flag", and "King of the hill" modes, for serious multiplayer variety.

Those of you that have invested in a 3DFX or Matrox card will be pleased to know that Raven are catering for your beefy machine, so as to make the game look as sexy as possible. Should turn out to be a very popular multiplayer game.



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WARLORDS III: REIGN OF HEROES IN STORES THIS AUGUST

WWW.WARLORDS3.COM

» One PlayStation

AVAILABLE: DECEMBER
CATEGORY: ACTION
PLAYERS: ONE
PUBLISHER: ASC

ASC's new title, *One*, places you in the part of John Cain, a man with a hugemungous gun in place of his left arm, a la *Cobra* in the Manga title 'Space Adventure *Cobra*'. The game might remind you of early shooters such as *Contra* where players have to shoot their way through enormous worlds populated by endless hordes of enemies. *One* looks fantastic with great locations, fast moving action and dangerous bad guys while the levels are huge and have plenty of paths to explore and poke around in. In an innovative move ASC have replaced the traditional power system with a rage meter that is used to increase weapons, attacks and resiliency. This feature means that the faster and more aggressively a player moves through the levels the more powerful they become. While there are only said to be five levels they are each supposed to be worth hours and hours of gameplay because of their sheer size. Locations range from mountain trails and canyons to high speed trains and city rooftops. The viewpoints are controlled by the PSX as you move from location to location but are also selectable by the player for more flexibility and special care has been taken to make sure you can always see what's going on (unlike the disappointing *Perfect Weapon*)

Players have a great deal of control over the characters including special moves and attacks. Evasive maneuvers such as rolls, and flips are necessary to avoid damage from the enemy soldiers, and climbing and hanging moves help while on steep canyons and buildings. A whole bunch of juicy weapons are available too including plasma cannons, flame throwers, and missile launchers. *One* looks good at this stage and if ASC can follow through nicely this should be a shooter to look out for.

G.S.



» Toshinden 3 PlayStation

AVAILABLE: AUGUST
CATEGORY: FIGHTING
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: TAKARA

One of the few Sony developers that was truly there from the beginning would have to be Takara, and it would seem that they're not really going to branch out anywhere new, but take their well known fighting title, *Toshinden*, and breathe some more life into it. It would seem that the current trend in fighting games is to go for that "let's add ten squillion characters" approach, because there are now an absolute truckload of characters in *Toshinden 3*. The main change in terms of game mechanics is the introduction of a roof, which players can be slammed into, which ends up putting a lot more emphasis on doing long floating combos. The main thing that you would have expected to have been improved would have been the graphics, but it doesn't look like much has been done there. Even though there's a 60 fps mode, which detracts from the background textures, and a 30fps mode, which leaves them in, a middle ground option would have been best. So hopefully we'll find some extra depth in gameplay. Apparently this is the last *Toshinden* game planned, so whilst it may not excite some people, it will probably be a bit of a must have for those that liked the first two games. »

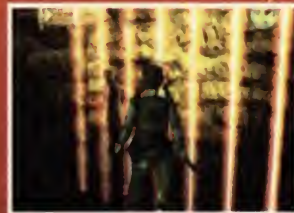


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FEI STAR



»» Tobal No.2 PlayStation

AVAILABLE: TBA
 CATEGORY: 3D FIGHTING
 PLAYERS: 1-2
 PUBLISHER: SQUARESOFT



As if there weren't enough Squaresoft fans dying to get their hands on Bushido Blade, and Final Fantasy 7, now we get a look at their first sequel on the PlayStation... Tobal No.2. Tobal No.1 wowed us with its unique approach to the 3D fighting genre, going for an "accurate" fighting game. Tobal No.2 has retained that element of "That's how it would really happen", like characters clutching onto their thighs as they cop a hefty round kick coming in low. However, it has adopted the unrealistic elements that seem to be extremely popular in all the 2D fighting titles, like fireball attacks and such. The only downer for Squaresoft here could be that some gamers like Tobal No.1 because of the lack of such moves. The whole grappling system has been revamped, making it much more like wrestling than just a simple "block their throw" system.

It's not just a case of some fighting mechanics tweaks, as the graphics have



taken a huge shot in the arm, with texture mapped characters and fighting arenas, except the backgrounds are now mostly 2D, but still look very impressive nonetheless. The frame rate and resolution are still outstanding, and the whole visual effect is quite dreamy, not falling too far behind Virtua Fighter 3.

Besides the obligatory improvements such as new characters, better graphics, etc. Squaresoft have paid particular attention to the Quest mode, which now involves a much more conventional RPG element, of travelling through towns, outdoors, dungeons, etc. And having to deal with other characters. This could surpass the Edge Master mode in Soul Blade, which would make it one of the most innovative fighting games to date.

Hopefully we'll have a PAL release by the end of the year. Tobal No.2 is not coming out in America however, so European sales figures of Tobal No.1 will most likely determine whether or not the Australian release will be confirmed. The game is already out in Japan... typical.

BT





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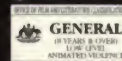
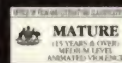


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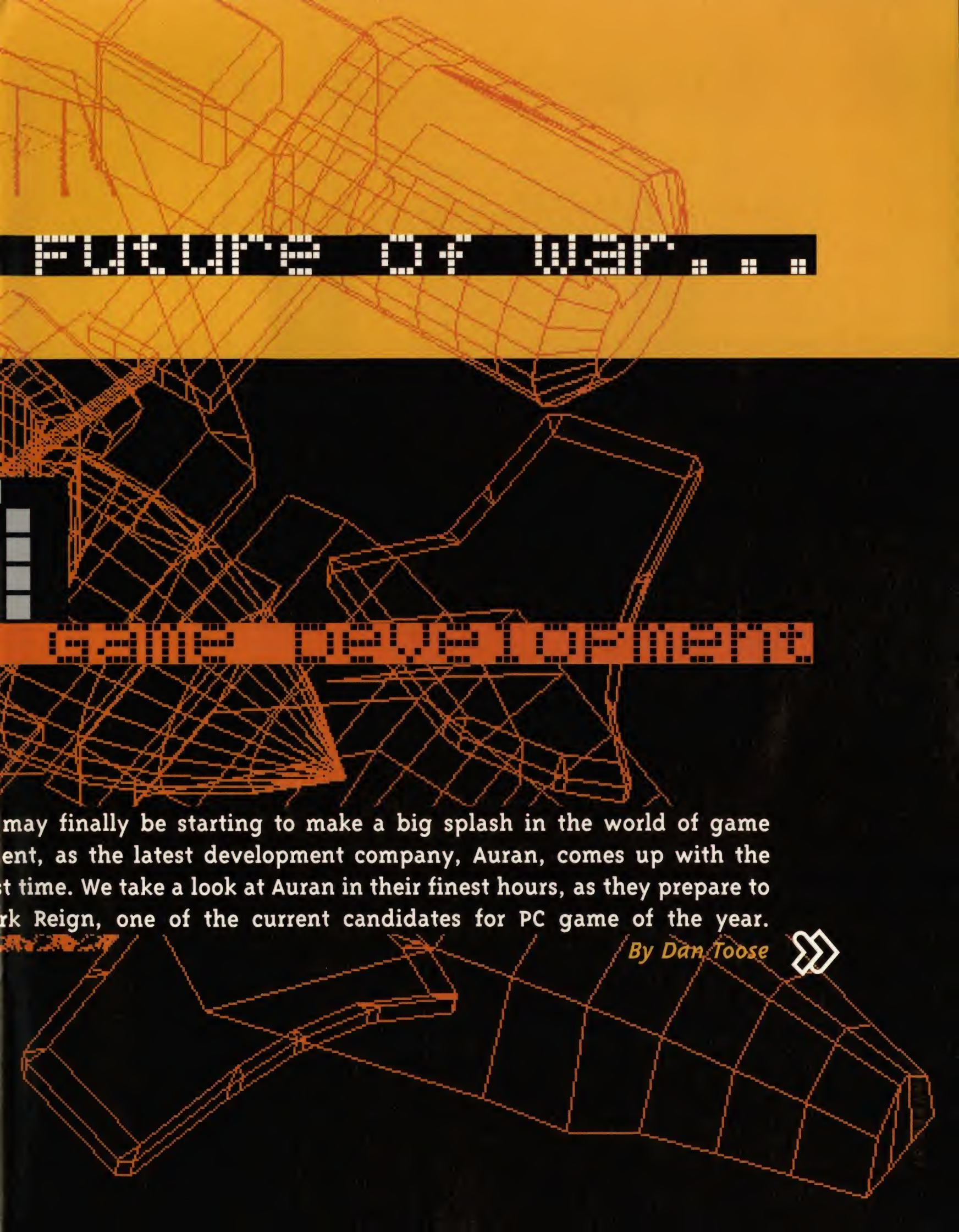
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GAME DEVELOPMENT

may finally be starting to make a big splash in the world of game development, as the latest development company, Auran, comes up with the next big thing. We take a look at Auran in their finest hours, as they prepare to bring *Mark Reign*, one of the current candidates for PC game of the year.

By Dan Toose





For some time now the only truly successful games developers within Australia have been Beam Software, who's recent success with KKND has once again made them a force to be reckoned with. Just when you thought that the Australian element of the world's games development scene was about to hibernate again for a year or so, right out of left field come Auran. Coincidentally, Auran are about to release a real time strategy game, which is exactly what Beam just did, although the younger company seems to be showing the old hands a thing or two. This relatively new company based in Brisbane is about to take the world by storm with the first game in the real time strategy genre that has truly broken any ground since Warcraft or Command & Conquer... potentially the PC game of the year, Dark Reign. Back in 1995, software engineer Greg Lane and businessman Graham Edelsten knew they had a great plan, but who could have believed they were going to set a new standard in the most popular PC game genre today?

I had the privilege to go meet the Auran crew in their last weeks before they finished up on Dark Reign, and whilst one might have expected a sense of dire urgency, the prevalent feel in the air was one of excitement, because this fairly small office of twenty-two zealous staff members were about to come to the conclusion of two years work, which could well result in the PC game of the year. Why is there such confidence in Dark Reign? Well the ultimate flattery is to have the recognised masters give the nod, and that's exactly what happened. Ron Miller, creator of Warcraft, left Blizzard whilst working on Starcraft to join Activision once he saw the work in progress on Dark Reign. A few months back we were shown a preview of Dark Reign, and when asked, "Is there anything you can think of that you'd add to what we've shown you?" the answer was, "No.", something that simply never happens.

The staff are so dedicated to their work, that they're requesting the next office to have sleeping quarters, so they can work non-stop. They did make time to let us have a go at Dark Reign (before we received a reviewable copy), and the beauty of the game was revealed in the reactions of the Dark Reign team, who watched the game as though it were all new to them too. They would seem to have done the impossible and create a strategy game engine where no two games will be played through the same way, and that outright victory is a tough prospect, rather something that is foreseeable within ten minutes of starting the game. We've been associating first class games development with the names Romero, Perry, Suzuki... Maybe we'll soon be adding Lane to that list, and have Auran join the ranks of iD, Shiny, Psygnosis, etc. Auran have got it right first time, showing their amazingly mature sense of organization, considering old giants like Origin don't seem to be able to get a firm grip on the planning of their own projects. Their vision is not just limited to Dark Reign, as they already have more plans for their "Tactics" engine, and for other future engines, which if they prove to be as powerful and innovative, could see Australia becoming the home of the world's leading game development team.

AND NOW, A WORD FROM OUR DEVELOPERS...

Rather than just give you our impressions, we interviewed Greg Lane, founder of Auran and the head of the Dark Reign project. Interviews with Greg may become harder to come by in the future, as the success of Dark Reign will make him a very busy man in the years to come...

Hyper: What were the origins of Auran? How did all this start?

Auran: Actually, Auran started as a result of a new years resolution! My partner and I were discussing business opportunities and decided that the time was right to enter into the gaming market with a new company and a bold new product.

Hyper: How about Dark Reign itself, who got the idea, and how?

Auran: Dark Reign began life as a product called Corporation. This was the original design concept that we took to the US in July 96 when we were first marketing version 1.0 of the "Tactics Engine". Dark Reign evolved from Corporation and as

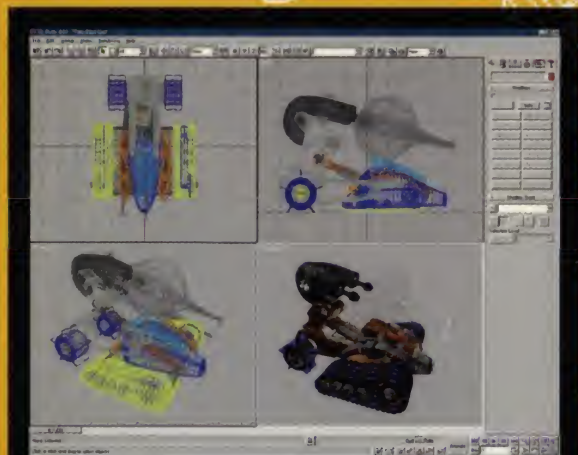
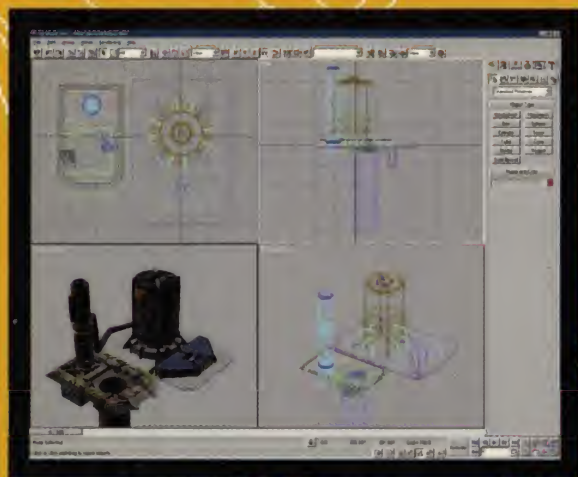


TOP: THE AURAN OFFICE FROM THE OUTSIDE, JUST ABOVE YOUR LOCAL CAFE. BOTTOM: IN THE MIDDLE, GREG LANE, THE BIG CHEESE AT AURAN...

the design for DR grew it became a game in its own right. The engine also evolved with it and Dark Reign uses version 2.0 of the engine. The storyline and concept behind DR is the result of a lot of effort from the good people at Activision.

Hyper: How many people work at Auran, and how has this changed throughout the Dark Reign project?

Auran: Right now there are 22 people at Auran. When we started 2 years ago we had just 2.



A LOOK AT THE CREATION OF THE 3D RENDERED ARTWORK IN DARK REIGN... GOBS' O'DETAIL

Hyper: It's not like employment agencies have a portfolio of game developers, so how did you go about sourcing talent?

Auran: Finding staff is very difficult. We advertise everywhere we can. In the paper, on the internet, through agencies etc. etc. In fact if you're reading this and want a job write to us!

Hyper: Do you think the fact that Dark Reign is loosely based upon the old real time strategy games like Warcraft and Command and Conquer will help or hinder the public's

reception of Dark Reign. Will it be seen as "another clone" or do you think this fan base is open to new ideas?

Auran: I think that since DR is in the same genre as C&C and WAR2 people will feel comfortable with it. I do believe that the time is right for a new product that really pushes the boundaries with what can be done in a RTS game and I think DR does just that. It is an evolution of these other games.

Hyper: Some of the vehicles and units in Dark Reign look pretty cool. Was all this left up to the art department, or has the approach to all the ideas in Dark Reign been a little more "open floor"?

Auran: Very much open floor. We take input from a lot of people in all areas of the game. The final design mix is decided upon by Activision in the US.

Hyper: Australia's really one of the smallest contributors to the games development industry, but how many units of Dark Reign are you expecting to ship world wide?

Auran: We expect DR to sell in very large numbers! In fact our initial figures would indicate that in some of the major countries of the world, it will be the biggest RTS title of all time!

Hyper: Is the Dark Reign we see today just how it was envisaged back in the early days of development, or do we have a totally different game?

Auran: It has changed a lot. The interface alone has changed 3 times and the art about 7 or 8 times. The design has also been evolving as things changed in other areas. DR is very much an evolved product.

Hyper: There are so many features to Dark Reign that it has to prompt the question, did you leave anything out? And, for what reason?

Auran: We have left a lot of things out, after all we had to save some things for DR2!... Actually we have so many more things that we would like to add to DR but we have just got to the "enough is enough" point. DR is right now in a league of it's own and it has more than enough features to satisfy anyone. We do have some very, very cool ideas for DR2 though.

Hyper: Making video games... how would you describe it? Is there a basic set of guidelines as to how you go about making a game?

Auran: Firstly it's a lot of fun. But I guess you knew that! As far as guidelines go, we kind of go by the "wouldn't it be cool if you could do this" principle. Then we try it and if its fun it stays in, if not it goes. You must of course consider anything you add in the context of the whole game so as to make sure

that everything stays in balance.

Hyper: Many people complain about grunt/tank rush tactics from Warcraft and C&C... is there some sort of tactic to Dark Reign that's "a sure winner"?

Auran: Not that we know of! I think that players will be amazed though at the Artificial Intelligence (AI) in DR. It uses no triggers (like so many other games) and more importantly it does NOT cheat. The AI starts with the very same things that you have and pays the very same price for things.

Hyper: The AI in most games of this genre up till now has sucked very hard. Was getting the AI right a really tough process?

Auran: It sure was. We have had 2 programmers working on just the AI for about 6 months. The AI code itself is a "Ford - Fulkerson residual flow network analysis system" combined with a "finite state machine". In simple English this means that the AI works with a table of goals on one hand and resources on the other. It then assigns resources to these goals so as to achieve them. This means that the AI will respond to what you do and even small differences in your tactics will lead to subtle differences in the response from the AI. All this leads to a game in which it really does seem that your playing against a real player when you play against the AI.

Hyper: There were certainly some very innovative moves in what was looking like a pretty static genre. What were some of the features that you were most proud of in Dark Reign?

Auran: I think that the Real Time Line of Sight (RTLOS) and the Real Time Tile Blending (RTTB) are 2 of the most amazing features of the game. RTLOS adds a lot to the game play of DR the RTTB means that you can create some amazing maps. Gone are the days of having to find that right tile for a particular position on the map. In DR you can paint maps just like a paint program.

Hyper: Has making Dark Reign so customizable made it a headache to program?

Auran: Yes and no. Some things have been made easier and others a little harder. On the whole I'd say its about even. Having an engine of course means that the designers can use it to try out a lot of ideas without requiring any coding.

Hyper: Do you see Dark Reign as a game, or a game engine, like Quake?

Auran: I see it as both. DR is a great game, but the engine is very cool indeed! The engine has an incredible number of features. In fact because DR is based on it you can configure it in so many ways. The permutations of what you can do are almost endless.

Hyper: You're going to fall into that same position that Westwood and Blizzard did, where the expectations are high. What have Auran got planned for the future?

Auran: We have some amazing new titles planned for release during 98. Of course some of these will be created using future versions of the "Tactics Engine" and others will be brand new.

Hyper: How has the online gaming community reacted to Dark Reign?

Auran: I think DR is the biggest thing to hit the online community already! An amazing number of DR fan sites have already sprung up and the recent beta test program was incredible. In the program people were asked to sign up to beta test DR and after just one hour over 5000 people had applied!

Hyper: Are you licensing the Dark Reign engine out to any other development companies?

Auran: Yes we are. Activision have a license to use the engine and they are working on at least one product that I know of using it. We of course also have a number of other products that will make use of the "Tactics Engine" in the future.

Hyper: What are some of the games that the staff of Auran loves? What do the people who make games play when they're not working on their own titles?

Auran: We all love Warz, C&C, Quake, and Carmageddon.

Hyper: It's pretty obvious that your office is packed to capacity, is Auran moving on to bigger and better places?

Auran: Yes, in late July we are moving to a huge office by the river here in Brisbane. It's massive compared to what we have now, so much so that all the staff want to play indoor football, and of course we get to keep the ping pong table.

Hyper: Dark Reign is obviously going to be one of the big multiplayer titles out for some time. Are there any plans for a big gaming site, like Westwood Chat or Battle.net where players can find one another?

Auran: Yes. The game will support Activision's Active net. Also, if you know the

other players IP address, you can connect directly to them.

Hyper: Including a map editor was a bit of a godsend, as was the customizable nature of the game. Would you say creating maps and adjusting units is a time consuming exercise?

Auran: Creating maps is easy. In fact it has a random plasma creator that allows you to really quickly make a map.

Creating units from scratch is a little more difficult. To ease the process we will be making some art that didn't make it into the final game available on our web site and people will be able to use that to create new units and buildings.

Hyper: How about the latency between here and the US? With games like Quake, it's not very playable, but will Dark Reign run smoothly across the globe?

Auran: DR needs ping times that are sub 300ms for good internet play. There is no limit in the game as to the number of people who can play via the internet (Other than the games 8 player limit) so as long as the ping times are low it would be feasible to have a 4 player game.

Hyper: Finally, is there anything you'd like to say to the gamers out there?

Auran: You're in for one hell of a game! DR will set the new standard for RTS games for some time to come. And if I can be so bold I think that DR2 will be the next successor to DR when it ships in mid 98!



Lifeforce Tenka

Has the console first-person shooter been re-defined?
Eliot Fish steps into the line of fire...



COME GET SOME...



DEAR GOD! THE BLUE TRANSCENT DEATH BLAST!

Ouch, this game looks good! Psygnosis have pumped Tenka with an amazing level of detail. From the smooth polygons on the fly, to the light sourcing, transparencies and every other trick in the book - Tenka at times looks quite incredible. Get into a crouch and crawl up close to one of those Eators and lo and behold but it has a gruesome, half-human face on it! Sneak up to an Agressor and deftly blow the head off it's shoulders at point-blank range. You can do it. If you're standing close enough, the blood that jets out will drip down your TV screen. Eww! There are lots of cool touches to this game that you'll excitedly discover throughout your exploration of it's 20 or so missions. It quite simply gets better and better, the deeper you go.

Bigger nads than Doom?

The first thing that sets Tenka apart from the Doom pack is the funky Morphing Gun. Instead of stumbling across an array of bulky weapons for your character to lumber around with, Tenka has a cool, upgradable gun which just gets beefier and more functional as you progress. Switching between gun functions is as easy as holding in the joypad's shoulder button and selecting a gun mode from the small menu that appears. This is tricky at first and you'll find yourself dropping beacons all over the place in your desperate attempt to switch weapons, but soon this becomes second nature. One of the first upgrades you find is an awesome laser-sighting device which happily tracks your enemies as long as you're pointing in their general direction. This aids blast fests immensely, doing away with the annoying task of "looking" up and down to find your attacker. Tenka also has the ability to crouch and crawl, jump and run and strafe, so all the cool moves are at your fingertips. I found it rather stupid though, that when you're standing next to a small ramp, it was impossible to simply jump up onto it, requiring you to go around and walk onto it perfectly straight. At times the collision detection sucked big hairy lemons. But on the whole, you'll be delightfully absorbed in the dark, gruesome world that surrounds you.

Show us yer architecture...

My first impressions of the level-design were not good. Things looked a little too Alien Trilogy for my liking - narrow corridors, ramps and small square rooms - but keep playing and the game begins to expand. Air-ducts are just waiting to be explored, some rooms have puzzles and traps like laser trip-wires, and others open out into large, dank chambers just begging for you to run and jump into the shadowy unknown. On the whole, the level design is good but probably the most disappointing aspect of the game. What will cook your sauce though, is the brilliant gun-blazing action! The Robots, Bionoids and Genetics pursuing you throughout each level have quite a nasty AI... they crouch, hide, strafe and pack a variety of vicious attacks. These dudes will sit back and wait for you to take them on, and the old ploy of lingering around the corner waiting for a bumbling monster to bump into your nozzle isn't going to get you anywhere.

Did I mention the crunchin' heavy metal, dude? The music in Tenka rocks! Literally! Hey it's a little cheesy, but it suits the gritty, testosterone-charged gameplay. So turn up the TV and enjoy all those widdly-widdly guitars in full. Nice FX too. The sounds are mean and are meant to be heard nice and loud. For full effect, play Tenka with some high-quality headphones. It will scare the living crap out of you. This is a high-quality product, there's no doubt about that. A looooooot of work has gone into providing us with an awesome gaming experience, and Tenka damn near well delivers.



AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: 1ST PERSON SHOOTER
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: M15

FREAKOMETER

You'll need a lot of time to spare

VISUALS
87
 From interesting to incredible

SOUND
84
 Big FX, Big Guitars. Beefy!

GAMEPLAY
86
 Involving, atmospheric and satisfying

OVERALL
88%
 Tenka brings home the bacon

Ballblazer Champions



Yes, you guessed it. Ball jokes and plenty of 'em. Eliot Fish goes in search of some champions...



"Excuse me, but I believe your balls are blazing." "Why right you are! I'm just about smoking out the house... excuse me!" OK. That's that out of the way, eh? No? You want more? Hmmm. On with the review, I say. LucasArts take a break from churning out superb adventure games, killer 3D shooters and bad FMV click-fests to bring us an updated, 90's version of the classic Ballblazer. Dan was very good to inform me of the game's near legendary status on the Commodore-64 (a long way from the Nintendo 64, believe me) and it's simple addictive gameplay. Does adding a whole bicycle-shop-full of bells and whistles simply detract from the pure fun gameplay of the original? Well... you see, I can conveniently stay objective for this one, as I never played the original... but I can say that besides getting a little confusing at times, Ballblazer Champions is excellent fun and hilariously frustrating in two-player mode. A very likeable game indeed.

It's got balls!

This is how it is. Take one big arena, two rotofoils, a blazing ball and a few hundred thousand spectators and you have the perfect futuristic ball game. You sit inside your turbo-charged, laser-equipped rotofoil (which can be supplied in a number of different shapes and sizes) and go all out against only one other player for the possession of a burning plasmorb with the intent of launching it hockey-style into a goal. Race and shoot. Simple stuff. Humiliation of your opponent is of course always the secondary aim in games like these, and Ballblazers happily

provides you with a number of powerups and cool weapons to unleash upon your foe. Each character has a different weapon (Zuura's Freeze gun or K'Krix's Plasmorb Magnet for example), and once out in the arena there are various items scattered around to make things even more interesting. Cloaking devices, Land Mines, Homing Missiles and even Credit Crystals (which buy you upgrades later on) are all up for grabs, but it's safe to say that your attention will lie elsewhere. Just keeping tabs on where the bloody plasmorb is will have you developing serious blisters, and then there's the problem of that homing missile your opponent has just fired up into your butt.

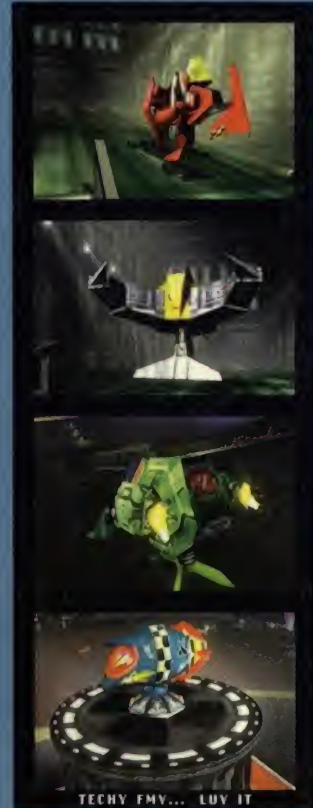
Hand over your balls

In Ballblazers there's usually a turnover every couple of seconds, which is what keeps the desperation levels high and the game churning. There's nothing like snatching the plasmorb from the other player's clutches and preventing a goal, or even better, knocking them into the plasmorb and causing them to score an "own-goal". The average round (though everything is configurable) lasts around four minutes, and in that time, it's simply up to you to score as much as you can and ultimately win all three rounds. However, your craft has only a limited amount of energy and even just holding the plasmorb uses this precious fuel up. This results in having to perfect the "dribble" technique where you grab the ball and then launch it straight away only to turbo up behind it and repeat the same technique. This gets you around the arena the fastest, but of course leaves the ball vulnerable to your opponent who is never far behind. Win a match and you can upgrade components of your rotofoil. Buy new shields, a more powerful launcher, a faster engine etc using the credit crystals you scored during the previous match and go on to face the Master Blazer and win the tournament.

You may have guessed that there are a few camera angles to choose from, a tournament mode and all the other obligatory video-game features and you'd be right. But ultimately the clever and simple gameplay is all that matters. This game is fast, furious and damn good fun. If you have a friend to play against, then check out Ballblazer Champions today. Otherwise, the enjoyment factor is fairly shortlived.



DAN'S OPINION
I loved the old Commodore 64 version, which naturally affects my perception of Ballblazer Champions on the PSX. The thing that made the original game so good was that it was fast, and easy to get a grip of. Back in the old days, the rotofoil snapped at 90 degree turns to face the orb, which at first was disorientating, but actually was very handy. I found Ballblazer Champions to be a little bit overdone, simply because all the extra stuff, whilst adding variety, make the game a bit slower, and I'd rather have manic pace that requires inhuman reflexes, than a big range of powerups, but that's just me... Eliot's mark seems spot on to me.



AVAILABLE: SEPT
CATEGORY: FUTURE SPORTS
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: G

FREAKOMETER

Fun for all the family

VISUALS

75
Fast 3D with lens flares galore

SOUND

68
Nothing much exciting really

GAMEPLAY

79
And we'll have fun, fun, fun till daddy takes the joy pad away...

OVERALL

76%
Sport! G-strings! It's got it all



Jonah Lomu Rugby



A chance to cover himself with Dencorub and cuddle large Mauris... Stretch Armstrong lives for that stuff.



It's been a couple of years now since rugby first reared its ugly, yet strangely appealing, head in the digital arena. That was late 1994 and EA gave us World Cup Rugby for the Megadrive. They're no fools over at EA and this release coincided nicely with, you guessed it, the Rugby World Cup. That was a good game and provided the springboard for EAs locally developed and ever improving rugby league game.

Looking back it remains a good game but at the time it was celebrated as much for its part in slightly denting the US-centric focus of sports games as it was for being a stand out sports sim. For sports games such as rugby, Aussie Rules and cricket (and probably badminton and Greco-Roman wrestling, if we get right down to it) there's still an element of that - if you're a sports nut and sick of high fives, you'll grab a bit of home grown action with glee even if it isn't the nut-grippingly perfect sports sim that EA churns out with joyous regularity.

Here, big Jonah gives you the best of both worlds - a sport with hometown appeal wrapped up in a game that's damn good too. Hat's off to Jonah, or at least the marketing goon smart enough to put old lumber-thighs' surly bonce on the cover of this game. First, you've got to remember that rugby is a hell of a complicated game to play in this arena. Thirty players on the field at once makes for a lot of action - much tougher to realise than basketball's five a side or soccer or baseball, where there's plenty on a team, but only a couple in the play at any one time. The programmers here have done a sterling job, its crisp (not NBA Live '97 crisp, I'll grant you, but still very good) it's clear and it looks damn well like a real game of rugby. And really, these days to say that a game is getting close to the look of a TV presentation is as big a compliment as you get. Yep, they're still cartoon sprites but this game looks fine.

Play as your favourite Slavic village...

It's in the gameplay, though, that this really shines. Option-wise, you get the standard every team in the world (and I mean every team - that Sri Lanka - Netherlands grudge match you've looked forward to is now at your fingertips) and the ability to pit them against each other in exhibitions, a regional cup tie (ala the Five Nations), a tournament of your own making or a replay of the 1995 World Cup. In respect of the latter, the South Africans among you will be disappointed to learn that the poisoning option has been disabled. Of course, all this is usual stuff, as are the choice of four grounds (all inexplicably English) and the variable half lengths and weather conditions. It's when you get onto the game itself that this game takes off - it's fast, very intuitive in its controls and it feels like a game of rugby (which, let's face it, is what you look for in a sim). The Playstation controls, especially the left and right buttons, which are used for passing, lend themselves so much better to the game than the Megadrive did and the gameplay is faster, more intricate and much more enjoyable as a result. The extra dimensions this adds to the kicking, passing, tackling and rucking is excellent. The goal kicking, in particular, has a realism to it that other footy sims have yet to come close to. All this is great - imagine how much I would've enjoyed it if had the instructions?

Och Laddy!

The exceptional play by play commentary is another highlight. To me, the standard inclusion of commentary has been the best thing to happen to sports games on the new systems, but too often the commentary is as lame as ... something very lame or just consists of a commentator ejaculating players' names. Here though, the commentary is provided by an hilarious Scottish geezer who is extremely excitable and has a very adept turn of phrase. His cry, as the ruck gets ugly, that players are "digging like demented moles" is one of the game's (and life's) true thrills. Likewise his barbed comments about English weather. It's kind of like you get rugby and Trainspotting in the same game.

This is a very enjoyable game. There are certainly sports games around with better graphics, stronger stats and great depth of play but this is a hell of a lot of fun. If EA remain the undisputed kings of sports sims (and I think they do) then Codemasters are surely now second, given the successes of the quirky Pete Sampras Tennis and Brian Lara Cricket.

It may not have been a good couple of years for big Jonah Lomu, what with kidney, wedding and World Cup final problems. But when it comes to hamburgers and video games, Jonah knows his stuff. You betcha.



AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: SPORTS
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: G

FREAKOMETER

Visuals: 80
Much better than any rugby game to date.

Sound: 86
Mainly standard sports stuff, but the commentary is great. Och aye.

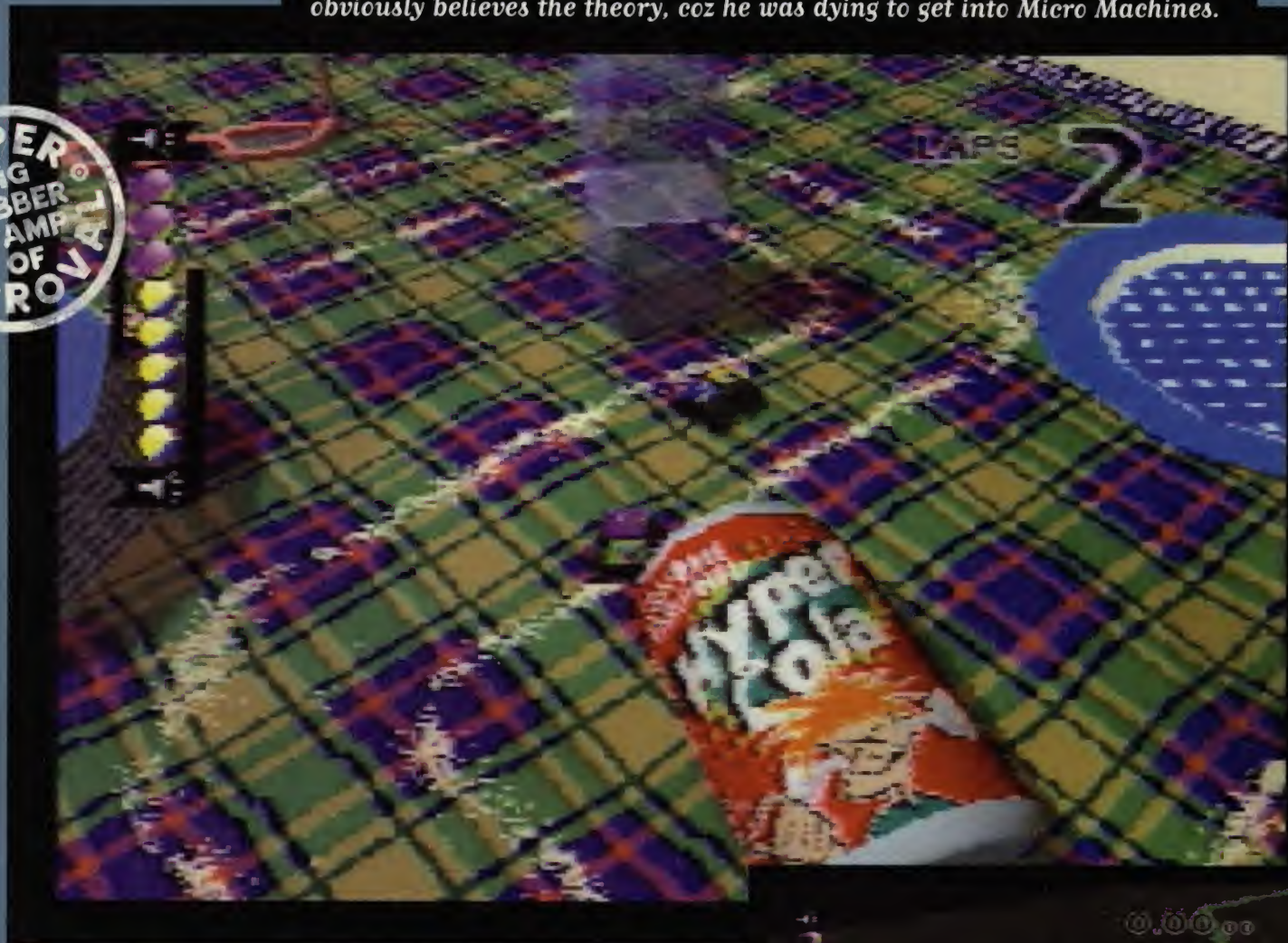
Gameplay: 90
Great controls-as intuitive as it gets for sports.

Overall: 84%
I love this game.



Micro Machines V3

You know what they say about men in big cars... DAVID WILDGOOSE obviously believes the theory, coz he was dying to get into Micro Machines.

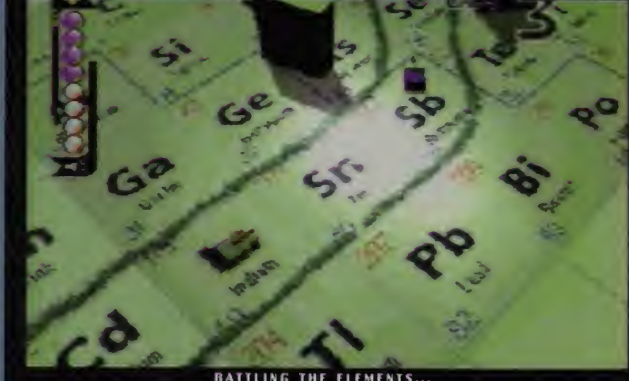


"Beep...BEEP...BEEEEEP!!! Accelerating powerfully, Spider, Cherry and I speed across the checked tablecloth, leaving Dwayne spinning his wheels in a cloud of dust back on the starting line. Jostling for 2nd position, I accidentally overshoot the first sharp right turn and get bogged in a particularly goeey dollop of honey. Handily, it does stop me falling off the edge of the table, though..."

Under its various guises over the years, Micro Machines has been a perennial favourite for all Mega Drive and SNES owning gamers. So much so that it has become almost synonymous with the term "16-bit". It's not surprising, then, that Codemasters have decided to resurrect probably their best selling title, doll it up a little bit, hopefully without ruining the gameplay too much (and they haven't, thankfully), and let a new generation of gamers discover what the rest of us have known for years. That is, that Micro Machines is a hell of a game.

They call me baby driver...

There is a bewildering amount of ways to play. You've got - deep breath - 1 player time trials, time trial challenges, tournament races, and head-to-head points races; 2 player single races or tournaments; 3 & 4 player team races, single races and party play; up to 8 player party play or knockout cup; a driving school; and, finally, a test drive mode. Obviously, having so many options is a good idea - but what is even better is that you won't see all the tracks in just one play mode. I spent a lot of time in the 4 player party play (with two people sharing one controller!), with its collection of nearly 30 different tracks, before switching to the 1 player and 2 player modes and I was delighted to find myself driving on completely new circuits almost every other race. I couldn't even begin to speculate as to how many tracks there are in total. Just as I have no idea of the number of vehicles in the game either. Needless to say, however, there are loads of them. F1 cars are insanely fast, buses go round



corners on two wheels, beach buggies handle nicely, ice cream vans play irritating music, minis just look cool, speed boats are quite useful on water, and tanks get to shoot! I could go on for a while longer, you know, but it'd be boring.

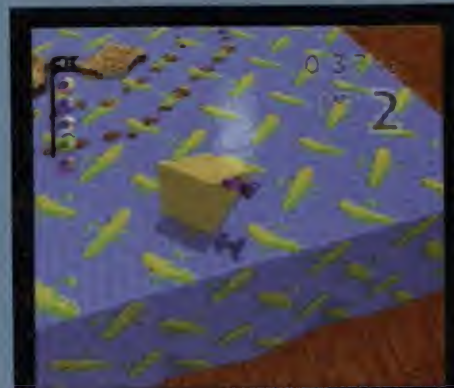
"Out of the honey, we zoom past the salt shaker and Spider gets snagged under a carelessly placed fork. I honk my horn and try to ram Cherry into that stale piece of toast, but only succeed in overshooting the next sharp right turn, driving into a wedge-shaped slice of Swiss cheese and flying off the edge of the table..."

Racing games are undoubtedly better to play against your friends than by yourself. All games are, of course, but racing ones benefit from it more than most. So the trick then, is to find a way of getting two, three, even eight people crowded around the telly and actually controlling something on screen all at once. Some have tried split screens, but it's proved quite useless for more than two players time and again. Micro Machines has always had the best solution, and MMV3 is no different. Everyone is dumped onto the one screen, the race starts and if you fall a screen length behind the leader then you're out. When there's only one car left, that person gets a point, and the race restarts from the same place it just ended. It's that simple. And it's that brilliant, too. By its very nature, this is the most competitive racing game there can be.

Power-ups are readily available on every track in the shape of little green cubes scattered along the road. Drive over these and you could be rewarded with things like mines, bombs, a glowing bumper bar, a claw, and most amusingly, a giant hammer to thump anyone who gets in your way. Best of all, some cubes give everyone the power-up, not just the person who collected it. It's a surreal moment when each car suddenly gets a monstrous hammer attached to the roof and begin to swing them round with abandon.

It's practically impossible to describe just how wonderful this game is in words. You really need to be able to see for yourself the way threats are hurled across the room, the way people try to gang up on whoever is winning, the long periods of intense concentration usually followed by minutes of hysterically cruel laughter. Isn't that what games are all about?

"Back on track, I leap over the capsized cereal packet, pick up the claw power-up and use it to grab Dwayne and toss him behind me. Unfortunately I proceed to lose control in a pool of milk and slip 'n' slide my way off the edge of the table. I limp across the line in last place, deeply shamed, but eager to gain my revenge at the Vindaloo Drive-Thru..."



HELP!



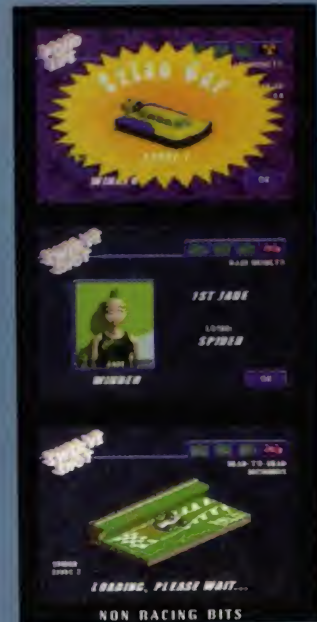
OH SHIT... FIDO!



FOILED BY DAIRY PRODUCE!



HAMMERING ALONG DOWN THE STRAIGHT...



LOADING, PLEASE WAIT...

NON RACING BITS

AVAILABLE: NOW

CATEGORY: RACING

PLAYERS: 1-8

PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS

PRICE: \$89.95

RATING: G

FREAKOMETER



Some people can't cope with racing "down" the screen for some reason

VISUALS

82

Nice 3D effects, but the gameplay's so good you barely notice the graphics

SOUND

60

Jaunty music, dinky sound FX, and annoying character voices

GAMEPLAY

93

Fantastic. More cars, tracks and options than you'll see in a 100 racing games

OVERALL

91%

Quite simply the best version yet

Xevious 3D

The original Xevious was an arcade smash back in the early Eighties and Eliot Fish is old enough to remember...



FMY OR A DISCOTHEQUE

Back when arcade machines only cost 20c (amazing but true), I spent hours transfixed by the classic shoot 'em up, Xevious. This game was the cutting edge in graphics when it was released to the arcades, and I definitely spent too much money on it. Those bizarre spinning silver tiles, and the flying coins that went "dink!", the teeny tanks that'd you'd have to line up in your bomb-sight... ahhh, it was simply one of the most addictive and most difficult shooters you could play. What it was all about was anyone's guess, but at the time it looked quite surreal and achieved cult status pretty quickly. It's absolutely no surprise really that Xevious has been given the 90s treatment, promoted to the world of polygons and slapped with the 3D tag. The game's programmers have stayed very faithful to the charm of the original and have merely spiced up the gameplay with some funky weapons and more complex levels. And that little "dink!" is still in there!



YOU VS. COMPLETE SMART ARSE...



Retro Trip...

Xevious 3D is the sort of shoot 'em up which switches your gameplaying from casual indifference to pure instinct and reflexes... The gameplay can become so frantic that you cease to be aware of what is going on around you in the real world; your fingers reacting with mechanical precision and your mind consumed with the colour and sound before you. This is a great game. You only have to play the original Xevious (which is included on the disc, along with Super Xevious and Xevious Arrangement!) to appreciate how simple and yet how influential this thing was. The concept of a top-down shooter, with the inclusion of a bomb-sight which enabled you to pick off ground objects was so cool. Of course, it meant that not only were you having to avoid enemy fire and blast oncoming obstacles with your lasers, but your attention was drawn away by what you could plug with your bombs. Ahh, I'm not getting all nostalgic on ya, am I? Sheesh. Even if you've never heard of Xevious before now, but you love a good shoot 'em up, then you'll really dig this game. It's got everything a great shooter should have. Except maybe it's a little short. Only seven levels is a bit lame, and when you consider that you have unlimited continues at your disposal, it really cheapens the experience. Whether the inclusion of three other Xevious titles on the same disc balances this out, I don't know. Hmmm.



2nd Best...

Despite that Xevious is a great shooter, it can't comere with the mind-numbing brilliance of the current Playstation champion, Raystorm. In fact, Raystorm is everything that Xevious 3D should have been. The sense of real depth in the backgrounds, deviously placed enemies and blurringly frantic action is lacking in Xevious 3D. In some levels, it comes close to matching Raystorm's speed and fantastically confusing gameplay, but Xevious is maybe a little too faithful to the original in this respect - the action never truly seems to get out of hand. One of the greatest things about a succesful shooter, is that sometimes you're just flying by the seat of your pants and rely-

ing solely on luck rather than actual expertise. When there's so much movement and firepower on screen that your craft is literally lost amongst the blur, you know that a game has you by the balls. You die and you want to kick your Playstation across the room, but the adrenaline rush is superb. Xevious never truly has you sweating. Like I said before, when there's unlimited continues to be had, it's just too tempting to simply rock on and complete the game (which clocked in at around 30 minutes for Xevious 3D). Maybe the inclusion of a password system, with a code at the end of each level, would have been a wiser inclusion and more a bit challenging.

Considering the fact that the original Xevious is included, it seems strange that maybe there weren't more risks taken with the graphics. There's nothing truly awesome to speak of here, except with maybe the odd cutscene - the ending being a real blast (literally). When you see the jaw-dropping perspectives and gorgeous detail in Raystorm, Xevious 3D looks a little bland. It's not that the game looks poor, it looks pretty spiffo - just take a look - it's just that so much more coolness could have been implemented. The sound effects are also a tad too conservative. No matter how cute it is that they kept that "dink!" sound, some blistering audio could have really helped things. Again, Xevious is left looking a bit like a piece of white bread.

For some pure shooting fun, though, there's certainly plenty to be had. Xevious 3D sure isn't easy and comes highly recommended to shoot 'em up lovers and retro gaming freaks.



AVAILABLE: AUGUST

CATEGORY: SHOOTER

PLAYERS: 1-2

PUBLISHER: NAMCO

PRICE: TBA

RATING: G8+

FREAKOMETER



You don't have to be a fan of the original, but it helps

VISUALS

79

The style of the original remains intact

SOUND

72

Dink! Dink! Dink! Dink!

GAMEPLAY

83

Addictive, pure and simple

OVERALL

80%

Right up there

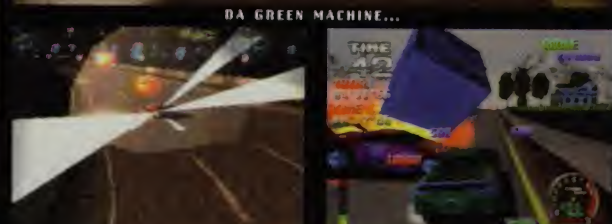
Ray Tracers

Dan & George bung L plates on the PlayStation as Adam Stafford test drives Ray Tracers

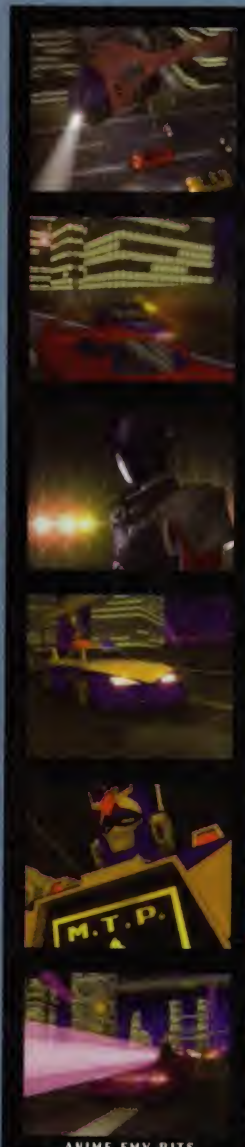
Remember Chase HQ? You know, that game where you were the cop who had to run into the bad guys enough times that their car would die on them and you would jump out and arrest them? Well, keep that in mind as you read this review because this game is sort of like Chase HQ reborn and on steroids!

The basic idea of Ray Tracer is the same as Chase HQ, you have a choice of four cars each with varying attributes and you have to drive off after the bad guys and well... smash things. The player is given a time limit and must reach the end of level boss and destroy it before the time expires. There's one boss at the end of each six (yes, only six) stages in the game.

The graphics of Ray Tracer are clear and quite nice to look at. The game runs at a good speed so it feels like you're actually moving at close to 300kph. The game does slow down sometimes, but not to an unplayable rate and it's only for short periods of time that the game will slow down. Some nice affects have been used in the game, such as the reflection in the windows and the blue beam that one of the two bosses at the end of level one fires at you.



BOOM! HAVE AT YOU CRATE!



ANIME FMY BITS





But where's the rest of it?

As mentioned before, there is only six levels in the game. Each level is fairly easy to complete after you've come to grips with how the car you've chosen handles. In Easy mode there's only three levels so you don't get to see the ending if you finish the game in easy, but it's not really that hard to finish the game in Normal difficulty either. Hard difficulty takes away the use of nitro to make it that little bit harder, but nitro should really be saved for the boss at the end of each level to make sure that when you hit it, you hit it hard. The levels are filled with other cars as well as trucks, paddy wagons & hover crafts. Which are there to try and stop you from getting to the end of the level, but each can be destroyed with one or two hits making them good only for giving the player some more points. Another way of gaining points is to run into barrels, logs, barricades and other items on the track. After hitting one of these items you can continue to hit it causing it to bounce along the road & each time you hit it you are given more points. There's also what is basically a time trials mode where the player gets to choose his track and drives around it trying to get the quickest time. You also get the option of having another car on the track to race against which is controlled by the game. Unfortunately, there's no split screen mode or link cable support, so you won't be doing this one with a friend.

The cars handle nicely and it's easy to come to grips with the controls and how each car handles. You're given the choice of manual or automatic to help add to the long term appeal of the game, but once you've finished it in Auto you're not likely to go through it again in Manual. The enemies that are on the track while you try to reach the boss are just a nuisance and each boss is very predictable. The cars can't be damaged so the only penalty you sustain for being hit by a missile for example would be to slow down, or flip over causing you to waste time getting back up to speed. When the cars flip, they flip very unrealistically, and amazingly land back in the middle of the road on their wheels ready to take off again after the boss.

Generic Japanese Doof

The sound is reasonable, with a techno sounding soundtrack playing in the background. The sound effects are good, tires screech when you lock up the brakes around a corner and slide sideways through the corner. There's also a person who talks to you at the start of each mission and sometimes gives you messages during the mission, but she wasn't speaking English so I can't tell you how helpful her info was. Your character also replies to her and gives out a shout sometimes when you put on nitro's or give the boss a good hard ram. This game could have been better if it was longer and not so easy, if there's a sequel lets hope they get it right the second time round.



AVAILABLE: JUNE
CATEGORY: ACTION
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: TAITO
PRICE: \$79.95
RATING: TBA

FREAKOMETER

A game for anyone who likes to smash things

VISUALS

89

Fast, clear the one of the games strong points

SOUND

75

SFX well suited & techno music, a little for everyone

GAMEPLAY

75

Fun to drive & easy to pick up

OVERALL

76%

Fun, but way too short

Torico

STEVE O'LEARY grabs the popcorn and sits down for the latest Sega mov.. Erm, FMV adventure, *Torico*.



MEMORY SELECT

For those who missed all the clues the first time around *Torico* allows you to playback all previously seen video in a small box. This can be helpful for newcomers to adventure games as it allows you to put together missing pieces of those hard to solve clues.

Your average console gamer is not a real fan of Full Motion Video (FMV) adventure games especially considering there have been few, if any real good ones. Today, it's a bit too much to be expected to pay \$90 or so for a few short lived minutes of lousy FMV strung together by a poor plot.

Unless you can drive, punch, kick or kill something in a game many will be pretty much uninterested. With that stated, only a really good story, with a interactive control system that together strives to improve upon previous adventure games would be the only reason most would spend the time of day playing these games and thankfully Torico for the Saturn managed to fulfil a few of my demands.

You get to be Fred...

In Torico you take the role of Fred, a lost traveller who awakens in gaol in Misty Town with no memory and the only thing to link him to any of his past is a strange symbol on his forehead. After wandering around the somewhat small Misty Town it becomes apparent that the key to your future lies in the secret of the symbol on his forehead and its relationship to the City of the Lost Moons. Lord Gordon, who governs over Misty Town, takes the role of the evil incarnate in the story and frequently dispatches his henchman, Jade, to foil your efforts in your quest.

The games control system is very simple with a single button required to pick up and use objects as well as the directional pad being used for all movements throughout Misty Town. Movement unfortunately is very linear with only certain directions being allowed at any one time and although it makes the game easy to play it also leaves you wishing for more freedom for exploration and movement. Most of the action take place in the form of the games FMV sequences, depicting all talking scenes and action scenes. An added



WILL YOU SURVIVE THE DREADED "PLAY EQUIPMENT OF DEATH"??



DARLING, DO FIX YOUR COLLAR, YOU LOOK LIKE A DICK...

feature is the ability to playback all previously seen video footage via Fred's' memory. Although seemingly a good idea, the playback feature may see all but the very inexperienced player finish the game all too soon due to the obviousness of clues, problems and their solutions.

Home movie quality?

Graphically the game wont turn any heads either. The video is at times very pixelated with poor use of colour and the lip sync resembles that of a Bruce Lee movie with characters mouths moving long after the speech has stopped. Given that Sega have done much better with video recently (Fighters Megamix intro etc), you would expect much more and especially in a game where FMV is a main feature.

All in all Torico, although enjoyable in its own right, fails to present anything new to the FMV adventure genre. The story fails to shock or scare the viewer at any time, something which many games of this type have relied heavily upon, and therefore leaves most if not all of its appeal in the games story, which to be honest is good but not great. The games simple control system has left out any room for complex interaction between characters and most puzzles consisting of ..pick up A.. use with B ..etc. You get the feeling after playing Torico that it could have been much better. Given it has its merits, but it fails to offer the depth and polish you would expect from a games system in its 4th year of development.



NO SON, YOU'RE GROUNDED AND THAT'S FINAL...

ONE TOO MANY CONES I'D SAY...

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: ADVENTURE
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: SEGA
PRICE: \$79.95
RATING: G8

FREAKOMETER

pretty basic adventure that won't pose to many hard problems

VISUALS
65
 O.K FMV and nicely detailed backgrounds

SOUND
70
 good music, speech is nice and clear..shame about the lip sync

GAMEPLAY
70
 simple...but that may be the problem for hardcore gamers

OVERALL
65%
 Could have been better....or maybe FMV games have had their day.....

Imperium Galactica

Born to rule? George Soropos was, that's why we let him loose on this one.



ULTRA SPIFFY FMV STUFF

In the dim, distant future Mankind will build a vast empire that stretches from one side of the Milky Way to the other. Aliens from all parts of the cosmos will come to marvel at this great human achievement - streets kept clean by dogs trained to eat their own poo, Scientologists eradicated by orbital phased energy discharge weapons and Neapolitan ice cream without the horrible pink stuff. Of course it all had to end when the weight of corruption and decadence became too much to bear, so now the task of rebuilding that lost glory is yours, can you handle it?

Imperium Galactica is a strange bird combining classic Space Opera with a FMV storyline and mission based gameplay. Imagine a Master of Orion type game that started out only allowing you access to a limited number of resource screens, a number which gradually expanded as you rose in rank giving you more and more scope to conduct your campaign of galactic domination. You start out with a small fleet and orders to repair a damaged colony recently attacked by the Garthogs, a race of aliens whose only contact with humanity was watching intercepted broadcasts of Worlds Greatest Commercials "Mmmm, brrrrk nnnngmungh, these Humans are not worthy of being molested by my goats, kill them all!" Planetary action takes place on smallish terrain maps which vary depending on the type of world, ice, desert etc., and has much more depth than many other games of this type. There are a wide variety of building types, some of which need to be researched before they can be used. These structures perform the usual functions of feeding, housing and protecting their inhabitants, they also need to be powered to function and these power stations usually act as the focal point of any attacks on your planets. Ground based combat takes place when you or your enemies attack a planet and defeat its' defence installations (space stations and land based energy guns) and is handled well in a real-time C&Cish sort of way. You can group and assign units and order them about just as you would in C&C, there are also defensive installations such as Barracks and Fortresses to help the defenders out. Ground battles never take on the grand strategic form of a true real-time strategy game though as the size of the city maps is very limited and as your cities get bigger there is very little room to move.



Join The Space Marines, Meet Aliens and Kill 'Em Good

Imperium's technology path gradually unwinds as you progress through the game, with more stuff becoming available for research as you climb through the ranks (well, you have to get to Commander before you can do any research, but it builds after that!) The level of research you can do depends on the number of appropriate buildings you have at your disposal. There are A.I. buildings, Civil Engineering, Mechanical, Computer etc. but only one can be built per planet. What this means is that, to keep your tech momentum going, you have to keep conquering or colonising new planets or suffer from lagging too far behind your opponents.

Space combat is, of course, an important part of the game (though not as important as ground combat!) and is handled in a similar way to the original MOO with a top down 2D display. This does get rather annoying though when your fleet gets tangled up with itself trying to obey your orders. Making ships manoeuvre around each other in two dimensions is stupid when, in reality, they would also be able to go above or below each other too. There is another dumb limitation also, your ships cannot fire and move at the same time (high tech or what?) so it's far better to let your opponent come to you and face a barrage of fire from your fleet than to charge at them, as you'll get creamed. This takes a bit of the fun out of the space combat side of things, for me anyway. While we're on a negative trip Imperium's AI could also be better. The game tends to target the strongest attacker, to the point where it will hammer one of your units 'till it's nearly dead and then change targets to a stronger one. The end result being that instead of reducing the number of units attacking it, the computer allows itself to be nailed by constantly changing targets and not finishing them off.

The Moral of the Story Is

Imperium will probably disorient Space Strategy gamers at first, its' campaign structure can be hard to figure out. I had to play about four games before I got the gist of what I was supposed to do. At the lower ranks things are easy enough, Communications from your superiors inform you of missions which you must complete to get your next promotion (escort missions mainly) But once you reach Commander things get a bit tricky. My advice here is to nail those Garthogs as quickly as possible, take your time and you'll regret it when you reach the rank of Admiral and find that the whole galaxy is already full! My only major reservation about this game is that, because of its' campaign style storyline, its' replay value won't be anything like that of MOO or MOO2, in fact after you've finished the game you probably won't want to touch it again, that combined with a missing multiplayer option cost Imperium dearly when it came time to devise a score. An innovative and fun game which should have had more replay value.



AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: SPACE STRATEGY
 PLAYERS: 1
 PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE
 PRICE: \$89.95
 RATING: G
 REQUIREMENTS: 486 DX100,
 8MB RAM, DOS 5.0, 4X CD

FREAKOMETER

 Space Strategy heads only need apply

VISUALS
76
 Well, its a Space Strategy game...what do you expect, nice rendered techy bits though

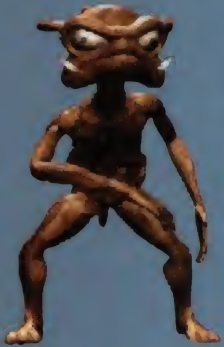
SOUND
74
 Yep, it's got sound

GAMEPLAY
82
 Very MOO, quite good but no replay value

OVERALL
80%
 Lack of replay value is the only thing that stopped Imperium from getting a better score, a great game while it lasts

Redneck Rampage

Git the dawgs Virgil, that George Soropos fella's done gone and interferred with Becky-May again. We'll teach those city folk not to come here and mess with Ma's favourite chicken!



AND THIS IS FER GETTIN' MY CHICKENS UP THE DUFF...

WHAT ARE THESE ILLITERATE HICKS DOING IN A LIBRARY?



YA DANG BULL MOLESTERIN' YARMINTI!

WOULD YOU LIKE A HAND?

HEY... YER KINDA PURTY...

"Well, me and Bubba were in the barn yesterday, makin' hay with Marylou our third cousin. Actually it's hard to say what Marylou is in r'lation to us 'cause her daddy done the dirty with our sister, Kelly-Jo Anne, her daddy being our uncle an all it kinda gets confusing. Anyway there we were gettin' straw on our bare asses when we heard an almighty noise outside. We all looks through the winda an' what in tarnation should we see but a big silver ship all full up with bug eyed monsters. Heck, I said to Bubba, You'd better go an' tell paw while ah fetch the shotgun, looks liken there after our praaaz pig"

Redneck Rampage is a rootin' tootin' first person shooter from Interplay built around Duke Nukem's 3D "build" engine. Seems that aliens have landed somewhere near Hickston in America's deep south and heck they've stolen your prize pig Bessie to boot! They've hidden themselves away in the sewers to set up their base and cloned a few of the locals to act as guards... Who knows what their ultimate plan is, who cares - you just want your Bessie back.

Skippy Old Coot seeks Porker for meaningful relationship

Redneck Rampage is squarely aimed at gamers with a sense of humour, it isn't as technically advanced as games based around newer 3D engines and doesn't offer much in the way of innovation. The game relies on its' character, humour and good level design to carry it through and that works just fine. Rampage is almost evenly split between indoor and outdoor locations: Barns, Farmhouses, townships and the local sewer works. All of which look great in 640x480 as the textures used in the game are very detailed indeed. I did find though that, even with a P166MMX, I had to reduce the size of the screen to get a smooth frame rate when there were more than one or two bad dudes on screen. The game seemed to slow down far too much when things got hot. Speaking of which, your enemies in Rampage are a pretty nasty lot, if a bit dumb. The first critters you'll encounter are clones of the local townsfolk like the 'Skippy Old Coot' who's comes armed with a .457 magnum and 'Billy Ray Jeter' a shotgun totin' hillbilly fiend. My favourites are the Turd Minions, creatures made from reanimated alien faeces (as the editor of the Hickston Hog says "Damn, I'm startin' to think I'm on the wrong side here. I mean, can ya imagine it? You could take a dump and have the little turd go plow the back 40!") They also like to throw the stuff at you...ech. Then there are the Hulk Guards and Vixens. Hulk Guards throw exploding caltrops as well as having an energy weapon built into their arm, they also take a lot of damage. Vixens are equipped with an interesting piece of gear - the Alien Bra Gun, something to steer well clear of. The most fearsome of all the critters though, for me, are the dogs. Unlike Quake's comparatively friendly canines these mongrels take a lot to kill, move fast and hurt lots. There is also a bit of a bug or design flaw in the engine that stops you shooting anything at point blank range, which is where the mutts tend to attack you (teeth don't have a very long range) this makes them very dangerous!

I love the Smell of Beer Fart in the Morning

Redneck Rampage's main appeal lies in its' sense of humour though, not in its' array of weapons, monsters and puzzles. Health power ups come in the form of Beer, Whiskey and Cow Pies, if you drink to much however you'll suddenly lose control and start staggering around like a pissed old fart! Cow Pies help to absorb the alcohol and stop you from gettin' blind while restoring your health too. The other way to perk yourself up a bit is to take a leak (I aint talkin' vegetables here) A quick hit of the pee key and you'll feel a whole lot better. Other bodily functions are also respected in Rampage... Try standing still for a while until you fart and you'll notice that the force of your flatulence actually propels Leonard, your alter ego, forward! Redneck Rampage, while not being contender for PC game of the year, is a whole lot of fun to play, challenging and addictive... 'nuff said.



MMM GUNS

Rampage's nine weapons provide nicely diverse ways of killing your opponents. The classics are there of course, the pistol and the shottie, as well as a few more interesting items. If you want to take out some critter hiding around the next corner the Rip Saw will send spinning blades of death bouncing off the walls. It can also be used up close like a chainsaw. The Alien Arm Gun is a bit of ofal you find after killing each Hulk Guard, it lets off powerful energy bursts when you pull on the tendons which hang out of its side and the Alien Bra Gun will make your friends think you've just gotten a job as an extra in Priscilla Queen of the Desert 2 but it sure does some damage to those pesky critters!

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER
 PLAYERS: 1 - MULTI
 PUBLISHER: INTERPLAY
 PRICE: \$89.95
 RATING: MA15+

FREAKOMETER
 Even if you don't love 1st person shooters, it's dang funny

VISUALS
87
 Convincing scene setting of the deep south, complex textures but only 2D monsters

SOUND
84
 Cool collection of Redneck tracks and (if you're on-line) great voice samples with Interplay's "CussPack"

GAMEPLAY
86
 The most fun you can have with a greasy pig

OVERALL
87%
 Well worth the entry fee

Need For Speed II



George Soropos' need for speed is matched only by his need for weed so we gave him the keys to this new racer.

The Original Need For Sleep, sorry Speed, was a singularly unimpressive piece of work which, while being one of the first racing games to incorporate SVGA graphics, was about as much fun to play as nude Volleyball in Alaska. Of course, with a careless disregard for our opinion, the game sold in the billions and EA poked their tongues out at us and said 'N'yah N'yah, no one listens to Hyper' And, after cornering their PR staff and rubbing Tigerbalm on their sensitive bits, we ruefully had to agree.

With sales figures like NFS's there just had to be a sequel, and we just had to review it, even though no one listens to us!

A Long and Winding Road

Need For Speed II's designers went back to the drawing board for the sequel, only they didn't find any chalk. The tracks are really the only major improvement in the game, there are six plus a secret one in all and most are well planned and fun to drive on. The first two won't excite you much as they are really just practice circuits, the sight of Ayers Rock sitting in the middle of a lake in the second "Outback" course should amuse a few of you though. The other four tracks are full of tricky corners and pleasant scenery and provide a real challenge in keeping your machine on the road.

Speaking of machines, NFSII has a suitably exotic lineup: McLaren F1, Ferrari F50, Lotus GT1, Jaguar XJ220 and the Ford GT90 to name a few. For my money though, what little of it there is, the only car worth driving in the whole bunch is the GT1. The McLaren and Ferrari are much faster but, according to EA's design team anyway, they both handle like delivery vans.

Something odd in the presentation of the game is that, no matter what car you chose to drive, it is always portrayed as a blue McLaren in the pre race animation (?)





LAST ONE TO THE CHALLET IS A WORKING CLASS OYK!



THOSE OTHER BITS

Strange Things Are Afoot

NFSII also includes a new arcade driving mode which is supposed to make it easier to do stuff like powerslides and hand-brakes as well as making the cars a bit easier to handle. While it sort of works I actually found that it made it a lot easier to lose control of your car and that powersliding in the standard game was more realistic and more fun anyway. Where things really start to get screwy though is in the raw detail of the driving model.

For example; you're in an F1, you're on a long flat stretch of road, you're in third gear doing 80 mph, your foot's hard down on the gas (or hard forward on the joystick) and there's NO response. Even my old Cressida would manage acceleration under such conditions! At times you'll notice your car actually slowing down when going down hill and speeding up when you're going up! The driving model at times seems very confused and it can be more than a little distracting. Another weird thing that threw me was the way the road textures appear to go backwards when you go above a certain speed. There is a sort of strobing effect that makes the road look like it's moving away from you instead of underneath and towards you. Needless to say, apart from the fact that it completely destroys the sense of speed that you get from watching the road whizz by, this can also be quite disconcerting. One more thing while I'm having a whinge here, when you're in tournament mode and you, for whatever reason, want to ditch out there is nothing that allows you to return to the main menu, you actually have to leave the whole game and then re-boot, huh?

While being a definite improvement on the original NFSII still has a long way to go to catch up with the likes of POD and Porsche Challenge...recommended only for exotic car freaks and people who've never driven a real car and so don't know what to expect.



PC DRIVING

The console systems have been winning the driving game wars lately with the poor old PC languishing for lack of good titles. With the very notable exception of POD (which is sci-fi based anyway) The PC hasn't seen any top notch driving or racing sims since GP2 and Sega Rally. Unfortunately Need For Speed II only rates as another almost good PC driving game, like Rally Challenge or Daytona before it and, as usual, the driving model is to blame. Driving NFSII simply doesn't make you feel like you're at the wheel of a supercar. The scenery just doesn't move by you fast enough at high speed to make you actually feel like you're at high speed, and there is absolutely no sensation of acceleration in any of the cars whatsoever. Far be it from me to belittle the efforts of a large team of programmers and developers but, well, it's back to the drawing board again guys.



YUPPIE VS YUPPIE

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: RACING
 PLAYERS: 1-MULTI PLAYERS
 PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
 PRICE: \$89.95
 RATING: G
 REQ: P90 (P166 RECOMMENDED), WIN 95, 16 MB RAM, 4X SPEED CD-ROM

FREAKOMETER

If you can handle a joystick you can play this game!

VISUALS

84

Picturesque tracks and long lasting skid marks, this game looks nice

SOUND

75

Unconvincing engine sounds and some OK trancey menu music

GAMEPLAY

78

Not too bad, but has a lot of problems with its 'realism'

OVERALL

79%

Glitches in the driving model ruin an otherwise good game

Dark Reign - The Future

Aussie developers Auran have declared war upon the real time strategy games of the world with their flagship, Dark Reign. DAN TOOSE takes the helm



It's turning out to be a ridiculously good year for Activision with big releases like Interstate 76, the Quake Mission Packs, and Hexen 2 to come, it's obvious that the video game veterans are on a roll. What should be their biggest seller this year however is their latest real time strategy game, Dark Reign, which runs off a game engine called the "Tactics" engine, developed by Auran, an Australian company. Auran came up with the concept and the game engine, and have worked in conjunction with Activision who have the staff and resources to coordinate the design, to produce what has to be easily the most technically advanced real time strategy game to date. Before we leap into this review, let it be known that we did the review of a "very bloody close to finished" beta version, which did not have the final artwork in it, nor did it have the final set of missions. However, we did get to play the game both multi & single player missions, and suffice to say, that the beta of Dark Reign was better than most games are finished.

The general gist of Dark Reign is that there are two main sides to play as, one is the Imperium who represent the oppressive nasty force that has essentially ruled the known galaxy with an iron fist, the other is the Freedom Guard who represent the rebels who decided to fight the system. Just so those of you that are new to gaming don't get completely lost in this review, Dark Reign is a real time strategy game, where you command a futuristic military force without any time for you to sit back and think about it. Like older RTS games, Dark Reign makes you manage your resources by collecting water

of War

(extremely valuable in the future), and Element 115, which you can use to spend on both buildings and units to further your efforts at conquering the current map. Each of the two sides in this battle has their advantages and disadvantages. At this stage there were 33 missions scheduled for the single player game, which is more than Red Alert or Warcraft 2.

The depth to Dark Reign is absolutely amazing. Unlike the other RTS games to date there are lots of units with special abilities that you can use to your advantage in the game. For starters some units can change form, making them turn into a completely different unit with different qualities and features. Other units can change form, but simply aesthetically, like the scout, who can camouflage themselves to look like a tree for example, and perform some covert operations. Not only can units change by you selecting them to, but there is also unit experience, and units can turn into more powerful, and more capable units. If you want to set up complex waypoints for your units to follow... you can. You can even set up global waypoints so you can have whole groups of units going along a path you've predetermined for them.

Ever had that situation in a multiplayer game where your partner would be much more help to you if you could give them some extra cash, or even just a handful of units? You can do both in Dark Reign. George and I accidentally started a game where we were both in control of the same team, which prompted the idea of having a four player game with two people on each side, one taking care of unit construction and defense, the other organising attacks.

It's hard to put a finger on exactly what it is, but there's something about Dark Reign's game mechanics which make it hard to just wipe your opponent out in a multiplayer game, creating more opportunities for epic battles that have the balance of power swing back and forth, which is something this genre has lacked.

There's no other way to summarize Dark Reign other than brilliant. There are so many subtleties and little extra features which were there that were too numerous to mention, but suffice to say, anyone who enjoyed games like Warcraft or Command and Conquer must go and buy Dark Reign so they can realize just how much better the original games could have been done. Definitely one of the strongest contenders for PC game of the year.



SMARTER THAN THE AVERAGE AI

AI Artificial Intelligence, perhaps the single most important feature of any video game where the computer must make your opponents react to what you do in the game. Quake for example had reasonable AI (good by the standards at the time), but nothing that your average gamer couldn't outsmart given a few hours practice. It's even more important in a RTS game like Dark Reign, Red Alert, etc. Where the computer needs to choose tactics that will defeat your own strategies. Dark Reign has outstanding AI where everything just makes sense. If the computer finds a group of your units, it assesses how much of a threat they are. If it decides it needs to eliminate you, it then goes about sending a force that is capable of taking the threat out. If it doesn't have those units already, then it goes about making them, and if it doesn't have the building required, it builds it! The only drawback is that if you make a whole mess of custom units for a custom mission, you'll have to program in all the AI settings. Because you can enter your own AI settings, this means it's quite possible for people to compete against each other not only hands on, but actually designing an AI and letting it fight someone else, or even their own AI!

PLAY GOD - SCENARIO EDITOR FROM HEAVEN

Dark Reign comes with an ultra sexy map editor which can make even the most inept artist create a pretty cool looking landscape. Even more importantly it can enable a creative mind to create maps which can set the scene for some pretty awesome battles. For starters there are numerous tile sets to choose from, which means you can make your terrain look quite diverse. Secondly you can paint on the map just like in any simple "paint" program, with some very sensible features like a spray effect, which scatters the tile you're using, so it looks more natural, and the ability to click on multiple scenery items, like trees and rocks, and have them "sprayed" onto the map where you see fit, saving you clicking on things over and over. Working with the multiple levels of terrain are simple, and the whole Scenario Editor in general requires no reading of long winded texts, or large IQs.

Not only is the artistic element to the Scenario Editor good, but the chance to come up with your own creative gameplay elements is there as well, with a long list of mission objectives to apply to your scenario, so you could have a mission where you have to steal enemy technology, then destroy a bunch of buildings, then survive for ten minutes afterwards. This also works for multiplayer, making it especially good for those looking for something other than a straight up battle.



DARK REIGN VS RED ALERT AND WARCRAFT 2

When you're making a game that's a blatant clone of an existing title that has been very successful, then you have to take the game further or forever live with the acceptance of your new game being "just another such-and-such clone", which may be as good as the original, but will fail to capture an audience due to a lack of anything really new for gamers to get into. Auran's work on the Tactics engine, with the "Wouldn't it be cool if you could do that well let's put it in then" attitude, has produced a game that any real time strategy buff will instantly realize, puts games like Red Alert and Warcraft 2 to shame. Aesthetics and sound really don't matter in this genre, because that's not why we play these games. Dark Reign does have the option for you to add in your own graphics and sounds though, so the game is as good looking as you care to make it. The terrain looks much better in Dark Reign due not only to the huge array of different tiles, but a variety

of terrain sets as well. The big difference between Dark Reign and previous real time strategy games is firstly that everything is customizable, which makes the longevity of the game go on forever, and allows you to change things that you don't like about the game, without having to be a computer boffin. Secondly the basic mechanics of the game, the controls and interface are far better thought out than any other game in the genre. Thirdly, multiplayer games have far more potential to last longer, and turn into real epic battles compared to games like Red Alert and Warcraft 2, that suffer badly from grunt rush tactics. Fourth, the multiplayer games can have objectives other than "Kill everything", and can also be set up sequentially, so there's real potential for something new in terms of real time multiplayer strategy. Fifth Oh bugger, this could go on forever. Almost any aspect you could think of in a real time strategy game has been done better than ever before by Auran and Activision's masterpiece, Dark Reign.



THE FREEDOM GUARD

You could say these were the good guys, fighting for the chance to regain some sort of sense of freedom and equality of themselves. The Freedom Guard's strengths lie in their ability to mobilize their bases and camouflage their units. Freedom Guard also have the advantage of being able to have veteran units. The technology that the Freedom Guard use to their advantage is the Phase Facility, which allows some of their units to bury themselves underground, so they can spring up for surprise attacks.

(Remember that this art is not final for these units)
RAIDER - The basic grunt for the Freedom Guard, who can phase underground once the Phase Facility is built.

MERCENARY - A recruit from outside the Freedom Guard, this heavy infantry has the "have rail gun, will travel" mentality.

SCOUT/SNIPE - The scout is, as the name implies, used for recon missions, and she has the ability to morph into trees, rocks, etc. To use as camouflage. Once she earns some experience, she becomes a sniper, with the ability to pick off enemy infantry at a distance.

INFILTRATOR - Like the name implies, your spy unit, that can do all sorts of cool things like steal plans to enemy technologies you don't have, examine their view of the map, etc.

FIELD MEDIC - Just like in Red Alert, the medic patches up those that need it, either manually, or automatically if he sees someone who needs fixin'.

MECHANIC/SABOTEUR - Sort of a medic for vehicles, except once the mechanic has some experience, he can become a Saboteur, which allows him to cause horrid amounts of damage to enemy buildings should he reach them.

MARTYR - The freedom guard have a lifespan of 25 years, and those nearing their quarter century



get the honour of strapping heavy explosives to their body and going in for one big bang.

SPIDER BIKE - The Freedom Guard's go anywhere fast unit, Spider Bikes are useful against both tanks and infantry. Inexpensive, fast and reliable.

SKIRMISH TANK - The generic, medium tank for the Freedom Guard, somehow we doubt that the art for this one is anything like in the final version.

TRIPLE RAIL HOVER TANK - Using stolen Imperium technology, the Freedom Guard created their heaviest tank, the Triple Rail Hover Tank. Not as beefy as a Tachyon tank, but not far behind.

TANK HUNTER - The perfect equalizer against the Imperium tank onslaught, firing a strong electrical discharge. Only one drawback is that the weapon is short range, so the tank hunter is vulnerable to distance attacks.

PHASE TANK - The ambush unit. Phase tanks can bury themselves underground for that perfect surprise attack. Only one problem is that they can't fire while underground, but if found, they can be fired upon, although the earth helps soften the blows.

HELLSTORM ARTILLERY - The unit with the longest range of attack in the game, the Hellstorm Artillery fires a shot that affects a considerable area too, and a group of these units can be used to hammer a target before they know what hit them. Downsides, slow fire rate and low

armour makes them useless once attacked.

R.A.T. (Rapid Armoured Transport) - A troop transport with the ability to camouflage itself while stationary.

FLAK JACK - A construction rig with gun bits added on to tackle the onslaught of Imperium Cyclones. The problem with the Flak Jack is that it is too busy looking up at the sky to fire at anything on the ground, so it needs ground support to stay alive.

OUTRIDER - Essentially a heavy gunship that is perfect for attacking ground units, but lacks any air-to-air weaponry, and thus needs all the help it can get from other air units.

SKY BIKE - A modified Spider Bike made for the skies. Weaker in armour and weaponry than the Cyclone, the Sky Bike relies upon its speed to help maintain tactical advantage in combat situations.

SHOCK WAVE - If you can muster the patience required to build this one, it's worth the wait. The Shock Wave unit has the ability to create a seismic disturbance, strong enough to send a wave through the earth that will cause immense damage to all in its path.

MAYBE UNITS: (Ones that were in the instructions, but not the game we reviewed.)

PHASE RUNNER - A transport unit that can take five unit from the phase facility, and transport them underground to the desired location.



WARCRAFT 2

TAILOR MADE GAMING

Just how customizable is Dark Reign? Well, imagine you thought that the Tachyon Tanks moved too quickly considering their firepower... then you'd just go into the configuration file that contains the info on that unit, and adjust the parameter for unit speed. It's not just limited to unit stats, you can also adjust how the unit looks by adding in your own graphics and sound effects, should you have the time and patience to do them! In basic gameplay, there are some other parts of the game which are highly customizable, such as the tenacity and autonomy of a unit. You just built a group of Plasma tanks which you want to designate to defend your base as a last line of defence. Just beef up their tenacity and they'll attack any enemy units that come into sight. Want to save that special unit for your final assault? Bring the tenacity down to low, and the unit will automatically avoid combat.



PLASMA TANK - The medium tank of the Imperium forces... comes with a plasma cannon, funny that.

TACHYON TANK - The Tachyon tank is not only the most heavily armed and armoured tank on the battlefield, but can also tank down it's adversaries when it looks like defeat is at hand by self destructing causing a rather nasty explosion.

SHREDDER - It slices, it dices! Very bad news for enemy infantry, as it rips anything it comes in contact with, erm... to shreds!

ARMOURED ASSAULT VEHICLE

Your generic troop transport, carrying up to five infantry units.

CYCLONE - The Imperium's versatile air unit, which can tackle both land and air units. Only drawback is that it has a limited supply of ammo, and needs to rearm after a short duration of combat.

SKY FORTRESS - This beast moves slowly through the air towards it's targets, who really have something to worry about, as the Sky Fortress houses the most powerful cannon in the game, however it can only fire a single shot before needing to go and rearm itself.

AMPER - Rather than use conventional medics, the Imperium military uses Ampers, cyborgs that fire a special poison into dying infantry units, that returns their life to full, but gives them a very short life span.

HOSTAGE TAKER - How's this for nasty, these vehicles come with "jaws" that will scoop up enemy infantry units and turn them into mindless zombies that will work under your control. Oh, and they have a bomb strapped to their back, perfect for suicide runs.

MAYBE UNITS: (Ones that were still being sorted out as we reviewed the game)

S.C.A.R.A.B. (Self Contained Armoured Ranged Artillery Battery) - An artillery unit with awesome range, but light defensive capabilities... Unless it retracts into it's armoured form, which makes it inert, but gives time for support to arrive.

M.A.D. (Mobile Air Defense)- The M.A.D. fires bladed orbs at enemy air units. However, it cannot fire at land units, and thus needs some protection.

THE IMPERIUM

Having been in control for ages, the Imperium have great technology and resources at hand. Their main strength lies in raw aggressive power. The Imperium have a structure called the temporal gate, which can be used to teleport up to three units to any location on the map you have investigated, or even nastier is the temporal rift projector, which can cause a destruction vortex to appear on the map, sucking all nearby structures and units in with devastating effect.

Here's a rundown of the Imperium units (note that some of these units may not appear in the final game, and some new ones may pop up).

GUARDIAN - Basic grunt for the Imperium, who's only really handy feature is their immunity to chemical weapons.

BION-The Imperium's heavy infantry, being a cyborg armed with a plasma rifle who is immune to chemical weapons.

RECON DRONE - Just pop in two AA batteries and send it off to uncover the map.

EXTERMINATOR - Hovering infantry that can go places most others can't. They also use chemical grenade canisters which are very effective against enemy infantry.

INFILTRATOR - Like the name implies, your spy unit, that can do all sorts of cool things like steal plans to enemy technologies you don't have, examine their view of the map, etc.

SCOUT TANK - A light fast tank, perfect for a quick scouting mission, or for a lightning strike on remote targets if you have em in mass numbers.

AVAILABLE: JULY

CATEGORY: REAL TIME STRATEGY

PLAYERS: 1-8

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION

PRICE: £89.95

RATING: G8+

REQUIREMENTS: WIN 95, P90, 16 MB RAM

FREAKOMETER



Whilst having a good interface, it can get in depth enough to scare off those not into the genre

VISUALS

80

Great terrains and the units we saw were okay, but we expect better in the finished product

SOUND

75

Zap, kapow, yes sir, no sir... right away sir...

GAMEPLAY

97

About as thorough and well thought out as any game ever created

OVERALL

91%

The best real time strategy game ever by a long shot

BLOOD

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: 1ST PERSON SHOOTER
 PLAYERS: 1-NETWORK
 PUBLISHER: MONOLITH
 PRICE: \$89.95
 RATING: MA15+



Before you can say "Not another Doom clone 'with a twist'", Monolith brings us another Doom clone - with a twist. Our hero is the somewhat mysterious Caleb, a mid-19th Century Texan outlaw with a touch of David Koresh flowing through his veins.

The storyline is that you and your babe Ophelia are cultists worshipping Tchernobog, an evil dude who decides one day that you, your babe and your mates have failed Him, so he kills you all. You come back to life as an undead gunfighter and proceed to mow down the baddies aka Young Guns meets Demon Knight.

Blood is basically a total conversion of the Duke Nukem 3D engine with a different theme, new weapons, monsters, power-ups and a lot more gore. The selection of weapons thrown at you makes for some interesting killing: a pitchfork, flare gun, double-barrel shotgun, Tommy gun, flame-thrower (i.e., a can of hairspray meets a zippo - hands up anyone who hasn't tried that) and, of course, a voodoo doll.

The gameplay is comfortably familiar for 3D gamers, but the monster AI is an improvement over past games - if you don't cull 'em quickly they'll follow you everywhere - up stairs, around corners, jump off ledges - even swim underwater to get at you. Oh, and watch out for robbed monks toting sawn-off shotguns who dive-roll around the room and scream at you in Latin like something out of Lethal Weapon meets The Name of the Rose.

Blood is an pretty cool game, but falls short of being 'the next big thing' for one main reason: with the plethora of 1st-person 3D games out there, unless you are doing something amazingly new your game will look, but not feel any different to all the others out there - and that's what long-term playability is all about. The Verdict: something to sink your teeth into while waiting for Unreal or Hexen 2.

VISUALS	65
SOUND	70
GAMEPLAY	65
FREAKYNESS	80
OVERALL	77

GEORGE ARGY

Formula 1

PC 3DFX

AVAILABLE: NOW
 CATEGORY: RACING
 PLAYERS: 1
 PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS
 PRICE: \$99.95
 RATING: G
 REQUIRES: P100, WIN 95, 16MB RAM, 3DFX BASED ACCELERATOR CARD.



Formula 1 has been a big success for Psygnosis, as the game has sold gobs on the PlayStation, although there were many in an uproar over many bugs and faults in the game. However, it's hard to be stressed about bugs in a game you've already released, and of course the PC gaming market was ripe for the pickings.

The first thing you'll notice about Formula 1 on PC is that it looks like no other racing game yet. Every texture and effect looks fantastic and to fault this game visually is hard. The only reason you'll mistake it for a video game is the pop-up of buildings and trees out in the distance. They've certainly fixed Murray Walker, no they haven't taken to his testicles with a pair of pliers... I mean they seem to have fixed bugs with his comments being a bit more spot on.

The cars themselves handle nicely, and you can adjust all the realism, etc, to suit your racing needs. You wouldn't go as far as to call this a true "driving sim" however, as it's not about anal retentive attention to driving physics, it's about having fun. There's no in car view, which didn't bother me, since I've yet to see a game with a cockpit view that didn't restrict your view so heavily as to make it much more inconvenient than in real life. The default driving view, whilst odd, does give you the right sort of view you need to be able to tell what's going on.

My only gripe with Formula 1 on PC was that the other cars always just held their racing line, as though you were not there. In arcade mode it's okay, as you can drive Destruction Derby style and get away with it, but if you're trying to have a serious race in Grand Prix mode, you'll often get the shits with the other drivers' lack of regard for your presence, since it will probably end up bumping you out of the race. Great fun, just don't expect things to work like in a real life race.

VISUALS	96
SOUND	83
GAMEPLAY	80
FREAKYNESS	70
OVERALL	82

DAN TOOSE

Sky Target

Saturn

AVAILABLE: JUNE
 CATEGORY: SHOOT-EM-UP
 PLAYERS: 1
 PUBLISHER: SEGA
 PRICE: \$89.99
 RATING: G



It's undeniable that for every great Sega arcade conversion there are just as many arcade games that are unsuited for home conversion with a lack of depth and replay value being their main downfall. Unfortunately for Sega, it looks like Sky Target may be one of these ill fated arcade conversions. In the arcade, Sky Target was the polygon version of the classic 'Afterburner', boasting Hi-res graphics at 60 frames per second, it provided the adrenalin rush that would suit the quick-fix game player. On the Saturn though, the visuals suffer rather a reduction in quality with pop-up, texture warping and a lack of detail detracting from its visual appeal that was so important to the arcade version's success. Having half the frame rate of the arcade, Sky Target stands poorly in contrast against the similarly based shooter 'Panzer Dragoon 2', indicating a lack of programming skill rather than lame hardware.

Further adding to Sega's woes is the control in Sky Target. The aircraft appears to oversteer with the slightest response from the joy pad making targeting enemies very difficult at times, and the lack of speed in the game leaves the player with no sense of danger or adrenalin pumping action that the original afterburner provided.

On the positive side Sky Target offers a choice of four aircraft, each with different handling characteristics and also allows use of the analogue pad making targeting of enemy planes much easier.

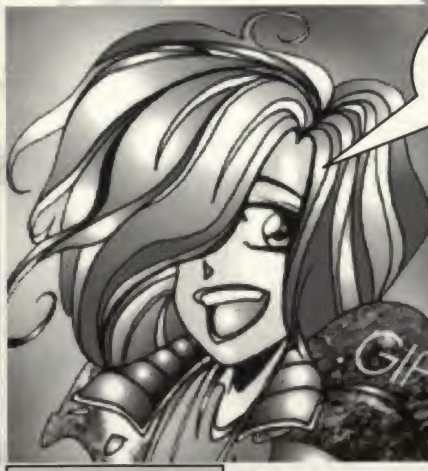
There are 7 stages and upon completion of each stage you are asked to choose between one of two future missions, making for a total of 13 available missions that can be accessed. There are also missions that have sub-paths that allow slightly different enemies and terrain to be encountered... hardly ground breaking stuff, but an effort to increase the game's replay value somewhat.

Overall Sky Target is mediocre stuff and leaves you feeling that Sega should concentrate more on original software rather than just porting all of their arcade games.

VISUALS	65
SOUND	70
GAMEPLAY	65
FREAKYNESS	20
OVERALL	65

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Amok Saturn

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: ACTION
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE
PRICE: \$79.95
RATING: G8+



Gee, the fancy box and threatening title really had me expecting some pretty major fireworks. I plonked the disc into the Saturn, flicked through the manual and grabbed the joypad in anticipation. What I received was a pretty uninspired 3D shooter that entertained but did not excite. You control a cool little Mech which can operate underwater as well stomp around on the surface. In fact, in the first mission, all you seem to have to do is swim to the exit (and avoid a few sharks). The animation is pretty keen and the controls felt smooth, but the backgrounds looked strangely like cardboard cutouts and most of your enemies are the size of sultanas. Still, I was having fun and there were some challenging missions. Your Slambird can run, strafe and unleash some cool missiles and bombs as well as rattle off an unlimited supply of bullets from your standard, generic guns but it still feels like you're pushing around a small robotic chicken. Each level seems to consist of a number of secret areas which reveal convenient powerups like Health, Missiles, Bombs and Invincibility as well as Extra Hull Pickups which expand the amount of health you can carry, so there's always something to poke around for. Most of the game you'll find yourself picking off soldiers, turrets and scattered mines as well as some bizarre wasp-like creatures called Zumzoum Warriors that drop scatter bombs on you which are pretty cool. You'll also come across sharks, rats, bats and ants!! Strange.

There are only eight levels which is a shame, because Amok is very playable. It's certainly not an intense gaming experience but I found myself enjoying it's simplistic level layout and familiar doomy action. Each level provides you with some easy to follow mission-based fun - but it's all extremely linear. You'll enjoy Amok for a few hours, maybe a few days and then it'll collect dust. A good one to rent, maybe.

VISUALS	69
SOUND	72
GAMEPLAY	68
FREAKYNESS	15
OVERALL	67

ELIOT FISH

Dark Light Conflict PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: SPACE COMBAT
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: ONE - MULTI
PRICE: \$79.95
RATING: G
REQ: P90, 16MB RAM, WIN 95



it's time to slip the urine extraction hose onto your todger and head out to deep space as the galaxy is once more threatened with annihilation, embarrassment and a sound thrashing from evil aliens bent on destruction.

In EA's new space opera Dark Light Conflict you play the part of a genetically altered space hero sent on a mission to study the enemy by learning his combat tactics, strengths and weaknesses. You carry out your mission by fighting alongside your foe instead of against him!

Dark Light has over 50 single player missions to play through, a lot by anyone's standards, and also includes multiplayer network support straight out of the box. Up to six people can play simultaneously on a LAN, but unfortunately modem support has to be downloaded as a patch from EA's web site.

The game's designers have made much of the realistic physics model in the game, as well as the detailed light sourcing and graphic depiction of the space craft. However they have made one enormous, unforgivable mistake in hardwiring the controls. It isn't possible to configure the keyboard and joystick layout to suit your own preferences and the way that EA have laid out the controls annoyed the bejesus out of me and basically put a big dampner on the whole experience. This happens surprisingly often and it makes you wonder why a company would bother to go to all the trouble of developing a game for a year or two only to balls it up with such a minor time saving measure. The biggest annoyance is having to take your hand off your joystick to roll or bank your ship, this makes flying really mechanical, unintuitive and, well, just not fun.

Dark Light's main competition in this genre at the moment is Lucas Arts' X-Wing vs Tie Fighter and, although EA's title has the edge in terms of graphical excellence X vs T is a more engrossing game and, for multiplayer action, far superior.

VISUALS	91
SOUND	80
GAMEPLAY	81
FREAKYNESS	40
OVERALL	81

GEORGE SOROPOS

Comanche 3 PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: AIR COMBAT SIM
PUBLISHER: NOVA LOGIC
PLAYERS: ONE - MULTI
PRICE: \$79.95
RATING: G8+
REQ: P100, 16MB RAM, WINDOWS 95



It's been a long time coming but Nova Logic's Comanche 3 is finally here and fans of their earlier Comanche titles won't have much to complain about! The new Voxelspace2 engine used in C3 and the upcoming Iron Fist2 pushes the benchmark for environmental and topographical detail further than ever before. The landscape looks less fractalised and more realistic, there are also very detailed models of ground features and objects such as trees, buildings and bridges. The best of all though are the combat units themselves, particularly the helos in the game which are almost photo realistic. The downside to this is the PC spec you'll need to get it running nicely. On my P166MMX C3 runs well in 640X400 mode with terrain and object detail turned down one notch. To go off in 640X480 with all details on would probably require a Pentium Pro or P2 running at 180MHz which is unfortunately out of reach for most people. Equally unfortunate is the fact that Voxel technology is incompatible with 3D acceleration so those of you with 3D cards can't hope for any improvement there.

Novalogic has continued their tradition of excellent mission design and copious extra options that made the original Comanche games so popular. From the excellent voice assisted training missions to the high intensity aerial battles against other helicopters in later missions, Comanche 3 will provide hours of entertainment for you and the whole family. A variety of sticks, throttles and pedal arrays are supported by C3 to let you get the best out of it and the control setup has been well thought out.

Of course the best way to play C3 is in multiplayer mode. You can go head to head or play co-operative with as many as five other pilots, the co-op missions are the most fun and, really, it's getting to the point in the PC gaming scene now where you have to be connected to get the most out of nearly all the titles being released. As a single player game Comanche3 is great but it's better with a friend, or two, or three.

VISUALS	88
SOUND	87
GAMEPLAY	88
FREAKYNESS	60
OVERALL	88

GEORGE SOROPOS

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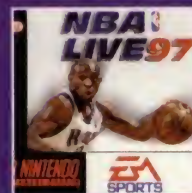
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SOUL BLADE

Like all fighting games, *Soul Blade's* game mechanics give it a defined set of right and wrong tactics which you really need to learn if you want to master the game. We'll take a look at general tactics that work for all characters in *Soul Blade*, what there is to unlock in the game and how you go about doing that, and a page on each character giving you some tips on which moves you should be using in various situations, including tactics on how to get through the Edge Master mode. **Playguide by Dan Toose**

THE BASICS:

Soul Blade is a game that revolves around attack distance, and attack height. You'll find that if you never give your opponent any breathing space, that you'll be able to continue attacking with much less risk of them launching a counter attack. This is where learning the distances is important. The further you are away from your opponent when you attack, the less likely they are to be guarding. The other factor to consider is the height of your attack. If both you and your opponent are standing in front of one another, the most useful attack is one that will aim at their legs, even though you haven't ducked yet, since they see you start an attack whilst you're standing, and often keep their guard high as a result. Something else to remember is that when people are rising from the ground, their attacks seem to strike home more often, so remember to keep clear, unless you believe you can time your hit to strike them as they're rising.

There are three attack types: horizontal, vertical, and kicks.

Horizontal attacks are fast, and generally sweep around far enough to ensure anyone who's within a reasonable distance will be hit.

Vertical attacks are slightly slower, cause more damage, are very useful against crouching opponents, but can be dodged fairly easily by an alert opponent.

Kicks are generally quick and light on the damage, but exceedingly handy for getting in that fast hit to the legs that you need to start some other combo.

Dodging: Whilst you can perform dodges, which are exceedingly handy for avoiding vertical (**B**) attacks, they generally don't get you out of the way of a horizontal (**A**) attack, so you generally should be more concerned with how to guard against incoming attacks, rather than counting on a dodge. Dodges tend to work best when an opponent comes charging in from a distance. Some characters have handy attacks that they can perform immediately after performing a dodge, try experimenting with this in practice mode.

Counter guard: Whilst being the riskiest method of dealing with an enemy attack, it will give you a huge edge over your opponent if you can master this art. Just tap towards your opponent and press guard whilst they are attacking, there will be a flash as you block, and your opponent will be stunned for a moment. In this instant you can launch into a nasty combo, which would normally be harder to get in. Get used to the timing by using practice mode.

THE SECRET STUFF

There are some extra characters and outfits for you to unlock in *Soul Blade*... Here's how. They will be just off the edge of the screen on the character select screen.

To play as Soul Edge: Finish the game (arcade mode) with all ten characters, or log 20 hours of gameplay to unlock Soul Edge.

To play as Han Myong: Perform Hwang's alternate ending, then perform Seung Mina's alternate ending, and you will unlock Han Myong.

To play as Siegfried! (Evil Siegfried): Find all seven extra weapons in Edge Master mode for Siegfried, then Siegfried! will be unlocked.

To play as Sophitia! (Casual wear Sophitia): Find all seven extra



weapons in Edge Master mode for Sophitia, then Sophitia! Will be unlocked.

To play as Sophitia! (Swimsuit Sophitia): Unlock all 70 extra weapons in Edge Master mode, and Sophitia!! Will be unlocked.

Alternate Endings: Each of the original ten characters has alternate endings, which can be accessed by pressing the right buttons at certain points in the ending sequence. Check the character pages following for this information.

Unlocking the last weapons in Edge Master mode:

The basic description of how to unlock the last weapon for each character is to:

1. Beat Soul Edge then save the game immediately
2. Go back to the location before Spain, and lose
3. Your character should then do their "Oh bugger I lost" animation on the map screen, if not, you're probably going to have to reload back to the point just after you beat Soul Edge
4. Go back another step, and this time, win, and you should receive your final weapon. If you lose, you will need to reload to the save point.

If you find this doesn't work, try just going back TWO locations after you beat Soul Edge, then win. There's a description for each character in this playguide on what worked for me, if it doesn't work for you, just keep plugging away with the process above, it seems to vary.

KEY TO MOVES:

f = forward

u = up

d/f = down & forward

u/f = up & forward

A = A-attack (horizontal)

K = Kick

b = back

d = down

d/b = down & back

u/b = up & back

B = B-attack (vertical)

G = Guard

VOLDO

Voldo, unlike almost every other character, doesn't have a straight up A, A, A or B, B, B attack at head level, which on one hand is bad, since they tend to be a good default move when you're too stressed to figure out a better attack at the time, but on the other hand it's good, since you'll be throwing out some alternative attack which will no doubt confuse your opponent. Don't be fooled into believing Voldo has short reach by his small weapons, his height and long arms make up for it considerably, and he actually handles more effectively as a long range fighter. Against the computer, it's a case of choosing your moves carefully... against a human player, simply pushing a constant attack often does the trick, since Voldo's moves are too confusing to follow a lot of the time. Not a great combo hitter either, so make sure you keep stringing the moves together.

ALTERNATIVE ENDING IN ARCADE MODE:

hit **d, u** at screen size change

BEST ATTACKS UP CLOSE:

Rat Chase (and Kick) : **d A, A, A, (K)**

A very quick combo aimed at the feet. If your oppoent looks phased by the first few hits, try adding a kick on the end for extra measure.

Demon Elbow : **f, F B**

Just a short sharp blow that does plenty of damage. Make sure you get the distance right, because you're somewhat vulnerable if you come up short.

Power Slave: **d B, B**

Not an Iron Maiden album, just a double uppercut that tends to fool humans more often than the computer. Great for ring out attempts as you move forward with each swing.

Plower: **A, K**

A quick swipe, then a kick which looks like it'll be low, but ends up mid, which will hit anyone ducking.

Mutilator: **A, A, B**

Another move suited to opponents who like to duck after a couple of high attacks.

Meat Grinder (Throw): **d, d/f, f B+G**

If you can get a stun hit in, go for this highly potent throw.

BEST DISTANCE ATTACKS:

Evil Bow: **d A+B**

Possibly Voldo's most useful move. Good range, very fast, aimed straight at your opponent's feet. If your opponent isn't moving to the side as they get up, you can nail them with this move.

Blind Blade: **d/f A**

Just a good hearty swipe out front, that will knock an opponent off their feet. Good damage too.

Lunar Dive: (whilst crouching) **d/f A+B**

This one simply sends you flying at your opponent. Great against opponents who are likely to be preparing a distance attack.

Psycho Spin: **f, F A+B+G, K**

Not a big range move, but it's very hard to get this move in up close without getting nailed. One of Voldo's trademark "surprise" moves.

Wheel of Fire: (Facing away) **A+G, u B**

Almost everyone gets excited when their opponent has their back turned, and this makes this such a great move for taking opponents by surprise with a long distance back attack.

OTHER COMBOS:

Dark Shredder: **A, B, A**

Whilst naturally more effective if all three hits land, the third attack really lunges forward, so you might want to try this one at a distance.

Kaleidoscope of Pain: **f, F A+B, K**

A sudden lunge at the waist, which turns into a mid level spinning kick. Quirky enough to be confusing.

BEST MOVES VS CROUCH:

Power Slave, Demon Elbow, Psycho Spin

Praying Mantis: **A+B**

A great move to throw in if you've just tried a couple of Evil Bow attacks, as it looks the same, but hits a crouch guard.

EDGE MASTER TACTICS

Stage 1: Sophitia

Sophitia is more capable at close quarters, so just keep striking from a distance

Stage 2: Hwang - (use Full Moon)

Try using the Power Slave move to get those mid air hits you need.

Stage 3: Siegfried - (use Full Moon)

If you are having hassles finishing Sieg off, go straight to the edge of the ring and go for a ring out with a Power Slave move.

Stage 4: Cervantes - (use Full Moon)

You only need to survive, so just keep your distance.

Stage 5: Rock - (Use Full Moon)

Head straight for the edge of the ring, then try for a Power Slave or Blind Blade swing to knock Rock out.

Stage 6: Mitsurugi - (Use Full Moon)

Like Siegfried, if you find Mitsurugi too hard to finish off, try for a ring out. If you want to slug it out, you'll need to land big distance hits.

Stage 7: Li Long (Use Guillotine)

Li Long is much more powerful at close range if you give him any time, so either keep making lots of short attacks, or try keep him pinned with the Evil Bow move. A ring out is once again the easiest way out.

Stage 8: Colosseum (Use Poison Arrow)

Sophitia is best taken out at a distance. Pick your hits against Rock, rather than try to keep him busy. Keep working on Mitsurugi's feet, as he's a far better "stand up" fighter than you. Siegfried can be taken out with a steady stream of distance hits.

Stage 9: Taki (Use Buffalo Horn)

Back off immediately and try keep Taki at bay with Evil Bow, Blind Blade, and Power Slave moves while your health recovers just enough for you to be able to survive a hit or two. No easy way out here.

Stage 10 & 11: Cervantes and Soul Edge (Use Buffalo Horn)

Against these last two, just ensure you're not too defensive, as it is very easy to get bogged down under a constant attack from the twin sword wielders.

To get the last weapon go to Germany, and win your first bout after defeating Soul Edge.



THE EVIL BOW MOVE IS PERFECT FOR CLOSING A DECENT GAP WITH A STRONG LOW HIT...

TAKI

Taki's greatest asset is her speed. She can string together three hit combos faster than any other character in the game. Her attacks are mostly short range, which should lead you to develop your timing with the Stalker move, which brings you behind an opponent launching a distance move. Don't be afraid to run in and launch into a move like Great Loop, which works surprisingly well on someone who's trying to come to terms with being charged. Practise backing off the instant you finish a combo too, since your combos are usually over very quickly.

ALTERNATE ENDING IN ARCADE MODE:

Hit **C** as the screen size changes.

MOVES FOR CLOSE COMBAT:

Lightning Spark: f A, B, B, B

A great attack if you want to rip into your opponent fast. It never dops your opponent though, so be ready to counter a throw at the end.

Dark Slash: A, A, A

The generic response after having blocked a high combo.

Lightning Strike: B, B, B

A good simple combo to use on an opponent who's finishing a combo, or coming in low.

Human Trampoline: d, d/b, b B+C (throw)

If you get a stun block in, or catch someone off guard, this throw does very nice damage.

Great Loop: d K, K

Perfect in that it is a standing move which attacks low, and if your opponent blocks that, it then swings over high, forcing them to block up or be hit.

MOVES FOR DISTANCE:

Assassin Strike: f F B

A quick rush and a stab to the appendix. Great against long range fighters whilst they're winding up.

Moon Orbiter: d, d/f, f B, K

Rolls into a dragon punch manoeuvre, then tacks a cyclone kick on the end. Often fools people into blocking low, then getting hammered.

Stalker: f, F A+B (flip)

Whilst not being an attack in itself, it opens new opportunities when an enemy charges you and exposes their back.



END OF A DIMINISHER ATTACK

OTHER COMBOS:

Diminisher: (rising from crouch) B, B

A great move to string on the end of any attack that puts you in a crouching position. Can also work at a distance as opponents move in.

Silent Storm: B, B, A, K

Very much a straight up attack, but good at tearing down someone fast if you get a clear shot.

BEST MOVES VS CROUCH:

Lightning Spark, Assassin Strike

EDGE MASTER TACTICS:

1. **Voldo:**

Get near the edge of the ring, uppercut him, then go for a quick A, A, A or B, B, B strike to help float him out of the ring.

2. **Mitsurugi:** (use Rekkimaru)

Keep in close, using rapid attacks to keep Mitsurugi from getting a combo happening. If you end up at a distance, come in with an Assassin Strike to close the gap.

3. **Li Long:** (Use Iron Fan)

There's no easy way to do this bout, as Li Long is very nasty up close. Try dashing in and performing your throws after he's just tried a combo, and get outta there if doesn't work at first.

4. **Colosseum:** (Use Iron Fan)

Mitsurugi: Keep pushing at him with Assassin Strikes and Reaping Hook attacks from a distance, and trip him up with Great Loop kicks in close. Don't forget the Midnight Sun uppercut in case you're near the edge of the ring.

Sueng Mina: Mina is particularly vulnerable to the Assassin Strike whilst winding up her slower combos.

Hwang: Just like Mitsurugi, except you need to be more wary of combos starting a short distance ahead of you. Try using the Stalker flip to your advantage when he charges.

Voldo: No easy way out here, just try keep him busy enough to prevent him confusing you with lots of attacks. If you use the Stalker, be careful of his rear attacks.

5. **Sophitia:** (Use Jutte)

If you're having hassles getting a clean shot in, try flipping over with a Stalker and get a shot in at her back.

Taki: Use Jutte's weapon destroying power to your advantage with lots of Lightning Spark attacks, then wear her down with relentless attacks.

6. **Siegfried** (Use Jutte)

Beating Siegfried outright is near impossible unless you string all your hits together perfectly. Best bet is to try for a ring out. Head to the edge and either dodge around, or use a Stalker to get behind for the Midnight Sun uppercut.

7. **Li Long** (Use Gaea Sword)

Li Long gets overzealous with his combos, and you can use this to your advantage by flipping over him and planting an Assassin Strike in his back. Floating him also often works, so try to mix in the odd uppercut.

8. **Rock** (Use Gaea Sword)

Let Rock destroy your weapon, then back off to the edge, and go for a throw to get the ring out.

9. **Cervantes & Soul Blade:** (Use Jutte)

Amazingly easy compared to the earlier rounds. Just let both of these two go underneath you whilst they do a combo, then attack their back. Quite easy to score ring outs here.

To get the eighth weapon, head back to Germany and win your first bout after Soul Edge.



THE BEST WAY TO USE THE STALKER FLIP. PERFORM THE STALKER AS THEY ADVANCE THEN ATTACK WITH AN ASSASSIN STRIKE AS SOON AS YOU LAND...

ROCK

Rock appears to be the most useless fighter in the game, until you learn some of the various combos at his disposal, and then he becomes one of the most dangerous. You don't need to use a large variety of moves with Rock, since most are quite ineffective against all but the most inexperienced opponents. Rock is definitely a distance fighter, so you'll actually want to be starting most of your attacks before your opponent is in range, since almost all of Rock's combos make him advance. More so than most characters, Rock can really benefit from the mastery of counter blocks, to ensure he can get those big hits connecting which make all the difference.

ALTERNATIVE ENDING IN ARCADE MODE:

Hit **B** at the screen size change.

BEST ATTACKS UP CLOSE:

Tidal Wave: f A, A, A

Two short sharp hits up close, then a murderous foot sweep. Few opponents have the presence of mind to block the last swing after they've been knocked back so far by the first two hits. This attack can also be used as a distance attack, as the last swing moves a long way.

Fly Swatter: B, A

An overhead swipe and a mid level crack. Not awesome by itself, but it's snappy enough to be followed up by a Tidal Wave or something else.

Battle Ax: f, F B

Just ram the thing in their face. Be careful not to come up short, otherwise you'll get tonked.

Sky Splitter: D A, B

The first swing at the legs looks like it's a one off shot, so it tempts the opponent to let their guard down, which lets the uppercut swing connect.

Rock Climber: f K

A plain old knee attack, which is quick, and also floats, just enough for you to squeeze in the first two hits of a Tidal Wave attack.

BEST DISTANCE ATTACKS

Tornado: f, F A, B

A horizontal swipe, then an overhead chop. Fairly fast, and does tons of damage. If you're fast, can be an effective close range attack too.

Discus Thrower: d/b A

A low spinning swipe at your opponent's legs, which will cause them to stumble. Great against those that love standing there waiting for you.

Pouncer: b A+B

Just leap at your opponent. Much faster than any of Rock's other moves, which helps it to be used as a surprise attack now and then.

Piston Attack: B, B, B

A lunging chop followed by two advancing ram attacks. Be careful using this against those adept at dodging, as it's a straight line attack.

OTHER COMBOS:

Fly Swatter Tidal Wave: B, A, f A, A, A

Try stringing those two together. You'll need a bit of a pause between the A and the f A.

EDGE MASTER TACTICS:

1. **Voldo:**

At this stage you can just let fly with almost any combo you want.

2. **Mitsurugi: (use Stone Club)**

Throw A, A, A attacks at a distance to taunt him in, then Tidal Wave him as he approaches.

Taki: Block her rapid close range attacks, then use close combos like the Tidal wave to beat her away.

Rock: Just keep a steady flow of attacks going and he'll get caught up in them.

3. **Hwang (use Battle Ax):**

Either go for counter blocks so you can get your throws in, or keep in his face, constantly trying to throw.

Sueng Mina: You only need two throws, just pick your moment.

4. **Li Long, Sophitia, Mitsurugi: (use War Hammer)**

Keep your weapon out in front, attacking often. Your awesome weapon destroying power should do the trick.

5. **Siegfried & Li Long: (Use War Hammer)**

In this situation it is almost essentially that you back off and keep the horizontal sweep moves happening.

6. **Taki: (Use 6)**

You need a very quick victory. Either start with a strong opener like a Tidal Wave, or, back off and let her run into an attack since she will constantly be trying to get in close.



THE END RESULT OF A TORNADO ATTACK... BRUTAL.

7. **Cervantes (use 7):**

Simply block his 3 hit combos, then either go for a throw, or Tidal Wave him at point blank.

8. **Soul Edge (use 7):**

Just like Cervantes except that you may need to throw some distance attacks in, as Soul Edge can pull out of short range moves more effectively.

Eighth weapon: After defeating Soul Edge, go to Germany and win.



THE TIDAL WAVE IS ROCK'S MOST USEFUL ATTACK. THE TWO QUICK JOLTS FOLLOWED BY THE HUGE LEG SWEEP, WHICH AS YOU CAN SEE, CAN RESULT IN A RING OUT...

LI LONG

Li Long is the fast, snappy, Nunchuku wielding assassin from China. Namco had to do a special version for the PAL market, as the Nunchuks were not allowed to be introduced into a video game, and the result was a three part staff, which is pretty much the same thing, but it keeps the censors happy. Li has more variety of moves up close, but his distance moves are quite reliable, making him very versatile.



ALTERNATE ENDING IN ARCADE MODE:

Hit **B** when the screen size changes.

BEST MOVES CLOSE UP:

Rising Dragon: K, d A

A good high-low combo that lets you go straight into a rising move right afterwards.

Hail Storm: B, B, B

The generic triple hit combo, which is quite reliable, and does gobs of damage.

Snake Venom: f B, B

A really quick, snappy double strike to the midriff. Great to repeat against aggressive opponents who try to attack after you're done.

Crazy Windmill: A+B

Whilst it can be used as a distance move, it's fast enough to be used as a short range move, and does better damage at that range.

BEST DISTANCE MOVES:

Rope Attacher: b A

An awesome distance attack. Simple, but so effective. Very hard to avoid, fast, good damage, and reliable. Works great on oncoming adversaries.

Rope Skipper: d/b A

Not quite the same range as the Rope Attacher, but a bit more deceptive and effective.

Punisher Whip: f, F B

The perfect attack if you want to float your opponent, and you want to start from a distance.

Monkey Magic: d, d/f, f B

You will need to anticipate the timing for this one, but it does great damage, and even if they block, does good weapon damage.

OTHER COMBOS:

Whiplash Pain: A, A, d K, B

A nice combo that will easily confuse your opponents.

Komodo Dragon: f A, B, K

Whilst only being at head level, if you know you can get the first hit in, it's very fast and effective.

BEST MOVES VS CROUCH:

Rope Attacher, Monkey Magic, Punisher Whip

Double Stab: D (crouch) A, u B

Perfect in one of those crouching standoff situations.

EDGE MASTER TACTICS:

1. Rock

You can really just push the buttons in any order you like. As long as you attack lots, there's no danger.

2. Siegfried (use Snake Wind)

Since you cause damage even when he blocks, and there's a time limit, just go ultra aggressive and don't give him a chance to breathe.

3. The Raft (use Snake Wind)

Seung Mina: At this level Mina pauses after she launches an unsuccessful attack, so keep her busy till she misses, then smack her out with a Rope Attacher".

Taki: She's dying to get up close, so just take a step back, and blast her away with a Rope Attacher as she charges you.

Sophitia: A little more trouble than the last two, so you may have to throw in a combo or two like "Whiplash Pain" when she's close, and the "Rope Attacher" at a distance.

4. Hwang (use Titan)

Your options are limited. Either go for a "Sun and Steel" (d/f B) if you're up close, or a "Punisher Whip" if coming in from a distance... Then try a simple three hit combo as they come down.

5. Colosseum: (use Steel Dragon)

Seung Mina: Just keep pushing for three and four hit combos, and she'll soon lose her weapon.

Siegfried: Like Mina, you need to keep him busy with combo after combo, but don't forget to go for a bit distance hit if the opportunity is there.

Rock: As long as you keep the swings coming, rock will be way too slow to do anything to you with his warhammer. Good idea to start with a combo that makes you advance like "Drum Fire".

Taki: She doesn't have any defensive power, so try the same tactic as you did in stage 3, and if she gets close, just push her away with a combo.

Hwang: he's dangerous up close, so back off a long way, and let him rush in and fall victim to distance moves like "Rope Attacher" or "Monkey Magic".

Mitsurugi: No easy way out here. Mitsurugi will not fall for the same distance tactics as the previous opponents. You'll keep changing your moves otherwise he'll predict them instantly and counter guard you.

6. Voldo: (use White Tiger)

You need to keep Voldo from getting a chance to launch an attack, so regardless of the distance (although close is easier to maintain a constant run of hits), keep the attacks coming and wear him down.

Taki: This time Taki is way too fast to try the old distance trick, so you'll need to apply a similar tactic to the one you just used on Voldo. Go for simple and reliable rather than big hits.

7. Cervantes & Soul Edge (use Asura)

Just block what these two throw at you and hit them at the end of their combos.

Eighth weapon: After defeating Soul Edge, go back to Italy and lose, then go to the Colosseum and win (good luck).



MAINTAINING DISTANCE... BEAT OFF THE ONCOMING OPPONENT WITH A ROPE ATTACHER, THEN TIME A MONKEY MAGIC ATTACK TO LAND ON THEM AS THEY STAND UP

SOPHITIA

Sophitia is one of the better close range fighters of the lot as she has a good range of combos, and an assortment of kicks that give her a lot of variety to choose from. A good general tactic with Sophitia is to back off and mix things up between blocking their attacks as they come in, dodging to the side and striking, and performing your own distance move. You really need to exploit her variety to use her effectively at higher levels of difficulty.



ALTERNATE ENDING IN ARCADE MODE:

Tap right at the screen size change.

BEST MOVES UP CLOSE:

Silent Shadow: A, A, d A

A quick combo that goes high, high, low.

The Conductor: B, B, B

A straight forward triple that hits hard.

Silent Screamer: A, A, B

Great against those who like to duck under quick head high combos.

Holy Slash: B, B, d A

A good move against those reluctant to go to a crouching block after a high attack.

Silent Dancer: A, A, A, K

The final kick is rarely anticipated after the triple slash.

Angel's Spiral: u/f K, A

A move to use against those who keep blocking up once you go to the air.

Angel's Dive: u/f K, B

The move to use against those who have gotten used to Angel's Spiral.

BEST DISTANCE ATTACKS:

Angel Strike: d, d/f, f B

A quick lunge forward ending in a stab to the groin. Great against opponents advancing on you.

Iron Butterfly: f, d, d/f A

Your basic dragon punch style manoeuvre. Good way to approach those crouching at a distance.

Athens Upper: f, d, d/f B

Another dragon punch style attack with longer range than the Iron Butterfly.

OTHER COMBOS:

Paradise Kick: K, K, d K, f K

Not a particularly speedy combo, but it covers a reasonable distance, and its slow nature fools opponents into a false sense of security.

Holy Strike: B, B, A, B

Whilst not being particularly tricky, this combo works wonders if you land it, and is a safe way to cover ground towards an opponent.

BEST MOVES VS CROUCH:

The Conductor, Angel's Dive

Moon Eclipse: b B

A good healthy overhead swipe that is a longer ranged move than almost any crouching move.

EDGE MASTER TACTICS:

1. **Sophitia:**

Just make sure you don't do anything stupid like get knocked out of the ring.

2. **Rock:**

The easiest way to get a ring out here are to take the fight to the edge of the ring, then either perform a Angry Spirit attack or a Sunrise Slice (d/f B) to get him airborne then float him out with a quick triple.

3. **Voldo (Use Gaea Sword)**

Since Voldo regains strength fast, keep pressing him with big combos, like the Holy Strike so as to get all his health down in one short burst.

4. **Sueng Mina (Use Gaea Sword)**

Just back off and block whatever she throws at you. If you see an opening, hit her down so as to buy more time.

5. **Taki (Use Gaea Sword)**

Back off immediately, then wait for Taki to come in with an attack, sidestep it, then attack, back off again, and repeat the whole process.

6. **Colosseum (Use Gaea Sword)**

Mitsurugi: Mitsurugi uses a rather weak weapon, so try wear him down over time with a defensive game, and then finish him off once unarmed.

Seung Mina: Mina is nowhere near as capable as you are up close, so get in there and don't let her pause for breath.

Hwang: This one has no sure fire easy way out. Try getting back and launching a Holy Strike combo as he advances.

7. **Taki: (Use Gaea Sword)**

The same tactics apply here as did in round 5. Just sidestep as she comes at you, and knock her silly.

8. **Siegfried: (Use Gaea Sword)**

Sit a medium distance from Siegfried, and try and dash in and throw him either just after blocks, or inbetween swings if you're quick enough. Siegfried likes to throw himself, so don't forget to do a counter-throw if you fail an attempt.

9. **Cervantes & Soul Edge (Use Apollo Sword)**

Like most other characters, the way to defeat these two is to simply block the three hit combos and return fire. Don't keep at a distance or you'll be at a disadvantage.

Eighth Weapon: After defeating Soul Edge, go straight back to Germany and defeat Siegfried again.



A BORING BLOCK-BOY IN YOUR WAY? NOTICE HOW THE ANGEL'S DIVE IS ONLY OBVIOUS AS A LOW ATTACK AT THE VERY LAST MOMENT?

§IEGFRIED

Clearly one of the strongest characters in the game. His combos may be a little slower than most, but they do excellent damage, and the height variation is good. Whilst definitely being a distance fighter, Siegfried has a few moves to help bump his opponent back out to a more convenient distance if they come too close. Against human players, remember that Siegfried's horizontal attacks cover huge ground fast which can be very hard to anticipate.



ALTERNATE ENDING IN ARCADE MODE:

Hit **B** when the screen size changes.

BEST MOVES UP CLOSE:

Brain Smasher: **B, B, B**

Whilst being incredibly simple, it is also incredibly effective. Just be careful of your opponent side stepping, because you'll leave yourself wide open.

Shoulder Charge: **f B+K**

A very quick, short jolt to your opponent's chest. More of an interruption move than an actual attack.

Unicorn's Charge: **d/f K, K, B**

Quicker than most of Siegfried's other combos, this one becomes handy against the faster opponents up close.

Wheel Turner: **f A**

A quick head high swing that does considerable damage.

BEST DISTANCE MOVES:

Drilling Horn: **f B**

Just a straight forward thrust of the sword, which works wonder against oncoming enemies.

Black Mail: **b, b B, B**

A jumping overhead strike, followed by a lifting hit. This one is good to use if you want to come in and make a low attack right after you arrive.

Spiral Blade: (whilst rising from crouch) A, A

Two very quick horizontal sweeps, which are at just the right height and speed to cause problems for anyone in their path.

Drop Kick: (whilst running) B+K

Just like WWF, Siegfried gets some air and gives em hell. Good to throw in now and then as a surprise.

Back Spin Slash: **b A**

A little slow, but if you connect you'll knock your opponent for six. Best to be used on an opponent who's getting up.

Sledge Hammer: **f, F A+B**

A bit of an all-or-nothing attack. You'll end up on the ground, but if you hit with this awesome overhead swipe, you'll do silly amounts of damage.

OTHER COMBOS:

Spiral Attack: **A, A, B**

When Siegfried uses horizontal attacks, they usually come in twos, so this combo will help get that extra hit in on those that tend to fall for the "I

thought that combo was over" trick.

Cross Cutter: **B, d A**

An excellent attack that is great at catching people off guard. The second swing is late enough that it is assumed it is never coming by your opponent.

BEST MOVES VS CROUCH:

Sledge Hammer, Black Mail, Drilling Horn

Knight Crasher: **B, B**

Rather than spit out the whole three hits and make it a Brain Smasher, this just concentrates on a crouching guard without the overkill at the end.

EDGE MASTER TACTICS:

1. **Mitsurugi**

Almost any attack plan will win here, just don't try and rely on swinging up close, as he is faster there.

2. **Sophitia: (Use Faust)**

Sophitia is a much more effective fighter up close, so use your distance advantage to effect.

Siegfried: Use the reliable moves like the Spiral Blade and Brain Smasher to finish your double off.

3. **Colosseum (Use Faust)**

Mitsurugi: As before, just try not to mix it up toe to toe.

Rock: Rock has just as much reach and power as you, so be on the defensive, then counter strike after blocking an attack, or when he leaves an opening.

Seung Mina: Back off, wait for her to start a combo, then nail her with long attacks, like the Sledgehammer. Use other attacks like Spiral Blade to finish the job if you close in a bit.

Sophitia: She'll try and harass you up close, which makes her prone to attacks like Mortal Slaughter, since she'll be advancing into it. Just keep the distance high and you'll win.

4. **Rock: (Use Flamberge)**

Start with some combos that will force Rock to block, and in almost no time, he'll lose his weapon. Try using the Cross Cutter attack. Be careful not to over extend yourself with the Brain Smasher combo, as time is important.

5. **Taki: (use Flamberge)**

This bout requires you go on the offensive straight away. Try simple Brain Smasher attacks, just varying the timing depending on Taki's actions. If you're near the edge, consider a ring out.

6. **Li Long (use Flamberge)**

A tricky fight considering your speed disadvantage. You can either wait for the opening to dash in and throw after he finishes a combo, or if you are having hassles getting in that close, try a Mortal Slaughter move, as the second part is considered a throw.

7. **Volvo (use Hard Steel Sword)**

Don't waste any time being defensive, especially in the second bout, as his weapons will still hurt you even when you block. Start with something aggressive and reliable, like a Brain Smasher. If you back off to a distance, make sure you're miles away so his crouching leap doesn't quite make it to you, so you can hit him hard.

8. **Cervantes & Soul Edge (use Hard Steel Sword)**

These two are no better defended than anyone else against your attacks. If they throw a combo, block it, otherwise, just stay on the offensive and you'll soon defeat them.

Eighth weapon: Just after defeating Soul Edge, go back to Italy, lose... then go to Germany and win.



YOU LOOK DEFENSELESS CROUCHING IN THE CORNER, BUT IF YOU COME OUT WITH A SPIRAL BLADE ATTACK, YOU'LL BE OUT OF TROUBLE IN NO TIME.

HWANG

Hwang is essentially just like Mitsurugi with just a few variations on a few moves. Hwang, if anything, is more versatile than Mitsurugi, due to his Tightrope attack, which allows you to sneak a hit into your opponent's legs, and also the Edge of a Hurricane attack, which is one of the few sword combos that goes low to high in the game. Hwang is also quite good in the kicking department, so you shouldn't forget to lay the boot in now and then.



ALTERNATE ENDING IN ARCADE MODE:

Hit **B** once the screen size changes.

BEST MOVES UP CLOSE:

Cut Grass: d K, B

Easily one of the best close in moves. Once that foot sweep has tripped them up, they're airborne, and dying to be tonked.

Spiral Flame: A, A, d A

A quick and simple way to hack away at your opponent. Good for wearing down weapons.

Edge of Hurricane: d/f A, A, B

A fantastic combo which swings low, then mid level, then overhead, making it capable of hitting anyone who guards at only one height.

X-Strike: A+B

Two hefty uppercuts which cause immense damage up close.

Top Thrower: b/d A

Ducks, spins and hacks at your enemy's legs, all in one swift move.

BEST DISTANCE MOVES:

Tightrope: d A

Ducking immediately, doing the splits, and striking out at your opponent's feet. Best used against oncoming opponents.

Reverse Flip: b A

A spinning neck chop, causing good damage, and sending your enemy flying. You'll need to get used to the timing of this move.

Split-U-In-Two: f, F A+B

Just a big meaty overhead swing that causes huge damage.

OTHER COMBOS:

Trip to Heaven: B, B, A, B

A four hit combo that is usefully both up close, and to make your way to an opponent, whilst forcing them to go defensive.

Trip to Death: B, B, A, d A

Just like Trip to Heaven, except the last swing hacks at the legs instead.

Earth Crusher: f, F K, K, K

A three kick combo which can do wonders at forcing your opponent back.

BEST MOVES VS CROUCH:

Split-U-In-Two, X-Strike.

EDGE MASTER MODE TACTICS:

1. **Mitsurugi:**

At this stage you can use almost any attack you like.

2. **Han Myong: (use Nippon Blade)**

Just keep your distance and throw attacks as he approached to keep him at bay.

3. **Li Long: (Use Mountain Breaker)**

The most effective way to get those throws in is to get those throws in is to get back and either rush in and throw, or block his long combos and try once he's finished.

4. **Seung Mina: (use Thunderous Fire)**

Simply go for any standard combo over and over, and eventually you'll wear her down.

5. **Colosseum: (use Thunderous Fire)**

Mitsurugi: Just be completely aggressive and you'll end up the victor.

Taki: Keep combos happening to get up close, then do a Cut Grass sweep or be ready to throw.

Li Long: He can best be attack as he comes in from a distance, either with a Tightrope, Moonchild, or a Reverse Slip, as his distance moves tend towards being high.

Rock: Keep the four hit combos coming, and either get out fast, or trip him up if you wind up close.

6. **Sophitia: (use Thunderous Fire)**

Alternate between the Quest For Fire uppercut (followed by A, A, A) and the Cut Grass move to defeat Sophitia as she advances upon you.

Hwang: Mix it up a little with non lifting moves, otherwise he won't fall for your floating attacks.

7. **Voldo: (Use Sword of Dawn)**

In all three bouts the trick is to stay back, start four hit combos as he approaches, then go straight into a close range move till you can back off for another pass.

8. **Cervantes & Soul Edge (Use the Midas Blade)**

For both final bosses, wait for the three hit combos to cease, then attack till they drop, or block.

Eighth Weapon: After defeating Soul Edge, go back to Italy, lose, then go back to Germany and win.



THE TIGHTROPE IS PERFECT FOR DUCKING AND ATTACKING ALL IN ONE MOVE...



FROM THE DISTANCE SHOWN IN THE LEFT FRAME, YOU CAN LAUNCH THE EDGE OF A HURRICANE ATTACK TO DEVASTATING EFFECT.

MITSURUGI

Mitsurugi is essentially one of the "Ken & Ryu" type characters in Soul Blade. Mitsurugi is not the fastest, nor the strongest, nor the trickiest, however he doesn't really have a weakness, and that is his greatest strength. Mitsurugi is a good character for those that like the idea of a relentless attack style, as it's very easy to string his moves together. Mastery of Mitsurugi is a good place to start in mastering all the characters of the game, since his style is very basic and fundamental, and you'll be completely familiar with Hwang from the outset.



BEST MOVES UP CLOSE:

Leg Sweeper: d K, B

Easily one of the best close in moves. Once that foot sweep has tripped them up, they're airborne, and dying to be tonked.

No Escape: A, A, A

A quick and simple way to hack away at your opponent. Good for wearing down weapons.

Steel Slicer: A+B

Two hefty uppercuts which cause immense damage up close.

Shin Slicer: b/d A

A reliable attack that takes the skin off your enemy's shins.

BEST DISTANCE MOVES:

Tiger Sweep: b A

A spinning neck chop, causing good damage, and sending your enemy flying. You'll need to get used to the timing of this move.

Pheonix Tail: f, F A+B

Just a big meaty overhead swing that causes huge damage.

Division Loop: (rising from crouch/ground) A, d A

Even if your enemy reacts in time to block the first, they'll be hard pressed to counter the second.

Wood Chopper: b K, B

What looks like a clumsy step forward, turns into a lethal long range combo.



PHEONIX TAIL... ONE BIG TONK

OTHER COMBOS:

Wipe Out: B, B, A, B

A four hit combo that is usefully both up close, and to make your way to an opponent, whilst forcing them to go defensive.

Sudden Wind: B, B, A, d A

Just like Trip to Heaven, except the last swing hacks at the legs instead.

BEST MOVES VS CROUCH:

Pheonix Tail, Steel Slicer

EDGE MASTER TACTICS:

1. Rock:

Just use your speed advantage with fast combos in close.

Mitsurugi: Be aggressive, as he's only dangerous if you let him get time to get some moves out.

2. Taki: (use 2)

If you back off, Taki will charge and usually come in low, so once she comes at you, start a combo with a vertical opener.

3. Seung Mina (use 3)

Stand your ground and do A+C throws at the end of her combos.

4. Li Long: (use 3)

From the outset, go completely aggressive with four hit combos, then hit hard once he's lost his weapon.



MIDWAY THROUGH A LEG SWEEPER... TIME FOR A FREE ATTACK

5. Hwang: (use 3)

The "Leg Sweeper" is by far your most useful attack for getting those air hits.

6. Colosseum: (use 4)

The same tactic actually works on all five opponents here, except the need to throw in some variation increases as you get to the later rounds. Start a four hit combo, then if you're close, try a "Leg Sweeper" or a quick "No Escape" move, if you feel the need to wear down their weapon.

7. Siegfried (use 2)

You need to cause damage really fast here. Attack non stop, and try for a big hit like a "Pheonix Tail" or a Critical Edge, to help get that life meter down fast.

8. Voldo: (use 4)

Try get Voldo to turn his back to you so you can do the Critical Edge easily. This is not as hard as it sounds, as he sometimes turns his back with certain attacks.

9. Cervantes & Soul Edge: (use 7)

Just block those three hit combos, then launch your own combo immediately.

Eighth Weapon: After defeating Soul Edge, go to Germany and win.



YOU'LL FIND LAUNCHING INTO A COMBO LIKE SUDDEN WIND WHEN YOUR OPPONENT CHARGES WILL MAKE IT HARD FOR THEM TO DEFEND AT THE LAST SECOND...

SEUNG MINA

An essential ingredient to all Japanese fighting games, a teenage girl who's too cute to be true and just happens to also be one of the most awesome warriors in the world. Mina is the quickest of the long range fighters making her a bit more versatile than a character like Rock for example. Since Mina does not have the raw power of characters like Rock and Siegfried, it is essential you master stringing hits together in smooth succession, rather than trying for that "big killer hit".

ALTERNATE ENDING IN ARCADE MODE:

Hit **d,u** (dodge) just as Han Myong is about to swing at Mina.

BEST MOVES CLOSE UP:

Rip Tide: **B, d A**

A simple two hit combo that will hit anyone who holds their position, whether it be standing or crouching.

Low Tide: **f B, d A**

Like Rip Tide, except the first attack is a thrust forward, which helps it to get someone out of your face.

Axle Kick: **B+K**

Mina plants her weapon into the ground, spins around it and kicks. More dazzling than powerful.

Twister: **u A+B**

A quick dragon punch style manoeuvre that will knock your enemy over if you hit.

Running Free: **b/d A**

A step backwards with a low swipe to prevent pursuit. Very handy for getting more distance between you and your enemy.

BEST DISTANCE MOVES:

Spinning Sparrow: **d/f A**

A simple twist and swing, that covers plenty of area, and will send your enemy flying should you hit.

Burning Free Wheel: **u/f B+K**

This attack looks a little over the top, but timed right on an unwary opponent, and it'll cause huge damage.

Keep Away: **d B**

The simple overhead swipe that you should be doing whenever you don't know exactly what it is your opponent is up to.

Skyscraper: **b B, d A+B**

Not an old Diamond Dave album, but one of Mina's heaviest attacks. A bit risky, since missing with the first part leaves you open to attack for a while.

Weed Waster: **d A**

Simply a low swipe at your adversary's ankles, without spinning you around. Fast and effective.

OTHER COMBOS:

Triple Wave: **B, B, d A**

Perhaps Mina's most useful combo, which attacks at all three heights, and

generally hits somewhere or another.

Sleeping Souls: **A, f A, A, d K**

A long combo that is twisty enough to cause confusion, and thus result in damage.

Star Destroyer: **A+B, f A, B**

Another combo that seems to last for ages. Great damage, but it is quite easy to block.

BEST MOVES VS CROUCH:

Rip Tide, Skyscraper

Meteor Shower: **B, B, B**

The straight up vertical combo which will pick off anyone guarding low.

EDGE MASTER TACTICS:

1. Mitsurugi:

Whilst you have a time limit, there's really no rush here. Just stay reasonably aggressive and Mitsurugi won't put up much of a fight.

2. Rock:

Use your speed to leave Rock for dead. Even just swiping over and over at him with the "Keep Away" move will do the trick. Don't get too cocky though, as he can do a lot of damage if you let your guard down.

3. Taki (use Tiger Fang)

Taki is much more dangerous up close, so once you've knocked her down, step back so you can launch a distance attack as soon as she's up for it. Try attacks like "Triple Wave" to keep her busy.

4. Li Long (use Long Handled Sword)

Mina is quick enough to strike at Li Long, and dash in and throw him before he can do anything else, so you may want to try this as an alternate to just waiting for the gaps.

5. Hwang (use Nagamaki)

Disarming Hwang is not hard with this fast weapon. Simply attack him with a fast simple combo, over and over till he loses it.

6. Sophitia (use Nagamaki)

The key to defeating Sophitia lies in keeping your distance, and letting her take the risks by coming into your long range moves as she advances. Try mixing up the attacks, like "Triple Wave", "Low Tide", "Spinning Sparrow", and use "Running Free" if she gets too close.

7. Siegfried (use Halberd)

You both have similar range, but you have a speed advantage which you need to exploit by keeping up a constant attack. From the outset, just press with "Triple Wave" attacks, and only try for a four hit combo if you're sure you have the opening you need.

8. Voldo (use Halberd)

It's obvious by the ring size how you are meant to win. Your best chance for a ring out is to dodge and do a horizontal attack straight afterwards, which has the same effect as a "Spinning Sparrow". Every time you fail to knock him out, he will attack, which you should just use as another opportunity to dodge, and repeat the whole process.

9. Cervantes and Soul Edge (use Nagamaki)

Use the same tactics you used against Siegfried, except you can be a little more aggressive, as once you've got a rhythm these two don't seem to have a comeback.

Eighth weapon: After defeating Soul Edge, go to Italy and lose, then to Germany and win.



THE BURNING FREE WHEEL



THE TRIPLE WAVE WORKS WONDERS... THE OVERHEAD AND MID STRIKES WILL HIT A CROUCH GUARD, AND THE LOW STRIKE A STANDING GUARD. HARD TO DEFEND AGAINST

CERVANTES

Two swords are better than one... well that's the theory anyway, and in this case it works. Cervantes is pretty much the combo master of all the characters in Soul Blade, not so much in numbers, as in reliability. Cervantes is strong both up close, and at a distance. The only possible disadvantage to playing as Cervantes is that your basic combos are easily recognised, and quite blockable.

Cervantes has the potential to be practically relentless in his attacks, which is the best way to play him. Since Cervantes is powerful in all areas, the best tactic is to force the fight to be fought at the distance that your opponent is weakest, rather than search for a particular strength in your own array of moves.

ALTERNATE ENDING IN ARCADE MODE:

Hit **B** when the screen size changes

BEST MOVES UP CLOSE:

Death Scissors: d/f A

A quick crossover of the blades at your opponent's legs. A successful hit reels your opponent briefly.

Ground Shaker: d B

An awkward looking swing that covers the area from the head to the toe of a close opponent.

BEST DISTANCE MOVES:

Unpleasant Desire: f, F B+K

Just like Wolf in Virtua Fighter, this diving kick covers plenty of ground, and also knocks the target back, which can be very handy for ring outs.

Demon Slaughter: f, F A+B

About as aggressive as it gets, this attack sends you into a forwards somersault, and then a vicious double slash. Possible to flip over your opponent if they're low.

Night Crawler: b/d A

A horizontal foot sweep with your sword, which seems amazingly reliable.

Self Destruction: d, d/b, b B

The fastest and most brutal long distance move in the game. Only drawback is that it weakens your blades.

Dancin' Goblin: f, d, d/f

This attack is a bit hard to land on an opponent, but if you do, it does a lot of damage, and besides... it looks cool.

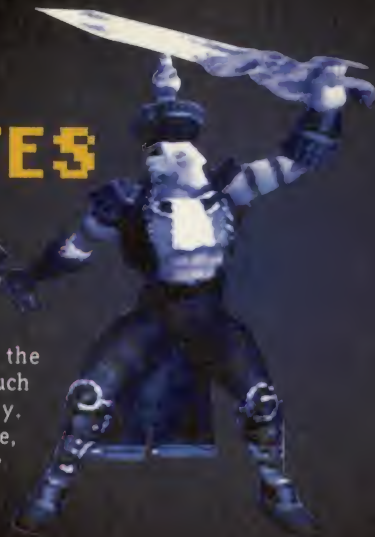
Sign of the Cross: b, b B

A bit slow, but the long wind up makes the move more difficult to judge as it comes in. Huge damage.

OTHER COMBOS

Speeding Bullet: f B, B, B

Very reliable combo that results in your opponent being pushed back a little, even if they do guard it all.



Shadow Flare: A, A, d A

Extremely simple, yet amazingly effective.

Metal Militia: A, A, B

Perfect for belting those that duck under the beginning of this combo.

Dark Conquerer: B, B, B

Easy to do, and quite reliable. Beware side stepping by your opponent.

Fearless Wretch: B, B, d A

A good one to use against those that tend to block high, as the last swing often catches them off guard.

BEST MOVES VS CROUCH:

Speeding Bullet, Demon Slaughter, Dark Conquerer, Unpleasant Desire.

EDGE MASTER TACTICS:

1. **Cervantes:**

At this stage, beating your double should not be hard. Just be aware of the combos he'll throw, and you'll come out on top.

2. **Sophitia: (use Soul Edge)**

Sophitia: Sophitia is much more dangerous up close, so just attack her with distance moves, and resort to fast combos once up close.

3. **Hwang & Seung Mina: (use Soul Edge)**

Hwang: Hwang can mix it with you up close, but your combos are effective at a greater distance than his, so try hitting him with some three hit combos like the Speeding Bullet, which will affect him if he goes low.

Sueng Mina: Mina is a distance fighter, but her attacks are slower to start than some of yours, so come at her with aggressive distance moves, like the Demon Slaughter or Self Destruction, and you should annihilate her.

4. **Rock: (use Soul Edge)**

The easiest way to get Rock out of the ring is not with an uppercut style hit like with most other characters, but to just use a combo that will knock him off his feet, or a forceful move like Unpleasant Desire, Self Destruction, or a Demon Slaughter, once he's near the edge of the ring.

5. **Li Long (use Soul Edge)**

It seems that the easiest time to get throws in is right at the end of a combo, so stand back a little, wait for the combo to start, step back as it approaches, then dash in and throw as it is just finishing. You can try blocking all the hits then rushing in, but your chances of Li Long not countering the throw are slim.

6. **Siegfried: (use Three Bladed Edge)**

Siegfried has the firepower to take you down, so don't forget to defend, otherwise you'll be wasting valuable time on your ass. Just plug away with the Speeding Bullet combo, Dark Slash and Scarface, and you'll do most of the damage that needs to be done.

7. **Voldo (use Three Bladed Edge)**

The plan of attack is simple, do an uppercut swing (d/f B) and then hit him with a Black Inferno combo while he's in the air. Little else you can do here, but it may help to mix up your attacks so he doesn't always predict your uppercut.

8. **Soul Edge (use Serpent's Tongue)**

Use the extra speed of your weapon to get in his face and attack constantly, rather than let him get his special tricky moves in on you.



JUST A SIMPLE SPEEDING BULLET COMBO, FOLLOWED BY A GROUND ATTACK WILL BE ENOUGH TO DO MOST OF THE DAMAGE YOU NEED TO WIN.

PlayStation

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Winter 1997

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SATURN

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Bonus Stock Cars

Type "GO BEARS!" at the Begin Career name entry screen for seven new stock cars.

Command & Conquer

SATURN

Even more codes for this strategy classic....

NB: There is no need to pauses the game to enter any of these cheats.

Reveal Map:

While playing, press **Up, Down, Right, Left, A, Up, Down, Right, Left, A**. The map should be revealed.

Toxic Lab:

While playing, press **C, Right, A, Z, Y, B, Up, B, B, A**. Now you can build a Toxic Lab and create Visceroids.

Easy Money:

While playing, press **Right, Left, A, B, C, Z, Y, X, Right, Left**. Your money will rise to \$5,000! Repeat this code as many times as you wish.

Extra Units:

After you've built a power plant and a barracks or Hand of NOD, press **Y, A, B, B, A, Down, A, B, B, A, Down, Up**. You can now build SSM's, mobile construction yards, and commandos!

Laser Orcas:

Build an Orca, then press **X, Y, Z, Right, Down, Left, Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, X**. Your orca's will be armed with two lasers with Obelisk of Light power!

Die Hard Trilogy

SATURN

Cheat Menu:

At the copyright screen, press **C, A, B, B, Y, C, A, B, B, Y**. To access this menu, pause the game and select **CHEAT**.

Ride a Baby Stroller:

To ride in a baby stroller, make your way to the Vengeance level. As soon as you can drive, do a 360 degree turn. If you did it right, a cop car will race past you. Follow the cop (or the blue arrow if you lose site of him) until you reach a parking lot. Here you will find an extra life, a time bonus, and a baby stroller you can ride!

Daytona USA: Championship Edition

SATURN

Mirror Mode:

To play any track in reverse, hold **X + Y + Z** while selecting a track.

Play as Daytona Super Car:

At the main menu, hold **R + X + Y + Z** and then press **C** to select your game mode. Of course if you'd prefer to earn the Super Car, place first on all five tracks in Normal mode.

Play as Uma:

At the main menu, hold **L + X + Z** and press **C** to select your game mode. Once again if you'd prefer to earn this vehicle, place first on all five tracks in Hard mode.

Play as Umaz:

At the main menu, hold **L + R + Y + Z** and press **C** to select your game mode. To earn this vehicle, use the Uma to finish the game in Normal mode, but then that wouldn't be cheating!

King of Fighters 96

SATURN

Play as Bosses:

To play as the bosses, choose "Team Edit" at the Character Selection screen. Now hold **Start** and press **Up + Y, Right + A, Left + X, Down + B**.

Loaded

SATURN

Cheat Menu

Pause the game and highlight the "BGM Volume" option. Press and hold these buttons in order: **Left Shift, Z, B, X, C, Right Shift**. A special Cheats menu will appear where you can skip levels, increase ammo, power, and lives. Highlight one of the options and press **C** rapidly to increase its number).

Soviet Strike

SATURN

Level Passwords

Black Sea	KRAZHA
Caspian	VERBLUD
Dracula	YADRO
Kremlin	PERIWOROT

Blue Lightning

PC

Bonus Points:

For 30,000 bonus points, hit the afterburners as you enter the canyon on level 4. For another 65,000 hit the afterburners again while you're in the canyons. A good spot to try the second bonus is right before you enter the second set of canyons.

Passwords:

Level 1	AAAA
Level 2	PLAN
Level 3	ALFA
Level 4	BELL
Level 5	NINE
Level 6	LOCK
Level 7	HAND
Level 8	FLEA
Level 9	LIFE

Civnet

PC

Cheat Mode:

To activate cheat mode, press **CTRL, A, O, D, B, A, M, F** at the end of your turn (do not hold down CTRL.) If you did it right, a menu will appear. Here's a list of options and what they mean:

ScaleIt - Increases your production
ArmyInfo - See information about the other races
MoneyAndPower - Money and some units
AllSeeingEye - Reveal the whole map
GetRichQuick - Get Money
GetSmartQuick - Get Tech

MissileCrisis - Allows the production of Nuclear Missiles

SettlersHo! - Creates Settlers

Nukestorms - Causes Global Warming

Automode - The Computer Moves For You

Armaggedon - Nukes The Whole World

Red Alert -

Counterstrike

PC

Giant Ant Missions:

At the title screen, hold **Left Shift** and **left click** on the round speaker. You must have the Red Alert:Counterstrike mission disc.

Tomb Raider

PC

All Weapons:

To get all the guns and full ammo, walk one step forward, one step backwards (you must use the Shift key), then turn around 3 times anti clockwise, then jump backwards.

Level Skip:

To skip the current level, walk one step forward, one step backwards (you must use the Shift key), then turn around 3 times anti clockwise, then jump forward. This is a great way to see the FMV clips.

Note: In both cases you must do the jump immediately after the 3rd turn. There is no room for even a small pause.

Virtua Fighter

PC

Add Dural to the Records screen:

At the "Press Start" screen, press **Up 17 times then ENTER**. Enter the options screen, and you should hear "Ring Out." Dural's stats are now on the Records screen.

Change Camera Angle in Watch Mode: To change the camera angle, press **F7**.

Choose Victory Taunt:

Hold either **DEL, END, or PgDn** before the character does his/her victory stance and you will be able to select which one you see.

There is also one reserved for when you get an "Excellent!"

Play as Gold Dural:

In the Character Selection menu, press **Down, Up, Right then DEL+Left**. If it worked you will hear a woosh sound.

Play as Silver Dural:

At the character select screen, enter **Down, Up, Right, DEL+Left**. You will hear a "swoosh" sound effect if you entered it correctly.

Ring Size and Stage Select:

At the "Press Start" screen, press

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Playstation 1902 262 662
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Sega 1902 555 444
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Electronic Arts 1902 261 600
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Up 12 times then **ENTER**. Now enter the options screen, and you should hear "K.O." Move the cursor down to Exit, then press down once more. The cursor will disappear. Press **DEL** and a second options screen will appear.

Slow Motion Replays:

At the end of a round, press and hold **DEL + END + PgDn** and the replay will be in "super-slow-mo".

View Credits:

Hold the **DEL** button down during the opening demos to see the names of the makers of Virtua Fighter PC.

HyperBlade

PC

Cheat Codes:

- MDMKS** Stronger attacks and defense
- SHUIN** Access a hidden team
- POTATO** Smaller character
- SPICYBRAINS** Flipped characters
- GORILLA** Gorilla characters

Scorched Planet

PC

Cheat Codes:

- ALIAH** Invulnerability toggle
- FATAL** All weapons and ammo

Level Codes:

Type in these codes to warp to that level.

- LAVA2** Mission 1 stage 2
- LAVA3** Mission 1 stage 3
- GATE1** Mission 2 stage 1
- GATE2** Mission 2 stage 2
- GATE3** Mission 2 stage 3
- CROC1** Mission 3 stage 1
- CROC2** Mission 3 stage 2
- CROC3** Mission 3 stage 3
- HEAT1** Mission 4 stage 1
- HEAT2** Mission 4 stage 2
- HEAT3** Mission 4 stage 3

Doom64

Nintendo64

Cheat Menu:

For access to a hidden cheat menu ("Features"), enter the password "?TJL BDFW BFGV JVVB". Start the game, then press Start and select "Features." From here you can choose from level select, invulnerability, all weapons, and more!

Funny Messages:

After you die, notice that you fall but the screen won't go "blood red" until you press a button. If you wait and don't press anything, the messages at the top will say stuff like "look at those demon feet!" It gets pretty funny if you keep waiting.

Level Passwords:

The Terraformer

- CB92** NBPL SYL? JO27
- Main Engineering** BXYH ?G4i 6Z4j PJ?Z
- Holding Area** CYCC MGPK X47G TS2B
- Tech Center** CF3? PG6D S12Z PFKB
- Alpha Quadrant** BXRO THiF 52GG 7W?B
- Research Lab** BBXW HLGS XB8F 4RKB
- Final Outpost** FVV9 FL55 QCFV DWJB
- Even Simpler** FFLB MQ6C VV1C PF1B

Killer Instinct Gold

Nintendo64

All Options:

For access to all options, press **Z, B, A, L, A, Z** during the story intro.

All Uniforms:

To enable all colors without training, press **Z, B, A, Z, A, L**.

Change Colors:

When selecting your character keep pressing Up or Down to cycle through all that character's colors.

Level Select:

In two-player mode you can select your starting level as follows. While selecting your character, hold any

of the following button pairs.

If you'd prefer to play alone simply let the other player's timer run out.

- Up+QP** Wolf Castle
- Down+QK** Bridge / Dojo
- Up+QK** Stonehenge
- Up+MP** Jungle
- Down+MP** Dungeon
- Up+MK** Museum
- Down+MK** Spinal Ship
- Up+FP** Space Ship
- Down+FP** Street
- Up+FK** Helipad
- Down+Z** Sky Stage

Play as Gargos:

To play as Gargos, press **Z, A, R, Z, A, B** during the story intro.

View Ending Credits:

To view the ending credits, press **Z, L, A, Z, A, R** during Story Mode.

Mortal Kombat Trilogy

Nintendo64

Level Select:

Highlight Sonya and press **Up + Start**.

More Options:

During the story line, quickly press **Left-C, Up-C, Right-C, Down-C, L, R, R, R, L, L**. If you were quick enough, a tone will sound and two new selections will appear on the



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cheat mode

Options screen.

Play as Human Smoke:

To play as Human Smoke, press and hold **Away, High Punch, High Kick, L, R** before the screen says "Fight".

Play as Khameleon:

At the story line, press **Right-C, Up-C, A, B, Down-C, Up-C, Right-C.**

Play as Motaro:

This trick only works on the Desert and Wastelands. Choose anyone, but before the match starts press and hold **Away+ Low Kick + High Kick.**

When the match starts you will morph into Motaro.

Play as Shao Kahn:

Select the Rooftop stage, Pit 3, or Kahn's Kave. Before the match starts, hold **Down + High Punch + Low Punch.**

Random Character Select:

To select a fighter at random, highlight Saibot and press **Up + Start.**

Ultimate Kombat Kode:

To enter Ultimate Kombat Kodes easily, all you do is when the story screen comes up start rotating your control pad in a clockwise direction. After a few rotations the Kombat Kode screen should appear.

Unlimited Credits:

For unlimited credits, press **Down, Down, Up, Up, Right, Right, Left, Left** at the attract mode screen.

Command & Conquer

PSX

COVERT OPERATIONS:

Enter the password: **COVERTOPS**

SPECIAL OPS:

Enter the password: **0305M080z**

SUPER RADAR:

Press and Hold **R1 + R2 + L1 + L2 + CIRCLE + SQUARE** then select "Start a new game" or select the password option (and type in your password). The sequence above can be released when the game starts. This makes you able to see the complete screen at the start of your mission without

exploring it with your troops.

The Need for Speed 2

PSX

More Angles:

At the main menu start your race then hold down **L1+L2+R1+R2+X+ Triangle+Square+C** until the race starts. You will now be able to have 9 camera angles instead of 4

Upgraded Car and Map:

If you hold down the change view button and then release you will receive a new screen with a map. enter "powrup" and you get a pioneer engine which gives you better acceleration on arcade, and better acceleration and a higher speed on simulation

New Car:

LILZIP - gets you the Ford Indigo New Track:

SHOTME - Bonus Track in a Movie Studio

Tunnel Bl

PSX

Codes:

ALL WEAPONS:

Press **L1+R1+R2+L2+Triangle +O+X+Square** at the same time for all weapons and energy.

POWER UP:

Hold the following buttons at the same time: **L1+R1+L2+R2+Triangle +Circle+Square+X**

ALL WEAPONS:

Press **L1+R1+L2+R2+Square+C+X+ Triangle** at the same time.

Area 51

All platforms

Secret Rooms:

Level 2: Shoot out all of the upper windows of the far back wall in the Hangar. Another can be found by shooting all the yellow barrels when you are the forklift.

Level 4: Shoot every yellow box while you're riding on the STAAR jeep

Level 5: Shoot the doorplate of the second door marked General

Weatherby as the door is opening. **Level 7:** Shoot all the yellow barrels at the first area where the four purple zombies are throwing barrels on the hill.

Rally Cross

PSX

Cheat Codes

Enter these codes as your name on the highscore screen or when beginning a new season. Unfortunately you can only use one per game.

Code Effect

fat tires	Fat tires
no wheels	No tires
wheels	Extra tires
stone	Heavier cars
feather	Lighter cars
float	Low gravity and stupid CPU opponents
spinner	Reduced tire friction
banzai	Improved acceleration

Porsche Challenge

PSX

Enter any of these on the Main menu Unlimited Retries:

L1 + L2, R1 + R2 + SQUARE

Test Driver:

RIGHT + SQUARE, LEFT + CIRCLE + SELECT

Fish eye Lens:

SQUARE + TRIANGLE + CIRCLE, L1, L2, R2, R1

Tune Test Driver:

LEFT + CIRCLE, RIGHT + SQUARE + SELECT

User Car Jumps:

SQUARE, CIRCLE, SQUARE

All Cars Jump:

UP + SQUARE, UP + CIRCLE, UP + SQUARE, UP + CIRCLE, UP + SQUARE, UP + CIRCLE, UP + SQUARE

Mad Race:

UP, LEFT, RIGHT + SELECT

Invisible Car:

SQUARE + CIRCLE, L2 + R2, SQUARE + CIRCLE, L1 + R1, SQUARE + CIRCLE

Hyper Car:

SELECT + SQUARE, SELECT + CIRCLE, SELECT + SQUARE + CIRCLE

Mirror Mode:

LEFT + CIRCLE, DOWN + TRIANGLE, RIGHT + SQUARE

Long Tracks:

SELECT + UP, SELECT + DOWN, START, SELECT

Interactive Tracks:

START + DOWN, START + UP, SELECT, START

High Voices:

UP, TRIANGLE, UP, TRIANGLE

End Game Sequences:

SQUARE, CIRCLE, LEFT + SELECT, RIGHT + SELECT

Save After Each Race:

START, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, SQUARE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, START

Doom

SATURN

Pause the game and try any of these...

Level Warp:

Right ,Left ,Z, Right Button, Z, Left Button, Z, C

God Mode:

B, Y, X, Left Button, Right Button, C, X, Z

Need for Speed 2

PC

Extra Track:

Go to the Location screen and type in **HOLLYWOOD.**

Bonus Cars:

On the Main Menu, hold **SHIFT** and then type in the Following. They're all pretty self explanatory as to what you get

- JEEPJY**
- ARMYTRUCK**
- BMW**
- VWFB**
- VWBUG**
- VOLVO**
- MERCEDES**
- SEMI**
- QUATRO**
- BUS**
- VANAGON**
- COMMANCHE**
- MIATA**



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A stylized signature of Jonah Lomu in black ink.



Team Selection



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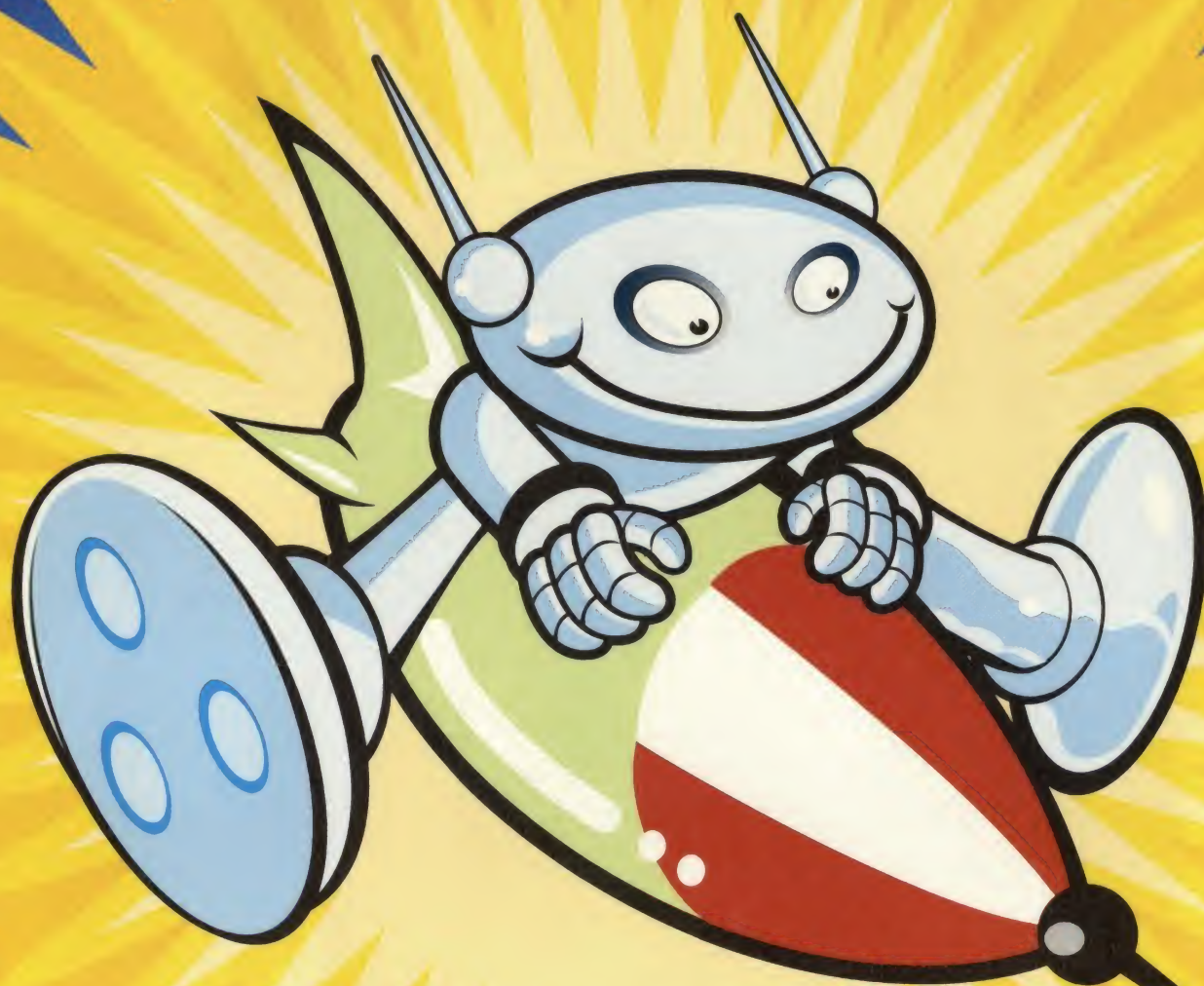
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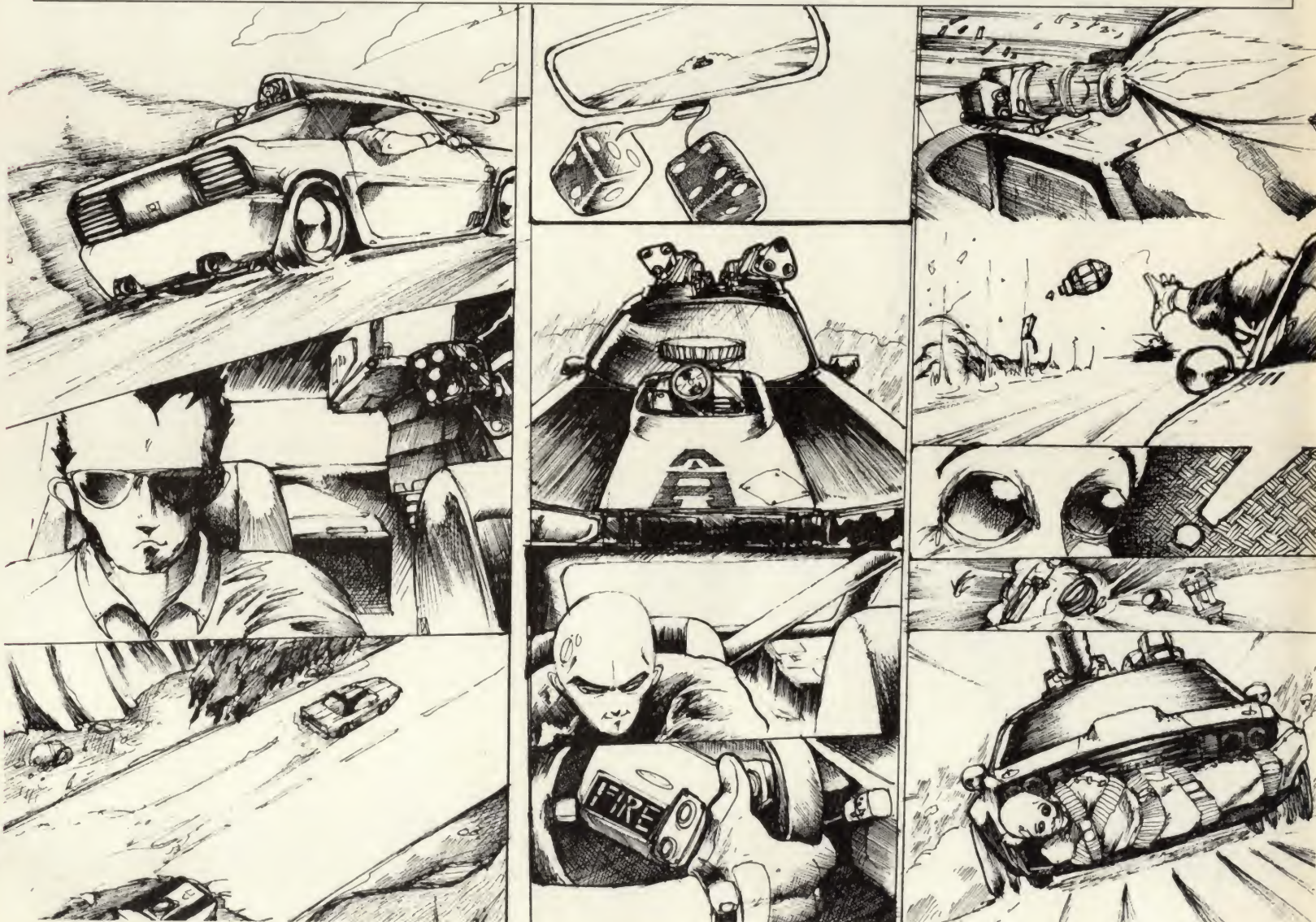


HYPER»

WE HAVE A WINNER! MAT BRADY FROM PADDINGTON, QLD was the undisputed winner of our SOUL GLO drawing comp. Three of the runners up are also printed here, but we got a whole bunch of late entries in, so we'll be printing one more prize winner next issue. Big thanks to everyone who entered!

RANDOM ACCESS

ISSUE 4, WHEREIN TAG SPORTS A NEWSET OF DUD'S & DRIVES HIS GRANDFATHERS CAR. **RAM** TRIES HIS HAND AT BEING A HOOD ORNAMENT.



HYPER Letters
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 freakscene@next.com.au

GIVE IT 101%!

Hi Hyper,

My name is Benn and I am writing you a letter (no sh*t). I love your mag heaps and so do tons of my friends. I recently bought a brilliant N64 and Mario 64 and I think Mario is the best game ever and it deserved a higher score than 95% and how can you give Quake 96% when the 2 games side to side Mario wins by miles. I know Quake is a decent multiplayer game but a one player gamer will last 3 minutes, while Mario 64 will last for god damn ever, and I have played 5 hours a day since I bought it and I still sit in call waiting for the bloody bell to go so can get out of the sh*t hole an play Mario. Any way I would like to know if you guys went a touch over the top with the ratings for the N64 games you first reviewed. They all got over 90% each, and just wanted to know if they are that good, or you just got hyped by the entire N64 thing. Now for some well wanted answers if you could help me.

1. What are the N64 games coming out this year?
2. Is there going to be a N64 steering wheel and pedals and if they are will I be able to get 4 of them and play 4 player Mario?
3. I love the way the analog stick works but are there going to be any games where I can use the original D-PAD?
4. Why are games like Turok \$130 we can't afford such expensive games?

BENN HANSEN

Higher than 95%... 95% is outstanding. So I rated Quake 1% higher than Nino rated Super Mario 64, who gives a stuff? It's just 1%. As for Quake being a 3 minute game, sure the game is easy to skip through in no time if you play through on hard or lower difficulty, but who cares? The game was designed for multiplayer gaming... so that's how it got rated. By your logic we should have rated Mario Kart 64 for example, it's a fantastic multiplayer game, but it is really kinda dull as a one player experience in comparison, but no-one cares because they buy it to play it as a multiplayer game.

1. We'll look at doing a list after E3, because everything's pretty uncertain till then.

2. Why on earth would you want four steering wheels? The standard Nintendo controllers are analog, and do the job perfectly. No news on a steering wheel, and that's mostly likely due to a lack of a need for one due to the standard controllers doing the job.

3. I think you'll find you can use the pad in games like Killer Instinct Gold, etc. You can use it for various functions in Doom 64. It'll be a case of "as it is needed"

4. Nintendo and Acclaim would probably say due to development and production costs being higher than your average game. The fact that there's such a small library of games might affect that price too, since let's face it, if you're desperate for a new game, and there's almost nothing else to choose from, will you get together that extra \$30?

NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

Dear Hyper,

Re: STREETFIGHTER III

I am writing to express my extreme disappointment at the most hyped-up Capcom game in history - Streetfighter III. I recently saw the game in a Sydney Arcade and just could not believe my eyes - this is Streetfighter III? This is the game that Capcom took eight years to produce after Streetfighter II?

Firstly, the graphics. To be brutally honest, the game did not look anything better than an update on Streetfighter Alpha II. If anything, the characters look "blockish", and the backgrounds are mere variations of those in the original Streetfighter II. Capcom's progression towards an Anime/Cartoon appearance has gone too far, with the selection screens looking decidedly dated.



WE'RE ADDICTED TOO, CLAN NEXT - LEFT TO RIGHT: KAT, SKULL, MR ED, MR P, BIG D, ARMAND, OLLIE, RICHIE, BAD JEDI, AND MR. SHINY... AND FLOUNCY, SLEEPING ON THE JOB



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear Hyper people,

I'm not writing to tell you that your mag rulz (though it does) or to ask a bunch of questions. I'm here to express my concern about alot of gamers who are so engrossed with games it's frightening! I'm your average 17 year old who loves to play console games, but when I bought a Pentium Pro 200 at the start of the year, I started to play multipayer games on the internet.

Seeing that my favourite game was Quake I started to play mostly that on the net, later I decided to form a small clan with some of my friends, that live close by. This just seemed to be a better way of having some more fun, but little did I realize it was a way of life for MOST! By this I mean that they put Quake as the HIGHEST priority

in thier life, over school, work and any thing else you can think of!! As many of my clan members we're only very new to Quake they were just looking for some extra fun (which it seems they may have forgot that that's what games are for). But after only just being formed we we're challenged by another clan to see if we we're good enough to form an alliance with them. Now I didn't care if we were part of thier alliance or not, but they as many clans do take it too seriously, sending me forms to fight them etc. Now when we actually had the war one of the members of the other clan joined who wasn't welcome, as they had too many members on their side as it was. Now this extra member was seriously pissed off!! He refused to leave as he was schedualed to play that night, and was told to leave by his clan leader. So his clan "leader" claimed he wasn't welcome in his clan

anymore! Now suddenly their was a huge argument going on, between this clan member and his "leader". He accused the leader of many things eg. not giving him a real chance, pushing them into putting Quake first in their life, and the list goes on! By this time I stayed dead so I could watch this pitiful show of two little girls having a bitch at each other, and it dawned on me! THIS GAME IS THEIR LIFE!! After a while the leader and a couple of their members left to talk to this "rebel" in a chat room, so god knows what happened next. After a couple of more matches we finished and left, I sat back and thought how stupid this shit is. So my message is, please don't be so sucked into this game that you can't escape while it costs you your social life and a whole heap of money! If anyone wants to add anything to this matter write in or to me, also if you realize that you are the rebel that I've

mentioned in this letter could you email me and tell me how it turned out, cyz.

BRADLEY

Email: bradley@internetnorth.com.au

PO Box 120

Mossman QID 4873

Bradley,

It's true Brad, there are quite a few people out there who's lives revolve around Quake, but some of the best players are also just "part timers". I used to play for around four hours each evening, but now I only log on once or twice a week. A healthy social life is still possible, even if you're Quaking regularly. Advice to all people who spend all their spare time playing one particular game... Don't, you'll become an awfully boring person to talk to. You think that girl you've always wanted is going to be impressed by your Quake habit?



Secondly, the gameplay. One could have forgiven Capcom had the gameplay been up to standard. Capcom, however, have decided to stick with the same old fireball routine with the added super-meter. All the characters have moves that come directly from previous Streetfighter games. It is absurd that Capcom cannot produce anything fresh in the gameplay department, especially since they had nearly a decade to do it.

Thirdly, the characters. They all look like cones from previous Streetfighter and Fatal Fury games. Is Capcom so lacking in creative talents that they cannot think of anything new?

Many overseas magazines have given the game rave reviews. My only response is: who took them to lunch? What game were they reviewing? What were they smoking? And where can I get some?

I have always took pride in the fact that our own Hyper magazine has always given

honest and objective reviews. Please give Streetfighter III the full Hyper treatment so that your readers will be better informed than their overseas counterparts.

Yours faithfully
SUNNY YAN

P.S. Any news on an Australian release of Final Fantasy VII? Sunny,

No doubt you're balking at the score we ended up giving it in our arcade section. Rather than try and defend our score, I'd have to say I agree with you, but besides Virtua Fighter 3, which I just had to review or my life wouldn't be worth living... I let Tim handle the arcade stuff, and give it what he will. He loved it, I thought it was just like every other 2D fighting game since Street Fighter 2 (with the exception of Samurai Shodown)... unoriginal, and uninspiring. Sure, there have been some very popular 2D fighting games since SF2, but none have really broken

ground. It's all just the same ideas with little tweaks, which really just add a bit more, as opposed to take the genre a step forward. Why then do I let Tim give Street Fighter 3 a five star rating? Because this ain't "The Dan Mag" and I'm not going to impose my personal opinion upon every scoring aspect of the magazine. Good to see someone challenging the flow of things and speaking up.

WHAT DO YOU FREAKS LOOK LIKE?

To the game kings that is HYPER, A royal message, your mag is a true ruler and is the best thing along with the Sega Saturn, Sony Playstation, Nintendo 64 and the Starwars Trilogy. I have some questions to ask -

- 1) Have you royal people got any news on Fighting Vipers 2 (if it exists)?
- 2) My friend said VF3 and Tekken 3 had too much meg for the Saturn and Playstation and that these systems would need an add-on like the Megadrive's

32X. Is this true? If so when will they be released?

3) Who answers your letters you receive?

4) Would you guys and gals include a small photo or drawing in your reviews please? (Of yourselves).

One last thing, Barry James of Geelong, shut up George is a top Bloke. He's just doing his job.

See ya later from

MR ECS

Perth WA (also known as the Redneck of Perth)

1) *No news as yet, it's unlikely that Sega are going to explore that avenue either, considering Virtua Fighter has been so much more popular. However if FV2 appears, we'll letcha know.*

2) *If he meant they were too large, that may be possible (who happens to know the size of VF3 or Tekken 3 off the top of their head). The Saturn has been said to use an add-on, but news from Sony is that Tekken 3 will not require any hardware assistance. Speculation is that the reason the arcade version of Tekken 3 did not look as sexy as VF3 is because Namco wanted to make Tekken 3 so it could be ported across faithfully to the PlayStation without an add-on.*

3) *Dan... although this close to deadline, I wish it was someone else.*

4) *Hmmm, why? George and I are in the back seat of the car in the Interstate '76 newspiece last issue, with Ben Mansill in the front (he says "Hi" by the way). If you wanna go convince the editor of Cleo to do a photo shoot of me... great, but unless we're actively doing something unusual or cool, that a photo would help for, then why would your average gamer out there want a picture of us? Surely another little screen grab would be a better thing than a pic of some dude you'll never meet. If we get swamped by requests for it, maybe, but otherwise, the mag is about games, not a bunch of guys from Sydney.*

IS THAT IT??

Dear Hyper,

I am only 12 years old and dissappointed with Mario 64. I purchased a Nintendo 64 with Mario 64 only a week ago and have already completed Super Mario 64. Sure it's a great game, but I did find it a bit easy. Why couldn't Nintendo

add a few more (or a dozen more) levels? You only fight Bowser three times and I found them all quite simple. Just in case you're wondering, NO, I did not really use your playguide for it (except to find out where the caps are to activate the specials, but you didn't tell us anyway). I can't find the Red cap. Do you know where it is (I know you must). I haven't completely finished the game though, because I've only got 71 stars, leaving me another 49 but I'm sure I could find them quite easily. Anyway, you already know how great your mag is, so I don't have to tell you all about it, so can you now answer these questions?

- 1) How long did it take you to finish Mario 64?
- 2) What is the next game I should buy? (I like racing, beat'm'ups and fighting games like Tekken, flight simulators and Doom type games)
- 3) How many games do you know will be out by the end of the year?

4) What's so bad about Cruis'n USA and Shadows of the Empire?

Hope you can print the letter, and answer the questions.

See ya

JASON

Toongabbie NSW

Wow! A 12 year old male who's openly expressed dissatisfaction to a game that 99% of the gaming populace loves. It's really cool to see someone show a complete lack of regard for general consensus when it comes to evaluating a new game. One thing though Jason, Mark (remember our old Art Director? - He says "Hi" by the way) did play through the game and get every star (as did Nino before he reviewed the game), and from watching Mark, I can honestly say the you'll probably more time getting the last 49 stars as you did getting the first 71, because some stars are just amazingly hard to get.

- 1) *Mark's the only person around the office to try, and he did it in his spare time at work and at home over quite a while, so who can say?*
- 2) *If you don't have it, get Mario Kart 64.*
- 3) *Nintendo says around 20. Time will tell.*
- 4) *Read the reviews... The games just weren't as fun as they needed to be.*

PSX NUTTER

Hyper Dudes,
Super funky mag, best multi-format mag in Australia. Just a couple of real quick questions from a Playstation junkie:
1) Why does the PAL version of "Tobal Noi" end up missing out on the Square demo CD. I know, K know. NTSC vs Pal, but really, why can't we have a rolling MPEG video file of the NTSC version at least to feast our eyes on and make our friends jealous.
2) Why didn't you go into the usual amount of detail you usually do with your review of "Soul Edge" in your March issue? We usually get a detailed character run down at least (alla Tekken 2 et al).

3) What is your opinion of the Psygnosis game "Chronicles of the Sword" (3D rendered knights-of-old adventure thingy). It seems to have missed your watchfull eyes. It looks good but I need to know how it plays.

4) When-oh-when are the following RPG's being officially released in this software forsaken country of ours. Wild Arms, Popolocrois, Arc the Lad (1 or 2), Final Fantasy VII, or anything even remotely like them. (It has gotten that bad I have even considered shelling out the dough and buying a Saturn)

On point three, I read a few letters pages back that you guys, due to printed deadlines, cut offs etc. May sometimes miss out on reviewing a particular game. Why not have an overview page, smaller than byte size, of the ones that got away that month? Thats all, keep up the good work and I'll keep subscribing....

Regards
SIMON FRENCH

1. *Maybe Squaresoft deemed the cost of pressing that CD was not worth the effort outside of Japan*
2. *Hopefully our eleven page playside this issue should remedy that.*
3. *Well, when we got a beta of the game AGES ago, we sent it back saying we thought it was too bodgey to review... We didn't get sent a final version, which might suggest there wasn't much difference between the two...?*
4. *FF7 is the only one of those games with a confirmed PAL release date, and that'll be November... should be big.*

A BENAUD UNBELIEVER!
Dear Hyper,
I was ready to fork out \$4,000 for the new N64, when I heard a rumour that the Playstation is going to release an AFL (Aussie Rules) and cricket game. Well stuff me! It stopped me in my tracks. If you could put this rumour at rest and make it a fact I will go out and buy the Sony Playstation. If it is true do you have an approximate release date for these 2 games? Keep up the good work on the mag.
P.S. What did Richie Benaud have to do with anything in last (42) issue? (Pages 6&7)
ANDREW

Adult - Gamer!
Well stuff you! Yes, there will be both a Cricket and an AFL game for PlayStation, but not till around Christmas. Both will be EA games, so we can expect the usual high level of quality that they deliver in the sport genre. P.S We did a feature on Beam, and they used Richie in EA Cricket 97, that shot was of him being recorded for the game.
WHAT MEDIA CREDABILITY?
Dear Hyper,
Firstly, congratulations on the mag. Keep it up, guys.
Secondly, I would like to say "shame on you" to 60 Minutes

for their story about "Your kids and the predators that lurk in cyberspace" (you can read about it in Driftnet in the Computers section in the April 1st Sydney Morning Herald). What a load of crap! It went on to talk about how "a harmless inquiry about Super League turns up pornography". The writer logged onto the internet and made an inquiry about Super League using Yahoo, Alta Vista and Excite. Yahoo turned up 92 sites, none contained pornography, so did Alta Vista's first 200 sites. Excite's first 100 sites contained nothing but sport. The cringe-fest at



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To make your games the coolest they can be, you need the boot of **Microsoft® Windows® 95**. Its 32-bit architecture not only lets you kick some serious enemy butt, but also gives you full-on, **3D graphics that'll blow you away**. To prove our point, Windows 95 now comes with a **complimentary CD sampler** with 13 hair raising games. So get with the program. If it's full-on games that get you going, then **it's time to feel the boot of Windows 95**. Complimentary Games Sampler available while stocks last. Available from participating resellers.



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SEAN TITZPATRICK SENT IN THIS EXCEEDINGLY SPIFFY ENTRY INTO THE SOUL GLO COMP...NO WONDER HE GOT A PRIZE!

Channel 9 begins now. In late '95 the OFLC mounted a search. It spent 27 hours hunting for porn on the net and found that "restricted and refused classification material was difficult to find, at times difficult to download and was more prevalent on Usenet newsgroup files than the World Wide Web". The faces of the Channel 9 executives are getting redder by the minute. The report also contained a section on paedophiles. Liz Hayes also talked about how "It takes only a few minutes on the Net to realise how close the dangers to children are...and how easily the children themselves can be targeted by paedophiles". Yet there's no evidence. This story (and others like it) is the reason people are so unsure and paranoid about the internet and why there are some groups out there who try to convince people not to use it. Because most people learn about the internet through the media. Unfortunately, it's the media that's running these stories that only creates more myths, illusion and disinformation. So it's up to

the media to wise up about the internet (and censorship I might add) and start discussing these issues in a rational manner, instead of this tabloid junk. Thirdly, I have some questions:

- 1) Now that Phantasmagoria 2 has passed through classification mostly intact, is the original still available? And what happened to that controversial game, Harvester?
- 2) Are the Sega PC conversions better than their Saturn counterparts?
- 3) Will there be a light shotgun, like Crypt Killers?
- 4) How long before a Pentium 200 with MMX be obsolete?

Yours truly,

PHIL

Belrose, NSW

Well, we all know that shows like 60 Minutes try to sensationalise everything so it actually seems like a big deal. No doubt they'll do a story on the drastic increase in rape caused by "sexually violent" games like Micro Machines V3 and Chessmaster 2000. Write in to 60 Minutes, and see if they put your letter on the show.

1) You'd be really hard

pressed to find a copy anymore, the general word on the game was that whilst being controversial, it was also crap.

2) Sega Rally was certainly no better on the PC than on the Saturn, and Virtua Fighter was a bit slow on your average PC. We'll have to see how Virtual On looks on PC.

3) Very doubtful

4) Define obsolete... Unless you're a flight sim freak that wants all the detail turned on, that processor will last you at least a year and a half. Of course new chips that will do bigger and better things will always be around the corner, but the top end of the processor market is usually pretty expensive. A Pentium 2 chip (that's Pentium Pro with MMX/extra instructions) is the latest and greatest, but costs a packet. The introduction of good 3D cards has taken the load off the processors quite a bit, so hopefully the need to update your processor might become a bit more infrequent.

A CARING SATURN OWNER

Dear Hyper Crew, I've been reading your cool mag since first print. A fine job, keep up the kick ass work. Anyway I wrote to ask you a few questions.

- 1) Any news as to when Streetfighter vs X-Mens release date on the Saturn?
- 2) Will Streetfighter 3 The New Generation be released on Saturn?
- 3) Can you give me a short list of 2D fighting games for the Saturn?
- 4) And finally how long should I play my Saturn before giving it a rest?

Thanks for your time

MICHAEL TRUONG
Yer answers

- 1) Virgin are distributing the game in Australia, but Capcom are still yet to give them a release date. Virgin's current guess is late this year.
- 2) The word is yes, but absolutely no clue when.
- 3) Golden Axe: The Duel, Street Fighter Alpha (1&2), King of Fighters 95, Darkstalkers, X-Men: Children of the Atom.
- 4) Till it starts complaining about it's back... Saturn's are reliable machines, and as long as you don't do dopey things like leave them on overnight, you'll be fine.

SET YOUR GUNS TO MISS...

Dear Hyper,

I've been tekken for a ride! I bought Die Hard Trilogy and also a Predator light gun and to my surprise there was no calibration device in the game. So now my gun is useless as it doesn't shoot straight. Who are the "ah! Souls" responsible and what can I do?

Now that's of my chest, some questions:

- 1) How large are the N64 games since they are cartridge?
- 2) Is there any word on a Dirt Dash release on Playstation?
- 3) Why hasn't Triple Play '97 been released on Playstation in Australia?
- 4) When will the Playstation dual analogue controller be available and how much?

Thanks

BRUCE IRVIN

We noticed that too... sucks doesn't it? Not a lot you can do, except learn where you have to aim on the screen. We wish we had a PSX lightgun back when we did the review, since it's a major bummer.

- 1) The games themselves are 8 to 16 MegaBytes (64 to 128 MegaBits) in size, and that's COMPRESSED data, which means there's really about three times that amount of data there (24-48 Mbytes). I really wish you people would stop stressing about the size in MB of data that games are. If it's a good game, it's a good game...
- 2) Not as yet, it would seem Namco are putting their efforts into Time Crisis for the PSX.
- 3) Perhaps the baseball games of recent times didn't do well in Australia, and thus no-one picked up the distribution for it out here... Although apparently Big Hurt did quite well, so who knows?
- 4) Although we don't have one yet, Sony tell us that we could see a July release for the Dual Analogue controller, no price yet, but it will support Bushido Blade and Rally Cross.

KIWIS AND OWLS

Dear Hyper,

I think your magazine RULES!!! I think the price is great and I like reading information on the new games available. Here are some questions.

- 1) In a friends magazine they advertised a gun for the PlayStation called the Justifier. Is this gun going to be available in New Zealand? If so

how much will it cost?

2) The magazine also said that its best use was for a game called Horned Owl. Will that come to New Zealand?

JONATHAN PRESTON
Auckland, New Zealand

QUIT DRIBBLING

Dear Hyper,

I started reading your magazine 2 months ago and think it's brilliant.

Anyway, I wrote to you to ask a few questions.

- 1) How come Total NBA 97 on the playstation is sold for \$20 cheaper than Total NBA 96?
 - 2) How long do you think the playstation will stay popular for?
 - 3) Can you please tell me if there is going to be a Total NBA 98 on the playstation how much will it be, when it will be released and if its going to be any good?
 - 4) On the N64 they have a game coming out in August 97 called NBA HANG TIME I've seen the graphics and they look just like the versions NBA JAM on the SNES and the Mega Drive on the Sega, is it a good game?
 - 5) How come the N64 isn't going to make many action and sporting games like the Sony Playstation and the Sega Saturn?
- Thank you for reading my letter and answering my questions.

Yours sincerely

NATHAN ZUR

Nathan,

- 1) Looks like Sony are trying to make their new range a bit cheaper possibly... Maybe your local store is doing a sale.
- 2) How long will the next to Hyper be? No-one knows, but it's certainly not losing any popularity right now.
- 3) We can only assume there will be, but we can't tell if it's any good until someone makes it now can we?
- 4) One would imagine it would be at least a tad better than the NBA JAM games on the 16 bit consoles. You're not into basketball at all are you Nathan?
- 5) Define action... There are sporting games for the N64 coming up over the next couple of months. FIFA 64 is already out there, and NBA Hang Time is not far away.

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FRONTLINE WGHYP

FOR SALE

Sega Mega Drive 2: good condition, 1 six button pads, 1 programmable pad with slow motion. Aladdin, Mortal Kombat 2 and Sonic and Knuckles sell for \$180 ono. Contact Blake on 9757 1510 between 4:00pm - 7:00pm.

PC CD-ROM game Descent 2. \$50 price negotiable. Call Nash on 9671 7085 after 5pm.

Super NES with 3 controllers and 7 games including Killer Instinct, Mario Kart and DKC3!!! \$285 ono. Ask for Justin (09) 448 6405, WA.

PSX Games (PAL), Die Hard Trilogy, Tomb Raider, The Need for Speed \$65 ono. Phone Martin on (02) 9569 8627 after 7pm.

For Sale: 4X Speed CD-ROM, Reveloution X, Privateer vs. Strike Commander Collectors Edition, Command Companion, 3D construction Kit, Klick and Play. All games for PC and will sell for best offer. Ring David on (07) 3848-1407 Tue-Fri, 4-7 PM

Sega Saturn: System, one control pad, Daytona USA and Demo Disk, all cheats in backup memory for Fighting Vipers, Virtua Cop 1 and Daytona, all boxes and instructions 6 months old, excellent condition - \$375 ono. Call Seb on (09) 358 5157 after 3:30pm (W.A time).

Playstation NTSC, comes with Tekker 2, Rage Racer, Die hard, Trilogy, Crash bandicoot, Light Gun, Adapters, 2 control pads, 10+more games, TV must have V-Hold. \$800. Call Jeremy on (03) 9434 4802 or email mjohm@cyberspace.net.au. Must be in Melbourne.

Super Mario 64 Unofficial Strategy Guide. 30 pages of pictures and walkthrough for all levels. \$20 includes P+H and folder. Phone (060) 415 547 or write to PO Box 655, Lavington NSW 2641.

Sega Saturn NTSC/PAL with Racing Wheel, 2 Controllers and 25+ games for only \$650. Also - WC IV, Ripper, Warcraft 2 - \$30 each or all for \$70. Call Geoff on (049) 751 918.

Sony Playstation (PAL - brand new) plus auto fire control pad, memory card and 2 games: Warhawk and Wing Commander

3, 7 playable demo discs and 19 playstation magazines. All for \$550 ono. Sydney and surrounding area only. Call (02) 9528 6079.

Sega Megadrive 2, 13 games, 2 two control pads including programmable pad, Lethal Enforcer gun, Four way play, Master System inverter, all boxed with instructions - \$475 ono. Call Adam on (03) 6428 6455 after 4.30pm weekdays.

Super Nintendo with Mario All Stars & 4 other games, 2 Super Nintendo normal Joypads, 1 auto fire propad, 1 cheat book and many separate cheats. Valued at \$400 will sell for \$250 ono. Call Grant on (077) 79 46 43. QLD residents preferred.

SNES with 8 games. Desert Strike, Zombies, DKC, Starwing, Blazing Skies, Mario Kart, MK2 and EWJ. Most with instructions. All for \$320. Call Tim Hayward on (03) 5155 2336. (VIC only).

Saturn Games for Sale: Virtua Cop & gun - \$80, Nights - \$60, Virtua Fighter - \$35 and Full Throttle for PC - \$35. All in good condition with boxes and instructions. Call Eric on (079) 824 609.

Playstation, 2 controllers and a memory card inc. 3 demo games all in excellent condition. All for only \$350. Call Andrew on (02) 9621 7467.

Playstation games: Formula 1 - \$79, Need For Speed - \$69. In excellent condition - call Andrew on (02) 9621 7461.

Tomb Raider, Die Hard Trilogy, Resident Evil and Discworld (all PSX). \$50 - \$70 each. Call Kane on (03) 9417 3572 - After Hours.

For Sale: Sonic 3 - \$30, brand new Batman Forever - \$35, Super Real Basketball - \$15, Talespin - \$15 and Gameboy games Killer Instinct - \$30, Worms! - \$35. All with instructions or the lot \$155 - Call Andrew on (08) 8431 2438.

For Sale: Atari Lynx 2 with adapter & 3 games: Warbirds, Checkered Flag, Hydra. In great condition worth \$185 - will sell for \$160. Call (075) 485 3250 (after 4pm)

Megadrive 2 games for sale: Lotus 2, Double Cluth, Rock 'n' Roll Racing, Another World, Quakshot, Sonic 1&2 and World of Illusion. The Lot for \$200.

Call Sean on (075) 485 3250 (after 4pm)

I will sell my Sony Playstation with 2 controllers and 2 games (Tekken and Crash Bandicoot) for only \$270. Call Daniel on (03) 9510 3434 (from 4.30pm weekdays).

Megadrive with additional control pad (auto fire and slow motion features) and Another World (game), complete with RF TV adaptor, transformer, box & instructions for Megadrive and autofire control pad. Everything in top condition, also comes with a pile of old Megazone magazines - \$90. Call (02) 9528 6079 (Sydney area only).

Mega Drive, four pads and 12 games all for \$200. Games include: SF2 SE, Rugby World 96, Hockey 95 and Sonic & Knuckles. Call Mionssa on (02) 9687 0064.

SNES, 2 controllers and games (Killer Instinct, MK2, Donkey Kong Country, Street Fighter 2, Super Mario World, F-Zero and SNES Nintendo Scope 6) all \$250. All items boxed with instructions. Call Jimmy Ph (07) 3353 0624.

SNES with Killer Instinct - \$130 ono. Game Gear w/4 games \$100. Call Donald on (02) 9958 2703.

SNES, 2 controllers and 7 games: DKC 2, Yoshi's Island, MK3, Jurassic Park, Golf, Super Mario World, F Zero, All boxed with instructions - \$200 ono. Call Gary on (043) 926 153.

Sega Mega Drive 1 & Mega Cds with one CD game (Road Avenger) and 16 games: MK3, Road Rash, Live 95 and more. Almost all with instructions - \$550 ono. Call (03) 5127 5991.

For Sale: Sega Megadrive 2 with 9 games: Street Fighter 2 (special Champion edition), Mortal Kombat, Streets Of Rage, Jurassic Park, Desert Strike, Sonic 1, Sonic 2, Sonic & Knuckles and Shadow Dancer. 3 controls one Viper 3 arcade joystick, 2 X standard. All leads, most boxes and manuals. Call Dane on (043) 697 035.

For Sale: Sony Playstation game, Formula 1 - \$60 or swap for Wipeout 2097 or Tomb Raider. Call Brett on (036) 376 1541.

Sony Playstation (PAL brand new, under warranty) plus additional auto fire control pad, memory card, two games

Warhawk and Wing Commander III, 7 playable demo discs and 19 Playstation magazines. \$450 ono. Phone (02) 9528 6079. Sydney and surrounding area only.

Gameboy with 3 games: Kirby's Dreamland, Ferrari Challenge and Tetris. All in v.g. condition. \$80 ono, call Anthony on (08) 8373 3616 SA only.

N64 with Wave Race sell for \$500 or swap for PSX with games. Ph (065) 576 491.

SNES with 5 games including DK2 and 3, Killer Instinct, Uni Rally and Buster Bunny and 2 control pads, one arcade turbo joystick. Will sell for \$320 or swap Playstation 1 control pad. Call (049) 343 970. NSW only.

SNES, 2 ordinary control pads. A Viper control pad, 3 games (Killer Instinct, Mario Allstars and Robocop 3) all boxed in perfectly good working order, 3 months old. Asking price for the lot \$350. Phone: (08) 8387 0336 (South Australia) Ask for Thomas. August 1 expires.

Playstation (PAL) with 5 games including Tekken 2, Tomb Raider, memory card, RF adaptor, demo discs. All boxed with instructions. Only \$550 ono. Call (07) 3408 8478 (QLD only).

Super Nintendo with 2 controls, 1 joystick, 6 games including Super Mario All Stars, Super Mario World, Mario Paint (includes mouse), Donkey Kong Country, Bubsy the Bobcat and Super Punch Out and an RF switch. All games \$30 - \$50. The lot worth \$710 sell for \$230 ono. Call James on (0353) 671 527.

Brand new Sony PSX world compatible, 1 controller; this machine will allow you to play any version (Jap, US, Copy, etc) game. Sell for \$390 - plus I will throw in Tomb Raider and Star Gladiator for Free. Call Mike on (02) 9554 9615.

SNES games for sale. \$20 - \$70. Secret of Mana, Secret of Evermore etc. All in good condition, boxed with instructions. Phone Rosemary on (09) 345 2479.

SWAPS

Will swap Mario 64 (N64) for any game on the Nintendo 64.

Call Nariman on (02) 9899 1513 (preferably in Sydney).

Will swap my PlayStation: 2 controllers, Memory Card, Tekken 2 & Alien Trilogy (All PAL) for a SNES with Super Star Wars Empire Strikes Back & Return of the Jedi + 2 controllers. Phone (045) 763 163 (after 3pm). Ask for Luke.

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