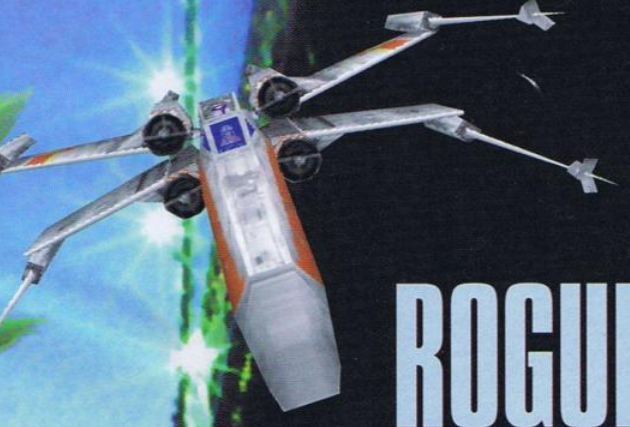


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DREAMCAST

Sega's 128-bit dream machine roadtested!

VIRTUA FIGHTER 3

Special preview of the world's best fighting game



ZELDA 64

The stuff Nintendo's legends are made of



30 HOT NEW TITLES REVIEWED!!

next gaming



64 SIXTY FOUR

MONACO

GRAND PRIX

racing simulation 2



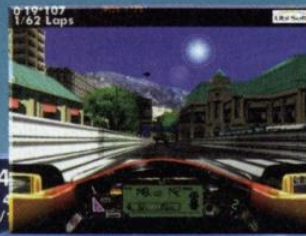
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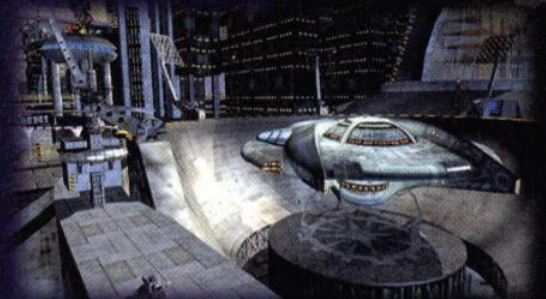


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what he does with power.*

Pittacus (c. 600 BC)

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Yet to be classified

PC CD ROM

Pett 984418984418

EDITORIAL

Well, here we are in 1999. I used to watch this very funky (or was it horribly daggy) sci-fi show when I was young called "Space 1999". In the show, humans had already set up bases on the moon, and had taken wearing ugly jump suits to new heights of stupidity... we were a truly advanced race. What a let down that I'm still catching a train to work rather than hooning around in an Eagle lander. Oh well, at least computer graphics and video games look a damn sight better now than they did in that show.

I have a strong feel that this is going to go down in gaming history as the year of the Dreamcast. After playing Virtua Fighter 3tb and finding that it actually looks a bit BETTER than the arcade version, thanks to sharper screen images, I can quite confidently say that Sega have got it right with the hardware, and you can all look forward to an absolute kick arse console later this year (probably September). What really freaks me out is the list of games coming out for the machine. There are so many killer titles in development for the Dreamcast, and by the time the machine is released out here, many of them will be finished and ready for release, so there should be an awesome starting lineup here in Australia.

We're quite relieved that the Christmas rush has finally come to an end, although there were still a few last minute Christmas titles that didn't quite get here in time for review, so we'll be looking at those stragglers next month... which will be getting awfully close to the launch of Metal Gear Solid (yes please), and hopefully not long after that, Quake III Arena (who would have thought I'd care about that one eh?).

With some excellent games just around the corner, and the Dreamcast looking like an awesome new console for 1999, it's already looking like a good year.

Dan



REGULARS

8 News

Yet more Dreamcast games announced! The ultimate Nintendo fighting game. Modem device for the N64, Voodoo 3 announced. Metal Gear Solid action figures, and more!



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Win a year's supply of Sierra games for PC! Also up for grabs, copies of AFL 99, Rakuga Kids, Gangster, Thief: The Dark Project, and Devil Dice!

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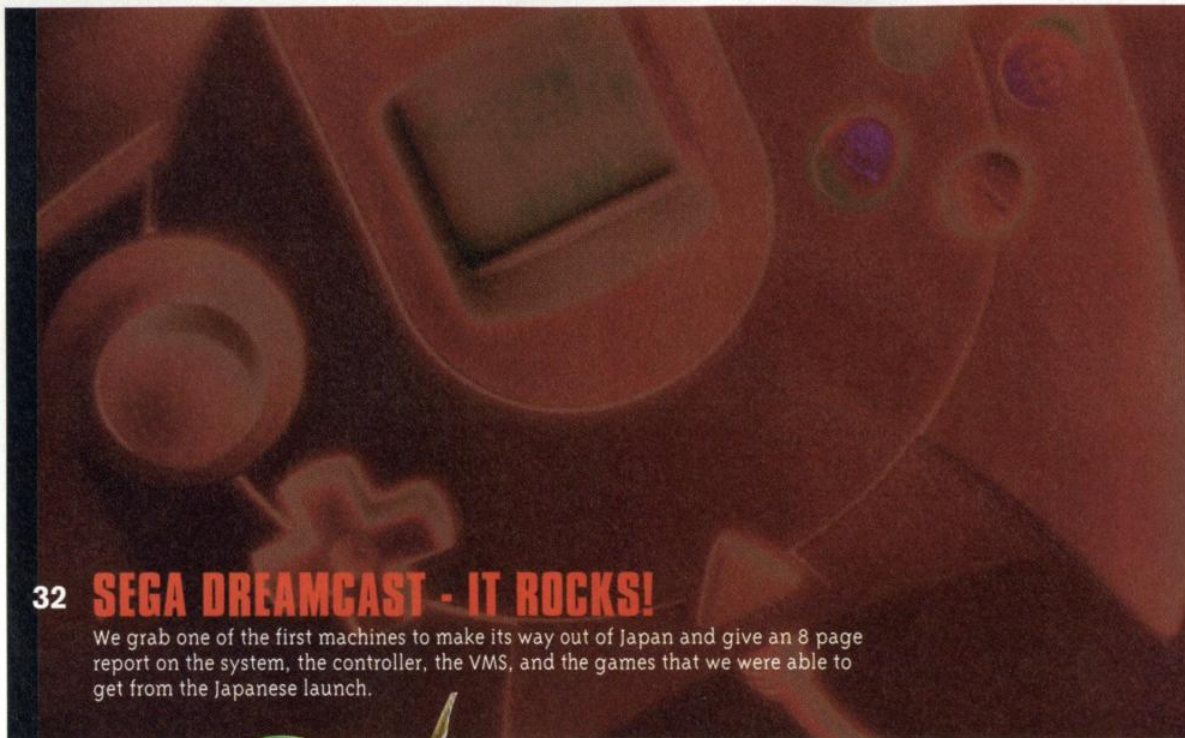
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We grab one of the first machines to make its way out of Japan and give an 8 page report on the system, the controller, the VMS, and the games that we were able to get from the Japanese launch.

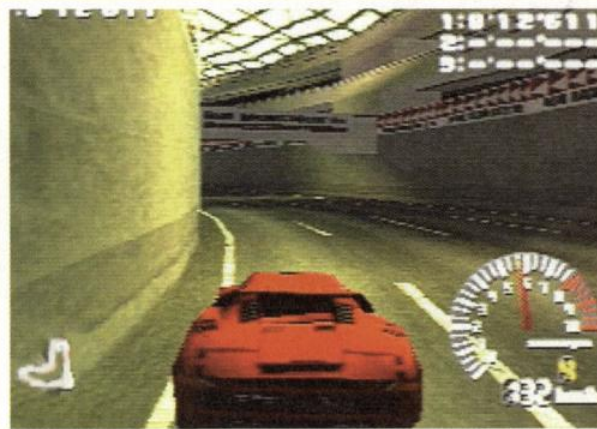


54 ZELDA 64 FULL REVIEW

Is it everything you'd all been hoping for? Hell yes! Kevin Cheung reviews the game that all Nintendo 64 owners have been waiting for.

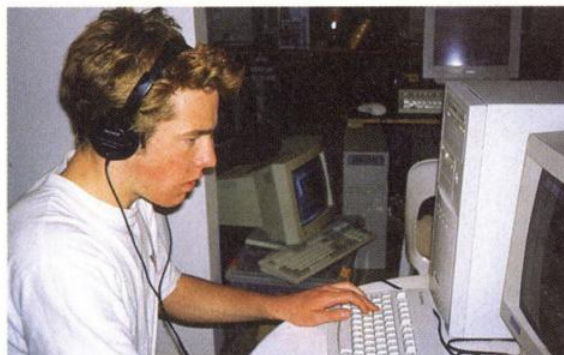
82 THE TRANS-TASMAN TUSSLE!

Australia and New Zealand's best Quake players face off in the first International Quake match held in Australia!



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ISSUE 64

February 1999

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MMMM... DREAMCAST GAMES...

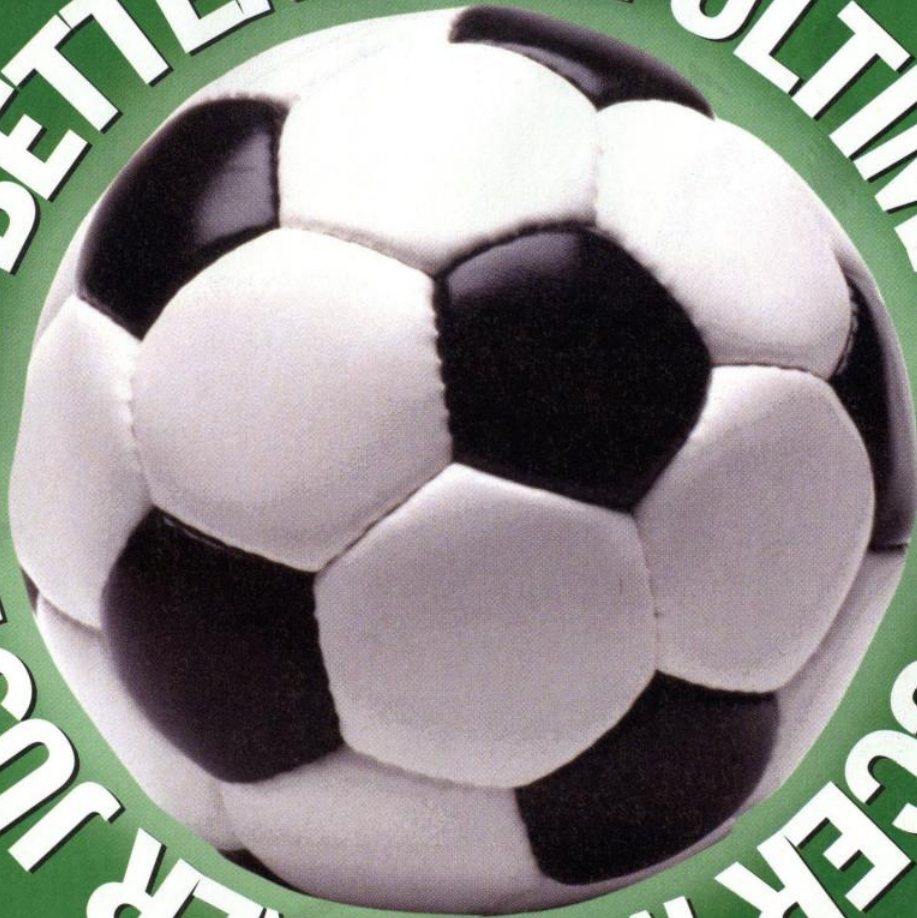


Looking forward into 1999, we've spied some incredibly droolicious games which are in development for the Sega Dreamcast... as if you needed more reasons to want to buy this console! Getting the saliva glands pumping, would have to be LA Machineguns, the sequel to that kick-ass arcade shooter, Gunblade NY. Frankly, this looks sick! If blowing things to smithereens doesn't appeal, then take a look at Magical Track Adventure, which is - you guessed it - an adventure/action game. Whatever the hell it's about is a mystery (you seem to travel the land on a set of railroad tracks), but the visuals are certainly darn-tootin' purty. Of course, the next big Dreamcast game everyone in Japan is hanging out for, would have to be the one and only Sega Rally 2. Another arcade perfect translation in the making, which should be out in Japan within a matter of weeks. Fighting games more your mug of java? Then get an eye-full of Power Stone, Capcom's upcoming 3D fighting game, based on Sega's new Naomi arcade board. The future is looking so bright, we'll have to wear titanium-layered goggles! Now, what would a Dreamcast report be without mentioning the RPG genre? For the RPG freaks amongst you, the Dreamcast is already looking very special. How about Climax Landers... looking like a cross between Zelda 64 and Final Fantasy VII, this RPG by the developers of the Darkstalkers games will give the Dreamcast's Grandia game a run for it's money. Stunning is just not the word for how good these games are going to be...



Clockwise from Top Left: Three pics from Climax Landers; Sega Rally 2; two pics from Magical Track Adventure; Power Stone.

JUST GOT BETTER! THE ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER



PREMIER MANAGER 99

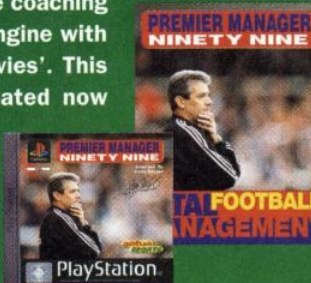
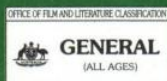
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Premier Manager Ninety Nine encapsulates all that is good about football Management simulations from the coaching and finance elements to the 3D match engine with commentary from Mr. football 'Barry Davies'. This product has been over-hauled and updated now includes all the new data for the coming season. Premier Manager Ninety Nine will capitalise on the outstanding success of the #1 selling 97 & 98 versions and will be the biggest title of this genre.

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METAL GEAR SOLID TOYS

The boom in action figures based on videogame characters is now serious business. Literally every popular game character is available in lumpy plastic form! You wouldn't believe it, but Metal Gear Solid is also popular enough to have it's own action figure range. The figures, made by McFarlane Toys in the United States, each stand roughly 6 inches tall and come packed with a variety of weapons and gadgets. Solid Snake, Liquid Snake, Meryl and all the other main characters look quite incredibly detailed and true to their polygonal origins. When playing with these creeps on your PlayStation isn't enough, grab your figures and... um... head out to the sandbox to re-create your favourite action sequences. Er... yeah.



N64 GETS MODEM

In a very unexpected turn of events, Nintendo boss Hiroshi Yamauchi has announced a new peripheral for the Nintendo 64 in Japan which will basically allow the N64 to go "online". Possibly inspired by the Dreamcast's internal modem capabilities, this will move the Nintendo 64 into a brand new phase. Gamers in Japan will now be able to log on to the internet and engage in online N64 multiplayer games. Though Nintendo were possibly planning a modem all along with the ill-fated 64DD, it seems like a brave move designed to keep the N64 "up with the times". Because of the sudden announcement in Japan, there is currently no word on the N64 modem making it to western shores.

COMPETITION WINNERS

Rejoice! For free games and goodies are yours!

Abe's Exoddus

Kian Feng, WA
Nick Bower, SA
Charles Gilbert, NSW
Chris Clarke, SA
Rick Thornton, NSW

NBA Jam '99

Darren Delforce, Qld
Robert Pezzano, Vic
Ben Richardson, Vic
Dion Matthews, Vic
Kelli McCartney, Vic

Radica Stealth Assault

Eddie Dufflied, Vic
Robert Jardine, NSW
M. Berndt, SA
F. Gallo, WA
Ben Getley, NSW
Adrian Ivens, Vic

Leigh Berryman, SA
Troy Craker, Qld
Steve Sheahan, Vic
Nic Walker, NSW

Quake: The Offering
Cameron Sanderson, SA

Some cry because of the challenging gameplay. Others cry for their enslaved brothers.

But most Mudokons cry because electrodes are attached to their tear glands, stimulating the ingredients for SoulStorm Brew, the best-selling nauseating elixir from SoulStorm Brewery. In the classic Oddworld tradition, Abe's Exoddus delivers more intuitive communication and entrepreneurial evil than ever before. Richer language. Lusher environments.

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Slap some sense into those Mudokons - but look out for laughing gas!



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Save your race...again!
Save your game...anywhere!



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odd to the last drop

THE ULTIMATE N64 FIGHTING GAME?



Owners of N64s are actually going to get to play one of those "dream" games that gamers and fans always suggest and fantasise about but which rarely get made... Nintendo have come up with a real crowd pleaser in the form of Smash Brothers. Not at all related to Smash TV, Smash Brothers is in fact a fighting game which will feature all the most famous Nintendo game characters, all together for the first time in the same game specifically to beat the blood out of each other... well, I guess seeing as this is Nintendo there won't be any blood exactly, but these guys are definitely pissed off about something (it is a fighting game after all). Imagine pitting Mario against Link from the

Legend of Zelda, or Samus from Metroid against Princess Peach? How about seeing if Donkey Kong can wipe the floor with Kirby? It sounds hilarious, and it looks even stranger when you see it in action. This looks like the return of the bizarre Japanese videogame, and if all goes to plan, the whole world will be able to enjoy it. Initial playable characters include Donkey Kong, Mario, Link, Bowser, Kirby, Yoshi, Pikachu, Fox McCloud from Starfox, Blue Falcon from F-Zero X and Samus from Metroid, but expect a whole bunch of hidden characters. There will even be a four-player simultaneous play mode! No word on an Australian release date yet, so for now, take a look at these screenshots and have a laugh...

QUAKE 2 EXTREMITIES

Id Software have made an official nod towards all the freaks out there who have hacked and enhanced Quake 2, by compiling all the best Mods available on the net and packing them together on one disc and releasing it as an official Quake 2 product. The cool thing is that all the freaky boys who made these mods receive some royalties from sales of this great add-on. In the pack you'll find... Action Quake 2, Capture, C.H.A.O.S. Deathmatch, Red Rover, Eraser Bot, Jailbreak, Kick, Qwar2, PowerBall, Rail Arena and possibly the best Quake 2 Mod ever - Rocket Arena 2. If you can't bear huge downloads, yet love your online Quake 2 action, run out and buy this now to enjoy all the new maps, weapons and gameplay variations. There are literally months of your life you can waste playing these great Mods. Hehheh.

CHARTS

Charts kindly supplied by Hitech World

PLAYSTATION

1. Tomb Raider 3
2. Shane Warne Cricket
3. Crash Bandicoot 3
4. TOCA 2
5. Abe's Exoddus
6. FIFA '99
7. Spyro
8. Coolboarders 3
9. Duke Nukem TTK
10. Colin McRae Rally

NINTENDO 64

1. Zelda: Ocarina of Time
2. Goldeneye
3. Mario Kart
4. Banjo Kazooie
5. WCW Vs NWO
6. F-Zero X
7. F-1 World Grand Prix
8. Top Gear Overdrive
9. Body Harvest
10. Holy Magic Century

PC

1. Half Life
2. AFL '99
3. Railroad Tycoon 2
4. European Air War
5. Grim Fandango
6. Rainbow 6
7. Moto Racer 2
8. FIFA '99
9. NBA Live '99
10. Shogo: MAD



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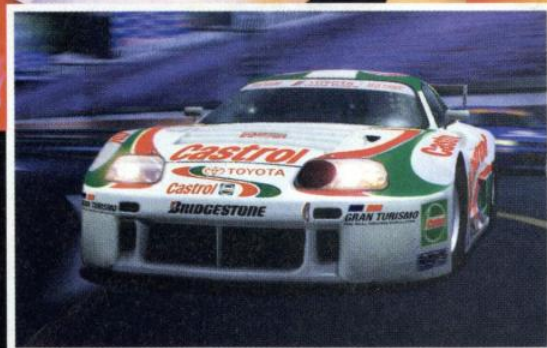
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VOODOO 3 ANNOUNCED

3Dfx Interactive have stunned gamers with their announcement of the Voodoo3 graphics accelerator, which should be available sometime later this year. Voodoo graphics has long been the gamer's choice, churning out the fastest 3D visuals currently available on a home PC, and the Voodoo3 promises unmatched 3D and 2D performance. To quote the press release - "With

processor limited for years to come. Voodoo3 can also display resolutions of up to 2048 x 1536 at a full 75Hz screen refresh rate, for some seriously high-res gaming. However, the card will still only render externally in 16-bit, though it's processing at 32-bit internally. For those of you investing in DVD, you'll be pleased to know that the Voodoo3 will also provide hardware DVD acceleration, for

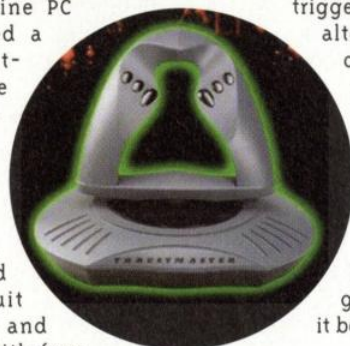


its dual, 32-bit rendering pipelines, Voodoo3 can generate more than seven million triangles per second utilising its 100-billion operations per second 3D architecture. Voodoo3 delivers more than twice the triangle performance of two Voodoo2 boards in the Scan Line Interleave (SLI) format - currently the industry's fastest 3D graphics configuration." That is truly astounding. This is a 3D accelerator which will be seriously

30 frames per second playback with no dropped frames, freeing up 40% of the CPUs overhead allowing you to perform other tasks whilst viewing digital video. The Voodoo3 2000 (OEM) and the Voodoo3 3000 (retail) will both be available in the second quarter of this year, and will be backwards compatible with all current 3Dfx enhanced games. Proof that the upgrade war can never be won...

FRAGMASTER

Thrustmaster, makers of fine PC peripherals, have developed a bizarre new joystick for First-Person Shooters. Dubbed the Fragmaster, this dual-grip joystick is designed specifically for gamers who would prefer a joystick-like control whilst retaining the speed and accuracy of playing with mouselook. Buttons are placed around the controller to suit shooting, ducking, jumping and weapon cycling/functions, with four



triggers and six buttons in total. An alternate mode called MegaHurts defaults the controller to more of a classic mouse-like control, whilst the controller will work with all current and future shooters. Although we're yet to test it out here at Hyper HQ, it certainly looks intriguing, and we'll put it through our Hardware guide procedure and give you the lowdown as soon as it becomes available...

OVERFLOW

Powerslide, the very pretty racing game from Ratbag, will have an add-on pack of some description released for it thanks to GT Interactive. Whilst testing the game, GT's independent test group loved the game so much, they suggested the creation of the add-on pack. Just what would be included in such a release for a racing game is unknown... probably new tracks, cars and multiplayer options...

Version 1.1 of Battlefield Communicator has been released on the internet, which allows up to 32 players to talk to each other in real-time whilst playing online games. Different channels can be set up so teams can have private channels for discussing tactics, with a mere tap of a button changing you back to an open channel. Of course, you need a headset with microphone for it to work, but if you're keen to grab yourself a copy, check out www.shadowfactor.com...

Playmates Toys are soon to release a range of Lara Croft action figures. The first figure, standing a tall nine inches high, will feature Lara in her wet suit! Grrr. Go enquire at your local Toys R Us for more details...

We might soon be seeing videogame music composers winning Grammys over in the United States. Seriously. The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences was recently holding a summit with a dozen top game music professionals to discuss the possibility of including the aforementioned award in upcoming ceremonies... all we need is for the Oddworld Inhabitants to win an Academy Award for their Abe short film...

Marvel Comic hero Spiderman is finally getting his own 3D videogame. There have been a few lame Spiderman games in the past, but now is the age of slick 3D and Tomb Raider gameplay, which kinda suits ol' Peter Parker down to a T. Both the Nintendo 64 and PlayStation will feature the game, published by Activision...

Speaking of Marvel heroes... Marvel Super Heroes Vs Street Fighter will be available on PlayStation early this year! With a huge 17 playable characters, this is an awesome 2D fighting game. In other Marvel news, X-Men 3D a 3D fighting game from Activision will appear on both PlayStation and Nintendo 64. Good news for Marvel comic fans...

Legendary game designer, John Romero (he of Doom fame) is currently still tweaking his new first-person shooter for PC, Daikatana, after seeing both Sin and Half-Life. The lon Storm man himself admits that he wants to ensure his single-player game is as strong as both of the aforementioned titles. Good luck, John...

There's still a large installed user base of Sega Saturn owners in Japan, and in an interesting move, Sonic 3D: Flickies Island will be released there mid January '99. The bad news, however, is that it may never see the light of day out here.

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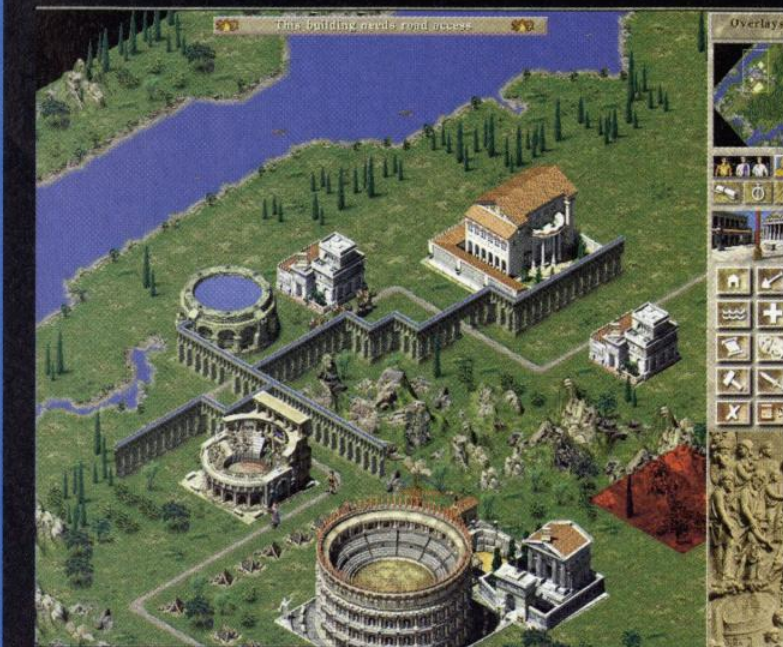


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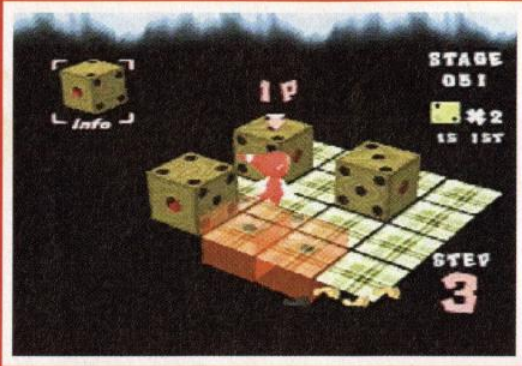
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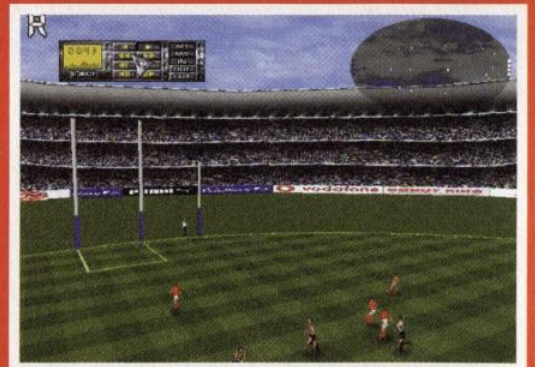
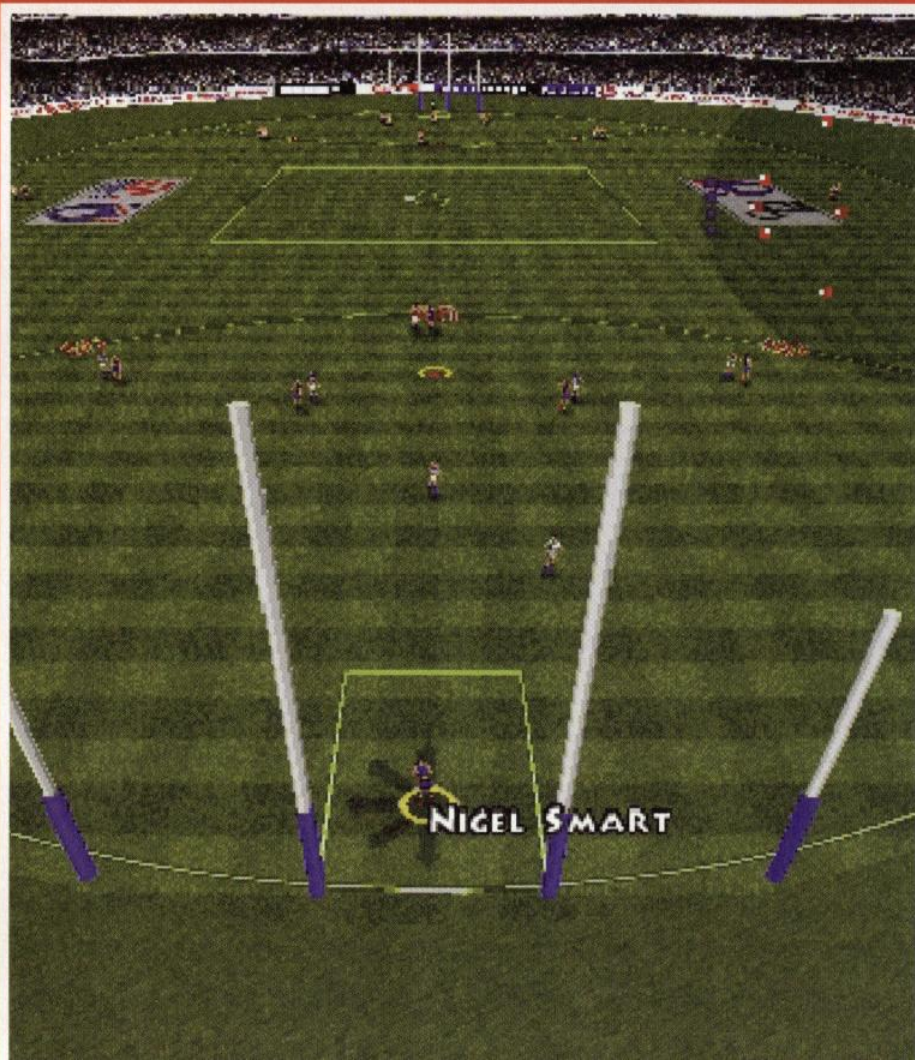
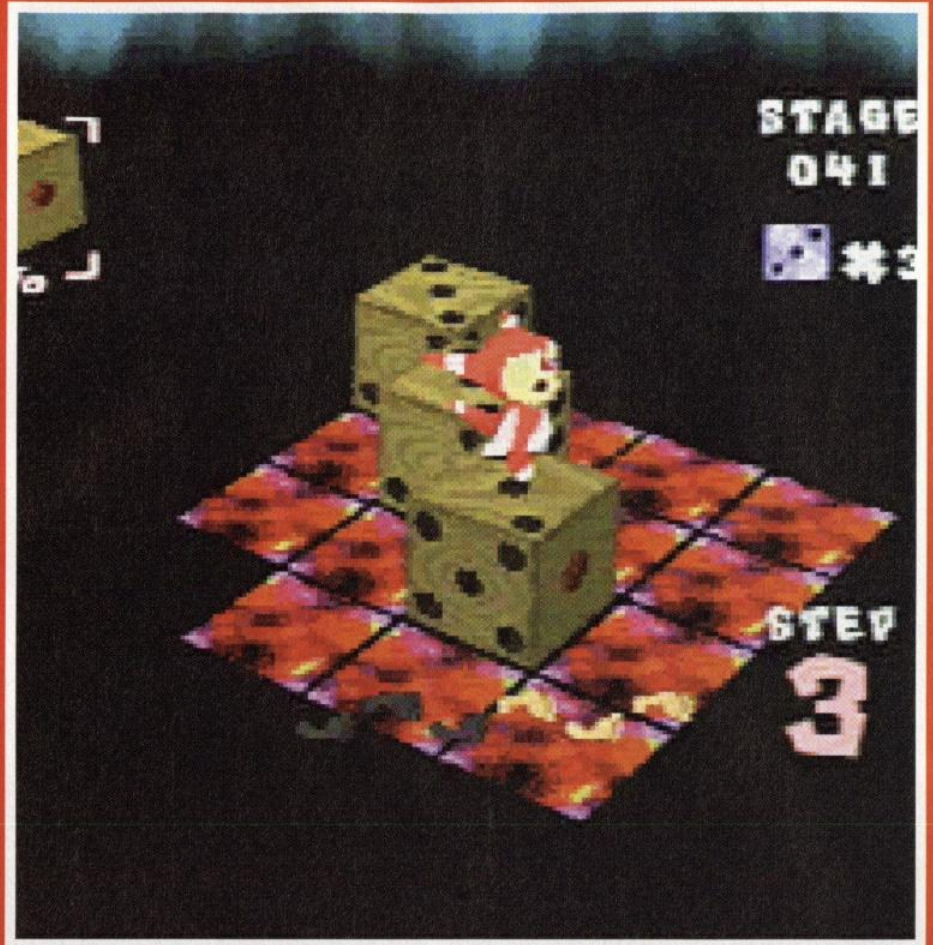


DEVIL DICE

Don't underestimate the power of a puzzle game! We could easily play Devil Dice for hours on end here at Hyper HQ before checking out our copy of Ridge Racer 4. Sony have chipped in five copies of this little brain belter to give away to those of you brave enough to face the Devil Dice challenge. To score yourself a copy for your PlayStation, answer the following question...

If you add up all the numbers on a single die, what do you get?

Put your answer on the back of an envelope with your name and address, and send it to us at: **Roll Em, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.**



AFL '99

Aussie Rules, rules. EA Sports are cool enough to make games as good as this for Australian sport lovers, so it was no surprise that they were also kind enough to offer up five copies of the game for PC to some Hyper readers. There's no doubt that there are enough AFL freaks and videogame lovers around this sunburnt country to make this one a bestseller, but answer this question and score yourself a freebie... but wait... each copy of AFL '99 will be SIGNED by an AFL star - one from each State! How awesome!

What does AFL stand for?

Scribble your answer on the back of an envelope with your name and address and send it off to: **Tight Shorts, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.**

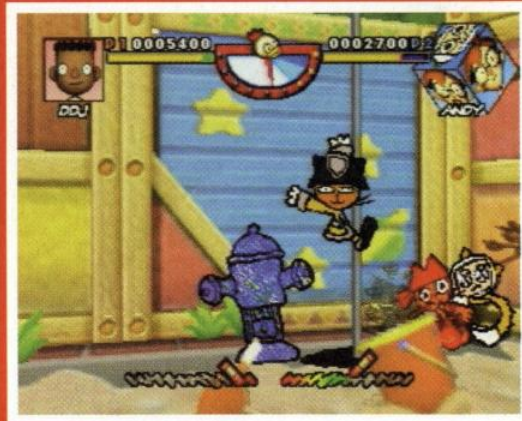
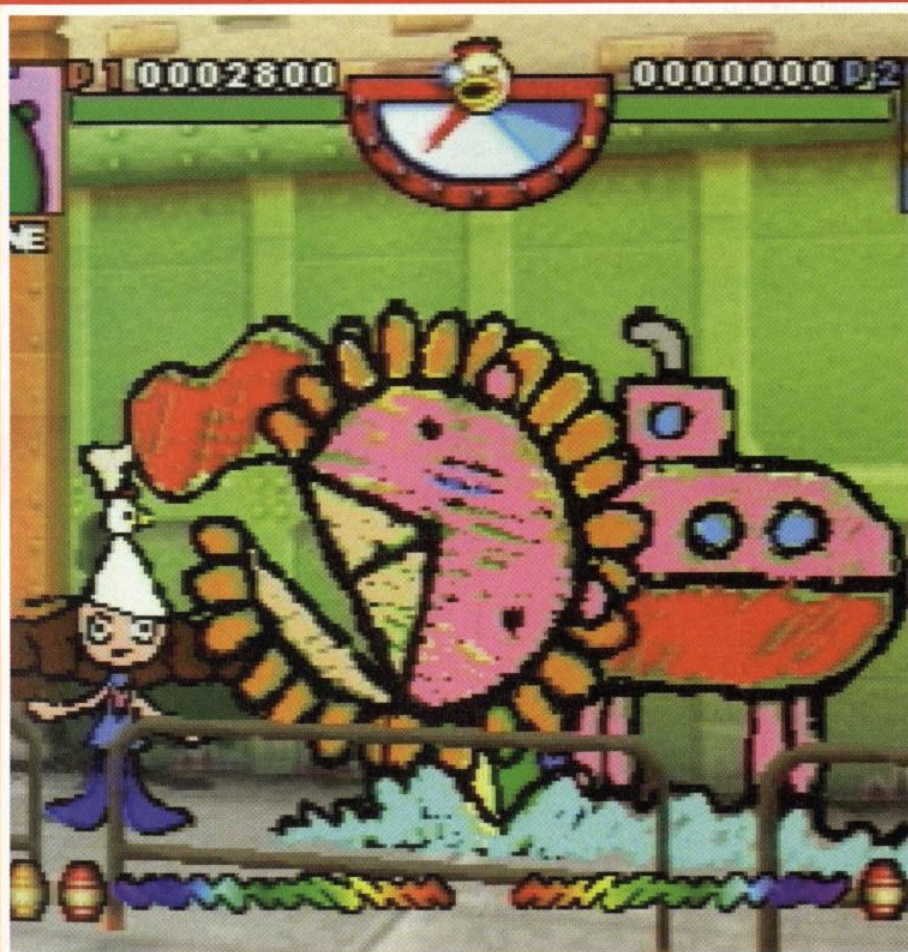


THIEVES AND GANGSTERS!

What's with this current trend in gaming which places the player in the shoes of a criminal? No heroes, no saving the world... we like it! After years of playing the do-gooder, now you can see how devious you can be... at least on your PC. Ozisoft have donated three copies of the wonderfully dark and creepy Thief the Dark Project and three copies of the streetwise Gangsters from Eidos to put up for grabs. If you'd like to steal yourself a copy, tackle this brain-stumper...

What other famous game is Eidos famous for?

Put your answer on the back of an envelope with your name and address and post it away to: **Who's Bad?, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016.**



RAKUGA KIDS

If it weren't for GT Interactive, games as cool as Rakuga Kids wouldn't see the light of day outside of Japan. So when you enter this comp and score yourself a copy for your Nintendo 64, look up to the heavens and say "Thankyou GT!". Then proceed to beat the crap out of silly looking 2D animals. It's great! To be in with a chance to win one of two copies, answer us this question...

Name another Konami game.

Put your answer on the back of an envelope with your name and address, and post it off to: **Rakuga Comp, Hyper, 78 Renwick St, Redfern, NSW 2016. Kapow!**

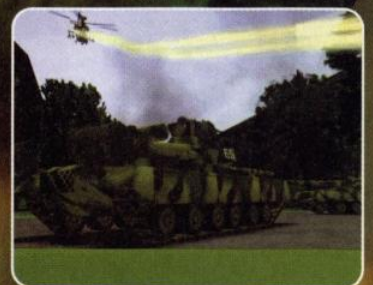
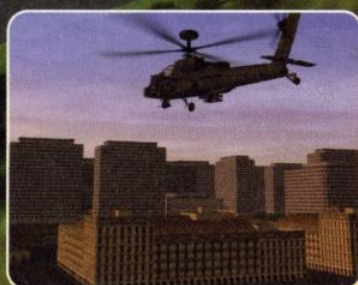
ENEMY
ENGAGED


APACHE

HAVOC



PC CD-ROM
WINDOWS® 95 & 98





**“The best
helicopter simulation
in the world...
ever.”**

91% – PC Gamer UK

APOCALYPSE RIGHT NOW!

East Meets West in an apocalyptic clash of the Superpowers as the US Apache Longbow and the Russian Havoc go head to head in the most incredible helicopter sim ever seen on a PC. But it's not just supermodel looks that makes 'Enemy Engaged – Apache Havoc' stand out from the crowd; easily accessible yet deeply challenging gameplay, an intense and absorbing atmosphere and super-fast speeds also make it the flying experience of a lifetime.

THE ULTIMATE POWER STRUGGLE.

THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING MACHINES.

OFFICE OF FILM AND LITERATURE CLASSIFICATION



Wireplay
The games network from BT

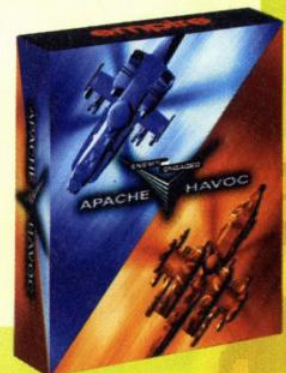
Exclusively distributed by



www.metrogames.com.au

empire[®]
INTERACTIVE

www.empireflight.com



ALL GRAPHICS FEATURED IN THIS ADVERTISEMENT COURTESY OF REAL IN-GAME FOOTAGE



detail of your level is now far easier, with the ability to rotate and zoom around your level to keep tabs on the action. New monsters and heroes will be available to play with, such as the Dark Elf (nimble, good with a bow), the Maiden (half-spider half-woman), the Mistress (torture queen from hell), Black Knight (good close combat fighter, and expert in the Chaos Arts) and a variety of other classic monsters keen to do your evil bidding and put those do-gooders to sleep for good.

Combat has had many improvements, with units now requiring a "space" on the map to be placed, so you can no longer dump a trillion units in a hallway and observe the following carnage in utter confusion. If you can imagine an invisible grid system, then you'd have an idea of how unit placement works - creatures will even block the path of your other units, preventing them from performing their tasks. Other new features include a Casino, where you can get your evil minions to lose all their paycheques back to you, and torture rooms allowing all sorts of new weird and wonderful ways to make life a misery for your captured heroes. You'll also be able to set a number of new traps around your gloomy joint, such as arrow-firing sentry points and floor triggers which activate deadly magic or horrific bladed instruments of pain. Speaking of magic, the spell system has also had an overhaul and you will now be required to use mana rather than spend gold when using magic. Bullfrog have added internet play to the multiplayer options also, so maybe we'll all be meeting in some dank dungeon sometime next year...

Dungeon Keeper 2

PC/PLAYSTATION

AVAILABLE: MARCH

CATEGORY: RTS

PLAYERS: 1-16 (1-2 PSX)

PUBLISHER: BULLFROG



Dungeon Keeper from Bullfrog was an almost-classic, hindered by some unfortunate flaws which have hopefully been surgically altered in the upcoming sequel, Dungeon Keeper 2. Probably the most important change to the game is a visual one, in terms of an evolution from 2D to 3D polygonal characters. Bullfrog have added 3D acceleration and Dungeon Keeper 2 will feature a first-person perspective as an option. With all the monsters and dungeons in the game existing in true 3D, the game not only looks prettier, but it means you have greater control over your environment. Observing every little





RULE 85a

'All drivers entered in the championship will be weighed, wearing their complete racing apparel.'

FIA Sporting regulations.

Formula One '98 Rules. OFFICIAL.





Running Wild

PLAYSTATION

AVAILABLE: FEBRUARY

CATEGORY: RACING

PLAYERS: 1-4

PUBLISHER: UNIVERSAL



A novel concept if ever there was one. Running Wild takes a bunch of animals, gives them human limbs and then pits them against each other in a foot race across a variety of different tracks. Even though you're racing on foot, the speed and "feel" of the game is reminiscent of the hoverboard racing in Streak. Tight corners, tunnels, jumps, city streets and icy caverns - this is no 100 yard dash. Besides running, your animal can jump to either avoid treacherous obstacles or grab hovering pickups which can give you a slight advantage. There doesn't seem to be anything remarkably original about Running Wild, other than the fact that your characters have to run. Most of the elements in the game can be found in a number of previously successful racing games - the boost arrows on the track for instance are straight out of Wipeout and Diddy Kong Racing. Visually, the game is nothing amazing, but it is fast and seems to run at a constant 60 frames per second which is good. Up to four players can go head-to-head at once in a split-screen mode, but the visuals do slow down slightly when displaying so much at once. All the animals have their own unique characteristics, funny yelps, grunts and hollers and whacky animations. Hopefully the gameplay will be tightened up a tad before the final release.



Heroes of Might and Magic III

PC

AVAILABLE: MARCH

CATEGORY: STRATEGY

PLAYERS: 1-MULTI

PUBLISHER: 3DO



The Heroes of Might and Magic strategy series seems to have made a greater impact on gamers than the original Might and Magic RPGs ever did. Though the RPG series is actually hitting number seven soon, the humble little

third sequel in the HOMM series is shaping up to be one of this year's killer fantasy titles. This time around, HOMM3 will feature a number of improvements over it's previous incarnations as well as a few adjustments to bring it in line with the evolution of the RPG series. For instance, like

the magic system in M&M6, spells will now be divided into their specific elemental schools - earth, air, fire and water - and the game even kicks off with Catherine (the wife of King Roland in M&M6) arriving in Erathia. As the game is sub-titled "The Restoration of Erathia", you can imagine that some pretty evil stuff has been going down in the kingdom, and you'd be right... so out roll the heroes to try and bring peace to the land once again. Heroes will be able to develop up to 26 skills, but will also be encumbered by their items and thus perform differently in battle, depending on what they are equipped with. Sounds like hours of fun character tweaking there...

Plenty of new units and town types will also be available, with each new unit having a specific unique characteristic and each town allowing you to build certain warrior and wizard units. The animation and visual detail is vastly improved over it's predecessors, however HOMM3 will remain turn-based, which will actually please most fans of the series. Long-winded, drawn-out, anally-retentive wars are what the Heroes of Might and Magic series does best! I know a few people who are stockpiling their canned food already.



and far between than the original. However, the car handling has been tightened up and an all-new stunt mode has been included to make up for the slightly more realistic racing engine. There are still crazy shortcuts, hidden areas and "unique" ways to get around a track, but there definitely seems to be a bit more focus on racing rather than exploring.

Rush 2 looks set to offer enough options, though, to keep you gaming on it for months. There should be so many new cars (all with different pros and cons), a bundle of new maps (as well as some classic San Francisco Rush tracks that have been updated), and some new gameplay modes, to make it still one of the best racing games available for the system. Besides the aforementioned stunt mode, where you can take on a human opponent in a test of acrobatic driving, there are also plenty of secrets to be unlocked in Rush 2 to keep you coming back for more. Mountain Dew cans are hidden throughout a series of maps, and finding them will unlock cheats, cars and tracks, ensuring decent longevity to the game. Strangely, the visuals don't really seem to be a great improvement over San Francisco Rush which seems to be a bit of a shame. Most importantly though, the gameplay rules. Review soon.



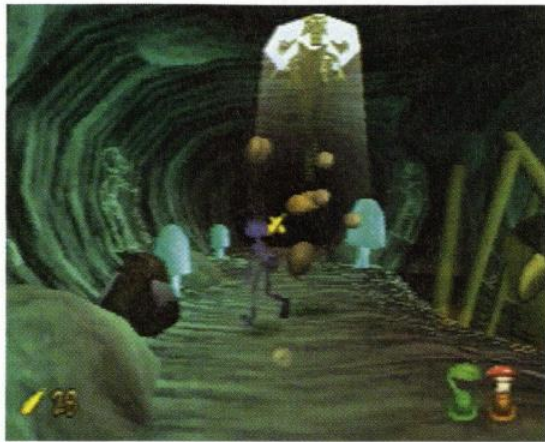
San Francisco Rush 2

NINTENDO 64

AVAILABLE: FEBRUARY
 CATEGORY: RACING
 PLAYERS: 1-2
 PUBLISHER: MIDWAY



The first San Francisco Rush game on the Nintendo 64 was an unexpected delight, so hopes have been high for Rush 2 to take us even higher. Everyone loved the original's utter disregard for realistic physics, with jumps designed to take you all the way to the moon, yet still land in time to win the race. Well, what we've discovered with Rush 2, is that the opportunities to pull off mad jumps and barrel rolls seem to be a tad fewer



A Bug's Life

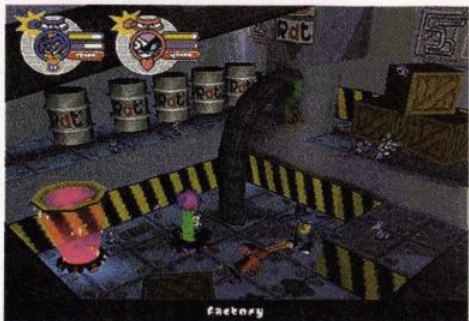
PLAYSTATION

AVAILABLE: FEBRUARY
CATEGORY: PLATFORMER
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: DISNEY

WOW-O-METER

Yes, it's another Disney movie-to-game conversion, following in the pretty big shoes of Aladdin and Hercules - two spectacular 2D platformers. A Bug's Life is a 3D platforming action game though, as opposed to a 2D scrolling-fest, and to Disney's credit, they've created a pretty good 3D environment. The graphics are colourful, smooth and the animation is pretty silky, but everything is very big and chunky on screen, so maybe this is one for younger gamers. Jumping on mushrooms and dodging insects doesn't provide much challenge, but this is pretty good for what it is - a cute easy plat-

former. The controls are responsive, feel relatively glitch-free and the action is pretty tried-and-true platforming fare. The camera angles surprisingly never really annoy, and you can lock it in place if you so desire, so exploring the landscape is more fun than frustrating. The levels look pretty interesting on the whole too, with plenty of bits from the film in there to surprise you. All the FMV in the game seems to be taken directly from the feature film, so fans of A Bug's Life can spooge over the computer graphics. A Bug's Life, the game, is showing promise, and should be a wholesome little platformer.



Rat Attack

NINTENDO 64/PLAYSTATION

AVAILABLE: FEBRUARY
CATEGORY: ACTION
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: MINDSCAPE

WOW-O-METER

Not much is known about this odd game, but one thing is for sure, Rat Attack looks cool! With some great character art, music and design, there's plenty of style here regardless, and it wins points immediately just for being funky and making us smile. This is a good old action game, with some tricky elements to get you thinking. You play one of eight different types of cat and your mission is to rid the world of rats! Either claw, bite or utilise a variety of traps and weapons to put an end to those flithy little beasts. Choose to play as cats such as Smokey (good with gadgets), Pearl (cat on skates), Hai Jinx (a kung-fu cat) or Manx (deadly claws) just to name a few. Each level is a colourful 3D collection of obstacles, which you must negotiate whilst attempting to catch all the rats. These little rodents don't just run from you the whole time, some of them are actually quite aggressive. If you're not careful, you may find yourself falling prey to a rat trap, or even the nasty local dog who may get alerted by the rats. The gameplay is viewed from an overhead perspective, so you can get a good view of various items, rats, traps and the all-important action. It looks like someone at Pure Entertainment has been inspired by Itchy and Scratchy, because Rat Attack is a furbal of laughs. Looking forward to the final version.



Trap Gunner

PLAYSTATION

AVAILABLE: MARCH
CATEGORY: ACTION
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: KONAMI



Here's something to pull at the heart strings of any of you old enough to remember playing Spy Vs Spy on your Commodore 64. Trap Gunner shares more than a few similarities to the old classic one-on-one action in Spy Vs Spy, with two-players going head to head in splitscreen in a variety of arenas. Running around the grid, your main aim is to simply kill your opponent by laying a variety of sneaky traps which are invisible to them. There is a function which allows you to "see" if there are traps near you, but you must stop moving to do this which gives your opponent more time to boobytrap the arena. Various powerups appear around the joint too, to tempt you into certain areas, so a clever deployment of your traps is essential. The characters you can choose from excel with different traps



and items, so there's longevity here much like a fighting game. In fact, if you bump into your opponent whilst sneaking around the map, you can shoot at them with a weapon or try kicking them in the head to slow their progress! One player may play against the CPU, but it's no match for the hilarity of a bitchy one on one game of Trap Gunner. The options allow you to play variations on the main theme, but essentially this is Spy Vs Spy for the '90s.



Rollercoaster Tycoon

PC

AVAILABLE: TBA
CATEGORY: SIM
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: MICROPROSE



The designer behind Transport Tycoon, Chris Sawyer, has moved on to some less-than-serious ideas, with this upcoming theme park sim. It's tempting to criticise Rollercoaster Tycoon for appearing to be a complete rip off of Theme Park by Bullfrog... but cynicism aside, Rollercoaster Tycoon seems to focus more on the actual designing of cool, crazy rollercoasters rather than the running of a business. Creating your own custom theme park, and maintaining it is still an aspect of the game, but creating successful rides which pull in money is the main objective. Whilst there will still be managerial duties of sorts, the game engine allows for realistic physics to occur with your sick and twisted creations. If you're not careful, though, you'll just end up killing all your customers. Like Theme Park, you'll find your patrons wandering around the park and complaining of thirst or ride prices, so clever planning will pay off over a mad rush of creativity. You'll go from small loops to huge sprawling masterpieces which duck in and out of trees and plunge through tunnels. As long as Rollercoaster Tycoon can offer some original twists to the Theme Park concept, this could be an addictive treat. Still in development, Rollercoaster Tycoon should be out sometime this year.



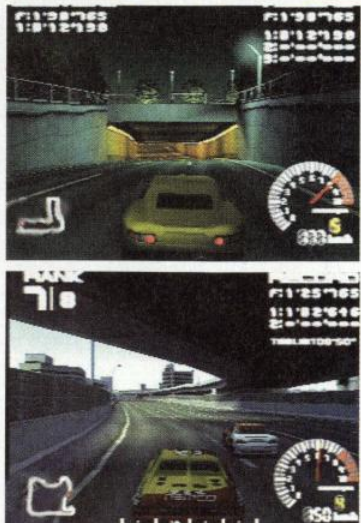
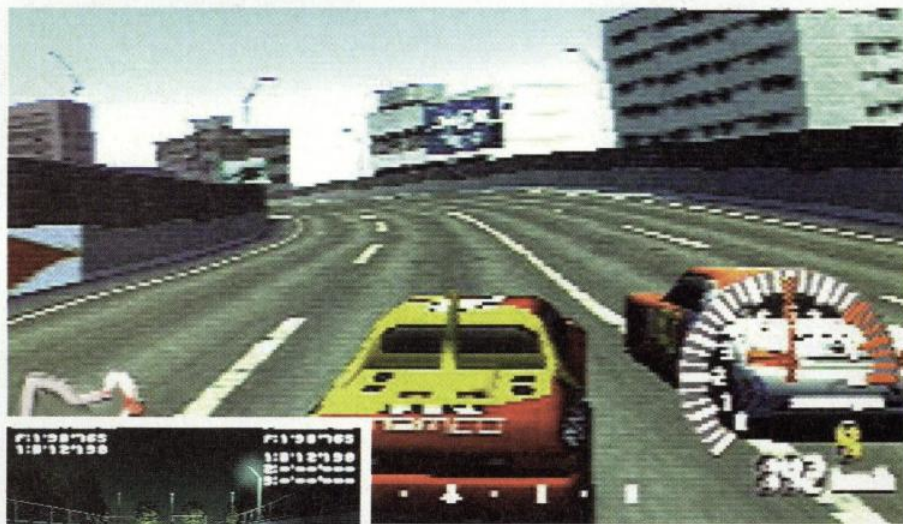
Rollcage

PLAYSTATION/PC

AVAILABLE: APRIL
 CATEGORY: RACING
 PLAYERS: 1-2 (1-6 PC)
 PUBLISHER: PSYGNOSIS



We'll never forget that Psygnosis brought the world WipeOut, so the mention of a new multiplayer racing game from the same publishers got us a little excited. The similarities to WipeOut don't end with the publisher's name though, as Rollcage is one adrenalin pumping racing experience. On the PlayStation, Rollcage is a blast in the two-player split-screen mode, with each player controlling a remote controlled vehicle which can not only go anywhere in the environment, but race up the sides of walls and even across ceilings! The action is fast and furious, with weapons and the vehicles themselves causing all sorts of incredible carnage and all at a blisteringly fast pace. The four environments - Harpoon Island, Sapphire Spring, Outworld and Neoto City all look very pretty and are loaded with scenery for you to destroy on your way to victory. If you're not the social type, Rollcage can be played single-player over eleven tracks, but you really want to go make some friends to really enjoy what this game has to offer. The PC version will allow a mad four-player split-screen game, and up to six over the net or LAN. Did we mention the cool soundtrack? Wig out to Fat Boy Slim! Yeah, it's all there. Rollcage has the potential to inspire another generation of racing games, so we're look forward to a reviewable version in a big way...



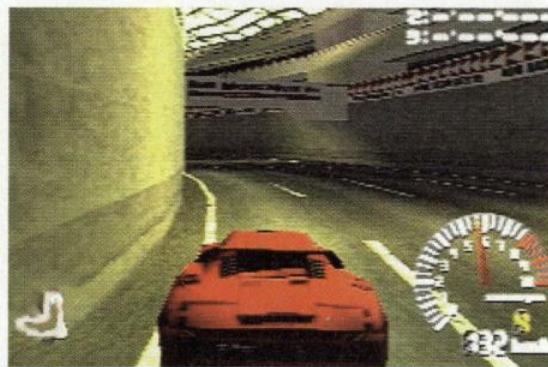
Ridge Racer Type 4

PLAYSTATION

AVAILABLE: TBA
 CATEGORY: RACING
 PLAYERS: 1-2 (1-4 LINK CABLE)
 PUBLISHER: NAMCO



Currently selling like proverbial hotcakes in Japan, Ridge Racer Type 4 will soon zoom into Aussie PlayStations, and the wait will be more than worth it. This is easily going to be the best Ridge Racer title, and it could possibly turn out to be one of the best PlayStation arcade racers ever. The greatest criticism of Ridge Racer used to always be the fact



that the distinct lack of tracks to race on killed any true longevity to the gameplay... well Ridge Racer Type 4 is a step in the right direction with 4 different tracks, each with their own variations and all playable in a mirror mode as a bonus (so you could look at the game as having 8 tracks). The number of cars which are unlockable is quite incredible, with some saying there are upwards of 300 different cars to find in the game... though not every one is unique, some just being minor variations. The physics and handling in Ridge Racer Type 4 have been noticeably improved upon over it's predecessors, with more realistic collisions and slightly less arcade overtones. Ridge Racer Type 4 should be the most demanding of the series, and ultimately the most enjoyable to play. With two PlayStations and two TVs, you can link up for a huge four-player race, or stick to the two-player split-screen if that's too much hassle. Visually, Ridge Racer Type 4 is stunning, with all the cars looking damn solid, and a bunch of tasty lighting effects giving the game that over-all polish. Played with Namco's fancy new controller, the JogCon, Ridge Racer Type 4 is going to be hot.

UPCOMING RELEASES

The complete guide to what's coming out over the next couple of months here in Australia



Trap Gunner



Bloodlines



X-Games Pro Boarders

★ Hot stuff on the way...

PC

FEBRUARY

- Aliens Versus Predator
- Battle of Britain
- Championship Manager 3
- Civilization: Call to Power
- Cricket World Cup
- Daikatana ★
- East Front 2
- Interstate '82 ★
- Jow Blow
- Nascar '99
- North Vs South
- Redline
- Sin Mission Pack 1
- Superbikes
- SW England
- Tank Spanker
- Ultima Ascension ★

- Alien Resurrection
- Blood Lines
- Civilization 2
- Deep Blue
- Eliminator
- Global Domination
- Granstream Saga ★
- Joe Blow
- Monkey Hero
- Quake 2
- Rainbow Six
- Rollerball
- Running Wild
- Thrust, Twist & Turn
- Tiny Tank
- Trap Gunner
- X-Games Pro Boarders

N64

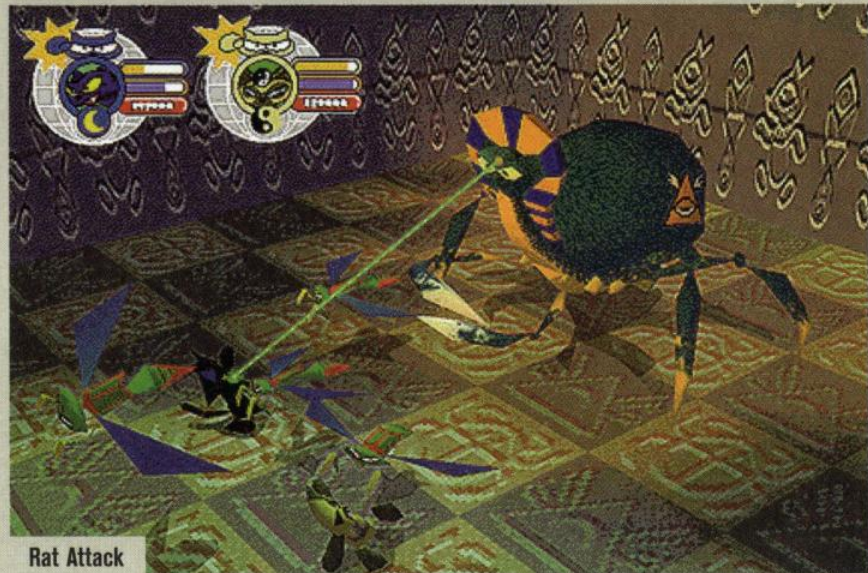
FEBRUARY

- Gex 64
- Quake 2
- Rat Attack
- San Francisco Rush 2 ★
- Superman 64

PlayStation

FEBRUARY

- A Bug's Life



Rat Attack



A Bug's Life

GAMESTER RUMBLE FORCE WHEEL

Nintendo 64

Type: Steering Wheel

Distributor: LiveWire

R.R.P.: \$149.95

Gamester have been churning out the peripherals lately, and the latest addition to their catalog is the G64 Steering Wheel and foot pedals with "Rumble Effect". What exactly do they mean by "Rumble Effect"? Well, it's more of a Rumble Pak effect in the wheel as opposed to actual force feedback, so any racing game which dishes out Rumble Pak support will provide the wheel with some kickback. Wheels which aren't a complete circle are generally less preferable, but the G64 feels fairly solid and the tension feels good. The wheel itself is just plastic, but it's fairly comfortable to hold. The pedals are combined analogue and digital, meaning the accelerator works in analogue mode, but the brake is simply on or off. Plenty of buttons are on the wheel, and there's a gear shift pad for your right hand, all within comfortable distance whilst driving. One drawback however, is that inserting a Memory Pak to save your progress disables the Rumble Pak in the wheel, so you can't play a racing game with the Memory Pak inserted. Having to pull the pak in and out of the wheel is no big deal, but a slight hassle. Also, the D-pad on the wheel is sloppy and useless, but you probably won't need to use that anyway. Both the wheel and pedals feel nice and solid, with enough tension to ensure a long life of hardcore racing. Worth investigation.

EF



THRUSTMASTER SHOCKHAMMER



PlayStation

Type: Dual Shock compatible controller

Distributor:

Playcorp

RRP: TBA

Now here's a surprise!

Thrustmaster, long regarded as one of the leaders in PC gaming peripheral development have turned their attention towards the console scene and have started creating a range of controllers to suit.

Thrustmaster's clone of the Sony Dual shock is perhaps the most original of the clones thus far, but is it the best? Let's take a look at the Shockhammer feature by feature. The two analogue pads are

excellent, being a little more firm than the others on the market. This will help to give more accurate control and smoother analogue control and response. On top of that, Thrustmaster seem to have defeated the problem of having the analogue pads being too easy to press in. Now this will only happen when you intend to do it.

The fire buttons are quite average compared to the analogue pad., being quite high, which never feels good. The shoulder buttons feel quite b-grade really, possibly the worst on a PlayStation pad available thus far, which is really unlike Thrustmaster. The digital pad is also nothing special, although it's a little less taxing to use than the Sony D-pads.

The Shockhammer does come with turbo and slow buttons as well, which may appeal to the odd shootem up player out there.

What it is going to come down to in the end as to whether or not this controller will be good value is the price. This is still being negotiated by the distributor Thrustmaster.

Yes, the Shockhammer is a pretty good Dual Shock pad, but unless it is competitively priced, it's not going to be a contender.

BT

Buyers Guide

	Item	RRP	Notes
PSX			
Memory Card	Memory Card 2MEG	\$29.95	It costs the same as the Sony card, but stores twice as much.
	Nyko Memory Card x 8	\$49.95	A better buy for those that don't think 120 save game slots is enough at any one time.
Digital Controller	Std Sony Controller	\$29.95	It's certainly not the cheapest, but it has the best feel and reliability.
Analogue Controller	Sony Dual Shock	\$59.95	Great analogue control with a rumble effect. Widely supported now.
Arcade Stick	Namco Arcade Stick	\$49.95	Solid as all hell, really authentic sensitive arcade button, and a stick that's perfect for whipping out fireballs. Hado-Ken!
Steering Wheel	Gamester Dual Force	\$169.95	One of the more expensive wheels, but is solid and has Dual Shock support.
PC			
3D Accelerator	Maxi Gamer Pheonix	\$299	Better performance than Voodoo 1 cards. The best cheap option to get 3D.
	Diamond Monster 3D II	\$399	The top end of the "affordable" 3D accelerators. Best results require a Pentium2, but P1 users will still benefit.
Sound Card	Professional Sound	\$89.95	It's PCI does SB support, 3D Direct sound, and is dirt cheap!
Video Card	ET6100	\$99.95	The best value buy for those who own, or who plan to own a dedicated 3D accelerator
	Maxi Gamer Pheonix	\$299	A 2D/3D card in one. The best value card for those who want some 3D acceleration, and don't have a PII-300 or better. Great 2D performance.
Flightstick	Thrustmaster X-Fighter	\$150	Sure, there's no throttle, but this stick feels great, and will last you for yonks.
	Microsoft Force Feedback-Pro	\$269.95	The most comfortable of the PC Force Feedback joysticks available at the moment.
Gamepad	Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad	\$79.95	Love em or hate em, Microsoft make great peripherals, and this is no exception
Mouse	Microsoft Wheel Mouse	\$59.95	Works as a three button mouse, and the middle button allows window scrolling.
N64			
Memory Pak	Nyko Hyper Pak	\$59.95	Four times the normal memory storage AND variable Rumble settings. The all in one "Pak"
	Memory 64 DLX	\$29.95	Not only does it have four times the standard memory, but it's only \$5 more expensive than the standard Pak!
Rumble Pak	Gamester Tremor Pak	\$24.95	This rumble pak DOESN'T need batteries, making it excellent value.
	Tremor Pak Performance	\$19.95	Two rumble modes, with the strongest being REAL strong. Great for those wanting to put it into a wheel.
Gampad	Mako Pad 64	\$59.95	Expensive, but its design allows you to hold the controller and press every button without moving your hands.
	Docs Controller	\$39.95	\$10 cheaper than the Nintendo standard. Feels better, and comes with auto-fire and slow as well.
Racing Wheel	V3 Racing Wheel 64	\$149.95	Gears on the wheel, really sturdy, great feel, and configurable buttons. Also allows for Rumble Pak.
	Mad Catz	\$129.95	Cheapest of the actual wheel controllers, includes a gear stick, and built in Rumble Pak. Not amazingly sturdy though.



Dreams do come true

Those who counted Sega out of the next generation console battle had better think again as Dreamcast has finally launched in Japan, and it rocks! Thanks to some dedicated staff traveling to Japan to buy the machine, we have now had a hands on experience with Sega's 128 bit super console, and take this opportunity to enlighten the gamers of Australia.

dreamcast

the dreamcast unit

No doubt some gamers are bitter over the lack of support for Sega's 32 bit Saturn, which despite its apparent lack of hardware processing power, still had some rock solid games in the form of Virtua Fighter 2, Sega Rally and Virtua Cop. No doubt those individuals will be even more angered to hear that Sega have all but dropped production of the Saturn and its software, but this was done for one very good reason: the Dreamcast.

Labelled as the console that can 'cast your dreams in front of you on TV', the Dreamcast, upon initial inspection, certainly does that.

Measuring a miniature 20x20 cm, the Dreamcast is a small, compact unit that doesn't look half as beefy and powerful as either the Playstation or Saturn. Still, the advances in graphics have allowed Sega to fill the Dreamcast with a relatively small number of hardware chips; 3 in fact, which is a stark contrast to the Saturn's 9 or so. These chips (the Hitachi Sh-4, the NEC Power VR 2 graphics chip and the Yamaha 32 bit sound chip), are in fact much more powerful than the latest PC hardware available (much to the dismay and anger of Dan Toose and Steve O'Leary, who have spent thousands of dollars on their own PCs). Boasting 16 Mb of main ram, 8 Mb of video ram (used to draw the machine's high res graphics) and 2 Mb of sound ram, the Dreamcast represents a huge leap in gaming technology for the home and can calculate approximately 3 million polygons per second with a multitude of next-generation graphical effects. These effects include transparency, lighting, bump mapping (the ability

to make flat polygons appear 'bumpy' or undulated), and full screen anti aliasing (which smooths out the visuals, removing any jagged to rough edges on surfaces in the 3D world). This hardware allows the Dreamcast to display a minimum resolution of 640x480 pixels on screen, which means that the games look incredibly high-res and very detailed. Furthermore, all three games that Hyper managed to get their hands on run at a solid 60 frames per second, even when the 4 player split screen mode was used in Pen Pen. There were brief moments of slowdown in the games at times.

The unit comes with 4 joystick ports which will allow 4 players to compete in any of the latest racing, fighting or sports games. DC also has a Universal Serial Bus port (similar to the port that PC support) which will allow two or even more DCs to be linked together for heavenly multiplayer gaming. Eight player Sega Rally 2 anyone?

The one thing we're uncertain about is the modem, which, whilst built into the Japanese Dreamcast, looks very much like a readily removable component of the machine, so that it would be easy to manufacture a "plate" to put there in place of the modem if there was going to be a country/format that was not going to include a modem. Hopefully we won't be governed by the European market (PAL), as while Australia is a very Internet intensive country, England is not, due to their timed local calls, which make it too expensive for most. Fingers crossed!



the dreamcast gamepad

DC controller pad resembles the Nights pad (analogue pad) for the Saturn. With four buttons on the pad's face and another two (triggers) on the front left and right, it is very comfortable to hold and the analogue stick is quite solid and offers a higher degree of movement than the N64 or Sony's analogue pads offer. The two trigger buttons are also analogue in control, meaning the further you push them the faster your car, boat or whatever accelerates, moves etc. This will be especially useful in driving games as it will enable variable rates of speed and braking for the driver.

Playing Pen-Pen felt very intuitive and natural with the analogue controller immediately, so at this stage the Dreamcast controller is getting a big thumbs up for racing games, and analogue control in general.

The only obvious downfall with the pad is that it could have had six buttons on top instead of just four. This relative lack of buttons makes

Streetfighter-type games just a little bit harder to play with. Considering the Saturn pad was better than the PlayStation pad, it does seem a strange move by Sega, considering the popularity of fighting games in Japan.

At this stage there's news that the controllers will also be available in red, blue, yellow, and the grey colour which you can see in the images here.

The controller has a "docking bay" for two VMS units, which could suggest that there's the possibility of games that use a HEAP of save game space, or that this just enables you to copy things from one VMS to another, without having to interrupt anything.

We will soon have a Dreamcast Arcade stick to check out, which we noted has six buttons, laid out in a very "Street Fighter" pattern. This will no doubt help satisfy the fighting game nuts (like us).

the VMS unit

When we first saw memory cards on the PlayStation, it seemed pretty funky to be able to take a bunch of save games to plug into a PlayStation wherever you go. Sega have really taken the whole idea another step further. The LCD screen not only displays information on what save files you have stored on the Dreamcast, it also keeps the time and date for you, and during games it displays special graphics and information.

This will be particularly useful for multiplayer games where you want to make decisions without your opponent seeing (like which play your team is going to use in a NFL game for example).

In Japan a special Godzilla VMS is available to co-incide with the game, where you can take two VMS units and join them to battle monsters against one another.

Whilst being able to plug two of these things together is awesome, you're going to want pretty tiny hands to be able to have any sort of head to head game going on this way.



Hyper crew's verdict

The reactions to the Dreamcast here at Next were a little mixed, everyone thought Virtua Fighter 3 was great, but since this was expected, a couple of people here were a little, "I want to see more". Here's the honest opinions of those that gave the Dreamcast a good going over here in the Next Gaming department.

Dan's Opinion:

Virtua Fighter 3 has helped show just how stupidly powerful this machine is. There's no big secret that I'm primarily a PC gamer, and that really just comes down to having expensive hardware that lets me (and developers) get super smooth hi-res graphics, and having networked gameplay both on LAN and the Internet. Put simply, PC games running on the top of the line hardware are simply better looking than anything on console... Till the Dreamcast.

Virtua Fighter 3b delivers more convincing 3D environments than I've seen in any game so far on ANY system, and this is the first game released, so we can only expect things to go from jaw droppingly good to unbelievable if Sega can continue to deliver this sort of quality in their titles, and the other developers out there can also come up with the goods. With Virtual On 2, Quake 3, Blue Stinger, Grandia 2, Climax Landers, and Sonic Adventures being just a few of the upcoming titles, I don't think the Dreamcast will disappoint.

Kevin's opinion:

Kevin wasn't here to give his opinion... He was off to Japan to buy a Dreamcast... seriously.

Eliot's opinion

It looks like a small PlayStation! The positioning of the power and open buttons, disc drive lid... it all seems familiar. Interesting marketing move, Sega. In the few brief seconds I managed to keep my eyes on the hardware and not on the amazing game on the TV screen, I admired the Dreamcast's compact size and comfortable controllers. However, the lack of six buttons really bugs me. Sure we will be able to buy arcade sticks and the like, but damn Sega, why couldn't you have just "got it right"? Everyone loves fighting games, and four buttons just isn't enough. Anyhow, my time spent with Virtua Fighter 3b was rather special. It looks stunning. However, I was surprised that it didn't blow me away. Visually, it looks like a logical progression for a console - getting on par with 3D accelerated PC graphics. Sure it's churning out graphics more reliably than current PII 450s, but I didn't expect any less. Impressive, but not anything mind-blowing. We'll see what future software brings...

Steve O'Leary's opinion: (N64 Gamer - Editor)

As an overall gaming system, the Dreamcast is bloody darn fantastic. Considering that the DC uses a similar CPU to the Saturn (only about 40 times more powerful), the DC's second generation software is expected to be much better than the already incredible Virtua Fighter 3 (given that the Saturn's second generation software was way better than the launch titles the machine was released with). If Sega decide to release the unit with the modem intact in Australia they will definitely be at the next step of video gaming. It's certainly interesting to see Sega finally get it right in terms of hardware, but it'll be even more interesting to see what Sony, and Nintendo especially, have waiting in the wings for their respective launches in the near future.

Malcolm Campbell's opinion: (Art Director of PC Powerplay and avid console head)

After putting down the diminutive control pad, I would have to say my first Dreamcast experience was exciting, but a little anti-climactic. Here is VF3 - a benchmark in the arcades for both graphics and gameplay - reproduced exactly on the small screen. It hammers home the power of the little white box, and how far ahead it is of the current pack. I can't wait to see Sonic Adventures, Climax Landers & Virtual On 2.

On the other hand, here's VF3 - a game everyone's played a thousand times in the arcades a year ago - reproduced exactly with no new features, extra characters or even a versus mode. Added to that, I got a cramp in my hand from the tiny buttons, and the less said about Godzilla Generations the better.

Virtua Fighter 3tb

Special Preview | Dreamcast
Available: TBA | Players: 1-2 | Publisher: Sega

It's not too often we're hanging for the release of an arcade machine, but back when Virtua Fighter 3 was about to hit our shores, the Hyper crew were in a frenzy. In fact a group of us had a VERY extended lunch to go check it out the day it came in, and to this day it has impressed us like no other fighting game has. A common comment at the time was, "This will never come out on console... not arcade perfect anyway". Well just to make us eat our words, Sega have an arcade perfect (well almost) conversion of Virtua Fighter 3 team battle.

In terms of visuals, this game leaves everything before it for dead. The detail in the texturing, backgrounds and modelling is unsurpassed. Birds fly around in outdoor settings. Leaves on the ground are brushed aside as the fighters step next to them. Water laps up onto the sandy beach of a small island, leaving wet sand as it recedes again. Footprints are left in the dry dusty sand of the desert as the fighters move around. Sparks light up the players with true light sourcing.

All of this happens in 640 x 480 hi resolution, with no interlacing or flickering, with full screen anti-aliasing... At 60 frames per second. The overall result is quite staggering. If you really want to show off the power of the Dreamcast, you can change views (on the fly) to either first person mode, or a distant overhead view.

Each character is beautifully animated including their hair and clothing, and they even adjust their stances according to the ground they are standing on. So they could have one foot on one step, and one foot on another.

The sound is arcade perfect, which is good, but perhaps could have been upgraded a bit for the Dreamcast, since it could certainly produce better sound and music than the Model 3 board.

On a further note of faithful arcade translation, perhaps Sega could have gone a little further and introduced a versus mode. You can play two player games, but it's JUST like the arcade, where one player challenges the other, and the player who was already playing can't change their character, which is quite annoying. There is however a team battle mode, which is just like the special tb version of the arcade game, and there is also a practice mode, although it is not really up to scratch with the usual, with no move lists included.

For those unfamiliar with the Virtua Fighter series, the game is a 3D fighting game which uses a guard, punch, kick and dodge button to allow the player to do a variety of moves which vary from character to character. The game features not only 3D movement with the dodge button, but also true 3D environments, with varying terrain that actually effects gameplay. If you're on higher ground and you try a high kick at your opponent, then it will probably go over their head. Characters even react to things such as nearby walls while fighting, so if you were to throw your opponent whilst pressed against a wall, the character may use the wall as part of the move by ramming their opponent's head into the wall or using it to spring off and do extra damage.

In terms of a fighting model, Virtua Fighter 3tb is perhaps without equal, going to detail that even includes foot stance. For example, some moves come out differently depending which foot you are leading with, and some moves work at different ranges depending on your feet relative to your opponent's. Put simply, it's extremely deep and complex, meaning that true mastery of the game will take a long time. Despite the occasional moronic review that has popped up on the Internet, Virtua Fighter 3 is not a button masher's game at all.

Now why did we say almost perfect? Well, there are two minor differences. One being that shadows cast onto a sloped surface break up into strips of different elevations, which whilst not a major problem or anything, does raise the question as to whether or not this is just a one off problem, or if it's something the Dreamcast cant do that the Model 3 board could... we suspect the former.

The other difference would require you to be a Virtua Fighter 3 fanatic to notice, but there is a slightly lower polygon count on the character models.

Despite the minor flaws, Virtua Fighter 3tb is a truly outstanding game, and considering the amount of time to a PAL release, there's every chance that these flaws may be remedied (especially the lack of versus mode) by the time we do a review later this year.



Pen Pen Triathlon

Category: Racing

Players: 1-4

Publisher: General Entertainment

No doubt the success of games like Mario Kart have given someone the idea to work on a "cute" racing game for the Dreamcast, and Pen Pen Triathlon would be it. Pen Pen certainly takes a different approach to the racing genre... There's no cars... No flying... but there's plenty of waddling, swimming and sliding on your belly!

These three modes of travel are what give Pen Pen its Triathlon title. A variety of cute aquatic characters are available to choose to waddle, swim and slide your way to victory. There doesn't seem anything in the way of powerups except a few spots along the trail that have a speed boost.

This game is the only real testing ground for the analogue controller at this stage, and it felt good. The controls work on a system of hitting a button rhythmically rather than button mashing or just holding down a button to go faster.

While Pen Pen is gorgeously clear, and smooth, racing game heads may not be satisfied with the lack of genuine speed in the racing itself. Considering how very Japanese the title is, it may well not be released out here, but young gamers, or those that lap up anything cute will love Pen Pen to death.



Godzilla Generations

Category: Action

Players: 1

Publisher: Sega

Another definitive Japanese game, Godzilla Generations is quite predictably all about taking Godzilla, or Mecha-Godzilla (thus Generations), and flattening some poor unsuspecting Japanese cities.

Of the three titles we saw, Godzilla was the least inspiring. The game did show off the bump mapping capabilities of the machine, with Godzilla's scaly skin looking very cool. Effects such as the fire and lightning breath looked like the old movies, which while authentic, is quite disappointing on a machine so powerful as the Dreamcast.

It is however pretty easy to say that the only people who will get much enjoyment out of Godzilla Generations are either Godzilla freaks, or those with an extremely long attention span, because the gameplay is extremely slow and repetitive.

Like Pen Pen, we doubt we'll see Godzilla Generations getting a local release out here, but by the time the Australian launch comes around, there'll be so many more titles ready that you'd never notice Godzilla's absence.

Confirmed Japanese Releases

These titles are slated for release in Japan. At this early stage there aren't any concrete release schedules for Dreamcast games outside of Japan, although we can assume the major Japanese titles will come out here too.

Agartha - No Cliche - Action adventure
 Akihabara Denno
 Gumi Pata Pies - Sega - TBA
 Akolyte - Ionos - TBA
 Blue Stinger - Climax - Action/RPG
 Biohazard (Resident Evil) Code: Veronica - Capcom - Action adventure
 Carrier - Jaleco - Action adventure
 Chakan: The Forever Man - Sega - Action adventure
 Cho Hamaru Golf - Sega - Sports
 Climax Landers - Climax - RPG
 Cool Boarders - UEP System - Snowboarding
 Crack 2 - Sieg - TBA
 D2 - Warp - 3D adventure
 Daytona USA 2: Battle on the Edge "Special" - Sega - Racing
 Dead or Alive 2 - Tecmo - Fighting
 Digital Horse Racing Newspaper - Shouei Systems - Horse racing
 D-Jump - Ubi Soft - TBA
 Drakan - Psygnosis - Action adventure
 Dynamite Robo - Warashi - Action
 Ecco the Dolphin 3D - Appaloosa - Adventure
 Elemental Gimmick Gear - Hudson - Action RPG
 Entertainment Golf - Bottom Up - Sports
 Evolution - Sting - RPG
 Flight Shooting - Konami - Flight Sim
 Frame Gride - From Software - Mech sim
 Furballs - Bizarre Creations - Shooter
 Galleon - Confounding Factor - Action Adventure
 Geist Force - Sega - Action/shooter
 Get Bass - Sega - Fishing
 Giant Glam - Sega - Wrestling

Godzilla Generations - Sega - Action
 Grandia II - Game Arts - RPG
 Great Buggy - CSK - Racing
 Gundam - Bandai - TBA
 Gutherman - No Cliche - Racing
 Half-life - Valve/Sierra - 1st person shooter
 Harukaze Sentai V Force 2 - Bing Kids - Sim RPG
 Hiryu-no Ken Retsuden - Culture Brain - Fighting
 Hydro Thunder - Midway - Racing
 Incoming - Rage - Shooter
 July - Fortyfive - Adventure
 King of Fighters '98 Dream Match Never Ends - SNK - 2D Fighting
 Let's Make a Pro Baseball Team - Sega - Sports management
 Let's Make a Pro Soccer Club - Sega - Sports management
 Looney Toons - Infogrames - Racing
 The Lost World: Jurassic Park - Sega - Action
 Maku X - Atlus - 3rd person adventure
 Mar Jong - Kaga Tech/Naxat Soft - Mah Jong
 MDK 2 - Interplay - Action/Shooter
 Merukuriusu Pretty - NEC - RPG
 Messiah - Interplay - Action/Shooter
 Metropolis - Bizarre Creations - Racing
 Mortal Kombat 4 "Special" - Midway - Fighting
 Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation - Ubi Soft - Racing
 NBA Action 2000 - Sega - Sports
 NFL Blitz '99 - Midway - Sports
 Nijiro Tenshi - Sega
 Monster Breed - Sega - Tamagotchi/VMS
 Ohzumo - Bottom Up - Sumo Wrestling

Pen Pen Triathlon - General Entertainment - Racing
 Pop'n Music - Konami - Dance game
 Power Stone - Capcom - 3D fighting
 Puyo-Puyon - Compile - Puzzle
 Rampage Universal Tour - Midway - Action
 Rayman 2 - Ubi Soft - Platform
 RealSound 2 - WARP - TBA
 Red Dog - Argonaut - Shooter
 Sega Rally 2 - Sega - Racing
 Sengoku Turb - NEC - RPG
 Seventh Cross - NEC - RPG
 Shien Mu (formerly Virtua Fighter RPG) - Sega - RPG
 Shienryu 2 - Warashi - Shooter
 Street Fighter III: Second Impact - Capcom - 2D Fighting
 Sonic Adventure - Sega - 3D platform
 Speed Busters - Ubi Soft - Racing
 Tetris 4D - BPS - Puzzle
 To the North: White Illumination - Hudson - TBA
 Turok 2 - Acclaim - 1st person shooter
 Unreal - GT Interactive - 1st person shooter
 Virtua Fighter 3: Team Battle - Sega - 3D Fighting
 Virtual On 2 - Sega - Mech combat
 VR Baseball 2000 - Interplay - Sports
 Warzone 2100 - Pumpkin - Strategy
 Whiplash 2 - Interplay - Racing
 World Series 2000 - Sega - Sports
 Zombie Zone (formerly House of the Dead: Side Story) - Sega - beat em up

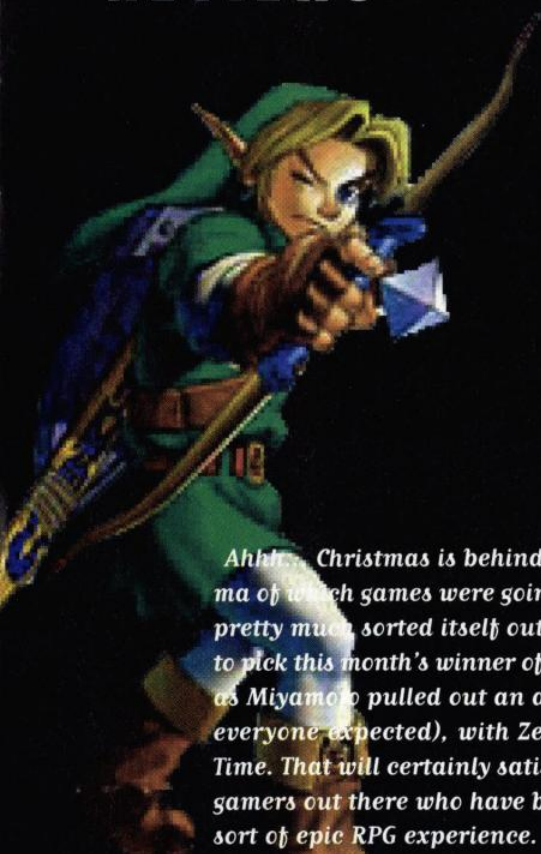
The Red Hot Rumours!

These titles are all unconfirmed releases for the Dreamcast, although we suspect at least two thirds of them will definitely come out at some stage for the system. In fact considering how "Japanese" some of the confirmed titles are, we expect more of these unconfirmed ones to make it out here than the ones confirmed for Japan. Most of them are sequels, so we're pretty much expecting super smooth hi-res versions of games we've seen in the past. With this lineup, the Dreamcast will be an awesome machine for any gamer, as it looks like it will be getting more PC titles ported than the other consoles have been.

Age of Empires 2 - Microsoft
 Alone in the Dark 4 - Infogrames
 Battlezone 2 - Activision
 Burning Rangers 2 - Sega
 Castlevania 3D - Konami
 Croc 2 - Argonaut
 Die by the Sword 2 - Interplay
 Duke Nukem Forever - 3D Realms
 Fighting Vipers 2 - Sega
 Gauntlet: Legends - Midway
 Giants - Interplay
 House of the Dead 2 - Sega
 King of Fighters '99 - SNK

Last Bronx 2 - Sega
 Marvel vs. Capcom - Capcom
 Megaman - Capcom
 Metal Gear Solid 2 - Konami
 Munch's Oddysee - Oddworld
 NIGHTS: Into Dreams 2 - Sonic Team
 Panzer Dragoon III - Sega
 Prince of Persia 3D - Red Orb
 Quake 3 - Id Software
 San Francisco Rush 2 - Midway
 Samurai Showdown - SNK
 Sim City 3000 - Maxis
 Sonic/Knuckles RPG - Sega

South Park - Acclaim
 Spikeout - Sega
 Streetfighter Alpha 3 - Capcom
 Super GT - Sega
 Tekken 4 - Namco
 Time Crisis 2 - Namco
 Total Annihilation 2 - Cave Dog
 Vampire Savior - Capcom
 Virtua Cop 3 - Sega
 Virtua Striker '99 - Sega
 V-Rally 2 - Infogrames
 Wipeout - Psygnosis



Ahhh... Christmas is behind us, and the dilemma of which games were going to be big has now pretty much sorted itself out. It was pretty easy to pick this month's winner of game of the month, as Miyamoto pulled out an absolute blinder (as everyone expected), with *Zelda 64: Ocarina of Time*. That will certainly satisfy the Nintendo 64 gamers out there who have been dying for some sort of epic RPG experience.

Nintendo 64 owners were also treated with a top notch driving game in the form of *Top Gear Overdrive*. Perhaps *Rakuga Kids* was more remarkable in that it gave Nintendo 64 owners a 2D fighting game worth playing (although those that hate cute will probably turn their noses up).

What on Earth happened to PlayStation this month!? I can't recall such a quiet showing for this console in over a year. *Devil Dice* was an office favourite for a little while here though, with a group of people looking at the screen scratching their heads and working together to solve it... Proving you can play it with friends and have some fun working together (quite rare really).

Not wanting to break a trend or anything, we continued to see a plethora of PC titles keep coming in through the door. The flight sim freaks can finally stop making jokes about the ever slipping release date of *Falcon 4.0*, as it has finally surfaced (we thought MicroProse were just playing a joke on us at first). Also totally worthy of Praise is Microsoft's *Combat Flight Simulator*, which should be an excellent online game.

This should silence those that are sick to death of every first person game having a lineup of guns as the focus of the game, as it is an excellent stealth and adventure game. *Rogue Squadron*, had us all quite excited after we've been watching the Star Wars trailer constantly since it appeared on the Internet. And of course there's much, much more...

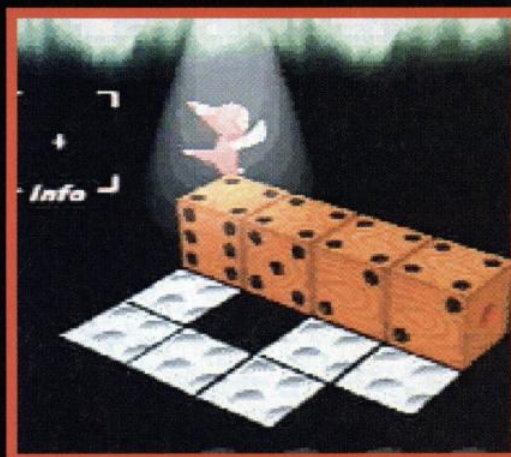
Enjoy!

Dan



GAME OF THE MONTH **ZELDA 64**

reviewed on page 54



PLAYSTATION
GAME OF THE MONTH
DEVIL DICE

Reviewed on page 47



PC
GAME OF THE MONTH
FALCON 4.0

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- 80 WARHAMMER 40K: CHAOS GATE

THE HYPER REVIEW SYSTEM

Available:	When the game is expected to be on sale. Release dates are subject to change without notice for a variety of reasons, so this may not always be correct. Ask your retailer if things don't show up.
Category:	What type of game it is
Players:	The number of players a game allows to play it at once.
Publisher:	Simply the company that publishes the game.
Price:	The recommended retail price. This is subject to change without notice.
Rating:	The OFLC's verdict on the suitable ages for the game.
Required:	The hardware required to play the game on your PC.
Desired:	The hardware we think you need to get decent performance out of the game.

Supports:	Which peripherals and hardware you can use with the game.
Plus:	Notable good points about the game.
Minus:	Notable problems with the game.
Visuals:	An indication as to the overall quality and impact of the graphics in the game.
Sound:	A rating that includes not only sound effects, but music as well.
Gameplay:	A measure of the depth, features and fun that you come across when playing the game.
Overall:	The verdict, in a number.

Blood Lines

A genre rarely done right, **Matt S** checks out the latest future sports title, Blood Lines...



BOING!

GO SHAFING

Your aim is to colour as many of the light shafts as possible your colour, when you have coloured all of them except one, boom, you just won that tribe battle thing. You firstly need to tag the person who is "it", as only whilst "being it" can you tag the light shafts with your colour — it's much more addictive and nowhere near as easy as it sounds...

Whilst running, getting shot, exploded and launched around the different arenas you'll notice a few power-ups such as shields, turbo, mines, and marbles (amusing motion capture used here). Different levels also have a selection of gizmos, like green launchpads (fling you off into the air, your character fully screams like a sissy and starts flailing about, it's very nicely animated), teleporters (but you can't telefrag any of your opponents, believe me, we tried), sinking platforms, folding platforms, pools of water, and flames through walls, the list goes on. The framerate was acceptable and quite smooth, the only slowdown we detected was when we all purposefully went stupid with our special weapons whilst running around the arena, an event unlikely to happen when playing normally.

TRASH TALKIN' AND TAUNTIN'

You'll also notice you have an energy bar down the bottom, whenever you fire off your energy beam at a player or utilize special moves, some of this energy is used, it regenerates relatively slowly, but you can recharge at the touch of a button! When you do the recharge thang your character does his/her "signature" movement in all it's motion captured glory (The Alex character reminds me all together too much of Ace Ventura... hmm) detracting from this is - whilst doing your jig, you stand still and are open to attack from anyone else... you can also use a - ahem - "fun taunt" that just slanders the other character, raising your energy (or maybe it should be the ego meter!) a little bit faster but not as effective as the dancing a jig with your recharge button. But wait! There's more! You can also "lock" a light shaft for 6 seconds so another player cannot change it to their particular colour, or if the light shaft is already coloured, change it back to a "neutral" light shaft.

This game itself has a pretty high strung feel, the sound effects were quite defined with a nice stereo image being created. Soundtrack is kinda scattered, from industrial guitar tracks to breakbeats to the same old same old drum and bass that seems to be kicking around many, many games lately. The AI being is extremely slow



Blood Lines' setting is a big brother future, where there is one government, religion, way of life, the list goes on. Of course, things such as regional cultures (read : tribes) don't fit nicely into this controlled picture. Your character is a member of one of these tribes; who by the way battle it out in arenas to preserve the bloodline of their ancestors, whilst of course the government is trying to infiltrate them. Yes you heard me correctly (smirk), but plots and storylines aside, Blood Lines is a game of high tech tag set in an arena with multiple levels with coloured light shafts... erm... lighting your way to supremacy.



in one the first level(s), turning into a cold calculating colourers of the light shaft the next! This AI really makes the learning curve steep as the game is either fairly easy or damn hard, this makes your progress into the game slow, almost to the point of discouragement (this progress is needed if you want to unlock the four extra Characters and other fighting arenas). For example after successfully defeating two challengers, the third seems to outclass you in every way – speed, special moves, and agility. By far the most enjoyable element of the game was the four player brawl option, which was by far and large the most frequented mode of play.

DAMN THAT LOUSY CAMERAMAN!

The angle of the camera sometimes makes for pain when trying to jump up onto a platform on an angle, but you soon get the hang of it. Analogue controlling seems a wee bit finicky, go with the d-pad and the rumble option on. When your four players decide to go their separate ways into the corners of the screen the camera zooms out so far to show them all at once that you end up being a few murky pixels swimming around, this



COME GIVE YOUR UNCLE A LITTLE HUG...



happens rarely, but it does happen.

Overall, the presentation of Blood Lines was great, the unbelievably fluid motion captured characters and the ways in which they tackled each other was great and has to be seen to be appreciated. Unfortunately, the single player action that Blood Lines provides, in my opinion, needed a bit more work, The multiplayer mode rocks my world. The four player brawl is definitely where it's at with this game, with multi-tap goodness keeping you entertained for hours. If you are looking for it's solo gaming aspect be prepared for steep learning curves (tough AI), in major summary - if you are into the multi-player thang Blood Lines is worth being on your list.



AVAILABLE: Feb
CATEGORY: Future sports
PLAYERS: 1-4
PUBLISHER: Sony
PRICE: \$59.95
RATING: TBC
SUPPORTS: Memory Card, Dual Shock, Multi-tap
PLUS Fast and amusing multiplayerism. Fairly simple, yet highly playable.
MINUS Bi-polar AI. Touchy analog control. Single player can get monotonous.
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY 87 75 70
OVERALL 77
Nice idea, Great Multiplayer, So so single player

Psybadek

Empathy with the characters in a game is very important... or so says **Cam Shea**.

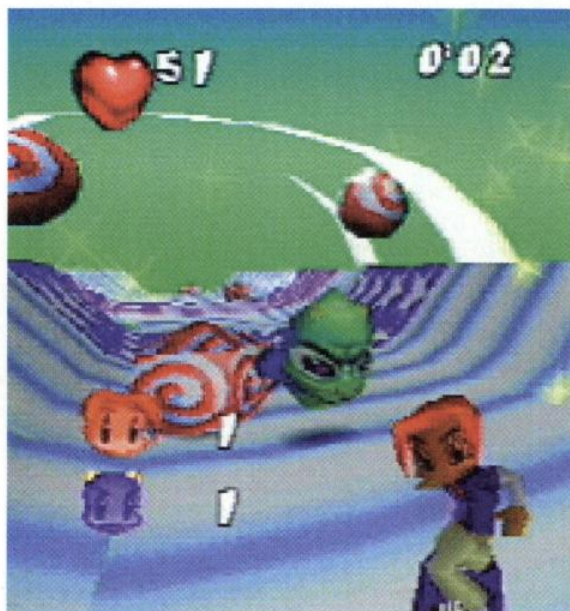


The Hyper crew have been eagerly awaiting this one ever since the first screenshots appeared quite some time ago. Seemingly lost in development limbo, Psybadek is finally here and it looks just as tasty as the first screens suggested. The wild and imaginative graphics, however, are in stark contrast to the insipid gameplay.

Psybadek certainly has its fair share of funk (it's a hoverboarding game after all), but little of it translates into an enjoyable experience. As either Xako or Mia, you must venture through a portal at the local hoverboard park and try to rescue their kidnapped friends. Psybadek is basically a pseudo 3D platform game, and a poor one at that. Although fun at first, the controls are far too loose. Jumping is inaccurate and the slippery feel is a real pain when death lurks over the edge of the many banks.



BETWEEN A ROCK AND A MAGIC THINGY



WHAT WAS IN THAT ELEC-TRIC KOOL AID ANYWAY?

The graphics in Psybadek are an entirely different story. They're tripped out, colourful

and pulsating with humour and style. Trees and flowers bob back and forth to the music and there's some impressive light sourcing. The draw-in isn't overly distracting, and a decent frame rate is maintained throughout. The music also suits the vibe, although you'll go mad from hearing the very limited repertoire again and again. Psybadek's redeeming features simply don't make it a fun game though, and in the end Psybadek is all style and no substance.



THE LEVEL INSIDE THE MICHELEN MAN'S STOMACH

AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Platformer
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
PRICE: \$69.95
RATING: G
SUPPORTS: Dual shock
PLUS Weird and wonderful graphics.
MINUS Repetitive gameplay, and lack of any multiplayer fun don't help.
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY 89 75 69
OVERALL 76
Psybadek is quite disappointing. It's potential wasn't realised, resulting in a linear, repetitive game with poor controls and little gameplay.

DON'T FAKE THE FUNK, OR YOUR NOSE WILL GROW...

There are five overall worlds, and plenty of levels. Unfortunately though, there might as well be four levels, as the gameplay breaks down to four different types of linear design. First up are the levels where you ride down a windy path avoiding enemies/obstacles, hopping across platforms and collecting stars. The objective is either to simply reach the end, or to collect/do certain things along the way. In the second type of level you're fixed to the spot in a shooting gallery, and must spin around 360 degrees and shoot the various creatures surrounding you. The third and fourth types are a race against a boss, and a face off with the same boss. Simply win in the first, and kill in the second.

By the end of the first world, you've already played and become bored of all these types of levels. Don't bother playing on though, because whether they're set in a jungle or the underworld, any changes are purely graphical. The gameplay is rigid, repetitive and as dead as non-ratings TV. Admittedly, your character's progress through the game is rewarded with new and increasingly powerful tricks, but this does little to help rejuvenate the game. There are also slight variations on the level themes, like being pulled down a river on the end of a length of rope by a crazy beaver, but it all boils down to exactly the same gameplay - collect stuff, avoid stuff, kill stuff.

B Movie

They're comin' right for us! **Eliot Fish** blows those damn aliens to hell...



NO! THEY'RE ABDUCTING THE LOCAL INDIAN DINER!

Aliens are invading the Earth... how original of them. Thankfully, *B Movie* is incredibly tongue-in-cheek, and for once, the concept is enjoyable as an action-packed satire of classic 1950's sci-fi flicks. As the seemingly endless hordes of UFOs come blotting out the sun, your small one-man fighter craft is lumped with the unenviable task of virtually fighting them off solo. Picture a hybrid of EA's *Strike* series, *Forsaken* and *X-COM* and you'd be close to envisioning the gameplay which *B Movie* has to offer. Just add lots of cheese.

ALIEN INVASION IMMINENT. DON'T PANIC.

Rather than just throw you straight out into the action every mission, *B Movie* takes the novel approach of allowing you to upgrade your craft with weapons your science team have researched throughout the game (think *X-COM* here). This doesn't happen automatically though, as you'll have to abduct alien items with your suck-o-matic whilst you play to satisfy the criteria for each weapon's development. Unfortunately you'll have a million other mission objectives to complete at the same time (think *Nuclear Strike* here), but somehow it becomes possible. One word can easily sum-up *B Movie*'s gameplay - Mayhem. Because the graphics engine is so darn fast and smooth (think *Forsaken* here), you find yourself in situations where there are literally waves and waves of UFOs littering the skies and so much action taking place that you'll become dizzy. The pace of the game is outrageous, requiring you to either drink Cola constantly to keep your nervous system as responsive as a rabbit or forcing you to just replay mis-



sions until you can figure out what you're meant to do amongst the relentless action. Missions usually require you to A) shoot UFOs; B) Suck up civilians and drop them to safe areas; C) Escort friendly craft and then D) fulfill mission specific tasks - usually all at the same time! What

really makes things harder than they should be, is that whilst your fighter can refill it's weapons' energy back at base, your shields never get recharged! This means that unless you fly like an ace throughout the mission, you'll always be shot down before you can finish what you're doing! Your attackers aren't easy to dispose of either - UFOs are damn fast and agile, and your targeting system and guns require precise shooting. Tricky stuff. This could be a good one for those that have been complaining that today's games are too easy.

TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

It's quite hilarious though, to experience the thrill of a classic alien invasion. The music for starters, is just like something out of an old classic UFO movie, with spooky wobbly noises and an overly dramatic soundtrack. During some missions, you'll get a good laugh out of your own military forces rolling in to "secure" a crop-circle site (with you being required to remove the presence of any civilians). All the scientists and miscellaneous people on foot are just chunky little sprites, but you can't help but smile at the obvious attempts at humour. For instance, one mission requires you to escort a police car as it cruises through town with a huge loudspeaker on it's bonnet telling the residents "Alien invasion imminent. Don't panic." as they all run screaming from their houses. Whilst *B Movie* becomes unnecessarily hard due to fast, slippery controls and seemingly unfair odds, this is a very entertaining shooter with lots of depth to the mission structure. Definitely worth checking out!



WHERE'S SLIPPY WHEN YOU NEED HIM?



AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Action
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
PRICE: TBA
RATING: G

PLUS
Lots of humour, some secrets to unlock and pretty graphics.

MINUS
Damn hard, and shields cannot be replenished!

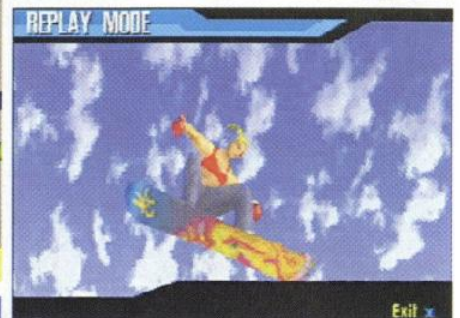
VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
87	83	85

OVERALL
84

You'll need crack skills to get through this one without breaking something. Great fun though!

X Games Pro Boarder

Only **Cam Shea** is radical enough to play a title with the X Games license... or is he?



THEY NAMED A MOVE AFTER DOCTOR JONES?

AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Rally racing
PLAYERS: 1-4
PUBLISHER: Kemco
PRICE: \$69.95
RATING: G
SUPPORTS: Rumble pak, 4MB RAM expansion pak

PLUS
Real life pro boarders, some awesome video footage.

MINUS
Dodgy frame rates, unintuitive controls, annoying circuit layout.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
81	78	81

OVERALL
79
Another snowboarding game... another mediocre entry. Not bad by any means, and worth a look if you'd like a punk soundtrack, but not polished enough.

Another snowboarding game...? Ah well, there's always room for another quality title in the Playstation's burgeoning lineup. It's just a pity then, that although X Games Pro Boarder has merit, it fits comfortably into the mediocre bin, lacking the polish of a 1080 or Cool Boarders 3.

SNOWBOARDERS ARE FUNKY, UNIQUE CREATURES... RIGHT? NOT HERE THEY'RE NOT.

What separates Pro Boarders from the rest is that it has the X Games license, a punk soundtrack featuring the likes of Foo Fighters, Rancid, Pennywise and NOFX, and eight of the top professional snowboarders. The idea of using real life boarders, each with their own unique look and skills is a great idea. Unfortunately, although each has his or her own signature moves, they all look and feel far too samey. Whereas Cool 3 had a whole host of funky riders, Pro Boarder's are all basic, uninspired models with few distinguishing characteristics. Their animations are okay, but not particularly smooth.

Talking about "not particularly smooth", we come to the graphics. The frame rate is consistently poor, and the

camera moves in a disconcertingly jerky fashion. The physics aren't nearly as floaty as Cool 3, and the halfpipe is realised well, but the downhill and slope style courses are quite a poor recreation of snowboarding. Even so, the downhill runs are cool purely because there is unprecedented freedom to roam, with almost no boundaries.

GET OUTTA MY FACE MAN...

In each event you compete against two other boarders, and in a cool touch, they're always on the course with you. That is, you'll need to avoid them as they bust tricks alongside you in the halfpipe or on slope style. Another nice change is that in events like the stadium, where you try and rack up as many points as possible off the quarter pipe, you're on a time limit rather than just having one run at it.

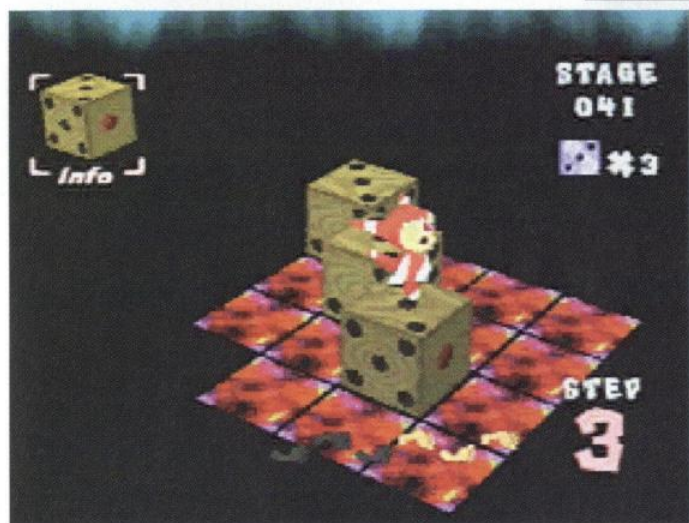
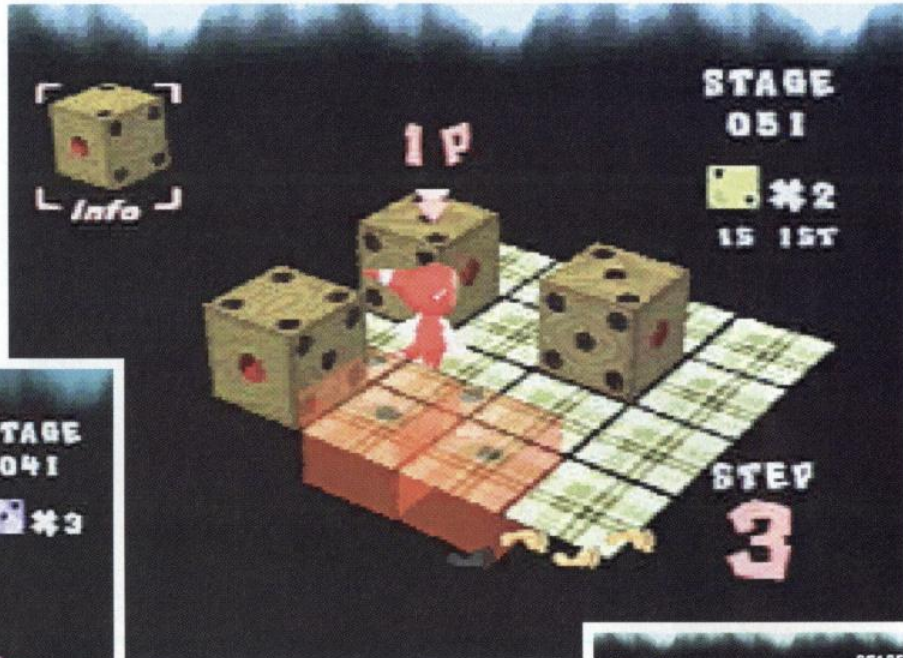
Thus, after each attempt you're deposited back at the top of the slope. This makes for more exciting, free flowing competition where another boarder can pip your score at the post.

One of the major problems with Pro Boarders is the overall structure. It begins with only five events accessible. Winning each of these opens up the first tournament, which consists of the same five events again in a fixed order, where you've only got three spare chances. This is frustrating because it's not a points-based system where you can afford to come second in one or two events and still win overall. Rather, you must win every event. Even if you're not particularly enamoured with one event or another, you're forced to beat it in one or two attempts. Also, you'd expect the main focus of any snowboarding game to be downhill racing, but until you've gone to the effort of beating the first tournament there's a grand total of one downhill run available. Even Cool 3, which had a tough tournament layout, had three downhill runs available right from the start. Cool 3 wins hands down.

Devil Dice

Eliot Fish would make a deal with the devil to get past level 59...

In the tradition of the great NES puzzle game days (anyone else remember the Adventures of Lolo series? One of the best puzzle games EVER!), comes Devil Dice from Sony. This is a test of lateral thinking like no other, and a game sure to test the patience of even a saint. It looks easy enough on first inspection, but under the surface lies a complex beast which has the potential to mess with your mind and leave you a blithering mess - much like some women I know. If you enjoy a good challenge, and think you have the brain power to move mountains, then get a gander at one of the best PlayStation puzzle games we've seen yet!



ROLL EM IF YOU GOT EM

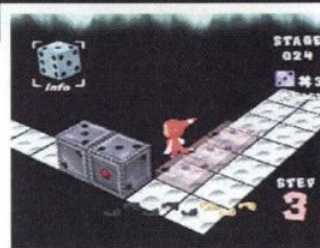
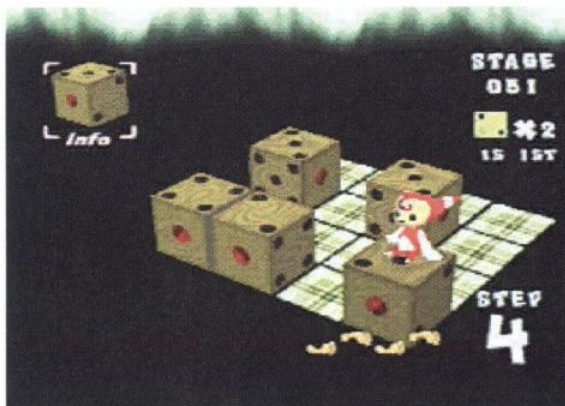
INSANE IN THE BRAIN

First up, Devil Dice can be played a number of different ways. Challenge the AI, a friend, the clock or simply your own patience. Here's the concept... match up the same number of dice as is the number on the top face of the dice. Thus, three dice showing threes, or five dice with five as the open face etc. That is the basic idea from which Devil Dice begins and then expands upon with quite a few amazing variations. For instance, you may have to keep matching and removing dice as new dice appear on the grid, or maybe you're brave enough to compete with the CPU. The only way to move the dice around the "map" is by controlling a cute little devil, who flips and pushes the dice for you. If he's standing on top, he can flip the dice over onto any adjoining face, but he cannot climb off a die unless there is an adjacent die to walk onto. Once a requirement is met, and the dice begin to sink into the grid, the devil can hop down and then push other dice around. There are a variety of different types of dice - ones that flip over, some which simply slide, others which cannot be moved and then dice which flip when pushed rather than slide etc. Of course, to top it all off, you may have a limited number of moves, so learning new skills (like opposite sides of each die always add up to seven) are essential to solving the many devious puzzles. Devil Dice is a hard game to explain in a one page review, and if you're not confused yet, you will be when you start playing the game's different gameplay modes. Once you get the hang of the gameplay mechanics though, Devil Dice is incredibly addictive and a serious brain teaser. This is a puzzle

game which totally requires brain power, not quick reflexes (though that comes into it at times) and you'll find yourself stuck on some stages for hours (or even days if you're unlucky). Whilst this can be frustrating, like any good puzzle game, you will be determined to "crack it". "No videogame is going to get the better of me!", you'll cry as your parents try to coax you into eating something.

LEARN TO HATE YOUR FRIENDS

Devil Dice isn't just a fantastically deadly single-player challenge, but a potentially friendship-breaking multi-player game. Two friends can attempt to solve specific puzzles on the same grid, using the same dice. Just when you think you have something solved, your opponent can foil you with one dice roll. If you're both trying to match dice, and the enemy gets a match first, you can still claim it by rolling another matching die onto the quickly sinking die. You'll be yelling, cursing, laughing, crying and feeling all those gooey multiplayer emotions. Either that or you'll want to punch each other out. It's that good. Devil Dice is an ingenious invention that must have taken a genius to design so flawlessly. Better than Tetris.



AVAILABLE: Now

CATEGORY: Puzzle

PLAYERS: 1-4

PUBLISHER: Sony

PRICE: \$69.95

RATING: G

PLUS

Endlessly addictive, and hard enough to last a long time.

MINUS

Some of you just may not "get it". Think laterally!

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

79 82 90

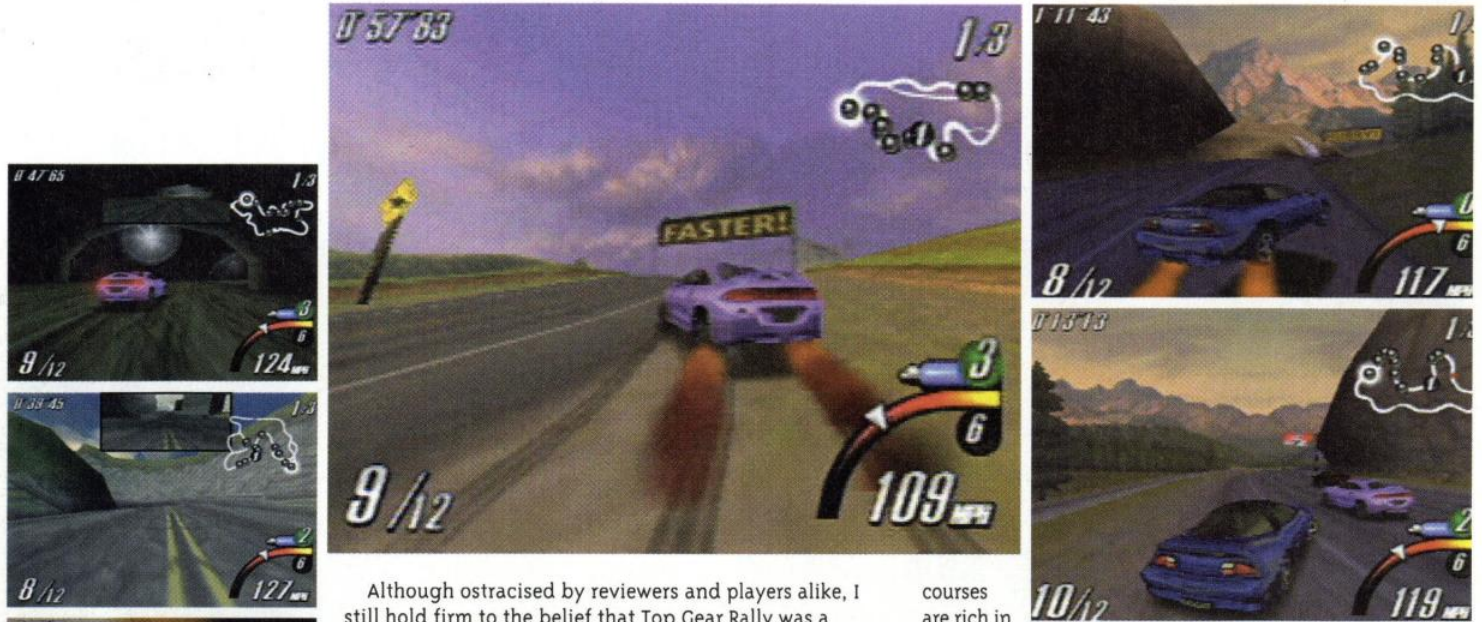
OVERALL

85

An awesomely addictive puzzle game that will satisfy both hard core gamers and newcomers alike.

Top Gear Overdrive

Cam Shea always has over the top gear... yeah baby!



Although ostracised by reviewers and players alike, I still hold firm to the belief that Top Gear Rally was a dodgy piece of work. The graphics were primitive, the cars handled like shopping trolleys, and for a spoilt bastard like myself, it just didn't stack up against the numerous quality racers on other systems.

Luckily enough, Top Gear Overdrive bears little similarity to its predecessor in terms of gameplay or visuals. It's a gorgeous ogle-fest, and the arcade driving model is a world apart from the aforementioned shopping trolley. Whilst the less simmy approach may disappoint some, TGO is still a great game in its own right.

courses are rich in detail, the cars are very solid, and effects like transparent windows and real time lighting add to its appeal. Most importantly, the game runs blisteringly fast. TGO also supports the RAM expansion pak, and looks awesome in a higher resolution.

DOH!

Unfortunately though, there are also the hallmarks of a rushed job. For instance, you know in the Simpsons how things have a habit of spontaneously bursting into flames? Well, the cars in TGO also have this habit, but in an unfunny way. Hit a trackside object like a pole, or run into the back of another car at high speed and the car will burst into a ball of fire. No flips, no spins, no realism. The frequency with which this happens, especially at higher speeds, is really annoying and ruins the racing flow. Indeed, sometimes you'll just take a weird line and suddenly have your car blow up. Even so, TGO is a blast, especially with friends.

AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Rally racing
PLAYERS: 1-4
PUBLISHER: Kemco
PRICE: \$99.95
RATING: G
SUPPORTS: Rumble pak, 4MB RAM expansion pak
PLUS Great graphics, sense of speed and multiplayer.
MINUS Feels a bit rushed, not enough tracks.
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY 90 76 83
OVERALL 85
A rather different racer to Top Gear Rally. Overdrive is a must for arcade rally nuts. Everyone else should take a look too.

ROAD RAGE IN CARTRIDGE FORM...

The driving model is arcade, pure and simple. The cars are absurdly responsive, feel very light and handle like they were born to powerslide. TGO could really do with some adjustments though, as the cars are just a tad too touchy. As per racing game etiquette, you start with a crap car and race till your fingers go numb in an effort to get a better one. Cash is awarded for placing in the top four, and there's plenty of bonus money up for grabs on the track. Don't save your money for a rainy day though, as it can be used to upgrade your car's handling, acceleration and top speed, as well as buy extra nitro boosts. Once you're up to the top class of cars, Top Gear Overdrive gets very, very fast. Insanely fast even... hurrah!

There are six tracks to be unlocked and raced on at three times of day, in several weather conditions, and in mirror mode. Each track is shortcut laden and quite distinct from the others. TGO takes you up mountains, along beaches and through cities. Track design is generally excellent, bar some poor design decisions made here and there, although a meager six courses is barely acceptable. TGO gains significant depth with its excellent multiplayer game. Up to four players can work their way through the championship with the AI cars intact, in addition to the normal versus mode.

TGO is one spunky looking game. The



PULL OVER SIR, YOUR CAR BREAKS PAINTJOB LAWS







HYPER» Virtua Fighter 3TB



HYPERR Neon Genesis Evangelion

Glover

Cam Shea reckons that Michael Jackson has just been ousted as the ambassador for white gloves...

Hasbro aren't exactly renowned for their innovative games, as their catalogue for other systems are mostly ports of board games and classic game updates. It's refreshing to see, then, that their first effort for the N64 is both an excellent game and likely to appeal to hardcore gamers.

Games like Glover and Silicon Valley really break away from the typical 3D platformer mould with fresh ideas and fresh gameplay. Glover has a premise that would be at home in a David Lynch film, as you take on the role of the goodie two shoes glove who must save the land from his doppelganger glove, the evil Cross-Stitch. To do this Glover must traverse across Cross-Stitch's nefarious worlds and return a whole bunch of crystal balls back to their rightful place.



GLOVER IS EXPERIENCED WHEN IT COMES TO BALLS

SOUND STRANGE? YEP IT IS, BUT IT'S DAMN GOOD!

The storyline may be silly, but the gameplay mechanics certainly aren't. To complete each level you must successfully guide both Glover and the ball to the exit. Each world is packed full of puzzles, and you'll need more than an itchy trigger finger to solve them. You see, on his own Glover controls much as any platform character does. He can do double jumps, cartwheels, push objects, crawl and fist stomp. Pair him with the ball though, and the possibilities are endless. Glover can cup the ball and guide it around, slap the ball, throw the ball, cross water by balancing on top, bounce the ball and morph the ball into a bowling ball, steel ball and crystal ball. All these abilities are required to get anywhere in the game.

Go for a run through the practice course and you'll see the potential of the ball and glove team. Controlling the ball is disconcertingly natural, not to mention surreal.

I'LL CALL HIM STITCH FACE...

The physics of the ball seem incredibly lifelike, but this realism brings with it some frustration. It can be quite difficult to get the ball to do your bidding, and sometimes the ball can be a little unpredictable. The camera doesn't help here either, as your precise ball control skills can become unstuck by the camera shifting angles or failing to track Glover properly. Losing the ball off the edge or missing a crucial throw due to these problems



LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE WALKING



AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	3D Platformer
PLAYERS:	1
PUBLISHER:	Hasbro
PRICE:	\$99.95
RATING:	G
SUPPORTS:	Rumble pak

PLUS

One word - innovative

MINUS

Difficult, plus you may struggle with the controls

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

79 80 84

OVERALL

82

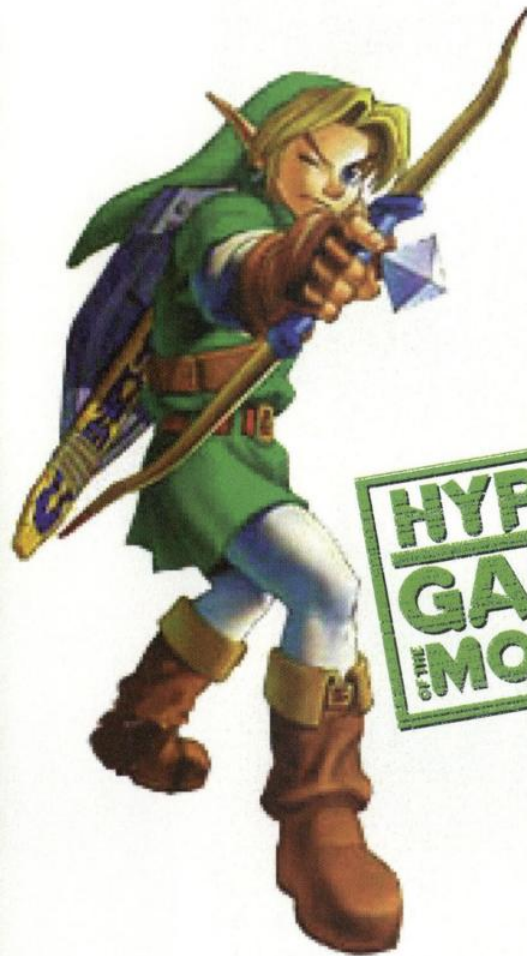
An intriguing and addictive game that comes recommended, but be prepared for a challenge.

gets annoying fast.

Glover has a very similar visual aesthetic to Mario 64. Textures are plain, but sharp, and fit nicely with the spirit of the game. Levels have simple structures and low polygon count creatures, but it's all quite crisp. The ability for a development team to imbue a glove with a personality can't be understated and they've done an impressive job. Glover's animations are smooth and all his moves look natural. Whilst nothing to shout about, the visuals are competent enough and hey, the focus here is definitely on gameplay anyway. Just as it should be - check it out.

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

There was a massive rumble in the Hyper office for this game, and **Kevin Cheung** somehow came out on top.



**HYPER
GAME
OF THE
MONTH**



LINK RUNS AWAY FROM THE FAIRY... WHAT A WIMP!



LINK DROPS IN ON THE HYPER CREW IN REDFERN

There's no question that everyone in the Hyper office has conflicting views, especially when it comes to which is their favourite system. But when *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* was brought into the office, everyone quite literally dropped everything and settled their differences so they could line up to play the game. After hours upon hours of play time and fighting over who gets to play next, we have all come to a consensus: *Zelda OOT* is the most exciting RPG on any console.

The story begins with an introduction to a young Kokiri boy named Link. As the only child among his people without a companion fairy, his life is already scarred by segregation, ridicule and loneliness as all Kokiri people have these companions for life. Link's future becomes bound by prophecy one day when he is summoned by the sagely Deku Tree, the grandfather to all life within the forest. Link learns from the old Deku Tree of an evil man from the desert whose presence is spreading a vile darkness across the land. Its body already cursed by a spell cast from afar, the Deku Tree pleads with Link to take this knowledge and to ensure that the light of life, honour, and justice never be extinguished. And with his dying breath, the old Deku Tree instructs Navi the fairy to become Link's life companion. Fuelled by honour and purpose, Link leaves the confines of his home forest and sets forth to the vast surrounding lands in the kingdom of

Hyrule with a determination to maintain peace in the land.

Later, you meet the lovely Princess Zelda and you discover that the 'evil man of the desert' foretold in the Deku Tree's prophecy is a visiting nobleman called Ganondorf. From there on, the game becomes a fantastic tale of trial and triumph as Link grows from a boy into a strapping young man, travelling from town to town and attempting to put an end to Ganondorf's evil plans.

COMPLETE ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCE

Ordinarily, the evaluation of the game's aesthetic values would be broken down into sub-categories such as graphics, sounds, music, and so on. However, to do so with *Zelda* would be a gross over-simplification of the total experience being put on offer. *Zelda* is a highly atmospheric game. From beginning to end, the surrounding environments are creative in design and bountiful in detail. When you're in the forest, for instance, the surrounding trees are lush and soft in appearance and the ground actually looks like grass and dirt. The atmosphere is augmented with fairies and fireflies buzzing around in the air. You can even hear the wind gently blowing through the leaves, and the





water flowing through a nearby stream as birds chirp their happy tunes. As the sun slowly sinks below the horizon, creating the bright orange glow of dusk as the day becomes night in real time, the shadows grow longer and the sounds of the plentiful life of the daytime soon becomes the humble song of the frogs and crickets. When the bright white glare of the moon is upon you, creatures of the undead begin clawing their way out from beneath the

ground, wishing only to bring Link to an untimely demise.

The towns are perhaps the most impressive things to see in the entire game. Like the countryside landscapes, each town is a brilliant example of how a 3D town should be modelled and presented. They look absolutely gorgeous. In some instances, however, the game allows you to switch to an overhead mode which allows a polygonal Link to run through a pre-rendered bitmap, similar to Final Fantasy VII. For all intents and purposes, it's really just a cheap thrill, but it is some of the finest examples of 2D graphics on the N64.

However, design and detail is one thing. What Zelda offers in addition to that are towns that are brimming with life. Every area is literally

crawling with people, animals, thieves, dancers, shoppers, dogs, cats, lost children, wild chickens, shopping bazaars... there is so much movement that it's impossible to not realise how lifeless other RPG towns are by comparison. In any other RPG, the town extras usually just stand there with only a few frames of animation so that you at least know they're alive, such as the wobbling head. Either that or they move about in a set path with just as many frames of animation in such a conspicuous manner that you know that you probably have to talk to them. In Zelda, the animations are actually cute and give each of the extras an organic humanistic quality. The overall effect is indeed something special.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND FLAWS? NOOOOO!

Even though Zelda's overall atmosphere and ambient effects give the game a high degree of life and character, the game is marred in several areas. First of all, those of you who are expecting the Mario 64 or Banjo Kazooie standard of graphics will be in for a minor disappointment as there is a fair degree of fog in some parts of the game, and some of the textures suffer greatly from over-filtering, which produces an awful lot of that fuzzy effect you get in games like GASP or GoldenEye. A lot of the interior graphics such as the insides of a cave or a big fish leave much to be desired, and in certain areas you'll notice that there are many repeating textures. On balance, the visuals are nevertheless very acceptable. The disappearing point is not bad, the framerate is constant and smooth, and the animations are all generally well done.

The music and sound effects, however, is a little difficult to call. On one hand, dedicated followers of the Zelda series will feel perfectly at home with many of the charm-

SHEER GENIUS

Okay. Zelda is in 3D. Get over it. Polygons, real time lighting, switching camera angles... a true RPG fan craves not these things. Well, maybe just a little, but they really take a back seat to the controls, the interface, and the general ease with which they can be manipulated. Zelda has three principle control features that make it such a stand-out of a game:

CHARACTER TRACKING

If there's nobody around you, pressing the Z button will lock Link towards the set direction, allowing him to strafe and run forward in a very straight line. However, doing so in the presence of any other character or object that is highlighted by your fairy cursor will cause Link to lock on to the said character or object. If you keep the Z button held during this time, Link will remain locked on and he can freely run back and forth and around the designated target and attack it with any weapon or guard against it. If there are multiple targets, you simply press the Z button to cycle through them.

LONG DISTANCE COMMUNICATION

It's practically taken for granted at this stage in time, but when you think about it, it is a source of total annoyance in many an RPG that if you wish to speak to anyone, you have to physically walk right up to them and press a button. In Zelda, all you have to do is use the character tracking to select somebody on the screen, and then you press the A button to talk to them. And you don't even have to stand next to them! This technique can also be used to analyse terrains, puzzles, and enemy characters, where pressing the C/up button allows you to listen to Navi's advice.

THE ALL-PURPOSE ACTION BUTTON

I seriously doubt that making this game, Shigeru Miyamoto ever took notice when I discussed the merits of an all-purpose action button in earlier issues. At any rate, Japanese action-based games traditionally armed you with a fixed number of moves that you had to exploit all the way through the game. There was no opening for other new moves to be learned mid-game. The



inclusion of an 'action button' in Zelda opens the door to an infinite number of moves available to Link, such as opening doors, swimming, pulling plants crawl-

ing down tunnels, talking, opening boxes, operating machines, and so on. With this much diversity, Zelda never comes off as feeling repetitive or formulaic.

THE NEW 3D RPG LANDSCAPE

Up until now, there has never been an RPG that properly utilizes polygonal graphics to its full potential. First and foremost, diehard fans of Final Fantasy VII will have to accept one very simple and undeniable fact: FFVII never needed the 3D graphics. If you've ever played the previous Final Fantasy games, you'll know that you explored the same towns and the same world maps, conversed in exactly the same manner with just as many different characters, and used exactly the same menu systems and sub-commands to cast exactly the same spells and elemental attacks. The point being made here is that the 3D graphics in a game like Final Fantasy VII makes absolutely no difference to the type of gameplay being offered. It's for that reason, in spite of the obvious plot and graphical differences, that RPG fans have been slowly becoming more and more disenfranchised by the complete lack of originality of recent RPGs. Games like Alundra, Wild Arms, and even the laughable Holy Magic Century all offered exactly the same boring routine.

Zelda, however, completely changes the RPG landscape. First of all, with the graphical interface being similar to games like Mario 64, the game allows for proper three-dimensional exploration in vast, intricately designed terrains, towns, caverns, castles, and so on. Holy Magic Century certainly did this to a limited degree, but when you play Zelda, you'll realise that it only touched a fraction of what the 3D medium offers. Key gameplay elements such as the ability to actively track an enemy, the ability to converse with people from a distance, or the multiple weapon control systems are examples of things that simply cannot be done in 2D. Zelda is the first game to ever to do such things, and all credit must really go to the innovative genius of Shigeru Miyamoto for thinking up such intuitive gameplay and controls. Let us hope that other developers can learn from his example and think of new and creative ways of fusing polygonal graphics with gameplay in a meaningful way.





ing tunes offered by the game. It's even more of a thrill when you realise how many classic sounds have been retained in this game, such as the little tune when you unlock a new 'secret' or the beeping sounds to indicate that you're nearly dead. Even the song in the opening sequence is based on the tune played by Link's wind instrument in previous Zelda games. In that sense, there's plenty of nostalgia; and it's a nice central theme to use to string the other Zelda games together. However, from a strictly objective point of view, the music is extremely limited by the cartridge format, and is unfortunately further limited compositionally by its deliberate focus on the old classic Zelda tunes, which were originally programmed for inferior systems. If you really want a good idea of what the music sounds like, listen to Lylat Wars and it's a pretty close match. Cytics would further argue that the capacity limitations completely ruin the aural experience as you are forced to listen to low-frequency sound samples during the game. As a fan of the Zelda series, this particular reviewer cares not for such complaints. The objective flaws have to be pointed out for fairness, but the music does indeed grow on you with time.

CONTROLS THAT THROW YOU IN THE DEEP END.

In spite of the problems detailed above, it's important to realise that it's the gameplay that counts in the end. Especially for RPGs, aesthetics like graphics and sound need only reach a requisite standard before any further improvement becomes a bonus rather than a necessity.

What's important is the story, the gameplay, and how the control interface works. First of all, the very idea that you play as Link and watch him grow up into a man is a mouth-watering concept. Having the ability to shift through time and affect the outcome of things in the past, present or future adds even greater depth and intrigue to the possibilities within the game. The other exciting part about the story is that Zelda OOT appears to be the first adventure within the continuity of the series. It's here you learn that the Triforce (which Ganondorf is trying to seize control over) was involved in the creation of Hyrule, and it's here you meet such characters as Impa and the Great Owl, who appeared in other Zelda games but looked much older.

In terms of gameplay, many people went ga-ga over Link's horse in the previews, but it was the cool control system that everyone came to admire. The A button is a generic action button, the B button is for attacking, the top C button is for the 1st person, and the remainder can be assigned to any secondary weapon or item of your choice. Jumping is an automatic action where all you have to do is run headlong across a ledge, the Z button is for character tracking, and the maps generate on screen in real time as you progress through the game. Compared to other RPGs, these controls have a rather steep learning curve as they are far from standard. However, once you get used to them and learn how to best exploit them, you'll realise that it is one of the simplest and most intuitive

WEAPONS, GADGETS AND GIZMOS



In addition to his sword and shield, Link will come across many different types of weapons and devices. Whether bladed or magical by design, they will all eventually have to be put to some use in completing the quest. Below is a description of but a handful of these items, many of which will be recognised by Zelda fans.

DEKU NUT (1): A bit of a lame weapon that you throw at your enemy, momentarily stunning them and allowing you to go in for the kill.

DEKU STICK (2): This is a weapon normally yielded by plant monsters that you've killed.

BOOMERANG (3): The boomerang is back baby! Throw this sucker around as a long distance weapon, and it can also be used to stun your enemies. And look! It flies right back!

BOMB (4): Light the fuse and toss it before you blow yourself up. This weapon is ideal for blowing away pesky boulders lying in your path, or for killing large beasts that just don't know when to give up.

OCARINA (5): Yep - this is the most important item in the game. The Ocarina is a woodwind instrument with magical properties, given to Link by his childhood friend Saria as

a parting gift. When equipped, the Ocarina can be used to play tunes that can summon beasts, tame spirits, facilitate time travel, and if you're bad enough at it, make a terrible noise.

SLING SHOT (6): This is a very cool weapon that has applications all the way through the game. When you've picked up enough ammunition (Deku seeds), you can either use the character tracking method to shoot at your enemies, or you can switch to

first-person mode and take out your target with a precision (well, sort of) shot. Holding down on the attack button here will allow you to pull back the slingshot further and wait for the shot.



LINK, YOU SHOULD NEVER LIGHT NAVI'S FARTS

control interfaces created for a game of this type. It basically fixes many of the niggling faults that other RPG developers simply couldn't be bothered to look at. The other gameplay feature worth mentioning is the shift from night to day, which affects the time at which you can do certain things, such as entering a shop during business hours and so on. It's a nice touch, even though Square's Brave Fencer Musashi has already done it.

The thing that really sets Zelda apart from the other RPGs, however, is its use of action elements. There is practically no other RPG on the market that places so much emphasis on action-based gameplay and does it so well. The only difficulty in most other RPGs is usually in follow a plot. The battles themselves are quite easy. In Zelda, however, your experiences in the game are forged from real time action where you are personally involved in every step taken, every swing of the sword, and every note played from the Ocarina. The game is therefore much more interactive than your standard

RPG. Any progress you make through the game is by overcoming the challenge is in the action itself, as opposed to overcoming a plot that's impossible to follow.

Zelda's opening sequence is perhaps the best way to sum up Zelda OOT. It was just a quiet, humble little sequence where Link rode across the countryside on his horse. The music and soft visuals make it very nonchalant and unassuming, without the loud extroverted 'hey look at me' fanfare that would usually stink of an over-hyped game later on. In doing that, Zelda came off looking very humble about itself - the quiet achiever - and its simple, subtle touches give it class and respectability. These are the qualities reflected throughout Zelda. For the only console RPG with a longer history than the Final Fantasy series, it seems only fitting that Zelda should now draw the line between the men and the boys of RPGs. And don't forget the women and girls too. Zelda is a magical experience with pure class.

AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Action RPG
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: Nintendo
PRICE: \$99.95
RATING: G
SUPPORTS: Rumble Pak

PLUS
RPGs are usually hardcore, but the action elements give it a wide appeal.

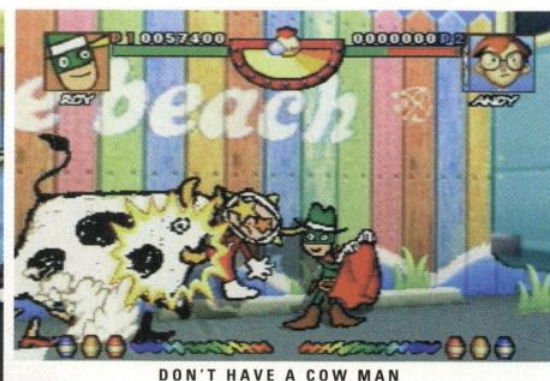
MINUS
Are you kidding? Only the most anally retentive basketcase on earth would care to fault this game to the point that they don't like it

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
92	81	96

OVERALL
94
The RPG has been convincingly wrested from the hands of Final Fantasy VII. Buy it now or feel very stupid about yourself.

Rakuga Kids

Maybe we can get **Dan Toose** to stomach a cute game if it involves physical violence. Rakuga Kids anyone?



ally scale properly, and are impressive on a technical level. There's also a "chalk & blackboard" mode if you really can't handle all that colour. Overall the visuals are fast, colourful (ow my eyes!), and very humorous indeed.

First Wipeout 64, and now this... Have we just entered a new era of excellent music on cartridge or something? Rakuga Kids has an outstanding soundtrack, some of the tunes will get stuck in your head immediately (and a few rather crazed members

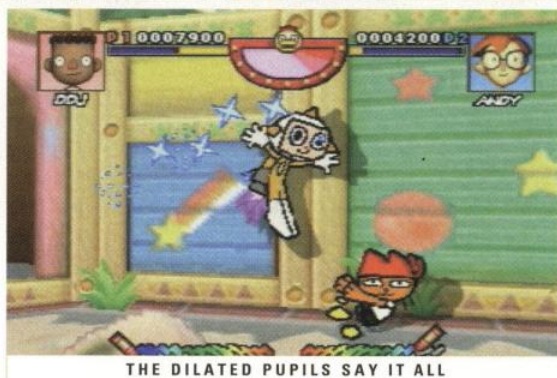
of the office here will now testify to that). The songs do get a little bit too loop orientated (which is always a bit monotonous with guitar based music), but is, on the whole, top stuff. Sound effects for the character attacks are cute, quirky and funny... Made to match the visuals.

AND THERE'S A FIGHTING GAME UNDER ALL THAT...

Now while Rakuga Kids may just be plain silly, there's actually some entertaining gameplay under all that crayon. Pretty much like your average Capcom fighting game, there are a host of combos you can pull off in an effort to bring your opponent down. So while button mashing is fun, those that actually try to apply some strategy to their style of play will probably win. There's also a super meter for launching special attacks, which tend to result in your opponent losing lots of health, and you laughing yourself stupid.

While there's no real weakness to Rakuga Kids, it's not going to have the same sort of lasting effect on gamers like a serious fighting game will. The fun from this title is generated by the funny visuals, not the act of battling past opponents. Younger gamers will love it, and those that have found most fighting games "a bit nasty" will probably find this a fighting title they can actually enjoy for a change.

An excellent game for those that don't want this genre to be taken too seriously.



The act of taking something too seriously can be a bad thing, and so that lends to the idea that maybe nothing should be taken seriously at all... and that has to be the mindset behind Rakuga Kids. Clayfighter 63 1/3 introduced this idea, but thanks to really shonky animation, and just all round general crappy quality, it made the idea of a comical fighting game more of a joke than it was actually meant to be. Pocket Fighter then got it right, with the hilarious flash combos that it offered. Now Nintendo 64 gamers have a chance to get the same style of game with Rakuga Kids.

LAUGHABLE VISUALS...

Rakuga kids proves that the Nintendo 64 can be a very capable 2D machine. The characters are made up of decent sized, and wonderfully drawn (as long as you can appreciate silly) sprites. Each character has a host of moves, just like you'd get in the Street Fighter games (in fact it uses the same button configuration and everything). The difference is that instead of rather nasty looking kicks and punches, these cute little characters tend to do things like hurl livestock, or turn a limb into a household appliance and smack it into their foe. In fact, just the act off mashing buttons and watching what happens will be enough to entertain most.

Not only are the characters well drawn and animated, but the backgrounds, whilst not atmospheric or anything, actu-



AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Fighting
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: Konami
PRICE: TBA
RATING: G
SUPPORTS: Rumble Pak, Memory Pak
PLUS Hilarious visuals and outstanding music.
MINUS Once the novelty of the humour wears off, there's little left to make you come back.
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY
84 90 78
OVERALL
80
PaRappa meets Street Fighter... funny stuff.

Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator

Thom McIntyre must like it here at Hyper, as he gets yet another outstanding flight sim to review...



Bruce Artwick must be chuffed with how far the descendants of his original Flight Simulator for Apple II have evolved. FS 2 featured a crude wargame, but after the years as FS established a following and MS bought FS, the oft-heard cry "Where's the fire button?" is finally answered. CFS recreates the European WW II air conflict, something firmly in the sights of several game developers as the PC grows sufficient grunt to handle a sky full of aircraft.

After installation, training videos and exercises familiarise you with eight WW II fighters. The scenery grabs you instantly - FS 98 is the core of CFS but the 3D engine is a step towards FS 2000. Fog and clouds are more graceful and the photoreal textures are improved. Aircraft systems are relatively complete, e.g. magnetos, mixture and props are adjustable where appropriate, although novices will appreciate easy engine starts.

Weather is unfortunately a subset of its parent. MS have thankfully fixed the FS 95/98 taildragger bug. Flight dynamics now feature 32-bit modelling. Sounds are great - for instance you can hear your damaged engine slowly destroy itself.

The aircraft look great with moving control surfaces. When you damage something chunks of debris fly off, and when they return the favour your plane becomes increasingly disabled. Blue smoke, black smoke, when it starts burning you want to hit the silk!

LOOKS ABOUT RIGHT...

I can't say authoritatively that the models are accurate, due to lack of stick time in Spits, P-51s etc (all offers graciously accepted!). I can only say they seem convincing enough. A wide range of air, sea and land vehicles are used by both sides. One of the best features is how the AI controls the actual aircraft models in the game - theoretically they can't do anything you can't and challenging combat reflects this. Thankfully there are 3 levels of AI skill.

A menu offers free flight, custom dogfights, single missions, campaigns or multiplayer. Air-to-air and air-to-ground missions are available. You may fly for the RAF or the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain, and the USAAF over Europe. Unlike most recent combat sims, scripted missions are used (albeit historically accurate ones) instead of a dynamic campaign. While this means the campaigns remain the same on replay, if internet support for CFS is anything like the freeware development FS sees (e.g. Squawkbox) this shouldn't be a huge problem.

GO FORTH AND KILL PEOPLE...

Multiplayer mode is possibly this game's strongest suit. On my first try, logging into the Zone (US) with a modest connection, I was able to wax some American butt, one

guy apparently owned an ex-military T-34 trainer. Naturally, I soon encountered the real heavies! CFS handles lag quite effectively too.

Despite a couple of omissions this is a seriously good game. Definitely the one that will suit those looking for an air combat simulator for multiplayer gaming.



THEY PAINTED ON EYES TO SCARE THE ENEMY... TRUE!



FREE EXTRAS!

Thousands of freeware planes (try flightsim.com) for FS 98 will work in CFS with WW II weaponry, for either you or the enemy to fly. This requires text editing but is explained in the help file. The possibilities are big - imagine a Hercules flight escorted by helo gunships having to survive attack from a team of Sukhoi-35s ...

AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Flight sim
PLAYERS: 1-network
PUBLISHER: Microsoft
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: G
REQUIRED: P166, Win95, 32 MB RAM
DESIRED: P II 266, 64 MB RAM, 3D Accelerator, joystick, rudder pedals

PLUS

Pedigreed flight engine from FS, smart graphics, ability to import FS aircraft, freeware support may bolster weak spots

MINUS

You can't transmit to wingmen or base, no dynamic campaign, limited weather options, no teamplay in multiplayer

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

93 91 94

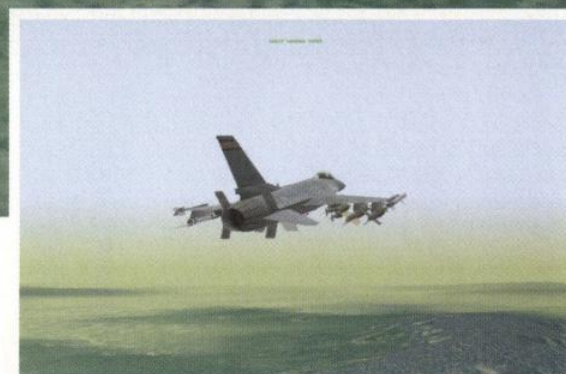
OVERALL

93

A very strong contender in the WW 2 flight stakes, especially if you want to play online.

Falcon 4.0

The game that has inspired more release date jokes than any other has finally arrived...
Thom McIntyre checks out Falcon 4.0



WHAT A PIECE OF WORK!

Call me weird but I've never daydreamed about the F-16. Single engine light planes are fine by me, but a spare powerplant would never be appreciated more than when armed forces are out for your blood. Nonetheless, it has been a very popular fighter and equally popular subject for military flight simulators, and the well-regarded Falcon series has a long heritage (version 3.0 is from 1991). So the wait is over for the legions of fans - Falcon 4 claims to be the most realistic flight sim to date; as claims go, a big deal. A hefty manual, starting with 30-odd flight lessons is the first hint in checking its validity.

BETTER WITH FRIENDS...

In overview, F4 is fundamentally designed as a multiplayer system (like Quake) of which single player mode is a subunit - most promising. Other key features are an advanced dynamic campaign modelling air and surface conflicts, radio interaction with AWACS, wingmen and air traffic control, and a flight model developed under the supervision of an F-16 instructor. Nothing is glued on here, it's all core. Word from one person who actually spent time in a military F-16 simulator (rigorously realistic) was that F4 was identical in behaviour. The F-16 block (or version) 50 is both air-to-air and air-to-ground capable so there's plenty of killing to do. The

scenario is an invasion of South Korea by the North.

The opening video is a real attention grabber and leads to a user interface which is deep and complex but not overly difficult to navigate. It would help if it looked a bit less busy as the game is complex enough. You can set up sound and graphics, check out some hardware, the numerous realism options, and then choose a range of conflicts from Instant Action through full-blown campaigns. Net play is available in all of these modes, including the campaigns - this is a big step forward from most sims which only allow deathmatch-style scrapping.

IT'S A PROPER SIM, MAKE NO MISTAKE...

The complexity of the sim really manifests when you launch. Throttle and tick operation won't shock any sim pilot, and the flight model takes mere seconds to demonstrate accuracy. But once through the first basic lessons I began to notice that familiar too-busy feeling that accompanies high workload periods in real aircraft. While not too hard to handle this baby is extremely





UM... CAN'T THE FAT SOLDIERS SIT DOWN THE BACK?

responsive and will reduce your standing height to around a millimetre if it gets ahead of you down low. In other words, the flying is not discouraging but an ongoing and enjoyable challenge to master.

Communication and navigation systems demand tuning and setting, the aircraft requires constant attention except in cruise and the war effort you are part of needs you to keep your mission and clearances in mind. MFD screens offer more functionality than you can shake a sidestick at, such as inertial way-pointing navigation. Realistic radar could absorb over an evening's attention alone. Also initially off-putting is the awkwardness of swapping views to operate different controls with the mouse - the cursor moves slowly. Learning the eccentric keyboard layout is the solution.

Campaigns bring you a range of missions in a changing environment. The latest on who's overrun what part of the country is posted in the campaign room, with a long list of missions you may fly, ranging from fighter sweeps to strikes. Incessant radio chatter between stations fills you in on the battlefield itself. The skies swarm with aircraft and the review machine, a Pentium II 266

with modest 3D struggled a bit with the frame rates at 800x600, likely due to the vast number-crunching needed to physically and tactically model a whole war. Not only do you fly through seething air traffic but you see the ground forces firing on each other - there's more going on down there than a few SAM sites. Weapons and targeting systems obviously take some time to master, and from the short time I had I can say that the AI is pretty heavy. In the prerelease there were some minor ATC clearance issues, but I would expect these to be ironed out in the final version.

NOT AS PRETTY AS THE OTHER ONE...

The graphics are functional. They lack gloss next to TAW or CFS and look a bit rough on the deck. That said, ground detail varies a lot and is well blended, and gives a good impression of elevation and speed. There are also nice touches like fog in the valleys and sun glare.

Blackouts start at the edge of the screen and contract your field of view which isn't something I've seen before. The sound is more than sufficient, right down to the different types of radar signatures your RWR produces.

I can't recommend F4 to the beginner, but if F-16s are your thing, don't hesitate. There's nothing closer this side of the USAF. If realism and complexity are your yardsticks, the same goes. Thorough development has produced a quality feature mix with previously unseen elements that should keep purists awake for months in single and multiplayer modes. If those are your terms, Falcon 4 has captured the flag.



PITY THIS F16 ISN'T EQUIPPED WITH AN ESPRESSO MACHINE

AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Flight Sim
PLAYERS: 1-Multi
PUBLISHER: Microprose
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: G
REQUIRED: P166, Win95, 32 MB RAM, 2MB SVGA video
DESIRED: P II 450, 128 Mb RAM, 3D Hardware accelerator, joystick, rudder pedals.

PLUS
Unprecedented mix of gameplay elements, everything including the kitchen sink, a moonshot at total realism.

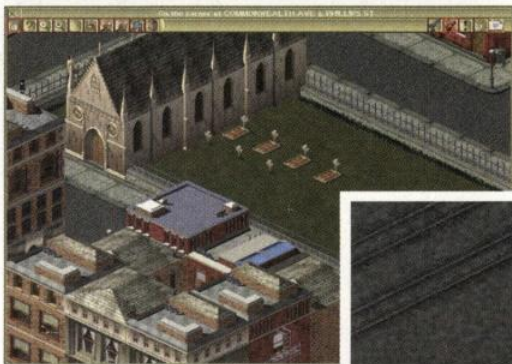
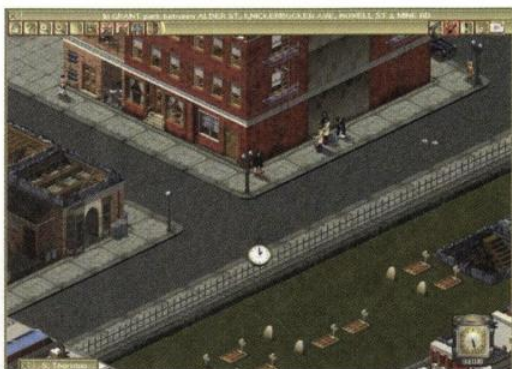
MINUS
Vertical learning curve, slightly grainy terrain, wants heavy-duty hardware.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
93	92	96

OVERALL
94
Leaves the others playing catch up. Well worth the amazingly long wait. One for the hardcore flight sim gamers.

Gangsters - Organised Crime

We figured being our only ex-con, that **March Stepnik** was going to be an authority on Gangsters.



And you thought that being Da Boss was going to be easy. Sitting around in a big comfy chair, lighting three hundred dollar cigars with hundred dollar bills. Having someone executed with nothing but a slight nod after being sold a works burger with pickles in it. I said! NO PICKLES! Walking the streets of your town, being offered gifts of gratitude from the common people for the security and opportunity you've brought to the neighbourhood. Besides, if these gifts of gratitude weren't delivered with an alarming frequency, you'd have some legs broken.

Well it's not as easy as that. Being the boss is hard work. Pleasuring is derived from knowing you've had your finger in every pie imaginable. See, you've got interests to protect

trolling the town of New Temperance (in which Gangsters is set). All commands are issued a screen resembling a filo-fax, which helps keep the task of managing your empire central and simplified, because as Da Boss, there's plenty for you to do.

MAKE CRIME PAY

There are three main things to worry about in Gangsters. Earning money, avoiding being exposed, and competing with the three other that have decided to make New Temperance their home town. The first thing you want to do is get the cash rolling in, so pick some hoods and send them out to extort money from local businesses. In fact, hoods make up the bulk of your empire as these are the people that go out and make a name for yourself, as well as protecting you from the other gangs. As your coffers start to grow, you can make even more by employing the services of an accountant. The accountant can help with tax evasion, escaping gruelling audits, and basically keeps track of all your finances. You can bribe people, rub em out, threaten officials, commit crimes,



MICROSOFT PEDESTRIAN SIMULATOR '99

AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Strategy
PLAYERS: 1-4
PUBLISHER: Eidos
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: M
REQUIRED: Win 95, P133, 16MB RAM, 4X CD
DESIRED: P166, 32MB RAM, 3D Card
PLUS Plenty of scope in true gangster character
MINUS A little overwhelming at first, and at times confusing
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY 76 70 85
OVERALL 82
Whaddya mean you don't want it?! Take it.. Take it!

and they're not exactly legit. But where there's a will, there's a way. Judges, Policemen, Senators? Merely pushovers on your road to filthy success.

DIRTY STRATEGY

Gangsters - Organised Crime is the first in-depth "Mafia" strategy game, and it's done a splendid job of integrating a whole stack of features you would have expected, plus a couple of others that you wouldn't have dreamed of. 1997's Constructor did a good job of providing us with ways of "intimidating" the right people to get your way, but was somewhat lacking in the detail department.

You play the role of the head of a "legitimate" business with the aim of becoming filthy rich and eventually, con-

even run for (or help determine the outcome the election) mayor! If it has anything to do with corruption and crime, then it's Gangsters.

There's a scenario to play as well as three different "Power Games" to take part in, ranging from Power (being the most powerful gang), Wealth (most wealthy) and Territory (the gang with the most territory). Gameplay consists of planning how to spend your week (giving orders to your "associates") then jumping into the game and making sure everything goes to plan.

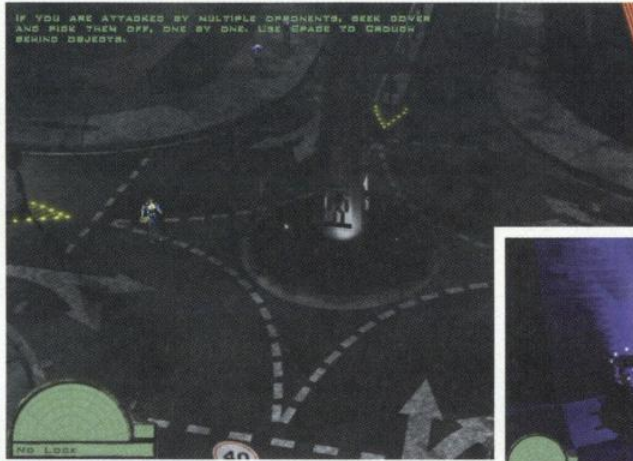
Initially overwhelming though thankfully intuitive, Gangsters is a funky organised strategy game simply bursting with detail and chock full of humour. Get outta here!

The Creed

Is **March Stepnik** a man of high adventure and intrigue? No, he was just on hand to review the Creed.



It used to be that graphics and sound alone could create an almost tangible ambience and atmosphere. Look no further than Blade Runner and Dark Earth for example. Each are great examples of how mood can be created through stunning visuals and unrelenting audio. Add to that an alluring story line and some good old fashioned gameplay, and you've got yourself a winner.



This is where the immersion factor of The Creed comes into it. It's outstanding. Walk around the city and you'll overhear the jaded lover threaten

her partner. You'll witness muggings (something that you'll frequently fall victim to yourself), open-street factional blowouts, murders, and generally - the whole seedy side of human interaction. And they're not just visual cues - you'll hear people call out obscenities (there's also a parental lock if this just isn't your thing) all over the place - greatly adding to the overall experience. For example, if you obstruct a car by walking on the road, the driver will more often than not tell you to "Get the #%%\$ off the road!" in a not so polite manner. The atmosphere is fantastic.

RUN... BE FREE!

All this serves as a background to your mission. Escape from this hellhole is your primary concern. Playing as either Guy Wolfe (bounty hunter with a cheesy-ass bad guy attitude) or Gene Matrix (visually stimulating (if top heavy females are your thing) terrorist with a noble leaning), you've got to come up with creds and the means to make it off the planet.

To do this, you must to rise the ranks of either the Government, the Brotherhood, or the Order. This is done by completing set missions. If you choose to join the government - expect to do some stooing, and if you choose one of the fanatic orders - expect to do some pretty sick stuff. All of them however, call on the dark more corrupt side of interfactional practices.

The Creed plays like a cross between Crusader and an action/adventure game. The detail is astounding, and the game world is beautifully brought to life with the help of 3D acceleration. Three gripes begin to surface after repeated play. Firstly, it's bugger easy to get disorientated (while pretty, the game's automatic perspective change quite easily throws you out of whack). Secondly, The missions often lack any real complexity, and are quite difficult to complete successfully for all the wrong reasons - mainly thanks to (bad) timing. Last of all, the game world is static. Fire a few rounds into the entertainment complex's front window, and you won't even leave a scratch.

Still, The Creed will give you that fix if a dark, mission based action shooter is what you're craving.



ELIOT LEAVING THE REDFERN OFFICE AT NIGHT

DARK AND NASTY...

One of The Creed's greatest strengths is that Insomnia Games have immersed you, the player, within a gloriously detailed world that oozes (in that ultra cool way that puss globules force their way out from under your skin after a major poppage) atmosphere. And not the Barney "We love you!" type of atmosphere either. The Creed is set in Cerberus, on the planet Outpost IV. A fairly out of the way colony, Cerberus is a hive of conflict, greed, and down-right naughtiness. Run by a corrupt government which utilises the services of an even dirtier police service. Cerberus also plays host to two other major factions - The Order (a bunch of fanatic devil worshippers) and The Brotherhood (a bunch of fanatic zealot god worshippers). Things are never peaceful for too long on Cerberus and if you don't learn to watch your back with some proficiency, you're not going to have a back to watch for very long at all.



AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	Action
PLAYERS:	1
PUBLISHER:	EA
PRICE:	\$89.95
RATING:	M
REQUIRED:	Win 95, P133, 16MB RAM, 160MB HDD.
DESIRED:	P 200, 32MB RAM, 541MB HDD

PLUS

Dark atmosphere, gorgeous graphics. A funky scenario editor works too.

MINUS

No compass, lack of mission depth, and at times, quirky controls. A movable perspective would have rocked.

VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY

89 88 79

OVERALL

80

Dark, gritty, and raw. Just the way we like 'em.

Settlers III

Being into the art of making little guys breed and crawl all over the land, **David Wildgoose** gets settled again.



Settlers III is one of those games during which it's not only quite feasible, but strongly advisable, to regularly get up from your PC and make a cup of coffee, read a book, or maybe even do a spot of housework.

Why? Because for long periods of time very little will be happening that would require your input. It's not just that this is a slow game - although it is surely that. Rather, the Settlers series takes a different angle on the whole realtime strategy genre.

Blue Byte have abstained from designing yet another so-called strategy game in which any resource management is merely the prelude to a click-fest of guileless combat. Instead they've created a deeply rewarding and genuine strategy experience; one that eases you in with its cute, cartoony visuals before overwhelming you in a mass of tactical nuances. It's great, believe me. With a design philosophy, then, of allowing the player to avoid the tedium of micro-management, Settlers III alleviates much of the frustration of realtime strategy.

THIS LOOKS LIKE A GOOD PLACE FOR A VILLIAGE

You choose which structures to build and where they need to be placed. These include woodcutter and stonemason huts, sawmills, farms, mines, barracks, weapon

and tool smiths, even shipyards, castles and catapult halls. You also build residences from which new settlers become available. Cleverly, you need never manually recruit anyone, they'll simply spill out of each new residence and take up various jobs as they become available. You can also adjust the ratio of professions throughout your empire at the click of a button. Likewise, when determining which goods go where or what production demands priority, all you have to concern yourself with is a few sliding bars. Want more ham than bread? Just increase the proportion of grain going to the pig farms ahead of the mills. You can also do things like telling your woodcutter to chop trees in this area only and then command your forester to replant them in the same place. You need only tell them this once and they'll happily get on with the job for the rest of the game. Fishermen, farmers, stonemasons and water-fetchers all act in the same way.

TELL THEM WHERE TO GO

In terms of resource management, Settlers lets you conduct business at the macro level. Combat in previous Settlers games followed this line of thought. As you expanded your territory into the land under enemy control, your little soldiers would fight border wars without needing to be prompted and guided every step of the way. However, combat here seems similar except for the added annoyance of having to find, click on, then direct your soldiers at the enemy forts. I suppose it means you can command soldiers into battle from anywhere in your territory, but it still seems a pointless complication to an already fine combat system. The joy of Settlers combat was its defiant rejection of Warcraft-style click-and-



SIR, WE'RE SURROUNDED BY ARMED MALTESERS!



drag - and a drag it most definitely is. Here, although the outcome is hardly bad, unfortunate compromises have still been made.

Thankfully, much of the strategy continues to centre around control of territory. There are three increasingly difficult campaigns to play through. There's a plot linking them all, but it's decidedly tenuous and probably best ignored. Casting you as a Roman general, the first campaign gently introduces you to the major game concepts and pits you against a fairly docile enemy. The second, in which you play an Asian general, is tougher as it often throws two or three enemies at you, while the third, Egyptian themed, campaign unleashes a far more aggressive AI that will keep you on your toes (and no doubt reduce those opportunities for coffee and housework). I found it a bit disappointing that there's no real difference between each race, with the exception of one or two buildings (though even they ultimately serve the same function) and the powers of each race's respective gods.

Speaking of gods, there are some amusing idiosyncrasies that make little practical sense, but somehow suit the less-than-serious atmosphere. For instance, to get your soldiers promoted to a higher rank, you'll require a supply of manna from your temples. In turn, to produce manna you'll need to win the favour of your gods. And to please the gods? Heh, you have to get them pissed, of course. Alcohol and religion - I've always thought they made a fine combination!

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Further, the gods bestow all kinds of gifts upon your populace. Anything from turning iron into gold and stealing resources from your opponents to magically fertilising your crops and toughening up your troops, plus many other acts of divine intervention. They are gods, after all.

Thanks to new features like these, as well as the improved interface and wonderfully cute graphics, Blue Byte have provided enough that is different to satisfy existing fans. It's come up against some pretty hot competition in the recent Caesar III and Knights & Merchants, but the quality of Settlers III means it can hold its own. They're all great games, anyway, I'd recommend any of them.



HYPER HOLIDAY RETREAT - A HOUSE EACH!

AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Realtime Strategy
PLAYERS: 1-Multi (LAN, TCP/IPX)
PUBLISHER: Blue Byte
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: G
REQUIRED: P100, 32MB RAM, 4xCD
DESIRED: P166 MMX, 32MB RAM

PLUS

Genuinely deep strategy, free of much of the genre's tedious micro-management.

MINUS

Combat takes a backward step. The print manual is poor.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
83	69	80

OVERALL

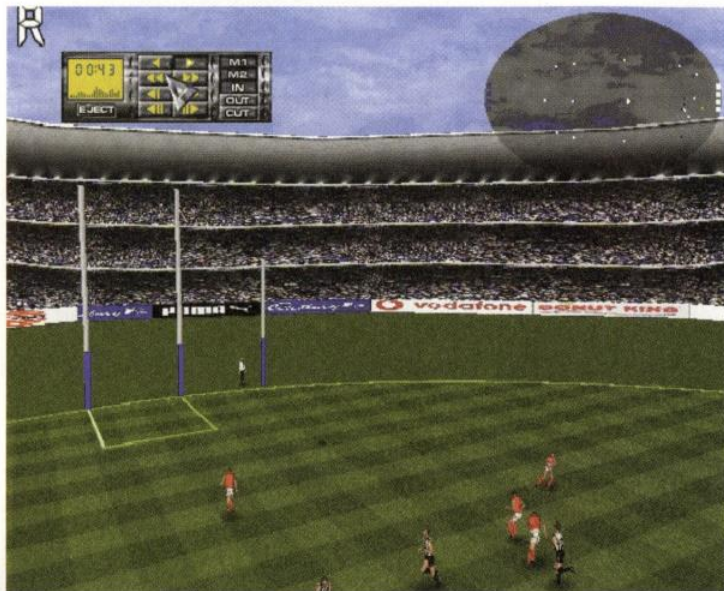
80

A solid sequel. Adds just enough that's new without ruining the original's charm.

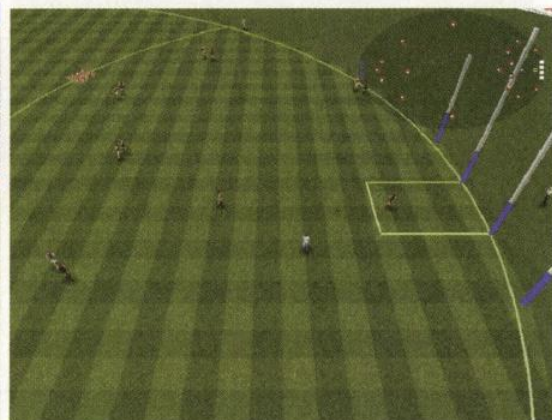
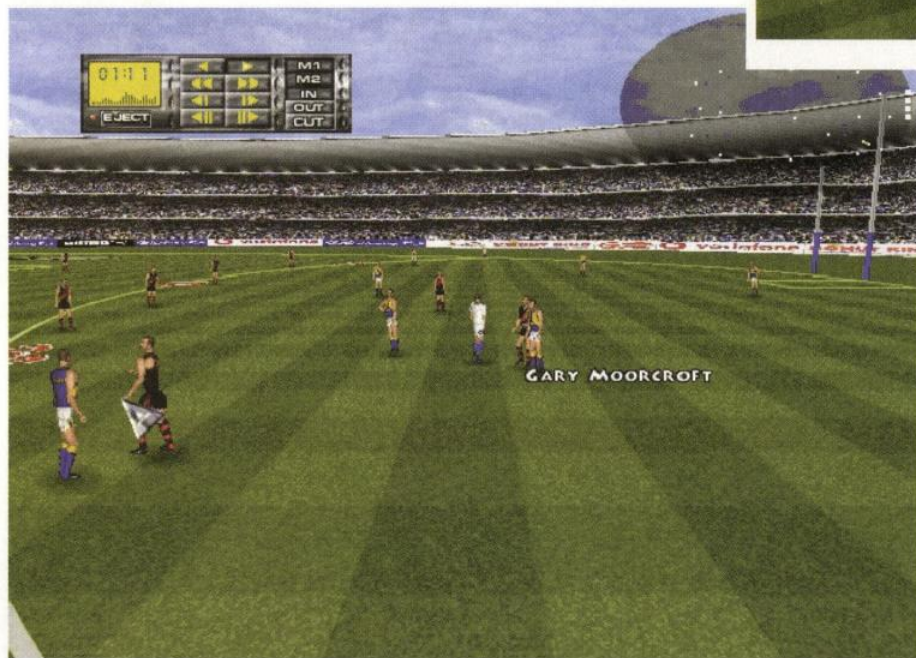
AFL 99

Peter Jankulovski checks out EA's latest addition to the Australian sporting games collection... AFL '99

This time last year, EA Sports' Australian division delivered to an eager public AFL 98 - one of the most anticipated sports titles for the PC, and a less than worthy representation of this country's biggest sport. While lacking greatly in many areas, not to mention the obvious, embarrassing omission of the game's 50 metre line marking (rectified very quickly via a patch), many overlooked its deficiencies and the title set all sorts of sales records. This was probably based on the fact that finally there was an AFL game, and it would be significantly better than the obsolete 8-bit version of many years ago. Developers Creative Assembly (incidentally, based in London) have now delivered a sequel, which is leaps and bounds ahead of its predecessor.



ALL YOU NEED IS THE MEAT PIE CHEAT



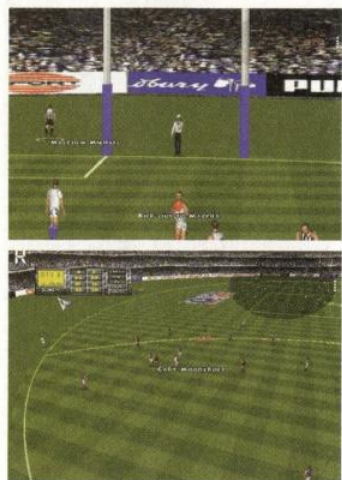
The motion capture of players has been greatly improved, and there is a whole new repertoire of play moves, as well as some spectacular marks which fans will greatly appreciate. Accuracy of kicking is usually not a problem, working on a system of placing a target on the ground and a double click of a keyboard/joystick button to determine power and accuracy. Several formation options are available, particularly on the kick-out of the ball from the goals, very reminiscent of the Madden series.

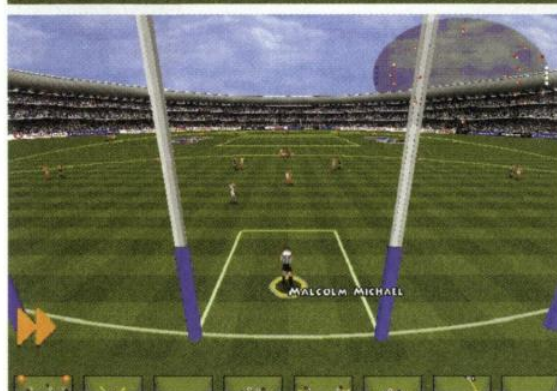
AUTHENTIC AUSSIE STUFF

As did last year's version, AFL 99 features all of the teams and players, as well as the various grounds from around the country. In true EA Sports fashion, a great amount of options and statistics are available. The regulatory Training, Exhibition, Finals and Premiership Season play modes are here, among others. In Premiership Mode, a number of options are available, to select which teams you control and take through the 22 round season and finals, based on the recent season fixture. As is the case with the other EA Sports 99 updates, 3 speed settings have been included, for those in search of some quick, arcade-like action. To add to realism, games can also be played in afternoons and at night, but little difference can be seen with visuals, as the 4 direction shadows of players created by the night lights and used extensively in soccer games, are notably missing.

WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE ON THIS?

With literally an unlimited amount of camera viewpoints and angles are available, few are actually useful during the game, as is the case with many sports games. The default camera setting seems to zoom out too far away from the playing field, possibly due to the immense size of the ground to be covered and the large amount of players at any one time. The distance of the camera often creates the problem of missing the target with kicks and passes, as the players appear too small and difficult to predict. Accuracy of kicks and passes on the run also tends to become a problem, especially from this default camera setting. You often find that you simply hand-pass the ball a few metres in front of yourself, picking it





UM... HOW MANY KILOMETRES LONG IS THAT?

up when you get to it again. The stadium backdrops tend to be fairly authentic, but for some strange reason, the fences behind the boundary lines have been pushed back an extremely long way, giving an impression of grounds being a lot bigger than their real life representations.

With the fence out so far, it is not uncommon to see a kick that has gone out of play, to rebound in thin air as it reaches an invisible, non-existent boundary. Other minor omissions and nuances are the lack of instant replays after scoring goals (although a Replay option is available), and a more TV-like score updating system would have been a nice addition on scoring goals, rather than the mundane display in the top left corner.

COULDN'T HIT THE SIDE OF A BARN

Generally, the computer controlled player AI is quite good, and presents a tough challenge. The numerous difficulty settings also mean that gamers of all skill levels will be catered for. However, there seems to be a great deal of inaccurate kicking for goal, an error made by the CPU controlled opponent a little more often than would be expected. In fact, as is a common occurrence with many other sports sims, scoring can be very unrepresentative of a real game. CPU deficiencies aside, though, AFL 99 is really about multiplayer gaming, and in this mode, it delivers a superbly fun contest.

Music is notably absent from the game selection screens, although the in-game crowd sounds are as authentic as they could probably get. Adding to the atmosphere is the commentary provided by Bruce McAvaney and Leigh Matthews, and fans will be delighted to hear the infamous "It's special" call, not to mention some commentary bloopers buried deep within the CD.

While AFL 99 lacks in some areas and does not seem to carry all of the finesse of other, more established EA Sports products, it is a huge improvement over the original and one which will be hard to pass up by the fans.



AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Sport
PLAYERS: 1-multi
PUBLISHER: EA Sports
PRICE: \$69.95
RATING: G
REQUIRED: P166, 32MB RAM
DESIRED: P11 233, 32MB RAM, 3D accelerator

PLUS

The latest and best Aussie Rules game, from the biggest in the business.

MINUS

Still not as refined as other standard-setting EA Sports games

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
80	76	86

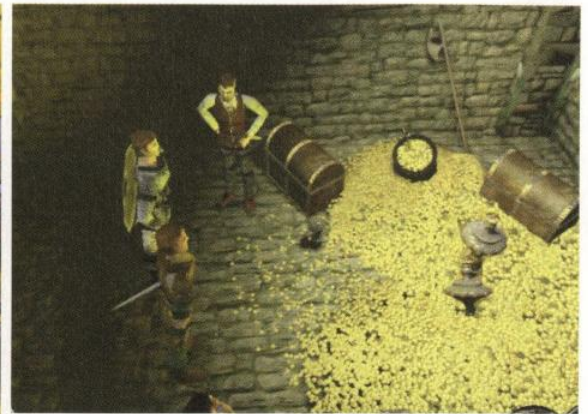
OVERALL

82

Australia's favourite ball game, bigger and better than last year's lack-lustre effort.

Return To Krondor

Sierra have once again decided it's that time of year to spit out some RPG action. **David Wildgoose** checks out Return to Krondor.



Return To Krondor? You mean we've been there before? Yep, that's right, RTK is the ages-in-development sequel to Sierra's Betrayal At Krondor, which came out in about 1994 and was an epic fantasy RPG based on the novels of Raymond E. Feist. In the mean time, there was Betrayal In Antara, a very similar game in style that did however lack the Feist license and, thus, cannot be regarded as a real sequel. RTK has, so it is, if you follow me. Right, glad we got that cleared up!

In the nicely realised intro scene, you're given the basic outline of the plot and the reason why Krondor needs you to come to its aid yet again. A brutal pirate by the name of Bear has been searching for a powerful, holy artifact called the Tear Of The Gods. Tracking it down across the seas, he launches a raid on the ship that is transporting this prized possession. Unfortunately, due to bad luck and the incompetence of Bear's crew, the ship is sunk before all the treasure can be unloaded. Thus, the famed Tear Of The Gods now lies at the bottom of the ocean, lost forever it seems. Or is it?

OUR INTREPID HERO... JIM

To begin the game you play James, confidante of the Prince of Krondor and reformed thief. Throughout the course of your journey to prevent Bear from recovering the Tear Of The Gods, you'll meet up with four other characters who will join your party. There's Jazhara, a beautiful and rather good mage; William, a warrior and member of the Prince's guard; the noble priest, Solon, who serves at the Temple of Ishap; and Kendaric, another mage and man with a shady background. One of the impressive aspects of this game, and the series in general, is the depth of personality given to these characters. Many RPGs treat your characters as mere ciphers for the various skills you'll need to complete the quest or, worse, just a collection of numbers. On the other hand, RTK brings them to life in a fairly convincing manner by giving them all believable histories within the world. Also to this end, whenever you chat with someone or encounter something interesting, each character will get a few lines of dialogue that reflect their distinct personality. James is a bit of scoundrel at heart and William tends to be somewhat quick-tempered, while Jazhara is a much-needed calming influence. Because each character is predefined, this makes the game feel more like an adventure than an RPG. But if you enjoyed the strong, character-driven drama of Final Fantasy VII, then RTK should please you in this area at least.

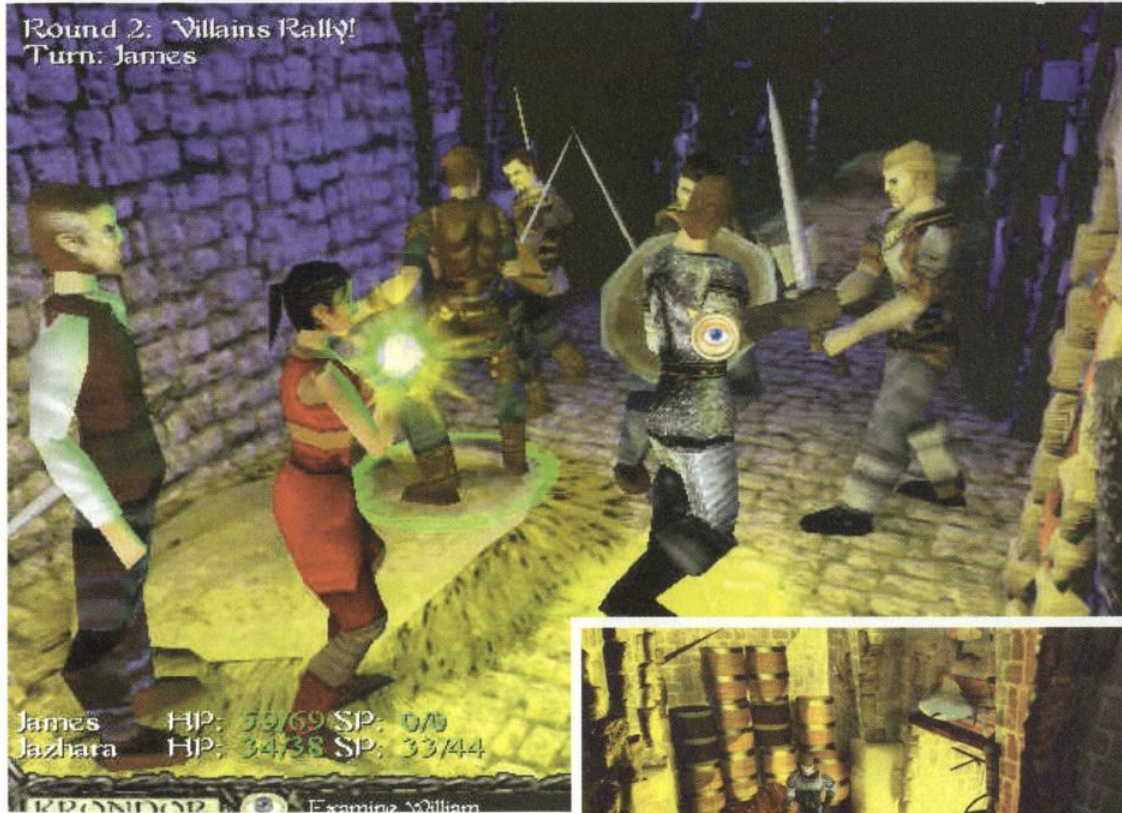
CARROT-UP-BUM RUNNING STYLE

I expect most people will be just as satisfied with the uniformly excellent graphics. All characters are made of 3D



polygons and animate well, except for their rather silly running style. The backdrops are really nice as well, displayed as they are via all kinds of cool and unexpected camera angles. Like Resident Evil and suchlike, RTK presents the action from a fixed point that shifts as you walk around. Even though they're rarely disorientating and taking into account your ability to switch between views when the opportunity arises (that is, you can't do it all the time), this system is not without its problems. The main one is that it's never clear where you should walk to force the camera view to change. Often I missed out on visiting an area because I failed to position James in the exact spot that would activate the next view. It's all a bit poor, really.

The interface is actually the game's primary failing. Sure, it gets the job done, but it should have been much better than it is. Such annoyances are also evident in combat. Again, it's mostly a well-designed and very good-looking system. It's entirely turn-based and allows you to switch cameras and plan your moves at your leisure, but a few little flaws undermine your enjoyment.

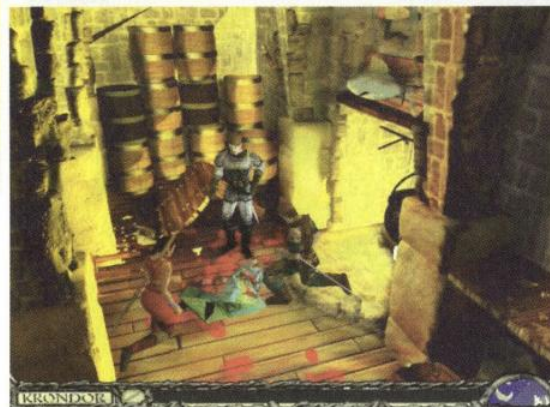


THE HYPER TEAM TRY TO LEAVE WORK EARLY

STOP PICKING AT IT!

On a more positive note, there are some other really great and original ideas at work here. Disarming traps is a surprising amount of fun when you select the "reflex" option. You play a thief, after all, and will be regularly delving into your toolkit of lockpicks, cutters, and ratchets to break into the many treasure chests and locked doors throughout Krondor. Likewise, your mage has a portable alchemy kit and, with the correct combination of ingredients, can create all sorts of useful potions to quaff during your adventure.

Return To Krondor is a pretty solid RPG, all told. Most of the factors that make for a good game are present. With plenty of skills, spells and other items, the character development is handled expertly. The conversation system is great, providing both detail and flexibility - I like the way



some situations can be resolved if you say the right thing, instead of forcing you to rely on your sword. However, the plot is quite linear and the game too short overall, although it seems even quicker due to the fast-paced story.

This really isn't an RPG for the hardcore player - if you loved Fallout and Might & Magic 6, then wait for Baldur's Gate. But for those who loved the first Krondor game or have been recently introduced to RPGs thanks to Final Fantasy VII, then this should suit your taste equally well.



AVAILABLE:	Now
CATEGORY:	RPG/Adventure
PLAYERS:	One
PUBLISHER:	Sierra
PRICE:	\$89.95
RATING:	TBA
REQUIRED:	P166, 24MB RAM
DESIRED:	P200, 32MB RAM, 3D CARD
SUPPORTS:	DIRECT 3D

PLUS

Visually gorgeous. Pacy, dramatic story with characters you'll grow fond of very quickly.

MINUS

Some interface and control problems. Too short and linear.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
85	82	70

OVERALL

74

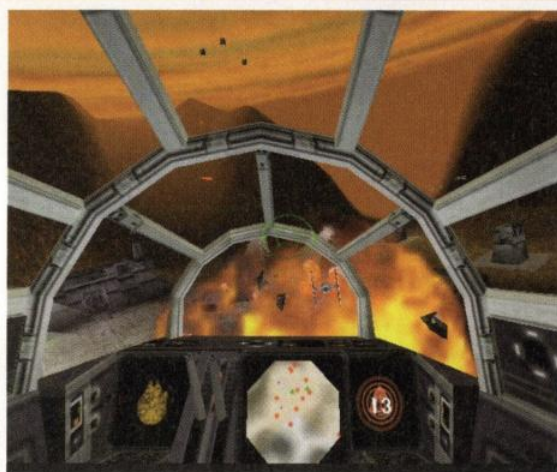
More of an Adventure/RPG hybrid than a genuine RPG. A good introduction, nonetheless.

Rogue Squadron

He's the only one in the office who knows what Gonk is, so **Eliot Fish** seemed like the freak for the job...



HEY DACK, WE COULD START A TOWING BUSINESS



I'D SOONER KISS A WOOKIE!

As a pilot in Rogue Squadron, you're flying a number of deadly missions for the Rebel Alliance. In fact, the game assumes you are Luke Skywalker even though you enter the pilot's name of your choice at the start of the game. The game begins on good old Tatooine, so the sandy landscape is fairly barren, but true to the films. Star Wars nuts will recognise Jabba's Palace on a peak, the Sarlaac Pit, Tusken Raiders running about, Landspeeders zooming through Mos Eisley and even Stormtroopers on Dewbacks. The environments are not terribly detailed, but just about everything you can think of from the films is in there, so that's pretty cool. In fact, there are some lovely touches... like if you fly your X-Wing too close to the ground, sand billows up in a cloud. Whilst it's not recommended, you can also destroy everything you see too - even the T-16s flying through Beggar's Canyon! Much like Shadows of the Empire on the Nintendo 64, Imperial Probe Droids are converging on Mos Eisley, so Rogue Squadron has been sent in to take them out. As soon as you engage in battle, you'll be thrilled by the brilliant sound - apart from the cheesy midi music (authentic Star Wars, but ala cheap synthesiser) - the weapons, explosions and craft noises are simply amazing, and never have they been so accurate in a LucasArts game. Hitting a TIE Bomber and hearing it's wounded moan as it plummets towards the ground is awesome. Protect Mos Eisley, and it's time to move on to some more challenging missions. The game certainly gets harder, from the next mission escorting Rebel ground forces through canyons to later attempting to destroy an AT-AT construction yard. As you play, the difficulty curve gets progressively steeper to the point where you'll be replaying some missions multiple times to "get it right",

The first thing you have to consider with Rogue Squadron, is that it is primarily a Nintendo 64 title, and the PC version is simply a 3D accelerated port. Whilst the PC version was finished first (and thus we are reviewing it first), it helps to keep it in mind that this game is designed for a console, and is very much an "arcade" experience, not a sim like X-Wing Versus TIE Fighter. Once you have that box ticked in your head, Rogue Squadron is thoroughly enjoyable, especially for those of you who love Star Wars. Honestly, without the Star Wars theme, maybe the game wouldn't score as well, but half the experience is reliving classic moments from the Star Wars films, so a lot of the appeal lies in the sound effects, crafts and environments. Gameplay-wise, Rogue Squadron plays a bit like a 3D Nuclear Strike... all the missions are flown near the surface of various planets, and most missions have multiple goals and sometimes time-limited objectives. There's actually a fair bit of challenge here, and it's pure fun all the way...





but once a mission is finished the game is automatically saved. Though the X-wing is the most used craft, other missions will require the use of the Snowspeeder (used in most missions against AT-ATs due to it's handy tow cable), A-Wing (fast fighter craft), the Y-Wing (for some bombing runs), the V-wing (a new craft from the Dark Empire series), and even the Millennium Falcon and Advanced TIE...

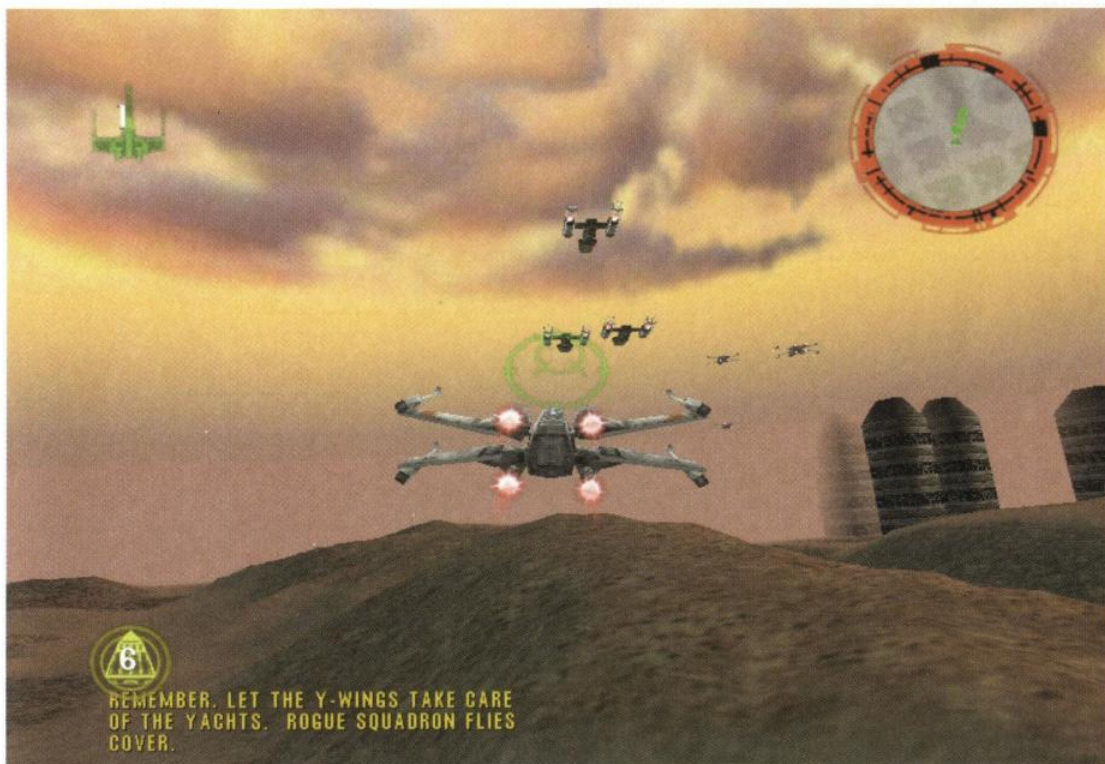


I'M SENDING YOU HOME IN A BOX!

DO OR DO NOT, THERE IS NO TRY.

Rogue Squadron controls well, thanks to a variety of decent camera angles (from the classic third-person Shadows of the Empire perspective, to a great cockpit perspective) and some very steady controls. Because you can roll your craft, and most of the time you'll find yourself banking hard to stay on the tail of TIEs, there is an auto-stabiliser which will right your craft if you get disorientated. Surprisingly, I was rarely frustrated in dogfights, and thanks to a handy crosshair, taking out my opponents was never a great hassle. When piloting the Falcon, the turrets are manned, so they even swivel around and auto-aim at your targets. Whilst games like X-Wing and TIE Fighter are excellent

"sims", Rogue Squadron is the first LucasArts space combat game which actually makes you feel like you're taking part in something from the movies. The visuals, sound and meat and potatoes shoot 'em up action, brings to life the Star Wars movies more than any of their previous games. Some may assume that since it's based on a console game, Rogue Squadron is either easy or lame, but quite the contrary... there are just as many objectives, obstacles and just as much danger in Rogue Squadron as there is in any of the other Star Wars combat games. This is just very much focused on the action, as opposed to running your craft's systems efficiently or conserving your ammo. Rogue Squadron is a blast!



AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: Flight Combat
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: LucasArts
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: G
REQUIRED: P166, 32MB RAM, 3D accelerator required
DESIRED: P11, 64MB RAM
SUPPORTS: 3D hardware, force feedback joysticks
PLUS Great sound effects, pretty visuals, hectic action.
MINUS Some fogging and sometimes barren landscape.
VISUALS SOUND GAMEPLAY 90 92 83
OVERALL 84
That's the PC score, as we reviewed on PC. For the Nintendo 64 add 5%!

Thief: The Dark Project

Master at stealing pens, pencils and erasers from other people's desks in the Hyper office, **Dan Toose** could relate to Thief.

About bloody time! Despite being a fanatical Quake player, falling just short of wearing a big robe with a "Q" on it and sacrificing mouse mats to the gods of gib, I, and I'm sure many other gamers are getting a little tired of every single first person game being about running around killing people with guns. Hexen doesn't escape this group either, as it's just the same thing with a medieval front end... you still wander and kill primarily. Looking Glass Studios have done what someone should have done a long time ago.

guard you can hear really is. The other main feature is a light meter, which you use to determine how well concealed you are, which is of the utmost importance.

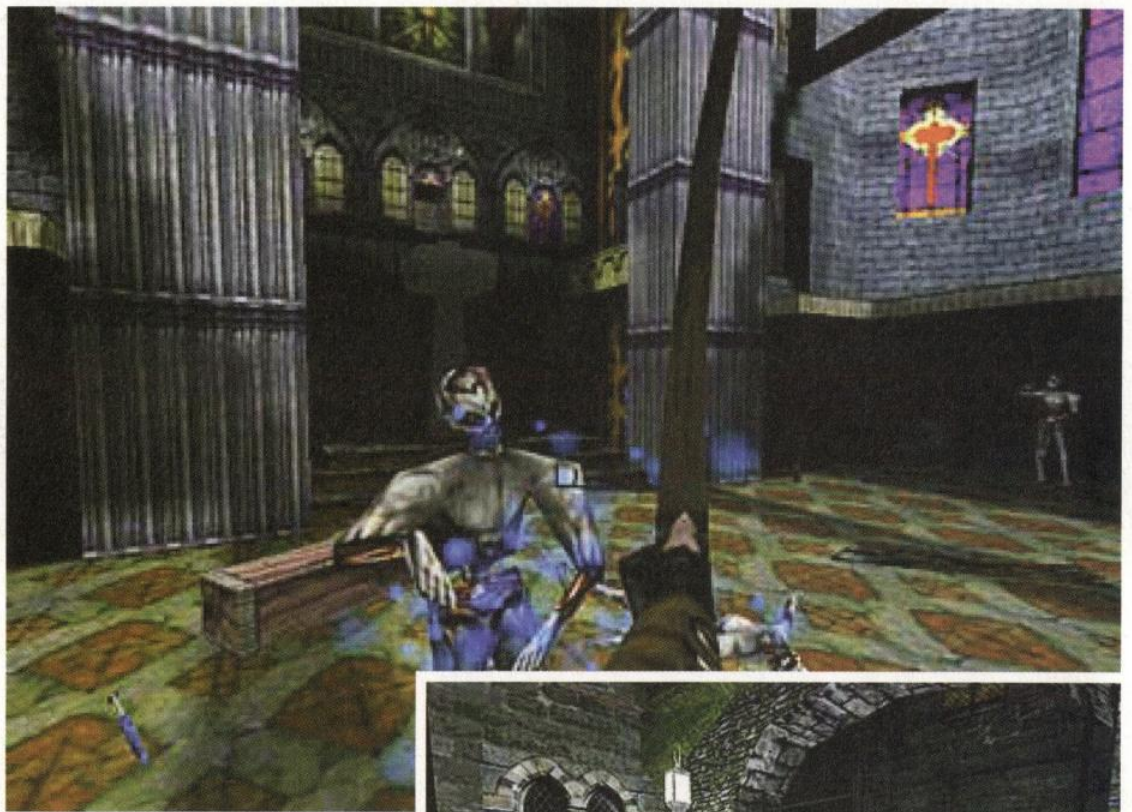
FEEL LEFT IN THE DARK?

Thief's graphics engine is not quite up there with the recent 1st person titles such as Half-Life, Sin or Unreal, however, it's certainly not bad or problematic. The game is for the most part, very dark, but this is heavily tied in with gameplay, and you're more likely to be happy wan-

THE LIGHTWEIGHT ARSENAL



As a thief, you need to travel light, and this is very much felt when it comes to your weapons. You carry a sword (for when things get hairy), a blackjack (to knock your hapless victims out cold), and a bow. Your bow is definitely your real versatile tool, thanks to an assortment of special arrows available. Broadhead arrows are your simple "kill 'em dead!" arrows. Water arrows have two uses... either to put out torches so you can darken the area, or when combined with holy water, these arrows become perfect for taking out the undead that inhabit some of the places you'll visit. Fire arrows do area damage and are quite powerful. Moss arrows are used to soften the ground in an area so you can make less noise when moving over it. Noisemaker arrows are perfect for distracting guards. Gas arrows are pretty self explanatory, creating a nasty gas cloud upon impact. Finally rope arrows are used to suspend a rope from the ceiling, to allow you to reach otherwise inaccessible areas.



HAVE AT YOU!

ORIGINALITY... WOOHOO!

Thief: The Dark Project is a first person game that unlike those before it, is not about killing everything that comes in your path. You play a master thief, Garriot, making your way through a series of missions, that are ultimately about making money. The game is set in a dark medieval world, with a dash of industrial technology thrown in for some variety. Unlike other first person games, you cannot simply wade through your enemies by pulling out the big guns and going ballistic. In fact, the emphasis on stealth is perhaps the primary standout feature to Thief: TDP.

Besides the regular sort of controls that you see in most 1st person games, a couple of extras have been thrown in to suit the stealthy nature of the game. Firstly there is a lean function so you can poke your head around corners or over ledges, without actually stepping out into plain view. This is particularly handy when you're tailing someone, or trying to tell how close that approaching

dering down a dull black corridor than a beautifully decorated one that is well lit. The character models are quite retro, being of similar quality to those in Quake 1... although the texturing is a bit better. Despite the fact that Thief's graphics are a little behind the times if you pull it apart piece by piece, the game as a whole looks good, and in particular the times when you're stalking through the shadows of cobbled streets looks and feels great.

In the same way an RPG doesn't really heavily rely upon the graphics, Thief is quite the same, which is



HAVE AT YOU TOO!



WHY... HAVE AT YOU ALSO!!



unusual for a 1st person game, but considering this is a game of avoiding combat and action rather than embracing it, there's no real need for flashy effects.

While the visuals aren't super for a 1st person game, the sound is excellent, which also ties in heavily with the gameplay. Different surfaces that you move over make varying amounts of noise, and the speed with which you move also directly affects this. Choosing to walk across a strip of carpet rather than on the stone floor may be the difference between life and death. In addition to footsteps and worrying about stealth, there's also plenty of speech in the game which helps paint a picture of what's going on if you do some eavesdropping.

THE SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS...

All the classic skills and tools of the trade are there. With lockpicks to get into those pesky chests. Flash bombs, healing potions, speed potions, and more help you overcome the guards and monsters you'll face. There's even the cleverly hidden pressure plate traps and so forth that will require a keen eye to spot.

There is a catch... Thief has no multiplayer aspect to it, which can probably be attributed to the nature of the game, since it's not about combat. Something else that may bother a few people is that the game is really quite

slow paced. For a master thief, you're not exactly fleet of foot, and those that are quite nimble at first person games may feel like they're in a bit of a straight jacket. It could be argued though that this helps force you to avoid combat when possible, since there's no easy way out using well honed Quake skills or anything. Lastly, there are times where enemy AI simply stuffs up, and you may be hitting someone with a sword and they still can't see you... even though you're in front of them in bright light.

If you're after a superb single player first person game, then there's no need to look past Thief at this stage. A lovely departure from the 1st person shooters that just let you run around and barge your way through the game.



AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: 1st person adventure
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: Eidos
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: TBA
REQUIRED: P166, 32MB RAM, 200MB HD space
DESIRED: P200, 32 MB RAM, 3D accelerator
SUPPORTS: Direct3D, Glide

PLUS
Takes the 1st person game down a non-cliché branch.

MINUS
The odd AI bug now and then. No multiplayer. A bit slow for those wanting to race around

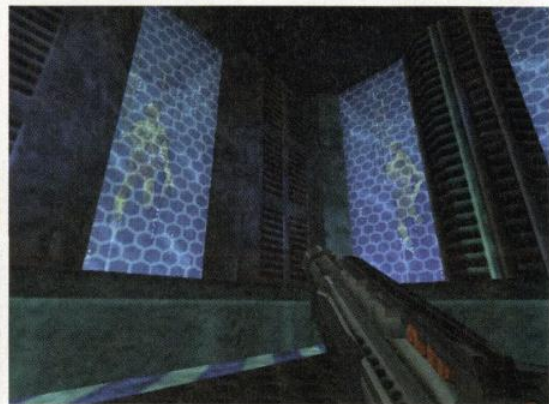
VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
81	90	90

OVERALL
89

A very welcome departure from the usual "Gimme a gun!" 1st person games.

Blood 2: The Chosen

In this year of killer first person shooters, how will the bloodiest of the lot fare? **Matt Bauer** has Monolith's latest in his sights.



THE MALTESER GUN STRIKES A DEADLY BLOW!!

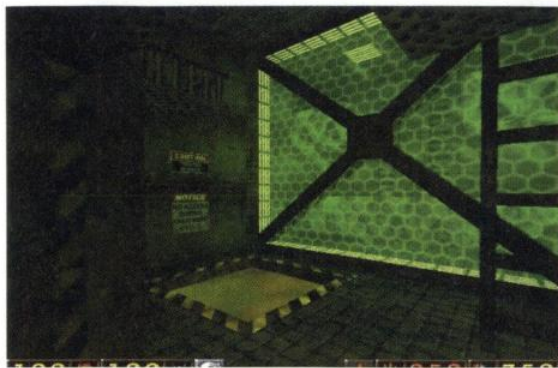
The development of first person perspective action games are now-days well into maturity. The continual improvement in this genre is largely due to groundbreaking games like Wolfenstein, Doom, Quake, Unreal and now Half-life. These were all must-buys for the action gamer as soon as they came off the shelf and they almost always lived up to the hype. On the other side of the scale, however, there were some serious flops. Blood 2 probably fits somewhere in the middle of this category and considering some superb recent releases like Quake 2 mission pack 2, Half life and to some extent Sin (if it wasn't so damn buggy), Blood 2 has chosen a very trying time to rear it's head.

LOTS OF CHARACTER

In the single player game, you choose to play one of the characters (Caleb, Ophelia, Ishmael or Gabriella) from the group known as The Chosen. Each one has slightly different characteristics that set them apart but all are basically lean mean killing machines.

Monolith productions have developed their own 3D engine for Blood 2 (and Shogo M.A.D) which is efficient and graphics for the most part are quite spectacular.

However, in some cases, the design aspect is where the engine is let down a little. Monolith have tried to make the environment bleak, murky and unpleasant. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm all for the whole bleak/murky/unpleasant bit; especially when it fits in so well with the story of undead creatures walking the streets with a military arsenal at their disposal trying to annihilate each other. However, this effect, along with some



MAYBE A QUICK SEX CHANGE BEFORE I MOVE ON?



twitch a little).

Of course in a game as sadistic as this one there are plenty of innocent civilians to ho into if you do get the urge; and after hearing some of their smart-ass comments, you'll want to put them out of their (and your) misery as well.

CUSTOMISING YOUR CARNAGE

Obviously multiplayer is a big part of this type of game and Blood 2 supports the usual direct modem, Internet and LAN based gaming. Each character has four stats (such as strength and resistance) that can be used to decide who you will use. Once you have selected, you can allocate points from a limited resource in order boost certain stats that you may feel are lacking in that particular character (or in your style of gameplay).

Blood 2 is by no means an innovator and definitely not a groundbreaker in the world of first person shooters but it does have some very cool features that will appeal to the bloodthirsty gamer. Six to twelve months ago, perhaps it may have been a best seller, but nowadays, it doesn't quite make it that far.

occasionally simple level design can sometimes make the scenery a little dull. Fortunately this is not the case throughout the game as levels such as a museum and some sort of science research area spice things up a bit.

DOES IT HURT?

A cool feature of the game is the way enemies react to being hit. With the less powerful weapons (like the pistol, shotgun, or Mac-10) each round makes the recipient recoil back a step in a stream of blood that sprays over the surroundings. Their little death twitches once they've hit the floor make it all worth while. Naturally, the larger weapons don't allow for much twitching after impact (well...maybe a few of the bits

THE ARSENAL



One of the strongest aspects of Blood 2 is the large array of weaponry that you can find along the way. There are over 15 weapons in all and most of them (as is becoming increasingly popular) have a secondary method of fire. This results in a healthy range of firepower that you can use to exterminate anyone and everyone who happens to look at you funny. The weapons are quite detailed and look very good while the sound effects for each one are powerful and suite the weapon well.

Some of the cooler weapons to note are:

M16 ASSAULT RIFLE:

A classic and one of my favorites of the game. It has a high rate of fire but not so much that you run out of ammo after one burst. Secondary fire: Grenade Launcher

SAWED -OFF SHOTGUN:

Only fires one barrel at a time, takes a long time to reload and is only effective at short range but dag-nab-it, I love the old fella "sniff".

HOWITZER:

This is one serious piece of hardware that packs an incredible punch. Just make sure you're in a big room when you use it. It takes a while to reload but it is well worth it.

TW-X59 TESLA CANNON:

A very cool weapon that fires balls of electricity at a fairly high rate. The secondary fire releases a large single electrical explosion that'll fry most badies on the spot.



100 100 100 050 500

AVAILABLE: Now
CATEGORY: 1st person shooter
PLAYERS: 1-Multi
PUBLISHER: Monolith/GT
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: MA15+
REQUIRED: P166MHz, 32MB RAM, 175MB HD space
DESIRED: P233MHz, 64MB RAM, 3D Accelerator
SUPPORTS: Direct3D, (Glide patch to come supposedly)

PLUS
Great range of firepower and cool sound effects.

MINUS
Level design could be better and a few minor bugs need to be ironed out.

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
78	83	75

OVERALL
76
Good fun, but nothing spectacularly new to make it stand out in the crowd of 3D shooters.

Viva Football

PlayStation

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: SPORTS
PLAYERS: 1-2
PUBLISHER: VIRGIN
PRICE: \$79.95
RATING: G
SUPPORTS: DUAL SHOCK

This has been said before, but looking at Viva Football, it needs to be said again. When you make a game that has been done time and time again, you really need to look to make it cutting edge... Better or at the very least, on par than the current titles in the given genre.

Where do I start? Visually, Viva Soccer is not only inferior to the current lineup of soccer games available on the PlayStation, but even the oldest games on this system. Quite frankly FIFA '96 rocked visually for its time, and it still looks better than Viva. Player animation is vaguely reasonable, but in general the visuals are a muddy mess that really fall way short of a modern soccer game.

Sound... How about some commentary? Every other soccer game under the sun has it, it's not like there's another aspect of the game that's so strong that we can live without it.

How about the controls? Getting a successful pass away generally requires you to hold down the pass button for a while. This totally ruins any



chances you have of getting some deft passing going and making an interesting (and realistic) attack upfield. Pretty much every soccer game released in the past 2 years has made passing easy, and this is just a step backwards to the dark ages where you struggled with game mechanics more than the other team.

Finally, how about the AI? Unless you manually change players using a button on your pad, you keep controlling the same player. This even happens when the ball actually comes to rest at the feet of one of your players. How about some common sense here and actually give you control NOW, rather than have to unintuitively do it manually.

Even soccer fans won't get any real pleasure out of Viva Football... Go for FIFA 99 or ISS Pro.

DAN TOOSE

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
49	55	35	40

Delta Force

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: FPS
PLAYERS: 1-MULTI
PUBLISHER: NOVALOGIC
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: MA
REQUIRED: PENTIUM 166 MMX, 16MB RAM, QUAD SPEED CD-ROM
DESIRED: PENTIUM II, 64MB RAM



Delta Force is a FPS that simulates likely combat situations in five of the world's hot spots. Novalogic are well known for their combat sims, but this is their first attempt at ground based squad warfare. They've done a pretty good job, too.

There are five different campaigns to choose from - Peru, Chad, Indonesia, Novoya Zemelya and Uzbekistan, with mostly linear progression through missions in each. Each location is modelled quite convincingly and appropriately. Missions take place in vast outdoor environments, with awesome terrain and countless possible strategies. Tactical use of terrain is important, as one hit and you're dead.

You're accompanied on each mission by a number of team members who, for the most part, are entirely useless. You can't tell them what to do, but at least they can help draw the fire away from yourself. As you'd expect, Delta Force has options a plenty in weapons, sidearms and other combat gear. Before each mission,

you can change your kit depending on the situation. This choice will affect how you can approach the level, so choose wisely.

Enemy AI is pretty poor. At times they'll find cover, try and gain a better tactical position, or fan out to try and hunt you down. At other times, they just stand there, or run around madly for no apparent reason. Multiplayer is where Delta Force will excel, however. The Novaworld server caters for plenty of game styles, and the extensive terrain and realistic weapons will really come into their own.

Graphically, Delta Force is average. There's no 3D accelerator support, as it uses a voxel based 3D engine, and unfortunately this means that anything in the distance is horribly grainy. For the most part, it looks good, but anything less than a p2 and you're struggling for detail and a decent framerate.

CAM SHEA

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
78	85	82	80



NHRA Drag Racing

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: DRAG RACING SIMULATOR
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: GREMLIN
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: G
REQUIRED: P133, 16 MB RAM, 3D ACCELERATOR.
DESIRED: P200, 64 MB RAM, STEERING WHEEL

If you've never seen Speed Week, drag racing features two dragsters on a quarter-mile strip. There are two flavours of car, both present in NHRADR- sedan-like funny cars and all-out dragsters. Boasting up to 6,000 hp with nitrous oxide injection, they run sub 6-second times at 300+ mph.

But hold on - a straight length of track offers less variation than even a brain-dead Nascar loop... leaving only the engine to master. With one forward gear the gameplay basically consists of a big burnout before a quick launch on the green light. Once powering down the track, you need to avoid the walls, watch for the front of the car lifting and maintain traction at the rear wheels by laying off the throttle. Over the finish line, pop the chutes and hit the brakes... race over.

The cars look good, belching smoke and flame. Four views are available. The sound, recorded live, is evocative and well done.

Among a selection of cars you also choose a sponsor and a crew chief who tunes the car in his own style. You can choose to tune the car, considering temperature, altitude, supercharger boost, compression, advance and nitro content, and the balance and spoiler incidence. Test drive, have single races or enter a tournament where you manage your money.

NHRA Drag Racing is well executed, but the subject is questionable in simulation value. Drag racing fans probably wouldn't be disappointed and would probably boost the gameplay mark, but a racing title without handling will wear thin fast with any other gamers.

THOM MCINTYRE

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
74	76	58	64



Pinball Soccer 98

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: PINBALL
PLAYERS: 1-4
PUBLISHER: GREMLIN
PRICE: \$49.95
RATING: G
REQUIRED: P133, WIN95/98, 16 MB RAM, CD-ROM, MOUSE
DESIRED: P166, 32 MB RAM, 3D ACCELERATOR

Part of the sudden rush of pinball titles recently released, Pinball Soccer 98's title doesn't leave any room for mystery.

After a slick video, menus prompt you for game and player options. Single play is just like any table at the shops for up to four people; double allows head to head play, split-screen or via network.

The table contains a fair complement of gadgetry like tunnels, bumpers and a neat swivelling camera. At the top, four players cover the opposition's goal - you can knock them out. A mechanical goalie resists your attempts to score. You cover your goal with the flippers and you can also shove the table left, right or up. Quite forgiving, it even warns you before it tilts. The scoreboard has a host of animations, befitting any modern table.

The perspective initially looks a bit squashed but quickly feels fine, and the ball reacts fast and naturally - the physics are solid and glitch-free.

Sound wise, a couple of soccer style themes lurk in the background, but the table sounds are realistic and the bumpers produce a satisfying kick.

Aside from the choice of team colours and name, other soccer elements come in the form of a giant soccer ball that appears in the middle of the field and bounces your ball around for extra points. Five a side mode puts yep, five balls on the table which keeps you busy, and the other team's players and a ref even run onto the field and magnetically manoeuvre the ball away from you.

The graphics could be somewhat sharper but work fine, and different table layouts would improve longevity. But it's playable and entertaining; soccer fans should take a look.

THOM MCINTYRE

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
73	71	74	73

Viper Racing

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: RACING SIMULATION
PLAYERS: 1-MULTI
PUBLISHER: SIERRA
PRICE: TBA
RATING: G
REQUIRED: PENTIUM 133, 32MB RAM, QUAD SPEED CD-ROM
DESIRED: PENTIUM II, 64MB RAM, 3D ACCELERATOR

Hidden behind its allusive title, Viper Racing is a simulation of the Dodge Viper... duh?! All the trappings of realism are here, from the first class physics model through to the extensive customisation options.

For the committed, there's an extensive career mode, or you can tone down the realism to suit your driving skills and/or inclination. Once you're racing there are heaps of different viewpoints to select from, including an x-ray view which sits in the cockpit, but ignores the casing. In this view you can actually watch the tires and shocks working away as you careen around the track. The best part is that you can apply any of the camera angles to any of the other cars, and study both their AI and their setup. Indeed, the other drivers are highly competent racers bound by the laws of physics, so studying their tactics can really help.

The damage modelling in this game is amazingly realistic. At first you'll just drive into stuff at top speed to marvel at the way the front



wheel ends up in the boot, or how the rear axle snapped leaving the wheels sunken. Aside from this though, the graphics are really quite average. Nondescript is probably the best way to describe them, as everything is drab and unimaginative. This goes for the track design as well - it just isn't very interesting.

Indeed, Viper Racing has none of the romantic allure of the historic tracks, cars and drivers of Grand Prix Legends, which is a shame considering its technical proficiency. Dodge Viper freaks will lap this game up, but Viper Racing amounts to a fantastic physics model wasted on dull tracks.

CAM SHEA

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
78	81	74	75

Deer Hunt 3D

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: DEER HUNTING
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: VALUSOFT
PRICE: \$49.95
RATING: M
REQUIRED: P133, 16MB RAM
DESIRED: YOUR MONEY BACK
SUPPORTS: DIRECT3D, 3DFX

How in Satan's bottom did this ever become a genre? Normal human beings would have utterly ignored the original Deer Hunter and prevented the seemingly endless pathetic variations it has spawned, but somehow, some idiots out there bought lots of copies of it. Now here we are with ten-billion hunting games, from Turkeys to Deer to Geese. All of them offer you the same thrill - kill a defenseless animal enjoying a munch on some grass with your high-powered rifle. Or even better, get the high ground and plunge a few deadly arrows into it's belly. How exactly is this gameplay? Here's how Deer Hunter plays... choose your tool of death, choose the colour of your camouflage gear, then pick where you'd like to hunt out of three locations. If you're unlucky it may even be foggy and raining. Then you have the astounding ability to walk towards some 3D accelerated rocks and trees, but wait don't run you may scare the deer - oh how appropriate, there's no run button anyway. Now, if



you spot a deer peacefully strolling towards the lake for a sip of water, raise your gun and take a shot. Don't walk with your gun raised, that could be dangerous... oh, actually you can't move whilst you hold your gun in a horizontal position. Okay... so now shoot at the deer. Bang! It runs a bit and falls dead. Now you walk over to it and get presented with a still graphic which looks like it was drawn by an eight-year-old of some dickhead with bumfluff on his face cradling a dead animal. Then marvel as you can place it's head on the wall of your log cabin. Tops! Let's do that again!

ELIOT FISH

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
79	70	10	15



Asghan

PC

AVAILABLE: FEBRUARY
CATEGORY: ACTION/ADVENTURE
PLAYERS: 1
PUBLISHER: GREMLIN INTERACTIVE
PRICE: \$89.95
RATING: TBA
REQUIRED: P133, 16MB RAM
DESIRED: P166, 32MB RAM, 3D ACCELERATOR.

After sitting through the rather rousing introduction to Asghan, my jaw literally dropped. Our hero arrives, standing at the bow of a ship, at a rather small dock on the coast of some mountainous island. The scene looked almost exactly like that from another hugely anticipated game in development. Could it be that I was handed an Ultima Ascension demo or even preview version by mistake?

Unfortunately, it was not. French developers Silmarils have presented us medieval fantasy game, looking (and playing) very much like Tomb Raider, the graphics are of a very high standard (well, they're comparable to the stills of Ultima Ascension - enough said). Although when it comes to camera angles, the game really does fall down sometimes. Moving along cliff faces is quite dubious. The only questionable part is the "rotating" game options a la TR. Imitation is said to be the most sincere form of flattery, but c'mon.

Looking like Core's TR, Asghan even plays a lot like TR with a few additions. There's a first person perspective, and Asghan, the warrior prince out to save his kingdom wields a sword rather than a couple of uzis. To battle the sixty types of enemies out to get in your way, there's also an emphasis on using the many magical spells at your disposal. The effect, both in game and visual, are spectacular.

The action is plentiful, and at times, Asghan is damn challenging. The main appeal of Asghan is being able to play a Tomb Raider style game that does the genre justice, as well giving us a fantasy/medieval setting featuring a fantastic magic system. For a quick, fun thrill.

MARCH STEPNIK

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
79	79	70	75



Warhammer 40,000 Chaos Gate

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: STRATEGY
PLAYERS: 1-4
PUBLISHER: SSI/GAMES WORKSHOP
PRICE: \$TBA
RATING: TBA
REQUIRED: P133, 32MB RAM, 8XCD.
DESIRED: P200, 64MB RAM, GRAPHICS ACCELERATOR.

A Warhammer table-top strategy game to PC strategy games makes perfect sense. The Warhammer phenomenon is absolutely huge, and judging by the way the other PC Warhammer games have rushed off the shelves, there are plenty of people wanting to get a fix of the action minus all that bickering, junk food, and lead figurines being inserted up the... The question is whether or not Chaos Gate is just one for the fans or for any strategy game enthusiast.

Chaos Gate is a turn based strategy game, sans building or resource management. You pick your forces from your ship and then launch your strike on the enemy. There are 15 linked scenarios as well as a mission generator. Units also gain experience as they do battle, even from random missions, which can be saved.

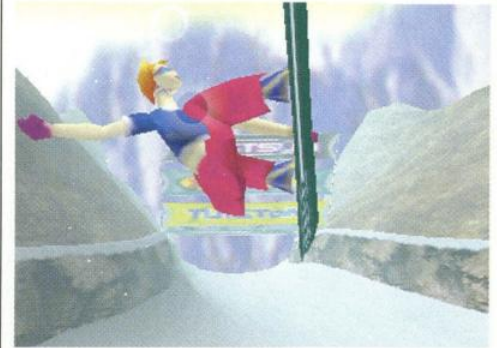
SSI have gone for unit quality over unit quantity. Each marine (Warhammer jargon for unit) has stacks of unique moves up their sleeve, as well as (supposedly) 25MB worth of animation each. For the Warhammer fans, the franchise aspect comes out in the ability to use some of the well known vehicles featured in the WH universe, like Predator tanks, Dreadnoughts, Land Speeders and Rhino APC's.

A useful feature is the mouse pointer representing your helmet's HUD. Run it over an enemy (to attack it), and you get a concise display of that units vital statistics.

Otherwise, Chaos Gate is your standard turn based combat-strategy title. Good, but with a huge choice of strategy games out there at the moment, definitely try before you buy, especially if you're not familiar with turn based strategy.

MARCH STEPNIK

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
78	83	86	84



Snow Wave Avalanche

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: SNOWBOARDING
PLAYERS: 1-MULTI
PUBLISHER: MIDAS INTERACTIVE
PRICE: TBA
RATING: G
REQUIRED: P133, 16MB RAM
DESIRED: P200, 32MB RAM, 3D ACCELERATOR

It was only a matter of time before a snowboarding game popped up on the PC. It was also only a matter of time before a really bad one came along. Lo and behold, here it is! The word "crappola" seems to fit this one rather well.

Any anticipation of an entertaining game with lush 3D accelerated graphics soon evaporated when I stuck the CD in and the game ran instantly without any installation process. After a bit of investigating, it turns out that this entire game (soundtrack excluded) clocks in at around 15MB!! Eeww.

An entertaining game this is not. For starters, there's no way to get an explanation of the control layout, let alone remap it. As a consequence, all I was able to do was duck and turn. I suspect, however, that there may be little more to it than that. You see, the only playmodes are a race where you go down a boring, linear run and swerve between the flags, and a race along a straight course where you (apparently) pull tricks off the drops in the track. That's it.

The graphics are the best part of the package, but that's certainly not saying much. The trackside scenery (and I do mean track) is good, and there is a reasonable impression of speed, but the snow doesn't undulate... it's entirely smooth. Graphical frills are non-existent. The rider models are quite plain, and the way they wobble their arms (like on a tight rope) in the air is intensely irritating. Still, you'd expect that of a game so shallow that everything it has to offer can be seen in less than five minutes. Amateur at best.

CAM SHEA

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
68	50	20	38

Buggy

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: RC RACING
PLAYERS: 1-MULTI
PUBLISHER: GREMLIN INTERACTIVE
PRICE: \$69.95
RATING: G
REQUIRED: P166, 16MB RAM
DESIRED: P200, 32MB RAM, 3D ACCELERATOR
SUPPORTS: JOYSTICKS AND JOYPADS



compelling, and there's a conspicuous absence of atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the combination of sensitive handling and the way the buggies jump and hop across the terrain also makes for some confusing racing. It's realistic, yes, but fun, no. As you'd imagine, consistent frame rates are rather important for this brand of racing action, but you'll need some PC grunt. Smooth racing can be kissed goodbye without 3D acceleration unless you're running the game at 320x200 with all the options turned down. It's relatively smooth with 3D acceleration, but the code could certainly be a little tighter. Buggy is by no means a bad game, it just fails to enthuse with other great racing titles around now.

CAM SHEA

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
80	75	72	74

A misspent youth without remote control cars is like a misspent adolescence without ganja. I'm sure most of you remember setting up devious runs around the living room and backyard, then racing against friends. Well, Buggy is here to get you back in that RC racing groove, sans batteries no less. Actually, you'll need a pretty hefty PC, but what the hey?

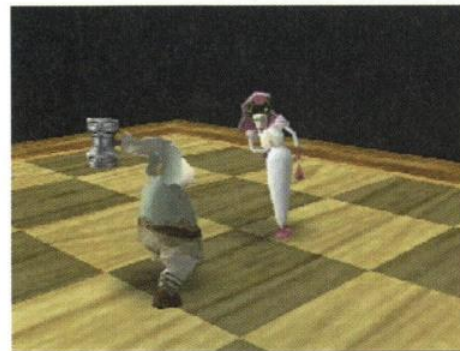
The remote control buggies on offer here feel just like the real thing, with sensitive controls and mean acceleration. Just think of the courses you dreamed up when you were a kid and you're getting close to the tracks on offer here. We're talking fantasy runs through jungles, cities, swamplands and beaches to name but a few. The tracks are vibrant and colourful, with good texture mapping. The terrain is great, with jumps, bumps and dips a plenty.

Gremlin really haven't done too much wrong here, and yet something isn't right. It's the big G - gameplay. Buggy simply isn't all that exciting to play. The handling and track design just aren't

Virtual Chess 64

Nintendo 64

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: CHESS
PLAYERS: 1-4
PUBLISHER: TITUS
PRICE: TBA
RATING: G



but they become rather tedious after watching them for the second time and it is impossible to study the game while they are playing, which is annoying. In the 2D top down view the board can be changed to a number of different colours with different symbols being used to represent pieces. VC64 also has a whole bunch of famous games to replay and analyse to increase the understanding of different game complexities. VC64 is the game to take you from chess novice to beater of grand masters, although don't go to tournaments looking for animated battle scenes.

ROSS CLARKSMITH

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
81	75	89	79

Chess, the game of kings, its been around for hundreds and hundreds of years and hasn't changed a bit, so what if anything is the benefit of having it running on your Nintendo64? Well first of all there are very few chess freaks that like playing against themselves, it gets kind of tedious and the conversation is dead boring. If you get that chess urge and you don't have a friend handy, you can play against a word champion class engine that can calculate up to 3000 moves per second. If your name isn't Nikoli and you have not been playing chess for long enough to be a grand master, then Virtual Chess 64 has a few features to help. It can teach you to play chess, from the different moves to different strategies. There are 16 different levels of skill, and if the game spots the player make three silly moves, it switches on its artificial stupidity and will make stupid moves of its own. If the player still gets stuck, the game will suggest moves to make.

There is an isometric view of the board that jumps into an animated battle mode when a piece is taken. There are 60 different animations,



Microsoft Pinball Arcade

PC

AVAILABLE: NOW
CATEGORY: PINBALL
PLAYERS: 1-4
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
PRICE: TBA
RATING: G
REQUIRED: P90, 16MB RAM
DESIRED: P133, 16MB RAM

Pinball tables are one of the oldest surviving forms of entertainment in modern times. The changes that have been made from the first tables without flippers, to the latest machines' multiple ramps, modes, and video sequences have ensured a loyal following for decades. Microsoft has gone right back to the 1930's and taken one influential pinball machine from each decade to give gamers a fantastic cross-section of pinball history. It all starts with Baffle Ball, a game that gave Pinball its name. It has no flippers, but a series of pins to strategically guide the ball into holes on the table for a high score, and pockets at the bottom for a low score.

The second table is Humpty Dumpty, the very first table to have flippers, which brought about the end of flipperless tables in only three months. Other tables include Knock Out, the first game with video sequences, Slick Chicks, from the early 60's when milk bar culture really took off. The 70's provide Spirit of 76 a game full of American icons for their bi-centennial year. The Haunted House table, was the first to provide a three level playing field, and a few of the older pinball fans should remember the complexities of Cue Ball Wizard.

All of the tables are careful recreations of the originals, with an amazing attention to detail. The visuals are faithful to the real thing and the sounds are what you would expect to hear coming from a real table. All the controls can be customised, and a nudge can be made from any side of the table. Pinball arcade may not be able to replace the felling of a real table, but for a day when you can't get down to the milk bar, it is a very good alternative.

ROSS CLARKSMITH

VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	OVERALL
86	81	89	88

CHALLENGE.AU'S AUSTRALIA VS NEW ZEALAND QUAKE MATCH



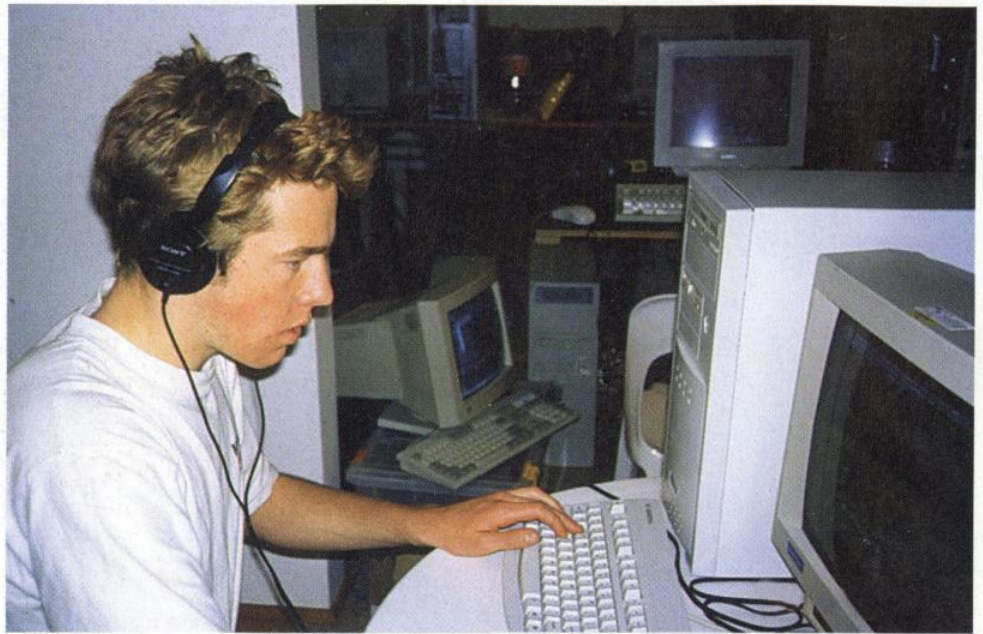
It's been a very big month in terms of Quake competitions, and of all the events going on, the Challenge.au Australia versus New Zealand Quake match one was certainly the one of the greatest international interest.

After each of the state teams from around Australia played one another for the right to represent Australia, in the end, NSW GolSyd team had a hard fought victory over Victorian team to become the national team.

The New Zealand team consisted of Immortal, Ajax, Wolph, and Dynamop... four of their most outstanding players. They came over to Australia, and promptly smacked around all the state teams that didn't quite make it to represent Australia. After not losing a single round thus far, New Zealand were looking like favourites for the big match, but the Australian team (Tim, Jac Deth, Faust and Blind) weren't interested in what the polls may have been saying, as they won the match, three straight rounds to nil, with each round being more conclusive than the one before it.

There were also a bunch of dual matches played afterwards between the NZ players and some of Australia's best, including the seemingly unstoppable Reload, who we're hoping will go on to play and defeat more international opponents (carn Thresh come git some!).

A big thanks to the Village, who sponsored the event, making this international match possible. If you'd like to check out more about the lead up and history of this encounter, head to (<http://www.challenge-au.com/>).



The Village AU vs NZ scores

Game 1: Australia 92 defeated New Zealand 70

Game 2: Australia 141 defeated New Zealand 64

Game 3: Australia 133 defeated New Zealand 39

Tim top scored all round with a grand total of 105

The Dual Matches

Players	dm2	dm4	dm6
Dynamop vs Booker	13-3	14-6	
Wolph vs Malby	4-9	6-5	13-1
Ajax vs Kabas	3-11	15-12	7-12
Immy vs Reload	2-22	6-15	15-29
Dynamop vs Frog	4-0	10-5	



IMPULSE '98 - WIREPLAY LAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

On the 5th and 6th of December, one of Victoria's leading bunch of Quake enthusiasts, the Sons of Quad, staged the LAN event of the year for the Quake 1 & 2 community... Impulse '98 - The Wireplay LAN championships.

When you walked in you saw 2 levels of a huge building... Upstairs had a Wireplay cinema room with previews of games, with a couple of computer stalls with games and hardware. Downstairs was full of desks & chairs for the couple hundred contestants and spectators. Players were greeted at the door and dog tags were issued as passes.

The venue was the Melbourne Showgrounds exhibition centre which provided a huge amount of space for this great event. There was a circular area with a space in the middle for people to sit for the finals, to help make this more of a spectator sport.

Competitions were held for Quake duel, team deathmatch, and team fortress... and of course Quake 2 duel and team deathmatch.

If you'd like to find out more about this event, check out the Impulse '98 web page... which will probably become the Impulse '99 web page sooner or later! (<http://impulse98.playnow.com.au/>)

The winners!

Quake 1 Duel comp

- 1st. [AO]Reload
- 2nd. Tim[BM]
- 3rd. Lithium[Ease]
- 4th. [AO]VuduChild

Quake 1 Team DM comp

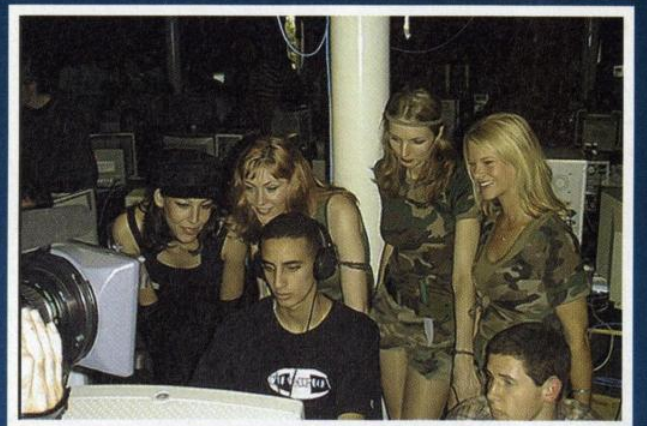
- 1st NSW
Tim, Faust, Jac Deth, Blind
- 2nd AshOck 2
Lint of Death, Malby, Reload, Mallanox

Quake 2 Duel comp

- 1st. [TR]Hellfire
- 2nd. Dae Breaker[DG]
- 3rd. Whitey[WAR]
- 4th. Dethon[WAR]

Quake 2 Team DM comp

- 1st Terminal Retribution 1
Hellfire, Psyc, Lecker, Ratsack
- 2nd Coots
LG, Dexter, Predator, Master Chicken



Team Fortress comp

- 1st Third Eye
- 2nd Ragin Innumerable Buffaloes

Female Quake 1 Duel

- 1st Bitchy[TS]
- 2nd. Maggi
- 3rd. Sexy



HALF LIFE ONLINE

Getting bored with Quake 1 and Quake 2? Well, Half-Life is developing a following, and this will hopefully offer some more variety to the online action gaming scene here in Australia. Half-Life does however require a bit of tweaking to get working as smoothly as people would like on the Internet, so we suggest you go check

out these two sites which will help you keep up to date with the latest patches, news and info on Half Life.

Half Life Australia
<http://members.xoom.com/morphdog/hl/>
 Half Life at AXG
<http://www.axg.net/half-life/>

AQL - Australian Quake 2 League

The AQL has to this point been a rather informal and fun way for Quake 2 clans in Australia to play one another online. Rankings had been done purely on wins, with no sort of divisional ranking or formal organisation. If this has put anyone off the AQL, I'd advise they check out the AQL site again, as the new season will see new rules and means of ranking. (<http://ausquake.newsnninja.com/aql/>).

To finish up the first season, the top 8 clans went through a knockout competition to leave the Clan Wars finalists, Malevolence and Draconic Guild to play each

other yet again, this time for the first AQL title. The final was all set to be played at MPU in Sydney, just after our deadline, so we'll announce the winners next month.

Quake 2 way out west!

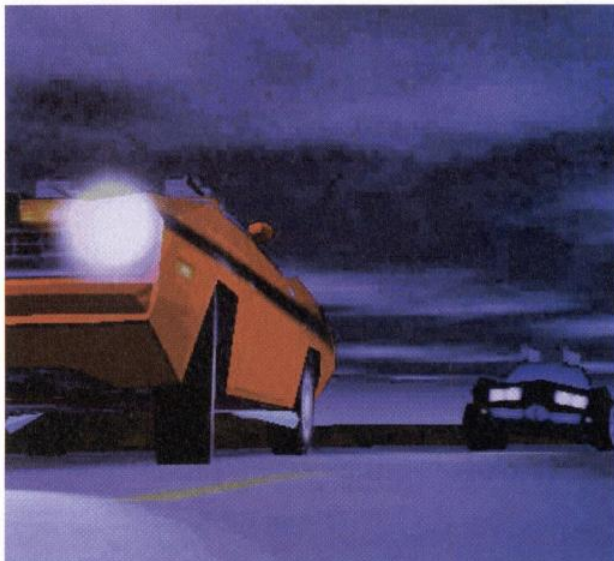
Being so far away from the rest of the country, the WA Quake 2 players can't get reliable connections to most of the servers in Australia over in the east, so here's the URL for the Perth Quake 2 Ladder (<http://www.iinet.net.au/stomp/>). Good to see the community out there has itself together!

Auto Vigilantes... Funky!

For those of you out there that are quite determined that you have the most bad ass set of virtual fluffy dice in the world, here's a ladder that may interest you. The AVA racing and combat ladders are the perfect way for a competitive Interstate '76 player to get some serious gaming action going on. The ladder seems to be run as an ongoing competition, so you can just join up and start playing.

Here's the URL to take you to the AVA ladders. (<http://ava.cybergoyale.ml.org/avaladder/>)

We can only anticipate that Interstate '82 will have a similar ladder or even be run by the same people next year.



THE MULTIPLAYER DIRECTORY

As more leagues and ladders appear, this list will continue to grow. If you run, or compete in a ladder or league not listed here, please let us know and we'll add it.

National Gaming Services

ACGP - <http://www.acgp.com.au/>
 Australian Computer Gamer Professionals

Wireplay - <http://www.wireplay.com.au/>
 An online gaming service currently catering to Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane

Multiplay - <http://www.multiplay.com.au/>
 An online gaming service that is the official Australian licensee of the TEN (Total Entertainment Network) client

Major State LAN events

VML - <http://www.newsnninja.com/vml/>
 Victorian Multiplayer League. The major Victorian regular LAN event. Will be the Victorian part of the national league.

MPU - <http://www.mpu.com.au/>
 Multiplayer United. A monthly LAN event, that will be hosting SGL (Sydney Gaming League) for the national leagues.

Regen - <http://www.regen.powerup.com.au/lan/>
 The major Queensland LAN event, which is host to the QGL (Queensland Gaming League) for the national league.

Quake Scene

Challenge-AU - <http://www.challenge-au.com/>
 Run by Hoony, this site is dedicated to International Quake challenges.

AusQuake - <http://ausquake.newsnninja.com/>
 The main Australian Quake 2 web page.

Quake.AU - <http://www.quake-au.net/>
 A top Quake news site that covers a broad range of stuff, run by Malby.

OZTFL - <http://oztfl.newsnninja.com/>
 An Australian Team Fortress League.

OTFCR - <http://otfcr.kanga.com.au/>
 The other major Australian Team Fortress League.

Q2 League - <http://sas.ml.org/q2league/>
 A Quake 2 Capture the Flag league, based on the Power servers.

Starcraft

KSCL - <http://gameserver1.ogn.aust.com/leagues/sc/>
 Kali Starcraft League. A dedicated Australian Starcraft ladder, separate from the Battle.Net ladder.

GAUNTLET LEGENDS

ATARI

► TIM LEVY

1954- J.R.R. Tolkien launches the first Lord of the Rings book.

Late 1970's-Dungeons & Dragons (a Tolkien inspired game) becomes the most popular role playing game.

1985- Gauntlet (a Dungeons & Dragons inspired game) hits the arcades hard with one of the first highly addictive 4 player games.

1998- Gauntlet reinvents itself using 90's technology.

Gauntlet, for those who were too young or poor to afford the coin eating machine, was a view from above maze shooter where you took on the guise of either a wizard, elven archer, a sword wielding Valkyrie or an axe wielding Warrior. An innovative aspect designed to deal with the time constraints imposed in the arcade

addictive view from above 3D platforming role playing shoot'em up carnage fest.

There are four 'worlds' to explore in your quest to locate hidden runestones which will entitle you to a showdown with the games biggest boss- Skorne: an evil dragon and lover of runestones. Each world (Mountain, Forest, Castle or Desert) has its own distinct flavour and nasties to deal with. A huge range of traps cover every surface. A vast array of enemies pour out from 'generators' (a.k.a monster factories). Arrows and bombs fly in over head. Treasure chests and barrels hold either bonuses(gold, food & power-ups) or trouble (Death, poison or traps). Walls are demolished or unlocked to reveal hidden rooms. Floor switches acti-

enough room for the characters to wander. Often you will find your self having shoot outs with enemies who are standing on another plane or level. The sound effects are also V.cool, though it is the game commentary that is the most useful yet funny.

Some tips:It doesn't always pay to follow the directional arrows as they only show you the way to the exit not to the runestones and hidden rooms.

- Use the lie of the land to funnel the hordes of the undead into an advantageous firing position or into a traps' killing zone.

- Always take out the monster generators pronto. use the X-Ray glasses to see what is inside the treasure chests. If 'Death' is inside, bomb him with magic



was that your health meter decreased through time and battle damage. It was also one of the first arcade games which introduced the art of teamwork -Warrior and Valkyrie to the front to take the brunt on their armour while the archer and wizard using long range attacks and spells from the back.

Gauntlet, although a classic in every right, has now been superseded in virtually every aspect. Every thing you loved from the original ("Warrior needs food ...badly") has been transplanted successfully into an

vate access to other rooms and runestones elsewhere off screen. Sub-bosses and end of stage bosses must be dispatched. Locations and routes must be memorized. All this is going on as well as trying to assist (or hinder) your team mates.

New to the game and the arcade industry is the use of passwords to save the 'level of experience', strength, speed, armour and magic gained by a character in the game. This is a much desired feature in a game which could take hours to finish.

There is now a huge range of power-ups including - familiars, a thunder hammer, magic potions, 3-way shot, levitation, magic shields and growth serum.

The graphics are very satisfactory, though it is the 3D camera work that kicks. Even in 4 player mode, there is

potion and he turns into food.

- When assaulting Skorne, make sure you have saved as many keys as possible - you'll find out why!

Atari has once again delivered the goods and has brought a classic game up to date and into the lives of a new generation of gamers. Gauntlet Legends has been well thought out and with the 4 distinct characters, 4 different worlds, countless power ups and the ability to 'save' means that there are countless hours of interactive entertainment for not only the arcade fan, but also for fans of Dungeons and Dragons.

9/10

Remember - share the food.
Thanks to Galaxy World

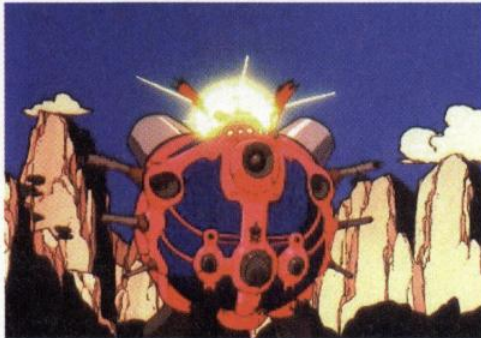
FINAL FANTASY LEGEND OF THE FOUR CRYSTALS

MAX AUTOHEAD



"Although FF is based on a game, I needed to use a cinematic space-time sense to take it away from the image of the original game as possible, while still including its essence"
So states director of FF Rintaro, responsible for anime greats such as Milky Way Train 999, the eighties version of Tezukas Astro Boy as well as Kimba the White Lion.
Game concepts generally fall down adapted to another

desired effect.
Within the world, four crystals are used to control the elements and to bring peace and harmony to the local human population. However, residing on the moon, a high tech evil God plots his revenge on the planet below by stealing the four crystals. Five unlikely heroes are recruited on a quest to save the planet, and to protect the remaining crystal from the forces of Darkness.

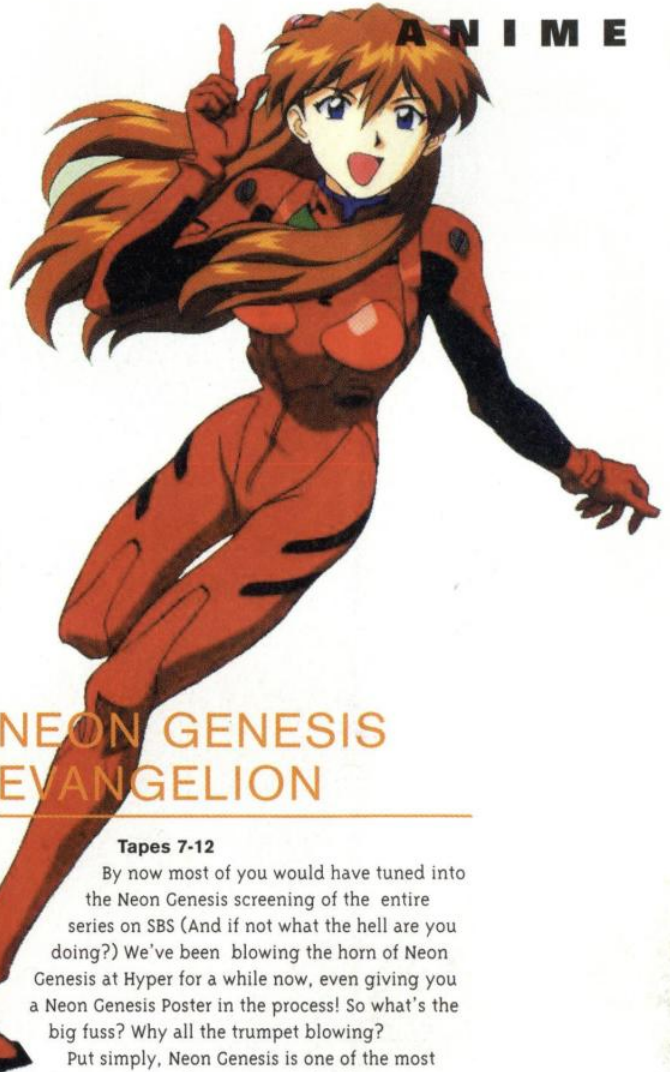


platform. Who can recall the disaster of the Street Fighter ala Van Damme movie? Yet these days more often than not, developers are starting to perfect the concept of narrative adapted from successful games (The Fatal Fury Animated Movie and the SF2 OAV series being prime examples). Final Fantasy- Legend of the Four Crystals is a textbook example on how it is done right.
The first thing to hit you about the world of Final Fantasy is the beautiful, strange but familiar world that its set it. Its a world containing a weird blend of new and old technologies. Director Rintaro worked hard for a "Pan-Asian" feel to the whole series, using the old art of "Hanga" (wood-block printing) to achieve the

What surprised me most about this OAV release was the element of humour utilised throughout the series. Both Sight and sound converge seamlessly in weird, wacky and often humorous scenes. Fantastic character design and attention to detail, as well as a well executed and thoroughly thought out narrative had me gasping for more.
If you're a fan of the Final Fantasy series, or an avid fan of good anime, Final Fantasy-The Legend of the Four Crystals entrance you like it entranced me. All four episodes available on two tapes.

10/10

Rated M15+. Distributed by Kiseki Films.



NEON GENESIS EVANGELION

Tapes 7-12

By now most of you would have tuned into the Neon Genesis screening of the entire series on SBS (And if not what the hell are you doing?) We've been blowing the horn of Neon Genesis at Hyper for a while now, even giving you a Neon Genesis Poster in the process! So what's the big fuss? Why all the trumpet blowing?
Put simply, Neon Genesis is one of the most innovative, well constructed, highly entertaining series to have been brought out. It certainly rates as one of the most successful animated series of all time, out-grossing most hollywood film releases, the series itself spawning two feature releases and a host of merchandise.

On watching the final twelve episodes in the series I was continually glued to the screen, constantly drooping my jaw as the story unfolded and succeeding in continually shocking me out of my skull. The constant psychological trauma inflicted on the teenage pilots coupled with the vile secrets of the older characters bubbling through the narrative like unchecked madness have been handled brilliantly by master storyteller Hideaki Anno, who uses the disintegration of the characters to expose the conspiracies surrounding the Evangelion units as they continue their relentless path to their terrible destiny.

This is a last reminder from us of the Neon Genesis series being screened on telly (SBS). However, if for some reason you miss the screening then all 15 tapes containing the entire series are available on video tape through Madman Entertainment. And for you boffins that just absolutely can't get enough, Neon Genesis Books, Collector cards, CDs and Limited Edition artwork can be obtained through the Cartoon Gallery in Sydney (ph9267 3022). Stay tuned for upcoming reviews on the Neon Genesis features!

10/10

Rated PG. Distributed by Madman Entertainment

Note from the editor: As a bit of a purist, I'd recommend that those of you are interested in purchasing the videos get the subtitled versions. They cost a little more, but the voices sound "right" and this adds a hell of a lot to the feel of it all.



All import videos supplied by **The Cartoon Gallery**, QVB, Sydney. Their website lists over 2,300 anime items. Phone: (02)9267-3022 <http://www.cartoongallery.com.au>

ELIOT FISH



EUROPEAN AIR WAR



Take to the skies! Easily one of the best WW2 flight sims ever, EAW from Microprose has the dogfighting freaks going nuts. Drop in here at an unofficial EAW site and chat on the messageboard about Fokkers, Spitfires and stuff. You can also get patches and find out about all those little details you're just dying to know. Ratta-tat-Ratta-tat-tat.

<http://members.spree.com/airwar/>



Grand Prix Legends

How many of you freaks out there have spent hours and hours doing careful laps of Silverstone, or spent days perfecting Monaco with the wonderful Grand Prix Legends? Plenty of you, I'm sure. Well, why not check out the APEX, a fully loaded GPL homepage that's brimming with stuff for those of you who just can't get enough of this awesome sim.

There's a forum where you can chat Fi and cars till your eyes bleed, links to patches and updates and even track guides which go into detail about how to master the tracks in the game! Astounding.

<http://gpl.gamestats.com/>

Dune 2000

Cult books, cult movie, cult game. Dune 2000 has a pretty strong net presence, but this website was the first, and possibly the best out there. For tips and strategies, patches and mods, and links to clans and maps - this is the one. At least as comprehensive as Quakez.com is for Quake 2. There are even sections devoted to designing your own custom units. Hell, you can even purchase a copy of the game online through the website! No spice girl jokes either.

<http://www.dune2k.com/>



Neon Genesis Evangelion

Thanks to SBS, we're all going to be glued to our TV screens watching this awesome anime. There are plenty of online Evangelion art galleries and fan pages, but few have the overall polish of 9eyes' NGE site. Not only does this site cover Evangelion like it's going out of style, but it's also an excellent anime resource in general. One of the big drawcards here, are the squillion anime midi files and MP3s you can download... coool!

<http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Temple/9211/index.html>

Zelda 64

The official Zelda 64 website has been launched by Nintendo, now that the game is being devoured in a frenzy all over the world. Solutions to puzzles and general hints and tips on the game are available, thanks to Nintendo's team of Zelda experts, and they've even illustrated their tips with screenshots so you know exactly what they're trying to explain to you. Meet here with other Zelda fanatics and even take part in polls and competitions. There's also a cool feature on every Zelda game which Nintendo have ever released.

<http://www.zelda64.com/>

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

ANCIENT HISTORY

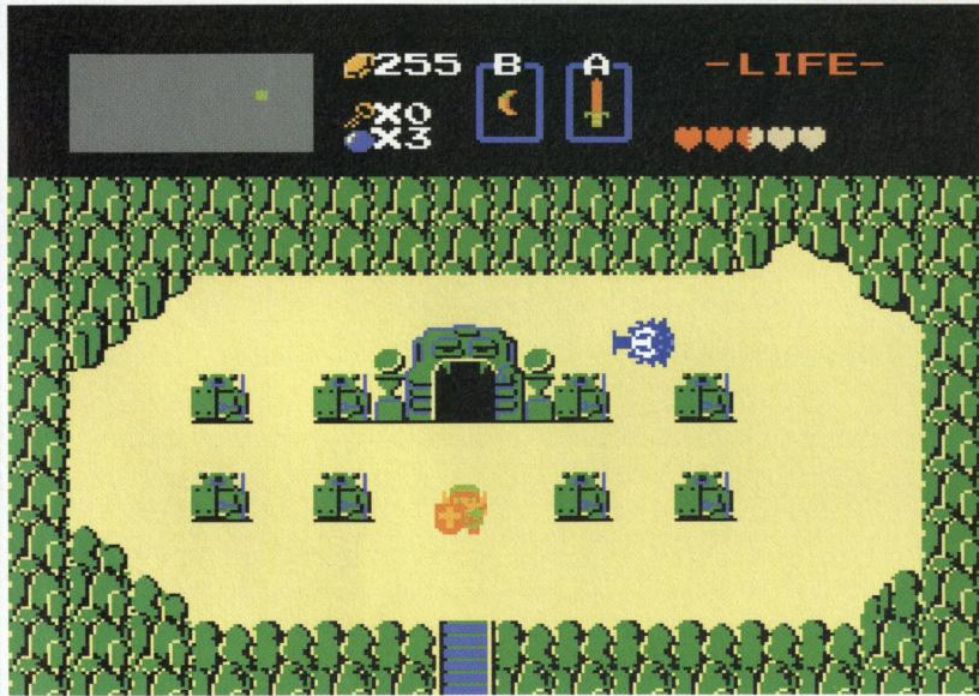
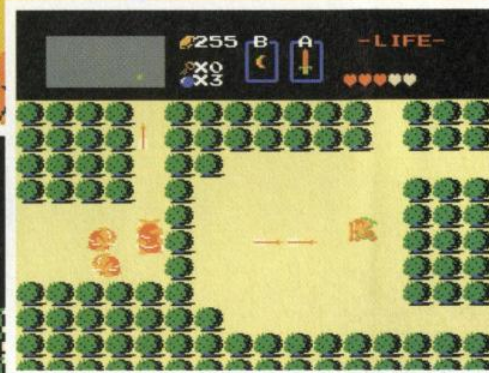
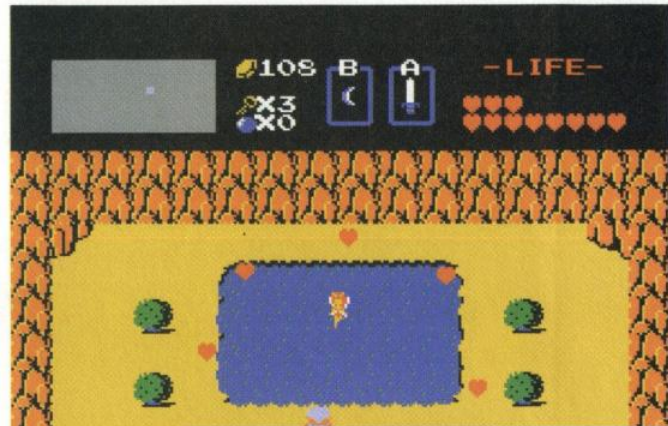
Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto would have to be one of the most inspired and visionary game designers of all time. His impact on the videogaming world is mammoth, creating and realising enduring characters including Donkey Kong (along with Mario), and Link. His achievements have recently been recognised, as Mr Miyamoto has become the first person to be inducted into The Interactive Academy of Arts and Science's Hall of Fame.

With the latest installment of Zelda - The Ocarina of Time, just hitting the retail shelves, it seems like an appropriate time to take a look at the history of the series. Link's quests have been phenomenally successful because regardless of the system and its graphical limitations, each game has been deeply immersive, as well as retaining the feel of the land of Hyrule. Indeed, there's a striking gameplay continuity across the entire Zelda series. Each successive title refines and improves, but the same sense of exploration, storyline and combat are there right from the start.

The Legend of Zelda was released in 1987 on the NES.

It introduced the mystical world of Hyrule, a princess named Zelda, the evil presence of Ganon and a hero named Link. The Legend of Zelda was viewed from an almost top down perspective, with Link's tiny sprite exploring dungeons and landscapes on his quest to recover the eight Triforce fragments. The Legend of Zelda was truly inspired, with cool weapons and battle system, heaps of secrets and a healthy combination of puzzles and combat. It goes down as the RPG that truly introduced action elements into the genre, rather than the traditional turn based system.

Zelda 2: The Adventures of Link appeared on the NES in 1988. In this game Link took on Ganon



again as well as his own shadow. Magic was introduced into combat, and there was a greater emphasis on talking with NPC's. The other major change was a dubious one where the perspective would switch to side on for combat (this was dropped for all future Zelda games).

After a four year wait the superlative Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past hit the SNES in 1992. It was a truly masterful piece of design that really utilised the SNES's greater processing power with innovative gameplay and attention to detail. Link's Awakening for Game Boy came out the following year. Although not offering anything particularly new, Link never had to leave your side, which could only be a good thing!

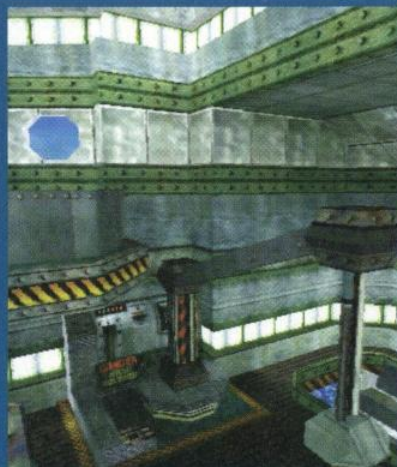
Where could Miyamoto go from there? Just read this issue's Zelda 64 review...

SIN PATCH MODERN HISTORY

Huge bug fix here folks... almost 20 megs... and it's about time! The plethora of bugs and other problems prevented Sin from being awarded our Hyper "big rubber stamp of approval". Our score stands, however, as post-release patches this crucial shouldn't be necessary, but don't hesitate to download it as Sin is a hell of a lot more playable now!

Major problems addressed are: long loading and reloading times have been improved, Manumit (the subway creature) now works correctly ie. he doesn't just stand there, monster AI has been adjusted, sound compatability issues have been fixed, and a host of other more minor problems that affect play.

You can get the patch at (<http://www.3dfxmania.com/>)





ULTIMATE GAMES HOTLINE
For hot tips and expert technical support call...

Sega
1902 555 444

Calls charged at a rate of .95c per min. A higher rate applies from public and mobile phones.

Sega PC
1900 142 100

Calls charged at a rate of \$1.50 per min. A higher rate applies from public and mobile phones.

Roadshow Interactive
1902 962 000

Calls charged at a rate of \$1.00 per min. A higher rate applies from public and mobile phones.

Microprose
1902 262 667

Calls charged at a rate of \$1.50 per min. A higher rate applies from public and mobile phones.

Sony Powerline
1902 262 662

Calls charged at a rate of \$1.50 per min. A higher rate applies from public and mobile phones.

Electronic Arts
1902 261 600

Calls charged at a rate of .95c per min. A higher rate applies from public and mobile phones.

Virgin Interactive
1902 220 058

Calls charged at a rate of .95c per min. A higher rate applies from public and mobile phones.

GT Interactive
1900 957 665

Calls charged at a rate of .95c per min. A higher rate applies from public and mobile phones.

Colony Wars : Vengeance

PSX

Cheat Codes:

Enter any of the following at the password screen EXACTLY as they appear (capital letters are important). Keep returning to the password screen to enter as many codes as desired.

Stormlord: Disable all cheats
Vampire: Invincibility
Tornado: Have all weapons
Dark Angel: Primary weapons don't overheat
Chimera: infinite secondary weapons
Avalanche: Infinite afterburner usage
Hyrda: Have tons of tokens
Thunderchild: All ships available
Demon: Mission and Ending select

Cool Boarders 3

PSX

Cheat Codes:

At the Tournament screen enter your name as these:
wonitall: All tracks open_em: All riders bigheads: Big heads

Fast Eddie:

To earn FAST EDDIE you must complete the mountain POWDER HILL in first place and with 3,400 points of more.

New boards and characters:

To get new boards and characters, start a Single Race at Pro level and beat the record shown at the bottom of the screen (eg. Come in first with 5000 pts.)

Play as Burg:

To get Burg, unlock every player, every board, and every track. Play single event, powder hill downhill. Get in first place with more than 3400 points.

Fifth Element

PSX

Cheat menu:

From the main menu (new game,

load game, options, etc.), press L1, L2, R2, R1, Select.

This will give you access to infinite lives, weapons, items, cinematics, and all the levels.

Pocket Fighters

PSX

Bonus Characters:

At the player select screen go to Ryu and press left and you will see Akuma. And go to Ken and press right and you will see Dan!

Restart Fight:

At the end of a fight hold L1+L2+R1+R2+Select+Start. The match will restart without any loading.

R-Type

PSX

Level Select:

Highlight either the "R-Type" or "R-Type II" options at the title screen. Quickly press L2 10 times, R2 10 times. Begin game play and press Start to access any level or view the FMV sequences.

Slow Motion:

Pause game play in R-Type or R-Type II. Hold L2 and press Right, Up, Right, Up, Down, Left, Down, Left, X.

Turbo Mode:

Pause game play in R-Type or R-Type II. Hold L2 and press Right, Up, Right, Up, Down, Left, Down, Left, Circle.

S.C.A.R.S

PSX

GLASSX: Crystal grand prix
DESERT: Crystal grand prix + car 6 (Scorpion)

ROCKYY: Crystal + Diamond grand prix

RATTLE: Crystal + Diamond grand prix + cars 6 & 7 (scorpion & Cobra)

ZDPEAK: All the grand prix

XPERTS: All the grand prix + Mirror mode

RUNNER: All the grand prix + Mirror mode + car 8 (Guepard)

MYSTER: All the grand prix + Mirror mode + car 9 (Panthere)

ALLVID: All the grand prix + Mirror mode + all the cars

TOCA 2

PSX

All cheats entered in the NAME ENTRY field.

Cheats

MINICARS: Micro Machines viewpoint

TECHOFF: Turns off car adjustments

PADDED: No damage

TRIPPY: Blurred background

BCASTLE: Bouncing collisions

ELASTIC: Higher elevated tracks

JUSTFEET: Invisible except the tyres

FASTBOY: Turbo mode

LONGLONG: 40 lap race

LUNAR: Low gravity

DUBBED: Quicker damage

BANGBANG: New option in challenge mode

Tomb Raider 3

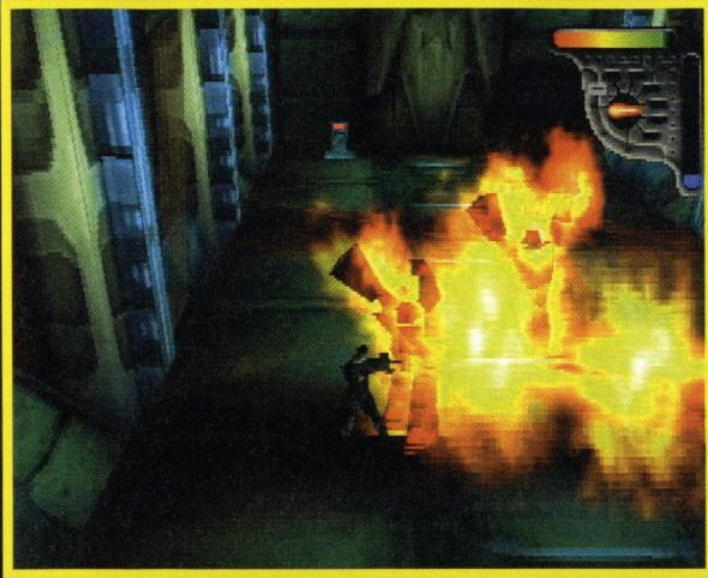
PSX

All Secrets and Bonus Level:

While playing press L2 5 times, R2, L2 3 times, R2, L2, R2, L2 twice, R2, L2 twice, R2, L2 twice. This will unlock the "All Hallowed" bonus level.

All Weapons, Medkits, Flares and Save Crystals:

While playing press L2, R2 twice, L2 4 times, R2, L2, R2 twice, L2, R2 twice, L2 twice, R2, L2 twice, R2.



Level Skip:

While playing press L2, R2, L2 twice, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2, L2 4 times, R2, L2, R2 4 times, L2.

Hints:

If you're having problems finding keys don't forget to check the corpses of the people or animals you have killed along the way. You may find that they are hiding a key or some other useful item!

The Unholy War

PSX

Secret Warriors and Mayhem Backgrounds:

To release two secret fighting backgrounds, beat Strategy Mode on Normal level with each side. The Arcane victory will release the Menhir Circle; the Teknos, the Dark Maze.

To gain control of two secret super-warriors, beat Strategy Mode on Hard level. The Arcanes earn the nasty MegaPrana, while the Teknos receive the Beta-Razorfane, their first truly effective flying character. All of these are usable in Mayhem Mode only.

Victory Boxing

PSX

Secret boxers:

In Open Style, fight until you are champion to access a Jack-In-The-Box boxer. Defend the championship title five times to access Snake.

In Peek-A-Boo, fight until you are champion to access Kiki and Mimi. Defend the championship title five times to access Edward King (the promoter).

In Peek-A-Boo, fight until you are champion to access Roboxer.

Defend the championship title five times to access Carrie (the girl that carries the round cards).

Wild 9

PSX

99 Lives:

This can take a while but it is worth it! In the Centerscape level, the first pylon that blocks your view of Wex has a 1-Up in it. Just jump up and get it. Now press START to pause the game, then hit SELECT to quit the level. Enter the Centerscape level again and the 1-Up will reappear. Repeat as desired up to a maximum of 99 lives.

Apocalypse

PSX

At the Pause screen, hold down L1 and input the following with the controller:

All weapons :

Square, Circle, Up, Down, X, Square

Invulnerability :

Down, Up, Left, Left, Triangle, Up, Right, Down

Unlock levels :

Triangle, Up, X, Down

Debug info :

Down, Down, Triangle

Asteroids

PSX

On the Title Screen when PRESS START is flashing, hold Select and press the following buttons in order. You will hear a sfx prompt, when the cheat is activated.

Unlock Classic Asteroids Game

Circle Circle Circle Triangle Square Square Circle

Unlock Fourth Ship



Triangle Circle Circle Triangle Square Circle Square

Level Select

Square Triangle Circle Triangle Triangle Square Circle

Once in the game, you can change levels and zones and turn collision off by:

1. During game play, press Select and Start simultaneously
 2. Select level, zone, and collision state using the directional pad
 3. Press L1
- Classic Asteroids Game Codes
 +1 LIFE = up, down, left, right, circle, square, X, triangle
 99 LIVES = up, X, down, triangle, left, square, right, circle
 INVINCIBILITY = down, down, up, up, circle, square, triangle, triangle

Rogue Trip

PSX

All cheats placed in the PASSWORD screen:

To battle Boss #2 Circle, Circle, L2, L1, Triangle, Triangle.

To battle Boss #3 Square, Triangle, Circle, Circle, R2, R2.

TO PLAY A DUKE DEMO

SQUARE, SQUARE, CIRCLE, CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, TRIANGLE.

To play as the Steamroller

Triangle, L1, R1, X, L2, L2

To play as the Saucer

R1, Square, X, Square, L2, Circle

Sin

PC

Cheat Codes:

To enter these codes, press the tilde key to bring up the console window, then type the desired code.
 superfuzz: God Mode
 health 999: 999 health
 wuss: all weapons
 wallflower: no target mode
 nocollision: no clipping mode
 spawn heligun: spawn the gun from the helicopter
 spawn cookies: creates cookies
 save #: saves game to specified slot #
 load #: loads game from specified slot #



Level Select:
To choose your level, go to the console (press tilde) and type "map ?" to warp to any map. Currently known map names for one player (in order from earliest to last level):
sewera: first sewer level
sewera2: second sewer level
oilrig: the oilrig
jungle: first jungle (Mountain Gorge)
jungle2: ATV map
area57: Darwin evolution map
lab1 or lab: Xenomorphic lab
lab2 or study: Xenomorphic study
estate: Sinclaire estate
thrall: Thrall master

Death Drome

PC

Level Passwords:
2REVOLT: The Abyss
3ACCUSED: The Outpost
SHORT4TIME: Citadel
5GETAWAYS: The Inferno
BOLT6DOWN: The Wall
ARREST7: The Spike
LASTMEAL8: Purgatory

them in again and again.
iwillsurvive: God mode
takeittothelimit: full ammo
raindropskeepfallinonmyhead: allow laser designator for every level
hitmewithyourbestshot: expert CPU

Tomb Raider 3

PC

Weapons Cheat:
Draw your pistols
Step backwards
Step forward
Duck once briefly
Turn accurately three times (left or right)
Backwards jump
Level cheat:
Draw your pistols
Step backwards
Step forward
Duck once briefly
Turn accurately three times (left or right)
Forward jump
These Cheats will work in every level with the exception of the

security wing (Nevada).

Virtual Fighter 2

PC

Play as Dural:
On the player select screen press: Down, Up, Right, Guard/Kick+Left (Dural).
Play as Gold Dural:
On the player select screen press: Down, Up, Left, Guard/Kick+Right. To see Dural shed her 'skin' finish the game on hard difficulty and with Kage.

Madden NFL 99

N64

Bonus Stadiums:
Enter one of the following names at the code entry screen.
EA Sports: EASTADIUM
Tiburon: OURHOUSE
Cleveland: DOGPOUND99
RFK: THEHOGS
Original Miami: NOTAFISH
Original Oakland: TICKEM
Original Tampa: SOMBRERO
Astrodome: FOR_RENT

Nascar 99

N64

Aerial Tricks:
Turn off damage in the options screen. While racing, turn around and slam into an oncoming car. You'll do aerial stuff like front flips and barrel rolls. It won't help you win the race, but it's fun.
Play as Bobby Allison:
If you race in the championship series and race Charlotte at 50% or

greater and place in the top 5 you will unlock nascar legend Bobby Allison and then be able to race with him.

Play as Alan Kulwicki:
Go through the championship season and race 50% of Bristol Day and get in the top five and you will get to run as Alan Kulwicki, in any game mode.
Play as Benny Parsons:
Begin a championship season, run 50% of the laps at Richmond, finish in the top 5 and you will earn Benny Parson.
Play as Cale Yarborough:
Race a championship season with at least a 50% race length and finish in the top 5 at Darlington.
Play as Davey Allison:
Go through the Championship Season and race 50% of Talledega and get in the top 5 you will get to run as Davey Allison.
Play as Richard Petty:
Race a championship season with at least a 50% race length and finish in the top 5 at Martinsville.

NHL 99

PC

Cheat codes:
When you're playing a game, press SPACE and enter these cheats:
Homegoal: Goal for the home team
Awaygoal: Goal for the guest team
Zambo: The ice machine comes on the field
Injury: A player of the team you're playing against becomes an injury
Check: Every player checks another player



health kit.
item_airtank
item_antidote
item_battery
item_healthkit
item_longjump
item_security
item_sodacan
item_suit

Powerslide

PC

Cheat codes:

During the game, type:
SPIDER: Car sticks to any surface
SLEEP: AI cars don't steer, they just accelerate
BLAST: Repels other cars
LUNAR: Low gravity
HOVER: Hovercars
TIMEWARP: Makes all your opponents ultra slow
GLIDER: Fly like an airplane

Deer Hunter II

PC

Cheat codes:

In the hunt view, push F2 to bring up the command window at the top of the screen and type in any of the following:
dh2circle: Trail deer's rear for easy kill
dh2deadeye: Arrow/Bullet cam
dh2doolittle: Deer won't run away
dh2flash: Run very fast
dh2honey: Deer come to you
dh2shoot: Takes you straight to a deer
dh2sightin: Sights gun automatically
dh2supaflash = Run very, VERY fast!
dh2tracker: Shows deer on the map and GPS
dh2wright: Fly mode
dh2blizzard: Cycles weather more quickly
dh2thunder: Makes it thunder

Grab: Every player checks another player with his hockey stick
Spots: Turn off the lights in the hall
Flash: All spectators use their cameras
Victory: Fireworks
NB: You must substitute Y for Z and Z for Y as per an American layout keyboard.

Half-Life

PC

Cheat codes:

Create a shortcut of HL.EXE, then add -dev -toconsole to the command line. Start Half-Life with this shortcut. This shortcut will allow you to enter the console (press the key) and enter any of the cheats.
sv_cheats 1: Activate cheats (you must do this to use any of the cheats)
god: Invulnerability
fly: gravity 0 with full control
noclip: Fly through any object you wish
notarget: enemies do not react to you unless you inflict damage
/give item_name
where item_name is a specific item as per the list below
eg: /give item_healthkit would give you a



dh2light: Makes it lightning
dh2rain: Makes it rain
dh2snow: Makes it snow
camera set deer#: See through deer's eyes
camera set crow#: See through crow's eyes
camera set fox#: See through fox's eyes
camera set player: Brings you back to hunter
NOTE: '#' sign refers to which animal you wish to 'see' through.
To turn off the cheat, just re-enter them.

Heretic II

PC

Cheats:

Type these in at the console:
playbetter: god mode
kiwi: no clip mode
victor: no target mode
suckitdown all: give all weapons and defences
twoweeks: power up
meatwagon: kill all non-boss monsters
crazymonsters - makes monsters berserk
angermonsters - makes monsters

ODT

PC

Cheat codes:

When these codes are typed correctly, a sound will be heard.
Type these at the Main Menu:
LACRIMOSA: after starting a new game and selecting a character to play, new menus will appear allowing any game level and sector to be played.
SOPHIA: add Sophia to playable characters.
KARMA: add Karma to playable characters.
In the game, press ESC to bring up the pause menu and type:
XUL: full Energy (Red Bar).
BOZ: full Mana (Purple Bar).
JBB: full capacity on all 4 weapons.
MATH: increase power slightly on all 4 weapons.
GRABO: increase Armour, Weapon, and Spirit levels slightly.
MUMU: increase Experience to maximum.
ALEX: set number of lives to 50.
RIK: all spells acquired.
VINCE: add one star to each acquired Spell.
CACHOU: full Energy, full Mana, full Experience, 50 lives, full capacity and power for all 4 weapons, increase Armour, Weapon, and Spirit slightly, all Spells acquired, all 4 stars on Spells.

LETTERS

HYPER LETTERS

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MISSING RESIDENTS...

Your mag rocks, really it does. Anyway I could go on about how your mag is so good all day but I'm not going to suck up to you. It's come to my attention that there are some bad things I've come across with my Sony Playstation. Now I am an owner of a PSX and I'm glad I am. BUT!

1. It seems to me that there will be no Resident Evil 3 on any platform and that will suck pretty bad. I mean you can't just have RE 1 & 2 and then 4. I realise this in issue 62 in your overflow and it doesn't appear to be in the list of games on the Dreamcast. What's your answer?

2. When the PSX 2 comes out will you be able to play your old Sony games on the new machine? If not, there's no point of me buying anymore PSX games if I'm just going to have to sell the whole lot when I buy a PSX 2?

3. Does the new Mad Catz dual force wheel move everywhere when your playing like the other one? Is it worth getting. Is there any other good wheels?

Thanks for you time guys

BLAKE WALKER

Kyneton, VIC

Blake,

Some answers and opinions for you:

1. My answer is don't worry about it. If they were going to skip 3, then it's not like there'd be this mystical game floating around that you'd be unable to get. There is a Biohazard game on the cards for the Dreamcast (That's what Resident Evil is called in Japan), and even if it IS the fourth one, that would simply mean there's going to be a 3rd one on PlayStation before it is released.

2. This has still yet to be confirmed. It must be pointed out that this is potentially very limiting. While it would be great to be able to play your old games on your new system, this may put restrictions on the hardware setup used, and I for one would rather see Sony make the best machine they can, than make one that could have been better, but was held back to ensure backward compatibility. Also, don't expect the PlayStation 2 (or 2000 or whatever it ends up being

called) to come out here till the year 2000. So I wouldn't be holding back on buying games all that time if I were you. Investing in technology is never of great value in the long term, but that's the price you pay to get the latest entertainment.

3. It's a bit less sturdy than the other Dual Force wheel we've tried (Gamester).

QUESTION BONANZA

I first bought your mag in May and was so impressed, I subscribed the next month. So to all of you reading this who haven't subscribed, DO IT NOW!. You won't be disappointed. How do you guys do it, every issue I get the mag and it is even more polished and enjoyable to read, By the way, I wrote this on a Mac and Mac's rule! While I'm at it, could you answer these couple of questions.

1. Will Perfect Dark be able to make use of the 4MB RAM expansion pak?

2. The special binding keeping issue 61 together was a great idea, is there any reason why you haven't stuck with it? (Maybe printing costs)

3. How on earth will Banjo Tooie be able to allow you to get into things you previously couldn't get to in Banjo Kazooie? Do the two carts link up in some way?

4. Any word from Cavedog on a possible sequel to Total Annihilation?

5. Any chance of a sequel to Rebellion?

6. Do you have any info, ie release date etc, on Age of Kings, the sequel to Age of Empires?

7. Will Rogue Squadron 64 have a 4 player deathmatch? If not, some Lucasarts programmers need a good bashing

8. Could you do some sort of feature on how Next Gaming got together?

Thanks for your time

SMACK HEAD

NSW

Smackster,

We're glad to hear you're happy with your subscription. Here's some answers for you.

1. No confirmation on that, although we suspect it will.

2. The main reason is that when a magazine is perfect bound (that's the name for that binding), you can't have a simple pull out poster. Sure enough a couple people wrote in that issue and complained about the lack of a poster.

3. Our guess at this stage is that

NEXT ISSUE...

HYPER»

METAL GEAR SOLID

One of the most eagerly anticipated PlayStation games is almost here... Metal Gear Solid looks to be Konami's best title in years. Adopting stealth, combat, and espionage into one of the best looking games on the system, Metal Gear Solid is already looking like a "must buy" title...

Full review... next issue





TOTAL ANNIHILATION KINGDOMS

the Banjo Toxie cart will plug into the N64 and have a connection to plug the Banjo Kazooie cart into the top of that... so you'd basically have two carts stacked together. At this stage none of us are certain what they intend to do.

4. There is Total Annihilation: Kingdoms coming soon (same engine but with a medieval slant), but as for another futuristic TA game, we've yet to see anything.

5. I strongly doubt that, as Rebellion wasn't exactly a big hit.

6. Nothing really concrete has been revealed as yet, other than Microsoft have been putting effort into more

detailed resource management, as that was the most common request they received for the sequel. It's also set in a medieval period, as the name may imply.

7. It's a single player game. You off to assault the developers now?

8. About once a year we do a birthday feature, but having just done one on our 5th birthday, we're not about to keep ranting about what's going on in here... There's far more important issues in gaming. Next Gaming didn't "get together", it was simply after we got to about our fourth gaming magazine that we figured we were a department

of Next so to speak.

CONSPIRACY THEORIST

I was lying in my bed last night while thinking about the way in which games have evolved and soon we will have the Dreamcast and after that the PlayStation 2000. This scenario of having a new machine with better processing power released every 3 years is in my eyes simply holding back the inevitable. That is photo realistic games. A game where you cannot tell the difference between reality and the game. Such a powerful system would have several advantages. For one, games will be utterly immersive. Secondly it would



Letter of the month

SERVE UP THE SERVERS!

Thanks for your recent article on multiplayer games, I'm only new to the multiplayer scene. I can't get enough, however I noted your retro on UNREAL and you commented on the game and it's a lack of AUSSIE servers. I agree that it's a real problem but it's not the only game with that problem. Being at the other end of the world, we are forgotten, but I believe there's a solution to this problem.

I suggest the software copyright owners add a clause to their contracts with the software distributors which insists that the AUSSIE or whatever the region they cover) distributors (Roadshow, Metro, etc, etc) must set up local servers which are ready at the time of the software release. Also these servers must be updated and supported until the other Third Party servers are set up and running and approved by the software copyright owners. I know it's not a perfect world but with the money we pay for these games \$80 plus, I think I should be able to expect the same services that the rest of the world has access too.

I own a PSX/ N64 and a P II PC, I get the most enjoyment out of the PC Multiplay gaming, but with the lag and ultra high ping. I get a little down and play with myself if you know what I mean. Also your article mentioned Wireplay which I'm sure is a great online service, however, I'm from Wollongong and they don't have a local number, I can't afford the STD prices so I use Gameplay shareware and it's a great alternative.

P.S: SIN fully installed is 600 megs and the first patch is 19 megs good job guys.

JASON ODEWAHN

NSW

Jason,

Excellent idea! This should really be put forward to the publishers (we'll be talking to them about it). It really should be quite obvious to the distributors and publishers that having online gaming services ready and waiting make a big difference. Imagine Starcraft and Diablo without Battle.net... neither would have done half as well as they did in the end. There is the issue though that some games may not even have any online following, and the cost of setting up servers for every game is pretty heavy, especially if you want to service the whole country, as you couldn't just have servers based in one spot and expect to have people on the other side of the country to get a playable game (depending on how much the game is effected by latency).

As for Wireplay, it's very understandable in your situation. It seems those that use the large mainstream ISPs (bigpond, ozemail, etc) in the rural or non major city areas tend to get the best pings. A guy in my Quake 2 clan lives near Nowra and he has an Ozemail account, and seems to get excellent pings to pretty much everywhere we go.



Gamester PSX Rumble Force Wheel.

Don't forget to include your contact details ON your letter. You've won a Gamester Steering Wheel Bill! For either N64 or PlayStation.



DREAMCAST'S SEGA RALLY 2

eliminate the current trend of game players buying machines based on numbers, instead concentrating on games instead. There are many more important reasons, but my general idea is that we have the technology now so why not speed up the process. Why walk when you can run? The only reason I can see such an idea being put behind is so game companies want to F# ! us players every step of the way, in which is keeping them afloat. Look at the Saturn, because it wasn't selling Sega had to bring a new machine. Does this mean in order to have progress a company must be making lesser? This is ludicrous and a new machine would make everyone happy not to mention allow the possibility for new games. FINAL WORD: Someone have the balls and bring us the future now!

Yours Sincerely

NINTENDO=OBSOLETE

Lakemba

I think you're overestimating how advanced technology is at

this stage, and underestimating the costs of hardware manufacture and research. With photorealistic visuals, it's not just an issue of technology either. Someone has to actually do the artwork.. and it's very time consuming, and thus for a developer, very expensive to look at doing more detailed work.

I think your call on Sega is off mark too. The Saturn was released in Japan YEARS ago... and it's been outselling the Nintendo 64 in software sales (besides around the N64's launch) the whole time. Sega may not have done well with the Saturn elsewhere, but the move to make the Dreamcast was just to get back out in front, and to move ahead. Sega's arcade games (which are always using the latest technology and hardware) could no longer be done (properly) on the Saturn. Also, the cost of hardware research and development is HUGE. Launching new systems costs these companies big time,

and that is exactly why there was such a long gap between the SNES and the Nintendo 64. Don't make the mistake of believing that companies like Sega, Sony and Nintendo make much money on the hardware that you buy. They make the real money in software and royalties.

Your "Why walk when you can run" comment is the stuff regular PC updating is made of. You will notice that to do this is EXTREMELY expensive. As for your conspiracy theory about game companies wanting to stuff you around, I think you're just being unrealistic about the amount of money required for what you're asking.

FOSSILS

There's a few things I'd like to ask you. My cousin recently gave me his 2 x 66 DX 486 with 16 MB Ram, 8 speed CD Rom and Windows 95. I know that it's an old computer. I don't understand any of this but I'm sure you do. Anyway I would like to buy KKND, Dark Reign

and Total Annihilation. Strategy are the main types of games I like. So I was wondering if these games would run well on my PC and I would appreciate it if you would recommend some 3D FX and sound cards that I need or that would be good for me.

P.S Could you also recommend other great games I could buy for my type of computer. (Preferably strategy games)

LOUIS

Blacktown, NSW

Louis,

You'll have great trouble getting any of those games to run at anything other than a snail's pace, if at all. You really need to be looking at OLD strategy games like Civilisation (the first one), or at buying a new computer. Even just getting a Pentium 166 would let you play the games you mentioned, and considering Pentium 2 - 450 is the current top of the line, you can expect to get a P166 VERY cheap.

STANDARDISE PLEASE!

I am writing in response to

Dean Young's letter (issue 62) concerning pirate games and game release schedules. This phenomena is not just restricted to games. As a DVD owner I can tell you why people are rushing to get NTSC copies of games or movies. Supply, demand and quality of product. As most TV's are now PAL/NTSC what would Dean rather play? The slow PAL version of Tekken 3 or the full screen/ speed NTSC version. In fact there's nothing stopping Sega, Sony or Nintendo from manufacturing 'world' machines that play both PAL/NTSC. Sony if my memory serves me correctly have the blue PS. In England Saturns are being converted to play Japanese import games with 50/60 switches. Hopefully Sega will make the orange beast a 'world' machine. At the end of the day Deans and all of our present problems lay with pathetic publishing and distribution companies who seem too afraid to DEMAND from programmers/producers an equal and not inferior product.

FLANGE

Flange,
There is no world machine.
Even blue PlayStations are
signal specific (PAL or NTSC).
Don't expect this to change
either unless we get one
worldwide standard TV signal.
The costs of installing
hardware into a console to
allow it to play either signal is
enough to warrant a price
increase, and the game
companies certainly don't want

this, as they make more
business when more people can
afford the console.
You are right however that
conversion delays and
performance differences need
to be cleared up... especially to
reduce piracy. For those
wondering why we don't get
some Japanese games out
here... besides predictions in
the way the western market
would take to such games,
another main reason is

translation costs.

I think we may see a company
release a system that can play
both formats, if they believed
that piracy would be beating
them enough that the only way
to ensure the slower market
(one that receives the games
last) didn't get flooded with
pirate software (like the PAL
territories do now with
PlayStation games). Then
spending that extra bit of
money on dual format

machines may be worth it...
however, I'd suspect they're
more likely to invest the money
in anti-piracy techniques and
ideas.

HARDCORE MY ARSE!

Straight to the point. What the
hell do you "hardcore" idiots
think you're talking about?
What is there to be hardcore
about? Yeah, sure, let's form
some sort of lobby group, see if
we can get a screening process
to make sure only the right sort
of people get consoles. After all,
they're different from us, you
know. They're games, not
bloody country clubs. I think
you just have to accept that
anyone who wants to buy a
gaming platform can, and the
world isn't going to alter itself
in any great way to cater to
your whims. So what if games
are released aimed at casual
gamers? There'll still be plenty
of games for someone willing to
spend a week in the dark
callousing their thumbs. More,
in fact because people now
have a chance to make enough
money in games development
that they can really produce a
well thought-out game. Do you
think games like Quake II could
be produced if companies like
Id hadn't made so much money
from previous games?

Someone buying a gaming
system as a status symbol
sickens me. It's not a damned
holy object. It's a commercial
product. Anyone who wants to
buy one, can. It's a right, not a
privilege. Are you some sort of
neo-nazi? Stop your snivelling,
Archie, and go back in the
closet.

ANDREW RIDDLE

Tamworth, NSW
Andrew,
Right on.

**ONE GAMER'S VIEW ON
TODAY...**

Every issue there are letters all
making valid, yet similar points
regarding gaming issues.
Sexism, violence, censorship,
cost, quality and piracy always
seem to stir up a response. Well
I thought that it was time to put
in my two bobs worth
concerning some of these
issues, remembering that this is
only my opinion and not gospel
that should be taken to heart or
disposed with a vengeance.

Firstly, I think that censorship
does have a place in our

gaming society. It is just the
level of censorship that should
be carefully monitored. While
not wanting to see a totalitarian
regime of censorship enforced,
it is nice to know that gaming
developers can't just push out a
game full of excessive and
explicit material just to make a
quick buck, because with
censorship there would not be a
market for these games that just
hold a shock value and not a
true gaming experience.

Cost and quality of games is
varied, and in regard to cost,
\$90 for a game (I don't care how
good) is just a plain rip off.
Quality, well that's what you
guys are for, to inform the
gaming public of what's hot
and what's not. Overall I think
that the majority of games
coming on to the markets are
good (GT, Wipeout 2097) and
that they easily outweigh the
shockers (Tommi Makinen
Rally).

Piracy... while I know that it is
illegal and I do not condone it's
practice I do not totally
disagree with the outcome of
these ventures. I know that
without piracy the cost of
games would go down, but by
how much? I mean is there
much of a difference between a
\$90 game and a \$75 game? It is
still a monumental rip off. I
believe that piracy has sold
more consoles for Sony,
Nintendo and Sega then they
would of sold without the
advent of this practice. This
may sound quite silly at first,
but there are many people out
there that would have not
purchased a console if they
would of had to spend another
\$300 just for a few extra games.
With piracy, many people buy a
gaming console because they
can get copied games for much
less. Of course there is a small
outlay for a mod chip or a
cartridge to disc system but this
is easily offset by the savings.
Also, you guys keep harping on
about the quality of
modifications and how they
void your warranty. Well, just
look in any classifieds and see
the host of ads that offer two
year warranties. Sure there are
backyard jobs, but there are
also some very experienced
technicians performing these
conversions. If console and
game developers want to stuff
the gaming public around by
delaying and inferior NTSC or
PAL conversions and charge a



RESIDENT EVIL



rip off price, then I can see why some people get modified consoles where you have the best of everything.

Well that is my long winded view on the gaming industry. I know that you guys are a great magazine, and I hope that you keep your objectivity regarding the issues that I have raised.. Thank you for your time.

Concerned Console Freak

KEITH STEVENS

Arundel, QLD

Keith,

Quite similar to the other letter this issue. I'm not going to add anything new. We're just printing this so the distributors, and publishers can get the clear message as to what the gaming community thinks. One thing I will say is that I agree with is that most games

that come out are pretty decent nowadays. Sure, there are some turgid pieces of crap around, but it now costs so much to release a bad game, that publishers are having to be a bit more wary of spitting out duds.

A RACE FOR 2ND

I feel that Nintendo are very afraid of becoming third in the race of gaming consoles, because I was recently reading an American magazine and this is what Nintendo of America chairman, Howard Lincoln, said in this interview

"Sega will have an up hill battle against Nintendo and Sony. They have difficult relationships with gamers, retailers and third party developers. They certainly have

a history of making great games- but that is not an issue." WHAT THE F*% IS THAT GUY ON! Of course this is an issue. Sorry, but dickheads like that make me angry. He sounds like Nintendo is number one but even the shithouse Saturn out sold it in Japan. I've got nothing against Sony and I think they have done well with their first machine and the 64's are good but not as good as Nintendo thinks they are. I also have a few questions:

1. Will the new Sonic game for the Dreamcast be any good?
2. DO YOU THINK SEGA SHOULD MAKE A NEW FIGHTERS MEGAMIX GAME JUST FOR THE DREAMCAST USING MODEL 3?
3. Could you please list all the games for the Dreamcast both

confirmed and rumoured?

Thanks

Daniel Bennett, Broken Hill Daniel,

Well, I can't see Sega having a problem at all with developers when it comes to the Dreamcast. For starters, the Windows CE operating system is making PC ports and coding in general for the Dreamcast a breeze for developers. Secondly, Sega are charging the LOWEST licensing fee of the three companies for making games on their system, which means there's more financial incentive for the publishers and developers to get behind the Dreamcast. And finally, there are so many killer titles lined up for the machine, and so many confirmed developers, including companies like

Namco, which were so strongly allied with Sony, that I'd be extremely surprised if the Dreamcast doesn't push the Nintendo 64 into 3rd place almost immediately.

I don't see the Dreamcast outselling the PlayStation though, but with the special CDs that they use, Sega may end up selling more software in the future considering how much piracy afflicts the PlayStation.

1. Every indication we've seen would say yes. We've seen movie clips of the game and it looked awesome. We'll be getting the game between the time we've finished the magazine, and when you're reading it... So expect a report of some sort next issue.
2. I'd like them to wait for Fighting Vipers 2, and Last Bronx 2 before they do this, and include characters from all three games. That would rock!
3. Ask and you shall receive (well sometimes). Check out the list in this issue's feature.

FAIR OR NOT?

First let me set the mood. It's late Tuesday night. Resident Evil 2 is in the Playstation. The lights are down. The stereo is up. All is serene in the press room. I'm about to pick up the gear cog I've just released from the painting. My thoughts are occupied with finding a safe path to the clock tower. Suddenly, without warning, Tyrant 103 comes crashing through the wall and I'm trapped in the corner with only a pistol and one grenade round. AAARRGGHH!... Damn near dove from my beanbag out the window. This is what playing video games is all about. Brilliant stuff, which brings us to my point. Just flicked through issue #62 read something very unsettling, Resident Evil 3 to go to Sega Dreamcast only? Sacrilege!! The RE series simply oozes atmosphere and reeks of gameplay. It's in my all time top 5 and one of the reasons I enjoy my PSX so much.

Now, it is well documented here in Hyper that 40 million Playstation's have been shipped worldwide. How many potential Resident Evil 3 purchases does that amount to? I'm guessing a hell of a lot.

Are Capcom really going to give all these gamers who have supported them in the past the



'single digit salute'? Let's hope not. Personally I'm offended by the feeling of being 'trapped' into having to buy the "Latest and Greatest Console" so I can continue playing an excellent game. Bottom line is I won't be buying a Sega Dreamcast as I am content with my PSX. Now before you all cry "Mainstream Sega Hater!" (Please God not another console letter war). I'm 28 years old and have been gaming since the Atari 2600 days, and have many fond memories from my Sega megadrive which I still play occasionally. I'm also one of the poor suckers who paid \$700 for a PSX back in '95. The new Sega product looks to be amazing but video games don't consume my life. I consider myself neither mainstream nor hardcore. Just an everyday guy who enjoys gaming. I will only consider buying a Playstation 2 if the price is reasonable and if it's backwards compatible with the PSX titles I already own. Hopefully Capcom and other developers will consider the consumer and not just the almighty dollar. After all, without us gamers they're out of business. See Ya!

Regards

FAB LATTANZIO

QLD

Fab,
Question for you then. If you feel "trapped" into having to buy the latest console so you can play games that are coming out that sound really good. Is it a case that the developers should be "trapped" into having to develop for the

systems which they've already pushed the limits of? A classic example of a company that refuses to work to hardware limitations would be Id Software. With Quake III Arena being hardware accelerated only, and let's face it, Quake 2 without hardware acceleration was not visually inspiring at all. If Capcom only do Resident Evil on the Dreamcast next, then it's not going to be because they just "don't want to" do it on PlayStation, since as you have pointed out... with 40,000,000 Playstations out there, there's a lot of money to be made. As for Capcom considering the consumer, I'd say the move to make games for the latest system IS for the gamers. I'd hate to see it all just stop at the sort of quality we've got now. I also don't quite understand why you, as someone who already owns a PlayStation, would actually insist on PlayStation 2 being backwardly compatible. You don't stand to gain anything this way. The only people it really helps are those who don't own a PlayStation, who will be able to buy a new system, and have all these games already there to play that they have yet to.

AWARDS & SCORES

Hyper,

I would like to comment on the Reader's Poll results which threw up some surprises, which if analysed, are really not that big a surprise.

Final Fantasy got game of the year as a result of it being the only serious contender in its

genre. Whereas in First Person Shooters, there were so many contenders that the votes got spread out over many games. I bet that if you pooled the votes of each game received by genre, and had the top 5 genres of the year, you would find RPGs most likely below FPS, Platform, Sports, and Racing. If Zelda had come out earlier this year the RPG votes would have been diluted, consequently FFFVII would not have been voted game of the year.

As for Goldeneye triumphing, well, maybe it really is better! Seriously, though, I am sure accessibility may have something to do with, especially with Unreal, but what about Quake2? That game has been out over a year (and more recently that GE) and really should have had a large enough player-base to garner more votes. But the real question: is Goldeneye the better overall game? Well, if you strip out all the coloured lighting and stuff (the novelty does wear off), how do they rate in the fun-factor stakes?

Personally, GE is as good as Quake2 and Unreal, if not better. And in multi-player, the fact that people can more readily experience "live" battles, which I reckon are much more fun than online, probably added to GE's votes. More people simply had more fun playing GE throughout the year and that is why it won.

By the way, who won the "Worst Character" of the year?

Separately, it always intrigues me how you guys can give a game 89%, or 61%, or whatever. I mean, how can you be so

precise? It starts looking especially silly when it gets really high like the 96% and 97% awarded recently. When you also consider the variety in readership and gaming tastes vary so much, it makes no sense to be so accurate, as you continually set new benchmarks where games from other genres are effectively competing against each other. I mean, is Mario64 better than Unreal, or Gran Turismo? The ratings say no, but as an example of their respective genres, they are probably equal in terms of reaching the current relative and relevant benchmark. In that respect, they are all equally as good as each other - it just depends on the gamer's tastes in games - and it is really Hyper's tastes that are pumping up particular game's scores. I reckon you should just score whole numbers out of 10. Whether they all get 10, or 9, is debateable, but they are all certainly of equal standard relative to the standard of their genres and don't deserve to be singled out as inferior to one another.

As a side effect of your system, an environment seems to have been created where any game getting below 90% is bad, or at the very least, average. Even "bad" games can still get 50's and 60's. It gets so silly that people regard an 87% game as a poor game compared to one that gets 90% when, in reality, 3% is negligible - both games are even.

Look, I just think the current system allows slight personal preference to enter the ratings to the point where they cease to be objective. It really is amazing what a 3% difference has on games and the perception of how good they are.

THE WARRIOR

Mitcham, Victoria
TW,

Some interesting points. With the readers awards. On the Goldeneye vs Unreal/Quake 2 thing, it's become a rather tired topic of debate now, purely because there's really no way to tell. We still personally believe that it comes down to sheer numbers for the votes, as owning a Nintendo 64 and Goldeneye is affordable... But getting a good PC and an internet connection AND Quake 2 is very expensive, and thus far less people have ever had a go of Quake 2 multiplayer than

have played Goldeneye.

I also don't think genre of the year would ever really work. People tend to like genres as an ongoing personal preference, rather than something influenced by the current times.

Final Fantasy VII won because it had appeal to many gamers, and that's it. It's not like 19% of all gamers are just going to vote for the best RPG that year. Otherwise, a game like Gran Turismo or Banjo Kazooie would have won, neither of which even made the top 5. I do however think you're right about the Zelda factor though. I expect it to win a category next year (I'm not sure I'd really call it an RPG... It's far more an action/adventure in my mind, and I've been into RPGs since Bard's Tale. Kevin called it an Action/RPG).

The worst character category became a total schmozzle so we left it out. People voted for all sorts of obscure characters and the highest percentage of votes before we got to about 150 DIFFERENT characters was 5% to "Spice Girls" (Ginger Spice was frequently singled out). Finally, on scoring, I'd LOVE to do just a mark out of 10, as it would save a lot of time, and umming and ahing. However, we're quite certain that we'd receive more complaints than praise about going to a "less accurate" scoring system. Our reader's survey also showed that over 90% of readers believe we get it about right most of the time, and considering how we get more complaints and letters of confusion when we change stuff in scoring... We think we'll leave it for now. I'll put the "Mark out of 10" question in next year's survey.

As for "Below 90% is bad", come on. Does my Rakuga Kids review sound like I thought the game was bad? That got 80%. With personal bias, we try as much as possible to give games to people who like that genre. Look at the two flight sims this issue. Sure, not everyone will enjoy them, but that goes without saying. Someone who actually wants a flight sim though will think Falcon 4.0 and Microsoft CFS are awesome, so the score is about right. Scoring tends to be relative to other titles in the genre, as that's the most relevant, accurate, and logical way to compare it.

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Nintendo 64 console, 3 controllers, Mario Kart 64 and Goldeneye 007 64 with several cheats enables including 007 mode. All boxed and all booklets included. Purchased new for \$460. My asking price \$350 o.n.o. Call 03 5435 2446 after 6pm weekdays or after 1pm weekends. Bendigo, VIC.

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N64, 2 control pads, 1 memory pack, 3 games - Goldeneye 007, Lylat Wars, Banjo- Kazooie. Boxed with booklets. Excellent condition. \$500. Call Nick 08 9528 1821. WA only.

Sony PlayStation - excellent condition. 2 control pads, 2 memory cards, Namco Gun and RF adapter with 9 games including: Abe's Odyssey, Time Crisis, Point Blank, Resident Evil, Crash 2, Overboard, Doom, Final Doom, City of Lost Children and 3 demo disk's. \$400. Call Phil after 7pm 02 4721 8793.

NTSC Spyro and Future Cop: L.A.P.D \$30 each, Starcraft \$45 (perfect condition) Gameboy with Tetris and Navy Seals and carry case \$65. Not colour. Call Chris on 08 9409 7733. WA preferable.

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What an offer! 1 Sega Saturn, 3 controls, 1 back up memory card, 5 games (Worldwide Soccer 97, Fighters Megamix, Nights, Earth worm Jim 2 & Sonic 3D) for \$110 o.n.o. Call James on 03 9728 5863.

Hot Deal! A Super Nintendo with 6 games and a Super Game Boy with 3 gameboy games: (Donkey Kong Land, 5 games in 1, Mario and Yoshi) for a low price of \$160. Or for an extra \$40 I'll swap for a PlayStation. Call Anthony on 03 9309 6639.

Interstate 76 \$30, Earthworm Jim \$15, Muppet Treasure Island \$25, Corridor 7 \$15, Shanghai 2 (dragons eye) \$15, Revolution x \$25, Backpacker \$25, Duck City \$25, The Dame was Loaded \$25., Duke 3D Atomic Edition \$35. Some prices neg. Call Lindsay after 4pm weekdays 03 5450 3026 or e-mail me at uladtheimpala@hotmail.com

WANTED

Diablo. I don't mind if it is boxed with instructions or not, but I will pay less if it is not with instructions. I will pay or swap for AOE temporarily (about a term or so) Adelaide area only. I also have some demo disks for sale. E-mail only to Black Ace on flinstones@picknowl.com.au

Wanted from anywhere in Australia- IBM games, music programs etc and/or PlayStation games for around \$10-\$15 each, (neg) Also wanted an original "Virtual Valerie" (IBM), boxed and instructions. Can neg on price.

Send details and prices to Adrian, PO BOX 150 Carnarvon WA 6701.

Sega Saturn Games- Sonic Jam, Sonic R, Shining Wisdom, Shining the Holy Ark + other games. Will pay competitive prices depending on condition. Call Luke after 4.30pm on 02 4730 2572.

I really need a copy of the Navigational Code Booklet for the PC game Space Quest 1 (SVGA version) Phone Peter on 02 9670 6278.

Diablo, Dark Earth, Virtual Fighter 2 will pay \$45. Also Interstate will pay \$25. Boxed with instructions in good quality only. Call Ben after 4pm on 02 4236 0038.

Japanese NTSC versions of Mario Kart 64, Star Fox 64, Wave Race 64 or any other good Japanese Nintendo game. Must be boxed with instructions and in good condition. Call Leigh Mon-Sat 4-7pm or Sunday 10-5pm on 02 6291 8192. ACT areas only

T Leader 3D joypad or good joystick. Call Ben after 4pm on 02 4236 0038

Any PlayStation games (PAL or NTSC) featuring mazda rotary powered cars, not including Gran Turismo, Rage Racer, Japanese GT racing. Will pay good price. Call Keith on 07 5594 9684.

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I would like to buy "Shining the Holy Ark" and "Dragon Force" for Sega Saturn. Top money paid. Disk only. Call Glenn 0417 618 319 or 02 4628 6599.

Saturn 3D analog controllers, new or used, good condition. Pay reasonable price and postage anywhere in Australia. Call Damien anytime 0417 114 844 or e-mail me at damieny@earthling.net

Krush, Kill 'n' Destroy for \$40 or less. Call Chris on 08 9409 7733.

Sega Saturn games- Worms, Sega Worldwide Soccer 97, Duke Nukem 3D, Quake, Christmas Nights (Must have box and instructions). Will buy for \$15-\$35. NSW only. (Worms wanted desperately) Call A. Clayton on 02 4261 5968.

Any PlayStation game willing to pay \$40. Must work with instructions. Please call Brenton after 4pm on 9386 5529 or 9389 9710

I will pay \$15 for Ultima Underworld - Labyrinth of Worlds, if boxed and in good condition \$20. Prices may be neg. Call Sean on 03 5387 1300.

SWAP

Attn: New Zealand. I want to swap Pilot Wings 64 or Diddy Kong racing for Mario Kart 64 or Yoshi's Story. Call Ben after 4pm

on (09) 480 9368. Must be in NZ.

I'd like to swap my N64 with Goldeneye 007, Mario 64, Tetrisphere, 2 controls and Rumble Pak for a PSX with 3 games (one must be Time Crisis/G-Con 45) 2 controls and memory card. Call Tim after 4pm on 03 5461 1730.

I would like to swap Total NBA 98 for X-Men vs Street Fighter. Call after 4pm on weekdays, anytime weekend on 03 9867 5569

7 boxed Nintendo games (including Mario 3) for Castlevania 2 + 3. Will also swap Donkey Kong Country 1+2 (SNES) for Castlevania Vampires Kiss (SNES). Or even a normal gameboy for Castlevania 1+2. Call Geoff on 03 9531 6275.

PENPALS

Hi my name is David. I am a 13 year old male who enjoys playing RPG's listening to Heavy Metal and using the internet. If you would like, write to me at 28 Grace St, Whitehills, VIC 3550 or e-mail me at Dubeburger20@hotmail.com

Hi, I love computers. Yes, that says it all. I love configuring, fixing, programming and most of all playing games. My name is Alex, and I am a 12 year old male. I am looking for a penpal between 11 and 13. I would most enjoy talking about computers, but I also enjoy music. If this sounds like you then e-mail me on flinstones@picknowl.com.au.

Hey all you N64 fans. I'm looking for a penpal aged 11-13, M/F (no freaks) who has a PC or, and 64. I'm interested in 1st person shooter's, sport's and racing games. I am a great Nintendo fan but also like Sony and I promise to write back to everyone that writes to me, so c'mon write to Ryan Sommer Palms Rd Walkerton QLD 4751

Hi my name is Ben, I'm 20 yrs old and I'm looking for PSX gamers to write to me about latest gossip (T-rex), newest games and any other subjects you want to write about If your serious about PSX games then write to me now! 1/38 Mullumbimbi St Brunswick Heads NSW 2483.

My name is Sarah. I am looking for a cool penpal M/F. I love playing on my PlayStation and I like listening to bands like Savage Garden and Five. If you're as cool as me please write to Sarah, PO BOX 28, Snug TAS 7054.

Hi my name is Bowdie. I am 11 years old and I'm looking for a penpal aged between 11-13 years of age. I am interested in PlayStation and I like strategy and platformer games. If you would like to write to me send a letter to Bowdie, 17 Mine St, Point Wakefield SA 5550.

Gday all you cool dudes. If your aged between 12 and 18, M/F and love PlayStation's stop reading now and get a pen and paper and drop me a line at Jade Dunstan, BOX 1592, Renmark SA 5341 and I

promise a reply.

Fellow freaks, sick of competing against yourself, tired of whipping your friends high scores? If you would like to correspond with a twenty something games freak that loves racing games, then look no further. Send any correspondence or high scores to Jason Vardy 1/4 Senate St Arundel QLD 4215.

Hi my name is Wes and I'm looking for a penpal aged 12-13. I like Anime PSX and Sega. I love Metallica and my favourite games are FF7, Command & Conquer, Mech Warrior and Sim City 2000. I collect anything that is South Park. Please write to Wes, 97 Albert St, Bacchus Marsh, VIC 3340.

Hi, my name is Brett. I'm 14 yrs old and I'm looking for a female penpal between ages 12-14. I enjoy bands such as Aqua and Spice Girls. I also like Nintendo and Sega saturn. Write to me: Brett Luketelich, 166 Baldivis Rd Baldivis WA 1672.

Hi, I'm a sexy male looking for a sexy female penpal aged 12 and up. I promise to reply to every letter written and please send a picture. So if I interest you write to Sexy Sean at 6171 Dorit Close Lisarow NSW 2251.

To my pen pals and anyone else compatible. Write to my new PO BOX 665 Engadine. I own an N64 and PSX. I am female, mature age and have TR1, TR2, TR3, FV7, Banjo Kazooie, Mario 64, and will be getting Zelda 64. I am also interested in chatting on the phone about these games if you are in Sydney. Any age OK, but no dominant men.

Hey people, my name is Ray and I'm looking for someone to write to. M/F any age, and i'm not one of those desperate guys who needs a girlfriend so write to me! I am 17yrs old and I own a PC and 64. My favourite games are Resident Evil & Starcraft. I enjoy surfing, movies and riding my skatie so if you want to write to me at 421 Sydney Rd Balgowlah 2093 NSW or e-mail me at foomanshoo@hotmail.com. Bye, love you all.

G'day my name is Catherine. I'm looking for a person that loves music and isn't just going to talk about games. You can be 10-99 yrs old, any sex. I don't care as long as you write. I'm 15 and love Nirvana, The Offspring, Pearl Jam and playing my guitar, so if you are interested write to me at 12 Newton Terrace Enfield SA 5085. P.S If you like Hanson don't bother writing.

Hi my name is Therese. I am 15 and really want penpals! I don't care how old you are, what you like and dislike, what sex you are (although males are encouraged to reply), just write! My letterbox is starving! Send replies to Therese French, 269 Dowling St, Dungong NSW 2420.

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