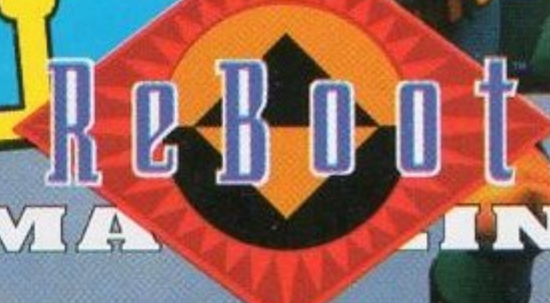


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NEXT GENERATION GAME MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 9
SEPTEMBER 1997

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CRASH 2
TOMB RAIDER 2
FFVII - THE REVIEW
STREET FIGHTER
EX PLUS α
GOLDENEYE
SAN FRANCISCO RUSH
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EXTREME G



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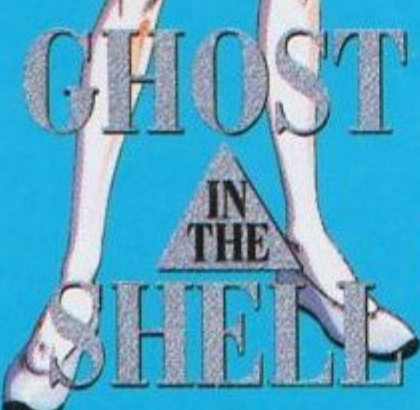
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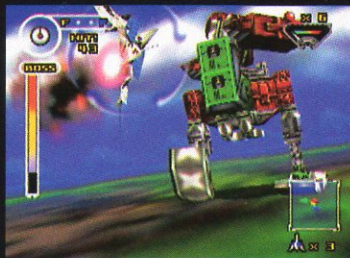
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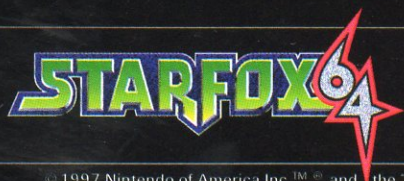


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OF THIRD DIMENSION



SUBJECT INTERACTS IN REAL
TIME WITH FELLOW PILOTS



SUBJECT PERSPECTIVE CHANGES
FROM VICTOR TO VICTIM

THE QUESTION IS
DO YOU WANT TO

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Hopefully... it's around September 1st and therefore the event is about to take place. An event so monumental that it could change the way we look at games from this point on and at the same time mark either an even greater resurgence, or more mediocrity (in terms of quantity not quality) for the RPG market in America.

I'm talking of course about the September 7th launch of Square's epic *Final Fantasy VII*. Hundreds of people, nine months and 30 million dollars worth of epic RPG are at hand. If this doesn't awaken the sleeping giant that is the amazing world of Role Playing Games on console, than nothing will.

My only concern is that *Final Fantasy VII* is so good that if it does open the door it may at the same time, in a manner of speaking, slam it shut.

Does there exist a company other than Square that could invent such a masterful game in under a year's time, or for that matter, in any amount of time? If they could, *Final Fantasy VIII* would be at hand by the time it arrived (it is but a mere 18 or so months away). Before that *Suikoden 2*, Square's *Saga Frontier* and *Final Fantasy Tactics*, and ASCII's *Moon* are all slated for early '98 releases. While all of these are all potential blockbusters, none are in the same class as *FF VII*. However, there is another epic RPG waiting in the wings....

When you think of Square, one other name comes to mind... Enix. They waged war in the 16-bit days under the Nintendo label and it would appear those battle lines are being drawn once again. *Dragon Quest VII* is well under way (for the PlayStation) and will be released in Japan in early '98. If Sony were to strike a deal similar with Enix to the one they did with Square, they would be mimicking Nintendo's footsteps almost exactly. The result would be a reign of supremacy in Japan very similar to the one Nintendo enjoyed for over a decade. I guess History really does often repeat itself.

But wait just one second, I've more space to fill! If my memory serves me, *FF VII* was originally announced as a Nintendo 64 title, so let's explore a somewhat far-fetched, but possible alternative scenario. Sony is way out in the lead at present, and the door is swinging shut, but it's not closed yet. What if Sega persuaded Enix to camp with them and their new 64-bit console? Or what if Enix were to reaffirm their alliance with Nintendo, who are about to launch their first cartridge alternative; the 64-Disc Drive? Either could trigger a resurgence (for Sega or Nintendo) as quickly as the Square deal put Sony on top in Japan. Supremacy in Japan almost always marks

"You're going to have the time of your life with *Final Fantasy VII*"

similar results in the US and UK. Of course that's more of a David Letterman dream sequence than an actual possibility, but then again, so was Square leaving Nintendo.

So, the fat lady is laboring onto the stage, but it's not over yet. She could trip and roll right back down the steps.

"Aunt Bunny fell down the steps". Whoa, flashback!

With *Zelda 64* and *Quest*, Nintendo have the action RPG category well at hand, but that genre holds nary as much weight in Japan where the battle is being waged.

Nintendo's sole major RPG is *Mother 3* and they will need a miracle to close the gap in Japan where they are being pummeled by Sony while running a close race for second with Sega who currently has the upper hand. Sega (who seem almost asleep at the wheel over here) need to make whatever announcement they've been holding back because 3rd party support in America for the Saturn is all but gone. A healthy 64-bit game plan on a developer-friendly console needs to happen soon. We all know it's out there, but how long will Sega wait? Seems like one big chess game doesn't it? I guess that's the beauty of the video game industry.

No matter how it all finally works out, two things are for certain. One, you are going to have the time of your life with *Final Fantasy VII*, and two, there is definitely more where that came from. Pretty cool, huh? Enjoy the September GameFan!

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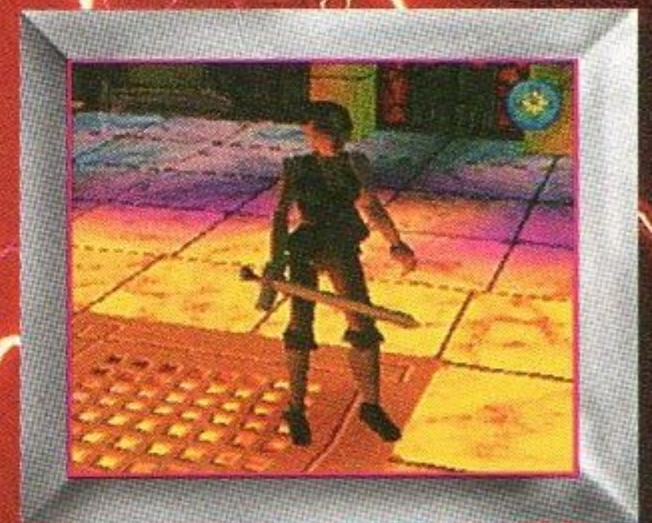
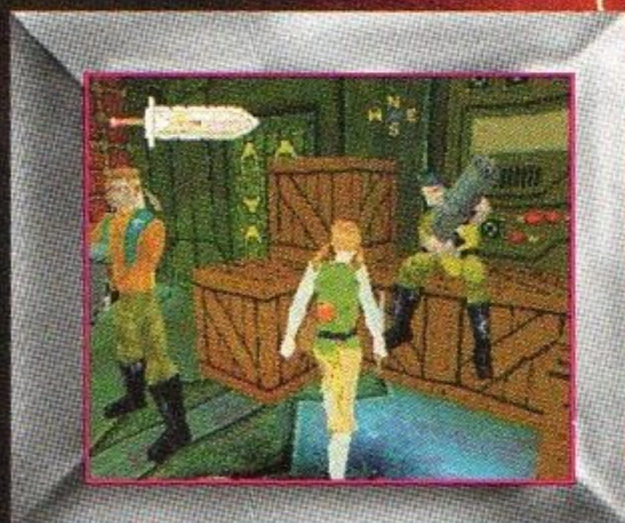
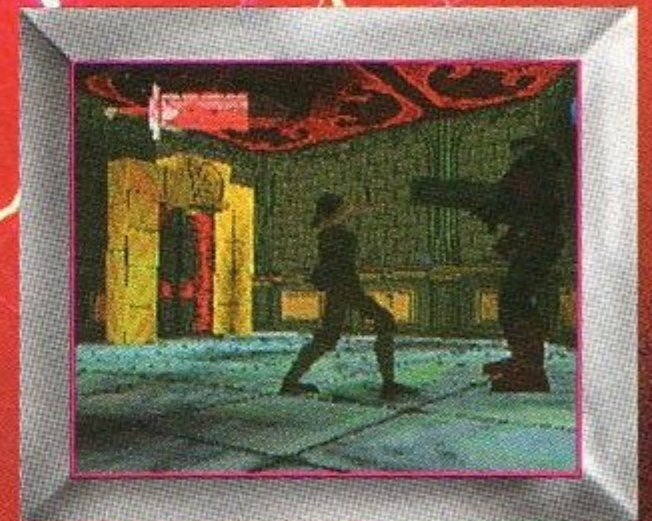
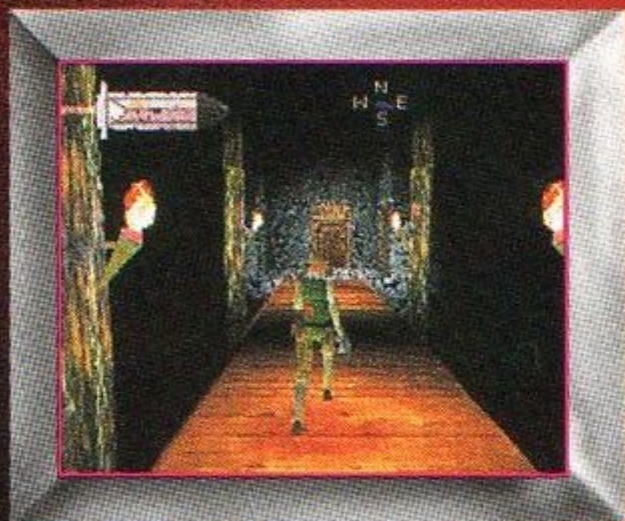
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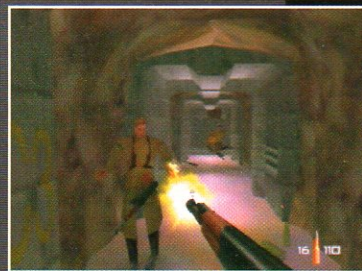
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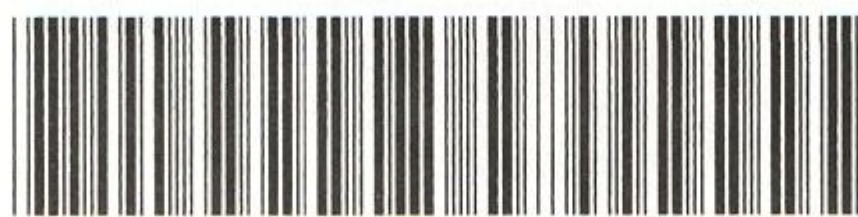


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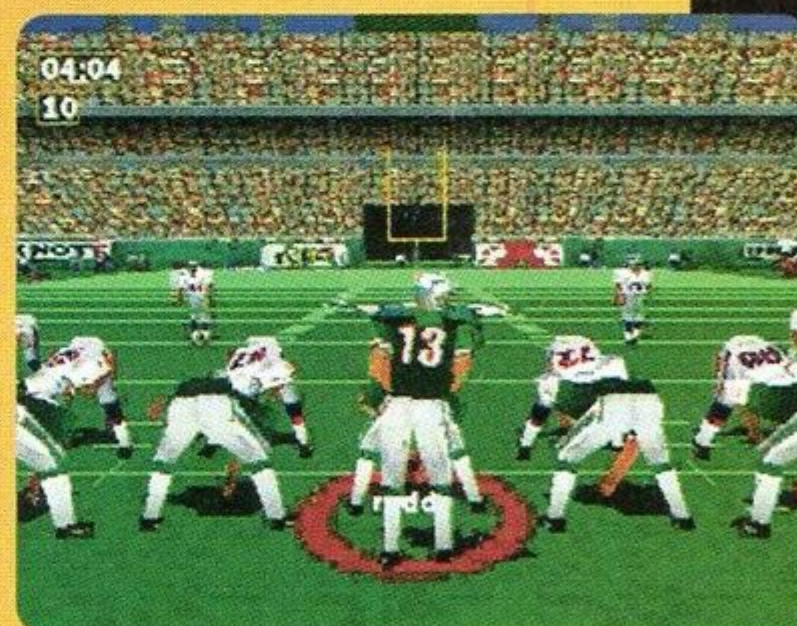
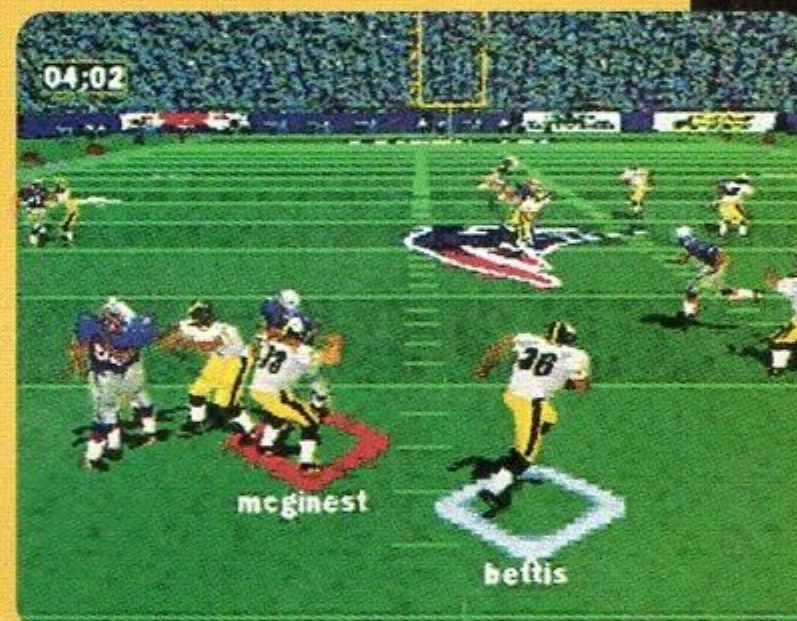
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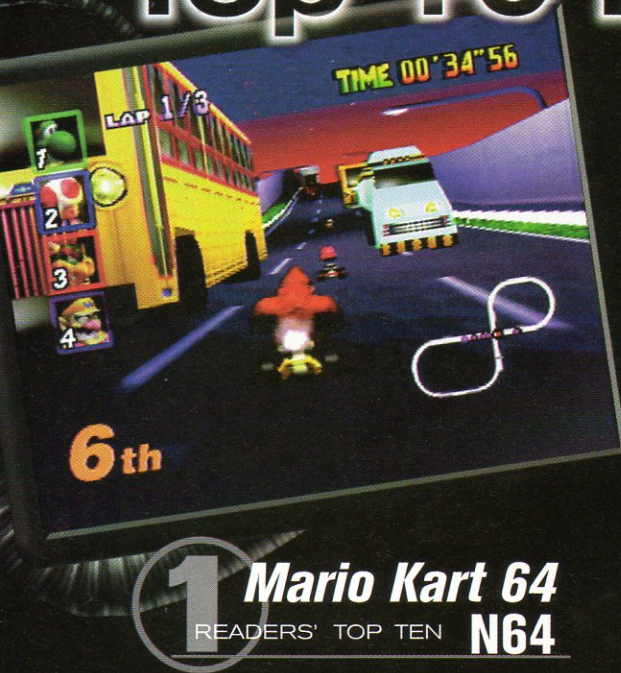
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Top 10 Most Wanted

FOR THE WEEK ENDING 7/30/97



1 Mario Kart 64 N64

READERS' TOP TEN

READERS' TOP TEN

1. Mario Kart 64 - N64
2. Resident Evil - PS
3. Tomb Raider - PS
4. Tekken 2 - PS
5. Super Mario 64 - N64
6. Blast Corps - N64
7. StarFox 64 - N64
8. Street Fighter Alpha - PS
9. Turok - N64
10. Wild Arms - PS

READERS' MOST WANTED

1. Zelda 64 - N64
2. Resident Evil 2 - PS
3. Final Fantasy VII - PS
4. Tomb Raider 2 - PS
5. Quake - N64



6. Cyberbots - Saturn
7. Time Crisis - PS
8. Yoshi's Island - N64
9. Crash Bandicoot 2 - PS
10. Duke Nukem - N64

GAMEFAN EDITOR'S TOP TEN



1. Final Fantasy VII (U.S.) - PS
2. Mischief Makers - N64
3. Silhouette Mirage - Saturn
4. Castlevania SOTN - PS
5. Goemon 64 - N64
6. GoldenEye - N64
7. Ghost in the Shell - PS
8. Street Fighter EX Plus α - PS
9. ThunderForce V - Saturn
10. F1-Pole Position- PS



1. Grandia (demo) - Saturn
2. Final Fantasy VII (U.S.) - PS
3. Silhouette Mirage - Saturn
4. Mischief Makers - N64
5. Thunderforce V - Saturn
6. ONE - PS
7. Dezaemon 2 - Saturn
8. Klonoa - PS
9. Beasterizer - PS
10. Tobal 2 - PS



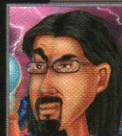
1. Final Fantasy Tactics - PS
2. Final Fantasy VII - PS
3. Langrisser IV - Saturn
4. Castlevania X - PS
5. Policenauts - Saturn
6. Devil Summoner - Saturn
7. Kowloon's Gate - PS
8. Alundra - PS
9. Samurai Spirits RPG - Neo-CD
10. Snatcher - SegaCD



1. Final Fantasy VII (U.S.) - PS
2. Street Fighter III - Arcade
3. Grandia (demo) - Saturn
4. Final Fantasy Tactics - PS
5. Vampire Savior - Arcade
6. Street Fighter EX Plus α - PS
7. Samurai Spirits RPG - Neo-CD
8. Bio-Hazard - Saturn
9. Rockman X4 - PS
10. Breath of Fire III - PS



1. Final Fantasy VII (U.S.) - PS
2. Abe's Oddysee - PS
3. Grandia Demo - Saturn
4. Tomb Raider 2 - PS
5. Crash Bandicoot 2 - PS
6. Silhouette Mirage - Saturn
7. Mischief Makers - N64
8. Street Fighter EX Plus α - PS
9. Time Crisis - PS
10. Quake - Saturn



1. Street Fighter EX Plus α - PS
2. Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee - PS
3. Crash 2 - PS
4. Silhouette Mirage - Saturn
5. Mischief Makers - N64
6. Grandia (demo) - Saturn
7. Colony Wars - PS
8. Thunder Force V - Saturn
9. Rockman X4 - Saturn
10. Ghost in the Shell - PS

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Third Prize: Matthew Levitan, New York, NY

Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This Month's Guest:
Jeremy Airey
Producer, "Clayfighter 63-1/3"

1. Final Fantasy VII - PS Import
2. Street Fighter EXplusα - PS Import
3. Tobal 2 - PS Import
4. Mario Kart 64 - N64
5. StarFox - N64
6. Street Fighter 3 - Arcade
7. Dynasty Warriors - PS
8. Hercules - PS
9. Top Skater - Arcade
10. Mortal Kombat 4 - Arcade/Tour Version



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PAC-LAND

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OF ISHTAR

ASSAULT

源平討魔伝
THE GENJI AND
THE HEIKE CLANS

ORDYNE

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IT KEEPS GETTING UPDATED AND
OUTDATED FASTER AND FASTER.

WHO'LL STOP THIS MADNESS? NAMCO -

AND THE MUSEUM COLLECTION, VOLUME 4.

FIVE STATE-OF-THE ART (WELL, MAYBE TEN YEARS

AGO) GAMES BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT FUN NEVER GOES OUT

OF STYLE. PAC-LAND - A WILD AND CRAZY PAC-MAN ADVENTURE. ASSAULT -

THE TANK WARFARE CLASSIC. ORDYNE - AN INTENSE, RAPID FIRE

SHOOTER FROM THE ARCADES. PLUS, THE RETURN OF

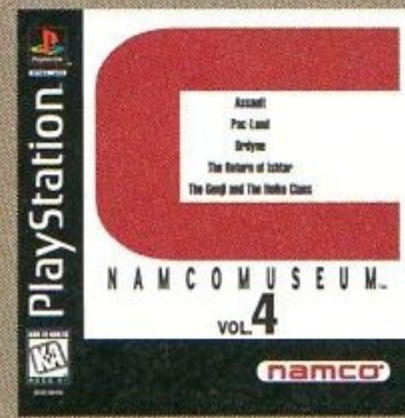
ISHTAR, AND THE GENJI AND THE HEIKE CLANS. EACH

ONE AN ABSOLUTE BLAST. GO AHEAD AND PLAY IT FOR

YOURSELF. JUST DON'T BE SURPRISED IF YOU'RE SOON

LAUGHING IN THE FACE OF TECHNOLOGY, TOO.

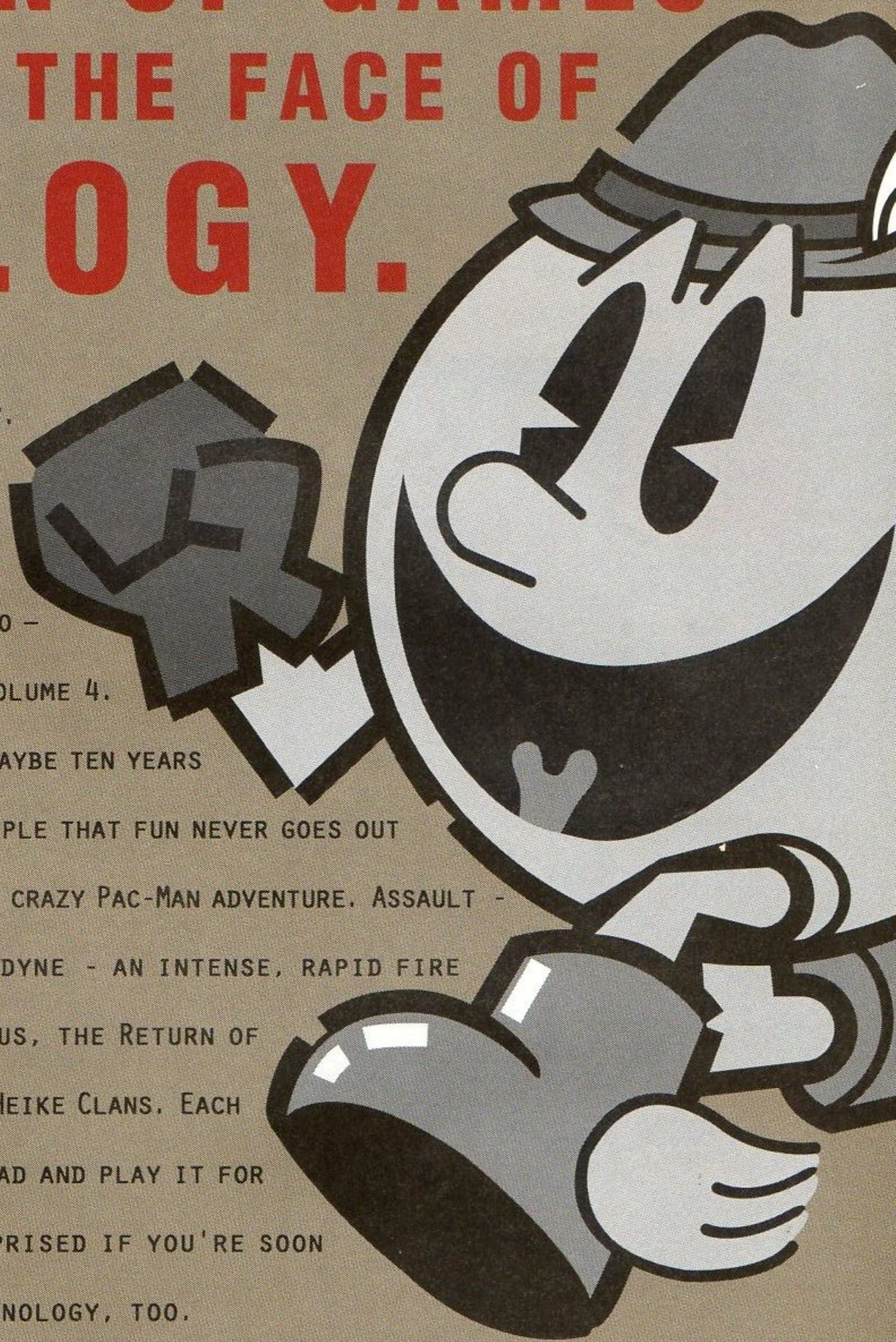
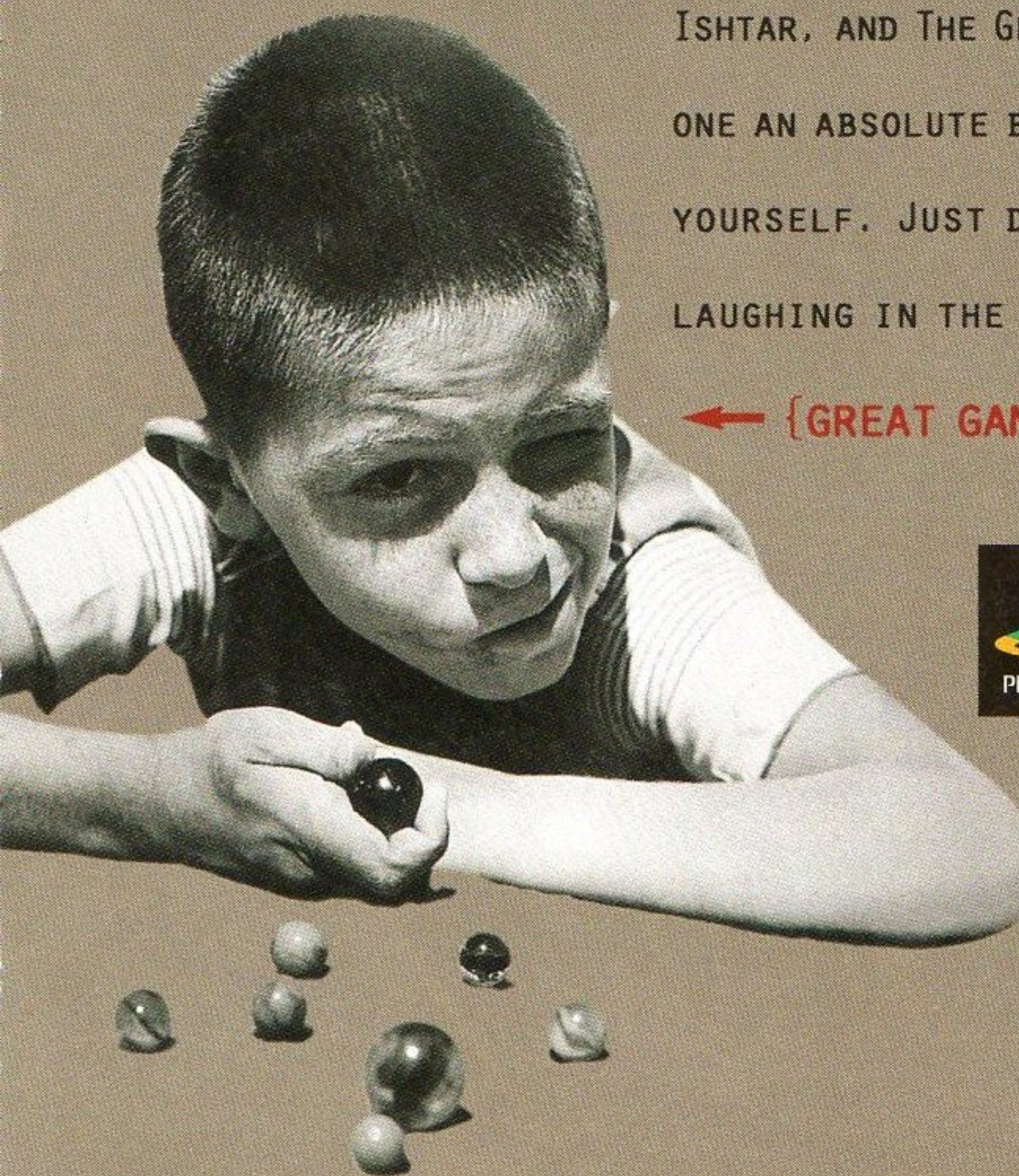
← {GREAT GAMES HAVE NEVER HAD TO BE HIGH-TECH TO BE HIGH-FUN.}



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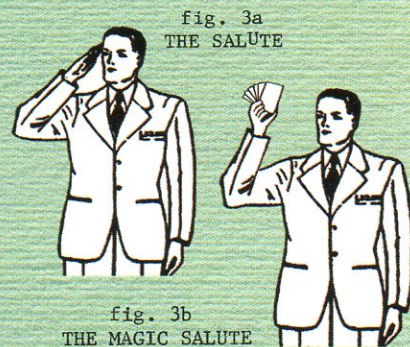
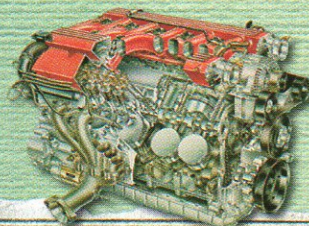


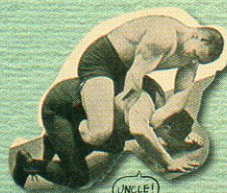
fig. 3a
THE SALUTE

fig. 3b
THE MAGIC SALUTE

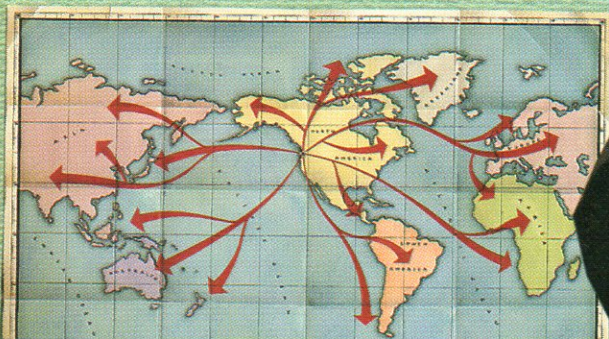
fig. 1a
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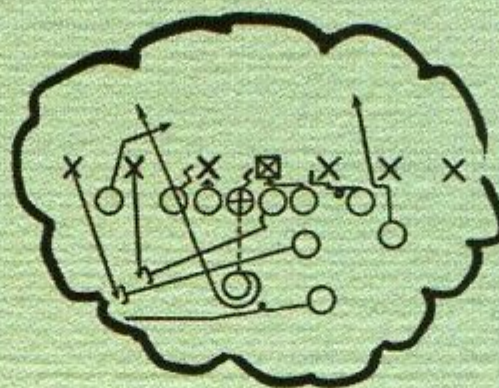
NO MORE TAKING ORDERS

INTELLECTUAL SUBORDINATES!

NO MORE BONEHEADS

IN YOUR BATTALION!

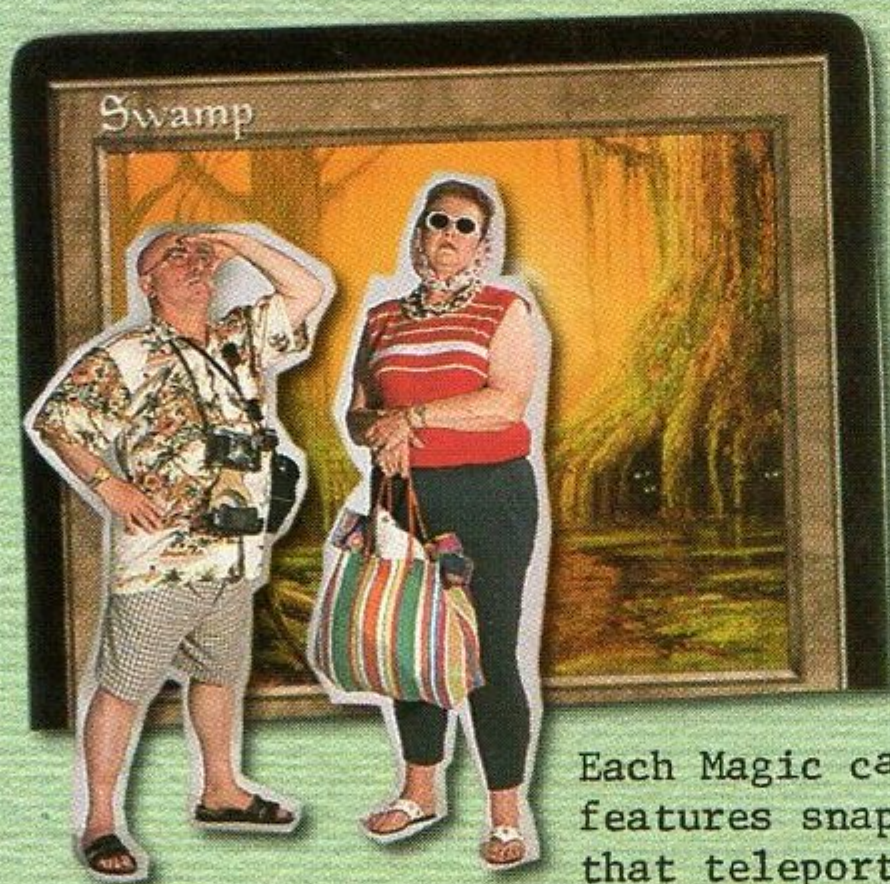
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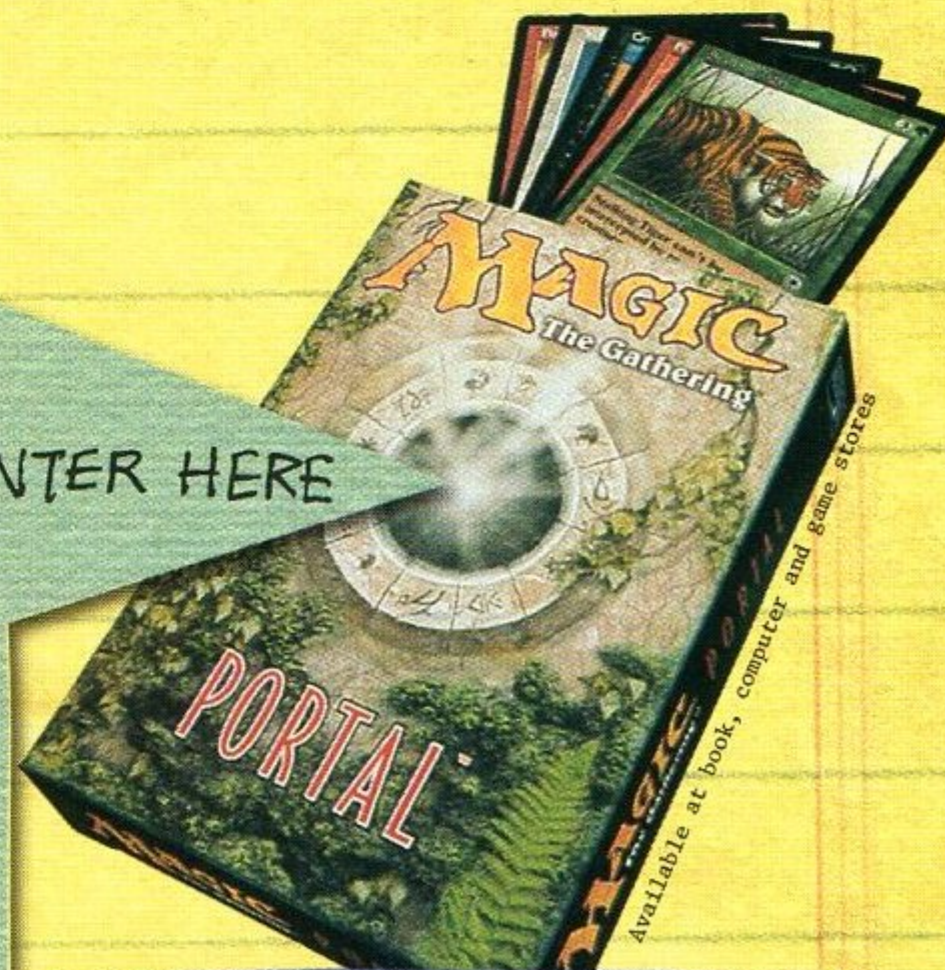
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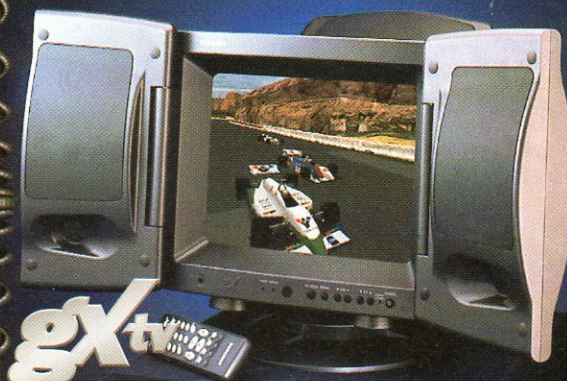
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Hocus Pocus

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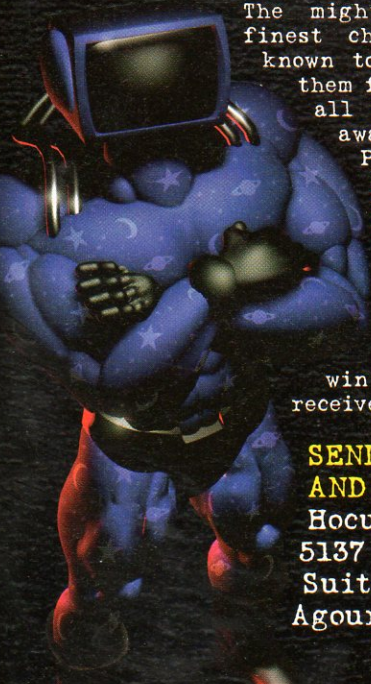
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CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS MONTH'S WINNERS!



The mighty Monitaur seeks the finest cheats, secrets and tips known to humanity, and we need them from YOU!! We'll look over all the codes you send and award a magnificent Grand Prize every single month! Remember, no cheap codes from previously published US magazines! Winners will be drawn each month and displayed in the only place where cheaters prosper. (Current subscribers who win a subscription will receive a one-year extension.)

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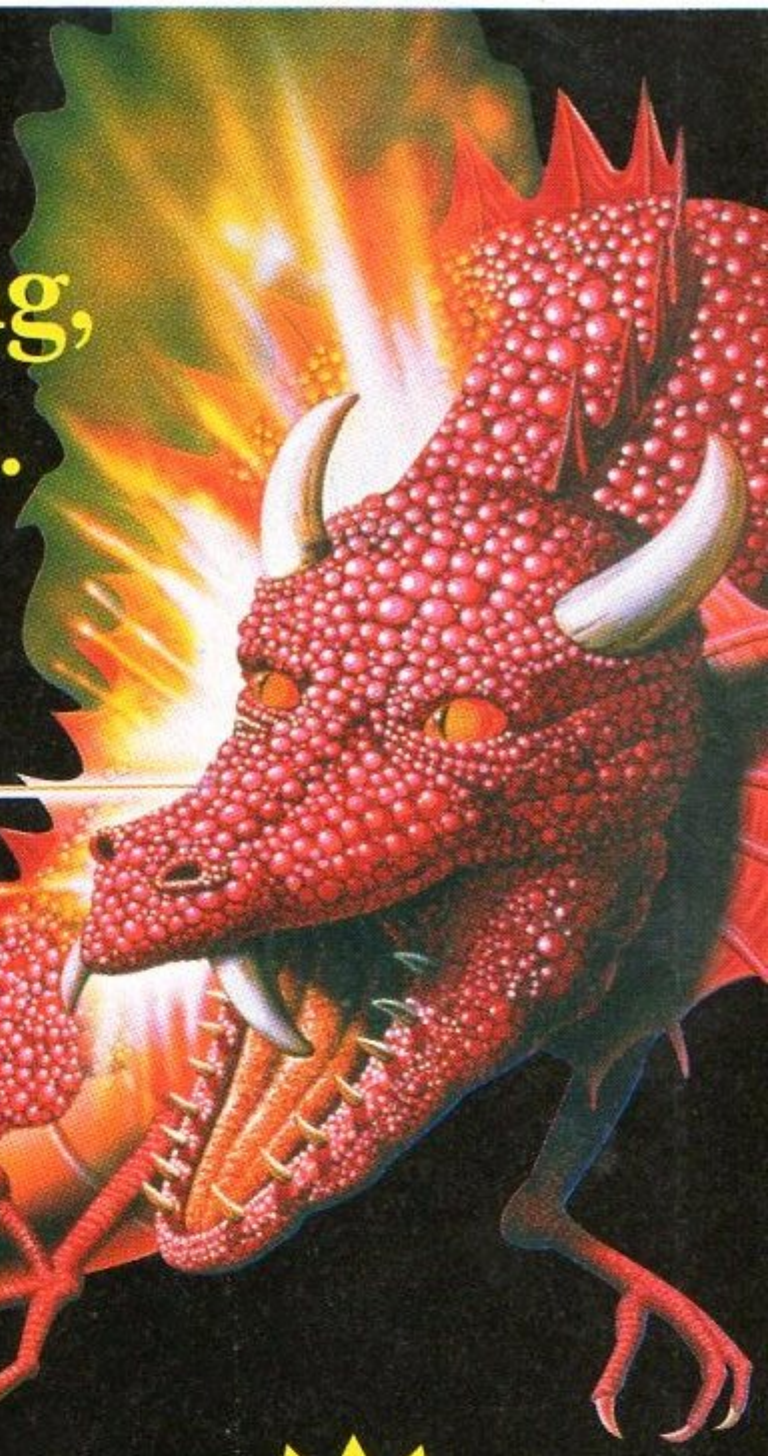
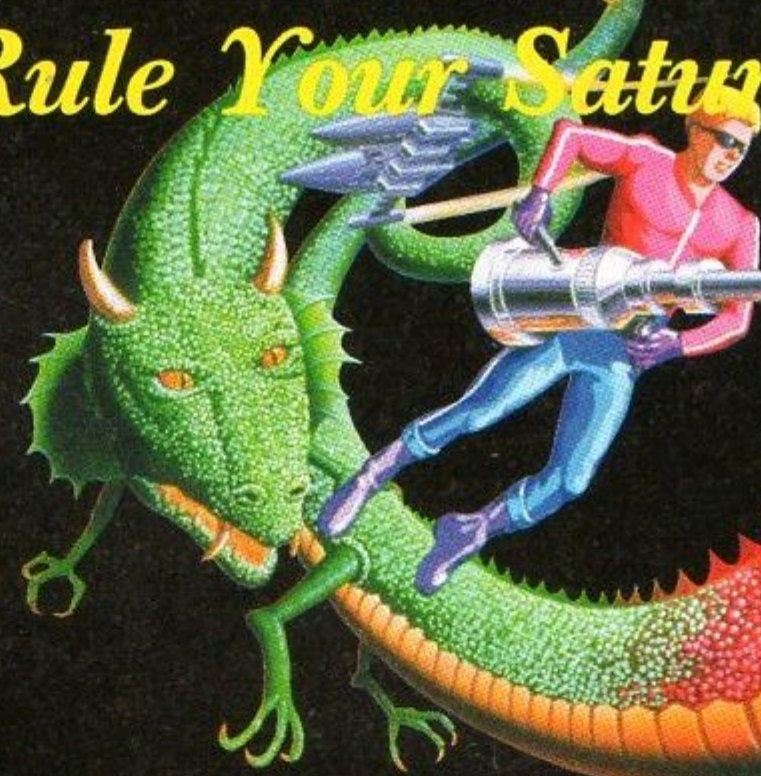
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LOS ANGELES, CA

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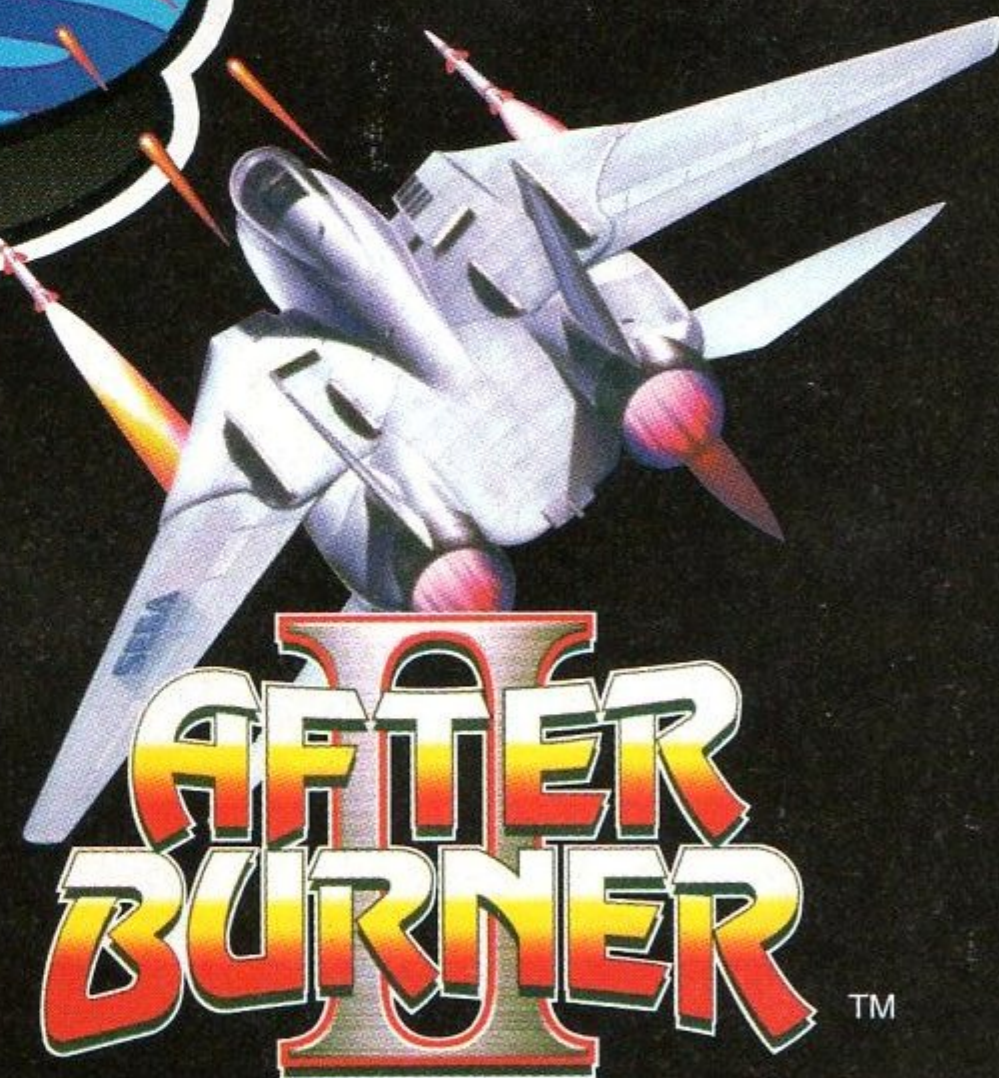
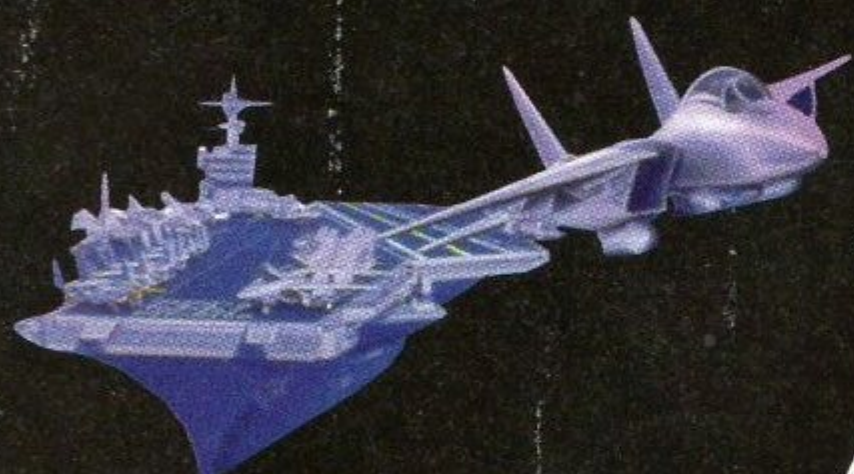
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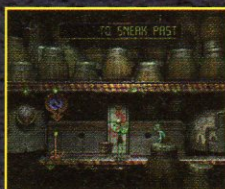
Rupture Farms 1

There is a secret area containing 3 hidden Mudokons directly below the very first screen in the game! Simply walk to the barrel as shown and tap down on the D-pad. If Abe is positioned right, he will climb down.



Rupture Farms 2

There is another secret area containing 2 hidden Mudokons below this screen. Once again the passage is hidden behind a barrel. You need a bomb to clear the mines first.



Rupture Farms 3

Yet another secret area containing 2 hidden Mudokons located below this screen. Once again press down at the barrel to make Abe climb down. Sneaky, eh?



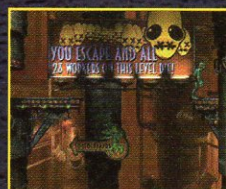
Rupture Farms 4

Yank the overhead pulley to open the trap door, then quickly run and fall down the hole into a secret area below, containing a hidden Mudokon.



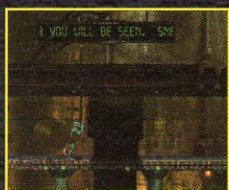
Rupture Farms 5

Pull the lever then run and fall through the trap door into the secret area below. There are three hidden Mudokons to be saved! Isn't this game cool?



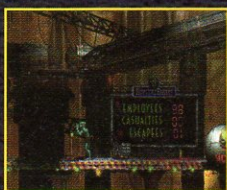
Rupture Farms 6

Kill the Slig by dropping a bomb on him from the screen above, then drop down onto this ledge. There is a secret area to the right leading to 3 hidden Mudokons.



Rupture Farms 7

There is a Mudokon hidden in the shadows here. Incidentally, there are 99 Mudokons in the game: 28 in Rupture Farms, 12 in the Stockyard, 6 in Scrabania, 3 in Paramania and 50 in Rupture Farms 2.



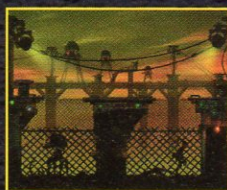
Rupture Farms 8

Another Mudokon is hidden in these shadows. Talk to him then lead him to safety. You should have saved all 28 Mudokons (14 normal, 14 hidden) by the time you leave Rupture Farms.



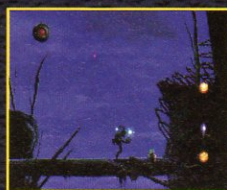
Stockyard 1

Free this unfortunately positioned Mudokon by chanting as soon as you walk on the screen. Take too long and he will be gored by the Scrab!



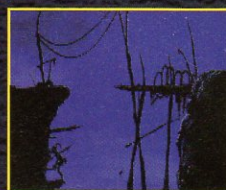
Stockyard 2

There is a secret door hidden in the darkness beneath the ledge on the right hand side of the screen. Walk to it and press UP to reach the walkway in the background leading to 2 hidden Mudokons.



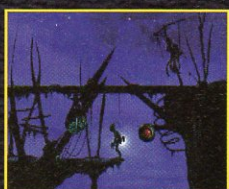
Stockyard 3

Chant here to open up the secret bird portal concealed by the dark mound. Jump through to reach a secret area with 2 hidden Mudokons.



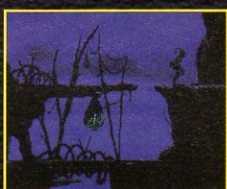
Stockyard 4

Drop down off the ledge at the bottom/left of this screen to reach a secret area that leads to a chamber with 4 hidden Mudokons. From this entrance it is possible to rescue all 4 of them.



Stockyard 5

Climb down from this ledge to reach a portal leading to the same secret area as Stockyard 4. You can only save 2 of the 4 Mudokons from this entrance, but it is easier to get rid of the Sligs.



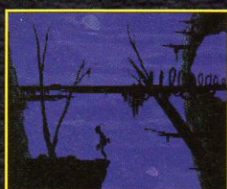
Stockyard 6

Pretty obvious one really. Just walk right here to reach a secret area with a portal leading to a hidden Mudokon. Take some rocks with you to clear the mines.



Stockyard 7

There is a secret passage-way to the left of the bonfire. Crouch and roll left to reach a secret area leading to a hidden Mudokon. Avoid the Slogs!



Stockyard 8

The final hidden Mudokon can be found by climbing down from this ledge and jumping through the portal found below. You should have saved all 12 Mudokons before you leave the Stockyard.



TURN TO THE DARKSIDE, ABE!

Did you know that Abe actually gains new dark powers if he kills enough Mudokons? Start a new game and kill as many as you can...



Paramite Temple

In the screen with the giant rolling cylinder (see above) there is a secret passage-way through the right wall. Once the cylinder has gone, crouch down and roll right. You will find 3 Mudokons.



Scrab Temple

As soon as you enter the temple, crouch down and roll left. Did you know you can kill Scrabs? Chant as they approach a jump and, if you time it right, they can't jump and fall down the hole! Very handy.



Scrab Temple 2

On this screen, after you have lured the Scrab that was on the lift away, take the lift down to reach a portal leading to a secret area with 3 hidden Mudokons.



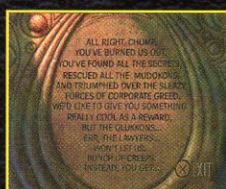
Scrab Temple 3

There is a secret passage-way to the left of this screen. Climb onto the platform underneath the torch and roll left. A single Mudokon is waiting to be saved.



Rupture Farms 2

When you return to Rupture Farms be sure to check all of the same secret areas for Mudokons. However, there is one new secret area located beneath the trapdoor on this screen.



Your Prize...

Rescue less than 50 Mudokons and you get the bad ending. Rescue 50+ Mudokons and you get the good ending. Rescue all 99 Mudokons and you get this screen followed by... ah, but that would be telling!

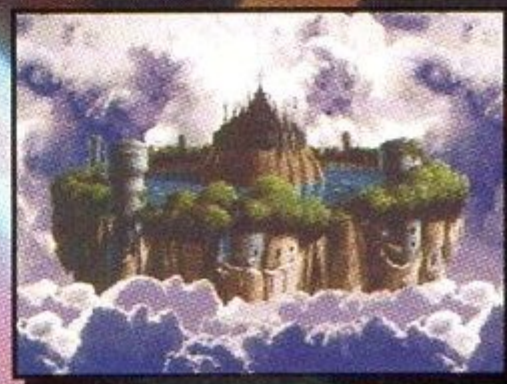
ALBERT ODYSSEY

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HERCULES Herculaid Passwords!

Here's all the level Passwords for Hercules! These should come in handy when you want to show-off some of the spectacular bosses to your friends, or if you've missed out on a few levels... enjoy!



LIGHT NESU MEDU HYDR ARCH PEGA



HAT THIN HEAD MINO GLAD

GLAD, MINO, GLAD, MEDU - **TRAINING**
HYDR, MEDU, THIN, MEDU - **GAUNTLET**
NESU, HEAD, MINO, ARCH - **FOREST**
NESU, THIN, HYDR, HEAD - **NESSUS**
GLAD, HYDR, ARCH, GLAD - **THEBES**
THIN, HAT, THIN, GLAD - **HYDRA**
ARCH, PEGA, ARCH, NESU - **MEDUSA**
HAT, PEGA, HEAD, ARCH - **CYCLOPS**
GLAD, THIN, THIN, LIGHT - **TITANS**

DARK RIFT Boss and Endings code!

Dart Rift features two hidden bosses, both of whom are playable if you input a secret code. The codes are entered at the title screen.



Sonork - L, R, Top C, Bottom C, Left C, Right C
Demitron & Sonork - A, B, R, L, Bottom C, Top C

If you find Rift too challenging, or you want to see an ending for a character you don't like to play, the following codes will aid you. However, you should use these codes as a last resort. All codes are entered at the Title Screen.



Aaron - Up, Left C, R, Right, Down, R, R, Left C
Demonica - Up Left C, R, Right, Down, R, R, Top C
Demitron - Up, Left C, R, Right, Down, L, L, Bottom C
Eve - Up, Left C, R, Right, Down, R, R, Right C
Gore - Up, Left C, R, Right, Down, R, R, Down C
Morphix - Up, Left C, R, Right, Down, R, R, B
Nikki - Up, Left C, R, Right, Down, R, R, A
Scarlet - Up, Left C, R, Right, Down, L, L, Left C
Sonork - Up, Left C, R, Right, Down, L, L, Top C
Zenmuron - Up, Left C, R, Right, Down, L, L, Right C

Note: Just to make sure there's no confusion, "Right" means on the control pad, "R" means shoulder button.

CARNAGE HEART Real-time OKE Control!!!

That's right, now you can have complete control over your OKE mechs in the heat of battle! During battle, push **Select** to bring up the options, then press **Select** 11 more times. Now simply change Automatic to Manual and the OKE is at your command!

CONTROLS:

Up/Down=Forwards/Back

Right/Left=turn

Square=grapple

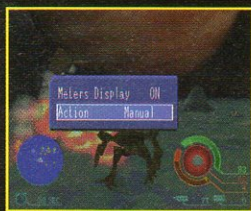
Triangle=jump

Circle=Duck

X=Fire main weapon

L1+right or left=Strafing

R1+Square/Triangle/Circle/X=change mech



Sure, this code defeats the purpose of the game (to build and program mechs), but it's cool!

P. S. Steve asked me to print this code "...just so people can use it." Respect!

DRAGON FORCE Debug Code!

This one's been floating around for while, but here it is for all those who missed it:

Before you boot up the game, at the CD player screen, hold **X, Z, L, R, and Start** at the same time.

Keep holding the buttons 'til you reach the title screen (the one with "Press Start") and enter the following:

Down, Down, Up, Down, Down, Left, Left, Left, Up, Down, Right, Right, Right, then release **Start**, and press it again. You should now see the "Debug" icon appear below New Game and Options. Start a game as you would normally do.

At the map, check the options menu for the Debug mode. Now you can trigger instant battles and domestic duties, change the battle music and backgrounds, even select the map speed and experience value of fights! Be sure to finish this excellent strategy game on your own first, though. It'd be a shame to ruin it.



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TIME ATTACK! AND Non-stop FMV in Sonic world!!!



FMV Trick:

First find the Sonic Movie House in Sonic World. Before entering, press and hold X, Y, and Z, then enter using the A or C buttons. Now choose an FMV clip and every single video should play one after the other!

Secret Time Attack:

So you thought you beat everything Sonic World has to offer? No way! Try this:

Highlight Sonic World at the title screen and press and hold A and Start. You should be dropped into Sonic World in an all-new Time Attack mode. You'll need to grab EVERY ring, that's 100 of 'em, in exactly 60 seconds before collecting your reward (which shall remain a secret). Beware: Getting all the rings is extremely difficult, but if you learn the layout of Sonic World it is possible.



CHALLENGE THE SECRET TIME ATTACK!!!



GAME SHARK CODES!



BROKEN HELIX for the PlayStation™

Infinite Armor 8005c918 0064
First Aid 8006fe2e 0101
Alien Weapon 8006fe68 011e
Grenades 8006fe76 0125

PSYCHIC FORCE for the PlayStation™

Infinite Health P1 80101e54 03e8
Infinite Health P2 80101f98 03e8
Infinite Psychic Power P1 80101e56 0190
Infinite Psychic Power P2 80101f9a 0190

THUNDER TRUCK RALLY for the PlayStation™

Extra Car Crush Pts P1 800bb0c0 03e7

POWERSLAVE for the PlayStation™

Infinite Health 80084bba 00c8
Amun Bombs 80084be2 003c
Cobra Staff 80084be6 003c
All Keys 80084c02 ffff
Transmitter 80084c06 ffff
All Artifacts 80084c00 ffff



SATURN GAMESHARK:

DARK SAVIOR for the Saturn™

Master Code f6000924 ffff
Infinite Points 102fb02e ffff
Infinite HP Garian 160defb0 03e7
Infinite HP Garian 160defb2 03e7
Infinite B-HP Garian 160defb6 03e7

MEGA MAN 8 for the Saturn™

Master Code f6000914 c305
Master Code b6002800 0000
Have Mega Ball 160361e4 0100
Infinite Mega Balls 160361e6 2800
Have Flash Bomb 160361e8 0100
Infinite Flash Bombs 160361ea 2800
Have Thunder Claw 160361ec 0100
Infinite Thunder Claws 160361ee 2800
Have Astro Crush 16036204 0100
Infinite Astro Crush 16036206 2800



ONE MAN. ONE SOLUTION. ONE STATE OF MIND.



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Hallo. Just wanted to let you in on how crazy things have been around here with the kids. Andy brought this new game-enhancer-thing home (as if those games weren't enhanced enough.) Since then, all he does is talk about these characters he runs into, mumbling something about total domination. Says this thing helps him find stuff. He thinks he's invincible, that he can do whatever he wants. Well, boys will be boys. Thank goodness, I've got Colleen.

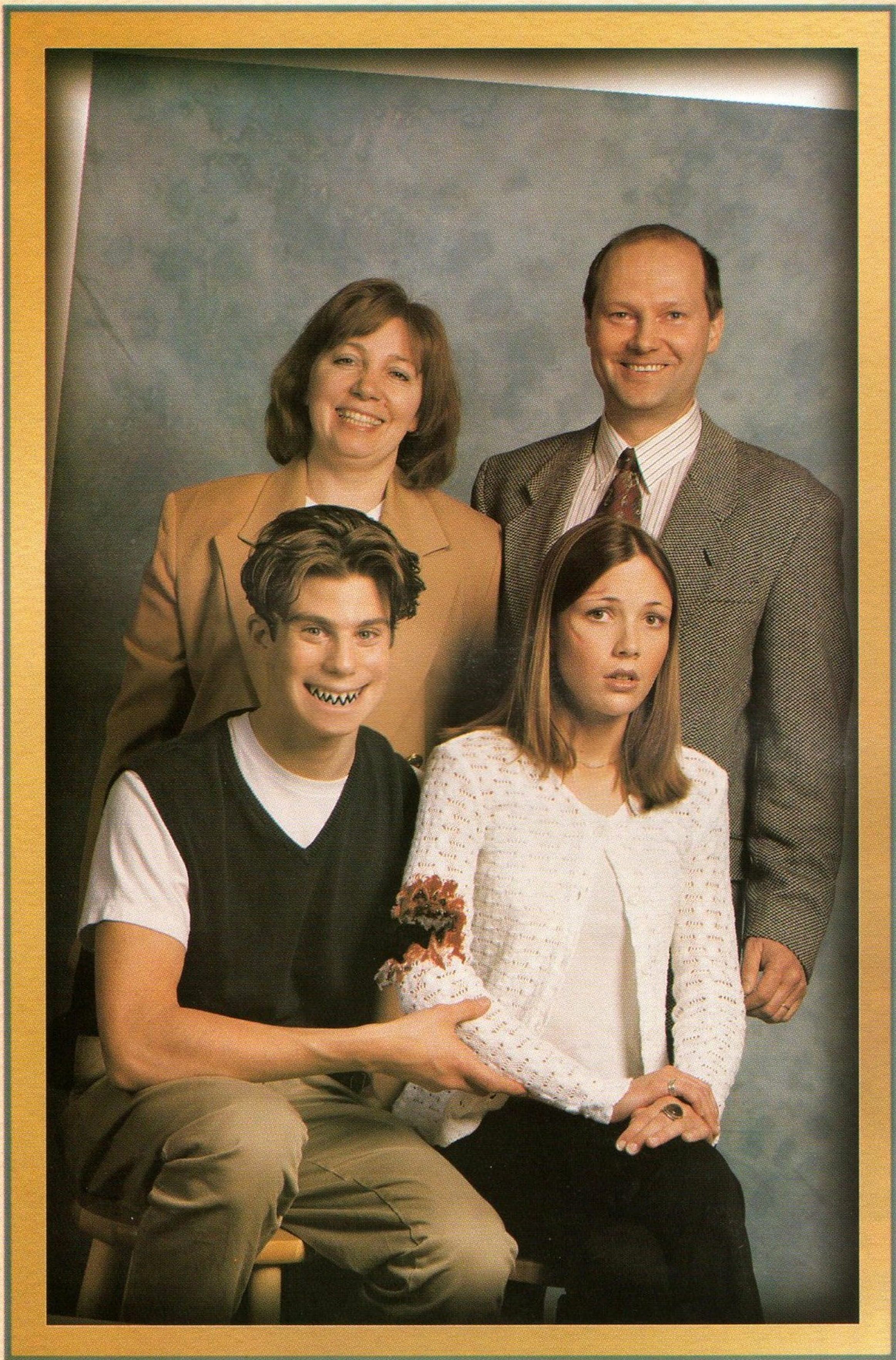
Write back soon.

Love ya,

Muriel & Tom

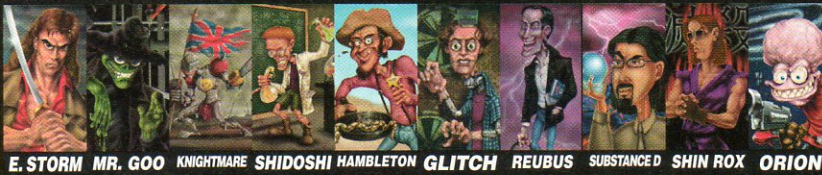
Colleen ANDY.

ABUSE THE POWER™



VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality



Abe's Oddysee
 PlayStation
 GT Interactive
 Adventure

Movie quality CG, inspired art direction, insane 2D animation, tight control, fiendish level design, a wealth of innovative gameplay touches - *Abe's Oddysee* has it all! But what really impresses is the way that all of these pieces fit together to form a bizarre, yet convincing universe that exists beyond the boundaries of the game. *Abe's Oddysee* breathes new life into an old genre and I defy anyone not to be impressed with what Oddworld Inhabitants have accomplished. A must for all 2D action/adventure fans.

G C P M O 95

This is the undoubtedly the most beautiful flip screen platform puzzler in the history of the world. Imagine a game that plays like *Out of This World* or *Flashback*, only it looks like nothing you've ever seen before. The art direction in *Abe's Oddysee* is truly cinema quality; EVERYTHING in the game looks as if it's been laboriously and lovingly toiled over till it looked just right. The animation is astonishing, the sound design, perfect. But best of all, the story, setting, and puzzle conception are truly inspired-the playing experience actually equals the graphic splendor. You must play this game. You will be in awe.

G C P M O 94

Quite possibly the most innovative game I've played all year, *Abe's* is an absolute PS gem. Skim the surface and you'll find some of the most impressive rendered graphics and startling animation ever seen in a video game. Play it just once and soon minutes melt away into hours of total immersion. The level design, puzzle implementation, and character interaction is just fabulous; literally the best *Out of this World* action I've ever played. 'Tis the story, though, told through stunning FMV sequences, that keeps the memory alive.

G C P M O 91

Discworld II
 PlayStation
 Psygnosis
 Adventure

Maybe its because I'm a Brit, but I absolutely adore Terry Pratchett. He genuinely is one of the funniest fantasy/comedy writers alive today. So for me, the chance to step so far back inside the *Discworld* universe is worth the asking price alone. However, if you're not a Pratchett fan, then a lot of the jokes and puzzles are going to pass you by. A so-so point and click adventure with a great license.

G C P M O 80

Whether any of you out there played the first *Discworld* or not (or even know who Terry Pratchett is, for that matter), I'm sure there are those that would find *Discworld II: Mortality Bytes* endlessly entertaining. If you laugh out loud at fare such as *Monty Python* or *The Young Ones*, chances are you'll find the humor in this game right up your alley. On the other hand, if that style of funny is not for you, then neither is this game. There's simply so much dialogue and exposition that if you're not amused by it, you'll probably lose interest.

G C P M O 79

Let's suppose you missed the first *Discworld* installment, like me. You missed the *Monty Python* humour, the great Eric Idle voice acting, and the bizarre, expansive quest across the psychedelic *Discworld* landscape. So with no prior experience I entered *DW 2*, and now I know what I've been missing. It's funny. Literally everybody talks to you and it can go on for several minutes at a time. The graphics are good, though with increased memory the animation would've been something special, and the voices are top of the line. Not my cup of tea, but I give full respect to the concept.

G C P M O 73

Hercules
 PlayStation
 Virgin
 Action/Platform

Whilst still on the silver screen, *Hercules* the game actually showed up! Not only is it fresh, but quite awesome as well. Mixing *Aladdin* like 2D with excellent 3D this is easily Virgin's best game since the glory days of the SNES and Genesis. The game's a tad easy at first (and Danny Devito's a little grating) but as things progress, the bosses get downright colossal and the later levels are amazing. The control's a little floaty, but not so much I couldn't adjust. Great stuff!

G C P M O 85

Hercules is truly a gorgeous game. The integration of 2D sprites and 3D backgrounds is almost seamless, while the quality of the animation is (as you would expect from anything associated with Disney) second to none. However, *Hercules* suffers from three major problems. 1) The game's too short, 2) It doesn't really offer anything that new and 3) the animation takes precedence over the control. Still, there aren't many 2D action/platform titles on PS and if you're willing to overlook these flaws, you may get your money's worth.

G C P M O 83

Wow! Amazing PlayStation 2D! I didn't think I'd ever see a side-scroller this impressive on the PS. So, the Saturn's memory and architecture is better for 2D, huh? Okay, Eurocom kinda beat the memory factor by streaming in new level data and animation at every checkpoint, but it doesn't make it any less amazing. The effects are gorgeous, the depth of the 2D playfield is just staggering, and the character animation is, well, Disney quality. Although I play side-scrollers religiously, I couldn't get past *Hercules'* unresponsive controls.

G C P M O 72

Final Fantasy VII
 PlayStation
 Square/Sony
 RPG

An Epic journey and possible life altering experience for all who take it. *FFVII* is the pinnacle of not just role playing but console gaming as we know it. All other systems and formats must bow down and kiss the 100s of small feet involved at Square. They quite simply care about us so much that I want to have them over for the Holidays. I love this game, its characters and its soundtrack more than I can describe. It's beyond perfection.

G C P M O 100+

I've little left to say about *Final Fantasy VII*. Really, what can I write here that will have any effect on you? You're going to buy it. Everybody's going to buy it. It's the best video game ever made, enhanced further with U.S.-only features like three new bosses, increased difficulty, and a new Materia management system. Uh... still more space to fill... uh... Um, it's got really nice graphics... You'll like them... uh... I like Tifa... It's got a good story... Um, the music's pretty good... uh... Barret speaks in Ebonics... um... Yes! The end!

G C P M O 100+

My Lord! Square went back and made the American version of *FFVII* better than the Japanese original? Can they do that? Can American gamers be so lucky? Hah, of course not! This talk of all-new CG, added Weapons (boss-like characters), storyline updates, a harder quest and other enhancements are simply nothing more than a conspiracy Sony's cooked up to control the youth of America! Don't fall for it! Err... anyway, the impossible has happened, and us Westerners actually have the ultimate version of *FFVII* (which will surely be re-released in Japan). This really is the greatest RPG ever made, and now it's here for you to experience... Um, go buy it!

G C P M O 100

Time Crisis
 PlayStation
 Namco
 Shooting

Wow, this is almost as good as *Horned Owl*!! Heh, heh... only joking. *Time Crisis* crunches all other gun games underfoot with a supremely accurate GunCom, spectacular on-rails entertainment and a whole new version of the game with multiple routes to take! Much more than the arcade, and intense armament-waving fun without the pain of picking buckshot out of your backside. Despite the limited genre (you shoot polygon people and little else), this delivers the same vein-popping rush as the *V Cop* series. Buy it!

G C P M O 94

Once again Namco have delivered an incredible arcade conversion, with accurate graphics, perfect gameplay and the amazing Special Mode - an all new adventure that's twice the size of the arcade! It's like getting *Time Crisis 2* thrown in for free! The Guncom is as accurate as Namco claim (perhaps a little too accurate) making for precision gameplay, while the 'duck' feature adds a new dimension to the genre. The best gun game on PS by a mile! Now where's *Point Blank*?

G C P M O 93

Well, there's no doubt in my mind - *Time Crisis* is hands down the best 'light gun' shooting game currently available on any home system. While normally these types of game do little to nothing for me, *Time Crisis'* unique blend of strategy (the duck feature) and accuracy give it the necessary depth to make the usually repetitive 'shoot the enemy' gameplay enjoyable. All of the exclusive home features are just the icing on the cake. If you like 'light gun' games, or think you might, then I highly recommend you give *Time Crisis* a shot.

G C P M O 90

Every little detail that's in all great shooters is in *RayStorm*. The best 2-D/3-D graphics, perfect gameplay, and Zuntata's famous Taito music. Taito even decided to include two different soundtracks, one arcade and one that's arranged. The only thing that I needed more of was stages; six is nice but not enough. That's something that will probably be in the sequel. You also don't get anything extra for beating the new PS mode of *RayStorm*. Besides those minor quibbles, *RayStorm* is the best shooter so far for the PS, and that's a fact...



G C P M O 90

32-bit shooters are an endangered species these days (in this country at least) so three cheers to Working Designs for having the kahoonas to bring *Raystorm* to the States. I said it before, and I'll say it again; this game rocks with skill! Action-packed (but limited) gameplay, Zuntata tunes, increased difficulty (thanks to WD) and the most psychotic 3D graphics EVER consigned to a home shooter! If you're even remotely interested in the genre, rush out and buy a copy immediately.



G C P M O 90

Made harder by the absence of a complete game on easy, normal, or even hard, *Raystorm* is ready for America. WD's picked a winner to launch Spaz. Easily on par with my favorite PS shooter, *Philosoma*, *RayStorm* is a testament to the PS's polygonal abilities, Zuntata's musical prowess, and Taito's shooter skills. If you're even mildly into shooting by all means pick it up. I warn you though beating it is extremely hard. You'll not find another this worthy until Square's *Einhander* rears its head in Japan this Fall. *RayStorm*'s a must for PS pilots!



G C P M O 90



RayStorm
PlayStation
Taito/WD
Shooting

Treasure has never, ever made a bad game! It just doesn't make any sense to me! Wait, I just played *Mischief Makers*. Mmn... perfect control. Incredible, never-before-seen 2D play-mechanics. Stunning level design. Effects the N64 has never attempted before. Characters that are just too damn cool. Length, 100% replayability, perfect difficulty. One of the best soundtracks this year... heh, on the N64 of all systems! So what was I saying? Oh yeah, Treasure rocks. *Mischief Makers* is incredible. Let it be in your collection today. Amen.



G C P M O 94

Mischief Makers is vintage Treasure, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Although the gameplay may be more *Dynamite Headdy* than *Gunstar Heroes*, there's still plenty of platforming action to be had... it's just mixed up with equal parts puzzle. The 'grab item' mechanic works well, and the trademark Treasure bosses are as impressive and as innovative as ever. One thing's for sure: *Mischief Makers* is in a class of its own on the N64.



G C P M O 94

My favorite developer in the whole wide world, Treasure, has once again bestowed on me a gift which I will always treasure, and Nintendo, well, all I can say is... way to go!! Nintendo, Enix, and Treasure are to be commended for a great game and a quick localization. As you'll read in my review, I just think the world of this game. From the deep gameplay to the best N-64 tunes yet, *Mischief Makers* is an exercise in game design. Apart from that it features three of the most amazing boss encounters ever assembled. Old-school-gameplay and 64-bit visuals finally meet.



G C P M O 98



Mischief Makers
Nintendo 64
Treasure/Nintendo
Action/All

Goldeneye is the first N64 game that just says "this is true 64bit!" Never in the history of games (except for *VF3*) have I been so shocked at the quality of the graphics. Control, music and gameplay is basically perfect. The two & four player mode is much better than the *Mario Kart 64* four player mode, and the fact that Rare has even added codes, and that you can use the Rumble Pack... what else could you want? If only Rare could hire more people, maybe *Goldeneye* wouldn't have taken two years to make. Respect!



G C P M O 95

Rare have done Nintendo proud yet again, with an action-packed, yet highly intelligent espionage-based *Doom*-style game. Huge sprawling levels with a joyful absence of fog, loads of nasty enemies of take pieces out of in a variety of fashions, and a load of levels combine. The result is an atmospheric ride through a Bond adventure with only a couple of minor flaws. Firstly, there's not enough bloody chunks, the foes are a little angular, it's eight months too late and the multi-player mode (despite having Jaws and Oddjob hidden in there) doesn't really cut it (You can see everyone!! You can't hide!! What's the point?). Excellent polished fun, nevertheless!



G C P M O 93

Beyond the golden opportunity to make dead Boris "I am invincible!" *Goldeneye* marks the advent of two key elements on my N64, the fan that would blow away the fog and the fact that it's an intelligent corridor game (i.e. one that I want to play very much). Graphically Bond shines beyond all corridor games before it and the gameplay... intelligent and intriguing. The soundtrack is well orchestrated, and the amount of death animation, respectful. You gotta' have it.



G C P M O 93



GoldenEye
Nintendo 64
Shooting/Adventure

If it's hard core F1 racing you're looking for, then waste no time. Rush right out and pick this one up! *F1 PP* is as deep a simulation as you'll ever get and, it's fast... really fast. With six available cameras and every car tweak you can think of at your disposal, you can really dial in the game to meet your specific style. From there, it's on to 120 laps of pure racing realism right down to the weather. It has a learning curve, but it's one worth learning.



G C P M O 89

I have a confession to make: F1 racing games really aren't my cup of tea. When it comes to racers I'm more of a *Ridge Racer*/*Daytona*/*Sega Rally* kind of guy. Having said that, there's no denying the quality of *F1 Pole Position*. The graphics (redraw not withstanding) are excellent, the control is tight and the tracks are authentic. Make no mistake; this is the best F1 game money can buy... if you're into F1. Otherwise you may find *F1 Pole Position* a tad un-exciting. Still, one of a kind for the N64.



G C P M O 84

F1 Pole Position marks the second N64 racing title I've seen fit to play all the way through. It has the depth, graphics, control and especially lasting power that a 64-bit title should. There are those who would balk at *Pole*'s re-draw but after talking to the developer and realizing less would mean a speed drop I care not. You'll never notice it anyway. This is pure F1 skills-based racing. Apply accordingly.

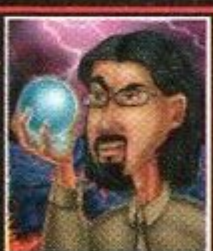


G C P M O 89



F1 Pole Position
Nintendo 64
UBI Soft
F1 Racing

From the crusty remains of the Jaguar version, developers H2O have recrafted their puzzle game for Nintendo's soft scarce N64. Now with the popular *Tetris* monicker affixed, this unique puzzler should get all the attention it deserves, even if the game really doesn't resemble its namesake much (save for the shapes of some blocks). Thankfully, it does remain true to its origins in fun and addictiveness. The music is absolutely first-rate and the graphics deliver plenty of eye-popping thrills. With cool alternate modes of play and a multiplayer option, *Tetrisphere* should please puzzle maniacs from all walks of life.



G C P M O 86

Nintendo has done it again. This version of *Tetris* is by far the most innovative in such a long time. The gameplay is tough to get used to but the amazing control, playability, and graphics make it the die-hard *Tetris* man's dream come true. One thing is for sure, and that is you must play the training mode. The reason? There is so much on-screen going on that you'll need the extra time to adjust. The most amazing thing is that *Tetrisphere* has the best music of any N64 game ever, and the quality is really close to CD.



G C P M O 80

This game is just ... weird. If a different puzzle game is what you're looking for, you need look no farther. My concern is that *Tetrisphere* isn't a simple, easy to play game like *Tetris* or *Puyo Puyo*, nor is it a mind-bender such as *Intelligent Qube*; instead, it exists in some strange in-between world. Because of this, I'm not sure if it will still be as addicting months from now. Still, it's a quality puzzle game (which is good considering it's the first for Nintendo's 64-bitter), with challenging and engrossing gameplay and music that is some of the best yet produced on the N64.



G C P M O 81



Tetrisphere
Nintendo 64
Puzzle

Ah-ha, what do we have here? A man's shooter perhaps? Yes indeed. Whereas some shooters are a quick, albeit beautiful blast, *Thunderforce V* is a one-player shooter quest. You don't mess around with *TFV*; learn it quick or die even faster, 'cause this one's epic. The graphics are astounding. Detailed light-sourcing plays over the surface of giant polygonal bosses, backgrounds line-scroll impeccably, and enemies scale and rotate non-stop. It's just a festival of hard-core shooting, from the masters of the craft. It's also the best 32-bit shooter available, period.



G C P M O 93

The Saturn installment of Technosoft's definitive Sega shooter series has finally arrived, and it's a corker! Huge polygonal enemies, familiar and original weapons, impressive 3D backdrops, pulse pounding synth rock and action so intense your thumbs will bleed! Compared to *TFV*, *TFIII* and *IV* were a walk in the park! The graphics are occasionally less than impressive, but other than that, this is everything you could hope for in a 32-bit *Thunderforce*. *TFV*... pour homme.



G C P M O 92

The shooter I've been waiting four years for has finally arrived. TechnoSoft, after the disastrous *Hot Blooded Father & Son* has again found themselves with *NeoRude* on the PS and now the amazing SS shooter they needed in '95, *Thunder Force V*. *TFV*'s interface mimics *TFIV*'s (tied with *Axelay* as 16-bit shooter supreme) so you can arrange the first three levels to your liking. From there it's on to yet another metal blast with all of the intensity 2D can muster. The SS Polygon machine heats up and takes it like a man with mega bosses and pure adrenaline gameplay. Grab the Hunter and enter the zone. All SS users must own *TFV*! (P.S. SOA's asleep at the wheel... they passed. Can you f*%^\$ believe it!??)



G C P M O 94



Thunder Force V
Saturn
TechnoSoft
Shooting

GameFan Online... our web site doesn't suck!

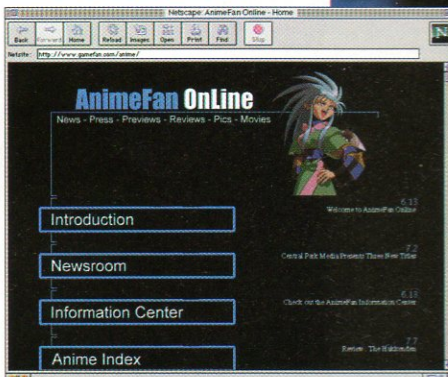
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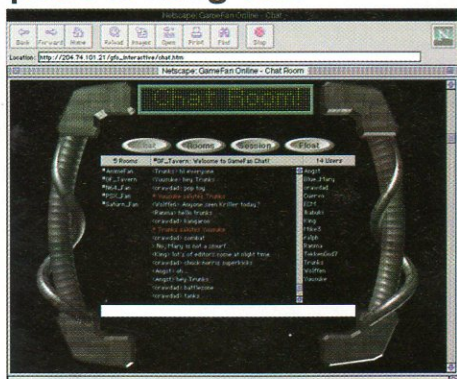
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Ogre Battle



More than ever, the adage "what was old is new again" could fairly well describe a large number of games being released these days. Whether an older game gets all gussied up like my fair lady or an older game is presented in its pure, unaltered, original form, successful ideas are seldom laid to rest (nor should they be for that matter). Now, Quest's SNES battle RPG, *Ogre Battle*, has found a new lease on life and a new home on Sony's 'do everything' PS. Apparently, *Ogre Battle* is quite rare on cartridge, so this should make a few mad people out there very happy.

The developers of this update, ArtDink, haven't completely redone the game. In fact, all they've really done is tweak it a bit here and there. For instance the battle screen, though the effect is subtle, is now polygonal and it scales. Look at the books in the background of the screen shots and you should be able to tell. Also, the spell effects cast by either your characters or the tarot cards are now resplendent with transparencies and some simple light sourcing. You gotta have light sourcing these days, you know. Everything else, like the character sprites and map screen remain identical to the 16bit original. And aside from the addition of a very useful mid battle save feature, the gameplay is untouched.

I never played the original *Ogre Battle*, so this was an all new experience for me. Taken for what it is, there's really nothing wrong with it. Keeping in mind its intention and heritage, the game looks and sounds alright (Liberation!), and there is a quite a lot to keep track of and do to be successful in battle. There are certainly more elaborate, more recent examples of the genre to be sure, but those who were never able to track down the original *OB* (isn't that a feminine product?) should be excited by this slightly prettier update.

SD



Evil Never Sleeps.
And Now Neither Will You.

REVIEW



DEVELOPER - ARTDINK

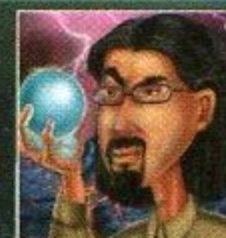
PUBLISHER - ATLUS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

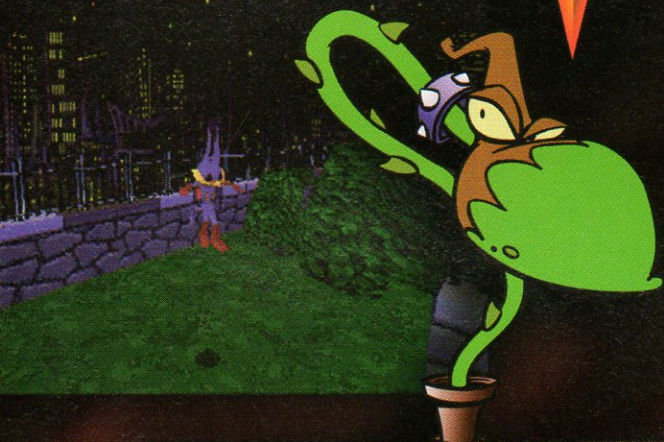
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW

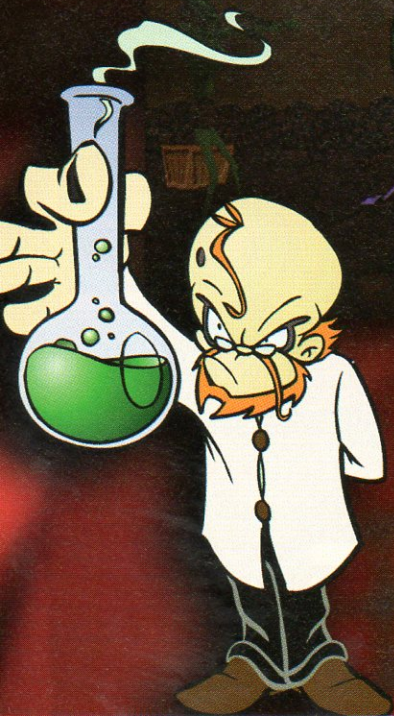


SUBSTANCE D
What was old is new again.

JERSEY DEVIL



- Multiple open 3D environments, tracks and rides
- Tons of action and puzzles
 - 20+ moves
 - 60 character models
- Supports dual-analog controller





THE BEAST IS LOOSE

"...looks to be one 'damned' fine game,
and should prove one of the 'hotter'
titles we'll see this fall season"

— *P.S.X.*, August '97

"The game uses large 3D levels in a
variety of unique styles (...) filled with
traps and enemies that pose a serious
challenge to the player"

— *Next Generation Online*, May '97

"...lavish cartoon-style graphics
offer gamers a fun-filled action
platform experience."

— *PS Extreme*, July '97

JUST TRY MESSING WITH HIM!

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A diabolical
product from
malofilm
interactive

Mortal Kombat Mythologies: Sub-Zero. Arriving October nineteen ninety-seven.

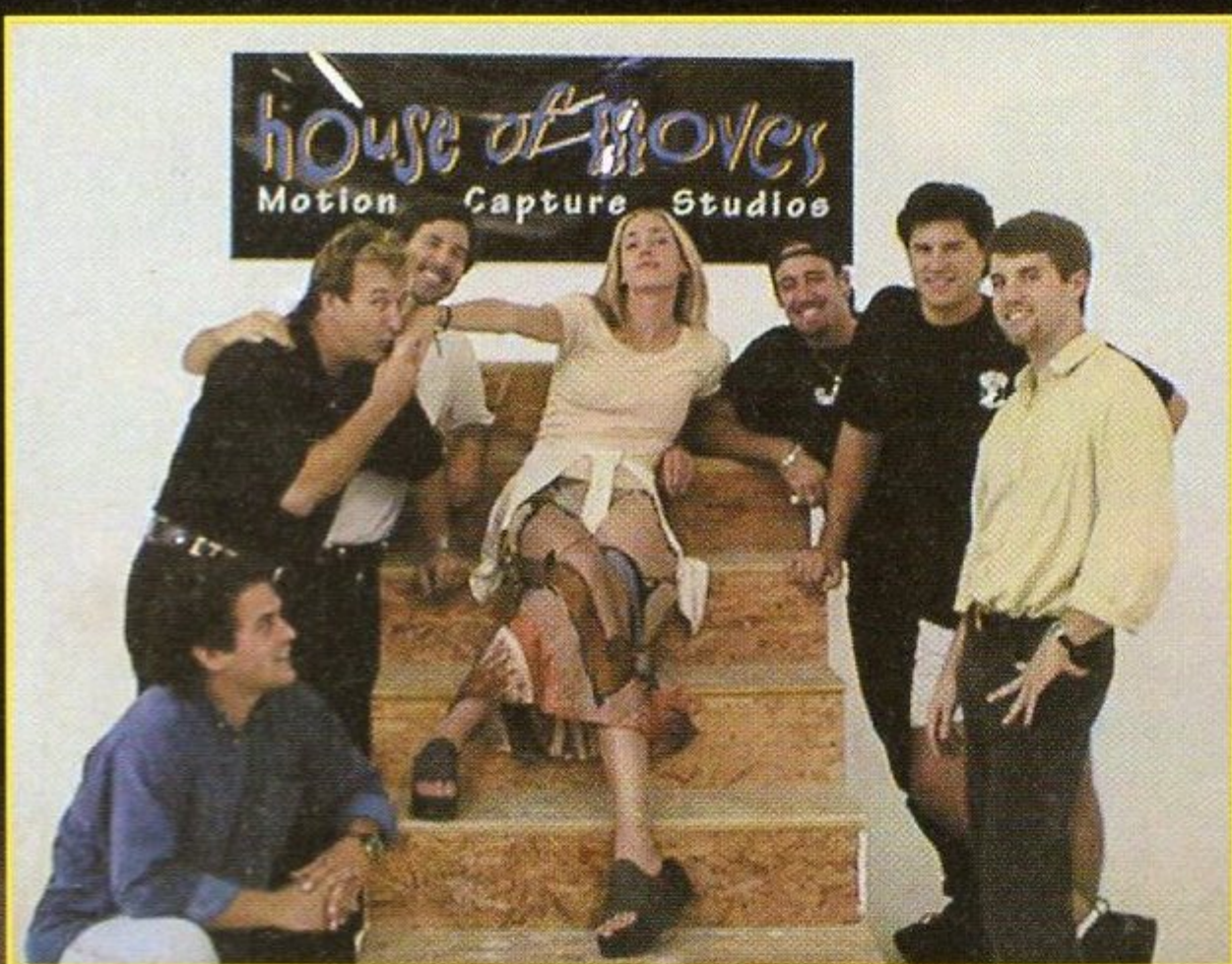
Soon you'll meet
the root of our evil.



MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES

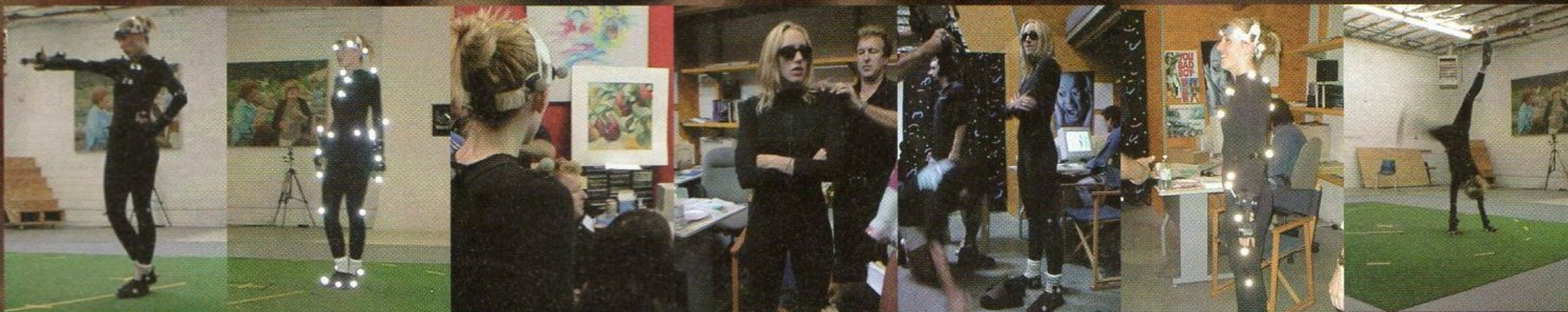
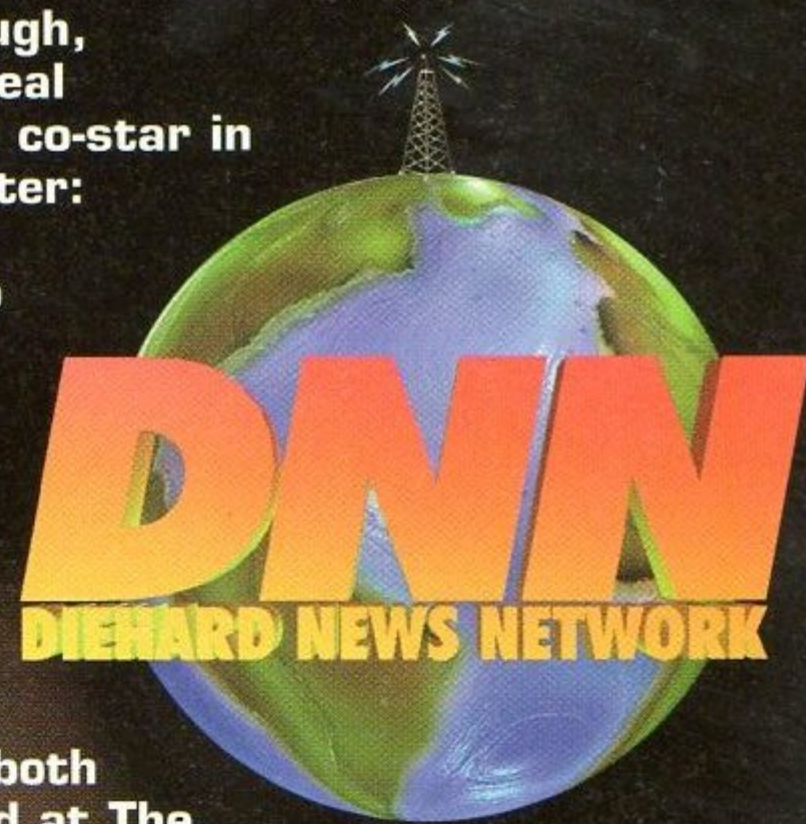
SUB-ZERO

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As if Bruce Willis wasn't enough, Activision recently inked a deal with recording artist Poe to co-star in their forthcoming 3D action/shooter: *Apocalypse*. Poe was brought on board to both contribute music to the game's soundtrack AND play the part of Trey Kincaid's ex-girlfriend Mary Magdalene, a beautiful pop diva who transforms into one of the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

In order for Poe to appear in the game, she had to go through the same process as Willis, being both cyber scanned and motion captured at The House of Moves. In between takes, GameFan got a chance to speak with Poe about her role in *Apocalypse*. This is what she had to say.



GF: How did you get involved with *Apocalypse*?

POE: All I really know is that they (Activision) approached us. There were some people at Activision who liked my record and they came to us and said, 'Would you be interested in doing this?' And, ironically, I got my name Poe because I went to a party when I was 8 dressed as the plague (from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death"). But the director didn't know that! And that really astounded me, because I thought that's why they wanted me to do it. 'She's Poe! She got her name from dressing up as the plague, we've got a character called the plague—cool, she'll do.' But they didn't know that. So it was great synchronicity.

GF: What attracted you to the project?

POE: Well number one, I loved the premise. I think the premise is very interesting and intelligent. The fact that this evil Reverend takes his energy and transmutes it into the four deadly horsemen of the apocalypse—that's a powerful image. And I get to be one of them! I mean, if you're going to play a villain in any arena, how much better can you get than the horsemen of the apocalypse! Death, war, famine, plague—these are great villains!

Also, I've always been interested in crossing formats in terms of the arts—from visual to narrative to music. I think the future is going to integrate all those things a lot more, and I think projects like *Apocalypse* are paving the way for that.

GF: What are you contributing to the game musically?

POE: There's either going to be one or two of my songs included on the CD. How much I get involved with the actual 'in-game' music remains to be seen. The guy's working on that right now, and he's explained to me that it can't be CD quality because the PlayStation can't read both CD audio and game data at the same time. One thing we talked about was the possibility of integrating certain recognizable melodies of mine from past records into some of the arrangements surrounding my character. But we'll have to wait and see what happens.

GF: Do you play games?

POE: Yeah. But to be honest, I've only just gotten into them. I was really into Doom though. That was an awesome game, and it was the first game I ever played using a VR headset. There's a funny story behind

that. I'd gone after a show to do a meet-and-greet at a Cyber Cafe, and there were 40 contest winners who were there to get autographs. And the guy that owned the place asked me if I'd ever done the 3D helmet thing with Doom. And I was like "No, let's do it." I completely forgot where I was and did not emerge for 40 minutes. And when I emerged there were 40 people who had been sitting there the whole time watching me shoot invisible space aliens. It was amazing. I don't have one of those yet but I'd really like to. I didn't get queasy or motion sickness or anything. I could have stayed in there for hours. So Doom's been my favorite. But I've been getting more into games since I've gotten my PlayStation.

GF: What do you think of *Apocalypse* so far?

POE: Oh, I think it's amazing. We went to the E3 convention in Atlanta—which was a ball; visual ecstasy—and I was supposed to do all this press stuff. You know, meet people and everything. But I started playing *Apocalypse* and they just couldn't drag me away. I was like, "No way man! I just died in the same place AGAIN and that can't happen!" I was absolutely engaged. Of course it won't be really good until I'm in it (laughs). And it's nice that they're giving young actors who can't find work elsewhere a chance. Like this guy Bruce, who I think is trying to make it as an actor. I think this could really help him (laughs).

GF: Did you get to meet to Bruce Willis?

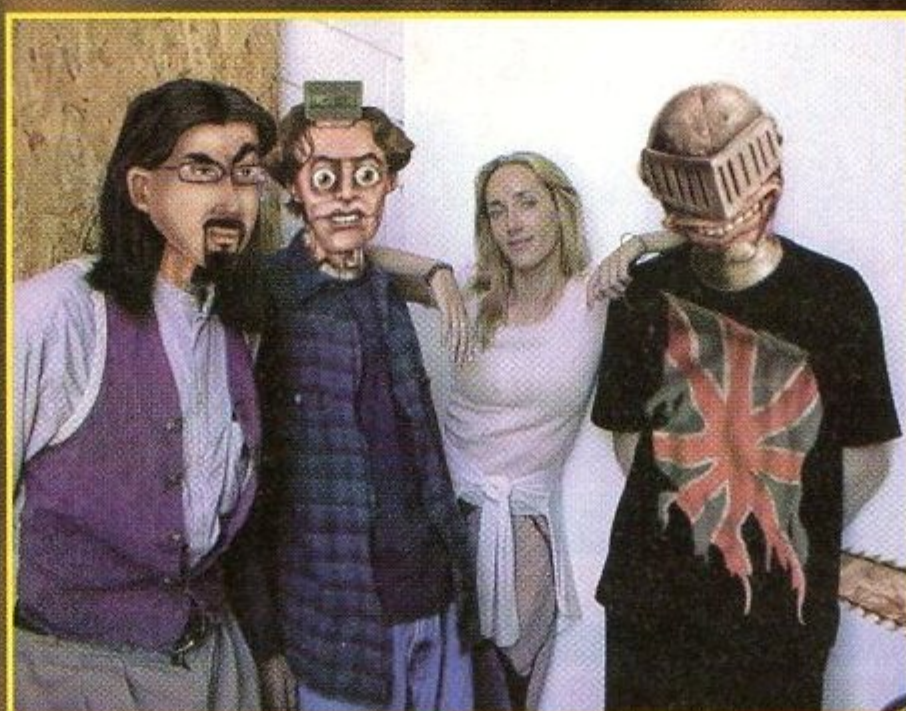
POE: I did. I got to do a press conference with him at E3. Bruce was a great guy, he was really cool. It was just a strange experience to do a press conference where there were like, literally 200 cameras just in your face. "Well my last action film, and I'm sure you've all seen it..."

GF: Would you consider doing any similar projects?

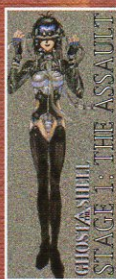
Poe: Sure. I love the idea of being able to compose an entire universe in which things live. Our culture is so lacking, so fragmented in terms of its mythology and history that you end up authoring your own sense of reality in every dimension. So as an artist it would be great to have a CD that not only integrates music and film, but also integrates a game whose purposes and principles put across the same message that you're trying to convey musically.

GF: Poe, thanks for your time.

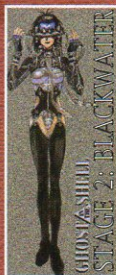
Poe: No problem.



Those handsome GF Editors strike a pose with Poe! From the left: Substance D, Glitch, and Nightmare.



BLAST AWAY AIR AND GROUND TARGETS AT WILL. IT'S YOUR FIRST MISSION. TIME TO GET YOUR FEET WET!



SLIDE THROUGH TUNNELS PICKING OFF SOLDIERS. SWITCH TO NIGHT VISION FOR ADDED COMFORT AND KILL BABY, KILL!



ASSAIL THE TARGETS IN THE ALLOTTED TIME OR SAY GOODBYE TO WHAT ORGANICS YOU HAVE LEFT.

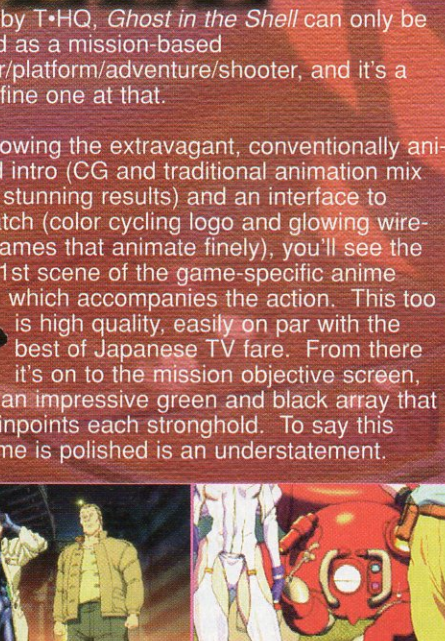
GHOST IN THE SHELL

Ghost in the Shell is the most notable anime release ever in the US, topping rental charts and selling record numbers on VHS and LD. If you watch anime, you've seen Mamoru Oshii's production of Masamune Shirow's cyber-fiction manga masterpiece, and chances are, even if you don't, you've at least heard of it. Well, you know what? It makes no difference because the game (by Exact, makers of *Jumping Flash!*) has nothing to do with the film. Rather, it focuses on the popular Manga, an 8 part series in which Major Kusanagi's ghost indeed appears in a shell... well, more like a living tank with legs really. That's right, housed within that red pod is the world's finest cyber babe. Part organic, part machine, and all bad ass cop.

Published & distributed in

America by T•HQ, *Ghost in the Shell* can only be described as a mission-based corridor/platform/adventure/shooter, and it's a damn fine one at that.

Following the extravagant, conventionally animated intro (CG and traditional animation mix with stunning results) and an interface to match (color cycling logo and glowing wireframes that animate finely), you'll see the 1st scene of the game-specific anime which accompanies the action. This too is high quality, easily on par with the best of Japanese TV fare. From there it's on to the mission objective screen, an impressive green and black array that pinpoints each stronghold. To say this game is polished is an understatement.



P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - EXACT

PUBLISHER - T•HQ

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



CYBER STORM
It's moments like these that make it all worthwhile.



AHH, WATER CRAFT...

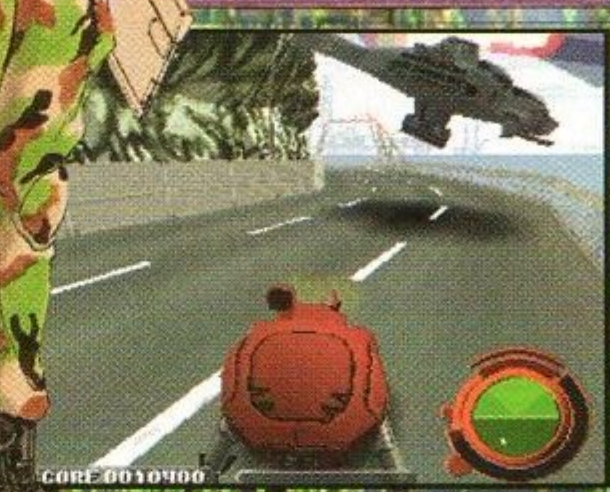


HOW DELIGHTFUL.



Finding yourself in Mission one, a fairly straightforward search-and-destroy assignment, you suddenly realize that one thing in particular is going to make *Ghost in the Shell* a memorable experience... you stick to everything! Or at least Fuchi-Koma does. Just about every structure in the game can be adhered to, giving you freedom of movement like never before, camera views you've never imagined and the shot selection of a roving sniper. See a helicopter above? Scale the bunker wall, perch on the roof and take it down! Or better yet, face upward stuck to the side of a building and strike its belly. This is easily one of the coolest play mechanics ever. Fuchi-Koma can also thrust forward (by holding L&R while moving forward), strafe, jump, and fire weaponry (standard machine gun fire is unlimited and up to three bombs can be stored).

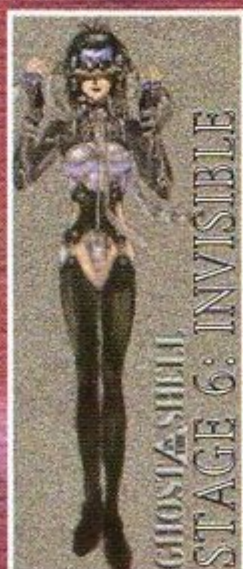
Of course the vehicle itself cannot be expected to carry the action,



WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE ...



MAY KILL YOU.



it's the execution that will ultimately tell the tale. Knowing this, Exact places Kusanagi and Fuchi-Koma in different circumstances throughout the game. Deep underground, amidst flowing drainage canals, you must use the walls to your advantage and proceed with caution, while in high speed pursuit among twisting freeways strafing becomes a key element. Afloat a huge raft at sea, speed and placement become key, and in free roaming cities they all come into play. The gameplay is simply brilliant and, although somewhat easy, never grows tiring. As dazzling, if not more so, are Ghost's bosses. From giant mechs that appear in huge arenas to cloaking humanoids, they range in difficulty to kill, but always impress visually.

Leaving the soundtrack, level summation, effects, length and a few other morsels for the review (scheduled to appear in the October issue), I can tell you right now, *Ghost* fans, you will not be disappointed with the game. With the added anime and art (both dedicated solely to the game) worth the price alone, *Ghost in the Shell* is a no-brainer purchase. And for the corridor fan who's looking to expand his horizons (and hell, even jump a little), your tank awaits. **E**



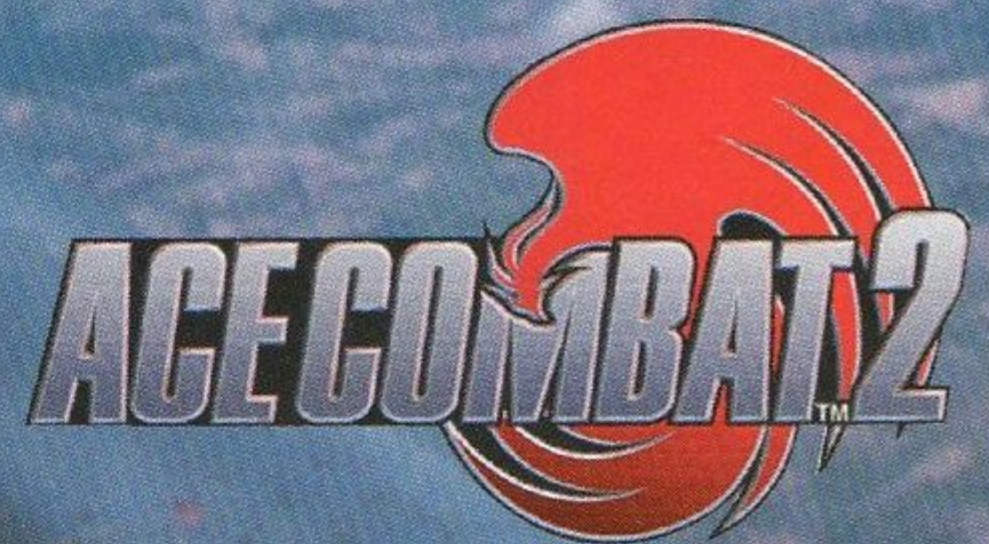
IN
:06 SECONDS,
THE COMPUTER
PILOT IN
ACE COMBAT 2
WILL SEND
YOUR JET
CRASHING
TO EARTH.

YOUR EGO
WILL FOLLOW
SHORTLY
THEREAFTER.



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Uh-oh.

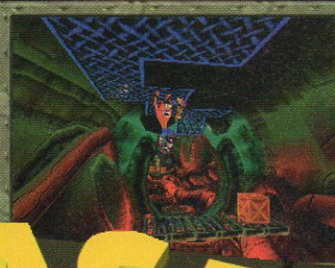
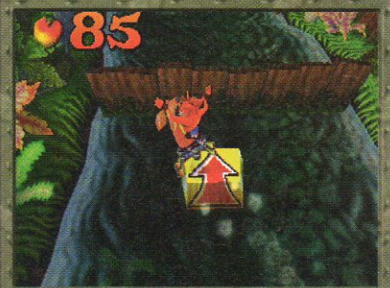
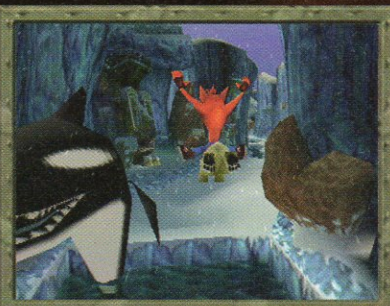
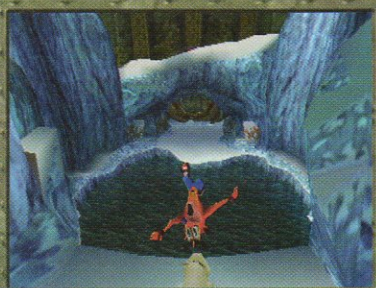


SUPERIOR ENEMY INTELLIGENCE

After Crash defeated Dr. Neo Cortex in the climax of the original *Crash Bandicoot*, Cortex fell from his airship to what everyone believed was his doom. However, instead of becoming pavement pizza, Cortex falls through a hole in the ground and into a hidden cave filled with rare crystals. With this new resource, Cortex sets about re-building his evil empire, and with the help of partners N.Jin and N.Brio he soon launches a new base into orbit with the intention of subjecting the entire world to the effects of his deadliest weapon; the Cortex Vortex. And guess who's job it is to stop him?

For the most part, *Crash 2* remains true to the spirit of the original. Gameplay is still a mixture of 3D 'into the screen' sections and 2D 'side scrolling' sections, though this time there's much more variation. Single levels branch into multiple routes more often and at certain points the 3D sections turn into 2D sections on the fly with a *Pandemonium* style camera change. *Crash 1*'s bonus rounds also make a marked return, though this time they are integrated INTO the level as opposed to being a separate entity - a very nice touch.

Another new addition to *Crash 2* is the 'Warp Room'. Rather



SNIFF 'N'

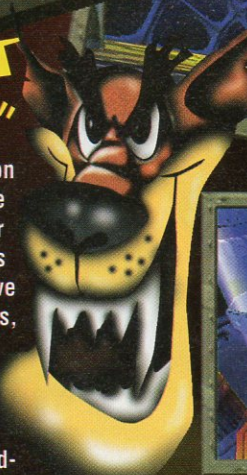
SLIDIN'

CRASH BANDICOOT 2

"COME AND GET
ME BANDICOOT!"

than just progress from level to level in a linear fashion (like the original *Crash*), *Crash 2* gives you the ability to tackle a set number of levels in any order you like, before moving on to the next set. There's been no word on the final level count yet, but we've heard talk of as many as 30+ hazard-filled stages, each larger and more complex than anything seen in *Crash*.

No matter what you thought of the original *Crash Bandicoot*, you have to agree that it was a stunning-looking game. The asynchronous load-



WANNA RIDE??



IN THE FIRST GAME CRASH RODE A SNORTING WILD BOAR BUT IN CRASH 2 HE HANGS 8 ON A JET POWERED SURF BOARD, FLIES VIA ROCKET PACK AND MOUNTS A POLAR BEAR FOR A WILD TOSS IN THE TUNDRA (AND THOSE ARE JUST THE ONES WE'VE SEEN). FIRE UP THOSE ANALOG PADS!



NEW MOVES!!

CRASH HAS LEARNT A FEW NEW TRICKS SINCE HIS LAST CONFRONTATION WITH NEO CORTEX. IN CRASH 2 THE PANTALOON-CLAD BANDICOOT CAN CRAWL, SLIDE, HANG FROM CEILINGS, WADE THROUGH WATER, CLIMB AND BEST OF ALL - FLOP! BY PRESSING THE CORRECT BUTTON WHILST IN MID-JUMP CRASH STRIKES A POSE BEFORE FLOPPING FACE DOWN INTO THE GROUND. CHECK THE "DAVID-LEE-ROTH" AS WELL!

ing allowed for some of the cleanest, most vivid textures ever displayed in a console game. Well, believe it or not, Naughty Dog have somehow found a way of improving the graphics engine for *Crash 2* and the game looks better than ever! Expect more polygons, more animation, better textures and larger environments than the original *Crash*. But hey, why don't I shut up and let the screen shots do the talking?! *Crash 2* is slated for a November release, so you can expect to see some *hardcore* coverage in a forthcoming issue. K



P

PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - NAUGHTY DOG

PUBLISHER - SONY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

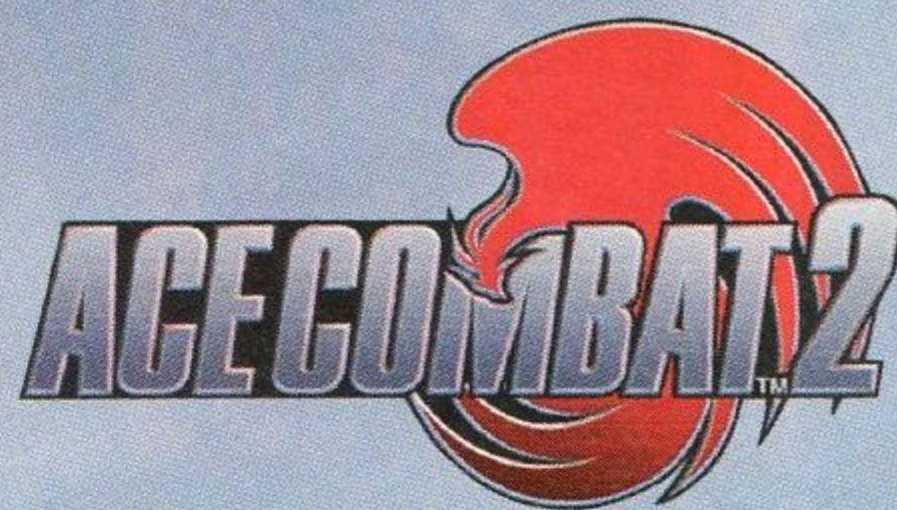
DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER

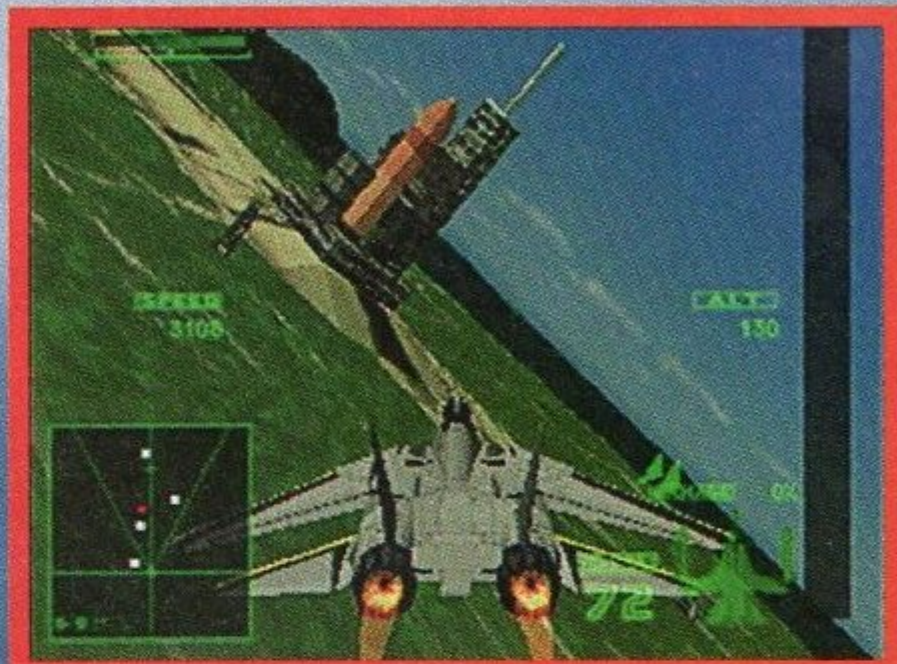


KNIGHTMARE

Plumbers and hedgehogs beware!!!

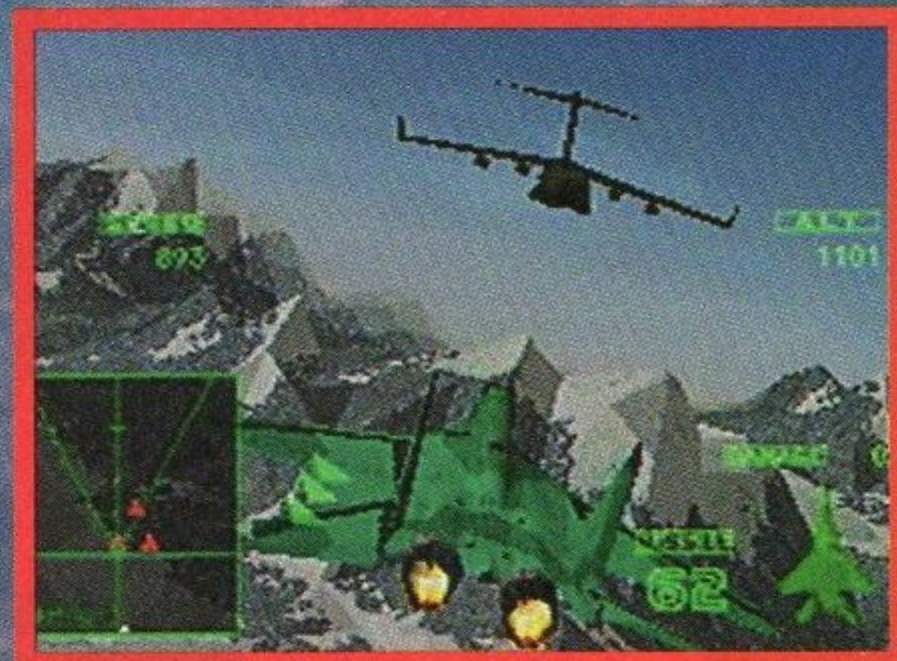


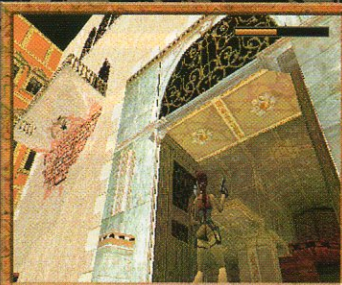
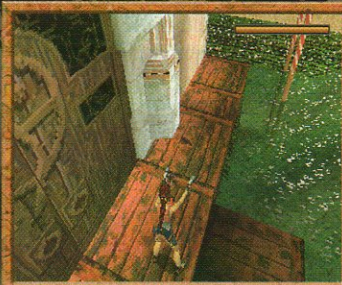
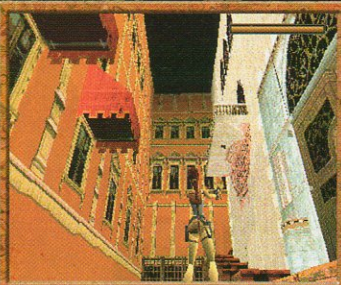
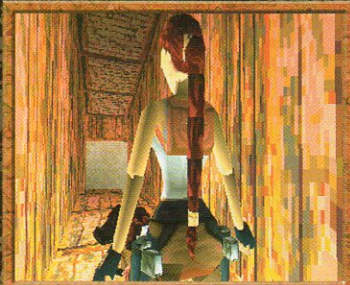
SUPERIOR ENEMY INTELLIGENCE



- The most realistic dogfights ever created for the PlayStation™ game console.
- Total 3-D polygon environment - fly freely and unload your arsenal with reckless abandon.
- Advanced artificial intelligence - cunning and calculating enemy pilots.
- 30 formidable missions - nearly double the missions of Air Combat.
- Awesome mission debriefings - dynamic diagrams and moving maps for surgical strikes.
- Secret planes and hidden missions - the better you fly, the more you'll reveal.

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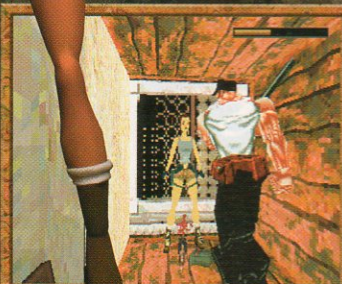
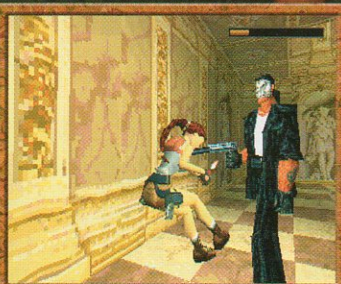
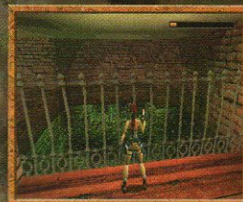
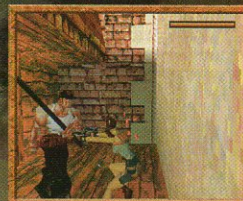
Never have the words 'highly anticipated' been more appropriate than in the case of *Tomb Raider* 2. Even before the original *TR* was released, rumors were flying round about a sequel, and now, only 8 months down the line, those rumors have become a reality. Work is progressing at an alarming rate on *TR2* (Core began six months before the original *TR* was even released!), and already the first playable demo has found its way out of Core and into our grubby little paws.

At first glance things seem very similar to the original *TR*. Control of Lara is identical (hey, if it ain't broke, don't fix it) and the graphics engine/camera system seems much the same. Core is deliberately keeping gameplay in the same mold as *TR*, but the number of innovations they have planned (see box-outs) should guarantee that gamers don't feel too much *deja vu*.

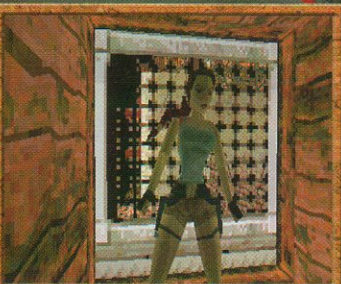
The build we tested only included one playable level (Venice) with running demos of other levels, including Tibet and the infamous Titanic stage. Our collective breath was taken away as Lara, exploring inside the semi-flooded hull of the sunken ship, approached a long window with a flare and gazed through at the sharks swimming around in the dark ocean outside. Stunning stuff. Count on us dropping more knowledge as we get it. **K**

TOMB RAIDER 2

STARRING LARA CROFT

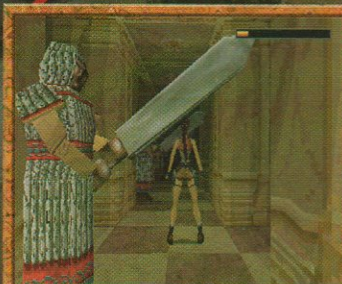


BODY OF EVIDENCE



Realizing that Miss Croft is one of the major selling points of *TR2*, Core has wisely decided to expend a few more polygons on her model this time around. This is immediately noticeable on her flowing pony tail, but on closer inspection, can also be observed on several other parts of her (ahem) anatomy. Let's just say she's not going to be poking anyone's eye out in *TR2*. Lara also has a number of new costumes for different environments, including a wet-suit and mountain gear.

LET THERE BE LIGHT



One of the biggest improvements to the graphics in *TR2* is the addition of real time light sourcing. This feature is put to good use for both aesthetic impact (light streaming in through windows) and for gameplay innovations. One of the new items that Lara can find are boxes of flares, and once lit, these can either be carried or thrown to light up dark areas. Core also mentioned the possibility of having outdoor levels change from day to night in real-time.

P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - CORE

PUBLISHER - EIDOS

FORMAT - CD

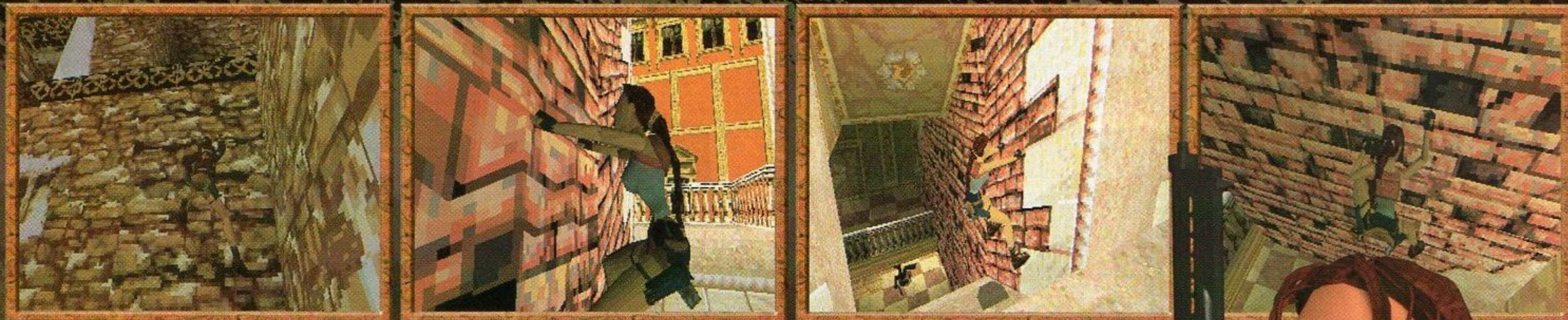
OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER

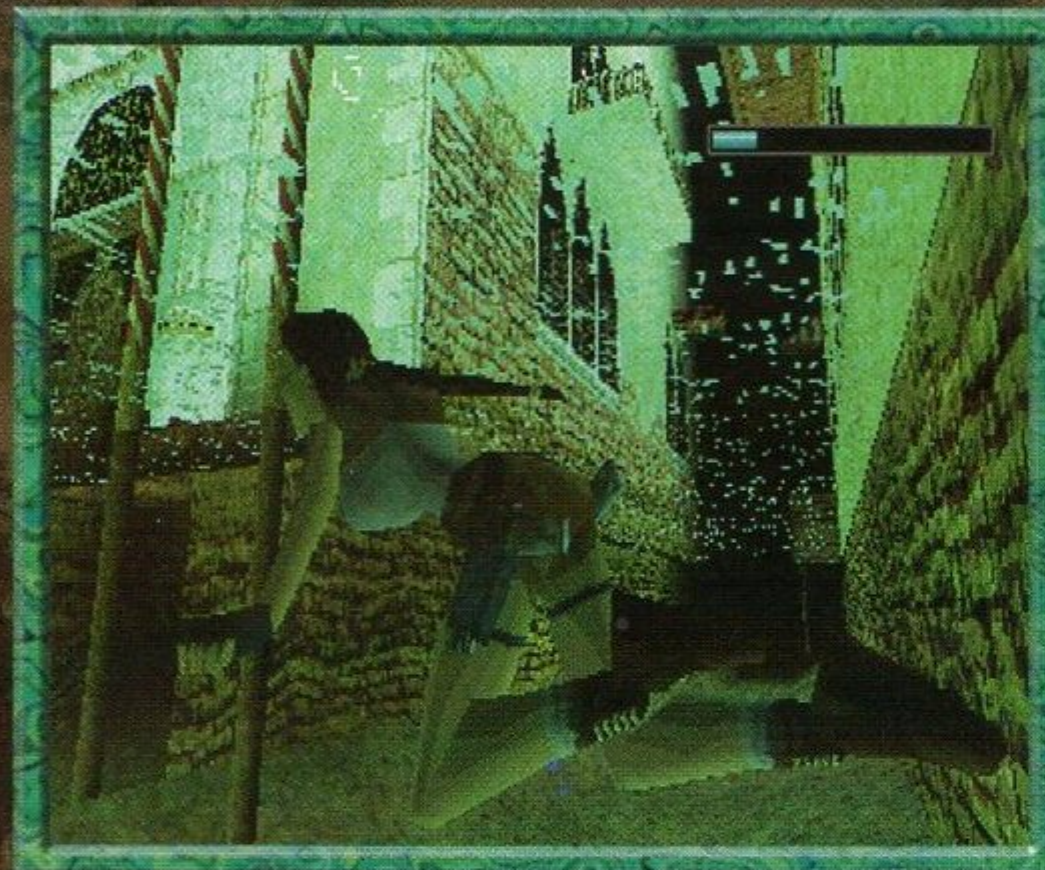


KNIGHTMARE
Get ready for an older, tougher, rounder Lara!



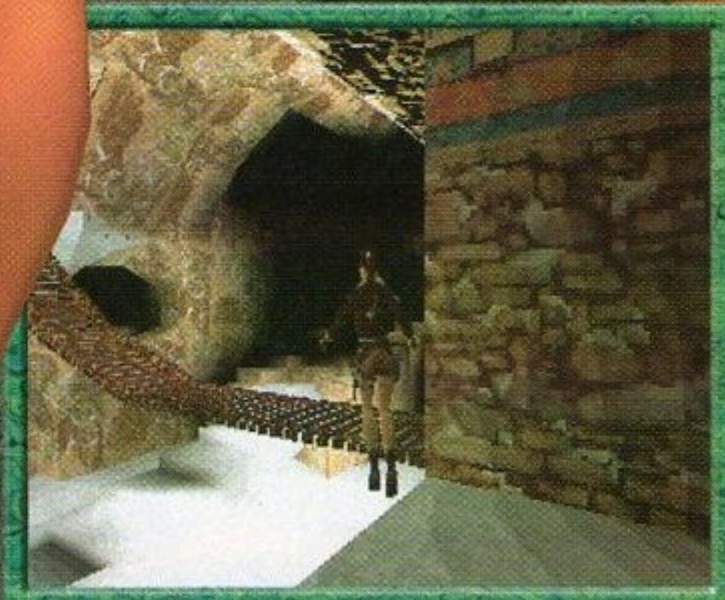
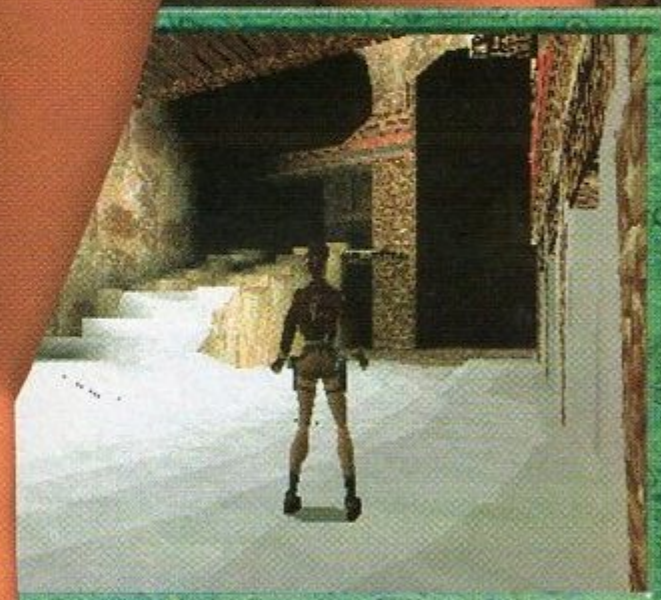
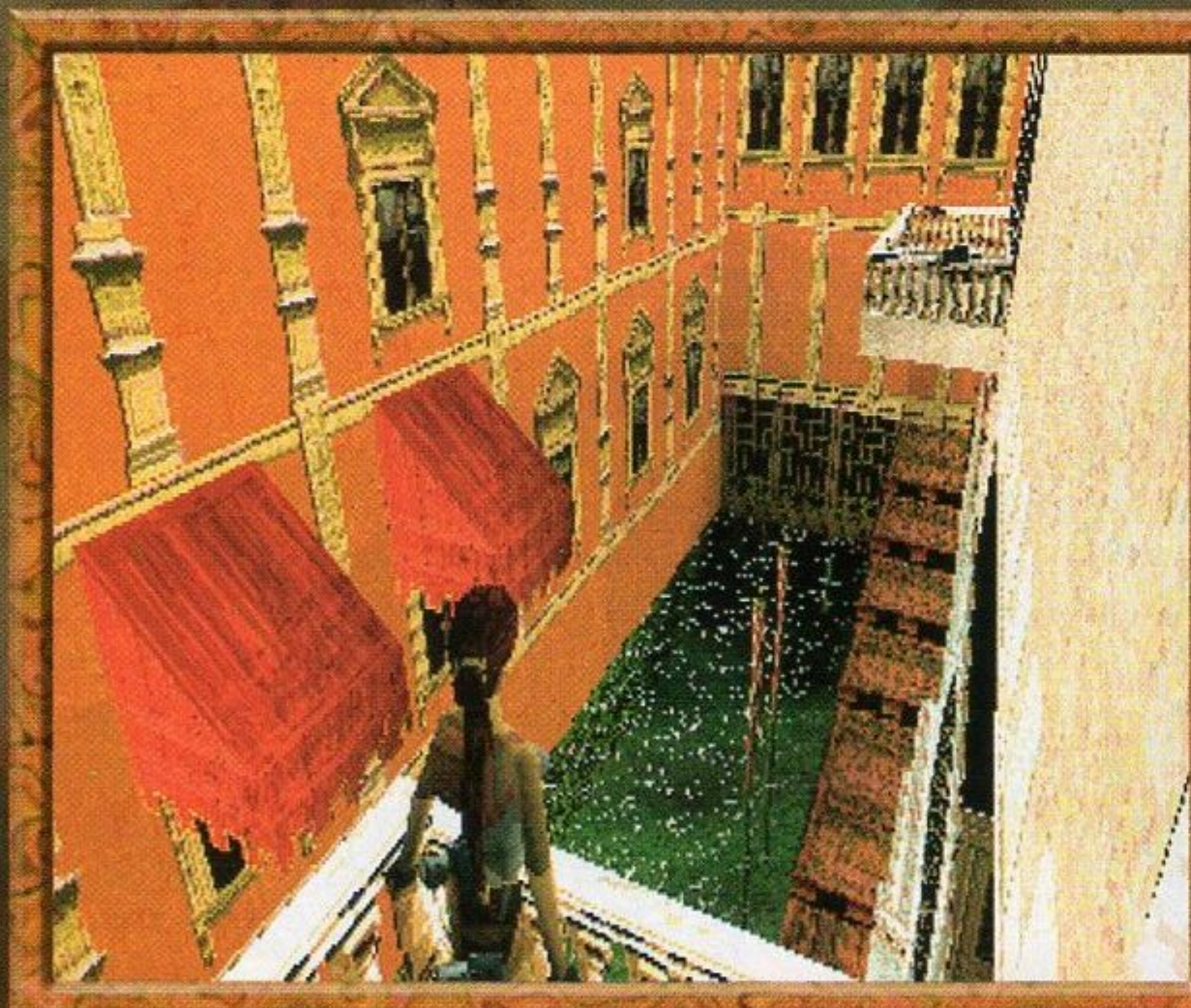
I'VE GOT MOVES YOU'VE NEVER SEEN!

As anyone who's played *TR* will tell you, Lara is one athletic chick. She can run, jump, grapple, dangle, swim and slide with almost Olympic prowess. Well, in *TR2* Lara also has the ability to rock climb! Certain textures indicate the presence of jutting rocks, and on these surfaces Lara can climb out and maneuver either vertically or horizontally to reach new areas. The animation for this action is on a par with her 'rock pushing' animation! We've also heard rumors that Lara will be able to 'swing' at certain points in the game, though we haven't seen any evidence of this yet.

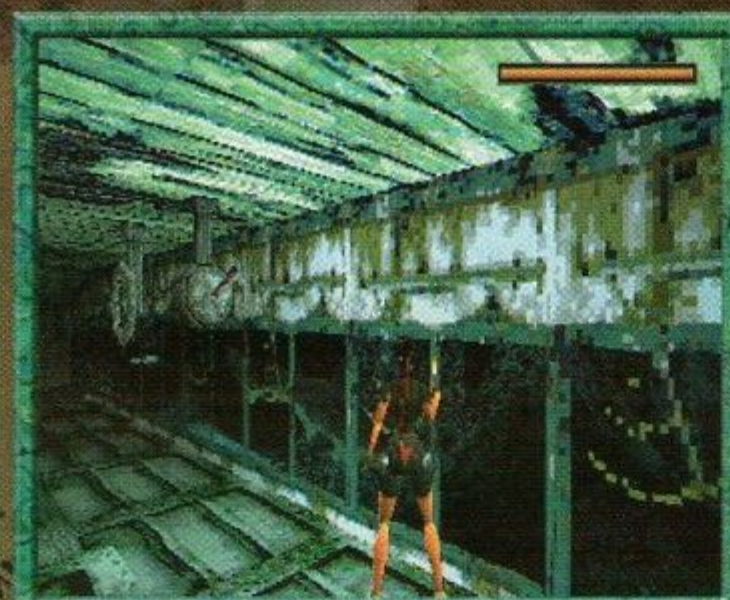


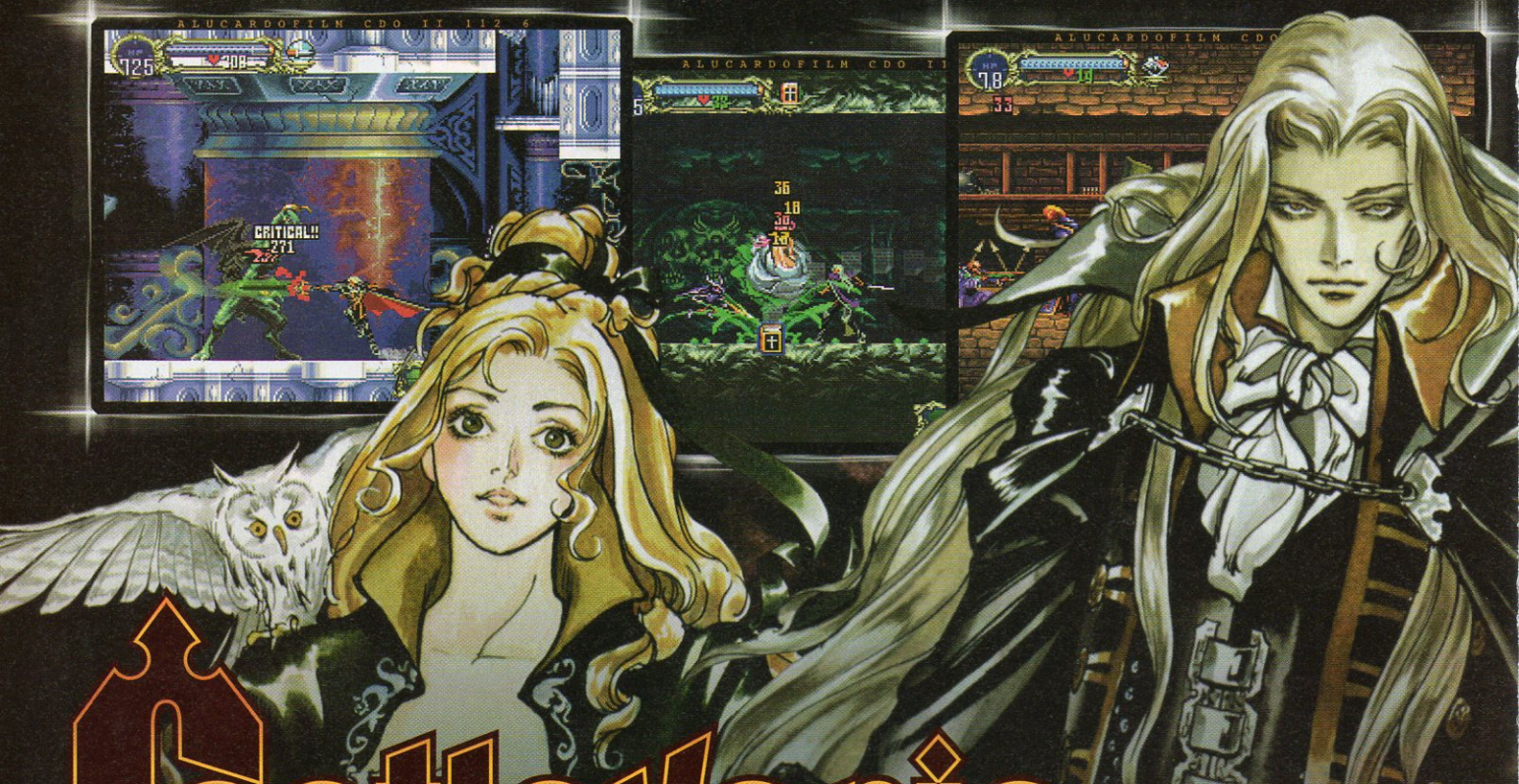
A WHOLE NEW WORLD

For *TR2*, Core has promised us a brace of larger, more 'exotic' levels than *TR*, spread over a myriad of globe-trotting locations (Venice, Tibet, Great Wall of China). Also, you're no longer confined to just internal exploring—many of these levels will feature outdoor areas. The level in this demo (Venice) exhibits realistic textures, authentic looking architecture, and best of all: new enemies. Rats, muscle men, and black-suited mobsters (there will be more human enemies this time) are all out to stop Lara from finding the Dagger of Xian. Luckily, she has a whole new set of weapons to combat them with, including a harpoon gun for tackling underwater enemies.



Lara's looking better than ever!





Castlevania

Symphony of the Night

This is one of those few games that you either love or haven't played yet. It's as simple as that. Every installment of the series, from NES to SNES, has been an unmitigated 2D classic, and, as I'm sure you've gathered by now, Symphony of the Night is no exception. If this was a review,

I'd already be saying things like 'this game is a work of art' or 'an instant classic'. But hey, it's a preview, so I won't.

CV: SOTN starts off with the climactic battle between Richter Belmont and Count Dracula, as seen at the end of Dracula X. After Dracula is defeated, the intro tells of how one night, four years later, Richter mysteriously disappears, and Maria Renard (the child Richter saved in Dracula X) goes looking for him. At that point, Castlevania (the castle of Dracula) which is supposed to appear only once every century, materializes 95 years ahead of schedule, and Maria enters in search of Richter. Meanwhile, Alucard, the son of Dracula, who once teamed up with Ralph C. Belmont to destroy his father, is awakened from his eternal slumber by the overwhelming presence of evil in his homeland. Fearing the return of his father, he ventures forth...

CV: SOTN marks a departure from the traditional linear 'level by level' structure as seen in previous installments of Castlevania (with the exception of CV2). By linking all of the levels





together to form one giant Super Metroid style 'world map', CV: SOTN adds a welcome element of adventure to traditional platforming action. Like Super Metroid, certain items or special abilities are sometimes required to reach new areas, but for the most part you're left free to explore the castle at your leisure.

As you would expect from a game bearing the Castlevania name, the main character (Alucard) controls like a dream, with instant response time and a wealth of special moves and techniques to master. As the game progresses you acquire new weapons, armor and items which improve



DEVELOPER - KONAMI

OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - KONAMI

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



KNIGHTMARE
Deep down Alucard had always wanted to be in Lost Boys.

2D Insanity!! Konami have the power!!

Alucard's physical attributes, along with the ability to transform into one of three different forms. There are puzzles to solve, bosses to fight, and just when you think it's all over, Konami springs one of the coolest surprises in the history of gaming—the opposite of what you expect. I don't want to give too much away, but let's just say that you can't really appreciate the genius of the level design until you discover this awesome secret.

Being that this only a preview and all, I can't really enthuse too much about the lush animation, awesome character design, strikingly beautiful backgrounds and stunning soundtrack, but rest assured that come view-point time next month, I will. **K**

MIGHTY MORPHIN', ER, VAMPIRES!

Throughout the course of the game, Alucard can collect certain power-ups that give him the ability to transform into one of three different forms, each with its own unique abilities. The wolf can run and jump long distances, the bat can fly, and the mist can pass through certain obstacles and enemies momentarily.

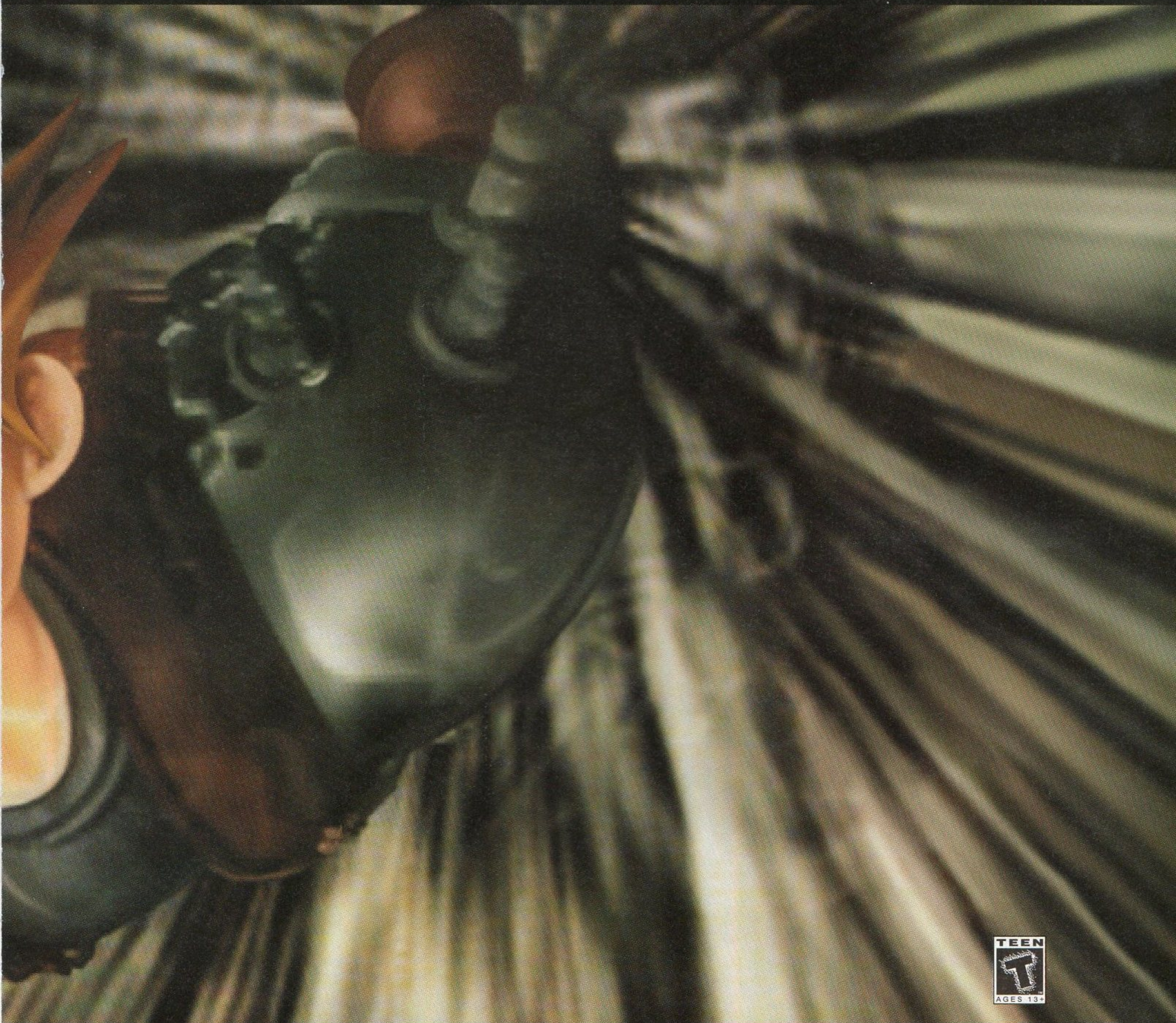


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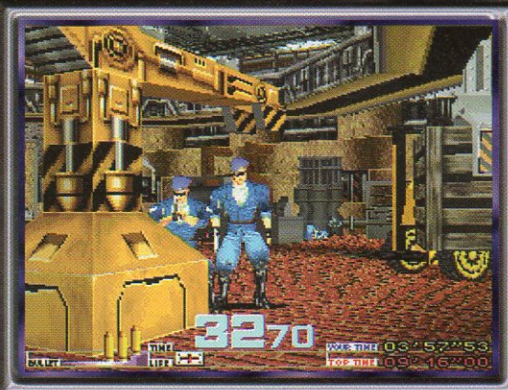
NEVER UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION™

You know, considering that *Time Crisis* is only Namco's second stab at porting a System 22 coin-op to PS (after *Ridge Racer*) it's pretty astonishing how good a conversion this is. Although the graphics aren't quite as detailed as the arcade, the frame rate is identical, and the slight polygon drop is only really noticeable in the real time cut-scenes. Get into the action and for all intents and purposes, this IS the coin-op. The sound and music are perfect, and as you would expect from Namco, the gameplay is 100% proof. Bottom line: fans of the arcade aren't going to be disappointed.

But *Time Crisis* isn't just a great conversion. It's a great game in its own right. Unlike *Virtua Cop 1 & 2*, which were pretty much non-stop blast-athons, *Time Crisis* is an exercise in accuracy and timing. The 'duck' feature serves to add a much-needed element of strategy to the proceedings, while Namco's own light gun—the Guncon (packaged with the game)—allows for unprecedented accuracy in a home videogame. Ultimately you are not just looking to stay alive (as you are in most gun games), but to find ways of improving your time for each area.

Ironically, *Time Crisis*' biggest selling point (the Guncon) turns out to also be the game's biggest flaw. No, it's not that the Guncon isn't as accurate as Namco claims. Quite the opposite. The Guncon is too accurate! When you shoot the screen your bullet leaves a hit spot, as with all gun games. However, in *Time Crisis* only the absolute center of the hit spot (an area only a few pixels wide) actually counts as a hit. Many a time you will smother an enemy with hits spots and he won't go down. You have to physically aim EVERY shot with marksman-like skill to guarantee a kill. Fine if you like to spend the whole game squinting down your gun's sites, but personally I would have preferred a little more flexibility.

Despite this criticism (which I'm sure some perfectionists will view as an asset) *Time Crisis* is still an excellent game. The environments are detailed, the enemies are both well modeled and cunningly placed, and with the Special Mode it's like getting *Time Crisis 2* thrown in for good measure. Just don't expect to blast through this one like *V.Cop*. **K**



TIME CRISIS



We all know that Namco likes to add new features to their home conversions but with *Time Crisis* they've outdone themselves. Simply put: Special Mode is a whole new game! This time you must track down Wild Dog's arms supplier, the genderless Kantaris, in her (his?) hotel/arms factory. Depending on your performance the game can take one of multiple routes leading to multiple endings. Too Cool!

R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - NAMCO

OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - NAMCO

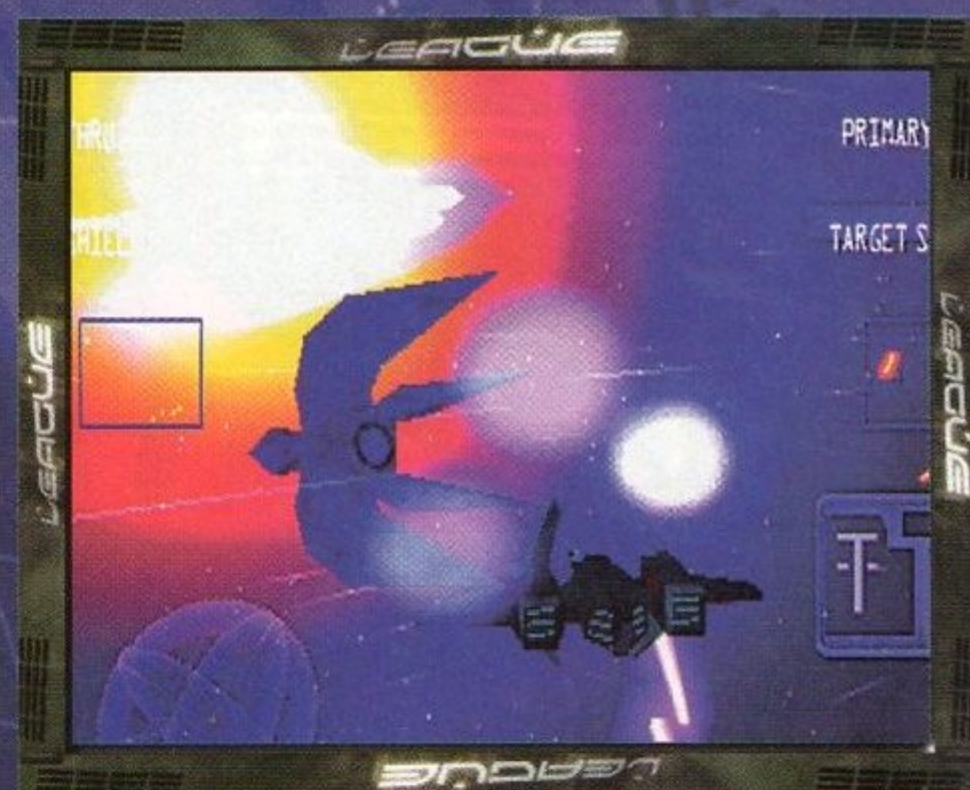
DIFFICULTY - HARD

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



KNIGHTMARE
I admit it. Namco has some skills.



While it's hard to convey through still images, the forthcoming *Colony Wars* from Psygnosis is an absolutely beautiful game. It's also one of the few 'free-flying' 3D shooters available on the all-genres-covered PS, and as such, is a welcome change of pace. Though only three missions were available for us to play around with in this preview version (Psygnosis promises 70 missions in the final), I was amazed at the level of polish and graphic prowess already present. Psygnosis has put a lot of effort into *Colony Wars* and it shows.

This being the short preview that it is, I'll save the story details for the full review and get to the most compelling aspect of this title so far—the graphics. I've never been in such a cool looking deep space environment. The way the stars streak as you move about, the insane light sourcing and lens flares, the solidity of the models, and the vibrant particle explosions just assault your rods and cones with coolness. And with the huge sounding orchestral score playing behind the action, *Colony Wars* has this epic, spacey feeling that is so incredibly my cup of tea. Control is tight and precise (depending on what craft you are piloting) and the enemies are vicious, leading to some pretty intense dog fights. It's refreshing to find a title that plays as good as it looks.

The three sorties available on this demo are all pretty much search and destroy, and I'm curious to see how Psygnosis is going to come up with things for you to do over 70 missions. With the emphasis obviously placed on shooting, will variety be a rare commodity? We shall just have to wait and see. With a planned November release, Psygnosis' *Colony Wars* could do for free-flying 3D shooting what the *Wipeout* series did for racing—catapult it into the next century. **SD**



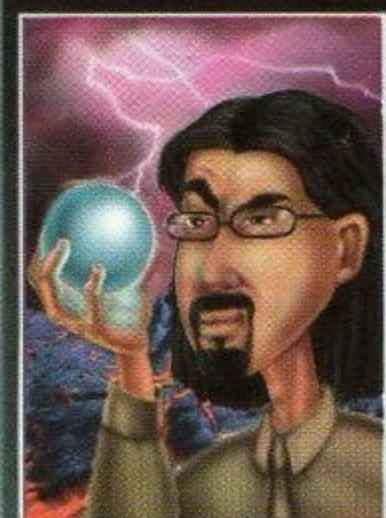


P
PREVIEW



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PSYGNOSIS
PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - UNKNOWN
AVAILABLE - WINTER



SUBSTANCE D
I want to be like Mark Hamill!

COLONY WARS



Long before Disney's *Toy Story*, lived a completely rendered adventure called *ReBoot*!

Currently shown in 40 Countries, (though ABC, in their infinite wisdom, buried it in an early Sunday morning time slot here, until it disappeared into syndication land) with season three just getting underway in the UK, *ReBoot* takes place inside of a bustling "city" on the Net called Mainframe and is completely rendered on SGI workstations using SoftImage. Produced at Mainframe Entertainment in Vancouver each episode takes three weeks to complete.

Throughout each episode the computer puns fly like cows in a Shiny game and pop-culture references are a dime a dozen. *ReBoot* not only looks amazing, but it's a cool show. Sounds like a no brainer video game candidate right? Well, I always thought so, and luckily, so did software giant EA. And so here it is starring Bob, Guardian 452. Bob (the show's lead character) isn't from Mainframe. He hails from the Super Computer but is assigned to protect (mend and defend!) Mainframe from viruses and the evil schemes of our demonic duo (the bad guys) Megabyte and his evil cyber-witch sister

Hexidecimal.

Also prominent in the show are Dot Matrix, the sultry green-skinned owner of a retro-style diner (on Baudway no less) and Enzo, her little brother. I'm not clear yet on their role in the game, (if any) but we're just getting started with this one.

Bob gets around on a hover-board, jetting from place to place with Jetson-like speed and agility, so it's fitting that EA chose to build the game around this craft. With the psychics involved made for 3D and a machine that rolls out the welcome mat for it, well, let's just say it's a perfect match.

The environments in and around Mainframe are finely texture-mapped polygonal playfields, from vast arenas to tunnels, and are presented in an impressive 30fps. They are both high and wide as well, providing an excellent video game landscape.

Bob himself is one of those rare video game characters with whom it's fun just to play around with. The feel of the hover board (which strafes, flips, boosts, and well, floats) is excellent, especially when negotiating platforms. Available thrust adds a whole new dimension to the balance and maneuverability in a video game. The available analog control should make it even better, though at present, I found the standard D-Pad more accurate in negotiating tight situations.

Bob attacks, (among other things) with





"Glitch" a multi faceted device which is strapped to his arm. With complete control over a grappling item and an assortment of attainable weaponry (all of which is limited except for Bob's standard blast) the player has plenty to manage in and around each level.

ReBoot's well into development but still early in many aspects such as control and graphics, yet I found it extremely fun to play. EA Canada are doing a great job and are taking the time necessary to deliver a finely tuned product. I believe they are headed in the right direction.

And so, *ReBoot* may finally get the recognition it so greatly deserves... as a game, oddly enough. Of course there's always the chance that somewhere at one of the major TV networks, a program director with actual intelligence will realize what a show like this could do in prime-time and give me what I really want... Hmmmm, an intelligent TV executive... Maybe not. **E**



P
PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EA CANADA (EH)

PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - NA

AVAILABLE - WINTER '97



**CYBER
STORM**
A PIXELLA-
CIOUS RIDE
THROUGH
MAINFRAME!

BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S REVIEW.... A FINAL LOOK AT FOX/ARGONAUT'S ENTRY INTO THE 3D FRAY

Croc

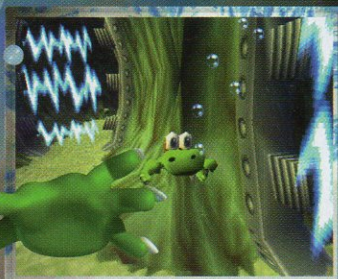
LEGEND OF THE GOBBOS

Sporting ultra-sharp textures (2nd only to the beloved Bandicoot's), a smooth 30fps frame rate and 5 massive islands to explore, *Croc* may very well be the most ambitious free-roaming PS game yet. As the 3D adventure wars once again begin to rage, Argonaut's loaded their entry with fantastic looking effects, huge beasties, intricate level design, a vast array of play mechanics and a cute little Croc who's chock full of expression. Comprised of many linked areas rather than singular vast landscapes, the only question will be whether gamers will

embrace Croc's back-and-forth, "find the key and unlock the cage" gameplay. I'd have to say that with all the hidden challenges and secrets tucked away in Croc combined with excellent boss encounters and a finely orchestrated soundtrack the answer will be a resounding "Hell, yeah!" *Croc*'s deep enough for even the most serious explorer and safe for the kids as well.

Whether it's hot babes or cute critters you desire, this Fall will be memorable indeed. We'll review *Croc* in the October GameFan.

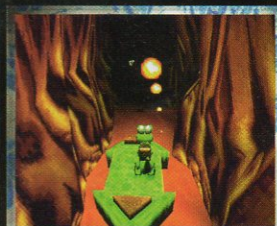
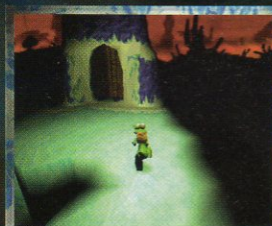
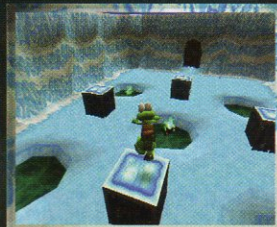
Where there's water...



Of course, Croc's a natural swimmer. While underwater Croc's tail whip takes care of both enemies and, anything that might need breakin' into. Croc can swim fast or slow (like Mario) but has a super fast flip turn all his own.

It's all about savin' Gobbos...

Hey, they saved you once. You owe 'em! Gobbos are little, and quite helpless. So then why are they locked away in huge steel cages? Well, because whenever a video game Overlord, Demon, Baron or otherwise shady villain takes over a domain he automatically must lock away all of its inhabitants. It's video game law! What, were ya raised in a barn or somethin'?



UPDATE

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ARGONAUT

PUBLISHER - FOX INT.

FORMAT - CD

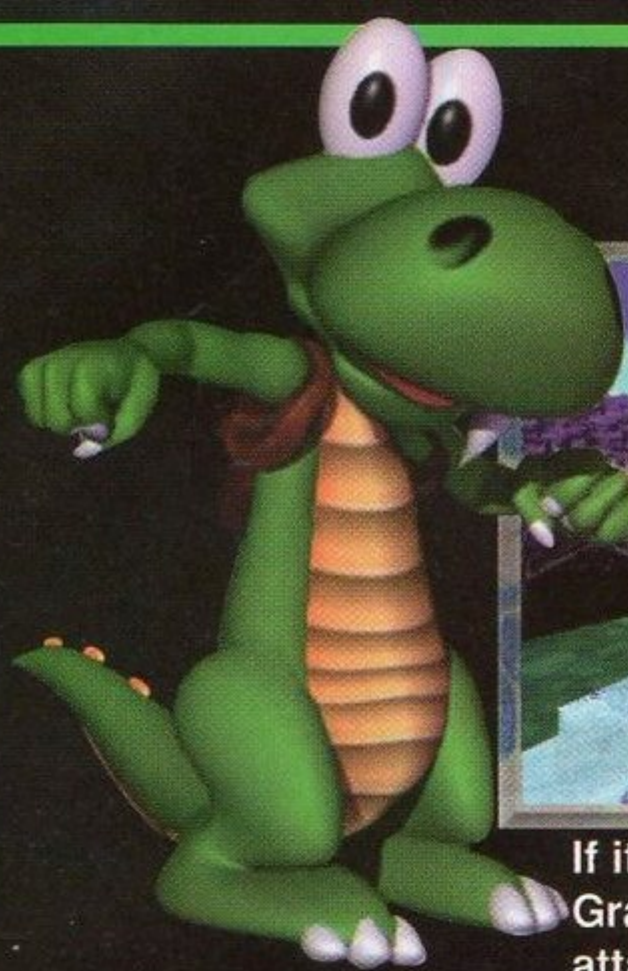
OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

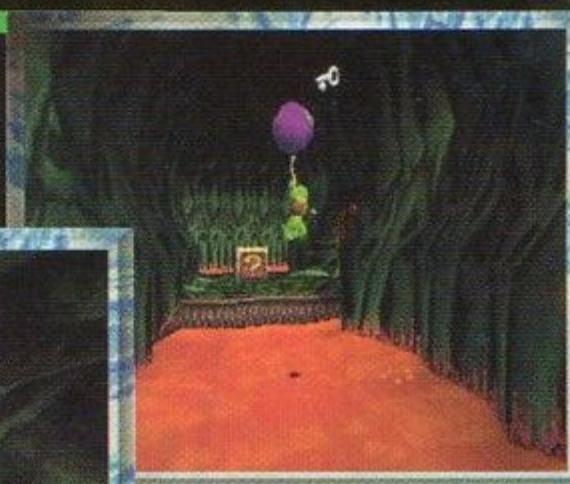
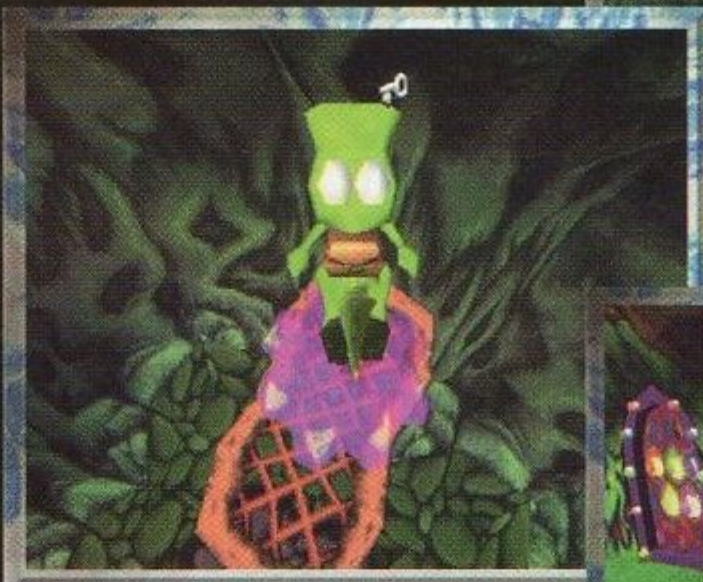
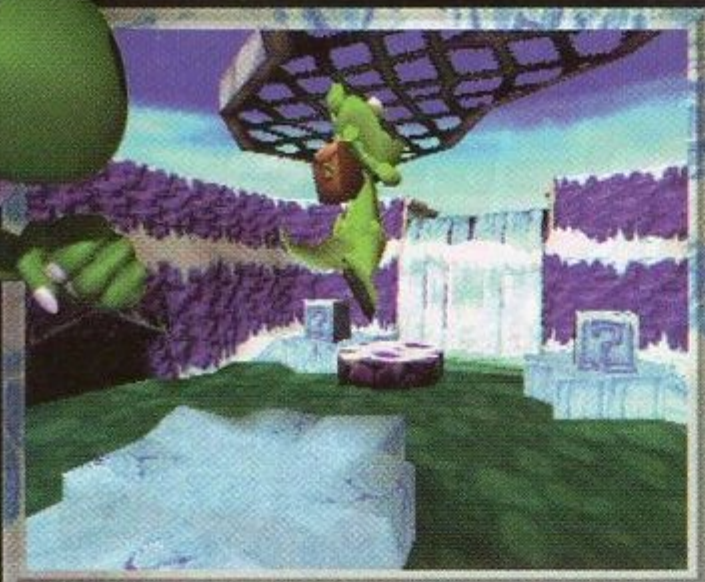
AVAILABLE - AUGUST



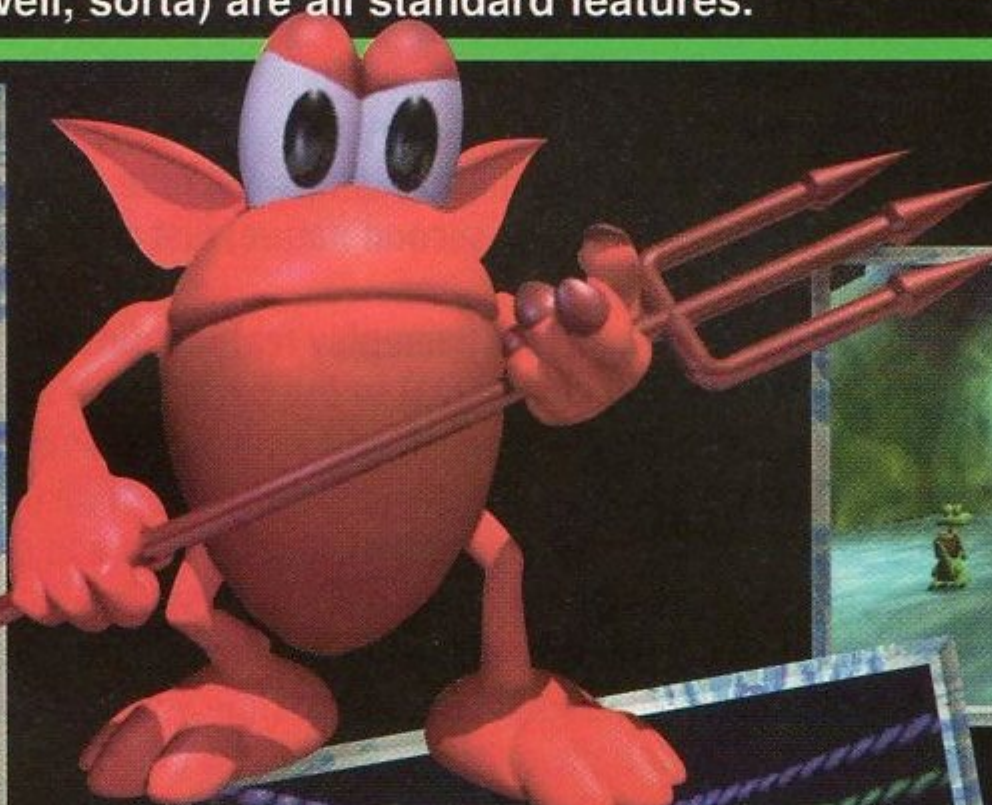
E. STORM
Argonaut resurfaces with a vengeance, giving Fox a winner with sequel power.



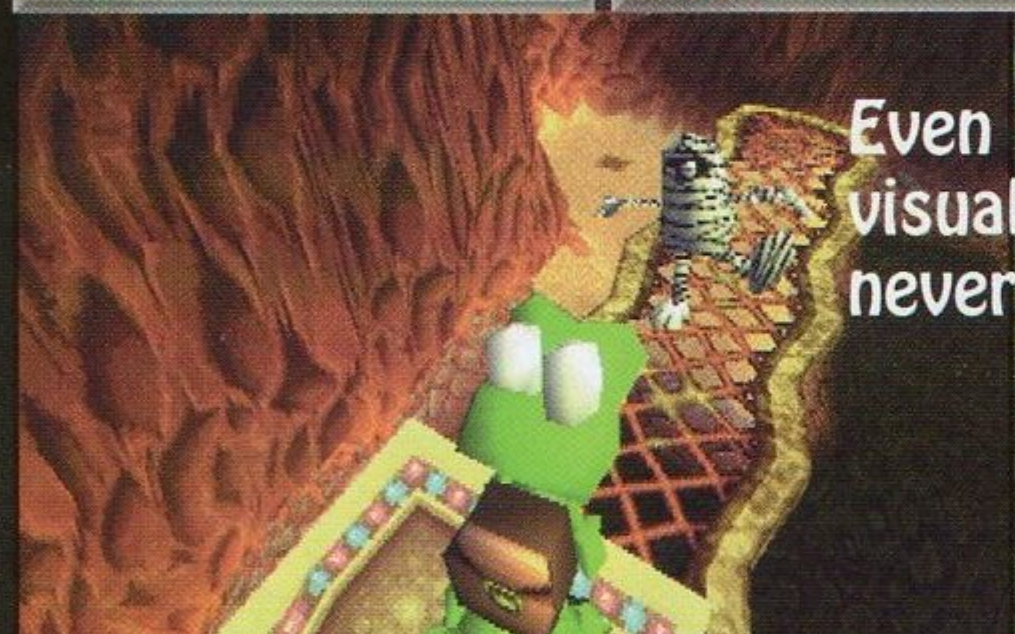
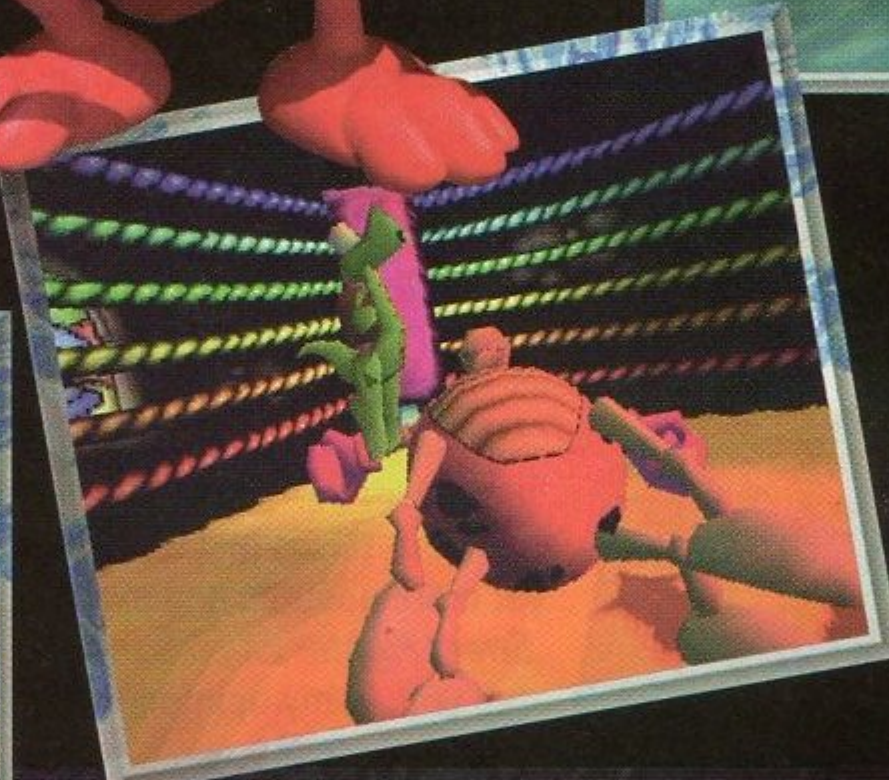
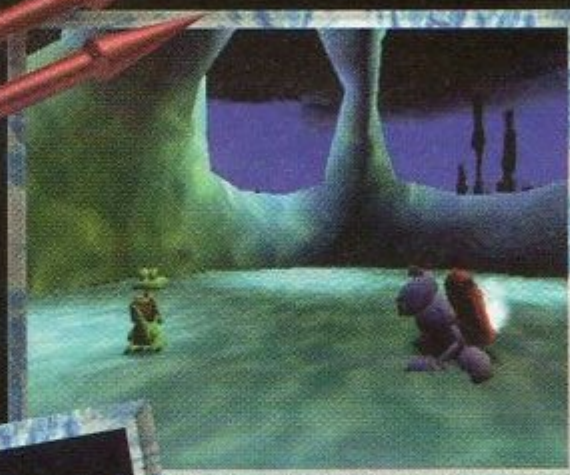
Swing, climb, glide and just about everything in between...



If it's play mechanics you're looking for, *Croc*'s loaded! Grappling, precision jumping, timing maneuvers, dual attacks, swimming, strafing, climbing, and the infamous Lara Croft flip turn (well, sorta) are all standard features.

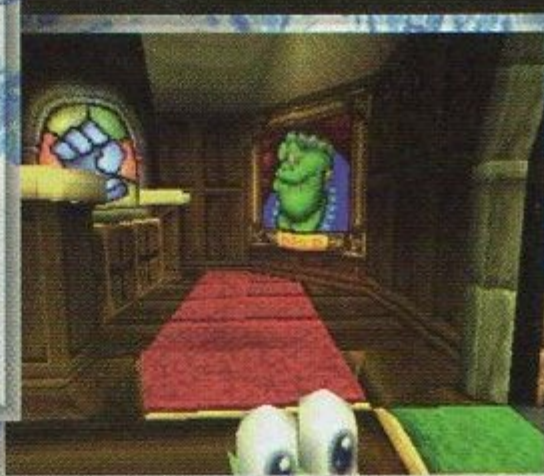
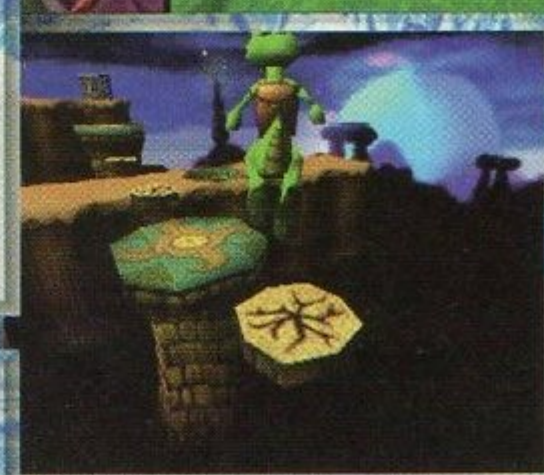
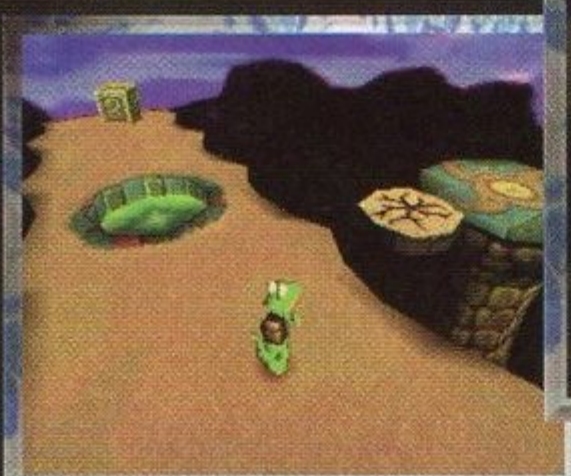
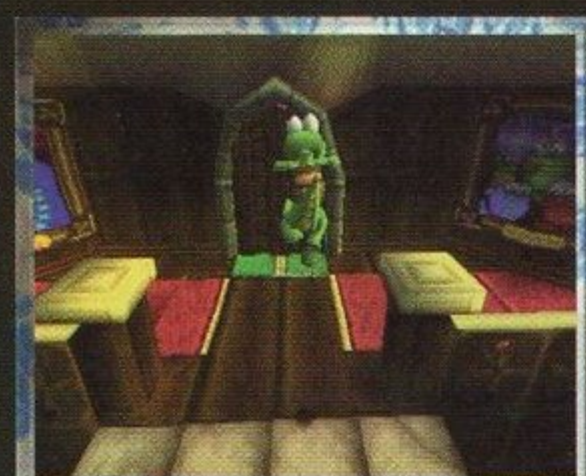
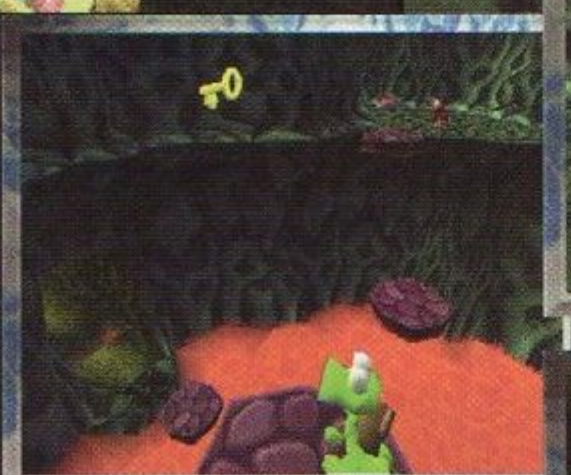
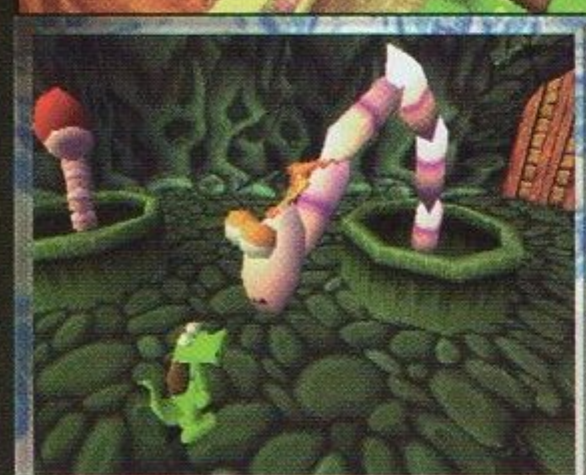


Oh yeah, there's big bad bosses too...



Even close-up the visual integrity is never compromised!

Look how far you can see. This game's no *Croc*!



THE NEW ERA OF STREET FIGHTING IS UPON US...

Should *Street Fighter* be in 3-D? That's a tough question to answer, but here's my opinion: The way things are going, it was inevitable that a 3-D *Street Fighter* would eventually be created. After the acceptance of this fact, I began to realize just how problematic a 3-D version of *Street Fighter* could be. How could you make characters jump quickly in 3-D? How could you make them two-in-one? How could you make them cross up? How could you allow for expertly-timed wake-ups? One company arose with the answer: Arika, headed up by the creator of *Street Fighter II* himself, Akira Nishitani. If anyone could create a viable 3-D *Street Fighter*, Nishitani was the man to do it... and, with *Street Fighter EX plus α* (alpha), he succeeded beyond anything I had imagined.

Here is a game that plays exactly like previous *Street Fighters* (except, of course, for new features like Guard Break and Super Cancel, but I'm getting to those), yet is constructed entirely of polygons... truly an astounding feat of programming skill! Timing the wake-ups and cross-ups will take some getting used to, but as soon as the slightly floaty timing is learned, control becomes second nature, fast paced—100% *Street Fighter*. The way it should be.

SFEX plus α adds two very important gameplay features (in addition to 12 all-new, never-before-seen characters) to the basic *Street Fighter* engine: Guard Breaks and Super Cancel, which also appear in *Street Fighter III*. Guard Cancels are slow attacks (a little slower than overheads in previous *SFs*) that take a single level of super gauge and smash through your opponent's block, leaving them open to a mad, 70%-life-draining combo. At first, these are hard to counter, but after playing *EX* for a good amount of time you'll realize how they substantially enhance gameplay, effectively eliminating turtles. Super Cancel allows you to two-in-one off of special moves into supers, then into more supers, like this: Ryu can now jump in with an attack, low Forward, Fireball, Super Fireball, Super Hurricane Kick. And that's Super Cancel at it's most basic level... it's madness!

It appears as if I'm rapidly running out of room, but this is just a preview. We'll bring you yet more updates and eventually a review on *Street Fighter EX plus α*, a game that I can already tell you, in my opinion, is the best polygonal fighter of all time. **SR**



REVIEW



DEVELOPER - ARIKA

OF PLAYERS - 2

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

DIFFICULTY - VARIABLE

FORMAT - CD

AVAILABLE - 4TH QUARTER



SHIN ROX

おおッ!
さくらちゃん、
再び!

THE GREATEST MODE EVER IN A FIGHTER: EXPERT MODE! COMBO MANIA!!

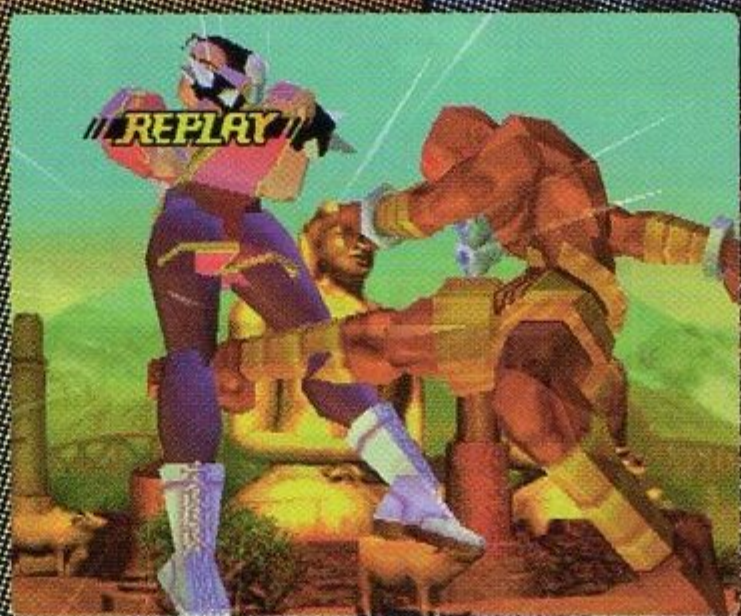
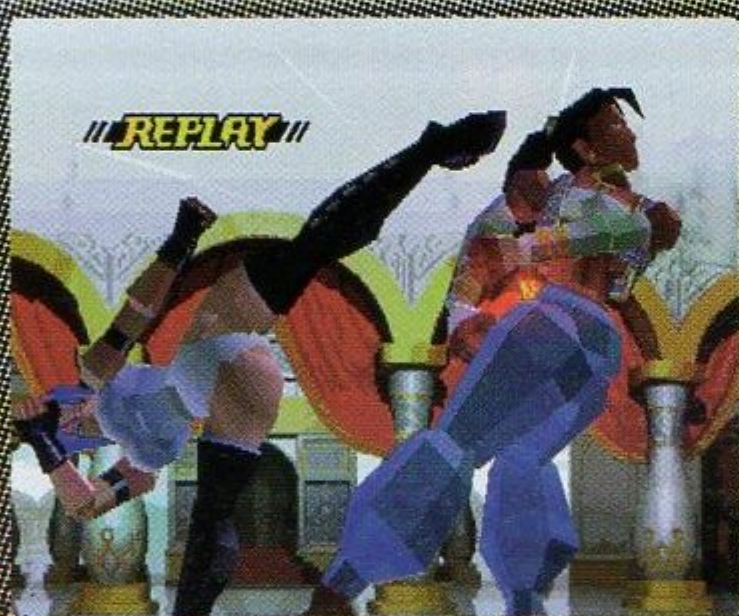


Capcom has answered my prayers! Finally...the mode all manic SF players have been waiting for: Expert Training Mode. Expert Training Mode requires you to complete 16 "missions" (mostly difficult combos) per character, ranging to ridiculous, TZW (the greatest combo master alive)-style craziness as "Jump Roundhouse, Strong, Strong, Forward, Knee-Press Nightmare, Psycho Cannon, Psycho Crusher."

(In layman's terms that means 'really freakin' hard.') If you have true, MacGregor-style skills, you'll do them all, but the question is... what do you get for it? Wait for our review!



Only those with the maddest skills can complete Expert Mode! Can you?



FIGHTER plus α

NUCLEAR STRIKE

In short order, Electronic Arts has quietly prepared a sequel to their successful *Soviet Strike*. This time switching locales to Southeast Asia, *Nuclear Strike* presents a scenario in which a lunatic with a nuclear weapon must be neutralized. Played out over five multi-mission levels (and again punctuated by the same style of really cool FMV clips), this latest *Strike* looks set to surpass its predecessor in almost every way.

To begin with the obvious, the graphics have been nicely enhanced. EA claims no less than a 25 percent increase in frame rate over *Soviet Strike*. And even with that, the terrain maps remain wonderfully detailed and the surface and object modeling looks better than ever. In short, it's a great looking game.

Very welcome is the addition of a myriad of other craft to control. With a whopping thirteen in all, these new player vehicles are probably the single coolest addition to *Nuclear Strike*. Take a look at just a couple of them shown here in the layout—like the M1 Abrams tank and Harrier jump jet.

As promised by *NS* producer Michael Kosaka when I spoke with him (Volume 5, Issue 7), things have been made a little easier this time around. Most noticeable is the new way-point indicator, giving you a directional cue for your next mission objective. It's a



Thirteen Vehicles of Destruction!



simple addition that makes the game more straightforward, exactly as intended. And expanding on this slight shift in game balance towards visceral thrills, ammo and armor pick-ups have been more liberally spread throughout the levels.

Nuclear Strike is close to being finished, but it's clear already that fans of the series have something to start looking forward to. With tangible improvements at almost every turn, *NS* could easily end up being the finest of the *Strike* games. Can't wait to bring you the glorious final review. **SD**

P
PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EA

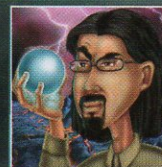
PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - FALL



SUBSTANCE D
Or as they call it in Indiana:
"Nukular Strike"

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YOU KILL FOR POWER.**

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ARENAS OF COMBAT**

contain hidden rooms and secret levels for a vicious challenge at every turn

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THE ULTIMATE COMBAT CHALLENGE you must first waste the enemy – then take over their bodies and use their powers to crush even deadlier opponents



3-D ENVIRONMENT WITH FULL 360° ATTACK MOBILITY

EUROCOM

**Windows® 95
CD-ROM**

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THE NTSC U/C DESIGNATION. U.S. AND FOREIGN PATENTS PENDING.

Do the hero thing.

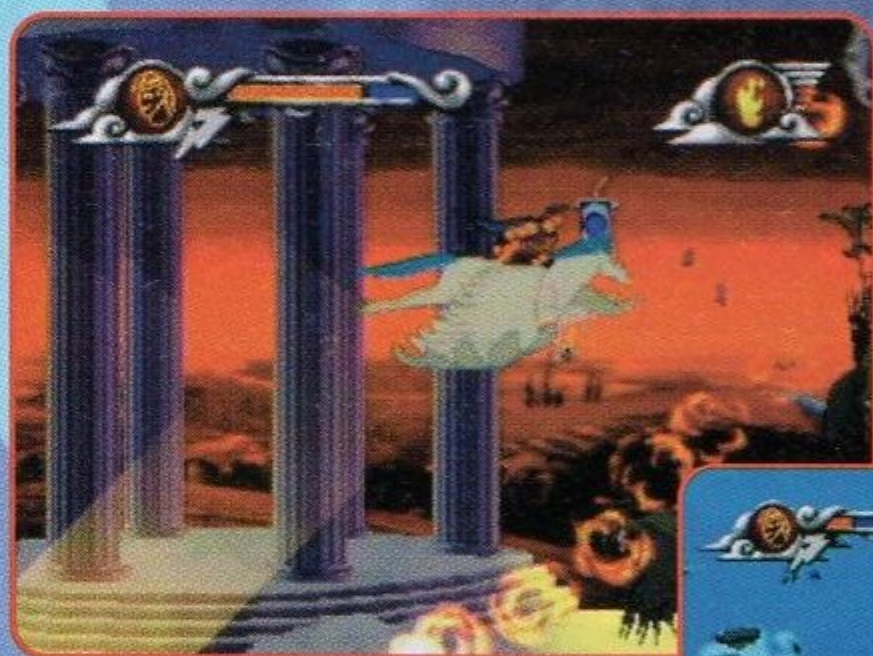
Disney's **HERCULES** Action Game

Zeus has answered your prayers. And now, it's time to take your place among the gods in this hot new PlayStation™ game console adventure. Explore three worlds of 3-D gameplay right out of Disney's Hercules movie—with the original character voices, sound effects and music. Mangle monsters like Hydra and the Cyclops. Terminate the Titans. Save Thebes from a hostile takeover. Hey, this game can make you immortal!

Survive the Hero Training Gauntlet.



Watch out for snake-headed Medusa and her flaming Venom Spit.



Real-time 3-D landscapes and special effects are cool when you're protecting Mt. Olympus from a fire-breathing Titan attack.



Slay multiple heads as you face the vicious Hydra.

Defeat your enemies with your Power Sword.



Think fast or the Cyclops will get you.



Includes special five-color disc.

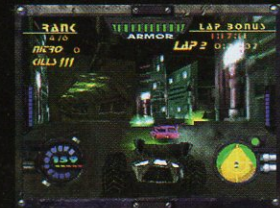


Also available on PC CD-ROM.



www.vie.com/hercules





RED ASPHALT

Hands up who remembers Rock 'n Roll Racing? It was a fun 16-bit isometric combat/racer with futuristic tracks, upgradeable cars and a commentary by Larry Hoffman ("Tarquin jams into first!"), kind of like RC Pro-Am with guns. I only ask because *Red Asphalt* began life as none other than *Rock 'n Roll Racing 2*, and even though the name has changed in development, the similarities are inescapable.

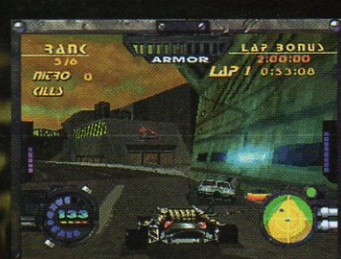
In *Red Asphalt* you must race your way to victory over a total of 25 grueling tracks, spread evenly over four planets (L.A., Hell World, Neo-Tokyo and Cloud World). In each race your goal is simple—to come first without being destroyed—and depending on your performance (position/speed/number of kills), you are awarded both money and Chaos points for your troubles. Money is used to either upgrade your existing vehicle or buy an entirely new vehicle, while Chaos Points are needed to progress to the next planet. Each planet has six tracks and if you haven't amassed the correct amount of Chaos points by the end of the final track, you are sent back to the beginning and your Chaos points are reset.

Even though *Red Asphalt* has been in development for

25 FUTURISTIC TRACKS!



nearly 2 years, this is the first playable build we've received and I'm happy to report that things are looking peachy keen. The action is fast and furious, the 3D engine is throwing around an impressive number of polygons at a decent frame rate, and the various track 'themes' are all extremely atmospheric. Best of all, however, the final version will include a two player Vs mode utilizing the Sony Multi-Link cable! Expect to see more on *Red Asphalt* in an upcoming issue. **K**



DEVELOPER - INTERPLAY
PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - FALL



KNIGHTMARE
It's Rock 'n Roll
Racing 3D!



G.P

G-POLICE

After enjoying an extremely prolific showing at E3, Psygnosis is beginning to show off their dynamite PS product line-up for the fall. Look for the stunning 3D shooter *Colony Wars* elsewhere in the mag, and read on for the low-down on *G-Police*, their second high-profile 3D action shooter.

Set in the 21st Century, in a world much like *Wipeout XL*'s, the G-Police are a specialized branch of law officers designed to patrol the chaotic urban jungle of Callisto city. You pilot a heavily armed 'DASA-Kamov HAVOC close air support gun ship' (or: a cool helicopter for short) into a sprawling cityscape of skyscrapers, bridges, vehicles, and, naturally, villains. Callisto itself is a troubled place—a melting pot of violence and anarchy just waiting to happen—and as a member of the G-Police it's your job to keep the peace. The cool city designs are supported by a high frame rate, and despite minor draw-in issues it's a very convincing environment.

This build has three fully playable missions, and ever since the demo came in I've been beating them every which way but loose (give me more!). These scenarios are a great mixture of fast

paced blasting action and strategic flight, which bodes well for future missions.

The control is spot-on: You can move both horizontally and vertically, as well as a scanner, firing button, and weapons toggle.

Basically, thanks to the hovering system, you have complete 360° control over your jet chopper. The weapons include machine guns, flares, plasma rings, seeker missiles, area effect bombs, and cannons; all of which are accompanied by pretty lighting and transparency effects.

The missions don't revolve around rudimentary tasks like in other games of this type, thanks mainly to the lively sci-fi banter between you and HQ. You'll be sent to the dock area to scan crates for illegal merchandise one moment, then suddenly thrust into an intense aerial battle with terrorists the next; the mission objectives are always varied and engaging. 'Course, feel free to blow almost *anything* up in your spare time. Civilian cars, buildings, debris—it's all game!

I'm looking forward to playing any of the proposed 33 levels in the final version, if only to hear what kind of daunting tasks HQ has in mind for the poor, abused G-Police! In the meantime, enjoy the shots and keep it here. **G**

P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - PSYGNOSIS

PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - FALL



GLITCH

Jeeyeah Police!
(Ummmm... that sounded stupid...)

COURIER CRISIS



Coming this fall from New Level Software and BMG, check out *Courier Crisis*. As a courageous bike messenger, it's your job to navigate through multiple sprawling 3D city-scapes in a race against the clock to deliver



over 250 special packages. Succeed and you'll get a fat raise. Fail, and you could be out of a job! Currently early in development (frame rates and environments need tweaking), *CC* has obvious potential. Unlike most racing titles, it offers a free-form 3D environment, with streets, alleyways, stores, vehicles and pedestrians of ALL types.

There's five big neighborhoods to conquer, with 'wrong-side-o-the-tracks' missions set in Skid Row, Waterfront, China Town, Civic Center, and the Industrial Zone. The developers have also seen fit to include almost 200 roadside obstacles and 70 types of crazed pedestrians—all of them detailed and humorously animated. The sound effects are all life-like sound bytes from the Warner Bros. library, and the music is a fantastic mix of major alternative tunes (courtesy of Cargo Records) and excellent techno from some of Europe's best. And as our New Level friends explained, even the dispatcher's voice is unique, authentically recorded using an old microphone and cheap stereo for a raw sound.

As for gameplay, well, imagine a cross between *Road Rash*, *Skitchin'*, *Runabout*, and maybe even a little *2 Extreme* thrown in for good measure. You know, the type of engine that lets you do strange things (usually violent and funny) in a 3D environment populated by tons of sprite-based objects and people. Heck, in *CC*, even aliens walk the streets!

The level design is awesome and the play mechanics are extremely flexible (with proper timing it's possible to bunny hop onto the roof of a building!). The engine supports this mayhem with a self-adjusting camera and excellent collision detection.

I'm looking forward to *Courier Crisis*. I'm a sucker for *Skitchin'* and the *Road Rash* series and it looks set to deliver the same type of wacked-out gameplay and bizarre humor. I do hope they're able to speed up the engine and tweak the controls though—with a design this ambitious, and that being all that's missing, it'd be a shame not to. **G**



P
PREVIEW

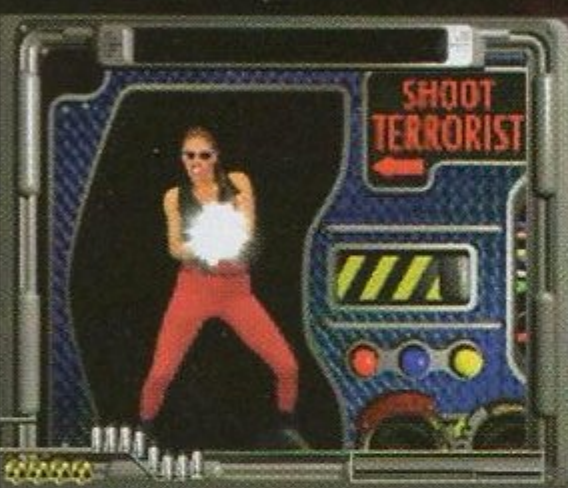
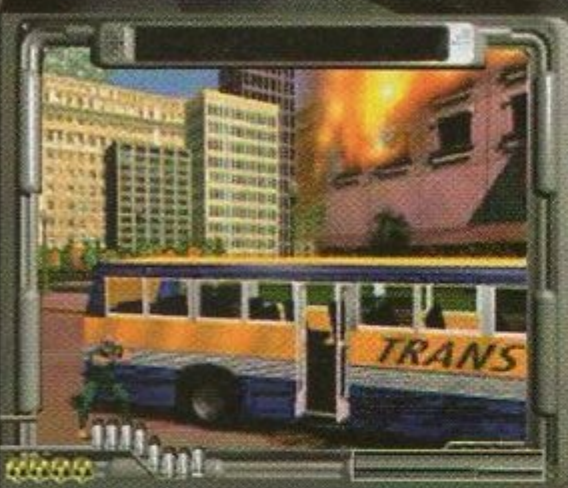
PlayStation

DEVELOPER - NEW LEVEL SOFT
PUBLISHER - GT INTERACTIVE
FORMAT - CD

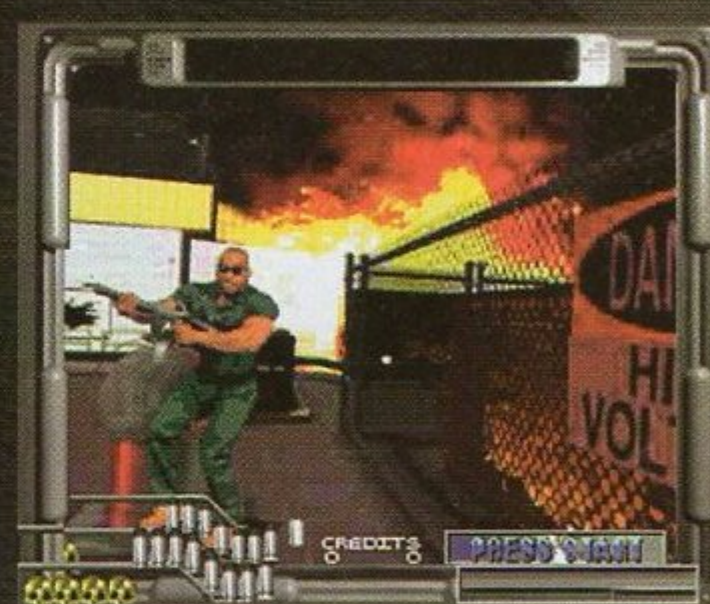
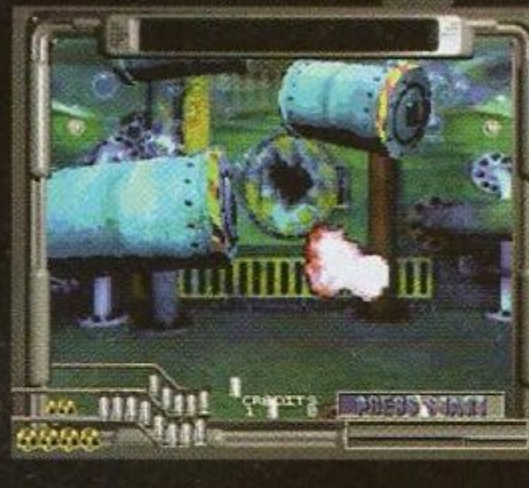
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - UNKNOWN
AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



GLITCH
I can't ride a bike but my tricycle hauls ass!



MAXIMUM FORCE



There are some phenomena in life which cannot be explained. The pyramids of Egypt for example. Stonehenge. Roswell. And perhaps most baffling of all: *Area 51*. No, not the place, the game. Midway's *Area 51* was, er, 'uncluttered by substance'. That's one way of putting it. Crap. That's another way. Yet the American public did not seem to realize this, and the game topped the arcade charts for several months, crushing 'lesser' gun games like *V.Cop 2* and *Time Crisis* underfoot. With this kind of success a sequel was sure to follow, and who is Midway to argue with a franchise...

Maximum Force is not a direct sequel to *Area 51* (the story and settings are different), just the same type of game. Like *Area 51*, players are taken on a set path through one of numerous pre-rendered CG environments and must shoot at any digitized enemy sprites that should happen to get in your way. *Maximum Force* offers a different theme than *Area 51* (urban/anti-terrorist) and an improved graphics engine (the FMV looks great) but the gameplay is much the same. Digitized actors pop out of the same place on cue, get shot, and disappear into a little blood splat.

Despite the FMV nature of the game, the background environments are surprisingly interactive. Pretty much any object can be shot, and that includes boxes, glass and lights. There are the usual quota of weapon power-ups to be collected (on top of your standard 8 shot pistol), thousands of enemies to kill and at least 30 different secret bonus rooms to be discovered. Who knows, maybe *Maximum Force* will be the game to put FMV shooters back on the map. Check back next month for the full review. **K**

P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - MIDWAY

PUBLISHER - MIDWAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 2

DIFFICULTY - UNKNOWN

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



KNIGHTMARE
The 'sequel' to
Area 51. 'Nuff said.

MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES

SUB-ZERO

This month Midway granted us an exclusive look at the latest rev of their *Mortal Kombat* action/RPG — *MK Mythologies: Sub Zero*. Described by the game's creator, John Tobias, as a cross between "Out of this World, Tomb Raider and MK," *Mythologies* chronicles an episode in the *MK* universe that precedes the original *MK* tournament by ten years, centering specially around Sub Zero and his involvement with a group of characters called The Elder Gods.

Right now, Tobias and his team are working on bringing together all of the game's various elements (story, level design, graphics, sound, combat) in time for a Christmas release. In the PS rev we tested they were just starting to put the finishing touches on some of the earlier levels and we were finally able to get a sense of how the finished product would play. Using traditional *MK* controls (including uppercuts and leg sweeps), players must explore eight vast 2.5D 'worlds,' negotiating traps and environmental hazards whilst battling numerous enemies, sometimes simultaneously. Sub Zero retains all of his moves from previous *MK* games, and Midway promises a cast of over 30 characters, ranging from rats in the sewer level to giant polygonal bosses to old favorites like Scorpion and Rayden. There's even a few characters from the forthcoming *MK4* and *MK: Annihilation* movie.

"Mythologies is not just a straightforward action/platformer featuring MK characters."

In case you missed our June preview, *Mythologies* features 2D digitized sprites imposed over 3D backdrops (running at a constant 30 fps) captured by an intelligent camera system that scales and pans to frame the action. Enter combat with two grunts and the camera will zoom in to focus on the battle. Reach one of the game's many 'platform' sections and camera will scale out to allow you to see the surrounding environment and thus plan your jumps. Each world features multiple paths and areas to explore (including the usual quota of *MK* secrets) and Midway is keen to emphasize the RPG aspect of the game: *Mythologies* is not just a straightforward action/platformer featuring *MK* characters.

Also new to this rev was the inclusion of numerous live-action FMV sections that detail the game's ongoing story (something Midway assures us will NOT disappoint *MK* fans). There were also rumors of a hidden 'Arena' mode that would effectively turn *Mythologies* into the next installment of 2D *MK*, though Midway would not comment at this time... **K**



P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - MIDWAY

PUBLISHER - MIDWAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - UNKNOWN

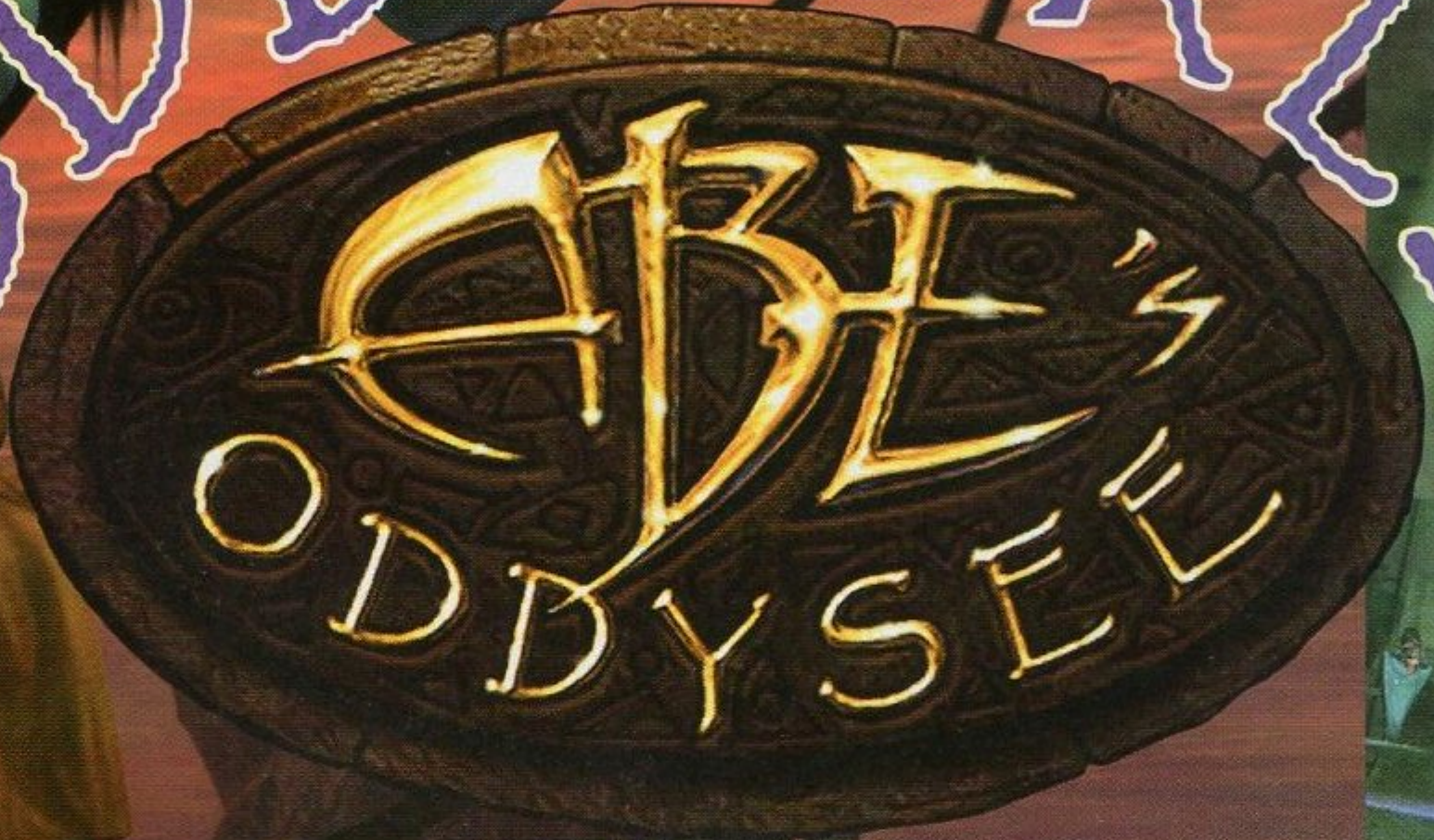
AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



KNIGHTMARE
I want *MK Mythologies: Goro's Quest!*



ODDWORLD



Even though I enjoyed the demo of *Abe's Oddysee*, I approached this review with a healthy degree of skepticism. The hype has been enormous, and in my experience, an abundance of hype normally means a lack of quality. But from the moment Abe popped his head out on the title screen, all my apprehensions just melted away. Quite simply, *Abe's Oddysee* is pure class. From the atmospheric intro to the explosive ending—and everything in between—Abe's is a case study of how, in the right hands, movies and games *can* mix.

"Abe's Oddysee is a case study of how, in the right hands, movies and games CAN mix..."

At it's core, *Abe's Oddysee* (the first in a series of five games set on Oddworld) is a 2D flip-screen action/adventure reminiscent of *Out of This World* or *Flashback*. The story centers around Abe, a Mudokon slave working for Oddworld's biggest meat processing plant: Rupture Farms. By chance, Abe discovers that his species is next on the menu and flees the factory, only to fall (literally) into the hands of a wise Mudokon Shaman. Under the Shaman's guidance, Abe soon learns that he has special powers, and he must embark on a spiritual quest to realize these powers before returning to Rupture Farms for the final showdown.

Slig



Oddyssey genuinely move like they are stop-motion animation models.

The animation isn't at the expense of the control, either. Abe runs, rolls, jumps and sneaks with all the precision of an action/platform character, with only a slight animation lag to convey realistic momentum. This leaves you free to concentrate on overcoming the taxing level design, and believe me when I say that you're going to need all the help you can get: *Abe's Oddyssey* is one tough ride! Each new screen brings a new set of naturalistic puzzles (i.e. they exist within the game environment) to test both your mental and physical dexterity. Thankfully, you have infinite lives to experiment with and there's often more than one way to solve a particular problem. Do you try to sneak past the sleeping guard, or do you wake him and get him to chase you onto a previous screen where you can dispose of him with a switch operated trapdoor? The choice is yours.

So what make's *Abe's Oddyssey* so special? Well, at the risk of sounding like a press

release: everything! First of all, the graphics are just plain gorgeous. You can see the caliber of the art direction from these screen shots (movie quality backgrounds) but what you can't see are the 2,750+ frames of character animation and 1000+ frames of background animation. Admittedly, it is with-in a flip-screen format, but I'm not exaggerating when I say that the characters in *Abe's*

Slog



I think what impressed me the most about *Abe's Oddyssey* is the attention to detail. The atmospheric locations, the seamlessly integrated CG (*FFVII* style), the interactive soundtrack, the depth-cued sound effects, the realistic creature AI, the GameSpeak—it all combines to accomplish *Oddworld Inhabitants'* goal of creating a living, breathing, cinematic world within the parameters of an established game genre. *Oddworld Inhabitants* call this the A.L.I.V.E. system (Aware Life forms In Virtual Entertainment). I call it excellent game design.

Any criticisms? Well, despite having infinite lives the save game/restart system kind of sucks—especially if you want to back track. And the challenging nature of the puzzles means it may prove a tad too frustrating for inexperienced gamers (or possibly a tad too slow for impatient gamers). But these are moot points at best. The fact is, if you like the action/adventure genre and think you've got the patience to out-think, instead of out-gun, your enemies, then you simply must check out *Abe's Oddyssey*. It's an intoxicatingly beautiful, innovative and intelligent game, and I really can't recommend it highly enough. **K**

Paramite



Scrab

Molock



R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - **ODD WORLD INHABITANTS**

PUBLISHER - **GT INTERACTIVE**

FORMAT - **CD**

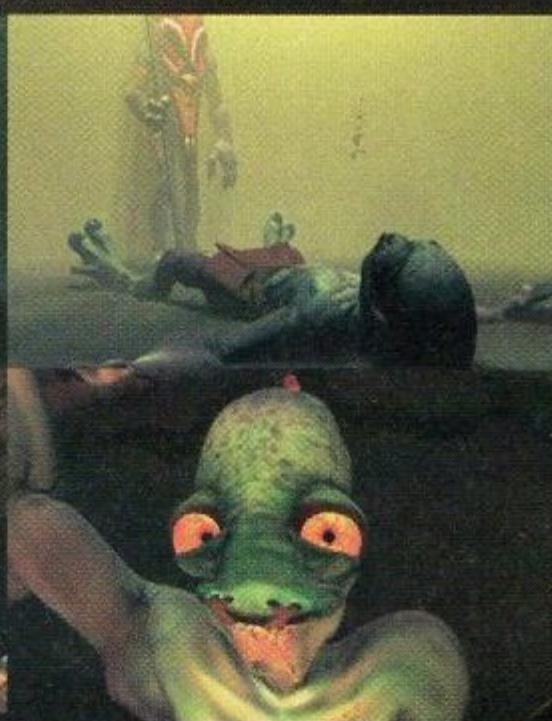
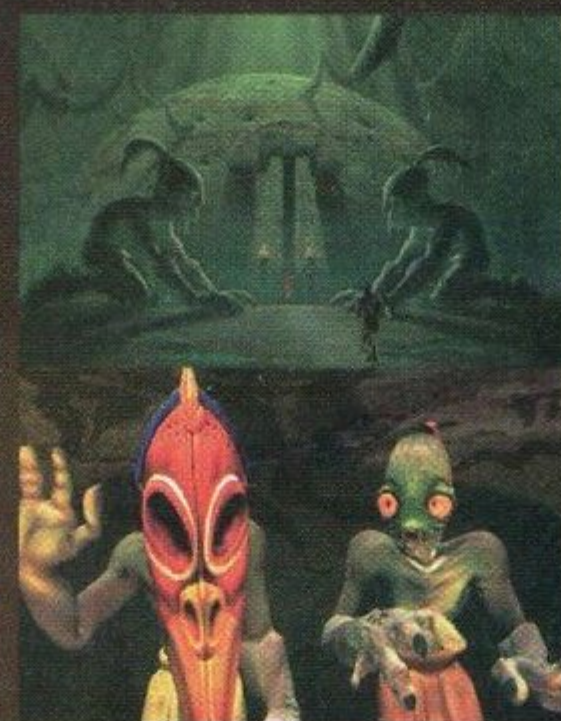
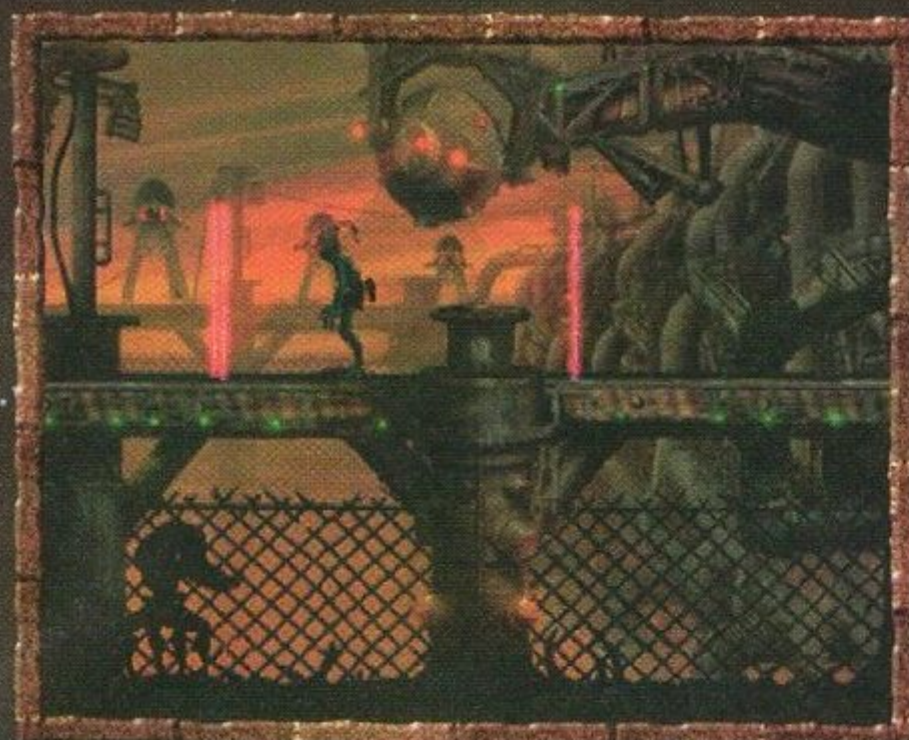
OF PLAYERS - **1 - 2**

DIFFICULTY - **ADVANCED**

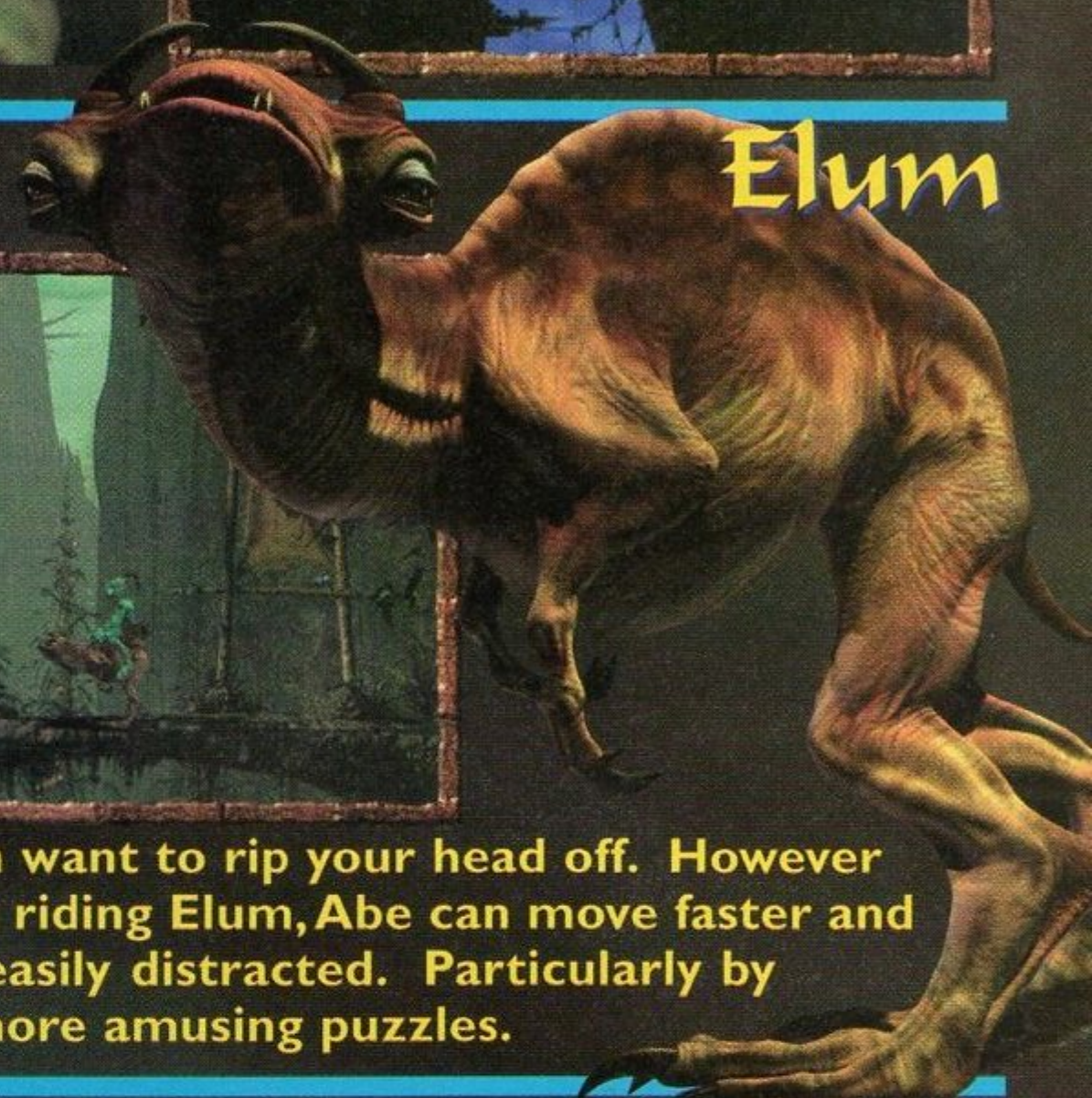
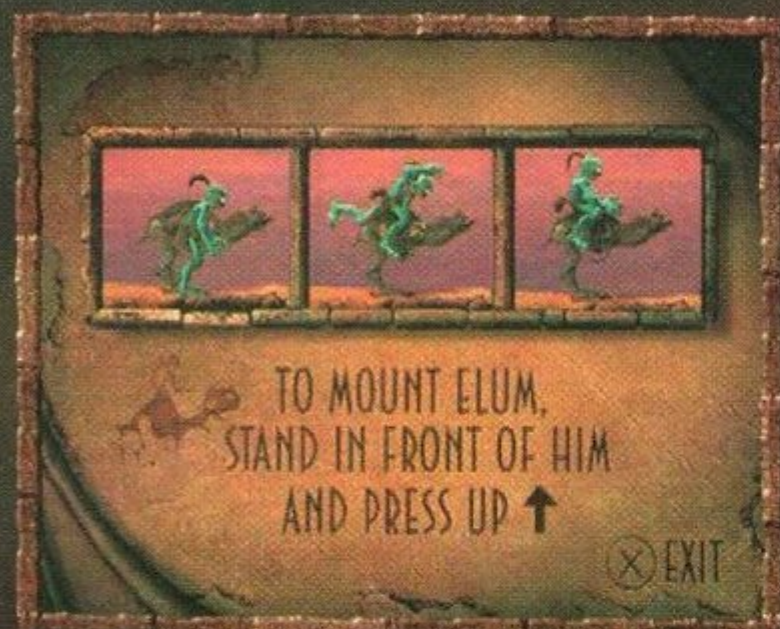
AVAILABLE - **SEPTEMBER**



KNIGHTMARE
IT'S A.L.I.V.E.!



Creature Comforts



Elum

Oddworld is populated by all manner of crazy creatures, most of whom want to rip your head off. However there is one animal who's on your side—your trusty steed, Elum. When riding Elum, Abe can move faster and jump further than he can on foot. There's just one problem: Elum is easily distracted. Particularly by honey. Finding ways to 'motivate' Elum presents some of the game's more amusing puzzles.

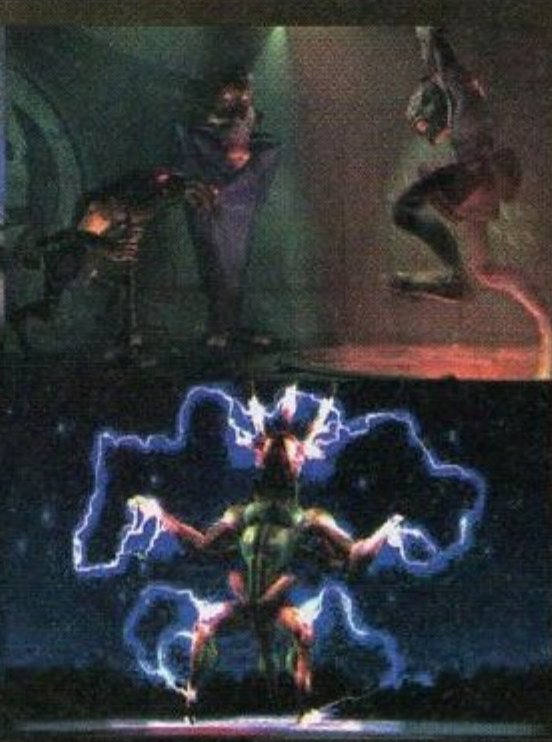
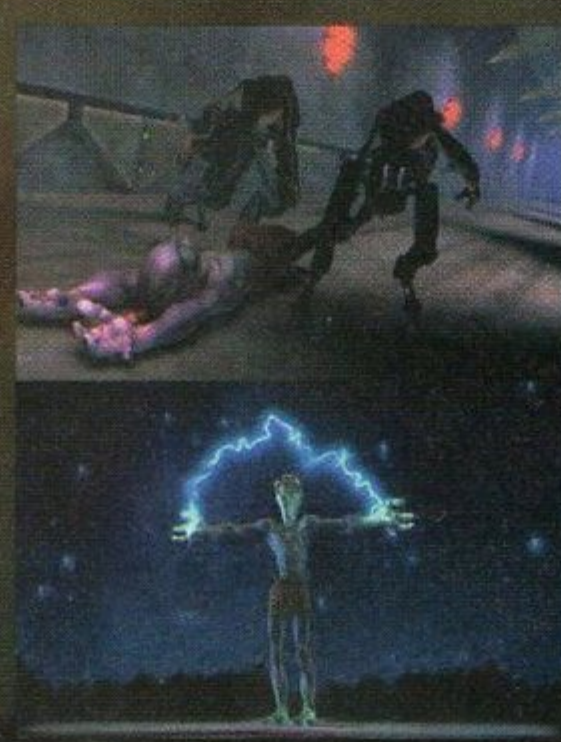
Free Your Friends!

Scattered throughout Rapture Farms are 100 fellow Mudokons, many of whom are hidden. Abe can free a Mudokon by talking to him to get his trust, then leading him to one of the many circles of birds which act as a portal to freedom. You don't have to rescue all Abe's friends, but you won't get the good ending unless you do.



Possess the Enemy!

Abe has no natural weapons, save for his ability to chant and take possession of any nearby Slig guards. Once in possession of a Slig you control it like you would Abe. You can talk to other Sligs, command Slogs, and best of all, make full use of the Slig's deadly machine gun. When you no longer have use for the Slig, simply chant again to return control to Abe, causing the hapless Slig to explode in a shower of body parts. Cool!



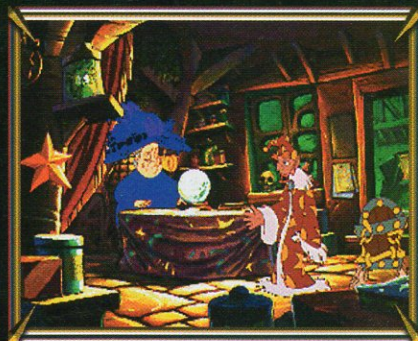
You've got to love a game that riffs and goofs on everything from Schrödinger's Cat to pork futures. Such is the bizarre lyrical tapestry of Psygnosis' *Discworld II: Mortality Bytes*. Furthering the adventures of apprentice wizard Rincewind, a deputy Librarian at the Unseen University, *Discworld II* (like its predecessor, obviously) is based on Terry Pratchett's hugely successful English series of fantasy humor novels about a place called Discworld which, by the way, just happens to move through space on the back of a giant turtle. Weird.

In this adventure, Rincewind (voiced once again by former Python Eric Idle) has inadvertently sent Death on a holiday. Now, no one in Discworld can die properly, and it's up to the catastrophically inept Rincewind to put things right once again. We can't have everyone running around immortal, now can we.

Featuring over 25,000 hand drawn frames, *DW II* is designed to resemble traditional cell animation. However, with the mass of those frames ferreted out over many separate objects, individual element's animations aren't terribly smooth, though they are drawn well. The same goes for the backgrounds. All have a rich and appropriate look to them, though there is jerkiness when the BGs scroll.

The gameplay in *DW II* is point-and-click all the way (mouse optional and recommended). You move a little sparkling cursor to guide Rincewind around, look at and use objects, and talk to people. In speaking, you can offer up one of several "openers" expressing greetings, sarcasm, a question, and muse—among others. Just be prepared for some long listening sessions once some characters begin talking, as there is a lot of speech. It's a very detail-rich world, and the game loves explaining it to you and setting up the puzzles in all their strange, trippy intricacy. Imagine drawing blood from a mouse using a set of stolen vampire dentures or swapping a croquet mallet with a hammerhead shark and you have an idea of the kind of puzzles you'll encounter.

If you consider yourself a fan of things like Monty Python and its absurdist, intellectual style of dry English humor (sic), you'll probably get a kick out of this. With the patience to sit and listen, the whacked out puzzles should delight in all their twisted logic. I really warmed to the humor and surreal storyline, though I must admit to being left a little cold by the PC-like interface. But that's just me, I suppose. **SD**



**R
REVIEW**



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PERFECT ENT.

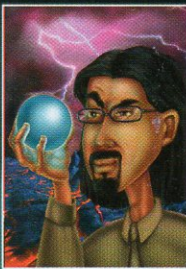
PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

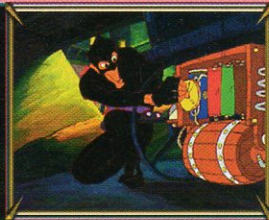
AVAILABLE - NOW



SUBSTANCE D
What's all this then?

DISCWORLD II


MORTALITY BITES






FINAL FANTASY VII

SQUARE HAS TAKEN WHAT WAS
ALREADY THE BEST RPG EVER
AND AUGMENTED IT WITH
THREE NEW BOSSES, INCREASED
THE DIFFICULTY, ADDED
NUMEROUS GRAPHICAL
TOUCHES AND RENDERED THE
ASTOUNDING NEW FMV YOU
SEE HERE... SPECIFICALLY FOR
THE U.S. MARKET. TOO GOOD TO
BE TRUE? TURN THE PAGE AND
FIND OUT...




This won't be a regular review. It'll be more of a... shall we say... defense. "A defense?" you may be wondering, "why would such a clearly excellent game require a defense?" I'll fill you in: *Final Fantasy VII* is, for me, unquestionably the greatest entertainment product ever created. While it may have flaws, they are so minor that, if present in other games, many would seem like shining high points. I'm issuing a *Final Fantasy VII* defense because of the large group of people quick to judge the game with such nitpicking points as "The game's too easy," (Not anymore. The U.S. version is substantially harder. For instance, the infamous Knights of Round has to be done four or five times on the last boss now, not once) "The music is poor," (It isn't as good as past *Final Fantasies*, but slaps down 99% of the other soundtracks out there, and has the greatest last boss music ever) "The Materia System's interface is shoddy" (Again, not anymore, Square's revamped it for America) and "The ending is disappointing," among others (Nine minutes of the best CG you've literally ever seen in a video game. Nine minutes! By contrast, the *Soul Edge* and *Tekken 2* intros are about two or three minutes long. Are sepia-toned game graphics and 20 minutes of *Mode 7* really better?) I personally feel any criticism leveled against *Final Fantasy VII* like a rusty, twisted thorn beneath my flesh: If ever there has been a perfect video game, this is the prime candidate.

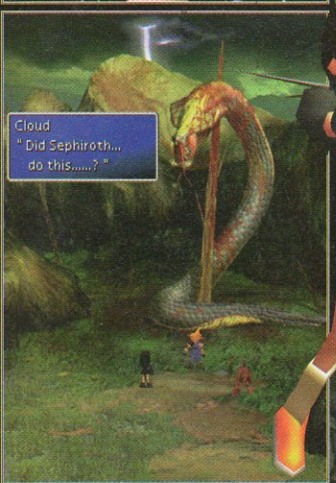
This game is ridiculously beautiful. Analyze five minutes of gameplay in FFFVII and witness more artistic prowess than most entire games have. The level of detail is absolutely astounding. Operating in the same superlative-laden GameFan review style as normal, these graphics are impossible to describe - no words are great enough. Both map and battle graphics are rendered to a level of detail completely unprecedented in the video game world: Before FFFVII, I couldn't have imagined a game looking like this for many years, and that's no exaggeration... one look at an FMV cut-scene or call spell



should handily convince you. FFFVII looks so consistently great that you'll quickly become numb to the power... only upon playing another game will you once again realize just how fantastic it is.



But how could a plot ever hope to match these visuals? Surprise, surprise; Square has the answer. I don't have any room to go into details, but rest assured FFFVII possesses the deepest, most involved storyline ever in an RPG. There's few games that have literally caused my jaw to drop at plot revelations, and I'm most pleased to say that FFFVII doles out these shocking, un-guessable twists with regularity - you are constantly motivated to solve the latest mystery.



Actual gameplay remains largely unchanged from past *Final Fantasies*, with a couple of major additions: Materia and Limit Breaks. Materia is the "new system" in FFFVII, similar to Accessories/Relics, Job Change and Active Time Battle before it. Basically, Materia are stones that each hold a certain power, whether they be

FINAL FA



MINI GAMES WITH SKILL

One of the many, many reasons FFVII rocks with skill is its mini-games, each a (nearly) fully-realized game in itself - and there's TONS of 'em - the four you see here but scratch the surface! Most run at that most hardcore of frame-rates, 60fps, and range from racing, like G-Bike, Snowboarding, and Chocobo Racing, to shooters, like Shooting Coaster and Submarine, to a fighting game (don't get your hopes up... it's not too exciting) and even a real-time strategy game, Condor War. Square loves you so much that there's an arcade in FFVII you can visit to play these skilled mini-games whenever you want!

G-BIKE



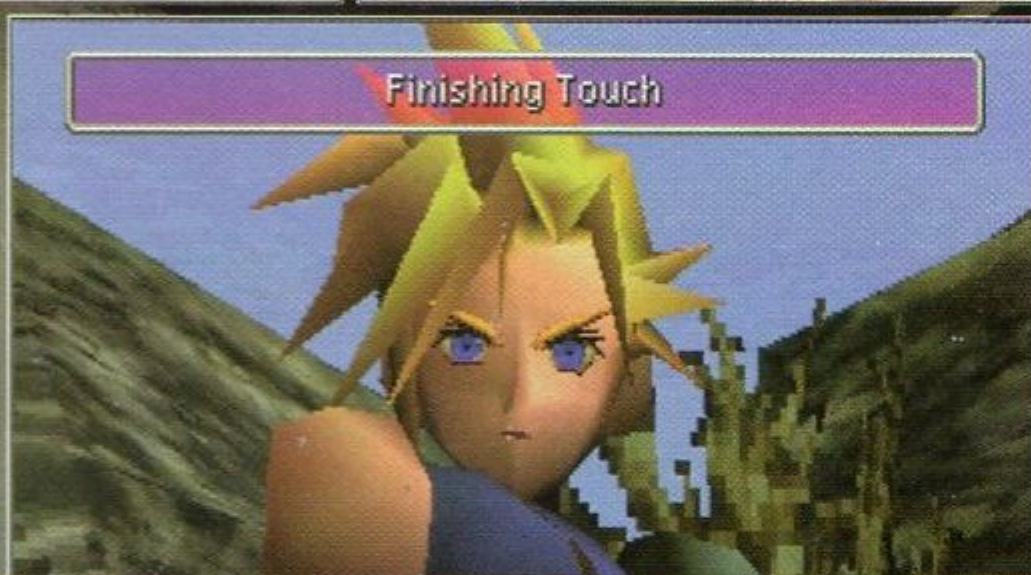
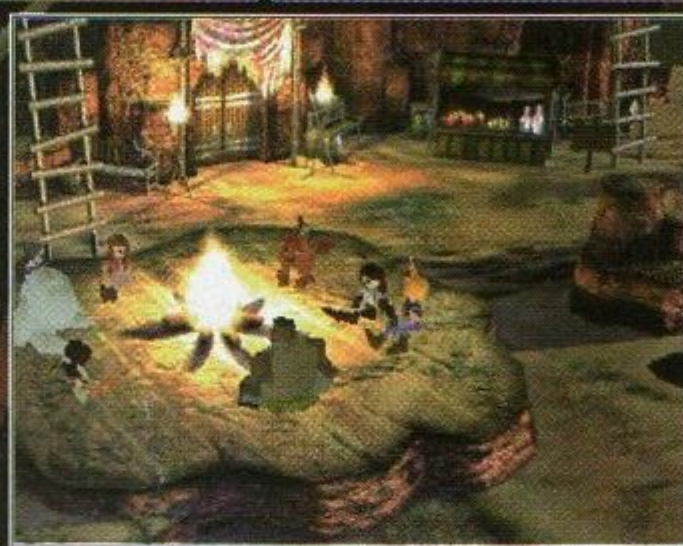
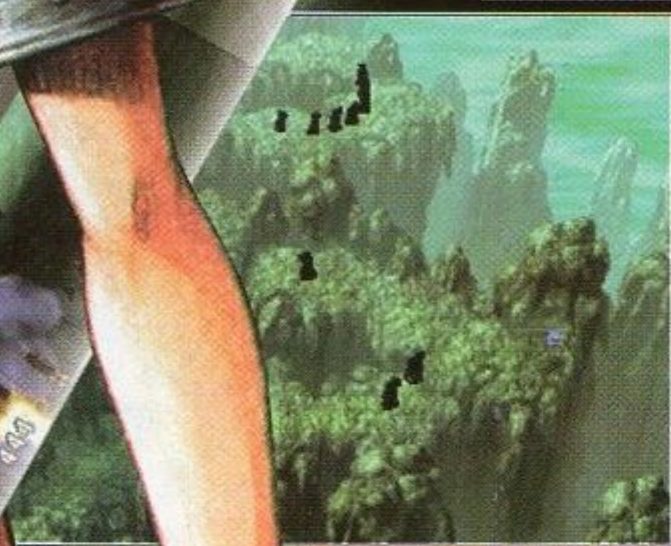
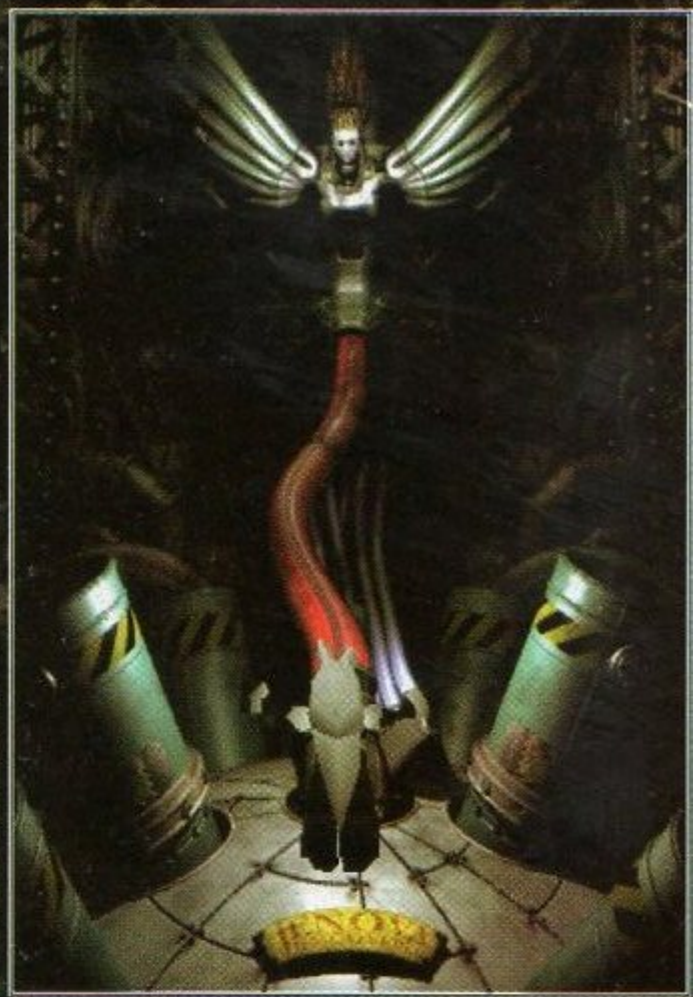
SNOWBOARDING



SUBMARINE



CONDOR WAR



spells, battle commands or other, more esoteric functions. Unfortunately, they remove much of the character found in previous FFs, as without Materia the only commands available to each party member are Fight and Item; nobody has exclusive battle commands. This, however, is where the Limit Breaks come in. As you're hit in battle, a *Samurai Shodown*-style anger meter, known as the Limit Gauge, slowly builds. When it reaches maximum, you have to use a limit attack (different for every character) - you're no longer allowed to attack normally, adding an element of strategy: Use the limit now to gain experience towards new Limit Breaks, or save it until it's useful?

As I mentioned earlier, the music in *Final Fantasy VII* unfortunately can't compare to *FFIV*, *V* or *VI*'s soundtrack. Allow me to defend Nobuo Uematsu. Previous FFs had anywhere from 50-60 music tracks, and the man had a couple years to compose for them. *FFVII* was completed in under a year and has over one hundred music tracks. That's quite a few. I'm just giving you the facts; you draw your own conclusions. This is a topic of heated debate at the

GameFan offices, so I'll go no further with my opinions. Nevertheless, several tracks are excellent, such as the boss theme, Jenova's theme, Cosmo Canyon, Nibelheim and the final boss music, to name a few, but there just aren't as many top-quality tracks as in previous FFs.

It appears I'm rapidly running out of room, and I have about

10,000 more things to say... I haven't even mentioned all the incredible new features Square's added specifically for us red-blooded Americans! Well, I guess I *did* devote a whole leaf o' GF to the subject. Just turn the page. Ah well, this entire rant is irrelevant. I know you'll buy *FFVII*... A review isn't necessary. If I've sounded like I've been talking down or holier-than-thou during this article, please forgive me: I take *FFVII* criticism very personally, as it was the

most flawless, magical game experience I've had in my entire life... and I hope it will be the same for you.

NR



DEVELOPER - SQUARE

PUBLISHER - SONY

FORMAT - 3 CDs

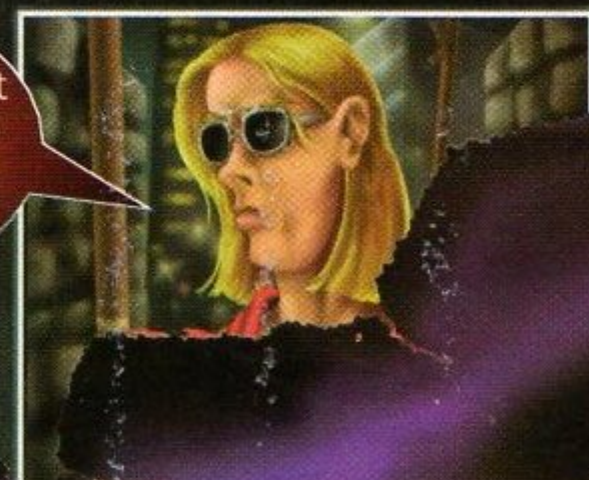
OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SEPT. 7TH

WARNING!

Fellow masters of skill! Don't look at the next page unless you don't care about seeing some of the later hidden/U.S. exclusive bosses early!



FINAL FANTASY VII

FINAL FANTASY VII'S MAD, U.S.-ONLY FEATURES!

DIAMOND WEAPON



Yes, it's true... Square has added two all-new, never-before-seen bosses to the American version of FFXVII, as well as allowing you to actually fight a creature only glimpsed during FMV sequences in the Japanese version: Diamond Weapon. ("Weapons" are giant creatures created by the planet in times of great peril, by the way) At any rate, try Stealing from DW to get a weapon for Yuffie not found in the Japanese version, Rising Sun!



DIAMOND WEAPON'S DIAMOND FORCE



EMERALD WEAPON



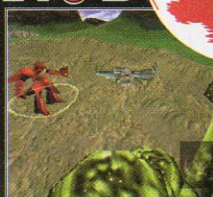
Emerald Weapon is the first optional Weapon you're able to face in the American FFXVII, and, like Ruby Weapon, it's about 10 times harder than the last boss! Really! You have to be a FFXVII master to even put a dent in Emerald... it has an attack that does 9999 damage to all party members! "Doesn't that kill you?!", you ask? Yup. It sure does. So how does one survive such an attack? Were not giving you any hints! Utilize skills!



EMERALD WEAPON'S EMERALD BEAM



RUBY WEAPON



Ruby's even harder than Emerald... because you get to fight it with only one party member, picked at random! After a few turns Ruby blows two members out of the fight, leaving a lone character to defeat it. Add this to it's burrowing arms that come out behind you for a two-sided attack plan and you've got problems. Anyone who can actually defeat the Ruby and Emerald Weapons deserves to be known as a *supreme* gaming master. Imagine! Over 1,000,000 hit points!!



OTHER SAVORY, SKILLSFUL FFXVII MANIA GOODS TO GNAW ON

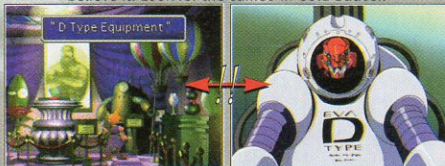
ZENOGLAS??

Here's a question sure to be on the tips of many tongues this September: What the hell's the comatose Cloud talking about in the below shot? Square Japan's official answer to "Who's ZenoGlas?": "You'll find out." Our witty response: "You mean later in FFXVII? The answer: "No." Hmm...



D TYPE EQUIPMENT

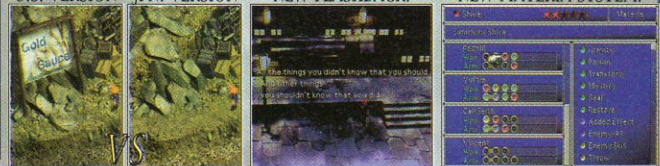
Square rocks with skill. Why? After creating the best game ever, they thought, "Hmm. Might as well pay homage to the greatest anime ever. What's something really, really obscure we can throw in from Evangelion that only Nick Rox will catch?" The answer: Asuka's infamous D Type Equipment from Episode 9, "Magmadriver." Look at that madness... you better believe it. Look for the cameo in Gold Saucer.



MORE PROOF SQUARE LOVES YOU

Look at this insanity! Square's made radical improvements to the American Final Fantasy VII: they didn't just add three bosses, they went beyond... way beyond! Several maps now have bonus graphical touches, like this example from North Corel. They even added a minute and a half or so of all-new FMV introducing the Weapons, which you can see on the opener page; not to mention a brief yet all-new flashback sequence with Cloud and Tifa (below) and a much easier-to-manage Materia system! Supreme skills!

U.S. VERSION IPN. VERSION NEW FLASHBACK! NEW MATERIA SYSTEM!



COULD THIS BE THE BEST PLAYSTATION SHOOTER?

Yes! Not only do they bring the best RPGs to the US, but when nobody else takes the initiative, Working Designs brings over Japan's best shooters too. Smart people. Consider

RAYSTORM

Taito's *RayStorm* to be the champagne cracking over the bow of Spaz on its maiden voyage, as WD's shooter division gets underway. Strange analogy? Well, they really couldn't have picked a sweeter vintage. And as per the Spaz motto ("Twitch games only"), *RayStorm* is a pulse-pounding overhead shooter with some of the most explosive graphics, beautiful Zuntata sound, and high-powered gameplay ever witnessed. On to the review we go!

I'll be superficial and jump right into *RayStorm*'s stunning polygonal graphics first. Why not, it's the first thing you'll notice, and damn they're amazing! If you've been playing shooters all your life, this game is visual euphoria! It's a shiny, sparkly gem. You've never seen such gorgeous overhead graphics; giant multi-dimensional polygonal backgrounds scrolling beneath your ship at insane, silky-smooth frame rates. Insanity just riddles the screen from wave after wave of ultra-colorful transparencies and genuinely shocking weapon effects. And as each stage comes and goes you'll be introduced to new levels of mind-blowing 3D. Stage 2's waterfall or stage 4's intense space battle are fine examples of imagery you've quite literally never seen before in a shooter—play it, and find out!

On to the gameplay, a small (ahem) part of any shooter's bid for success. *RayStorm* uses the same weapon system as its predecessor, *Layer Section/Galactic Attack*, which is to say an upgradeable main weapon and various types of lock-on beams as your secondary. The main laser gets much thicker (and eventually turns into a graphically impressive ribbon), while the lock-on weapon becomes more proficient at locking onto multiple enemies, as well as increasing in destructive power. It's easy to lock on, too: Just run your on-screen cross-hairs over a row of enemies, either on the ground or in the air (that's why the lock-on is so important), and fire away. You can even set it on "Auto" and the computer will handle all the lock-on tasks for you. Apart from a heavy dose of skilled dodging, and several cinematically busy boss attacks, *RayStorm*'s gameplay is unique largely due to this multiple level firing system.

I've already written far too much for this page, but if you need even more convincing (and in-depth info), check out E.Storm's complete review of the import *Raystorm* in GF Volume 5, Issue 4. If not... you should be enjoying *RayStorm* now! **G**



R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - TAITO

PUBLISHER - SPAZ/WORKING DESIGNS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW



GLITCH
The first legitimate shooter hit on the PS.

Disney's HERCULES

Back in the days of 16-bit every new Disney movie would be accompanied by an officially licensed 2D action/platformer. From Little Mermaid and Beauty and the Beast to Aladdin, The Lion King, and Pocohantas, no Disney movie was considered too obscure for a game tie-in. It was as predictable as the toy line, McDonalds meal deal and best original song Oscar. Back then, we all groaned at the thought of playing yet *another* 2D Disney platformer. Today, we welcome any new entries into the dying genre with opens arms. Ironic, don't you think?

So here it is folks, Hercules - the first Disney property to appear on the PlayStation; and as you may have gathered it's a 2D action/platformer. Luckily for Virgin, there aren't a lot of those around on the PS. In fact, there aren't a lot of those around on any 32-bit system, period. Traditional hand drawn animation is a painstaking business and there simply aren't enough players left in the industry who have either the time or inclination to invest in a graphical medium that is rapidly becoming less and less commercially viable.

Personally I feel that a well designed 2D game can easily compete aesthetically with most 3D games, but I'm in the minority. Hopefully Hercules will help my claim.

Why? Because Hercules graphics are simply stunning. The first couple of levels give you a feel for the technology but later on things get *really* out of hand. All of the characters (Hercules, enemies, side kicks, etc.) and objects are hand drawn and animate with all the grace and fluidity of...well, a Disney car-





toon. This is definitely some of the best animation yet seen on the PS. The backgrounds are a mixture of 2D parallax and 3D polygonal objects, integrated so seamlessly that you never stop and think, 'yeah 2D sprites in a 3D world' like you do with MK Mythologies. The CD is used to asynchronously load data as you play (the excellent midi music is taken directly from the movie) resulting in huge, lush, detailed levels packed with scaling, rotation, reflections and all manner of graphical tricks. There's always some kind of movement going on somewhere on the screen. As for the bosses: well, let's just say that the Hydra is one of the most impressive looking creatures you'll see in any game, *anywhere*. That includes PC and arcade. It looks like your PS forgot it was only supposed to be 32-bit and is instead doing a great job of impersonating an SGI workstation. Seriously. It's just a shame that the gameplay doesn't match up to the quality of the visuals.

Hercules plays a lot like most of those 2D 16-bit Disney licenses of old. Admittedly there is some variety in the gameplay (most notably the 'racing into the screen' levels) but for the most part you'll be running, jumping, swinging and chopping just like you did in Aladdin. Only not as well as you did in Aladdin. Because Hercules' controls are frustratingly un-responsive. This is a shame really, as although you do get used to it, having to predict every sword swipe by half a second really ruins the fun. That combined with the lack of innovation (this isn't really taking the genre anywhere new) are enough to knock Hercules down a notch from the 'great' to merely 'good'.

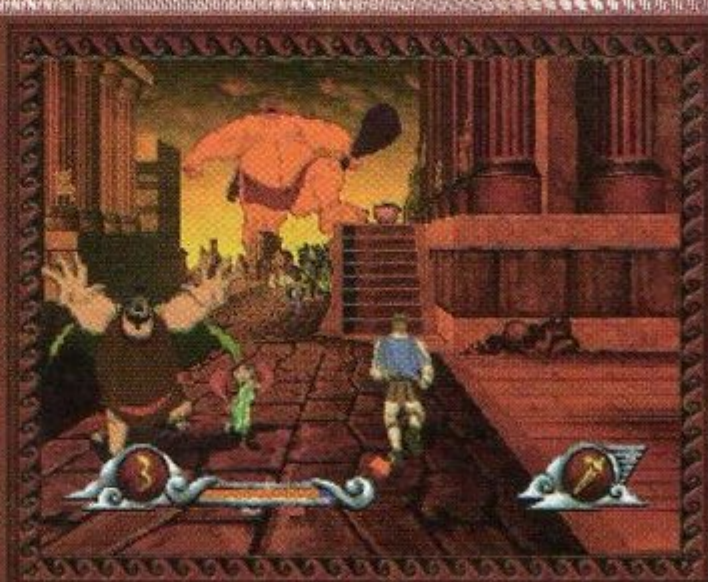
Still, let be it known that Hercules is an Ok playing, stunning looking action platform title that sets a new watermark for mixing 2D and 3D graphics and is aesthetically the best electronic representation of a Disney movie ever!

And its by Eurocom of all people! It's nice to see a 2D action game on PS, especially when it looks this good (even the 'hard to impress' FF Rox agreed that Hercules graphics were something special) and I guess fans of the movie are going to love it regardless. One thing's for sure: between Hercules, Abe's Odyssey and Gundam PS owning 2D fans are spoilt for choice this month. K



Z-AXIS GAMEPLAY #1

At points in the game Hercules can move 'into the screen' Bug style to continue the action on a new plane. Look for paths or stairs.



Z-AXIS GAMEPLAY #2

Certain levels are composed entirely of 'Z-Axis' gameplay. Hercules runs into the screen and must jump and dodge to avoid obstacles.

K REVIEW



DEVELOPER - EUROCOM

PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW

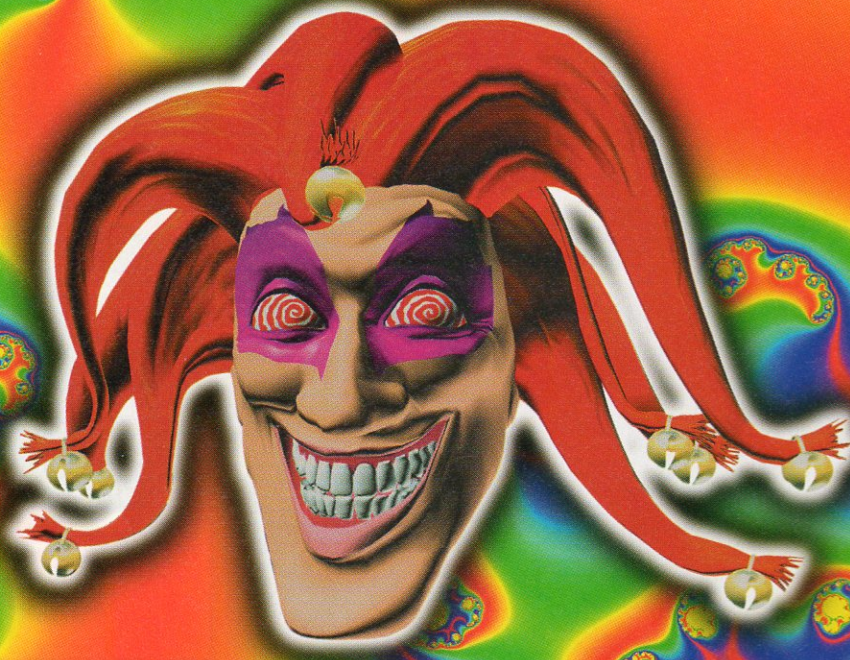


KNIGHTMARE

Looks better than it plays.

ID

EGO



Satisfy all your needs, wants and...



Pilot a giant mech through warped 3D tunnels.

Descend into the all new psychotic world of Pandemonium 2 and twist reality inside out. Explore a whacked-out psychedelic landscape with Nikki's insane double jump—then dominate with Fargus' maniacal attacks by hurling his viper-tongued side-kick Sid for skull crushing good times. Navigate the undulating 3D hyper-kinetic backgrounds 'till it turns your brain to puddin'. Hey...it's a twisted new world of furious gameplay that'll devour you before you truly understand it. So have a good trip.



Fargus is a raving maniac prone to light fires now and ask questions later.

Nikki—equipped with powers



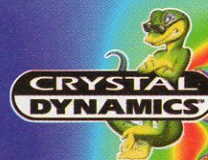
that only big bad girls have.

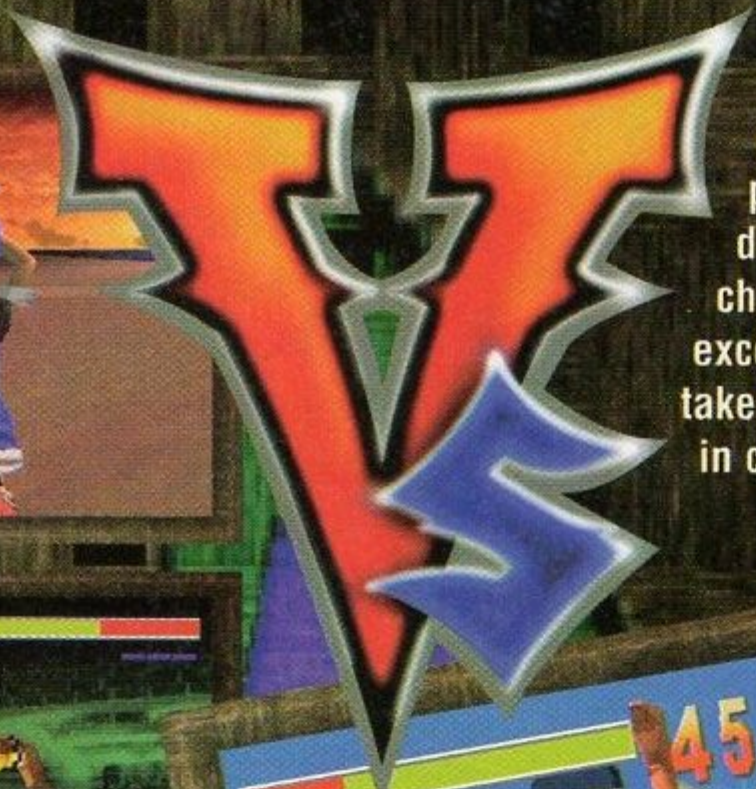


Call 1.800.771.3772 for
Game Rating Information

Pandemonium 2™

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T•HQ's got a 60 frames-per-second fighting game all their own and judging by this latest preview disc, they are headed in the right direction with a well-rounded assortment of characters and locales, beautiful animation, excellent lighting and vivid special effects. Vs. takes place in and around urban city locations and in characterization is American based. Turf-specific

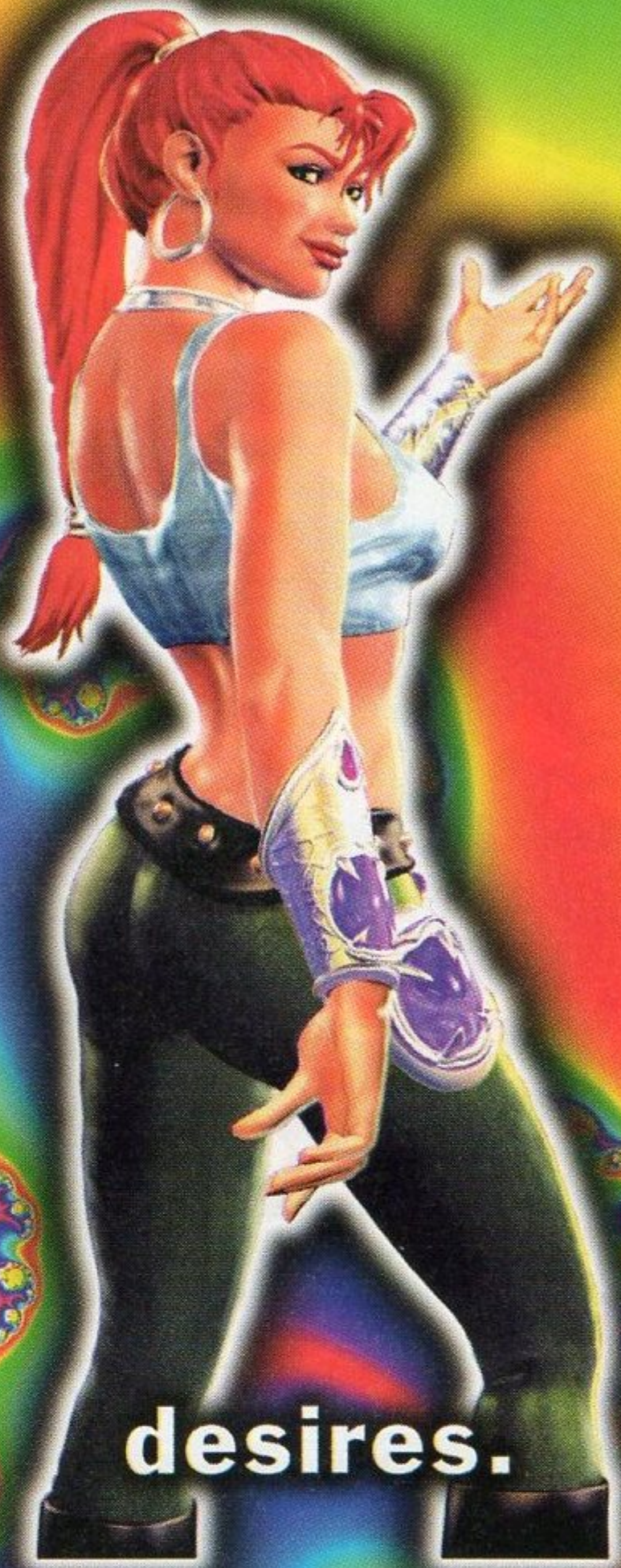
characters will fight at the beach, in the hood, on Campus, and in and around inner cities, with a variety of locales in each such as Malibu Canyon, and the campus rooftops. Although American derived, the game is being programmed in Japan. So by

utilizing two Continents,

T•HQ is assembling a unique fighting formula. The games moves are PPK based, with juggles aplenty and awesome supers and features real-time lighting. The only two flaws thus far are the characters personalities which are way off base with over-acted voices, and the lamest jugular vein spray ever recorded. This especially must go. It seems that someone believes that unless a

game has hose fires of blood we won't buy it. T•HQ must fix this *immediately* for their game to be taken seriously. Otherwise it's all systems go! Stay tuned for more Vs. in future issues.

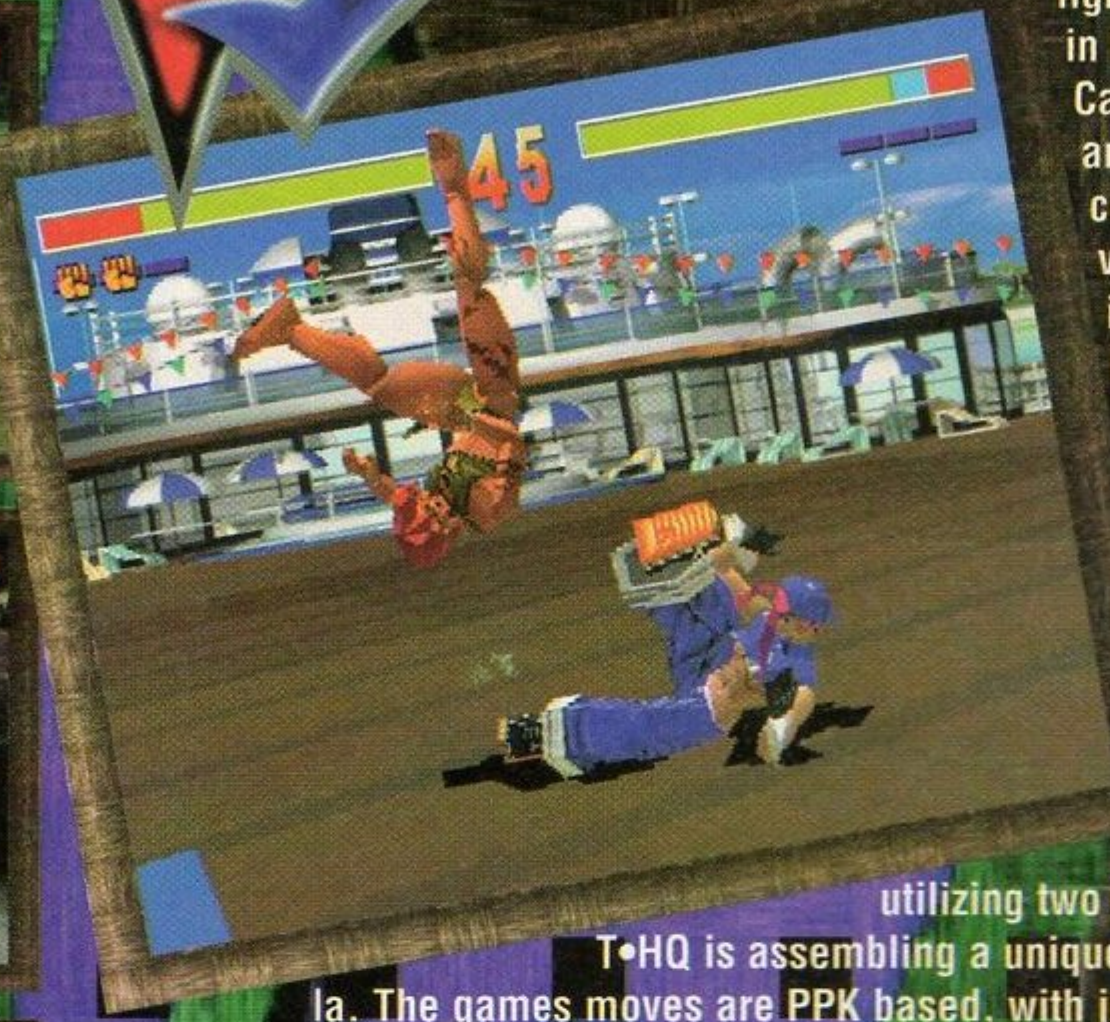
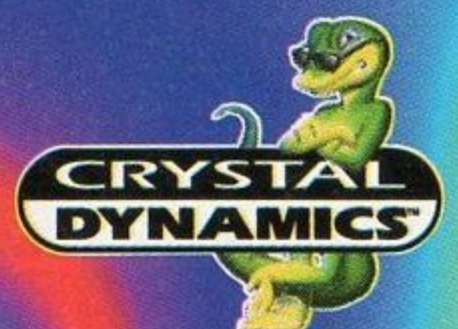
LIBIDO



desires.



Hidden bonus levels take you to funky new places.



DEVELOPER - T•HQ
PUBLISHER - T•HQ
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - FALL

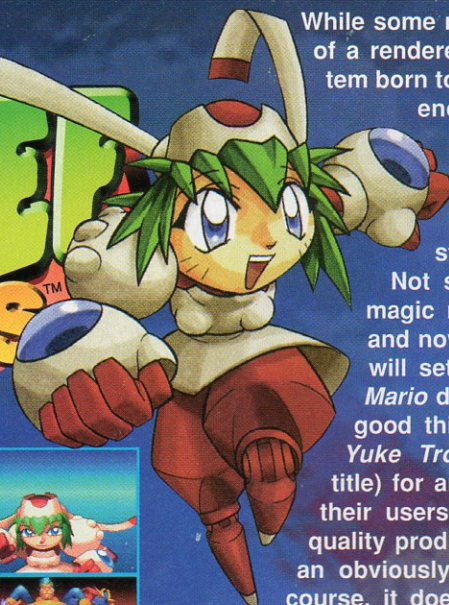


E. STORM
LOOSE THE
SPRAY AND WE
CAN TALK.

Welcome to this month's cover feature, Nintendo's (via Treasure for Enix) *Mischief Makers*. Originally planned as a 4 pager, I couldn't help myself and did 6! I hope you like it... The game's out late September!



MISCHIEF MAKERS™



While some may consider the appearance of a rendered 2D side-scroller on a system born to do 3D disappointing, I find it encouraging and believe that the Nintendo 64 was equally bred for 2D. You'll not see 2D anywhere that even remotely resembles what's in store for you here.

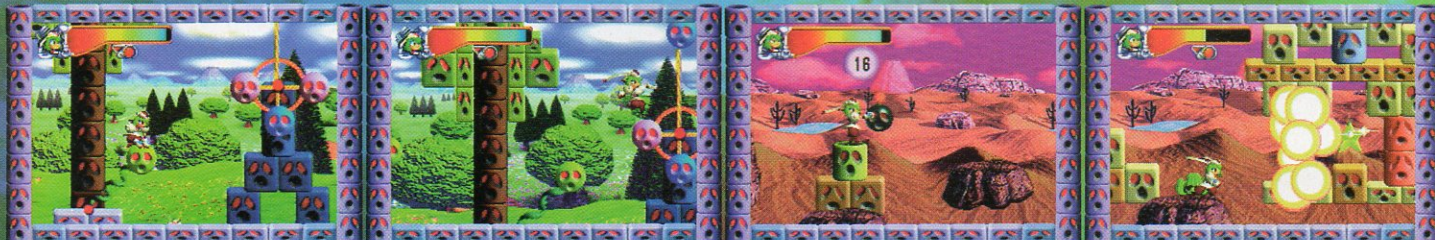
Not since *Mario* has the true 3D magic returned to the Nintendo 64, and now Treasure's *Mischief Makers* will set the stage for 2D games as *Mario* did for 3D. Nintendo's done a good thing, quickly converting *Yuke Yuke Troublemakers* (the Japanese title) for an American release, showing their users they're willing to back any quality product and even roll the dice on an obviously deeply Japanese game. Of course, it doesn't hurt that it's absolutely groundbreaking... There's a lesson for Sega in here somewhere...



KIDNAPPED! THE NENDOROS HAVE KIDNAPPED MARINA'S MASTER! ONLY A HYPER-POWER BEAUTIFUL ROBO MAID CAN SAVE HIM NOW!

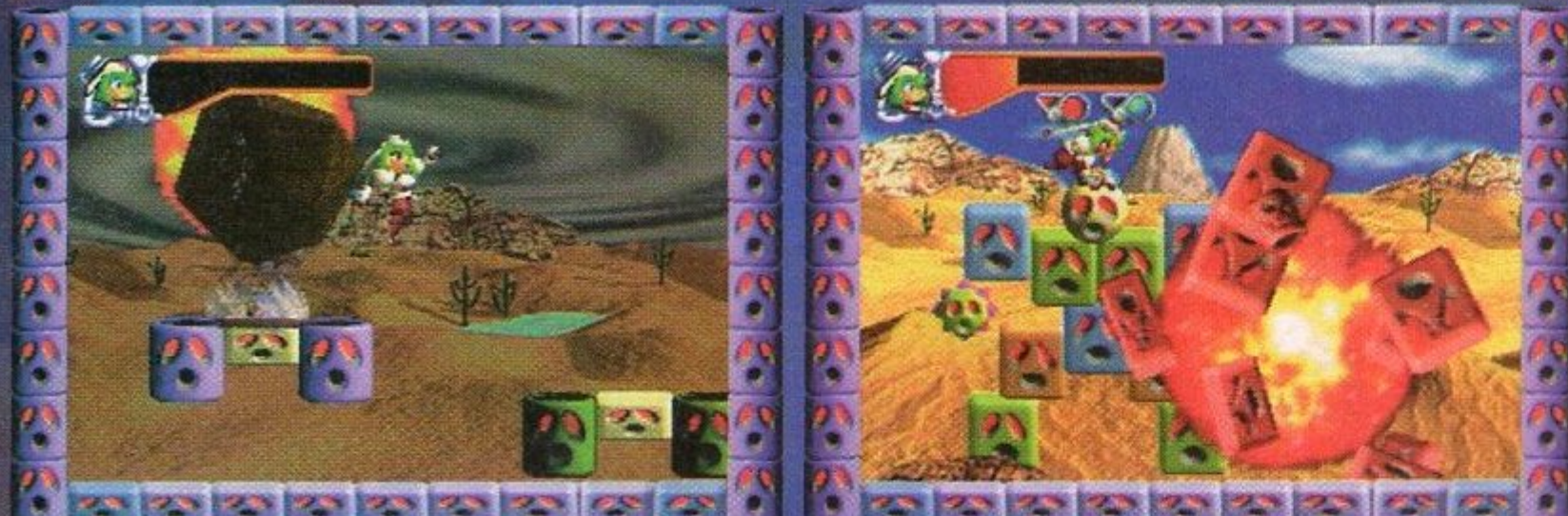


THE ENTIRE FIRST WORLD IS SET UP LIKE A HUGE TRAINING FACILITY. HERE YOU'LL SYSTEMATICALLY LEARN THE INS AND OUTS OF MM'S AMAZING PLAY MECHANICS. PICTURED ABOVE, MARINA PULLS OFF A SUPER JUMP BY DASHING INTO AN UPWARD LEAP, FOLLOWED BY A THRUST.



MASTERING THE SPRINGS IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. GET USED TO CARRYING AROUND TICKING TIME BOMBS AS WELL. MM IS 100% SKILLS BASED.





THINK BACK TO WHAT YOU WERE PLAYING A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO AND REALLY *LOOK* AT THESE SHOTS



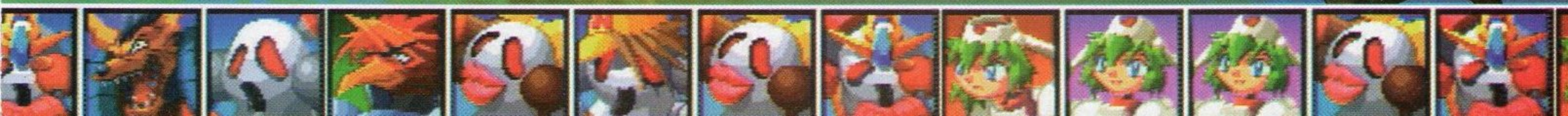
GESSLER'S THE FIRST NOTABLE BOSS MARINA ENCOUNTERS AND HE DOESN'T EVEN TIP THE SCALES COMPARED TO WHAT'S AHEAD... LOOK CLOSELY AT THE BOTTOM RIGHT SHOT... IN HIS MOUTH. YIPE!

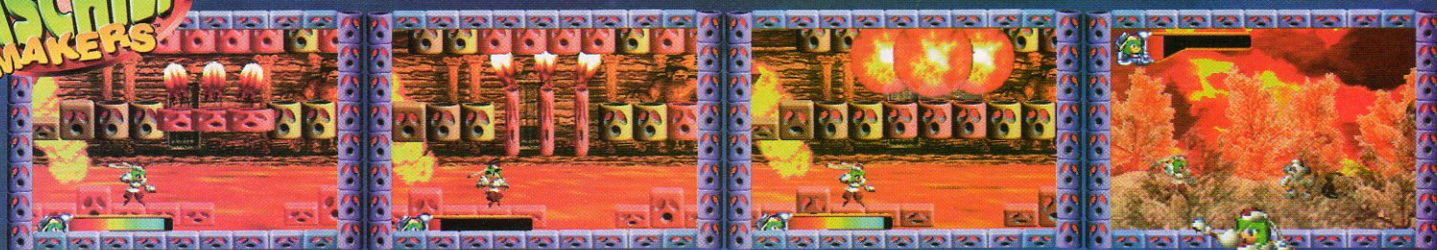


downright elusive), and then re-enter and attempt an "A" grade. In some levels, that means completion in a record amount of time, in others performing a certain task, and in others, both. But in the boss stages it means extermination without ever taking a single hit! *Mama mia* indeed! Simply put, the bosses in *Mischief Makers* are among the most dramatic (and

tedious journey. Once in a while, however, action and puzzle/strategy elements come together amicably, creating something truly memorable. Such can be said of *Super Metroid* and the upcoming *Castlevania X*.

But even more so than *Metroid* or *Castlevania* (both deep excursions in the play mechanics dept.), *Mischief Makers* is a festival of play mechanics like no other, accept for maybe *Dynamite Headdy*, *Mischief's* closest relative. Every button on the controller must be committed to memory like never before. When you're done with *Mischief Makers* you'll be able to smack those little yellow pellets (any of 'em) in a millisecond. In fact, how much you like *Mischief Makers* may depend on how good at games you are. Rookies will undoubtedly have a tough go of it and often become frustrated, while intermediates will find a paramount challenge, and seasoned pros will think they've crossed over. Why? Because completing a world is only the beginning. To truly beat each stage you must first capture the yellow diamond (which is often cleverly hidden and sometimes





I COULDN'T RESIST SHOWING THESE FIERY FLUTES (FROM WORLD TWO) AS THEY CONTORT. ON TO WORLD THREE THEN...



TIME TO MIX IT UP... PICK UP THE POT, FILL IT WITH INGREDIENTS AND SHAKE IT BABY. SKIERS TOSS IN FIRECRACKERS. FOUR MAKES A BOMB.



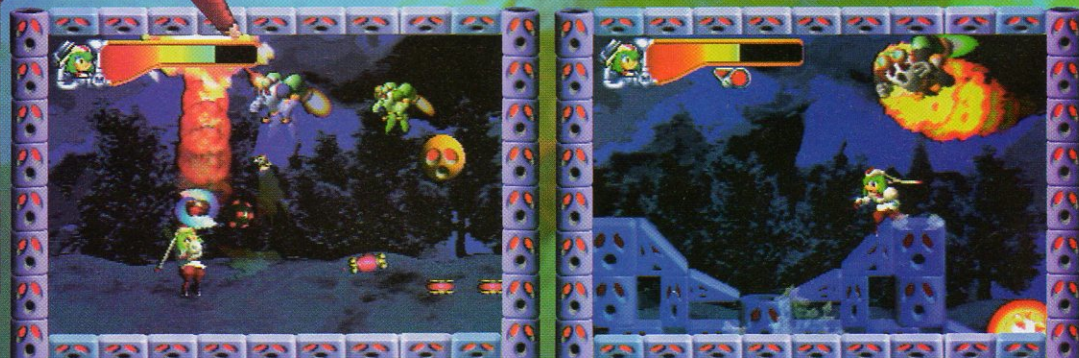
nasty) I've ever encountered, and also, the most enjoyable. If there's one thing Treasure really gets off on, it's constructing awesome bosses. These give new meaning to the term *multi-jointed*, and are presented (for the first time) in widescreen format. You zoom so far out and are drawn so close, within the same battle, that it's the only way they could fit them into a conventional screen. And therein lies the keen diversity that marks so many of Treasure's games. One minute you're frolicking in a thinking man's fantasy zone, performing any of a dozen or more tasks



(such as collecting ingredients to mix potions, recovering lost children, or crushing opponents atop a giant robot) amidst songs that often exude a *Wizard of Oz*-like gaiety, and the next you're under fierce attack, literally running (and often flying) for your life. At one point, Marina finds herself in a sort of alien track-and-field event, as clever a diversion there's been since Black's Crazy Dice Maze in *Gunstar Heroes*. From ver-

tical freefalls to vast caverns, from erector set-like frameworks to intricate rotating mazes, you'll not find gameplay this deep on the Nintendo 64 or anywhere else in the next generation playground.

Marina herself, one of Treasure's oddest characters, is distinctly female... and that's about it. She animates flawlessly, controls like a dream and believe or not (even though she appears to have no feet) really grew on me. Marina is guided via the standard D-pad, rather than the wand, which, given the intensity of the action, I deem a wise decision. The

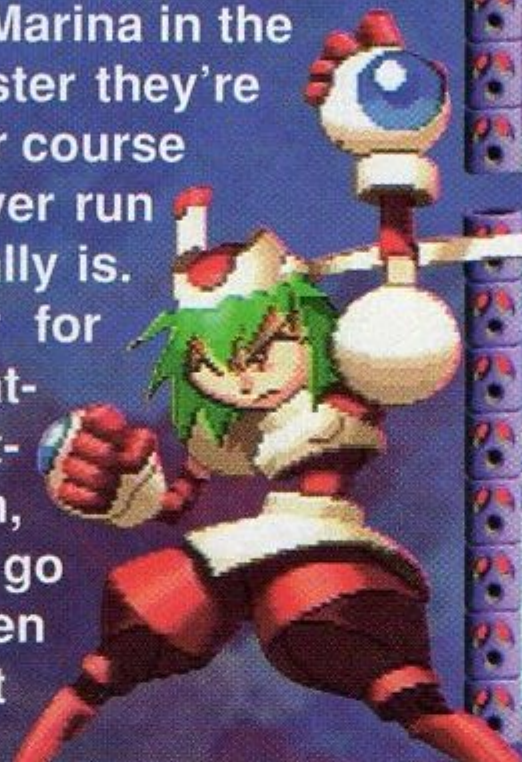


AIM FOR THE STARS!



DID I MENTION PLAY MECHANICS? ABOVE, MARINA WRANGLES A MISSILE AND GOES BALLISTIC. DON'T YOU JUST LOVE 2D? I MEAN, YA GOTTA.

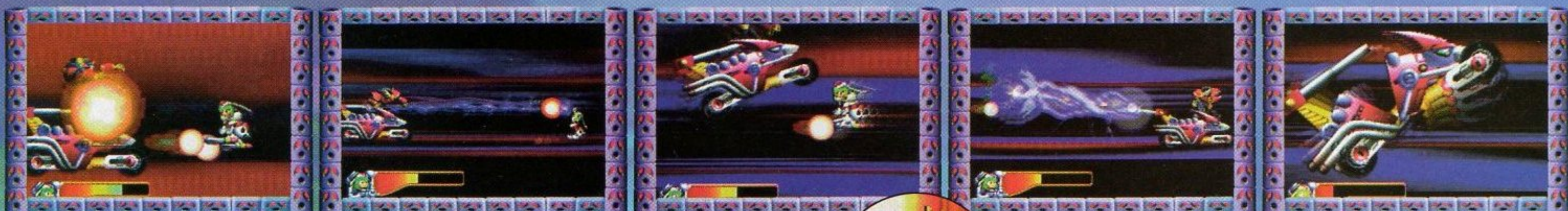
A button controls jumping (hold up for more height) and the running dash (down and A twice) along with many variations. For example down-down, A, up-and-A will produce a quick high jump which can then be built on with the thrusters for added propulsion in any direction. Marina's thrusters are controlled with the C cluster directional pellets and boost Marina in the likewise direction. The more and faster they're pressed, the longer she can retain her course in any given direction. Thrusters never run out, as it should always be—and finally is. The pellets also serve as a mixer for Marina's potions when tapped repeatedly holding the spell pot. The B button is used for picking up, hangin'-on, tossing, catching and launching. I'd go into how each comes into play, but then we'd be looking at a novel. Let's just



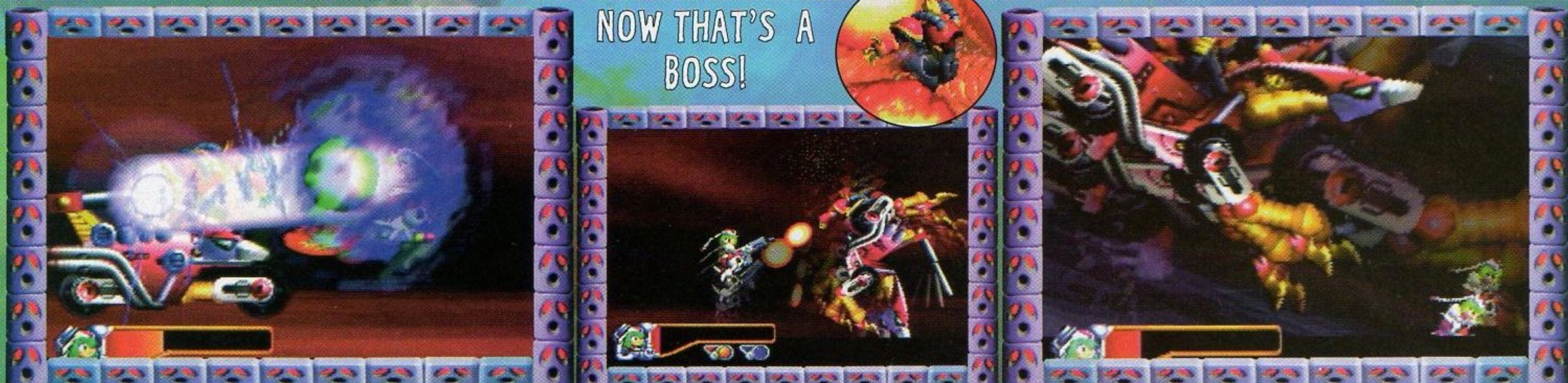
say that innovation and fun are high priorities. The control, as far as response and execution, is perfect. It takes a while to dial in, but once you do, you could fill days with solid gameplay.

Graphically, although 2D, *Mischief Makers* is bursting at the screws with special effects. Not the usual array either, but a whole new batch with that distinct Treasure look.

NENDOROS ARE SPORTY LI'L FREAKS! BEAT THE CAT AND RIDE HIM INTO BATTLE!



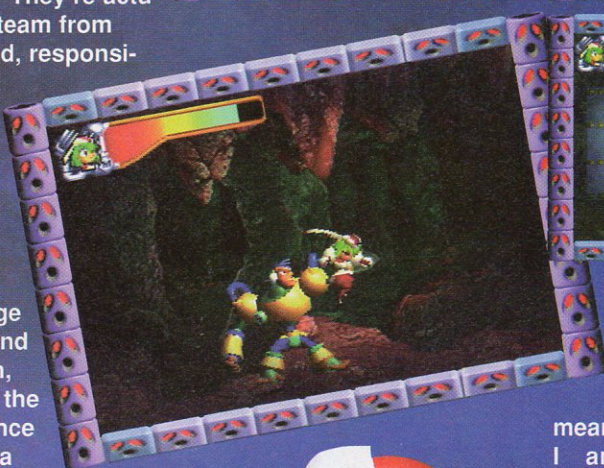
NOW THAT'S A BOSS!



For those unfamiliar with

Treasure, think of them in relation to Sega as you would Rare to Nintendo (well, until now at least, they seem to be spreading their wings). They're actually a rogue team from Konami of old, responsible for such joyful relics as *Castlevania IV*, *Bloodlines* and *Axelay*. They have a fetish for huge explosions and frantic action, and they are the best at it. Once you've seen a Treasure game, you can spot one a mile away.

That look has translated beautifully onto the willing Nintendo 64 with multiple layers of parallax, seamlessly line scrolling floors, amazing zooming



MISTY CAVES MAKE WAY TO POISONOUS FROGS AND LOST SOULS. THESE SPOOKY DEPTHS ARE NOT EASILY LEFT BEHIND...

and rotation fx, and show-stopping pyrotechnics—I mean downright inspired. I am in awe of the Nintendo 64's 2D capabilities in the hands of Treasure's maestros.

The intermissions are amaz-

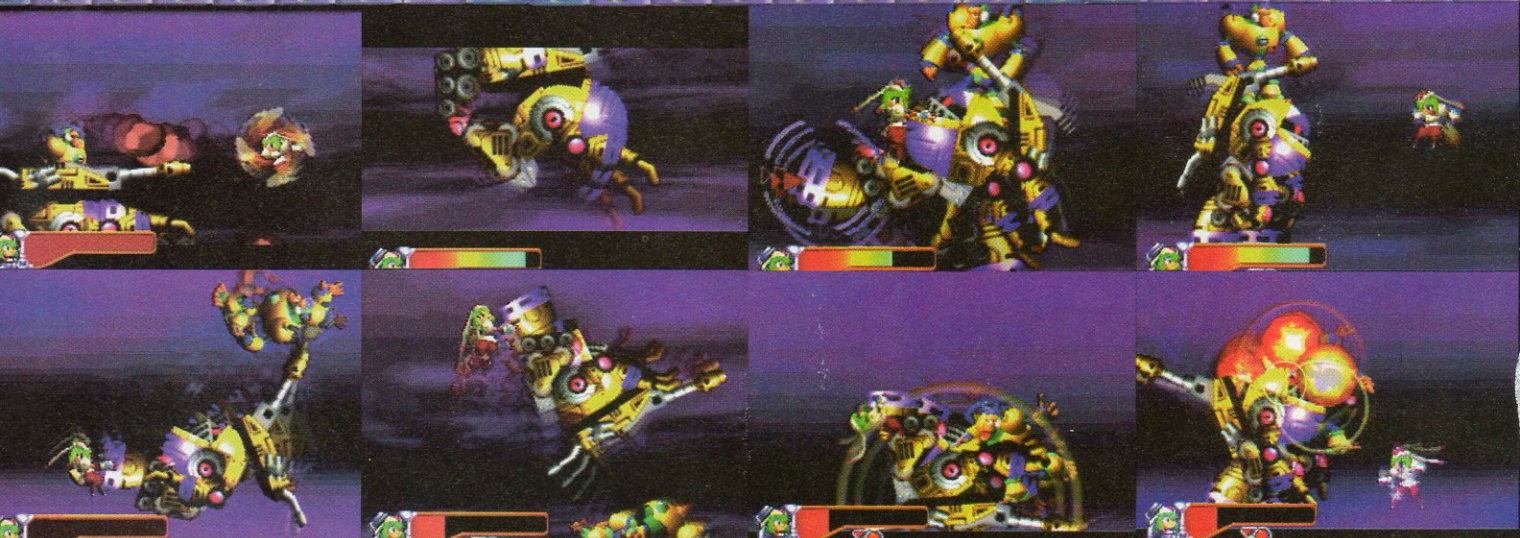


ing too, for a cartridge game, and the art is second none. Visually, *Mischief Makers* will dazzle even the most hard-core 3D fan... at least the ones with vivid imagination and a taste for the surreal rather than the real.

Now I'm going to talk about the oh-so-Mischievous music. Bear in



BELOW, THE NINTENDO 64 REALLY FLEXES ITS MUSCLE. YOU JUST CAN'T FIND ACTION LIKE THIS ANYWHERE ELSE.



mind that I adore frolic-
some Japanese sound-
tracks that successfully
piggyback their on-screen
antics, and find offensive
detached background
music, like so many token
guitar riffs that pound away
in too many of today's
games. When I want music
for car or home I hit Tower
but when I'm play-

ing a
game, I
want to be
absorbed
into whatev-
er it is I'm
doing, which
in this case is
lunatic (I'm
wearing my
shame like a
neon sign, aren't
I). I really like
Treasure's
soundtrack, so sue me. It's
among the best I've heard
on the system, so commit
me. I make a living playing
video games, both oars are
seldom in the water.

Before I go, I do have one
request. For preview's
sake, I used the
previously-
released
Japanese version
(Yuke Yuke
Troublemakers).
And while I do real-
ize Marina's voice is
a super squeaky
import, I beg that
Nintendo see their
way clear to keeping
it intact, as Treasure
intended. As funny
as this sounds,
changing it could
have a major effect
on the game. And
with that, I bid thee
farewell. See ya
here next month
with a little Konami
magic... E

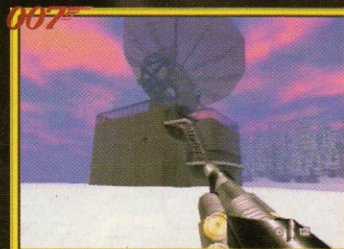
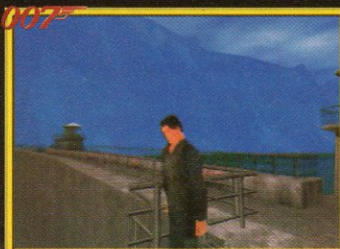
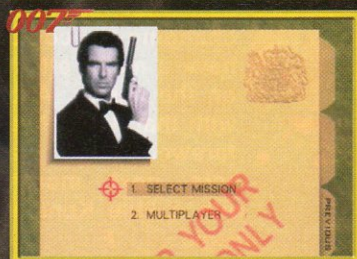
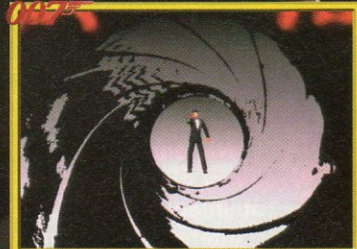
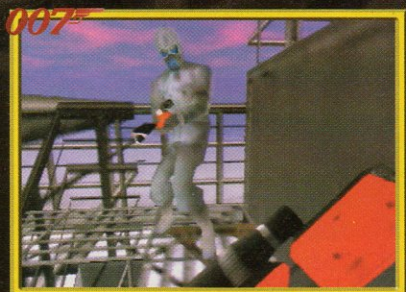
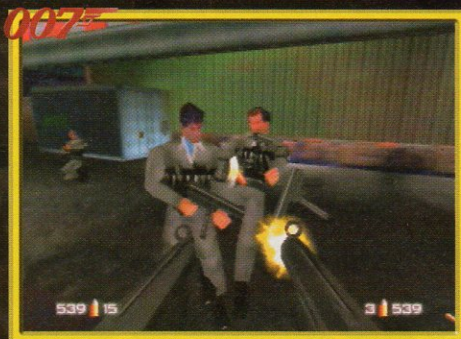
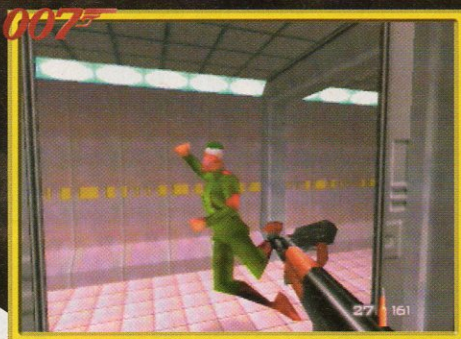
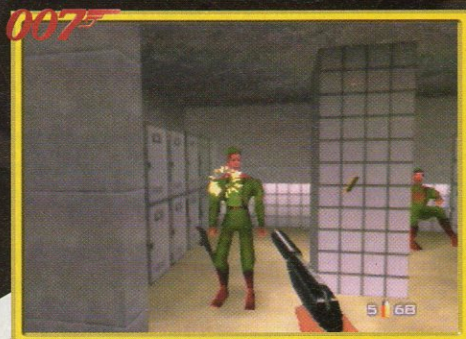


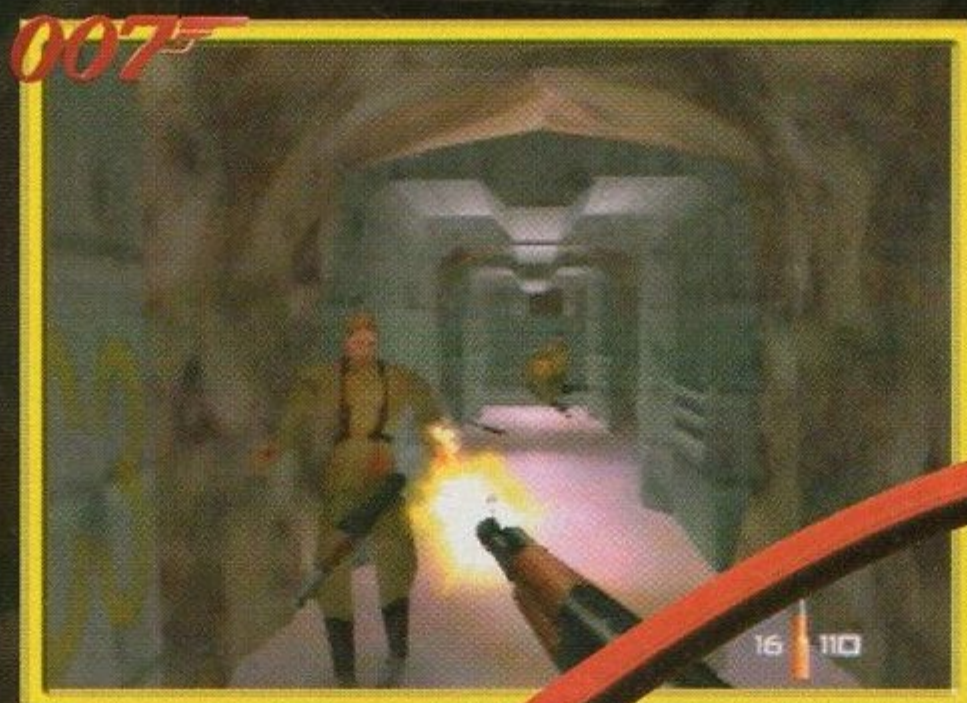


GOLD

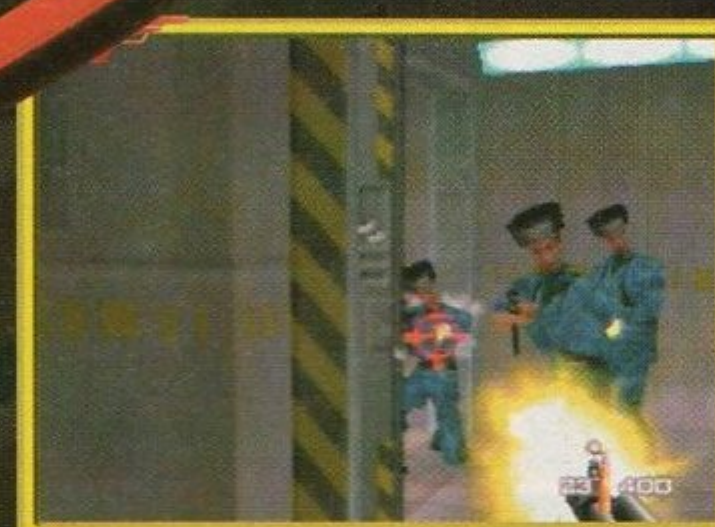
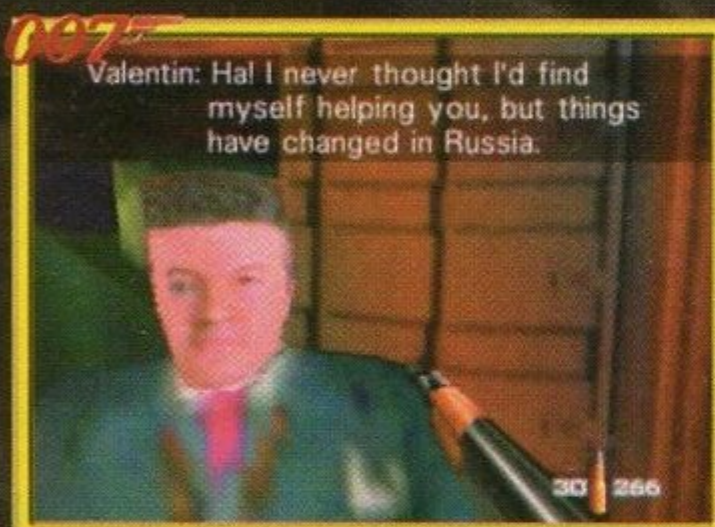
In a shocking turn of events, the good folks up at the treehouse stopped throwing acorns at each other and actually came to visit us lowly ground-dwelling mortals over here at GameFan with a definite, real, honest-to-goodness... Nintendo 64 release!! Under strict armed guard, a shiny new Nintendo 64 console (avec steel cage to prevent cartridge tampering) was presented for us to play on, and we were able to briefly partake in an all-new Nintendo 64 title for a good couple of hours before it was sealed up and taken from us. Our picture usage was inspected (no more than 30 screenshots were allowed to be taken—on pain of death, I may add), and then the shadowy 'Nintendo' operative left... flitting into the night. Some of the GameFan crew thought that those 'kerazy' Nintendo people were perhaps a little too paranoid until we realized... "Hey wait a minute... all this totally needless and secretive behavior is all part of the pre-launch plan for GoldenEye! That's why we had to sign parts of our anatomy away on all those forms! They're pretending to be like James Bond!" Oh how we laughed! Phew, good one, Nintendo. You had us all thinking you hated us for a minute...

Moving swiftly onto the game itself... Some of the older readers of this esteemed tome may remember a James Bond movie that graced our screens in the dim and distant past. Pierce Brosnan, Sean Bean, Robbie Coltrane and that woman with the muscly thighs all starred in an action-packed romp into the world of the no-nonsense, martini-quaffing, bird-shagging and quintessentially 'English' secret agent. And now... many moons later, we have the actual game to play, courtesy of Rare (the real muscle behind Nintendo's continued success). When I visited Rare last Christmas, they showed me the game in progress, and I knew then just how cool it was going to be. And now, after my (admittedly) laughably short period of playing GoldenEye, I





GOLDENEYE



can report that game-starved owners now have a release to not only gnaw at, but to chow down on completely. For you see, GoldenEye is a veritable banquet of video-gaming joy...

You'll turn on your Nintendo, and first be greeted by a really cool intro title looking exactly like a British film board classification screen (but with four players instead of the movie rating), but next comes the introduction I know you've been waiting for... a black-suited English gent striding into view and turning to shoot as the screen drips blood. This time, Rare has gone for

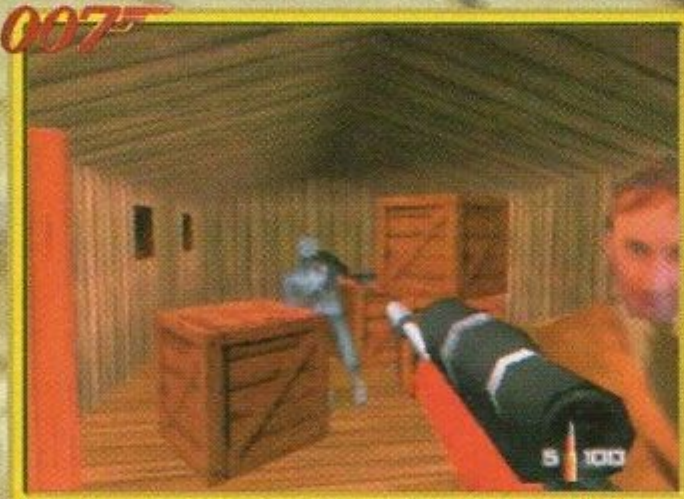
a rock guitar accompaniment of the infamous James Bond theme, and it adds a great air of amused excitement as you eagerly wait for your first mission and briefing from Central Intelligence. After choosing your difficulty level, adjusting and generally fiddling with the general options (stereo or mono sound, widescreen, 16:9 ratio view or normal view, et cetera), your special assignment begins in the crumpet capital of London; Westminster. Time for tea and biscuits with 'M'...

You're treated to a series of top-secret 'file' screens, and after tossing your trilby onto a hatstand and flustering Miss Money Penny, Bond chats away to 'M' and other assorted top brass. The text dialogue is hilarious; the chaps over at Rare have some demon writers, resulting in conversations that are not only witty, sarcastic and dry, but totally in character with the Bond films. "Top wheeze, 007! Oh, do be careful of that plastic explosive hidden in that pen.." You get the idea. If only these were CG cut-scenes with voices of actual plum-in-mouth actors, this would be a perfect scene setting, but alas, that cunning cartridge format means scrolling text and still pictures of paper files and photographs. Good job the actual game plays so well...

Once you begin your operation, a roving camera circles a pretty good polygon likeness of Pierce Brosnan (I say 'pretty good' because the texture-mapped polygon model shows Bond's features but doesn't seem to include his eyes, resulting in a rather scary 'mannequin-esque' secret service agent), moving through his head and into a Turok-style first person perspective view. Then, you creep around a metal bunker, peep your head around the corner and view the fabulous 3D world that Rare has created. The entire GoldenEye experience is unbelievably slick, and the gouraud-shaded, mip-mapped (not to mention anti-aliased), 3D texture-mapped locales are faithfully replicated from the film for your continued espionage-based enjoyment.

(continued)

"CAN YOU SHEE THE BEASHT?"



"Yesh, thanksh to my shpecial targeting lock shupplied by 'Q'!" Many of the weapons present in GoldenEye have special targeting locks, enabling precise and deadly shooting of enemy forces without giving your position away. The screen zooms up in a binocular fashion, enabling Bond to plant a carefully aimed sniper bullet between the eyes (or indeed, the legs) of a roving enemy soldier, MDK-style. The results are beautifully sick to behold; the guy collapses in agony while the rest of the guards continue their watch! Pure, adrenaline-pumping fun and the best addition to the 3D corridor genre since polygon enemies.



DEVELOPER - RARE

PUBLISHER - NINTENDO

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1-4

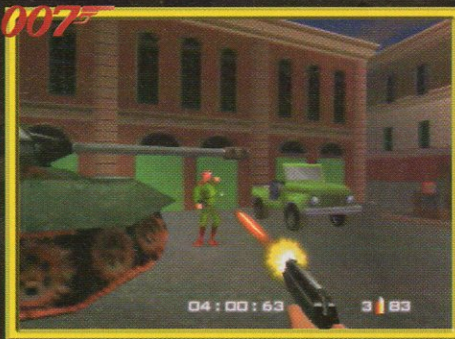
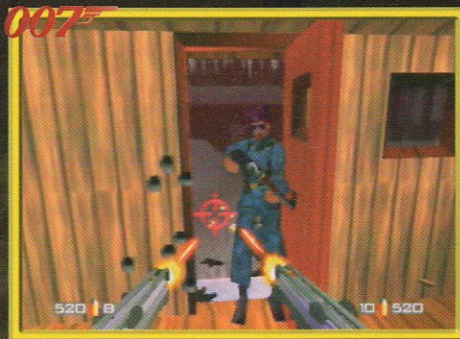
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - AUGUST

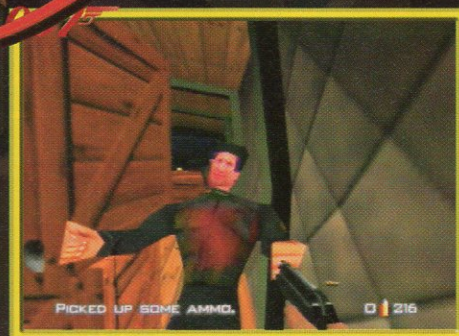
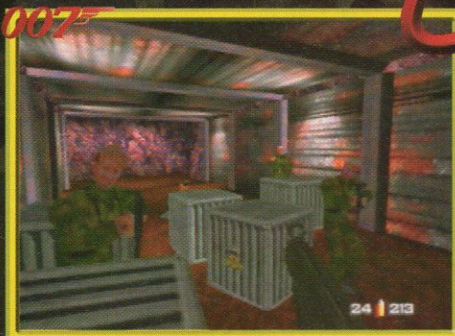


CHIEF HAMBLETON

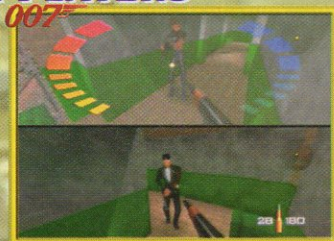
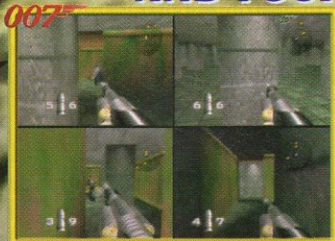
Ah, Mr. Bond. We've been expecting you... for the last eight months.



GOLDENEYE



"THE MAN WITH THREE NIPPLES, AND FOUR PLAYERS"



Unfortunately, Scaramanga isn't initially available as a cool character to control in the (up to) four-player mode, but most of the GoldenEye cast is. Choose your favorite villain or hero and then depart into a Doom-style maze of corridors where huge weapons are picked up and then shot into opposing players' craniums. There's not quite the feeling of intense fear that a link-up PlayStation Doom generates (and you'll have to be sat at a retina-burning distance from your television due to the four tiny screens), but once you get used to the slightly slower gameplay and lack of detail, you can have a relatively fun time creeping around a laboratory on the hunt for enemy agents...

As you tip-toe past the watchtowers (or snow-capped hills, crumbling parkland or rumbling metal train, depending on the level), bringing your Walther PPK to bear on any guards who challenge you, you're struck by numerous sensations. Firstly, that the 'stealth' music grumbling away in the background (mostly variations of the Bond theme) is the perfect accompaniment to your exploits. Secondly, that there's little in the way of fog. Interior structures never get hazy, and the outside locales are all massive and truly believable. Thirdly, when you pepper walls with gun-shots, the bullet holes stay in there. The weapons are real... astoundingly detailed just like those in Turok. Fourthly, the enemies, although very angular, move convincingly and act with an eerie sense of artificial intelligence. Plus, each of those textured faces is a treehouse employee or Rare gardener, giving you an even greater sense of enjoyment as you plant a sniper bullet in their backs...

Talking of bullets, you're able to gun down foes in numerous

ways, and the death throes of each gibbering victim varies depending on the quality of your shot. Sneak up behind a guard, and fire a bullet point-blank in the back of the head, and your victim crumples instantly (but without the showers of blood that rocked Turok's world). Shoot him in the leg, and he hobbles, falling to the side, before regaining his composure and receiving another shot to the torso... cue death gurgle! Apparently, there's over 200 different death animations in here, so those sick-minded gamers with an evil glint in their eye are sure to get their body-count's worth here. However, simply wandering around a level gunning down enemies like swine isn't the way to play this game. Ruthless cunning and strategy is the order of the day here...

Via your watch, you're able to check on mission objectives, which vary in every level... you'll be hunting down computer cards, checking consoles for information, using that cool 007 camera to take sneaky blueprint shots and generally acting like a silent and deadly assassin. Choose the 'wade in and spray with automatic gunfire' option and you'll be brought down... hard. That's not to say there isn't a wonderful array of killing devices at your disposal (Uzis, grenades, sub-machine guns and John Woo-tastic double gun firing), it's just that GoldenEye is a whole lot more than Turok-style gameplay. Of the 24 levels, each has many different objectives, and playing the game on the difficult settings enables countless sub-missions, leading to a very fraught but undeniably enjoyable video game title, refreshing, very intense, and unequivocally recommended.

I'm very annoyed that I had to base this review on only four hours of play under Nintendo molly-coddling (this not only does Rare a disservice, but also you, the reader) and thus was not able to get to grips properly with the game. From my brief playtest, however, I found a totally enthralling trek full of spectacular effects, needless (but extremely cool) additional touches and an involving plot which shows just how spectacularly talented Rare programmers can be; and this results in a slick, extremely presentable and damnably playable release. This exploits the Nintendo 64 to the full, drags you into the world of Bond and shackles you there, providing candy-eye at a retina-popping rate, and a new and stealthy gameplay compared to previous romps in the first-person perspective. Frightful PR, Nintendo. Astounding game, Rare. **CH**



MACE

The Dark Age

Let's face it: the N64 isn't exactly overflowing with quality 3D beat-'em-ups right now. It's either *War Gods* or *Dark Rift*, and even though *Dark Rift* is decent, it still can't hold a candle to the likes of *Fighters MegaMix*, *Soul Blade* or *Tekken 2*. The N64 is in desperate need of a decent polygonal fighting game and Midway believes they have the answer: *Mace*!

Mace: The Dark Age is a port of Atari's 3DFX Voodoo Graphics-driven arcade game released earlier this year. Atari spent over two years trying to make *Mace* stand out from other fighting games, and to their



credit the game exhibits a myriad of cool gameplay features that, while hardly original, certainly add to the experience. *Fighting Vipers*-style 3D side stepping,

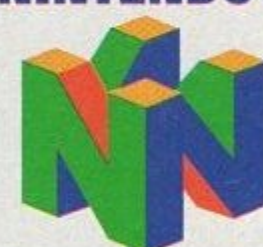
VF3-style multi-level playfields (including steps, ledges and ramps), *Dead or Alive*-style hazardous arena boundaries (lava, quicksand, fire, spikes, and deep water) and a unique array of interactive and throwable objects such as tents, urns and tables. All of the arenas are fully 3D and utilizing the terrain to your tactical advantage is a crucial strategy.

The home versions of *Mace* will feature a whopping 20 characters: ten instantly selectable warriors (including a knight, a ninja, a blind monk, a viking and a belly dancer!), a sub boss (a gargoyle named Grendal), a main boss (the rogue demon Asmodius), and seven hidden characters, including a war robot and a chicken! Each character has their own weapon, fighting style and gruesome fatality to finish the enemy. Well, this is Midway after all.

Mace plays a lot like *Soul Blade* (four buttons and back to block) with similar style combos, counters and special move commands. Due to the polygon intensive 3D arenas and detailed characters, the arcade ran at 30 fps (instead of the genre-standard 60), but Midway is confident that they can replicate this frame rate on the home consoles. If they can, and the final version plays as well as Atari claims, N64 owners may finally have a 3D beat-'em-up worth fighting for. **K**

P
PREVIEW

NINTENDO 64



DEVELOPER - MIDWAY

PUBLISHER - MIDWAY

FORMAT - CART

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



KNIGHTMARE

The arcade 'smash' hobbles home!



I've said it before and I'll say it again: *Duke Nukem 3D* is still the best single player corridor experience currently available for the PC. It's patent mixture of non-stop action, unprecedented-

levels: 3 all new Dukematch-specific levels designed by Eurocom, and 29 regular levels taken from both the original *Duke Nukem 3D* and 3D Realms' official level add-on: the *Plutonium Pack*. In addition, Eurocom has altered the design



ed level interaction and seedy humor has made it a smash hit all around the world (even Japan!) and this November it's coming to an N64 near you.

Duke Nukem 64 isn't just a straightforward port of *Duke Nukem 3D*. Oh no. British developers Eurocom are huge *Duke Nukem 3D* fans, and have taken this opportunity to add (and alter) a number of exclusive features specific to the N64 version. If you're a *Duke* fan, you might want to sit down before you read this...

First of all, *Duke Nukem 64* will feature a whopping 32

of the original *Duke Nukem 3D* levels to include new areas, some of which feature artwork from the *Plutonium Pack*. A good example of this is the new convenience mart hidden on the very first level—an excellent surprise for veteran *Duke* players! The protector drone, the alien from the *Plutonium Pack*, has also been included. Secondly, Eurocom has given *Duke*'s arsenal a thorough

DUKE NUKEM

re-working. The 'ripper' chaingun has been replaced by twin John Woo-style sub-machine guns, the Devastator has been replaced by a Grenade Launcher, and the Freeze ray has been replaced with... the Plasma Cannon—a chargeable weapon capable of vaporizing an individual or an entire room, depending on how long you hold the trigger. Purists may lament the loss of these weapons, but for my money the new ones are even better. In addition, certain weapons can now utilize *Turok*-style ammo power-ups, such as dum-dum bullets (pistol), explosive rounds (shotgun) and heat-seeking mis-



siles (rocket launcher).

The demo cartridge we received shows the game in a near complete state, with only a few graphical glitches left to be ironed out. Control is switchable between *Turok*-style joystick looking (YES!) and ordinary joystick movement, with the d-pad being used simultaneously to select weapons and items. Eurocom has also informed us that the final version will feature even higher frame rates and offer Rumble Pack support! If all goes as planned, *Duke Nukem 64* could end up making even PC owners jealous! **K**



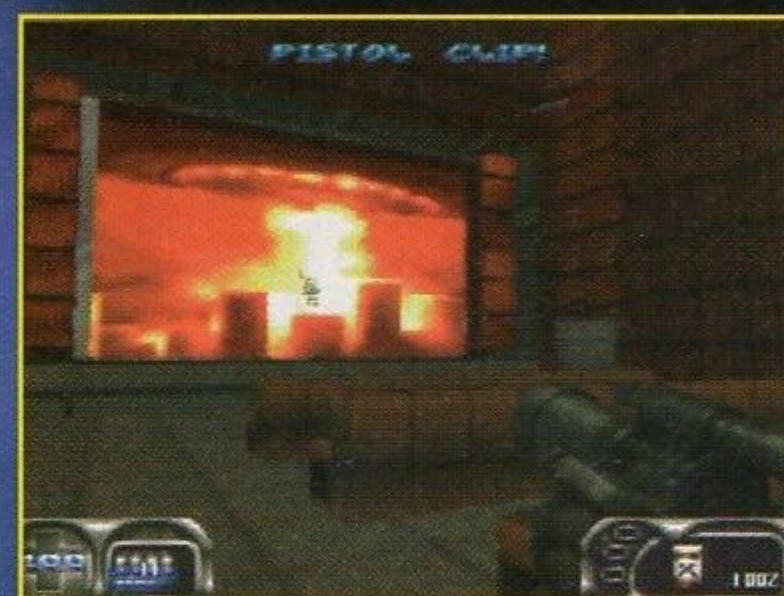
MULTIPLAYER

Duke Nukem 64 includes a four player split screen Dukematch mode, a la *Hexen*. This time however, players have the option to include up to three computer-controlled Duke-Bots to make up the numbers. The three new multiplayer-specific levels (a pirate ship, a haunted castle and a silo) have been designed deliberately simple to keep the frame rate high, even with four players. Co-op mode is also available.



CENSORSHIP?

Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the water... Nintendo strikes again! *Duke Nukem 64* will have NO profanity, NO religious references (the church from *Death Row* has gone), NO nudity, NO pornographic references (the movie theater on level one now plays a sci-fi movie, and the adult book shop is now a gun store) and NO references to alcohol (all bars seem to have gone). The theme of 'babes' seems to have been replaced by the theme of 'guns.' So heed Nintendo's message: sex is bad, guns and violence are good!



P
PREVIEW

NINTENDO 64
NN

DEVELOPER - EUROCOM

PUBLISHER - GT INTERACTIVE

FORMAT - 64 MEG CART

OF PLAYERS - 1-4

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



KNIGHTMARE
Hail to the nudity-free king, Baby!

AUSTRALIA



BRAZIL



ARGENTINA



SAN MARINO



EUROPE



BELGIUM



SPAIN



BRITAIN



GERMANY



JAPAN



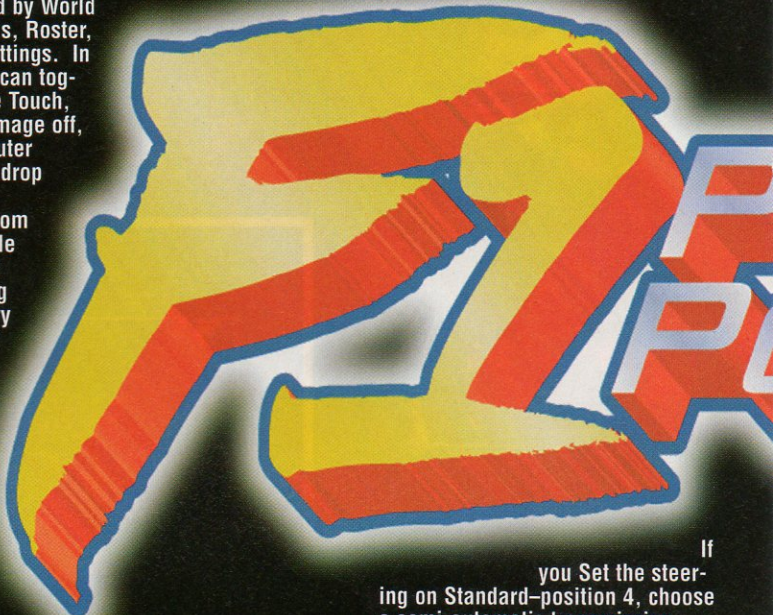
options in the smooth and easy to manage interface. You're greeted by World Grand Prix, Battle, Time Trials, Roster, Record, and Configuration settings. In the configuration setting you can toggle Computer Level, Machine Touch, Machine Damage (rate of damage off, easy, normal or hard), Computer Accident, (rate at which cars drop out, real, or off) Radio Communication (messages from the pits-on or off) and Pak File (Auto or Manual save). Once you're in the World GP setting more options await, like every aspect of car tuning known to man (made easy), Free Run, Qualify, Race, and Data Save. Basically, this game's loaded with options folks, so kick the tires as long as you like.

And since the game carries a full F1A license, team/driver selection (based on the '96 season) is vast. My driver? From team Tyrrell, Japan, U. Katayama, born 5/23, 1963. The guy's got his act together.

MONACO



Aside from Mario Kart, which I expected to be first rate, I haven't been all that enthralled with an N64 racer. Although devoid of pixels, the ultra-blurriness of them, coupled with the prominent first stage smog alert, has kept me pretty much glued to my trusty PS racers. *F1 Pole Position 64* (formerly Japan's *Human Grand Prix*), however, has caused me to have a sudden change of heart. Due in no small part to its graphic appeal but mostly to its adherence to the sport (while providing days and even weeks of intense racing), *F1* does racing right... really, really right. From the outset there's a surplus of available



If you Set the steering on Standard-position 4, choose a semi-automatic transmission, manual brakes set on 6, suspension set on 5, and down force on selection 7, you're racing my current car (Katayama chokes a couple and I'm outta' here).

Once you get rollin' in *F1PP* it's wise to remember you're playing a simulation. Arcade controls won't work and power-slides always result in crashes. Enter turns wide (aiming for the inside axis) and don't be afraid to decelerate and/or use the brakes. These simple tactics will substantially trim the learning curve.

You can control the action with either the analog wand or the D-pad (in several available configurations) but I advise sticking with the analog, unless of course you live to tinker. In that case you

R REVIEW

NINTENDO 64
NN

DEVELOPER - HUMAN

PUBLISHER - UBI

FORMAT - 64 MEG CART

OF PLAYERS - 1+

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - EARLY OCTOBER



E. STORM
A never-ending F1 battle awaits those with the skills to embrace it.



AN F1 SIMULATION WITH NO EQUAL? YOU BE THE JUDGE.

should be in heaven. Days will go by and you'll still be tweaking your car. The control is perfect as you basically make your own.

Visually, *F1PP* has an unusually crisp, clear look for an N64 game, with terrain and trackside features so real you almost feel the action. Each specific motor revs its own tune, and the weather actually changes during each event!

The import version had a bad dose of

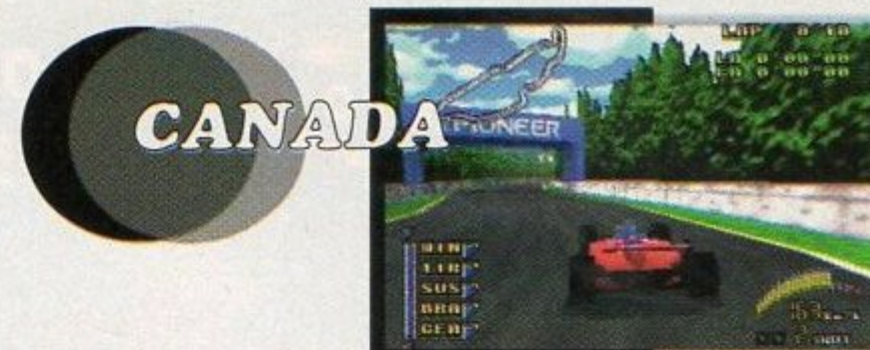
redraw which has been addressed in the conversion. Not so much as to slow down the game, but it is noticeably improved. UBI wisely chose game speed over zero re-draw, a good decision given the fact you'll probably never notice it in a race.

The music between races is cool, and (I can't thank Human enough) there's none *during* each race. I can't tell you how annoyed I've been with

F1 simulators that feature in car soundtracks. When I'm dialed into a tight battle, the only thing I want to hear are engines, tires and my pit crew.

As an F1 simulation I'm at a loss looking for flies in *Pole Position's* ointment. If you're even the least bit interested in realistic racing than I recommend it highly, but in the instance you're absolutely on the lookout for a quality F1 racing experience—well then I urge you to act immediately when *Pole Position* arrives in early October. **ES**

POLE POSITION 64



CANADA



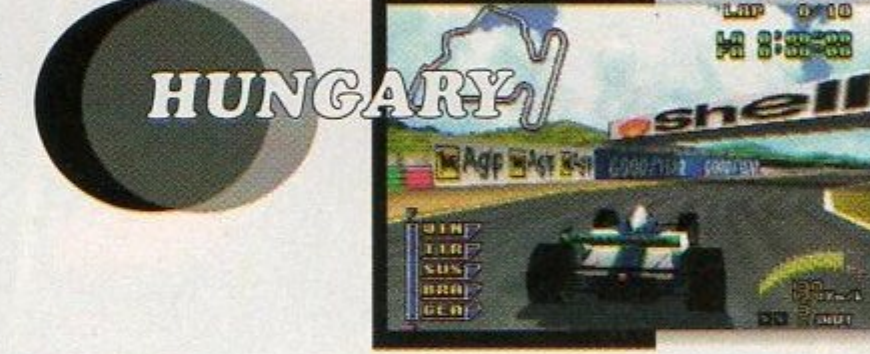
FRANCE



ITALY



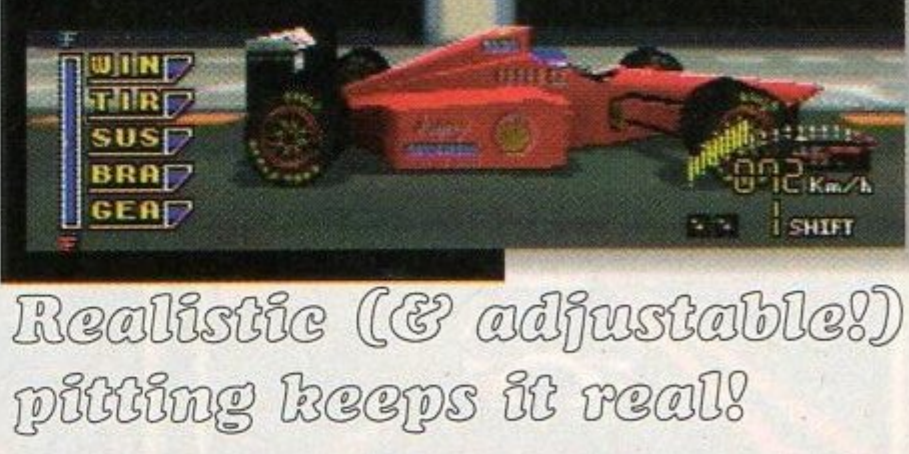
PORTUGAL



HUNGARY



Six selectable cameras insure the proper view.



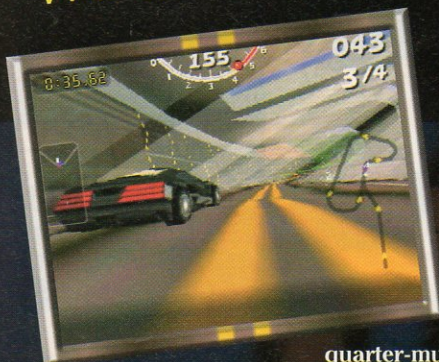
Realistic (& adjustable!) pitting keeps it real!





REV IT UP, PEOPLE!
WE'RE GOIN' FLYING!

SAN FRANCISCO RUSH EXTREME RACING



The games company formerly known as Williams is finally staking a claim to the arcade racing throne. Previously, Midway (the staunchest third party supporter of the Nintendo 64) stunned gamers across the globe for all the wrong reasons with that leprous offspring of the racing genre; *Cruis'n USA*. I hated it with a head-twitching passion. But after playing the

quarter-munching *San Francisco Rush* in the arcade and being

told that the Nintendo 64 version would be "exact," I was prepared to forgive Midway for their previous *Cruis'n* antics. And after three days of *San Francisco Rush* on the Nintendo 64? I'm a changed man, brothers and sisters, ready to preach the Midway gospel to all those that will listen. For you see, dear reader, *San Francisco Rush* is a triumph over the diabolical *Cruis'n USA*, a saintly title diverse and far from previous Midway racers and a godly title worthy of the great Miyamoto himself! Somebody say "Amen!!"

Knightmare: "Amen!!"

Thank you brother Nightmare!

Right then, for those arcade-meisters who've played *Rush* before, I can tell you to prepare for pantaloons-besmirching delight when the home version hits. The graphics are exact (in every respect) to the arcade. Silky 60fps action which never slows down, and all the mad steering you'd expect from the Atari *Hard Drivin'* team which helped out on this release. In fact, if you plugged in the arcade and Nintendo 64 versions of *Rush* side-by-side, you'd only notice two discrepancies at the moment (and one will definitely be fixed by the time we receive a fully reviewable copy). Firstly, there's a serious lack of cars; four to be exact. Now I don't know about you, but I like to be weaving through San Francisco with slightly more than a quartet of rivals to sideswipe off the streets. Forget some problems with (wait for it) the sound, and you're playing *Rush* in the arcade. And if you don't find that reason enough



P
PREVIEW

NINTENDO 64
NN

DEVELOPER - MIDWAY

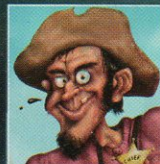
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



CHIEF
HAMBLETON
OPEN YOUR EYES
AND FEEL GOOD...
RUSH!!



some slight misting on the horizon, but the sensation of speed, gorgeous surroundings and cunning enemy A.I. are all present and that's what counts.

Controlling your car is slightly different from *MRC*, as *Rush* steers like *Daytona USA* rather than *Ridge Racer*. There's no mad powersliding around corners; your steering is a lot more heavy and ponderous and you can't simply wrench your vehicle through turns; you must judge racing lines well in advance if you want to avoid

tumbling into a side fence and bursting into flames. Additionally, as arcade-goers may be aware, there's a load of shortcuts to find during your race. Find a grassy verge, check your racing line and head for



to start saving your pennies for the finished version, then you must be some non-racing freak who shouldn't be allowed into a hot rod.

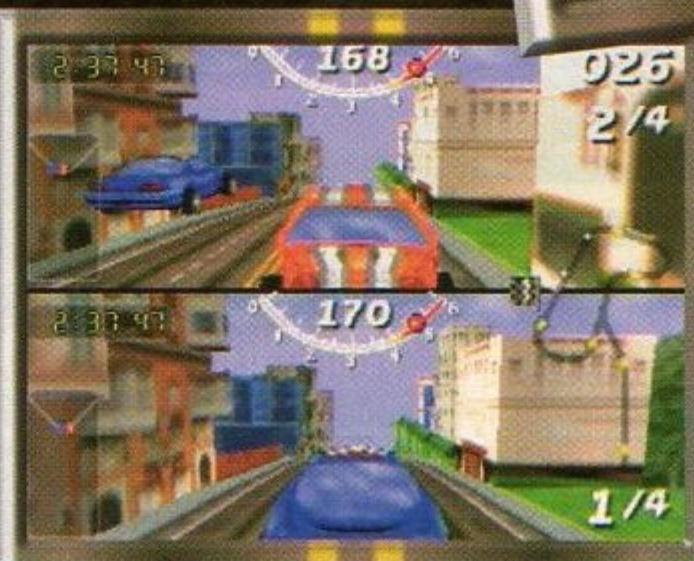
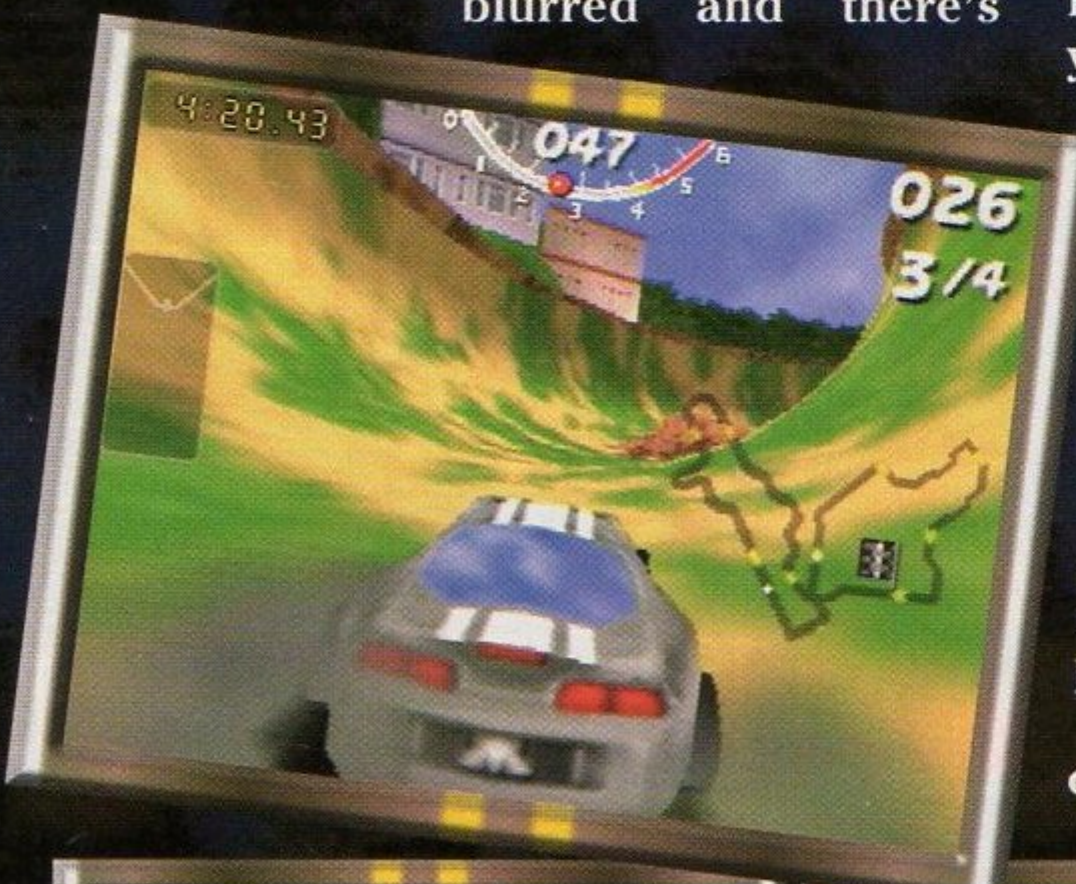
Moving onto the actual game itself, seven mammoth courses are planned, as Midway makes sure Nintendo owners receive extreme value for money (and the latest arcade upgrade of the game). From the four complete courses GameFan tested, I can safely state that racing fans are gonna be whooping in delight at the detail, numerous sub-routes and general graphical effects going on in *Rush* that simply hasn't been seen before in any home system. After selecting your viewpoint from the four usual cameras (all flicked using the annoyingly-hard-to-reach left shoulder button), you'll speed across the Golden Gate bridge (last seen in silicon form in *Pilotwings 64*) and into a manic, jostling race for position. Everything is motion-blurred and there's



ground sewer system, under a juggernaut, up a ramp and onto a building or onto a piece of newly-constructed freeway, there's loads of routes to take... and some of them lead to really odd places (such as a *Rush* texture-mapped loop-the-loop), whilst adding that oh-so-important extra gameplay time and helping turn a fun racer into a *bona fide* classic. Add a cool choice of seven different cars for every expert level, your own personal color (er... as long as it's from the preset palette present), that extremely important two-player mode (with NO speed loss—stunning and addictive!) plus the fact that you're actually racing on real-life areas of San Francisco (passing trams, leaping over Lombard street *et cetera*) and you've got one of the greatest arcade conversions ever! I'm revving myself up into a frenzy about *Rush*.... we'll be back with the final word on this killer title soon... **CH**

the ramp... *Dukes of Hazzard* style! Once you've launched yourself skyward, you'll notice a couple of things. Firstly that you're actually soaring into the heavens in an uncontrollable but breath-takingly scary arch through the air. Next, you'll see that the buildings still look cool and really detailed from high in the sky. Then you'll twist horribly in the air and corkscrew down onto the tarmac below. The effects have never been seen before, and add an extra dimension to the 'fun' arcade racing genre. Forget your complex 3D physics this time... we're going flyin'!

And there's still those cunning shortcuts to find. Whether it's via an under-



Tetrisphere™

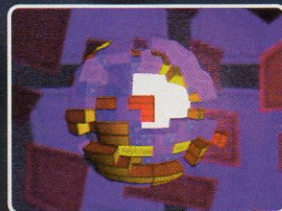
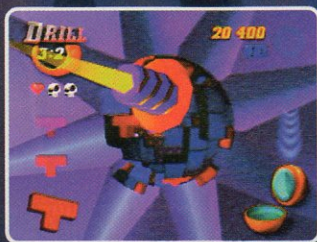
Owing very little to the etymology of its name, the oft-delayed and much-anticipated Tetrisphere is more about shifting blocks than dropping them. This probably has something to do with the fact that TS began life as a Jaguar game by H2O, and was only transferred to the N64 after the cat became extinct.

In TS, the blocks you drop are only catalysts to explode the patterns you've already set up on the surface of the sphere through shifting the differently shaped blocks around. It's a bit confusing to explain actually, though very easy to grasp and quite fun once you begin playing and working out what to do in your head. Alternate modes of play like Hide & Seek and Rescue, along with a two-player-simultaneous, eight-player tournament battle give you several different ways to play.

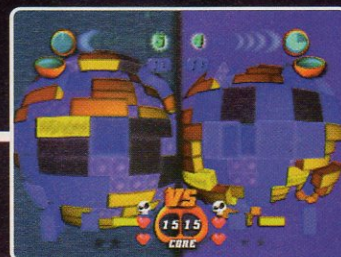
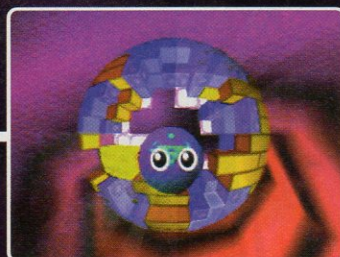
Partially because of this game's excellent-sounding, car-

tridge-based techno score, I get a feeling from TS similar to what I felt when playing Tempest 2000. Granted, one is a shooter, the other a puzzle game, yet beyond the music they both share this abstract and intense visual and aural landscape. With no basis in reality, both are 'games' in the purest sense of the word. The visuals are there solely to facilitate the playing of the game, not to express any sort of dramatic idea. I must say I like that every now and again.

As far as puzzle games go, TS is plenty addictive and excellent fun, with an almost lightshow-like intensity. Like almost every other N64 release, I'm sure Tetrisphere will be eagerly lapped up by software starved N64 owners. But unlike certain other 'games', I won't feel bad if TS sells more than a few copies. I know I'll be buying one. **SD**



So many modes of Spherical Insanity!!!



Time Trial

Drill

Rescue

VS

R
REVIEW

NINTENDO 64
NN

DEVELOPER - H2O

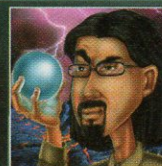
PUBLISHER - NINTENDO

FORMAT - CART

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



SUBSTANCE D
It's time to exercise those spatial relations skills.

MEGAFAN

...so
deep
you'll
need
a life
jacket!



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AGF87



Albert Odyssey is one of those 'long awaited' titles that creeps-up on you, just as you begin to forget it's still coming out. Announced over a year ago, along with *Rayearth*, *Lunar*, and a *Sega Ages* pack, *Albert Odyssey* is the first of the bunch to make it to the shelves. And while the future of other Working Designs Saturn titles is still up in the air, *Albert Odyssey* is here now, ready to provide the classic RPG gaming that Saturn owners continue to crave.

Classic is the word, really. In all of its components, AO is an old-school RPG. After all, it was originally designed as a Super Famicom game some 3 years ago, only to be scrapped a few months before completion. Later it resurfaced, announced on one of the Saturn's earliest coming soon lists, but even that was wrong. The game finally appeared in Japan last year, at which point WD announced the translation. Now, in a day and age where *FFVII* is considered to be the modern progression of the RPG (and rightfully so), *Albert Odyssey* represents the return, nay, the preservation of the classic RPG. There might not be too many more like this.

The Odyssey Begins

Albert Odyssey follows the sad tale of an orphaned boy, Pike. After witnessing the slaughter of both his parents by a vicious band of Goblins, Pike is rescued by a Harpy, Laia, and raised happily in the Harpy Forest. One day, on his way to the Harpy well-spring, Pike encounters a man riding atop a huge red dragon. He demands to know Pike's identity, that of the village, and where to find the "Power Crystal." Dumbfounded and scared witless, Pike can only mumble a few unintelligible words, enraging the mysterious man to no end. As the villain prepares an unknown incantation, Laia arrives and runs to Pike's side. Suddenly there's a flash, Laia launches herself in front of Pike, and... and the rest is petri-fied history. The quest to remove the spell of stone begins...

O.K., time to get into some hard-core game observations...

Gameplay

I have to tell you, *Albert Odyssey* may be one of the few Saturn RPGs around, but it isn't one of the best RPGs available. This has nothing to do with the translation; AO is just wholesomely average as an RPG. The quests and mini-quests are uninspiring, the battle frequency is horrendous, and the fighting itself is mind-numbingly slow. To Working Designs' credit, however, the quests are spiced-up by an interesting plot, and the battles (which used to be almost dysfunctionally slow in the import version) have been sped-up with tolerable loading times. It takes far too long to get through even the simplest of battles, but



ALBERT ODYSSEY

LEGEND OF ELDEAN



you're still way better off with the US version. I guess the major contributor to this sense of disparity in the battles is the slow command sequences. You have to confirm attacks for each character *individually*, after which they immediately roll out their melee and magic. Trouble is, there's nothing "immediate" about it. The characters and enemies alike move slowly, attack slowly, heck, they even die slowly, and often what should've been a quicky turns into a monotony of button-pressing and waiting. And since battles are triggered every 8 to 10 seconds, no matter what, get ready for a lot of

forced powering-up. Sadly it looks as though Working Designs were helpless in this area, 'cause the game progresses in such a way that you *need* to level up constantly, and the original designers simply chucked in the battle overload to keep the game balanced. A lame, required play-mechanic, complicated by poor execution. Onward we go...

Graphics and Sound

Albert's graphics are 16-bit quality for the most part. The colors in certain backgrounds are beautiful, and various Mode 7-type background and spell effects are very nice. The main map is also a Mode 7 showcase, although it's been retouched since its 16-bit days with lush 32-bit color. AO's strongest point, graphically, is its battle animation. The characters' attacks and expressions are excellent, and the high number of animation frames are purely 32-bit. The sound is just brilliant! Except for grating battle tunes, the towns, dungeons, and especially the maps are gifted with superb music, both redbook and PCM. And every character has cool Japanese voice when attacking and casting spells. Props to WD for leaving 'em in.

Story

Mmn...the plot unravels really slowly, but the story does take on 'save the world' proportions eventually. And while it starts weak, play 'til the second part of the game and you'll be treated to a much deeper, much more rewarding storyline. Female villains are treated especially well, such as the Silver Vixens from part one. They're a specialized three-woman mercenary team, led by the arrogant Miss Kris Seed, with a well-written, spiteful personality. Unfortunately, Working Designs went a bit berserk on the townsfolk. In my opinion, the 'wacky' modern humor is completely out of place in a traditional RPG setting. You'll see talk of Ebonics, marital issues, using the can, and what RPG would be complete without mention of "yucky-poops"? It's all very sad, seeing as how the dramatic moments are so very well written.

Well, this novel must come to an end. Despite my criticisms, I played *Albert Odyssey* all the way through, and yes, it was worth the 20 or so hours. If you're playing AO after *Shining the Holy Ark* (as I did), or if you're expecting an epic 32-bit RPG, you will be disappointed. If you have time for a solid traditional RPG, however, *Albert Odyssey* will do you just fine. **G**

THE SEA URCHIN

He'll be your tentacle-snarin' host on the Ghost Ship. Here's how to sink him:

- 1) Stock plenty of Life Roots and 'restore conditions' items.
- 2) Use Gryzz, the Dragonkin. He is extremely resistant to magical attacks. The Urchin will paralyze the whole party... and *only* Gryzz can shake it off.
- 3) Restore your healers first and have them do the same to your thugs.
- 4) Attack with Gryzz every second round, and use his Healing Breath in between rounds to help the others. Good Luck!



DEVELOPER - SUNSOFT	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - WORKING DESIGNS	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - NOW

GLITCH
A good translation? Yep. A great RPG? Mmn...good, not great.



• Bomberman •

SEGA • PUZZLE • NOW

I've been a happy *Bomberman* player for years and years. The latest (and let it be known, the *greatest*) bomber to come home is *Saturn Bomberman*, Sega's Hudson-developed, 32-bit sequel. Not only is it one of the best multiplayer games ever, it's also a fantastic one-player experience with a ton of replayability.

For the rookie *Bomberman* player (do they exist?!), I probably couldn't recommend a better starting point than *Saturn Bomberman*. It may be a hard-core, multi-player tournament game, ideal for old *Bomberman* vets to test each other, but it has kick ass Normal and Master modes, too—ideal for those lonely nights when buddies aren't available. Normal and Master are also the place to find the game's best music, as each background offers some incredibly catchy techno and drum-'n-bass renditions of the *Saturn Bomberman* theme.

Saturn Bomberman is also a place to settle rivalries. Plug in a multi-tap (or two), round up pads and up to ten (10!) players, and hit the Battle Mode for hours of classic multiplayer Bomberman goodness. Play with up to eight players in any regular arena, choose from among 10 cool characters (Bonk and Master Higgins are on board), and blow each other to heck.

Well, that's it, I'm done here. If you're into *Bomberman*, you like party games, and you own a Saturn, you'd be crazy not to pick up *Saturn Bomberman*. Hell, there's even a cool NetLink mode (two-on-two only, but fun nonetheless). Bah, talk is cheap. This is the ultimate multiplayer *Bomberman*. Buy this game and have fun.



• MegaMan X4 •

CAPCOM • ACTION • OCTOBER

The surprisingly resilient MegaMan appears yet again in this, his latest adventure, *MegaMan X4*. Generally considered to be the series for exploring new gameplay ideas, this particular entry into the *X* annals looks as if it intends to return to its roots somewhat and deliver an all-out action game. Can't argue with that.

Graphically, this is one of the best looking games the series has ever seen. Both MegaMan and Zero animate beautifully (this is Capcom, after all), and the BGs, while not bursting with scrolls, are lovely to look at. There are even some great *MegaMan* anime FMV clips sprinkled throughout the game.

The fruity *MegaMan 8* on PS sold very well here, and I'm glad to report that this darker *MegaMan* is coming soon. Our preview version was pretty finished, so look for the full GF treatment as soon as we get a final. This is going to be a great *MegaMan*.



COMING SOON: SATURN



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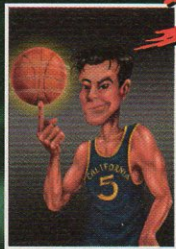
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GAMEFAN

SPORTS



JOE KIDD

Sports Fans Rejoice!

KIDD'S Corner

It wasn't so long ago that we only had one or two decent hockey games, no respectable baseball titles, one dominant football franchise, and a multitude of mediocre hoops. All of a sudden **Acclaim** sports starts burning the oil and spits out quality games like *All Star Baseball '97*, the soon-to-be-released *Breakaway '98* and what may be the first football game on the N64, with some of the most incredible graphics you will find. **Sony** explodes onto the scene, and starts knocking people out left and right. They sent in the forces with *MLB* and *Shootout*, but word has it that not only *GameDay*, but *Faceoff* as well are da Bomb! I've seen them both... they're not just rumors. What's up with **EA**? **EA** has a battle on their hands for the first time in a long time, and they've got a couple of things up their sleeve as well. The most

GET IT STRAIGHT!!!

In the July issue, Joe Kidd committed an incidental, yet personal foul by claiming *Acclaim's Breakaway '98* was the first game with icon passing, when in actuality it was *Sony's* savvy that brought the revolutionary Icon Passing System to the hockey rink with their *NHL Faceoff* series.

noteworthy is a hell of a *Madden* game on the N64. Lace 'em up boyz, it's all about the analog. *Live 98* could be the ultimate hoops title, the selection of new, customized moves will have your head spinning. Hockey fans look-out, cuz *NHL* is back, and looking sweet. **Sega** is busting out the bread and butter with *World Series Baseball* (solid as always), but look for *NBA Action* to be the Saturn sleeper of the season. This season's gonna be deep!

Joe Kidd can be contacted at: rlee@metropolismedia.com

"JOE"

Arguably the best around, with *Triple Play 98* being it's only true competition. Virtually flawless playability, highlights this all around gem of a baseball sim. With little to no load time, *MLB* offers more overall playtime and less waiting around. New animations are unequalled, with players executing plays while throwing from their knees. *MLB* is a must have.

G C P M O 93
(9) (9) (9) (8) (7)

Once again, **Sega** successfully builds upon an already reputable franchise. The new word here is polygons, and the transition was by all means successful. Gameplay glided from controller to screen effortlessly, and no major AI problems were apparent. Graphics seemed to oscillate between fans and proponents loving the look, and opponents finding it "grainy" and "hazy." Overall above a solid effort.

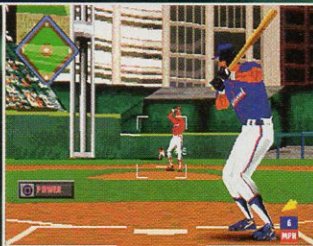
G C P M O 77
(8) (8) (7) (7) (7)

VIEWPOINTS

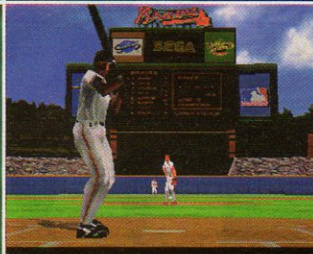
"STRAP"

I think *MLB* plays even better than *Triple Play*. The engine is arguably the more robust of the two games, and the great loading (or lack thereof) is certainly a bonus. I love the player animation too, it's dramatic and some of it's never been done before. **Sony's** also taken care of every possible flaw in the AI and camera system, so enjoy!

G C P M O 92
(9) (8) (8) (7) (7)



MLB '98
Sony



World Series Baseball '98
Sega

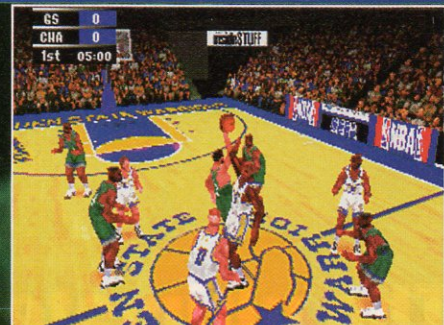
Any Saturn sports player will tell you that *WS '98* is amazing. Just think, they've switched from sprite to polygon players and the ultra-smooth engine has come away 100% intact. Awesome. Gameplay? Shouldn't even be a question at this point; every *WS* plays great and '98 is no exception. Best of all, it's terribly fun to play, especially with two players. Unlike my peers, I think *WS* is right up there with the best!

G C P M O 90
(9) (9) (9) (8) (7)

"P R E V I E W S"

Sega's going to be playing above the rim with this bad boy. All Saturn owners should be fired up to play this game, because it gives you the smoothest gameplay, and the best graphics on the platform. The 3D players show put together some of the best dunk and lay-up animations available in any basketball game around. You're gonna love the Practice Mode, as you practice your favorite shot, lay-up or just flat out get on up there and rattle that rim. Signature moves are stylin' but the D needs to tighten up—one fake to the side, and I'm drivin' to the hoop. BTW, if you want this game but have a PS... word up on *Hardwood Heroes* by Midway.

NBA Action '98 Sega



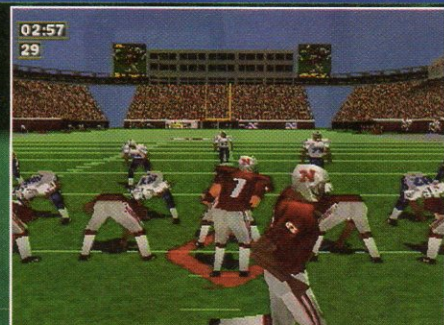
The month of October yields the return of one of the most action-intense racing titles around. What would you call a combination of race bikes, surfing, flying, and terrains of snow, ice, land and sea? Well **Sony** calls it *Jet Moto*, and this year it's called 2. If you thought the original courses were tough, step on up to 10 new tracks including river rapids, national forests, deep caverns and roller coasters. There are steeper embankments, twistier corkscrews, and deadlier waterfalls. The new graphics will bring you further into the game, with the 3D engine driving the PS to its limits. Unbelievable physics and new hotter and faster bikes make this game one to look out for.

Jet Moto 2 Sony



Well, **Sony** already proved football and polygons are a natural together, so why not bring it to the college ranks? **Sony** has put out such a solid, straight, across-the-board, sports line-up, I have no reason to doubt this will be any less. You can expect the latest in animations like "tight-rope" the sidelines. Player sizes are realistic to go along with their attributes. Each team has specific Team Playbooks, so choose your school and choose your style. The secret to this game is finding the team with the most "GameBreakers," or the guys that make the plays happen. Stat-tracking, atmospheric effects, All-Time teams and more. College football is alive on the PlayStation!

GameBreaker '98 Sony



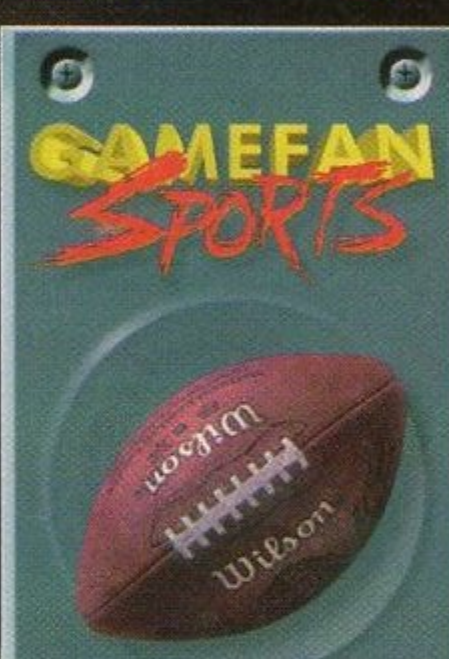
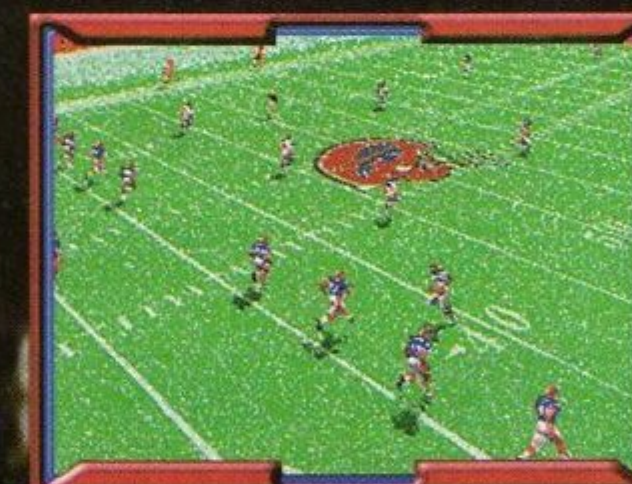
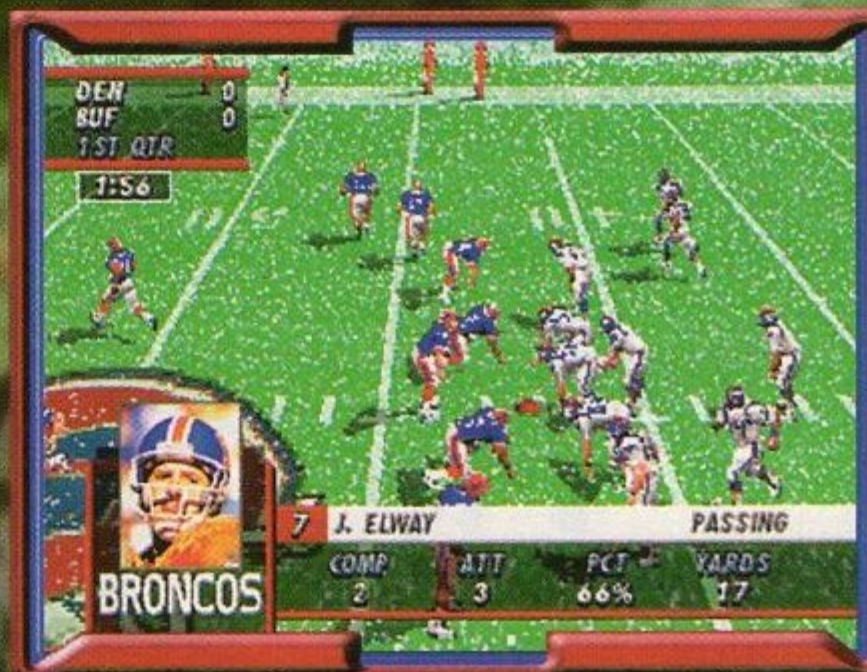
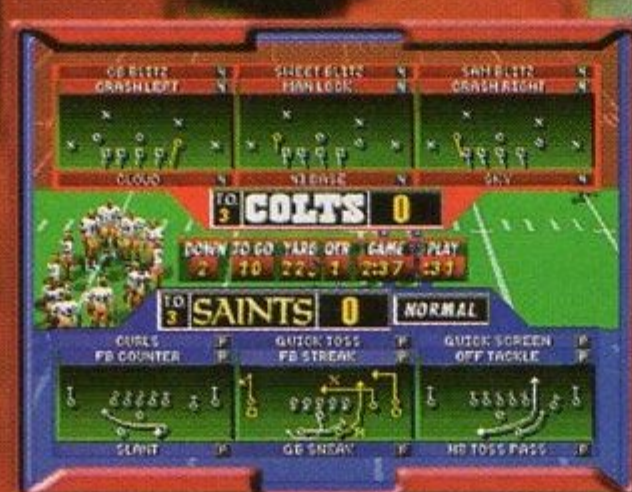
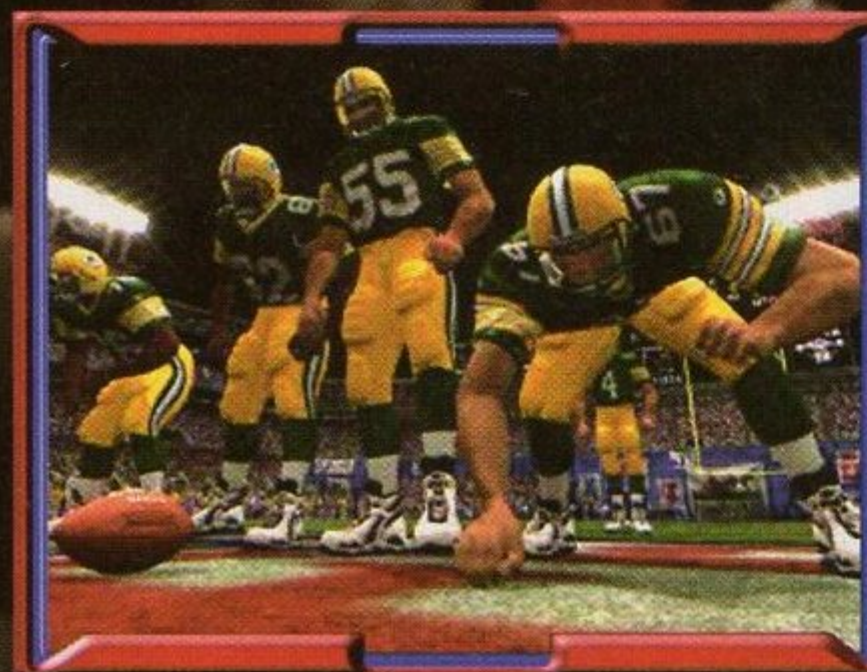
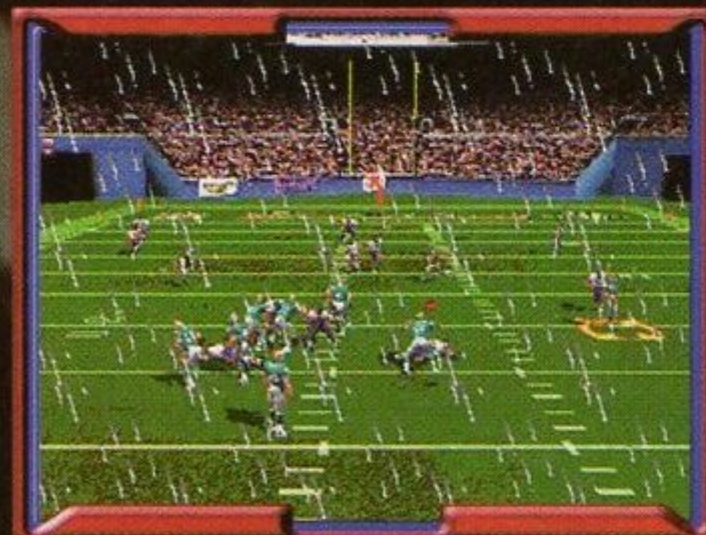
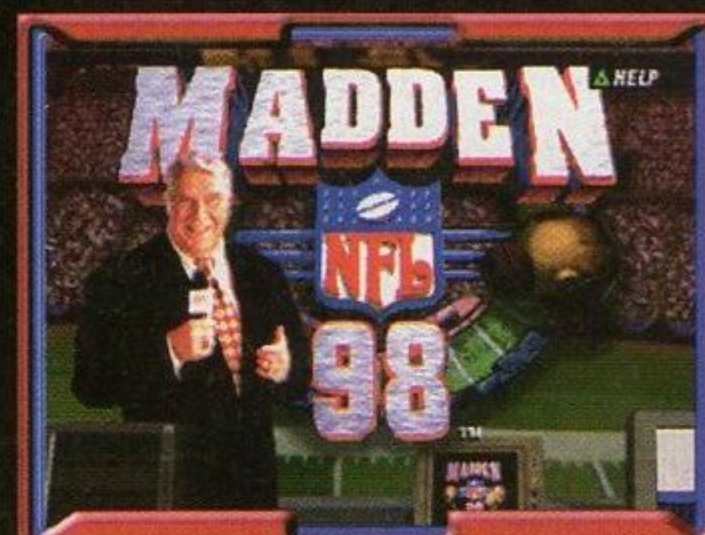


MADDEN 98

Football fans get 2 Christmases a year—the one that happens in December—and the one that happens when *Madden* comes out. As we enter into the Fall season, we come upon one of the most widely anticipated line-ups of football games, and once again *Madden* is the pre-season favorite.

The focus of *Madden 98* was purely gameplay, which is what the guys up at EA determined as the next, practical step toward making the ultimate football experience. Each time they collaborate at the drawing board, the goal is to bring in unsurpassed realism; a definite EA trademark by now. With the competition getting stiffer by the season, EA geared up for the Bigs and brought on the committee; the Players' Committee that is. PC is made up of a select group of players who specialize at their perspective positions, guys like Merton Hanks for the DB's, McGlockton for the line, Barry Sanders for the backs—you get the picture. If you're playin' in the Bigs, you gotta come ready, and that's just what they've had in mind. Now you see more than ever, position by position, guys doing what they're supposed to do, whether that's dropping into their zone or picking up the blitz. The Liquid AI is dripping it's so loaded.

Get a load of all the one-handers and end zone celebrations too, because there are so many new animations, you're bound to see something new all the time. But remember this, don't be expecting polygons, because EA chose to stay sprite-based to maintain the gameplay. They wanted the game to be "smarter, faster and deeper" and that it is. But for a sports game world, ever changing to polygons, this could prove to either be a very bold and wise move, or a slap in the face. Why? 2 reasons: *Quarterback Club '98* and *GameDay '98* both went polygonal and both succeeded. The question is: We all know *Madden's* got the meat and potatoes, but do people want that new-fangled gravy on top of it all? What's it worth? Only time will tell. **JK**



PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - EA

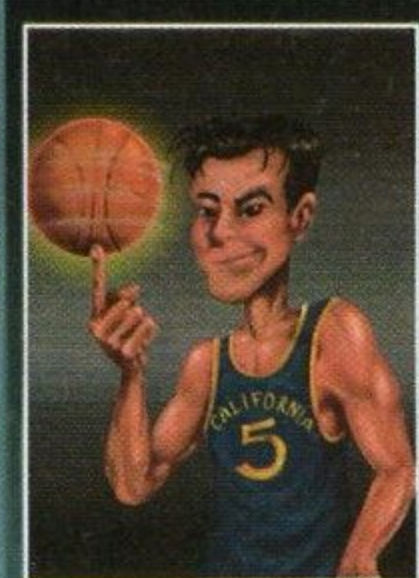
PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

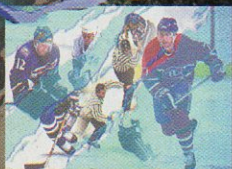
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



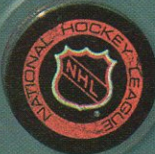
THE KIDD
My bread's waitin' to sop some sauce!

NHL BREAKAWAY 98

NHLPA



GAMEFAN
SPORTS



PREVIEW



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ACCLAIM

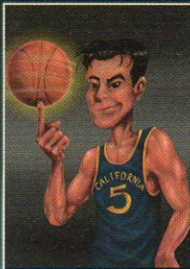
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - FALL



JOE KIDD

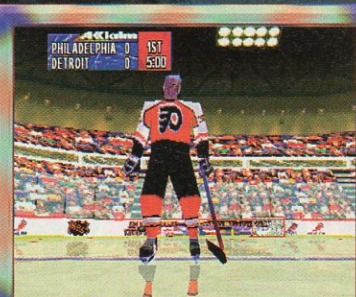
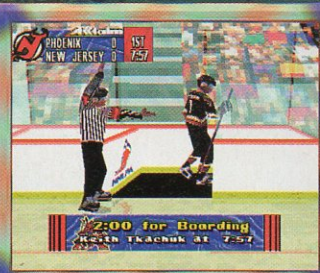
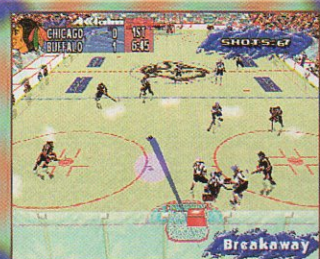
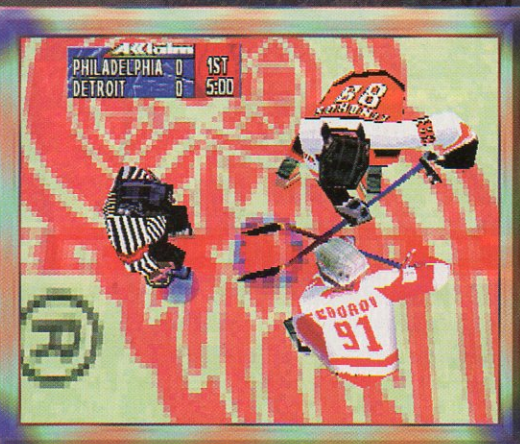
The ice is starting
to heat up!

I've been waiting a long time to see Breakaway '98, and we finally get a glimpse. When Acclaim first talked about this game, there was a twinkle in their eye, and you could tell they really had something special in mind for this one.

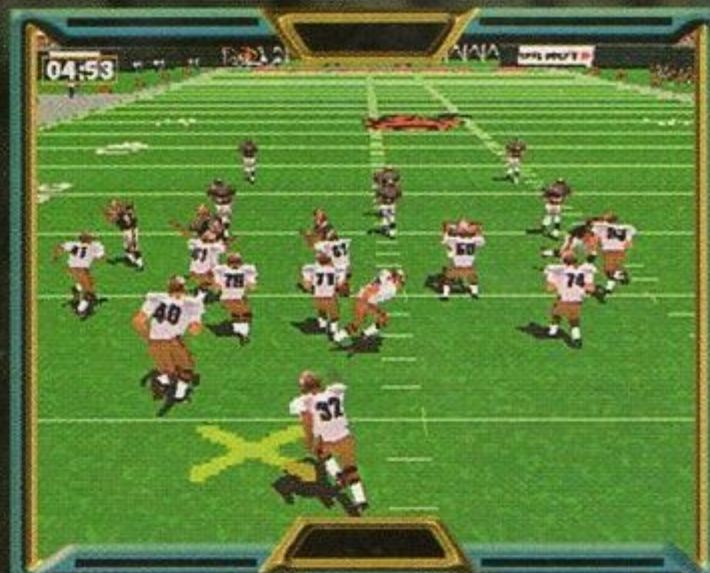
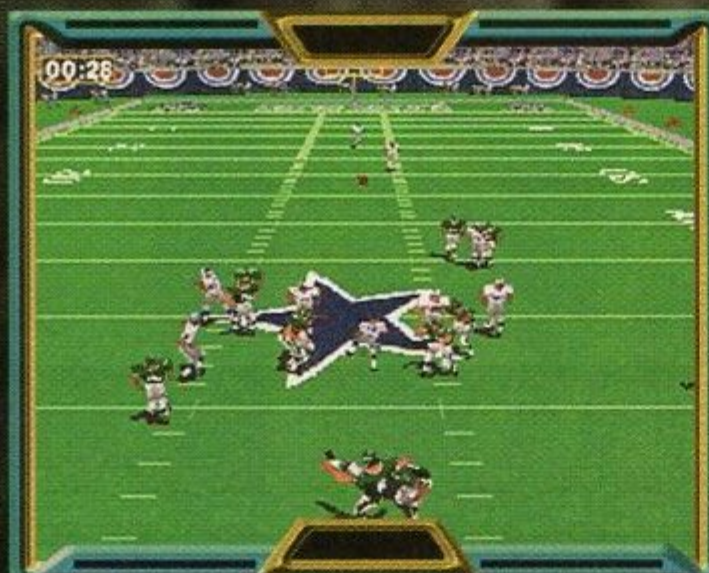
Breakaway '98 could take hockey games to the next level with features like Momentum-based Checking, Non-puck-handler Control, Advanced Coaching Strategies and a Total Team Management System. All of these features are meant to bring you further into the real thing, and to allow you to wear the many hats of a hockey franchise. And in the Fox tradition, they even brought in the glowing puck, or "halo" for visual tracking. I don't think Acclaim missed a beat when brainstorming all of the key components that make hockey such a fan favorite.

The only thing they hadn't done yet, was put what was on paper into the game, mix in a little gameplay, fold in a little AI and polish it off with some graphics. Gameplay? Well, it's still a little early to say—overall control was responsive but the speed was a little too fast for sim requirements. AI? Definitely too early to say just yet, but the system will be a Playbook-based AI that plays the actual teams' styles, complete with forechecks, traps, dumps and chases. In addition to the Advanced Coaching Strategies and Non-puck-handler Control, the Total Team Management System is what really excites me. Throughout the season, you will receive points, based on performance, which you can allocate toward better coaching, player development, injury therapies...! This is the kind of complexity a die-hard sports gamer is looking for, further enhancing the fantasy-GM qualities of the game. Graphics, I can say without seeing the finished product, are top notch. Full, 3D polygonal players, complete with extremely detailed uniforms and rinks make this game very visually appealing.

With the special attention being given to this title, as well as Acclaim's creative development team, you can be sure you'll be seeing this one in the Top Ten by summer's end. **JK**



FEEL THE POWER

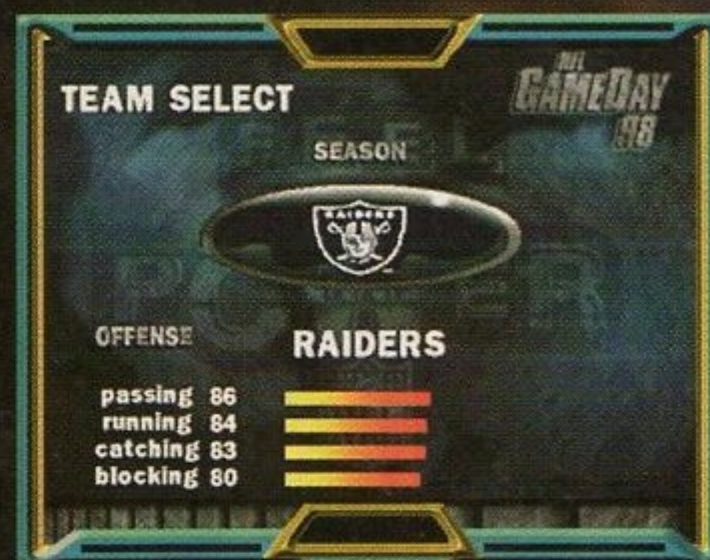


In sports, they honor the most improved player of the year, so in video games, it's only fair to have the most improved sports franchise of the year. Where last year *GameDay* had just broken through the *Madden* armor, this year they're getting fitted for a suit of their own, and what a fine suit it is.

The one word that comes to mind after initial games of *GD'98* is "explosive." It appears as if it's one of those rare gems that actually bring you onto the field.

The difference can be attributed to several different areas of the game. Graphically, *GD'98* brings polygons to the grid-iron for the first time ever. The full 3D engine has breathed life into a deteriorating 2D environment, and has brought the standard of football games to a new level. The players are bigger, faster and stronger—and man, can they hit! New animations have guys getting layed out on their backs, balls getting jarred loose for interceptions, and straight-arms sending guys into the stands. The "new look" of polygons is so much more appealing than the flat, uncomplicated sprite games of yesteryear. What really accentuates the look is the sound effects used in the game. Guys are actually grunting on the line, screaming as they get hit and their helmets crash together. The sound is so deep and so forceful that you can literally sense the impact. The crowd is AI smart, in that they know when to cheer, and the volume fluctuates throughout the game like a pulse as the game builds.

Of course, *GameDay '98* has all of the standard features, and has added some All-Star teams, Super Bowl teams, some options to customize the game and what have you. But last year's version was acclaimed for the instinctual AI of the defense; fans of the sport appreciated the nuances of the D, and heralded *GD'97* as THE game because of it. This year, the defense has tightened up even more, but not so much where you can't complete a pass or get some yards on the ground. The 2 keys I found to being successful in the pre-release version of *GD'98* are: the offensive line, and the receivers' routes. In order for me to successfully execute a drive, I had to be able to read my blocks and spot the holes. That's been said before, but if you have the ability to do so, you'll be rewarded with a handsome ground attack. If



HARD HITTING NFL ACTION!

NFL GAMEDAY 98



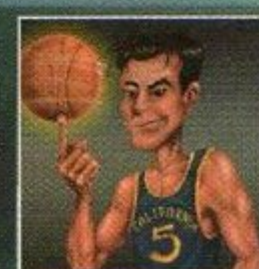
going to the air, you'll really have to know the patterns, and let the wideouts run them, because if you don't, the pass will be there but your man won't—conversely, if you let him run his route fully, you can thread the needle, even with as little as a half-step on your man.

Actually, I lied. There's one more key, and it's pretty huge. It's called Total Control Passing, and this is the stuff legends are made of. Essentially what TCP is, is a way to give you the ultimate quarterbacking experience on the PS. For those of you who pride yourselves in reading defenses, you can now totally exploit the D in a very, large fashion. TCP allows you to either lead your receiver, keep the ball short, or take the ball left or right. Let's say Jerry's got single coverage on the right, and the D-back, respecting Jerry, gives him about 15 yards. Well you've selected a route that has Jerry going long, but the defense is defending the long ball. Well, now with TCP you can tell Jerry to "come back a little" and re-route his pattern—in essence he's running a hook. I tell you, seeing TCP executed correctly brings on a whole new realm of satisfaction, and a whole new level of gaming.

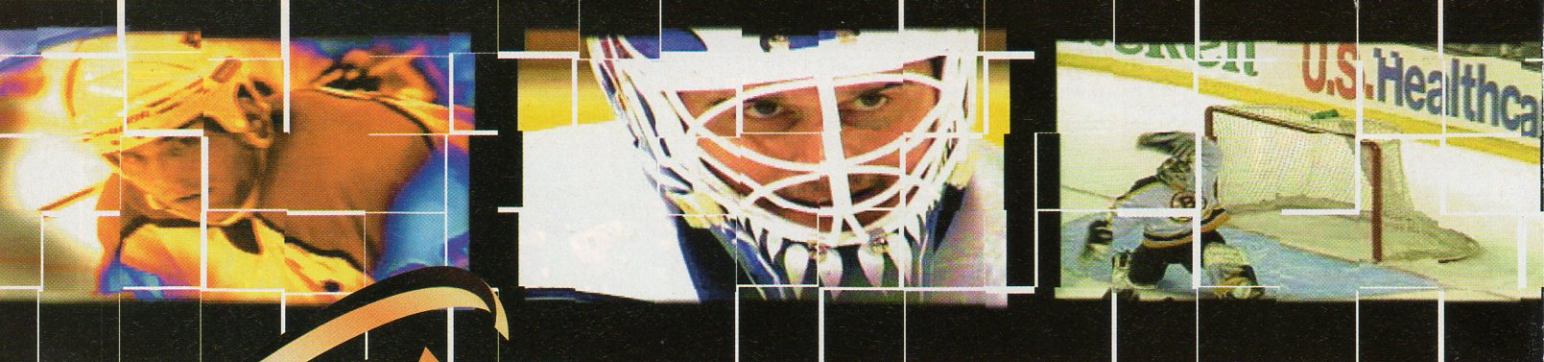
What *GD'98* has essentially been able to achieve, so far, is to be able to create a game that is fun, yet difficult to master. I'm a guy that has historically been able to dominate in any football game, on any platform, but this game seems to have brought an element of uncertainty that will expose any "human-ness" you possess. It's an exciting day for football, and the real deal is yet to arrive. **JK**



DEVELOPER - SONY
PUBLISHER - SONY
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-8
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



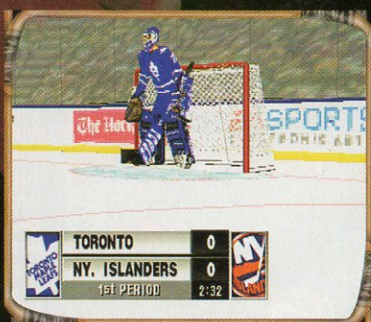
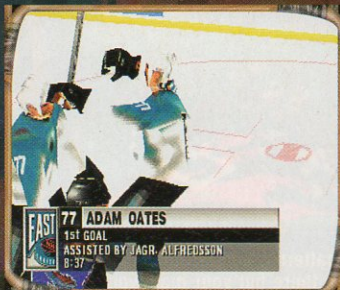
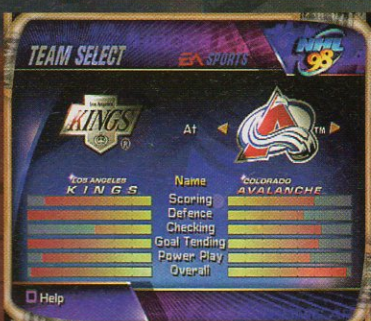
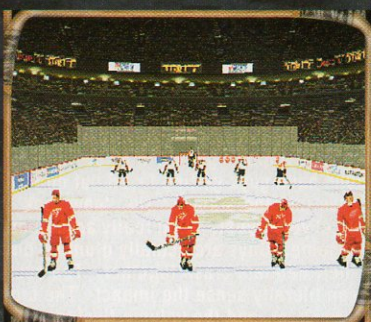
JOE KIDD
Two words:
TCP baby...
TCP!



NHL 98

Where the heck did they pull this one from? I mean, the *NHL* series has always been respected, but this game is the you-know-what. Any video game that makes you more a fan of the actual sport has done a pretty outstanding job. The preview version of *NHL 98* would seem to be such a game—it's of that magnitude.

Slated for an October release, this hot title gives the smoothest, most responsive gameplay of any hockey game to date. We all knew that EA was competitive and liked to win, but now we know how they respond when their back's against the wall. First glimpses of *NHL 98* showed new moves, new motion capture, new modes and oh-so-much-more. The features are there as always, with all of



the NHL teams, logos and players. All of the rosters are up to date with trades, stats and player ratings. But when it's all said and done, it's all about the gameplay—and *NHL 98* delivers a cross-check-and-a-half at that. The pace is fast, but realistic and not awkward in the slightest, and every control has touch precision.

The glue that holds the game together will definitely be the improved sounds and commentary. The scratching skates, chanting crowds, penalty box doors slamming and stadium-specific organ grinding is intense. In the mode of *Triple Play 98*, the sound is live and random in a way that puts you in the stands, while being in the rink at the same time. The play-by-play commentary is done dual style, again, ala *TP 98*. Jim Hughson and Daryl "The Razor" Reaugh are extremely informative, timely and hilarious, too. The dual commentary EA has brought to the console is worthy of awards, and brings such an advanced take on video hockey that you're sure to be impressed. Thankfully, October is right around the corner, because I need my *NHL 98*!

JK

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EA

PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

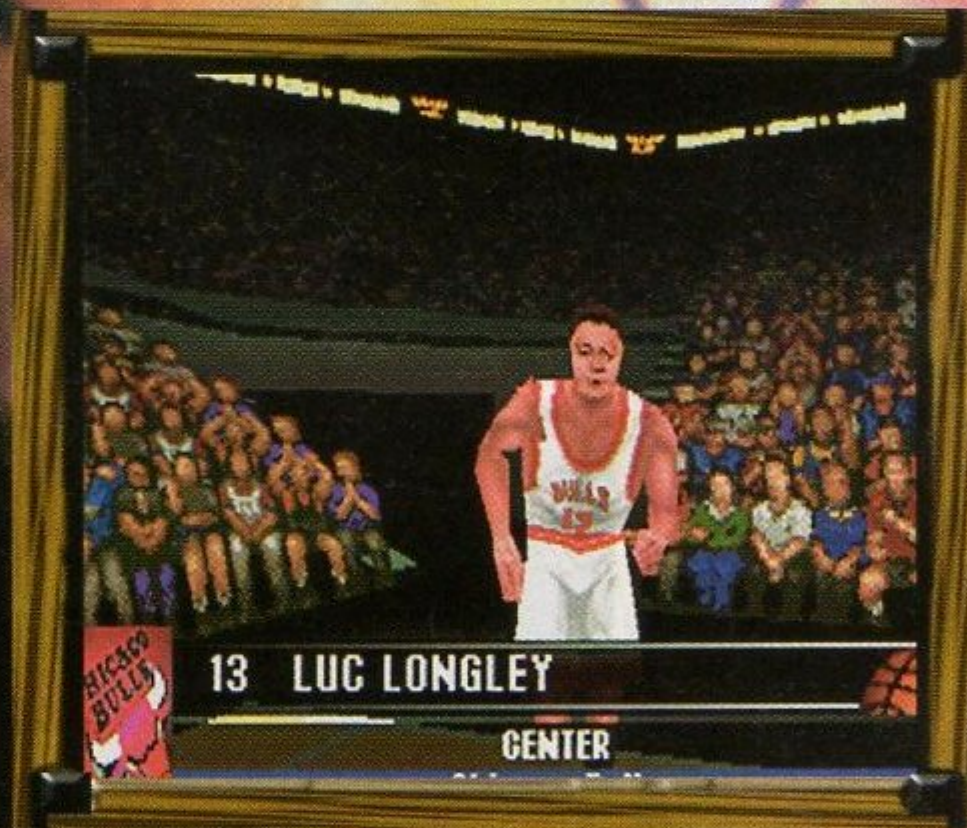
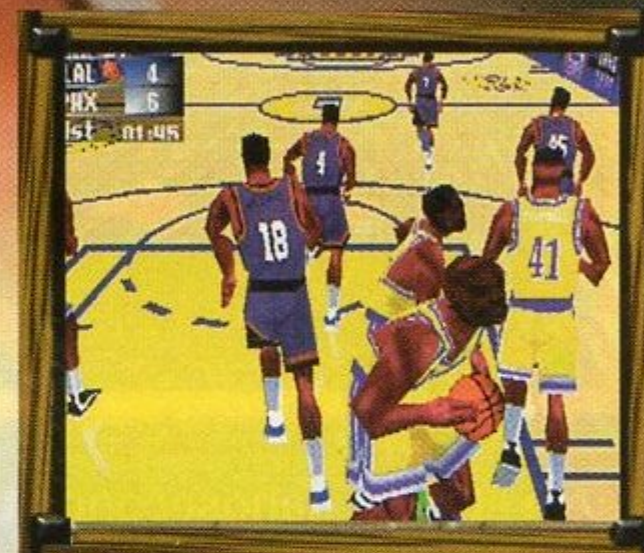
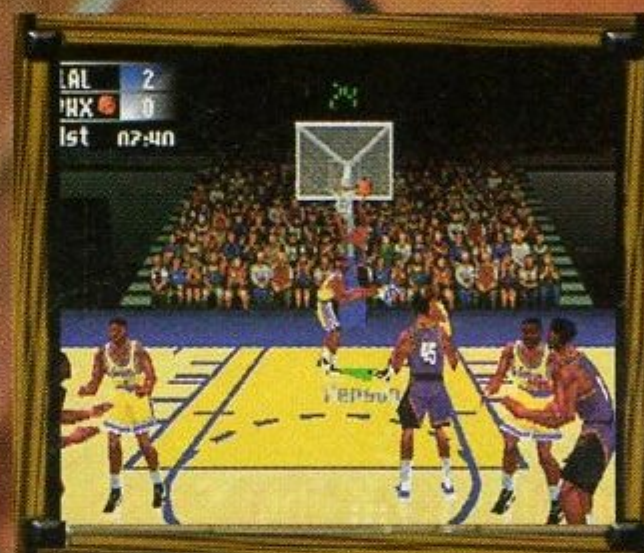
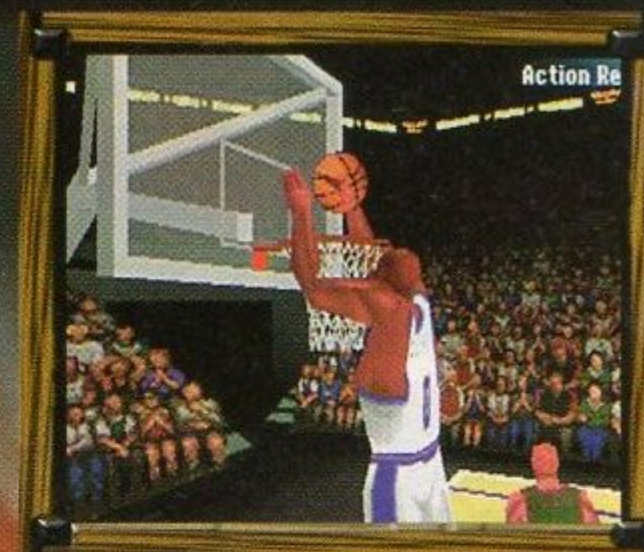
JOE KIDD
Uhhhh....
Wow?

I can hardly believe it's already been a year, but basketball games are here once again! Although Midway has been notorious for their 2-on-2, big head renditions of hoops, they are now making their first run at some serious 5-on-5 sim action with their *NBA Hardwood Heroes*. Midway may be more type-casted for their arcade-style hoops games, than Leslie Nielsen is from *Airplane* and *Naked Gun*. But if you can clear your mind of "He's on fire!" for a few moments, you might get a glimpse of a very good ballgame. Although the game is still early yet, *Hardwood Heroes* has got nothing but upside to it. After playing a couple games, I walked away very impressed. In its current stage, it won't win any trophies in graphics or AI, but with a little work this one can challenge the very best. When I play any game, I need to see that it holds my interest; *Heroes* does this immediately.

Graphically, *Heroes* is the equivalent of *In The Zone 2*, with it's animated, yet angular players. *Heroes* has the best variety of dunks coupled with the clearest, most accurate motion capturing I've seen in hoops. When the guys are airborne, their movements are completely natural, unlike many games' awkward, unrealistic hops. Whether you're comin' through the lane with a tomahawk, from the baseline with a reverse, a 360 from the foul line, or a mere double pump, they are all completely different. The motion-captured moves are even evident in the signature moves, whether it's Webber's around-the-back move, Spree's spin move, or GP's between the legs, each move is obvious, and not lost in a muddled mass of chunky graphics. Occasionally, you'll even catch some of the players pulling up with an ankle sprain, hopping on one leg clutching their ankle. 3 out of the 11 camera angles give you very good close-ups of the players, yet I didn't ever really take to any of the perspectives with much enthusiasm. I generally prefer an iso view, but there was too much of an angle to get a good feel for the court and the other players, while the second best angle (full court) loses too much action behind the basket.

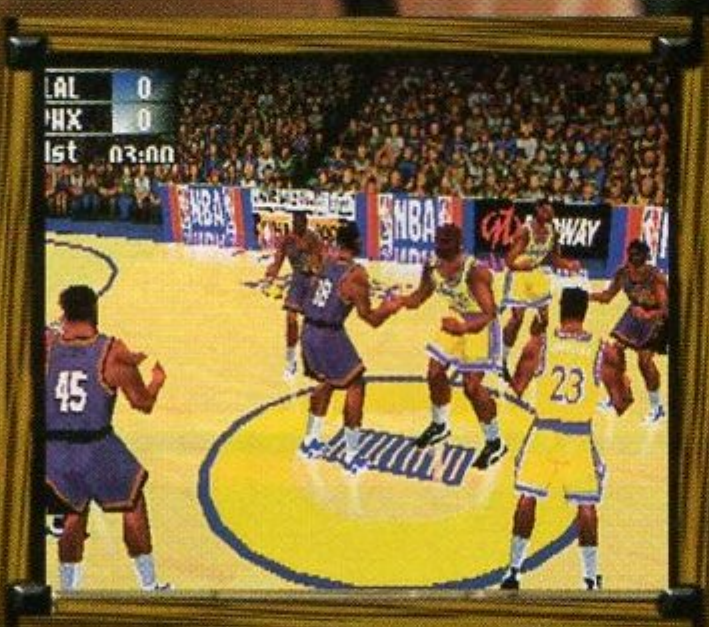
You gotta love the continuation fouls, the tip ins, the follow-up dunks, the live crowd, and the quick fast breaks. You even have a ton of offensive and defensive plays and strategies, along with icon passing to enhance the game; the problem is, you really don't need them to score. The icon passing is nice in that it is available on the inbound pass, but other than that, it's unnecessary. I could choose from the man-style playbook provided, pull up the icons and zip a pass in, but when it's all said and done, all I really have to do is press turbo and drive to the basket—instant 2 points. Defense is practically non-existent at this point, and baskets are way too easy to make. The only thing that really slows you down right now, are the incessant amount of

NBA HARDWOOD HEROES™

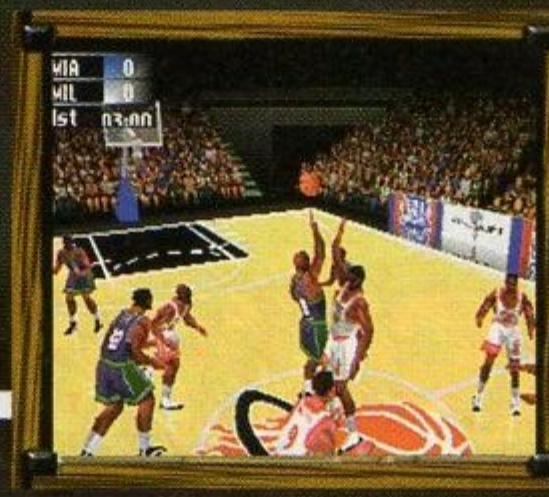
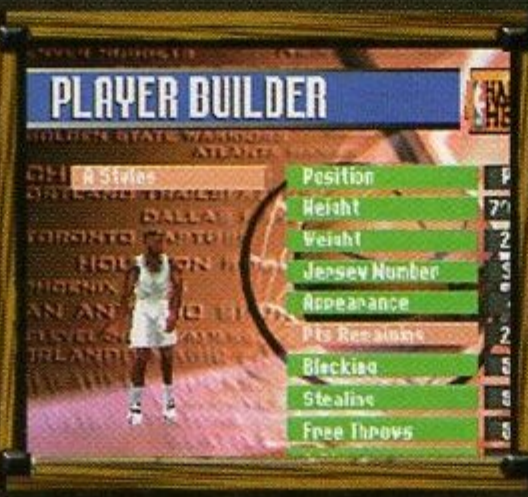


charging and reach-in fouls, which seem endless. One mode completely unique to *Heroes* (aside from all the usual Create Player and Stat Tracking modes): You can now enter the Practice mode—a first in NBA sims. It caught me off guard how fun this mode really is, as you attempt dunks from every angle, turn-around jumpers, and 3-point shots. You can even set up a player under the hoop and dunk on his head! It's just like going to the park and shooting around... if only I could dunk. Another noteworthy point is that, so far, there is no commentary to speak of, and rosters have not been updated by current trades.

This version is still very early yet, but could clearly be a game worth investing in should the AI get some fine tuning. As critical as I am of *Hardwood Heroes*, the potential for this game is scary, and only hope they live up to it -- we'll see soon.



**NON-STOP
HARDWOOD
ACTION!**



GAMEFAN SPORTS

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - VISUAL CONCEPTS

PUBLISHER - MIDWAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - UNKNOWN

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

JOE KIDD
...and don't call me Shirley!

[GAMEFAN UP-TO-THE-MINUTE]



Quite literally nanoseconds before the good ship GameFan sailed to the printers, this piece of flotsam was snatched from the murky waters. Just prior to our Nintendo 64 *Extreme G* explosion next issue, Chief Hambleton zipped and skidded around an all-new version of the game, coming away with a resounding 'thumbs up!' The frame-rate is holding steady at well over 50fps, there's some spectacular settings to scoot through, and everything is looking *Extreme*(ly) *WipeOut* influenced. The tracks do indeed throw you about in a rollercoaster ride of retina spasming fun, the enemies are indeed nasty pieces of CPU-controlled work, and the multi-player game quite simply rocks the kazbah. Four tracks are available, and despite that pea-souping monstrosity fading into the background (yeah, the fog's pretty bad), we reckon this is another winner for Acclaim. More next time...



MegaMan X4

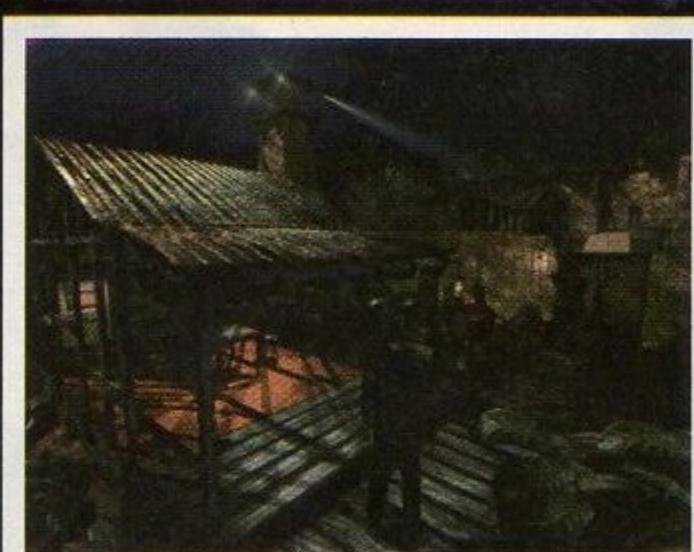
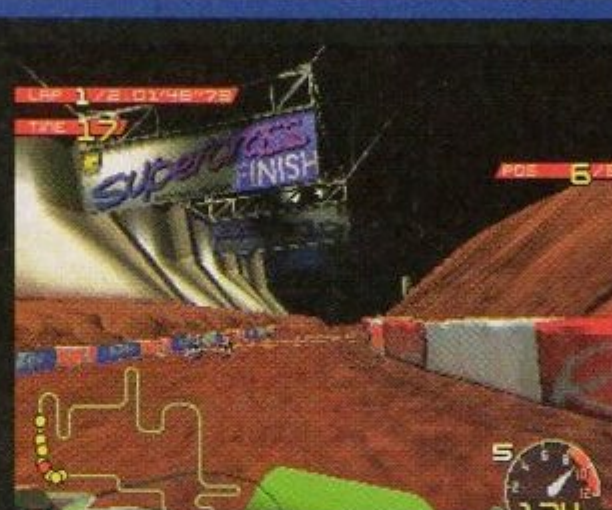
Good news for PlayStation owners! Well, at least the ones that want more *MegaMan*. And judging by *MM8*'s performance that's quite a few. *MegaMan X4* takes the tried and true *MM* gameplay and juices it up with rendered graphics, x-tra animation and even more huge sprites. It also stars Zero as a playable character from the outset. Sony passed initially on *X4* but I suppose they've re-thought out their decision to kill 2D since we've all shown we dig it. Either that or they saw *Castlevania SOTN* and had a change of heart.



Men In Black

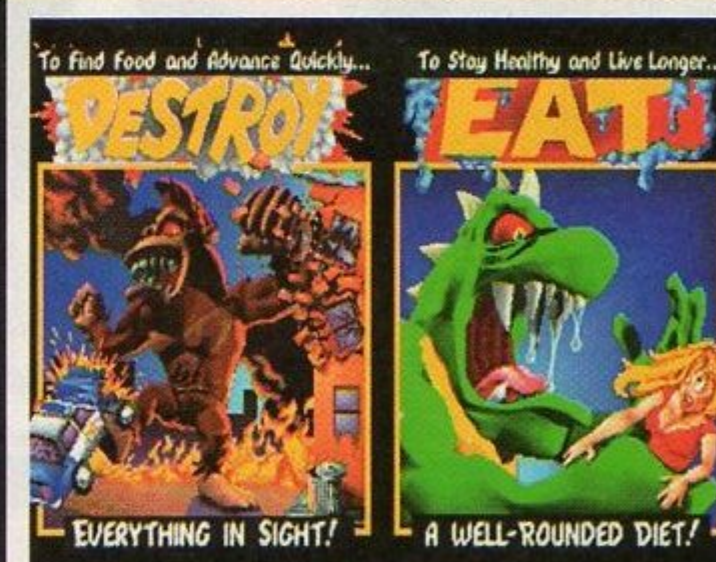
Ever wanted to be a *Man in Black*? Well now's your chance. Based on this summer's biggest blockbuster movie, *M.i.B.* is a *Resident Evil* style action/adventure that mixes polygon characters with pre-rendered backdrops - many taken directly from the

movie. The game picks up where the film left off, with players taking control of any of the *M.i.B.* agents (Tommy Lee Jones, Will Smith or Linda Fiorentino) in the on-going battle to 'protect the earth from the scum of the universe'. There are five different missions to choose from (all tied in to one main story) and best of all - you get to use all of the hi-tech gear from the movie. These shots are from the PC version (due in September). Expect a more 'action-oriented' version for the PS later this year.



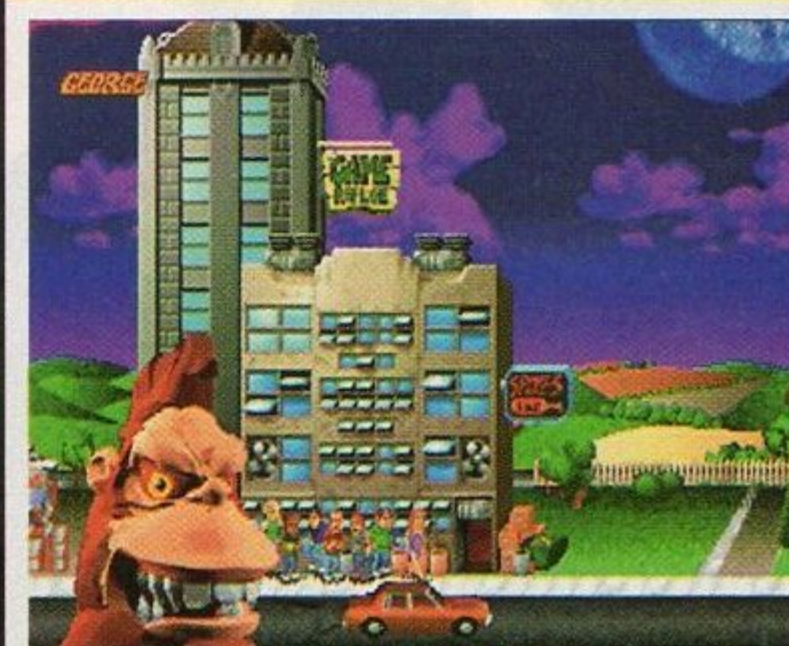
Moto Racer GP

Add one part *Motocross*, one part *Enduro*, and one *GP Racing*, and voila! You've got yourself the makings of one helluva racing game! Heading our way from the respectable EA, *Moto Racer GP* is a two wheeler's dream come true. It's got a full quiver of race bikes, all tuned specifically for optimum personalization, a smooth frame rate, and hot light sourcing. But most importantly it's got the first intelligent first person (from behind the handlebars) camera. If you wheelie down the straights, the feeling of the front end coming up is super realistic. That's a good thing too, friends, because the rider himself (when in view) is a super dork, at least currently. Hopefully some choice body-English will be added as the game enters the all important tweaking stage. I'll be back with a review as soon as I get the green flag from EA. **E**



Time to take a next-generation stroll down ol' memory lane. Anybody remember *Rampage* from the arcade or NES? Well, Williams is excavating the beasts to do some major damage on rendered urban and city dwellings. A welcome classic for a change, *Rampage* is coming for the PS and Nintendo 64! Hey, just in time for the new Godzilla feature!! I smell a winner, no, two winners! **E**

Rampage



THE TIME HAS FINALLY COME TO EMBODY FIERCE CHAMBARA IN 3-D PARALLEL WORLDS...

2P UKYO



It had to happen. Times change, and hardware improves. SNK stunned the arcade world back in '93 with the introduction of the first weapons-based fighter, and now they're back to reinvent the genre with the groundbreaking, 3-D *Samurai Shodown 64*. *SS64* runs on SNK's incredible new Hyper Neo-Geo 64, hardware that combines top-of-the-line 3-D capabilities with the best 2-D chipset ever seen on Earth; a first for an arcade package system.

Since we've never played *Samurai 64*, and the game's still early in development, (remember, any aspect you see/read about here could be completely changed before the game appears in arcades) we don't know much about it, but here's what we've been able to learn: There are a total of 11 immediately selectable characters: Haohmaru, Genjuro, Ukyo, Nakoruru, Rimururu, Galford, Hanzo, Kazuki and Sogetsu from *SSIV*, and two new characters: **Shiki** and **Hanma Yagyu** (Apparently, no relation to Jubei). These characters' stories are not yet known, but they look hardcore, especially the two-tone-eyed Shiki... in fact, her name is written with the kanji for "Color." There's one sub-boss and a final boss. Apparently, the sub-boss is well over two normal character lengths tall! Madness!

As for new gameplay features, there are several: The first and most obvious change is the addition of a **Block** button, replacing kick. Attacks have been relegated to two buttons, and the fourth and final button is **Dash** button. Similar to *Bushido Blade*, this button can be held down to run in true 3-D space around the battle map. Unlike *Bushido Blade*, however, your **Stamina Gauge** (located on the left and right sides of the screen) steadily runs out as you dash, limiting you to a certain range of movement. As for other gameplay features, we know that the choice between Shura/Chivalry/Slash and Rasetsu/Treachery/Bust remains, except for the bosses. Pressing A+B+C once again invokes the Rage



SNK REPLACES 'KICK' AND 'MEDIUM SLASH' WITH 'BLOCK' AND 'DASH' BUTTONS! THE TRANSITION FROM 2-D TO 3-D IS COMPLETE!!



SOGETSU

HANZO

RIMURURU

GENJURO

HANMA

Explosion mode, where you can perform "Issen," the ultra life-draining attack that was accomplished in SSIV by pressing A+B+C again during Rage Explosion. The last and most mysterious new gameplay feature is the "Samurai Drive System," which appears to be a chain combo system. We'll bring you more information on this as it becomes available.

Well, that's all the information we've received. We'll bring you more Samurai 64 reports as we get information, as well as a report on SNK's second Hyper Neo-Geo 64 game, Road's Edge.

NR

SAMURAI SHODOWN
IS REBORN IN 3-D!

HACHIMARU

UKYC

GALFORD

NAKORURU

SHIKI

KAZUKI

Saga Frontier

PREVIEW



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SQUARE

PUBLISHER - SQUARE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN

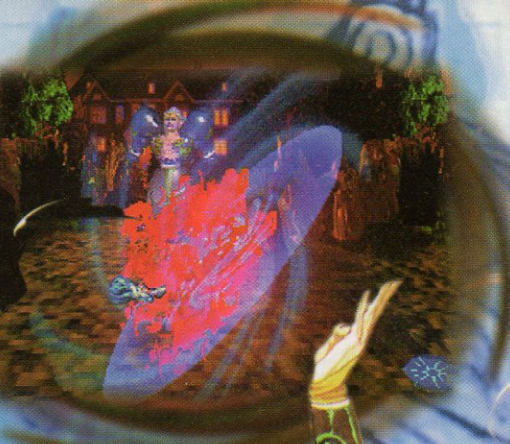


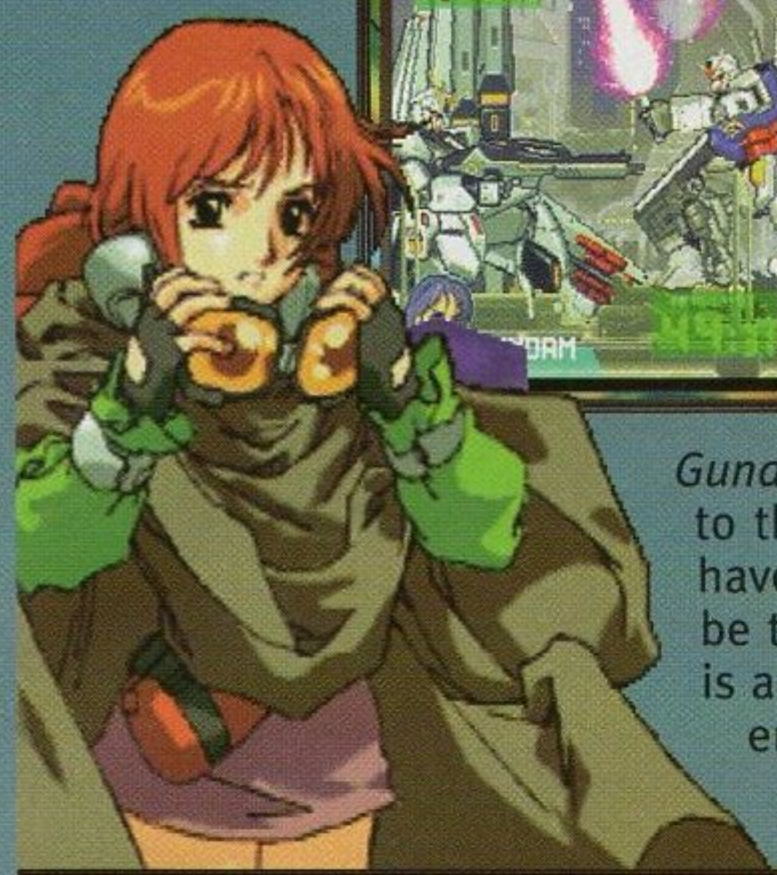
It's hard to write about Saga Frontier. So much of the game is groundbreaking, from the ultra nonlinearity, seemingly hundreds of party characters and beautiful backgrounds... but fundamentally, the game is grating and, well... not quite right. It begins with simply walking through the game's backdrops. Your character is pre-rendered, unlike FFVII's polygonal characters, so any radical perspective change in the backgrounds will make your character seem totally wrong... and this happens frequently. The impression of walking, no... floating around flat-as-a-pancake pictures really hits home. It's jarring, to say the least.

Unfortunately, this was my first impression of the game and it really stuck with me. The battles are also most unimpressive, with framey prerendered enemies pasted on a couple parallax layers. Some of the battle effects are semi-cool, but none touch FFVII's.

Also, though many of the backdrops are beautiful, the overall pastel color palette makes everything seem like a Barbie® house playset, or something. Saga Frontier's strengths definitely lie in the quest itself, which is typical Square excellence. You've probably never played a more non-linear console RPG, ever; there are tons of mini-quests to be found in the game's 30+ worlds, called Regions. The last boss and quest objective are apparently totally different depending on which character you choose, as well.

Well, I've said all that can be said about my admittedly extremely brief time with Saga Frontier. I'll play it some more and get back to you next month with an update if it proves worthy. If not, consider it Square's second-worst 32-bit game... right behind the PlayStation remake of Final Fantasy IV.





There have been many many Gundam games in the past, but nearly all of them have been un-exceptional. The recent Z-Gundam games on Saturn were good, but the countless side-scrolling SD

Gundam titles did nothing for me. Come to think of it, most of Bandai's games have done nothing for me. It seems to be the general consensus that Bandai is a better toymaker than a gamemaker. Which is what makes *Gundam: The Battle Master* all the more shocking. *G:TBM* is a 2D fighting game featuring recognizable mechs from the Gundam universe (the story line and characters are all new). But for once the license isn't the game's only selling point.

Firstly, *G:TBM* looks amazing. The mechs move and attack with an unprecedented degree of fluidity for a PS game. How can a system with such little



RAM produce characters so big that move so smoothly? The answer is segmentation. Rather than draw and animate the entire mech frame by frame (as is traditional for a 2D fighter) Bandai have instead opted to create each mech out of a series of connected sprite 'limbs' which scale and rotate independently, giving the impression of movement. The end result may not look as organic as traditional animation (it wouldn't work for humans) but for giant robots it works superbly.

Secondly, the game plays pretty well. The four main buttons are punch, kick, close combat weapon and projectile attack; while R1 and R2 make your mech fly momentarily. Special moves are pretty simply to access (basic fireball motions) and you can 'sway' into the background SNK-style by pressing any two buttons simultaneously.

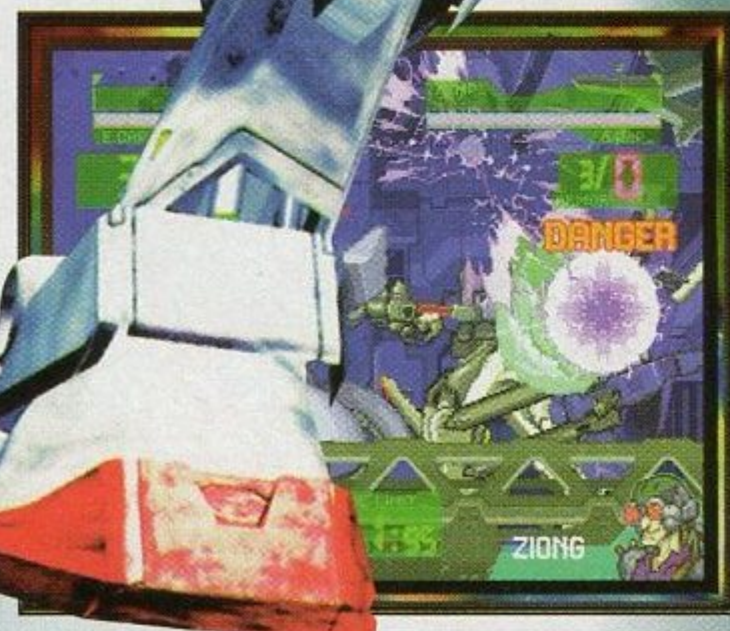
Due to the realistic nature of the mech's movement, the game plays pretty slowly (there isn't a great emphasis on combos) but this only serves to add to the 'simulation' feel of piloting a vast mech. Admittedly it's not going to be to everyone's tastes (I wouldn't consider it as a serious rival to either Capcom or SNK's 2D fighters), but the graphics are superb and it's definitely unique.

One thing's for sure: *Gundam* fans are gonna love it. **K**



GUNDAM

0079 THE WAR FOR EARTH



R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - BANDAI

PUBLISHER - BANDAI

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW (JAPAN)



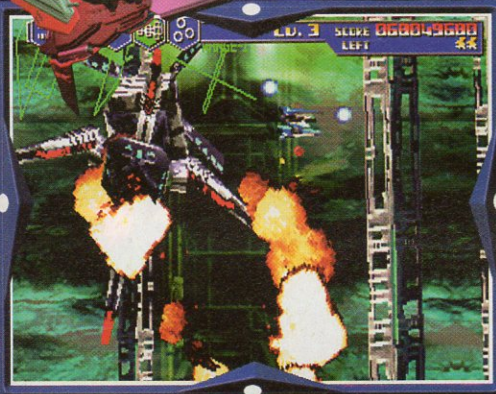
KNIGHTMARE
A *gasp* good
Gundam game?!
Whatever next?

An unmanned space inspection craft called Sekka reaches the surface of Pluto. After locating a mysterious object of non-human origin, Sekka returns from Pluto to the Lunar district for inspection. Scientists determine that the object is made of an advanced technology, dubbed Vastian's Steel (Vasteel). A half century later, at the Earth island research center of Babel, Vasteel technology has been analyzed and perfected by the artificial intelligence program Guardian. 6 years later, the people of Babel vote to immigrate to other planets. Excessive armor and weapons are attached to everything used in the immigration, but this fact is known only to Guardian. Suddenly Guardian goes off-line, declaring war against humankind, and 1/3 of the population is lost in a vicious attack. The last of the humans develop the special fighter RVR-01 Gauntlet and form a last ditch squadron to eliminate Guardian...and that can only mean one thing: The return of the Thunderforce.

Thunderforce might well be the most respected shooter series ever. We've all enjoyed the likes of *Axelay*, *Gaires*, *Phalanx*, and the *Darius* games, but with this, the fifth *Thunderforce* game, it's clear that Technosoft respects their devout shooter fans to no end. It's also clear that they refuse to part with the successful formula developed over years of incredible game design. The result? *Thunderforce V*, one of the best shooters ever conceived.

Let the shower of praise begin! First, the details everyone wants to know about, like graphics. *Thunderforce V* is definitely the most graphically impressive game in the series. Sure, you say, that's not exactly a huge statement considering this one's on a 32-bit system, but it is. The 16-bit *Thunderforce* games were state-of-the-art, usually far and above anything else on any home system at the time. And *Thunderforce V*, by 32-bit standards, is right up there with the best (by "the best" I mean the excellence of *Roystorm & Philosoma*). Play through the first three levels to witness gorgeous, silky smooth line scrolling and excellent background transparencies, continue onwards to levels four, five, and six and be treated to a graphic masterpiece. Polygons assault you throughout, literally, as almost every enemy and boss is fully 3D modeled and even light-sourced based on the color and brightness of the background. Although for brief moments at a time the game does slow down, it is almost appreciable when you consider the explosion of activity, both sprite-based and polygonal,

THUNDER



"Thunderforce V, one of the best shooters ever conceived."



TWIN SHOT

BACK

WAVE

FREE RANGE

HUNTER

on-screen. As we continue through this glowing review, however, you'll see that graphics are but a small part of *TFV*'s superiority...

Gameplay. Sweet, blessed gameplay. That's what makes or breaks a shooter. *Thunderforce V* is perhaps the most satisfying single-player shooter I've ever experienced. You're equipped with the standard Twin shot to begin with, as well as the Back shot, and complex play-mechanics requiring both weapons immediately come into effect. Within moments you'll begin to feel the power of *TFV*'s beautiful design. The enemy patterns and level construction are simply brilliant, perfectly measured in all aspects to peak your reflexes and judgment. Literally every kind of shooter play-mechanic has been covered, from intense dodging scenarios (bullets and objects) to highly creative boss encounters. Each of the seven huge levels split-up and change several times. A high-tech cityscape, for example, loaded with tanks, turrets, and giant attack cycles, reaches powerful heights among beautiful multi-layered skies. Enemies of every variety, whether a huge formation of laser ships, mad rows of homing missiles, or insane galloping mech-beasts challenge even the best shooter players. That's why you've got big guns, though. Power-ups include the Wave, a straight-forward giga-beam, Free-Range, an awesome rotating targeting laser, and Hunter, the weak but effective homing shot. You can completely re-map the controls so that, for example, each button on the pad fires its own power-up (eliminating the cumbersome need to cycle through weapons mid-game). Even the on-screen power-up display

REMI
Reinforcement of Fighting Unit Investigation
Power & 3.5
Program & 3.5

Weapon

CCS

PHOTON RIFLE

Refined "Vasteel" Replica-01 "GAUNTLET"
"THUNDER FORCE" THE EARTH SIDE SPECIAL COMBAT TEAM NO.222

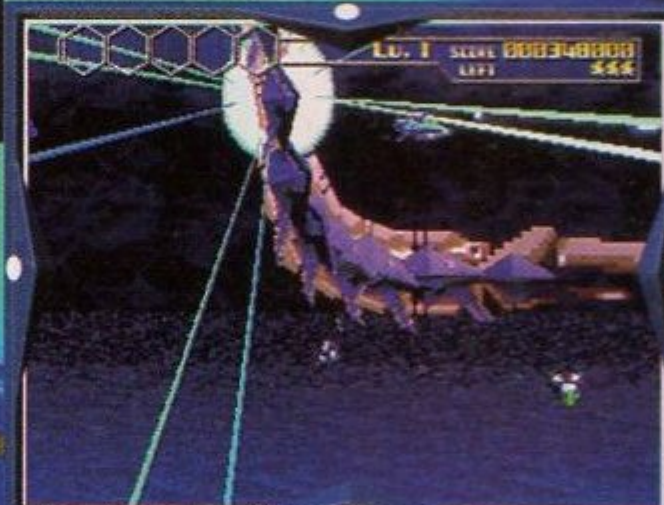
can be re-configured to your personal tastes, or you can choose to play with no window display whatsoever. Do you see what I'm getting at? Is this the ultimate shooter or what?

Let's briefly go through the "Technosoft is so cool" details now. First-off, continuity with the *Thunderforce* series. As you can tell, the mother brain-like generic plot doesn't leave much room for a connection, but make it to Level 4 and surprise, surprise it's the final boss from *TF4*! Introduced by an incredible arranged version of his original boss tunes from *TF4*, the little booger swoops in from nowhere, slaps on a set of battle armor, and begins the fierce, nostalgic battle. How cool is that? Mmn...what else? Oh yeah, the music. It's perfect, it's Technosoft, it's a *Thunderforce* game, and it's arranged. I couldn't have wished for a better soundtrack (driving, insane synth-rock) for such a powerful game.

Well, it's time to go play again. I must beat it! Be warned: *Thunderforce V* is tough, hard-core, man-style all the way through. If you can finish it, you've got major shooter skills. Nobody's picking this one up (SOA had a chance to bring it over but passed... doh!), so call an importer and order yourself a copy. The Special Pack even comes with a cool *TF* music compilation disc. You won't regret it, I promise.



THUNDERFORCE V



R
REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - TECHNOSOFT

PUBLISHER - TECHNOSOFT

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - REALLY HARD

AVAILABLE - NOW (JAPAN)



GLITCH

Thunderforce
is BACK!



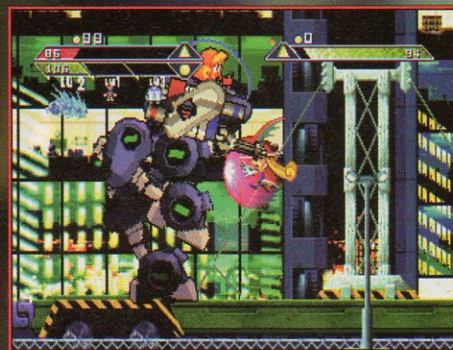
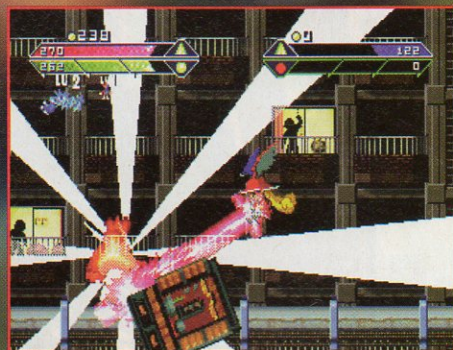
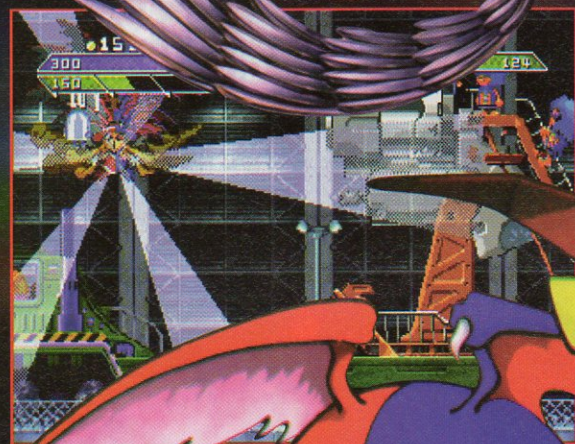
SILHOUETTE MIRAGE

Silhouette Mirage, Treasure's second endeavor on the Saturn, is scheduled to hit Japanese systems on September 9th. Sega UK has already picked it up, but, par for the course, SOA has yet to. If they don't, what could be one of the greatest Saturn achievements ever could pass by our solar system, causing further meltdown among Saturn users. We've scolded them on this one for months now. The rest is up to them.

Regardless, here's a look at the first stage in the game, playable on a recent demo released in Japan. Early on, I can already tell you that in the special effects and play mechanics departments, *Mirage* is going to be a break-through title (as most Treasure games are). Shaina attacks enemies with one of up to three selectable powers she can buy and, depending on the enemy's type, must attack with either her red or blue side. In the 21st century there are two types of beings: silhouette and Mirage. Shaina happens to be both. Her blue side won't effect a red silhouette and vice versa. Cool or what? Treasure are geniuses.

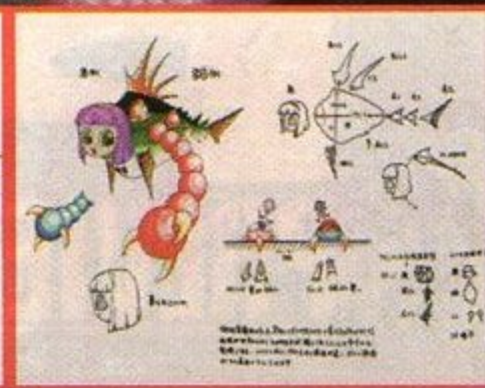
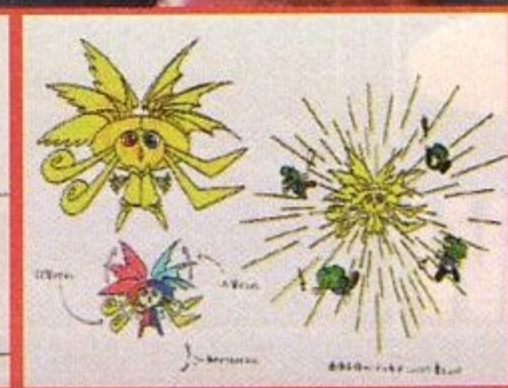
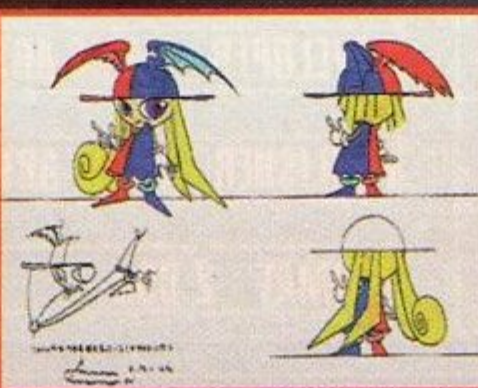
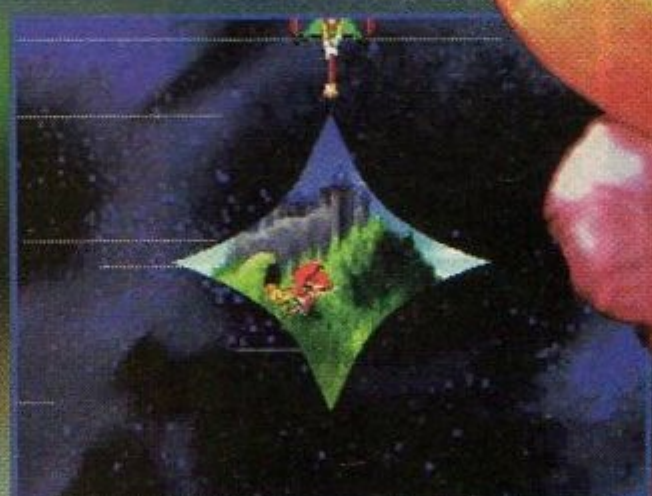
The music is pure Treasure, the gameplay—an adrenaline rush, and yes, as all Treasure games provide, you'll have a distinct feeling you've never been here before. It's all original and all good-'n-tasty so look for it Japanese-style in September or pray SOA finds them-

selves... again.





GAG! THIS GAME DESERVES ATTENTION!
WAKE UP, SEGA!!



My usual comment for a good-looking Saturn game tends to be "Wow... this looks good, for Saturn." Whether I say this because of an innate, subconscious distaste for the Saturn based on the perception of the system in the U.S. or simply PlayStation bias I don't know, but, at any rate, that's what I said upon seeing Grandia. Yet, this time, a spark of realization came to me: Is this not "good" (I should have said "unbelievable.") for any system? Indeed, it is. Grandia is the best-looking home game of all time, save perhaps Konami's Metal Gear Solid. Grandia will inevitably be compared to Final Fantasy VII, so let's cut right to the chase: FFXVII is pre-rendered, which is nice, but Grandia is entirely polygonal, 100% fully 3-D, with a level of detail that simply shouldn't be. Just look at these shots, then try and imagine them moving in real time with 360° camera control. It's unthinkable, for any platform. Until I saw Grandia running on an actual Saturn—the very same Saturn that's been running 3-D games of literally half the quality of Grandia for the past three years—I would have never, ever believed it could exist.

Grandia isn't all about graphics, either: It has an awe-inspiring soundtrack by Noriyuki Iwadare of Two-Five, who did the music for both Lunars. Take it from me, folks: This soundtrack is MAD.

The developers have said that Grandia's storyline will be nowhere near as serious as that of their Lunar series, and it shows, based on the astounding demo that was released free to the Japanese public last month: There's no all-pervading evil, no discernable goal... in fact, everyone seems pretty happy. The main character, Justin, is just a boy looking for adventure, like his father before him. However, this will probably get a bit more serious during the course of the game.

Unfortunately, in true GameArts style, Grandia has no release date and probably won't come out for many, many months. They'll be lucky if they can get the 2-CD game out before the end of the year, but they claim it's on schedule. But hey, for this level of quality, I'd wait a lifetime. As soon as there's any more information to bring you on Grandia, you'll see it here first. T

GRANDIA

P
PREVIEW



DEVELOPER - GAME ARTS

OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - GAME ARTS/ESP

DIFFICULTY - UNKNOWN

FORMAT - 2 CDs

AVAILABLE - '97 (IF WE'RE LUCKY)



TAKAHARA
I have
returned!
...perhaps.

As one of the quintessential anime series of the 1980's, *Macross* has made the inevitable leap to the interactive realm on several occasions, with varying degrees of success. Taking the form of a side scrolling shooter, this latest *Macross* game (based entirely on the original *Macross* feature circa 1984) is fairly entertaining, as shooters go, and is certainly much better than the tragedy that is *Macross VFX* for the PS.

Filling up two CDs (huge amounts of anime are packed in) the action in *Macross* follows the story of the movie exactly. From the rescue of Minmay to the death of Roy Focker, it's all here, presented either through the FMV or the in-game graphics. Surely this is where the bulk of the appeal lies with this

game. Bandai has made the most of the *Macross* license and fans of the anime are going to be ecstatic. It's too bad the game itself is merely good, not great.

While the graphics are up to the challenge with cool line scrolling floors and ceilings, scaling sprites, generous parallax and decent ship animation, there is a decided lack of intensity in the gameplay. Perhaps this is a side-effect of the game following the story of the anime so closely (and thus not allowing for much leeway in the nature of the action). Regardless, a good shooter should be a nerve-wracking experience, in my opinion, and *Macross* simply lacks that adrenaline punch.

Still, for *Macross* fans this is the best use of the license so far, and as such, it is noteworthy. Just don't expect the type of white-knuckle intensity that is *Thunder Force 5*. **SD**

超時空要塞 MACROSS

愛・おぼえていますか

R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - BANDAI

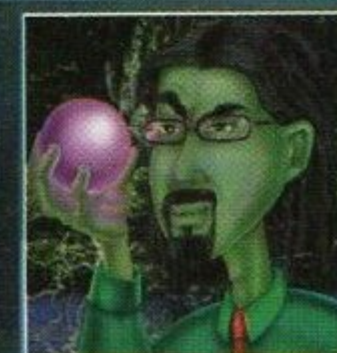
OF PLAYERS - 1

PUBLISHER - BANDAI

DIFFICULTY - EASY

FORMAT - CD X2

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



**SUBSTANCE
DECULTURE**
Deculture?
Yeck! Deculture!

P
PREVIEW



PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - UNKNOWN

AVAILABLE - 8/97 JPN., ? U.S.



SHIN ROX



Wait a second... wasn't this game supposed to come out over a year ago? Indeed, it was, but you'll be glad Capcom postponed it in the long run...

they've added superskills. They've taken the already perfectly cool Breath of Fire III that we had the chance to preview last year and increased the frame-rate, added tons of new graphical features, redesigned the characters (this new art HAS to be by Kinu Nishimura. Am I right?) and added incredible spell effects. Now all that remains is a good translation (painful memories of Breath of Fire II's translation come to mind... no, they'd never let that happen again...) and you'll have what's sure to be one of the top two or three RPGs to come out thus far for the U.S. PlayStation.

The story, like the first two Breath of Fires, takes the same characters and places them in all-new scenarios, assuming that stories past never occurred... it's almost like every game in the series is one of those hokey What If comics. Um, actually, it's cooler than that. Never mind.

Breath of Fire III takes the 3/4 battle view of the originals one step further—the whole game is in this perspective, and the beautiful environments are polygonal, ala Dark Savior or the upcoming Grandia. You're not stuck in the same view forever, either... The L and R buttons must be used to rotate and shift the angle, as hidden treasure and whatnot is often hidden behind polygonal walls. Another skills feature of Breath of Fire III's

polygon engine is the transition to battles... there is none. All fights take place on the same screen you're wandering around in. The battle animation is also excellent—superbly animated in true Capcom fighting-game style. There's even fighting game-style voices for each character's special and magic attacks (yup, all of them. And one character can have like twenty spells!)

Well, I don't have much more room. As soon as the Japanese version is released on 9/11, we'll have another, in-depth pre-view.

SR

Hardcore Spell Effects! This version of Breath of Fire III differs little from the preview we brought you almost a year ago, except for the improved graphics engine and the incredibly hardcore spell effects. Though not up to, say, FFVII standards, they're WAY better than Wild Arms' and even feature a few effects I haven't seen done before. BoFIII represents new heights of 3D skills from Capcom. Respect!!





A cute, wacky bunch of characters fighting it out in a game that's half serious and half insanity? I know, I couldn't believe the concept either! Okay, putting aside the sarcasm, *Waku Waku 7* is yet another fighting game that is among the "between-genre" titles. The creators tried to make a fighting engine that was serious and structured, but also includes some really out-there concepts and characters. How are you supposed to cower in fear when you're facing a giant Totoro with a little girl hanging from his back?

Sunsoft did attempt to make *Waku Waku 7* a serious fighting game, giving them credit, and it certainly shows. The control is very solid, and there's a good amount of possibilities when it comes to combos and juggles. The super system is a bit expanded over most games, giving you three possible specials: a standard "super-type" move, a high-impact charging special move, and the ability to power yourself up and increase the damage of your attacks. The choice of what you can do is really nice, and your super bar unleashes only one or two standard special moves.

The game, however, has some serious downfalls. Putting it simply, it's slow: characters move annoyingly slow, and there's some really noticeable slowdown in the game at times. The question is raised as to why this slowness occurs, and if the RAM cart is being used for all it's worth. The backgrounds are very pixelly and low in detail, the music and voices aren't as clear as they should be, and the characters aren't extremely detailed or animated (though some, such as Tesse, are animated very nicely). Because of all this, while *Waku Waku 7* was a decent attempt, it's just can't stand up to the quality of other Saturn fighting games. It could have been a very cool title, but just falls short in the process. **S**



R
REVIEW



DEVELOPER - SUNSOFT

PUBLISHER - SUNSOFT

FORMAT - CD+RAM CART

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - MODERATE

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



SHIDOSHI
Waka Waka
Seven? Waku
Waku Seven...
I am a con-
fused child...



GuyBrave came as somewhat of a surprise this month. This unique, polygonal action/RPG features a detailed quest you can begin with any of four cool little mechs, five camera positions (each with zoom) during battle, and smooth, 30 fps polygon action. Multiple weapons can be bought and stored as well as energy cells for the long battles that link the intriguing storyline. A highly recommended import.



It may have 16-bit quality animation and herky-jerky controls but *Gowkaiser's* (the game which the anime is based on) got what no other 2D fighter does... Diorama. Since all PS games (even 2D ones) are polygonal, the designers (wisely, the game has little other merit) decided to have some fun and allow us a peek, shall we say, behind the scenes. Don't look for this one Stateside. Not only is it poor but there's 'nekkid' girls in it!





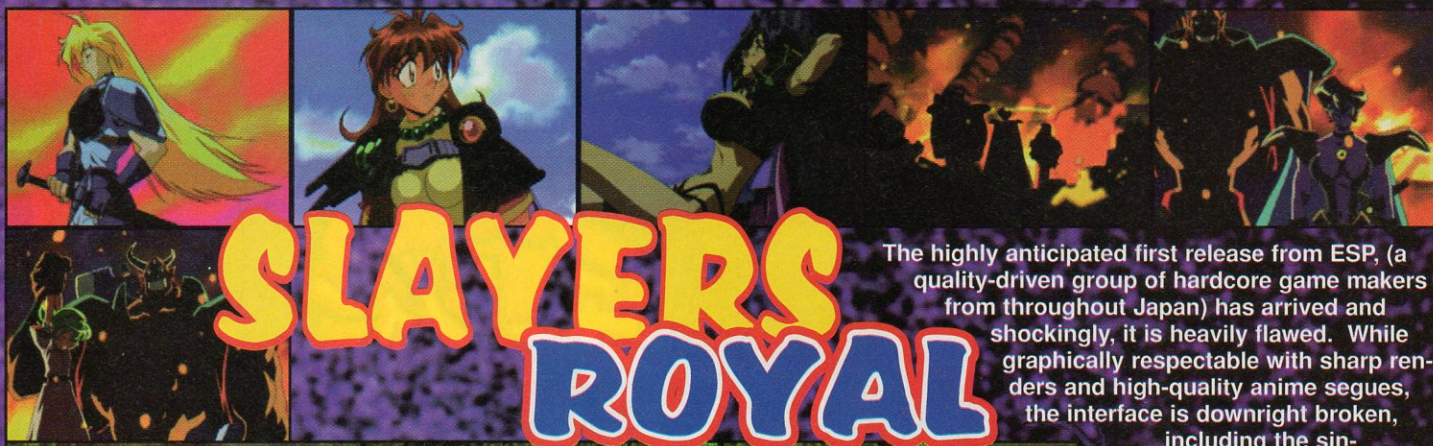
Alien Mice have begun to infiltrate the Earth and so Cheesy (originally scheduled for release in the UK and US) in all of his floaty 3D glory, must save the day! In Cheesy's defense, with four engines (top down, 3D first person, 2.5D *a la Clockwork Knight*, and free roaming) it's a diverse game, and, although floaty... kinda fun. There's a bungee drop like the one in *EWJ* and generally the bosses are quite cool. The music is really good and, well, this game's pretty okay. It's all rendered up and ready to go now in Japan. So if you just can't get enough of this cool platform critter, give it a look.



パンツァー-パンディット PANZER BANDIT

Bandai liked Treasure's *Guardian Heroes* so much they decided to make one of their own for the PlayStation and its millions of happy users in Japan. *Panzer Bandit*, like *GH*, features infinite juggles, spectacular effects, crazy aerial antics, and play on and between two parallel strips of playfield. It also features surprisingly striking art with a definitive style (a first for Bandai in my book), really great control and good music. Our first playable featured only one level but a final is on its way (the game will be available from 8/7 in Japan) so look for a review next month.





The highly anticipated first release from ESP, (a quality-driven group of hardcore game makers from throughout Japan) has arrived and shockingly, it is heavily flawed. While graphically respectable with sharp renders and high-quality anime segues, the interface is downright broken, including the single worst sound effect



(as you toggle through options) in gaming history. Your dog *will* bite you if you bring *Slayers* home. Since it is based on a great anime series (it's been on Japanese TV forever now) it's worth a go for super hardcore fans, but everyone else stay far away. ESP's second release (Treasure's amazing *Silhouette Mirage*) is due Sept. 9th. Save your coins for one of the year's best!

ビューポイント (VYUPOINTO)

TITLE	DEVELOPER	DIST.	RATING	GRAPHICS•CONTROL•PLAY MECHANICS•MUSIC ORIGINALITY•TOTAL SCORE (BEST BEING 50)
CHEESY • OCEAN / JALECO • G				G-7 C-7 P-6 M-8.5 O-7 35.5/50

TITLE	DEVELOPER	DIST.	RATING	
SLAYERS • SOFT X / ESP • PG				G-8 C-4 P-5 M-6 O-7 30/50

TITLE	DEVELOPER	DIST.	RATING	
GOWKAISER • URBAN PLANT • PG				G-3 C-5 P-3 M-5 O-3 19/50

TITLE	DEVELOPER	DIST.	RATING	
GUYBRAVE • ALEXA / AVIT • G				G-8.5 C-8 P-9 M-8 O-9 42.5/50

THE RATINGS: G- SAFE FOR ALL AGES AND SPECIES. PG- SUGGESTIVE AND PERHAPS JIGGLY, BUT NO NUDDY. R-NUDES, FREAKY AND/OR GENERALLY NIGHTMARE-INDUCING SITUATIONS.

MAKIN' 'EM SHAKE!

AND WHY NOT! This past July Nintendo (Japan) released special Jolt-Pak versions of



both *Super Mario 64* and *Waverace 64*. Both make good use of the Pak's vibrations. It's also the first crack Japanese gamers will get at the US version of Mario.

The Guvnor presents...

EUROPA

British developers have gone into 3D platform adventure overdrive in the wake of *Super Mario 64*. As well as *Banjo-Kazooie* and *Conker's Quest* from Rare, Scottish developer VIS are working on *Earthworm Jim 3D*, Argonaut are 'doing' *Croc* for Fox Interactive, and Psygnosis are touting *Rascal*, all of which are looking pretty damned fine.

Fed up with Japanese gamers getting top N64 releases first? You've got it lucky compared to your European counterparts. Latest releases include the marvels of *Kl Gold* and *MK Trilogy*, with no sign of *Starfox* for a least another couple of months. Still, at least we had *ISS 64* first.

More *Starfox* news. Ex-patriots and sad games-obsessed freaks may recall that the original SNES *Starfox* was released in Europe under the name *Starwing*, for licensing reasons. After poor sales, especially in Germany, Nintendo Europe are looking to rename the 64-bit sequel to... (wait for it) *Lylat Wars*.

Nintendo's pet coders Rare apparently have another game in the works. This previously unannounced project may even be released before *Banjo-Kazooie*, but Rare are tight-lipped as to its identity. By a process of elimination, we've discovered that it's not *Donkey Kong 64*, it's not *Killer Instinct 64* and it's not... er, *Jet Pac 64*.

Saturn sales have picked up dramatically in the UK since the hardware price drop to £99, but third party developers in this country are abandoning the ailing machine in droves. Acclaim have no new titles lined up, while long-time Sega associates Codemasters have indefinitely postponed the release of *Micro Machines V3*.

In other Saturn news, Sega have finally decided to release *King of Fighters 95* with the ROM cart in Europe. There's no sign of the RAM

cart though, which may jeopardize the release of such Capcom delights as *Marvel Super Heroes*, the *X-Men vs...* games and *SF III*.

Sony are so impressed with Cambridge-based developer Millennium and their hot title *Medievil*, that they have bought the entire company.

Ocean's shiny new PlayStation racer *V-Rally* has stormed to the top of the UK charts, selling 15,000 copies in its first weekend and trampling all over other high-profile releases such as *Dungeon Keeper*. *V-Rally* now has the 4th best 'first weekend sale' of all time over here, doing better than *WipeOut* (AKA *WipeOut*); which is commonly acknowledged to have 'sold' the PlayStation to the British public.

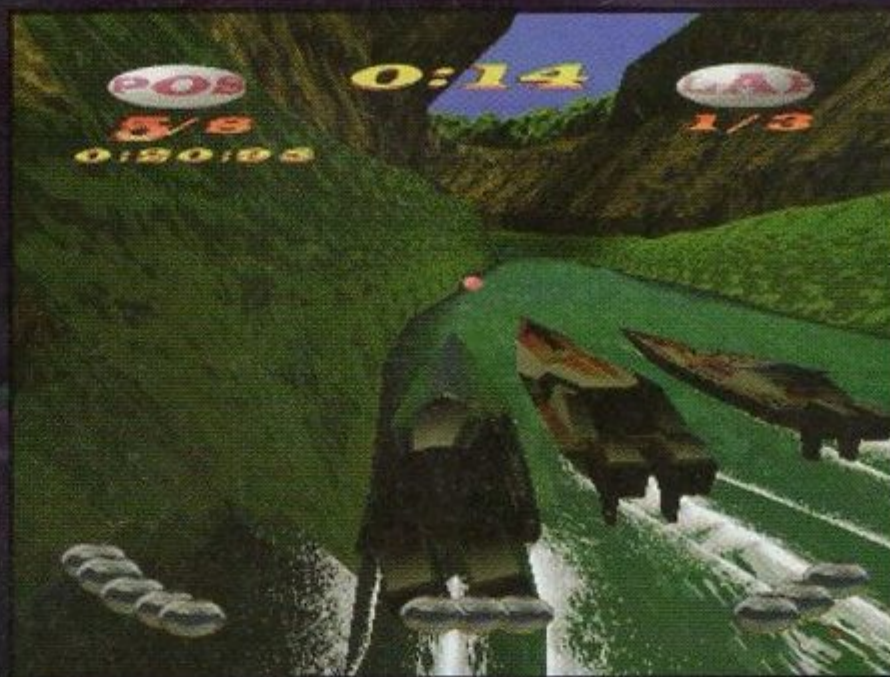
The strong sales of PlayStation games such as *V-Rally* coincide with increasingly poor sales of PC software in Britain. Even top titles like *Quake* have only sold around 600,000 units, and most PC releases are heavily discounted by around £15 (\$25) from launch. Top selling PC software right now - IBM's *Voicetype* utility. Fun, fun, fun.

MEDIEVIL

Medievil tells the tale of an ancient land locked in perpetual night by an evil sorcerer named Zarok. After sending the populace to sleep, Zarok stalks the land stealing energy from the minds of his slumbering victims. However, his trail of magic starts to re-animate the dead, including one Sir Daniel Fortesque, a heroic knight who has decayed to a skeleton inside his armor. Wishing only to return to his eternal rest, Daniel sets off in search of Zarok, not knowing that Zarok's magic has also resurrected certain other creatures, whose intentions aren't quite so honorable...

Medievil is essentially a 3D action/adventure which owes more than a passing debt to Capcom's 2D

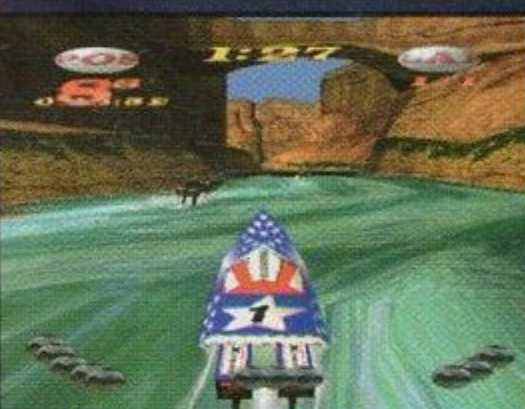
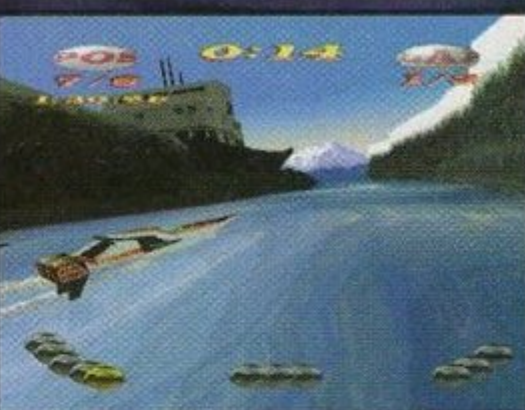
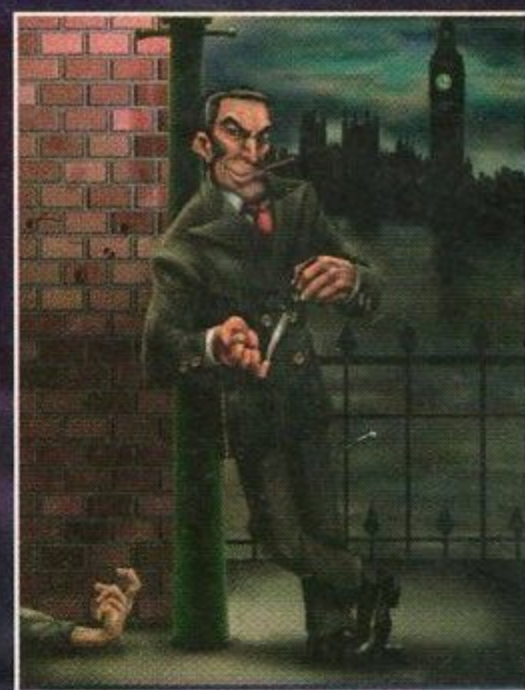
'Ere, me Nobby Stiles are givin' me grief... must be all those pukka UK games I've been a-playin', mates! Here's another round-up of top European software... Guvnor style!



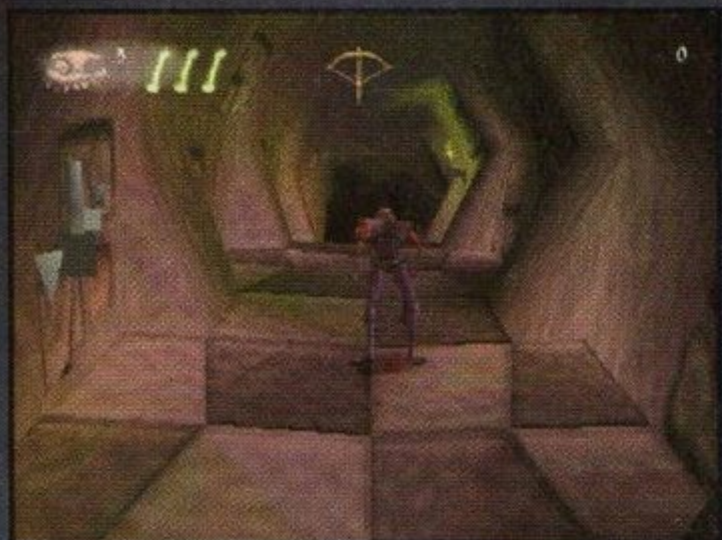
classic *Ghouls'n'Ghosts*. Players take control of Daniel as he runs, jumps and shoots his way through 30+ huge levels of hardcore action, including a graveyard, a spooky village, a (once) deserted battlefield, an asylum, a forest, a floating ghost ship, and finally, Zarok's stronghold. There are multiple weapons to choose from (with daggers and axes straight out of G&G), potions to drink (one of which turns Daniel into a fire breathing dragon) and a huge cast of bizarre monsters, including a living gallows which uses the man hanging from it to hit Dan and a boss made of glass that bursts from a window to attack. The graphics are amazing, the music is enthralling, and you can expect to see much more on this hot title in a forthcoming GF.

RAPID RACER

PS owners jealous of Nintendo's *WaveRace* may finally have something to ease the pain. Best described as 'WipeOut on water' *Rapid Racer* is a powerboat racing sim which pits you against seven other boats over a total of 18 courses set in a myriad of exotic locations. What makes this title stand out from the crowd, however, are the graphics. Hi-res (like *Tobal 2*) and 60 fps, *Rapid Racer* comes as close to replicating the look of a Model 2 game at home as any console title ever has. Amazing water effects, realistic physics (wake from other boats actually effects the handling of your craft), a split screen two player mode (both horizontal and vertical) and Fractal mode that randomly generates one of 256,000 tracks! Who says nothing good ever comes out of Europe?



THE PS GETS MEDIEVIL



OTHER STUFF

SEGA

Word reaches us that Sonic Team's final Saturn project will NOT be a sequel to either Sonic OR NIGHTS! Instead the game will feature an all new Sega mascot in a 3D action title that will lead Sega's Christmas Saturn line-up.

The Blackbelt is go! A demonstration video of what the system is capable of is already doing the rounds at Sega (think Model 3 at home!) and rumor has it that Sega of Japan has already begun development on between three and six new titles, including *VF3*, *Scud Racer* and *Soccer*.

Speaking of *VF3*, Yu Suzuki recently confirmed that there will be a new version of *VF3* hitting the arcades very shortly. This new version of the game will feature a team battle mode and more balanced characters. No word yet as to whether or not these new features will be incorporated into the Saturn version of *VF3* but it's likely, considering how a similar situation existed with the Saturn *VF2*.

Sega of America still hasn't confirmed that they will be releasing GameArt's amazing *Grandia* in the US, although we hear that Sega UK is expecting the game for a March release. Also, no word on *Silhouette Mirage* or *Thunderforce V*. Come on, SOA! Get it together!

CAPCOM & SEGA

There's a really strange rumor going round that a special version of *Street Fighter EX* might be coming to Saturn sometime next year. I know it sounds strange, but it is said to have something to do with a deal between Capcom and Sega regarding Capcom using Sega's model 3 hardware for *SFEX2*! Capcom recently announced that *Darkstalkers 3*, *Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter*, *X-Men vs. Street Fighter*, and *Street Fighter 3* will all be Saturn EXCLUSIVES and will make use of the all new 4 meg RAM cartridge to be released in Japan.

WARPED?

Warp, the creators of *D's Diner*, have hinted that they might be porting their first proposed M2 game, *D2*, to the Saturn. Kenji Eno, the owner and President of Warp, recently met with Sega on four separate occasions to discuss the project, so it may be a Saturn exclusive. Warp is also working on *Real Sound 2 & 3*. *RS 2* will debut as *D's Diner: Real Sound version* later next year and *RS 3* will debut as *Spy Launch: a comedy*. Kenji Eno and Yu Suzuki are also said to be developing a game together. Additionally, Warp is said to be producing an AM Arcade game with Sega (Model 3).

SEGA AT TOKYO GAME SHOW

Here's a quick list of some of the upcoming 80 Sega Saturn games to be displayed at the Tokyo Game Show this September:

Dead or Alive
Darkstalkers 3
X-Men vs. Street Fighter
Sonic R
Virtua All Japan Pro Wrestling
Sega Touring Car Championship

Solo Crisis

Mobile Suit Gundam Z
Castlevania X
Riven: The Sequel to Myst
Sakura Taisen 2
Legend of Seven Wind Island
Devil Summoner 2
Grandia

PLAYSTATION DOMINANCE CONTINUES

PS continues to dominate in Japan, with weekly sales of 50,000 compared to Saturn's 5000 and N64's 4000. Cumulative shipments of the PS recently reached 17.6 million units (!) as of June 30, up 4.1 million units since March 31. That's a lot of PlayStations!

Working Designs has picked up *Alundra* for a US release and aims to have the game out before the end of the year.

Square recently announced a new RPG starring everyone's favorite over-sized mutant chicken: the Chocobo! No news on an exact release date, but expect to see *Chocobo RPG* some time next year.

In Japan, Sony recently ceased production of their analog pads because of some complications with the 'force feedback' feature (possibly due to copyright infringement?). We're still waiting to see if Sony will manufacture the pads without the feedback...

PS GAMES AT THE TOKYO GAME SHOW

Tekken 3
Resident Evil Director's Cut
Metal Gear Solid
Parasite Eve
Front Mission Alternative
Front Mission 2
Tale of Destiny
Einhander
Tomb Raider 2
Resident Evil 2

NINTENDO

The 64DD, which has been confirmed for a Summer '98 release, is now rumored to debut in the US at \$99 with a game! The 64DD will come with 8 Megabytes of ROM (7 megabytes for sound samples and 1 megabyte for fonts) and as previously reported: 4 megabytes of RAM and a communication line (phone jack). 20 games are currently under development in Japan and a further 15 in the US. Konami's Action/RPG *Hybrid Heaven* will be one of the first 64DD games to feature modern gameplay and will be the first in a series of 64DD games, according to the developers at Konami. Also in development is a sequel to *Super Mario Kart R*, a new upgrade featuring 20 brand new tracks, 4 new characters (one of which is rumored to be Fox McCloud from *StarFox*) and a new vs. mode which will utilize the writable feature of the 64DD. Bandai has two different versions of *Tamagotchi* planned for Nintendo, who are programming the N64 and 64DD versions at their Kyoto headquarters in Japan. The cartridge version is 96 megabits and should be out by the end of the year in Japan.

Nintendo of Japan is also working on a fighting game which is supposed to be out by the end

of the year and will debut at the Nintendo Shoshinkai show in November. The only info we have is that the game will feature one new character and will be comical in style, like Sega's *Sonic Fighters* arcade game.

Mother 3 will also be at the Shoshinkai. According to sources close to the project at Hal, Mr. Itoh is already planning several sequels to *Mother 3*. *Mother 3* will feature '12 chapters' and will be the first RPG on a home console EVER to feature different paths for every single player. *Mother 3* will be 40 to 60 hours long and will launch on March 21st (date might still change) in Japan along with *Mario Paint*, *Sim City 64* and *Pocket Monsters 64*. I finally have some info on *Super Mario 64 2*: Apparently it will be a 64DD disk with 4 playable characters and a 2 player simultaneous mode.

FINAL ROUND

- Crystal Dynamics recently formed a distribution partnership with Midway. The first game will be *Gex: Enter the Gecko* for N64.
- Zelda 64* will ship one week after Shoshinkai and will now feature blood! The game will also be rumble pack compatible.
- Konami is porting *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* to Saturn (and adding exclusive features). *Vandal Hearts* and the amazing *Metal Gear Solid* are also rumored to be in the works...
- Quake 64* has been delayed until March 1998 as Midway is planning on adding some form of multiplayer mode! Coolio, Daddy-o!
- Ultra Donkey Kong* will be the first Rare game to run at 60 fps at 640x480. It will ship in March with the American release of the DD64.
- Yoshi's Island 64* will feature 60 fps animation—that's 60 different frames of animation per second! It will use both the d-pad and analog stick for control. Burn me in the pits of Hades if I lie!
- F-Zero 64* is 80% complete and could ship as early as September in Japan. It will have the same background story as the SNES original, and will feature at least 20 tracks with a 4 player mode and rumble pack compatibility.

TACTICS OGRE HEADED TO STATES

Artdink's PS remake of the popular SNES strategy/RPG *Tactics Ogre* (originally by Quest, who were recently acquired by Square for *FF Tactics*) is headed to the US thanks to Atlus. Unlike *Ogre Battle*, this is the first time *Tactics Ogre* has appeared in the States (the SNES version did not receive a translation).



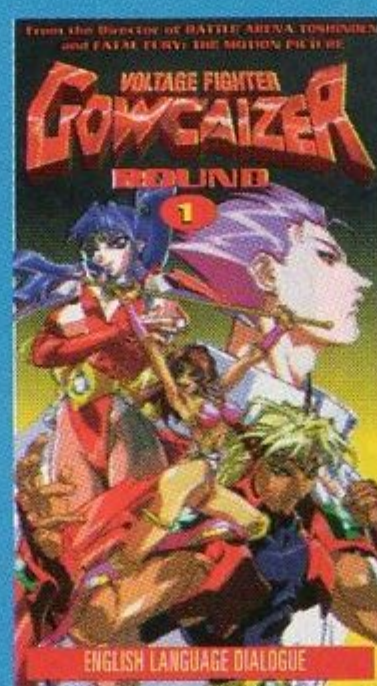
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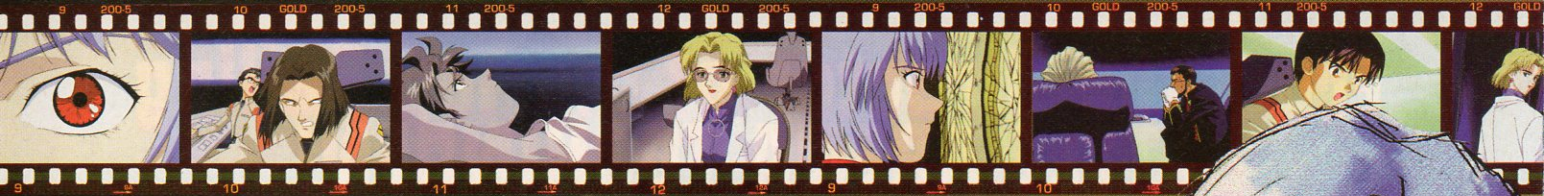
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Priming

af If all goes well with this issue of GameFan, there's still a few weeks before A.D.Vision's *Evangelion Genesis 0:7* goes on sale. Yet in our quest to cover *Evangelion* every issue, we're bringing you this pre/review: We're reviewing the subtitled edition now, but we'll have to wait until next month to comment on the dub, which we haven't heard yet.

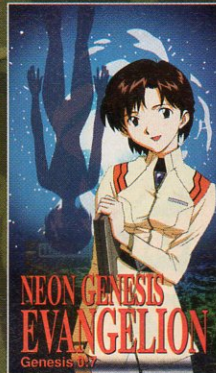
Genesis 0:7 is an interesting volume in that it contains the final Angel combat filler episode in the series, 13, as well as the beginning of the true drama in Episode 14. Episode 13, "Angel Invasion/Lilliputian Hitcher" deals with the appearance of the eleventh angel *inside* the computer system that controls all of Tokyo-3, MAGI. Apparently, the Angel is trying to make contact with Adam, the entity that Gendo referred to as "the first human being" early in the series. As it penetrates further and further into MAGI's defenses, it evolves, gaining control of two of the three main MAGI computers, Melchior and Balthasar. The only chance NERV has is to pit Caspar, the remaining computer, against the Angel, but the machine can't win on its own: It will need the guidance of Ritsuko, whose mother designed the MAGI computer system, imbuing it with her own personality. Can Ritsuko overcome her mother's arcane programming as well as the Angel in the 20 seconds that remain before total contamination?

Episode 14 is, for me, one of the lower points in the series: Half of it is a re-cap of previous episodes, with voice-overs and captions. One could assume that this is the point in production when Gainax's funding began to run thin. It does, however, have a deep and introspective poetic journey through Rei's mind, beautifully acted by the ridiculously talented Megumi Hayashibara. It'll be quite interesting to see how Rei's American voice actress handles this incredibly poignant scene. The remainder of the episode reveals that perhaps the Evas have minds of their own: Does Unit 00 want to kill Rei?

We'll be back next month, as usual, with a review of both the dubbed *Genesis 0:7* and *Genesis 0:8*.

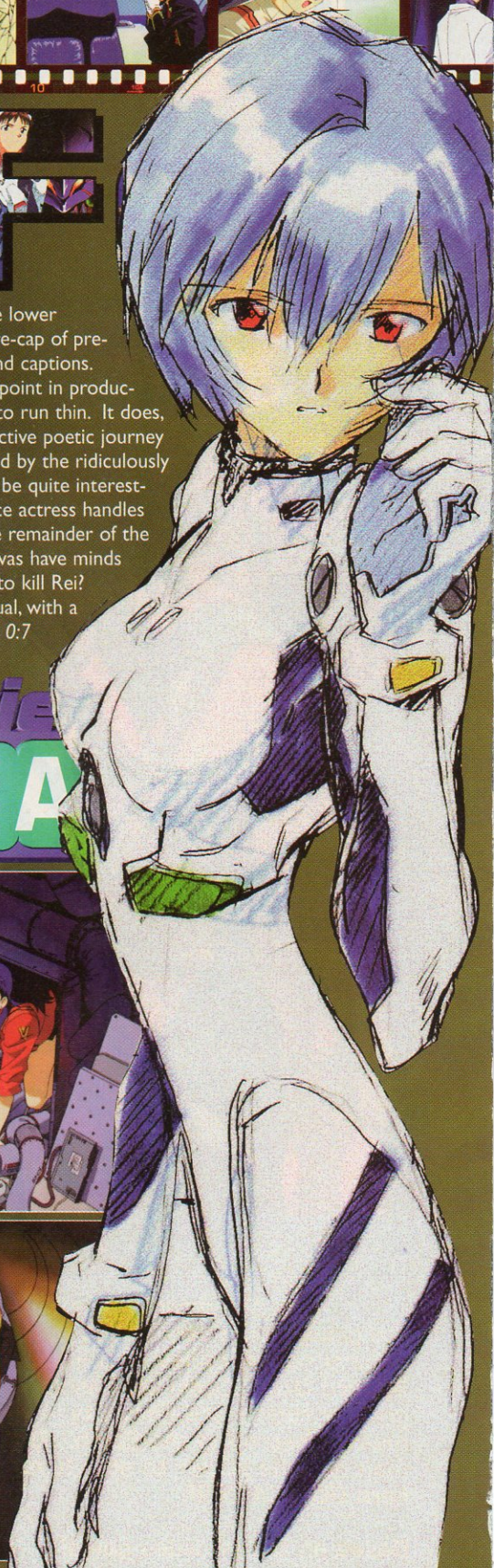
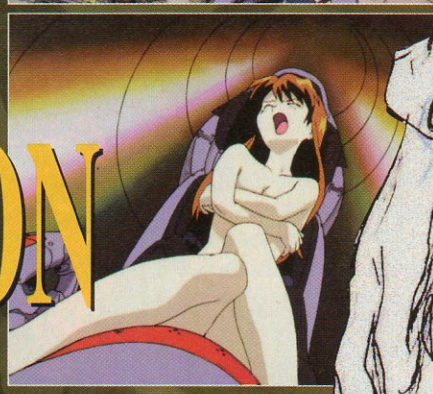
AF Review

animation	F	D	C	B	A
n/a					
story					
music					

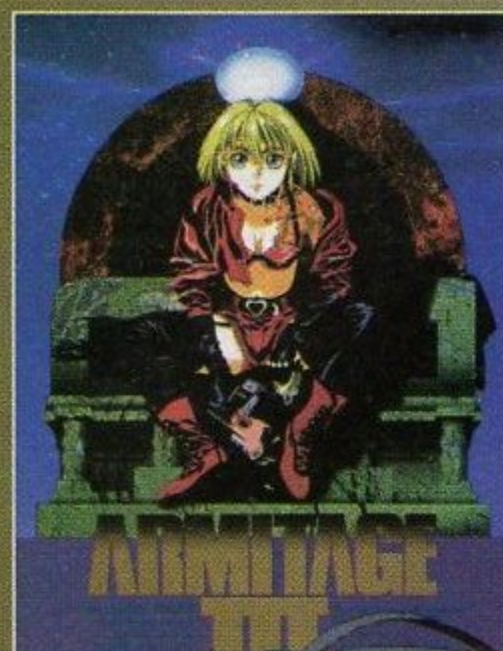


NEON GENESIS EVANGELION

Genesis 0:7



ARMITAGE III: POLY-MATRIX



Pioneer's one-shot movie version of the *Armitage III* series, originally released as a four-parter both on LD and VHS, is set to hit this October 1st. The new incarnation, *Armitage III Poly-Matrix*, oddly enough, was originally released in Japan with Japanese subtitles. There's a switch. Starring Kiefer Sutherland (*Lost Boys*, *Freeway*) as Detective Ross Sylibus and Elizabeth Berkley (*Showgirls*) as Armitage, this film marks the first serious American dub of a Japanese anime. Besides the totally remixed soundtrack, (which is fantastic and available from Pioneer Entertainment) and sound effects, viewers will be audibly pleased with an English translation that is second to none.

Admittedly Berkley's performance in *Showgirls* was questionable (OK, so she blatantly overacted) but with *Armitage III* believe she has found her true calling. Easily the best voiceover ever in American anime, Berkley hits the mark with highs and lows that swing with her on screen persona perfectly. Sutherland does a fine job as well, although, because Ross Sylibus is a rather monotone character, he's not afforded the opportunity to use his acting skills as much as Elizabeth.

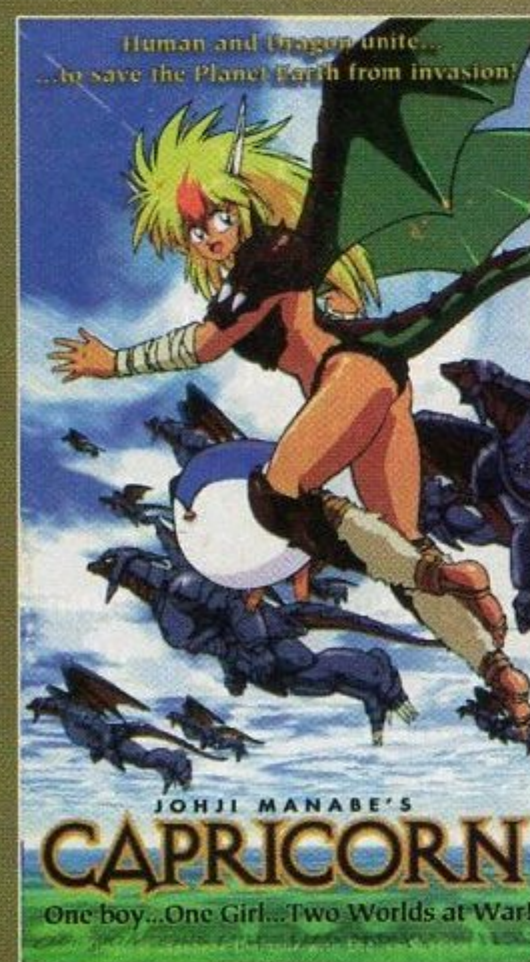
Armitage revolves around a world in which Thirds, female androids so real they have souls and are able to give birth, are a regular part of society. When suddenly Rene D'anclaude begins to murder them one by one, Armitage and Sylibus are thrown into a manhunt that will forever change both of their lives.

The story which unfolds, part discovery, part violent confrontation and part love story, is wonderfully written and executed, providing 90 minutes of intriguing anime. Armitage herself is a Third so as you can imagine things get quite interesting. As a character, by the way, Armitage is one of the most intriguing female leads ever drawn, so if you like a strong female base in your anime diet, do catch this awesome film.

If you've seen the previously released episodes and feel it's worth a second look, I believe you'll find this new edition a worthy addition to your anime collection (it's packaged for keeps) and if you've never seen *Armitage III*, I highly recommend picking this version up when it debuts October 1st.



CAPRICORN



I've been a fan of Johji Manabe for about as long as I've been into anime: I adored the *Outlanders* manga series, and thought that Caravan Kidd was a nice little tale. Upon receiving a copy of A.D. Vision's *Capricorn*, however, I was a bit worried: It looked, well, rather similar to the rest of his work. Cute alien girl, out-of-place human boy, and a bunch of cute little creatures running around.

While the story is somewhat similar, it wasn't as bad as I feared. Taku's a young Japanese school-boy who suddenly finds himself in a strange world, and meets a young dragon girl named Mona. Meanwhile, an image of the planet "Capricorn" has appeared in the sky above the alien land. Zolba, a high commander of the government, plots for the invasion of Capricorn, using a highly advanced device to create a bridge between the two worlds. Taku finds out that Capricorn is actually Earth, and with Mona and his new band of friends, fights to save the Earth from total annihilation.

Capricorn, sadly, is just too short. It tries to pack a lot of story into a short OVA timespan, and everything ends up happening far too quickly. The pace never has a chance to slow down, and character development is forced to happen in a matter of moments. The story would have benefited greatly had *Capricorn* been a full-length feature—had it been longer, *Capricorn* could have been a much better title. As it is, while it isn't anything spectacular, it isn't that bad, and should provide for an entertaining, although short, 45 minutes of your life.



FROM A CAVE DEEP INSIDE AGOURA...



Dear Postmeister,

As a long-time reader, and a senior citizen (over 40) in the gaming scene, I must take issue with Mr. Sakaguchi's comments regarding American games players in your July issue (Square interview). I for one have never found RPGs to be to 'complicated'. I have played them from the first 'Dragon Warrior' game on the NES to current ones like 'Wild Arms'. I've also played my share of import RPGs (I can't read Japanese). I don't consider myself to be the brightest bulb on the Christmas tree, just an average player who loves RPGs. Mr. Sakaguchi, I believe, doesn't give the American gamer enough credit.

One more thing. Please bring back 'The Graveyard' section on a regular basis.

Thanks for reading and listening,
Dennis Tamosan,
Hilo, Hawaii.

As a 40+ gamer who plays import RPGs, you, Mr. Tamosan, are not representative of the 'average American gamer'. When Mr. Sakaguchi spoke he was not referring to the enthusiast gamer (i.e. anyone reading this magazine!) but instead the general public who put Need For Speed 2, Cruisin' USA, WCW Vs The World, Area 51 and War Gods at the top of the charts for months on end. Admittedly some RPGs have had chart success recently (Suikoden, Wild Arms), but nothing like the above mentioned 'quality' titles.

Dear Posty,

This is a response to Jonathon 'The Palpatine' Randolph's letter in the July issue of GameFan. You told him that Capcom still hasn't announced X-Men Vs SF for the PlayStation. I think you made a mistake. If you take a look at the July issue of EGM's previews you'll see a preview of X-Men Vs SF for the PS. Both EGM and GamePro said that X-Men Vs SF is scheduled for a Fall '97 release. So Jonathon, you might see this game in September. If EGM and Gamepro previewed X-Men Vs SF, why didn't you guys? Weren't you at E3?

Gary Yee,
San Francisco, Ca

Here's the deal: Capcom of Japan say X-Men VS SF is NOT coming out for PS. Capcom of America say it is. Now maybe Capcom of America know something we don't, but I for

one tend to put more faith in what the Japanese parent companies have to say. Besides, PS Marvel Super Heroes is already missing 50% of the animation frames. If they did X-Men Vs SF for PS (with 4 characters in memory at once) it would be missing at least 75% frames PER CHARACTER! It would look retarded!

To Postmeister,

In your May issue, Joey Conelly wrote a letter concerning the cover of Issue 3, Vol 5, of how Turok carved the letter SEX on the dinosaur. I thought this kid was on crack until I went through my magazines and saw the cover. I was almost as shocked as when I discovered the American League of Stafford, Virginia, found such subliminal messages in The Lion King, The Little Mermaid and Aladdin. I think you were an idiot for printing Joey Conelly's letter, but the truth always prevails. In my opinion, someone should get fired for this and the magazine should give us readers a full apology. Since this will probably never happen, I regretfully have to quit your magazine.

Bear in mind I'm 22 years old and I don't think a subliminal message can affect me, but it's your target audience - young teenage males and pre-schoolers - that I'm worried about. I cannot continue giving this publication my hard earned money.

Goodbye Forever,
Enriquillo Bonao,
NY, NY

You're kidding, right?

Hey Posty,

Recently there was a letter from a Mr. Martin Wiener in which he asked about the "FFVII spoiler thing" and you responded how it was spittle and nothing but rumor. Well, I think I have proof of the fact. I had been discussing the whole situation and researching it for a while, when I came across Mr. K. Megura's FAQ in which he gives a Gameshark code that pretty much validates the whole thing. It proves the existence of the Suichuu Kokyuu materia... or roughly underwater breath. The code is 8009B6xx - 00yy. Make xx an odd number like 82 and make yy '11' to get the materia.

Regards,
James Smith
Sonora, Ca

So the existence of a single item proves the whole ridiculous 'Ressurrection' theory? There are a couple other "hidden" materia you need a GameShark code to get - do these also tie in with your theory? Square have gone on record as saying that they NEVER had ANY intention of EVER including such a sub-quest. Think about the ending of the game... it'd have to be 100% different. Also Tetsuya Nomura, the FFVII character designer, has said that the entire character of Tifa was created just to counterbalance the event you say can be reversed... It is simply a rumor, nothing more.

End of discussion.

Dear Postmeister,

I have a couple of questions I would like you to answer for me.

1. Is Redneck Rampage coming to any console systems? How is it?
2. Can you guys tell me where I can find a copy of PowerSlave for Saturn?
3. What systems will the new Rampage: World Tour game be coming too?
4. I heard that Phantasy Star 5 is in the works for Saturn. Is this true? Ever since I bought a Saturn I've been dreaming of a 32-bit Phantasy Star sequel.
5. What is the correct name for Sega's new system?
6. Will Working Designs be remaking Lunar Eternal Blue for Saturn after they remake the first Lunar?

Thank You,
Matt Puskar
Glenshaw Pa.

1. Interplay recently said they were 'considering' a PS conversion of Redneck Rampage, but Nightmare tells me the game is pretty hardware intensive (requires a PC with 16 megabytes of ram MINIMUM!). I haven't played it, but Nightmare says (quote) 'Y'all gotta love any game that has an alien bra as a weapon!'

2. Nope. But if you do happen to find one, keep hold of it! Playmates only ordered one run of Saturn Powerslave (doh!) so it's now officially a collectors' item! Not to mention one of the best 3D shooters around.

3. PS and N64. It's looking good too. I remember playing the original on my SMS all those years ago....

4. It's true! PS5 is GO! In Japan at least. Lord only knows when, or indeed if, we'll see it over here.

5. Gigadrive, Dural, Black Belt, Saturn 2, take your pick. Since the machine doesn't officially exist yet there is no definite name.

6. Um, don't count on it...

Dear Mr. Postmeister

First, I would like to start by saying that I think GameFan is the best games magazine on the market. I never get disappointed, and each issue is always better than the one before. But enough with the flattery, lets get down to business.

By now every PlayStation owner knows about the main problem with their system. We all have experienced it. You are happily playing a game when, for no apparent reason, the cinema jumps or pauses; the music cracks; or sometimes the game just plain freezes on you. It is very frustrating. We all know the reason for this too: the PlayStation is overheating. Putting it upside down just does not cut it. So what do we poor PlayStation owners do? Fear not for I have the answer. Simply go to any department store and buy one of those small 8 inch to 10 inch fans, which shouldn't run you more than \$10. Plug in the fan and make sure

it is blowing directly on your PlayStation. This will keep it cool and never again will you have to worry about break up. Trust me, it works. I play for 5 to 8 hours straight without a single jump.

Your Truly,
Juan A. Cancel
Bklyn, NY

Have you been reading MegaFan? I hate to be the one to break this to you Juan, but thousands of gamers have been using fans on their PSs for oooh, I'd say about three years now. But thanks for the tip anyway. The other key thing to remember is to always pull the power supply out of your PS when you're not using it, as some units stay hot even though the power is off. If your PS gets hot; let it cool. Never put your PS on its side or upside down, as aside from disc swapping (to play import games) there's no faster way to permanently damage the laser inside your PS (thus making games skip no matter how hot your PS is).

Dear Master of all-things-post,

I have written many letters to you, usually requesting release dates or a company's current project. This I am writing with a truly serious subject - THE WORKING DESIGNS DEBACLE.

Working Designs has announced that they are mad at Sega and after Lunar's release they will be deserting Sega. This can not be for the fan's best interest. Who will translate quality RPGs for Saturn? Who will buy their excellent translations of crappy RPGs for the PlayStation? Does anyone else care? Doesn't Sega and WD both realize they're hurting fans? Fans who have been with them through thick and thin? I would like to know your opinion on this. Postmeister, spread your wisdom... please.

A loyal subscriber,

Kevin Haroutioun OHannessian
Brooklyn, NY

I've heard so many rumors and allegations concerning the WD/Sega split that I don't know who or what to believe anymore. But I do know one thing: It's bad news for American Saturn owners. WD were an invaluable asset to SOA, and without them the Saturn will find itself in even deeper waters than it is right now. If I were Sega I'd be on bended knee right now begging WD not to go...

Dear Posty,

I had no idea how incredibly wise you folks are until I chanced upon your Graveyard Special feature (Vol 5, Issue 7, p.20). 'Tis a mystery to me why E.Storm, for example, has not yet been made Emperor of the Planet Earth! Anyway, I'd like to humbly offer my own list of games that need sequels. To wit:

1. *Strider*: E.Storm speaks wisdom. Use the Pandemonium engine for a 32-bit upgrade.
2. *Gunstar Heroes* - Oh yeah... upteen hundred colors and hand drawn to boot.
3. *Clash at Demonhead* - Contrary to what Evil

Rox thinks, I remember Clash very fondly. Action, adventure and lots of in-jokes.

4. *Blaster Master* - Another old fave, using a cute little war buggy.

5. *Gradius* - Don't forget the classic Konami code!

6. *Sonic CD* and/or a sequel. Don't let this game die with the Sega CD.

7. *Contra* - Well said, Nightmare! *Legacy of War* blows humongous chunks!

8. *Phantasy Star* - Sega's attitude seems to be "Do we HAVE to?". Why is this?!?

9. *Bionic Commando*: Yeah, I get a warm glow whenever I think of that old classic ["yes YES!!" - Chief Hambleton]

10. *Rygar*: This game never really got the attention it deserves.

Until Lara Croft teams up with Samus Aran... Don Lewis.

Fortuna, CA

AND NOW... INTRODUCING: QUICK SHOTS!!!!

Here in the cave, I read EVERY SINGLE letter that comes in. Honestly! That's my job! But as you know I just don't have the space to reply to all of them. So Quick Shots is just my way of answering more of your letters... in a condensed form.

Billy Quinn, Randollstown, MD - Nightmare didn't have bad judgement: Cruisn' USA sucks the big one.

Kieper - Howard Lake, MN - That makes two Toshinden fans in this world. You and E. Storm!

Akira, Phoenix, Az - Hey, I like Groove on Fight too!

Mike Gallarello, Hauppauge, NY - You want to know if Res Evil 2 will let you 'kill kids this time?' Seek professional help, pal.

Nick Woods, Manchester, Ky - Your love for MK is unhealthy.

John Velauez, Aurora, IL - You gave GamePro 87%, EGM 72% and GameFan 97%? Why only 97%?!

Kevin Violette & Mark Cunningham - PowerSlave, Hexen, Mass Destruction and every 2D Capcom and SNK game are all better on Saturn than PS.

J.R. Ostonal, Mississauga, Ontario - I would love to see a new 2D Bionic Commando. No word from Capcom yet I'm afraid.

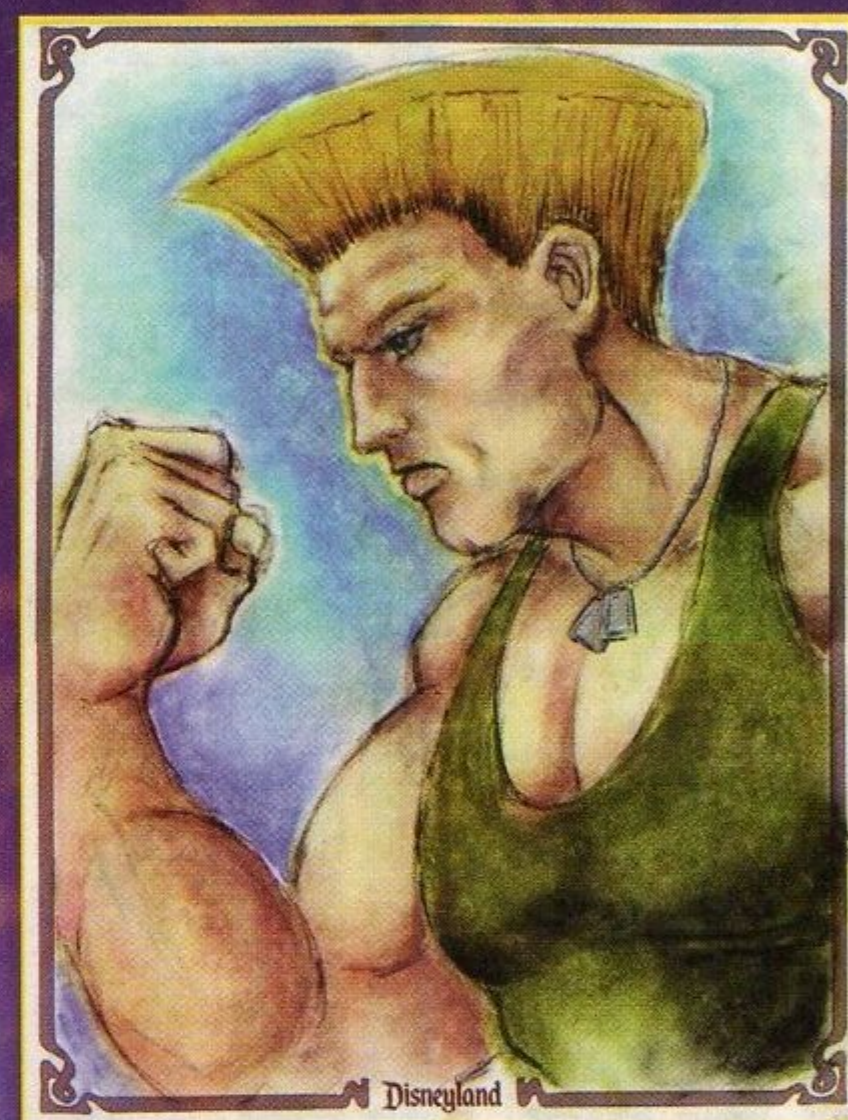
Write to me or I'll run for President!

The Postmeister
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**And now for some fan art!
Didn't have the room for all of
them, but nonetheless I will
reveal more next issue! Jeeyah!**



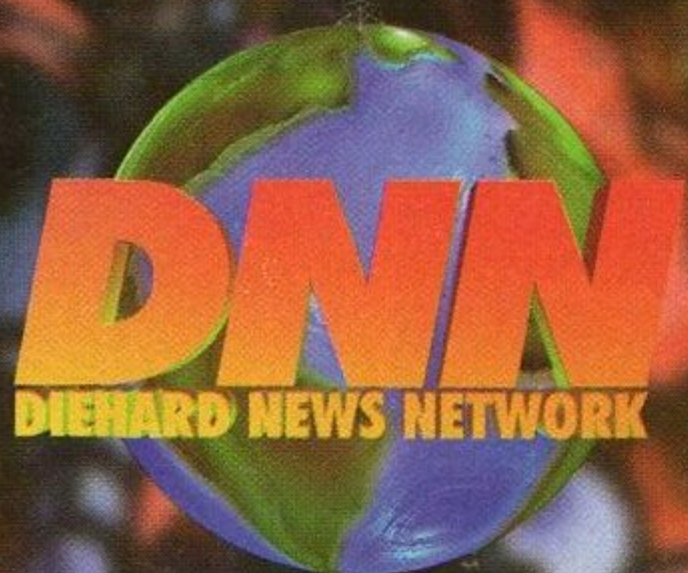
Peter Han of Portland Oregon shows us his rendition of the mighty Gozeta! Awesome!!



Jason Apalit of Diamond Bar, California sends us this "Flex-master" Guile. Yet another attempt to get Jen Seng's attention, no doubt...



Glenn Jackson of 'military residence' sends us this Honey of *Fighting Vipers*! Hmm... I know she's only sixteen, but... um... Anyway, nice subject to draw about nonetheless! Great work!



20 (OR SO) QUESTIONS WITH ENIX...

GF: How many of Treasure's staff worked on the Yuke Yuke project?

T: It depends on what part they worked on. They are from Treasure, Enix, voice actors. Many people worked on this project. Simply those people on the end credits are responsible, but the total number (including sales people at Enix) would be much more.

GF: How long was Yuke Yuke in development?

T: More than one and a half years.

GF: Why did you decide to do a one player puzzle/action game as opposed to a two player action game like Gunstar Heroes?

T: The reason is that Treasure wanted to develop an action game that is cool for one player, and does not need two players.

GF: Where did you get the idea for Yuke Yuke from?

T: Treasure has developed many action games. With Yuke Yuke, we wanted to attract normal users, not just the die-hard gamers. So we came up with an original idea: what if you could throw or shake opponents instead of punching or kicking them?

GF: Are there any hidden secrets in the game? Is there a reward for collecting all gems or getting all 'A's?

T: Depending on how many yellow crystals you collect, you will see more of the ending. Also, something different will happen depending on the registered player's age...

GF: How do you get an S grade for a level?

T: You just have to do your best. That's all I can say...

GF: Did you enjoy working with the N64 hardware?

T: Yes, we did.

GF: How is the N64 as a platform for 2D games?

T: Very good.

GF: Will Treasure make any more games for N64?

T: We are examining the possibility at this time...

GF: Do you have plans for a Yuke Yuke sequel?

T: Not yet...

ENIX

GF: How is work progressing on your first Saturn game, Tales of Seven-Wind Island?

E: Everything is going well right now.

GF: Do you have any plans for another Actraiser game with Quintet in the future or another title in the Elnard/Mystic Ark series?

E: We are thinking about it...

GF: Are you considering doing any more N64 or 64DD titles?

E: We are thinking about it!

GF: Does Enix plan on making any games for Sega's forthcoming 64-bit system?

E: ... I cannot answer that.

GF: Is Treasure going to be doing any titles for you in the future?

E: Not yet, but we are thinking about it.

DRAGON QUEST

GF: Will Akira Toriyama return to do the character designs?

E: Yes.

GF: There are many Dragon Quest fans in the US. What can they expect from DQVII?

E: We are trying to develop a game that can be enjoyed by everyone, but beyond that, we cannot say at this time.

GF: When can we expect DQVII?

E: As far as a release date is concerned, Mr. Yuji Horii (scenario and game designer) has stated that he would like it to be available before the end of 1998, and we're all working very hard to reach that goal. We will release the first official information about *Dragon Quest VII* in March of 1998 at a special conference, so please wait until then for more information.

GF: After Square's Final Fantasy VII, do you feel RPG fans expect fully polygonal characters and a liberal use of CG?

E: Our use of polygons or CG movies will be based solely upon necessity. We are working hard to achieve a level of smoothness in the polygonal graphics that will retain the look and feel of *DQ*.

GF: Does DQVII usher in a new chapter in the series after the *Lot/Erdrick* and *Celestial* series?

E: The story will be completely different than *Lot* or *Celestial*.

GF: Do you have plans to remake *Dragon Quest IV* as you did with I, II, and III on the Super Famicom?

E: We have not yet decided to remake any *Dragon Quests* after III.

GF: Thanks so much for your time.

E: You are welcome, and we hope you continue to enjoy our games.

GF: We will!

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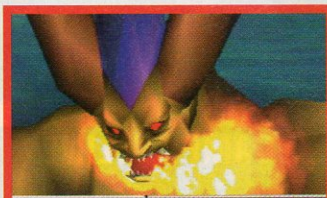
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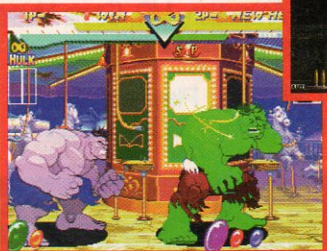
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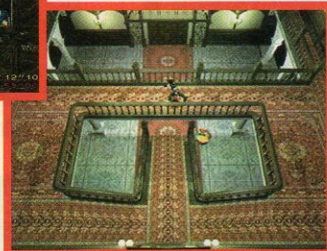
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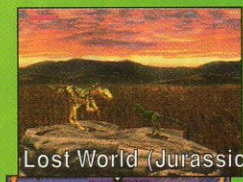
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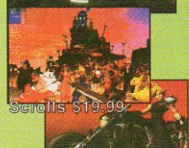
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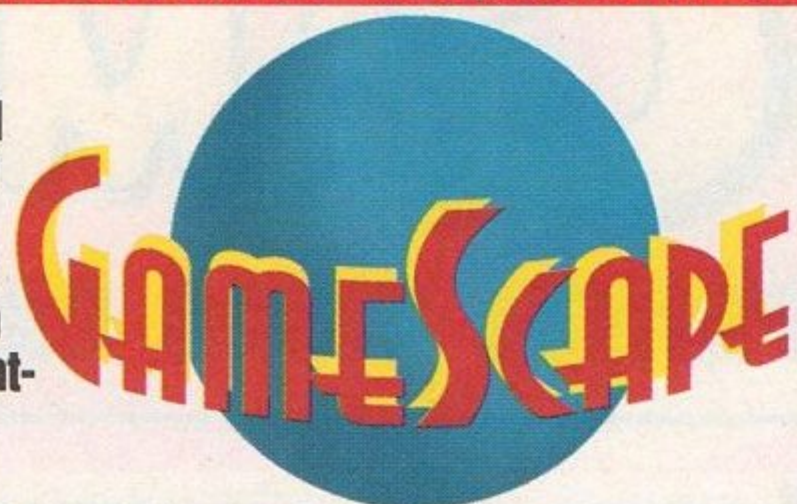
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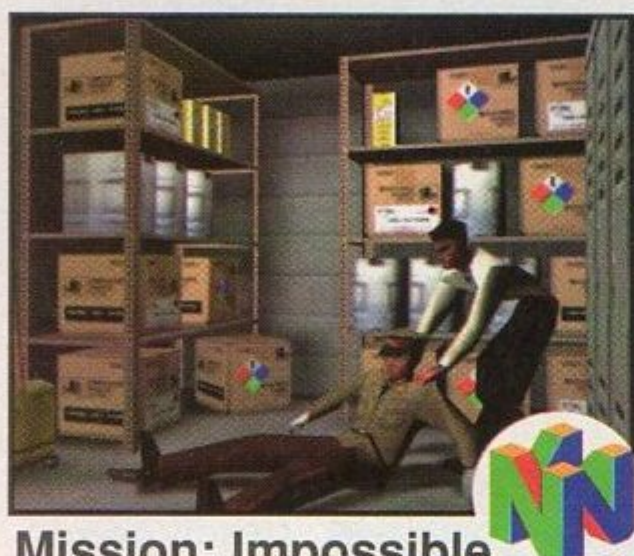


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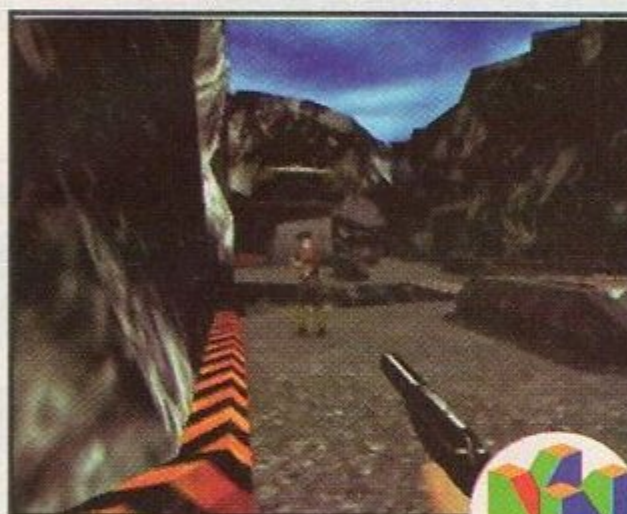
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Rev. Limit
Doraemon
Bomberman 64
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Hinoriken
Aeros Gauge

U.S.

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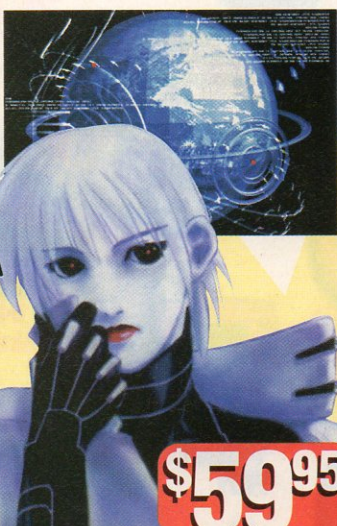
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SEPTEMBER



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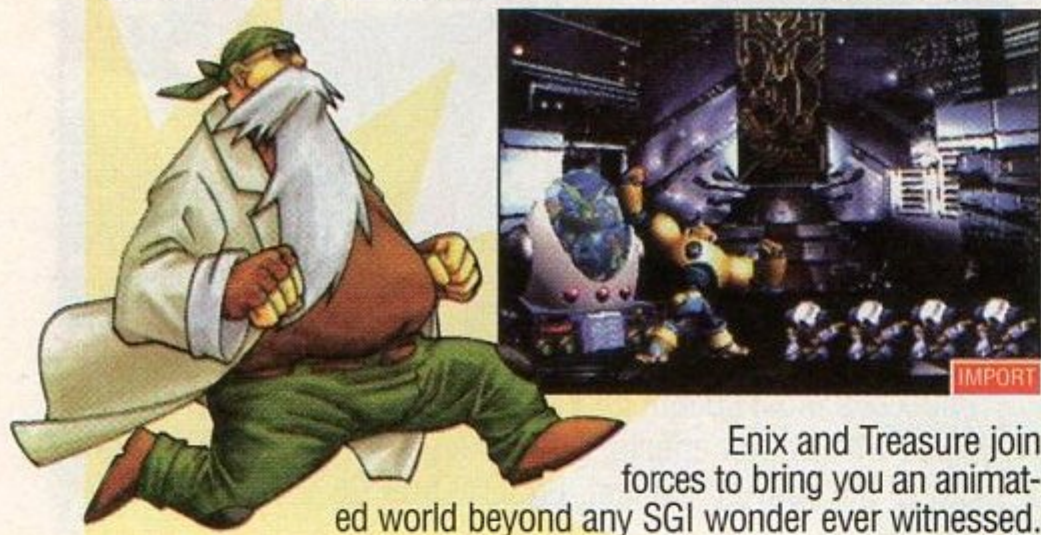
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FINAL FANTASY TACTICS (2 CD SET) SPECIAL! (71 tracks)

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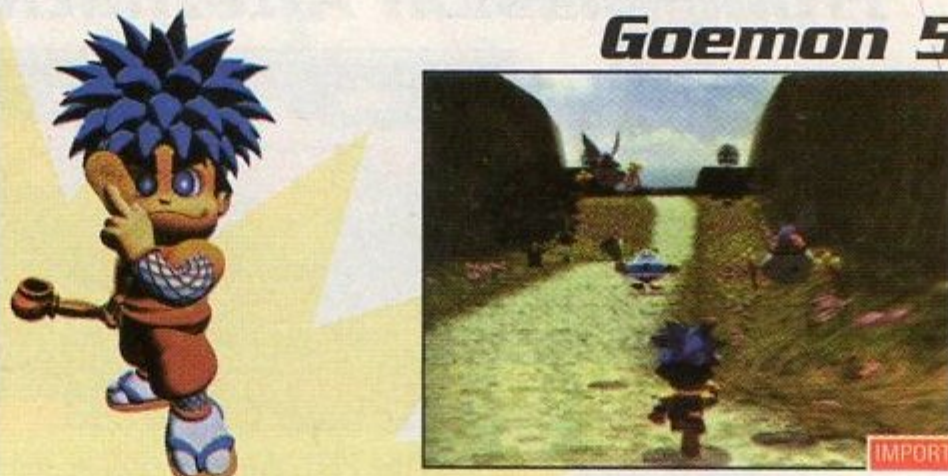


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Enix and Treasure join forces to bring you an animated world beyond any SGI wonder ever witnessed. **\$84.95**

Goemon 5



The Mystical Ninja returns with friends, in what may be the wackiest Nintendo 64 title yet. Goemon in a 3D polygonal world, what the heck else could you ask for? **\$97.95**

Sonic Wings Assault

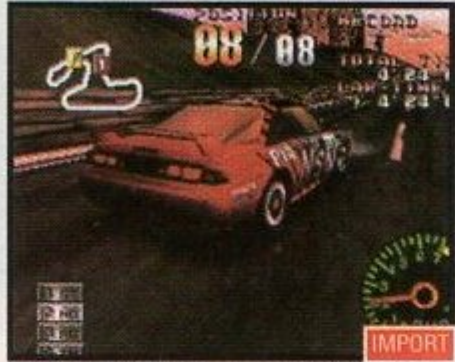


Video Systems' amazing Sonic Wings overhead shooter series has hit both the Neo-Geo and Saturn thus far. Nothing can prepare you for the arrival of this Nintendo 64 assault. **\$93.95**

Nintendo Video Games



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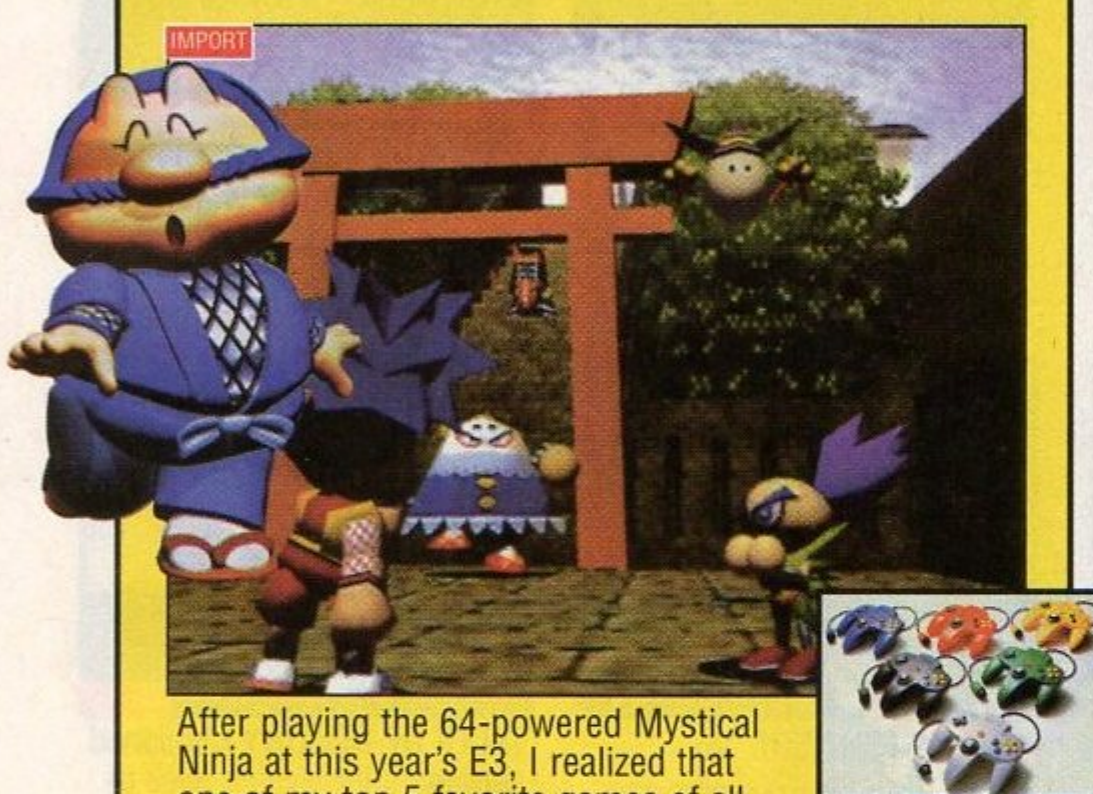


VIRTUAL PRO WRESTLING ULTRA BATTLE ROYAL N64 There have been tons of wrestling games for many different formats but finally the best of the bunch has arrived. Prepare yourself. **CALL!**



AERO GAUGE As the anticipation grows daily for the ultra cool F-Zero 64, Aero will ease the pain nicely. **CALL!**

Game & Controller GOEMON 5 PACKAGE SPECIAL



After playing the 64-powered Mystical Ninja at this year's E3, I realized that one of my top 5 favorite games of all time just reached a whole new realm. Goemon with your choice of any N64 controller. **\$119.95**



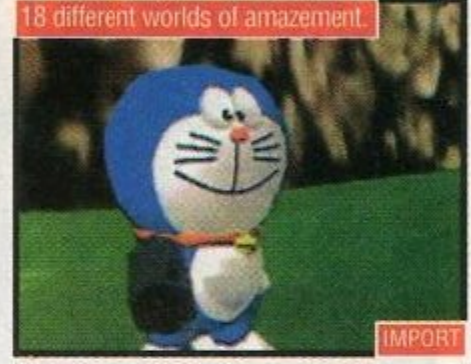
GOLDENEYE Rare takes the corridor genre to the next level with this 3D spectacular. Prepare to be amazed. **CALL!**



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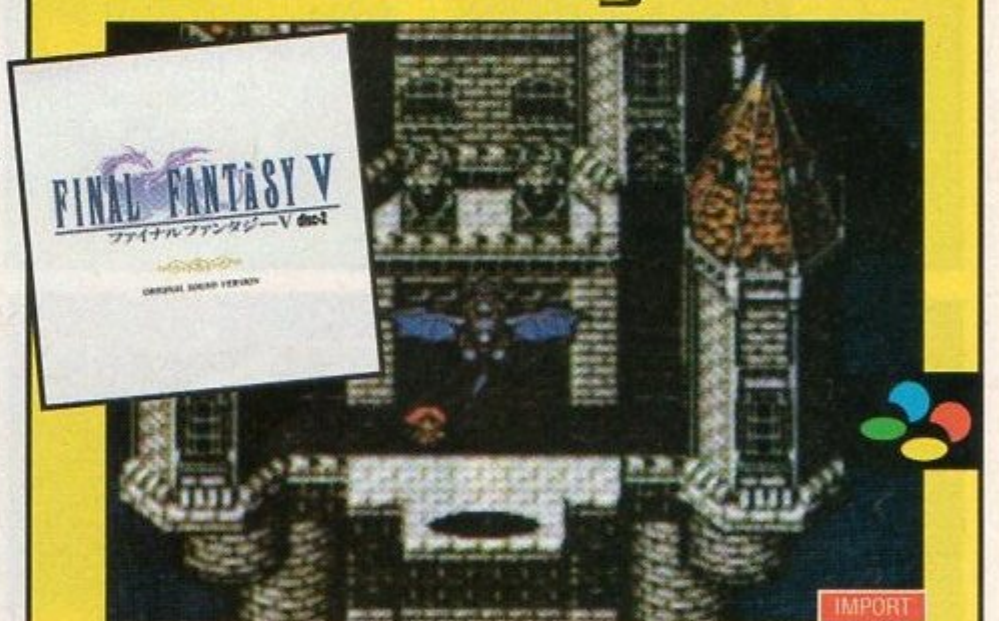


POWER LEAGUE 64 Hudson hits hard on the realism with the first b-ball game to feature pitch indicators and split second swing adjusting. **\$89.95**



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DRAGON BALL Z HYPER DIMENSION Enter the litheralic dimension with Bandai's last installment on a 16 bit format. Enhanced graphic force and 2D blistering abound. **\$84.95**



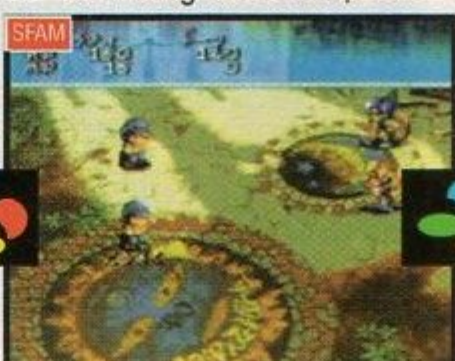
SAILOR MOON SUPER S Sailor Moon scouts join together for one final female pound. Fans of the SFC instalment will enjoy this one. **\$79.95**



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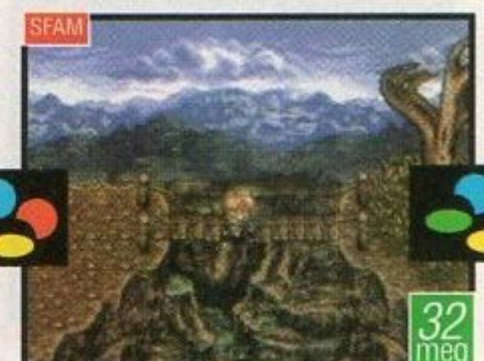
SECRET OF MANA 3 One of the top selling SFAM RPG series of all time. **\$84.95**



STAR OCEAN The last Enix title produced on a 16-bit system. 32 megs of pure equalized sound and detailed hand drawn graphics. **\$79.95**



RANMA 1/2 #3 The final Ranma title released on a 16 bit system was a hit. Buy it now at the Cave before it is extinct. **\$59.95**



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TOBAL 2 SquareSoft is completely out of control. What's their secret? Toba 2 makes Toba No. 1 look like it was made 10 years ago, literally! **Toba 2 Import PlayStation \$84.95**



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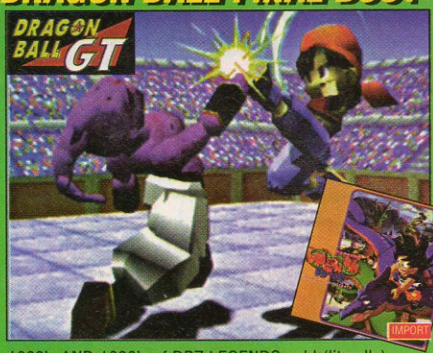
ZERO DIVIDE 2 Fully refined polygons, massive playfields, super combos and thrash pumping tunes make Zero 2 the best mech fighter next to Cyberbots. **\$74.95**



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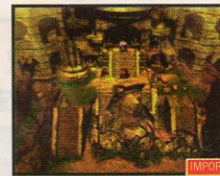
GUNDAM THE BATTLE MASTER When was the last time you played a fighting game with characters so huge they didn't fit on screen? Introducing the master, the Gundam Battle Master. **\$74.95**



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SAMURAI SHODOWN RPG It's been a long time coming but SNK's Samurai Shodown RPG has finally arrived. **\$74.95**



SPECTRAL TOWER 2 Simply beautiful! Final Fantasy 7 appears to have set a new standard in RPGs. Enter the tower this September. **\$79.95**



FINAL FANTASY TACTICS SquareSoft conquered isometric strategy with Front Mission on SFC, with Tactics they have reached perfection. **\$89.95**



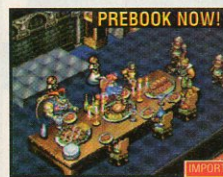
DRAGON BALL Z LEGENDS 1000's sold since we first opened. One of the most requested import PlayStation fighting titles that we carry. **\$59.95**



KING OF FIGHTERS '96 Finally PlayStation owners can see what they have been missing. The best 2D out there. **\$74.95**



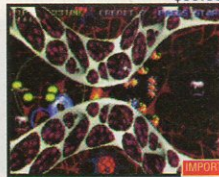
TALES OF DESTINY Fashioned after the unbelievable Tales of Phantasia for SFC comes Destiny. Absolute RPG heaven. **CALL!**



BREATH OF FIRE III Capcom is about to astound us all once again. After viewing an early promo video on this title the Cave staff is still wondering if things can get any better than this. **CALL!**



STREET FIGHTER COLLECTION The most world wide known fighter next to MK, all packed up for your bludgeoning pleasure. Contains SSF, SSF-turbo, and another secret prize. **\$79.95**




GRADIUS GAIDEN Konami bring it on!! Parodious, Darius, Twinbee, and Gradius! Thank you for supporting our habit! **\$79.95**



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PANZER BANDIT Banpresto nails it again with this incredible side scroll action fighter. Coming soon!!! **\$79.95**



DRACULA X Dracula returns, bringing a new era of 2D adventure. Take on the Metroid-like game design. It's a given: If you're a serious gamer you must own this game. **\$79.95**

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Sega Saturn Software



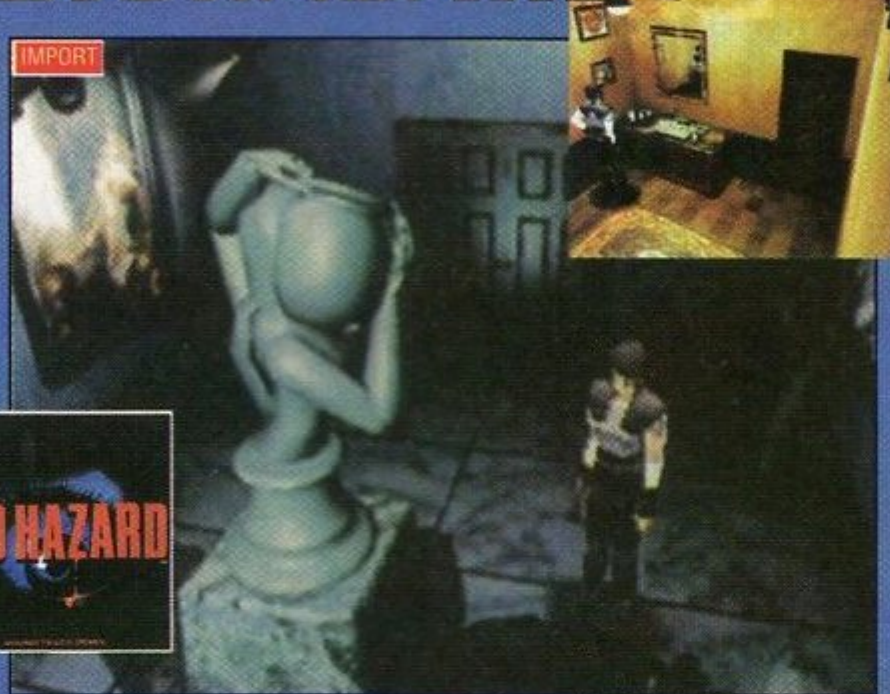
CHAOS SEED With what appears to be a battle engine similar to Chrono Trigger, Chaos Seed should provide us with long hours of RPG bliss. **\$69.95**



VIRUS The disease is spreading, an epidemic is about to take place. Virus takes us where we have never gone before, with any other CG interactive title.

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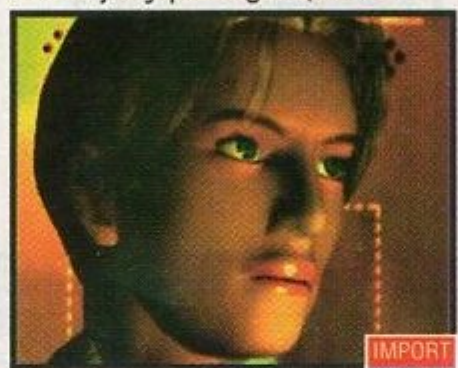
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RABBIT Comical fighters seem to be gaining popularity. Nin Ku, Waku Waku 7, and now Rabbit. Rabbit combines the antics of Waku and classics like Kabuki Klash in one juicy package. **\$64.95**



ENEMY ZERO After viewing the announced American version at E3, it's obvious why we will all still be purchasing the import version. **\$69.95**



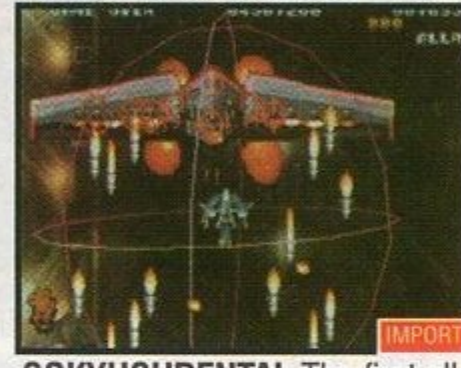
WILLY WOMBAT This looks like a N64 game, what's goin' on? 3D action fans must own this title. Thanks to Susumu Matsushita for the artwork. **\$64.95**



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KING OF FIGHTERS '96 With more fighters than any other 2D fighter and custom team edit, KOF '96 is a must-own title. **\$59.95**



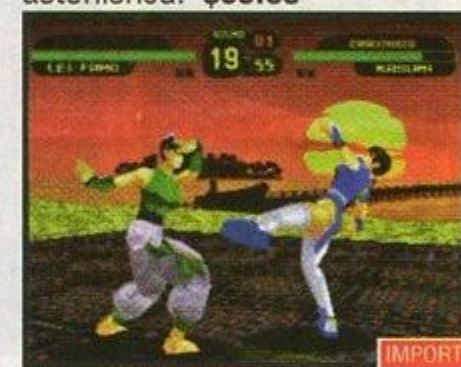
WAKU WAKU 7 Sun Soft steals the show with this one. Unparalleled animation and gadgetry gags galore. **\$64.95**



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KING OF FIGHTERS '97 Oh my god! SNK I love you! **CALL!**



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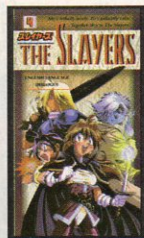
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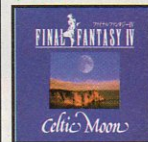
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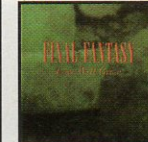
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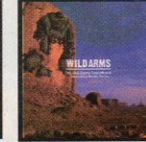
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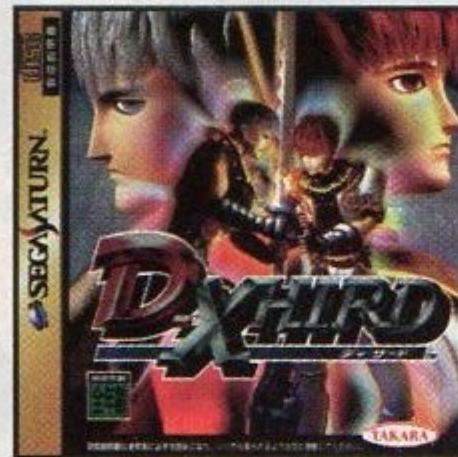
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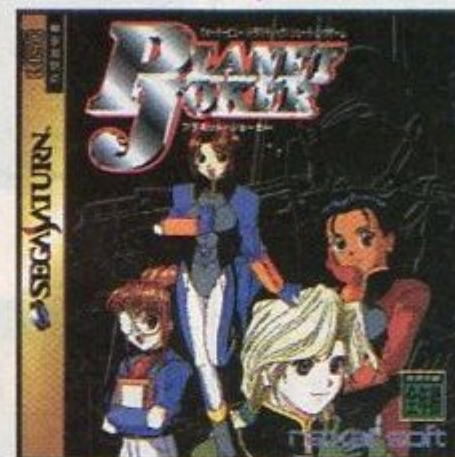
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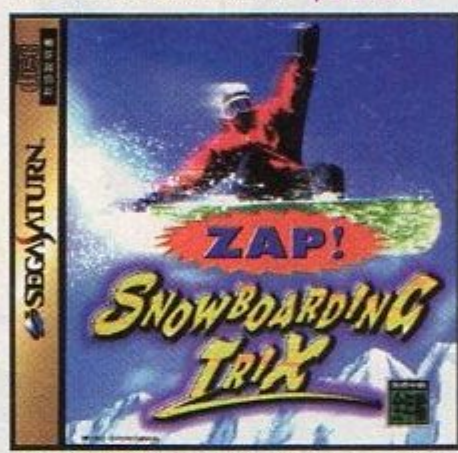
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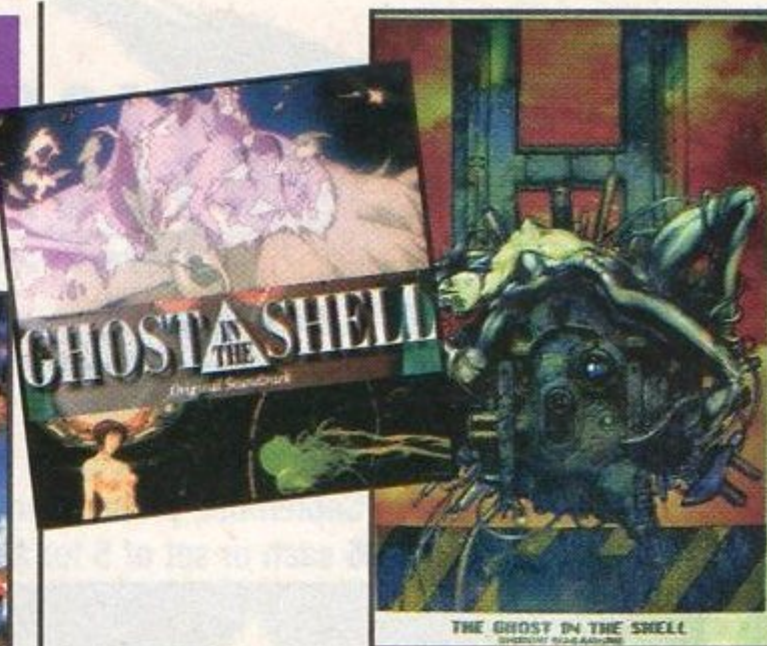
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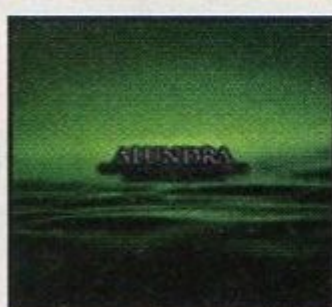
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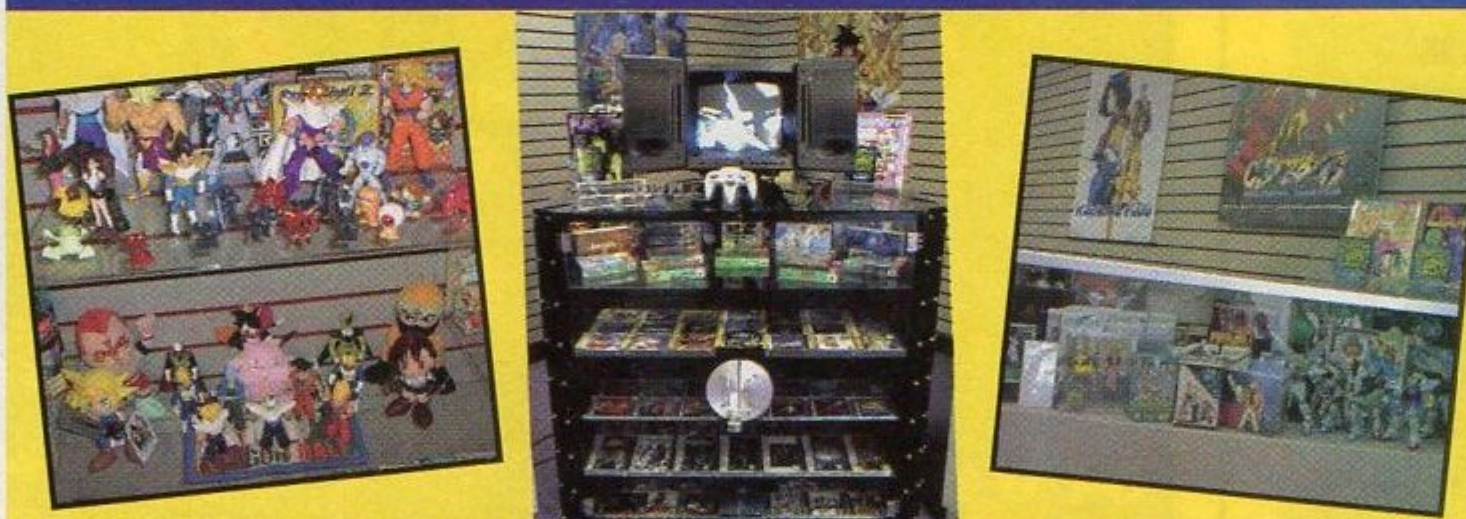
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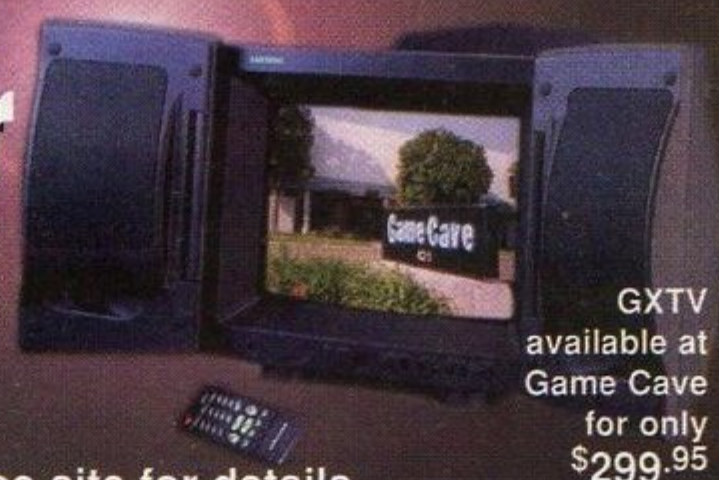
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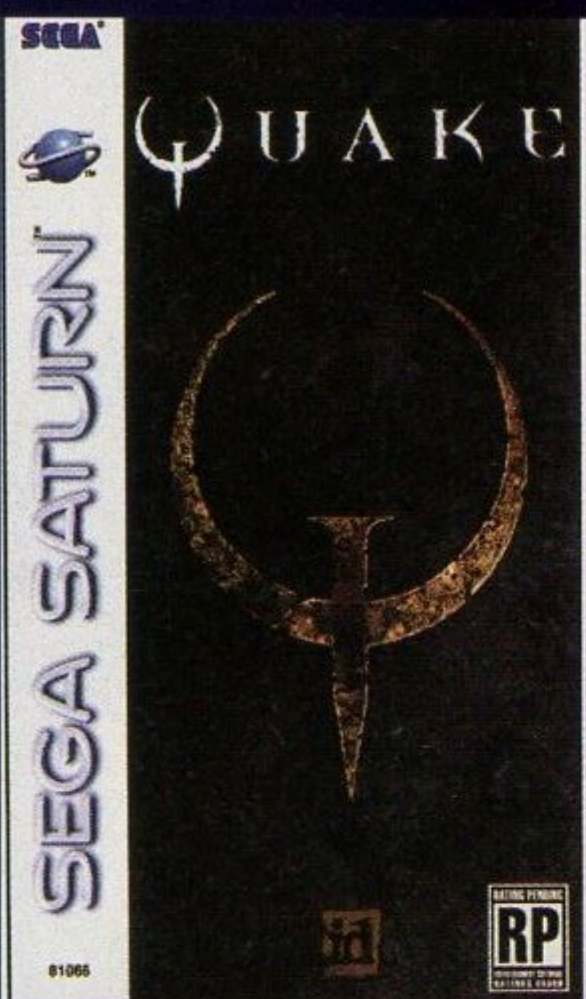
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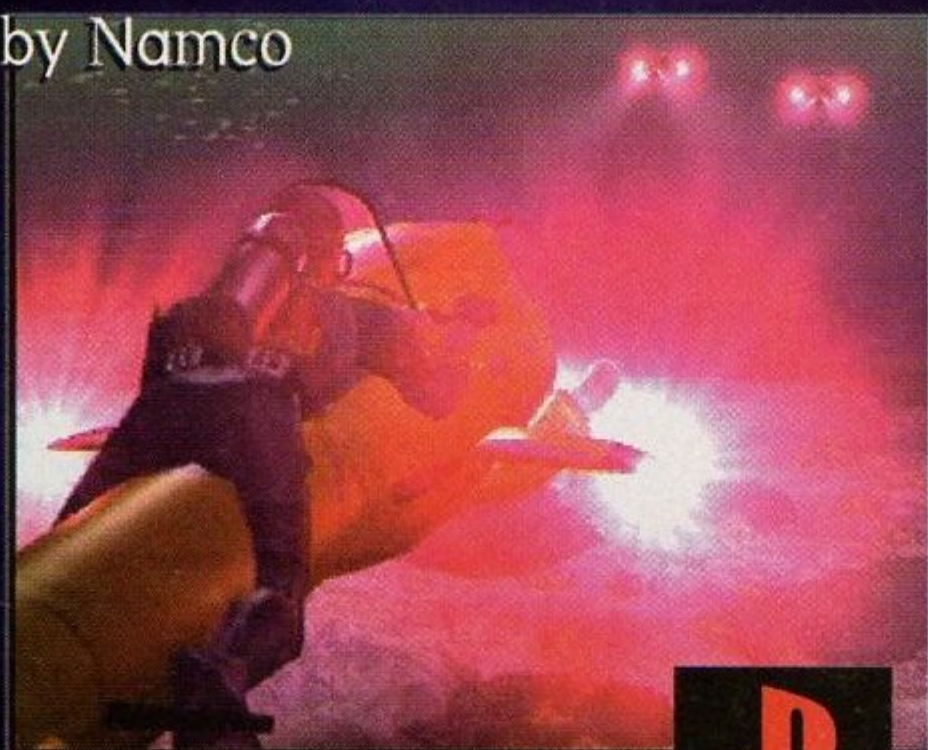
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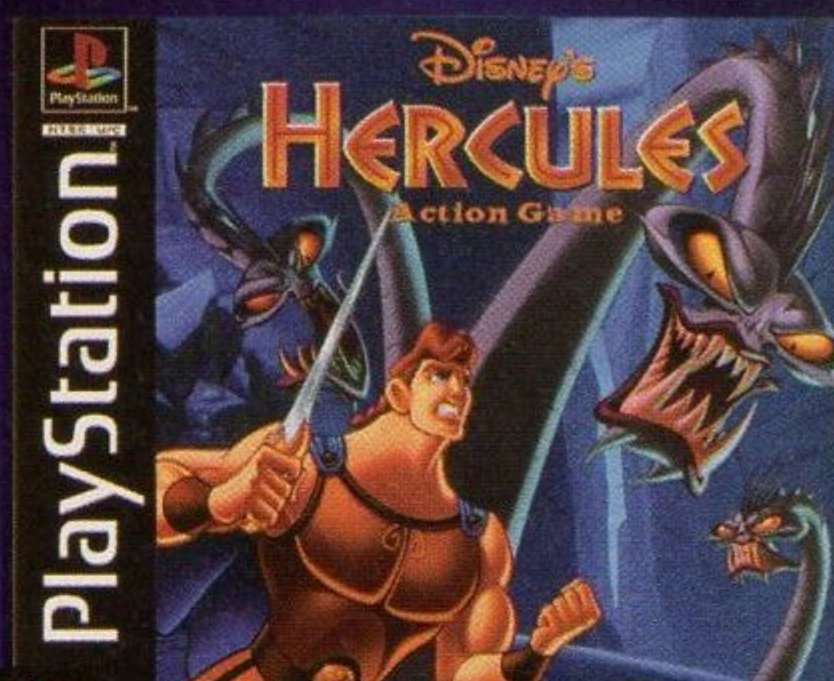
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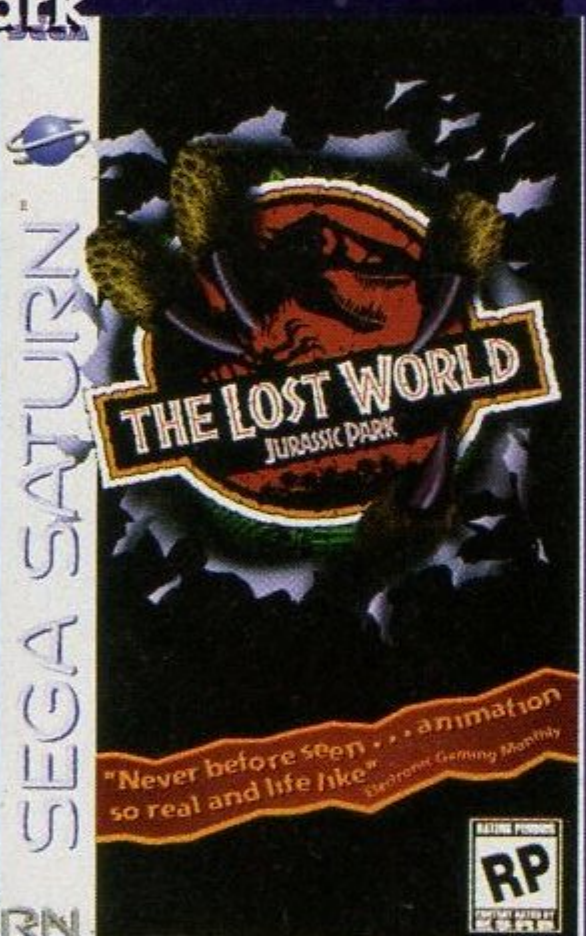
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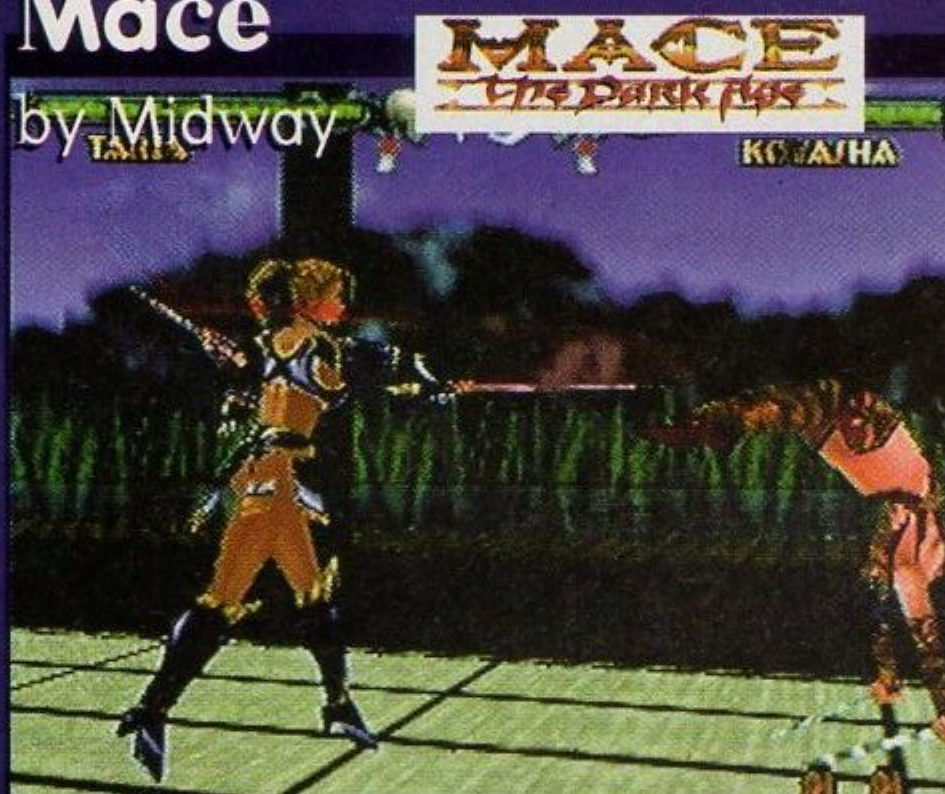
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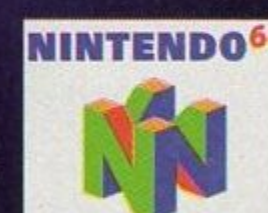
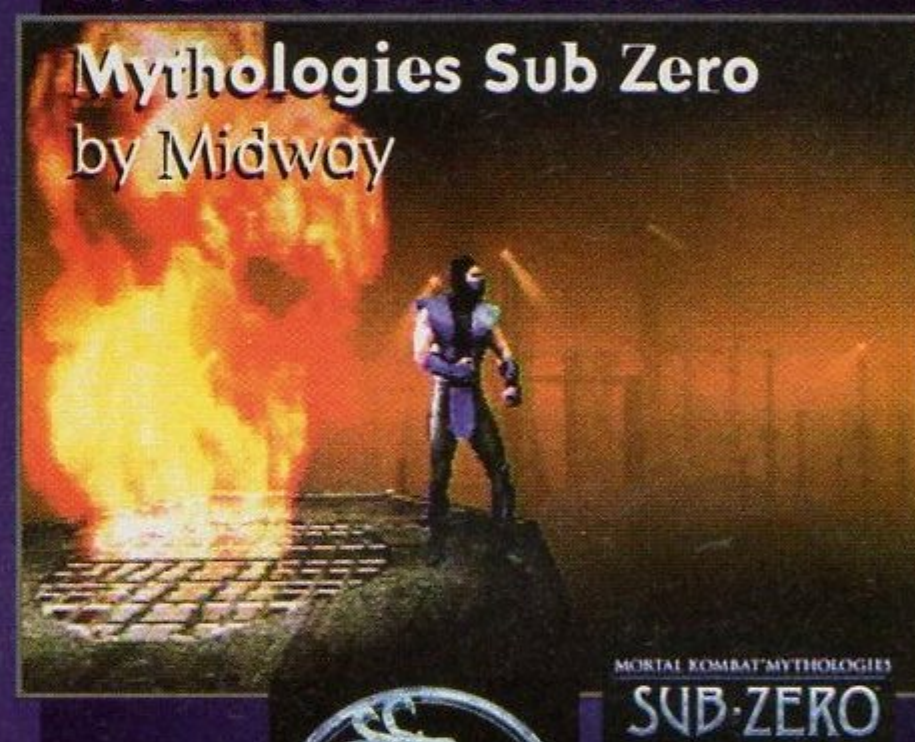
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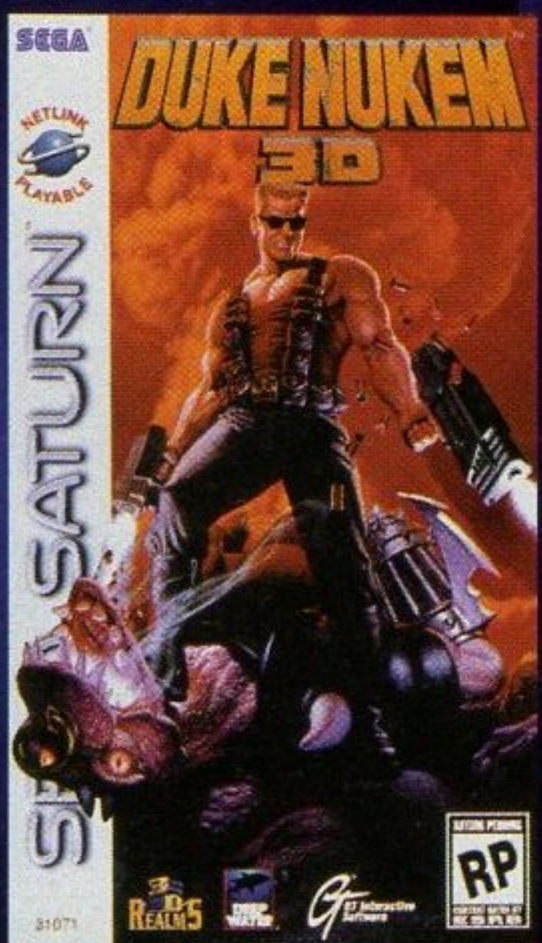
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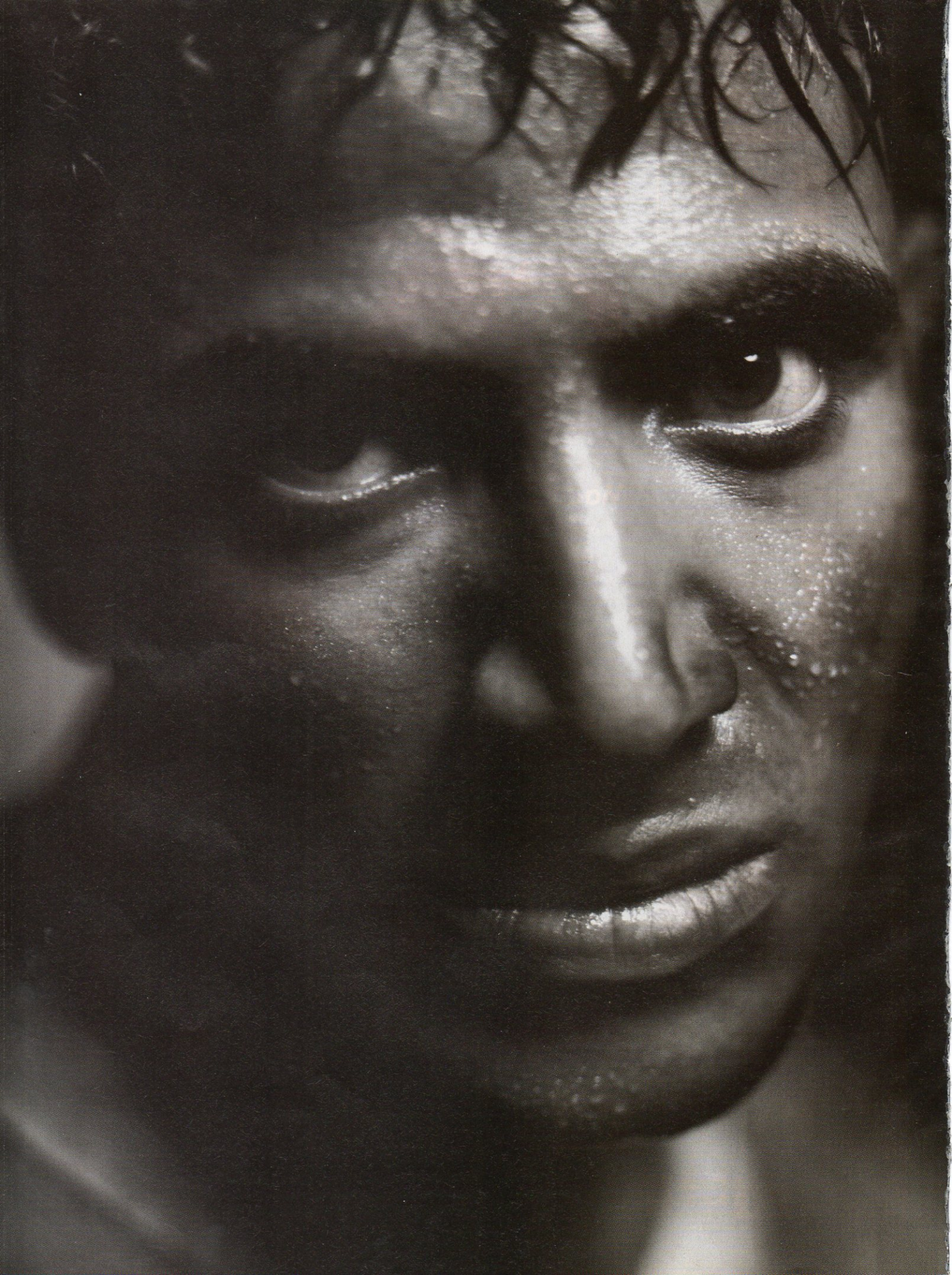
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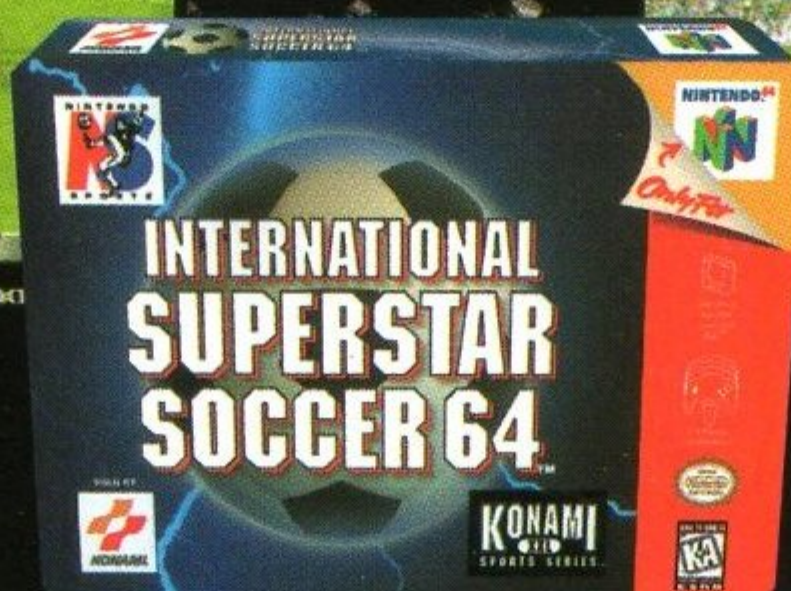
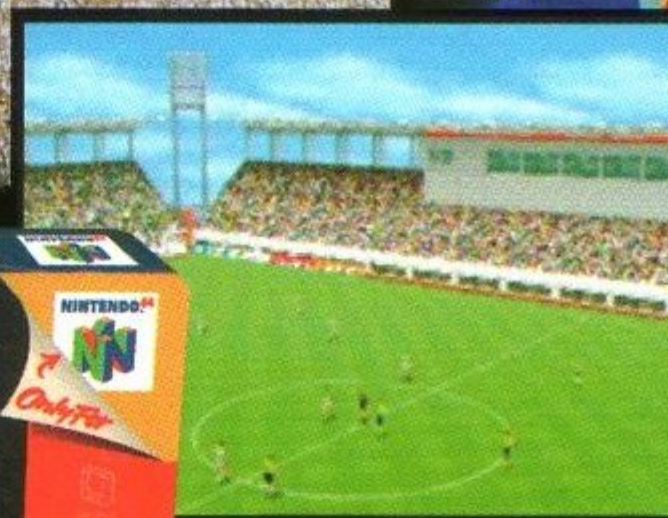


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