

INSIDE: THE DEFINITIVE 16-PAGE GUIDE TO MEGA-CD GAMING!!

MEGA POWER



FEB 1994
£2.50
ISSUE 7

not an official sega publication

for those who take playing games *seriously!*



SONIC AGAIN!

Bad, blue and back! Sonic 3
will be appearing on a
console near you, soon!

THE WEST.



printed in the uk

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02

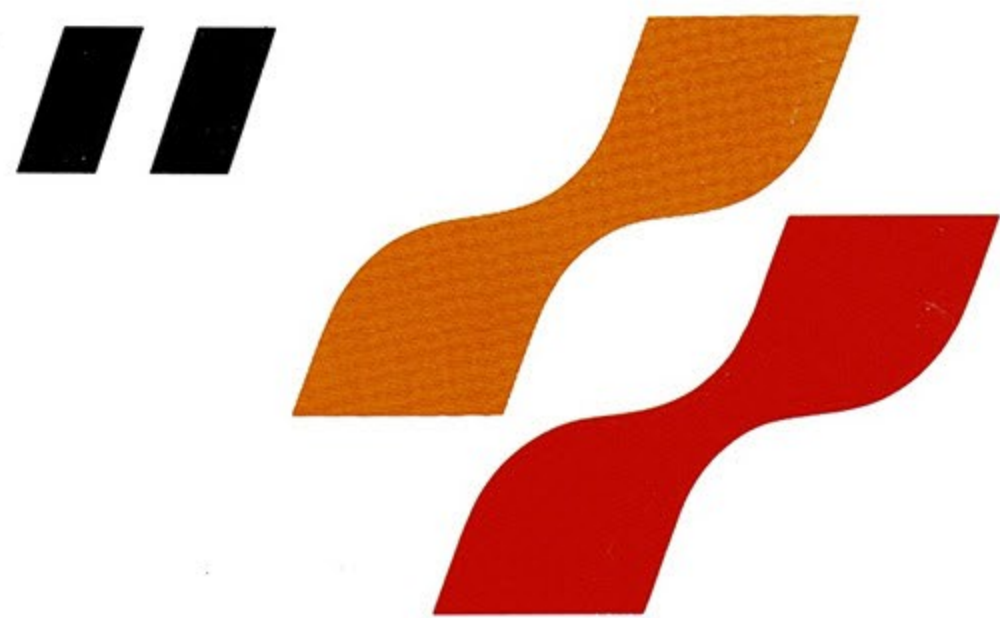
JUST GOT WILDER!

It's a sci-fi shoot-out as we
preview the CD game they didn't
want you to see!

FEATURED

sonic 3 • Virtua Racing • Barkley-shut up and Jam! • Mad Dog McCree • castlevania
stella Fire • Ground zero Texas • Pele • The Lost vikings • skitchin' • Normy • sumo
legends of the Ring • Dragon's Revenge • Prize Fighter • The secret of Monkey Island
Mean Bean Machine • socket • kick boxer

INSIDE



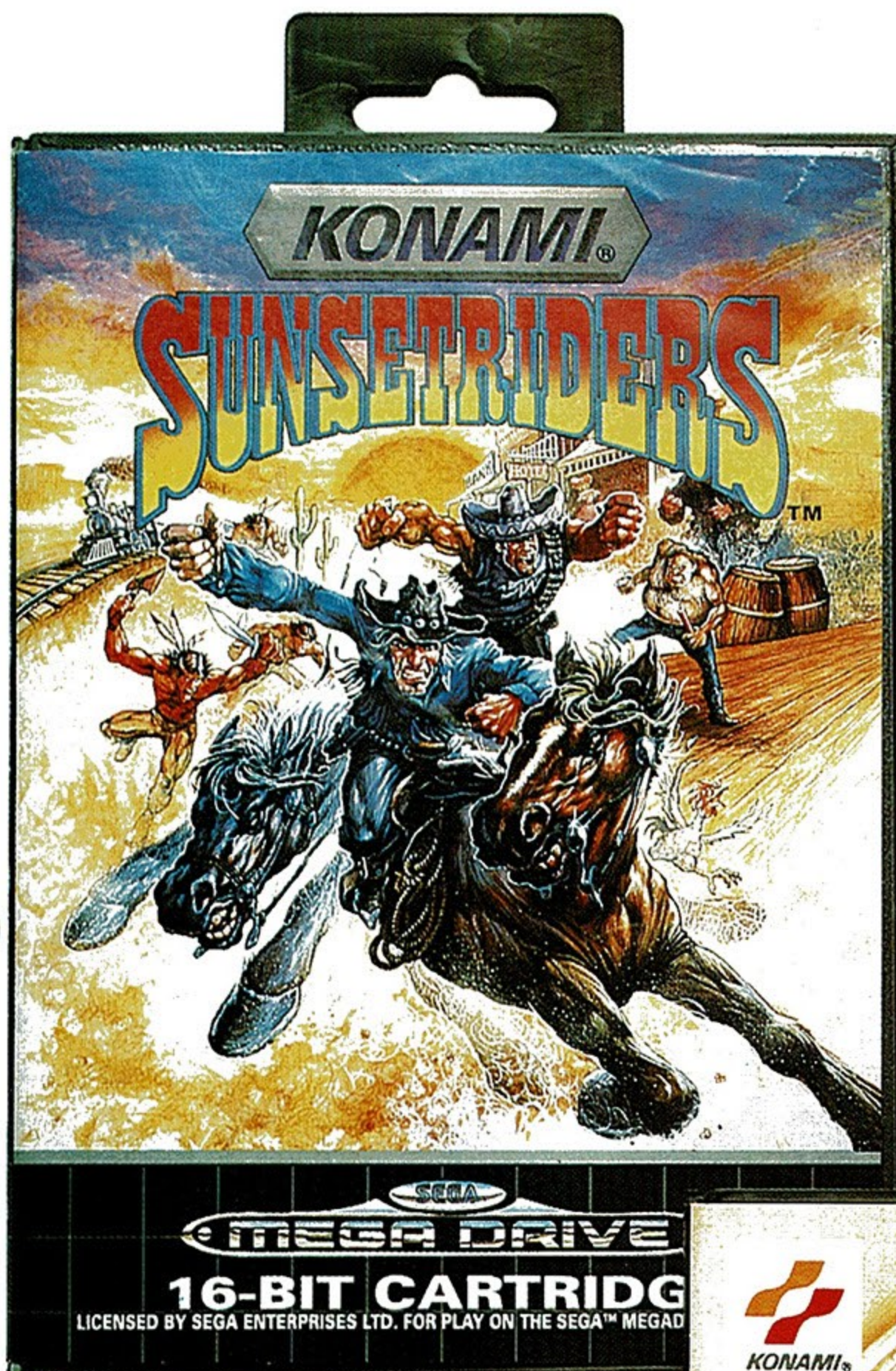
KONAMI

SUNSETRIDERS

It has obviously had a lot of attention paid to every aspect of its production... it's superb.

MEGATECH 87%

Very impressive SEGA PRO 87%



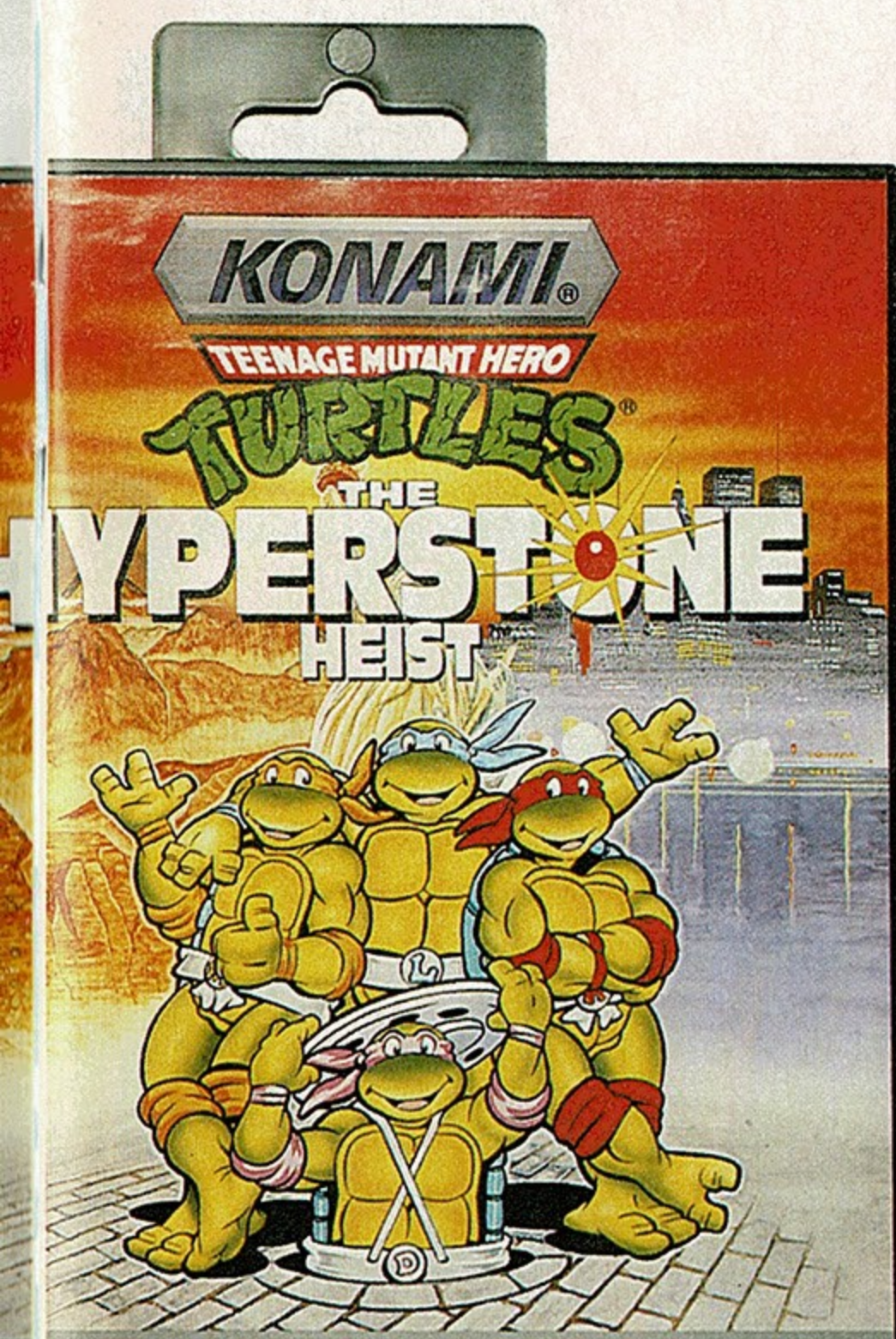
ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES

A top class product with attention to detail second to none. Amazing. **MEGA ACTION 94%**

RKA is possibly the best game on the Mega Drive ever. **GAMESMASTER 92%**



MI KRED!"



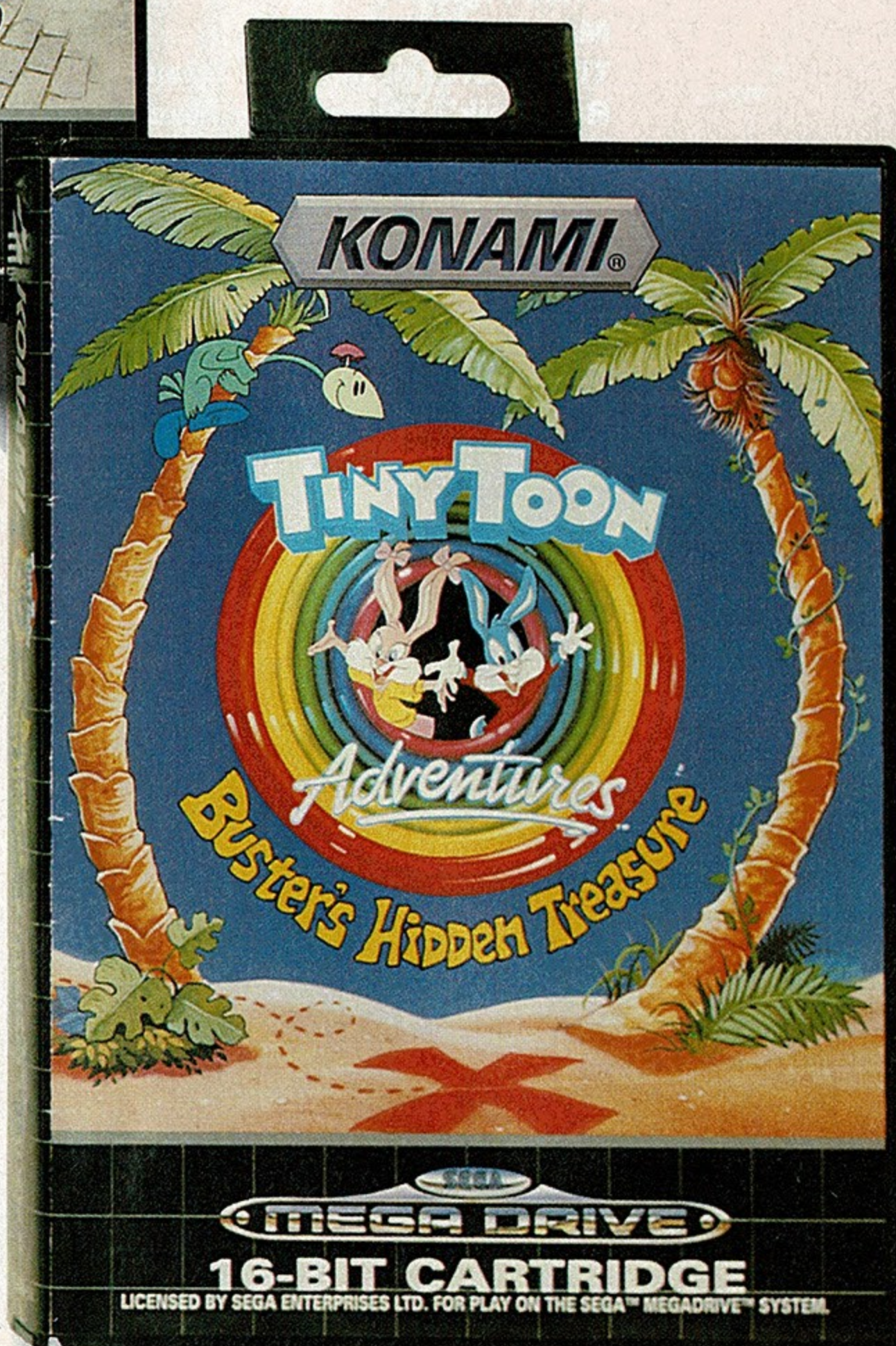
TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES® THE HYPERSTONE HEIST™

Good clean amphibious fun. **SEGA PRO 87%**

Turtles really is a visually stunning game

MEGA TECH 87%

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MEGA DRIVE
16-BIT CARTRIDGE
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One of the best plat-formers
ever. *Megatech 95%*

a fast paced platform game
that is similar to Sonic,
but....better fun.

*Mega Drive Advanced
Gaming 93%*



cover story

Bad, blue and Back! Yes, Sonic 3 will be storming it's way onto a console near you soon. Who better than the elite MPs to take Sega's latest platform buster for a test run?



Football's most revered ambassador kicks off.

28



Classic middleweight action in the square ring.

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Mad Dog's on a posse hunt inside.

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The most addictive game of the month.

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Sir Charles Jams 12

Basketball's bad boy makes good is soon to be immortalised on your console.

The Ultimate Guide to Mega-CD Gaming 67

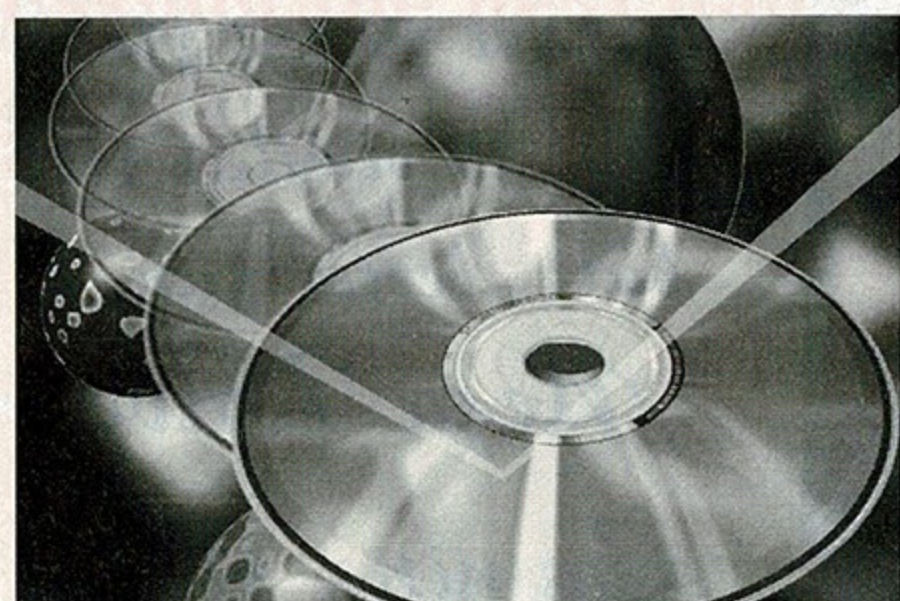
Got a CD? Want to know a little bit more about the games you could be playing? Sorted!

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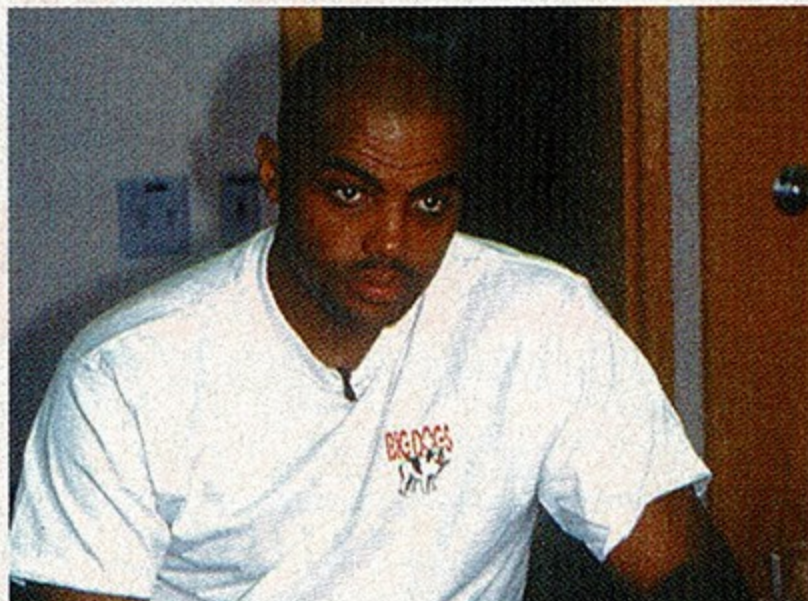
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GUIDE TO CD GAMES
16 pages packed with all the more notable CD releases.



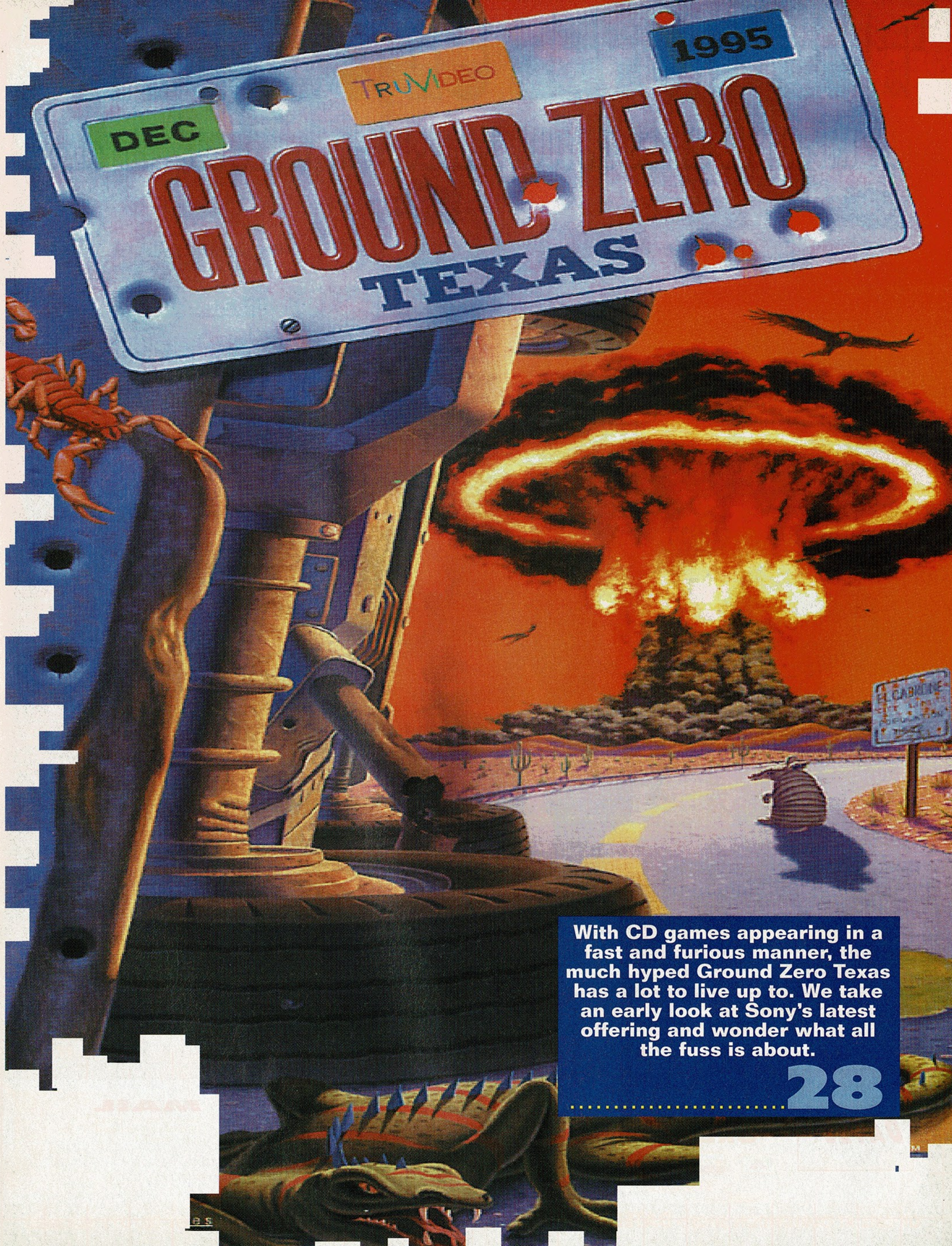
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CALL ME SIR!
Charles Barkley is soon to be immortalised on console.



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VIRTUALLY HERE!
Virtua Racing on the console, yep, we've played it!



With CD games appearing in a fast and furious manner, the much hyped Ground Zero Texas has a lot to live up to. We take an early look at Sony's latest offering and wonder what all the fuss is about.

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PRESS

s t a r t



You'll have to excuse me this month but I feel the urge to go off on one of my self-indulgent rants.

It all began with England getting knocked out of the World Cup. Over the past few months I have read a lot of articles about the demise of the English game and the lack of flair in the youngsters coming through the present school systems. The coaches have been blamed, an emphasis on speed and strength has been blamed, a basic lack of skill has been cited. From where I'm standing the only people who haven't been blamed and deserve to have the finger pointed at them more than anyone are the property developers! When I return home to the street I was born in I find it hard to associate what I see with the world I roamed in as a child. The fields are gone, the trees are gone, the wild blackberry bushes are gone, there is no grass and nowhere to kick a ball around. Is it any wonder our national game is wilting, when the raw talent has nowhere left to develop? You can't learn flair and trickery at some coaching session run by a local teacher or youth club leader, you learn from practise, from doing it over and over again against other kids and from basically running with the ball from the time school ends to the time you have to go in for your tea.

This greed for a quick profit is heartlessly replacing the countryside with concrete boxes, and is also one of the reasons why the console games industry is thriving. If there is nowhere to go out to play, then you stay in don't you? It would seem that as a result, we will soon be producing world-class video gamers and only second-rate sportsmen. Read what you will into this but personally I don't believe that it can be doing the country any good at all; football is only the tip of the iceberg. Give us wide open spaces, not dirty urban jungles, you shallow-minded bread heads!

dave perry

dave perry

Looking decidedly peeky as he stalks the Paragon offices, we have had to bear the shock this month of realising that our editor is not indestructible. After steering the latest issue of Mega Power to its deadline, filming his Wednesday shows of Games World and now also co-presenting the whole of the GamesMaster Team Championships with Dexter Fletcher, he took half a day off! Exhaustion he claimed was the cause – we think it was more probably those dodgy bacon rolls you get on British Rail trains.

Rating: Weary or not, Dave is still the country's leading 'games-playing animal!'

Motto: "Let's get it on!"



phil king

The Kingster is fast becoming the man to beat in the Mega Power offices. As Dave spends more and more time shooting all over the country, Phil has muscled his way in as office champion on a number of the newer titles. Sadly dissappointing on *Sensible Soccer*, for a world champion anyway, he has proved unbeatable on *Legends Of The Ring* with his favourite fighter Roberto Duran. We must confess to worrying a little about Phil. He takes it all way too seriously and squeals with delight as he pummels his opponents into submission. He's even grown a beard and is having his hair permed. Be warned, Phil King is one sick puppy!

Rating: Still waters run deep.

Motto: "Let 'em have it!"

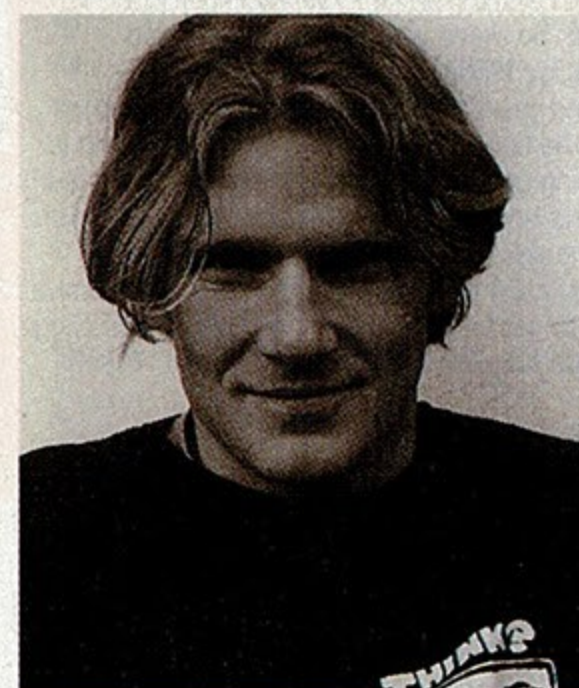


steve bough

Pronounced 'bow' not 'boff', and definitely not related to the famous sports presenter. Steve has shown his true colours recently as a ridiculously dedicated masochist. He fills the office with stories of how surfing in the winter is great because it is 'physically punishing' and only the tough can survive a condition known as 'ice-cream head'. 'Ice-cream head' occurs, apparently, when you first go under the water in freezing conditions and your head feels like it's going to explode with the pain. Great eh? Is it any wonder that Steve and Phil get on so well together?

Rating: Not completely at home on the console but what he lacks in polish, he makes up for in tenacity.

Motto: "It's not over 'til it's over!"



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POWER NEWS

PREVIEWS

AX101 Sega

Another futuristic 3-D shoot-'em-up looms from Sega of Japan. But will this be another *Sewer Shark* or *Silphed*? Well, the high-grade graphics certainly look awesome as you pilot your AX101 single-seat space fighter through dramatic landscapes, flying through canyons and over mountains – hitting the scenery rapidly reduces your energy level.

After another incredible cinematic-style introduction, you take off to battle an armada of alien spaceships. Whether the gameplay matches the stunning graphics and presentation is yet to be seen, but this is certainly the best-looking Mega-CD title to emerge so far. Sadly we'll have to wait till about March to even get our hands on the imported Japanese version, as the game's release date has slipped from December. On the other hand, this is surely a good sign as it means Sega are taking their time to get it right, rather than rush-releasing it for the lucrative Christmas period.

Street Date (Japan): March 1994



DOUBLE SWITCH Sega

This Mega-CD adventure is much in the vein of *Night Trap*, using digitised actors. It's a murder-mystery set in the Gothic mansion called the Edward Arms. Despite being an old spooky building, this has a high-tech security system located into its walls.

You've been hired by Eddie and his mother Blanche to protect the guests of this strange place, as the last tenants disappeared into thin air. There are plenty of interesting characters staying at the mansion, including thieves, archaeology students and even a techno-punk group called "Jeff And The Scream".

Every time you play the game, new story lines will appear so there's always something different to see and do. The gameplay is promised to be fast-paced with plenty of nasty traps to discover. In addition, the game features some star performances. Corey Haim (out of "The Lost Boys" movie) plays Eddie, while pop-star/actress Deborah Harry is his mother Blanche. The whole thing's been directed by Mary Lambert, whose previous work includes the two "Pet Semetary" movies and some Madonna videos!

Street Date (USA): March 1994



PHANTASY STAR - END OF THE MILLENNIUM Sega

The mouthful of a title replaces the original "Phantasy Star IV" because this game is more a sequel to *Phantasy Star II* rather than the third adventure. So there you have it: it's to avoid confusion, we think!

A thousand years after the destruction of Mother Brain by the heroes of *Phantasy Star*, the world is slowly being consumed by deserts and the only surviving people live in a few small oasis towns. The two heroes are Leila and the young boy Rudy, who go around the desolate land, killing monsters. Coming on a 24-Mbit cartridge, it's a truly massive RPG with lots of new features to get to grips with, including the Ice Digger and Land Master vehicles.

Street Date (Japan): January 1994



POP'N LAND Sur de Wave

Oh no, not another Japanese platform game. But wait a minute, this one's on the Mega-CD and it's a bit different from the usual cutesy platformers. Yes, it has the normal sideways scrolling run-and-jump action (with some nice parallax backdrops), but the unique selling point is the extent to which you can customise the main character. You get to choose between 16 types of head, body and weapon – so there's a total of 4,096 possible combinations!

Some of these will be extremely potent while others are virtually useless: it's up to you to experiment to find the best combinations to tackle the game's 15 colourful stages. Each of these features a unique creepy boss to defeat at the end, so there should be plenty of challenge to keep you jumping for joy. It's certainly refreshing to see something innovative in the platform genre for a change.

Street Date (Japan): January 1994



GENGHIS KHAN II Koei

The notoriously brutal warrior-king Genghis Khan is about to storm onto the Mega Drive in a new military strategy game. You get to play Genghis himself, issuing orders to troops on the plan-view battlefields. Your tactical decisions determine the outcome of battles in three historically authentic campaigns.

There are several ways of playing the game, ranging from simply watching the battles to actually controlling individual soldiers on the battlefield! You can even save lots of time by turning off the battle views.

Whichever way you play, this promises to be one of the most detailed historical games to date. The only thing that bothers us is whether it's ethical to play the part of such a notoriously genocidal leader as Genghis Khan. Does the length of time since his death really make it okay? Who knows, maybe in a thousand years' time gamers will be able to enjoy *Hitler: The Final Solution* or *Saddam Hussein's Chemical Warfare*!

Street Date (USA): January 1994



A BIT MORE

Sega are to add a 64-bit video chip to their in-development Saturn console. The RISC 64-bit chip will enable incredible graphics with texture mapping, glow shading, 60 minutes of Full Motion Video, an optional widescreen display mode and a 16 million colour palette.

Nevertheless the guts of the Saturn will still have 32-bit architecture, including a custom 32-bit main processor being developed in conjunction with Hitachi. So Sega's initial claims that it was a 64-bit machine were a bit much. They're now calling it a "Multi-Processor Machine" – much more apt as it contains no less than seven different processors.

Due to appear in Japan in the fourth quarter of 1994, the Saturn is likely to cost ¥30,000 (£190), or ¥50,000 (£315) with the optional CD-ROM drive. Of course, prices in Britain are likely to be much higher (at least £299) when the machine hits these shores officially in late 1995. The other bad news is that the Saturn will not be downward-compatible with the Mega Drive and Mega-CD. Indeed, rumour has it that Sega of Japan are no longer accepting in-house development proposals for Mega-CD titles, instead concentrating on the new machine. Ten Saturn games are already in development, including *Sonic The Arcade Game* and a conversion of the 3-D beat-'em-up coin-op, *Virtua Fighters*.



CODIES LINE-UP



Codemasters have announced a host of new Mega Drive titles for 1994. After a highly successful 1993, with releases such as *Micro Machines* and *Fantastic Dizzy*, the Codies are to release even more products next year: a total of six Mega Drive titles.

The first of these, *Tennis All-Stars* will be served up in April.

This arcade simulation of international tennis lets you play against world-class opposition. It also offers a vast array of match-play options, including a variety of singles and doubles competitions, male and female tennis players, and different court surfaces. You can play solo against a seven-level computer opponent, a straight two-player match, or with up to four human players on screen. Following the trend in beat-'em-ups, each tennis player has a special tactical move for you to learn and use.

You can even stop your game and scroll the screen to view other matches. And thanks to Codemasters' VFM policy, there's even a bonus game included, called *Crazy Tennis*. There's even a guest appearance from "a leading computer and video game character" (a fiver says it's Dizzy).

Speaking of Dizzy, he's soon to appear in triplicate. Released around Easter, the *Excellent Dizzy Collection* comprises three full games starring the ovoid hero. *Dizzy The Adventurer* is a magical cartoon adventure with a host of new characters. Dizzy travels through mystical lands, solving puzzles along the way, to rescue his beloved Daisy from her enchanted sleep. The second game, *Go! Dizzy, Go!* is a classic maze-style game for one or two players simultaneously. Dizzy and Daisy enter five worlds packed with demonic beasts that must be crushed by shoving movable blocks onto them. The game will also be packed with power-ups and "special secrets". Thirdly, *Panic! Dizzy* is a simple but addictive puzzle game with three variations. You compete against any of the Yolkfolk or a friends, pushing the falling shapes into the right holes in a race against the clock.



Shipshape software

Another puzzle game on the way from the Codies is *Sink Or Swim*. A *Lemmings*-style save-'em-up, it stars Kevin Codner rescuing passengers on a sinking ship. The panicking passengers behave just like Lemmings as they run around each vertically scrolling level, falling in the rapidly rising water. To prevent them drowning, you need to jump around the platforms to press the right switches to start conveyors belts, open hatches, and even lift crates and girders. Originally



released on the Amiga, this enjoyable puzzler will swim onto the Mega Drive in June.

Later in the year, around October, *Psycho Pinball* aims to take video-game pinball to a new heights in playability. As in *Sonic Spinball* it's not a ball you flip around the tables, but instead a silver-plated armadillo called Psycho! There are six wacky tables in all: Future Fair, Wild West, Moon Shot, Under Sea, Safari and Ghost Town. In between levels, Psycho gets to tackle a sub-game challenge relating to the table's theme. For example, in the Wild West there's a runaway train game, a tree-top fight on the Safari table, and a spooky shoot-'em-up in the Ghost Town.

Also due in the autumn, *Smaartvark!* stars an eponymous TV repair-aardvark (!) who actually gets inside your telly to fix it. Thus each level of the game is a TV channel containing glitchy-bug creatures that need to be exterminated by sucking them up your snout and blowing them to oblivion! Some of the inhabitants of TV land also cause Smaartvark problems, including mad scientists, vampires and B-movie monsters. Promising laughs a-plenty, there's also a fun two-player mode where you challenge a mate in a cartoon world, performing slapstick pranks on each other.

Finally, there's the previously mentioned (MP#5) football game for World Cup year, now renamed *World Soccer '94*. With so many fun titles in the offing, Codemasters certainly look set to have a very happy New Year.



HELP! RAISES THOUSANDS



The Mega Drive charity compilation *Help!* is set to raise over £400,000. Cash raised will be allocated to children's charities including Childline and The Prince's Trust.

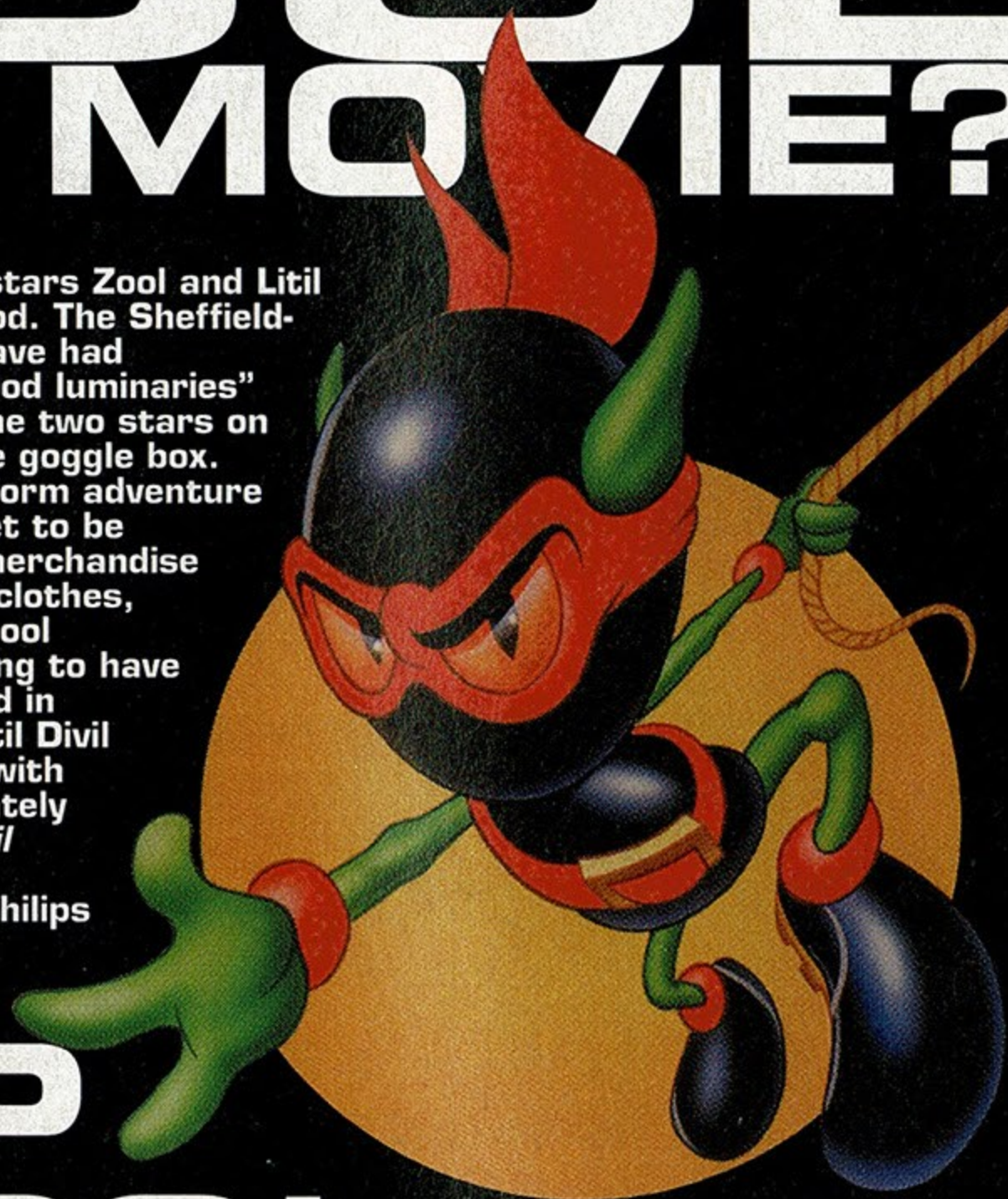
Retailing at £49.99, the five-game pack comprises Sega's *Sonic The Hedgehog* and *Space Harrier*, Acclaim's *WWF Super Wrestlemania* and *Krusty's Funhouse*, and US Gold's *Indiana Jones III*. So not only are you helping a good cause by buying it, but you're also getting great value for money.

The pack's success has been bolstered by the backing of major high-street store, Dixons. They've taken the full run of 10,000 units, guaranteeing a £420,000 total for charity. Exclusively available from Dixons stores, the compilation is released on 31 January.

At MEGA POWER we think the *Help!* project is a great achievement by an industry all too often accused of money grabbing. We congratulate the organisers and software companies who have given their products for the pack. Well done, all.

ZOOOL THE MOVIE?

Gremlin reckon that their game stars Zool and Lital Divil could be heading or Hollywood. The Sheffield-based software house claim to have had discussions with "leading Hollywood luminaries" about the possibility of putting the two stars on the silver screen - or at least the goggle box. The alien hero of a colourful platform adventure (8/10, MP#3), Zool is already set to be featured on a range of licensed merchandise in 1994, including sweets, toys, clothes, toiletries, novels and Back-to-School equipment. Gremlin are now hoping to have Zool TV and film projects released in 1995, along with an animated Lital Divil feature. A PC arcade adventure with spectacular animation, unfortunately there are no plans to convert *Lital Divil* to Mega-CD at the moment, although it will get an airing on Philips CD-i.



STOP PRESS!



At the time of writing, we've just heard that an updated version of *J League* is to be released on 17 December in Japan.

From the screenshots the 8Mbit cart looks almost identical to its predecessor, so it seems like they've just updated the teams and maybe tweaked the gameplay.

Meanwhile back in the UK, Tengen are to release the Mega Drive version of the long-awaited *Lawnmower Man* movie conversion. A Stephen King horror story about virtual reality experiments that go wrong, the blockbuster film featured incredible rendered graphics. We'll have to wait till June to see how this all translates onto the Mega Drive. Another product on the way from Tengen is *Pinkie*. To be released later in the year, it'll star the latest character from James Pond creators Millennium. A sort of cute pink alien, Millennium reckon *Pinkie* will be rocketed to stardom thanks to a promotional link-up with a major soft drinks manufacturer. Hmm, sounds tasty to us.



ACTION REPLAY CODES

Micro Machines too fast for you? *Mortal Kombat* beating you to a pulp? Need to skip levels or gain invincibility? Dattel's Action Replay cartridge is just the ticket: here are the latest cheat codes for it...

Alien 3 FF08670059 FF08670059	Infinite time Infinite missiles
Battletoads FFE0460005 FFE0070017	Infinite lives Infinite energy
Bubsy FF0090000F	Invulnerable
Chukan FFC0D0000C	Invulnerable
Corporation FF219E0033 FF2A2B00FE FF2A2F0001 FF2A260033 FF2A240001 FF441A0012	Infinite time Infinite energy Infinite ammo Infinite power No damage when hit Money to buy everything at the shop
Fantastic Dizzy FF81130000	All stars collected
Flintstones FF01550004	Infinite energy
Galaxy Force II FFF8350088	Infinite energy
Mickey Mouse World Of Illusion FFFD530003 FFA0380005	Mickey or Donald permanently has three tries Mickey or Donald permanently has three energy cards
Micro Machines FFA99B0604	Blue doesn't move
Mortal Kombat FFAAFF000A	Stops timer in bonus round
Puggsy FF08660003	Infinite lives
Shining Force FFA1B600XX	Allows you to change the characters (Turn Action Replay on when entering a battle and of when finished. Replace XX with 0-29)
Shinobi 3 FF37E00003 FF37E90010 FF37E30032 FF37E60001	Infinite lives Infinite energy Infinite shurikens Infinite magic
Sonic Spinball FF579E0003	Infinite lives
Streets Of Rage II FFFC190001	Allows two people to play the same fighter
Sunset Riders FFB0990003	Unlimited energy
Super Hang-On FF06570000	Can't fall off the bike
Super Monaco FF92340000	First place in every race.
Super Monaco Grand Prix FF92FA0000	Infinite time
Wonderboy In Monsterworld FF959D0001 FF962F00FF	Infinite elixir More money

POWER NEWS

POWER WINNER

MEGA-CD 2 [Issue 5]

An absolute avalanche of entries poured through our letter box for this compo, and we thought it only fair to put everyone out of their misery as soon as possible. The winner was Mrs Sue Smith from Christchurch. It's a good job she's saved those demo discs.

January

Aero The Acro-Bat	Sunsoft	Mega Drive	UK
Air Management II	Koei	Mega Drive	Japan
Another World 1 & 2	Virgin	Mega-CD	UK
Battle Fantasy	Micronet	Mega-CD	Japan
Body Count	Sega	Mega Drive	UK
Castlevania: The New Generation	Konami	Mega Drive	UK
Chuck Rock II	Core	Mega-CD	UK
Dragon's Lair	Readysoft	Mega-CD	USA
Dragon's Revenge	Tengen	Mega Drive	UK
Dune	Virgin	Mega-CD	UK
Eternal Champions	Sega	Mega Drive	UK
F-117: Night Storm	EA	Mega Drive	UK
Genghis Khan II	Koei	Mega Drive	USA
Greatest Heavyweights	Sega	Mega Drive	UK
Gunship	US Gold	Mega Drive	UK
Incredible Crash Dummies, The	Acclaim	Mega Drive	UK
Indiana Jones	Sega	Mega-CD	UK
Joe Montana's NFL Football	Sega	Mega-CD	UK
Madden NFL '94	EA Sports	Mega-CD	UK
Mean Bean Machine	Sega	Mega Drive	UK
NFL Quarterback Club	Acclaim	Mega Drive	UK
NHL '94	EA Sports	Mega-CD	UK
P-Star: End Of The Millennium	Sega	Mega Drive	Japan

POWER DATES

When's a game out, who's producing it? The MPs give you the definitive guide to the next six months' releases.

Pop'n Land
Poppo Mail
Power Drift
Powermonger
Sister Sonic
Terminator, The
Time Dominator
ToeJam & Earl 2
Wonderdog
Young Indy

February

Beastball
Brett Hull Hockey
Bubba 'N' Stix
Bubba 'N' Stix
Chaos Engine, The
Dragon
Dune II
Ground Zero Texas
Jungle Book, The
Jurassic Park
Lost Vikings, The
Pebble Beach Golf
Ren & Stimpy
Sonic 3
Terminator

March

Aggressor
AX 101
Bare Knuckle III
Charles Barkley Basketball
Double Switch

Sur De Wave
Sega
Denpa
EA
Sega
Virgin
Vic Tokai
Sega
Core
Sega

MicroProse
Accolade
Core
Core
MicroProse
Virgin
Virgin
Sega
Virgin
Sega
Virgin
Sega
Sega
Sega
Virgin

Core
Sega
Sega
Accolade
Sega

Flashback
Lawnmower Man, The
Liberator
Marko's Magic Football
Mega Race
Mike Ditka American Football
Prince Of Persia
Rebel Assault
RoboCop Vs Terminator
Virtua Racing

April

Excellent Dizzy Collection
F1 World Champ: Heavenly
Symphony
Lawnmower Man, The
Tennis All-Stars
World Cup '94

May

Kawasaki Superbikes
Outrunners

June

Demolition Man
Incredible Hulk, The
Kevin Codner In Sink Or Swim
World Soccer '94

Autumn

Goal!
Psycho Pinball
Smaartvark!

Sony
Tengen
Core
Domark
Mindscape
Accolade
Domark
JVC
Virgin
Sega

Codemasters
Sega
Tengen
Codemasters
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BARKLEY

— SHUT UP AND JAM

Hands up all fans of basketball? Does the name Charles Barkley mean anything to you? Well, if he doesn't all will be revealed. Charles has been licensed by Accolade for their new basketball simulation.

Basketball is the fastest growing sport in Europe, especially in Mediterranean countries such as Spain. In all these places American player Charles Barkley is a hero to many. You may have seen him in the last Olympics: he was part of the all-star USA "dream team" which thrashed all the opposition to win the gold medal. He's not had it easy, though. Brought up in the ghettos, he played basketball on the street and played it rough. He is streetwise, mean and plays a rough game.

Hailed by his fans and even his critics as "Sir Charles", Barkley has earned the distinction of being one of the greatest stars of the National Basketball Association (NBA), and has also amassed the most fines since he's been playing! Millions flock to see his stylish and exuberant competitiveness. He is most definitely the player to watch, and to quote the man himself, "I love to play basketball, I love to have fun, and I love to win."

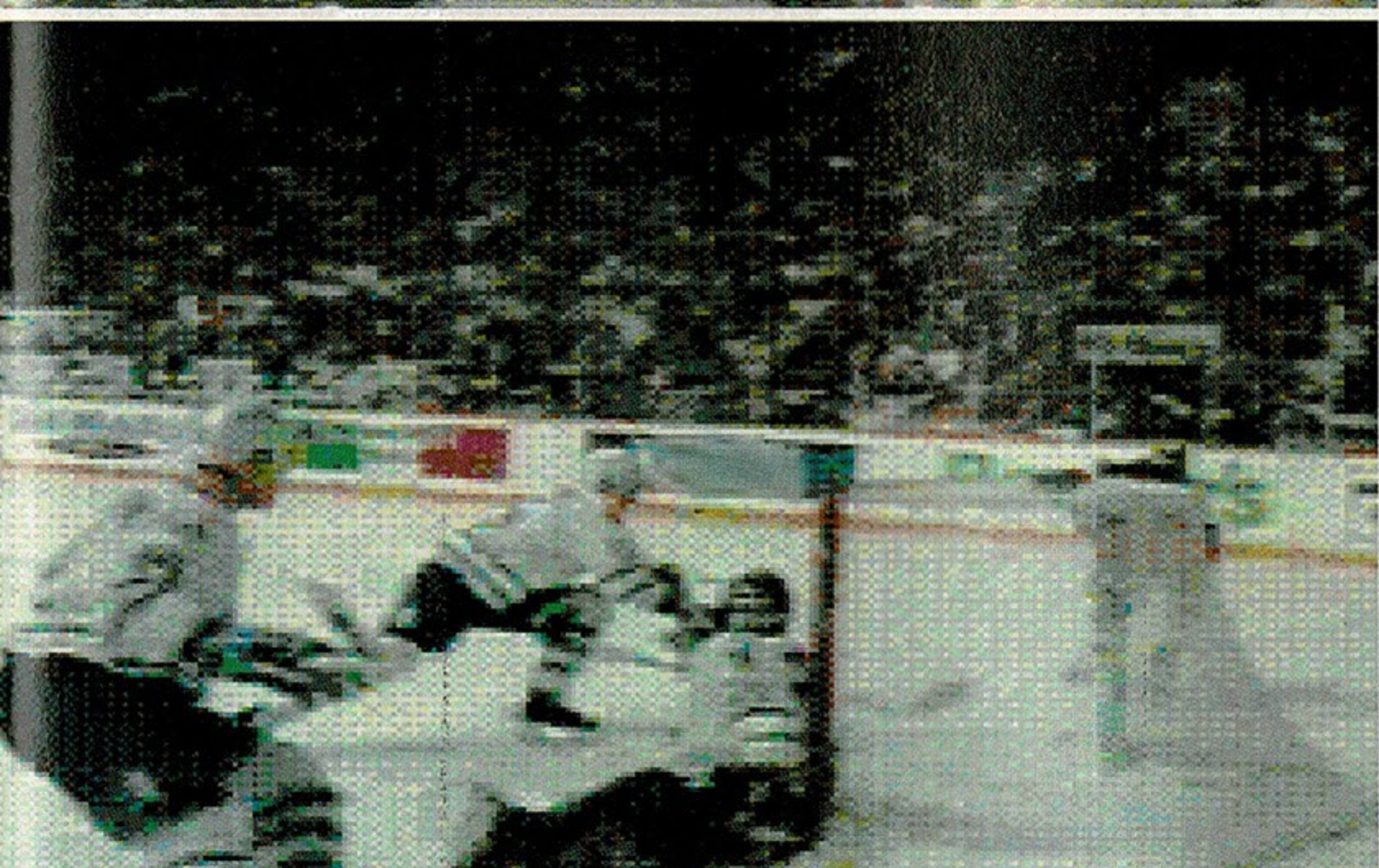
Accolade were certainly quick to sign him for their eagerly awaited release. Called quite simply *Barkley - Shut Up And Jam*, the game will not only be the most original basketball sim around, it will also permit up to four players to join in the fun.

With Accolade's commitment to "games with personality", they emphasised that they wanted the main input to come from Barkley. With Charles's influence, the game has developed into something which will be quite unique, taking place on a street court with a background of street life, graffiti and the like. The game will be in Charles's own definitive style; ie rough and tough as he is into hitting pushing and some even fouler methods of beating opponents! Other special features include an intense two-on-two jamfest starring Charles and 16 of his neighbourhood buddies, and of course the four-player option.

The game is scheduled for release on the Mega Drive for the second quarter of '94, probably June, with the price as yet not confirmed. One thing's for sure: the combination of Accolade's game design talents with Barkley's personality and playing style should be an explosive one. Let's hope they can carry it off!



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55 monster levels

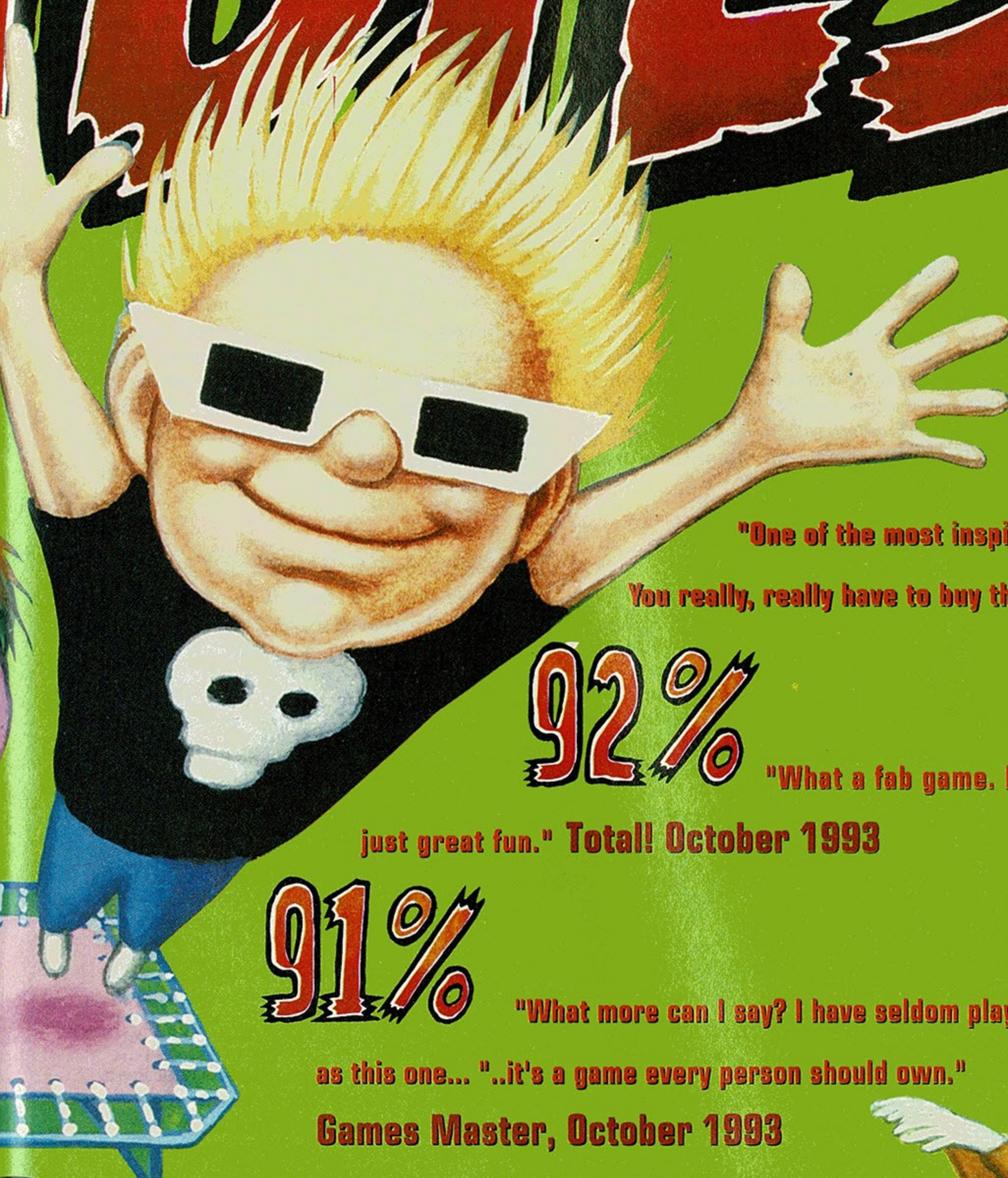
of manic mayhem with monsters,
mummies werewolves all trying to kill
the neighbours! These scary psycho's
must be terminated and **it looks**
like it's up to you.

ZOM



SUPER NINTENDO
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

BALES



94%

"One of the most inspiring new releases in years.

You really, really have to buy this." **NMS, October 1993**



92%

"What a fab game. Big, beautiful and

just great fun." **Total! October 1993**

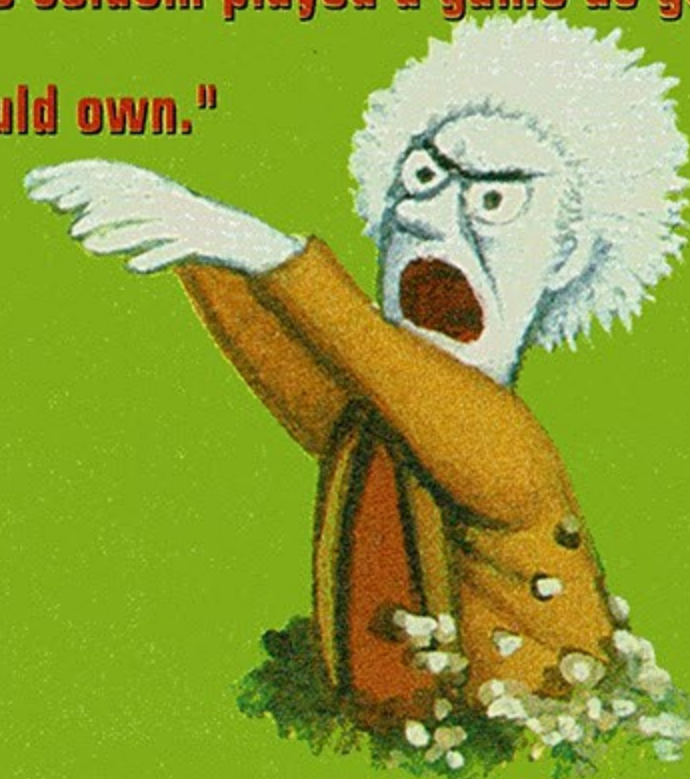


91%

"What more can I say? I have seldom played a game as good

as this one... "...it's a game every person should own."

Games Master, October 1993



DYNAMI

FEEDBACK

This month we've had more letters than ever before, many of them concerning MEGA POWER itself. If you want to make a point about the magazine, games, hardware or anything relevant to the Mega Drive or Mega-CD, write to: Feedback, MEGA POWER, Paragon Publishing, Durham House, 124 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth BH1 1NF. Remember, this column couldn't exist without you.

POOR PIRATES

Dear MEGA POWER,

I was disappointed with the article on pirates in the November issue. Considering MEGA POWER is supposed to be an independent publication, I expected something better than a patronising lecture on the evils of piracy. As (reasonably) intelligent human beings, we are allowed to make up our own minds.

I doubt that illegal copying is anywhere near as great a problem as Sega make out (Sega have an uncanny knack of manipulating the facts to suit their own mercenary policies – see Rob Higgins's letter in Issue 4). Sega is one of the world's most profitable companies and it seems unlikely that a few Magicoms (or even a few thousand) would destroy its foothold on the UK console market. To be honest, Sega are doing a fine job at that themselves.

How so? I used to be able to afford a new game every month; now I can only afford budget games like *Gynoug* and *Alisia Dragon*. If Nick Alexander thinks people are happy to pay £60 for games, he might as well pack up and go home. It is high prices, not piracy, which threatens the future of the console industry. Obviously if Sega cannot see that, they have been blinded by their own greed.

Michael Gordon, Hazlerigg, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Aha, it's the old argument of "if it weren't for high prices, people wouldn't pirate games". True, higher game prices probably make piracy a more viable option than it otherwise would be – especially considering the high cost of Magicom-style copying devices. But it's more the opportunity of obtaining pirated games that matters: if they're hard to get hold of, most people won't bother. You only have to look at the appalling Amiga piracy problem to see this. Although game prices are far lower than console ones, there's much more Amiga piracy due to its relative ease: people even copy games that are available on budget for £9.99.

Nevertheless, you're right about Sega's pricing policy. It certainly contrasts with that of Nintendo, who have tried to keep prices down by letting third-party licensees buy cartridge components in dollars rather than yen. Unfortunately, Sega Europe are still blaming everything on the strong yen, using it as an excuse to push prices ever higher. Nick Alexander stated in the industry newspaper that something Sega paid 10,000 yen for now cost them £62.50 rather than £44 a year ago. Absolutely true, but he went on to claim (in another publication) that this means games should now cost £63! Yet the cartridge manufacture cost affected by this exchange-rate change only represents a small proportion of the retail price: about £14. All Sega Europe's other costs, such as distribution, PR and advertising remain completely unaffected. Nice try, Nick.

COMPACT PRICES

Dear MEGA POWER,

Many congratulations on being the first Sega magazine to be placed on sale with a demonstration Mega-CD disc. This one act safely shows that this is both possible, and in the software companies' interests. Allowing people to see the product properly before purchasing must be good news. I would like to know how this came about – did you approach Core or did they approach you? If you approached them, can you convince any other manufacturers to do a similar demonstration copy of their games. If this is possible, would you consider running a mail-order scheme to sell other demonstration CDs?

The main thing that your act shows is of course how cheaply the CD can be made for. Comparing Special Reserve's prices for Mega-CD games, they are almost double the price of Amiga CD32 prices. How has this come about?

John Chapelhow, Parbold, Wigan

For our first cover-mounted CD, Core approached us with the initial idea and we quickly came to an agreement for *Thunderhawk*. Since then, we've had discussions with many prominent software

companies about CD cover-mounting. Psygnosis have already given us the three-game demo for Issue 6 (obviously not yet out when you wrote your letter) and we're certainly looking forward to further CD demos in the future – including more multi-game ones. I doubt we'll be running a fully-fledged mail-order scheme for demo CDs, but people can always order back-issues with them on.

You're not the first person to be puzzled by the high price of Mega-CD games. As Rob Higgins commented back in Issue 4's Feedback, Sega's justification for it was feeble. The thing about the Amiga CD32 is that Commodore don't control the price of software; they just take a set royalty from each disc. The software companies are free to release products when and at what price they want. This leads to healthy competition and reasonable prices for the consumer. Another reason why Mega-CD games are dearer is that some of the money goes towards subsidising the price of the hardware. Nevertheless, Electronic Arts have managed to release Mega-CD games at £39.99, so why can't Sega?

MP

STREETS APART

Dear MEGA POWER,

Firstly I wish to congratulate you on an excellent mag, which is easily the best in the Mega Drive and Mega-CD field. Now to my question: back in about June I was reading and hearing about *Street Fighter II Champion Edition* on the Mega Drive, how it was almost arcade perfect and a 16Mbit cart. How much better is *Street Fighter II: Special Champion Edition*, the 24 Mbit cart, than the one Sega decided was not good enough to release.

Robert Brinklow, Hemel Hempstead

The earlier 16Mbit cart that you mention was withdrawn shortly after its release in the USA. As we never got a chance to play that version, we couldn't tell you how good it was – though it couldn't have been much cop if Sega withdrew it. On the other hand, the 24Mbit *Street Fighter II* is undoubtedly the best beat-'em-up on the Mega Drive.

MP

LACK OF CHALLENGE

Dear MEGA POWER,

So you reckon your beloved leader Mr Perry is, and I quote, "an unstoppable gamesplaying animal." Well, and I don't just speak for myself when I say, "Ho ho ho". We, the Kew branch of MP readers club, think otherwise. Are you sure he is not the "Chris Eubank of the console world"? Fancy picking opponents who have no possible way of winning. They couldn't win a three-horse race, even if the other two horses were Shergar and Pharlap. Behave MP. We, the humble readers of Kew, challenge you to pick a worthwhile opponent and see then how good or bad Mr Perry really is. Hey! Now there's a good idea for a competition prize. Place a question in your January edition and the funniest, wittiest answer received would be the winner, and whoever wrote it goes in a head-to-head situation

with the man himself in your next Power Challenge. What about it, Dave?

Neil Pearson + the entire Kew branch of the MP readers club, Richmond, Surrey

PS. Do not fail us now, oh leader of many (tsk!).

How dare you question the ability and courage of our great leader? "The Kid" is a proven gamesplaying champion. Not only has he thrashed all the other magazine journalists on Games World, but he has also beaten all-comers at *Street Fighter II* challenges around the country. As you'll have noticed, we don't have the Power Challenge in every issue now, which is just as well for you as he'd have ripped your throat out.

MP

Mega POWER

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reviews

If all you want to know is what we think about the game, this is where you should start. Each of us has our own gaming likes and dislikes, and it's here we can let rip. Our strict reviewing policy means every one of us must justify our opinion to the others.

One picture in each review will have numbers scattered over it. Using these, we can go even more in-depth explaining elements of the game. Each number corresponds to a numbered caption near the picture.

Percentage, here's the rating we gave it.

We get deep in the pixels of a game and try to convey the action by showing close-ups from the game. Here you could see anything from a series of slams to the demise of General Ortega.

Mega Drive or Mega-CD. Look here first to see if it's on your machine.

A bit of background to familiarise yourself with what sort of game we're reviewing. You're bound to find something here that you didn't already know, so this is the best place to start.

Where applicable, we tell you a bit more about games similar to the one we're reviewing.

THE LOST VIKINGS

Playing, developers are... authority are all things we at Mega Power... Steve thought... the game is... the game is... the game is...

OVERALL 83

This is a platformer with a difference. It is witty, challenging, and great to look at.

FINAL VERDICT

"The Lost Vikings has successfully managed to use three main characters and still come up with a top game. It presents to be very challenging, amusing and of course only one half of a puzzle. There's certainly a lot of fun."

ALL FOR ONE

The Mega Drive... the game is... the game is... the game is...

OVERALL 83

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FINAL VERDICT

"The Lost Vikings has successfully managed to use three main characters and still come up with a top game. It presents to be very challenging, amusing and of course only one half of a puzzle. There's certainly a lot of fun."

Instead of blathering on for thousands of words explaining every single element in the game, we give you pictures instead. After all, a picture tells a thousand words, and with the amount of pictures we use, you'll be getting the equivalent of a magazine's worth of text for every review. Beneath each picture, we tell you exactly what's going on and what we think about it.

For control freaks. A complete run-down of what your joystick functions are in relation to each game.

No, we won't be pulling some strange facial expression in the hope that you can work it out (that's so Eighties...). Each picture fulfils two purposes: it tells you who's written the comment, and what they thought of the game. Red (hot!) means "I think the game's great". Green (neutral) says "it was fun, but I wouldn't buy it". Finally, the blue (cold) face says "I wouldn't even recommend this to that annoying kid in MacDonald's". Any game with a blue face on it should be approached with trepidation.

Here we give you the hard facts. Read this and the personal comments to get a quick view of the game.

the ratings

GAMEPLAY

Takes into account how the game feels. Is it fun to play? Was it difficult to get into? How original is the design?

GRAPHICS

Looks at animation, use of colour, definition, variety and functionality. Ultimately, does it look as good as it should do?

SOUND

Are the tunes and sound effects any good, and, secondly, do they suit the game and build a convincing atmosphere?

ADDICTION

Most games are fun initially, but how long will you be playing it? Is it the sort of game you'd play months after buying it?

OVERALL

- 0-30% - Don't bother. A load of rubbish and serious damage to street-cred.
- 40-50% - A very risky purchase. Don't blame us if you get a dog.
- 60-80% - A decent game, but may only be suited to certain players.
- 90-100% - Everyone will love this. We'd lash out the cash for it.

BATMAN RETURNS

SEGA £39.99 OUT NOW

one player CD no password available in UK

GAMEPLAY 70 GRAPHICS 70 SOUND 70 ADDICTION 70

OVERALL 90

FINAL VERDICT

"A brave attempt at bringing the caped crusader to the small screen. Unfortunately the jerky animation poor collision detection render this cart virtually unplayable. This game makes even Adam West appear believable."

A Final verdict from the MPs. This is a conclusive statement based on all of our feelings about the game. You'd be well advised to heed this.

How many players can partake in the action.

How big the cart is (not applicable to CD games).

If there's a save option, how it works and what it saves.

Where in the world it's available.



THE MEGA BLAST

This is the ultimate accolade any game can receive. Only games that score above 90% are awarded this supreme honour and should definitely be near the top of your shopping list.

PREVIEW

SONIC

The blue hedgehog's third Mega Drive adventure has finally zoomed into view. MEGA POWER took a first-class ticket to Mobius and located not only Sonic, but also a lethal enforcer by the name of Knuckles.

A year after saving the animals and chaos emeralds in his last adventure, Sonic is back, along with his chum Tails who makes a welcome return after missing out on Sonic's recent Mega-CD game.

In *Sonic 2*, the boys thought that they had destroyed the Death Egg, which was Dr Robotnik's heavily armoured ship. However, the evil doctor managed to crash-land on a strange island floating in the sky. He soon discovered that it was only kept afloat by the power of chaos emeralds, and of course he decided to steal them so he could repair his Death Egg and seal the fate of Sonic, once and for all.

Following the introduction of Tails in *Sonic 2*, and Amy and the metal Sonic in *Sonic CD*, *Sonic 3* sees yet another new character appear. This time he's the guardian of the floating island's chaos emeralds. Knuckles is the man in charge, and although he's a peaceful guy, Dr Robotnik has tricked him into believing that Sonic and Tails are the ones trying to steal the emeralds.



Between battling the new types of badniks, and trying to outsmart Knuckles throughout the game, Sonic and Tails have their work cut out once they arrive on the floating island in their search for Robotnik.

Electrifying action

There are distinct differences between this adventure and the last two outings. For example, the TV sets still contain items, extra lives, and shields, but the latter have been modified. Sonic can now become electrically charged when obtaining a shield. This will assist him in collecting rings (they are drawn towards the shield because of its magnetic force) and defeating enemies. Fire and whirlwinds shields are also included.

Sonic 3



These platforms weren't here a minute ago. To make them appear you need to bang the blue circle in the bottom left corner, and laugh as your quick wits lead you to previously hidden riches.

There are six zones in all, each featuring two acts. This may sound small but don't be deceived: they are massive, each with at least two different exits. Alongside that, there are at least two different endings to the game.

The lampposts still act as restart points, and the stars again appear on collection of 50 rings. However, instead of entering the special stage, you'll enter a bonus section where Sonic and Tails get the opportunity to collect extra lives and points.

Don't worry, the special stage is still here, but it is somewhat different. To enter it you have to find the large golden ring which is hidden in each act. Once in the special stage, you'll be required to collect all the blue balls, and keep doing this, avoiding the obstacles until you reach the chaos emerald. Much-needed extra lives are awarded on the collection of a hundred rings in an act, collecting 50 rings in the special stage, or bouncing on the trusty TV set.

At first sight, *Sonic 3* does look quite similar to his previous adventures, which is inevitable. But the more you play, the more you'll find out how different this game is. With each act being so large and offering so much to explore, this third Sonic outing keeps in with the excellence of the first two games, and gives you more.

More fun, more gameplay and more enjoyment will be yours when *Sonic 3* hits the streets in February. Judging by the high standards that this



Slightly reminiscent of the Labyrinth Zone in the first Sonic adventure, here we see Sonic being blown by the large fans underwater. He is protected by a shield, but he still needs air.

and his previous games have set, is it any wonder



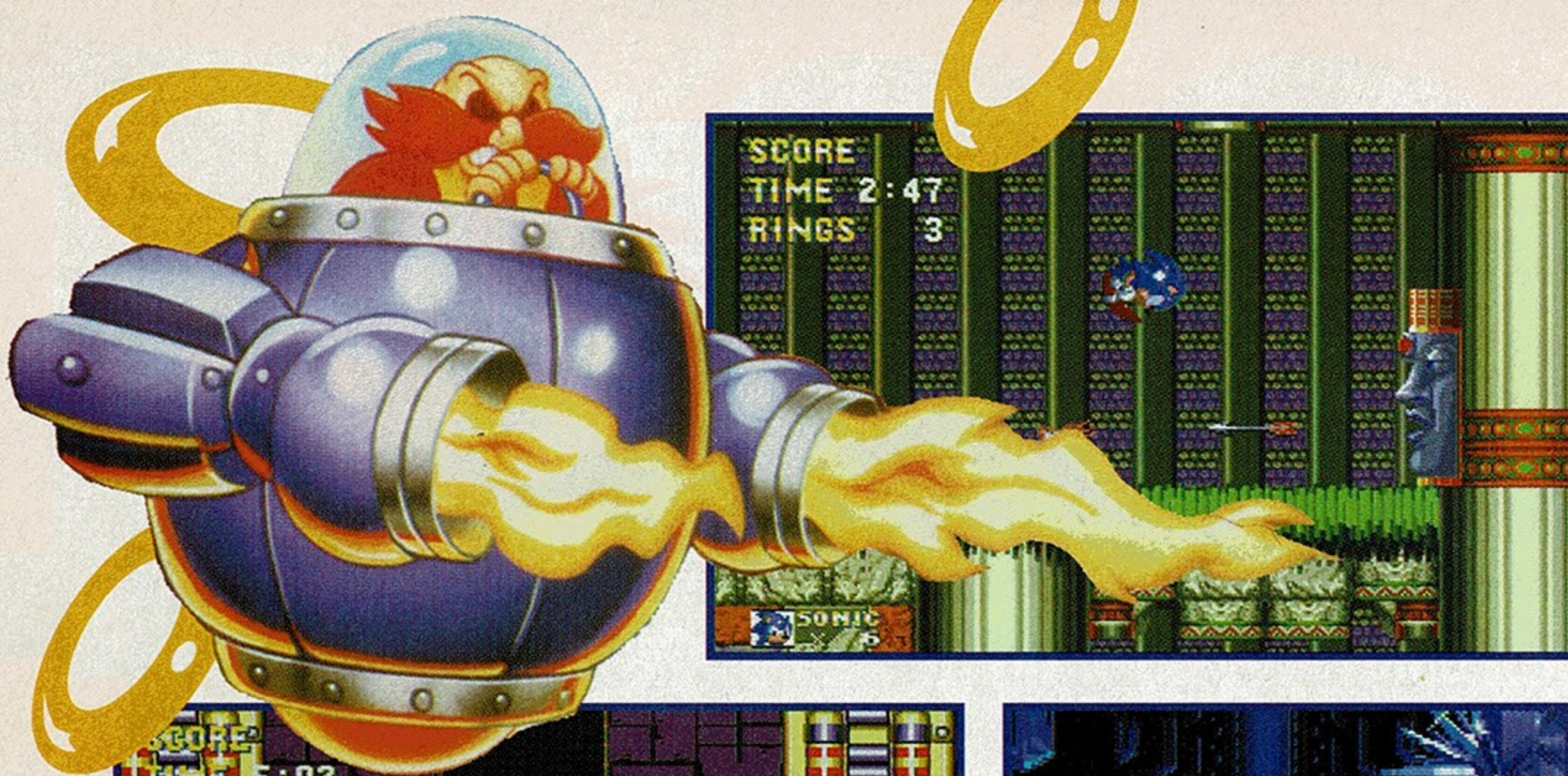
There are two brand new bonus stages in *Sonic 3*. Sonic bounces up and flicks the lever to release extra lives and point bonuses whilst Tails remains at the bottom frantically picking them up.

that Sonic's still the most famous hedgehog in the world?



What would Sonic be without Chaos Emeralds? The special stage is different for this adventure, but the emeralds remain the same. You need to collect them all to finish the game properly.

Mega POWER



SUPERSONIC SUCCESS



It is rather remarkable that a small blue hedgehog should rise to such worldwide fame. The fact that he is a computer sprite makes the whole episode even more baffling. Sonic is undoubtedly Sega's mascot, as Mario is to Nintendo. It is of course a sign of the times: we live in the electronic age, and this has changed our tastes from once hero-worshipping the sun, to now worshipping a Japanese invention – I suppose you'd call it progress!

With Sonic's meteoric rise to superstardom, it is strange that for three years he has remained at the top. What is the draw with this hedgehog? Undoubtedly cutesy characters do sell computer games. Take for example Mickey Mouse, Bubsy and James Pond to name but a few. But the hedgehog has one advantage over all of them: he's totally cool. Adopting 20th century western ways has helped Sonic to the heights he's reached today. He wears trainers, he's blue, he's Sonic.

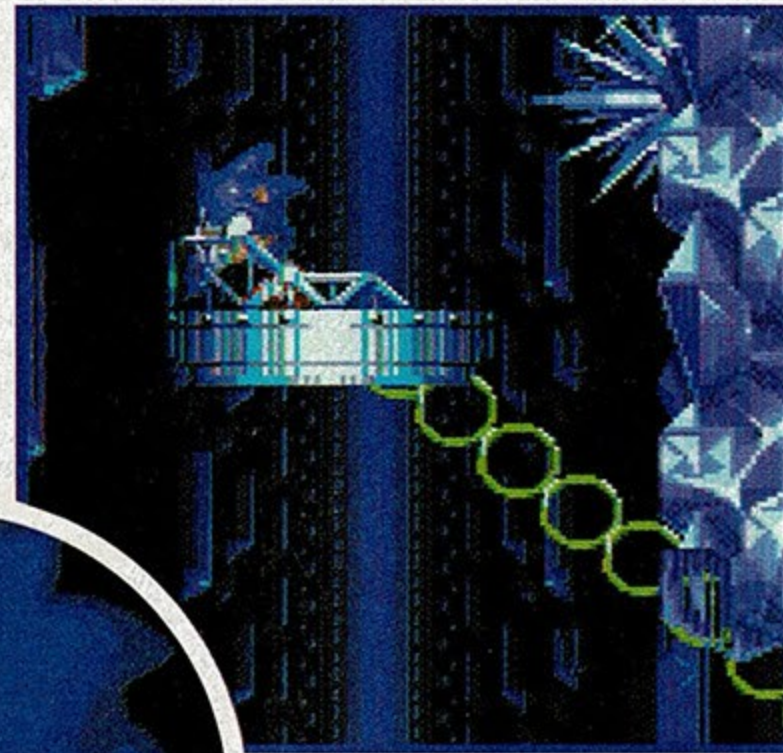
It is riding on this success that the young spiky hedgehog returns for his third outing on the Mega Drive, let alone the other countless adventures that tell of Sonic's fortunes and misfortunes on the other three Sega formats. We are not sure how long he's here to stay, but within the last three years this pronged hedgehog has become a legend in his own lifetime.

With the first *Sonic* game achieving record-breaking worldwide sales, Sega were somewhat taken aback by the success of their new character, and decided to make him their official mascot as well as developing a sequel. *Sonic 2* was introduced in the November of 1992, and was launched with one of the most successful marketing campaigns the industry had ever seen.

More Sonic spin-offs saw Sega reinforce their hold on the European market. *Sonic CD* was the first outing on the Mega-CD, while the spiky hero flipped out in Mega Drive *Sonic Spinball*, and starred in yet more adventures on the Master System and Game Gear.

Rumours have been around for ages about when *Sonic 3* was coming out. The questions ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous... When will Sonic be out? Is Tails still included? What do Sonic and Tails get up to in their spare time?

The emergence of the game has answered all these questions apart from the last, although we did see these two entering a certain massage parlour in London recently!




Playing *Sonic 3*, you will undoubtedly come across aspects from the previous two games. These springs bounce Sonic in either direction, and allow him to get that extra boost of speed.



There is a two-player option and this is it. Very similar to *Sonic 2*, where it is essentially a time-trial. The other character in the picture is the guardian of the Floating Island, Knuckles.

SONIC 3



1-2 players



16Mbit



save game

SEGA

£TBA

OUT FEB

Information

(071) 373 3000

SO FAR... finished

early days

ANTICIPATION

VIRTUA RACING

PREVIEW



After seeing Virtua Racing at Sega HQ, the MEGA POWER crew were so excited that they had an unfortunate encounter with the boys in blue on the way home. Collecting the mandatory three points, they blamed the whole episode on this superfast game!



Being located in Bournemouth, the home of the UK's flagship Sega World arcade, the MEGA POWER crew are often to be seen down there, gripping the steering wheels of the eight-player *Virtua Racing* machine. So we do get more than our fair share of practice at this supreme motor-racing simulation.

After the overwhelming success of *Virtua Racing* in arcades throughout the land, converting it onto a 16Mbit Mega Drive cartridge was always on the cards. But could it do the arcade game justice? Well, programmed by the same people that held the honours for the arcade programming, you'd be forgiven for thinking this was the coin-op – it's so close.

Coming to a Mega Drive near you in April, this game will take the console world by storm. Virtually

all the great features of the arcade machine have somehow been crammed into the small plastic thing we call a cartridge. There are even some extra play options. Firstly, in the arcade version there are always five laps per race, but on the Mega Drive cart you get the choice of 5, 10, 15 or 20 laps if you're up to it.

Another addition is the choice of difficulty level. On the coin-op you just get to choose between three tracks (easy, medium or hard) to set this. But on Mega Drive, you can also choose different drivers: novice, normal or expert.

The only real omission is in the choice of viewpoints. On the arcade, there are four variable views that you can choose from, but the Mega Drive only has three – accessed with X, Y, Z on a six-button joystick, or switched by pressing C on a three-but-

ton.

The game on cart plays like a dream, with the 3-D polygon graphics moving at exceedingly high speed (as fast as the arcade) thanks to the additional Digital Signal Processor chip in the cartridge. In fact, it's so fast that the racing action is very tricky to get to grips with at first. But the better you get, the more addicted you become. Even more fun is to be had in the split-screen two-player mode, enabling you to race head-to-head against a friend.

At the end of the day, *Virtua Racing* is simply wonderful. When this little beauty is released in April, it'll surely race straight to the top of the charts. Undoubtedly one of the year's biggest releases, this is set to be Sega's *Street Fighter II* of 1994.



VIRTUA RACING

1-2 players

16Mbit

save game

SEGA
£TBA
OUT APRIL
Information
10711 373 3000

SO FAR...

early days

ANTICIPATION

PREVIEW



CASTLEVANIA THE NEW GENERATION



You'll have to negotiate these spikes if you wish to go any further. Simply wait for them to turn around and then cross when the spikes are pointing downwards. Jump off quickly again before the spikes revolve back to the top.



The guy floating in midair in the corner is the man you must get rid of. If you don't dispose of him quickly the water level will start rising and you'll drown. If you have any items, use them as this will kill him quicker.



After defeating the magician, you'll be confronted by this rather large guardian. The best way to avoid being killed is to dodge his weapon, get in close and repeatedly hit him. Be very quick about this.



The first level guardian is reasonably easy to kill. Jump between the platforms and hit him when his guard is down. He is quite a slow mover so this shouldn't pose too many problems for our heroic vampire hunter.

Sinister, menacing and downright scary describes this frightening game of vampire slaying. Equipped with crucifix, holy water and garlic breath, Steve Bough goes hunting for Dracula...

Released on the Nintendo a few years back, the original *Castlevania* caused quite a stir amongst the games-buying public. Many equally successful sequels followed, including some on the SNES and PC Engine, but it's taken Konami quite a while to bring this vampire-hunting saga to the Mega Drive.

This latest game in the series takes you on travels throughout 19th century Europe. Understandably, Transylvania is included as it is the home of the Big Daddy of the vampire world, Dracul, or Dracula as he is known by the Hollywood fraternity. He was the lord of the Valahia region of Transylvania. Anyone who crossed or disobeyed him would suffer terrible torture. He would have their ears, nose or genitals cut off. Even worse he would peel off their skin whilst they were still alive. If this wasn't enough, his insatiable appetite for gratuitous torture had him sticking needles in the bodies of the victims, and then forcing them to eat the flesh of other humans, still alive whilst they watched their ears and genitals swallowed. People who witnessed such cruelty (and survived) called him the devil (Dracul In Transylvanian), and he became known as Count Dracula.

Hundreds of years after Dracula was laid to rest,

a strange woman named Elizabeth has decided to try and resurrect him. Somehow she must be stopped. You play either of two brave vampire hunters: John Morris and Eric Lecarde.

Each has a different weapon with which to defeat the mindless and endless zombies, skeletons, mutant offspring, and freak beings that stand in your way to Ms Bartley, and Dracul.

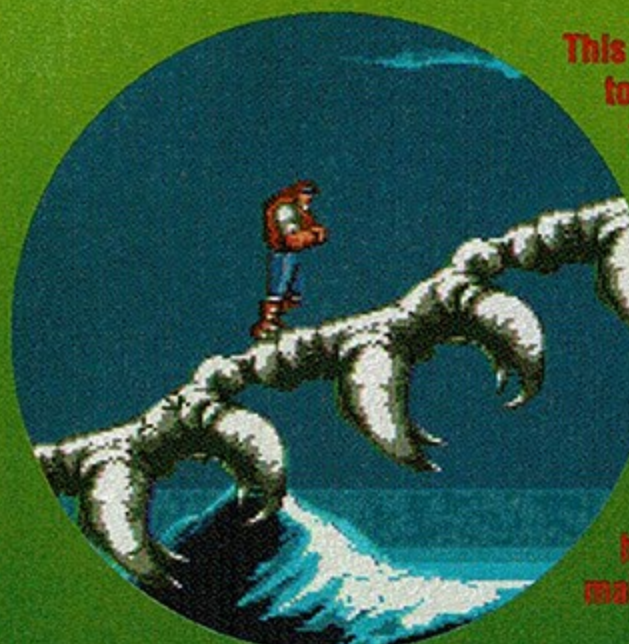
Your scary adventure starts in the heartland of Europe, and then moves onto places such as Atlantis (supposedly mythical), the Alps, London and the straits of Dover. Each country contains several large platform stages: there are ten in the first level alone.

With only four continues permitted, your reflexes must be at their sharpest in order to progress through this game. If that's not enough there's also a difficulty setting, so you can make the game even harder. It's all up to you to save the day. Playing as either Johnny or Eric, you must defeat Elizabeth Bartley and prevent the reincarnation of the depraved and barbaric Count Dracula.

Much delayed, *Castlevania* is now due for release in January, and Konami are hoping this version has the same level of success the blood-sucking series had on the Nintendo systems.



This underworld area is similar to Atlantis. Nasty creatures will jump up and spit venom at you, so be prepared to duck their fire. This level is quite short, as are a number in the game. However, take great care as a simple slip-up will cost you a life. This can be very frustrating at times.



This claw walkway is a route to another area. So, what's the problem? you might ask. Well, the problem is that when you walk along, the walkway gives way underneath you, so you'll have to get a move on. There is also an extra file to be had on this section, so make sure you collect it.

INIA: ATION

The levels are big, the pick-ups are plentiful, but it is all slow and lacking in any real edge

VAMPIRE HUNTERS

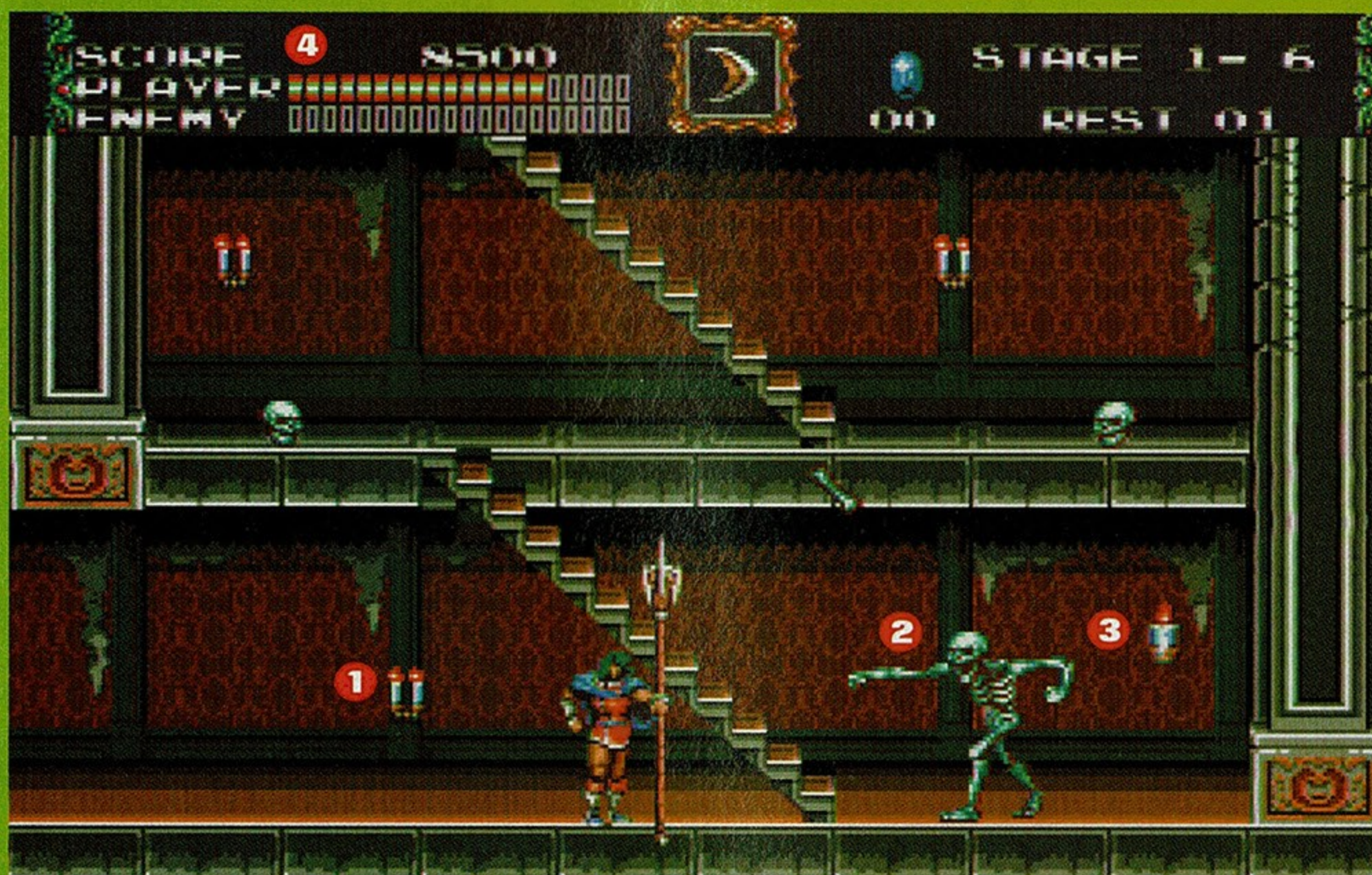
JOHN MORRIS

Born on the 12th of December 1895 in Texas, John Morris is a descendant of the infamous vampire-slaying family, the Belmonts. John has a special weapon in order to defeat Bartley and Dracul: a whip that has been handed down through the generations of his family. Called "Dead of Vampire", John uses it to defeat the enemies that approach him. The whip is more powerful than the lance which Eric possesses, and John is also helped in his travels by protective spells which he can conjure up, and magic holy water. These techniques were taught to him by ancient Indian medicine men.



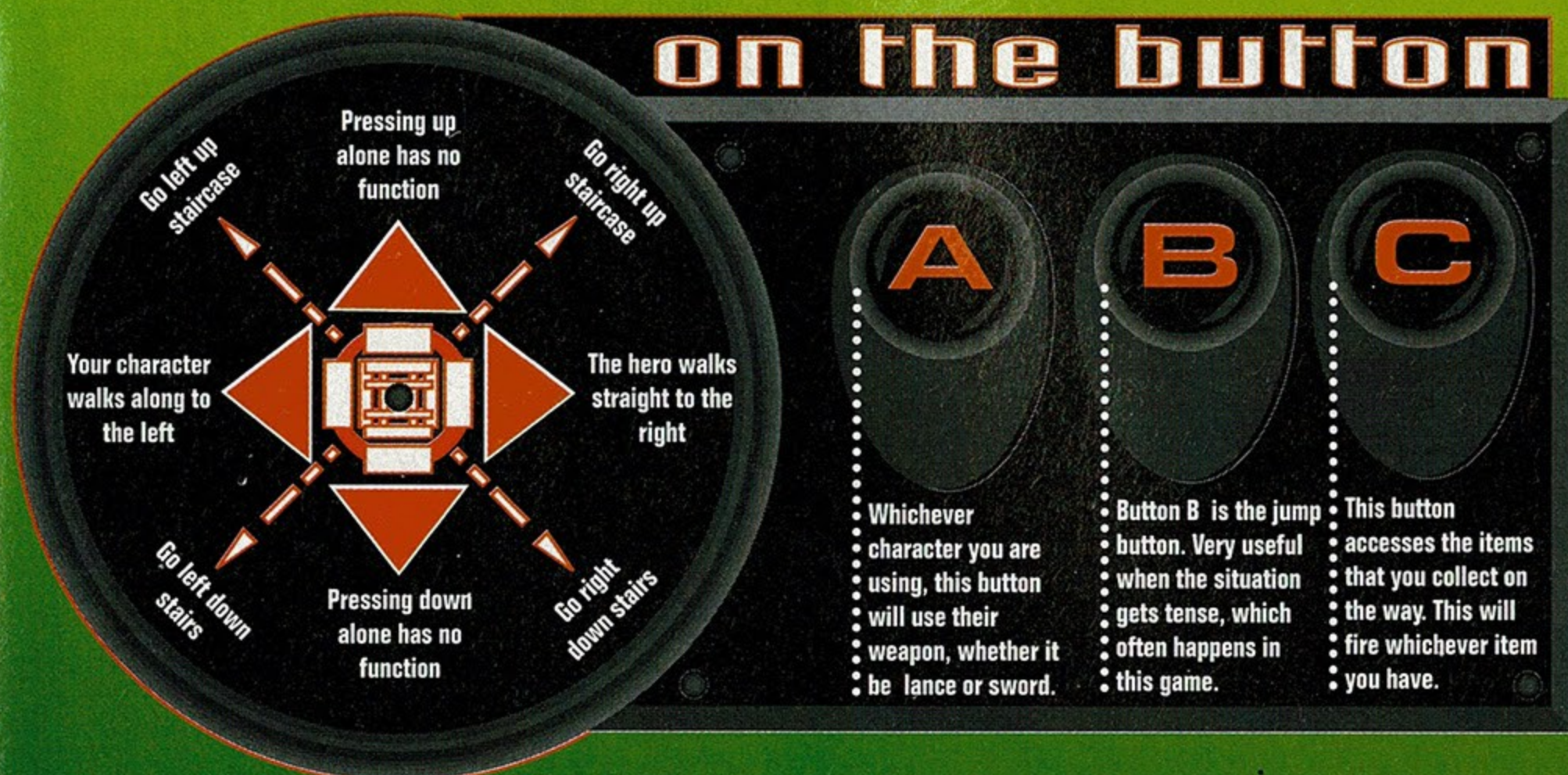
ERIC LECARDE

Born on May 3rd 1892, in Segovia (Spain), Eric is also a descendant of the somewhat legendary Belmonts. His special weapon is his lance. This is not as powerful as John's whip, but Eric is in better physical shape and therefore uses his body to better advantage. He is nihilistic and flamboyant, and even though his power is less, his attitude and superior body movement make him a very useful vampire hunter. He can spring to hard-to-reach places, and has the advantage with his spear that he can attack the vampires and guardians from afar.



- 1 Hit the candles and they will reveal an item for you to collect. This is normally in the shape of points, money or energy, which is much needed.
- 2 These skeletons literally crack up. By that I mean that they pull off their bones and throw them at you, but they are quite easy to deal with.
- 3 The larger candles again reveal items that can be of use to our hunters. They are normally energy, points or much-needed extra vitality.
- 4 From this you can see that your energy bar has taken a few hits but nothing too serious for the time being. This can all change if you slip up for a moment.

on the button



With rave reviews for both the Super Nintendo, and the PC Engine, one would expect the Mega Drive conversion to deliver much more than it actually does. Castlevania is essentially a platform adventure. You know the score: jump right or left, kill the bad guys and save your special weapons for the guardians. Well, this is no different to other games in the genre, apart from the fact that it's set in the 19th century and involves vampires. Admittedly there is a lot going on — for example, hidden rooms to find — and in places some rather excellent graphics and guardians. The challenge for those that can stick out the monotony is apparent, but unfortunately there's no real diversity in what's going on. The story is a great idea, but the game itself is nothing new or radical. If you're addicted to platforms, you might well enjoy this game. If not, go and find something better to do.

STEVE



Here's the map of the areas of Europe that you will have to cover in order to reach your final destination. The count's castle is very clearly highlighted on the right-hand side of the map, and our very own London plays a big part in this game with the hunters trekking over to England to find Elisabeth Bartley and the doastardly elusion Dracula. Don't you wish you'd listened to those ordnance survey lessons at school now?

This map shows one of the earlier levels in its entirety. This will be useful to locate all the dangers that face you on your travels. There are loads of candles meaning loads of items, so it's important to collect them all.



FIEND OR FOE



This skeleton looks like he is crying. In fact he's about to pull off his head and throw it at you!



The swinging axe can be very effective in killing the baddies. Time your move so that you are being approached by an enemy, and then simply get out of the way.



The Atlantis creatures are nasty little swines. Make sure you duck to avoid their venom.



The hanging eye. Again very easy to kill, just hit it three times and it will burst into pus.



Mutant offspring of a Doberman, I suspect. This will breathe fire at you and also charge. Now is the time to use the axe heads if you have them.



These three boneheads are very easy to kill. Simply hit them whilst standing a way back.



A lot of people I know have been looking forward to seeing this game. The word on the street was that it was going to be a corker. Unfortunately unless it undergoes a major rethink before its official release, the chances of those expectations being lived up to are very, very remote. I played this game for hours, desperately trying to search for the hook that would draw me in but unfortunately I just finished up feeling drained and disappointed.

The levels are nice and big, the pick-ups and special weapons are plentiful, but it is all slow and lacking in any real edge. You plod along killing ghouls, who duly die in an explosion of gore. The music is monotonous and tinny, very much like the original Golden Axe, and there are no notable sound effects at the moment. Maybe the finished version will rectify all this... but I doubt it.

Far from inspiring, it's a pleasant little platformer with very little excitement and no real addiction. Dated before it's even released.

DAVE



I just can't understand what all the fuss is about. Castlevania is not at all the mega-game I'd been led to believe. Now, I can see the attraction of taking on large monsters and finding the right technique to beat them. And discovering and using special weapons is another good aspect. The thing that bothers me is that the action is so often frustrating: sometimes the tiniest error in movement or timing results in instant death. Even fighting the baddies is irritating as you can be trapped helplessly in a corner and get hit time after time — your guy only flashes invincible for a split second after losing energy so you don't have time to escape.

If the gameplay's disappointing, the graphics are even more so. The sprite animation really is quite poor, particularly the jerkiness of the small hero's movement. Some of the big monsters are impressive, but the overall look of the game isn't as polished as we've come to expect on the Mega Drive. Somehow it all looks a bit tacky — especially when compared to something as slick as Gods.

Don't get me wrong, Castlevania has the guts of a very good game and I'm sure it'll provide many hours of play for arcade fans. I'm just a bit disappointed because I know that with a little more care it could have looked and played so much better.

PHIL



One thing about Castlevania is that if you are a fan of all things weird, then you'll surely like this game. All the monsters within it are completely freaky. Take this long-necked mutant for example: it wriggles around and spit fireballs at you.



These watery stages can sure cause a few problems. If the rising water wasn't problem enough, endless obstacles stand in your way, including minotaurs with very sharp spears.



ITEMS GALORE

Some of the many items that can be found in Castlevania, all there to help you on your way.



Axe Head

Collecting these axe heads will stand you in good stead. Use them only in tight situations, such as when you are fighting the minotaur creatures, as they're quickly used up.



Magic Beam

Again a very effective item that can be used when all else fails. This will shoot particles across the screen and hit your enemy. They are limited so use sparingly at all times.



Boomerang

Great to use on the first level guardian, boomerangs hit enemies and then return. As with all of these bigger items they are limited so select carefully and don't waste them.



Big Bomb

These bombs explode and cause a great deal of destruction for all the pussies that surround you. These are quite hard to find but are also very effective, and good to watch.



You'll be given passwords at the successful completion of each sector. Of course you have to kill the guardians to be given the passwords, but boy do they come in handy. With only four continues allocated, with three lives a time, the passwords are essential for playing the even harder later stages of this very challenging game.

Taken from the title screen of *Castlevania*, this picture shows our two intrepid vampire hunters, looking ready and eager for action.



This picture is taken at the very start of the game, and shows Eric in a family-style photograph with his trusty lance. Dangers are very limited at the moment, but make your way a little further and you will find out the meaning of the word trouble.

CASTLEVANIA: THE NEW GENERATION

one player

8Mbit

passwords available

KONAMI

£44.99

MARCH

Information

[081] 429 2446

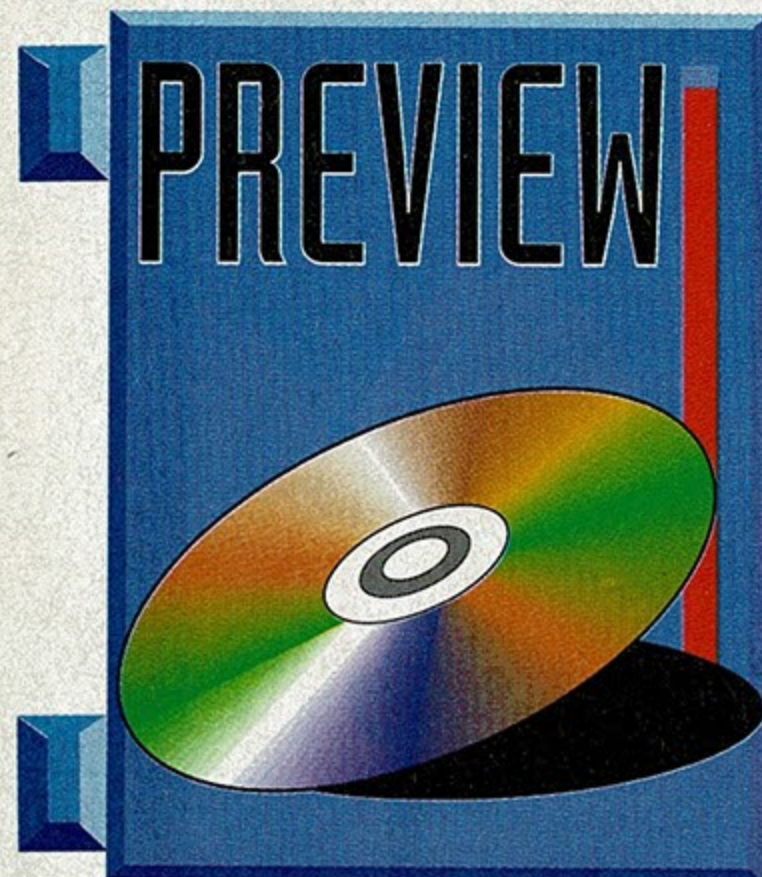
SO FAR...

finished

early days

ANTICIPATION

80-90



GROUND ZERO TEXAS

We at MEGA POWER all love a good blast with the guns. So with great delight we stepped in front of the screen, fastened our lassoes and spurs, and flew down to Texas to do some sharp shootin'.

The first time we caught a glimpse of this game, there was a discussion on BBC2's Late Show about violence in video games. Obviously games such as *Mortal Kombat* and *Street Fighter II* cropped up in the conversation, but *Ground Zero Texas* was a surprise title also mentioned. In the USA it'll have an "MA-13" (parental guidance) certificate, due to the amount of bloodshed involved in the game, but so far there's no news of what the British Board of Film Classification will give it.

Ground Zero Texas follows similar lines to predecessors such as *Lethal Enforcers* and more recently *Mad Dog McCree*. The game also resembles that somewhat controversial CD title *Night Trap*, as you use four strategically positioned cameras to locate the enemy.

The story of *Ground Zero Texas* is one that you would only find in computer games – or dodgy B-movies. Basically aliens have landed in the good old US of A, and made their way to Texas. Whilst there, they have been abducting and storing humans in a huge freezer. The reason behind the aliens' behaviour is that they see us as a major food group.

The other worrying factor for the crack commandos in Texas is that the aliens can transform into human figures, so you're never quite sure who are the aliens. Those of you old enough to remember that classic sci-fi series "V" will no doubt be aware that this story sounds remarkably familiar.

Anyway, you have been drafted in to assist the team of commandos situated in the town of El Cadron. Your objective there will be to meet up with Lt Harlan Reece, operations commander, and assist him in surveillance and possible attack. If all else fails in the mission, you are warned that a B2 is circling overhead armed with a nuclear warhead, ready and willing to destroy the town and the aliens!

Agents of destruction

The five main characters you encounter within the game are all part of the elite team that you've just joined. Initially you meet with the Commander in Chief, Reece. If you should happen to die, he will appear on the screen, very angry and punch you in the face – nice bloke!

Other agents are scattered around the town of El Cadron. Agent Breen is your contact in the Catina, and can be viewed by one of the four installed cameras. Matthews is your agent in the Main Street; he is described as very hard-working and careful. Pike is available for intelligence and possible retaliation at the Plaza Square, and DiSalvo is your tough-as-nails second in command.

Each agent keeps a watch on their designated area for you, and alerts you when trouble looms – indicated by a flashing red light. The four cameras showing the areas all have shields that can be closed to defend them against fire. But often you will be in the wrong location, look up at the screen and find that your camera has been rapidly hit. Sometimes you'll even be under attack in more than one location. If your camera takes too many hits, it packs up and the infamous words "game over" appear.

The weapon you are allocated to rid these extra-terrestrials is a remote auto-stabilizing photon-enhanced particle beam disruptor with stun capacitor! It is enclosed in a bonded titanium casing to withstand maximum firepower. When an alien appears on screen you have to quickly move the cursor onto him and fire: if you're not quick enough, you'll take a direct hit from his green laser fire.

The problem that will face you throughout this game is that the aliens are very intelligent. They can often anticipate your next move, so to survive this, you must be smarter than them. If the blatant abduction of human beings wasn't enough, the aliens have also stored an arsenal lock, which is rigged to blow El Cadron off the map. The only way this can be opened and deactivated is to discover the correct four-figure code.

Throughout the many levels, your reflexes will have to be at their sharpest. The game suffers slightly from the CD's slow access but plays very well, offering excellent FMV and challenging action. *Ground Zero Texas* does look set to follow in the footsteps of other successful games in this genre. It possibly would have benefited from the aid of a light gun (like *Lethal Enforcers*), but it's still highly playable. If this is the direction CD games are going to take, we're sure in for a lot of interactive fun.



One of the very slick opening sequences that greets you when you switch on. This is basically your landing and briefing of the situation that is going down in Texas.



This, believe it or not, is an alien that has been transformed into a human. You do get a slight warning before they fire on you, but you really do have to be fast to kill them first.



Getting hit by the alien's green fire is bad news all round. If you look at camera 4, you'll see that it's been hit badly: only a few more hits and the camera will break down.



In the bar, agent Breen socialises with one of the informers, or is she? Never trust anyone in this game, as the aliens have mastered the art of transformation, from ET to human.



Coming out the bar, this is a very deceiving scene, the reason being that a massive shoot-out occurs in a second. Make sure your shield is up, and prepare to fire away. But who will be the alien?

This guy is on your side. He will tell you the latest information about the ongoing situation. Listen to what he has to say as the information he gives you is very useful for future progress.



Now you really are in deep trouble. You have managed to kill 16 aliens thus far, but remember there loads more, and you're not doing too well. Two agents have just come under fire and look in perilous danger. With your shield up, find the aliens and blast away. You can't get hit when the shield is up, but it does make it very difficult to see what's going on.



- 1 The first camera point gives you the view of the Plaza Square. When you see the red light flashing, get there quickly because there's a whole lot of trouble going down.
- 2 Camera 2 gives you another perspective of the town. There are special agents situated in each section of the town, all ready and waiting for the aliens to kick-off.
- 3 Agent DiSalvo awaits your instructions on camera 3. She is on permanent lookout and will keep you informed of the aliens' movements throughout El Cadron.
- 4 As mentioned before, when the red light is flashing, get there as quick as you can - If not you'll arrive to find many dead and your camera in pieces.



Switching camera, every time you need to cut to another scene you'll see this screen. It tells you where you're going, and if anything else is happening in other zones.



Another agent. Don't make the mistake of shooting this chap, because if you do, be prepared for a massive telling-off by Reece. He will keep you informed of aliens.

The man himself, Reece is one mean son-of-a-bitch. Not only does he really have a serious go at you, he also punches you hard in the face. He's the main man down in Texas, so give this guy respect.



Agent DiSalvo's a foxy lady. Oh dear, what am I like? Yet again I find myself fancying women off computer games; maybe this is the reason I can't get a bird, 'coz I'm too sad.

GROUND ZERO TEXAS

one player

quick access

battery backupx

SONY
£59.99
March 94
Information
 071 734 5151

SO FAR... finished

early days -90-

ANTICIPATION 90



PELÉ

Being a massive fan of football, Steve Bough was happy to see yet another soccer sim appear. But can Pelé stand the pace? Steve sorts out the men from the boys...

At last Graham Taylor's resigned (about time) but let's face it, our national pastime is lingering in the doldrums. Thankfully for those of us with consoles, when the World Cup comes on TV, we can all switch off and play computer football. But which game? When I say stiff competition, I mean exactly that. Pelé is up against such computer greats as *J League Pro Striker*, *Sensible Soccer* and the excellent *FIFA International Soccer*. Somewhat surprisingly, *Pelé* was programmed in Canada (not renowned for its footballing prowess) but the programmers did have Pelé himself to advise them on tactics and playing styles.

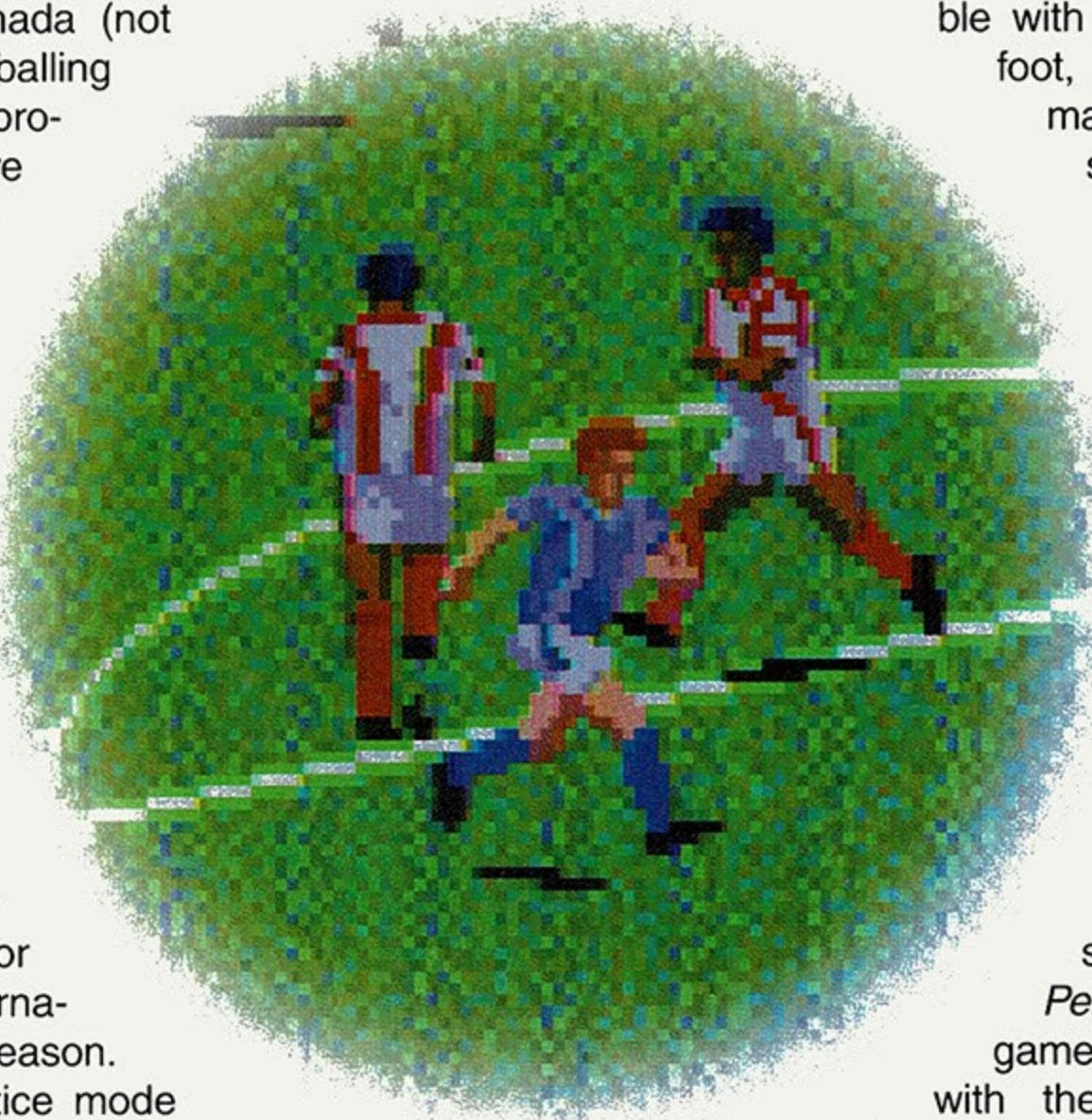
The game incorporates club teams from around the world, including some from Brazil (though strangely not Pelé's club, Santos). Options enable you to play exhibition games or participate in a tournament or full season. There's also a practice mode where you have six shots, with only five seconds allowed for each one.

Before the match commences, there are options to change the team formations and select

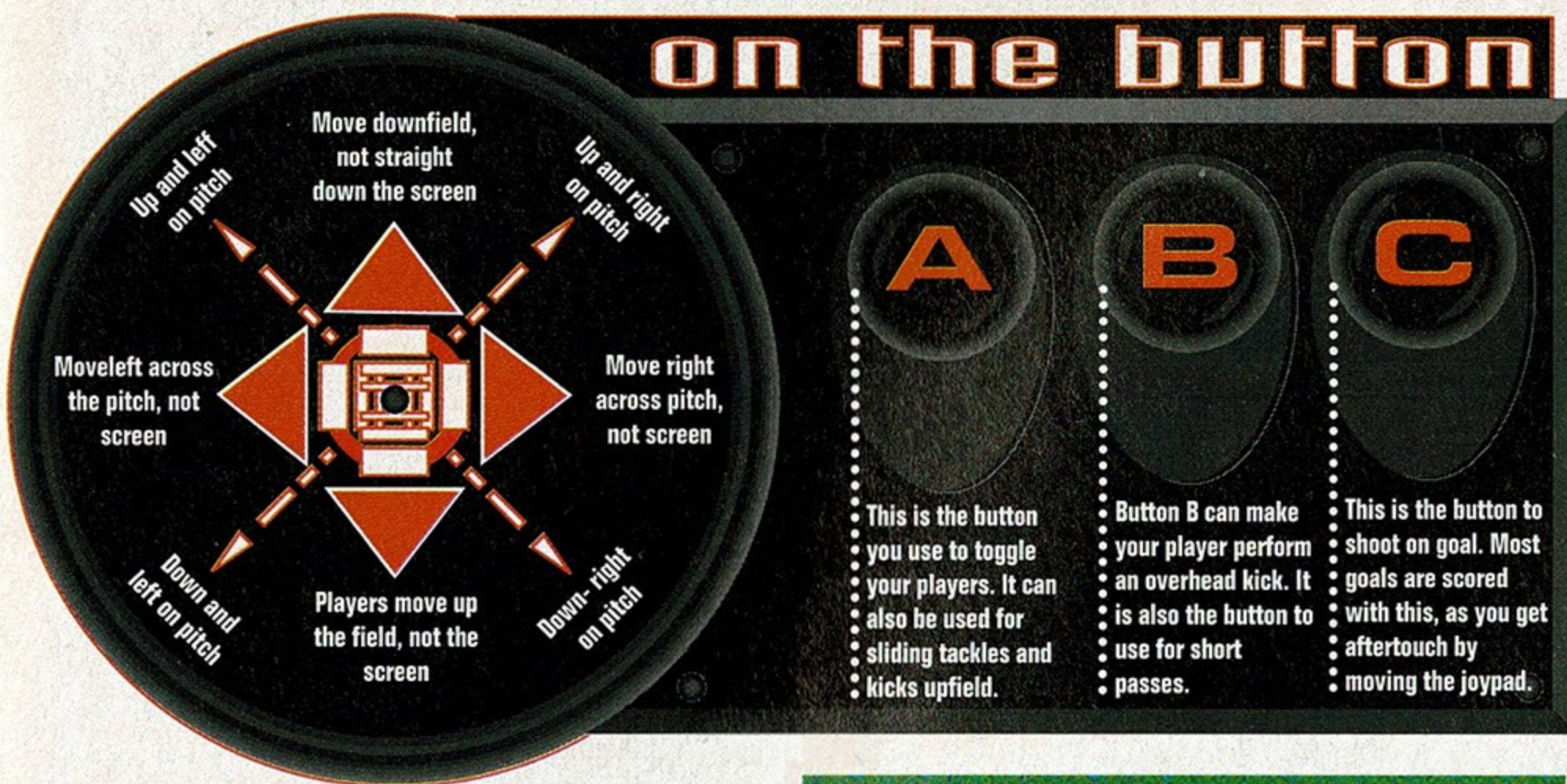
your side from the team roster, which shows all your players' detailed statistics.

Playing from an overhead and slightly angled perspective, the game has fairly large players running around the scrolling pitch. As in *FIFA International*, you can dribble with the ball stuck to your foot, pass to nearby teammates, and launch fierce shots – though there's no "idiot" shooting button, so you have to aim carefully. You can toggle between players, do slide-tackles and barges, and perform impressive headers and even bicycle kicks.

Accolade do seem to have tried very hard to produce something special with *Pelé*. Unfortunately the game's release has collided with the likes of *FIFA* and *Sensible Soccer*. Even endorsed and aided by the greatest player in the world, it'll have a hard match against such tough opposition.



The striker approaches the opposing goal and surely he *must* score? Oh no, the referee has just blown the final whistle! Anyway the agile computer keeper might well have saved it.



on the button

A

This is the button you use to toggle your players. It can also be used for sliding tackles and kicks upfield.

B

Button B can make your player perform an overhead kick. It is also the button to use for short passes.

C

This is the button to shoot on goal. Most goals are scored with this, as you get aftertouch by moving the joystick.

(Right) A goal-mouth situation is shown here. The keeper is just about to pluck the ball from the air, but is closely surrounded by three players of the opposing side. Offside, ref!



The Brazilian team Sao Paulo are drawing with AC Milan. The keeper will now press C and the ball will fly upfield. Pressing the button B will make the keeper throw the ball.



Unlike *J League*, *Pelé* is another game that has computer-controlled goalies. So at least you don't have to worry about making silly keeping errors.

The Premier Division

Blue is the colour, football is the game. Well, we just had to give you our version of the Premier computer football league.

GAME	GAMEPLAY	GRAPHICS	ADDITION	OVERALL
FIFA INTERNATIONAL	93%	93%	95%	94%
J LEAGUE PRO STRIKER	92%	89%	94%	94%
SENSIBLE SOCCER	91%	87%	93%	92%
EUROPEAN CLUB SOCCER	79%	77%	78%	76%
SUPER KICK OFF	78%	76%	77%	75%
TECMO WORLD CUP	68%	65%	68%	69%
ULTIMATE SOCCER	64%	62%	65%	63%
PELÉ	55%	74%	58%	57%



I know, I know, you're all expecting me to ramble on about *J League*. I'll save you the boredom and only mention it the once. Since I discovered *J League* all my expectations have been set by this. The only game that comes close is *FIFA* so, as you can see, my requirements are rather high for a new football game. After the recent influx of soccer sims, *Pelé* arrived and we all greeted it with a certain trepidation. Obviously the controls took a little getting used to, but even after several matches I still found them confusing and awkward. All the aspects are there, toggling your player, short and long passing, and even bicycle kicks, but it's all easier said than done.

Generally I really like football games, and I even enjoyed *Pelé* to a certain degree. But unlike the other quality footy sims, it just fails to stimulate. All the ingredients seem to be there, but I think more time and quite a bit of tweaking could have changed this from being a mediocre game to a blinding one.

STEVE



Never before has the Mega Drive been so well-endowed in the football games department. Pelé is the fourth big title to appear on the console in the past six months; unfortunately it is also by far the worst. It looks impressive, it has the great Pelé's endorsement (one of the greatest ever exponents of the game) but unfortunately it plays like it's been programmed by someone who has never kicked a ball before in his life. Slow, ponderous and ultimately uncontrollable, this game has few saving graces. There is no excitement, laborious digitised videos for every ref's decision, and fuzzy crowd hiss. You never really feel on top of things out on the pitch. The shots are weak and haphazard and the pitch perspective seems to be constantly at war with the players. For example, it is almost impossible to play a simple ball up the line as the touchline is drawn at an angle at which the ball trajectory doesn't travel so it nearly always goes out of play. Lining up a shot is nigh on impossible, and there isn't even any decent aftertouch to help you rectify the situation. In fact, the only thing that makes Pelé even moderately enjoyable is the ludicrous way in which the goalies save the ball. If you shoot it at bellies. Ooh, very real.

Nope, I'm sorry but this is the worst football game I've played for a long time. There are so many bugs and faults that I could easily fill this page with lists of my gripes and moans. Very disappointing.

DAVE



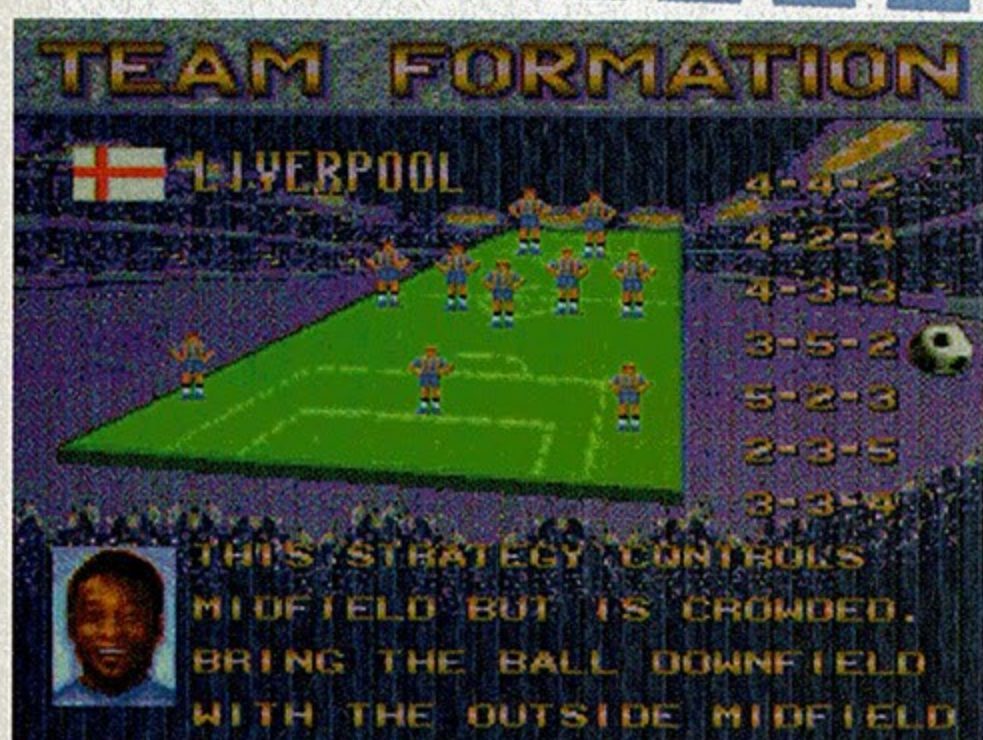
I hate to say it, but this really is a poor man's FIFA International. It uses the same sort of isometric 3-D view and large player sprites, but the gameplay isn't even in the same league. Most annoying are the 45°-rotated controls: pushing straight up moves your player **DIAGONALLY** up the pitch. This is incredibly confusing and I found myself constantly having to think which way to push the joystick to go in the required direction — hardly instinctive, it's more like a test of mental agility!

Even ignoring this game-destroying aspect, Pelé would still be second-rate. The graphics are dull, with a yukky-looking pitch and some dodgy animation — particularly on the goalies as they make saves. Worse still, they've tried to jazz the game up with naff black and white digitised sequences. It's all very well to show Pelé scoring after you've just knocked in a goal, but why do you have to sit through a crappy ref sequence every time he blows his whistle?

The action itself is slow-paced and simplistic compared to the likes of FIFA and Sensible. Player intelligence is particularly poor. When taking a free kick just outside the opposing penalty area, you'd expect some of you team-mates to go forward so you can float a kick towards them, but they all stay back behind the ball!

At the end of the day, Pelé reminds me how poor the standard of Mega Drive football games was before J League. Since then we've had Sensible and FIFA — and compared to them, Pelé just looks sad.

PHIL



The tactical tips given in *Pelé* are excellent if you are not really sure what formation to choose. And if you can't trust this man, who can you trust, I ask you!

These two players don't seem to be doing that much, but maybe they'll do a Ryan Giggs any minute now. As with real football, running off the ball normally creates space.



PELE CALLS THE SHOTS



Here's the great man himself checking out the latest progress of his very own game. Pelé had extremely close links with the developers, and oversaw what actually went into the game. He provided the expert knowledge needed in order to create a realistic football simulation, and of course added the very South American bicycle kick.

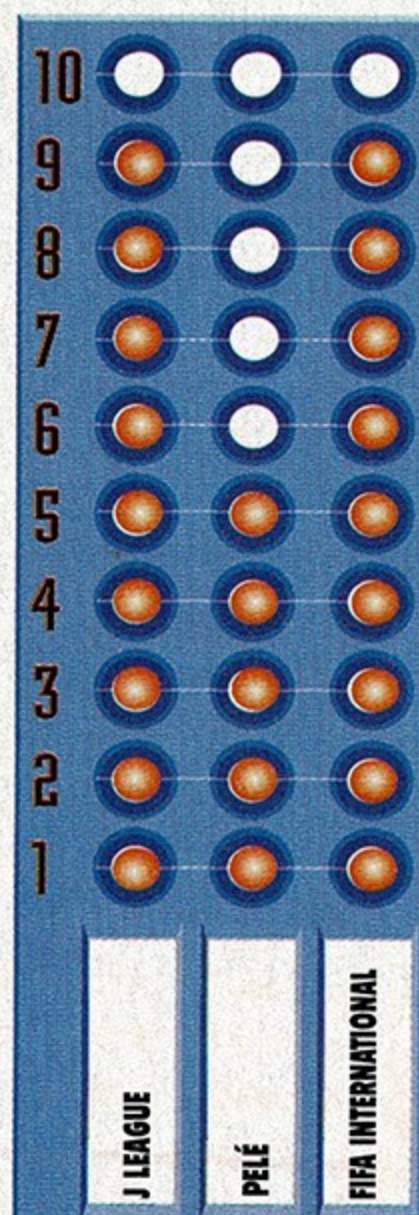


The ref blows for a free-kick to the opposition. These little video scenes appear when a foul is committed, or when a goal is scored — then you see a picture of Pelé celebrating.

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"Had it been released in the days before *J League* and *FIFA*, then *Pelé* might have done okay. But up against games of that calibre, it can't compete. Although offering promise, it never really delivers. The price is the only swaying factor."



PELE

1-2 players

8Mbit

battery backup

available in UK

GAMEPLAY	55
GRAPHICS	74
SOUND	63
ADDITION	58

ACCOLADE
£29.95
OUT JAN

OVERALL
57

INSTANT ACCESS

KICK BOXING

Never afraid of a good scrap, the MEGA POWER crew went in search of some of the hardest men in kick boxing, and came back with more than bloody noses.



REVIEW



The varied options screen allows you to pick and choose your fighter's moves. It also enables you to train, so you can practise all the manoeuvres for your next bout.



A picture showing two of the kick boxers grappling. Most fighting games suffer from a lack of moves and this is no exception. With only about three kicks and three punches it is very limited.

The ref counts the guy on the canvas out. Using virtually the same rules as boxing, if he doesn't get up before the count of ten, the other guy wins. Should have done more training.



With the latest clutch of fighting games hitting the streets, it's no surprise that this is the dominant genre. Alongside *Sumo* (also reviewed this issue) is this latest game available on import. *The Kick Boxing* is exactly what it's called! It's a boxing-style simulation, where you take on the role of a kick boxer. Originating in the Far East, kick boxing is just like normal pugilism but permits the fighters to also use their feet. This exciting and violent sport has rapidly gained popularity recently, mainly due to the Hollywood success of kick boxer Jean-Claude Van Damme in films such as *Hard Target* and *Universal Soldier*.

This simulation has the usual one-on-one com-



In the training mode, you'll effectively learn the art of kick boxing. The more you train, the better you become. It's definitely worth spending time here if you wish to do well.

bat situation. The main objective, as with any beat-'em-up, is to work out your fighter's moves. And there are plenty of them: you have all the moves of boxing, but with kicks thrown in. You can perform various punches and kicks to the head and body, do leg sweeps, as well as jumping or blocking to defend the inevitable attacks.

The international contest features such reputable stars as The Lord, Gold Man, Helmutt, Chan Lee, and not forgetting the King of kick boxers, Cognear. You start off as the weakest fighter, which means you'll get absolutely mullered at first. Practising at the training ground is the only way to improve your standing and make that top ten. Every so often you also get to grapple with a bear in his secret cave!

Learning the moves is the all essential aspect with this game. The only problem is that once you've done this, what do you do next? It's not the same as *Street Fighter II* where there's always something new to find. *The Kick Boxing* uses all the moves, but the opponents are indistinct, while all your contests have the same dull backdrop. As it all plays at a fairly slow speed, you may find little incentive to carry on.

By far the best thing about this game is the price. At £27.50 this is much more like it. Unfortunately, compared to other beat-'em-ups, *The Kick Boxing* looks like a horse with three legs. Available on import, this game will only appeal to die-hard beat-'em-up fans.

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"The price is obviously the swinging factor with this game. It's a fair price for a fair game. If you have a spare thirty pounds, and like beat-'em-ups, then you might be drawn in by this. Even so, it does become very dull."

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1

STREET FIGHTER II
KICK BOXING
MUSLIMED ALI

KICK BOXING

1-2 players

8Mbit

passwords given

available in JAPAN

GAMEPLAY	67
GRAPHICS	64
SOUND	62
ADDICTION	65

OVERALL

68

INSTANT ACCESS

MICRO WORLD
£27.50
OUT NOW

REVIEW

THE LOST

Pillaging, drunkenness and barbarity are all things we at MEGA POWER get up to on our weekends. Steve Bough donned his pointy antler hat, swigged a bottle of Scotch and went in search of some totty, and of course, *The Lost Vikings*.



Erik has found the exit, but hold on, where are the other two? You must have all three characters in order to go through the exit – if not, you can't complete the level.



Climbing the ladder, Erik wants to grab that key. He must be careful though, as there is a fireball fast approaching. But you must get the key in order to get out of this level.



In deepest space, Olaf glides down with the use of his shield. This is one of the end guardians that must be defeated. As with everything else, use your brain to work out how to do it.



Erik in mid-flight. He needs to get across onto the spring on the left-hand side. He's the only Viking who can jump, but he's vulnerable to attack as he has no weapons or shield.

British history is steeped in tradition of the Nordics, coming across in their longboats many moons ago. We were taught to believe that the Vikings purely came across from the cold Scandinavian waters to rape, pillage and brutalise the native people – much as our football hooligans do abroad nowa-days.

The Lost Vikings stars three uncouth Vikings, not this time on our sunny shores but lost in deepest space. This idea, albeit completely insane, is massively original and hilariously funny. Erik the Swift, Baleog the Fierce, and Olaf the Stout are the three main characters in this game. The story goes that after a successful day's hunting, the trio happen to get sucked out of their homes by a UFO piloted by the evil alien Tomator. To get back home the threesome have to travel through his spaceship, a sort of alien zoo populated by all the creatures Tomator's collected. There are four themed "worlds" and a total of 37 levels.

Although played by one player, the game is all about working as a team. Each Viking has his own special skill. Erik the Swift, as he's not as fat as the other two, can do the running and jumping. He is very useful to collect keys and difficult-to-reach items such as bombs and food. Baleog the

Berserker is a bit of a fat boy, but with his sword and bow he's the fellow to tackle the dinosaurs, snails, bugs, aliens and weird miniature trolls that constantly hassle you. Olaf the Stout is the other psycho Viking who has obviously been having too much of the good life. His best friend is his shield, so he's the chap you want to send forward on exploring missions as he can't be hurt whilst his shield is up.

This game will certainly keep you guessing. The objective throughout is to find the exits. This, as always, is easier said than done. Coming from a period that has just discovered the wheel, *The Vikings* understandably aren't exactly sure what is going on. But with perseverance and the occasional death or two, the game and the Vikings make more sense. For instance in one of the worlds, the Great Factory, *The Vikings* are struck in awe by such things as magnetism.

Interplay, the game's developers, have had huge success with the SNES version. This does look set to repeat that on the Mega Drive. Yes, there won't be as many colours, but it still looks pretty sharp. If you ever fancied being lost in time and infinite space, take a look at *The Lost Vikings*: the least you'll do is laugh.



At last we finally get to see this game. After appearing on the front cover of Issue 1, we haven't heard much, apart from knowing when it was available for review. It was, therefore a very pleasant surprise when I switched on. Personally I love the madcap story that supports this game. Being a huge fan of anything "alien", the narrative behind this game certainly appeals to me. But it's not that which is the major draw with this game; it's the fun, yet sometimes annoying aspect of controlling three warriors. Half the fun is in working out who to use. It's often worth sending Olaf off ahead because of his shield, but this isn't always the case.

Cartoon animation, not quite to Disney standard but still rather good, has been used. And of course there's the comedy element, which is a clever touch in any game. The levels, all 37 of them, do pose a few problems but this all adds to the challenging gameplay, and of course the diversity will keep you happy. If you are looking for something challenging yet fun, frustrating yet desirable then *The Lost Vikings* could be right up your street. Now you can pillage, loot and get very drunk in the safety of your armchair. I ask you, what could be better?

STEVE

WIKINGS



- 1 Erik the Swift is by far the fastest viking amongst the threesome. Use him to jump gaps, head-butt walls to destroy them, or even to leap over the enemy.
- 2 Baleog the Berserker is the guy with all the weapons. He has in his armoury a sword and a bow and arrow, which are used to defeat the enemy.
- 3 Olaf the Stout. When you approach a new level, send Olaf in first, as he has a very strong shield with which to protect the other two Vikings. Nice geezer!
- 4 These question marks give hints and advice to the puzzled Vikings. Stand in front of one and look up to get a tip on how best to clear the current level.



Olaf the Stout with his shield up high to protect his head from any falling debris. As mentioned before, always send him ahead, as he is the main protector of the gang. Numerous obstacles lay in wait for him, so maybe this is the stage that you bring in another Viking to have a scout about. Erik would be the best choice, as he's so fast.

OVERALL %

83

This is a platformer with a difference. It is witty, challenging, and great to look at.



From the moment we put this on the first ever cover of MEGA POWER I knew it was going to be a great game... I'm very rarely wrong about these things, you know. The

Lost Vikings has to be one of the most enjoyable games I've played in a long time. The bickering characters are totally endearing, and the way that each has a particular talent that he uses to help the others is wonderfully reminiscent of Lemmings in that you have to carefully consider how to tackle each level as a team. Selecting which character to send on first to pave the way for the other two, is vitally important. Whether you use Olaf the Stout and his shield to protect the party from laser rays, or Baleog and his bow to kill buddies, or even send speeding Erik onwards to leap chasms and activate switches for his pals, will determine how you fare in your mission to return home.

This is a platformer with a difference. It is witty, challenging, and great to look at, plus, with 37 levels it is big enough to keep most gamers busy for a long, long time.

This could be the New Year's first surprise package, ask your local shop when they're getting it in and check it out!

DAVE

on the button



- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>A</p> <p>This accesses the secondary ability of each Viking. For example, this will make Baleog fire his bow and arrow.</p> | <p>B</p> <p>This accesses the main ability that each Viking has. For example, this will make Baleog swing his sword.</p> | <p>C</p> <p>Button C switches between the three characters. So when you need to change Vikings, simply press this.</p> |
|---|---|---|



The Vikings are attacked by an ancient Egyptian. From here you should move Olaf forward to guard the gang with his shield, and then make Baleog fire arrows to destroy the attacker.



The Lost Vikings is just a shade from being a great game. The three heroes are oozing with character, thanks to great animation and their hilarious comments at the start and finish of each level. It's good how you need to use the Vikings' differing abilities to solve puzzles, even if it was probably inspired by Lemmings. In fact, that's what this game reminds me of most, although here you get to take direct control of the characters.

Even so, it's actually more frustrating than Lemmings. With many hazards causing instant death, it's very easy to get one of your characters killed, in which case you may as well reset the game. This is particularly annoying when you've got through most of the current level, only to make a small but fatal mistake. It's just as well there are level passwords or I'd have gone completely mad. As it is, there's a lot of trial and error needed to solve each level and I'm not sure if I've got the patience to keep going to the very end.

PHIL

Lost Items

Items shown below are just some of those you'll find throughout the 37 levels of this brain-bending game...



Food Items

This apple will restore a small amount of energy to one Viking's health. Give it for the guy who needs it most.



Slab Of Meat

This meat is again designated to replenish the health of one of the three vikings. Whoever needs it most should have the honour.



One Of Many Keys

These keys are scattered all over the shop. They are essential in order to open doors, bridges and other devices.



Smart Bombs

These bombs can also be found in numerous places. They destroy the surrounding enemies, but can also blow up walls and doors.



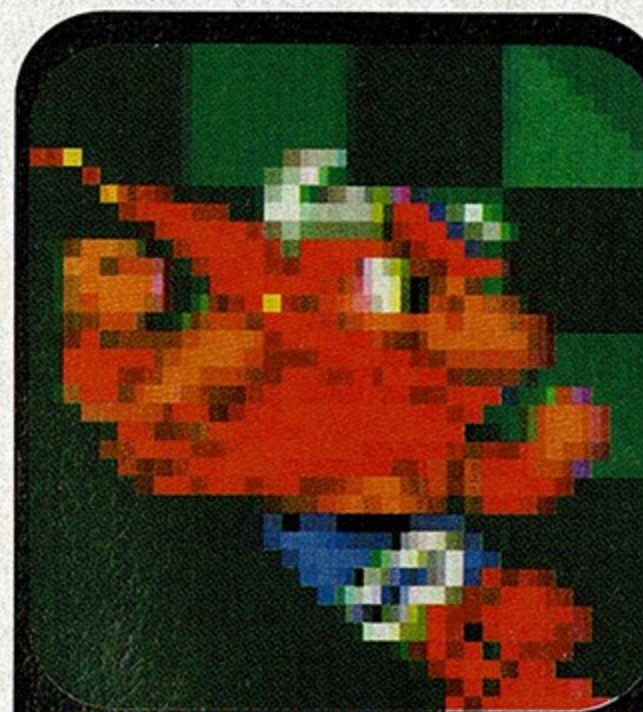
Question Marks

These give you valuable information on how to go about completing the current level, so stop and read them all.

ALL FOR ONE



Baleog the Berserker is the main Viking when it comes to fighting foes with his sword and bow.



Erik the Swift is the fastest mover of the three characters. Send him forward whenever you need speed or jumping.



Olaf the Stout guards his comrades with his shield. Send him in to confront the enemy as he won't get hit.



Looks like you're in toy zone. The question is, how the devil is Baleog going to get across that gap? Well, it looks like he's on some sort of moving platform.



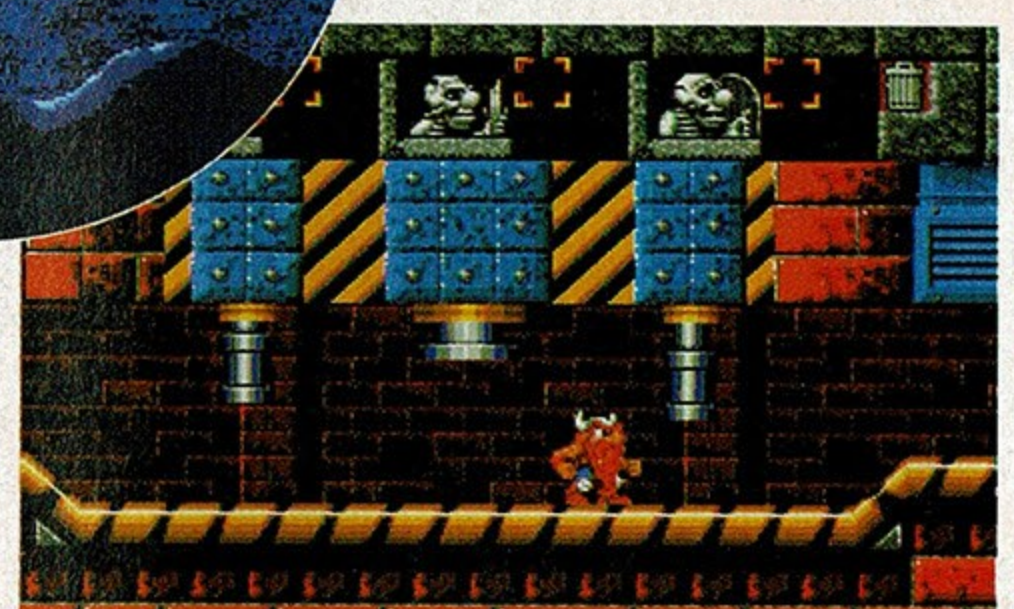
Here you see two of the little monkeys up to their usual shenanigans. Follow the springs to bounce up the screen and eventually find the exit. But watch out for the many hazards along the way.



The end sequence when you die, showing the traditional Viking funeral ship. The continue screen appears here.



With this level you'll have to progress carefully until you know exactly where you're going. You can also climb the trees to search for items or exits.



From the picture, you can see that Erik has been hit by these large thumping hammers. Caution is required in order to make it safely to the other side, but his comrades are already dead.

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"The Lost Vikings has successfully managed to use three main characters and still be easy to get to grips with. It proves to be very playable, amusing and, of course, sets one hell of a puzzle. There's certainly a lot of game!"

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3	●	●	●	●
2	●	●	●	●
1	●	●	●	●
LEMMINGS				
THE LOST VIKINGS				
WONDER BOY 3				

THE LOST VIKINGS

VIRGIN
ETBA
OUT FEB



1-2 players



8 Mbit



level passwords



available in
UK

GAMEPLAY	82
GRAPHICS	80
SOUND	74
ADDITION	82

OVERALL
83

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PREVIEW

SKITCHIN'

Up, down, flying around, looping the loop and defying the ground. Performing these tricky manoeuvres earns you money which can then be spent improving your equipment in the skating shop.



The picture above shows our resident skitcher looking a bit wobbly. The reason for his antics is that he's just hit a nasty patch of oil. Try to avoid surface water and oil, as they often cause you to get hit.



You'll see this screen when you enter the tournament mode. This is where you'll compete for the big bucks and aim to become top-dog skitcher, which is a very high honour.

MEGA POWER heard all about Electronic Arts' cool new game *Skitchin'* and felt compelled to catch a ride...

As the name implies, *Skitchin'* is a cross between hitchhiking and roller skating. In this extremely dangerous "sport" sim you control a skater, racing along the freeway by grabbing hold of the rear bumpers of cars!

Programmed by the same people who did *Road Rash 2*, *Skitchin'* is very close in style to that famed and very popular game. It incorporates a vast array of racing options, enabling you to compete in progressively harder races, a sort of knockout tournament, and even against a friend on the split-screen game display.

Before each race, there's the chance to purchase better equipment with money earned from previous outings. You can choose new skates (pricey but effective), better gloves, or stronger body protection. However, you must remember to save at least \$20 for your next race entrance fee.

You begin each race by skating merrily along the road. Now, this doesn't last too long, because as this game involves hanging on to the back of cars, they follow in abundance. A quick check of your mirror is required so you can catch the back of the car at the appropriate moment: too late and it zooms past; too early and you get hit. Once you've grabbed hold of a car, you can hang on the back for a while, then when it goes round a bend you can catapult yourself past it to try and get to another car further ahead.

This is all very well in theory, but of course there are an abundance of obstacles in your way. Firstly there are other skitchers. You may often find more than two skitchers per car: the only way to get rid of them is to give them a sound punch in the face, or better still bash them with the pipes that lie in the road. Ramps can also be used to gain valuable ground. When you hit the ramps, the more impressive the manoeuvre, the more points and money you get – but careful, this is a hard move to master. Barriers prevent your progress, as can oil and water deposited on the road.

When skitching on the cars, look for the police car. This is the best car to hold onto, as it provides you with the most speed and bonus money. There are plenty of different courses to choose from, all across Canada and the United States, so put on those boots and start tagging onto those cars. Just one more thing: remember, don't try this on your dad's car, as he'll find a bloody mess all over his bonnet!



The whole idea of this game is to hold onto passing vehicles to gain a speed advantage. This time it's a motorbike, but the best vehicle to hang onto is the police car, as you get more money.

SKITCHIN'

1-2 players

16Mbit

passwords given

ELECTRONIC ARTS
ETBA
OUT MAR
Information
 (0753) 549442

SO FAR finished

ANTICIPATION 90

Electronic Arts introduce possibly the strangest new character ever in a surreal, rib-tickling platform adventure...

NORMY

Who is this Normy bloke, then? Is it Dame Edna's late husband? Or could it be Norman Wisdom? Or maybe even Norman "Curly" Watts from the Street?

In fact, Normy turns out to be a cool Californian surfer dude – and with his straggly hair, stubble and dodgy Bermuda shorts, he looks the part. It's a surprise then that he has a fairly respectable job at a legal firm. Okay, being an extremely junior employee Normy's the poor sod who has to go and deliver all their writs.

The trouble is that the people he has to serve the writs on all live in six completely different time zones. And we're not talking Pacific or Eastern

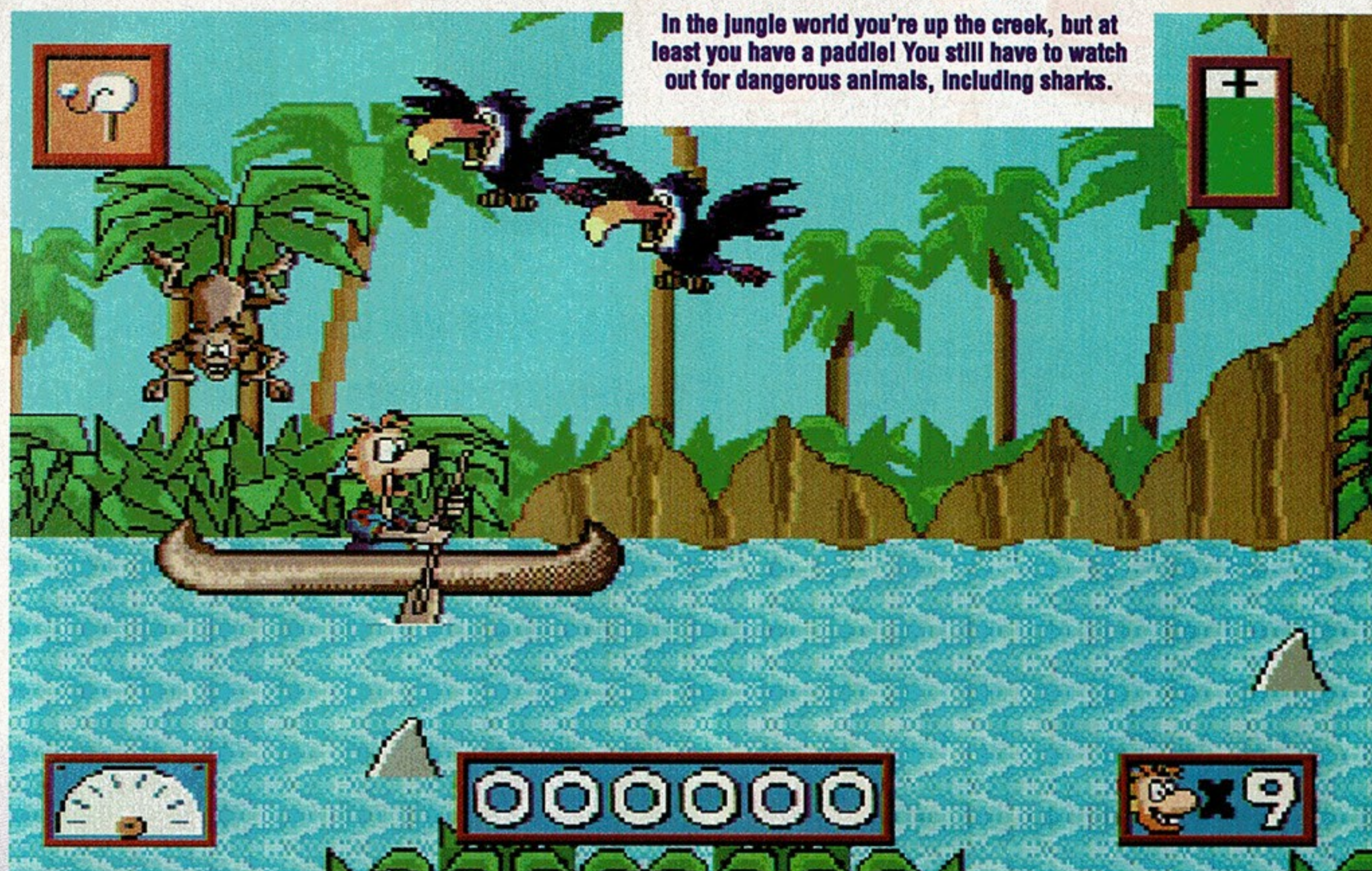
Time here – these are historical eras. Starting in prehistoric times, Normy gets to jump around huge scrolling stages filled with platforms, traps, savage animals and unfriendly cavemen. Hitting hazards reduces Normy's energy bar, so he has to either leap over them or kill them with his rather original weapon. Normy carries one of those ping-pong bats with a ball attached by a rubber band: by batting the ball forwards he can eliminate nasties from a fair distance. He can also jump up high by trampolining on bouncy pigs, or slide under hazards.

As you can tell, it's all surreal stuff, and gets even weirder. After three prehistoric stages, Normy is warped to the next era: medieval England, complete with jesters walking on balls (!). Five stages later, he enters the 1930s and a dense jungle populated by unfriendly natives who look like Moe out of The Three Stooges. Throughout five huge levels, these guys get up to all sorts of tricks, including poking each other in the eye and carrying rats on their heads. Normy can even get in a canoe and paddle down the river, but watch out: falling in the water is fatal.

Things get even spookier in 1970s Transylvania where Normy explores the four stages of a castle

haunted by ghosts. If he's not frightened to death, Normy goes forward into the far future for the alien Planet X stages, all eight of them. Finally, he visits possibly the funniest scenario of all: hell. Here he's confronted by such unspeakable horrors as computer nerds, walking bagpipes and mime artists who look hilarious as they stretch their arms out pretending to be surrounded by an invisible bubble! Avoid the fires and bottomless pits of the three hellish stages and you get to serve a writ on the devil himself.

Throughout all six worlds there are plenty of bonuses to collect for points and energy, along with more powerful weapons such as axes, spears and a magic wand. Colourful and, from what we've seen so far, very playable, *Normy* is one hell of a weird and funny game, but it's certainly very refreshing to see such an original platform adventure after all those cutesy clones.



Transylvania is a very spooky place, full of ghosts to frighten you to death.



Here Normy bounces on a springy pig to jump much higher and reach bonuses.



Californian surfer dude Normy encounters unfriendly natives in the jungle. He also has to duck the darts fired by the many gargoyles – very Indiana Jones, eh?



Pressing button A makes Normy run faster than usual – good for those extra-long jumps. Here he enters the bowels of hell to serve a writ on the devil himself. The meter on the top-right indicates that his energy is getting pretty low, but he still has seven lives left.

NORMY

one players

16Mbit

continues given

ELECTRONIC ARTS
ETBA
OUT APRIL
Information
107531 549442

SO FAR...

early days

ANTICIPATION

finished

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REVIEW

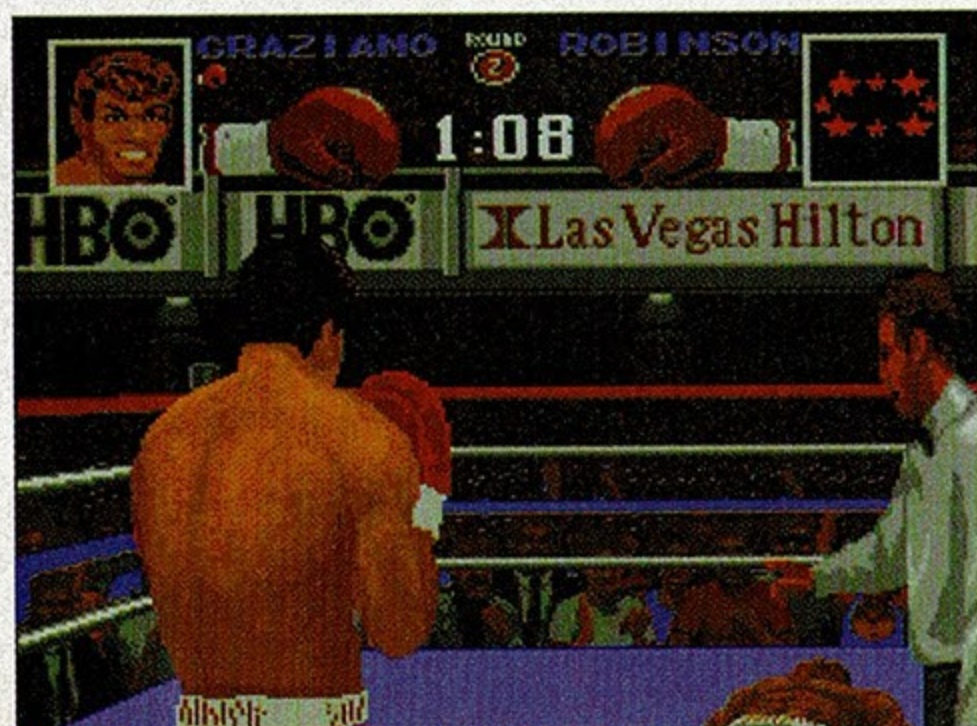
BOXING LEGENDS OF THE RING



So who exactly are the "boxing legends of the ring"? Well you can certainly forget Frank Bruno – even Mike Tyson doesn't get a look-in, as these guys are all middleweights. But if you're expecting to see Nigel Benn or Chris Eubank, you must be dreaming. I'm not being unpatriotic, but neither of them would stand a chance against any of these guys in their heyday.

The eight famous fighters on offer range from the old to the new, including arch rivals Roberto Duran and Sugar Ray Leonard. Then there's "Marvellous" Marvin Hagler, the bloke whose head looks like a Malteser. Perhaps the most dubious inclusion is the "legend in the making", James "Lights Out" Toney – who hardly anyone in the MEGA POWER office has heard of.

In Exhibition mode, you can select any of these eight greats to fight against a computer or human opponent. Or you can even have up to eight players in a truly "knockout" tournament. For long-term play, though, it's best to choose the Career mode.



Rocky Graziano has just knocked Sugar Ray Robinson down. He's flat out on the canvas while the ref counts away. Can he get up in time? It all depends whether he's been knocked down before and, in two-player mode, on you bashing those buttons.

Just as Sega are about to launch their *Greatest Heavyweights*, another contender emerges for the undisputed boxing title. Phil "Knockout" King steps into the ring to fight the likes of Hagler and Leonard.



Thomas "The Hit Man" Hearns delivers another punishing right to Marvin Hagler's head. See the drops of blood fly off and wince as you hear the thudding sound effect. As the clock shows, they've only been fighting for 25 seconds and Hagler's already looking very bruised and battered. At this rate he'll be knocked down before the end of the round.

This lets you create your own boxer, choosing his appearance and fighting abilities, and even allocating power to each of his eight types of punch. Beat your first opponent and you go up the rankings to face harder and harder challengers.

Contests can be anything from two to 12 rounds – each lasting up to three minutes (real-time). With the fighters in the ring, the ref calls for a fair fight, the bell rings and the bruising bout begins. The view is from just behind one of the boxers: in solo mode this is you, but in two-player you switch positions every round to avoid any advantage.

You select from eight different punches by pushing A and C with different directions. Of course, the aim is to beat the living daylights out of your oppo-

nent, but this is no simple slugfest. You can't go for a constant button-bashing attack due to your limited punching stamina, represented by a boxing glove which decreases every time you punch.

You need to skilfully block and dodge your opponent's blows too. With each hit, your boxer's portrait gets more battered and bloody. When its background goes white, your bloke's only a few punches away from being knocked down. If he does

hit the canvas, it's not necessarily the end of the bout: rapidly hit those buttons to make him get up again and beat the ref's count.

Can you box clever enough to win the world title, or will you end up doing HP sauce ads? Either way, playing *Boxing Legends* is certainly a lot less painful than the real thing.

ENDS ING

I like my action bloody and gruelling. Boxing Legends Of The Ring delivered big-time.

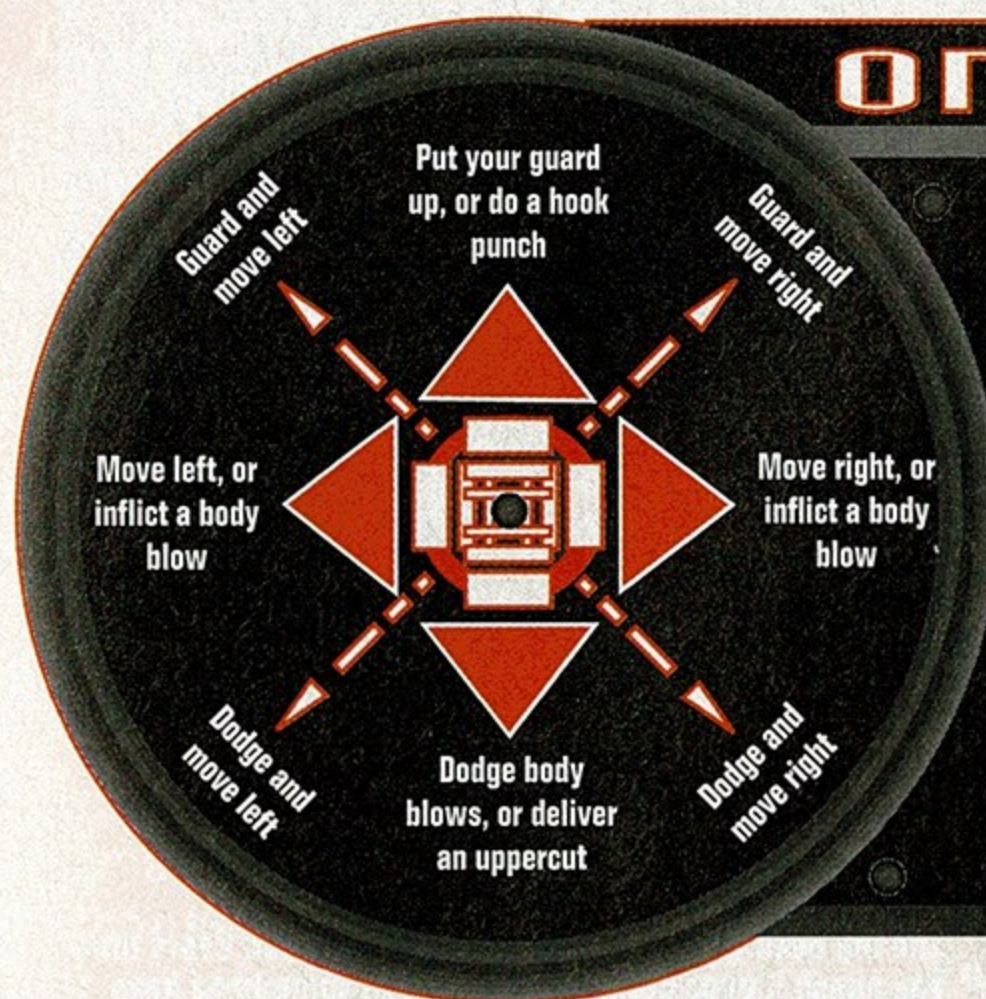
OVERALL %

91

on the button



Uh oh, Sugar Ray Robinson is in trouble now as he's run out of punching power. While waiting for it to replenish, the best tactic is to hold onto the opponent or simply run away!



A

On its own this puts out your quick jab. Combined with directions it does a left hook, body blow or uppercut.

B

When you're close to your opponent, pressing this makes you hold onto him in a clinch - good for getting a breather.

C

Combined with the various directions, this produces a right hook, body blow or uppercut. There is no right jab.



When I feel the need to get aggressive, I like my action bloody and gruelling. Boxing Legends Of The Ring delivered big-time for me. As a huge boxing fan I was drawn in initially by the attraction of being able to pit various classic middleweights against each other. I was further impressed by the realism of the graphics and the excellent resemblance they bore to the actual fighters, but it was the great gameplay that finally hooked me. This is definitely a thinking man's boxing game (if there can be such a thing) and here, more than in any other boxing title, it is important to approach each fight with a crystal-clear strategy. If you try to go toe-to-toe you will almost certainly get creamed. Jabbing, hooking, covering-up are all very important as an energy bar inhibits simply slugging away: the more punches you throw the lower it gets. As a result you begin to learn the benefit of restricting your attacks to brutal, controlled bursts of action, of making your opponent pay for punching himself out, and of carefully awaiting the right moments to attack.

The sound is satisfyingly jarring as well-timed punches send blood spraying from the boxers' mouths and the ref delivers the mandatory eight count after you've hit the canvas. The graphics are extremely impressive with all the fighters' mannerisms perfectly captured. Just watch the deathly look in their eyes as they stalk each other.

If you like boxing games, buy it, or tell your folks "I want it, I want it, I want it!" This really is the best example of pixel pugilism on the console to date.

DAVE



This is the best boxing game I've ever seen - and not just because I'm the undisputed office champion! Most simulations of the sport encourage all-out attack with the fighters constantly trading blows as you bash the buttons. Boxing Legends is different, requiring skilful blocking and dodging of your opponent's punches to succeed. I soon got the hang of defending several of my opponent's punches, then countering with a couple of quick jabs followed by a flurry of uppercuts and body punches.

Good fighting strategy is made necessary by the limited punching stamina, so you have to rest every so often to avoid running out completely. If this happens, you're really in trouble as you have to go completely on the defensive. You can even grab hold of your opponent for a time-wasting clinch while your punching power rises again. This is also a good tactic for hanging on when you're near to being knocked down. Even so, as in real boxing, it's perfectly possible to get up from the canvas and still win the fight.

A superb two-player game, Boxing Legends offers even more lasting appeal with its Career play mode. I love the way you can customise your own boxer and try to elevate him up the world rankings. It's the icing on the cake for a game that plays as good as it looks. In fact, it's bloody great.

PHIL

THE GREATS

In exhibition mode, you can step into the boxing boots of eight real middleweights, each with their own strengths and weaknesses...



ROBINSON

The original Sugar Ray combines a blend of speed, power and style in the ring. He can absorb enormous punishment as well as dish it out.



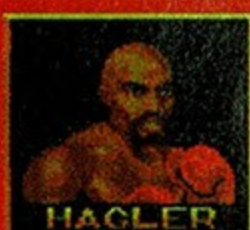
HEARNS

The "Hit Man" has tremendous power and great boxing skills. He is a superior offensive fighter with numerous weapons and likes to finish fights early.



LA MOTTA

"The Raging Bull" has a great chin. A slugger who ignores defence. Lacks power, but overwhelms opponents with sheer volume of punches. Concentrates on the body attack.



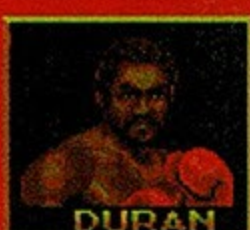
HAGLER

"Marvellous" Marvin has great power in both hands and is very accurate. Works a balanced attack to the head and body. An aggressive fighter who stalks his opponents.



TONEY

"Lights Out" is a legend in the making. He has a solid chin and good power. Tends to fight in spurts, moving and blocking for a while before launching a barrage of punches from all angles.



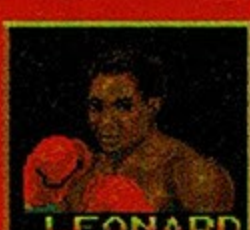
DURAN

A master strategist in the ring, "Hands Of Stone" is able to slip punches and counter effectively. Fights inside and possesses a lethal right hand.



GRAZIANO

"The Rock" is a dangerous brawler who abandons conventional boxing style. His power and chin make him ominous. His lack of defence makes for an exciting slugfest.



LEONARD

The second coming of Sugar Ray, Leonard is a flashy and explosive fighter. Excellent killer instincts and ability to win a round with a flurry in the final seconds.

In the Career mode your aim is to rise up the rankings to eventually take on the top guy. You don't get to choose your opponents though: you often have to fight rematches against beaten opponents.

THE RING Ratings			
MIDDLEWEIGHTS			
Rank	Name	W	L
1	LA MOTTA	83	19
2	TONEY	36	10
3	ROBINSON	174	19
4	DURAN	87	09
5	LEONARD	36	02
6	GRAZIANO	67	10
7	HAGLER	62	03
8	HEARNS	50	04
9	KIRIKINI	26	05
10	PERRY	30	09



- 1** The boxer's portrait indicate his health, getting more bruised and battered as he gets hit. When the background goes white, he's near to being knocked down.
- 2** This little glove indicates that the fighter has one superpunch left. An extra one is earned every time you knock down your opponent.

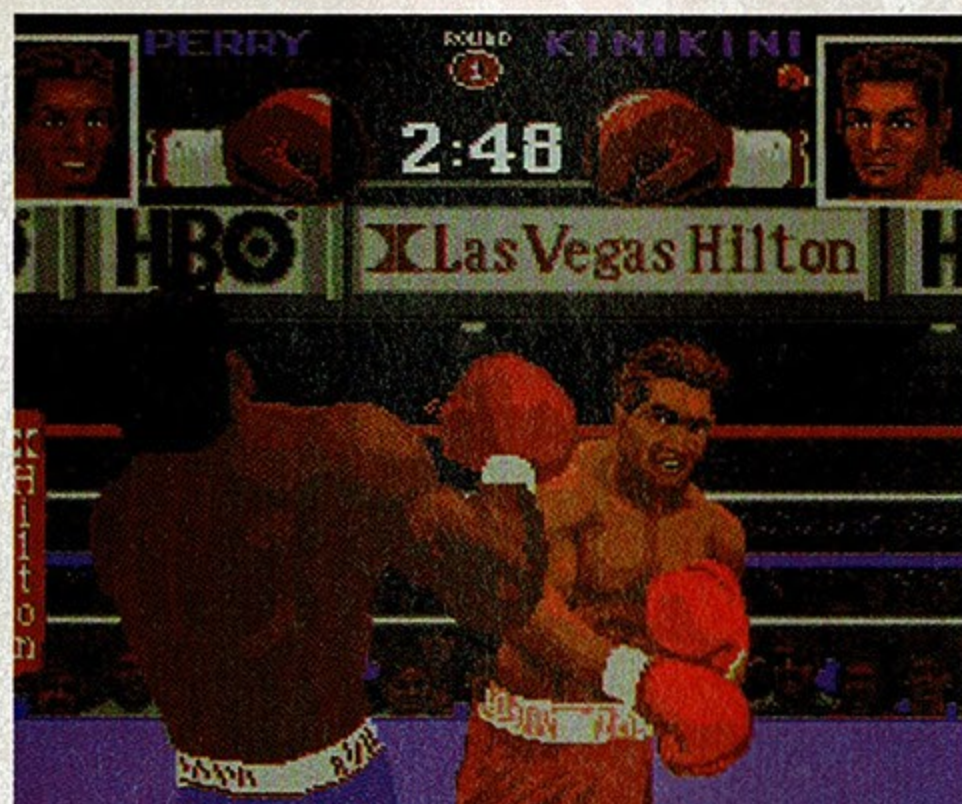
- 3** The clock shows the amount of time remaining in the current round – each lasts three minutes (real-time). Between rounds, both fighters get slightly refreshed.
- 4** The big boxing glove is a punch stamina meter. Every time you punch it goes down slightly, so you sometimes have to take a breather to allow it to rise again.



From the moment I heard the infamous words "seconds out" my ears pricked up, and I thought, hello, sounds like a rather fine boxing game's just come into the office. Well, I wasn't far wrong because *Boxing Legends Of The Ring* is one wicked game. Phil, as you know doubt will have gathered, is the man of the moment, unbeaten for the last three days. This game is one of those rarities that we all sit down and try to win. As a boxing simulation it works very well. Admittedly in alternate rounds your boxer has his back to you, but this doesn't cause a problem.

The graphics move with fluidity, and the sound FX and girls that appear at the end of each round all add to this slick package. All the boxers featured are legends, not some fat geezer who won one fight. These are the business: Jake LaMotta, Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvellous Marvin Hagler. I must admit I do like my sports sims, though not all of them are any good. But this is one that I would definitely add to my library. Being so addictive, it gives you the opportunity to grab a joystick and beat the hell out of your opponent. Must dash as Phil "I didn't punch when you weren't looking" King has just challenged me to another bout. Time to kick ass!

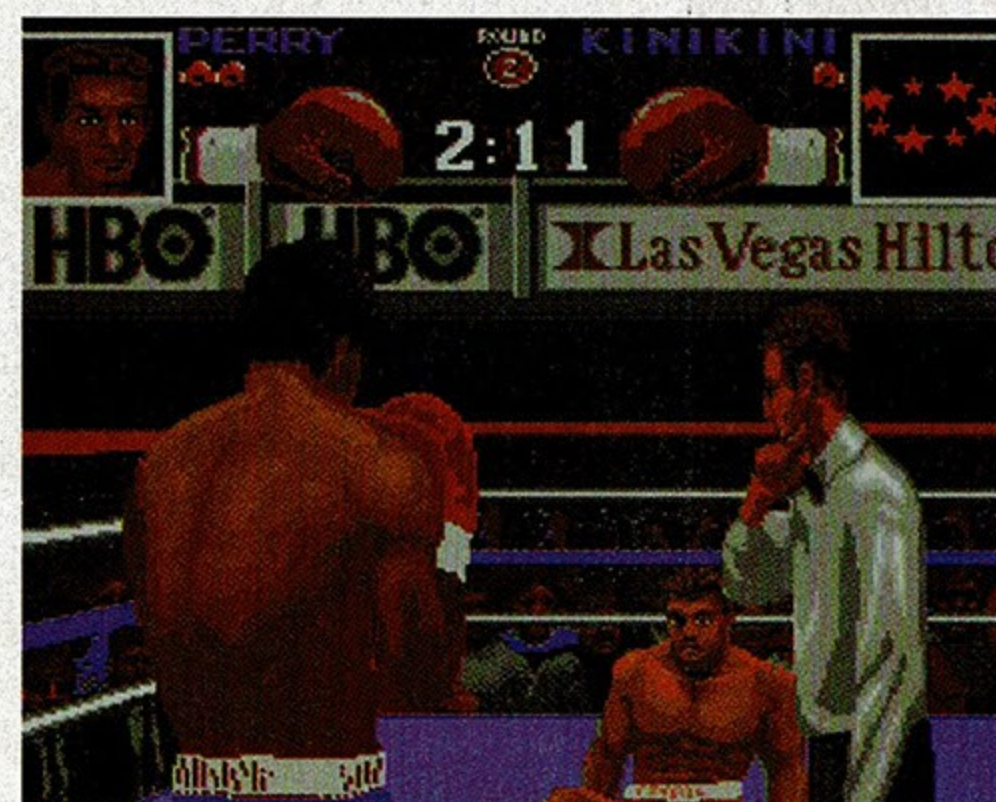
STEVE



Dave "The Kid" Perry's head is rocked back as computer fighter Kinikini delivers another powerful blow. It's only 12 seconds into the first round and Dave has already used his superpunch – you have to connect with it or it's wasted.



In Exhibition mode you can choose any of the eight great middleweight boxers. The password facility enables you to save your position in Career or Tournament mode while you get a between-bouts cup of tea.



"The Kid" knocks down his computer opponent and earns himself a second superpunch. It looks like Kinikini's going to get up in time to beat the count this time, though. If a fighter's knocked down three times in a round he automatically loses.

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"This is probably the best boxing game yet, due to the way that fights are not mere button-bashing slugging matches – you often have to defend while restoring punch stamina. This makes for epic two-player battles. Great fun."

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

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GRAPHICS	90
SOUND	88
ADDICTION	92

OVERALL

91

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REVIEW

DRAGON'S

An adventurer summons a magical metallic orb to do battle with mythical monsters and an evil sorceress. "Sounds like a load of pinballs to me," thinks Phil King...



Just one of the bonus tables. Here you have to flip the ball at goblins who take off their heads and throw them down the screen!



There haven't been that many notable pinball games of late. The one that springs to mind is of course Sonic Spinball, but how does Dragon's Revenge compare?

This is a more standard pinball game than Spinball was, but at least it plays much better than Virtual Pinball. It's fairly challenging, with the neat graphics on the table layout proving suitable stimuli. There are also a number of different stages and sub-levels to be found, which will have you desperately bashing your flippers.

The music and samples stand out, purely because they're so weird. Listening to the "oohs" and "aahs" of Darzel is strangely captivating, but it takes more than samples to make a game. Converting pinball onto a console is very hard. Tengen have produced a playable game here, but for me it lacks a certain something. I wonder how long you would play this game without getting bored. I must admit it didn't take too long for my attentions to wander onto something more interesting.

STEVE

Pinball games don't normally have proper plots: themes (like Jurassic Park or Mario), yes; plots no. You usually just bash a ball around flashing targets to score as many points as possible. A recent exception to this was Sonic Spinball which had a real purpose to hitting all those targets, enabling you to actually "progress" through the game.

This is also the case with Dragon's Revenge. The long-awaited sequel to Tengen's Dragon's Fury tells the story of a village in the mountains of Kareggedor with a terrible curse. Every year the people must sacrifice one of their own to a terrible dragon. This all worked out okay until one of the victims, a beautiful woman called Darzel, struck a deal with the dragon for her own protection. Now instead of demanding just any old sacrifice, the dragon was persuaded to ask for only the most beautiful maiden – otherwise he would burn the village to cinders. This ensured no-one in the village could be more beautiful than the cunning Darzel.

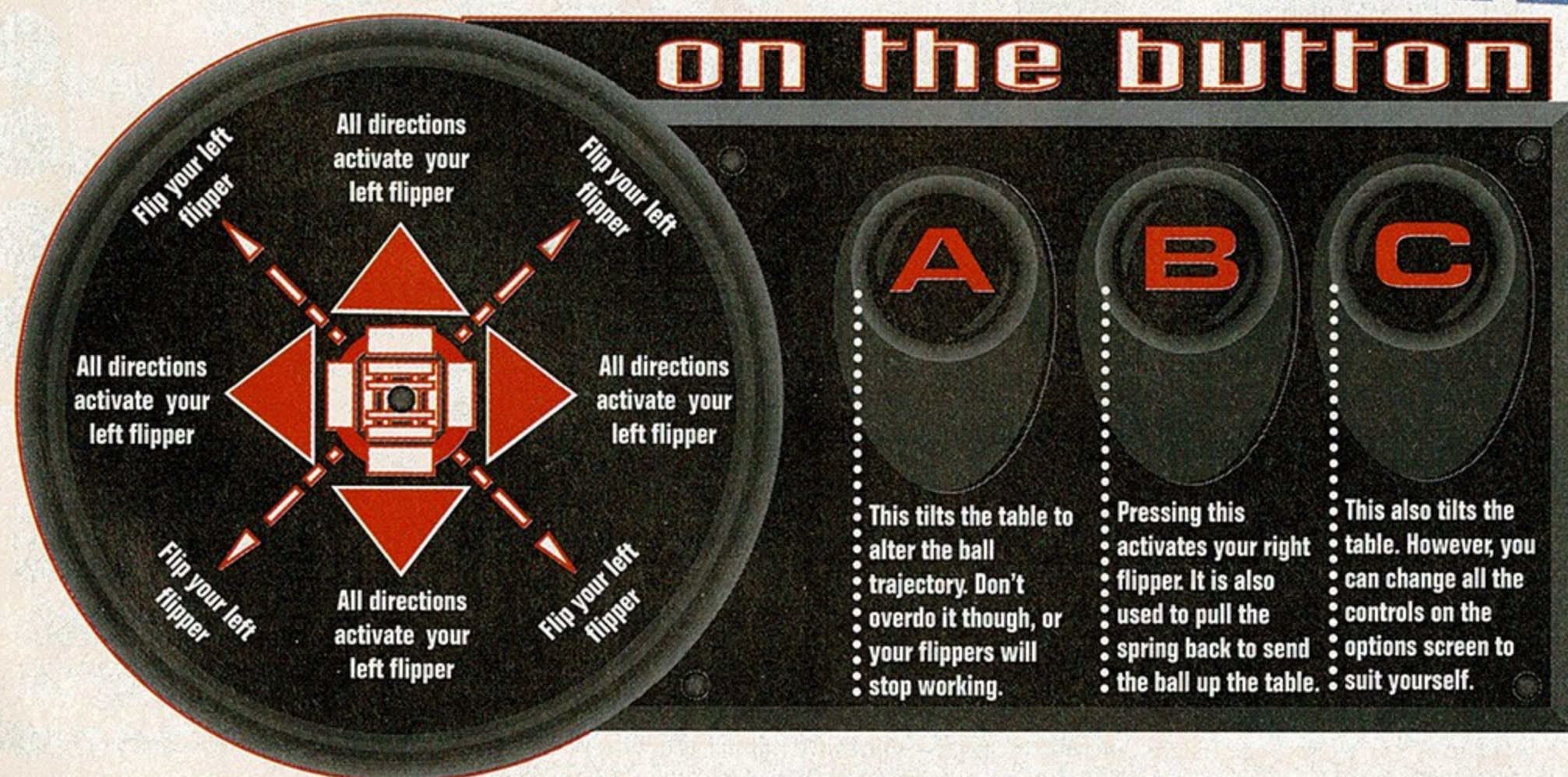
Having heard of this curse, three brave adventurers visited the village to attempt a daring rescue of the next victim. They failed and were imprisoned by Darzel in massive crystal globes throughout the countryside. Luckily one of the trio was a bit of a sorceress herself and had in her possession The Mystic Silver Ball. And guess what: you get to knock this around a table with flippers!

The scrolling table is split vertically into three sections, each with its own pair of flippers and populated by various mythical monsters that need several hits to destroy. The aim is not just to rack up points, but to knock the ball into special places (which must be opened first) to access eight sub-levels. These are simpler tables where you have to smash the ball repeatedly into large or numerous baddies to release a helpful monster, or one of your other adventuring buddies. The latter give



I love pinball: both real and computer versions. I particularly enjoyed Sonic Spinball as there was more incentive to keep playing than just racking up loads of points. Dragon's Revenge has the same sort of long-lasting appeal due to the similar way in which you make progress through the game. It's very satisfying when you manage to get through to a sub-level. And it's even better when you complete one, as you only have one chance – muck it up and you have to go through the process of opening the special entrance again on the main table. This would have caused much frustration even for a pinball-lover like me, if not for the clever password system. Even so, this game is certainly no pushover. Perhaps what surprised me most was the very weird sound FX. Knock the ball into certain places and Darzel (pictured in the middle of the table) starts moaning suggestively with prolonged "oohhs" and "ahhhhs" – I wonder where they sampled that from? There's also some nice speech and good grunting and roaring dragon sounds in there. Combined with the slick graphics and addictive action, this makes for a very satisfying game of pinball. I like it.

PHIL



REVENGE

OVERALL %

80

Great sound, impressive animation, probably the best pinball game around at the moment.



You need to hit all those blue blokes to destroy them. This will open the entrance (where the arrow points up to the skull) to another of the bonus tables.



The second time you go through the skull entrance you get to this hellish bonus table. After killing all the little dragons, you have to take on a huge dragon's head.



The sorceress Darzel moans as you roll the ball over the coloured targets round her head. Get them all flashing blue and her head floats down the screen – hit it to win an extra ball.

you two or three balls on future sub-levels, but you need to complete them all to win the game. To avoid frustration, you're given a new password every time you solve one.

Like Sonic Spinball, this is certainly pinball with a difference. The only question is whether all those scantily clad women and suggestive sound FX will put you off your ball control.



This map shows the whole of the main pinball table. As you can see, it is split into three vertical sections, each with flippers and one of the secret entrances. Activate the latter and you can enter one of eight smaller bonus tables.



On this bonus table, you have to keep hitting the bird in the middle. However, he only pokes his head out every now and then so it's quite tricky to keep the ball in play long enough. An added complication is that winged demons fly down the screen and get in the way.



As a rule I don't like pinball games and the fact that I sat and played this one for more than a few minutes is testament in itself to the game's quality.

Dragon's Revenge is a highly detailed pinball game that includes numerous table features, eight bonus rooms and fantastic speech. Initially the game grabs you by the testicles and has you engrossed by just how much it can do, the variety of creatures that wander about the table, the eerie animation of Darzel's face in the centre of the table and the sheer excitement created by the hard-hitting sound effects. However, there is really only one table in the game and after a while you begin to lose interest in the goings-on.

The control method is both logical and responsive and the speed of the game is quite astonishing, especially when you consider how much is packed into the program and how much is actually happening on-screen at any one time. Everything about the game feels solid and no-one is going to complete this overnight, but somehow I found it a little monotonous after a while.

Great sound, impressive animation, probably the best pinball game around at the moment, but personally I prefer the real thing down my local.

DAVE

Try not to be distracted by the two blondes as you aim to hit the tree's arms enough times to turn them into small trunks which must also be destroyed. The spiders just get in the way.



Hit the dragon's head several times and he breathes fire to create more monsters to get in the way. Destroy these and hit his head some more and his mouth should open. Knock the ball into it to reach yet another of the bonus tables.



(Above) Every time you pause the game, you are given the current password to write down. This records how many of the bonus tables you've completed, so you don't have to start from scratch when you play again.

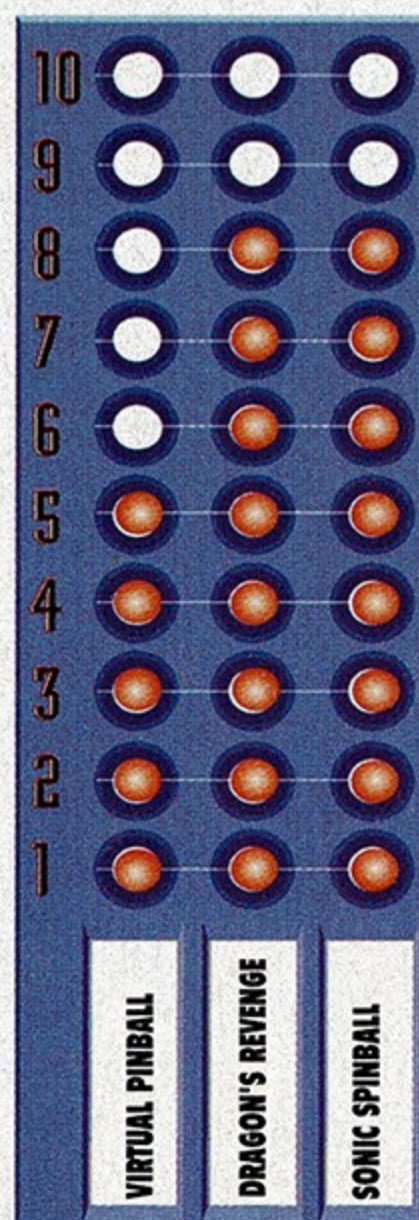


Those three bumpers knock the ball around at high speed. Roll it over the three hearts for a million points.

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"This is one of most playable pinball games we've seen. As well as great graphics and strange sound FX, you get the incentive of making progress by completing the various bonus tables. So you always feel you're getting somewhere."



DRAGON'S REVENGE

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GAMEPLAY	82
GRAPHICS	86
SOUND	90
ADDITION	74

OVERALL

80

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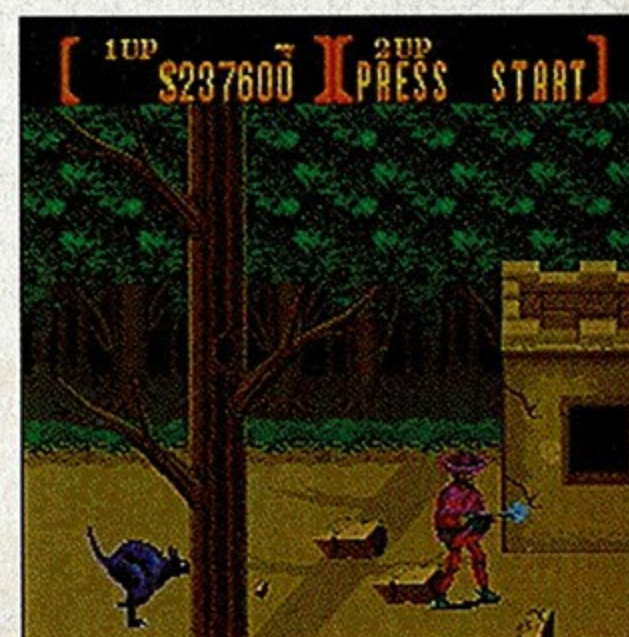
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REVIEW



PRIZE FIGHTER

You sit in the gloomy dressing room, preparing for the battle to come. Your biggest fight yet is only minutes away and you're still feeling nervous. As your veteran trainer briefs you on tactics, the referee walks in and warns you about fighting clean or he'll deck you himself! Seconds later, your introduction music starts up and it's time to go. The crowd are baying for your blood but amongst them is a little boy on crutches who pleads, "Win it for me, Kid!" Looking at your opponent, you can see the contempt in his eyes. And by the look of his fast shadow boxing, you're in for some punishment tonight. The announcer screams, "Let's get ready to rumble!", the bell rings and you trust your survival instincts to keep you in one piece...

The latest "interactive movie" from Sega, *Prize Fighter* puts you in the ring with four of the meanest boxers around. And these guys are real, their many movements and punches filmed and digitised for the ultimate fighting experience. Instead of the usual behind-the-fighter view, you get a first-person perspective of the action, only seeing your digitised gloves superimposed on the small Full Motion Video window. The most obvious aspect is that everything's in black and white. As well as reducing the data size of each frame, enabling virtually no accessing delay between the various video sequences on the CD, this creates a moody atmosphere much like in the movie, *Raging Bull*. Indeed, the man who choreographed the fight scenes in that film, and the *Rocky* series, has also directed the bouts in *Prize Fighter*.

Once the bell goes you need to watch your opponent's movements to dodge his punches or

After beating the world's great middleweights in *Boxing Legends Of The Ring*, Phil King piles on the pounds to fight for the heavyweight title in *Prize Fighter*...

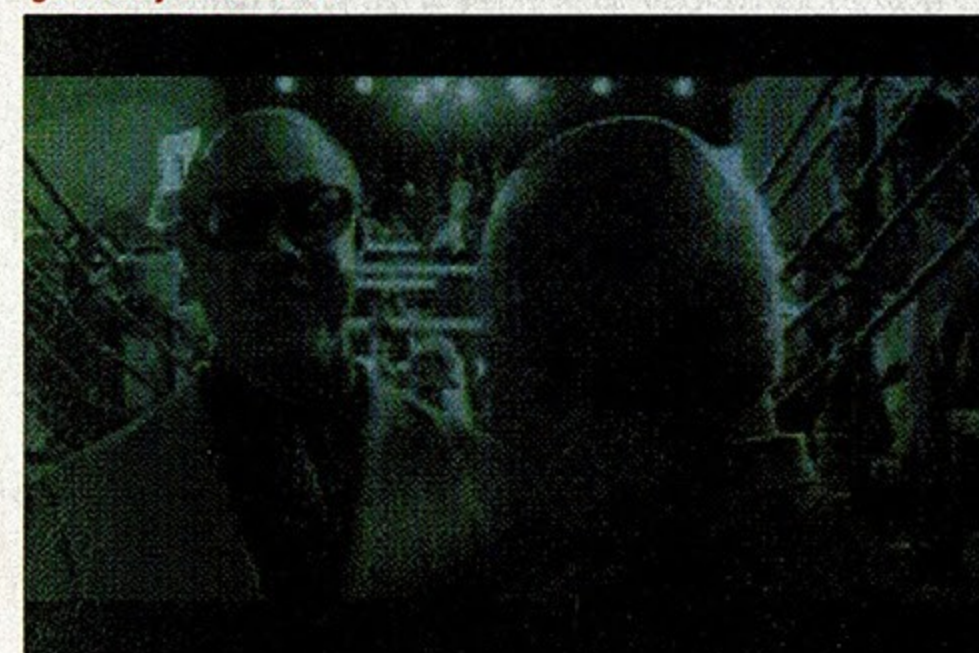
block them by putting up your guard. At the same time, you have to keep an eye out for openings so you can connect with your own punches. Initially this is very tricky, so there's a handy training mode which displays arrows around the FMV window to indicate when you should use which punch. With every successful blow, the scene cuts to a close-up of the punch connecting. Every hit causes damage to the opponent: the fighters' health is indicated by two faces below the FMV window. When the background of one of these turns completely red, that fighter hits the canvas. If this is you, your vision rocks and you fall flat on your back, looking up at the ref as he does his count. If you're lucky you'll get up: it all depends on the power of the punch and your stamina.

If you're knocked out three bouts in a row it's game over, but every time you win a fight you earn some "power points" to allocate between your two hands and stamina. You certainly need to improve your statistics before taking on Nuke "The Duke" Johnson, heavyweight champion of the world, and you also need to beat the other three fighters first.

Could you be a contender or will you wind up as an overweight comedian in a tacky bar? At least with *Prize Fighter*, it won't hurt to try.



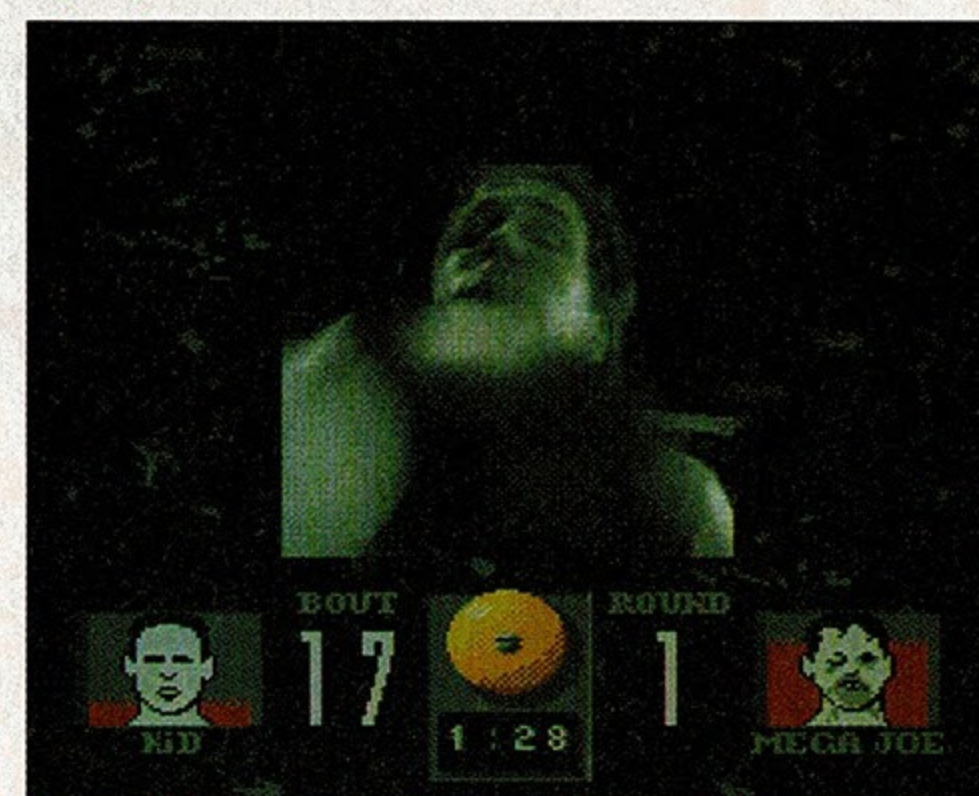
After lengthy introductions for each fighter, the real-life announcer Michael Buffer screams his catch-phrase of "Let's get ready to rumble!"



This shady bookie character appears before each bout. Here, he tells you to throw the fight as he's got a lot of money riding on your opponent. He even threatens to break your kneecaps!



Following your trainer and seconds, you emerge from the tunnel to a cheering crowd. This is the scene before your world title fight against Nuke "The Duke" Johnson.



Ooompph! As you land a left jab on the chin of Mega Joe, the scene switches to a close-up of the punch connecting. Your opponent's portrait (bottom right) shows he's in bad shape.



This has to be one of the most atmospheric games I've ever played. Right from the shadow-boxing title sequence (accompanied by classical music) to the close-ups of the digitised boxers' heads rocked by punches, this game has you completely engrossed. The black and white nature of the visuals provides extra impact to the seedy atmosphere, much as in the film *Raging Bull* – and thanks to Ron Stein's direction, the fight scenes seem just as brutal. With the first-person perspective used throughout, and the way the other characters look at you when talking, you get a real feeling of being there.

As for the action itself, it turns out to be surprisingly interactive and playable. You can punch, dodge and block whenever you like, so you get much more freedom than in most CD "interactive movies". The game is certainly challenging to begin with, and the training mode is essential to help you see when the opponent's open for you to hit. As in *Boxing Legends*, you have to box clever to win: aimless rapid punching will soon get you knocked out. Just as I was beginning to think I'd never be a contender, I found a technique to beat the first fighter. However, for later opponents I had to adjust my fighting tactics and it took a lot of fights to build up enough points to eventually beat the champion, who's one real tough cookie.

All the same, with the obvious lack of a two-player mode, I don't think *Prize Fighter* has as much lasting appeal as *Boxing Legends*. But it sure is fun while it lasts.

PHIL

PRIZE FIGHTER

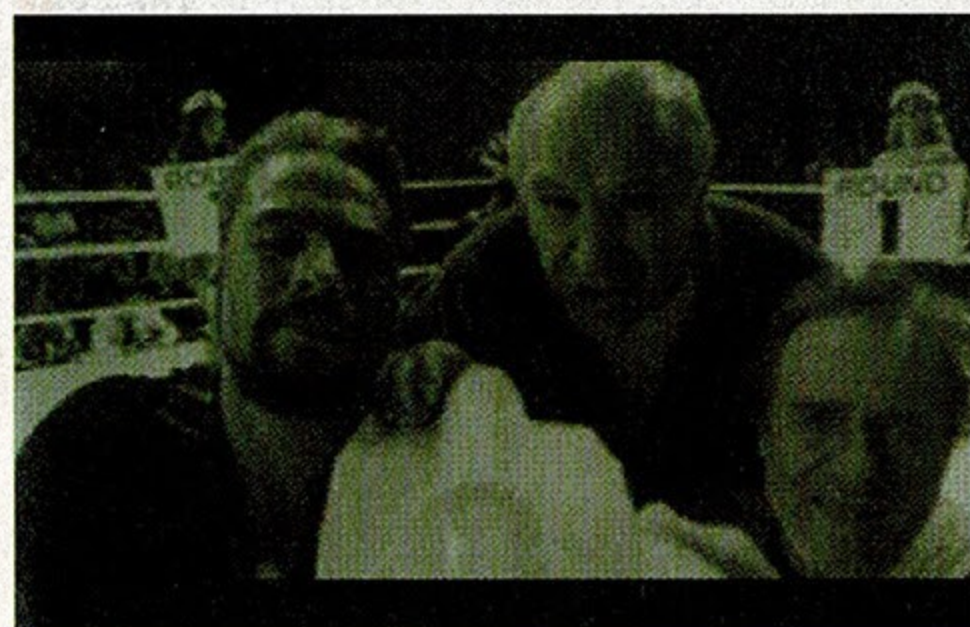


From the moment this game begins, through all the action and to the final sequence, it's brilliant. At first you are enticed by the wonderful classical music (CD quality) that fills the air, which is coincidentally very reminiscent of the film *Raging Bull*. From the mass of options, through to actually getting in the ring, you wait with nervous anticipation for the big fight. One slight drawback is the size of the screen when fighting. I felt it could have been slightly bigger. However, the picture is very clear and ultimately effective.

Getting to grips with your fighter is most definitely the hardest part of this game. You must learn in the training mode when to attack, block or hold. Entering the fight you'll probably get mullered at first, but persevere, it's worth it. Deft touches such as various jibes and jaunts about your boxing talents all add to the realism of the game.

Prize Fighter is certainly a world that I assure you, you'll want to enter — at your own risk, of course.

STEVE



Before the fight begins, your seconds give you some final encouragement, along with a squirt of water. Meanwhile, the lovely card girls parade around the ring in the background.



After connecting with another huge right hook, you've knocked Mega Joe to the floor. There's only six seconds of the round remaining but I don't think he'll be getting up from this one.

The video graphics are astoundingly smooth as you stalk your opponent around the ring.

OVERALL%

84



- 1 The Kid's portrait indicates his general state of health. As this is worsened by being repeatedly hit, his face gets more battered and the red level in the background rises.
- 2 Beneath the round bell, the clock indicates how much time is left in the current round: here it's 2 minutes 53 seconds. Each of the three rounds lasts for three real-time minutes.
- 3 With the game's training mode switched on, you're aided by these arrows which indicate which punch to use and when. This only works for the first round of a bout.
- 4 Your opponent's face behaves just like yours, getting more damaged with every blow you land. To knock him down you need to get the red level in the background up to the top.

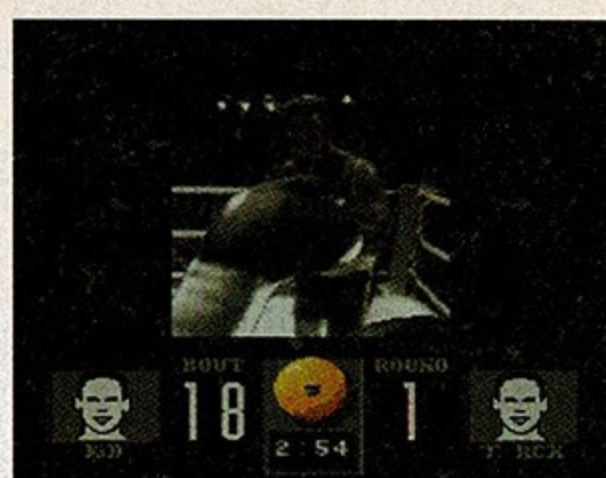




Just to prove Phil did it, here's what the newspaper says when you become champion of the world.



Each win earns you power points which you can allocate between your stamina and left and right hands.



Your digitised gloves move out from your unseen body every time you go for a punch.



A dream scenario for all fight movie fans, this is as near to an interactive movie as I have ever seen. Directed by Ron Stein, creator of the boxing sequences in the Rocky and Raging Bull movies, this game contains every gritty boxing cliché ever seen on the big screen and has the player feeling like the star of a classic boxing flick. There's drama, action, even gangsters telling you to throw the fight... oh yeah, and a good game too.

Prize Fighter is a long way from being the ultimate boxing game, but it is probably the most ambitious we have seen for a long, long time. The video graphics are astoundingly smooth as you stalk your opponent around the ring and the constant taunts of the crowd and your adversary really add to the "Hollywood" feel of the game. The graphics representing your damage meter are a bit naff, but then I guess something had to give.

This game has many faults. It's a shame that it's all in black and white, but what do you expect from a guy that worked on Raging Bull? There's also only four rival boxers and the movie sequences get a bit samey after a while. Oh yeah, and there's the corny sub-plot about the little crippled boy who idolises you; very American kitsch. But you find yourself forgiving all of these shortcomings as they are easily overridden by the game's sheer originality and novelty value.

Brave and impressive, I can't help feeling that as real-life "fantasy" games like this begin to appear, our stride into the virtually real world of our dreams cannot be far off.

DAVE

READY TO RUMBLE

There are four tough opponents for you to take on in this brutal boxing sim, each with his own boxing style, strengths and weaknesses. They range from the impertinent Honeyboy (shown in the poster) to the champ Nuke Johnson.

TONIGHT PRIZEFIGHTER

HONEYBOY



190 POUNDS
703 POWER POINTS

VS.

THE KID

211 POUNDS
321 POWER POINTS

- PRESS START TO FIGHT -
- PRESS C FOR OPTIONS -



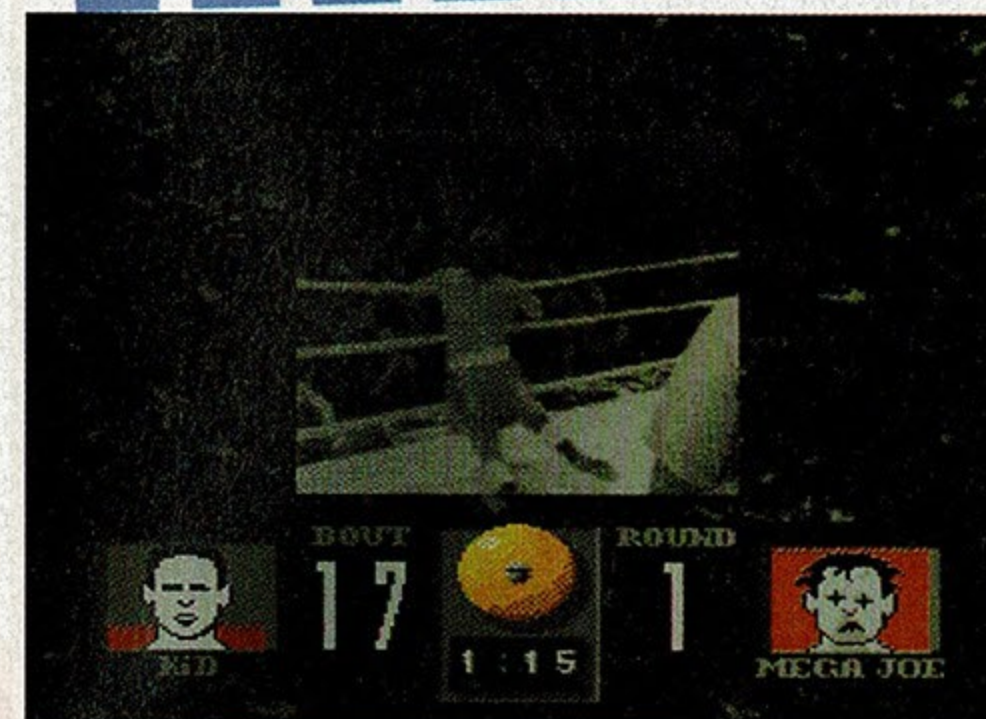
The second fighter, Mega Joe has power but is fairly easy to hit.



T Rex lives up to his name with punishing punches from all angles.



The champion, Nuke Johnson is a classy fighter with a good defence.

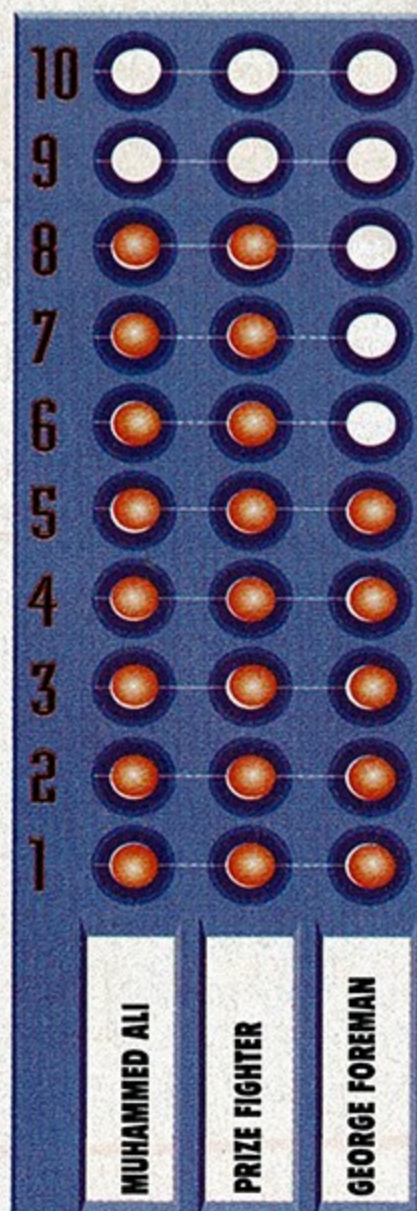


One of the more dramatic knockdown scenes shows Mega Joe falling onto the ropes and rebounding onto the canvas, flat on his back!

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"This heavyweight boxing game oozes class. It hooks you right from the moody title sequence, clobbers you with lengthy cinematic scenes, then knocks you out with brutally addictive action. The only thing in question is its lastability."



PRIZE FIGHTER

SEGA
£49.99
OUT NOW



one player



quick access



battery backup



available in
USA

GAMEPLAY	86
GRAPHICS	87
SOUND	93
ADDICTION	80

OVERALL

84%

INSTANT ACCESS

SEGA



XS

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REVIEW

MAD DOG

Obviously adversely affected by all the violence in video games, Steve "The Cornwall Kid" Bough packed his pistol and went off to the Wild West for a rootin'-tootin' shootout.



You can't be in the real Wild West without seeing a brawl, and *Mad Dog McCree* gives you plenty of action. Watch these two fools fight each other, probably over the lady behind.



Having shot this pussy off the roof, he drops to the floor like a stone. Remembering to reload is most important in this game, as your opponents often get up off the floor.



A traditional shoot-out with the outlaw Josey Wales hiding behind the rocks like the scaredy cat that he is. Don't worry: as soon as his head pops up, shoot him dead.



Mmm, I do like that pouty look. I certainly don't intend to shoot her, but this seedy saloon is where a lot of Mad Dog McCree's cronies hang out. Be quick on the draw or be dead.

American Laser Games (ALG) are certainly busy people. Alongside *Mad Dog McCree*, they're currently converting their other arcade hits, *Who Shot Johnny Rock?* and *Space Pirates* to name but a few. The prospects of this rapidly expanding company look exceedingly good. Formed in 1990, when they burst onto the arcade scene with *Mad Dog McCree*, ALG quickly established themselves as a revolutionary company that was not afraid to break new ground. Their idea was to develop games which involved live action on interactive video. A new concept was born and ALG cornered the market in providing the player with the chance to become part of a real-life action-adventure movie.

Launched in the US arcades in the autumn of 1990, *Mad Dog McCree* became the top-rated video game in the world by the following year, winning the Amusement Machine Operators Association's prestigious New Technology Award.

Now converted to Mega Drive, the game is essentially a Full Motion Video shoot-'em-up. The narrative describes the sorry tale of Mad Dog McCree, a mid-West outlaw who likes nothing better than to go into towns and shoot up the occupants. His henchman have taken over a Wild West frontier town, locked the sheriff in his own jail and are wreaking havoc in the saloon, the bank and

the stable. Mad Dog has also kidnapped the town's mayor and his daughter.

Armed with your trusty pistol, you're the only person who can stop him. After some shooting practice, knocking bottles off a fence, you set out to clean up the town. Choosing between the first four stages, you have to shoot it out with Mad Dog's henchmen, by moving your gun cursor onto them and blasting before they fire back.

After this, you'll be expected to locate Mad Dog McCree and his henchman, and this is done by a process of elimination. For example, you can shoot signs to go left or right, or take a route down a mine shaft which may lead to his hideout, or maybe not. With sharp-shooting, you can eventually have a final showdown against the man himself, and by this stage you should be the fastest and sharpest shooter in the West. Bonus rounds are awarded for shooting cow skulls and spittoons that appear intermittently in various scenes.

The game can be played with a light gun (Menacer or *Lethal Enforcers* pistol), joypad, or even the Sega mouse. Can you be the hero of the day? Can you save the Mayor and his daughter and hopefully get off with her? All these questions can be answered. It purely depends on how quick you are on the draw, yee-hah!



As with most avid games players, I used to play this game in the arcades. Travelling up to the Trocadero for a day out on the ale and video games, this was one I was always ready to shove my pound in. It was brilliant on coin-op, as you had a gun in a holster, and the screen was beautifully clear. Converting this onto console has made the game suffer somewhat. Switching on, you're confronted by some totally dreadfully grainy graphics, which unfortunately disappoint immediately.

This becomes such a pain that often you'll shoot a henchman, and then find it increasingly difficult to locate the shots from the next bandit. This is all caused by the graphics, as it's too damn hard to see what's going on.

It is very disappointing because this is an excellent game. The gameplay is highly challenging as the arcade version proved. The way you hunt down Mad Dog is very interactive, and thoroughly enjoyable. Because ALG used the full screen they had to sacrifice the graphics, but surely that is plain stupidity. Wouldn't it make more sense to reduce the screen size instead? A light gun would also be beneficial, as you can't really move around fast enough with the joypad. Despite some fun action, this game is let down severely by those appalling graphics. Sadly for me, there's no excuse: I feel it's a great game that's been wasted.

STEVE

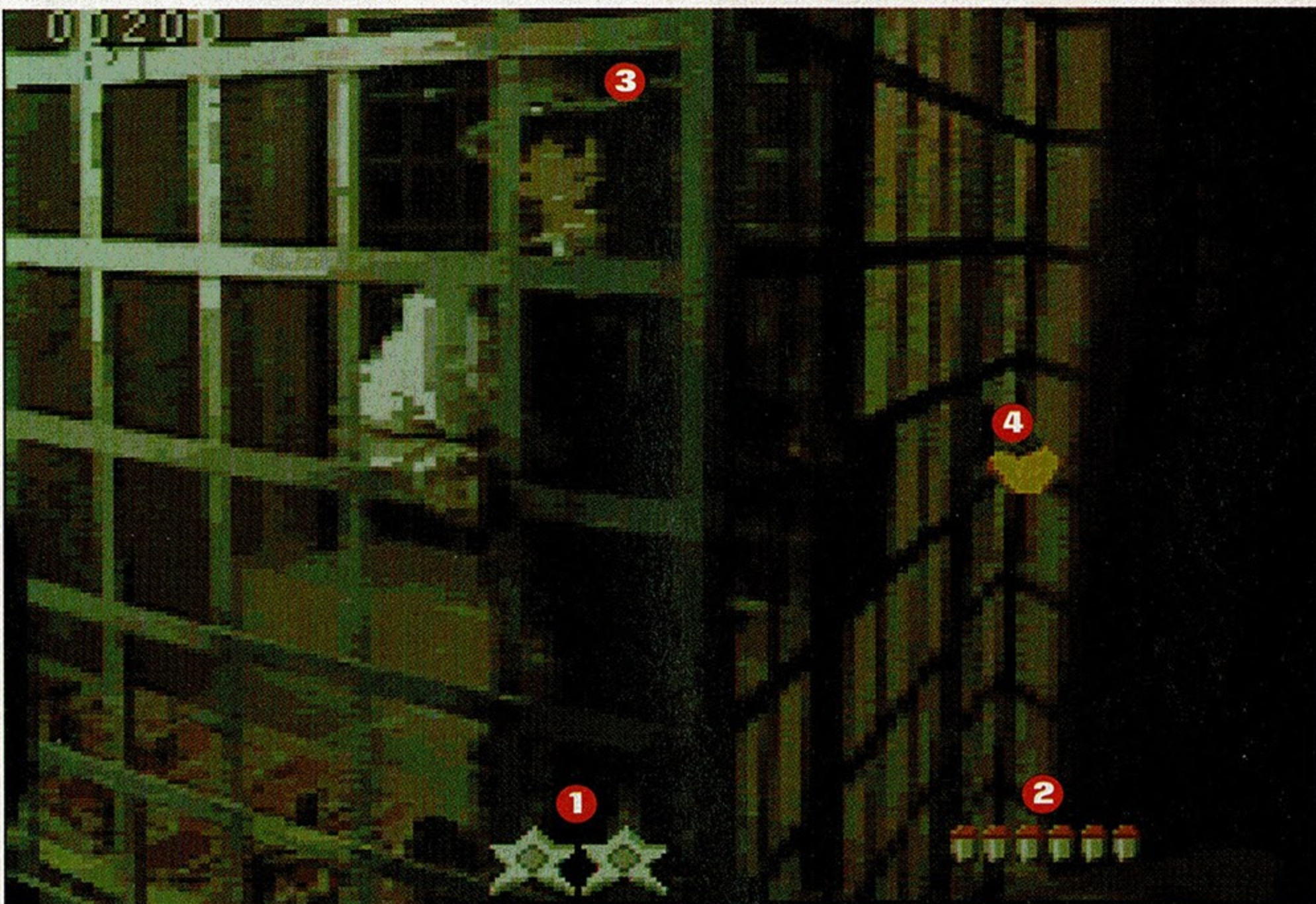
MCCREE



This guy hiding behind the barrel will warn you that there's more trouble ahead. Make sure you are reloaded and then stand in front of the door and fire away.



This is a little tricky. At least five gunmen are hiding in this blood, and the probability that you'll die is very high. However if you're quick on the draw, you'll get them.

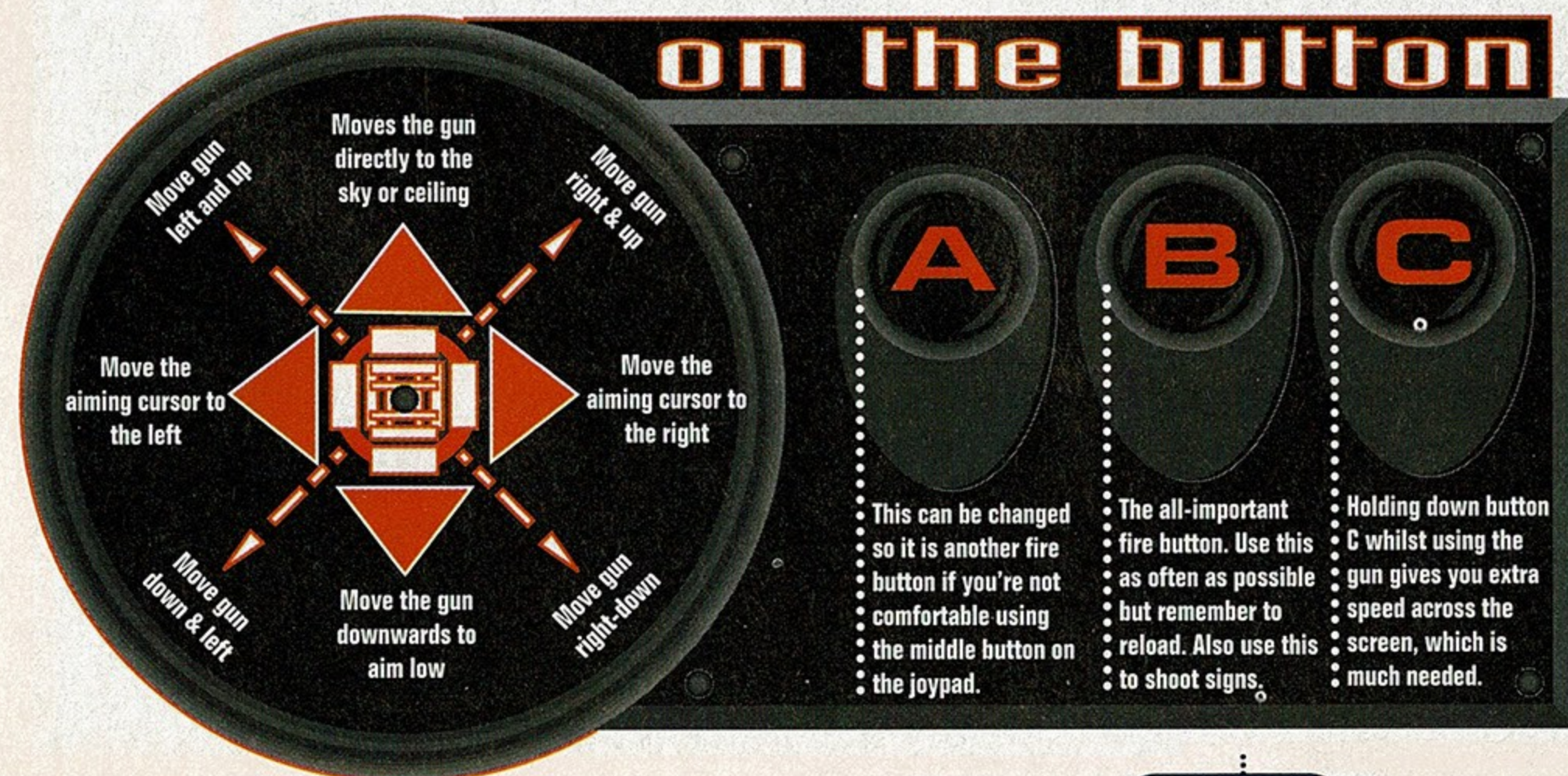


1 The two stars indicate how many lives you have left, which in this case is two. Every time you lose a life, the undertaker pops up to tell you about it. Nice bloke!

2 The all-essential bullets: you can have up to six in your revolver, but these go really quickly. Remember to reload as often as possible otherwise you'll be helpless.

3 To free the sheriff from jail, you must firstly go to the saloon, kill all the bad guys there, and then you'll be given the keys by the barman to release the sheriff.

4 The gun, which only appears as a small icon on screen. Line up the gun quickly to beat the baddies to the draw. Press c to move the gun around the screen quickly.



OVERALL %
58

Without a light gun this CD is little more than a nostalgic trip through a world of frustration.



The addiction factor for this game derives almost totally from its association with the arcade classic from which it has been converted. Remaining true to the original story line, you hunt down that evil gunslinger Mad Dog McCree through a number of pistol-toting levels, cutting down his trigger-happy henchmen along the way. It's just like having the arcade machine in your house... well, actually it's not! The graphics on this version of the game are very poor indeed, and pointing in the general direction of the baddies is often the best chance you've got of winning gunfights. Without a light gun this CD is little more than a nostalgic trip through a world of frustration as outlaws pop up and shoot you long before your cursor gets anywhere near them. Very enjoyable in the arcades three or four years ago, at home Mad Dog McCree is little more than an enigmatic memory test and once you know where the characters will be appearing from, the challenge of the game is lost. Mad Dog McCree on the Mega-CD is interesting, totally inevitable, but way too linear for my liking... and you don't even get a gun to play it with.

DAVE



Taken from the title sequence, this picture shows a happy-looking woman. Not for much longer though as she not only witnesses a shooting, she also gets brutally shot.



This is a serious blast-up in hell. Taking on these three guys you have absolutely no chance, because the gun doesn't move fast enough. Plus more importantly, you haven't done this screen correctly: you must get the keys to open the cells first.



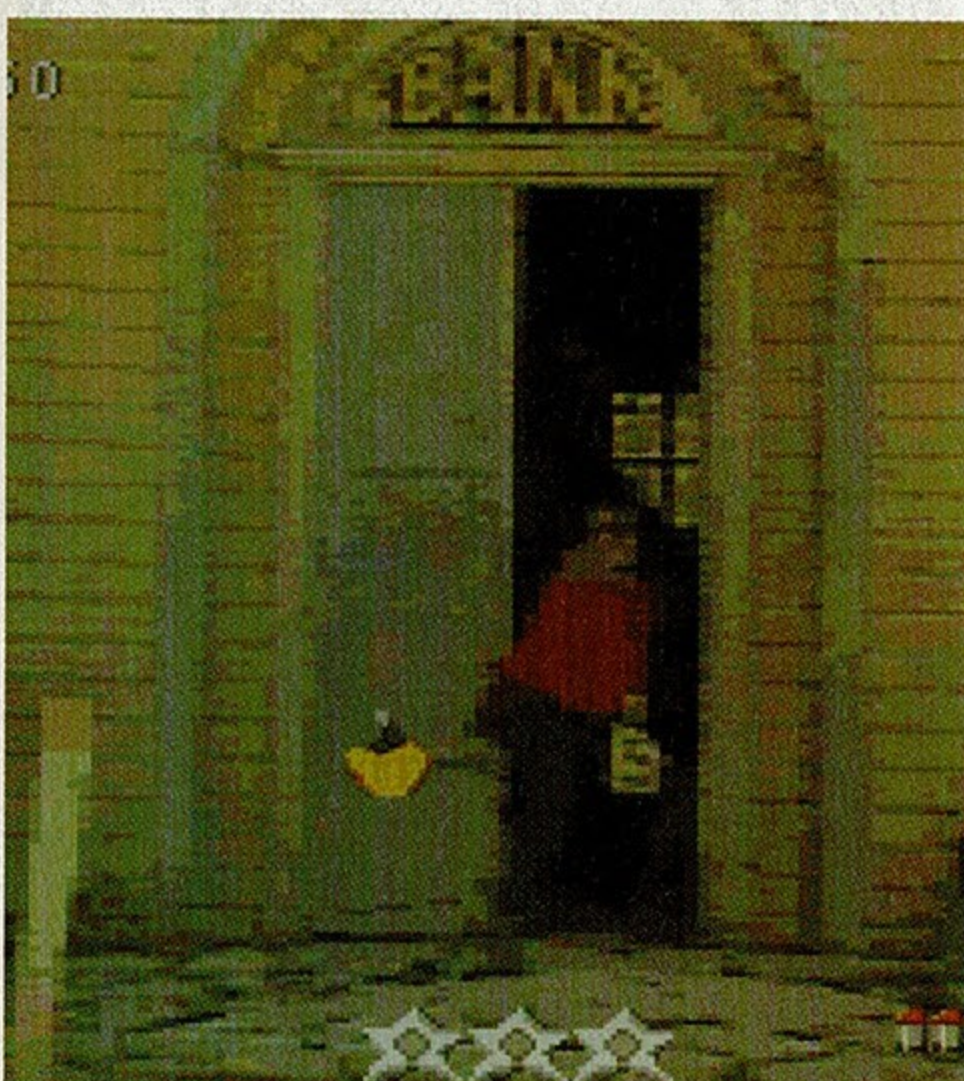
Jeez! Get a load of those grainy graphics — they're almost like the early sepia photographs of the Wild West! I can appreciate the problems of using a full-screen display for the FMV, but Lethal

Enforcers did the same and looked much better than this. Not only do the graphics spoil the atmosphere of the coin-op, but they also make it hard to see where the baddies are — spotting a couple of indistinct pixels isn't easy.

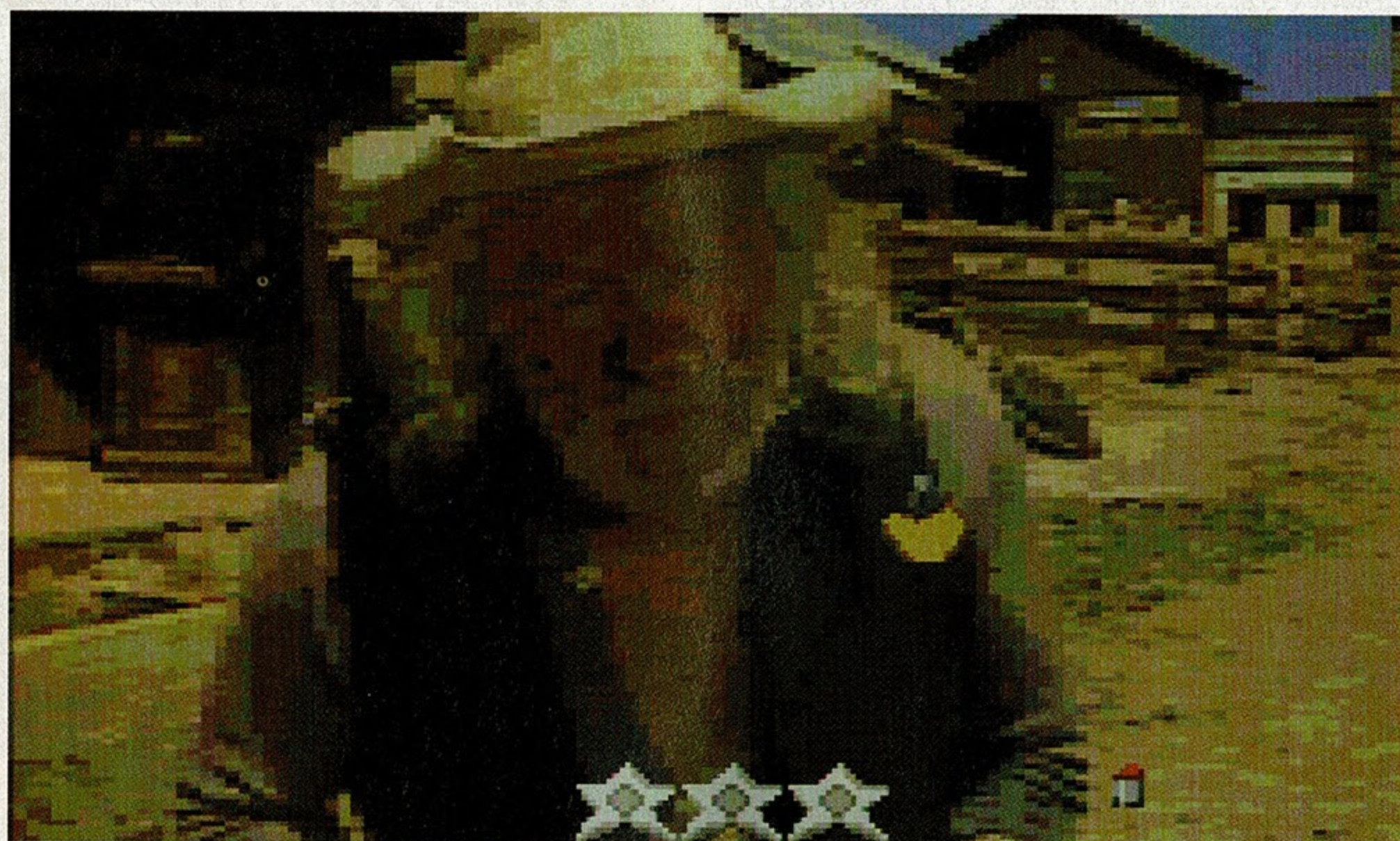
The other really bad aspect of this conversion is that it's almost impossible to do well with the joypad, as you simply can't get to some of the baddies quickly enough. The game's much better with a light gun, but I still reckon the collision detection's a bit dodgy: several times I could've sworn I'd killed someone, only for them to surprise me by firing back.

Along with the appalling graphics, these annoying flaws completely ruin the fun of the arcade game. There are far better Mega-CD titles than this around: if you want a good shootout, I'd recommend Lethal Enforcers or Ground Zero Texas instead.

PHIL



A shootout at the bank. On killing this guy, another person will appear. You don't want to kill the second person, because if you do, you'll go to the graveyard and see the words "game over" emblazoned across the screen. You'll know next time.



This old geezer appears throughout the game. He gives you advice, tells you what's happening in other places, and generally makes himself useful. At the start of the game, make sure you prevent him from being shot, as it's very bad news for you if he dies.

MP


FINAL VERDICT

"*Mad Dog McCree* is undoubtedly an excellent coin-op, but the conversion is let down by the appallingly grainy graphics. However, if you can put up with this flaw, you'll find this game addictive, amusing and fun!"

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

LETHAL ENFORCERS
MAD DOG MCCREE
T2: THE ARCADE GAME

MAD DOG MCCREE


 1-2 players


 quick access


 infinite continues


 available in USA

GAMEPLAY	81
GRAPHICS	41
SOUND	62
ADDITION	65

OVERALL

58

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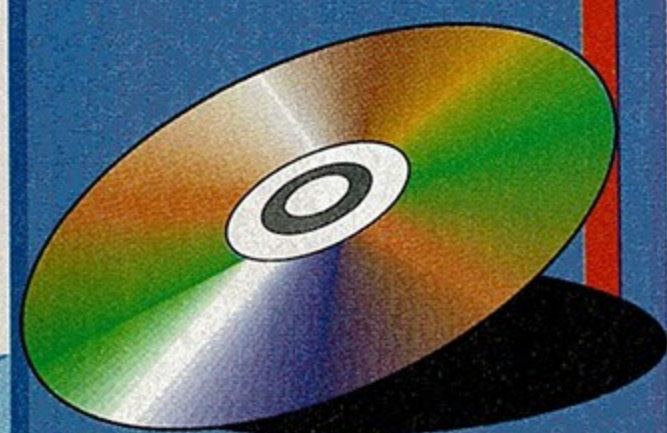
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REVIEW



THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

"Yo ho ho and a bottle o' rum. Ahoy there. Arrrgh, Jim Lad. Shiver me timbers. Pieces of eight, pieces of eight!"
Wearing his eye patch and wooden leg, Steve Bough sets sail for Monkey Island in search of lost treasure...

Stories of pirates run as long as your arm. There was, of course, the most famous pirate of all time, Blackbeard of the Caribbean. He terrorised the waters of the West Indies, plundering ships from all nations. Then there was the famous book *Treasure Island*, featuring Long John Silver and his beloved parrot.

Being from Cornwall, I've been brought up with traditions such as the above, including smuggling, which was just as loathsome as piracy. Instead of boarding ships at sea, the smugglers would lure ships onto rocks by use of a false light, and then kill the crew.

So, you may be asking, what has all this to do with computer games? Well, quite simply *The Secret Of Monkey Island* is all about treasure-finding, sword mastery and the consumption of grog, which is all pirates do!

Guybrush Threepwood (daft name) has arrived on Monkey Island with his objective set on becoming a pirate. There are rumours of treasure buried deep within the island, and as a brave and yet foolish hero, you set upon the task of finding it. Now, becoming a pirate is not the easiest thing in the world. For Instance you have to be an expert in the arts of theft, murder and, of course, have an exceptional talent for getting drunk. Most of us have the latter, but fail on the first two.

Not deterred in the slightest (especially with all the abuse he receives), Threepwood embarks on the three trials to become a pirate. This is discov-

ered on entering the Scumm bar and chatting with three important-looking pirates. They inform you that to stand any chance of being a pirate, you must first master the art of stealing. Secondly you must become a master of the sword, for all that swashbuckling. Lastly and most importantly, you must be able to locate treasure.

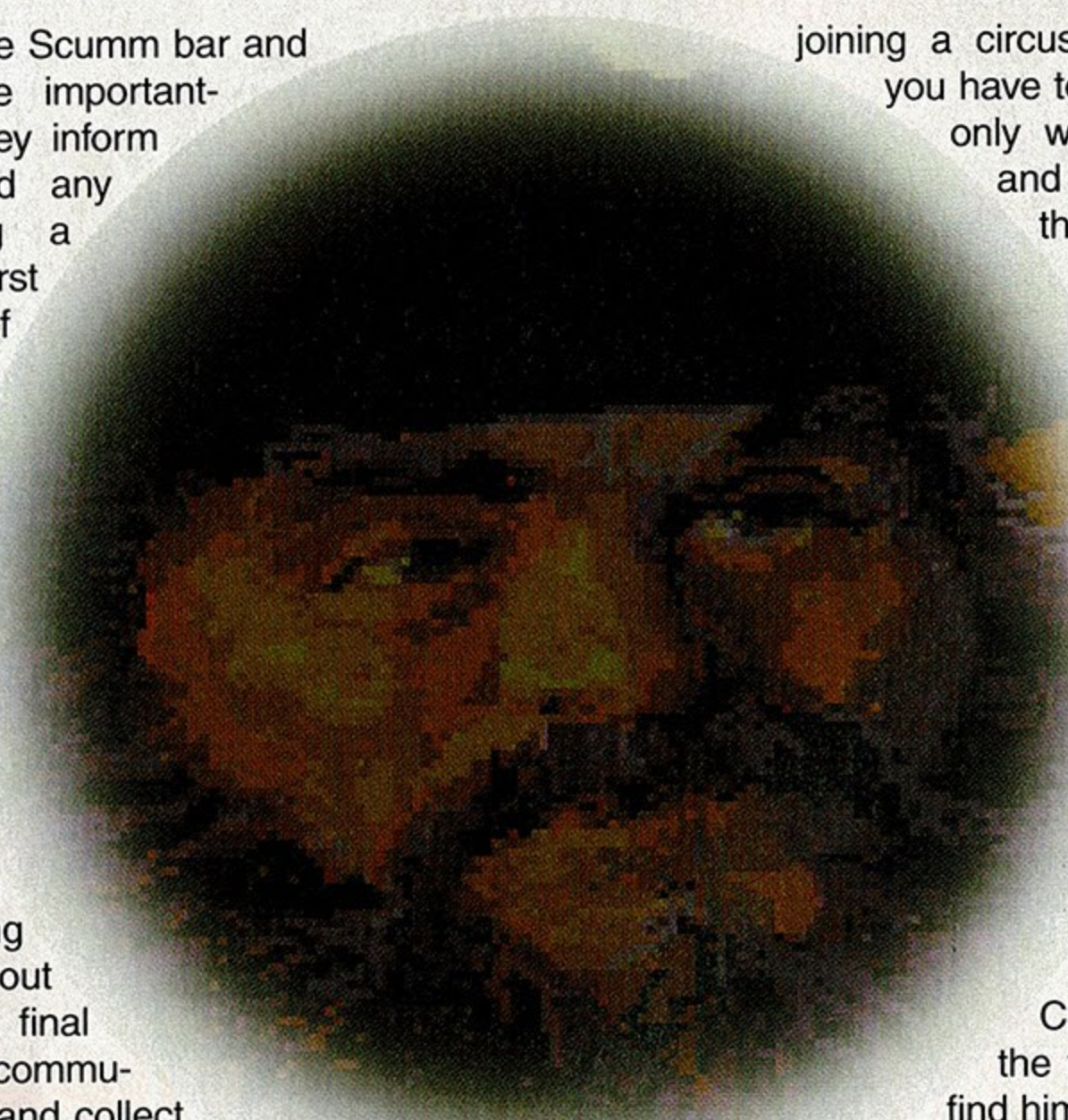
Of course, the loot's hidden on Monkey Island in this roleplaying game. Throughout three levels and a final stage, you have to communicate with people and collect items – all achieved with a point-and-click interface. The hardest part of any RPG is in collating useful information, and this can only be done by talking. Useful tips will be revealed by certain people, along with a lot of humorous backchat. Essential items can be bought with money earned from various jobs, including

joining a circus. Sometimes, though, you have to resort to stealing: the only way to get your sword and a shovel is to nick them.

In each location you have to use the old grey matter to decide exactly what to do. Do you give a hunk of meat to the guard dogs? Do trolls like fish? These and other puzzles are all to be solved in *The Secret Of Monkey Island*.

Throughout the game you'll hear the name of "Le Chuck". In order to find the treasure, you'll need to find him. The problem with this fellow is that he's a ghost. The story goes that he fell in love with

Governor Marley (a woman) and never returned. Only he knows the secret of Monkey Island. It's all up to you as Guybrush Threepwood to discover him, the treasure, and the secret of this peculiar island.



This map show you early locations of Monkey Island. From here you need to go to the right and enter the Scumm Bar. Talk to the pirates and they will give you further information on joining them, which is the whole idea of the game.



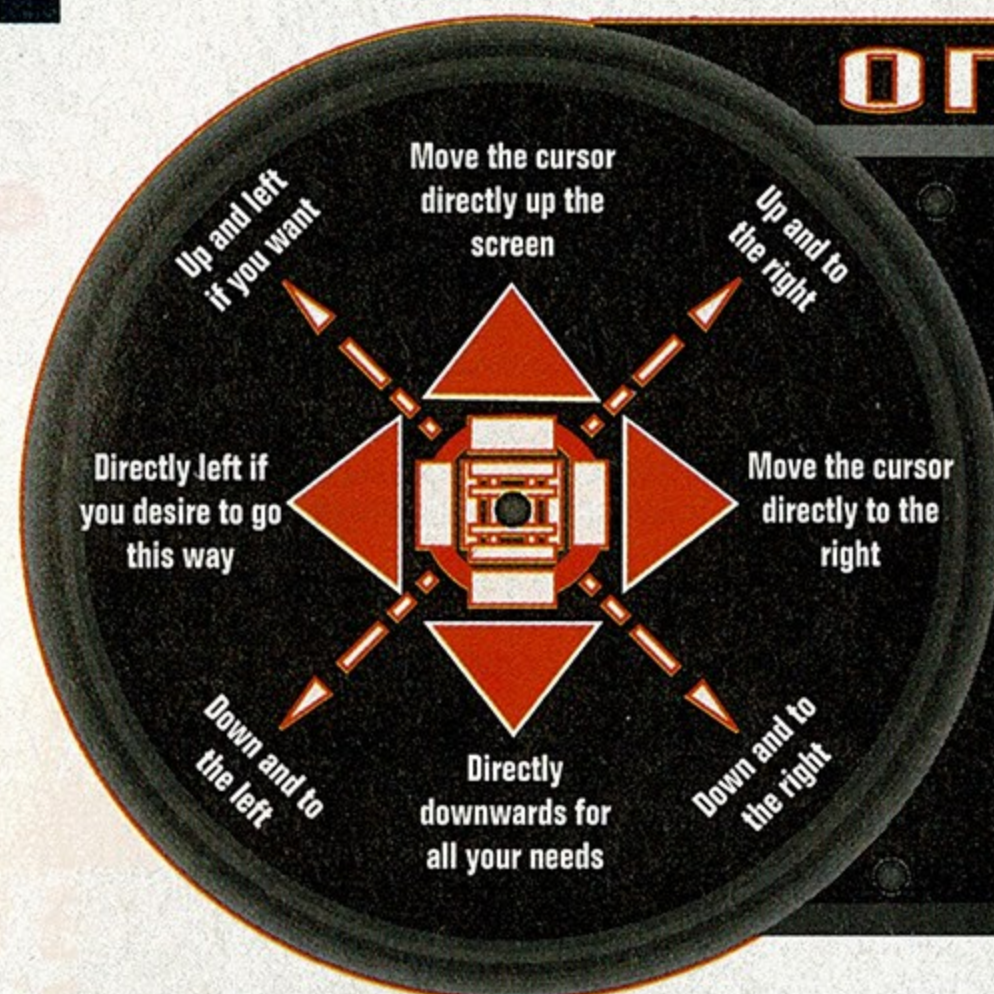
SECRET ISLAND

This is pure "shovelware," shamelessly ported from the PC with few if any enhancements

OVERALL %

62

on the button



A

Pressing this button will allow Guybrush Threepwood to pick up items that he requires on his long journey.

B

This button will allow you to pick items from the inventory that will help you, eg to give meat to the dogs.

C

This is your answer button. When you want to choose a reply, scan down the list and choose by pressing this button.



So many options, you must decide which one to choose. I'll tell you anyway: get the chicken which has a pulley through its body and slide on the rope to the other side.



The long path to the governor's mansion. You'll have to work out how to pacify the dogs.



The three main pirates that you have to talk to. They advise you on how to become a pirate, so listen to them before you make any rash adventuring decisions.



Oh dear, some games just take too long to come out. With technology moving as quickly as it is, the old doctrine of "once a great game, always a great game" is slightly redundant. The Secret Of Monkey Island was a great game many years ago on the PC and Amiga, but now it looks, plays and sounds dated. It is sad to see a once impressive title look so lowly and shabby, a pale imitation of itself. Of course, nothing has changed about the game since it first appeared to wide acclaim, and that is its problem. It is slow, dull and uneventful. It has no real soundtrack and no real excitement. This, for me, was a potent reminder of how much games have advanced over the past few years, and whilst the puzzles and strategy elements are as demanding and taxing as ever, the overall package is simply too dull to keep most gamers amused for long.

I won't give it a bad rating out of respect for the past, but would warn anyone looking for excitement to steer well clear. This is a huge, seemingly endless adventure that is for die-hard roleplaying fans only

DAVE



Fans of computer games will no doubt remember this, as it was a success on PC and Amiga formats. True to tradition, Sega have kept with the game's style and format, and haven't changed much in converting this from PC to Mega-CD.

This is a refreshing change from the genre of games of late onto CD, but one feels that this isn't the game to start tongues wagging. Escapism is to me what computer gaming is all about and, if like me, you like to get into roles, you'll be drawn to The Secret Of Monkey Island. It offers plenty of brain-teasing puzzles and some rather wicked and highly entertaining insults. Becoming a pirate is the easy bit, it's managing to drink all that grog that I had the problem with!

Unfortunately, although I do quite like the theory behind this game, aspects such as the very slow access and poor controls are a pain. These faults, including some very sad incidental music, outweigh the good points. Without question this game would offer hours of searching and puzzle solving, but unless your a big fan of RPGs I'm not sure if you could be bothered.

STEVE



This is pure "shovelware", shamelessly ported from the PC with few if any enhancements. Nevertheless, I'm in two minds about it, mainly because the game itself is such a classic. As with most Lucasfilm RPGs, the normally serious process of adventuring is lightened by plenty of quirky humour. It's great talking to all the people you meet, knowing that you're bound to get lots of sarcastic replies, along with the odd snippet of useful information. In one scene, you can even talk to a dog, with hilarious results.

The point-and-click interface suffers slightly from the obvious lack of the mouse it was designed for, but is otherwise easy enough to use. Regular disc accessing is a necessary evil, considering the sheer amount of data in this game, and anyway it's better than swapping all those floppy disks on the computer versions.

So there you are: this is a game of two halves. Technically it's a rusty old chest, not making any use of the Mega-CD's capabilities. But inside lies a game of pure gold to delight any passing adventurer. 50 quid's a bit steep for such a golden oldie, though.

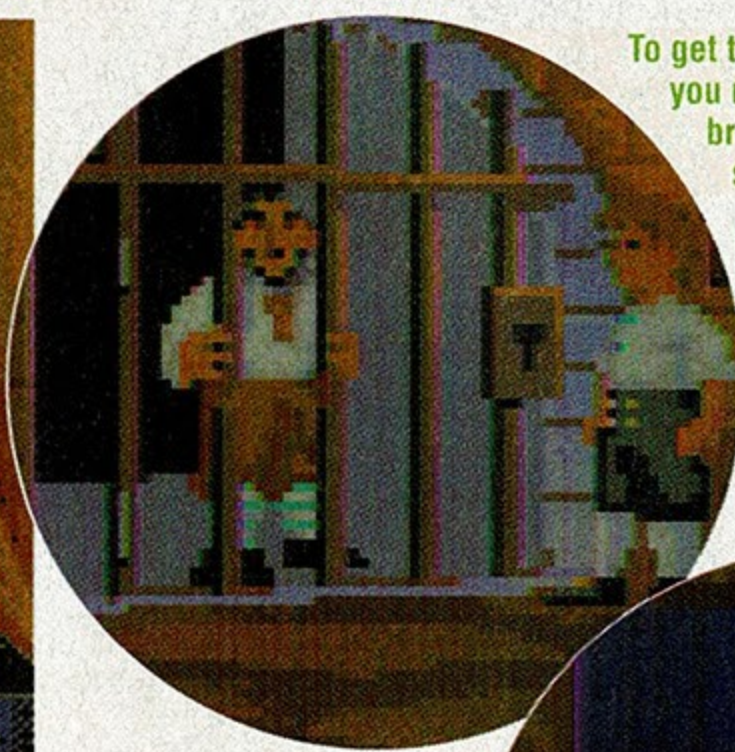
PHIL



- 1 Pieces of eight. These are required throughout the whole game in order to get you things. For example you need to buy a treasure map, and this costs money.
- 2 This fish needs to be given to the troll at the bridge in order to pass through. If you don't have the fish you've had it. Get the fish from the pub kitchen.
- 3 I already have the map on my inventory, but you need to get it yourself, and this is back to the old problem of money: no bread, no map.
- 4 This rather weird chicken with a pulley through its body is required to use the death slide in order to reach the house on the other side.
- 5 The lookout gives you small snippets of information that will assist your perilous journey. Listen to what he has to say, as it does come in useful later in the game.
- 6 See that sprite, that's you that is. The ever ready Guybrush Threepwood – what a stupid name anyway. Control this goon throughout the game.



In the church in the town square. To be honest there's not really much point going in here, but the best way to get any further in this game is to try every possible location: this is the only way to eventually find the treasure. From the picture you can see that Guybrush only has the fish in his inventory, so he needs to find more items.



To get this guy out of prison, you need to collect the breath mints from the shop. Don't steal anything in the shop as he won't let you have the mints if you are caught stealing. The imprisoned man can be of great use to you in this game.



Guybrush looking slightly bemused at the entrance to the Scumm Bar. You need to go in here and start asking a lot of questions about the whereabouts of the treasure, and also about becoming a pirate.

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"If you are a big fan of this genre of games, then possibly you might find this stimulating. If not, you should steer well clear as you'll find this game very slow-paced with the constant CD accessing. One for die-hard RPG fans only."

10
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DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS
MONKEY ISLAND
KING'S BOUNTY

MONKEY ISLAND

one player

slow access

save position

available in USA

GAMEPLAY	70
GRAPHICS	68
SOUND	53
ADDITION	67

OVERALL

62

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REVIEW



Dr Robotnik's MEAN BEAN MACHINE

MEGA

BLAST!



Obviously the more difficult the level, the harder the game, and when you get to level five it gets really tricky. The beans come down at such a rate it's frightening.



The compulsive two-player mode. Over the past few weeks, the Mean Bean battle between the Mega Power crew has been raging. In the shot above, player one is just about to lose as his beans have reached the top of his playing area. Both players have a choice of skill level, so an expert player can have the handicap of several rows of rocks dropped in his area before the match even begins.

What does it all mean? Steve Bough went in search of the truth of the strange powers behind this strangely titled game. After repeated beatings all Steve could say was "Phil's not the reigning champion". Strange lad!

Hands up all of you that remember *Columns* and *Tetris*. If not, where have you been for the last three years: Mobius?. This latest crazy release from Sega, *Mean Bean Machine* features Sonic's arch rival, Dr Robotnik. Now already I hear you asking questions, such as "what the hell is Robotnik doing?" and "are Sega mad?".

Quite simply, no, as this is certainly one of the finer releases to come from the Sega stable. Initially released on Japanese import as Puyo Puyo, this game has proved a massive hit in the Far East, topping the charts for weeks on end.

It's essentially a puzzle game, set in pretty much the same style as *Columns*, *Breakout* and *Tetris*. The objective, if you haven't roughly guessed by now, is to drop pairs of beans so that four identically coloured ones link together and disappear. The main dif-

ference between this and the aforementioned games is that *Mean Bean Machine* is a lot faster, and the idea is to not just clear one section of beans at a time, but cause a chain reaction of falling beans to complete two, three and possibly four lines. This produces a cry of "Yee-hah!" and causes a shower of rocks to fall on your opponent's side of the screen. These get in the way, preventing your opponent from joining together his beans. Rocks can only be destroyed by creating fours right next to them.

The key to this game is working out in the time before the next bean drops, which strategic opening will benefit you most. As the main aim is to force your opponent's beans to the top of his play area, you have to plan to create several groups of four in one go. If you get a sequence of two fours, that causes at least rocks to fall on your opponent's stack.

Three fours increases this to about 12 rocks, and if you can manage four lots of four (tricky but possible), this will launch over 24 blocks onto your hapless opponent – ha, ha, ha!

The main menu presents three choices of how to play the game. You can compete against a succession of robotic opponents, gaining passwords along the way, until you finally face Dr Robotnik himself. Then there's the Exercise mode where you try to knock up a high score before your stack hits the top – every time you pass a certain number of points, a little creature comes on screen to magic a four at the bottom of your pile. Best of all, though, is the two-player competitive game which often results in intense yo-yo battles between completely engrossed opponents.

So, you're fully aware of the state of play, now all you need to do is place some money on the table and get your mates round. Sorted!

MEAN BEAN MACHINE



This is Tetris with attitude!
This is Columns with balls!
This is one of the most addictive games I have ever played. A perfect combination of graphics, humour and gameplay, this is real entertainment. A good friend of mine, and a respected games expert to boot, once said to me that he believed the greatest game of all time was two-player Tetris. At the time I smiled politely and walked on, but this game proves it. Brilliant fun, no annoying tinny music and lots and lots of cerebral exercise.

You won't be particularly impressed if you see this playing in your local games shop, not unless you pick up the joypad and get involved. I put off reviewing Mean Bean Machine for hours, dismissing it as just another a Tetris clone... big mistake, now I can't put it down. You can play this in seconds but it takes weeks to master.

Great in one-player mode, brilliant fun in two, my only gripe is that they had to tag Robotnik's name onto the title although it really has very little to do with the whole Sonic saga. Still, if it attracts a wider audience then so be it.

If you want a game that doesn't require reading a hundred-page manual, will keep you and your friends hooked for hours and will test your mental agility to the max... here it is!

DAVE



Playing the computer on stage one seems relatively simple at first, but as you appear to get better, so does your opponent.



About two weeks ago I found myself spending my Saturday night not out on the town doing what young men do, but stuck in a warm house with Columns on the Game Gear. Two weeks later I find myself in a similar situation, glued to the screen with this game, the only difference is that I'm getting paid for it. Mean Bean Machine is brilliant. For those of you who possess an addictive nature, you are going to love this. It's such a simple format. Look at the track record of Tetris and Columns, both ground-breaking games of their time. Well, this isn't much different. From the moment you pick up the joypad you are hooked: there's no point making any plans, as you'll find like I did that they all go astray in favour of placing these little beans together.

Yes, yes, the graphics are wonderful, very smooth. The sound? Again equally impressive. So what if the screen doesn't vary? you're so intent on placing the beans correctly that nothing else matters (unless the surf's up). The only small complaint is that there isn't much change in the visual stimulus. But who cares? - I assure you, you certainly won't.

STEVE

OVERALL %

94

...you can set up really impressive chain reactions as the beans fall down the screen

PUYO PUYO



Mean Bean Machine was initially released in Japan under the name of Puyo Puyo. In this version there was no Dr Robotnik, he was no doubt out chasing Sonic. But this is where the differences end. Obviously the import version is all in Japanese, although in this sort of game that only presents any sort of problem on the options screens. Secondly there's no opening credit shots of Dr Robotnik - instead you have opening credits of two Japanese children laughing inately.

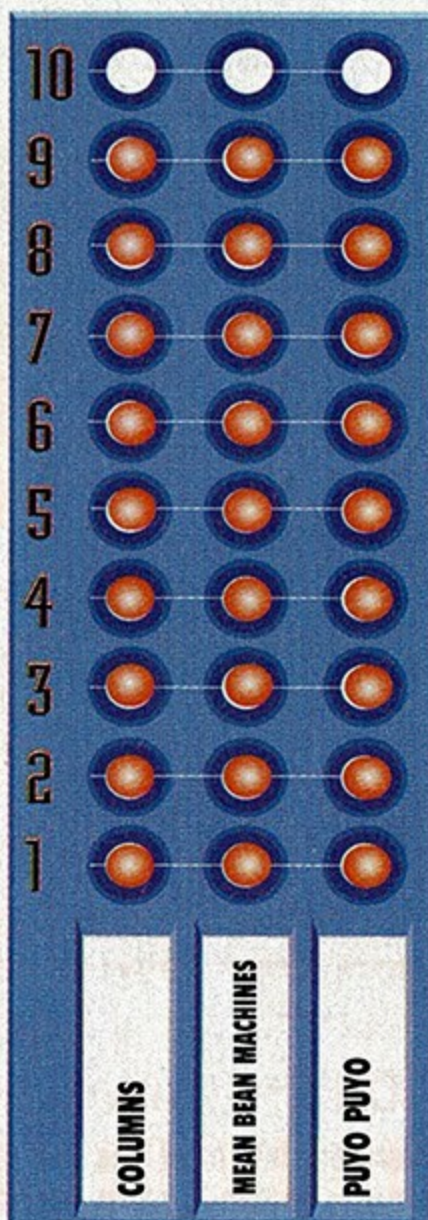
Essentially, from here the two games are exactly the same, playing identically. This leaves us with the question of which one you should buy. Well, Puyo Puyo is a very reasonable £39.99, whereas Mean Bean Machine is slightly more at £44.99. Puzzling, eh?

MEGA POWER

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"Quite simply one of the finest games to appear for a long while. It uses the same simple idea first utilised by Columns, but takes it one stage further for even greater compulsion. Truly outstanding - you'll be well hooked."



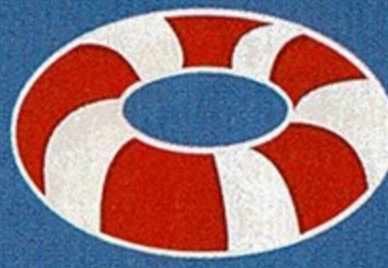
MEAN BEAN MACHINES



1-2 players



8Mbit



passwords given



available in UK

GAMEPLAY

93

GRAPHICS

90

SOUND

90

ADDICTION

95

OVERALL %

94

INSTANT ACCESS

REVIEW



SOCKET

First there was Donald, then there was Daffy, but the latest ducky star is really set to shock. Phil King plugs into Socket...



The plucky ducky hero Socket confronts the evil Time Dominator for the first time. He must also watch out for the sharp stakes which fall from above.



At the start of every level, Socket plugs his tail into this device to charge himself up with electricity. He needs this to run, but it's rapidly reduced on colliding with baddies.



The villainous Time Dominator makes another appearance to try and squash Socket by dropping a heavy chest. Another problem is that the floor slides away to reveal spikes.



Socket is basically a total Sonic rip-off. How many more games do we have to see for companies to realise that we are bored sick with this rubbish? Socket offers absolutely nothing new. The game lacks depth, is very easy, and they haven't even bothered to think up new titles for levels, Emerald and Labyrinth being just two examples. Oh, of course I forgot. Socket features special bonuses and guardians. Oh, well that's new isn't it?, that's never been done before. I'm sorry to keep harping on, but we've seen it all before; so much for future progression. It's all very well pushing these "cutesy" platform characters at us, but take the point, most of us have had enough. Move on, find something new, stop producing the same old rubbish, and then possibly people will sit up and take notice. Only if you are a millionaire should you even consider renting this.

STEVE

In the year 2902, everything is high-tech. Even humble ducks need electricity to function, charging themselves up by plugging their tails into power sockets. Thus the highly charged duck hero of this game is aptly named Socket. His mission is to defeat the evil ruler, Time Dominator (also the title of the game in Japan). This strange villain has created a time machine to bring back treasures from the past. The unfortunate side effect of this is a warp in the flow of time. Socket must travel through different time zones to find and defeat Time Dominator.

The zones, of course, are scrolling levels full of platforms for the hero to jump on. He charges himself up with energy at the start of each level, but this is rapidly reduced by colliding with baddies or hazards such as spikes and balls on chains (hmm, wonder where I've seen that before). Not only that, but Socket's energy slightly decreases with every movement he makes. To keep himself charged, he needs to collect plenty of the lightning bolts scattered around the play area. If Socket's energy gets very low, an ambulance siren goes off to warn you that he's near to losing a life.

To help Socket run up steep slopes and jump onto higher platforms, there are many springy bumpers and special devices which send him zooming through the air at supersonic speed. Another handy feature is Socket's electric kick which is used to kill baddies at close range, and to break through walls.

In total there are seven themed rounds, each comprising three zones, to get through. By going through doors, Socket can also enter special zones or rooms where the big bosses await.

With the inclusion of time trials, the similarity to a certain blue hedgehog's adventures is fairly obvious, but Vic Tokai are hoping their electrical duck will really turn gamers on.



This section is very reminiscent of a certain blue hedgehog's adventures as Socket is ricocheted around the screen at high speed by pinball-style bumpers.



There are lots of spikes and other hazards to reduce Socket's energy. He can jump on moving stone blocks to go up higher, but must beware being squashed by them.

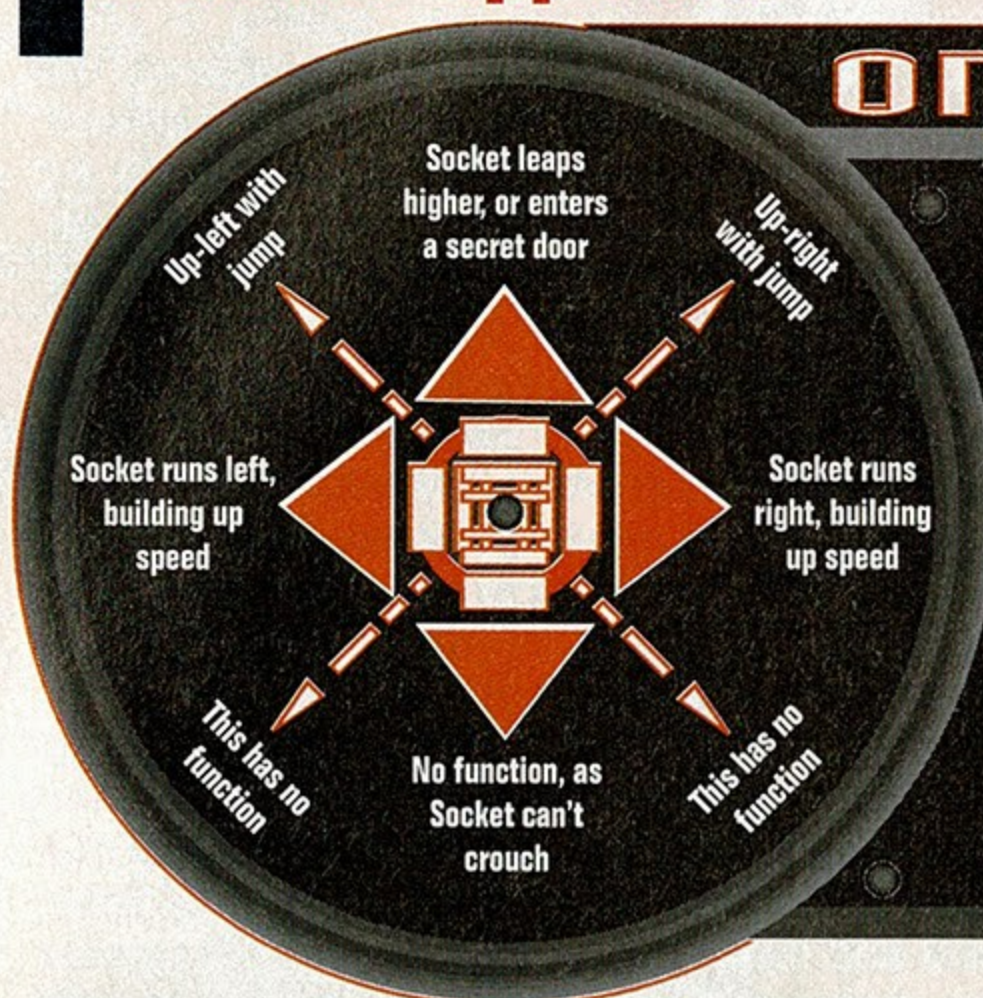


In the underground caverns Socket can ride on these mining wagons. Here he's pressed the button above to stop the wagon underneath a sort of monorail which will lift him upwards.

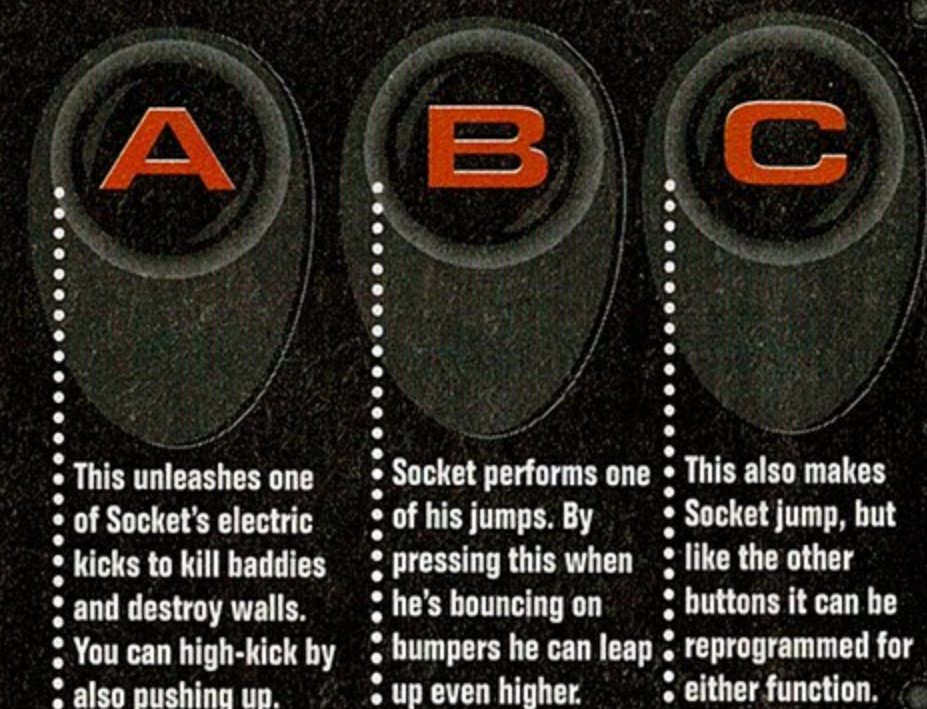


Jumping into one of these strange devices sends Socket zooming along at supersonic speed, enabling him to go up steep slopes and even loop the loop – remind you of anything?

Despite the interesting theme and colourful graphics, Socket's lack of gameplay innovation is all too apparent.



on the button



Socket kicks his way through an obstructing wall. He can also use this highly-charged manoeuvre to eliminate baddies, though it usually takes a couple of kicks. Here he's just passed one of the heavy tree trunks which hammer down onto the floor, squashing anything beneath them.



Yet another slick platform adventure hits the Mega Drive but, despite the interesting theme and colourful graphics, Socket's lack of gameplay innovation is all too apparent. Not only does the hero often zoom up ramps and round loops at supersonic speed, but there are many other very familiar features. I got a real sense of déjà vu while riding on sliding stone blocks and avoiding spiked balls swinging on chains! I wouldn't have minded if there were some other remotely innovative features, but virtually everything here has been seen before in other platform games.

This lack of imagination is a real letdown, as the levels are fairly well designed to provide good playability. If anything's wrong, perhaps the baddies are a bit too few and far between – and the end-level bosses are disappointingly simple to defeat. I can't see Socket taxing expert gamers for very long, and with the lack of interesting new things to see, there's little incentive for lesser players to keep trying.

PHIL

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"The graphics may be cute and colourful, while the action is fairly playable, but *Socket* suffers from a complete lack of originality. Thus there's little incentive to keep playing when you know you'll have seen it all before."

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SONIC
SOCKET
BUSY

SOCKET

one player

8Mbit

two continues

available in USA

GAMEPLAY	63
GRAPHICS	80
SOUND	70
ADDICTION	55

OVERALL

61

INSTANT ACCESS

VIC TOKAI
IMPORT
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REVIEW

SUMO

Two fat blokes wearing nappies or an ancient Japanese tradition? When push comes to shove, only Mega Power has enough weight to tackle such a heavy game.

Channel 4 have been televising sumo wrestling for some time now and it's acquired a cult following. Like American football, to the uninitiated it can look like pure thuggery as the wrestlers slap and push each other, but there's much more to sumo than that. There are many different throws and holds, all with mysterious Japanese names. For instance, the simplest method of victory is Oshi Dashi, or pushing your opponent out of the ring.

This is just one of the many ways of winning in the first ever Mega Drive *Sumo* simulation. Stepping into the black loincloth of the wrestler named Harimanada, you take on progressively more challenging opponents, collecting passwords along the way.

Each bout starts with the robed referee lowering his ceremonial stick (which looks like a small carpet beater) – there's none of that boring chucking of salt and stamping as you get straight into the action. The most obvious attack is to slap your opponent repeatedly. This, as with other moves, reduces his energy level slightly – when it's zero

he falls down and is defeated. However, it usually doesn't come to this as one wrestler is often thrown or pushed out of the ring beforehand. This is a welcome feature as you always have a chance of winning, even if you're on very low energy.

To throw an opponent, you need to first grab hold of his belt. In this clinch situation, the wrestlers can simply push forwards. But watch out: you may have your opponent on the very edge of the ring, only for him to turn you round – as the two wrestlers flash alternately you have to time your button press accurately to win.

Apart from basic slaps and foot sweeps, all moves are accessed by *Street Fighter II*-style combinations of directions: for example, DOWN, DOWN-RIGHT, RIGHT makes your bloke give a big push forward in a clinch. In addition, each of the 15 wrestlers available in two-player mode has one or more special moves. These range from whirlwind and flaming slaps to spectacular throws as the opponent is somehow lifted up and chucked about 40 feet into the air to come crashing down outside the ring! As the moves are so tricky to pull off (one even requires a 360° pad rotation) it's very satisfying to see such dramatic results.

As well having varied moves, the wrestlers differ massively in size. Another misconception about sumo is that the fatter the wrestler, the better he is. Although body weight is obviously a factor when pushing forwards, the bigger wrestlers are often turned and tricked into falling by smaller and more agile opponents. In the game, however, size doesn't seem to make much difference.

Although not as complicated as many beat-'em-ups, *Sumo* offers a decent challenge in solo mode, with three skill levels. As with most combat games, it's even more fun with two players. The combination of great outsize graphics, spectacular (and often hilarious) manoeuvres and instant playability makes *Sumo* an enjoyable game to get to grips with.



Blimey, look at the size of that bloke! Here he's picked you up and his bashing you against his head. Next he'll throw you way up in the air for an easy victory.



That's what I call impact: the one guy jumps up and slams his posterior into the other wrestler's back to seriously drain his energy (shown by the red bars above the action).



That's the way to do it. Having completely drained your opponent's energy, you fling him to the ground to win the bout. But can you beat the really big guys?

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"As fighting games go, this is definitely in the superheavyweight division. Once you get to grips with the spectacularly animated manoeuvres, it's really a lot of fun. A good challenge in solo mode, it's even better against a friend."

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ROYAL RUMBLE
SUMO
WRESTLE WAR

SUMO

1-2 players

8Mbit

passwords given

available in JAPAN

GAMEPLAY	84
GRAPHICS	90
SOUND	75
ADDICTION	80

OVERALL

82%

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REVIEW



STELLAR-FIRE

After guzzling several cans of Stella Artois, Phil King reckoned he was brave enough to tackle Stellar-Fire and save the Earth from yet another alien invasion...

The American company Dynamix are usually connected with point-and-click adventures, including Mega-CD titles like *Willy Beamish* and *Rise Of The Dragon*. So their latest CD product, *Stellar-Fire* comes as something of a surprise. It's an arcade-style 3-D shoot-'em-up, boasting super-fast polygon graphics and "room-shaking sound effects".

What isn't so surprising is the standard futuristic scenario. "The year is 2206. The Draxon, a cybernetically linked race, seek to consume the sentient consume the sentient lie of the galaxy by incorporating it into their own system, which is devoid of cultural and personal identity." Ah, it sounds like a bit of classic Commie-bashing's around the corner... If you want to preserve the sanctity of a Big Mac and Coke, you'd better get in your space fighter and stop those pesky aliens invading the Earth!

With the Earth's major fleets already in ruins, the only hope is a last-ditch attack squadron. Its ambitious aim is to destroy the Draxon's home planet of Arctura. However, after a surprise Draxon attack, the only surviving fighter is the Raven piloted by you. Fighting alone against enemy ships, somehow you have to hop between Arctura's moons to eventually reach the planet itself.

There are five moons in all, each

one protecting the more inner moons and planet with a force shield. You begin your attack on the outermost moon of Xarz Voor. Flying over the rocky landscape, you have to fight through the Draxon ships indicated on your radar while searching for the moon crystals needed to reach the moon's guardian warrior. Your fighter's compass always guides you the next crystal.

Weaponry at your disposal includes a strong but slow-firing cannon, a faster laser, and a limited number of Fat Boys. Far from being Billy Bunter types, the latter are smart bombs which cause substantial damage to everything in sight.

A number of power-ups can be collected on your travels, including double fire, enemy-seeking cannon shells and zigzagging lasers.

The weapon strength meters are located in your cockpit display, as is an impact detector which shows which part of your craft has been hit by enemy fire. Every impact reduces your shields: when the indicator hits zero you lose a life. Damage can be repaired and extra lives collected by finding the right power-ups.

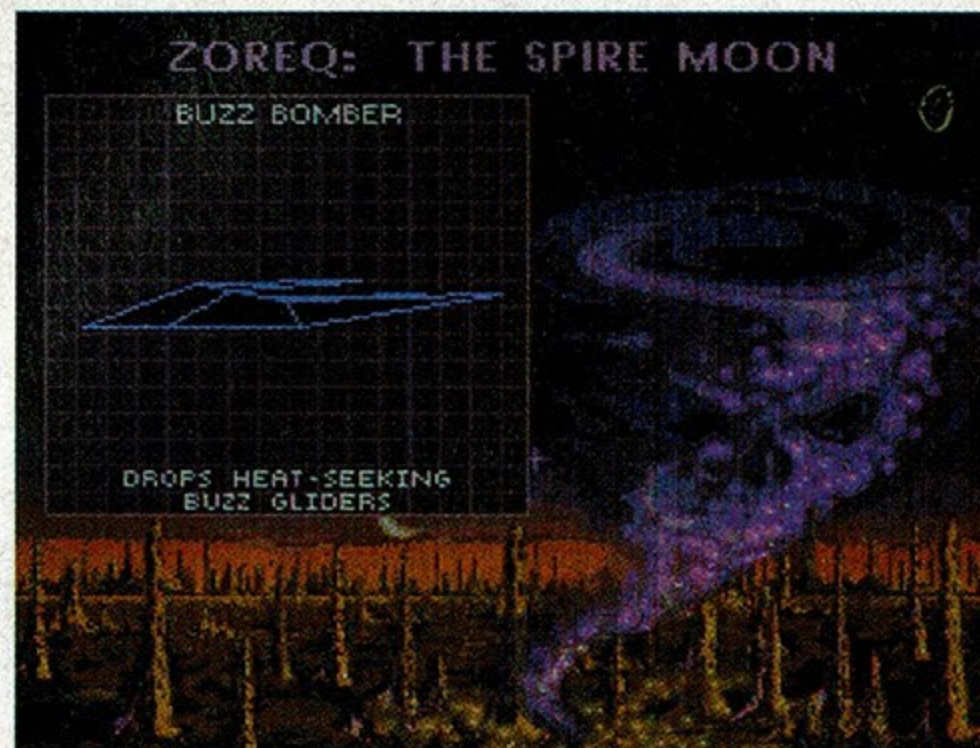
Do you have the seat-of-the-pants flying skills required to save the Earth? Even if your name's Buck Rogers, Dynamix reckon the game's three skill levels should keep you busy – the hardest "reeks of absolute death and is intended only for the truly insane"!



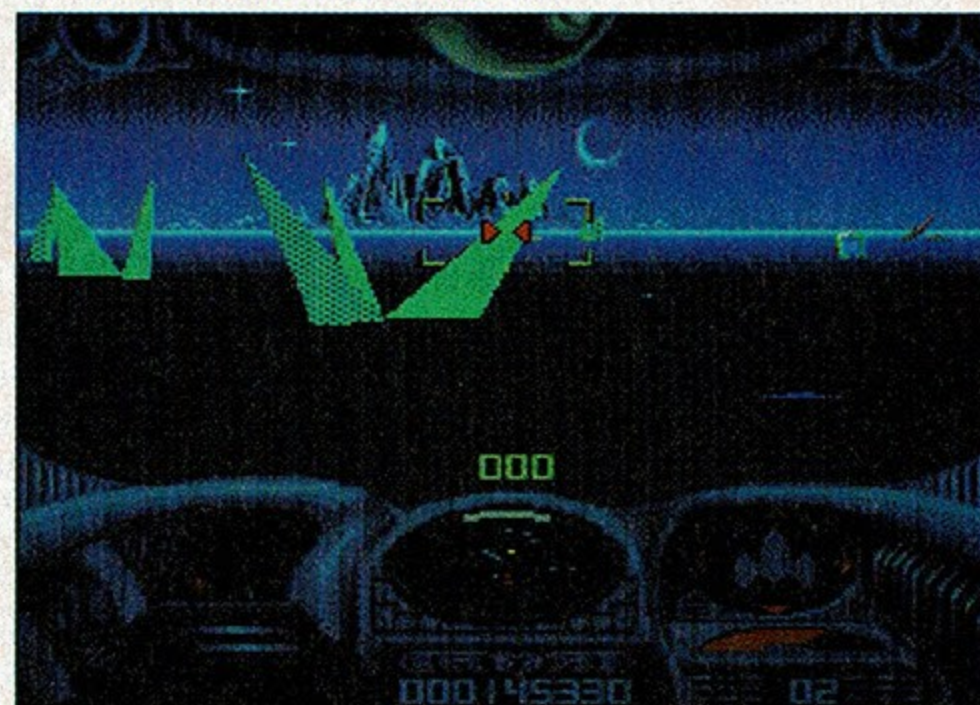
Collect all the crystals littered around the landscape and you eventually reach this giant one. Simply shoot it to reveal the end-of-level guardian.



You approach one of the crystals that need to be collected on each level. Just run over it to pick it up, then follow your compass to find the next one.



Before you tackle each moon, you get this screen to show you all the new baddies you'll encounter. They're also described by the accompanying female voice-over.



Never mind all the ships flying and darting along the ground, each moon's surface is also littered with deadly hazards like these energy-draining spikes. So avoid them.



Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. Just when you thought things were getting better on the Mega-CD, another naff game rears its ugly head. If you thought *Silpheed* was shallow, you ain't seen nothing yet.

Judging from the *Stellar-Fire* box and instructions I was at least expecting a decent space shoot-'em-up. Unfortunately it doesn't even get off the ground... literally. For some strange reason your high-tech space fighter is so advanced it can't rise up above the moon's surface: all you can do is steer left and right and change your speed. And how do you know you're moving? Why, thanks to the dots speeding towards you on the barren and completely flat landscape! Considering the graphical simplicity it isn't even very fast.

As for the blasting action, it's so mind-numbingly crude I thought I was in a time warp. It's like being taken back to mid Eighties, except the 3-D shoot-'em-ups round then were infinitely more playable. It all comes as something of a nasty shock after the slick intro sequence, narrated by the Klingon bloke off *Star Trek*. Yet again it's that old Mega-CD tradition of nice intro, shame about the game... except this is possibly the worst one yet.

PHIL

FIRE

Yet again it's that old Mega-CD tradition of nice intro, shame about the game

OVERALL %
24



The point of this game escaped me, and to be perfectly honest I don't really care, a typical case of nice intro shame about the gameplay.

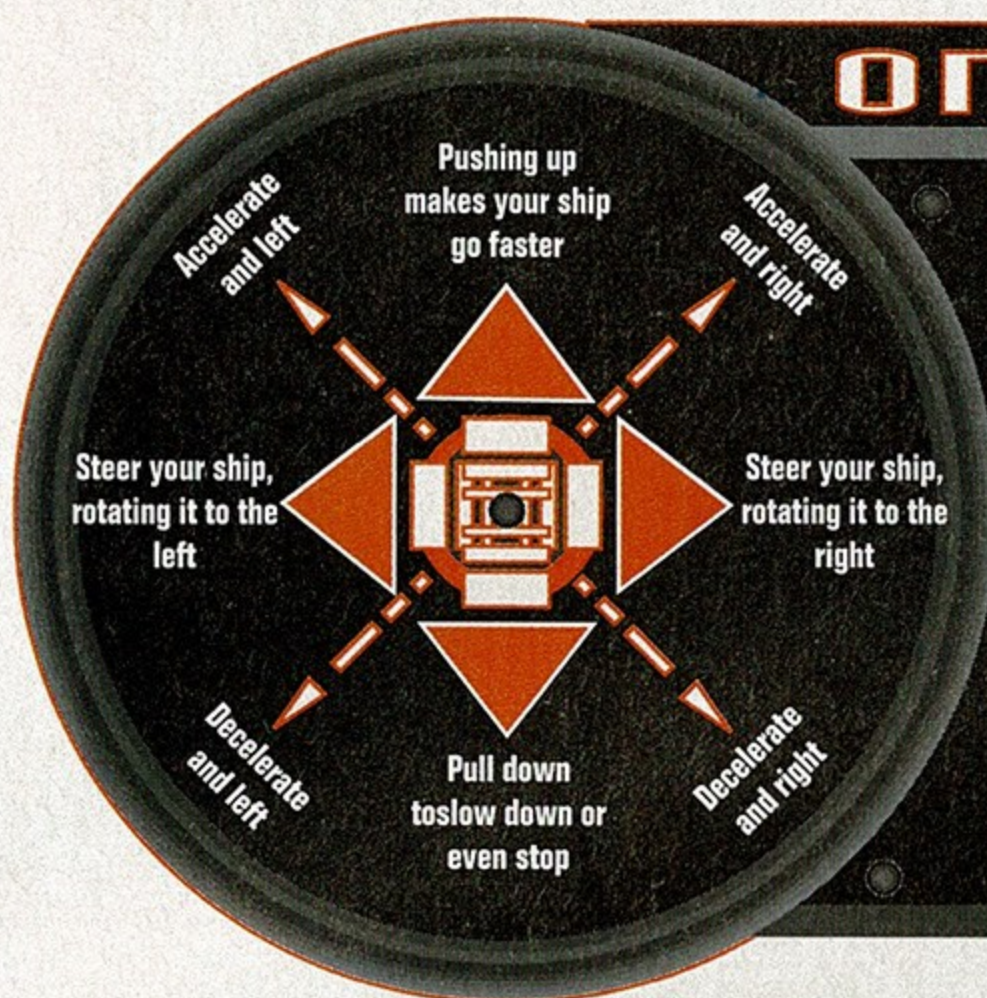
Packed with great speech and very little else, Stellar-Fire is a monotonous, crawling blaster over which you have very little control and in which you eventually find you have very little interest.

Corny sci-fi still screens and a screechy rock soundtrack further convince me of the dated nature of this game. Do saddy programmers really believe all gamers to be metal-heads?

The FX are limited, and many sound like an indigestion complaint, and the baddies are, on the whole, limited to fluorescent vector graphics.

Many people in the office picked this CD up, but very few were still playing it after ten minutes. Don't bother.

DAVE



on the button

A

Fires your ship's powerful cannon. This is more effective against some enemies than others.

B

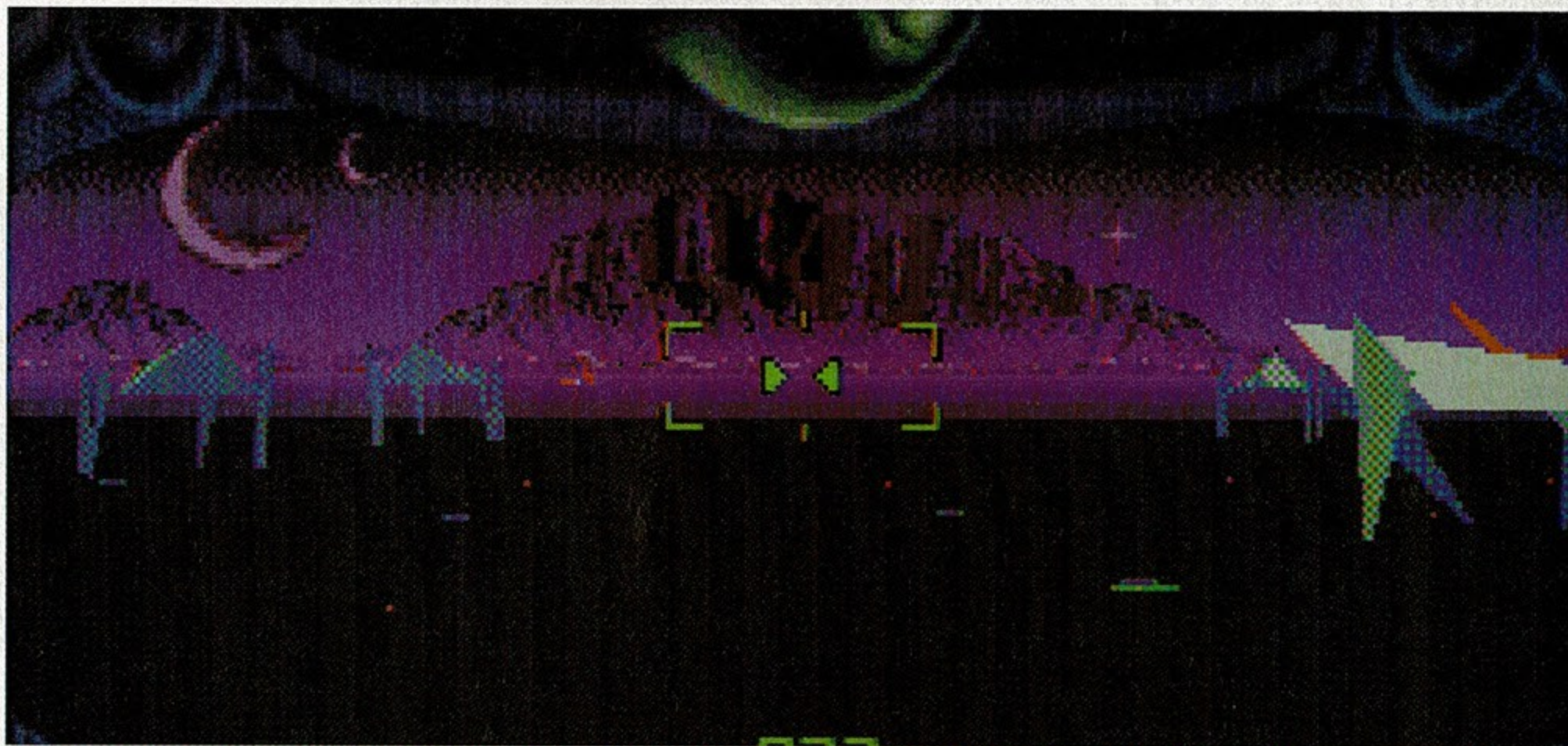
Shoots your laser beam towards your central target. With power-ups you can have a zigzagging or double laser.

C

This sets off one of your Fat Boys. These are smart bombs, destroying all baddies within a certain radius.



The guardian at the end of level two is this swirling tornado of shiny fragments. Keep your distance when firing and get ready to run for it when the tornado zips towards you.



Star Wars-style Walkers ramble across the barren landscape of one of the game's five moons. Blast them with your cannon or laser, or simply avoid them. As there are so few landmarks, the dots on the surface are there to give an illusion of speed. However, your craft never goes fast enough to get off the ground – a bit like the game really.

MP

FINAL VERDICT

"This deadly dull space shoot-'em-up is undoubtedly one of the worst Mega-CD releases to date. The blasting action is extremely repetitive and there's nothing very exciting to see as you travel laboriously around each moon."

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

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STELLAR-FIRE

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OVERALL

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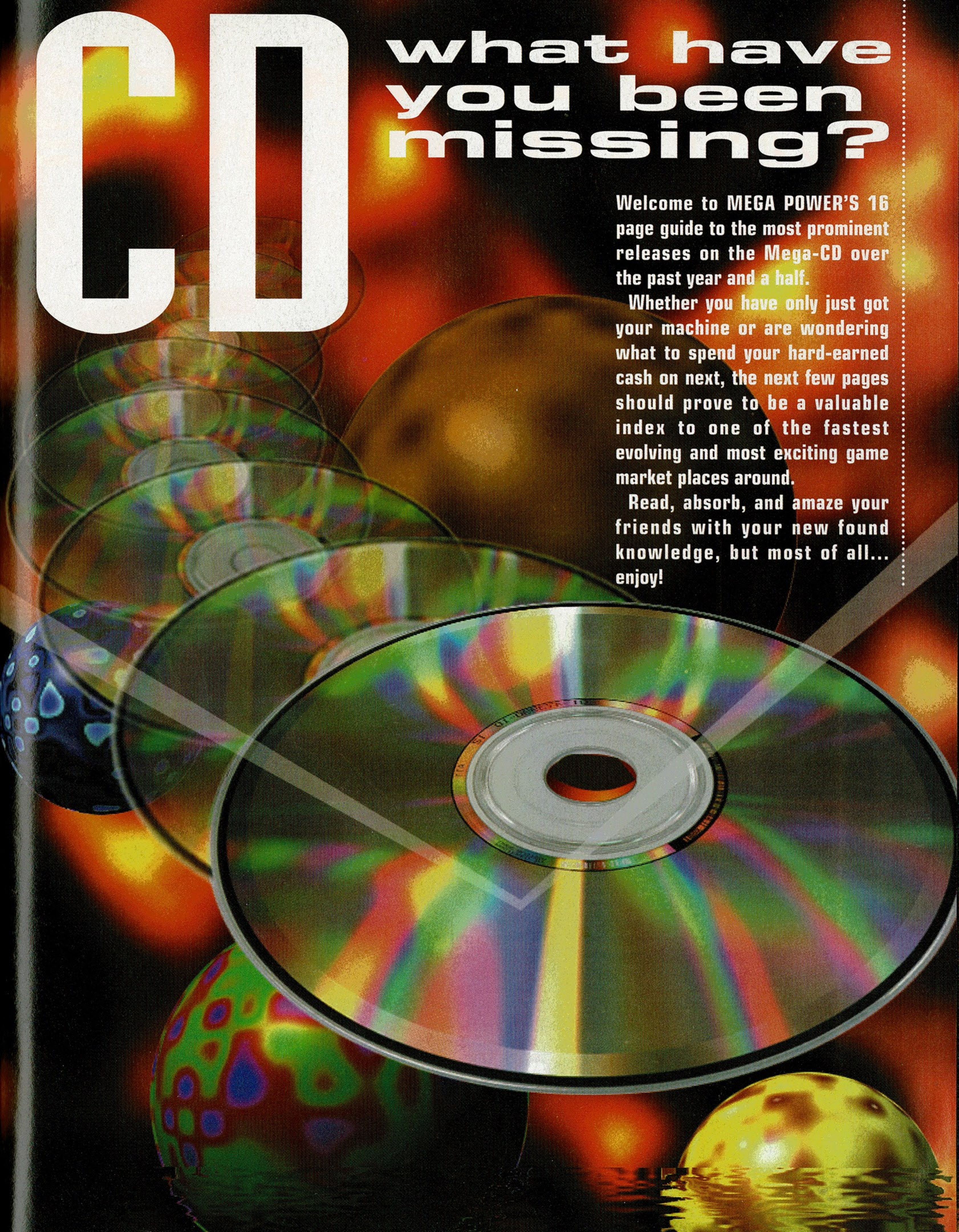
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CD

The background of the entire page is a vibrant, abstract collage. It features several overlapping CD-ROMs, some showing their reflective surfaces with rainbow-like iridescence and others showing their printed labels. Interspersed among the discs are various colorful, organic, and pixelated patterns in shades of red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. The overall effect is a dynamic and visually rich representation of digital media.

what have you been missing?

Welcome to MEGA POWER'S 16 page guide to the most prominent releases on the Mega-CD over the past year and a half.

Whether you have only just got your machine or are wondering what to spend your hard-earned cash on next, the next few pages should prove to be a valuable index to one of the fastest evolving and most exciting game market places around.

Read, absorb, and amaze your friends with your new found knowledge, but most of all... enjoy!

welcome to world of MEG

So there you are, £270.00 lighter, and one black box heavier. You're now the proud owner of a Mega CD or Mega CD 2, depending on where you bought it. Welcome to the next level.

The critics find it all too easy to slag the Mega CD off for insufficient software support, but as you'll see over the next 16 pages, there aren't just one or two Mega CD titles out there: we're talking at least 36, with more rattling off the machines even as this section is being printed. Sega, at last, have put their money where their PR mouth is, and produced a range of software for users to fiddle around with. Some of them are good, some of them are bad and there are a couple which are really ugly. But then every dog has its fleas, doesn't it?



So just what does the Mega CD have to offer? When it was launched in Japan on December 12th 1991, the Mega CD was the cutting edge of video games technology. True, other manufacturers had CD players on the market, but none of them had the corporate back-up of Sega. Massive RPGs started to appear, utilising the Mega CD's huge storage capacity and selling well to the adventure-hungry Japanese. Then, in November 1992, the Sega CD arrived in the US, along with a series of more traditional - if disappointing titles. And then in April 1993, we finally got to see it over here in the UK. The Mega CD is basically a peripheral, an add-on to increase the capabilities of your existing Mega Drive. It offers several useful features for programmers:

- **Increased storage capacity - each CD can hold 650 Megabytes of information, whilst the average cartridge game weighing in at 16 Megabits is equal to 2 Megabytes. So that's a lot of**



space.

- **CD quality sound. Well, what a surprise!**

- **Custom graphics chips to handle sprite scaling (moving a sprite in and out of the screen) and rotation.**

What that all means in real terms is a bit less clear. However, once you start to realise that you could take around 250 Mega Drive games and fit them all on to one CD, you get an idea of the Mega CD's real potential.

Inside the unit, which snuggles up next to your Mega Drive, or sits proudly atop it, is a Motorola 68000 chip, or CPU (Central Processing Unit). This handles the leg work, leaving the graphics chips to do the fancy bits. The CPU runs at 12.5 Mhz, and is essentially the same processor as the Mega Drive's CPU, although the MD's runs at 7.6 Mhz.

the GA-

CD



Although the two processors run simultaneously, most games are still prone to access delays, as the Mega CD drags information from the disc. Had there been more Buffer RAM (presently, it stands at 768K) for the Mega CD to store the information on as it went along, these delays would have been much reduced. Hopefully, Sega will still launch an additional RAM cartridge for the Mega CD at some point in the future.

Sounds are enhanced through the Mega CD's custom eight channel chip, which is a significant improvement over the Mega Drive's three channel one, as can be heard on most Mega CD games. Sampled sound abounds, and thumping soundtracks are the order of the day for CD software.

Another area where the Mega CD leads rivals is in its use of Full Motion Video (FMV). There are currently several FMV

titles on the market which utilise point and click type interfaces and FMV. Night Trap, which blends live action and a clever control system is a good example of how things are developing in this field. At present, the FMV has been fairly grainy, although a number of firms are working to improve things. Supermac launched a development package called Cinepak, which is said to give a full screen, virtually grain-free image, whereas previously, Sega's FMV titles have had to reduce the screen size for games, to prevent massive slowdown. Sony Imagesoft, too, are working on their own system.

The biggest noise about the Mega CD has to be its sprite scaling and rotation facility.

So far, the only game to really maximise this feature is Core Design's Thunderhawk, which is why the magazines have been full of it for so long. Not only are enemy tanks and planes texture-mapped, but the bitmapped 'ground' tilts and swings under your helicopter: something that the SNES can't manage with its Mode 7 graphics.

As programming techniques

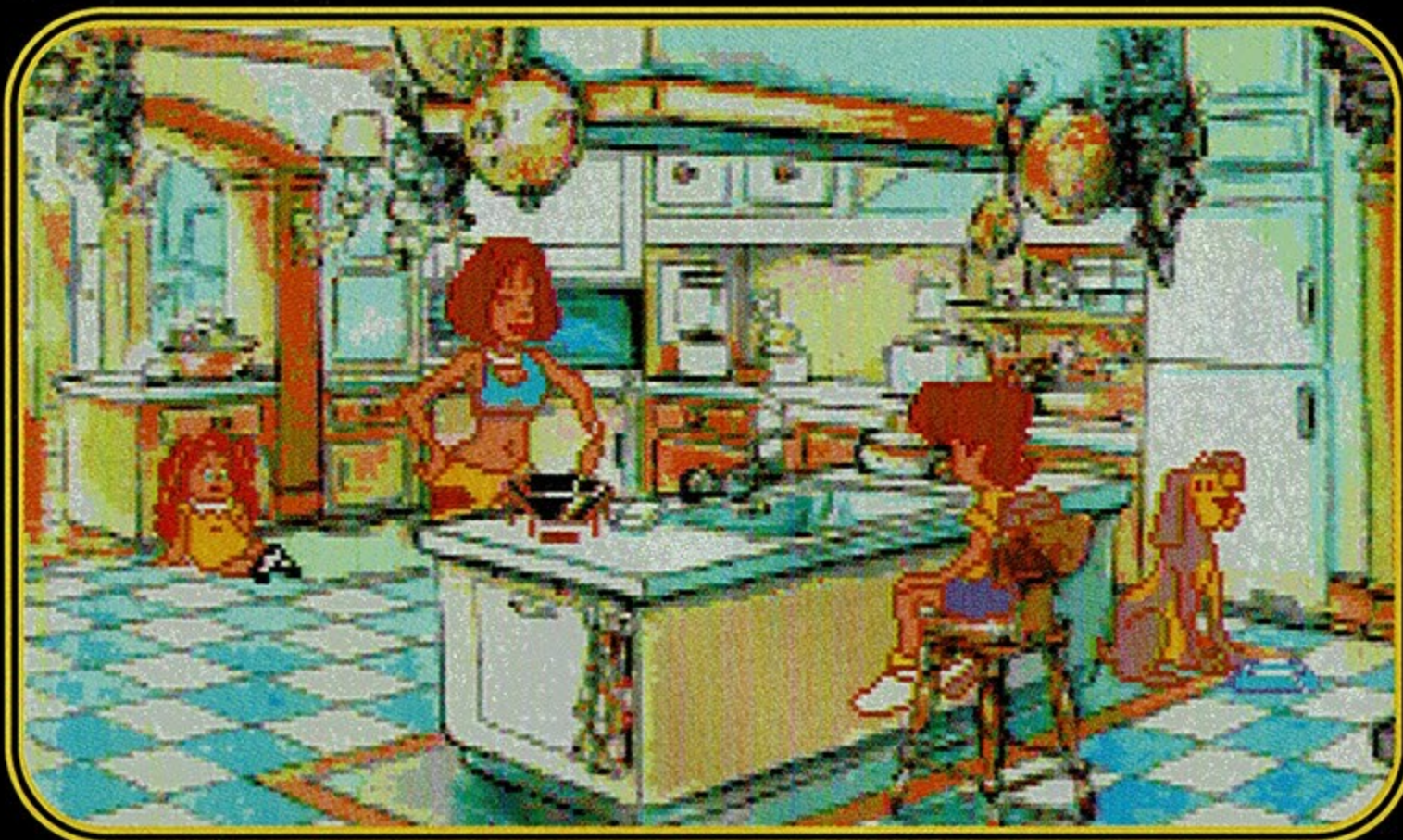
improve, and developers become more used to the hardware, Mega CD titles should continue to get better. The feeling in the industry is that the days of the enhanced cartridge game ported onto the Mega CD are over, and that we'll see more and more games designed specifically with the Mega CD in mind. We'll see. In the meantime, use this guide as a yardstick, and wherever possible, try before you buy.



The Adventures Of Willy Beamish
Sony Imagesoft
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

Take on the role of Willy Beamish, schoolboy games nut. You eat, sleep and breathe video games, and all you want from life is to win the 'Nintari' Video Games Championship. The problem is, this year's tournament takes place on a school day, and you're going to have to skive off in order to enter. And unless you're very careful, you're going to get caught in the act. Practising your favourite Nintari game in your room will help set you up for the Championship, but unless you can keep away from teachers and so forth, you're never going to win!

Willy Beamish was very successful on PC and, like *Rise of The Dragon*, we can expect to see more of these conversions in the future (*Leisure Suit Larry* is a cert). The control system is the same as *Rise of The Dragon*; point and click with multiple choice sentences for conversation, and the game also enjoys a rather natty line in animation. On the downside, while *Rise of The Dragon* has a strong plotline, *Willy Beamish* doesn't. That, added to a painfully long loading time and the fact that if you cock up, you're dead meat, means that *Willy Beamish* takes a lot of patience to play.

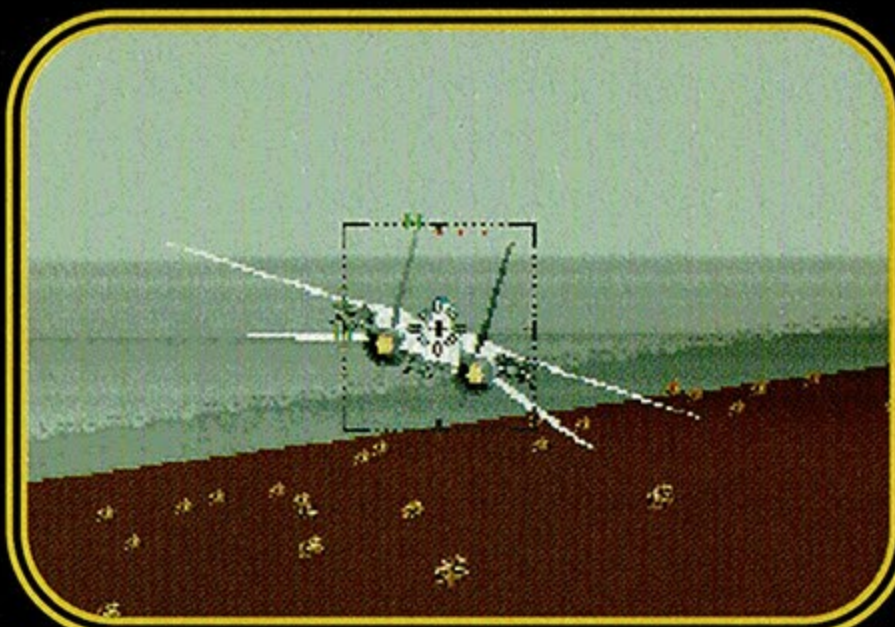


Afterburner 3
Sega
£39.99
Released: Out Now

This game was fully expected to be Sega's Mega CD showcase when it first arrived. Sadly, it's not up to the job. Pilot your F-14 Tomcat through various war zones, meet foreign pilots and ground crew and kill them in a selection of explosive ways.

Far from being the third in a continuing and improving series, *Afterburner 3* is very similar to the second game, although the basic game does have three different play styles. The first, is normal, the second is a time attack where you have to blast everything in the quickest possible time and the third is the hits game, where your score is based on how many enemies you've blown away. All these are basically the normal game with a different set of stats to them.

The graphics here are pretty simplistic. The backgrounds are all rather bland, like *G-Loc* on the Mega Drive, although the Mega Drive's palette could have done better than this. The sprites are big and there are some great explosions to look and listen to, but the only really neat graphical touch is the way your view switches to an enemy's cockpit whenever they get a lock on to you. Dodge out of the way and you return to your own plane. It's a decent enough blast, with plenty of aircraft and bombing runs to keep your adrenaline rushing, but without the soundtrack and a tiny bit of scaling, there's nothing here that couldn't have been done on a cartridge.



Annette Again
Wolfteam
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

Remember Earnest Evans? Well, Annette popped up in his game, 'cos she's his girlfriend and this is the sequel to her original game, *El Viento*. And this time, Earnie pitches up in her game.



Whilst *El Viento* provided some limited enjoyment, it must be said that the sequel doesn't live up to the promise of the original. Following in the same sword 'n' sorcery mould, it's nothing more than a sprawling beat 'em up, with the accent on the sword rather than the sorcery.

El Viento did well in Japan, and it seems Wolfteam were happy to stick to the formula and, while the graphics are easy enough on the eye, they're nothing special, and we've seen much, much better from Wolfteam.

The gameplay is typical hack and slash fare, and there's really nothing new here. If *Golden Axe* was amongst your pack-in games on the Mega CD, then stick with it, because *Annette Again* contains nothing unique to the CD, or to the genre.

Batman Returns Sega £39.99 Released: Out Now

Oswald Cobblepot, aka The Penguin, returns to haunt Gotham City in the game of the film. With his Circus Gang causing havoc in the city, it's only a matter of



time before The Penguin, now in league with the PVC-clad Catwoman, has the whole town at his beck and call. However, he didn't count on resistance from The Batman, and it's up to the man with the mask to get rid of Pengy once and for all.

Take the dull side-scrolling platform cartridge game, chuck it on a CD and voila, you almost have Batman Returns. Luckily, what saves this games bacon, or bat, is the fact that Sega decided to make some use of the Mega CD's extra processor by adding on a driving section. This is accessible from the main options screen - a must for anyone who has even seen the dodgy platform beat 'em up cartridge - which means you can miss out the rest of the game and just play these levels. Which is what you'll want to do when you see it. Viewed from behind the Batmobile, you control the car as members of The Penguin's Circus Gang try and force you off the road with other cars, bikes, missile launchers and even a huge refuse lorry. The Batmobile is equipped with missiles of its own, but keep an eye on your energy bar, because you'll take a pounding. The sprite scaling is particularly impressive, as the gang's trucks go up in flames as you fire at them and force them off the road. Certainly only worth buying for this section, unless you're a really forgiving sort who can stand the iffy platform beat 'em up!

Cobra Command Sega £39.99 Released: Out Now

Originally the pack in game for the Mega CD, along with Sega's classics CD, Cobra Command is also available as a stand alone game. Hugely popular on import when it first came out, Wolfteam's animated point and click interactive game really showed players the Mega CD's potential.



You take the controls of a helicopter gunship and fly from the cockpit as you take out terrorists who are out to smash governments worldwide and take over the planet as their own. From the skies above New York to Easter Island and the terrorists secret base, it's up to you to knock their hardware out of the sky, and decimate their land forces.

The graphics are all animated in the style of a cartoon, which means that your actual interaction is limited to moving the on-screen gunsight left, right, up and down in response to your co-pilot's orders, or the flashing green arrows that appear on screen to direct you. Targeting the enemy aircraft and land forces isn't easy, although the speed your sight moves can be altered in the game options. Get your aim wrong, and you'll be treated to a lovely series of animations of your chopper exploding and ploughing into the ground. The sound is excellent, while those animé-style graphics really give the game atmosphere. Unfortunately, the point and click nature of the game means it eventually becomes dull unless you activate a level skip cheat.



Chuck Rock Sony Imagesoft £39.99 Released: Out Now

There was Chuck, sitting quietly one day watching the box while the love of his life, Ophelia, was hanging out the washing.

Suddenly, Chuck's arch enemy, Gary Gritter, kidnaps his woman and runs off! Never one to sit around when his woman has been dragged away, Chuck sets off after

Gary through five prehistoric levels, each with a number of separate stages, belly-butting and kicking his way past dinosaurs and other monsters before reaching his final showdown with Gary.

Chuck Rock was a big success on the Mega Drive, even if it is another platform game, and the Mega CD continues the game's success. While there's very little here that isn't on the original cartridge, Chuck's "Ooga Booga" and the myriad of cartoon-style sampled sound effects make it far better than its original incarnation. Chuck's animation is fantastic and, while it's a bit of a pain constantly topping up on food to increase your energy level - some of the prehistoric birds are just impossible to hit - there's no doubt that Chuck Rock has heaps of gameplay, even if it is just a tweaked cartridge game on CD.

Dracula
Sony Imagesoft
£39.99
Released: Out Now

A classic story told many times on film and now on the Mega CD. You play Jonathan Harker, currently residing at Castle Dracula, home of you-know-who, and it's your job to rid the world of the blood-sucker and all his minions. That's the plot taken care of, then.

For those of you who have been on Mars since 1992, Dracula is the platform license of the film which Sony originally released for review purposes some months ago. Let's just say that the game had some reasonably serious flaws which led Sony to withdraw it, following a series of rather unkind reviews. At last, a software producer which listens to its critics!

Although this new and improved version of Dracula has had sufficient adjustments made, it's still essentially a side-scrolling beat 'em up, give or take a bit of FMV. Harker has a number of fightin' moves available to him with which you can whump the various evil doers who come your way. However, even with the much improved gameplay, Dracula still suffers from the problem of being a license: there's only so much you can do, after all, within the contracts. With that in mind, it sadly falls into the 'so near, and yet so far' category, home of 90% of the world's movie licenses. The digitized backgrounds look a treat, and even the animation is now slicker. But in the end, it's all still too simplistic to provide a long-term challenge.



Dune CD
Virgin
£44.99
Released: Out Now

The planet Arrakis, known as Dune. Homeworld of rebel Paul Atreides and the unique Spice that expands the mind and makes space and time travel a piece of cake. The only problem is, the Harkonnen race want to control the Spice, and they're willing to kill everyone on Arrakis in order to get it. As leader of the Freemen, it's your job as Paul Atreides to use your special powers to gain control of the Spice and defeat the Harkonnen once and for all.

Based on David Lynch's film of Frank Herbert's ultra-successful Dune novels, Dune CD is remarkably faithful to Lynch's narrative. Using a point and click interface, you view the action in first person perspective and move within the game by selecting destinations on a main map. Meeting characters allows you to question them, while some of the characters will join your cause. Questioning people will take you to further destinations, although this can become a bit linear in the long run, as you feel the game decides what you do next, and not you the player.

In-game graphics are stunning, with beautiful animation on the characters as they address you. If I had any complaints, it would be the game's access time. A great title if you're a fan of adventure games, but not much cop if you're a frantic shoot 'em up fan.



Devastator
Wolfteam
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

As 'assault suits' feature in more and more cartridge games, it was only a matter of time before they hit the Mega CD, too. As with any import

title, fathoming the Japanese plot is a little beyond me.

What I can tell you is that you control a hefty assault suit which is meant to be massive but, for some reason, appears as a titchy - albeit highly mobile - sprite. Like all platform

shooters, you can grab power ups and health add-ons

to improve your chances against the massive enemies you'll face off against, while you're also armed with a large grappling hook. Don't ask me why.

The graphics are pretty enough, even with that small main sprite, and the side-scrolling is smooth enough. But aside from that now-standard CD quality sound, there's nothing here that couldn't have been done on an 8 or 12Meg cartridge, so why bother sticking it on a CD?



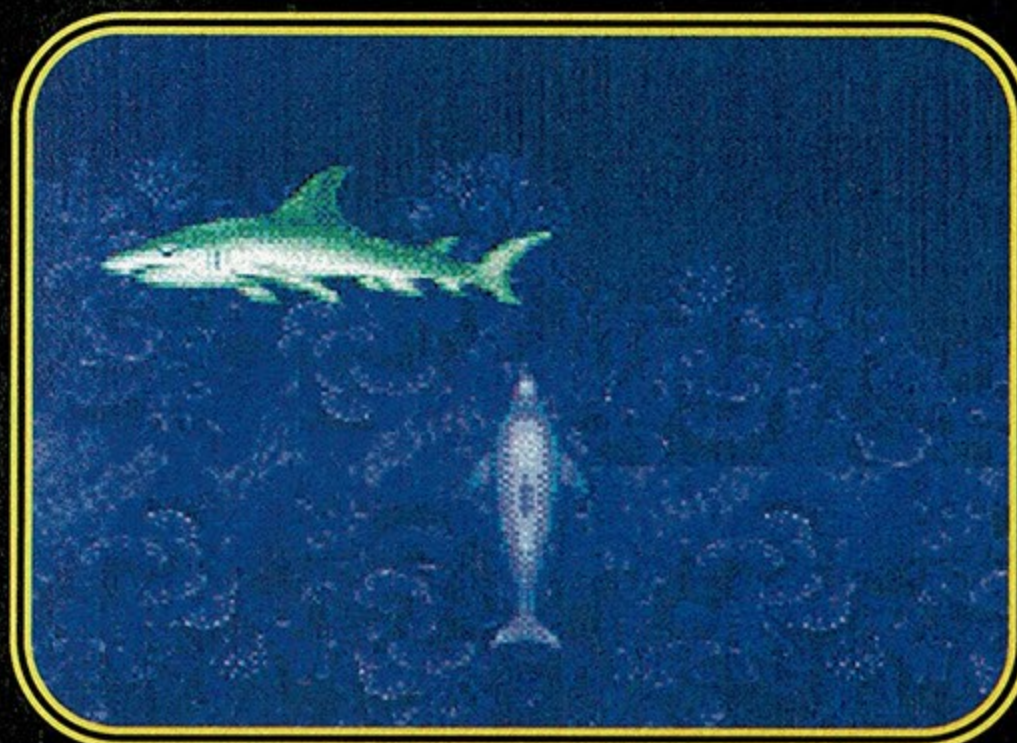
Earnest Evans
Wolfteam
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

One of the first and still one of the best. Impressive graphics and weird animation, that made the main character look like a Bill and Ben puppet, gave us an early taste of what the CD might be capable of. It was also the first sight for many of the



japanese Manga-style cartoon graphics. Packed with challenging gameplay and well-rendered adversaries, Earnest Evans was excitingly different and still possesses a quirky originality today.

Great storyline, lovely cartoon sequences and a pumping soundtrack won this game a place in many a gamer's heart.



Ecco The Dolphin CD
Sega
£39.99

During a storm, Ecco loses track of his dolphin pack, and has to travel the oceans solving puzzles and enlisting the help of other creatures in order to find his friends.

Little different to the cartridge version, Ecco is basically an underwater puzzle game which sees you swimming around caves and trying to avoid enemies like jellyfish, sharks and octopuses whilst using your sonar to locate clues and special crystals. To be honest, Ecco is one of those games that you'll either love or hate. The graphics are absolutely gorgeous, and they haven't been tweaked for the CD. Indeed, if you discount a little Library FMV section, all that is really different is the stunning sound. The gameplay is limited, given the complexity of the task you face, with Ecco headbutting (it makes a hideous noise!) enemies and finding his way around with sonar beeps. The only problem is that unless you really, really love puzzle games, Ecco will soon begin to bore the pants off you, even if it is one of Sega's best products in years.

Final Fight
Sega
£44.99
Released: Out Now

Cody, Guy and Mike Haggar make it onto the CD in a classic conversion of Capcom's arcade beat 'em up. When Mike Haggar is elected Mayor of Metro City, he immediately begins to clear the streets of scum. Naturally, this upsets the villains, in particular, the Mad Gear gang, who decide to do something about it. In an attempt to stop Haggar, they kidnap his busty, lusty daughter, Jessica, and hold her to ransom. But someone like Haggar isn't just going to pay up quietly so, along with Cody (Jessica's boyfriend) and his friend Guy, Haggar hits the streets to track down the Mad Gears.



Whether you play it in two player mode or on your own, Final Fight is a tremendous game, with heaps of gameplay despite having only Streets of Rage-type special moves.

Each of the character has their own style of fighting; Haggar is a bullish wrestling type, while Cody is a dirty elbow fighter and Guy does martial arts. There are hordes of Mad Gear gang members to take out, and the fighting action is fast and furious. Health power ups hide in bits of scenery and whenever an enemy drops a weapon, you can pick it up to use it yourself. The bosses aren't too tough, but you'll still need to be good, especially as the game progresses. The graphics are great, and don't lose too much depth given the Mega CD's limited palette, while the sprites are big and meaty. For added enjoyment, there's even a time attack feature which, like most of the game, features a pounding rock soundtrack. Until Mortal Kombat hits the CD, you'd be hard pressed to find a better beater.

Funky Horror
Band
Sega
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT



Uh! Is the standard reaction to this game. Spaced-out and loaded with outlandish jap humour, this game is virtually unplayable for anyone outside of Japan. It is a text intensive RPG and as such you spend most of the time staring at screens that resemble take-away menus. Great soundtrack though.

Ground Zero Texas
Sony
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

Because of a particularly nasty embargo put on this game by Sony, magazines have been prevented from reviewing it even though it is out on import.

Set in the quaint Texas border town of El Cadron, you play the part of a tactical expert investigating the growing number of disappearances from the town's population. You soon discover that the place is crawling with aliens. Armed with special weapons you go in after the murderous space monsters and soon find yourself slap bang in the middle of a science-fiction meets the wild west shoot-out.

Directed by Dwight H. Little, the man behind big movies like Halloween 4 and Rapid Fire, Ground Zero Texas is a brilliantly interactive blaster. With over 110 minutes of movie footage and four different locations, the gameplay never really gets boring. Your friends will be impressed [see preview this issue].



Jaguar XJ220
Sega
£39.99
Released: Out Now

Unless you've suddenly just inherited £500,000 or so, then this is the closest any of us will ever get to driving the world's fastest production car, the Jaguar XJ220. Compete for money on the World Tour and improve your car's specs along the way, as you visit 16 different countries around the world. Alternatively, you can compete in the Grand Prix game for Championship points, although in this mode, you can't select the order in which you visit the 16 courses. There's even a Track Edit mode, to fiddle about with when you're not racing solo or with a mate.

The action is viewed from behind your car, a fairly hefty silver sprite. Unfortunately, that's about as good as the graphics get. The locations you visit are all virtually identical – unless all 16 countries feature a similar mountain range – and visually bland. And, far from making use of the Mega CD's scaling abilities...well, see for yourself. Bland music, access times from Hell. I'm sorry, but this falls into the: 'Try before you don't buy' category. Stick to Super Monaco. Or better still, wait for Virtua Racing on the Mega Drive.

Heavy Nova & Black Hole Assault
Sega
£39.99
Released: Out Now

Remember that rather odd robotic beat 'em up, Heavy Nova? Well, here's the sequel. Why there was a sequel in the first place is rather mind-



blowing, but here it is. Like Street Fighter 2, this is a one-on-one affair for either one or two players. There are a number of metallic fighters on offer, and each has a limited number of special moves available to it. If you can get them to work, that is.

All that aside, the thing you really need to know about both Heavy Nova and Black Hole Assault is that as games, they're both a shuddering pile of spunk. The concept of battling robots may be a good one, but the limited graphics and dreary gameplay mean that these aren't worth looking into. The beaters market is a crowded one on the Mega Drive and, while we've yet to see anything stunning on the MCD (with the exception of Final Fight), this pair are a real let down. Take our advice: wait for Mortal Kombat.



Hook
Sony Imagesoft
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

Peter Banning, mild mannered dad and lawyer, never imagined that he would go back to Neverland, home of Peter Pan and Captain Cook. In fact, he couldn't even remember being there in the first place. But when his children are kidnapped by the evil Hook, it's time for Banning to be reminded of his past life of Peter Pan and regain the Golden Sword in order to free his children from the Captain.

Battling fierce pirates, skeletons and even giant worms, Peter has to fight his way through 11 levels of mayhem before reaching his old enemy for the final battle.

Well rendered graphics, although the sprites are a little titchy, and an amazing soundtrack are the highpoints in Hook. It's an addictive little game with simple gameplay and an addictiveness which keeps you coming back to it; although with infinite continues, it's relatively easy to finish.

The controls are easy to master, and you have to force yourself to save your pixie dust for the later stages.

The only real criticism is that old chestnut about Hook being a game that, with the exception of the odd fancy graphic and that soundtrack, could easily have been crammed onto a cartridge. However, if you like platformers, you'll be pleasantly surprised by this one.

Joe Montana's NFL Football Sega £IMPORT Released: Out Now

Milking their license even though Joe isn't with the 49ers anymore, Sega bring the NFL to the CD. Take your favourite team from the full choice of 28 through a full season and into the Superbowl play-offs while Joe provides you with help every now and then. Those of you familiar with previous Montana games will know the controls and the playbook which, while not as user-friendly as Madden's is just as good.



The skill level can be altered and you can play solo or against a mate. The graphics make reasonable use of the Mega CD, with the players and pitch scaling, while there's the obligatory CD sound. While generally great, the graphics can be a little blocky at times, and it must be said that the playability of the Montana games was never up to the standard of EA's efforts. However, there are plenty of nice touches here that keep you interested, such as Joe appearing on TV on the pitch to give you hints and tips (which looks great, incidentally), and the battery back up which saves your play-off places, etc. Pretty polished stuff, for the Mega CD's first sports game and Electronic Arts are sure to hit back with one of their own.

Make My Video Sega £44.99 Released: Out Now

Under this Make My Video banner, we include everyone who has released CDs so far, from Marky Mark, INXS, C+C Music Factory to Kris Kros. The format for each CD is essentially the same. Your CD comes with three music videos of the artists top songs, and you are given the opportunity of playing around with them using the Make My Video editing suite. Mix the actual video footage with other clips, rotate, flip, sing-a-long-a-Max: you name it, and it's here. The format changes a little bit from CD to CD, but the basic idea remains the same.

Sega are obviously thinking about new ways to explore video-gaming, but with a mere three songs to each disc, and the fact that you can only save one video at any one time mean that their enjoyment has to be fairly short-lived.



Lethal Enforcers Konami £54.99 Released: Out Now

This one was a real blast in the arcades, and looks set to do the same on consoles. You take the role of a rookie cop out on the streets and facing down bank robbers, terrorists and Chinese Tongs. Armed with your large blue light gun (included in the purchase price), it's down to you to rid the streets of the scum. As you complete the levels, you have the chance to sharpen up your targeting in bonus rounds, and during the game you can power up to different guns such as Magnums, shotguns and machine guns by firing at their icons. The bad guys are out in force, and it's all too easy - and tempting - to hit a cop or an innocent victim with a stray shot. Do well enough, and you'll climb through the ranks. Fail a level and you'll have to repeat it.

The six levels themselves are varied in location from a bank to the airport, and although the game doesn't exactly require the brains of a master strategist, you will need to be sharp and quick. The Full Motion Video is fairly good, although it's still a little grainy and not a patch on the real arcade game. With sampled gunshots and that adrenaline rush, though, it's still great fun. The only real question is its longevity.

Mad Dog McCree American Laser Games £IMPORT Released: IMPORT

What more can be said about this great game? A smash hit in the arcades the conversion to CD is a little ropey but still possesses all the humour and

action of its predecessor as you run around town gunning down outlaws and saving the sheriff from gangs of marauding hoodlums. Using full-motion video, this, one of many releases from American Laser is set to follow this ever expanding genre of FMV shoot-'em-ups. The only unfortunate aspect with this game is that the graphics are appalling [see review this issue].



Microcosm CD
Psygnosis
£44.99
Released: January



Ever fancied yourself as Dennis Quaid? Well now's your chance, as you relive the films *Fantastic Voyage* and *Inner Space* by taking an armed submersible inside a human body! The corporate war between Cybertech and Axiom has escalated to new heights. When Axiom's president dies, they blame Cybertech, and in revenge, plant a miniature brain

manipulation droid into Cybertech's president. With this in place, Axiom can control Cybertech's boss and there's no way Cybertech would know. But something went wrong in the operating theatre. And to reverse the process, you are sent in inside a micro sub.

The first thing that hits you are the intro graphics. Psygnosis staff were blue-screened and digitized into the opening shots, and it's exceptionally well done. And it doesn't stop there, either. Viewing the action from your ship, you'll have to wipe out various bacteria and antibodies, all out to attack your craft. Powering up your weapons gives you a better chance against them, as well as the end of level guardians. With each stage featuring a different area of the body, the background graphics are tremendous, although you can't really interact with them, aside from smashing into them. The problem with *Microcosm* is that it's a bit of a wolf in sheep's clothing. Whilst it looks ultra slick, in actual fact, it's just a basic shoot 'em up. What makes it different is the well-pitched difficulty curve, and the adrenaline rush you get playing it. Rick Wakeman, keyboard supremo, arranged the music, and you can't really fault it, although the spot effects could have been a bit meatier. A very simple, addictive game that might be linear, but it's a hell of a blast all the same.

Night Trap
Sega
£44.99
Released: Out Now

Teenage girls have been disappearing at the home of Mr and Mrs Martin. The authorities have sent you in as part of SCAT (Sega Control Attack Team) to find out what happened to the girls and keep the Martin's five new guests safe and sound.

To help you out, the whole house is wired with hidden cameras and booby traps which you can use to keep track of the girls, the Martins and the mysterious intruders known as the Augs. Allow the girls to be kidnapped, or let Augs take over the house and your boss comes on line to pull the plug on you: Game Over.

Aside from the media hype and its '15' certificate, *Night Trap* still shines as Sega's best FMV/Interactive title to date. The involving, strategic gameplay might not be everybody's cup of tea, while the 'save the scantily-clad girls' concept might not be politically correct these days. However, *Night Trap* is hugely atmospheric and enthralling, so if you don't mind girls in their undies, grainy FMV and a great soundtrack, then this is for you.



Mortal Kombat CD
Acclaim
£TBC
Released: January

Well, I think we know the form with this one. A head to head tournament of fighting skills, you can pick any one of seven fighters, each with their own abilities and special moves and go head to head against the CPU or a friend. The controls couldn't be simpler: A - punch, B - block, C - kick. Special moves and close quarter blows can be performed by using button combinations when you're in range.

This is one of those games that you'll all know about anyway, so we won't trouble you with niceties. What you get on the CD are more animations to the players, CD quality music, beefed up presentation and improved gameplay, where it had its failings. Acclaim have even included the two minute advert that was on TV. There are also spinny Acclaim logos and Probe logos all over the place.

Whether all that makes any difference to the actual enjoyment of the game is debatable. Certainly, from what we've seen, it's a slightly glossier product. *Mortal Kombat CD* has all the elements that made the MD cart so much fun: wicked digitized graphics and those awesome death moves. Warm up your Mega CD now!



The Ninja Warriors Taito £IMPORT Released: IMPORT

I seem to remember playing this - or a very similar game - on coin-op, but if this is Taito's idea of a conversion, then my old man's a dustbin. Or something like that. This is a walking beat 'em up of the lowest order. The side-scrolling may be smooth, but the appalling lack of variety in the gameplay, and the minimal number of moves available to your characters means that unless you're absolutely desperate for a two player ninja game, you should avoid this one like the plague.

The graphics are very poor, although your main sprite isn't too badly defined. But the range of moves (ha!) can make things appear jerky at times. Yet another CD that wouldn't look out of place on a Master System cart. Stick to Revenge of Shinobi on the Sega Classics disc, or better still, pick up Final Fight.



Here's a game to buy for someone you don't like. Taito have evidently got it in for Mega CD owners. Night Striker received seriously bad reviews from all and sundry and, until I sat down with it myself, I couldn't see why. I do now. Avoiding the Japanese manual and iffy, rescue kidnapped scientist and obliterate the evil bad guys from the face of the planet plot, what you have here is a very dodgy hybrid of Batman Returns driving and Lawnmower Man flying. If, of course, Night Striker was of comparable quality.

It's not. Enemy planes and trucks are massive, bitmapped affairs that scale about as well as a Game Gear game. The colourful backgrounds almost make up for things, but since they're usually obscured by massive, flickering, bitmapped explosions, you don't get to see them too often. While it might be relatively smooth, it ain't fun. Nice to listen to, but

Prince Of Persia Sega £39.99 Released: Out Now

Isn't it always the way for Sultans? You nip out of the country to fight a war, and leave it and the safety of your beautiful daughter in the hands of your trusted Grand Vizier Jaffar, and he immediately takes over! And worse still, the nefarious Jaffar plans to marry the Sultan's daughter - your bird - in an hour, and if she refuses to marry, he'll kill her. Yikes!

The only person who can save her, and the entire country, is you, the aforementioned Prince of Persia. Unfortunately, the evil dude has tossed you into his deepest, darkest dungeon, and you've only got 60 minutes to save the Princess. It's up to you to climb, swing, jump and fence your way to the evil Jaffar's inner sanctum, killing guards, solving puzzles to open doors and avoiding traps along the way.

Prince of Persia ranks alongside Lemmings in terms of gameplay and the number of systems it has now appeared on. Aside from utilising an at times dodgy control system - jump, leap, run, take baby steps - all handled by three buttons, Prince of Persia on the Mega CD is essentially the same as it is on every other format. With one exception. It looks very rough. Having played the SNES, Macintosh and Master System versions means a comparison is in order. Not only does the SNES (and I hate to say it) look far prettier and includes extra levels, but the Mega CD version isn't even as smooth as the 8-Bit Sega one! It's still a fine puzzle game if you can get past the fiddly controls, and there's some lovely rotoscoped graphics on the main sprite, but with 650Meg of space on a CD, you'd be well within your rights to expect something a bit flashier. After all, the expanded



Night Striker Taito £IMPORT Released: IMPORT

Rise of The Dragon Dynamix £IMPORT Released: IMPORT

You're Blade Hunter, futuristic P.I. in this sexy, cyberpunk adventure game. The mayor's daughter has died after taking some weird new drug, and the mayor wants to know who manufactured it. He's hired you because you can dispense the kind of justice the cops don't take kindly to. Travelling across the city via the underground, you visit bars and break into criminal's houses in your search for clues before meeting up with the real villains.

Very successful on both PC and Mac, Rise of The Dragon is split into two types of gameplay. There's the point and click side, which allows you to explore, add things to your inventory and talk to other characters by giving you multiple choice replies, plus there's an arcade shooting section. There's so much depth to this game that any review would be too short. The graphics are fantastic: it's like a graphic novel. True, there's isn't a lot of animation, but it all looks very slick. Right down to your dripping tap. The only problem with the game is the access time; the bane of the Mega CD. Other than that, Rise of The Dragon is a challenging, thoroughly enjoyable title.



Road Avenger
Sega
£44.99
Released: Out Now

From Wolfteam, the people who brought you Cobra Command, Road Avenger follows a similar line, except that you're now in the seat of a rather nifty car, instead of a gunship. It's your job to hurtle through the streets and country roads wasting thugs who leap onto your bonnet etc., and trying to keep your car on the road as bad guys attempt to force you off.

Tight control of your brakes and turbo booster are the order of the day and, whilst Cobra Command was a little let down by the limited gameplay, you'll be pleased to hear that Road Avenger is much improved. Whereas Cobra Command was set at a fairly easy pace, Road Avenger's eight levels are fast and furious, accompanied by a thumping soundtrack that keeps that adrenaline pumping. There are accidents all around you, and hitting pedestrians only adds to the buzz. One neat touch is the way the viewpoint suddenly shifts to let you watch the carnage you've caused along the way.

The animated graphics are fantastic, with some mega explosions and crashes, and plenty of new and gripping ways for you to die as you smash into buildings and so on, while the spot effects of your brakes squealing will set your teeth on edge. Far more polished than Cobra Command, this is still essentially a point and click affair with tweaked gameplay. It's great fun, but those eight levels won't last forever.

Sega Classics CD
Sega
£n/a
Released: March 1993

Included in the original bundle for the Mega CD, Cobra Command, and the disappointing Sol Feace. This CD contains five classic Mega Drive games. The only problem is, none of them have been enhanced in any way. What you get is Streets Of Rage, Columns, Revenge Of Shinobi, Golden Axe and Super Monaco GP.

For the uninitiated, Streets Of Rage was Sega's first classic walking beat 'em up. It looks a bit jaded now, when compared to Final Fight and so on, but it's still great. Select from three police fighters and clean up the streets. Great graphics and some classic tunes. Columns was Sega's answer to Tetris, a gripping puzzler which sees you basically lining up columns of jewels to clear the screen. Very, very annoying and addictive. Revenge Of Shinobi is a great hack and slash platform game. Again, it looks a bit dated now, but the gameplay still brings tears of joy to some reviewers' faces. Golden Axe is beginning to look ropey, although this conversion of Sega's big arcade hit is still a very playable hack and slash romp. And finally, there's Super Monaco GP, still a great racing game, although it isn't as quick as F1 from Domark. But as a pack-in disc, it's damn good value for money.



The Secret Of Monkey Island
JVC
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

At last, the game we've all been waiting for. Well, some of us, anyway. Monkey Island was the adventure game for PC, Amiga and Mac owners, and now you can play it on the Mega CD. You take the part of Guybrush Threepwood – great name, great guy – apprentice pirate. The only

problem with being an apprentice pirate is that there aren't really many recognised exams or certificates that you can aim for. No sort of 'A' Level in Jolly Rogering, or that sort of thing. So to prove yourself willing as a pirate, you're set a series of challenges by your pirate mates. Complete these, and your pirate membership card is in the post, fail, and you're just plain old Guybrush Threepwood again.

Simple controls – that point and click affair again – with multiple choice for dialogue make Monkey Island a piece of cake to play. But it's the humour that makes the game so addictive. Even as you wander around the travelling circus or visit the ghost pirate LeChuck, you'll be laughing. This is not an adventure game to be taken seriously. The graphics are top notch, with some excellent music and spot effects. It even makes those old CD loading delays worth sitting through.



Prize Fighter
Digital Pictures
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

Directed by Ron Stein, the man behind the boxing scenes in Rocky and Raging Bull, you play 'the Kid' [could this be our own Dave Perry] as he attempts to win the World title. All the footage is shot in TruVideo and the action is fast and frantic. Unfortunately there are only four characters to fight in the game including the Champ, Nuke "The Duke" Johnson, a particularly nasty man, but the graphics are gritty and the cliched boxing humour is ideal for those who dream of getting into a ring but don't really want to get hurt [see review this issue].



Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective Vol. 1
Sega
£44.99
Released: Out Now

Here's a novel way of utilising the Mega CD's storage capacity and FMV capabilities. Take over the mantle of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, in three celebrated cases of murder and intrigue by questioning characters and piecing together the clues.

The icon-driven game is a simple interface to use. You have a main map, a London directory, The Times archive and other reference files at your disposal. Putting your clues together will lead you to various witnesses and suspects, all of whom you'll need to question. This is where the FMV takes over, with each character dropping clues and red herrings left, right and centre. Put the right ones together, and the beak will tell you how well you've done. Elementary. At least, it sounds simple. In actual fact, this is a tough, challenging game. What it lacks in sprite scaling and rotation, it more than makes up for in atmosphere and difficulty. It might not be Thunderhawk, but it's a different angle on Mega CD software.



Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective Vol. 2
Sega
£44.99
Released: Out Now

Holmes returns with three more cases to solve, in a neater, improved sequel. Whilst the first game was good, the additional little improvements Vol. 2 has received make quite a difference.

Included with the CD is a mini-newspaper, crammed with useful info – a nice touch – while the gameplay remains largely unchanged, the in-game graphics have been improved: even the FMV sequences seem slicker. Three cases may not seem like much for a sequel, but they're all equally involving. If you liked the first outing, then this will appeal to you, too.



Robo Aleste
Sega
£39.99

Released: Out Now

Guess what? Yes, the planet is in terrible danger. Evil-doers threaten the planet's safety and the life of your Lord, Nobunaga. Jump into your assault suit and head the bad guys off at the pass, thus saving the world from evil dominators! Okay, I know it's not much of a plot, but I reviewed the import version, 'Nobunaga and His Ninja Force'. It's a bit more of a mouthful than Robo Aleste, but they're one and the same game.

What we have here is the Mega CD's first vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, viewed from above – obviously – as Nobunaga and his jetpack hurtle over scenic countryside chock-a-block with bad dudes all out to shoot your assault suit out of the air.

Although the programmers have made some effort to use the MCD's sprite scaling chip, it isn't really done to any great extent. You mainly notice it as you plunge into level one, and when the bitmapped enemy ships descend to your height. Other than that, the graphics are remarkably Mega Drive, which makes a change. I don't think. Although some of the backgrounds are impressive, you spend a lot of time simply trying to spot your sprite on those levels and, while there are a fair selection of baddies to waste, you soon find out that this is simply a mindless blaster. Really, other than some nice sound effects and tunes, this is a barely average shoot 'em up in what has always been a crowded market. With so many good ones on the Mega Drive, why on Earth would you want an average shooter for your Mega CD?

Sewer Shark
Sony Imagesoft
£39.99
Released: Out Now

Welcome to the sewers, Dogmeat. The drains have been over-run by hideous, mutated creatures, and you and your team are in charge of cleaning the place up. Piloting a heavily-armed sewer buggy modified by your co-pilot, Ghost, you've got to follow the sewers blowing away mutated rats and taking the right turns at various junctions. Get it wrong and you'll end up ploughing into a brick wall. Do it all right and you'll be sent to Solar City to live the good life.

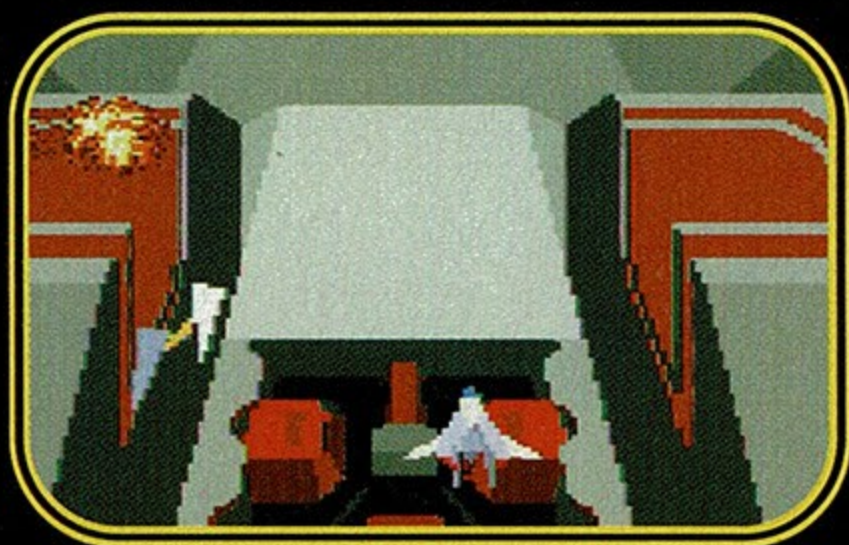


The first person cockpit view is simply laid out with a crosshair and directional indicator. Cock things up and the view will switch to Ghost as he slags you off. Gameplay wise, Sewer Shark is very similar to Cobra Command and that game's lack of interaction. The Full Motion Video, however, leaves a lot to be desired. Given that this is a CD, I'd expected a far better soundtrack, too, although the voice samples are all clear enough. Not an auspicious start for Sony's FMV games, but MCD owners can't be choosers!

Silpheed
Sega
£44.99
Released: Out Now

Galaxians with prettier graphics is a cruel way to describe this game, but it fits. Piloting your small craft through massive alien ships and over planets, it's up to you to destroy the unending hordes of alien craft that approach you. Although only armed with wing blasters to begin with, power ups and a between levels weapons select screen allow you to build up your armaments.

Forget the comparisons to Starfox on the SNES, because Silpheed is a cut above it and in a different type of category. The big, fractal and polygon generated planets and ships look stunning, and some of the 12 levels provide a real challenge, even if the bosses do lack a bit of oomph from time to time. Interaction with the backgrounds isn't quite as good as it could be, with only certain levels allowing you to really get into the graphics, as it were. If there are any problems with Silpheed, it's the occasional jerkiness that creeps in. As a single player blast with great graphics and sound, plus simple but effective gameplay, it's damn good, but the ultimate in shoot 'em ups it ain't.



Sonic CD
Sega
£44.99
Released: Out Now

Sonic debuts on the CD in style in this massive 63-odd level blast. This time, the evil Dr Robotnik has developed a time machine and travelled back to change the past, thus altering the future.

To reverse his nefarious plans, Sonic has to travel through seven zones destroying the devices Robotnik has planted. As usual, there's a special stage, and this one is in the style of a Mario Kart race, viewed from behind Sonic as you charge around a track jumping into UFOs in order to collect precious Time Stones. Miss out on these, and it's possible for Robotnik to travel through time and replace his evil machines to alter history once more!

Each zone consists of the usual three levels, with an obligatory boss level as its last level. This time, though, Sonic can run fast enough to travel through time and, by hitting either a Past or Future signpost, you'll zip through time to that era. This not only makes the game a lot harder, but also increases its lifespan from the standard 24 levels to the 63 that I've already mentioned. The gameplay is as usual, but Sonic is so playable that I defy anyone not to enjoy this one. A nice intro cartoon, great soundtrack and that wicked special stage make this the best Sonic game yet.

Stellar Fire
Sierra
£TBC
Released: TBC

Remember Atari's old coin-op, Battlezone? Ever played Spectre Supreme on PC or the Macintosh? Then you'll know what to expect. The year is 2206, and the cybernetic Draxons are out to assimilate all life in the galaxy and have hit the Earth. As the commander and sole survivor of the Stellar 7 Force, it's your job to destroy the Daxon before everyone the planet dies. Luckily, your ship is fairly well-armed with a main cannon, and there are hidden power ups for you to discover throughout the levels.

Unlike Spectre, there are some hefty bosses for you to face off against, and you'll need all your wits about you as you pilot your way across the cluttered landscape. The graphics are a nice mix of polygons and more standard graphics, while your cockpit layout includes radar and energy bar readouts.

Although it isn't the most original idea for a game ever, Stellar 7 does come from Sierra, a company renowned in the PC and Mac world for their games, so everyone is expecting a great deal from the finished product. [see review this issue]



Spiderman Vs The Kingpin
Sega
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

The Kingpin has planted a nuclear bomb in New York and framed Spiderman! Our webbed hero only has 24 hours to locate the bomb before it wipes out the city, and as if that isn't bad enough, all his old enemies, as well as the NYPD are out to get him! Eight levels of multi-scrolling webbery await you once you set your difficulty. Story screens lead you into each timed round and to progress to the bosses, you have to waste all the baddies on each level.

After fights, you can renew your energy back at your apartment, but this does eat up time. Web cartridges can be bought by taking photos of the bosses and selling them to the Daily Bugle. Spiderman can kick, punch and web his victims, as well as swing from web ropes.

Basically an enhanced version of the cart with nicer intro screens, and not much else. Oh yes, and that old CD-quality sound thing. Hardly a big improvement over the cartridge, but worth looking at if Spidey platformers are your thing.



Switch
Sega
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

Unlikely to even be released officially, Switch is a wacky game that adopts a very simple one button playing method. As the strangely drawn Switch, your mission is to get through the levels by pressing a number of switches in the right order. Some help you progress, some send you back to where you started. It is a process of elimination and quite often success is due more to luck than skill. The graphics and crazy Japanese humour more than compensate for the random nature of the game itself, although it is difficult to see what they went mad about.

Highly original and backed up by a brilliantly varied soundtrack, Switch is definitely a game worth checking out, if only for its novelty value.



Thunderhawk
Sega
£44.99
Released: Out Now

At last, a real game for the Mega CD. Thunderhawk places you in the cockpit of a gunship, armed with chain guns, rockets and missiles as you fly through 10 theatres of operation, each with three to five missions for you to complete on the way. From the snowy wastes of Alaska to the heat of the Middle East, your job is to avoid the enemy and destroy your primary targets at all costs. Your briefing on each mission before you start, and a map and radar screen in flight allow you to plot your course and, should you stray too far, your co-pilot will tell you which way to head.



Time Gal
Sega
£44.99
Released: Out Now

Another cartoon game from Wolfteam, and another limited interaction point and clicker. As the title suggests, you play Time Gal, a tasty little thing with a penchant for hot pants and bikini-style tops. And, with a name like Time Gal, it's only logical to assume that you can travel through time, which you do. You're tracking a fugitive from justice who has escaped in a time machine. Naturally, this makes your job less than easy, even though you can follow him throughout the ages. Various monsters will try to block you, all easily killed with your little laser.

The control system is the same as the other Wolfteam games, although they've introduced a random element here which means that if on one stage you initially pushed to the left to move, on another game you may have to push to the right. This at least improves the longevity of the game and keeps you on your toes.

Otherwise it's all very similar to the other animated interactive games we've seen, although the graphics are slick and the soundtrack is as good as we've come to expect from those Wolfteam programmers.



Core Design are the first people to really make any use of the Mega CD's sprite scaling and rotating capabilities, which means that this game really kicks.

The bitmapped ground tilts and rotates like nothing you've ever seen from Sega, while you waste texture-mapped tanks, choppers and trucks - you name it, and if it's enemy military hardware, it'll be here somewhere. Add a CD quality soundtrack with great sampled sound, a stunning intro and simplistic but addictive gameplay, and you've got one good reason to stump up for the Mega CD.

Wolfchild
Sega
£39.99
Released: Out Now

Lon Chaney Jr. time, as a scientist's son is hideously mutated into a wolf and goes off to seek vengeance against his father's killers. Sound familiar? Wolfchild was a not-particularly-well-received Amiga game two years ago, now playing on a Mega CD near you.

As side-scrolling platformers go, the nine stage Wolfchild is pretty much what we've come to expect: standard gameplay, mediocre graphics and sound, with occasionally suspect collision-detection. Wolfchild is armed with various weapons, which you can power up along the way, although they would be far better if the game was a tad more challenging. As far as utilising those old Mega CD chips goes...forget it. Fancy intro aside, this could easily have appeared on cart instead. And what a shame it wasn't, because now it has to compare with Sonic CD. And there's just no competition at all.



Wonderdog
JVC
£IMPORT
Released: IMPORT

This was Core Design's first CD effort for JVC's Wondermega, the Mega Drive/Mega CD combo that was launched in Japan. As such, it's something of a showcase for the MCD's storage capabilities, as the lovely animated intro shows.

Wonderdog's spaceship crash lands on Earth and he's rescued by a small boy. The two play for a while before daddy comes along to take junior home. With no-one else to play with, Wonderdog decides to set off in pursuit of his new master, which proves to be more of a challenge than he realised. All this is, by the way, part of the pretty cartoon intro, which will have you watching open-mouthed at the quality.

Covering seven worlds, each with a series of zones, Wonderdog is another platform romp. As with most platformers, in the final zone of each world you meet up with an end of level boss; in this case, they're usually very silly, too.

Firing stars at his enemies, Wonderdog runs and leaps around the screen, picking up sets of ears (don't ask) to replenish his lost energy. There are heaps of secret rooms to find in this side-scroller, and the whole thing is password coded to make life easier.

As a first attempt, Wonderdog shows the kind of thing Core had in mind for the Mega CD, and there are obvious visual links with the Chuck Rock games. If the difficulty level had been a bit more severe, Wonderdog would have been a classic, but in reality, it's just another pretty, not very tough platform game. Unfortunately.



WWF Rage In The Cage
Acclaim
£TBC
Released: TBC

Take 20 awesomely large WWF wrestlers, chuck them in a ring, and give the last man standing an award.

That's the basis of Rage In The Cage, which did very well on console formats, and ought to be equally successful on the Mega CD. You can choose from normal one on one bouts, tag team fights and then the final massive brawl, where the object is to remain standing in the ring while you toss other fighters outside. There are an impressive range of moves on offer, plus those all-important signature moves for each wrestler. A nifty FMV intro and plenty of laughs (watch the wrestlers bladder each other with chairs outside the ring) makes this a very promising title.



C · o · m · i · n · g S · o · o · n

Here's a quick preview of some of the top Mega CDs due out over the forthcoming months on import and official release:

Rebel Assault
JVC

Released: TBC

Star Wars comes to the Mega CD. Join Luke in his X-wing as you fly against the Empire's fighters.

The Terminator
Virgin

Released: TBC

Play Kyle Reese in the all-new Terminator adventure, as you travel back in time to save John Connor. Fail, and the machines take over the future, wiping out the human race. Slick graphics and all new stages. This one is definitely not to be confused with the cartridge game.

Another World 1 & 2
Virgin

Released: January 1994

Lester Chaykin, scientist, is transported to another dimension when one of his mistakes goes massively wrong. Join him and his native friend as they escape from incarceration and continue their adventures. Marvellous rotoscoped graphics and stunning backgrounds made this a compulsive Mega Drive title. Now Virgin have gone one better by including the sequel, too.

Flashback
Sony Imagesoft
Released: TBC

Regain your memory and fight for survival as you take on the role of Conrad, an agent who discovers a plot to take over the world. Travel to the aliens homeworld and visit Titan, gain employment to

make enough money for your space flight. It's a bizarre and multi-layered game that was stonking on cartridge, with more of those lovely rotoscoped graphics and involving gameplay. We know this version will have enhanced sound, but will it include new levels?

Chuck Rock 2
Core Design
Released: January 1994

Join Chuck Rock's fat, bald son in more prehistoric belly-buttin platform-foolery. Doubtless this will be every bit as good as its predecessor and, with Core using the Mega CD so well on Thunderhawk, maybe we can expect to see something a bit special from Chuck Rock 2.

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ALISA DRAGON

Level select
Hold A after the Sega logo has disappeared and then press a till Gainax is whisked away. Now hold c and press START when the stars come out. A chime will confirm the cheat. During the game, press c to skip the level and b with up to increase your hit points.

AUTERD BEAST

Infinite continues
Press START and A on the title screen to continue from the last game played.
Character select
On the title screen hold LEFT-DOWN, A, B, C and START to select the character you play.
Extra options
Press START and B on the title screen for more options.

ANOTHER WORLD

Level codes

Level 2 - HTDC
Level 3 - CLLD
Level 4 - LBKG
Level 5 - XDDJ
Level 6 - FXLC
Level 7 - KLFB
Level 8 - BELX
Level 9 - BRID
Level 10 - TFB8
Level 11 - TXHF
Level 12 - CKJL
Level 13 - LFKC

ARCH RIVALS

Easy scoring

Vinny's the best character. So start with the ball and pass to your team-mate, run straight up the court and press the pass-back button. Run into the corner and shoot and you'll nearly always get a three-pointer.

ARCUS ODYSSEY

Level jump

Enter BBBBBBBBB as the password to start on level five with six reverse dolls.

ARNOLD PALMER GOLF

Super shot

Enter your name as EVE and you will be able to hit the ball great distances.

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

Hidden game

Take over 100 shots on a hole. Wait for game over, then press A, B, C and UP for a hidden game of Fantasy Zone.

AVITON SENNA'S SNIP 2

End password

Use SENNA or CHAMPION as your password to see the end of the game.

BACK TO THE FUTURE 3

Stage select

Pause the game, hold A and press UP, DOWN, LEFT and RIGHT to go forward a level.

BAD OMEN

99 balls

During the title menu press buttons A and C together, then START. The screen switches and you will notice that your ball stock has increased to 99.

BATMAN: REVENGE OF THE JOKER

Passwords

Stage 6 guardian: 6300
Stage 7 guardian: 7200

Cheat

You don't lose your invincibility capsules when you die, so you collect them again and again after dying, storing up dozens to use against the bosses.

BATTLEMANIA

Strange scene

When the Sega logo appears, frantically press START on the second joystick and something weird will happen.

BATTLETOADS

Level three warp

Battleload-butt the two pigs at the start of the first level and run to the first platform to find a glowing warp. Quickly walk into it and you're offered the chance to warp up to two levels.

BIO HAZARD BATTLE

Level select

When the Sega logo appears, hold C and press UP, UP-RIGHT, DOWN-RIGHT, DOWN-LEFT, LEFT, UP-LEFT and UP. Then press START for a level select.

BURNING FORCE

Extra lives

When the title screen disappears, press B, A, B, A, C, A, A and START to get ten more lives.

CASTLE OF ILLUSION

Extra life

Keep pressing START when your score's being added after each round for an extra

DARIUS 2

Zone select

Press C, A, C, C, C, A, B, A, B, C, A on the title screen.

DAVID ROBINSON'S SUPREME COURT

Team tip

Choose Detroit and always shoot three-point shots: nine out of ten will go in.

DEADLY MOVES

Password

For maximum power against Ranker, enter this code:
MEV XRPO JMT

DECAPITACK

Extra lives

You can get extra lives by jumping straight down onto the springy poles. As you hit the top keep springing up and down and the pole segments should light up. When they're all lit you have an extra life.

DESERT STRIKE

Extra lives

To add ten lives to your Apache, enter the password BQQQAEZ and any level password.

Level codes

Level 2 - WQJROBZ
Level 3 - VLJKTY
Level 4 - BTTIKLK

DRAGON'S FURY

33 balls

Try entering 0956335555 as the password for 33 balls.

DEVILISH

99 balls

On the title screen, hold A, C and LEFT, then press START.

DINOLAND

Test card

When the Wolf Team logo's onscreen, press A, B, C and then START.

DJ BOY

Action replay

Watch the demo when you've completed a game - it's your game over again!

EA HOCKEY

Best shots

Slap shot from the blue line, using LEFT and RIGHT to direct the puck. Close shots are best performed slowly with lots of dribbling directly at the keeper and then pressing C.

ECHO THE DOLPHIN

Level select

Enter PLEASE on the title screen followed by any of these letters: EE, FF, GG, HH, II, KK, OO, QQ, UU, WW or ZZ.

Code

Enter SHARKFIN and press START. Your sonar now kills jellyfish and you don't need to go up for air.

Infinite lives

Enter the code NIHPLODS.

Invincibility

During the explanation of the next level, hold A and START. Unpause and you'll be invincible.

ELEMENTAL MASTER

Hidden options

Press A and START together to enter a hidden option screen

EL VIENTO

Level select

Press START during the game, then UP, LEFT, RIGHT, DOWN and B to jump to the next stage.

ESWAT

Level select

When you complete the game properly, you can go to any level by pressing RIGHT-DOWN and A, B, and C simultaneously on the title screen. Just press START to get the select.

EWANER HOUYFELD'S BOXING

Green goddness

Start a new career and enter your name as The Beast. You'll turn green and have superhuman abilities.

EUROPEAN CLUB SOCCER

Win any match

Enter the password QUITTER. When you quit the match, you'll win the game.

Password

Enter A630A61AA to get into the final.

Level 7 (easy) - INCBIN
Level 7 (normal) - CLIP
Level 7 (hard) - KALIMA
Last code - CYGNUS

FORGOTTEN WORLDS

Infinite continues

Start in two-player mode, then when player one kicks the bucket, just press player two's START button rapidly to get him in the game.

GADGET TWINS

Level select

When the two planes appear, press C, A, RIGHT, LEFT, then repeat.

GAIN GROUND

Level select

On the options screen press A, C, B, C.

GAIALES

Invincibility

Start playing then pause the game. Hold LEFT, A and C for a second then continue the game and you should be trouble-free.

Level select

Plug in two controllers and press START and B on pad one to go to the options screen. Select tune 18 and hold down A on pad two then select exit with pad one. Still holding A, press C on pad one and hold them down until the Sega logo disappears. Now press START for a level select.

GALAHAD

Infinite lives

Type in LOTUS as your password then press A, B, C and START to skip levels.

GHOSTBUSTERS

Freaky stairs

You're totally immune to the ghosts while on the stairs.

GHOU'S 'N' GHOSTS

Invincibility

Go to the options screen four times. When you get back to the title screen press A, A, A, UP, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT and RIGHT. Then hold B and press START to enter the fray unharmed.

GLOBAL GLADIATORS

Level skip

Pause the game and press B, C, B, A, B, C, B, A, B. Unpause.

Infinite lives

When the Virgin logo appears, press A, B, C, B, A, C, A, B, C, B, A, C.

GOLDEN AXE

Level select

Hold DOWN-RIGHT, B and START simultaneously on the title screen.

GOLDEN AXE II

Extra credits

Move the cursor to the Options choice on the title screen and press A, B and C simultaneously. Keep them held down until you enter the options screen, then let go of A. Move to the Exit option and press START. Choose one or two players then a normal game by pressing A. Credits should now be eight.

GRANADA

Dopey git

Once you've completed the game, wait till the music's finished and press A. Now your character will fall over - straataaange.

GRANDSLAM TENNIS

Hidden options

Enter CONFIG followed by full stops as your password.

GYMNOG

Level select

On the options screen, put the cursor on 'controls'. Hold down button A for about five seconds to bring up a level-select screen.

Easy mode

On the options screen, put the cursor on 'game level' and hold down A, B, C and START simultaneously.

Infinite credits

When the Game Over message appears, hold LEFT, A, C and START.

HARD DRIVEN

Easier challenge

You don't have to race the Phantom Photon on the stunt track, just smash through the barrier to go around the speed track instead.

HEAVY UNIT

New skill level

Hit A, B, C, START on the title screen.

HELLFIRE

JOHN MADDEN '92

Passwords

0465100 - quarter-finals
0075121 - semi-finals
0475352 - superbowl

JUNGLE STRIKE

Password cheat

By changing the first letter of most passwords, you can usually access about six other levels. Also, the password BNSH3NMHUK puts you on level one with four lives and the ability to select your preferred co-pilot.

Level codes

Level 2 - RLSMJFYBLML
Level 3 - 9V6JV4MGDBS
Level 4 - XTMCRRWNMCJ
Level 5 - VNPYV6PC3X4
Level 6 - W6MDY39VSPP
Level 7 - THCYV4MHPPM
Level 8 - 7GBTNLGMHH4
Level 9 - N4SG3N6MHHS

KID CHAMELEON

Final guardian

Go to the Lake Woods 2 level. Fight your way to the end and jump onto the last prize block above the exit. Now press DOWN-RIGHT and then press the jump and special attack buttons to warp to Plethora.

KING'S BOUNTY

Password

VRP 06 8TO
FT3 VE M6N
DGI ZZ 7B1
MOE 8W COR
NOA BD EXH
DCE FH Y22
VM1 JL MF6

KLUX

Special gems

On the title screen, hold LEFT-UP, A, B, C and START for a special game.

KRISTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE

Open all doors

Enter SMAILIIV as the password.

LAKERS VS CELTICS

Password

3L2GJS - LA Lakers vs Philadelphia 76ers

LEMMINGS

Sunsoft passwords

Level 25 - BWFRB
Level 30 - CBMFL

LUX ATTACK CHOPPER

Passwords

Plain Aria - COTERDG
Domino Mirror - CSTEIYE
Freedom Train - CSIEAZE

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE

Passwords

SLUGSPACE - infinite turbos
MANSELL - invulnerable

M1 ABRAMS BATTLE TANK

Unlimited ammo and invincibility

Wait for the demo screen, then press B, B, C, B, C, C, B, C, B, C and START.

MARIO LEMIEUX HOCKEY

Password

This is the password to play Detroit Vs Montreal in the final:

K45C LVA5 8E23

MARVEL LAND

Password

TRIDENT - last section

MASTER OF MONSTERS

End sequence

Press A, B, C and START on the sound test screen.

MEGA-LO-MANIA

Passwords

Level 8 - JSVADMBQHY
Level 10 - KLFDZFWKWA

MERKS

Tougher game

Go to Commando mode and press A, B, C at the same time, then press START while holding the buttons. Enemies will now be faster and more intelligent.

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

Level skip

MOSE POWER

POWERMONGER
Password
Final level - TUSD2TJW7TIS9J3D4PJLIXPHAKJEKOGQ

PREDATOR 2
Passwords
Level 4 - LOS ANGELES
Level 5 - TOTAL BODY

PRO BASEBALL SUPER LEAGUE 91
Beat everyone!
Go to the player change screen when you are fielding and press c. Answer yes to forget the match and you, strangely, win 1-0. It only works while you're fielding.

QUACKSHOT
Extra lives
Top up your lives by repeating this over and over again. Get to the Viking ship and go up the mast in the lift, collecting all the money bags. Walk right and follow the path down to the extra life. Now exit the screen, then re-enter it to see the reappearance of the extra life.

RAINBOW ISLANDS
Full complement
To get all the power-ups, on the title screen press UP, B, DOWN, LEFT, C, A, A, B and C.

RAMBO 3
Full complement
Fight to the two firing walls on level three. Destroy all bar one of the cannons, then put the yellow icon on the dagger and go to the bottom of the screen. Stab the man in camouflage and collect what he leaves behind. Repeat this to top up on everything.

THE REVENGE OF SHINOBI
Infinite shurikens
Select zero shurikens on the options screen and leave the game for 40 seconds. The zero will then turn into an infinity sign (∞).

RINGS OF POWER
Money top-up
Get to 32", 2" - 6", and you can constantly re-enter the secret temple to get the four gold chests.

ROAD RASH
Password
B0000 04R00 11CAF 56C7B - level five, Panda, \$26,230

ROAD RASH 2
Password
0H4R 550H - level five, Diablo, \$20,000

Road Rash 2 Cheat
On the options screen, set the player mode to Mano a Mano. Go to the main menu and select your bike. Now change the player mode to Take Turns and start the game. You can now use any bike on any course.

Race select
On the title screen press UP, A, C and keep them down. Now press START.

ROLD TO THE RESCUE
Secret menu
On the title screen hold UP-LEFT, A and C, then press RESET. Keep holding them for a few more seconds and press a for a cheat menu.

ROLLING THUNDER 2
Password
Level 11 - A Private Thunder Created the Powder

SAINT SWORD
Password
Level six - TAITOZ

SPEEDBALL 2
Password
Division one: LCL1 CWAf OBXE ya3q 2bst -1s1 gVVC

SPIDER-MAN
Shortcut
On level one, get to the wall of boxes past the dog. Jump up to the second row and crawl to the right. You will pass through the wall and end up at the forklift.

SPLATTERHOUSE 2
Password
Level 8 - EDK VEI TAL LDL
Level 2 - EDK NAI ZOL LDL
Level 3 - IDO GEM IAL LDL
Level 4 - ADE XOE ZOL OME
Level 5 - EFH VEI RAG ORD
Level 6 - ADE NAI WRA LKA
Level 7 - EFH XDE IAL LDL

SPLATTERHOUSE 3
Level codes
Level 2 - REISOR
Level 3 - ETLBUD
Level 4 - TABRAE
Level 5 - ELPOEB
Level 6 - PHENIX.

STEEL EMPIRE
Level select
Go to the sound select option and play sounds 01, 01, 09 and 02.
99 bombs
On the ship select, press C, A, C, A, START and B.

STORMLORD
Reset clock
Pause the game and press B, A, A, C, UP, UP, A, A, A, A, A.
Five lives
Pause game. Press A, A, A, C, C, B, B, C, A.

STREET SMART
Extra lives
Reset quickly about 12 times, then choose options from the menu. Move the cursor to the sound test and press DOWN, DOWN, DOWN and A.

STREETS OF RAGE
Level select
Hold down on player two's pad and press A, a and c then enter the options screen using player one's pad.

STREETS OF RAGE II
Extra continues
If you are about to die on player one, plug in the second controller and press START to begin with a fresh character.

Level select
On the options screen, hold down A and a on joystick two. Simultaneously press START on joystick one to enter a full cheat screen.

STRIDER
Level select
While the master laughs away to himself at the beginning of the level, hold DOWN and press A, C, B, C and A.

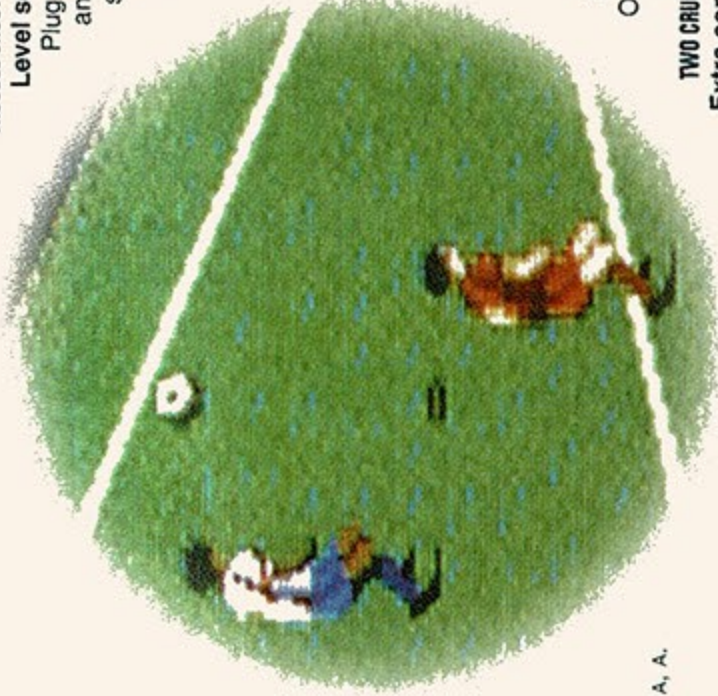
THUNDER PRO WRESTLING
Extra continues
When Game Over appears, press UP and C.

TINY TOON ADVENTURES
Open all levels
On the password screen:
NGOO WQOW QKXQ
QWQX WGRY

TIMT
Level select
When the Konami logo appears, press C, B, A, A, A, A, B, C. On the title screen press A, B, B, C, C, B, A.

TOEJAM & EARL
Secret level
On the first level, drop through the hole in the island to land on level zero. Have a bath and drink some lemonade. Jump off this level to zoom up to the highest level.

TROUBLE SHOOTER
Level select
Plug in two controllers. On the title screen, press START, RIGHT and C simultaneously on the second pad. On the new screen, press START, RIGHT and C to increase the level number.



TRUXTON
Power bomb
Set off a skull explosion then pause the game while the explosion's in mid-flow. Wait about 15 seconds then unpause and the bomb will increase in power.

TURRICAN
Infinite everything!
On the options screen, place the cursor on exit and hold DOWN while pressing A, B, A, B, A, A, B, A, A, A, A.

TWIN COBRA
Level select
On the title screen press UP, DOWN, RIGHT, LEFT and START.

TWO CRUDE DUDES
Extra continues
On your last life, press START on player two's pad to bring in the second character.

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER
Passwords
Level six - JDRSD
Level 11 - BYTCX

VALIS 3
Sound test
On the title screen, hold UP-LEFT, A, B, C and START.

VERTEX
Infinite lives
Pause the game while holding A, a and C. Press DOWN and START for an extra life.

WANI WANI WORLD
Infinite lives
When the Sega logo appears, reset twice and four question marks will appear instead of lives.

WARRIOR OF ROME
Password
GREBDO3QNE - end sequence

under the rocks to the leaf and 3-up. Pick them up then kill yourself. Just repeat the technique, killing yourself each time, to top up your lives to the maximum.

JAGUAR XL220
Level skip
Go "name entry" on the options screen. Delete the current name and input MAR, then choose World Tour and select a race. When the race starts, pause the game, then press A, a and c together to win.

KRIS KROSS: MAKE MY VIDEO
Hidden scene
On the caller screen, press A, B, C and RIGHT.

MARRY MARK: MAKE MY VIDEO
Hidden scene
Hold A and C. Press START to go to the U-Direct mode and then A, B, C and RIGHT to see Mr Wahberg and his girls.

NOSTALGIA 1907
Skip intro
Turn on and when "SEGA" appears, press and hold button c till "Sur De Wave" appears. That boring intro will now be ancient history.

ROAD AVENGER
Level select
From the start, push UP to access the options screen. Once there, press A six times. Now just play the game as usual.

SEWER SHARK
Continues
Once you get to Terminator or Beach Bum, press A, C and START on the "game over" screen to continue.

SOL-FEACE
Extra options
On the title screen, press A, B, C, A, B, C, B, C, B, A, A. Press START when you hear a sound effect. In Config Mode you'll now find Start and Mode. Go to Start and choose the start level with LEFT and RIGHT. Mode allows you to adjust the difficulty of the game, again with LEFT and RIGHT. If you press RIGHT a few times whilst holding A, you'll get "mutekt", invincibility!

THUNDERHAWK
Infinite armour & weapons
Pause the game and push UP, RIGHT, LEFT and DOWN. Press START to unpause for infinite everything.

TIME BAI
Passwords
SHXGJWF - 1991AD
XPTXGSHD - 2001AD
QWCDHRKT - 3001AD
PLOTVMXY - 3999AD
LKDWBSYF - 4000AD
KVGRZCZW - 4001AD

Level select
On the menu screen press UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, LEFT, RIGHT, RIGHT, UP. Go into the game and you can start on any level. START pauses the action and C takes you to end of the current level.

WONDER DUG
Passwords
REEVES - Planet Weird
PIXIES - Planet Foggia
WOPIE - Planet Knitus

POWER

Mega Drive and Mega-CD games are worse than rampant bunnies in Spring; they just seem to keep on multiplying. Knowing what the latest games are is easy, knowing all about titles released years ago is a little tougher.

Fret not, in the Power A-Z you'll find a listing of every single Mega Drive game we have discovered – regardless of its origin. If the game isn't officially available, we've written import in the price column. Obviously, as the months go by, we'll discover more and more information, like the Japanese producer, or perhaps info on the official release details. All games are listed under the English names, with the Japanese or American game name mentioned where necessary in the small synopsis.

Finally, we've given each game a rating out of ten. Although our review pages rate out of 100 we have rounded each game down to the nearest ten, ensuring that no game ever scores ten out of ten. There's no such thing as a perfect game.

These may also differ from those in the original MEGA POWER review, but generally reflect what we feel the game deserves when we are compiling the A-Z each month.

title	producer	price	comment	rating
843	Import		Aircraft shoot-'em-up. Very dated but good, simple fun.	6
688 ATTACK SUB	Sega	£39.99	Difficult submarine simulation, hard to play but the effort is worth it.	7
THE ADDAMS FAMILY	Acclaim	£39.99	Creepy goings on as Gomez tries to find his family in this movie tie-in.	7
ADVANCED WW2 SIMULATOR	Import		Another difficult game, unfortunately you'll need a strong command of Japanese.	7
AERO BLASTER	Import		Too short and easy shoot-'em-up, two-player is fun though.	6
AERO THE ACRO-BAT	Sunsoft	£TBA	The batty circus hero gets up to all sorts of tricks in this fun platform adventure.	8
AFTER BURNER II	Sega	£34.99	Very accurate reproduction of the coin-op, but too easy	5
AIR DIVER	Import		Quite similar to <i>After Burner II</i> , but has more challenging gameplay and tougher guardians.	8
ALADDIN	Virgin	£44.99	Animation by Disney artists makes this platformer just like an interactive cartoon.	9
ALESTE (MUSHA)	Import		Very amusing shoot-'em-up. Detailed graphics, but a tad too easy.	8
ALEX KIDD IN ENCHANTED CASTLE	Sega	£29.99	Platform adventure that is packed with levels but becomes slightly tedious.	6
ALIEN 3	Flying Edge	£39.99	Good graphics and sound on this basic shoot-'em-up, but poor playability.	7
ALIEN STORM	Sega	£34.99	Another shoot-'em-up that is far too easy; the two-player option saves it.	6
ALISA DRAGON	Sega	£39.95	Help this babe through eight stages of tough guardians and few lives.	8
ALTERED BEAST	Sega	£34.99	The graphics are flickery and response slow. Don't rush out to buy it.	4
AMAZING TENNIS	Absolute	Import	Novel perspective from behind the player brings neat gameplay to this sim.	7
AMBITION OF CAESAR	Import		Dedicated to fans of strategy games, graphics are excellent.	5
AMERICAN GLADIATORS	Gametek	Import	The game from the crap TV programme; six events to pound through. Monotonous.	9
ANOTHER WORLD	Virgin	£39.99	Revolutionary animation, brilliantly detailed graphics and addictive gameplay.	5
AQUATIC GAMES	Electronic Arts	£39.99	James Pond competes in a series of fun sports. Great gameplay and graphics.	7
ARCH RIVALS	Flying Edge	£34.99	Manic basketball extravaganza. Keeps you enthralled for a few hours but soon wears off.	8
ARCUS ODYSSEY	Import		RPG in the style of <i>Gauntlet</i> . A much-needed password save makes this slightly easier.	7
ARIEL: THE LITTLE MERMAID	Sega	£39.99	Become either Ariel or Triton to defeat the forces of darkness. Plenty of vicious sharks.	9
ARNOLD PALMER TOUR GOLF	Sega	£34.99	Up against all the competition, this still proves to be an enjoyable simulation.	7
ARROW FLASH	Sega	£34.99	Very poor shoot-'em-up, grim graphics and sound. All round embarrassment.	8
ART ALIVE	Sega	£29.99	Art package that encourages you to draw on the MD, but you can't save it!	2
ASSAULT-SUIT-LEYNOS	Import		You are a robot who has to bash other robots. Innovative, but not much fun.	3
ATOMIC ROBOKID	Import		Scrolling shoot-'em-up, that's total rubbish.	4
ATOMIC RUNNER	Sega	£39.99	Impressive graphics and sound FX make this a good solid platform shoot-'em-up.	7
AXIS	Import		Worth seeing for the amazing 3-D graphics. Very addictive shoot-'em-up.	1
BACK TO THE FUTURE III	Imagitec	£39.99	Massive let down, don't even think of testing it.	7
BAD OMEN	Import		Break-Out clone, which is actually pretty good.	5
BART'S NIGHTMARE	Acclaim	£39.99	Third cartoon adventure of <i>The Simpsons</i> in which Bart plays mini-games to rescue his homework.	8
BART VS THE SPACE MUTANTS	Flying Edge	£39.99	Fantastic everything in this game – even tons of challenge.	9
BATMAN	Sega	£39.99	Fine conversion. It may get a tad boring, but accurate graphics hold things together.	8
BATMAN RETURNS	Sega	£39.99	A good sequel that proves very difficult. Five levels of hair-pulling frustration	8
BATMAN: REVENGE OF THE JOKER	Import		Better than all the other Sega versions, with large sprites and detailed backdrops	9
BATTLE GOLFER	Import		About the exploits of a golf ball and its travels. Sounds dodgy but it's good.	5
F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II	MicroProse	£39.99	A fair conversion of the old computer flight sim.	6
F-22 INTERCEPTOR	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Arcadey sim where you have to shoot at Iraq. See Saddam cry!	8
THE FAERY TALE ADVENTURE	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Fans of RPGs will love it; very accessible and ideal for newcomers.	8
FANTASIA	Sega	£39.99	Tough with great graphics, let down badly by the gameplay which is very annoying.	5
FANTASTIC DIZZY	Code Masters	£39.99	The eggy hero makes a sparkling arcade-adventure MD debut.	8
FATAL FURY	Sega	£44.99	<i>Street Fighter II</i> clone with varied moves but pretty dull.	6
FASTEST 1	Import		Split screen two-player racing – but that's about it.	4
FATAL LABYRINTH	Import		Far too easy for the experienced adventurer; good for novices.	6
FATAL REWIND	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Conversion of <i>The Killing Game Show</i> . Strong platformer with superb graphics.	7
FATMAN	Import		Punch-'em-up with comical characters parading across the screen.	6
FERRARI GRAND PRIX CHALLENGE	Flying Edge	£39.99	One of the worst racing games available. The ear-splitting sound doesn't help.	3
FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER	Electronic Arts	£44.99	The best football simulation ever, with spectacular action and four-player option.	9
FIGHTING MASTERS	Import		Great visuals, atrocious game. Only for beat-'em-up wimps.	2
FINAL BLOW	Import		Boxing game that again looks great, but don't be fooled.	3
FIRE MUSTANG	Import		A WW2 shoot-'em-up that doesn't work. Large graphics enhance the slow pace of the game.	5
FIRE SHARK	Sega	£34.99	Fun shoot-'em-up with everything except challenge. Good graphics and tricky opponents.	7
FLICKY	Sega	£29.99	Tiny sprites, simple backgrounds and awful gameplay make this simply appalling.	2
FORGOTTEN WORLDS	Sega	£34.99	Shoot-'em-up with long stages and varied enemies. Tough but enjoyable.	7
G-LOC	Sega	£39.99	Almost identical to the arcade version. Take to the skies and blast away.	8
GADGET TWINS	Imagitec	£39.99	Action packed and very funny platformer. Brilliant graphics and wonderful cartoon FX.	9
GAIN GROUND	Sega	£34.99	Impressive shoot-'em-up which will keep all blast fans happy.	8
GALAXY FORCE II	Sega	£34.99	Two-player game where you have to jump and shoot your way through a massive landscape.	8
GAUNTLET 4	Sega	£39.99	So bad, it's unbelievable...	1
GENERAL CHAOS	Tengen	£39.99	Fair conversion of the decade-old coin-op, with Sega Tap four-player option.	5
GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO BOXING	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Novel shoot-'em-up war game where you must position soldiers to blast the enemy.	8
GHOSTBUSTERS	Acclaim	£39.99	Poor attempt that does nothing whatsoever to Acclaim's reputation.	2
GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS	Sega	£34.99	All the characters have been turned into Japanese mutants with large heads.	9
GLOBAL GLADIATORS	Virgin	£39.99	Wonderful platform game where you fire custard at slime monsters and collect McDonald's arches.	9
GODS	Accolade	£39.99	Now officially released here, this playable platform puzzler has stunning graphics and backdrops.	7
GOLDEN AXE	Sega	£34.99	Great arcade game for its time but now looks terribly dated.	7
GOLDEN AXE II	Sega	£39.99	Easier than the original, it contains loads of new creatures and some good story screens.	7
GOLDEN AXE III	Sega	£34.99	What a waste of good programming time. Just like the other two, this shows absolutely no originality.	5
GRANADA X	Sega	£29.99	Control a 20-tonne tank to rescue a kidnapped girl. Very addictive.	8
GRANDSLAM TENNIS	Sega	£39.99	Plain tennis game which offers nothing new.	5
GREENDOGG	Sega	£39.99	Greendog is one cool Steve-dude. Guide him through wild lands on this well-animated platformer.	8
GREY LANCER	Import		Ultra-fast scrolling shoot-'em-up with a great soundtrack and superb gameplay.	9
GUNSHIP	US Gold	£44.99	Naïf conversion which turns the flight-sim licence into a mediocre shoot-'em-up.	5

BATTLE SQUADRON	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Very tough shoot-'em-up, which is both challenging and looks great.	8	GUNSTAR HEROES	Sega	\$39.99	Looks brilliant, but is incredibly tedious as you try to kill the frequent guardians with thousands(!) of hits.	6
BEAST WARRIORS	Import		Don't be fooled by the pretty pictures, there's nothing nice about this game.	2	GYNOUG	Sega	\$34.99	Nasty guardians and good gameplay make this worth looking at.	7
BIMINI RUN	Import		Outer-space shoot-'em-up that fails to impress. Funny but that's it.	5	HARDBALL	Accolade	\$34.99	Baseball sim that looks good but offers nothing.	3
BIO-HAZARD BATTLE	Sega	\$39.99	High difficulty setting that is very colourful but lacks gameplay.	6	HARDBALL III	Accolade	\$39.99	Will keep fans happy with great gameplay and excellent graphics.	8
BILL WALSH COLLEGE FOOTBALL	Electronic Arts	\$44.99	Much-needed development of the <i>John Madden</i> series for four players.	8	HARD DRIVIN'	Tengen	\$39.99	Two levels limit this well-executed driving sim.	7
BIO SHIP: PALADIN	Import		Two-player shoot-'em-up with cool sound, but it's pretty easy.	5	HAUNTING	Electronic Arts	\$49.99	Encouragingly original adventure ghost game in which you scare the pants off a rich family.	7
BLOCK-OUT	Electronic Arts	\$34.99	<i>Tetris</i> goes 3-D as you attempt to fit the blocks into a well. Very challenging.	7	HEAVY NOVA	Import		Robots beat each other up, boring.	3
BOB	Electronic Arts	\$44.99	BOB's a strange little character with odd animation, although he can't stave off the poor gameplay.	5	HEAVY UNIT	Import		Best thing on this shoot-'em-up is that you can change the shape of your ship.	6
BONANZA BROS	Sega	\$34.99	Option of a two-player mode which makes it more fun but still too easy.	5	HELLFIRE	Sega	\$34.99	Weird wacky shoot-'em-up that has a loyal following.	8
BURBY	Accolade	\$39.99	Massive pretender to the Sonic crown. Great graphics and sounds, although incredibly frustrating.	8	HERZOG ZWEI	Sega	\$34.99	Strategy and arcade combined, where you fight tanks. Odd name, eh?	6
BUCK ROGERS	Electronic Arts	\$49.99	Hugely challenging RPG with tons to do and difficulty set just right.	9	HOMIE ALONE	Sega	\$39.99	Spin-off from the movie: poor graphics and sound, with dodgy gameplay	4
BUDOKHAN	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Good presentation, but it's another shallow beat-'em-up with limited moves.	5	HOOK	Sony	\$39.99	Slow-paced platform adventure with very few innovations and crude gameplay.	5
BULLS VS LAKERS	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Re-live the 1991 NBA finals in this basketball sim. For die-hard fans only.	8	HUMANS	Imagitec	\$34.99	Puzzle game in which humans are controlled to clear levels. Good graphics and sound.	8
BURNING FORCE	Import		Awful beat-'em-up that isn't worth writing about.	1	IMMORTAL, THE	Electronic Arts	\$44.99	Tough puzzler with brilliant visuals. There are 20 different gory death sequences.	8
CADASH	Import		Japanese arcade adventure. Fun to play with bright sprites and detailed backgrounds.	7	INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE	US Gold	\$39.99	Platformer that follows the film well, but short and easy levels.	6
CALIBRE .50	Import		Vertical shoot-'em-up that is very mediocre.	3	INTERNATIONAL RUGBY	Domark	\$39.99	Shallow gameplay requires little passing or skill.	4
CALIFORNIA GAMES	Sega	\$39.99	Cool sports but rushed game. One for Surfers Steves only.	6	INSECTOR X	Import		Superb shoot-'em-up, where graphics, sound and gameplay are brilliant.	9
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE AVENGERS	Sega	\$34.99	Poor beat-'em-up worth playing in two-player mode only.	3	ISHIDO: THE WAY OF THE STONES	Accolade	\$34.99	Boardgame based on <i>Shanghai</i> . Okay but boardgame conversions at dodgy.	6
CASTLE OF ILLUSION	Sega	\$39.99	A classic game. Great everything on this wonderful platform extravaganza.	9	J LEAGUE PRO STRIKER	Sega	Import	Once in a while there comes a game that knocks us for six. <i>J League</i> is one of those games.	9
CENTURION	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Historical strategy with excellent in-game maps. Unfortunately, the storyline is dodgy.	7	JAMES BOND - THE DUEL	Domark	\$39.99	Neat animation and flawless graphics are helped by spot-on FX.	8
CHAKAN	Sega	\$39.99	Taken from the comic book series. Creative graphics and music enhance this, but lacking in gameplay.	7	JAMES POND	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	First MD game to be programmed solely in the UK. Quite bland but very playable.	6
CHAMPIONSHIP BOWLING	Mentrix	Import	All the action's offscreen in this odd translation of ten-pin bowling.	4	JAMES POND II	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	The graphics are very slick, the gameplay is challenging and overall very funny.	9
CHAMPIONSHIP PRO-AM	Import		Racing game with good view of the track. Very appealing with great graphics and soundtrack.	7	JAMES POND 3	Electronic Arts	\$44.99	Playable platformer that doesn't gel together as well as <i>RoboCod</i> .	8
CHESTER CHEETAH: TOO COOL TO FOOL	Kaneko	\$39.99	Unoriginal and dated platform adventure that's seriously uncool.	3	JENNIFER CAPRIATI TENNIS	Sega	\$34.99	Another plain tennis game, very basic all round.	4
CHIKI CHIKI BOYS	Sega	\$34.99	This platform adventure offers very little, but younger players will enjoy it.	5	JEWEL MASTER	Sega	\$34.99	Initially impressive but far too repetitive.	6
CHUCK ROCK	Virgin	\$39.99	Stone Age palaver in this arcade adventure. Very funny and challenging.	8	JOE MONTANA FOOTBALL	Sega	\$34.99	Not even Joe Montana can save this boring American football game.	4
CLUE	Import		Basically this is Cluedo on the MD. Not bad, but we'd rather buy the board game.	7	JOE MONTANA II	Sega	\$34.99	Real-speech commentary helps the sequel, but still needs work in game department.	6
COOL SPOT	Virgin	\$39.99	Original, fun and super cool. It's also very difficult and will keep you playing for ages.	9	JOE MONTANA III	Sega	\$34.99	It just gets better and better, retaining all the good things from the previous games.	8
COLUMNS	Sega	\$29.99	Brilliant puzzle game, which will keep you totally hooked.	9	JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	The original game that started the trend. Intelligent play, but simple moves.	7
CORPORATION	Virgin	\$39.99	A strange creature escapes from the labs. You have to kill the mutant and infiltrate the corporation.	9	JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL 92	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Updated graphics and sound make this a worthy upgrade.	8
COSMIC SPACEHEAD	Codemasters	\$39.99	Fairly enjoyable, but slow-paced point-and-click arcade adventure.	7	JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL 93	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	More of stats update for die-hard fans, and folks who haven't got the others.	8
CRACKDOWN	Sega	\$39.99	Shoot everything that moves. Detailed graphics and addictive gameplay.	8	JORDAN VS BIRD	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Average basketball game that unfortunately lacks depth.	5
CRUE BALL	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Fast and furious pinball sim, with ten tables and Motley Crue music.	6	JUNCTION	Import		By mixing a <i>Pipe Mania</i> -type game with a slide puzzle the result is a very challenging foray.	8
CHUCK ROCK 2	Core	\$39.99	This arcade adventure plays very similarly to the original, but lacks humour.	7	JUNGLE STRIKE	Electronic Arts	\$44.99	More of the same mindless <i>Desert Strike</i> encounters, but bigger and better than before.	9
CURSE	Import		The worst game ever?	0	JURASSIC PARK	Sega	\$49.99	You can control either Dr Grant or a Raptor in this polished movie licence.	8
CYBERBALL	Sega	\$34.99	Futuristic American football, with metal monsters, inaccurate graphics let it down.	5	KABUKI SOLDIER	Import		Beat-'em-up featuring sumo wrestlers – not bad.	6
DANGEROUS SEED	Import		12 levels of shooting away alien plant life. Makes for a novel and lengthy game.	8	KA-GE-KI	Sega	\$39.99	Also known as Fists of Steel. Grim, grim, ultra-grim.	3
DARIUS II	Import		Another 12-level shoot-'em-up, you can do the levels in any order.	8	KID CHAMELEON	Sega	\$39.99	The kid must venture everywhere to save his mates in a constantly changing game.	8
DARK CASTLE	Electronic Arts	\$34.99	Soundtrack saves this tedious offering. Poor animation and graphics.	4	KING COLOSSUS	Sega	Import	Japanese adventure game. Nine levels of adventuring.	4
DARWIN 4081	Import		Yet again you shoot aliens – not exactly 2010 philosophy, is it?	8	KING'S BOUNTY	Electronic Arts	\$34.99	Rather boring RPG with huge amounts of bland landscape to cover.	6
DAVE ROBINSON'S SUPREME COURT	Sega	\$39.99	Excellent sports simulation. Unfortunately the players aren't the real McCoy.	7	KING SALMON	Import		Fishing sim with Japanese text. Sounds quite naff but is actually very addictive.	8
DAVIS CUP TENNIS	Tengen	\$39.99	Totally accurate tennis sim – it even has players that argue! – but awkward player view.	8	KLAX	Domark	\$39.99	The Simpsons make an appearance, but a simple puzzle game really.	6
DEADLY MOVES	Import		Street Fighter II clone that lacks depth as each wrestler has limited moves and only one special attack.	7	LANDSTALKER	Flying Edge	\$39.95	In Japanese but great adventure game with tremendous graphics.	8
DEATH DUEL	Razorsoft	Import	Repellent shoot-'em-up that is very tough but lacks everything else.	6	LAKERS VS CELTICS	Sega	Import	Incredibly realistic, with all the players from that season. Basketball fans only.	8
DECAPITACK	Sega	\$34.99	Gory killings from a gruesome head-chucking main character. Big and very playable.	8	LAST BATTLE	Electronic Arts	\$34.99	Disappointing beat-'em-up with slow, boring gameplay.	7
DESERT STRIKE	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Prequel to Jungle Strike, with great graphics and sound, but not enough levels.	8	THE LEGEND OF GALAHAD	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Average platform with an element of RPG.	5
DEVILISH	Import		Similar to <i>Break-Out</i> , but with better graphics. Addictive bash-'em-down fun.	8	LEMMINGS	Sega	\$39.99	One of the finest puzzle games on cart. Extremely addictive.	6
DICK TRACY	Sega	\$34.99	Loads of neat cartoon statics and a decent attempt at character sprites, but lacks originality.	5	LHX ATTACK CHOPPER	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Helicopter sim that isn't original, but will appeal to war junkies.	9
DINOLAND	Import		Quite original, a beat-'em-up on roller skates, but again it's too easy.	3	LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Very good racing game, enhanced by speed, superb graphics and split screen.	6
DJ BOY	Sega	\$34.95	Viewed from above, this little race game should appeal to all ages, particularly the young.	5	M1 ABRAMS BATTLE TANK	Sega	\$39.99	If you like tanks then you won't be disappointed here. Lots of trundling around aimlessly.	7
DOUBLE CLUTCH	Sega	\$29.99	Arcade-style, two-player beat-'em-up. Much better than the sequel.	7	MCDONALD'S TREASURE LAND ADVENTURES	Sega	Import	Ronald McDonald stars in this colourful, playable platformer – pity it's only got four levels.	9
DOUBLE DRAGON	Ballistic	Import	Flickery graphics, slow characters and tiresome gameplay.	4	EA Sports	\$44.99	This upgrade of the popular gridiron series uses a whole new game engine.	7	
DOUBLE DRAGON II	Import		They should have stopped at the first one.	8	Electronic Arts	\$34.99	Replica of the arcade classic which is still brilliant, but limited.	6	
DOUBLE DRAGON III	Flying Edge	\$39.99	Simple, exploitative translation of the Coppola movie, severely lacking in originality – unlike the movie.	4	Sega	\$39.99	Viewing the match from the side fails dismally, making it very hard to work out moves.	8	
DRACULA	Sony	\$39.99	Official release of <i>Devil Crush</i> . Very addictive game that has superb graphics and sound.	8	Import	Import	Platform adventure which will test your reactions and skill. <i>Marvelous</i> graphics.	8	
DRAGON'S FURY	Domark	\$39.99	A successful combination of military manoeuvring and "gods game"-style construction.	1	Import	Import	Boring strategy where only the monsters win.	7	
DUNE II	Virgin	\$44.99	Superb graphics on this RPG and unlimited challenge make this a must.	7	Import	Import	Scrolling shoot-'em-up which is very fast but over too quickly.	6	
DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS	Sega	\$39.99	Loads of punks to mow down if you like that sort of thing. Far too easy.	8	Sega	\$39.99	Cyberpunk adventure through a post-nuclear landscape. Looks good, but is monotonous.	8	
DYNAMITE DUKE	Sega	\$34.99	Guide your intrepid explorer through countless scenarios in this colourful adventure.	9	Virgin	\$39.99	Brilliant game play and very challenging. Requires a lot of thought!	6	
EARNEST EVANS	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Prequel to <i>NHLPA Hockey</i> . Lots of gameplay, without all the intricacies.	4	Import	Import	Tetris, but better presented. Interesting graphics and varied game play.	8	
EA HOCKEY	Sega	\$39.99	If you like dolphins, you'll love this. <i>Hugely</i> original with stunning graphics and sound.	7	Import	Import	4x4 beach racer that doesn't live up to expectations.	4	
ECCO	Import		Shoot-'em-up where you've seen it all before. Gameplay is addictive and involving.	4	Sega	\$39.99	Identical to the arcade, beefy sounds and graphics.	8	
ELEMENTAL MASTER	Import		Looks great and plays as well. Brilliant manga animation and statics.	7	Codemasters	\$39.99	Average coin-op conversion which fails to impress.	7	
EL VIENTO	Sega	\$34.99	Parallax, multi-directional scrolling gives the impression of a huge game. Challenging and addictive.	9	Import	Import	Average coin-op conversion which fails to impress.	4	
ESWAT	Virgin	\$39.99	First decent soccer sim. Moves are convincing and creates a believable atmosphere.	8	Electronic Arts	\$39.99	Popular RPG which grows on you the more you play it.	4	
EUROPEAN CLUB SOCCER	Sega	\$39.99	Well defined sprites and challenging gameplay make this an impressive sim.	8	Ballistic	\$34.99	Similar to <i>John Madden</i> but without the character – still good, though.	8	
EVANDER HOLYFIELD'S BOXING	Import		A strange mixture of RPG, platform and puzzle makes <i>Exile</i> an intriguing game to play.	8	Import	Import	Fair representation of the game with good animation. But why buy it instead of the boardgame?	6	
EXILE	Sega	\$34.99	Save the population from extinction in the aftermath of WW3. Let down by the gameplay.	4	Import	Import	Controlling a sword-wielding young lass may appeal, but it becomes very tedious.	8	
EX-MUTANTS	Domark	\$44.99	Probably one of the most accurate driving sims around, but seriously flawed in its gameplay.	8	Sega	\$34.99	Save Michael's captured children (if you must). Detailed graphics, smooth animation and great sound.	8	
F1	Import		<i>F-1 Circus</i> is one of the best arcade driving sims yet. Plenty of courses, plenty of gameplay.	8	Acclaim	\$49.99	Expensive <i>Street Fighter II</i> basher with lots of flaws, but also lots of fun.	8	
F-1 CIRCUS	Import		Great sound FX and graphics with pukka visuals.	8	Import	Import	Much worse than the arcade version. Should have packed her bags and given up by now.	2	
F-1 GRAND PRIX	MicroProse	\$39.99	While this certainly looks passable, it never reacts like a real plane would.	6	MUHAMMAD ALI'S HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING	Virgin	\$39.99	The best bruiser in the ring. <i>Ali</i> has many options, great visuals and gob-smacking sound.	8
F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II									

POWER

title	producer	price	comment	rating
NHL HOCKEY 94	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Gameplay's almost identical to NHL PA, but sound and graphics are much more polished.	8
NHLPA HOCKEY	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Simply one of the best sports simulations you can slam into your machine. Super fast, super real.	9
NINJA BURA!	Import	£34.99	RPG that requires an understanding of Japanese.	7
OLYMPIC GOLD	US Gold	£39.99	Good simulation that is best played with two or more players.	8
ONSLAUGHT	Ballistic	£39.99	Medieval platform beat-'em-up that comes highly recommended.	8
OUTLANDER	Import	£34.99	Drive 'n' blast game that will please anyone who fancies themselves as Mad Max.	6
OUT RUN	Sega	£39.99	Arcade conversion that is very similar and still great fun even now.	7
OUTRUN 2019	Sega	£39.99	Set in the future, on a par with <i>Out Run</i> .	8
PAC-MANIA	Domark	£34.99	The graphics are excellent which makes the whole thing a joy to play.	8
PAPERBOY	Domark	£39.99	Still no two-player mode, and pretty much the same but slightly bigger.	6
PAPERBOY 2	Domark	£39.99	Better than <i>Arnold Palmer</i> with four courses and great graphics.	7
PGA TOUR GOLF	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Fantastic follow-up to PGA, with more courses and bigger, better challenge.	8
PGA TOUR GOLF II	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Quality platform adventure with excellent graphics and even better gameplay.	9
PHANTASY SOLDIER 3	Sega	£39.99	Mammoth RPG which is fairly easy to get into, but still very tough – and steep!	9
PHANTASY STAR II	Sega	£49.99	Ten quid cheaper than the original with improved graphics. But the sound is still very weak.	8
PHANTASY STAR III	Sega	£34.99	Very average shoot-'em-up, which you'll probably finish the day you get it.	8
PHELIOS	Import	£39.99	Much more violent than American football which it's loosely based on. Also has two-player mode.	6
PIGSKIN FOOTBRAWL	Domark	£49.99	Digitized graphics and gut-wrenching sounds enhance the experience of battering someone to death.	7
PIT-FIGHTER	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Certainly isn't an action game, yet the strategy isn't complex enough.	8
POPULOUS	Import	£39.99	A cross between wrestling, martial arts and soccer. Innovative but poorly executed.	6
POWERBALL	Electronic Arts	£39.99	A land mission has to be undertaken, unfortunately the graphics and sound let it down.	7
POWERMONGER	Accolade	£39.99	Not much different from every other golfing game, although the graphics are noteworthy.	7
POWER CHALLENGE	Flying Edge	£34.99	Seven stages of futuristic street violence with plenty of hostage rescuing to be done.	8
PREDATOR 2	Import	£39.99	Ardent sports fans will enjoy it, but it is totally unoriginal.	7
PRO QUARTERBACK	Psychosis	£49.99	Playable platformer with the emphasis on puzzle-solving in 51 challenging levels.	8
PUGS!	Sega	£39.99	Splendid Disney game with Donald starring in a superb platform adventure.	8
QUACKSHOT	Import	£39.99	Four-wheeler buggies racing around a race track. Utterly useless.	2
QUAD CHALLENGE	Tengen	£39.99	Souped-up version of <i>Hard Drivin'</i> with too few extra features to really shine.	7
RACE DRIVIN'	Import	£39.99	More shoot-'em-up fare from the Far East. Nothing new but quite challenging.	6
RAIDEN TRAD	Import	£39.99	Two games in one on this brilliant platformer. Totally addictive gameplay and awesome tunes.	9
RAINBOW ISLANDS	Sega	£29.99	Shoot the annoying inhabitants of a forest sounds boring, doesn't it. Well, it is.	5
RANBOW III	Sega	£39.99	Amazing-looking shoot-'em-up with double the usual number of colours onscreen.	8
RANGER-X	Import	£39.99	Guide your gallant hero through a maze of dangly platforms. Poor gameplay, decent graphics.	5
RASTAN SAGA 2	Import	£39.99	Baseball sim without a difference. Screens full of stats and difficult batting motion.	6
RBI 3 BASEBALL	Import	£39.99	Hitting the ball is hard enough. Once you've done this, you'll discover the outfield to be totally bland.	6
RBI 4 BASEBALL	Import	£39.99	Yet another baseball sim in the RBI series. Only for real armchair sports fans.	6
RBI BASEBALL '93	Tengen	£34.99	Considered to be one of the best beat-'em-up games, and rightly so.	8
REVENGE OF SHINOBI, THE	Sega	£34.99	Sluggish gameplay ruins this women's wrestling game. Good inlay, though.	6
RINGSIDE ANGEL	Electronic Arts	£49.95	Colourful, extremely large and exceedingly difficult. Brilliant nonetheless.	9
RINGS OF POWER	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Varied backgrounds and atmospheric music make this fun to play.	7
RISKY WOODS	Import	£39.99	Converted from the coin-op, but unfortunately it is dismally poor.	3
ROAD BLASTERS	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Race a motorbike through the countryside, overtaking or clubbing other competitors. Great fun.	8
ROAD RASH	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Virtually the same as the first but with the added bonus of two-player split screen.	9
ROAD RASH II	Acclaim	£39.99	On dear. A sad platform shoot-'em-up with stupid baddies and on-so-tedious blasting gameplay.	8
ROBOCOP 3	Virgin	£44.99	Mediocre platform shoot-'em-up action as you guide RoboCop through ten samey levels.	8
ROBOCOP VS TERMINATOR	Konami	£44.99	Smooth jaunt in the traditional style of <i>Ghosts 'n' Goblins</i> . Quite special.	8
ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES	Sega	£39.99	Encounter hoods, panthers and 18-wheel juggernauts. How <i>James Bond</i> should have been.	7
ROLLING THUNDER 2	Import	£39.99	Save the world's wildlife in this Indy-style adventure beat-'em-up. Untapped potential.	3
RUNARK	Import	£44.99	You've guessed it: a man with a sword, boring graphics and crap animation.	1
SAINT SWORD	Sony	£44.99	Superbly playable overhead-view footy game with great options to create custom cups and leagues.	7
SENSIBLE SOCCER	Import	£39.99	Sad Japanese arcade adventure with very little content to keep you playing.	8
SD VALIS	Import	£39.99	A beat-'em-up which fails to impress; poor graphics and virtually non-existent gameplay.	4
SHADOW BLASTERS	Sega	£39.99	In this beat-'em-up a dog does the dirty work for you, which adds an amusing dimension.	8
SHADOW DANCER	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Psychodelic graphics enhance this otherwise poor platformer that becomes very monotonous.	8
SHADOW OF THE BEAST	Electronic Arts	£39.99	This sequel combines teasing puzzles with atmospheric and mystical graphics.	9
SHADOW OF THE BEAST II	Sega	£44.99	Hugely addictive, with fantastic graphics and very challenging gameplay.	4
SHINING IN THE DARKNESS	Sega	£44.99	12Mbit sequel to <i>Darkness</i> , featuring more intelligence and improved gameplay.	5
SHINING FORCE	Sega	£34.99	Tremendous platform adventure with loads of pick-ups and plenty of ninja magic.	8
SHINOBI III	Import	£34.99	As the title implies, you literally shove things into where they belong. How dull...	8
SHOVE-IT	Sega	£34.99	Uneventful pool simulation. The tables are dull but a few trick games and extra options liven it up.	7
SIDE POCKET	Import	£34.99	Todd has to escape the planet of slimy surroundings. Too green to make this bearable.	6
SLIMEWORLD	Import	£34.99	Fun to play with some very fast gameplay, but not enough challenges.	5

title	producer	price	comment	rating
SUPER BASEBALL 2020	Electronic Arts	£44.99	This futuristic, robotic version of the sport is a bit gimmicky.	6
SUPER BATTLETANK	Import	£34.99	Tank sim that may appeal to your basic instincts, ie, point, shoot, blow up.	3
SUPER FANTASY ZONE	Sega	£34.99	Big guardians and small sprites. Good fun for a while.	6
SUPER HANG-ON	Sega	£34.99	Exciting motor-biking from this arcade classic.	8
SUPER HIGH IMPACT	Import	£34.99	Good animation on this American football sim, but as usual sad lack of challenge.	6
SUPER HQ	Import	£34.99	Very boring RPG that has nothing new to offer.	4
SUPER HYOLIDE	Sega	£34.99	Good in its day but now looks dated next to <i>J League</i> .	4
SUPER KICK OFF	US Gold	£39.99	Offers enough options to stave off boredom. One of the decent attempts at the sport.	8
SUPER LEAGUE BASEBALL	Sega	£34.99	Good war game that sets the scene for a challenging confrontation.	8
SUPER MILITARY	Import	£34.99	Everything else is here, just lacks a two-player mode.	8
SUPER MONACO GP	Sega	£49.99	All the sights and sounds are here on this 4x4 truck racing game. Great fun, cute trucks.	4
SUPER MONACO GRAND PRIX II	Ballistic	£29.99	Neat sound FX and good graphics scoring sequences which make this enjoyable to play.	8
SUPER OFF ROAD	Sega	£34.99	Highly acclaimed arcade game that is very tough. Bit flickery, though.	8
SUPER REAL BASKETBALL	Acclaim	£29.99	A shoot-'em-up that's claim to fame is the two views – all it does is confuse gameplay.	8
SUPER SMASH TV	Sega	£34.99	Side-view with super scrolling makes this a good, albeit odd, interpretation.	6
SUPER THUNDER BLADE	Flying Edge	£39.99	Addictive two-player action in the ultimate WWF simulation.	8
SUPER VOLLEYBALL	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Difficult to get into with sluggish gameplay.	8
SUPER WRESTLEMANIA	Sega	£49.99	Massive RPG which is incredibly tough. Fantastic graphics, large landscape.	8
SWORD OF SODAN	Sega	£39.99	Boring platformer with an additional shoot-'em-up section. Bad Disney licence – shock!	3
SWORD OF VERMILION	Sega	£39.99	Poor American offering that has dodgy graphics and gameplay.	6
TALSPIN	Sega	£39.95	Ambient backdrops and a charismatic main sprite give this game that something special.	8
TASK FORCE HARRIER EX	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Dodgy sound FX and animation let down the graphics.	6
TAZ MANIA	Import	£39.99	Racing sim combined with platform investigation scenes. Naïf conversion of a naïf original.	2
TEAM USA BASKETBALL	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Splendid adventure based around good old-fashioned RPG principles.	8
TECHNOCOP	Sega	£34.99	Best played on the two-player mode for the most fun. Limiting moves.	7
TECHNOCLASH	Konami	£39.99	Great beat-'em-up, with bright backdrops and colourful turtles.	8
TECNO WORLD CUP '93	Import	£39.99	Terry Venables baseball tie-in – er, no sorry, funny Jap baseball game. Whoops, sorry, Tel.	8
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES	Virgin	£39.99	Packed with sills from the movie linking the four stages. Great blasting but too short.	6
TEL TEL BASEBALL	Acclaim	£39.99	Use either the <i>Joypad</i> or the <i>Menacer</i> . Nine stages of fantastic virtual realism.	8
TERMINATOR, THE	Ballistic	£34.99	The success of this game lies in the car handling which feels just like the real thing.	9
TERMINATOR 2: THE ARCADE GAME	Sega	£34.99	Strong challenge and overall presentation with some super backdrops.	8
TEST DRIVE 2: THE DUEL	Sega	£34.99	Better than the original, this will have you playing for ages.	7
THUNDER FORCE II	Sega	£39.99	Magnificent graphics and gameplay. Shoot-'em-up at the peak.	8
THUNDER FORCE III	Import	£39.99	Check machine compatibility, but you're not missing anything.	9
THUNDER FORCE IV	Import	£39.99	Limited moves means it's not much fun to play	3
THUNDERFOX	Import	£39.99	Totally uninspiring helicopter game with dubious graphics.	5
THUNDER PRO WRESTLING	Import	£39.99	Wonderful adventure that borrows much from the Warner Bros cartoons.	2
TIGER HELI	Konami	£49.99	Much inspired by <i>Street Fighter II</i> as the Turtles and four friends try one-on-one combat. Very playable.	9
TINY TOON ADVENTURES	Sega	£34.99	Cartoon graphics and some brilliant sampled sound. Weird sense of humour.	8
TMNT: TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS	Sega	£44.99	Psychedelic graphics and weird features abound in this enjoyable, spaced out platformer. Dig it, man.	8
TOCJAM & EARL	Sega	£34.99	Great platformer with arcade-quality graphics. Bit too easy, though.	8
TOCJAM & EARL 2	Import	£34.99	Average shoot-'em-up which has little to offer if you want something different.	8
TOKI	Import	£34.99	Take control of Toxie and help him in this dire scrolling arcade adventure.	7
TORAI TORAI TORAI!	Import	£34.99	Nothing to do with trampolines. Not even bouncy or fun.	3
TOXIC CRUSADERS	Import	£34.99	Female stars in Forgotten Worlds type game. Makes for a good looking and colourful game.	1
TRAMPOLINE TERROR	Sega	£39.99	A normal but easy vertical shoot-'em-up that's immense fun. <i>Taisujin</i> on import.	7
TROUBLE SHOOTER	Ballistic	£34.99	The innovative shooting technique adds a new twist to this platform shoot-'em-up.	8
TRUXTON	Sega	£34.99	Control a helicopter through dreary battle zones.	4
TURBO OUT RUN	Sega	£34.99	Average shoot-'em-up that is very easy.	4
TURRICAN	Import	£34.99	A psychodelic Japanese shoot-'em-up which plays well. Intense and challenging.	5
TWIN COBRA	Sega	£34.99	The sequel to <i>Populous</i> has more powers, better graphics and bigger landscapes. Action-oriented strategy.	8
TWIN HAWK	Virgin	£34.99	Plays like <i>Ohello</i> , but totally rubbish with very few console-inspired surprises.	4
TWINKLE TALE	Sega	£39.99	Fast, furious and full of options, but fails to deliver in the all-important gameplay department.	8
TWO CRUDE DUDES	Accolade	£39.99	Zombie level guardians add humour to this shoot-'em-up. Wicked title.	5
TWO TRIBES	Import	£39.99	Not as tough as it looks, but super gameplay. Could be called <i>Turrican 2</i> .	8
ULTIMATE QIX	Import	£39.99	The original hack-'em-til-they-die arcade adventure. Worth a playtest for a laugh.	7
ULTIMATE SOCCER	Import	£39.99	Looks great but is incredibly boring. Should have left it at <i>Valis</i> .	6
UNDEADLINE	Import	£39.99	Fun to play with some very fast gameplay, but not enough challenges.	5
UNIVERSAL SOLDIER	Import	£39.99	Fun to play with some very fast gameplay, but not enough challenges.	5
VALIS	Import	£39.99	Fun to play with some very fast gameplay, but not enough challenges.	5
VALIS III	Import	£39.99	Fun to play with some very fast gameplay, but not enough challenges.	5
VAPOR TRAIL	Import	£39.99	Fun to play with some very fast gameplay, but not enough challenges.	5

MORE POWER

Now I know a lot of you haven't heard about this game yet, but as soon as you do, make sure you take a look at it. *Puyo Puyo* is a Japanese import game that has a similar connection with that old Sega classic, *Columns*. The theory behind the game is virtually the same: you must get rid of blocks in sets of three, for example three blues or reds — you know the score. It also has a rather wicked two-player aspect, in that you can challenge your friends in a tremendous, and I must say exciting, series of matches. This game is most definitely a puzzle game at its best, as you find the hours (in my case, work) ticking away. Those who love fancy graphics will hate this; it's all very plain. But this is gaming at its finest, and for me you'd have to go a long way to beat this for sheer entertainment.



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Now a lot of you haven't heard about this game as soon as you do, make sure you take a look at *Go* is a Japanese import game that has a similarity to that old Sega classic, *Columns*. The theory is virtually the same: you must get rid of blocks in three blues or reds – you know the score. *Go* has a rather wicked two-player aspect, in that you can challenge your friends in a tremendous, and I must say exciting, series of matches. This game is most definitely a puzzle game at its best, as you find the hours (in my case, work) ticking away. Those who love fancy graphics will hate this; it's all very plain. But this is gaming at its finest, and for me you'd have to go a long way to beat this for sheer entertainment.

I know strategy games aren't everyone's cup of tea, and I firmly believed they weren't for me – until I played *Dune II*. Its easy-to-use controls are a boon, helping to get you involved in the game very quickly. It's all very simple, moving the cursor around, selecting the unit you want and telling it where to go. Even the process of building new installations is instinctively easy – no complex menus and submenus here. It is that the first few missions really help you learn everything on screen rather than having to read a manual. Despite this, the game offers a mammoth task. Become much harder as you progress, requiring good military strategy and management of your resources. In the way new weapons are constantly introduced,



At a time when it is politically sound to denounce boxing as a brutal and barbaric sport, it is comforting to see that conservative game publishers have blatantly ignored the qualms of the more right thinking public, and brought out a brutal and bloody button basher that totally glorifies the aggressive nature of the sport. I'd like to express some concern... but I can't. I totally love it!

The idea of "being" any of the great middleweights of all-time is inexplicably appealing to me, and as I carve into my opponents as the crafty Sugar Ray Leonard, the brutal Jake LaMotta, or even the marvellous Marvin Hagler, I find myself being the kind of creature that the Marquis of Queensbury had nightmares about.

Why can't you bite their ears, thumb their eyes or head-butt them? That's all that's missing, even more ways to make them bleed: 9-10 You're out!

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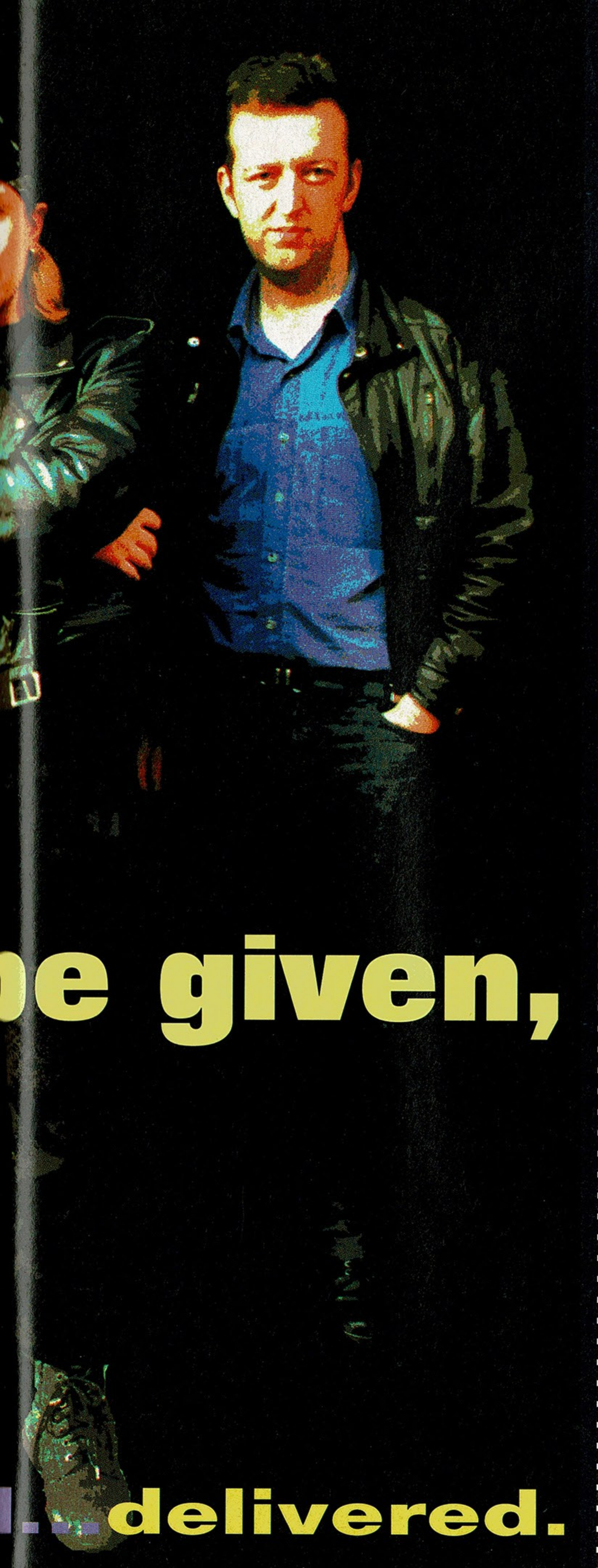
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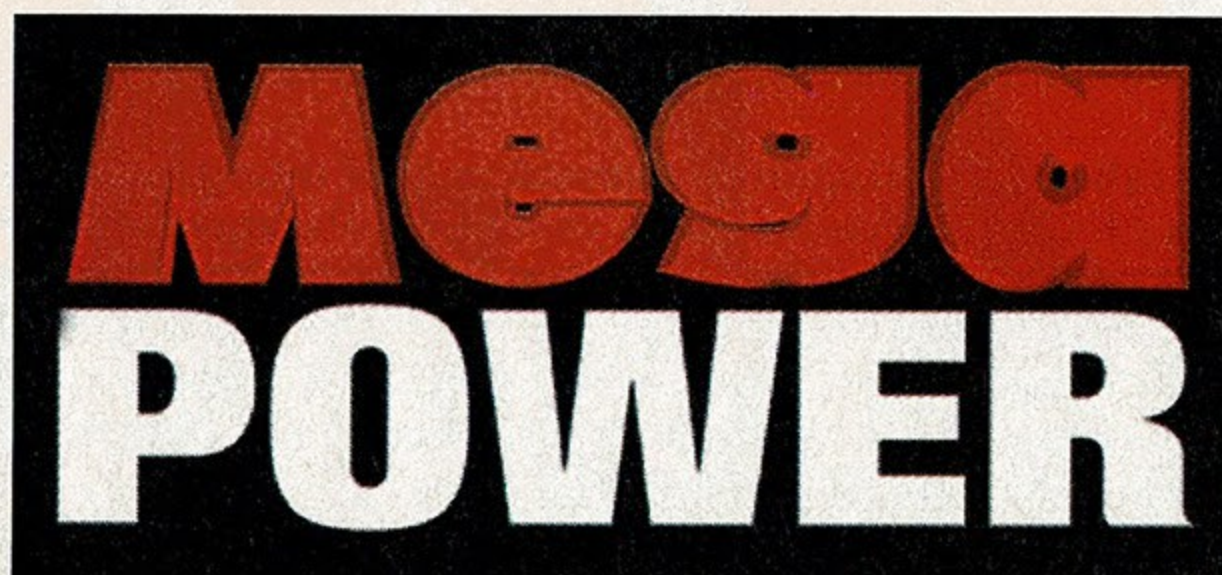
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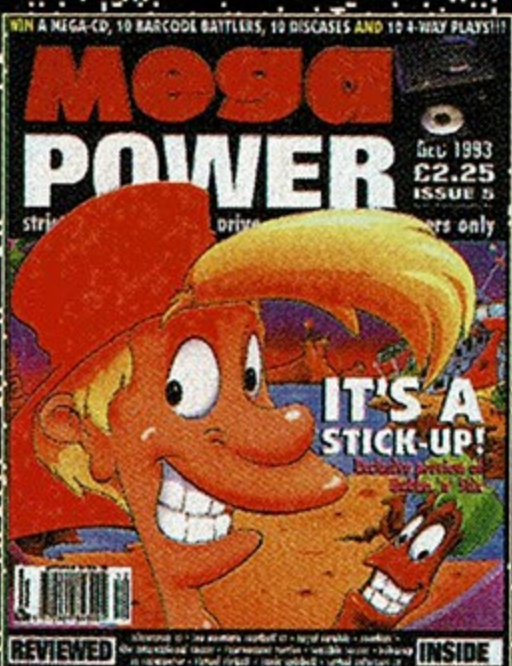


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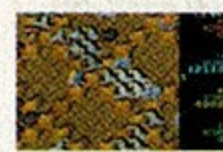
Charts

HIGH STREET CHARTS

Compiled with the help of HMV, Our Price and Virgin.

mega drive

position	last month	months in chart	game title
1	(-)	1	FIFA Soccer
What a surprise, Electronic Arts with their latest example of how to produce a brilliant sports sim.			
2	(-)	1	Sonic Spinball
The world's favourite hedgehog is back in yet another adventure, this time on a pinball table.			
3	(-)	1	RoboCop Vs Terminator
This supposedly controversial game is nothing really more than a bland shoot-'em-up.			
4	(1)	2	Street Fighter II
Quite simply the finest game available, it's set such high standards that everything else looks lame.			
5	(2)	2	Aladdin
You've played the game, watched the film: what next, going to see Sue Pollard in pantomime? No, please spare us!			
6	(-)	1	WWF Royal Rumble
Acclaim's very amusing wrestling game, which has you smashing chairs over each other. Top fun.			
7	(7)	3	Rocket Knight Adv.
Join Sparkster and friends as you battle fierce pigs in this captivating platform adventure.			
8	(-)	1	Gauntlet 4
Not one, but four players in this enjoyable romp, all about shooting, magic and all that other baloney.			
9	(9)	3	NHL Hockey '94
This one stays at number nine, and EA prove that they can milk their sims till the cows come home.			
10	(-)	5	PGA Tour Golf II
This game is the equivalent of Meat Loaf's "Bat Out Of Hell", ie it's always in the charts. Fantastic.			



mega-cd

1	(2)	2	Sonic CD
Hardly surprising to find this game at the top of the tree. One of the better examples of CD gaming.			
2	(-)	1	Lethal Enforcers
Tremendous fun, as you blast your way through FMV to your heart's content as a rookie cop.			
3	(-)	1	Thunderhawk
Core's highly praised CD release has you flying the chopper, fast and furious in the ready money round.			
4	(4)	2	Ecco
Ambient gaming at its best. Put on "Chill Out", partake of your favourite vice, and play forever.			
5	(-)	1	Night Trap
It's strange to see this return into the charts, but it's a welcome re-entry for the playable interactive movie.			



INDEPENDENT CHARTS

Compiled with the help of Video Games Centre, The Software box and Video Games Box.

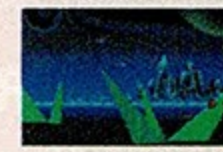
mega drive

position	last month	months in chart	game title
1	(-)	1	FIFA Soccer
Da, da, da, da, EA at Wembley, just listen to what they're singing. Most excellent football simulation.			
2	(1)	3	Street Fighter II
We keep on praising this game, but nine out of ten gamesplayers also think it's the tops.			
3	(-)	1	RoboCop Vs Terminator
Why they gave this a "16" certificate beats us. We've seen worse things at a PTA meeting.			
4	(-)	1	Sensible Soccer
Oh, we're so lucky working with the world champion, Phil King! Small spites, but still a top game.			
5	(2)	2	Aladdin
Disney's much-hyped adventure is an excellent game. Check out Robin Williams in the film, too.			
6	(-)	1	ToeJam & Earl II
Psychedelic stuff from Sega. This game is so surreal, with wicked graphics and gameplay.			
7	(6)	2	F1
Domark's hot racing simulation, that suffers slightly from a few flaws, but on the whole is rather playable.			
8	(8)	4	PGA Tour Golf II
Don't blame Steve, maybe it's because the price has been reduced that this has remained in the charts.			
9	(9)	2	Aero The Acro-Bat
Surprisingly, this hasn't changed from last month's chart. A very credible platformer, with the obligatory cutesy star.			
10	(-)	1	WWF Royal Rumble
Proving to be popular amongst both importers and official retailers, simply on the basis that it's rather good.			



mega-cd

1	(1)	4	Sonic CD
Still there, but now being challenged by plenty of new and exciting games. How long can Sonic keep it up?			
2	(2)	2	Lethal Enforcers
A deserved second month here for this supreme shoot-'em-up. Get those guns and do some damage.			
3	(-)	1	Ground Zero Texas
Hot on the heels of the above, this again is a brilliant game where you deal with chameleon aliens.			
4	(-)	1	Stellar-Fire
Exceedingly poor space shoot-'em-up, where you'll find as much pleasure as watching paint dry.			
5	(3)	6	Silpheed
Still clinging in there after all this time, love it or hate it, you can't seem to ignore it.			



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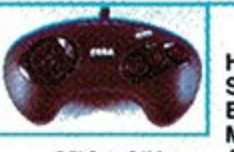
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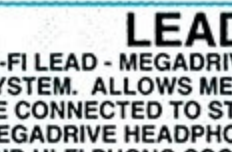
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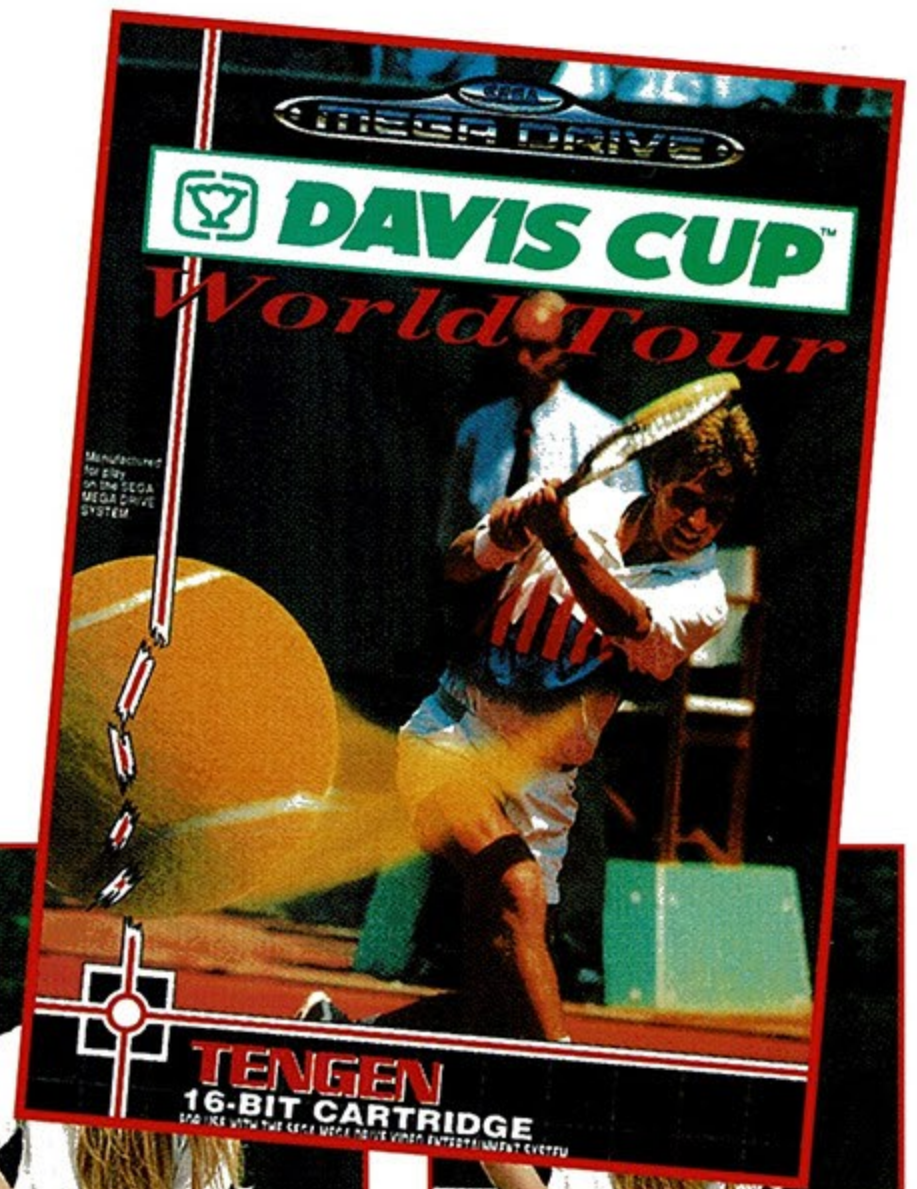
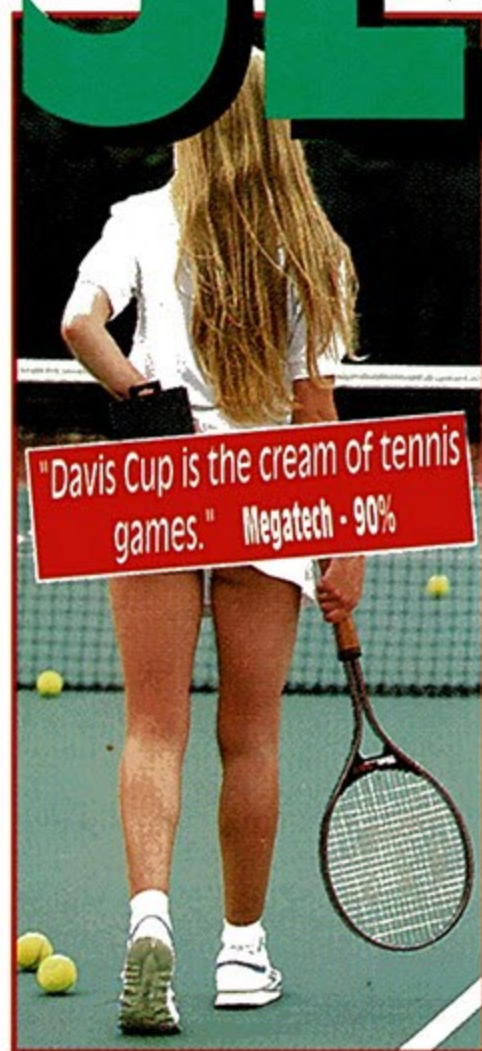
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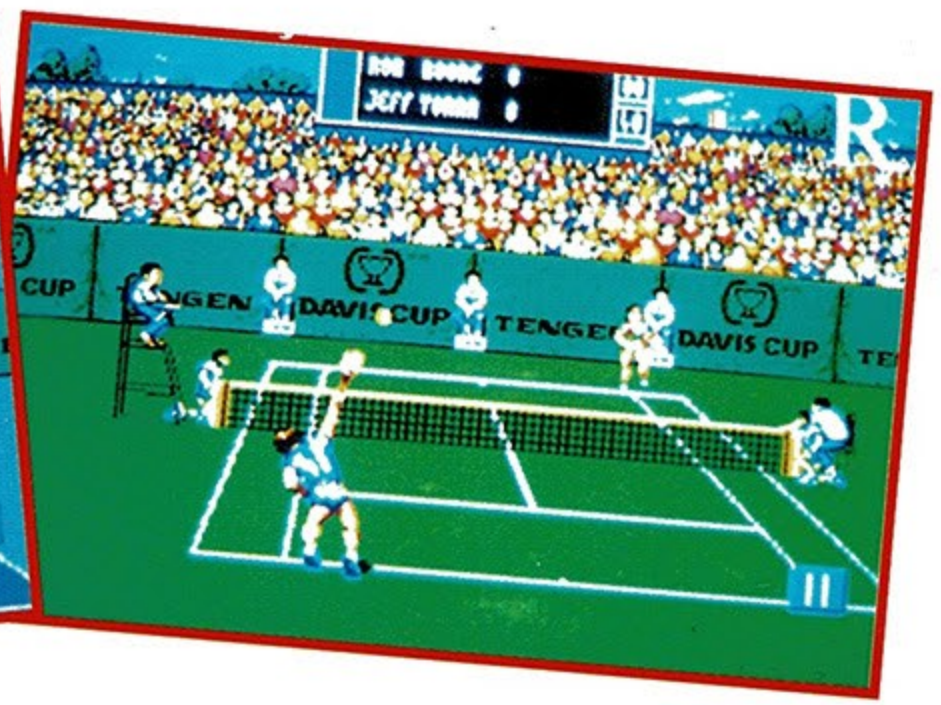
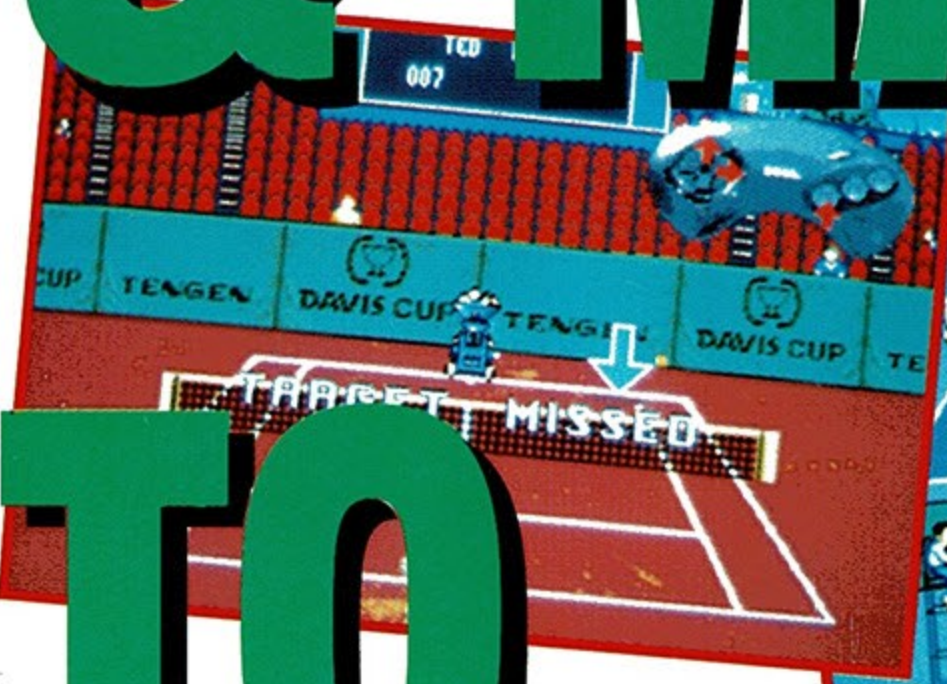
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