REVIEWED! TONY HAWK'S 2 ■ DAVE MIRRA BMX ■ RESIDENT EVIL 3 ■ MR DRILLER ■ WORMS

THE DREAMCAST MAGAZINE

DC-UK

January 2001

18

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EXCLUSIVE!

Skies of Arcadia

OVER 20 PAGES OF IN-DEPTH PREVIEWS!

Sega's amazing RPG revealed in full. See one of the biggest games of next year. Here! First!

PREVIEWED!

Unreal Tournament

It's deathmatch time again

Arm yourself with all the latest info and screenshots of this brutal shooter!

REVIEWED!

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

The Hawkman is back get your pads on and follow us!

TIPPED! MSR AND SHENMUE

A full driving guide and a detailed walkthrough inside

REVEALED! ANTI-DREAMCAST?

Are shops treating Sega's machine fairly? **p042**

PLUS! SEGA PILLOWS!

The crazy world of Japanese merchandise **p038**

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PREVIEWED! Grandia II ■ Outtrigger ■ Cannon Spike ■ Vanishing Point

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With tougher, meaner worms and on-line game play, it's an epidemic in the making.

WORMS WORLD PARTY. A TRULY GLOBAL PROBLEM.

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January 2001

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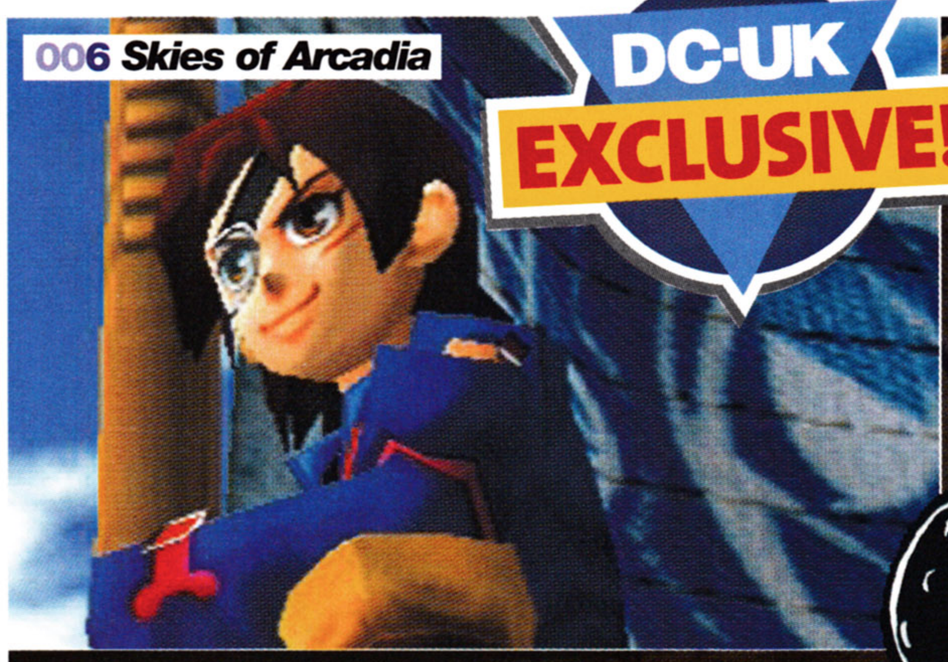

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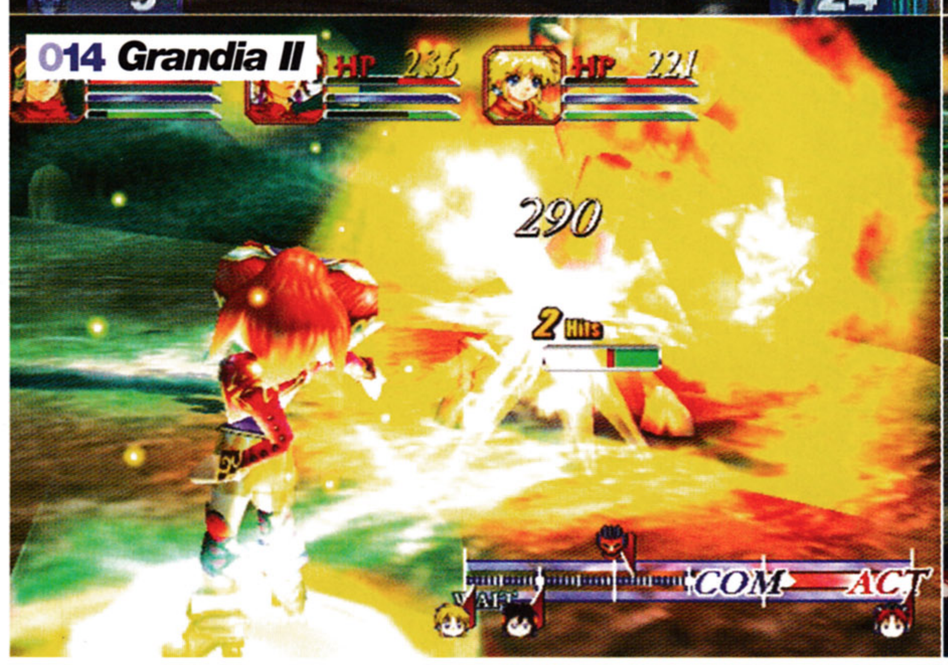
Just when you thought it was safe to stop skating...



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Reviews you can trust

050 *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* The king of the skateboard is back and we're determined to get through this entire intro without having to rely on the lazy, oh so hilarious, use of skate slang words such as 'rad', 'bitchin' or 'gnarly'... Oops

056 *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX* BMX was to the eighties what skateboarding was to the seventies, and surfing was to the sixties and mopeds were to the fifties. Find out why in our review of this bicycling simulation

058 *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* Eurgh, I just know there's a zombie hiding in this room, yet I must enter and investigate further. Don't get me, zombie, don't hurt me, my undead friend. I'll just... AAAARRRGGHH!

060 *4x4 Evolution* Roads are rubbish – they're full of traffic and don't have mud all over them. It's time to leave that tarmac behind and discover the uninhibited thrills of naked offroad racing! Apart from the naked part

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Come aboard Sega's jaw-dropping RPG adventure. You won't have seen anything as beautiful as this since Lisa Snowdon did that photoshoot in Maxim. Mmmmmmmm

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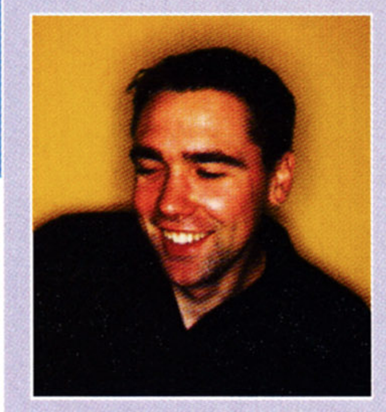


The problem is, there are too many of them. Astonishing games, I mean. You're still playing *Virtua Tennis*, *Ferrari 355* and *Metropolis Street Racer*, you're getting to grips with *Jet Set Radio*, *Quake III* and *Shenmue*, and you're looking forward to *Half-Life*, *Phantasy Star Online* and *Daytona*. But there's another potential classic on the horizon that you might not even have got round to thinking about yet. It is called *Skies of Arcadia*.

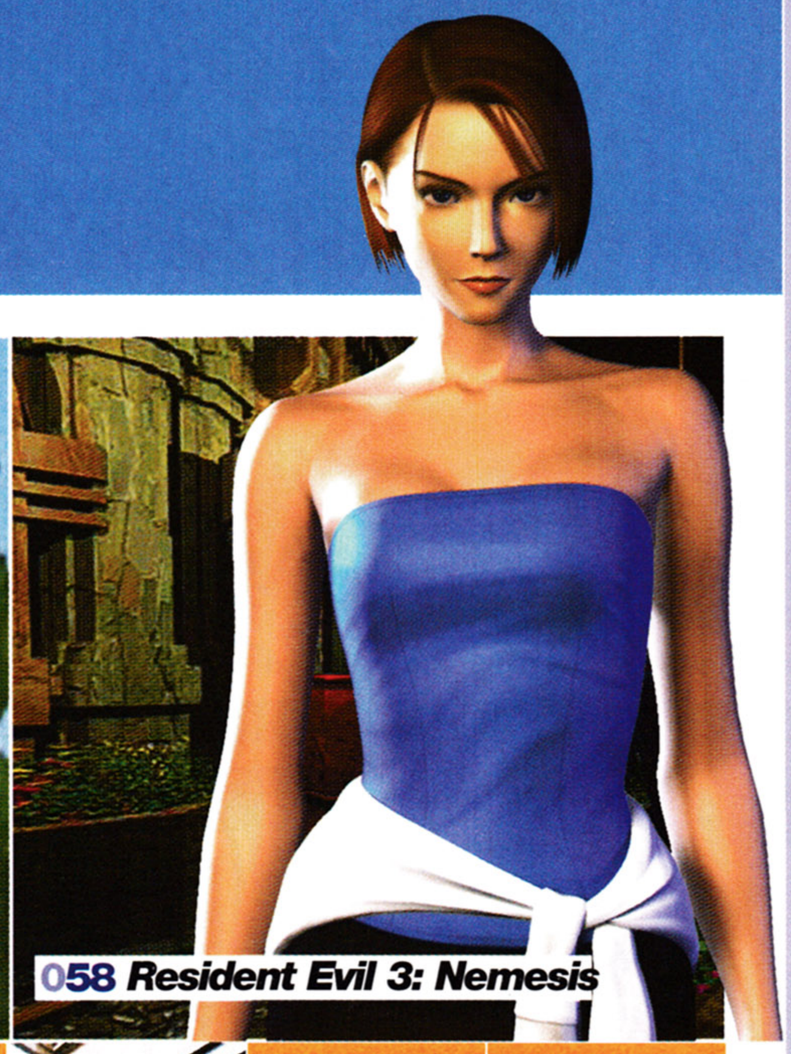
Designed by Sega's Overworks team, this stunning RPG is a Dreamcast original – unlike *Grandia II* or *Phantasy Star Online*. It has been infused with new ideas and genuine enthusiasm (I know, I've met the team and they talk about the project the way gooey couples talk about 'trying for a baby'), it is going to be a great game. Just one of the great games Sega has told us about, and no doubt an accurate precursor of what is yet to be announced.

It's funny, then, that many gamers haven't even heard of *Skies of Arcadia*. If this game were coming out for a certain new, rival console it would have been embraced by a £10,000,000 marketing campaign. We would see short animated sequences featuring Vyse and his flying chums before each and every Champions League game; television programmes would be heralding it as the 'next generation of videogaming, far better than anything ever made before, ever, ever, ever'. It's funny how perspective works. Reminds me of a corking goal Paul Dickov of Man City scored against Bradford earlier this season, a volleyed belter from the cusp of the area. If Di Canio or Owen had put that in it would have been hailed as genius. But it was just Paul Dickov of Man City, so, oh, it was okay I suppose.

So we're preparing you this month for what lies ahead. While your gullible mates pick over the bones of their new console's skeletal launch line-up, you'll be ready for rich gaming experiences such as *Skies of Arcadia*, *Grandia II*, *Phantasy Star Online* and many others. How's that for perspective? ■

Keith Stuart
Editor

056 *Dave Mirra BMX*



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Why are shops trying to dissuade people from buying Dreamcasts? What do they stand to gain? Find out in our paranoid exposé

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Your favourite games made easy

072 *Metropolis Street Racer* If you're anything like half of the **DC-UK** team, you probably can't drive for toffee. Luckily, Ged Talbot of Bizarre Creations can and he's going to share his experience and ability with you. So come along to our *MSR* driving school. No sniggering at the back, there

078 *Shenmue* We've written a complete guide to this mammoth revenge drama, and here are the first two chapters worth. If you're happy hanging around in the arcade all day, fine. If not, follow us as we take you on the incredible journey that is *Shenmue*. Don't forget to check out the news on *Shenmue 2* on page 028 as well!

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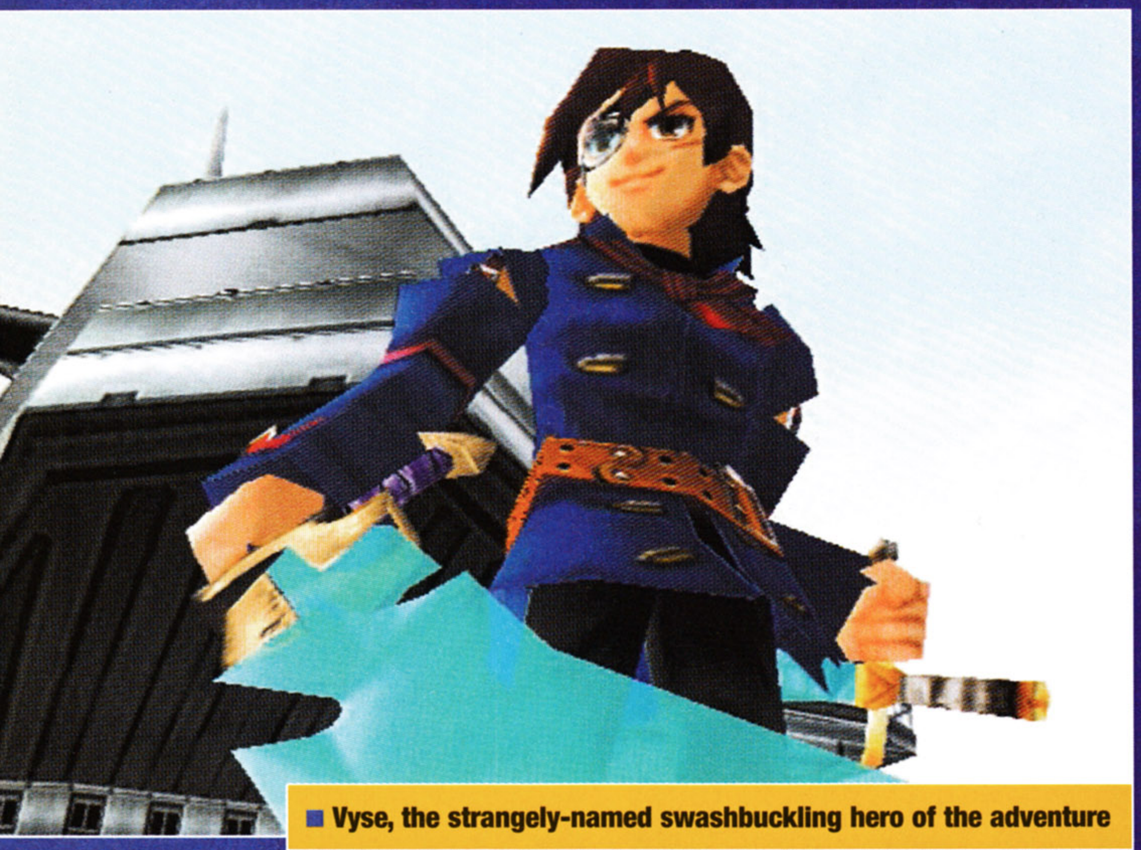
Can this game *really* be better than the first one? Find out right here, skate fans!



■ Vyse, the strangely-named swashbuckling hero of the adventure

■ Flying galleons are used to traverse the airborne gaming world

SKIES OF ARCADIA

The sky's the limit for one of the most highly anticipated role playing games ever made

IN A **NUTSHELL**

DETAILS

Publisher:	**Sega**
Developer:	**Overworks**
Origin:	**Japan**
Players:	**One**
Release date:	**January**

> Traditional role playing fun finally arrives on Dreamcast in the airborne shape of *Skies of Arcadia*.

With great characters, an absorbing story and imaginative battle action, this deserves to be very big indeed ■

With *Grandia II* and *Phantasy Star Online* just around the New Year corner, it might be easy to overlook Sega's upcoming stunner, *Skies of Arcadia* (formerly *Eternal Arcadia*). But ever so quietly, the recently renamed Overworks team has been tweaking and reworking its massive RPG in order to become everything to Dreamcast that *Panzer Dragoon Saga* was to Saturn. Yes, it's that ambitious.

Spread across two GD-Roms and boasting an impressive gameplay length of 50-plus hours of pure roleplaying euphoria, *Skies of Arcadia* tells the tale of a young wannabe air pirate named Vyse, who sails through the skies on his father's magnificent flying galleon. The father-son duo are members of the Blue Rogues, a group of pirates dedicated to doing the right thing (ie, giving to the poor, protecting the innocent, etc) as opposed to the more stereotypical pirate things (in a nutshell, fighting, pillaging and terrorising the countryside). The starry-eyed Vyse hopes to one day have a ship and pirate gang to call his very own, but he needs to prove himself before he can earn his wings.

And prove himself he will, as Vyse's bravery and noble nature are tested to the full in this epic adventure. A slew of villians are constantly on hand for turn-based battles: including a vast selection of weird sea creatures and notorious enemy swashbucklers, the Black Pirates. But, as with any RPG worth it's salt, there's the far more serious problem of an ambiguous, all-consuming, evil ready to bring war and chaos to the land of Arcadia. Naturally, it's down to Vyse and his

■ A favourite element of RPGs has always been heading for the shops to stock up on a range of new goodies. *Skies of Arcadia* certainly doesn't disappoint in this department

■ Graphics are tremendous throughout the game with each island boasting its own distinctive architecture (left) While the battleship fights look spectacular (right)

THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL

■ Treasure hunting is a race to find the object before your rival, Domingo

> Remember that you're flying around in the Age of Discovery? With this in mind, you'll no doubt thrill at the possibility of unearthing all kinds of treasures throughout the adventure. These discoveries can be made anywhere on the game map and pop up if you're in the right place by pressing the A button. Your finds are logged in your Journal under Discoveries (apt) and with over 40 entries to fill, you'll be desperately trying to get 'em all, Pannini sticker-stylee.

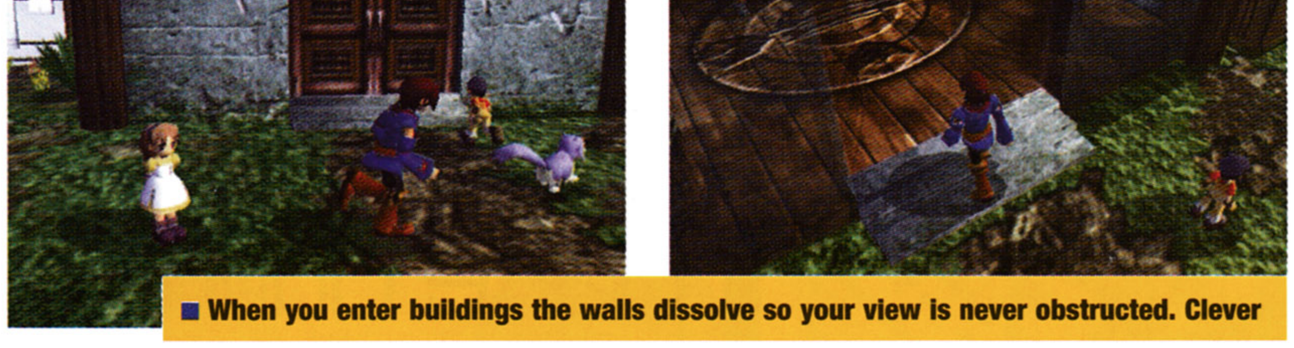
Throwing a potential spanner in the works is the fact that a fellow treasure hunter by the name of Domingo is also on the lookout for new things to discover. If you beat him to the loot you'll be able to sell your Discovery information for a pretty profit. But if the swine gets there first you can expect mere pocket change. Better get that old metal detector out of the shed ■

"What's an RPG without a little romantic tension?"

ever-increasing gang of adventurers to stop it.

Vyse's company includes two lovely ladies who just may form the corners of a very interesting love triangle: Aika, the bouncy, perky fighter who grew up with Vyse; and Fina, the wispy, ethereal spell-caster who Vyse saves at the beginning of the story and who remains very much an enigma throughout. Though Overworks is keen to stress the friendship the two girls share and the absence of any blatant love interests between them and Vyse – we have our suspicions otherwise. What's an RPG without a little romantic tension? And with the night-and-day differences separating Aika and Fina (tough girl vs proper lady), we'd be disappointed if the sparks weren't flying by disc two.

Actually, it is Fina's mysterious nature and ambiguous past that will propel much of the main ▶

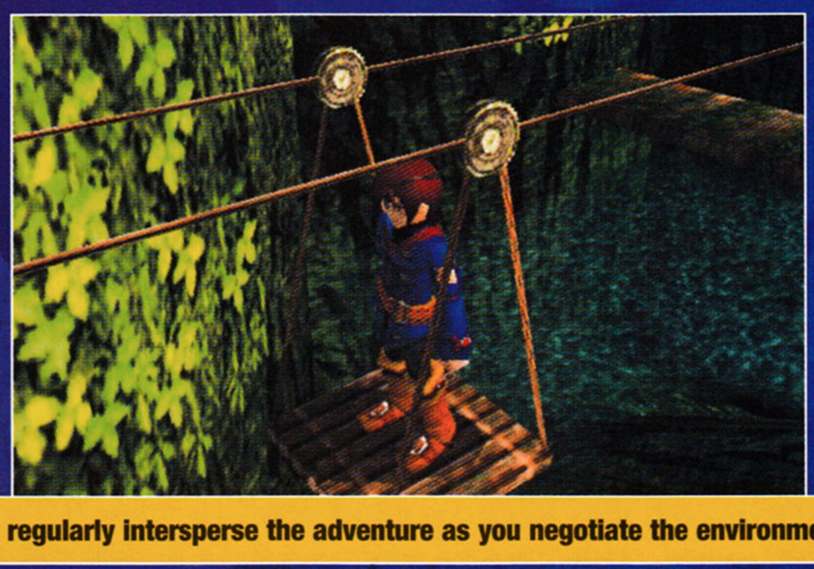


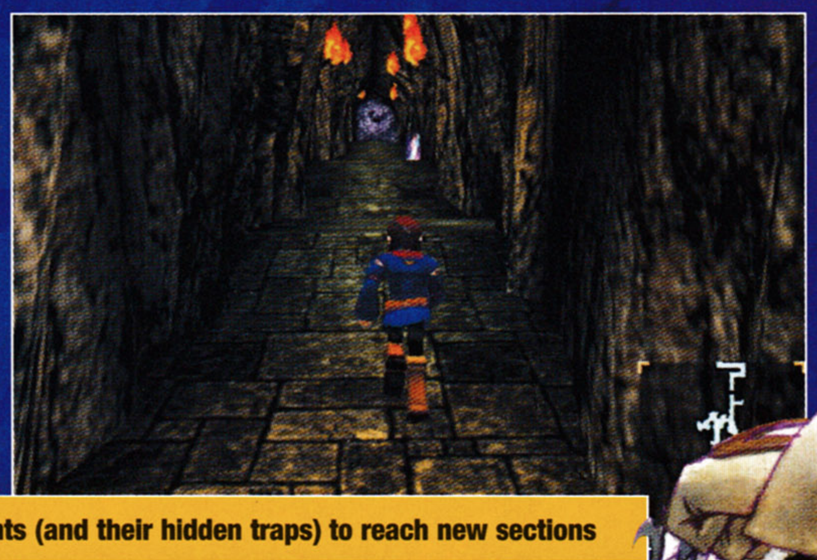
■ When you enter buildings the walls dissolve so your view is never obstructed. Clever

■ A variety of battleships will be at your disposal as you play through the adventure

■ Vyse makes short work of a winged beastie with his cutlass weapon

■ Looks like he could do with an umbrella





■ Exploration and puzzle elements regularly intersperse the adventure as you negotiate the environments (and their hidden traps) to reach new sections

► storyline in *Skies of Arcadia*. Neither Aika, nor Vyse, know much about her and as you progress and uncover more of the plot, little clues and random pieces of the puzzle will begin to fall into place, helping the player to uncover Fina's origin and her link to the troubles that plague Arcadia.

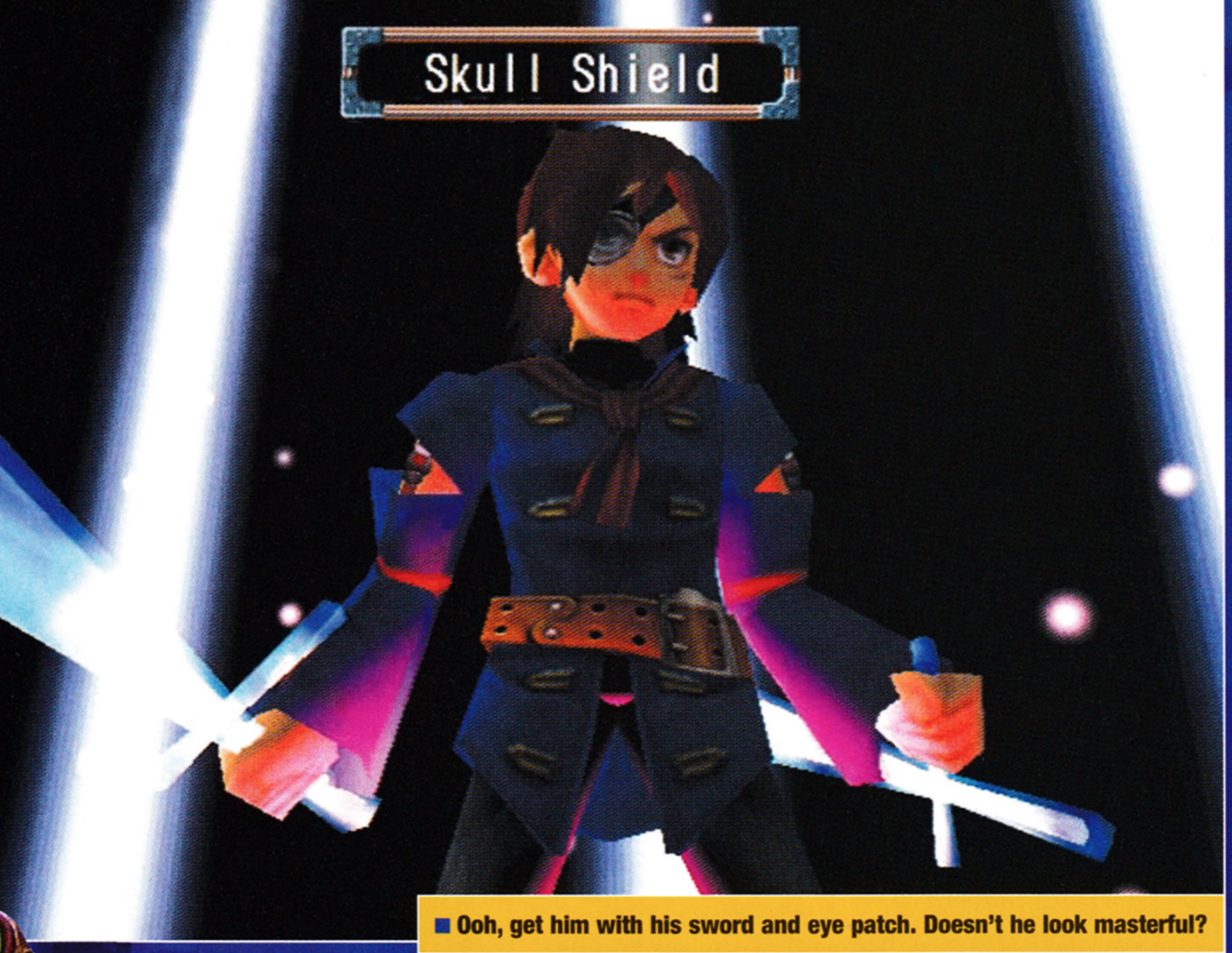
While the idea of a bunch of fresh faced adventurers confronted by a nebulous evil while trying to solve the riddle of one mysterious girl's past, isn't exactly the most original idea under the sun (especially for veteran RPG fans), the execution of the story concept certainly is.

If you've been following the twists and turns of *Skies of Arcadia*'s development from the early days like **DC-UK** has, you'll already know that the game's journey takes place during a decidedly different era from most RPGs: a sort of futuristic, fantasy Age of Discovery, replete with emerging technologies and air pirates travelling in search of new lands and adventures. By taking this intriguing premise and spreading it across a massive gaming world with a number of 'countries' to visit, Overworks has created an RPG that is both incredibly ambitious and very, very exciting.

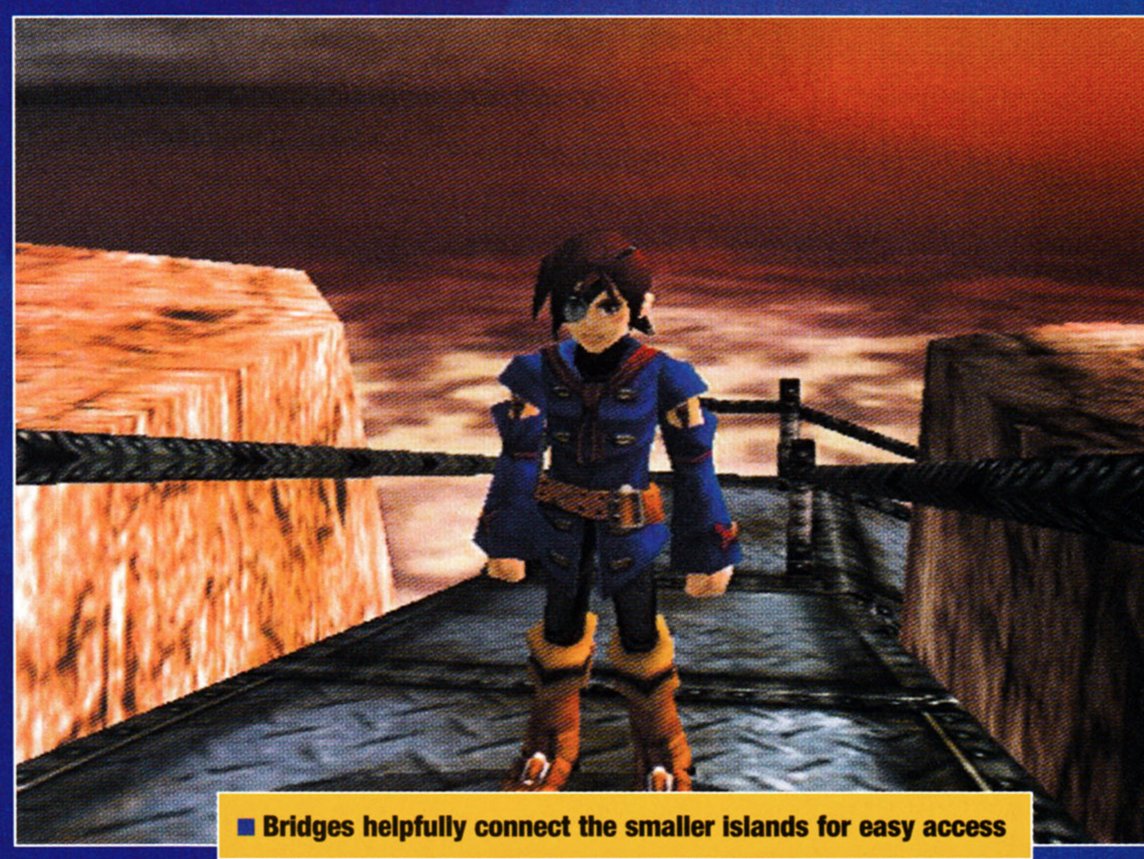
■ Each character has their own spectacular selection of magic attacks which can be added to as you progress

> "The game's journey takes place during a decidedly different era from most RPGs"

The world of Arcadia is dotted with a number of islands floating in seas of wind and clouds. As you travel across the globe in your air galleon you must stop at these various countries and meet the natives. Each island's population has its own style of dress, language and culture and this incredible level of detail also spills over into the environmental designs. All the countries have different and distinctive landscapes boasting some intelligent, interactive features. For example, a subtlety such as a waterfall cascading down a dungeon wall may well be calling the gamer's attention to the possibility of a secret passage lurking below the foamy depths of the pond at the foot of the waterfall. ►



■ Ooh, get him with his sword and eye patch. Doesn't he look masterful?



■ Bridges helpfully connect the smaller islands for easy access

RANK AND FILE

> One of the coolest features in *Skies of Arcadia* undoubtedly has to be Vyse's upgradeable ranking. On the menu screen, you'll find that Vyse has a title that changes from time to time. Whether you go up or go down depends on how you handle yourself in battle and when making tough decisions during your journey. After all, a man of honour and integrity is measured by the choices he makes, right? Make sure to listen for a chime when you select an answer after you are given multiple choices during a conversation. If you hear it, your ranking is slowly going up – but if you hear something else entirely, prepare to be demoted. Your rank will affect how merchants and some villagers will treat you throughout the game, plus who wants to be merely 'Vyse the Swordsman' when you can be 'Vyse, the King of the Rogues'. See if you can get him an even higher ranking ■

■ As you move up through the ranks, members of the public become increasingly licky. Creeps

ARCADIA'S MOST WANTED

> Meet the crew of the good ship *Skies of Arcadia*. A hardy bunch of warriors and magicians (with hidden personal 'issues') led by the brave young air pirate, Vyse, who's determined to match his father's legendary achievements as captain of the Blue Rogues. All six characters presented here can be added to your crew as the adventure unfolds and although Vyse is the main hero whose role you play, the others also become playable as soon as they sign up for perilous Blue Rogue duty. Admittedly, they fall into general RPG stereotypes (misunderstood hero, wispy sorceress, etc) but they're so well-rounded and intelligently portrayed you can't fail to become attached to them ■

VYSE

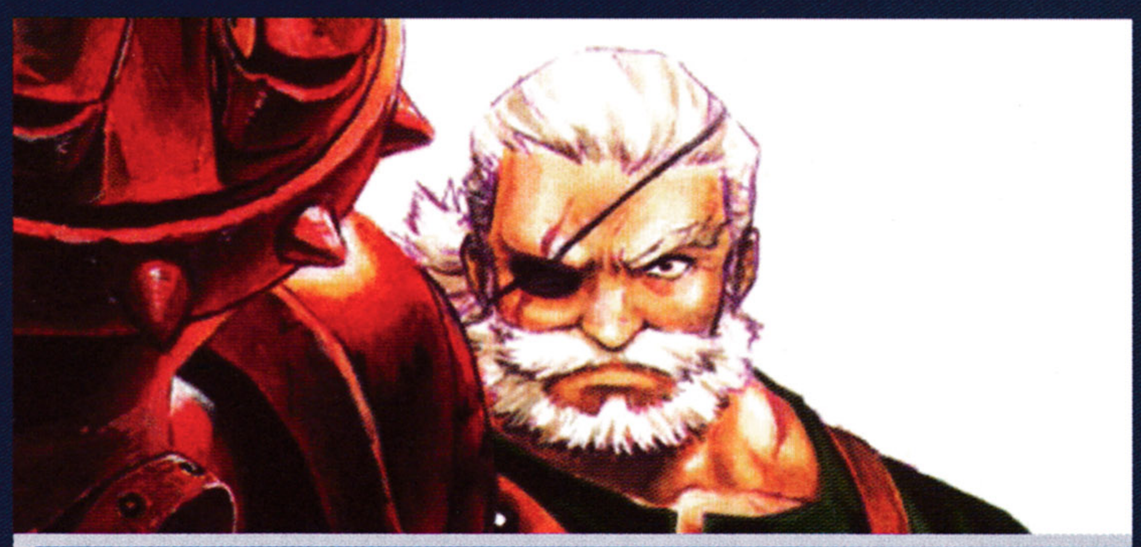
> Young, feisty and packing enough courage to save the world from doom, Vyse dreams of one day having a ship and crew to call his own. Always in the shadow of his father's accomplishments as a Blue Rogue, Vyse's loyalty and bravery will nevertheless win him the undying loyalty of his friends ■

AIKA

> Noisy, quick to the punch and moneyminded (to say the least), Aika does have a caring soul that may be hard to notice at first beneath her high energy wackiness. But you can always count on her to be fast on the draw and loyal to the end ■

FINA

> The mysterious stranger with an even more mysterious mission, Fina is more reserved than Aika, but deep down she hides a fierce spirit, despite her softspoken nature. Fina is extremely useful in battle as she's the party's most powerful magic user by far ■

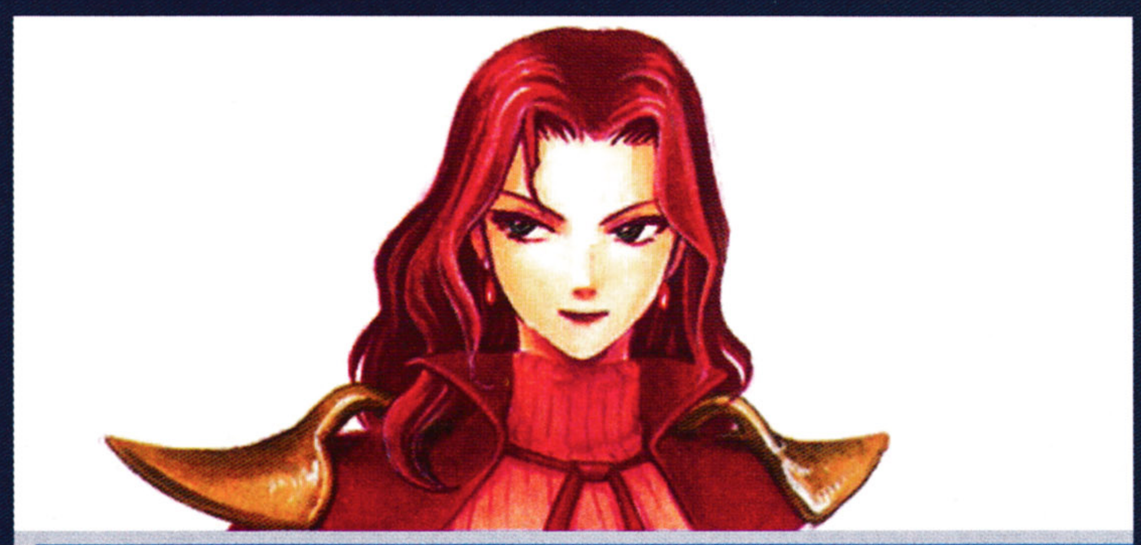


DRACHMA

> Drachma hides a very deep wound that forces him to forever chase down the dangerous arcwhale named Rhankam. The strong, brooding, silent type, he's a powerful ally and his ship, the Little Jack, is a great way for you to get around quickly ■

GILDER

> The free-spirited ladies' man, Gilder cruises the open skies looking for the good life, which roughly translates into: women, women, and er, more women. Equipped with a pistol and some of the best lines in the game, Gilder's aim is ultimately true ■

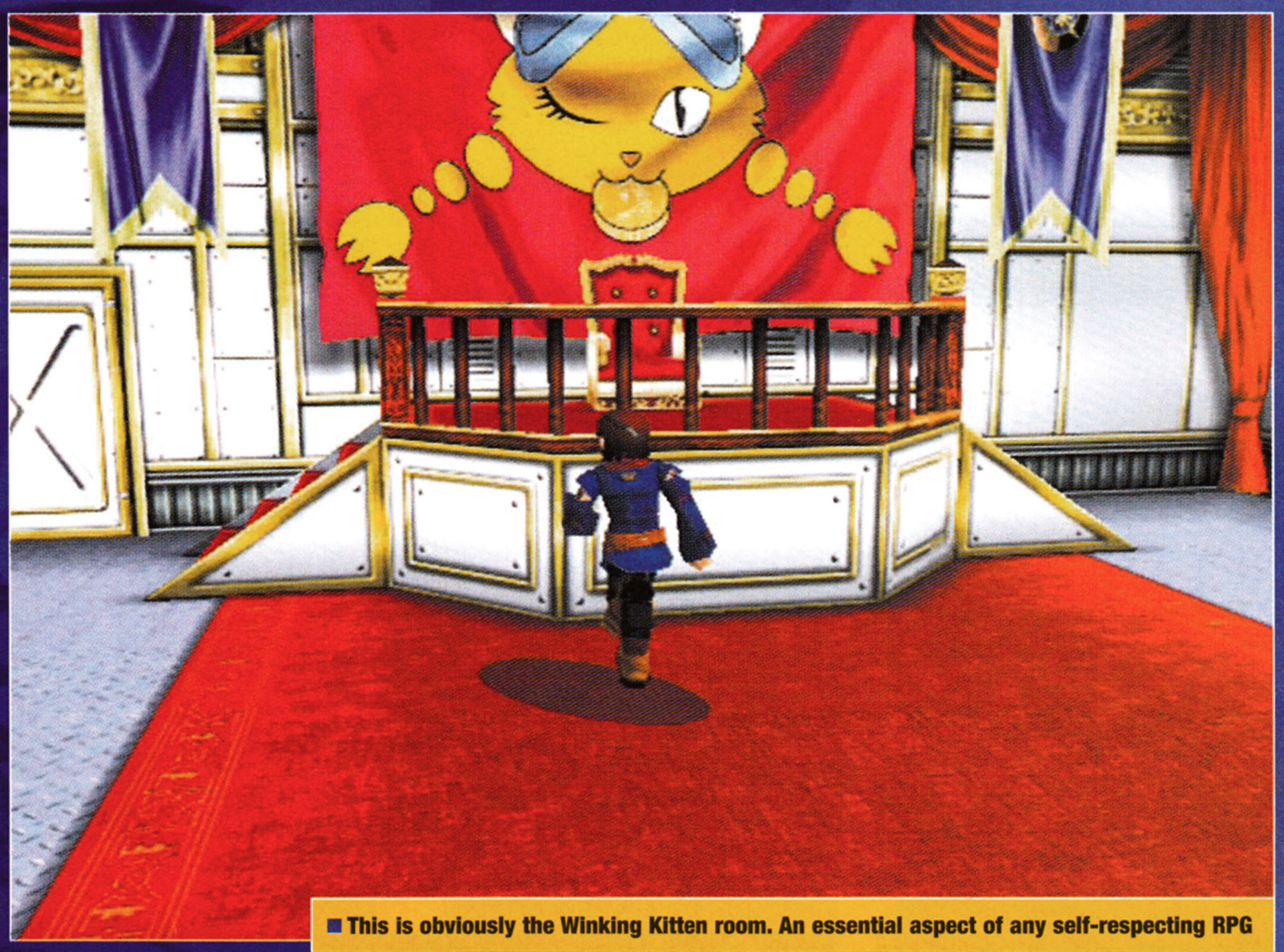


BELLEZA

> One of the much feared Valuan Admirals, Belleza's strength lies in her cunning more than physical force. She uses tricks and schemes to get the upper hand in a fight, but she's not evil. Instead, she's loyal to the wrong master, but will she realize this before it's too late? ■

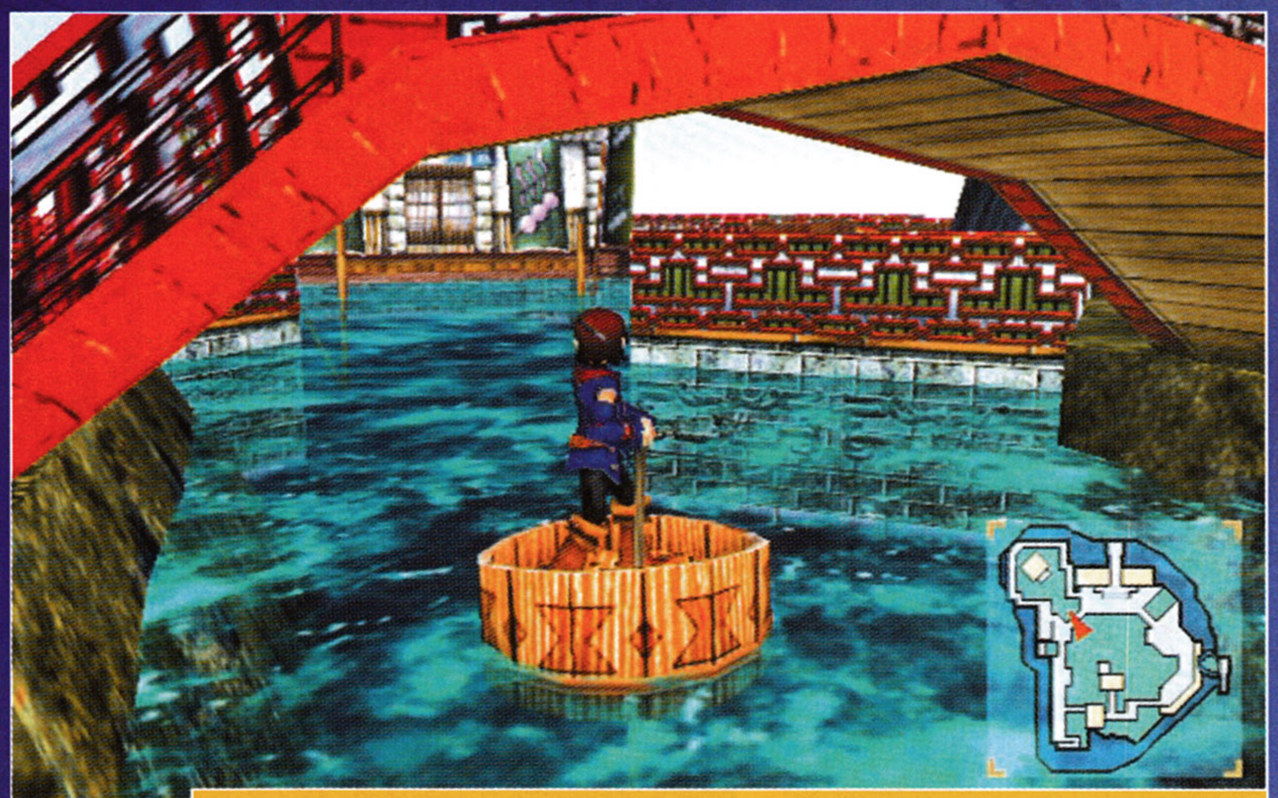
■ Gilder is the marksman of the crew with a deadly aim in battle

■ Fina gets busy with some healing magic



■ This is obviously the Winking Kitten room. An essential aspect of any self-respecting RPG

■ Fire your cannon at enemy galleons to bring them crashing out of the sky



■ Okay, it's no grand battleship but if it gets Vyse around then who's complaining?

► And it's this incredible sense of scale and invention which promises to make *Arcadia* such an outstanding RPG. With the skies and the ground open to exploration and discovery, players will truly be able to go anywhere and practically do anything they please.

The turn-based battling may be rather uninspired but the weapon and magic attacks at your crew's disposal are truly spectacular. You'll be able to stock up to four characters in your immediate battle party, each with his or her own signature specials and attacks. Even better is the ability to pit battleship against battleship during mid-air raids. The ensuing cannon-ball carnage is superb and enough to make Waterloo seem like an effete game of conkers.

> "Players will truly be able to go anywhere and do anything they please"

Add to this list of delights the ability to look at the environments in firstperson perspective for closer inspection; the wall-dissolve techniques when entering houses or buildings providing you with a perfectly clear view of events; plus an excellent cinematic soundtrack and absolutely stunning visuals (the expressiveness of each character's face has to be seen to be believed), and you have something that is not only technically ambitious, but also an adventure aiming at something more memorable than a simple dungeon 'n' hit point quest.

From our time sailing through the air with the greatest of ease, we're confident that *Skies of Arcadia* will delight and amaze all those long suffering RPG fans who have been withering away next to their Dreamcasts, waiting for a special role playing game to arrive. We could well be looking at the first Dreamcast masterpiece of 2001 ■

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pg 024

NBA 2K1

Don't jump into the slime if you can help it

Gunsights, explosions effects, ejected cartridges – all the details are here

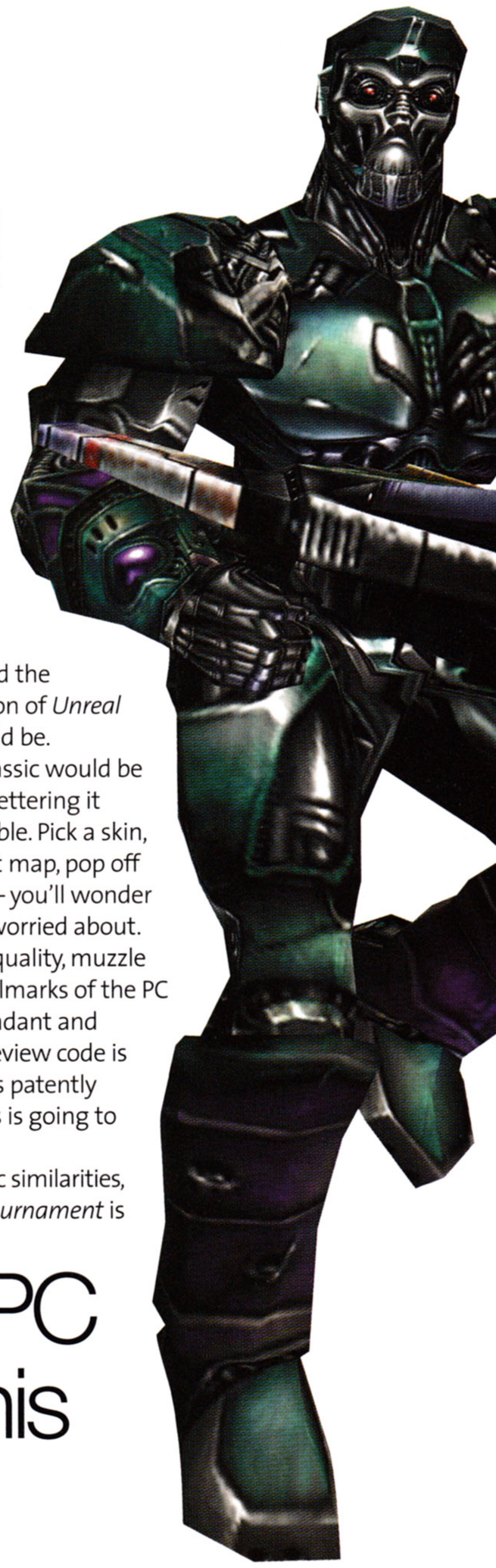
Don't just stand there – Fire!

Just a little bit lower should do it

Dark and dingy environments feature

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

Typical – you wait ages for a decent FPS, then two turn up at once



IN A **NUTSHELL**

> The other half of the epic PC shooter duo gets the Dreamcast treatment.

Likely to set the world on fire with its luscious graphics, silky smooth action and extra-violent armoury, *Unreal* is coming. Forget March. We want it RIGHT NOW! ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	**Infogrames**
Developer:	**Epic (conversion by Sega)**
Origin:	**USA**
Players:	**One to four**
Release date:	**March**

After experiencing a rather brutal gibbing at the hands of last month's *Quake III*, we've been wondering if our fragging action could get any better. A quick glance at the list of upcoming Dreamcast wares reads like a Who's Who of firstperson shooters: *System Shock II*, *Soldier of Fortune*, *Outtrigger* and *Half-Life* all have slightly different slants on the genre, but the granddaddy of them all is Epic's *Unreal Tournament*. Hitting the PC just weeks before *Quake III*, it was soon heralded as the best arena-based FPS ever, mixing strategy with full-on ultra-violence. And now it's coming for you.

Of course, with the port of *Quake III* being so tasty, we had our doubts as to exactly how good the Dreamcast version of *Unreal Tournament* could be. Matching iD's classic would be hard enough – bettering it virtually impossible. Pick a skin, dive into the first map, pop off your first round – you'll wonder what you were worried about. Fluidity, texture quality, muzzle flare – all the hallmarks of the PC original are abundant and although our preview code is an early build, it's patently obvious that this is going to be killer stuff.

Despite basic similarities, playing *Unreal Tournament* is

> "All the hallmarks of the PC original are abundant...This is going to be killer stuff"

WHAT IS UNREAL?

> Unlike iD – the Texan company responsible for *Wolfenstein*, *Doom* and *Quake* – Epic Megagames does not boast a hefty back catalogue of first person shoot 'em ups. When the company began work on the original *Unreal* in 1996, it's only previous big hit was a platformer starring unlikely floppy-eared hero, Jazz Jackrabbit.

After an incredibly protracted development period, *Unreal* finally emerged onto PC in 1998, boasting never seen before coloured lighting effects which have since become staple elements of any self-respecting 3D game. The sequel, *Unreal Tournament* was released a year later receiving Game of the Year accolades from just about every PC publication. Check out more about the game on **www.unrealtournament.com** ■

■ ***Unreal Tournament*: better, in everyway possible, than *Jazz Jackrabbit***

■ **In Domination, different sectors become controlled by the opposing teams**

■ **Capture the Flag is typical FPS stuff. Whack the enemy, then nick their bunting**

■ **What lies round the corner?**

■ **Check those smoke trails out – spectacular lighting effects make all the difference**

a different experience to *Quake III*, feeling more tactical than assault-based. In other words you won't spend your whole game running around like a psycho version of Linford Christie with a gun. Calmly and quietly picking off unsuspecting opponents with weapons such as the ASMD Shock Rifle requires a steady hand, but is incredibly satisfying if you pull it off. Plus, levels-wise, there are plenty of elevated points for 'camping', especially on the Keep map, where enormous towers allow a clear sniping view of any potential targets on the ground.

Unreal Tournament is no slouch in the artillery department, either, with rifles, machine guns, bazookas and grenade launchers featuring. Each weapon also has a secondary fire function, so for example the Plasma Rifle switches from burst fire to a continuous beam of destructive energy. As per usual, ammo is scattered around the levels and felling an opponent will allow you to take the weapon from their lifeless fingers.

In the finished version, all the modes of the original will be included. Domination, Capture the Flag and Deathmatch are present as are the online functions, where four players will be able to frag each other senseless. And of course none of this would be any good if you couldn't use the keyboard and mouse. Fortunately, Secret Level (the team porting the game) will implement this control set up for the final release – as we were only able to use the adequate default pad settings in our copy.

From what we've seen, *Unreal Tournament* is looking and playing brilliantly. With the *Quake III* conversion already proving that PC FPS classics can be replicated on a console, it's likely the same old 'which is better?' argument is going to rear its head early next year. We won't care, though – we'll be too busy sticking it to the man with our boom stick! Now who wants some? ■

> "We'll be too busy sticking it to the man with our boom stick!"

Battle sequences are turn-based affairs, but are still very rapid

Expect to meet a variety of monsters, from goblins and snakes to giant spiders and winged demons

GRANDIA II

Game Arts' sprawling RPG edges closer to its Euro release and DC-UK edges closer to sword 'n' sorcery heaven

Blocking and defending is as important as attacking

IN A NUTSHELL

> The first of the big three RPGs for DC.

Get ready for top-drawer adventuring action, courtesy of the team behind classics such as *Gun Griffon*, *Silpheed* and, of course, *Grandia*. Let the good times roll! ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	Ubi Soft
Developer:	Game Arts
Origin:	Japan
Players:	One
Release date:	February

Stunning lighting effects are core ingredients. *Grandia II* looks as good as it plays

Back in issue 15 we unveiled the Japanese version of *Grandia II* with a certain air of excitement. And well we might, given the game's pedigree. Those who missed that preview will be unaware of the potential delights of such a title, so let's recap.

Game Arts' original *Grandia* debuted on the Saturn and created an almighty splash in the world of videogame adventuring. Unfortunately, it never made it to these shores, the storyline remaining locked in its native Kanji. However, this obstacle didn't stop Otaku from importing it, a silly thing like the language barrier proving trifling in the grand scheme of things. And a grand scheme it most certainly was: many gamers considered it to be the best RPG, not just for Saturn, but for any system, testament to which was the PlayStation port some three years later. So, with the sequel already delighting Japan and America, we decided to sneak a look at the English language version. Which is as good an excuse as any to spend another week playing such an anticipated game.

Anyone expecting major changes to the PAL version will be disappointed – but we're inclined to think that's a good thing. Aside from not being able to understand the dialogue, the Japanese cut of *Grandia II* excels in all areas. The graphics, the sound, the movie scenes and the story are all top-quality ingredients, blending to form the first perfect-looking RPG for DC. Changing these elements would be an unnecessary exercise.

Dive into the game itself and everything soon falls into its traditional RPG place: playing as Ryudo, you'll be given the task of protecting the singer Elena from the forces of Valmar – a woken god of evil. The Church of Granas has sent Elena to take part in a ceremony that will vanquish Valmar forever, so as a bodyguard,

There are plenty of locations to explore, from towns to empty ruins

GRAND IDEAS

> Back in early 1997, Game Arts unleashed its original *Grandia* for Saturn, landing a 14-year old boy in the role of the hero. Charged with the task of discovering the truth behind the secret of Anjel civilisation, there were ten huge cities to explore, each teeming with activity, each in the throes of industrial revolution.

Grandia was also one of the first RPGs to use texture-mapped polygons for its environments, as opposed top flat bitmaps, which added considerably to an already striking visual appearance. Unfortunately, as well-received as it was, *Grandia* never made it to the USA or the UK. Talk about a missed opportunity! ■

■ *Grandia* was a bit of a graphical wonder way back in 1997

■ Mine cart action and aquatic set pieces helped diversify *Grandia*'s ten cities

■ The camera in *Grandia II* is always trained on the action in hand

■ Magical spells are de rigeur in any decent RPGs and this is no exception

■ The backgrounds move in full 3D, which makes things more convincing

"Many gamers considered it to be the best RPG"

you must see that she meets her rendezvous with destiny, or the world will suffer a terrible fate. Along the way, you'll be joined by the obligatory strangers who will serve as party members, each contributing different skills and adding to the storyline, as it unfolds to tell their tales.

The battle element of *Grandia II* is spot-on, too, with the standard turn-based combat augmented by a time bar that depicts when each character will be able to strike. An emblem representing each party member moves along the bar at different speeds, until it meets the action marker, where the character can perform their move. This allows the player to see how their heroes stand, health-wise, thus aiding decisions on whether to move, cast a spell, heal or attack. Battles are taut and swift affairs, with disastrous consequences should you fail to remain observant.

There's much to recommend *Grandia II*, with its beautiful visuals, hackneyed-but-stylish plot and 70-plus hours of gameplay. Given the shortage of true RPGs for DC, Game Arts' will be the first to set a new quality in the genre. Along with *Phantasy Star Online* and *Eternal Arcadia*, adventure fans should find themselves spoiled for choice over the next few months. And about time, too ■

■ Ryudo and Elena stop for some much-needed rest after a hard day's adventuring

The Colosseum provides a beautiful setting for this fast and furious session

OUTTRIGGER

AM2 loads up, takes aim and joins the ever growing Dreamcast deathmatch fray

IN A NUTSHELL

> Frantic, messy deathmatch action brought to life in typically glossy AM2 fashion.

Four players battle it out in a series of gorgeous locations with mad, big guns and grenades. Come in *Quake III Arena*, your time is already up! ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	**Sega**
Developer:	**AM2**
Origin:	**Japan**
Players:	**One to four**
Release date:	**Q2 2001**

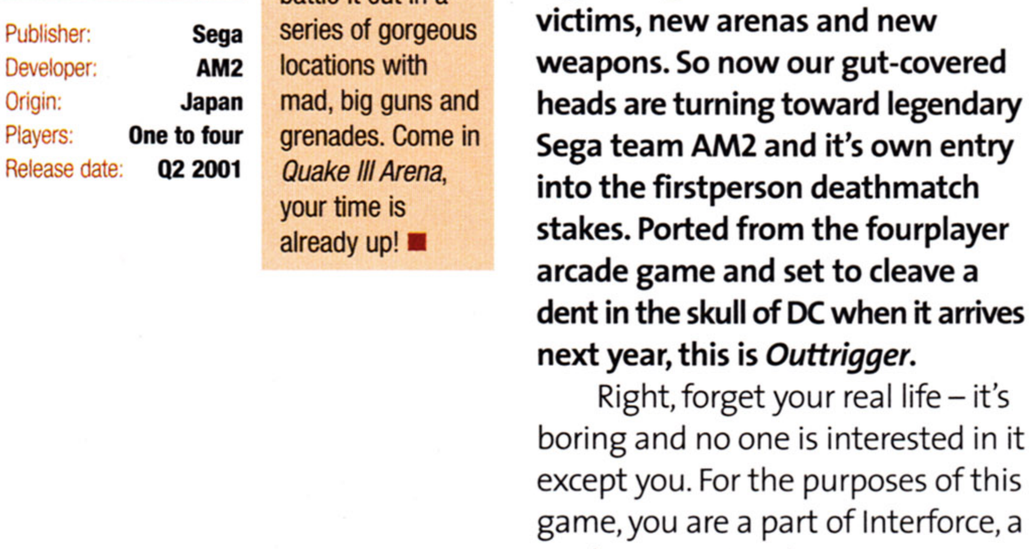
Since *Quake III* arrived at DC-UK towers, lunchtimes have become blood-soaked fragging sessions in which the sound of a body being violated by grenade shrapnel is never far from our demented ears. But the magazine's lust for carnage is growing and we need new victims, new arenas and new weapons. So now our gut-covered heads are turning toward legendary Sega team AM2 and it's own entry into the firstperson deathmatch stakes. Ported from the fourplayer arcade game and set to cleave a dent in the skull of DC when it arrives next year, this is *Outtrigger*.

Right, forget your real life – it's boring and no one is interested in it except you. For the purposes of this game, you are a part of Interforce, a crack International Counter Terrorism Force struggling to rid the world of, yes that's it, terrorists. All you have on your side are tactical prowess and enough small arms to destroy a large town.

These terrorists are light on their toes – bag 'em quick

There are four characters to choose from before the fun begins: Talon Grant, Alain Ciel, Jay Aragaki and Lina Miyagi – plus, a character edit mode will let you customise them to your hearts content. Once you've done this, don't think you can just jump straight into the terrorist bashing. New recruits first have to hone their skills in the training mode – a series of increasingly difficult tasks against the clock. These range from shooting-gallery style stages (where you simply gun down enemy troops that run around in front of you), to full-on arena battles. Just make sure you pick up the time bonuses found beside the charred corpses of your foes.

"But where does one fight



The multiplayer mode offers free-for-all and team battle options

> "Brighter and brasher than most shoot 'em ups"

SYMPHONY OF **DESTRUCTION**

Interforce's weaponry is suitably extravagant for a futuristic anti-terrorist squad. Here's a small taster of what to expect

SUB-MACHINE GUN
Not particularly futuristic but it's rapid fire is a deadly addition to the arsenal. A firm favourite

GRENADES
The grenades will cause plenty of carnage if you chuck 'em in the right place. Timing is everything

FLAMETHROWER
The deadly jets of fire that this piece of kit throw out will toast anyone that gets in the way

PROXIMITY MINE
Lob one of these little beauties on the ground and wait for the enemy to walk by. Kersplatt!

ROCKET LAUNCHER
This beast has a large splash damage radius so be careful or you'll take yourself out too

PHOTON TORPEDO
Star Trek fans rejoice! If you can get this baby on target it's a guaranteed one-hit kill

Huge, spectacular explosions fill the screen frequently

Time is tight on the training levels – grab the bonuses

Situations like this will invariably end in your demise

Bright and colourful is the order of the day in *Outtrigger* – you can't miss these guys

terrorists?" You're probably asking. Well, there are loads of brilliantly designed arenas including outdoor settings such as ruined temples and indoor areas like the observatory, complete with giant telescope. A huge arsenal of weapons also awaits, with plasma guns, sub-machine guns, grenades, lasers and flamethrowers available to keep you entertained. Extra items like thermal vision goggles (which allow you to see through walls) add to your tactical armoury.

As you'd expect from a game that wasn't designed by a bunch of morose Texans fed only on pizza and Slip Knot, *Outtrigger* appears brighter and brasher than most US shoot 'em ups. Blood red targets show up your enemies, realistic explosions paint the walls orange and yellow, jets of fire from the flamethrower turn the opposition into sparkling human torches. It's the sort of visual gymnastics you'd expect from AM2, previously responsible for the graphics banquet that is *Shenmue*.

The control method is usually where console shooters fall apart, but everything seems in order here. *Outtrigger* can be played from either a first or thirdperson perspective (in our demo version, the former was much more effective) and several control configurations are available. While currently lacking *Quake III*'s fluidity, the joypad holds up well and AM2 will hopefully also offer mouse/keyboard support to mimic the arcade version's tracker ball.

The oneplayer mode seems entertaining enough, giving specific objectives to meet while fragging the opposition. But it's the multiplayer options we're looking forward to and AM2 has included a split-screen mode as well as the online play that's promised. *Quake. Unreal. Outtrigger.* Hunting season is open ■

Health packs litter the arenas – you're gonna need 'em

CANNON SPIKE

You can never have enough shooting action, we say! Capcom obliges with its Psikotic new blaster

Take a trip back to your old primary school and you may be surprised how much you remember. Sure, it's had a new paint job, there's an up-to-date sports hall and you'll probably find computers in the library, but the basic layout won't have changed. Soon the sound of screaming kids and dinner bells comes rushing back, everything falling into familiar space. Very similar glassy-eyed memories of the Old School (or 'Old Skool' if you prefer) variety came over us when we busted open our NTSC copy of *Cannon Spike* recently.

It's good to know Capcom is devoted to keeping the spirit of the shoot 'em up alive, allowing the slightly more mature members of the **DC-UK** team (ie, Neil) to vent their frustrations in a safe and hygienic manner. Office bloodbaths are now a thing of the past.

Viewed from an isometric angle, *Cannon Spike* retains much of the feel of frantic overhead blasters such as *Smash TV*, *Loaded* and *Elemental Master*. Wave after wave of enemies, devastating weaponry and hulking end of level bosses are the ingredients for any shooter worth its bodycount and fortunately, this violent ballet scores highly in all three areas.

Jointly developed by Capcom and Psikyo (of *Strikers 1945* and *Gunbird* fame) *Cannon Spike* makes no bones about its aspirations. You and a friend pick a character each from Capcom's history (see Old Friends) and dive into the fray. Shooting, more shooting and the occasional screen-wide special move is what ya get. Relentless, is the best way to describe the mechanics, a non-stop barrage of firepower, a symphony of bullets.

IN A NUTSHELL

> Capcom goes all the way back to the '80s again with this old firm isometric-style blast 'em up.

Take control of two anti-robot cops, and… kill robots. That, ladies and gentlemen, is that. Blam! ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	**Capcom**
Developer:	**Capcom/ Psikyo**
Origin:	**Japan**
Players:	**One to two**
Release date:	**Spring 2001**

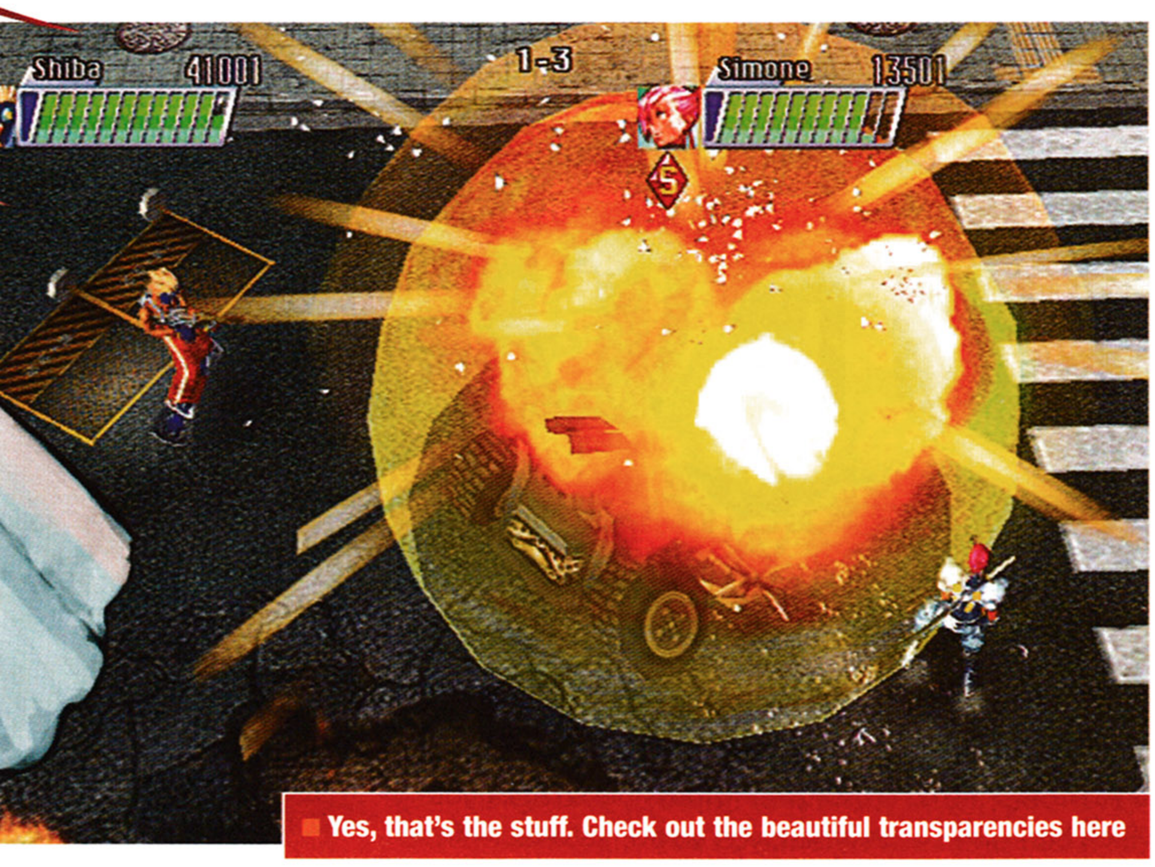
> "Wave after wave of enemies, devastating weaponry and hulking bosses are the ingredients"

■ **Unleash that Falcon! Bombarding your foes with big guns is the best**

■ **The first boss is surprisingly easy to destroy. Pummel it with Specials for a quick kill**

■ ***Cool Boarders* have nothing on this guy. Kill him quick**

Big guns ahoy. Psikyo resurrects its trademark *1945* laser blast to good effect



Yes, that's the stuff. Check out the beautiful transparencies here

Because of this, control is paramount. You don't want to be thinking about which button to press in the middle of a firefight and luckily things are elementary enough here to prevent such occurrences. You either use your guns to fire at distant enemies or, if you prefer, engage in hand-to-hand combat. Each attack has a standard and heavy variant, the latter of which is slower, but a lot more powerful. And for those panic-ridden moments when the screen fills up with flak, or when you just need to off a persistent guardian, the special moves let rip with a frenzied, concentrated attack.

There is a small worry that *Cannon Spike* clocks in a bit short, given that its nine levels are incredibly compact. Two minutes is the average time span for each zone and while that sounds like a stinking rip off, it's worth considering that the game retails for $30 (approx £20) in the States. Capcom *has* included a Gallery of unlockable art and two hidden characters, but is basically acknowledging the arcade length of the game by issuing a low RRP. Hopefully, it'll follow suit in Europe.

Forget longevity, though, and just feel those visuals. Psikyo has worked its graphical magic to the nth degree with some of the most spectacular explosions you'll ever see. New levels of pyrotechnic beauty are in store as even the smallest mid-level bosses explode into huge balls of plasma. Killing the bigger enemies literally fills the screen with fire, accompanied by gorgeous rippling shockwaves.

With limited continues ensuring no small challenge, *Cannon Spike* looks like a potential must-buy for shooting fans the world over. For now, **DC-UK** is off to improve its caffeine-addled reflexes. There be killin' afoot ■

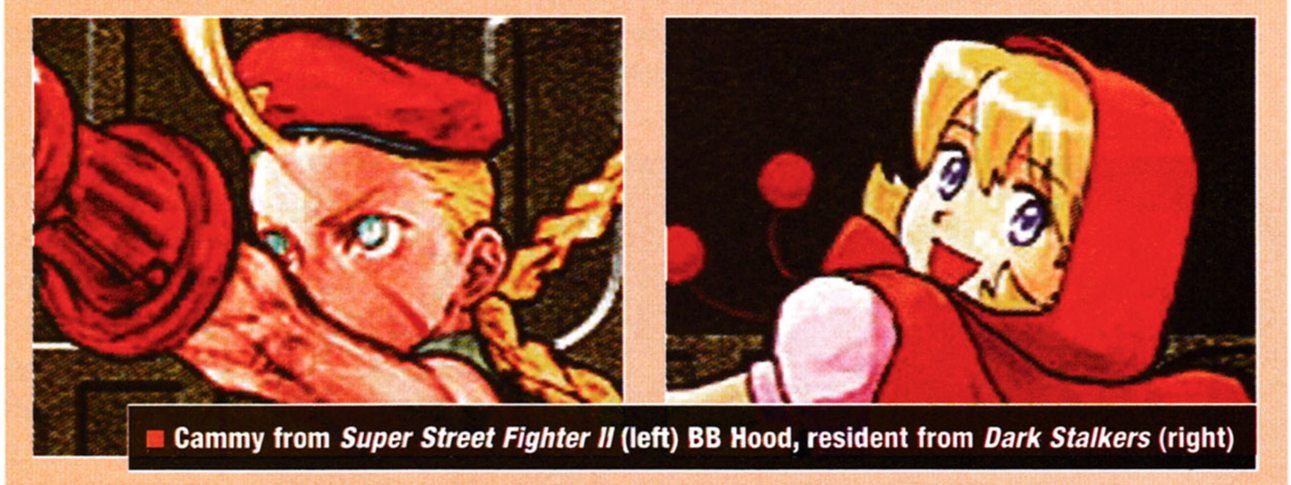
"New levels of Pyrotechnic beauty are in store"

Cammy's special attack sees her whizz all over the screen in a bright blue ball of fire

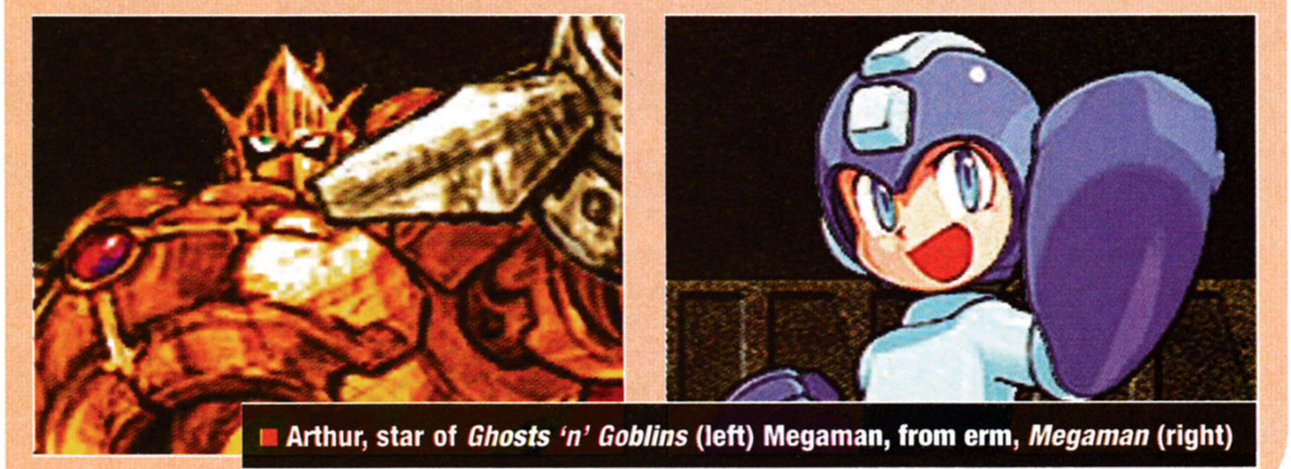
OLD FRIENDS

> You can always count on the obsessively self-referential Capcom to fill it's games with classic characters from days gone by. They did it with *Marvel Vs Capcom* and *Capcom Vs SNK*, now they're doing it with *Cannon Spike*. See how many recognisable faces you can spot to prove your hardcore gamer mettle. Here are some for starters ■

Charlie, a member of the *Street Fighter Zero* series

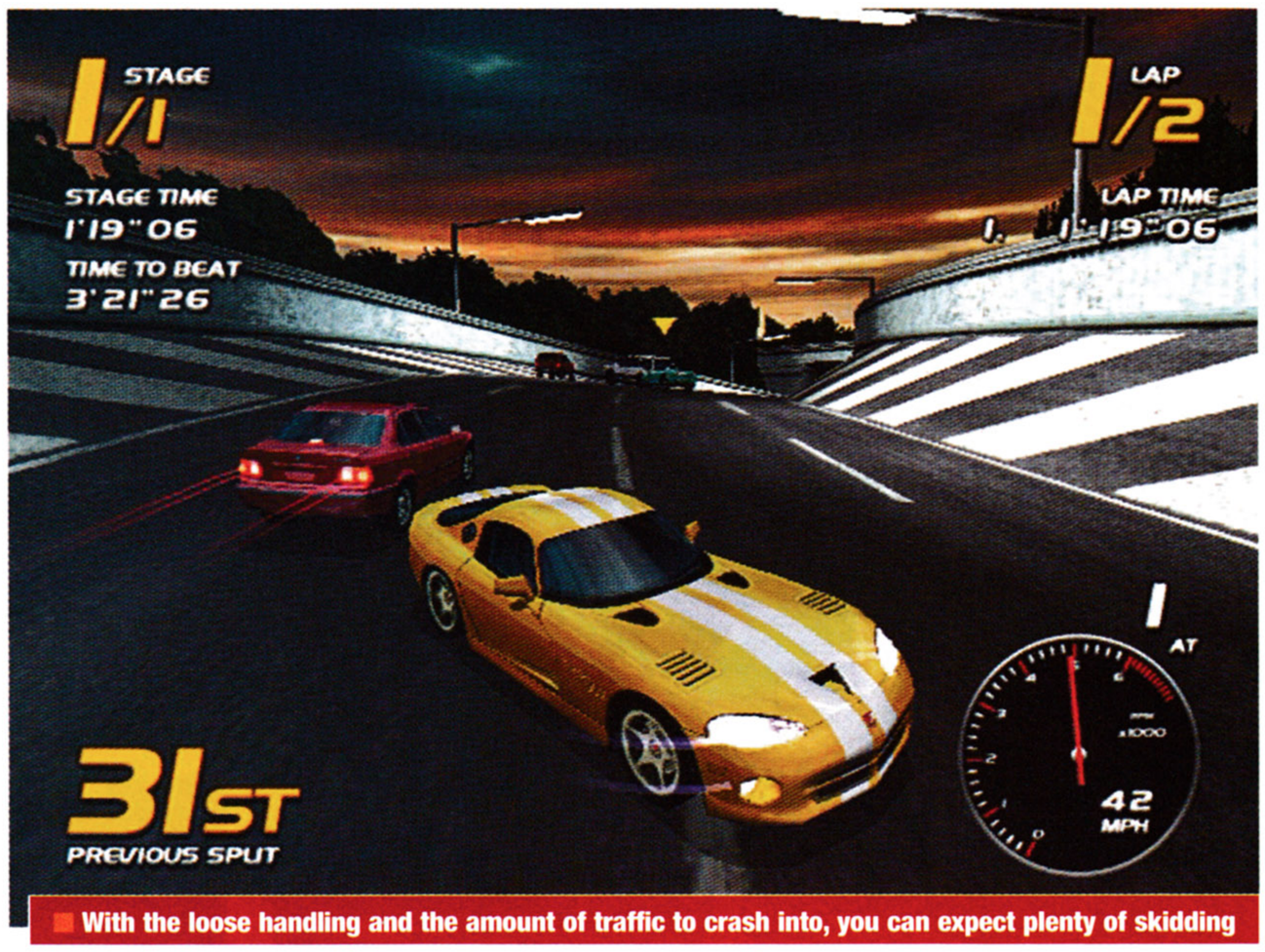


Cammy from *Super Street Fighter II* (left) BB Hood, resident from *Dark Stalkers* (right)



Arthur, star of *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* (left) Megaman, from erm, *Megaman* (right)

26 licensed vehicles are available ranging from sports cars to jeeps and vans



With the loose handling and the amount of traffic to crash into, you can expect plenty of skidding

VANISHING POINT

Rush hour traffic isn't such a problem when you've got a very fast car and license to drive like a maniac

IN A NUTSHELL

> Arcade racing returns to DC in one of the fastest driving games we've played for a long time.

Bomb around twisty city streets avoiding heavy traffic to try and achieve the best lap times. Expect plenty of vicious pile-ups ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	**Acclaim**
Developer:	**Clockwork Games**
Origin:	**UK**
Players:	**One to two**
Release date:	**February**

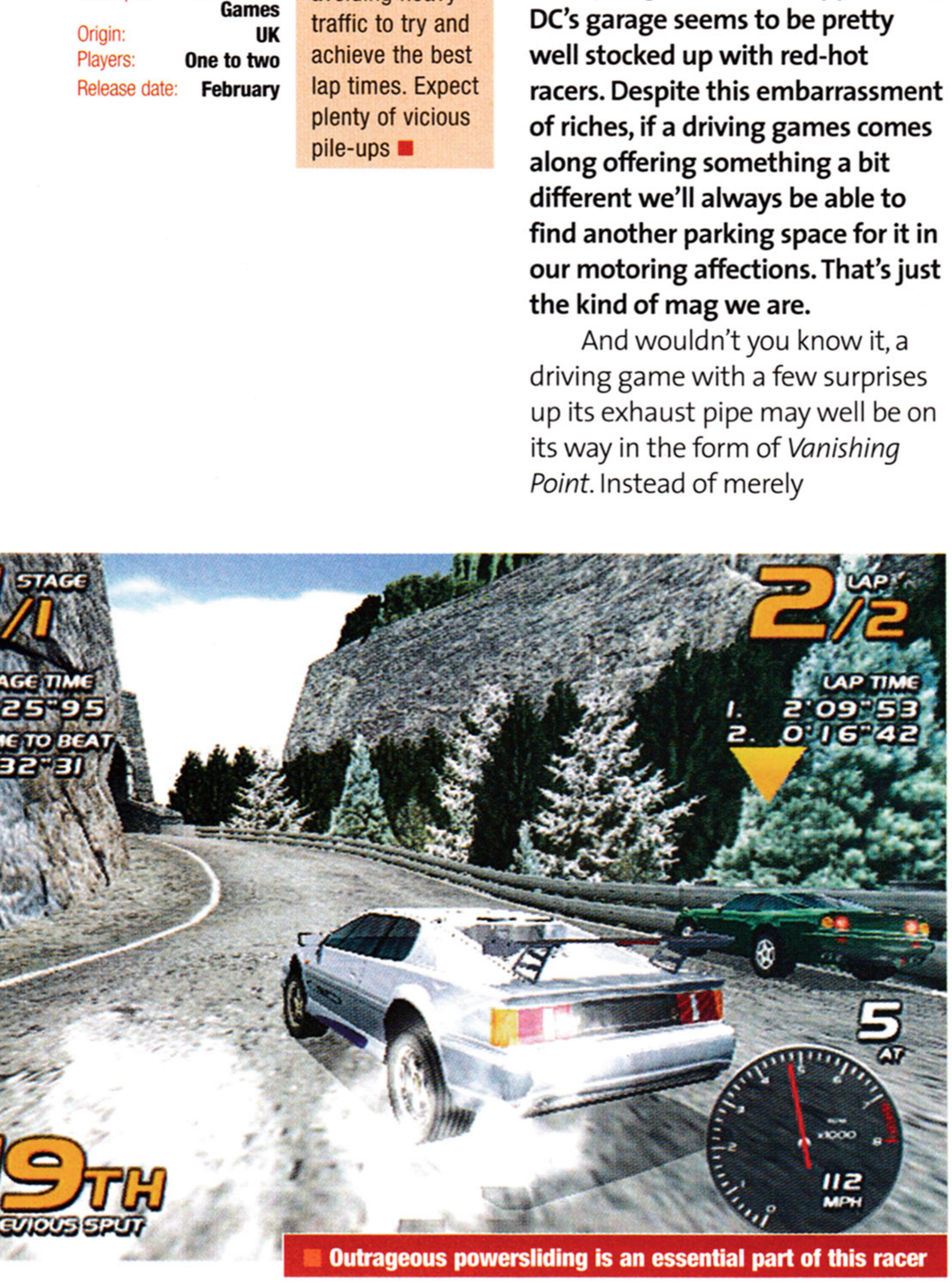
With the holy trinity of *MSR*, *F355* and *Le Mans 24 Hour* thrilling Dreamcast petrolheads everywhere, and even understudies like *Sega GT* overtaking the console opposition, DC's garage seems to be pretty well stocked up with red-hot racers. Despite this embarrassment of riches, if a driving games comes along offering something a bit different we'll always be able to find another parking space for it in our motoring affections. That's just the kind of mag we are.

And wouldn't you know it, a driving game with a few surprises up its exhaust pipe may well be on its way in the form of *Vanishing Point*. Instead of merely challenging a few other vehicles in lapped races, here you'll be speeding through road circuits packed with up to 80 (!) other vehicles – a few of which are competing with you but most of which are just everyday traffic, cruising along oblivious to the lunatic about to charge past them at 180 mph.

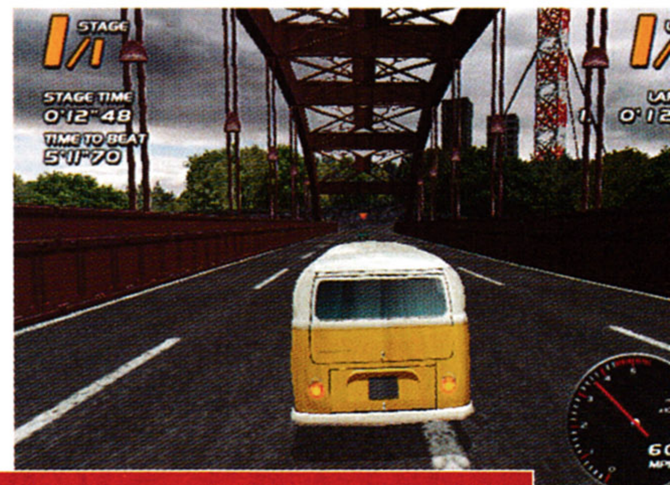
Rather than aiming to overtake rivals to get into first place, your success/failure is, unusually, based on the lap times you've managed to achieve while bombing around the courses. So, a speedy, trouble-free lap can move you straight up to first position but if you follow that with a nightmare circuit where you're repeatedly hampered by traffic, you can slip way back down the field.

We had our first glimpse of *Vanishing Point* back in issue 14, and now we've taken the updated preview code for a much longer spin we're encouraged by how well the game's progressing. The main gripe with the early code was the slidey handling that saw your vehicle skidding all over the shop like Bambi on ice, making it absolutely impossible to right your vehicle if you've oversteered even a fraction. This has been altered to a certain extent but the handling remains quite floaty which will divide gamers between those who like their driving heavy and realistic (*Ferrari 355*, *Gran Turismo*) and those who enjoy exaggerated, arcade performance.

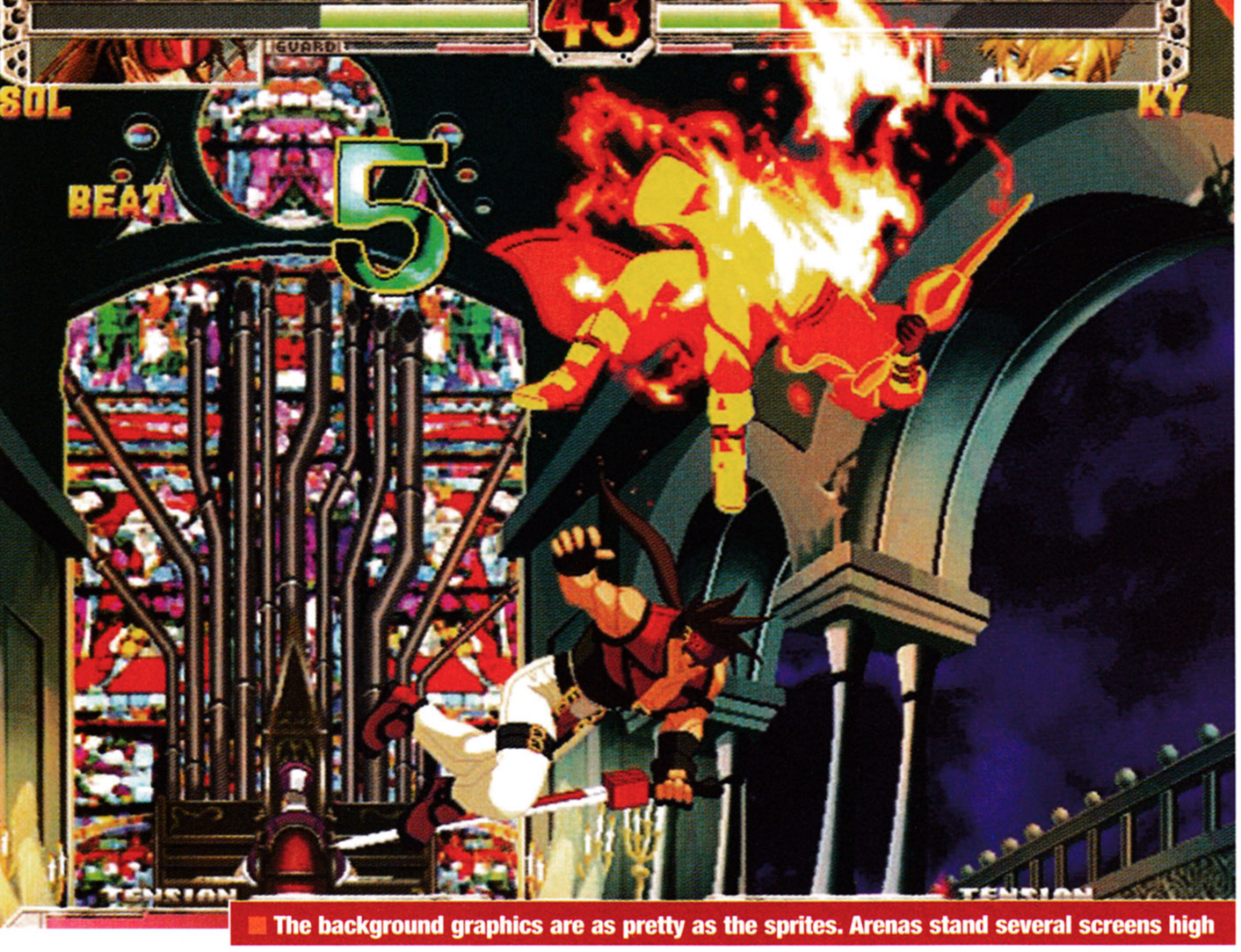
One aspect of *Vanishing Point* that no-one in their right mind will moan about is its speed. Hurtling along at 60 fps, it rivals *Le Mans* for the title of Fastest Racing Game on Dreamcast. With the dial creeping up to two tons, Spider Sense is required to predict the movements of the idiots ahead so you can weave between them without having to touch the brakes. Crashes are inevitable but it's this kind of thrilling, edge of the seat stuff that could well make *Vanishing Point* worthy of your driving talents when it's released in February ■



Outrageous powersliding is an essential part of this racer



It's just you and a mate (with no traffic) in twoplayer races (left) The comedy VW Camper van (right)



The background graphics are as pretty as the sprites. Arenas stand several screens high

Blood, dust and weapon effects are drawn in a solid, comic book style

GUILTY GEAR X

Stylishness is the order of the day in Sammy's new dueller

IN A NUTSHELL

> Two dimensional one-on-one fighting action steps up to the next level.

Ultra hi-res graphics, odd characters and some amazing power moves. Looks like this could be the true King of Fighters. Let's Rock! ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	**Arc System Works**
Developer:	**Sammy**
Origin:	**Japan**
Players:	**One to two**
Release date:	**Dec 14 (Jap)**

There are tons of reasons to own a Dreamcast, especially if racers and beat 'em ups are your thing. Fans of the latter, specifically the 2D variety, have never had it so good, with an entire army of top-notch fighting games to choose from. And while we all know the names *Street Fighter* and *King of Fighters*, *Guilty Gear* will be far less famous to many people.

So a little history, then: the original *Guilty Gear* appeared as a rather lacklustre beat 'em up for the PlayStation, but the developers decided to upgrade the arcade version significantly and met with a tremendous response from fighting aficionados. From that point, it was only matter of time before the home port was confirmed. Could it be the best is yet to come?

Judging from the Japanese code of *Guilty Gear X* that we played recently, the answer is looking like a resounding YES. Coded by Sammy, SNK's 1.5 developer, it is the first of its kind to draw the sprites in the hi-res 640 X 480 mode, making for totally smooth-looking fighters, unlike Capcom's more blocky protagonists. But that's not the game's strongest feature – the graphic style is of comic book quality, heavily stylish and replete with gorgeous lighting effects, light tracers and colour washes giving the game an astonishing look.

And the gameplay? Equally polished. There is a good range of characters, each equipped with the stock moves; punch, kick, block, slash, high-slash and jump. The power bar charges up for each offensive move, but decreases when you defend. Additionally there are two functions, labelled Respect and Memory, but we've yet to surmise their purpose, our Kanji being somewhat slack! Projectile moves are particularly brutal and the supers reminded us very much of T*he King of Fighters* series. The only down point was the slightly slow feel to each bout, but hopefully there will be an option to tweak this in the final cut.

Irrespective, *Guilty Gear X* is looking and playing brilliantly. With its hi-res graphics and slick, intuitive controls, it's almost a dead cert that it'll sell by the bucketload in Japan when it hits the stalls in December. Quite whether it can topple *Capcom Vs SNK* is unknown, but we're sure gonna have fun finding out ■

Oddness is the norm in *Guilty Gear X*. Check these characters out

Expect to have your peepers scorched by huge layers of light and colour

> "The supers reminded us very much of *The King Of Fighters* series"

The swirl at the bottom of the screen is your ship about to suck up all those bullets

The credit blocks get bigger and bigger, enticing you to take more risks to reach them

MARS MATRIX

Takumi gets brutal on yo ass with its new double-hard 2D shooter. Raw thumbs and red eyes beckon

The unfortunate thing about *Giga Wing* and *Gunbird 2* was that they could be finished in under half an hour. Even shooting fans would agree that 30 minutes was stingy, especially for a £40 game. So how can the experience be lengthened? 50 stages, a lá *Bangai-o*? Stripping the player of all power-ups when they take a hit? No, the only way to sustain the life of your arcade shooter is to make it incredibly difficult. You heard that, right? No more 'press start to continue' nonsense, no more breezing through the first six levels without lifting your finger from the fire button. Those days are over.

Our pre-flight check of *Mars Matrix* revealed a galaxy of options for tweaking the display, difficulty, sound and controls. There's also a secret options menu containing plenty of tweaks for ship speed and weapons level, plus a shop for purchasing extra lives and continues with gold blocks that are released from destroyed alien ships.

With everything in place options-wise, it's time to see how we fare in battle. There are two different ships to fly, one with a high speed and a powerful, but narrow weapon; the other, a slower craft with weaker, but wider-spread fire. Dive into the fray and the first thing you'll be assaulted by are the stinky graphics. Talk about late Saturn software: the sprites and backgrounds in *Mars Matrix* are both low-res and poorly animated. A big step backwards after the likes of *Giga Wing 2*.

Fortunately, things improve tenfold the minute you start playing. *Mars Matrix* reminds us of loads of different shooters all at once: *Layer Section* (see Glossary), *Super Star Soldier*, *Do Don Pachi* and *ASO II* all spring to mind. Indeed, Takumi's effort has a firing system as balanced as any of the above: the A button controls rapid fire, while the X button activates a short but deadly blast of plasma requiring careful use, due to its slow firing speed. Lastly, the B button controls the Bullet Capture Mosquito and the Gravity Hole Bomb. Hold down the B button and your ship sucks in all the onscreen enemy flak for as long as a depleting charge bar allows. Then release the button to drop the bomb, wiping out all the enemies in the vicinity.

Learning to utilise these different attacks is the key to the game, but don't expect this to be easy: *Mars Matrix* is is harder than Vinnie Jones after ten pints and curry (it's not subtitled *Hyper Solid Shooting* for nothing y'know). Wave after wave of enemy fire fills the screen creating patterns likely to send you into convulsions. The bosses are relentless in their attacks and at the default settings, you won't see the end of level two for several days. But that's a good thing. Given the unforgivable dearth of true 2D shooters on the Dreamcast, *Mars Matrix* looks like it could be the refreshing challenge that the genre so desperately needs ■

IN A NUTSHELL

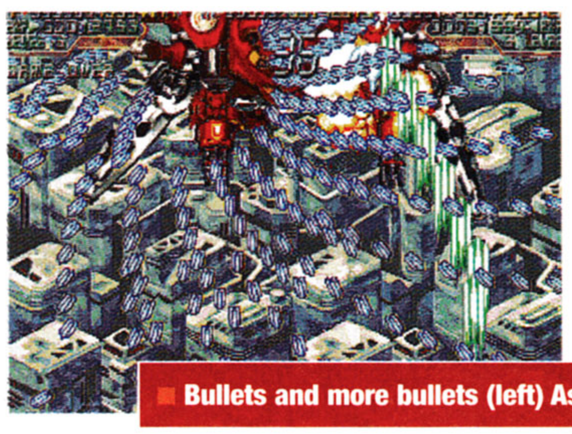
> Finally a tough, old-skool 2D shooter hits DC in an explosion of rock-hard gameplay and innovative weapons.

Max out your reflexes and test your battlefield tactics as you attempt to dodge a zillion bullets ■

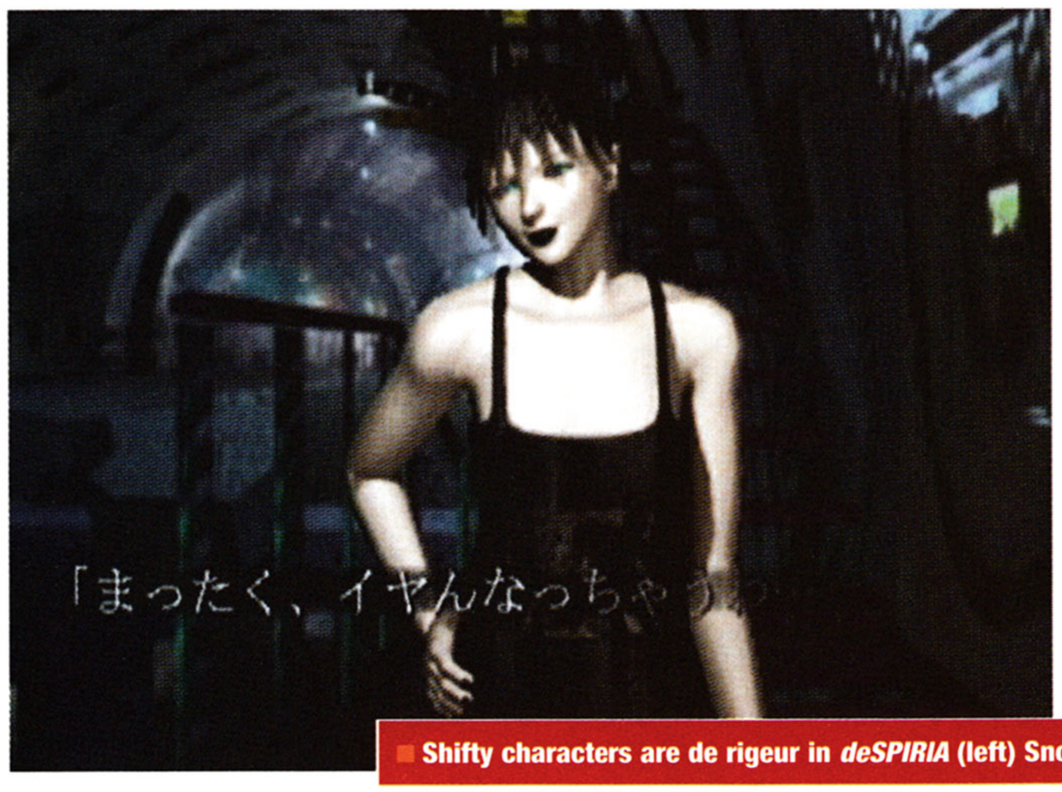
DETAILS

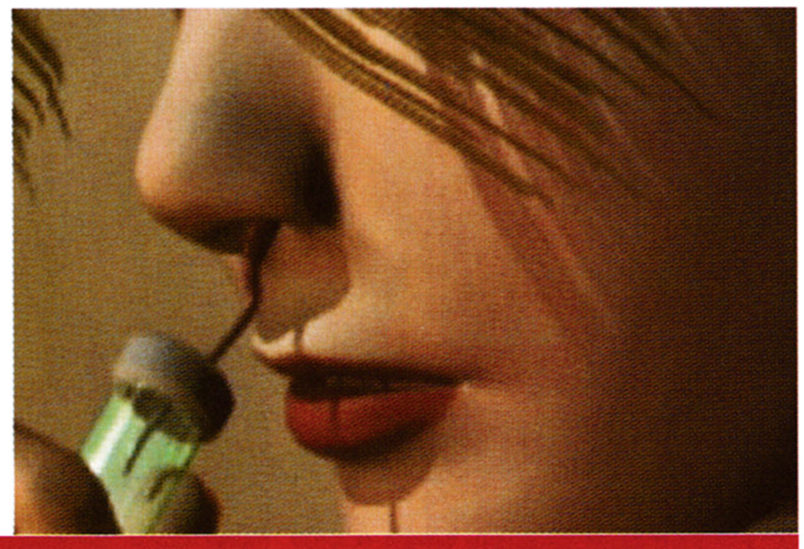
Publisher:	**Capcom**
Developer:	**Takumi**
Origin:	**Japan**
Players:	**One to two**
Release date:	**Out now (Japan) Q1 2001 (UK)**

This is the second level boss. Guess what? He's rock hard

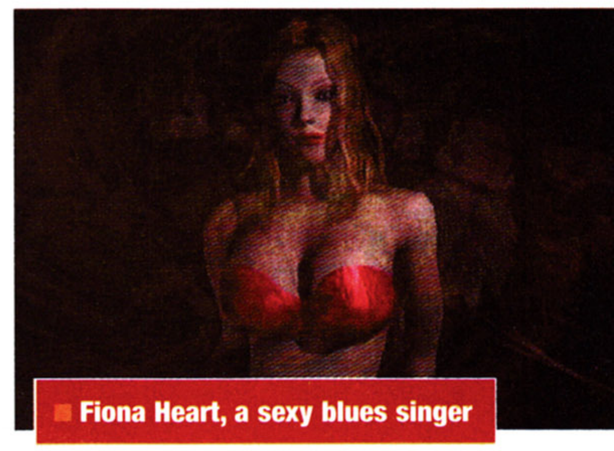


Bullets and more bullets (left) As usual, two players can play at once (middle) The calm before the storm (right)



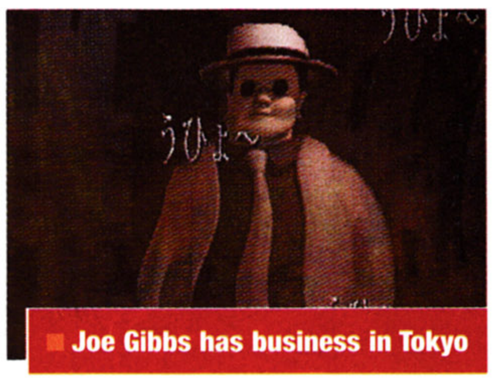


Shifty characters are de rigeur in *deSPIRIA* (left) Snorting these insects increases Alura's Soul Tolerance. Yuck (right)

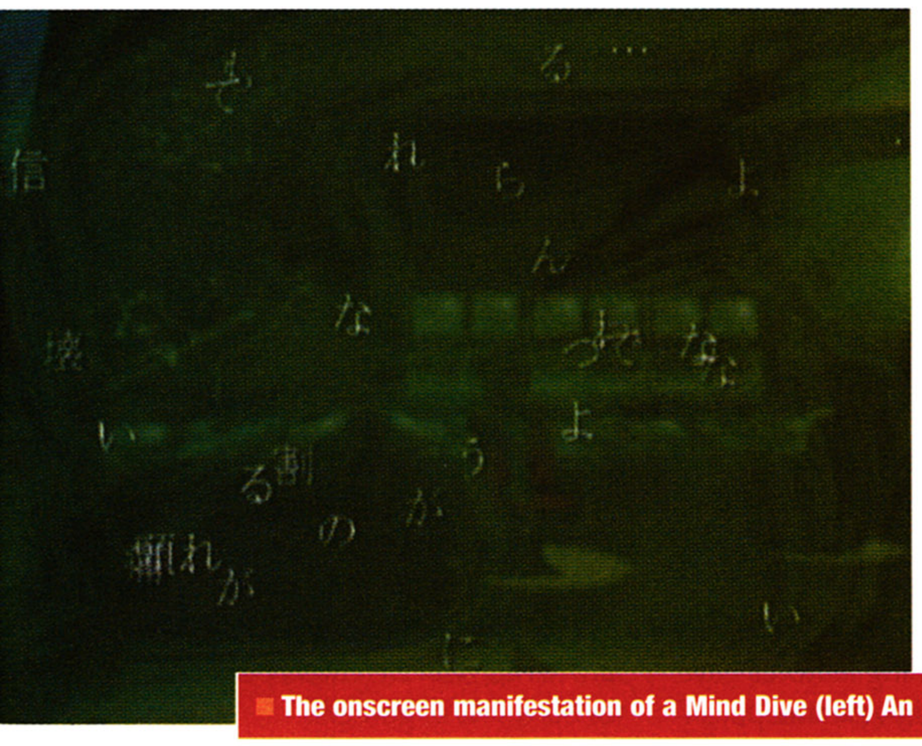


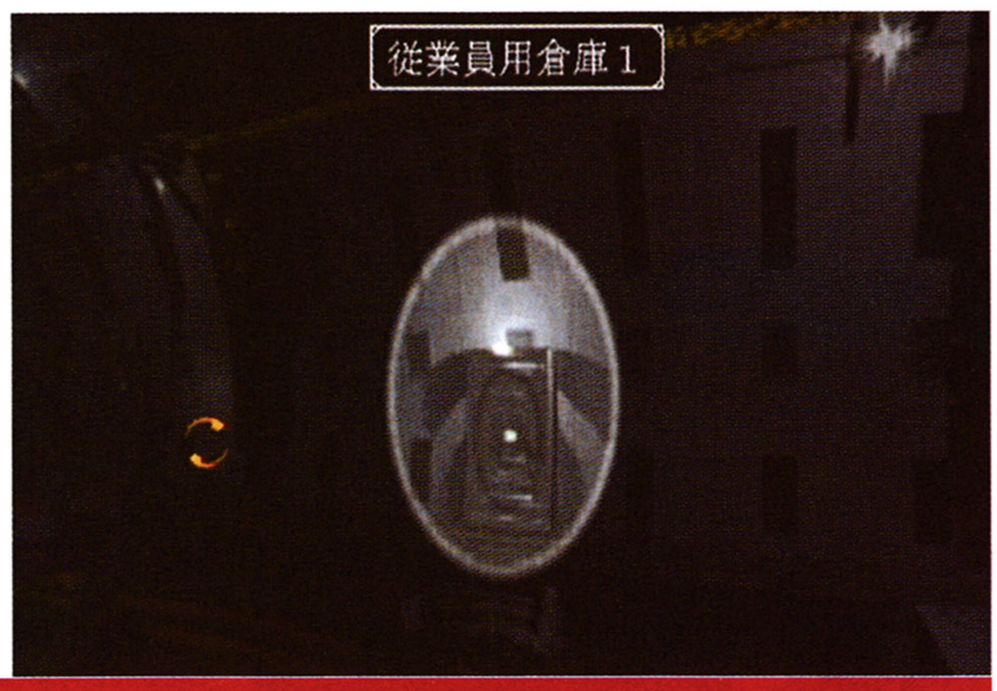
Fiona Heart, a sexy blues singer

A mind-altering insect to snort



Joe Gibbs has business in Tokyo





The onscreen manifestation of a Mind Dive (left) An Event Point within the Sphere. Selecting this highlight will take you there (Right)

deSPIRIA

Total Recall's telepathic alien Kuwoto has nothing on *deSPIRIA*'s Alura. Prepare to open your mind

Atlus has a knack of making strange games. Curious, peculiar, bizarre; all of these adjectives and more can be applied to the likes of *Maken X* and the *Persona* series on PlayStation. Both these involved surreal storylines, outlandish environments and strange characters hijacking each others' brains. With the upcoming *deSPIRIA*, it looks like the Japanese developers have now redefined the word 'madness' with one of the most nightmarish games yet to grace Dreamcast.

It's 2092, 22 years after the Psalms War that left Osaka, Japan, in ruins. Two thirds of the Earth's people have perished and the infant mortality rate is 90 per cent. Enter The Church, a force that nurtures the power of the mind. This organisation takes control of the populace, eliminating their enemies through mental war, leaving the world ripe for the taking. Alura is a child of The Church, trained as an assassin and sent to the New Tokyo Commune to whack an executive of the rebellious Heretics Group. However, the train mysteriously crashes en route, leaving Alura to discover the truth behind the suspicious accident. Synopsis laid down, the player takes over.

As is typical of Atlus, the game world is slightly unusual, existing within a restricted 3D frame. This Sphere System, as it's known, allows Alura to survey her surroundings by using the analogue stick, which displays a number of Event Points. These appear as highlighted ellipsoids, where pressing the A button initiates an automated sequence that shows Alura moving between the two places. Sometimes objects are revealed, but more often than not, you will encounter another character, which is when things get disturbing.

As the story of *deSPIRIA* tells of political turmoil and conspiratory institutes, people are evasive and secretive, making their intentions difficult for Alura to gauge. However, as she has incredibly powerful mental skills, she can perform a Mind Dive, which enables her to delve into the psyche of the character. Choosing to perform this digs up residual thoughts that the character may have had which manifest themselves as floating snippets of onscreen text. These give a clearer picture of that person's views and allegiances.

If you think that's weird, check out the combat system: Alura meets enemies as existing Egos and she can assume a number of different minds in order to fight them effectively. The attacks are solid representations of that person's memories and each fight brings an increased Experience level that will strengthen your selected mind.

Playing like a digital mix of Videodrome and Naked Lunch, *deSPIRIA* has an intriguing pitch and even more intriguing gameplay. Given that we couldn't understand a word of our NTSC preview version, we're in suspense of the English language copy big time. Lord knows what terrors await ■

> "*deSpiria* has an intriguing pitch and even more intriguing gameplay"

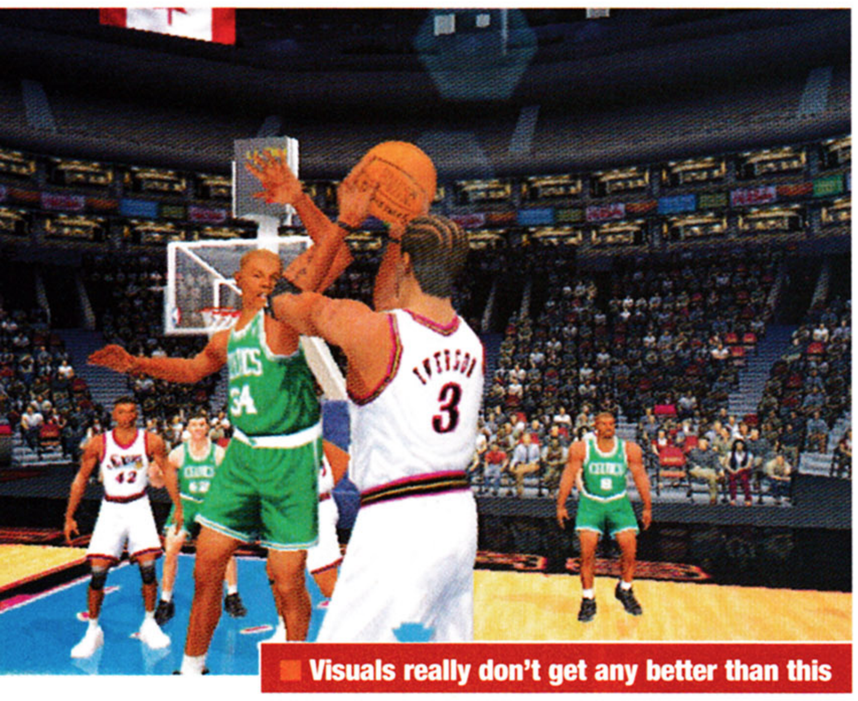
IN A NUTSHELL

> The power of the mind is your primary concern in *deSPIRIA*, Atlus's deep and conspiratorial action/role playing game.

In a dark and sinister world, suspecting everyone is the only path you'll find to the truth ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	Altus
Developer:	Altus
Origin:	Japan
Players:	One
Release date:	December (Japan)



Visuals really don't get any better than this

NBA 2K1

The Michael Jordan of basketball games returns with an even sexier pair of trainers

After only a single glorious year on the UK shelves, we've already reached the stage where Dreamcast has a contender for the finest game available in every genre. Best driving game? How about *MSR*? Best adventure game? Say hello to *Code: Veronica*. Best RPG? That's Mr Shenmue to you. We could go on, of course, particularly in the sports department where DC doesn't just have contenders for best of breed, it has undisputed champions.

As in reality, field goals are the easiest scoring method

Check out that gorgeous lighting

Virtua Tennis is the greatest tennis game ever made, *NFL 2K1* may be a simulation of a rubbish sport but it's the most staggeringly impressive simulation of that sport in history. The same could have been said of basketball hero *NBA 2K* a few weeks ago, but it's recently been superseded. Unsurprisingly, the game that has improved on the best hoops title ever is its own sequel, *NBA 2K1*.

Currently wowing lucky DC punters stateside and due for an alley-oop into the UK early in the new year, *NBA 2K1* isn't a massive departure from its predecessor but the already gleaming features have been given an extra spit and polish. There's now a far more obvious difference between Simulation and Arcade modes; meaning that, whether you're a hardcore b'ball fanatic or a devotee of the kind of simplistic fun offered by the *NBA Jam* series, *NBA 2K1* caters perfectly for both sets of gamers.

Somehow, Visual Concepts has also managed to improve on what were already some of the greatest visuals yet seen. Player models are smoother and even more scarily realistic than before and the animation moves at a perfectly pitched balance between authenticity and the speed required to make an addictive b'ball game. A whole new roster of motion-captured spins, crossovers and dunks are at your disposal and you'll beam with joy when you throw a trademark Kobe Bryant fake, spin past two guards and take it all the way to the basket for an under the leg slam-dunk.

But the main improvement over the original game is the small matter of full online basketball. Up to eight gamers can head on court for some multinational b'ball antics and this makes the prospect of *NBA 2K1*'s arrival even more unbearably exciting. In case you haven't already guessed, we really can't wait for this mutha ■

IN A NUTSHELL

> The best basketball game ever just got better with the arrival of its eagerly–awaited sequel.

Boasting improved graphics and animation, some great new moves and, oh yes, full online play, *NBA 2K1* rulez ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	**Sega**
Developer:	**Visual Concepts**
Origin:	**US**
Players:	**One to four** (offline) **Two to eight** (online)
Release date:	**Spring 2001**

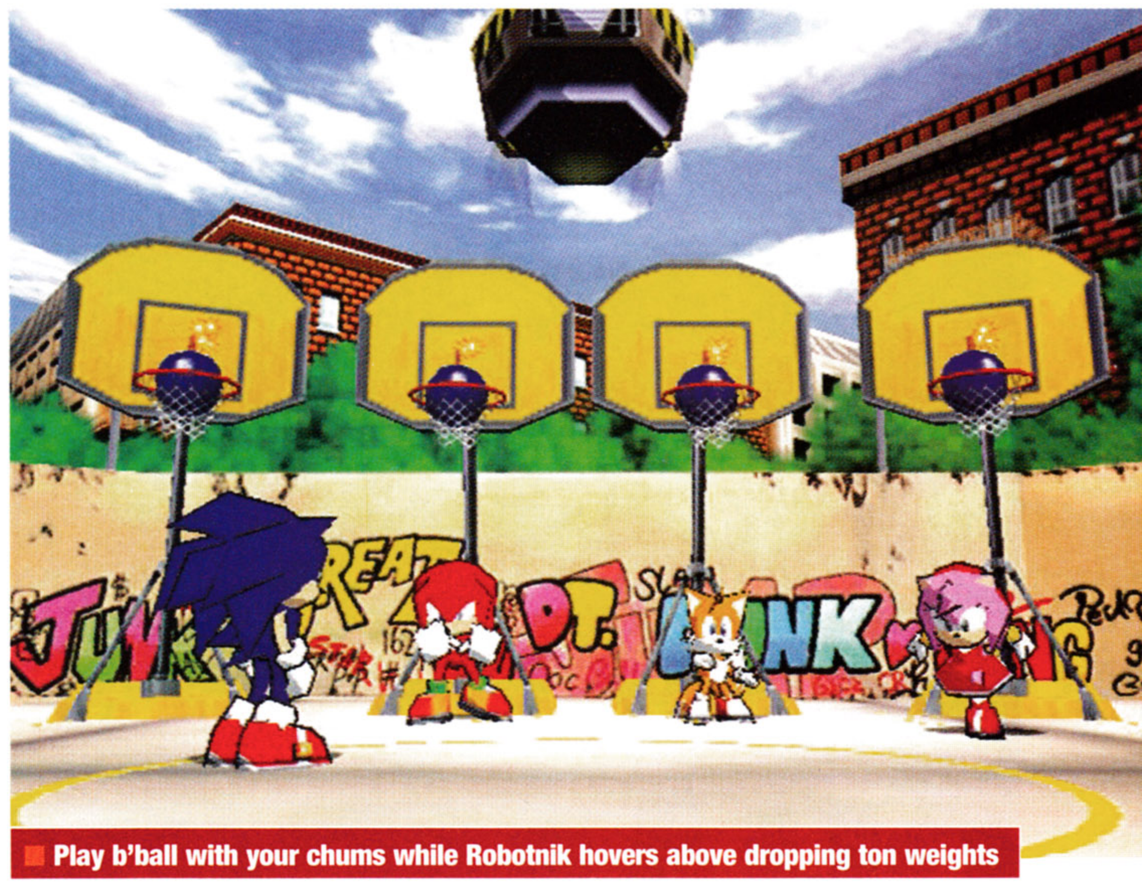
Nothing but nylon, bosh!

> "Player models are smoother and even more realistic"

Taking it all the way to the basket for a big air slam is superb stuff

Three-pointers require great accuracy

The excellent cartoon visuals use the same cel-shading technique as *Jet Set Radio*



Play b'ball with your chums while Robotnik hovers above dropping ton weights

SONIC SHUFFLE

Board game or bored game? Sonic and Co. star in their own Game Of Life for Dreamcast

IN A NUTSHELL

> You and three friends play a virtual boardgame made up of stacks of mini challenges.

Run, jump, bash and dodge the other characters in order to collect the most rings and recover the Precioustones ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	**Sega**
Developer:	**In-house**
Origin:	**Japan**
Players:	**One to four**
Release date:	**January**

For every good idea, there's about ten rip-offs waiting just around the U-bend. Occasionally, however, one of these normally stinky clones turns out to be quite promising. Such is the case with *Sonic Shuffle*, Sega's 'tribute' to the Nintendo 64 hit *Mario Party*.

As with any board game worth its salt you begin by choosing a 'piece', but where Monopoly has its car, hat and doggy, *Sonic Shuffle* has eight of the usual Sonic suspects to choose from, including the main man himself, Knuckles, Amy, Tails and even Super Sonic. Up to four of you can play at once and with characters selected, it's time for us to head off for some board-based baloney.

The objective of the game is to collect four Precioustones that are scattered around the board before *Shuffle*'s baddy, Void, can get its evil hands on them. And just like naked Twister, anything can happen. You begin by choosing one of the six cards you've been dealt and your character moves the corresponding number of spaces along the board. Each square has a different effect, some adding or subtracting rings, others randomly transporting you across the board. Mostly, they lead to minigames, which is where *Sonic Shuffle* takes its most obvious cues from *Mario Party*.

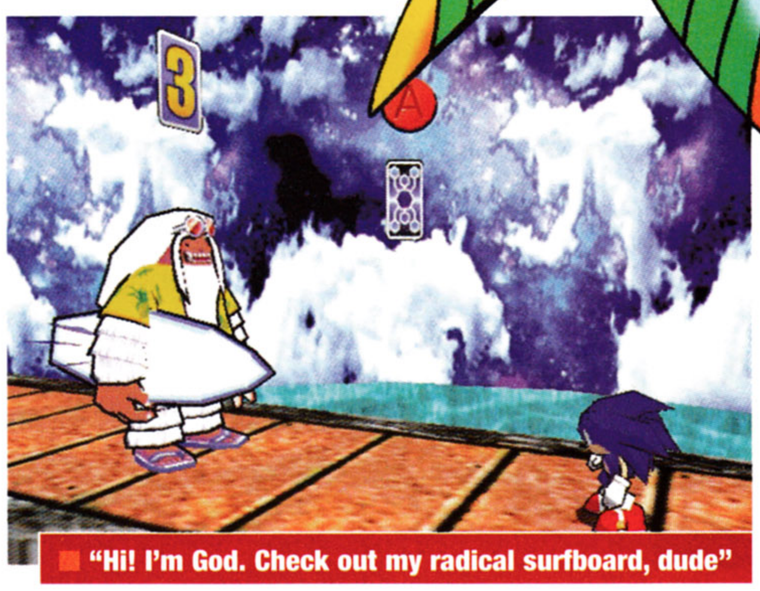
And 'party' sums up these mingames best. Irrespective of who landed on the square, all the players take part, sometimes in a free-for-all, other times in pairs. One minute you're floating in zero gravity scrabbling to get into shot of a virtual camera, the next you'll be running around a sunny beach attempting to stop the other characters nabbing your parasol. Busting through doors, playing in rock concerts and avoiding huge waves are just a few of the other things you'll be up to – and you can expect Dr Robotnik to appear from time to time too, dropping 16-ton weights from his ship and generally causing havoc in his inimitable style.

Pick a card, any card

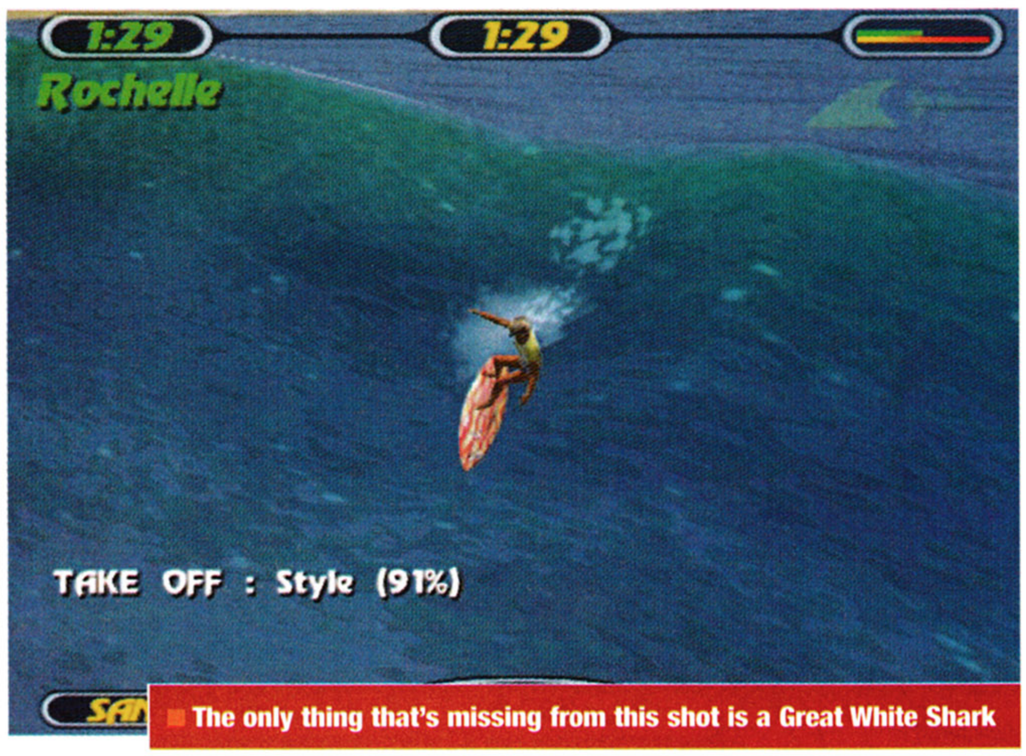
Despite our initial doubts, *Sonic Shuffle* has actually turned out to be quite good fun, though we'd advise against trying the singleplayer game – you'll fall asleep waiting for the three CPU opponents to make their moves. Beating human players is much more gratifying and although it's no *Quake III*, the family-orientated multiplayer antics offered by Sonic and his chums could make a really refreshing change from having to slaughter everyone in sight ■

It may look twee but as a multiplayer game this is fairly addictive stuff

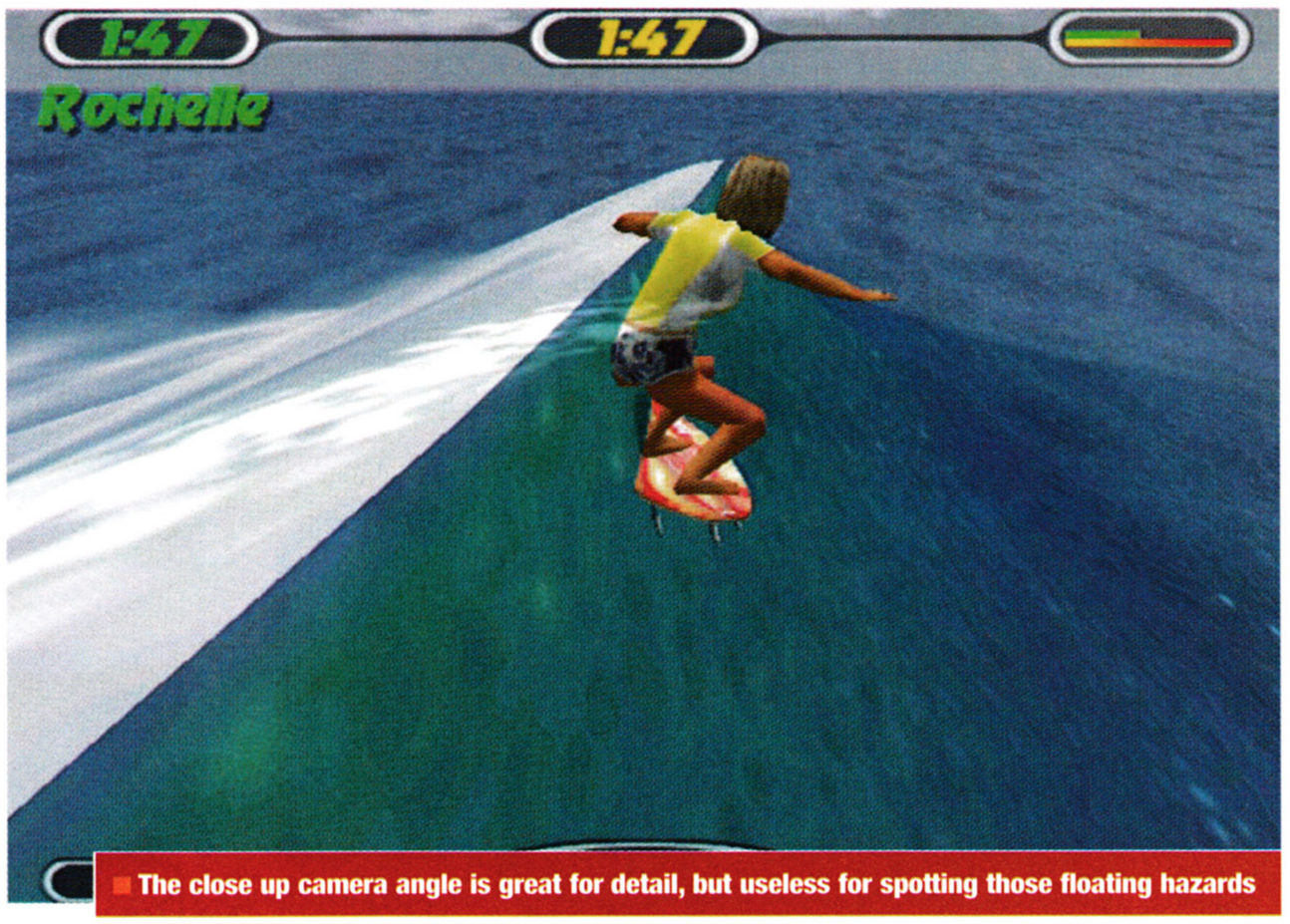
Is Sonic encouraging gambling?!



"Hi! I'm God. Check out my radical surfboard, dude"



The only thing that's missing from this shot is a Great White Shark

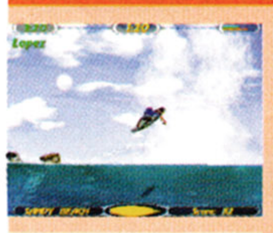


The close up camera angle is great for detail, but useless for spotting those floating hazards

CHAMPIONSHIP SURFER

Can't swim without water wings? Tough luck – you're going surfing

IN A NUTSHELL



> Get wet and wild in Dreamcast's very first surfing title.

Coded by a group of surf-mad Aussies and brimming with options, the long road to surfboarding hero-dom will be a watery one ■

DETAILS

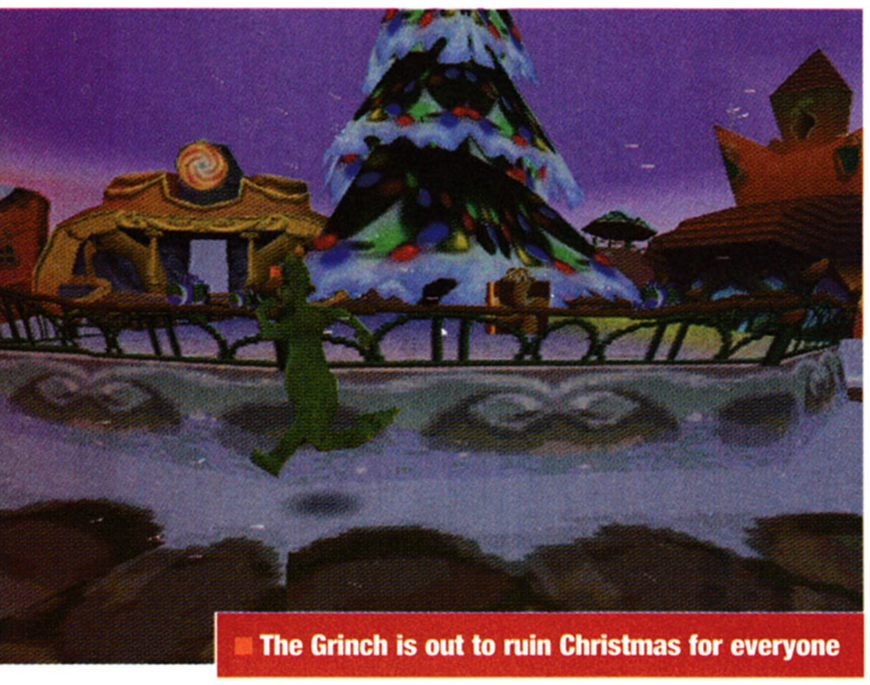
Publisher:	**Mattel Interactive**
Developer:	**Krome Studios**
Origin:	**Australia**
Players:	**One to four**
Release date:	**February**

With the likes of *Sega Extreme Sports*, *Dave Mirra BMX* and *Tony Hawk's Skateboarding* kicking around, it seems to be open season on macho sporting pursuits at the moment. Enter a new contender, *Championship Surfer*, domain of the seriously brave and permanently tanned.

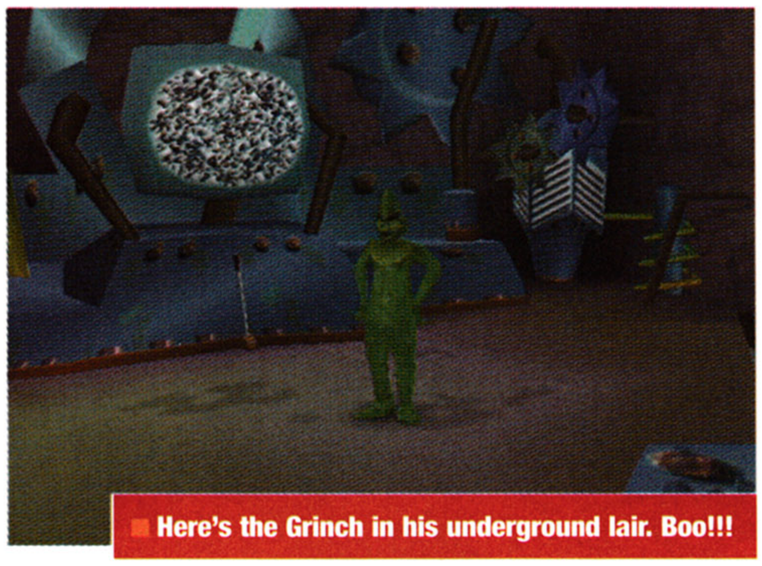
Currently being coded by Krome Studios, residents of Brisbane, Australia, this is an opportunity to go toobin' without getting remotely wet. The easiest way to catch your first wave is in the Freestyle mode, which lets you practice your moves, using the analogue stick to steer, A to jump and the triggers to pull off hard turns. There's also Championship, Arcade, King of the Waves (a split-screen twoplayer competition) and Rumble mode, which lets up to four surfers ride one massive wave; avoiding sharks, exploding ducks and mines. We found this to be great fun, each surfer attempting to force the others into the floating hazards while trying in vain to remain upright.

The graphics do their job well enough, especially the wave motion which is very convincing, tossing the characters around like paper cups in a storm. Winning each bout is down to a finishing score which rewards you for skill and style as you pull off stunts, such as snaps, barrels and aerials.

With real life surfers and a whole host of unlockable beaches and reefs, *Championship Surfer* looks like it could be a laugh riot for those who dream of sand, sun and surf but are too lazy to get off the couch. **DC-UK**'ll see you there if you bring the tinnies ■



The Grinch is out to ruin Christmas for everyone



Here's the Grinch in his underground lair. Boo!!!

THE GRINCH

Get ready to meet the anti-Santa Claus

For those of you who were not subjected to Dr Seuss books as a frightened child, Grinch is an ugly green monster who lives in a cave high above Whoville. A villain in the classic storybook mould, he's intent on ruining life for everyone in the town and sets out to steal Christmas, misery guts that he is. Unfortunately, while deciding which of many evil Xmas-pinching inventions to put to use, he accidentally knocks over a box of blueprints that get caught by the wind and scattered all over Whoville. And so begins the quest to retrieve all the papers while creating as much misery for the townspeople as possible.

And what better way to tell the story than through a 3D adventure? Starting from the cave, you get to perform a number of small tasks in order to learn the controls. The analogue stick moves the Grinch around, while the triggers pan the camera left and right and the A button makes him jump (doubletap it for a *Mario*-style bottom-bash on enemies and breakable objects). The Grinch can also employ his rancid breath as a weapon by pressing X. Heading out into the town, you find yourself bashing snowmen and smashing presents as well as trying to pick up the blueprints fluttering around.

Graphically, things are very bland at the moment, with textures so flat and devoid of shading they could be characters in Eastenders. But that complaint pales in comparison to the collision detection – watch in horror as the Grinch disappears into walls and through doors. Hopefully, AM&M will sort this out before it's released.

With an army of kids waiting for Jim Carrey's film representation of the green meany's exploits, the timing couldn't be better for this blatant license. Hopefully there'll be a good game in there too ■

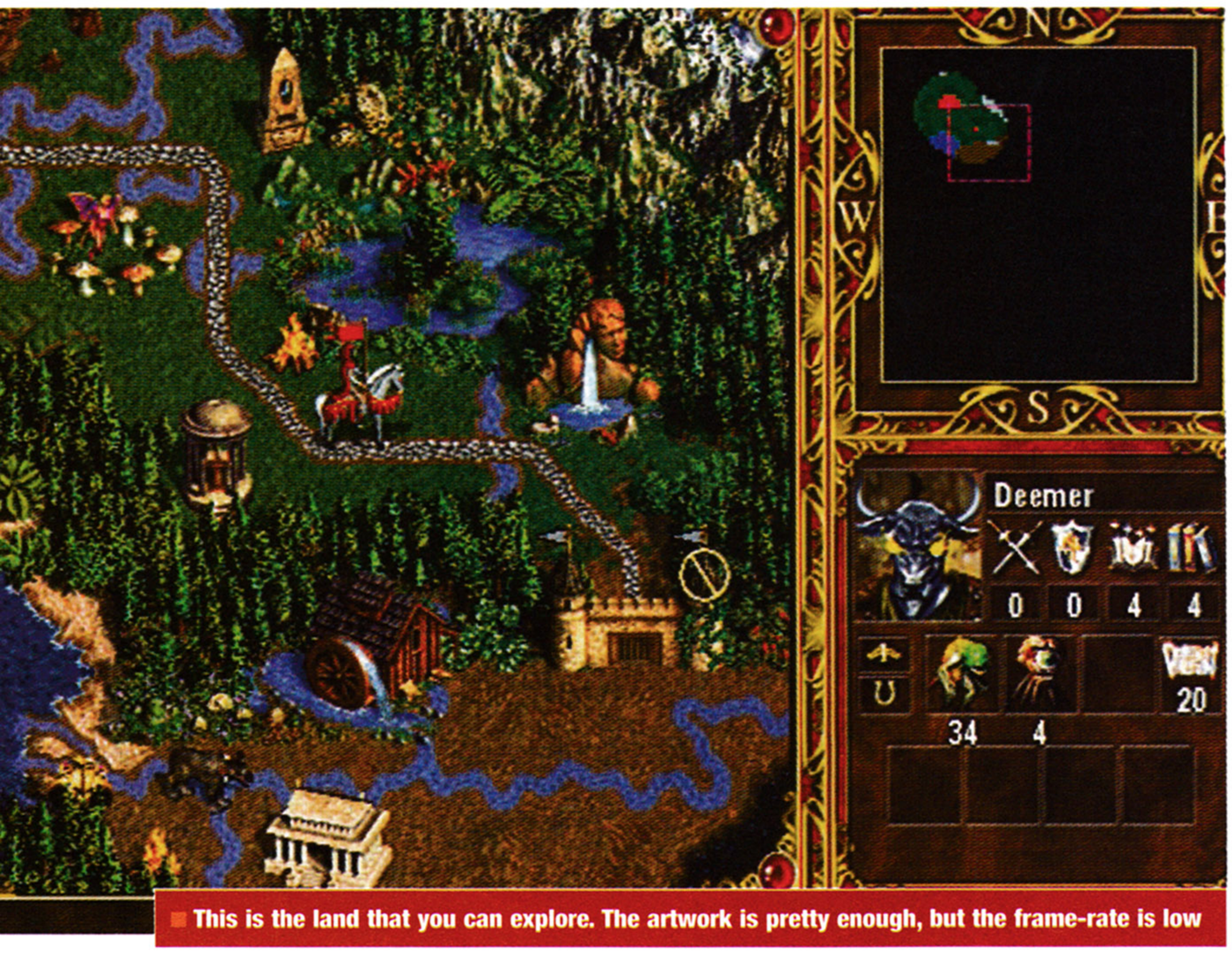
IN A NUTSHELL

> The standard 3D adventure fare returns to DC as the mean-spirited Grinch attempts to make off with Yuletide.

Bash enemies and collect all the lost blueprints for a Cruddy Xmas and a Crappy New Year ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	**Konami**
Developer:	**Artificial Mind & Movement**
Origin:	**USA**
Players:	**One**
Release date:	**January**



This is the land that you can explore. The artwork is pretty enough, but the frame-rate is low

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC III

In *HOMM's* third instalment, DC finally gets a glimpse of the magic

The *Heroes Of Might And Magic* franchise has been enthralling PC gamers since 1996, with it's addictive turn-based blend of strategy and RPG elements. Now Ubi Soft is bringing the third instalment over to Dreamcast so we can get a piece of the orc-slaughtering action. If you want dungeons, treasure, artefacts and, of course, loads of enemies to mash up, you've come to the right place.

If you've never played a top-down 2D strategy adventure before, don't fret. The game begins with a handy training mode so you can ease yourself into the finer details of gameplay (menus, resource gathering, spell casting, combat etc) before you plunge into battle. The oneplayer mode then offers a choice between single scenarios or a campaign, where your armies and heroes are carried from one map to the next. Elsewhere, up to eight players can take turns in the multiplayer battles and a multitude of scenarios are available. Strangely enough, these are won by beating all the other heroes, finding precious treasure and conquering the cities.

While the graphics might not push the boundaries of DC's power, *HOMM III* is crammed full of the tactical stuff that strategy players love. The series has been a big hit on PC and with little competition on DC, there's no reason why this shouldn't continue ■

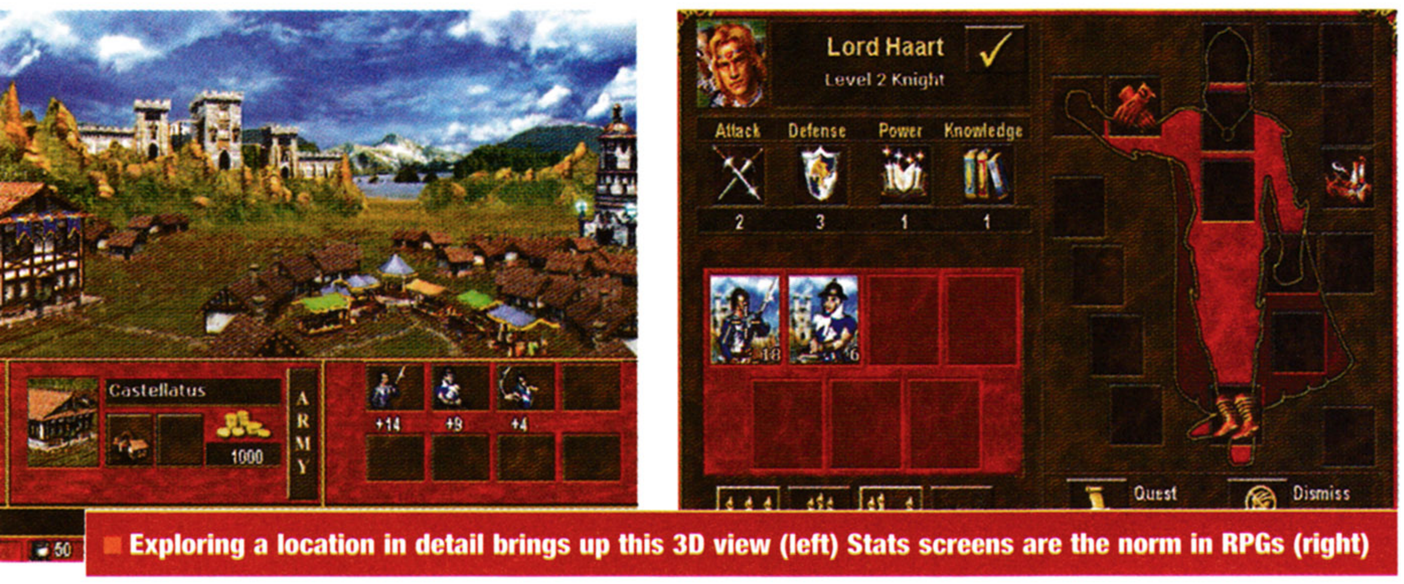
IN A NUTSHELL

> Turn-based 2D-strategy action set in a fantasy world.

The complex gameplay may put some off, but those willing to put in a little time and effort should discover a very fine game. The eightplayer mode will add to the appeal too ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	Ubi Soft
Developer:	New World Computing
Origin:	USA
Players:	One to eight
Release date:	December

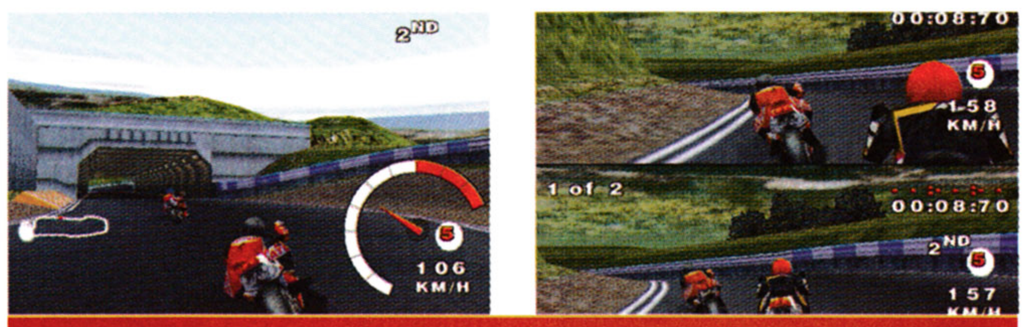


Exploring a location in detail brings up this 3D view (left) Stats screens are the norm in RPGs (right)

DUCATI WORLD

Acclaim's two-wheeler revs up

It's a racing game, therefore it has tunnels. That is the law



Keeping your balance is a fine art, as too much pitch will slip the back tyre out

Back in issue 15 we had our first glimpse of the upcoming biker, *Ducati World* and now we've had the chance to don helmet and leathers once more to see how well the game is coming along.

There's been some obvious progress since we last played, most noticeably in the handling which is now far more convincing; really capturing the thrills of leaning into corners, mere centimetres away from disaster.

Another sign of the game's progression is the twoplayer split-screen mode which has now been added. It's still at a very early stage (the frame-rate barely scrapes past moped speeds) but even running in slow motion it's obvious that racing against a mate is going to be a great laugh in the finished version. Although there's no *Road Rash*-like option to smack opponents round the head (this is a serious sim after all), racing on two wheels provides far more opportunity for violence than car games and it's not uncommon for twoplayer clashes to be just that: both bikers trying desperately to unseat each other and ending up skidding along the tarmac on their arses.

Motorbikes haven't been too well represented in the gaming world with only Sega's *Hang On* and *Manx TT* and EA's *Road Rash* providing genuine two-wheeled thrills. Find out if *Ducati World* can be added to the shortlist in next issue's review ■

IN A NUTSHELL

> Ducati is a legendary name in biking and it appears *Ducati World* may well do justice to its classy licence.

An in-depth racer with a fine balance between simulation and arcade thrills, this is looking like a good 'un ■

DETAILS

Publisher:	Acclaim
Developer:	Attention To Detail
Origin:	UK
Players:	One to two
Release date:	January

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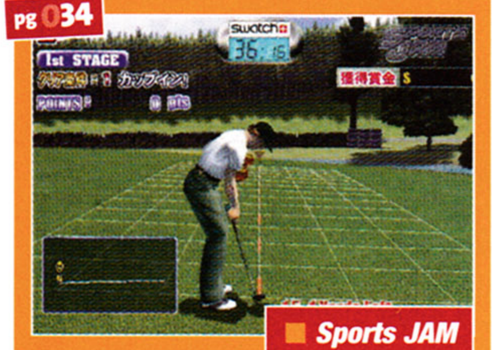

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News

Essential info from the wild world of Dreamcast

Sequel Frenzy

Prepare for a year of follow-ups as Sega warms up to push Dreamcast even harder

The year 2001 is already hotting up to be another memorable one for Sega fans. Besides exciting, original games, we're going to be treated to sequels of some highly acclaimed titles. Though many of you may be shuddering at the prospect of DC catching a nasty dose of sequelitis, let DC-UK guide you through some of the most thrilling prospects for the next twelve months. We promise you won't be disappointed.

Soul Reaver's luscious graphics and challenging gameplay certainly impressed when it arrived on Dreamcast and now we're being treated to a sequel courtesy of Crystal Dynamics. This should be a huge improvement in many areas, not least in the visuals. Textures get a full overhaul and, as these shots show, the results are stunning. The gothic feel of the game remains intact, with beautifully crafted environments (which will be much more interactive than before) and Dreamcast pulls off plenty of spectacular lighting effects. Also included is a wider variety of enemies and a larger arsenal at Raziels disposal.

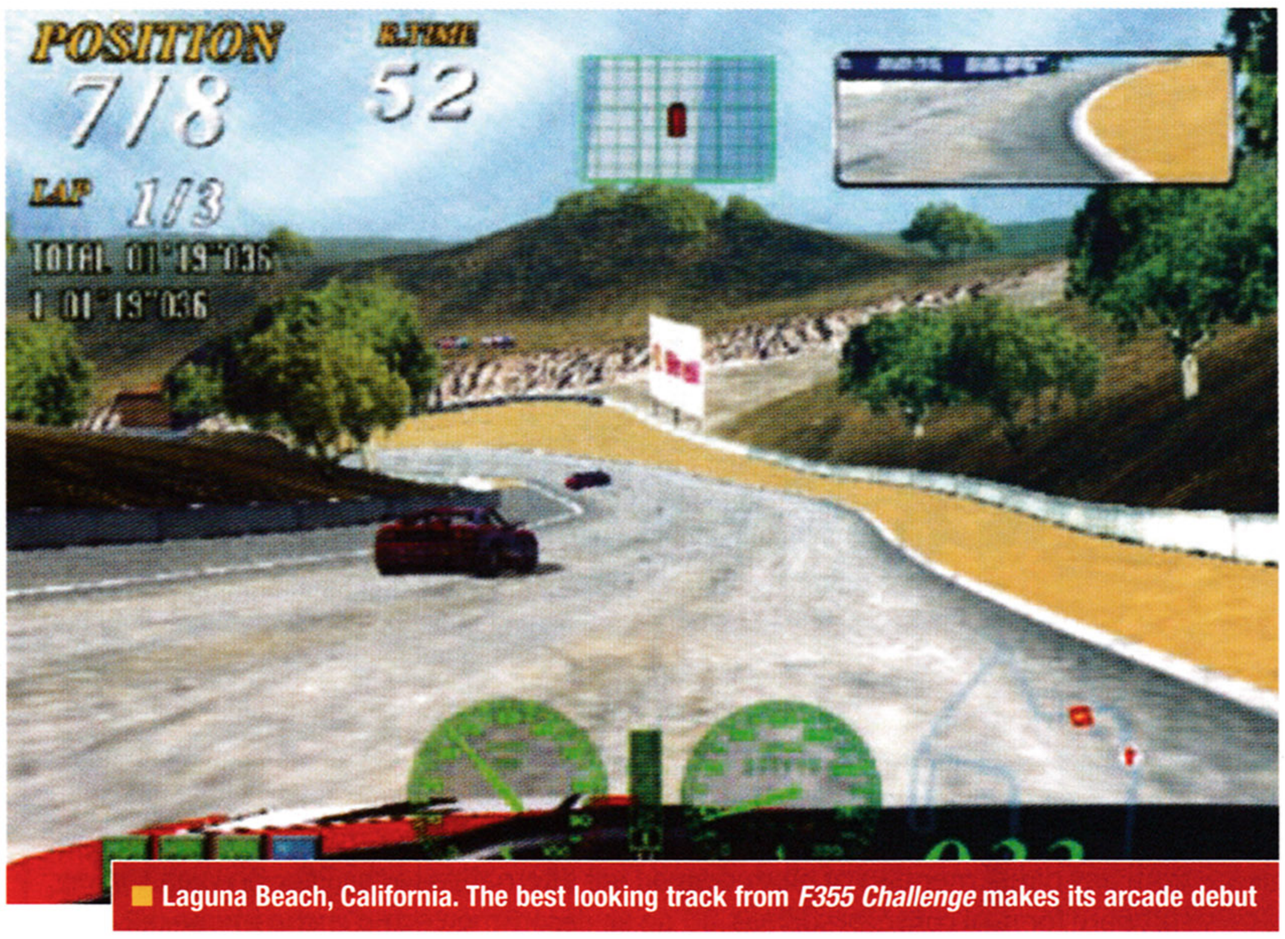
2001 will also see the return of bonkers cabby antics in the form of the recently announced *Crazy Taxi 2*. Developer Hitmaker has confirmed that the sequel will be based around New

Raziel gets a graphical overhaul for *SR2*

The colour palette is a lot more varied

RETRO MEGA DRIVE BUNDLE FOR US

Sega of America is to release a DC bundle called the 'Smash Pack'. The disc contains ten classic Mega Drive games, including the likes of *Streets Of Rage 2*, *Sonic The Hedgehog* and *Phantasy Star 2*. It will also feature *Sega Swirl* and *Virtua Cop 2* and should be available early 2001 for around £125. Unfortunately it looks like the disc won't be available on it's own.



Laguna Beach, California. The best looking track from *F355 Challenge* makes its arcade debut

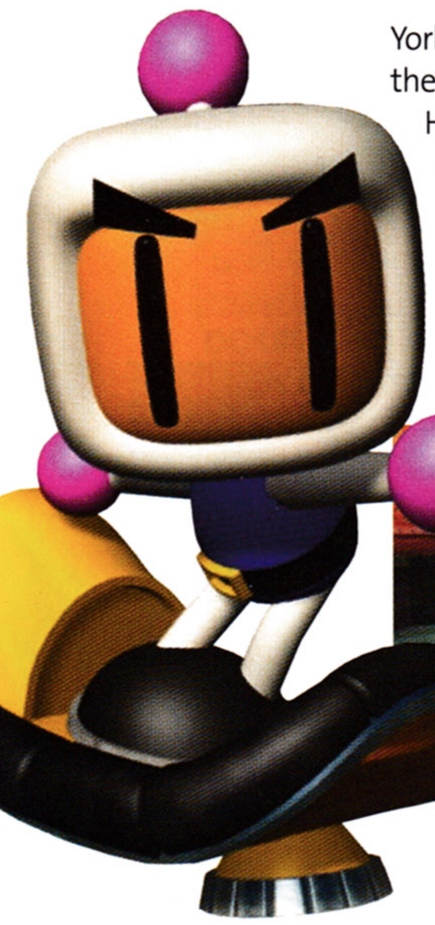
Under the bridge at Ferrari HQ, Maranello

Don't be fooled – it's not a true sequel

TOO HOT TO HANDLE?

THE HOTTEST GAMES OF 2001	HOW FIRED UP SHOULD YOU BE?
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	4
Agartha	4
Alien Front Online	4
Alone in the Dark IV	4
Black and White	5
Cannon Spike	4
Charge 'n' Blast	3
Commandos 2	4
Daytona USA Online	5
Fighting Vipers 2	4
Galleon	4
Grandia II	5
Guilty Gear X	4
Gun Valkyrie	4
Half-Life	5
Headhunter	5
Illbleed	3
NBA 2K1	4
NFL 2K1	4
Outtrigger	4
Phantasy Star Online	5
Project Justice	4
Sega Marine Fishing	3
Skies of Arcadia	5
Soldier of Fortune	4
Sonic Adventure 2	5
Sonic Shuffle	3
Soul Reaver 2	4
Starlancer	3
System Shock 2	5
Tokyo Highway Challenge 2	3
Unreal Tournament	5
Vanishing Point	3

"2001 will see the return of bonkers cabby antics"



York with new drivers and more of the popular 'crazy box' mini-games.

Hitmaker has made no comment as to whether the title will feature online play, but hopes are high considering the company's focus on Internet gaming. A Japanese release looks likely in the summer, with a European release soon after.

Bomberman makes a welcome return next year, with the multiplayer classic coming to Dreamcast in an online form. Taking advantage of DC's modem, the game will allow up to ten players to compete at once. As this is Dreamcast we're talking about, it won't be one of those poor pseudo-3D versions of *Bomberman*, it'll use highly stylised cel-shading graphics (last seen in *Jet Set Radio*) to bump up the eye candy stakes while preserving the sheer simplicity of the legendary puzzling gameplay.

The soul reaver practices his kill skills in a typically grisly fashion

Meanwhile, down at the local arcade, *F355 Challenge 2* will soon be making a dent. While not strictly a sequel to Yu Suzuki's challenging racer, it's an update that brings the arcade version up to spec with the Dreamcast incarnation. All the tracks from the DC game are now included and the deluxe twin cabinet version allows you to save your details to a VM and download them on your Dreamcast.

But we've saved the biggest for last as we've managed to get our hands on some details of the second part in Yu Suzuki's opus, *Shenmue*. The game will be set in China and Hong Kong and sees Ryu continuing his quest to find his father's murderer. Suzuki's vision for the epic is unfaltering and he wants to complete the full sixteen chapters he originally envisioned; though each game will also contain multiple chapters. *Shenmue 2* will be so large that it weighs in at a massive six GD-ROMs and the team promises that despite the beauty of the first title, *Shenmue 2* will outshine it in every department. We really can't wait to see what they've got planned. The good news is that the game is now definitely on for a 2001 release. That twelve months is going to feel like a hell of a lot longer though ■

■ Sega wants to replace the traditional videogame arcade with a more accessible Internet cafe model, like its Tokyo Net@ centre

Sega's Plans Unveiled

Dreamcast games on other formats? Can it be true? Yes, and that's only the beginning...

Through a series of press releases and conferences, Sega has recently outlined its business plans for the next few years. This may sound as dull as flood water, but there are some shocking revelations in store. Not least, the possibility of Sega developing for rival consoles.

But let's get the facts straight. In a statement made in late October, Sega announced that it would be producing a single chip version of Dreamcast which would then be made available to other companies to put in their own products. Primarily, this will mean DC technology turning up in things like palm tops, mobile phones and set top boxes (such as Digital TV receivers) – allowing the makers of such gadgets to offer users mini-games to play on their screens.

On top of this, plans have also been revealed to create a Dreamcast PCI card that will allow PC owners to play Dreamcast games on their computers, which could of course radically increase the market for Sega games.

While the statement shied away from any direct mention of producing software for rival consoles such as Gamecube or PlayStation 2, at a conference in Tokyo executives stated that cross-platform development *would* be considered on a case by case basis. This would probably involve a royalty system whereby developers could buy licences to convert Sega content for other platforms. Alternatively, Sega's in-house divisions (now run as separate companies don't forget) could well do the work themselves, but none of this is currently finalised. Appearing to add substance to this conjecture is a rumour that the upcoming arcade game *Virtua Fighter X* could well be the first Sega coin-op to receive a multi-format home conversion.

Sega is keen to stress, however, that its major decision has been to re-position itself as an 'online network and content company'. Effectively, Dreamcast may now be marketed as an all-round online entertainment machine – an accessible alternative to the PC with Web surfing, ecommerce and cheap phonecalls as well as games. Indeed, Sega is already building an 'extensive global Internet infrastructure' signing deals with telecommunications companies all over the shop to make sure it can provide fast, cheap and easy Internet access and multiplayer gaming – the aim obviously being to steal the thunder from PS2.

It is clear then, that although support of other platforms has been mentioned, Dreamcast is still at the centre of Sega's plans. The success of *NFL 2K1* in the states (350,000 units sold in one month) – mostly due to its online modes – has been held up as an example of where Sega is heading, with titles such as *PSO* and *Quake III Arena* also name-checked as future cash cows. It's a weird confusing time, all right. Stay with us on this ■

Sega's new year resolutions

WHAT'S PROMISED FOR 2001?

Here is a quick rundown of all the changes Sega plans over the coming three years. While some of these are wildly ambitious and unquantifiable, they do at least reveal a company determined to stay in the game. Check this lot out:

> Sega plans to develop for the following platforms: DC, arcade, PC, Personal Data Assistant (like the Psion Organiser series), Set-top Box, Game Boy Advance and car navigation systems

> As for Dreamcast, Sega has more than 31 titles (in house) for 2001. The objective over the next three years is to make the machine the world number one network gaming provider.

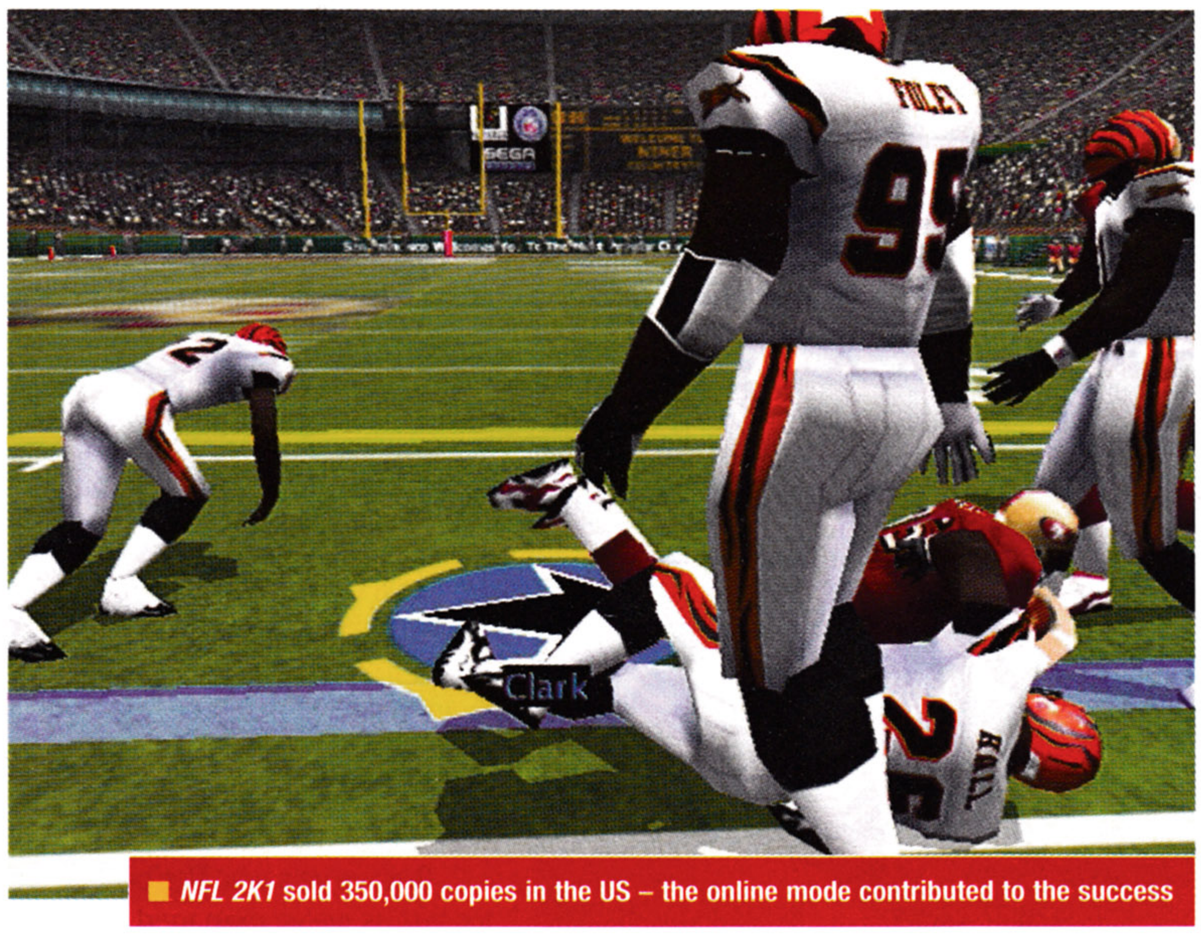
> Sega will terminate its presence in the arcade business overseas (EU, US, Australia). The company will continue to distribute its arcade games internationally, but will not have any arcade centres anymore. The staff will be laid off.

> There are also plans to broaden the arcade business and create 'hybrid amusement centres' providing diverse entertainment. Sega states that it will forge alliances with movie, music, television and even food companies to this end.

> Sega Channel will be resurrected as a digital satellite broadcast channel, starting in Japan and coming to the rest of the world soon after.

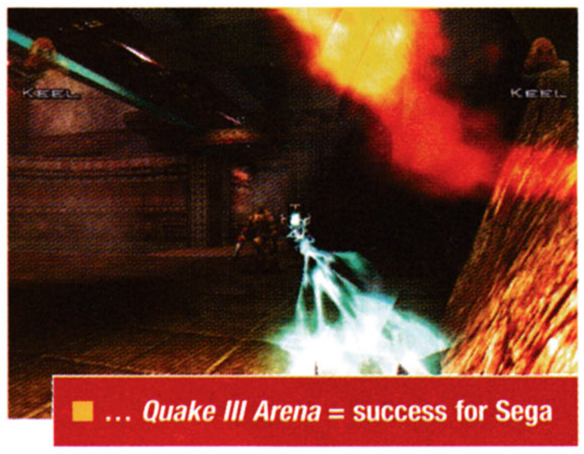
> Game development on other consoles is being considered on a 'case by case basis'. Other companies could be given licenses to port Sega games onto other consoles. Sega could also handle the conversions in-house but distribute them through another publisher (this happened with *F355* for example, published through Acclaim).

> Sega expects ten million Dreamcasts to be sold by the end of March 2001. The company claims to have already shifted six million worldwide ■

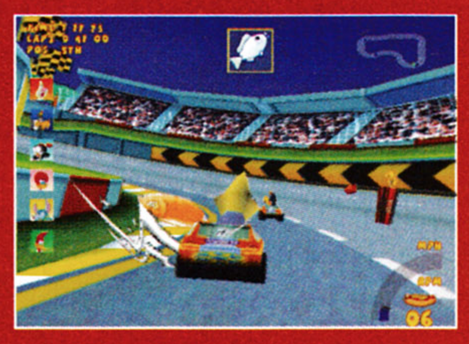


■ *NFL 2K1* sold 350,000 copies in the US – the online mode contributed to the success

■ Net play: *Unreal Tournament* +...



■ ... *Quake III Arena* = success for Sega



WOODY WOODPECKER RACING

As you'd expect from this karting racer from Konami, the game revolves around the manic bird, his cartoon pals and some daft antics. But what else? Well, players can transform their karts into all-terrain vehicles, flying saucers and hovercrafts. There are 18 tracks to race, and the graphics, while not exactly earth-shattering, look very bright and colourful. Expect a release in the spring.

DC-INTERVIEW

CHARLES BELLFIELD

Head of Corporate Communications – Sega USA

"The Net is about the experience"

DC-UK: We've just read Sega's press release. What is a 'multi-application protocol strategy'?!

CB: What we're looking to develop here, is rather than being platform dependent we will be application-dependent. Sega's business going forward is to develop a strategy that allows our content to work on multiple devices but still allowing us the strategic relationship with the platform. So it's not about just taking a Dreamcast game and then simply putting it on X-Box or PS2 – it's about developing the DC technology into a single chip solution, and actually lowering the cost of that technology.

DC-UK: When will this happen?

CB: It's being developed now but it won't make it into a retail product until next year.

DC-UK: What exactly is being scaled down?

CB: If you open up a Dreamcast now you'll see two main pieces of silicon and some memory chips. It's about shrinking the die so as to allow all the technology to reside on one piece of silicon that can be sold at $30 rather than $180. This will lower the cost of putting the technology into consumer products, like mobiles, etc.

DC-UK: And what will be the first markets for this DC-based technology?

CB: There are two markets we're focusing on: the portable market where we're using elements like Java – for example, we've announced a relationship with Motorola for creating Java-based content for cell phones and PDAs. But we're also looking at providing content for all handheld devices.

DC-UK: What kind of content? Surely not just VM games?

CB: No! You can have Game Boy Advance-quality content with this [Mini DC] technology. In the handheld market there are opportunities to draw on 8-bit [Master System] and 16-bit Mega Drive content – that visual quality will be what you can expect in the handheld markets.

DC-UK: So you're aiming for some kind of generic network technology that will work across multiple formats?

CB: Correct. It means we'll have handheld versions of games working in sync with what we call the home-based content – such as on DC, the PC, set-top boxes and all kinds of digital convergence devices with scaled-down Dreamcast technology inside them.

DC-UK: And presumably it'll hit Japan before America?

CB: Not necessarily. It could be the UK that sees it first [he mentions On Digital and the high pick up rate of digital cable boxes in UK].

DC-UK: What about the PC DC card? Is this the start of proper cross-compatibility?

CB: What we talked about was a PC card that allows DC content to be played on it – so yes, there is technology that allows this.

DC-UK: But isn't DC technology a bit old to become the lynchpin for a network masterplan?

CB: You put *Shenmue* next to *Kessen* and tell me it looks old. The Net is about the experience, not about horsepower. It's about striking a balance between performance and how unique the gameplay experience can be.

DC-UK: How can DC owners benefit from this multi-format approach?

CB: Imagine the *Shenmue* world in three years time. You'll play it on your home console but you'll also be able to be involved with the virtual world on the move – via your cellphone – in realtime ■

Samba De Arrivo

Get ready to shake those maracas!

Time to go maraca-loco, samba fans, because on December 8 the greatest *Beatmania* game ever is finally boogeying its way to Britain. For readers still to be educated in the ways of the maraca, *Samba De Amigo* is a music game that comes packaged with a pair of the beautiful percussive peripherals. The hilarious idea is to shake your maracas in time with some saucy samba sounds – ranging from remixed pop songs like Aha's, Take On Me, to traditional samba tunes such as the magnificent Mas Que Nada.

Amigo the Monkey shakes his funky stuff

Because of the game's specialist nature Sega is only producing around 3000 copies, you'll be able to buy the bundle for £99.99 at selected stores – EB, Game and various independent retailers. Yes, it's expensive but it's worth the cost because *Samba De Amigo* is an outrageously enjoyable romp – for more info see our import review in issue 12, where it received a sambatastic 9/10 ■

Driven mad by Crazy Taxi?
KO'd by Soul Calibur?

You need to consult the
DC-UK GAME LINE
0906 466 4445
7 days a week, from 8am to 11pm
For tips and cheats on all your favourite Dreamcast games

Customer Services 0870 800 6155
Calls costs £1.50 a minute at all times. Call charges will appear on your standard telephone bill.
Please seek permission from the person that pays the bill before calling.

DAILY RADAR UK

The latest gaming news courtesy of **dailyradar.co.uk**

SYSTEM SHOCK 2 DELAY

Respected first-person adventure *System Shock 2* has sadly slipped down the US release schedule into next year, according to Vactical Entertainment, the company responsible for the port from the PC. The game has still to be confirmed for a European release, but considering the praise heaped upon Looking Glass Studio's original PC version for its fine blend of story, action and RPG elements it's only a matter of time before someone picks it up over here ■

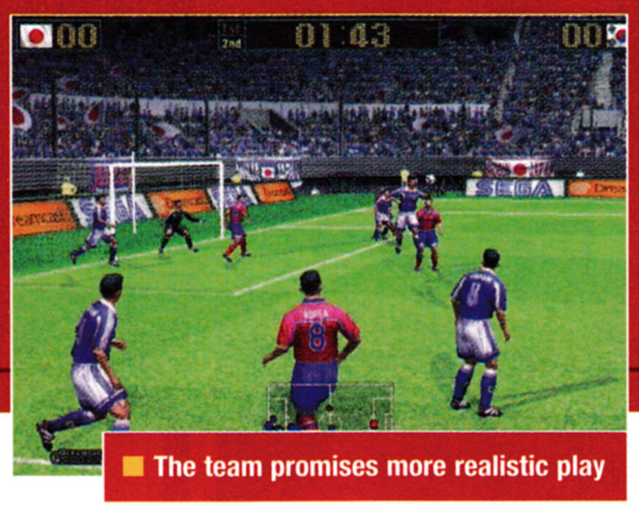
SONIC CELEBRATES HIS BIRTHDAY ON YOUR DREAMCAST

Segas famous mascot is ten next year and by way of celebration it seems that Sega will be releasing a compilation disc of his adventures for fans to enjoy all over again. There's no exact details at present on exactly which titles will be on the disc, but considering the capacity of the Dreamcasts GD-ROM's we could be lucky enough to get the complete set of the hedgehogs 16 and 32-bit outings. And, of course, we've still got *Sonic Adventure 2* to look forward to as well. 2001 should be a good year for Sonic fans ■

YANKS WILL PLAY PSO FOR FREE

While the Japanese will have to pay a subscription fee to play Sonic Team's brilliant *Phantasy Star Online*, it has emerged that our lucky trans-atlantic cousins will pay no such charges. Once they have paid their subscription to SegaNet (Sega's own ISP) they won't ever have to pay another cent. As far as Europe goes though, Sega has commented that the situation is complicated by the different territories over here. While they haven't yet confirmed what the situation will be, the company admitted that there will be 'incentives' for us European gamers. We'll have to wait and see if the deal matches the US one ■

Player animation is much improved



The team promises more realistic play

Virtua Striker 3

The footie game we hate to love is back, but this time it's serious!

Konami's *ISS* games may rule the football roost in the home console market but in terms of the arcades, the Premier League Champion for the last six years has been Sega's very own *Virtua Striker* franchise. While the series can boast a lofty reputation in the realms of the coin-op, when it was finally converted to console in the shape of DC's *Virtua Striker 2: Ver. 2000.1*, it wasn't just the game's title that stunk up our noses. The footie action was also incredibly disappointing with dreadful controls and sluggish animation making it play like an arthritic non-league toiler.

But it's time to let bygones be bygones and put that disappointment out of our collective Dreamcast head, because *Virtua Striker 3* is on its way to the arcades (it's currently around 50 per cent complete) and we're hoping it'll right a few of its predecessor's wrongs. Visuals are already looking pretty saucy (it's being programmed on the new Naomi 2 technology) but then *VS2* also looked great and played like a dog. So what we're really interested in is how does the game perform?

Well, that's a stupid question to ask ourselves considering *Virtua Striker 3* isn't finished and nobody's played it yet, but according to the game's producer, Satoshi Mifuni, we should have reason to be optimistic. The motion-captured animation has been completely redone – hopefully meaning an end to the agonising occasions when you're put through on goal only for your player to run in the opposite direction to the ball. And even more encouraging is that the simple, three-button control system has been overhauled and we're praying it'll take its inspiration from the intricate analogue genius of *Virtua Tennis* rather than the jerky, digital nightmare of *Virtua Striker 2*.

Another reason to be cheerful is the fact that, in the last couple of years, football has really taken off in Japan, and this increased knowledge and passion for the beautiful game will be reflected by a far more realistic game of *Virtua Striker*. At least in theory. More news on this one when it hits the arcades and if it's any good, the outrageous hype for a DC conversion starts right here ■

The pitch level camera is rubbish

The return of Quake

The original iD classic? On DC? Surely not?

A mysterious package materialised in the office late this issue. After the bomb squad assured us that it wasn't going to explode, we opened it to find an anonymous person had sent us a copy of *Quake* for Dreamcast. Hear that? *Quake*, not *Quake III Arena*. As we reported back in DC-UK 12, Titanium Studios of Australia ported the game to Dreamcast for a private project, but since then the code has somehow leaked onto the Net. How odd.

So we did the honourable thing and slapped it on. Thirty seconds later, it was up and running in all its 1996 glory. And you'd better believe, this is a *Quake* more perfect than you ever dare hope – fast, violent and, well… brown. A release is out of the question, but suffice is to say, *Quake* for Dreamcast rules. Just remember – you didn't hear this from us, right? ■

The colours are bland but it plays well

RUMOUR

Rumour: Despite the hype, Sony only sold 309,000 PS2s in the US in the first week. Whereas, DC shifted 372,000 units in three days. Worse still are the software sales, the highest was *Madden 2001* with 122,000 units, *Tekken Tag* selling a mere 75,000, compared to *Soul Calibur*'s 300,000. Ratios of software to hardware sales reached just 1.7:1 for PS2, where DC managed 3:1, even though it had only half as many launch titles as PS2. And one of the best games on the system, *Time Splitters* scraped 17,000 copies. That's one sold for every 18 PS2 owners.
DC-UK: Looks like someone's been telling porkies about their pre-orders, doesn't it?

Rumour: A post on **Segatech.com** was the cause of much debate considering it was supposedly from a member of Square. The post concerned the results of an internal poll asking employees what systems they thought the company should develop for and apparently, DC was the winner.

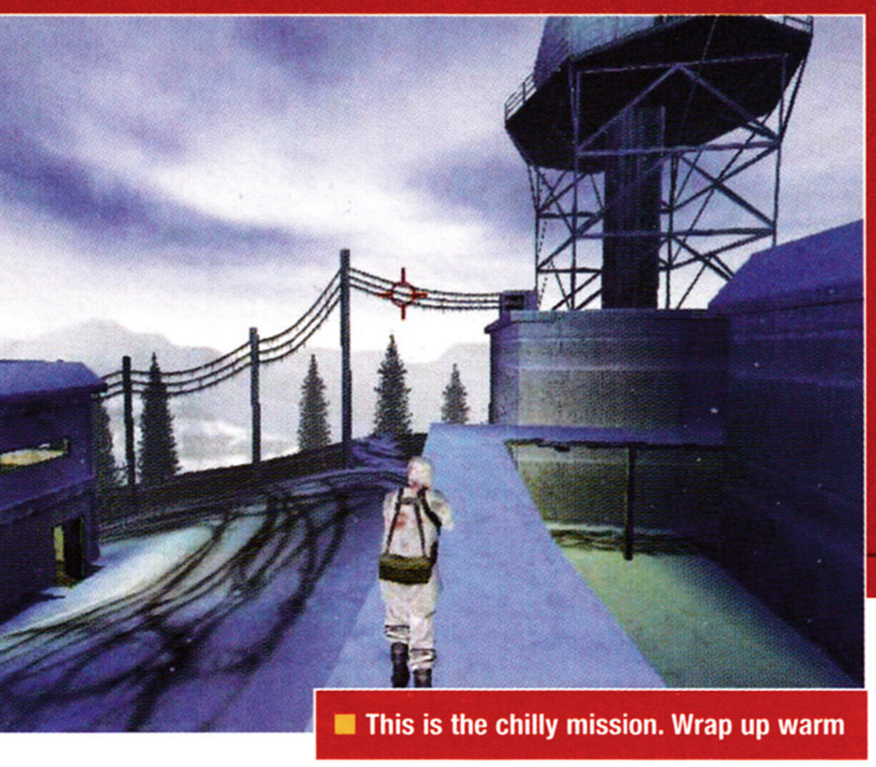
The anonymous insider was quoted as saying: "Most of us love DC. We've even started on some projects. All we are waiting for is the corporate go-ahead." He also stated that the original demo of *The Bouncer* was running on DC before Sony snapped up the rights to it.
DC-UK: It's impossible to authenticate the validity of the post. If it's proved true though, expect a huge news story ■

CHARTS

Dreamcast diseases...

Top ten conditions and illnesses associated with DC

1. **Virtua Athlete's Foot**
2. **Wacky Rabies**
3. **VD-Rally**
4. **GoutTrigger**
5. **Tapeworms Armageddon**
6. **Extreme Warts**
7. **Midway's Greatest Nits**
8. **Hidden and Gangrenous**
9. **San Francisco Thrush 2049**
10. **FluFlu Rocket!**



This is the chilly mission. Wrap up warm

Stealth plays a major role – check out that camouflage gear

Over the Rainbow Six

Kill terrorists using tactical espionage!

With *Rainbow Six* still awaiting its European release (see issue 13 for the US import review) its sequel, *Rogue Spear*, is already poised for release in America, courtesy of developer Pipe Dream. Originally a PC title, the action revolves around anti-terrorist organisation, Rainbow Six as they battle the Mafia and Middle Eastern extremists in locations around the globe.

The tactical shoot 'em up action requires you to direct your troops on various stealth-based missions. You can choose whether to plan the action in minute detail (using waypoints and commands to plan your teams' route) or use pre-programmed tactics. There's a large inventory of death-dealing armaments to choose from, including the likes of sniper rifles, Berettas and M-16's. The sniping action in particular looks to be a finely tuned aspect of the game, and, handily, certain troops can be chosen with sniping abilities for those all-important long-distance head shots.

Characters in the DC version look to be more realistic than in the original and Pipe Dreams claim that the soldiers will move and react much more effectively. The PC version of *Rogue Spear* is renowned for its top online multiplayer shooting fun but unfortunately this isn't to be included in the Dreamcast port. Don't despair though, because there's a comprehensive fourplayer split-screen mode to keep you amused. This includes scenarios like save the base, survival, stronghold and assassination. There's also all the missions from the PC add-on pack, Urban Operations and ten new characters to choose from, so it's not all bad news. Look out for a release early in the new year ■

CHARTS

ChartTrack

Dreamcast top ten...

1 **Metropolis Street Racer**
Publisher: Sega
★ It's finally here! It's bloody brilliant! It's gone straight to the top of the charts! And they've even advertised it! Blimey.

2 **Sonic Adventure**
Publisher: Sega
▲ Does the return of Sonic mean new DC owners are buying the game alongside the console? Let's hope so.

3 **Silent Scope**
Publisher: Konami
★ Fantastic anti-social arcade shooter. Blast terrorists in their naughty brains with your trusty sniper rifle.

4 **Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?**
Publisher: Eidos
▼ Will the appeal wear off now that a posh bird has actually won a million?

5 **Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2**
Publisher: Sega
★ Pugiltastic boxing fun returns to DC. Now smack Wacko Jacko in the face.

6 **Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation**
Publisher: Eidos
▲ Lara's Revelation returns just before the arrival of her fifth adventure.

7 **Soul Fighter**
Publisher: Mindscape
▲ Possibly the worst game on DC. Why is it back in the charts? WHY?!!!!!

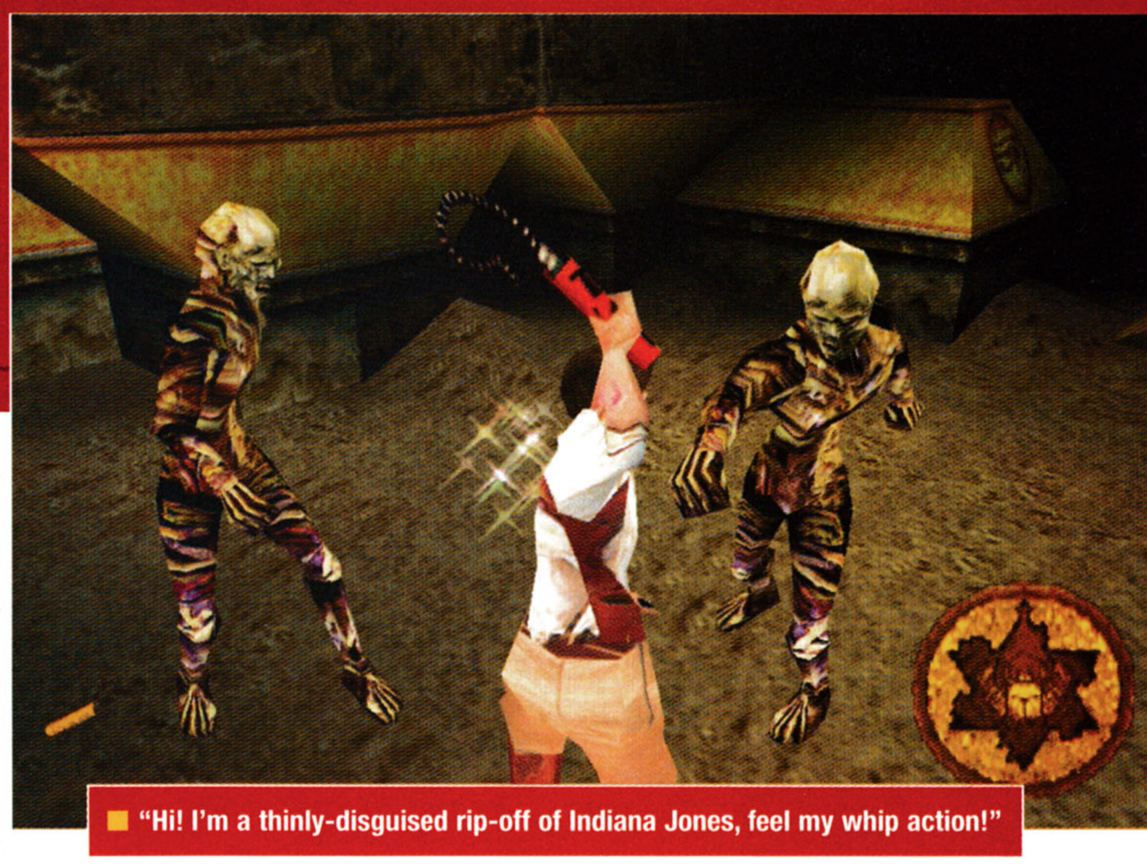
8 **Virtua Tennis**
Publisher: Sega
▼ Quite simply the best tennis game ever. Purchase it with speed.

9 **Le Mans 24 Hour**
Publisher: Infogrames
★ Superb endurance racer that deserves a far higher chart position.

10 **WWF Royal Rumble**
Publisher: THQ
▼ Dodgy wrestling action is drooping faster than Hulk Hogan's film career.

KEY: ★ New entry ▼ Dropped ▲ Climber ◆ Non-mover

Courtesy of Chart Track Ltd Tel: 0208 741 7585 www.elspa.com © Elspa



"Hi! I'm a thinly-disguised rip-off of Indiana Jones, feel my whip action!"

I want my Mummy!

Could this be a decent movie tie-in videogame shocker?

Given the huge success of action/horror hit movie The Mummy, a game based on it was always likely. Originally putting in an appearance at E3, the title is now set for release around February 2001 courtesy of Konami and Universal Studios. The game is a thirdperson action adventure that puts you in the shoes of one of three characters from the film; each with their own attributes that affect the way you play. Expect Brendan Fraser's character to be the all-action hero type, while Evie, the sultry librarian heroine will rely on her intelligence (and filing skills) to get her through.

Battling your way through the City Of The Dead is a suitably atmospheric experience, with some nasty undead beasties lurking in its depths, traps around every corner and some clever puzzles to keep you entertained. While the game seems essentially a *Tomb Raider* clone, the graphics look good, with some nice light sourcing and detailed textures to show off the DC's power. And the environments are dark and eerie, as you'd expect when creeping around the Mummy's tomb.

At this stage *The Mummy* is looking like it could do the business when it arrives next year but look out for a preview soon to find out if it's a nail-biting classic or a stinking pile of festering flesh. Eurgh! ■

> "It could do the business when it arrives next year"

The game follows the movie's plot as you battle the Mummy and his minions

DC-EXPRESS

CODE VERONICA: COMPLETE ON DC AND PS2 NEXT YEAR

Capcom has announced that an enhanced version of its masterpiece *Resident Evil Code: Veronica* will be released on both DC and PS2 in Japan in March. Entitled *Complete Edition*, the game will feature graphical improvements along with new scenes and dialogue. Nothing has been confirmed yet about a Euro release, but we'll keep our fingers crossed ■

■ "The next person to call it soccer gets it in the goolies"

■ You have to prove various skills

■ Ice hockey is really cool! (Groan)

■ *Sports JAM* is eight sports games wrapped into one

■ You'll win money as you progress

Go sports crazy

There are eight good reasons to seek out *Sports JAM* at the arcades

Last month we showed a few grabs of this multi-faceted arcade game but didn't have space to go into any details. Well, thank your lucky stars because this month we do.

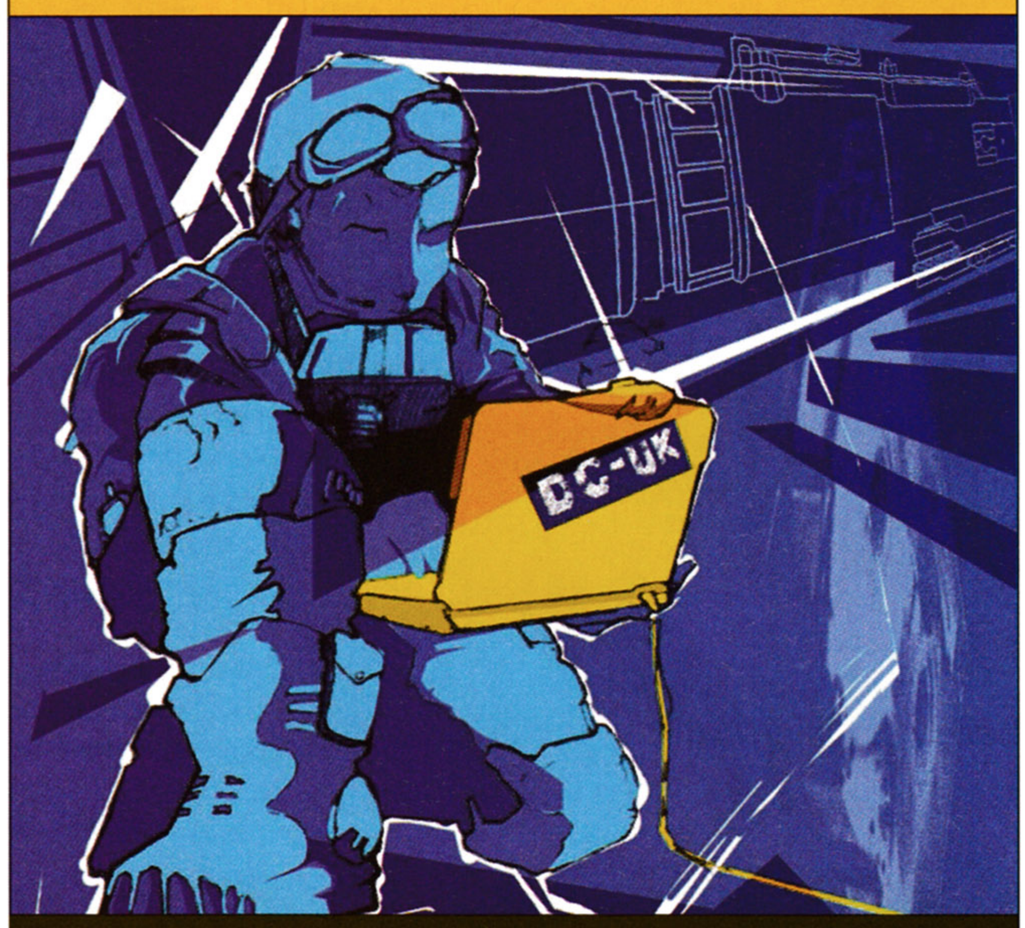
Designed by Sega's Wow Entertainment team, *Sports JAM* features eight popular sports – soccer, basketball, tennis, baseball, ice hockey, golf, cycling and American football. But it's not merely a compilation. The game is actually split into a series of four stages, each one requiring the player to choose from a selection of sports. When you've made your decision you have to compete in mini-games based around that discipline, designed to test your skill and accuracy. So it's not even a sports sim really – its a sport-themed skill tester, or something.

Obviously oriented toward the US market (you can tell because they refer to proper football as, eurgh, soccer), *Sports JAM* boasts a cool twoplayer mode and crisp funky presentation. Oh and it's the first Sega coin-op to exploit the new Naomi GD-ROM board – which, as the name may well indicate, stores the game on a simple GD ROM disc – just like Dreamcast. This is very cost effective for the arcade operators apparently, as if we gave a damn. However, the fact that it's already on GD ROM is a sure sign the game will be coming to DC. Or are we just being spectacularly naive? ■

> "*Sports JAM* boasts a cool twoplayer mode and crisp presentation"

DAVE 2000

Each month our regular columnist puts the videogame industry over his knee and gives it a damn good spanking



Could PlayStation's undisputed queen really be Dreamcast's saviour?

There are piles of them. Everywhere. DCs, stacked in shops, brimming with collections of free games, packed in every doorway, as if the troops are readying themselves for one final push over the edge and out onto the streets. A bit like that last episode of Black Adder. This is Dreamcast's golden period. It's now or never.

And what better way is there to spend £150 this Christmas? You could blow that on crackers and mince pies alone after a few pints of the festive spirit. Such a bargain will see huge numbers of parents working out how many sheets of wrapping paper they need to mask a Dreamcast while it waits for Christmas morning patiently beneath a pile of needles. Stand outside shops and watch with pride as people with those blue and white boxes of joy pass by.

But there are people who would rather DC remains exclusive, with its enigmatic swirl symbolising membership of an elite club. The 'hardcore' gamers, those that judge games on how long it takes to understand the control system, don't like seeing their favourite underdog cult machine being adopted on the cheap by the sweaty-fingered masses.

Tomb Raider is the perfect example of this: no hardcore player would be seen motionless in front of a TV in the company of the dumbed down Croft, but for the majority – and the parents who control the crucial Chrimbo purse-strings – Lara and her one annual new move signify games themselves. They are the games that make people who don't know about games want to join in.

Your dad knows who Lara Croft is for god's sake. Would he recognise Ulala or Ryo? Would they drive him to make an impulse purchase? Nope. When it comes to snaring the uninitiated casual shopper, the angular, retarded-but-recognisable car crash victim face of Lara is worth approximately 128 bits of hardcore gameplay.

So don't complain about DC being infected by these average, mass-market piles of blandness, accept them for what they are: reasons why the machine might still be on the shop shelves this time next year. As long as there is Lara, there is hope. The second she stops pulling in the money she'll be gone, taking your cash down to the cosmetic surgery clinic to try and buy herself a pair of rounder tits ■

Dave 2000's real name is Tarquin.

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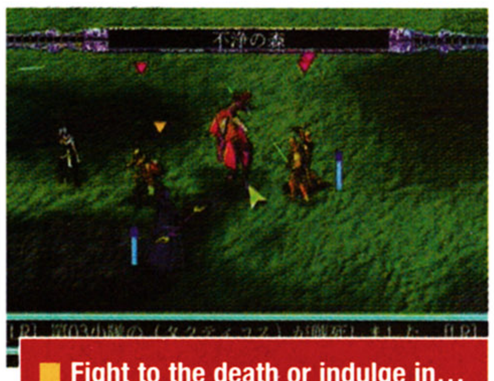
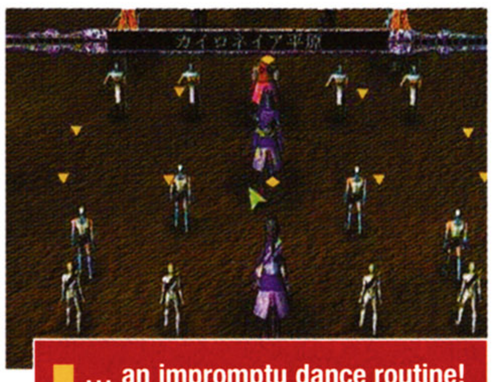
International News

Our Japanese newshounds sniff out Eastern delights

"Take that stupid skullcap off, you look like a prat"



Fight to the death or indulge in...



... an impromptu dance routine!

Alexander: the Road to Persia

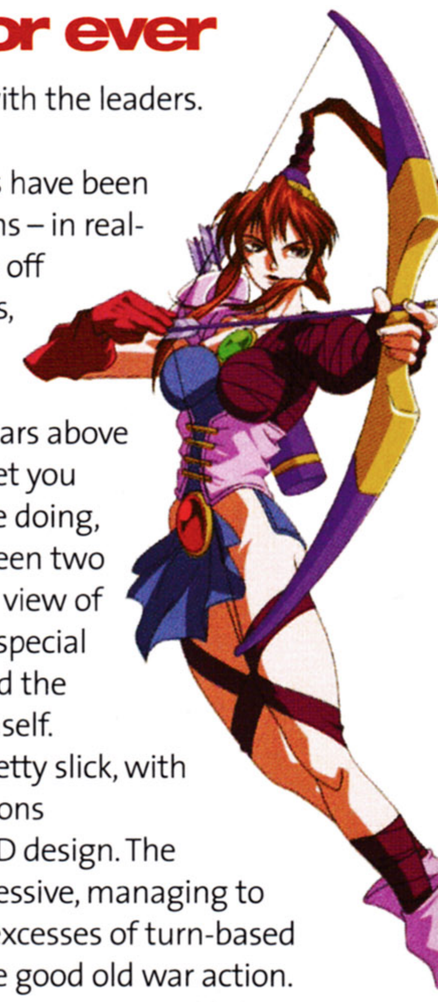
Become the greatest emperor ever

Recently released as an animated movie in Japan, Alexander the Great is coming to Dreamcast next February in the form of a military battle strategy war game – the sort of thing that PC gamers love (indeed it was originally released on PC in October) and the rest of us have headaches trying to understand.

This one is pretty easy to get to grips with, though. You take on the role of – go on guess... Oh alright, we'll tell you – Alexander the Great and you have to compete in a series of battles against various enemy armies. However, you don't just charge in there with your spear and start running people through – each battle begins in the briefing room where players study the battle map, looking out for possible traps and ambush points. Next, you assign orders to your computer-controlled generals and then provide them with troops remembering that these generals all have their own combat styles and battle behaviour, so you have to put the right troops with the leaders. Now THAT'S strategy.

Once all the plans have been made, the battle begins – in real-time. Your generals go off and follow their orders, while you take direct control of Alexander. During battle, healthbars above each of your soldiers let you know how well they're doing, and you can flip between two cameras: an overhead view of the whole battle, or a special Alexander-cam, behind the great warmonger himself.

The visuals are pretty slick, with some nice 2D animations complementing the 3D design. The gameplay, too, is impressive, managing to combine the tactical excesses of turn-based war games, with some good old war action. Unfortunately, a UK conversion is unlikely ■



Air Trix takes off

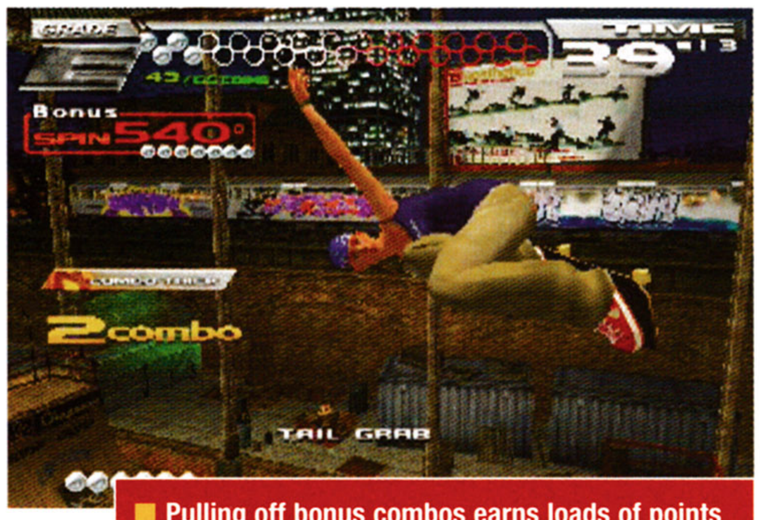
Hitmaker makes skateboard hit!

Three years ago, Sega's AM3 studio created a radical skateboarding coin-op named *Top Skater* which actually employed a realistic skateboard controller: you stood on it and shimmied about to move your on-screen skater. Naturally, the kids loved it. Well, AM3 may have changed its name to Hitmaker since then, but the team hasn't forgotten its skateboarding past – hence *Air Trix*, a visually amazing sequel to that original gnarly arcade beast.

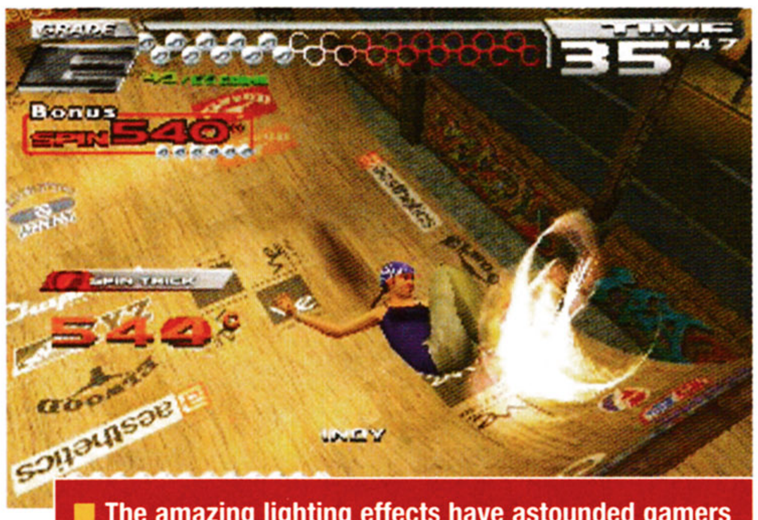
But this is no simple update. Whereas *Top Skater* provided a kind of downhill slalom, *Air Trix* takes place in a half-pipe and is based entirely around pulling off awesome tricks and stunts – the more you do the higher you rank at the end of the game. Easy.

As *Air Trix* employs the latest incarnation of Sega's mega-top-of-the-range arcade board, Hikaru (also used in *Episode 1 Racer* and *NASCAR*), the graphics are stunning especially the lighting effects, the like of which have honestly never been seen before. You'll get to judge this for yourself early next year when it hits your local arcade ■

Grinding is an intrical trick component in the game

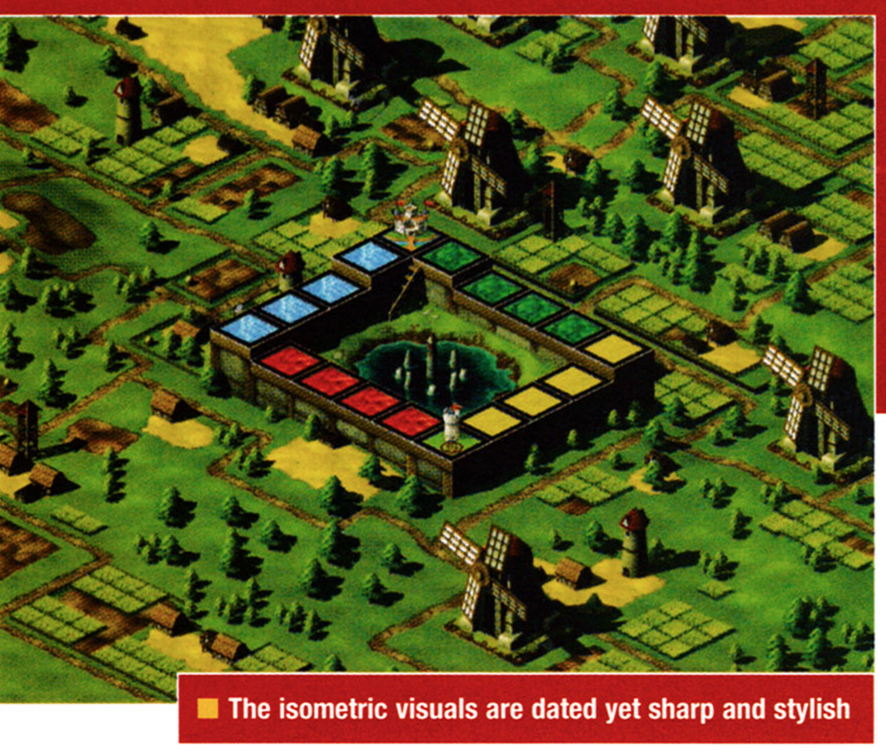


Pulling off bonus combos earns loads of points



The amazing lighting effects have astounded gamers

Hmm, she's pretty. Nice Switch Nose Grab, too



The isometric visuals are dated yet sharp and stylish

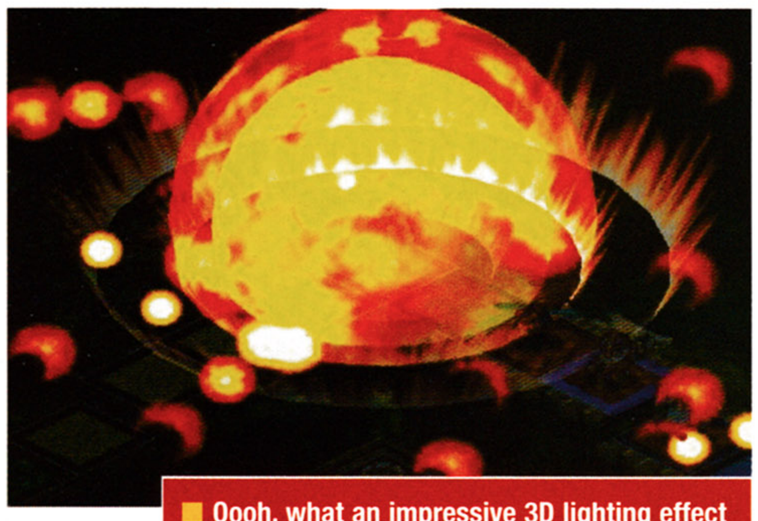
Culdcept II

Monopoly meets Pokemon. Oh, heaven

There aren't many interesting ideas in videogames anymore so when one comes along we should clutch it to our bosoms like over-protective mothers and refuse to let go. Unfortunately we didn't get the chance with the original *Culdcept* (released first on the Sega Saturn and later on PlayStation) because it was never published outside of Japan. Let's hope that is remedied for the sequel, because no matter how well-travelled you think you are, you've never seen anything quite like this.

Well, actually you have seen a couple of things quite like this, but not melded together. *Culdcept* you see, is part Monopoly and part card trading game (think Magic the Gathering, Pokemon, etc). You go round an RPG-themed board using a die to move, and when you land on a square you pick up a card, each of which features a spell, an item or a creature. You then place a creature on the square to make it your property – so if anyone subsequently lands on it, they have to 'fight' your creature in the usual trading card manor (ie, by comparing stats). Points can be gathered throughout the game by indulging in such battles, and these are used to buy spells and more powerful attacks for your creatures.

Culdcept II leaves this intriguing gameplay pretty much intact. What it adds is better spell effects, more lavish design and, it is rumoured, an online mode. There are also loads of new cards to collect (450 rather than the 360 found in the PS version), and these can be arranged into your own personal 'Book' (or deck) which you can save to VM and compare with other players. Developed by a four-man team known as Omiya Soft, *Culdcept II* is set for an early 2001 release – don't worry we'll get on the phone to Virgin or Ubi Soft and convince them to publish it in the UK ■



Oooh, what an impressive 3D lighting effect

WTF NEWS

ill communication

THIS IS A WARNING! The following story contains scenes of explicit violence and bad language and should not be read by anyone.

We've been in a state of shock since our copy of the unofficial Japanese Dreamcast Magazine arrived in the office, sporting an innocent-looking GD demo. Among other things, it contained a trailer of *Illbleed*, the new blackly comic horror adventure from Climax Graphics due out in Japan next February. The screenshot below might give you an idea of the game's bloody content. However, that's not the reason we're in shock. Oh no, the game itself pales in comparison next to the truly appalling/excellent narration that accompanies the demo. The following transcript should be read in the style of a baratone voice-over man:

"Wanna be a millionaire? Death is your final answer. You'll vomit with excitement! You'll puke with pleasure! You'll s**t with fear! Splattered brains. Infected flesh. Get excited! Get disgusted! Get pissed off! Every door leads to terror. You'll see dead people. They'll see you. Maximum pulse. Maximum bleeding. Maximum strain. You will go through a live inferno. But there are only two options. A virtual house of horror. *Illbleed*! This is real. Coming this winter."

Frankly, if that doesn't get you interested, nothing will. Luckily, we'll be running a preview in next month's issue. You're already vomiting with excitement aren't you? ■

This combat display reveals just how hardcore *Aero Dancing i* is

The Replay mode allows propeller heads to manipulate their fantasies

More Aero Dancing!

CRI is back with another tough title in its flight sim series

In America there are groups of men who meet in those multiplayer gaming cafes, dressed as fighter pilots. They hold realistic briefings and then they play PC flight sims called things like *War Birds* and *Air Warrior*, all the while shouting commands at each other via elaborate head-sets. Usually this sort of mental behaviour is best avoided, but Japanese developer CRI has obviously taken note: the latest incarnation of it's *Aero Dancing* series (we call it *Aerowings* in Britain) features fourplayer Internet dog-fighting action. Our flight goggles are already steaming up in anticipation.

Unfortunately, CRI has neglected to let slip any details about this fourplayer mode, but other gameplay details have been squeezed through the gaming grapevine. The main singleplayer mode, for example, features more than 30 missions involving such objectives as gaining air superiority, bombing ground targets and escorting allied aircraft.

After each successful sortie, you gain experience points AND open up new aircraft. There are 30 specimens including newcomers such as the Mig-29, AV-8B and the A-7E. No, we don't know what they are either – go and look it up in your dad's Observer Book of Fighting Planes (actually don't bother, the game also comes with a Hanger mode in which you can analyse facts and figures about all the available craft).

Further modes include the Free Flight mode, in which you create your own scenarios, and the replay mode in which you... oh come on, you know this. There's also a range of twoplayer options, including one that supports the DC link cable of all things – which is lunacy because only about three people own one. CRI also points out that the visuals and flight engine have both been updated to make the game even more realistic. *Aero Dancing i*, as it's known, is due out in early 2001 in Japan – it will no doubt enter our airspace a few months later ■

"Oh, I've burnt the toast!"

YOU'VE PLAYED THE GAME NOW EAT THE HERO!

The crazy world of Japanese merchandise

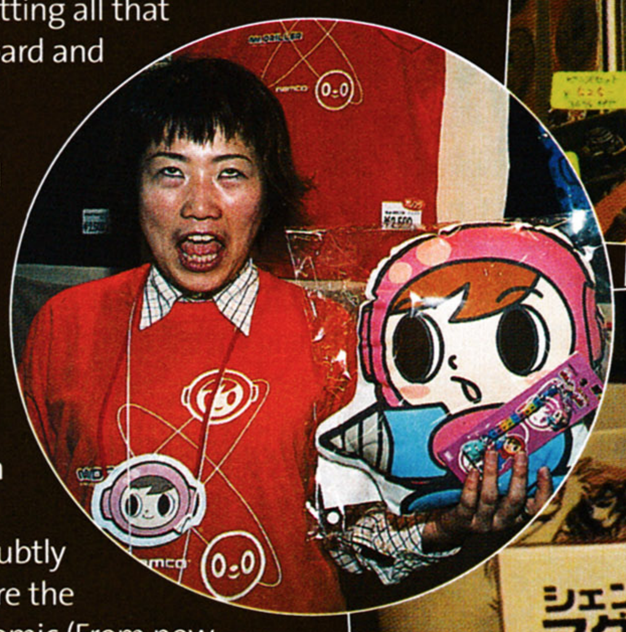
You can't get away from it. In fact, in today's crazy consumer culture, it can easily take over your life. Its an unstoppable force called merchandising and for gamers at least, merchandising Mecca can be found in Japan.

Want to drink out of a *Shenmue* mug? Can't go on without a *Sonic the Hedgehog* mobile phone case? Fancy a pair of Hello Kitty pants? Of course you do, you're only human after all.

And luckily, it's all available. Yes, with a big budget and some clever shopping around, a total gaming lifestyle is a mere long haul flight away. Are you tempted yet? Well, here are a few choice products to lead you up the twisty-turny path of tie-in tat. Tread carefully gentle reader, you may never return ■

HOUSEHOLD GOODS
税別
price ¥270
♥さくらや

Sure, the likes of Ikea and Muji have made outrageously expensive furniture by pretentious designers affordable. But is there really any joy in offsetting all that laminated particleboard and steel with boring accessories? Do yourself a favour and throw some *Mr Driller* cushions on the couch and drink your next hot beverage from a *Shenmue* or *Virtual-On* mug. Serialised in the local Dreamcast Magazine, the very subtly titled 'Sega Games are the Best in the World!' Comic (From now on we'll abbreviate the name to SGBW for short... it's less of a mouthful) has produced a range of home furnishings, coin banks and cute little plastic figures dangled from wire for readers to purchase. By the way, the comic includes a girl who's head has been replaced by a Dreamcast. Is that the perfect woman or what?! ■



■ Do you think this shop has any Dreamcast stuff in it?

■ Drink from your favourite videogame characters!

ACCESSORIES
税別
price ¥270
♥さくらや

Cool strap attachments have become a corner stone of the Japanese mobile phone fetish – if you don't have one fixed to your unit, you're just not with it. Sonic, SGBW, *Space Channel 5* and *Samba De Amigo* aficionados can announce to onlookers their favourite game during their endless wireless chatting hours. The *Samba De Amigo* strap comes with maracas or a whistle, just in case no one's paying attention. When not in use, slip the phone into a padded Sonic case – you don't want to get it scratched, right? Any change after buying all this gumph can be stuffed into a rather stylish SGBW wallet. Oozing sheer style, the entire *Mr Driller* accessory range is worth investigating too ■

■ Never lose your phone again with this garish attachment

■ Keep your favourite game close to your heart

CLOTHING
税別
price ¥270
♥さくらや

Games are so immersive these days you practically end up living in them - so you may as well wear them too. Whether you're pummelling the living daylights out of opponents in *Guilty Gear X*, drilling coloured blocks in *Mr Driller* or blasting zombie beasts in *Resident Evil*, finding a suitable T-shirt or jacket to accompany your gaming experience shouldn't pose a problem. Why, if you want to take it to the utmost level, you might as well indulge in a little cosplay – the Japanese past time of dressing up as a favourite game character and then going to parties with other similarly attired weirdos. Take a look at the cosplay fans in the photo on the right. Now doesn't that look like fun? One of them is enjoying it so much he's fallen over ■

FOOD
税別 PRICE ¥270 さくらや

The feline cartoon character, Hello Kitty is huge in Japan and understandably stars in her own DC games. Naturally, the merchandising opportunities surrounding this cute cat have not gone unexploited. Not only can you buy a special pink Kitty Dreamcast, you can also eat kitty food! White chocolate and strawberry cream filled biscuits as well as custard sponge cakes (molded or stamped in her highness's image of course) are a must on any menu. Meanwhile, Puyo Puyo and Digimon fans can eat custard cakes based around their favourite creations. We haven't spotted any Seaman fishfingers yet, sadly ■

■ "Hello Kitty! Gulp. Mmmm. Goodbye Kitty!"

■ Why do some of these seals look French?

TOYS
税別 PRICE ¥270 さくらや

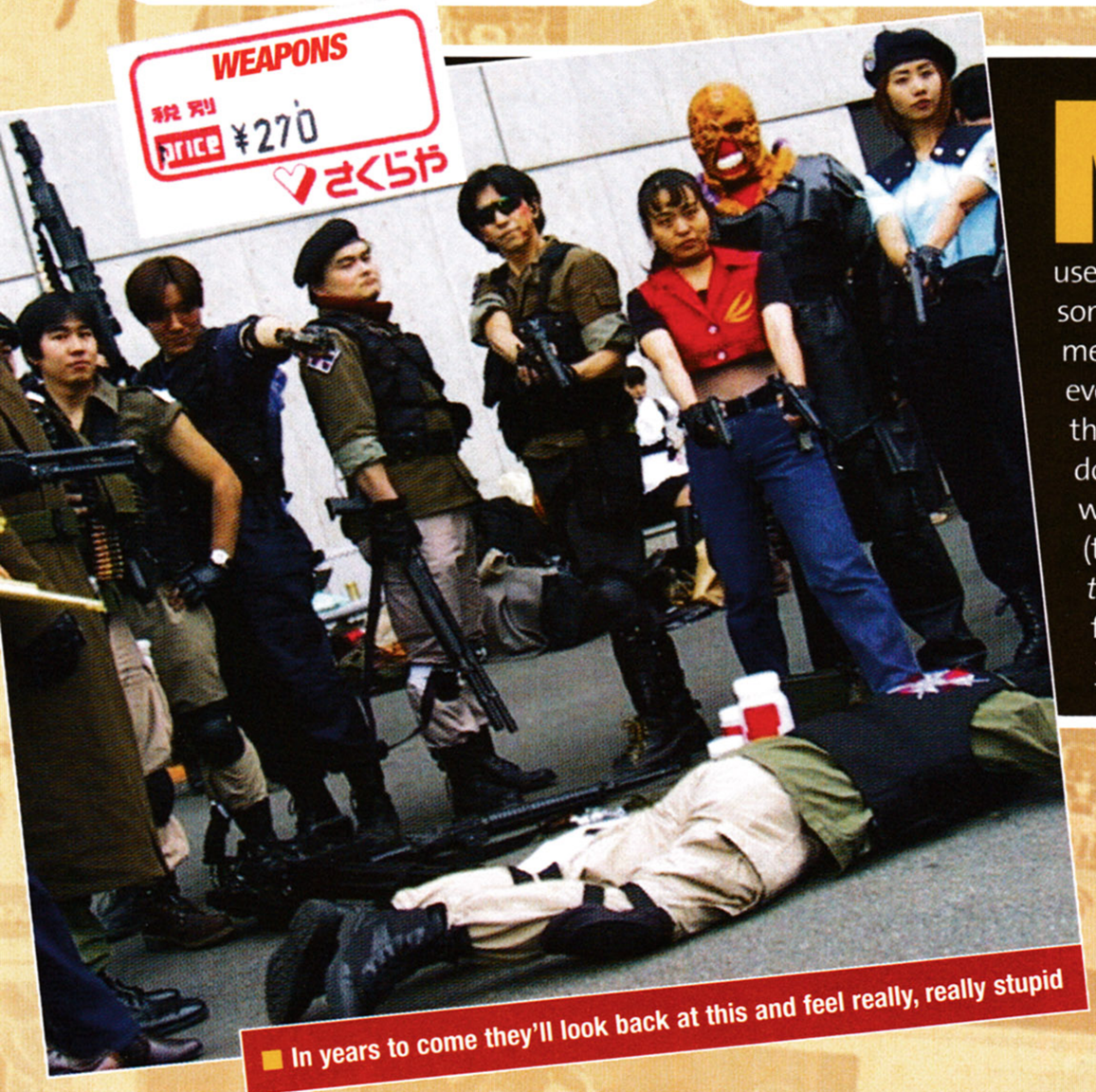
Boys, if Kitty's just too girly and cute for you, the ultra cool range of *Virtual-On* robot figures may just be the ticket. They're poseable and beautifully detailed, and deluxe box-sets containing additional weapons and accessories are available, in addition to the standard models. The Temjin's packaging is so extravagant, it's almost a shame to open it! And of course the real collectors don't – haven't you seen Toy Story 2?

Incidentally Sega toys has created a range of cuddly toys named the Sushi Azarashi family. Someone figured that blending seals with sushi would be a big hit with the plush toy and accessory crowd. Amazingly, they have! Well, they are cute... ■

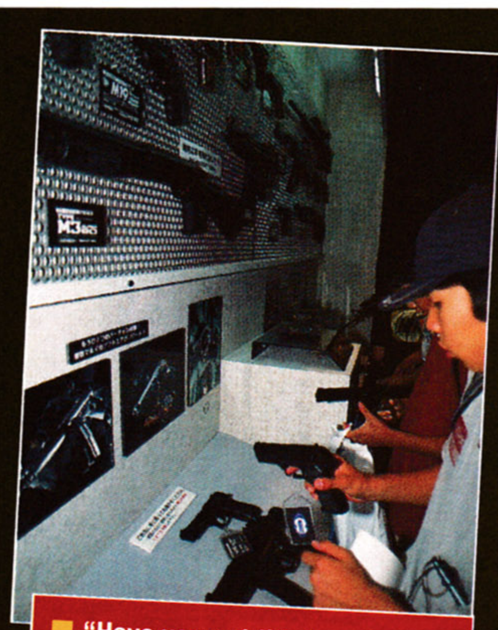
■ Someone should tell that robot he's over done it on the accessories

WEAPONS
税別 PRICE ¥270 さくらや

No self respecting *Resident Evil* cosplayer is complete without a Desert Eagle or Uzi to stash in their combat trousers. Air gun versions of virtually every handgun and rifle used throughout the series are available, and then some! Specific shops stock an arsenal of meticulously detailed replica kits, with certain guns even weighted accurately and possessing a recoil that feels like the real deal. And the fun certainly doesn't end there. The most outrageous replica weapon we found was a one-to-one scale sword (that's seven foot!) from the 3D slasher *Sword of the Berserk*! Who on earth would want a seven foot long chopper? Actually, don't answer that, you perves ■



■ In years to come they'll look back at this and feel really, really stupid



■ "Have you got this in yellow?"

Has your appetite for game merchandise been whetted? National sci-fi chain Forbidden Planet sells a few videogame action figures and models, while decent importers such as Another World (**www.anotherworld.com**) The Videogame Centre (01202 527314) and Otaku (**www.otaku.co.uk**) stock plenty of game-related toys, soundtrack CDs and assorted junk. Alternatively, you could fly to Tokyo and get the stuff straight from the source. Check out **www.japantravel.co.uk** for info ■

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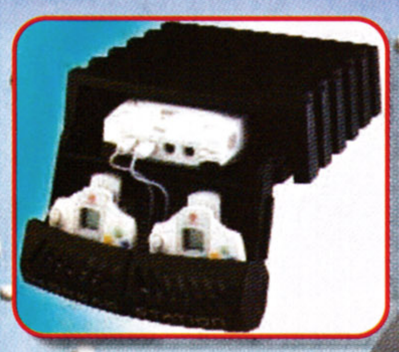

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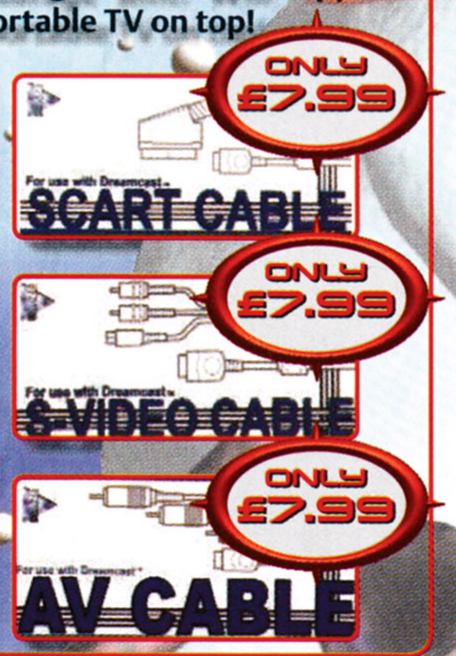

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For only **£1.99** per item you can get your games individual packed in these special gift boxes. Available in a choice of colours (shown below) these boxes are ideal if you are buying games as presents for someone else.

(NOT AVAILABLE FOR PC GAMES)

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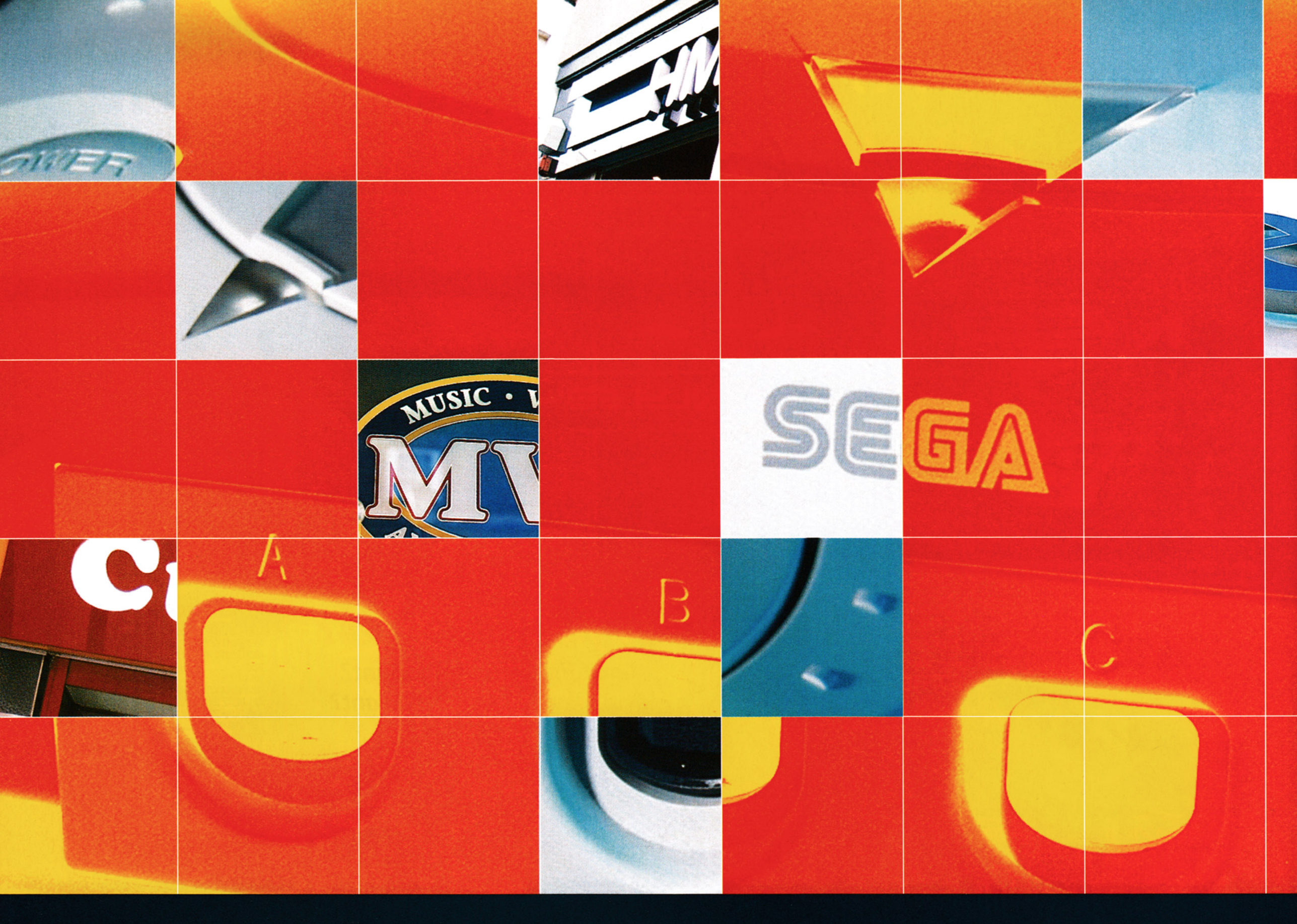


HAUNTED HIGH STREET?

Videogame shops are actively discouraging customers from buying Dreamcasts. That's the claim made by dozens of DC-UK readers. But why are they doing it? Newspaper journalist Sophie Lomax investigates the situation in her home town...

You've gone without beer for 4 weeks, given up smoking and convinced yourself knitting is quite an exciting alternative to expensive Friday nights out. At last, your piggy bank rattles with enough dosh to buy a shiny new Dreamcast console and you hotfoot it up the high street, heart pounding and eyes ablaze with excitement.

Hang on a minute, though: what's this? The windows of your nearest music and videogame retailer are so clogged up with posters advertising PlayStation 2 that it's impossible even to peer inside at the morose Britpop fans rescuing Oasis CDs from the bargain bucket. Still, you have hard-earned pennies to burn and stride confidently in. "I'm thinking of buying a Dreamcast," you declare, bravely. The sales assistant stares, raises an incredulous eyebrow and says slowly and distinctly: "Look into my eyes, look into my eyes. Dreamcast is rubbish, you must buy a PlayStation 2..." Couldn't really happen, now, could it? Shockingly, yes it could – and more or less did, when I conducted a sneaky undercover investigation, on behalf of **DC-UK** readers, into videogame retailers' selling tactics in the twinset and pearls city of Guildford.

Hands up any would-be Dreamcast buyers who have been fobbed off by retailers eager to plug the more expensive PlayStation 2? After a comprehensive stomp around various general shops and specialist videogame stores, it became abundantly clear that you are not alone. With some rare and honourable exceptions, I felt more than a tad manipulated by stores up and down the high street as impartial advice became a scarce commodity among profit-chasing competitors.

A national mecca of cheap videos and chart music (most commonly known by it's three letter acronym), undoubtedly claimed first prize in my fantasy Biased Shopkeeper contest. I ask a bored-looking assistant whether the shop sells Dreamcasts. "To be perfectly honest with you," replies Bored Bloke, suddenly quivering with sincerity and concern, "I would never, ever, buy a

RETAILERS STRIKE BACK

We asked a selection of Independent and national retailers about their policy toward different consoles

"We have a very clear strategy for Games at HMV which embraces ALL formats. It is imperative that we offer our customers all gaming formats and we achieve this through 75 per cent of our stores, some of our smallest stores only have enough space to dedicate to one or two formats and with chart displays.

Dreamcast is stocked by most stores and we actively encourage the stores to pass on their knowledge of the console and its games. We have held a games conference this year for our managers and buyers to see software and thus ensure the quality of service we offer our customer is unparalleled. We would instruct our stores to offer the most appropriate console for their customer's needs."

MARTYN GIBBS
HEAD OF GAMES
HMV UK LTD

"As we're not a specialist games store, we only stock the best selling consoles on the market. Bearing this in mind, our staff are trained to only give specific product information if the customer asks for it. When advice is given, it should be impartial."

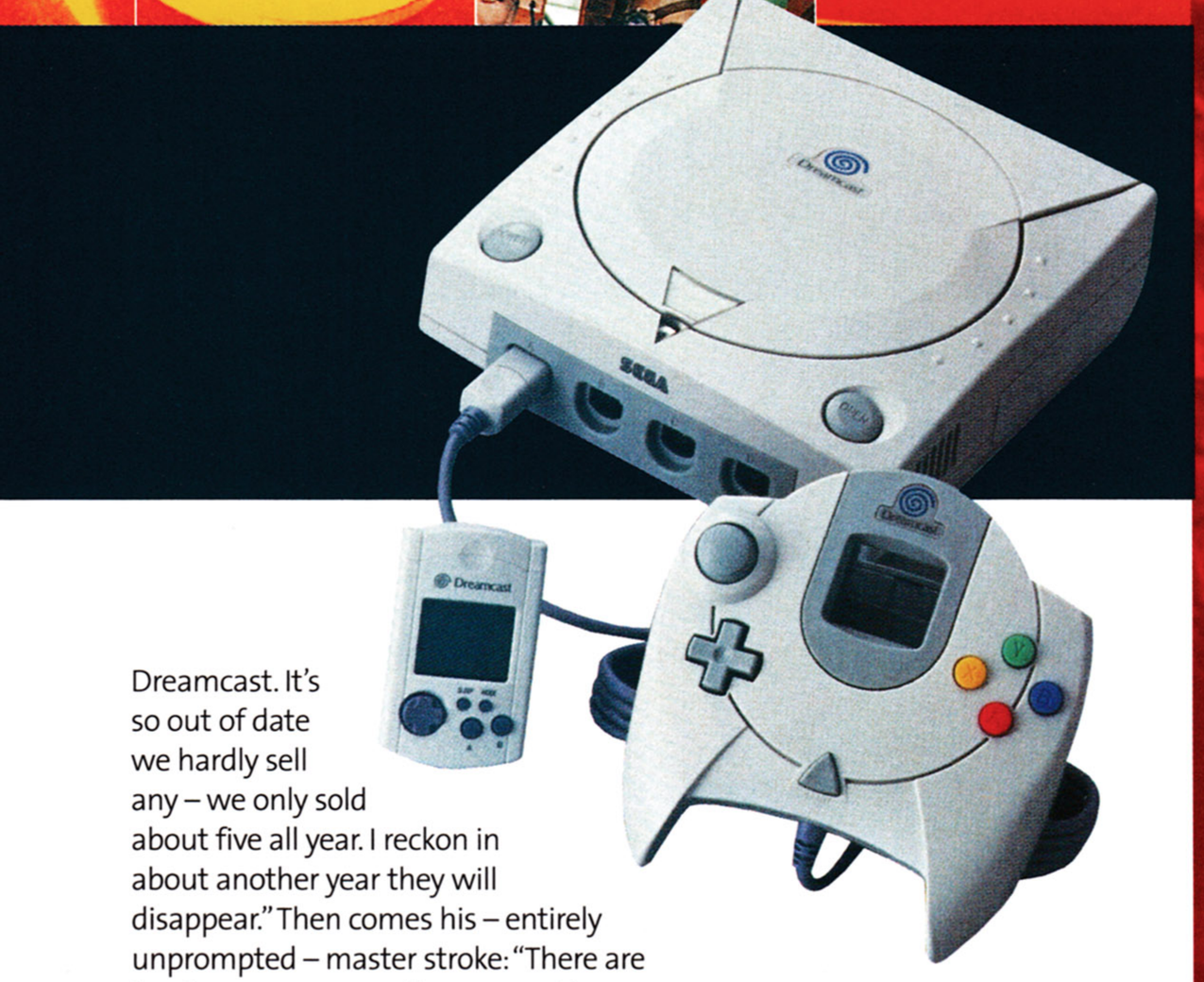
SPOKESPERSON
WH SMITH LTD.

"Our staff and Customers have always been a knowledgeable bunch and don't tend to fall for Sony's marketing hype. We love the best games, wherever they come from and whatever platform they run on. At the moment – and for the foreseeable future – most of those top titles are on Dreamcast and this is what we are telling people who come into our shops.

"We're not just pushing Dreamcast for effect – unlike most UK retailers, we've been selling imported PlayStation 2 games since the machine came out in Japan, so we have first-hand knowledge of both consoles. Our opinion is that the games on Dreamcast are simply better. Sega fans can sleep easy; if they are near a CEX store or a Web browser, they will always be able come to us for the latest DC goodies."

ROBERT DUDANI
MD OF COMPUTER EXCHANGE

Other retailers – Dixons Group (which includes Currys) and Electronics Boutique/Game – were contacted but failed to respond.



Dreamcast. It's so out of date we hardly sell any – we only sold about five all year. I reckon in about another year they will disappear." Then comes his – entirely unprompted – master stroke: "There are hardly any games on it compared to PlayStation 2. That is definitely your best bet." "Ah," I reply. "PlayStation 2. What's that, then?" This unleashes a salvo of drooling admiration for Sony, topped off by another assistant chipping in with: "I would definitely buy PlayStation 2, of the two. You should forget Dreamcast." I pretend to cave in and ask whether they have any of these thrilling new PlayStation 2s in stock, only to be told I'll have to dish out a 25 quid deposit on the off-chance the store might, or might not, be getting

"Our staff and customers don't tend to fall for Sony's marketing hype"

some in time for Christmas. I thank him for his invaluable advice, and beat a hasty retreat.

I try a major music retail chain next. "Can you tell me about Dreamcast?" I enquire innocently of the chap manning an information desk. Things get off to a pretty good start when he says: "Don't get me wrong, Dreamcast is a great machine, an excellent player. But," he adds ominously, "its output of games is pathetic. I don't know what they are playing at. If they don't get their act together and come up with some new games to fight PlayStation 2 with, they will be completely buried. They have been around for a whole year now and the choice is not exactly spectacular, in terms of a big range. It's a bit archaic, really. What do the designers do all day?" "Oh well, then, what is this PlayStation 2 I've heard so much about?" And he's off: "It's awesome, the games are fantastic and there are loads of them, they're brilliant – really amazing. They are way ahead of the pack and there is really nothing to compare with them." Crikey. Then comes his verdict: "You would be much better off buying a PlayStation 2." This time around, I'm told I would have to stump up a £50 deposit. He admits: "It's twice the price of what you came in here wanting to buy, but it is a good investment. I wouldn't buy a Dreamcast if I were you, if you want a long-term game playing future." "Thanks," I murmur and leave.

Things are looking bad for Dreamcast, so I head for what turns out to be a deceptively friendly looking middle aged man in a nationwide consumer electronics retailer (which also owns its own specialist videogame

> "I felt a tad manipulated by stores as impartial advice became a scarce commodity"

HAPPY SHOPPERS?

We asked visitors to **www.dc-uk.co.uk** what experiences they'd had buying Dreamcasts...

> I found that the staff who work at HMV in Oxford Street in London are all major DC fans, they always recommend Dreamcast titles and when I asked about pre-ordering a PS2 they said I personally should stick with my DC.

SIMON FIELD

> I went into a game store in Woking about a month before the Dreamcast's release and put down my deposit. When I handed my money over I was told by the staff at the counter that it was the best decision of my life, because the DC was the greatest thing ever. I went back to the same store a few weeks ago to buy a new game, but when I was at the counter the guy serving me said that I shouldn't waste £35 on this and should put down a deposit on a £300 PS2 instead. He told me that the PlayStation 2 was superior in every way and that the Dreamcast was only surviving due to a lack of opposition at the moment.

GRAHAM HODGETTS

> I was appalled when some staff at my local games exchange/retailer said that they couldn't accept my Dreamcast games because Sega have been bought out by Sony and that they will be ceasing development in the near future!

ADAM HARLAND

> Every time I go into a certain videogame outlet they always say "You should wait for the PlayStation 2." I then ask them why, and reply with, "It's got a DVD player." That's such a cheap trick to lure people into buying Sony's machine.

ROBERT SALHA, AUSTRALIA

> Without a shadow of a doubt the Game shop in Ellesmere Port has to be one of the most impartial and most courteous retailers in the business. Plus, As you walk into the shop there is a Dreamcast Pod set up at the front of the store and not relegated to the back of the shop as I've seen in other videogame outlets.

ANDY CONCANNON, CHESHIRE

> I phoned my local retailer a couple of weeks ago to ask if they had *Power Stone 2*. This particular store is meant to be a videogame specialist, employing knowledgeable staff. Still, that didn't stop the store manager from confirming with me that it was a PlayStation game.

JEREMY VEAL, NEW ZEALAND

> I recently purchased a Dreamcast in Cheltenham, based mainly on the advice of two shops, Game and e-play (independent I think). In summary they said: PlayStation 2 will be very expensive with few original games available initially and certainly not widely available before Christmas. The Dreamcast is powerful, available now and not at a silly price – both shops thought Dreamcast should be the best Christmas buy.

MATTHEW DAYRES

> When I was in a videogame store recently the shop assistant seemed to know very little about DC and said that I would be better off waiting for PS2. When I mentioned the problems with the registration for PS2's he said that I would have little problem getting hold of one. But what about the fact that there were only 200,000 being released? He said there were more coming than being said.

G BELL

> A customer in my local branch of a major electronics retailer was asking about the newest game machine and the member of staff was basically trying to

stores), and leave him in no doubt as to exactly what I am after. "I want a Dreamcast", I announce loudly and firmly, just in case he is a bit hard of hearing and uses it as an excuse to regale me with more tales of PlayStation 2's magnificence. However, he whisks me straight across the shop floor towards a neat stack of Dreamcast bundles and hovers, silently, at my left elbow. "Can you tell me a bit about them?" "No. I am no sort of expert." He looks so gloomy that I resign myself to breaking my rule not to mention PlayStation 2 before an assistant does. "What about, erm, PlayStation 2, then?" "Haven't seen it," he reluctantly spits out in between wondering whether it's nearly lunchtime. "You can't get it before February and, anyway, they are all much of a muchness." But which one, I want to know, would be the best value for money? "I have no idea," he hisses, his face growing pinker and blotchier by the second as he contemplates my impudent questions. "How on earth am I supposed to know if either of them will be around in ten years' time? Technology moves so quickly and it is not my job to guarantee anything."

> "I would never buy a Dreamcast. There are hardly any games on it compared to PlayStation 2"

At last, I give up on my depressed consumer electronics man and chug off to one of the country's biggest newsagent chain. I soon discover why its videogames department is almost entirely empty of customers. "Ooh, I've no idea about anything, I'm afraid. I'm not at all computery," confesses the woman in so-called charge. She goes on: "Nobody else here knows anything either. There's one chap who sometimes plays videogames, but it's his day off." Her colleague adds helpfully: "I think

sell a PSOne to him. He completely ignored the Dreamcast on the shelf next to it and I'm sure I heard him state "Oh yes, it plays all the games the old PlayStation does. It's also a lot smaller." I hope he wasn't trying to give the impression that the PSOne was in fact the new PS2.

ALAN TYLER

> I recently went into Dixons to enquire about purchasing a PS2, the shop assistant then went on to tell me that he had been to the Irish launch party of PS2 a few weeks back and said the graphics looked flaky and the DVD didn't look very good either. I was completely amazed when he said, "You really would be better off buying a Dreamcast."

NOEL ROCK

> Having worked in retail before, I know how to treat customers. I also know how to tell customers what they want to hear, and how to sell to them the more expensive product. My first run in with DC bashing retail staff was last year when I was waiting for the release of everyone's favourite, *Soul Calibur*. I was told the release date had been put back several times because Sega's main warehouse had burnt down and that was where DIRECTLY they got their software. I left.

PETER ABBEY

> I'd love to know the attitude of my local Tesco when it comes to videogames, because the only DC thing they're selling is a VM!

STEVEN PICK

> The staff at Game, Jakarta and EB have always been helpful, to the point where in Jakarta I had a store assistant hound me to play *MSR* so that he himself could have a go! At no point in my purchase/visit history have the staff moaned about the DC and put PS2 on a different level to it, which I have found encouraging.

SCOTT M, TIPTREE, NR COLCHESTER

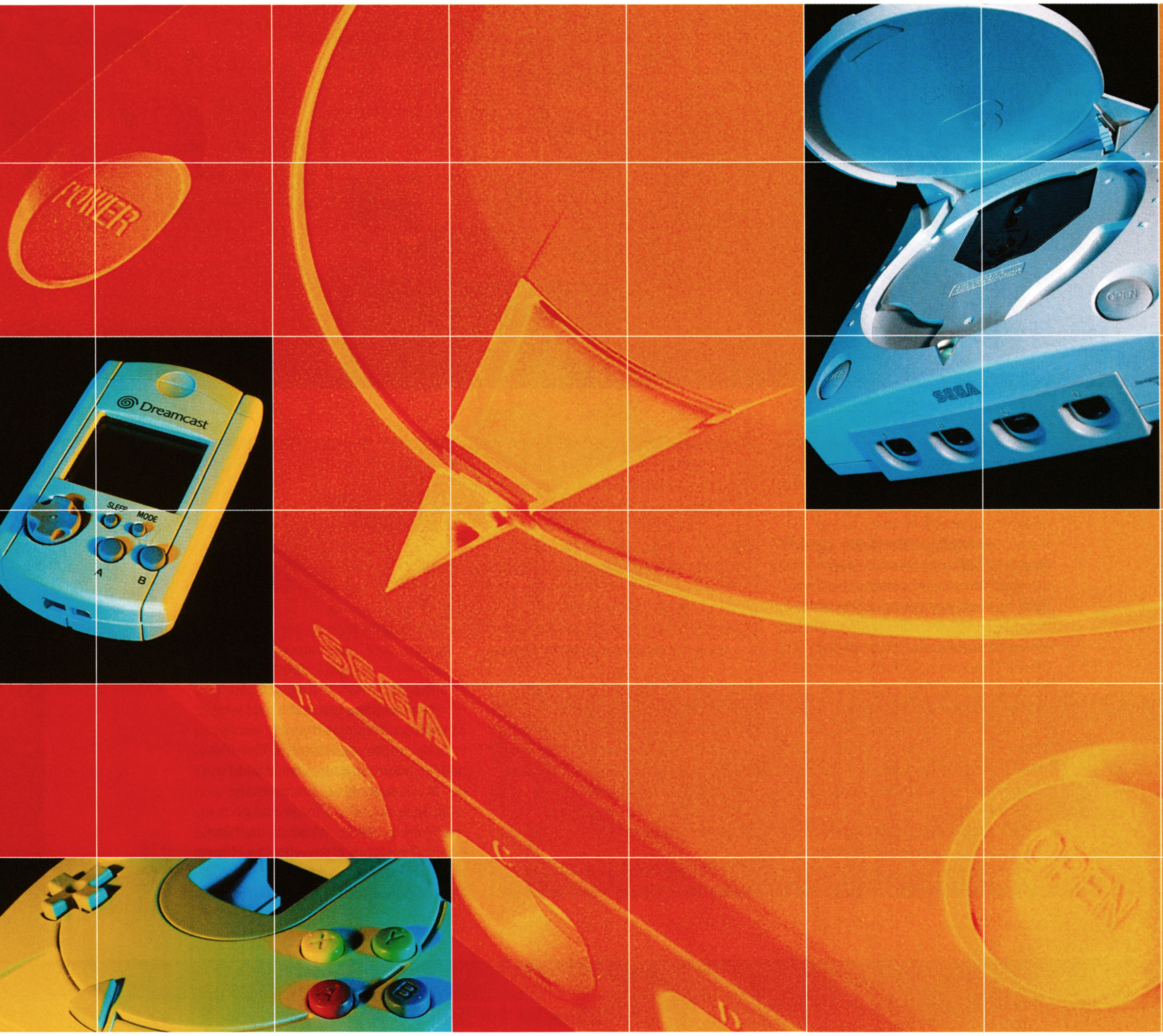
> I went into our local Game and Dixons recently and asked which console I should buy for Christmas. Dixons said, "Dreamcast as the games coming out for it are excellent. To tell you the truth the PS2 games aren't that good yet, the DC is the same level of machine as the PS2. The DC is only £149 and we're giving away three games." Game's response was "You can buy a PlayStation or a DC, the DC is the better one coming close to the PS2 and although it hasn't got too many games now, the new ones coming out are excellent."

GARETH HUDSON

> He had been to the launch party of PS2 and said the graphics looked flaky

> Back in April, it was my Birthday, and for a present, I wanted an update from my now obsolete N64. As I visit a big videogame retailer for most of my peripherals, it was my first port of call for acquiring my DC. When I took the empty DC box off the shelf a shop assistant politely said to me "The PlayStation 2 will be much better for you," and informed me on the Saturn's background, so I asked when the PS2 was coming out. He told me that if I put my name down I might be lucky enough to get one around October. I told him that I didn't think I could wait that long for a birthday present, and carried on to the counter to buy my DC.

NICOLA JACKSON



Dreamcast has been out for a while. PlayStation 2 is bound to be better, because it is bang up to date. I think it will be really flash, too." Remember, you heard it here first.

Perhaps a dedicated videogame shop would be able to tell me a bit more. Perhaps Game? It is here, finally, that the spectre of Sony begins to disperse and the promotional spiel churned out by enthusiastic sales assistants starts to become more knowledgable. A Game employee tells me: "DC is a cracking play, as well as a bargain. It's got some amazing games, it is up to date and will be for another four years. "I wouldn't buy PlayStation 2 at the moment – there won't be many games which will be able to exploit its power for a long time."

Next up is a salesman at an independent store, Capital Technology: "When I put the two side by side, I can't tell the difference. What you have got to remember is that PlayStation 2 is vastly more expensive and, also, won't be freely available to everyone for ages. I highly recommend Dreamcast."

Best of all, though not from Sony's point of view, was the help and advice I got at Electronics Boutique: "Put it this way, I've tried them all. I've got my Dreamcast, which I love, and I will not be buying a PlayStation 2. The games are brilliant. Graphics on all the different consoles are much the same everywhere these days and so it's all down to the games themselves. It has been suggested that *Half-Life* is the best game ever built and I'm inclined to agree." He raves over *ChuChu Rocket!*

"Dreamcast is a cracking play, as well as a bargain. It is up to date and will be for another four years"

TOYING SHOP

How do retailers decide on what games and consoles they promote? Neil Randall has some theories

> First of all let's get one thing straight: it is unlikely that videogame retailers are promoting PlayStation 2 over Dreamcast simply because the former costs £299 while the latter is £149. Shops don't actually make £150 quid more on each PS2 they sell because the machines actually cost more for them to buy from Sony. In any case, the real money comes from software sales.

So why is PlayStation 2 being so aggressively supported? First, a little background info. Videogame retailers can be split into two types; Independents and Multiples. Independents are self-sufficient and usually only have a few branches in one locality. Multiples are huge chain stores, which often sell videogames alongside other products. Each of these have very different reasons for deciding which platform to push.

Firstly, Multiples measure the success of their sales by raw turnover not profit. This means they are looking to sell as many units of the most popular games and consoles as possible. And the machine with the largest installed user base in the UK is the PlayStation, ergo Multiples will push PS2 pre-orders because the machine is seen as the continuation of a safe and lucrative market.

Sony's admittedly excellent sales support is another major incentive for retailers to back PlayStation. The company treats the Indies and Multiples fairly and offers the accolade of Approved Sony Centre to any store that turns over a high enough volume of PS units each year. This is rewarded by discounts for bulk ordering, plus an increased credit limit. Sega allegedly offers no such incentive, it is slow to re-credit for faulty items, fails to provide price-protection when price-drops come and is biased in favour of the Multiples. Unfortunately then, life is simply easier for shops if they back Sony products.

The shop staff themselves are another important factor in how well – or badly – a console is pushed. In an Indie, sales assistants need to know their stuff as a far wider range of software is stocked, and services such as importing and repairing are offered. Not only this, but Independent stores are much more reliant on providing good quality customer service – which means recommending the best games and systems rather than the ones that have sold the most units.

The same cannot be said of Multiples, especially the electrical outlets such as Dixons and Currys. Videogames are only part of their range and so inevitably they are not interested in quality. Their entire purpose is to shift as many units as possible, which means that staff are not expected to have any games knowledge and will often simply promote the brand that the company sells the most of.

There are other possible factors. PS2 only has two joypad slots so retailers will be able to make more out of multi-tap sales. It also has a DVD player, opening up another avenue of profit to shops that stock DVDs. It's a cynical world ■

and *Shenmue*, making no mention whatsoever of selling PlayStation 2, except to tell me: "It is not available yet." He even wafts a copy of **DC-UK** encouragingly in front of my nose, before announcing: "Dreamcast is the absolute best."

So, what sense can buyers make of this wildly conflicting advice? This much is clear: non-specialist videogame retailers are the least Dreamcast – friendly of the lot, with much of their 'advice' – if they have any to give – geared towards selling you as much as possible in the shortest conceivable time. The best plan is to do your homework before hitting the shops. It must be admitted – albeit in a whisper – that even the more clued up stores are often far too biased to be of much help to those in need of impartial advice. As for some of the rest: enough said ■

The names of some of the shops visited during the making of this feature have been removed under advice from our lawyers. The spoilsports.

Sophie Lomax is currently working at the Evening Standard. She recently wrote an exposé of corruption among London traffic wardens for the paper, having spent two weeks undercover as a warden herself.

DC-UK COMMENT

It's not good enough. All good retailers claim that they pursue an objective approach to console sales. However comments such as "There are hardly any games on it [Dreamcast] compared to PlayStation 2" are not objective. In many cases shop staff simply knew nothing about Dreamcast, intent instead on praising a rival machine few of them will have had any first hand experience of. Which means when a customers comes into a store looking for impartial advice, what they're often getting is an opinion, based on little more than hype.

And this isn't just in Guildford. The testimonies supplied by **DC-UK** readers paint a similar picture throughout the country. We also ran a poll on **www.dc-uk.co.uk** asking what sort of service visitors to the site had received when trying to buy a Dreamcast – 36 per cent claimed to have been actively discouraged from buying the machine and only 1 per cent said they had received balanced and objective advice on which console to go for. Is it any wonder that Dreamcast is suffering in such a climate of ignorance and casual dismissal? Staff training might be a good idea ■

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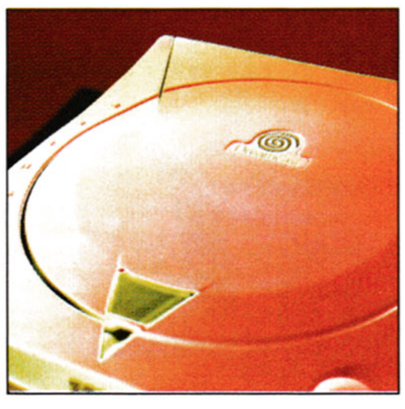

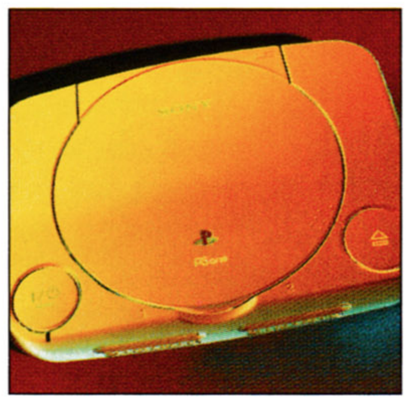

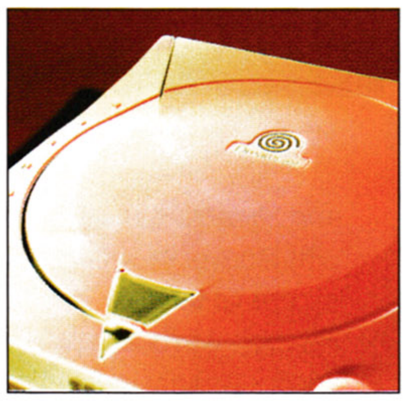
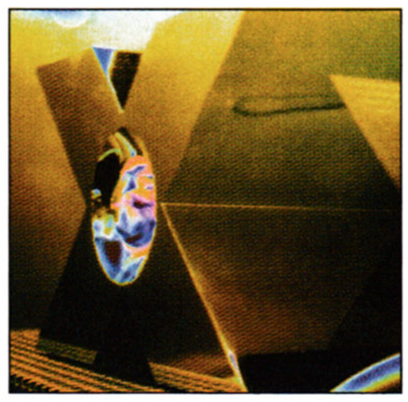
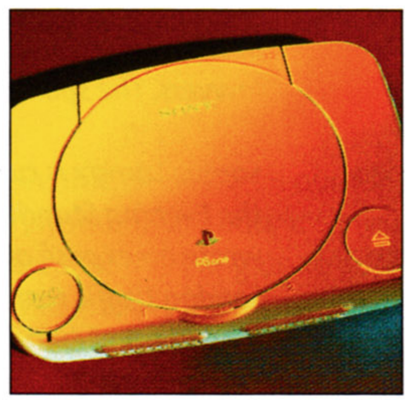

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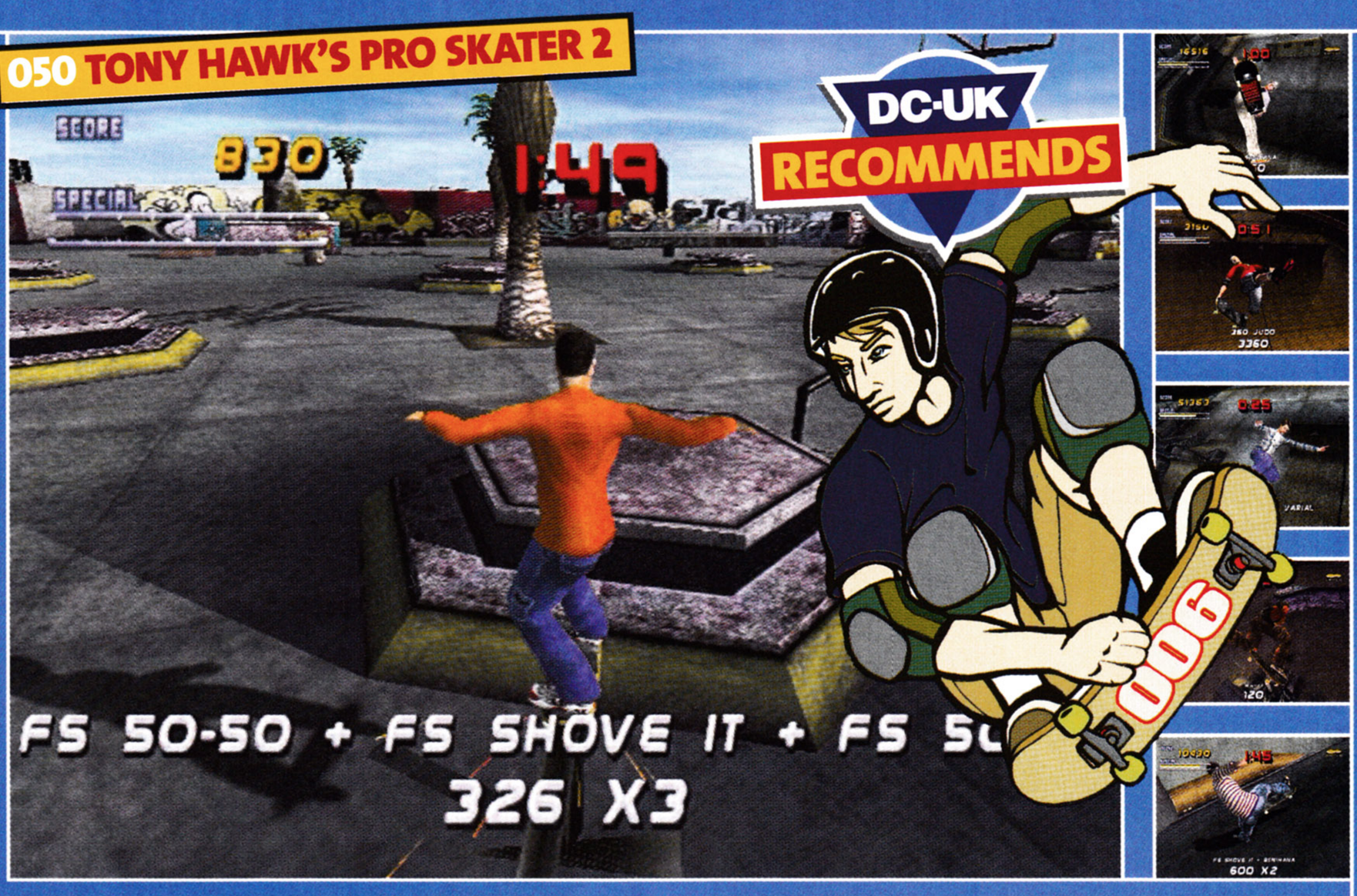
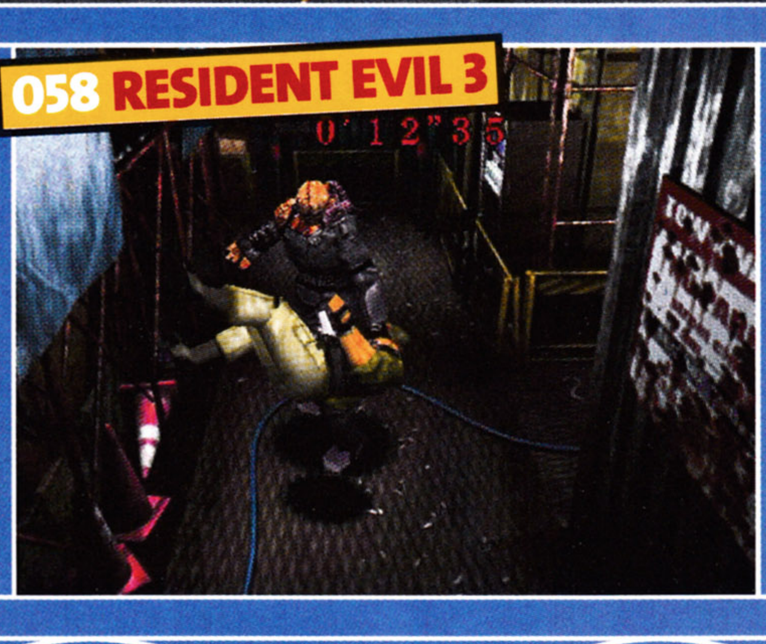




THE REVIEW PANEL

Name: Lee Hart
Games of the moment:
Basketball fan Lee, can't get enough of the masterful *NBA 2K1*. We've tried convincing him he's not Michael Jordan – being seven inches shorter and, well, the wrong colour – but that hasn't stopped him wearing his Nike Air's every day.

Name: Adrian Lawton
Games of the moment:
Ade has been suffering from a bizarre case of zombie worms this issue, playing both *Resi 3* and *Worms World Party*. Why not combine the two for a game of *Evil Worms Party*? Quick, get on the phone to Capcom!

Name: Neil (Maximus) Randall
Games of the moment:
Besides indulging his homicidal tendencies with *Unreal*, Max could mostly be found in his own little corner of 2D heaven, firing pink lasers in *Mars Matrix* and kicking arse in *Guilty Gear X*. He's such a sad old '80s throwback.

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

DC-UK is committed to delivering the most honest, accurate and comprehensive Dreamcast review section anywhere, anyhow. Which means we never review half-finished games or try to pass off a review of an NTSC game as a PAL one (our import reviews are clearly marked as such).

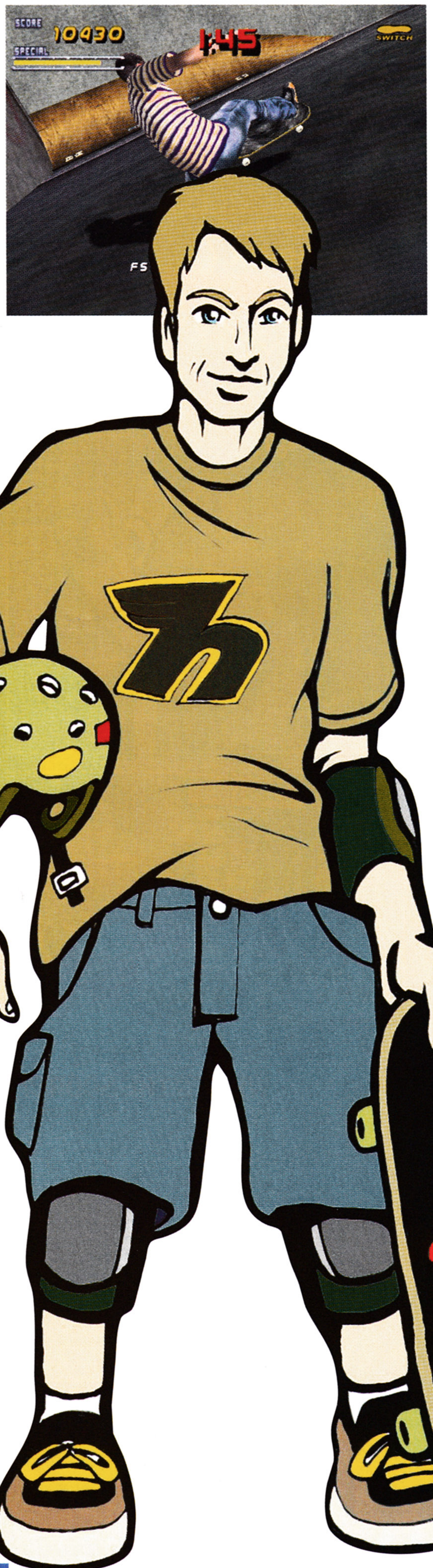
DC-UK marks out of ten, as that is the clearest, fairest method of scoring. And, since halfway between nothing and ten is five, so five is an average mark. That doesn't mean that a game isn't worth investing in if it scores a five, only that it's, well, average. If a game scores a ten (which isn't very often, by the way), that doesn't mean it's perfect, just exceptionally good ■

DC-UK RECOMMENDS

If a review sports this icon it means the game is hugely enjoyable and jam-packed with great features. Usually a fine example of a certain genre or a game that's particularly innovative.

DC-UK ESSENTIAL

An absolute must-buy, offering lasting depth, beautiful visuals, originality and charm. This one won't crop up every month – we're reserving it for games you simply cannot be without.



"There are very few games that will keep you as enthralled as *Tony Hawk's 2* this Christmas (or beyond)"

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

The Hawkster returns in improved form. If only all sequels were this accomplished

DETAILS

Publisher:	**Activision**
Developer:	**Neversoft/ Treyarch**
Price:	**£39.99**
Release date:	**December 15**
Players:	**One to two**
Extras:	**60Hz, Vibration**

Let's be honest here, pro level skateboarding isn't difficult. No, it is not. It's absolutely, mystifyingly astoundingly perverse. The required combination of acrobatic skill and utterly perplexing sense of balance is genuinely humbling. And that's taking the tricks on a singular basis. Working out how to string them together on the fly, as it were, is another set of trucks entirely.

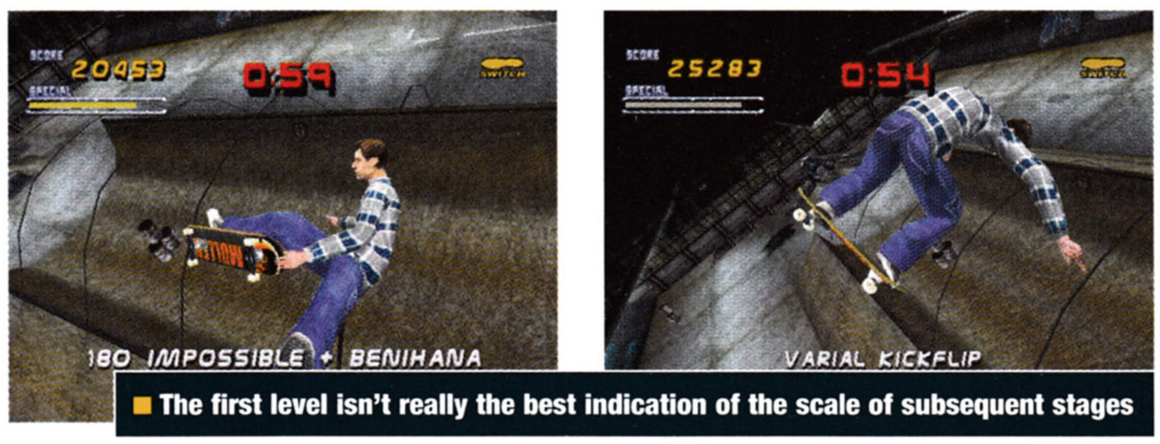
What remains particularly fascinating is that so many people around the globe ever manage to become proficient in this art. Top of this evolutionary ramp stands one inconceivable talent of a man. King of the vert (as opposed to street skating), 12 world championships and more than 50 signature moves firmly establish Tony Hawk as the father of modern skateboarding. His skating genetic material has been analysed, digested and ultimately absorbed by the new

■ The clothes rippling effect as your skating man flies through the air is great

As you'd expect, the animation, along with the graphics, is excellent throughout

The variety of levels is perhaps more pronounced than in the original Hawk game

Twoplayer games include: graffiti (above), tag, trick attack, horse and free skate



The first level isn't really the best indication of the scale of subsequent stages

One of the areas in a stage that you wouldn't necessarily know was there at first

generation of boarders for years now. Probability suggests that one day someone better will grind his/her way into the sport. But life isn't a series of absolutes, so we'd suggest you don't hold your breath.

Besides, Tony Hawk is not dead yet. But he has been immortalised, again, in a second exquisite videogame outing. It wouldn't be unfair to say the original Tony Hawk game caught most gentlefolk by surprise – until then, the intricacies of skateboarding had not been captured convincingly and only the eternal optimists believed Neversoft would get it right first time. Yet they were. And they did.

Surprised, too, must have been publisher Activision (who originally released *Tony Hawk's Skateboarding* on PlayStation) when all the dudes and dudettes around the globe – even those without any previous interest in videogames – picked up the joypads to clear the gaps and land the tricks they couldn't do in real life. Surprised enough, clearly, to push for a sequel.

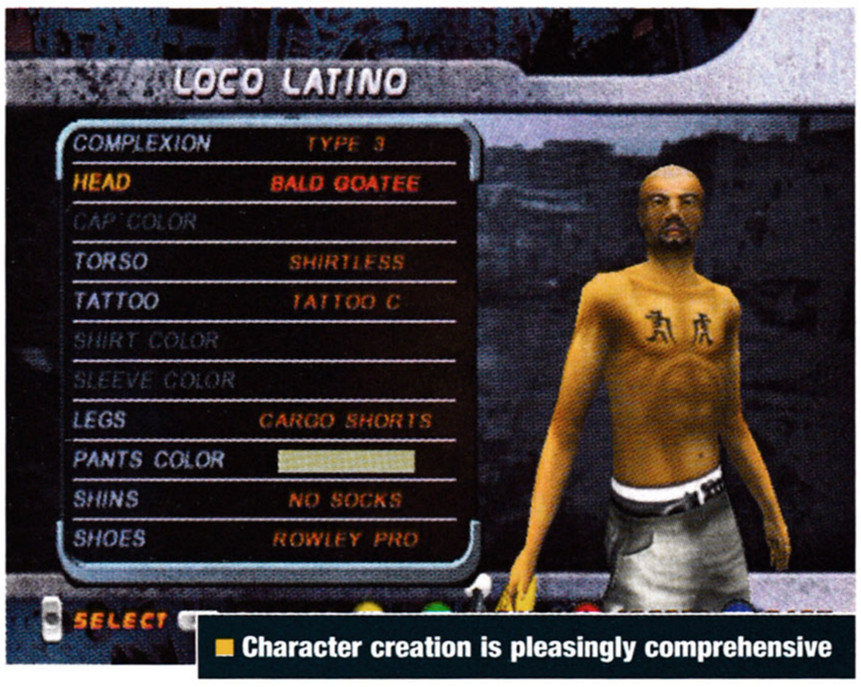
DC-UK RECOMMENDS

And here it is. *THPS2* sees 12 of the world's best pros join Tony's gang of digital skaters. Most of them, like Bob Burnquist, Elissa Steamer, and the UK's very own Geoff Rowley, are making their second appearance, but three – funny man Eric Koston, veteran Rodney Mullen and old-skooler Steve Caballero – have undergone polygonisation for the very first time. If, however, individuality matters to you then feel free to create your own master skater with the Character Editor option. Within it you'll find a comprehensive set of choices, ranging from the technical – speciality (vert, street, all-round), stance (goofy or regular) – to the personal – height, weight, hairstyle, skin tone, tattoos – to the fashionable – logos, clothes, and footwear (including, yes, socks). When you're done playing Dr Frankenstein, you can concentrate on the more serious business of assigning your player's stats (see Le Statistician box).

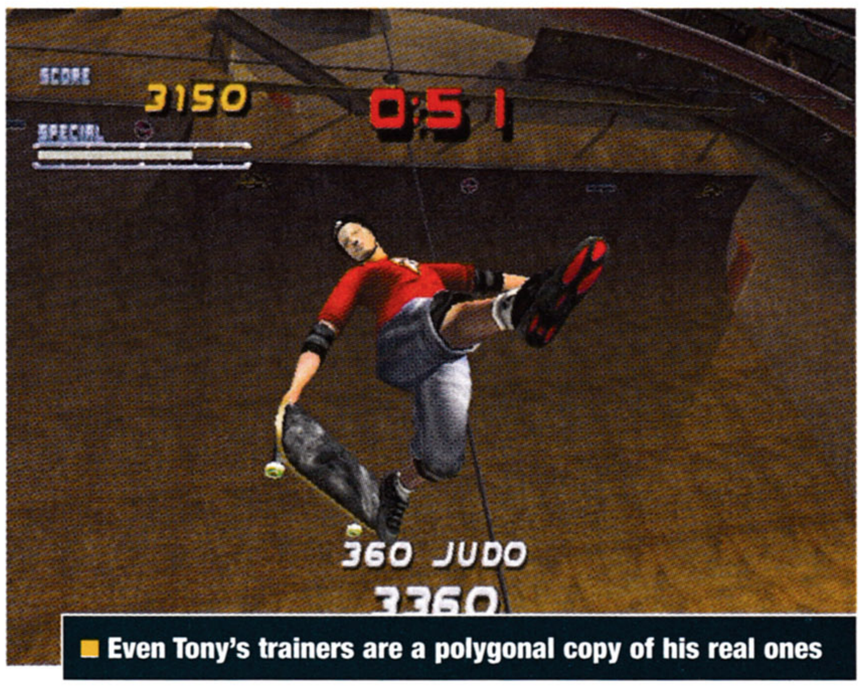
If you've taken all this trouble over the selection process, chances are you'll venture into the career mode (though it could be due to the fact that very little else is open in single session and free skate options until cleared in the main game). Here you'll find eight levels which open progressively depending on the amount of money you've earned. Ah, we haven't mentioned this yet, have we? Okay, remember the five tapes you had to get in the original Tony Hawk game in order to progress through the stages? Well, in *THPS2* tapes are no longer the currency. A hidden tape still exists but, along with all of the other nine level challenges, you are now rewarded with hard cash. This hard-earnd moolah can then be spent increasing your character's stats, purchasing better boards from the skate shop or, most interestingly, extending your trick repertoire. ▶

> "Beautifully thought out and utterly essential"

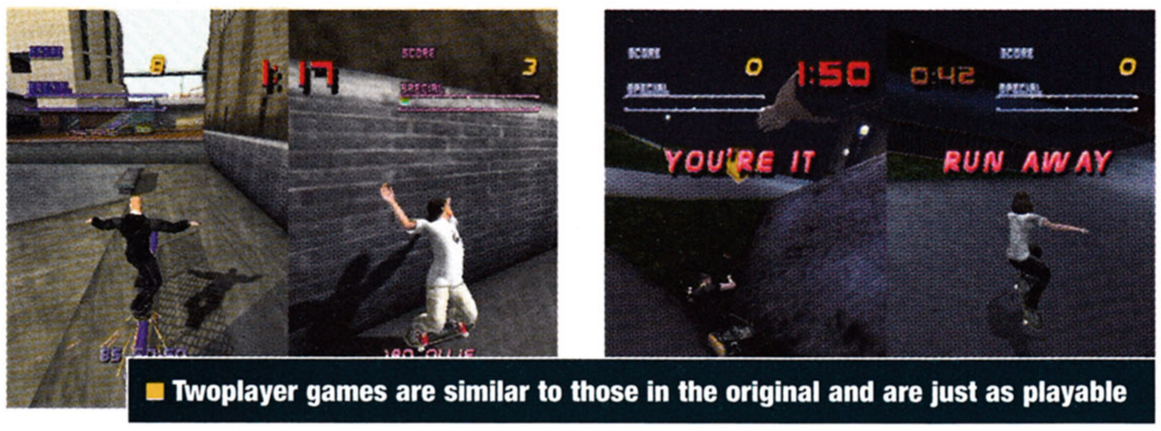
■ Unlike the PlayStation version, the DC allows far more of the levels to be displayed



■ Character creation is pleasingly comprehensive



■ Even Tony's trainers are a polygonal copy of his real ones



■ Twoplayer games are similar to those in the original and are just as playable

▶ This is done by opening up the Trick Selection screen. Every skater starts off with a comprehensive selection of moves but if you want to increase your trick set you're going to have to spend some serious rolls of dead presidents (being a US-developed game, Her Majesty's head is nowhere to be seen). The catalogue of moves vary in price based on difficulty and point value, so the harder the move, the larger the number of notes needed. Another considerable advantage of visiting this section of pits and troughs is that it allows you to fully configure the button sequence for the moves to perfectly suit your particular riding style. And you can do this for any of the Flip, Grab, Lip and Special tricks available.

Other than the obvious addition of numerous extra moves, the most significant new feature of the boarding action has been the inclusion of manuals (essentially the skateboarding equivalent of wheelies or endos) which allow you to connect a string of tricks together. In theory at least, there's nothing to stop you from making your way around a level in one continuous implementation of ollies, grinds, kick tricks and manuals, thus scoring an absurdly indecent amount of points. In practice, things have a tendency to turn out somewhat differently but the possibility (and the enjoyment of trying) remains.

Other notable new inclusions are the extra challenges found in twoplayer mode. The three original games all make a welcome return – Trick Attack where you have to out-stunt your opponent; the stunts-paints-scenery madness of Graffiti; and the notorious (swear) word game, ▶

"The original game caught most gentlefolk by surprise"

AND HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER...

In the unlikely event that you'll exhaust the possibilities of the main levels, why not create your own? *THPS2*'s skate park editor offers an impressive amount of opportunities to hurt your digital skate dude, with over a hundred items on offer for placing within a reasonably ample area. Park benches, picnic tables, shrubs, all manner of ramps, rails, platforms and skate bowls are available and can be twisted around and made to fit snugly into the appropriate places. Sound daunting? Well, the development chaps have helpfully included 50 pre-made parks using the editor to give you an idea of what can be achieved. Better still, you can tweak and alter these to your heart's content, before saving the revised version on a VM unit. You can test skate a work in progress area at any time, of course. But if you're truly hardcore, you'll make your own then take them round a friends and laugh maniacally as he continuously breaks his legs. Virtually speaking, naturally.

■ At first things look depressingly empty

Controls, as you can see from the screenshot, are simple enough. Cycling through the actual items (and there are well over a hundred) is a case of fooling around with the d-pad. It's intuitive enough for you to pick the whole process within a few minutes.

■ The variety of items that can be used is excellent

The hardest thing about the whole skate park creation process is knowing where to start. Initially it may seem rather daunting which is probably why the developer has helpfully included a selection of pre-made levels for you to get inspiration from.

■ You can alter any aspect of a pre-made arena

Which is why we've cheated and loaded up this ready made creation. Well, it would be rude not to.

■ Same skate park, different setting style

There are four graphics settings to choose from. Though not necessarily evident in screenshot form…

■ And another one. Can you spot the difference?

… in practice the overall atmosphere can alter quite dramatically. It all depends on what you're after, really.

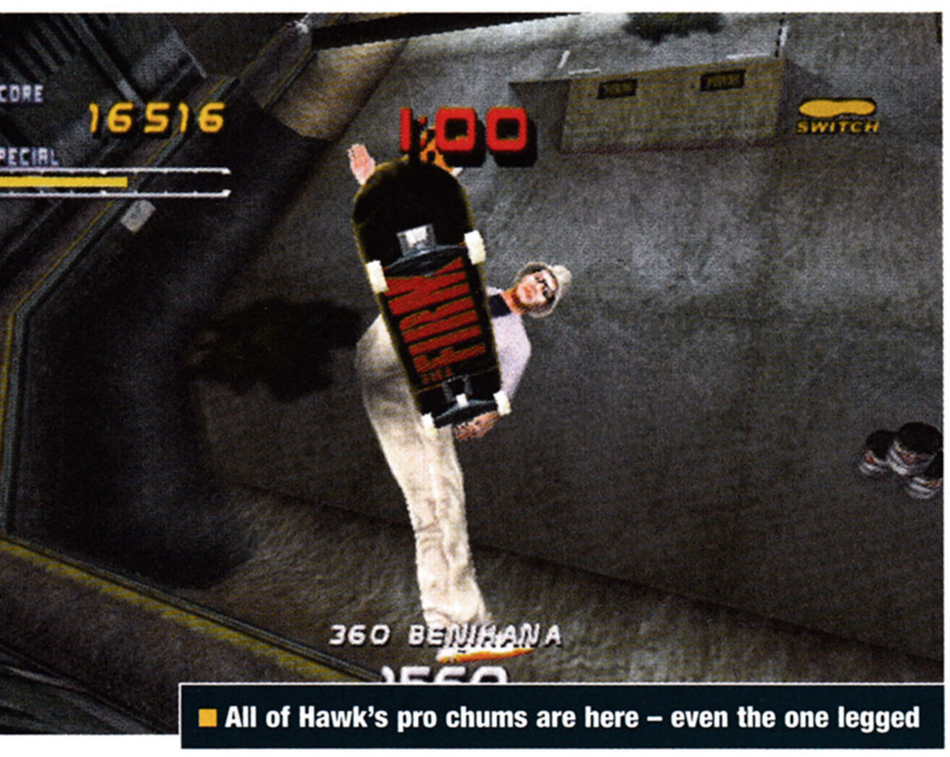
■ It may look complicated but it all makes sense, honest

If you want to get clever, you can actually set gaps (air, rail, manual, wallride) for super point jumps. Select the items involved but only ten can be placed in one park at a time

■ Voila, the finished thing gets test skated for radability

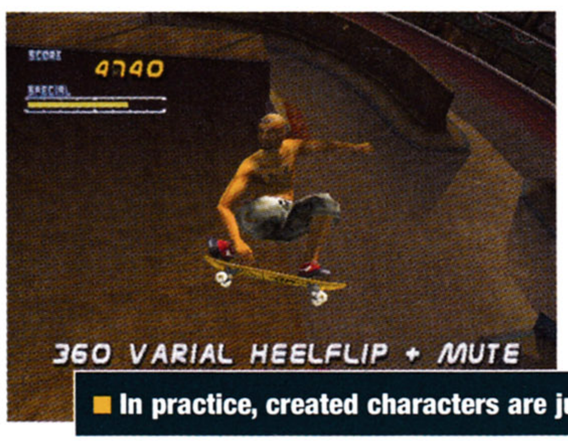
Anyway, at any time you can load up the real thing and try it out for real. Once you're happy with it, save it. A well designed park can be as playable as those from the game

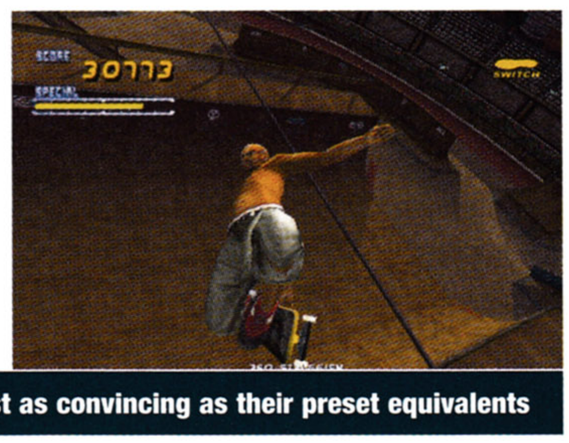
■ Some of the later challenges may baffle you at first, but keep thinking logically



■ All of Hawk's pro chums are here – even the one legged

■ Pull a manual and you could link this with following tricks





■ In practice, created characters are just as convincing as their preset equivalents

■ The camera works overtime to always provide you with the best viewing angle

▶ Horse – but now you can also beat a friend in Tag and Free Skate. The latter is a fairly dull game enabling you to learn the levels with another skater in tow. But Tag is a hugely enjoyable challenge where one player is 'It' and you have to avoid them for a set amount of time (with hilarious consequences).

Anyway, back to the actual levels, then. As with the original game, three of the eight superbly designed offerings are competition events taking place in skate parks where the best two of your three run attempts count. The rest are all street-based courses offering a bewildering variety of transfer, grind and straightforward trick opportunities. Improved, too, is the size of these stages – just when you think you've got one clocked, you uncover an entire new section by grinding your way across a new rail or by knocking over a fence. It's massively satisfying stuff.

As is the whole game, really. Yes, a few of the later challenges may initially irritate as a result of vagueness of the wording, but everything in the game is supported by underlying logic – think it over a little and you'll soon have things worked out. There are very few games that will keep you as enthralled as *Tony Hawk's 2* this Christmas (or indeed, beyond it). Longevity is virtually limitless – there's always yet another route to uncover through the complex environments, always a new self-imposed goal to attain. And in case you were wondering, you'll be pleased to hear the outstanding control system from the original game hasn't been touched.

THPS2 takes everything that was great about its predecessor and injects a new dose of playability, wrapped within the kind of execution that few developers ever manage to attain. This is beautifully thought out, thoroughly refined and utterly essential for skate fans ■

João Sanches

DC-UK RECOMMENDS

LE STATISTICIAN

■ Maxed out stats represent a hefty investment – but it does make a difference

Regardless of whose career you decide to further, there will be areas of their repertoire that will need improving. This is done by venturing into the stats shop, where you can purchase extra ability points and hence increase the performance of your trickster (wo)man. Trouble is, stats increase in value so you'll need plenty cash

DC-UK VERDICT

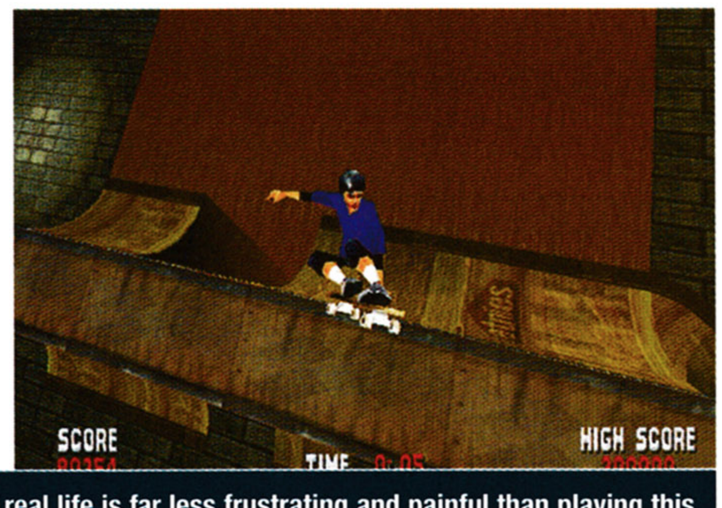
GRAPHICS
Excellent. Superbly detailed, very little fogging, the levels convey a solidity that has previously been lacking in skate games

SOUND
Excellent soundtrack (Rage Against the Machine, Naughty by Nature, etc), supported by a lovely variety of realistic sound effects

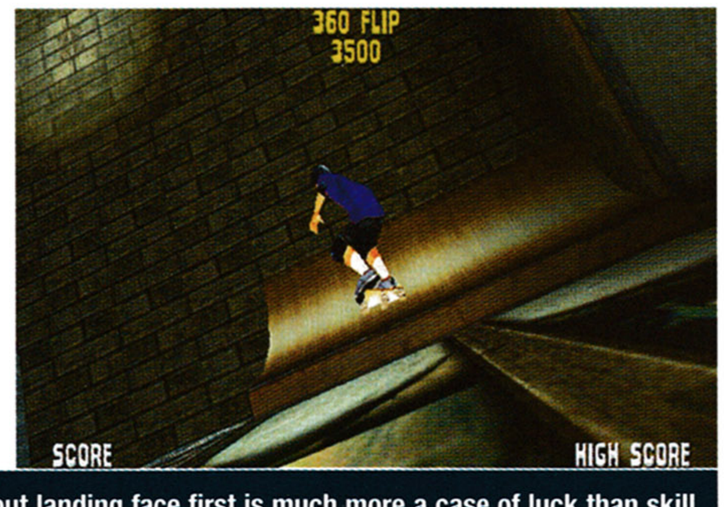
GAMEPLAY
Without question, the best control method of the rapidly increasing skating game world, the Hawkster returns in greatly refined form

OVERALL
Improves on the already magnificent original both in terms of quality and quantity. Masses of content and unrivalled playability should keep skating fans and gamers enthralled for a very, very long time. Superb

9
OUT OF TEN



Learning to skateboard in real life is far less frustrating and painful than playing this



Completing tricks without landing face first is much more a case of luck than skill

Tony Hawk needn't worry about any semblance of competition

MTV Sports Skateboarding

Could this be Dreamcast's most unplayable game ever?

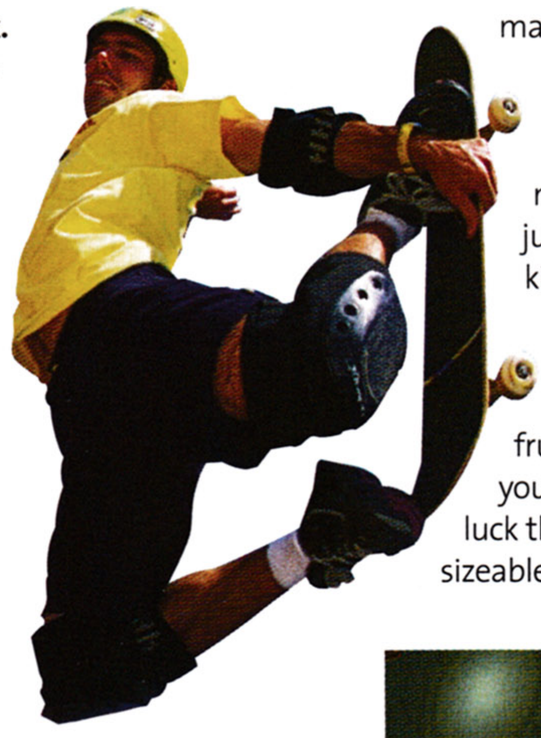
Since Tony Hawk first launched his gold-plated skateboarding sim, the PlayStation has been inundated with terrible wannabe clones. Unfortunately for us DC owners, this floating tide of dredge has now reached our sunnier shores, and if *MTV Sports Skateboarding* is anything to go by it doesn't half reek.

You'd hope that most developers start out with high ideals for their game. But sometimes things go horribly wrong along the way. Are they forced to cut corners by penny-pinching overlords? Do they get lost in their art and forced to publish unfinished masterpieces? Whatever the answer, the end result of a mediocre game is always the same – an embarrassing waste of time and money for everyone concerned. Sadly for developer Dark Black, this is exactly what they've produced here.

MTV Sports Skateboarding tries desperately to ape *Tony Hawk's* in every conceivable way, but aside from having identical controls, it fails miserably in all other departments. It's so glitch ridden that it's almost unplayable. One minute you're boarding along, whistling a merry tune to the rap/hardcore soundtrack, when all of a sudden, without any reason, your perfectly executed 720 kickflip mute grab sees you bailing embarrassingly as you land. Anyone foolish enough to attempt a grind on the lip of a ramp or halfpipe will again find themselves falling foul of the malevolent game engine. Pulling off such a trick is so randomly executed that it's made virtually impossible.

DETAILS

Publisher:	THQ
Developer:	Dark Black
Price:	£39.99
Release date:	Out now
Players:	One to four
Extras:	None



In addition to the item collection found on most of the game's levels, skaters must also impress the judges to progress. Given that kissing the concrete seems to be an integral part of the game, this is definitely not an easy task. Even more frustratingly though, once you've managed (more though luck than judgement) to amass a sizeable score, nine times out of ten this is not enough to impress the cruel hang 'em high judges, who relentlessly send your knackered skater back for more. In addition to this jamboree of faults the title is also dogged by truly awful animation sequences, slow game speeds, terrible collision detection and some appalling level design.

To its credit *MTV Sports* tries to throw in some new-ish additions to the *Tony Hawk's* formula in the form of some new game modes: MTV Hunt involves collecting ten MTV logos from around a skateboarding arena. It may sound easy, but each time you bail (ie, a lot) you also drop a logo. Meanwhile Stunt Mode provides skaters with a huge ramp with which to pull off as big a combo as they can. Unfortunately, these extra modes suffer from the same problems as the rest of the game, which only serves to crank up the overall frustration.

The only vaguely positive aspect of this title is the solid selection of rap, punk and hardcore tunes that make up its bitchin' soundtrack. Bands such as Pennywise, The Deftones and Cypress Hill all have decent tracks featured, and many of the game's skateparks have video walls showing the bands in action. But music maketh not the game and *MTV Sports Skateboarding* fails to entertain in just about every other area. The aim was no doubt to knock Mr Hawk from atop his lofty halfpipe nest, but this truly awful game doesn't even begin to ruffle his feathers ■

Richard Owen

'What have I done to be sent to this horrible skateboarding hell?'

DC-UK VERDICT

GRAPHICS
Bears more than a passing resemblance to the PS version that spawned it

SOUND
Top-notch licensed soundtrack is the only saving grace

GAMEPLAY
Does the developer have any idea what this phrase means?

MULTIPLAYER
Four people couldn't all be stupid enough to play this, surely?

OVERALL
Frustrating, annoying, awful, ill conceived, bug ridden, pile of steaming tripe. Avoid at all costs

3
OUT OF TEN

It's not the most visually astounding thing currently on DC

"For those of you too young to remember, they were more sought after than a liaison with the lovely Linda Lusardi"

Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX

DETAILS

Publisher:	Acclaim
Developer:	Z-Axis
Price:	£39.99
Release date:	December 1
Players:	One to two
Extras:	None

With skateboarding done and dusted, publishers have found something else for you to grind the local vertices with

According to the song, everybody was kung-fu fighting in the seventies while the nineties saw everyone who was anyone cruising around on a mountain bike. In between these decades, however, back in the perm rock and Miami Vice-jacketed days euphemistically referred to as the eighties, there were few conversations at school that didn't involve the words Skyway Tuff II's.

They're BMX mag wheels, for those of you too young to remember, and at the time they were more sought after than a liaison with the lovely Linda Lusardi. Back then, ludicrous flick BMX Bandits was obligatory viewing and if you cycled to school you either rode a BMX or you went via the back way so no one saw you. The merciless playground environment wasn't the place for compromises. No racers, no choppers, and certainly no front-mounted baskets.

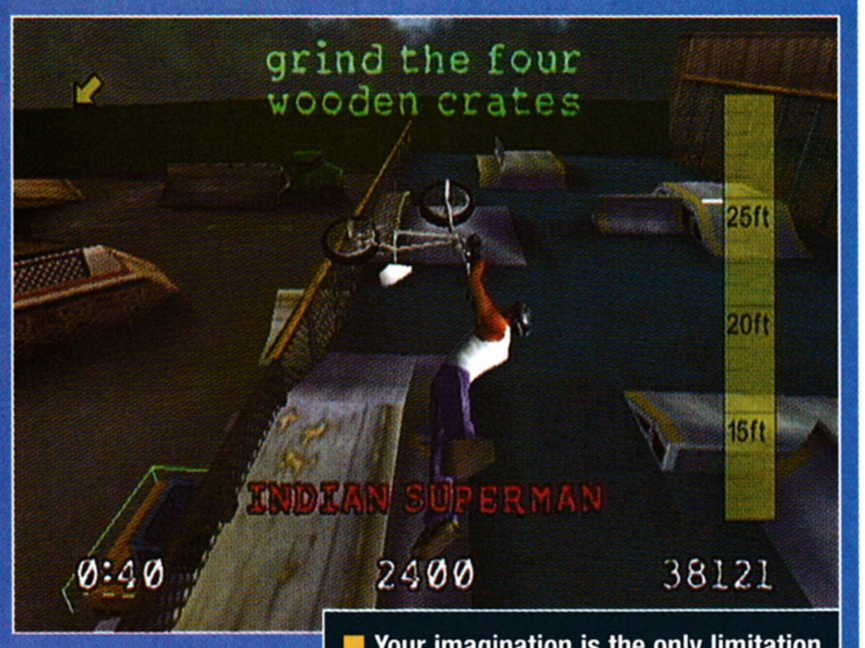
Fittingly, Dave Mirra isn't known for compromising, either. Having spent 20 of his 26 years on a bike (eight of them riding pro), Dave has pushed the sport forward like few of his peers. He's also supremely talented, which helps, naturally. The first dude to pull a double backflip in competition, Dave also happens to be the most decorated X Games athlete boasting ten medals (eight gold, two silver) by the time he got to this year's event.

With videogaming publishers realising the potential of extreme sports-based material, polygonal immortalisation was inevitable. Nine of Mirra's chums also turn out for this outing which features 12 BMXing vert, dirt and street locations. Initially, only one is accessible and progression through the Proquest (ie, career) mode opens up the rest. Predictably, this is done by completing a series of challenges for each level – anything from grinding rooftop girders to fast planting billboards. Three levels of these exist (amateur, pro, hardcore) and while you can get away with opening new levels by completing just two from the trio for a while, eventually you'll need to come back and master the hardcore

Mirra appears to be a direct port of the PlayStation version – a shame given the superiority of DC hardware

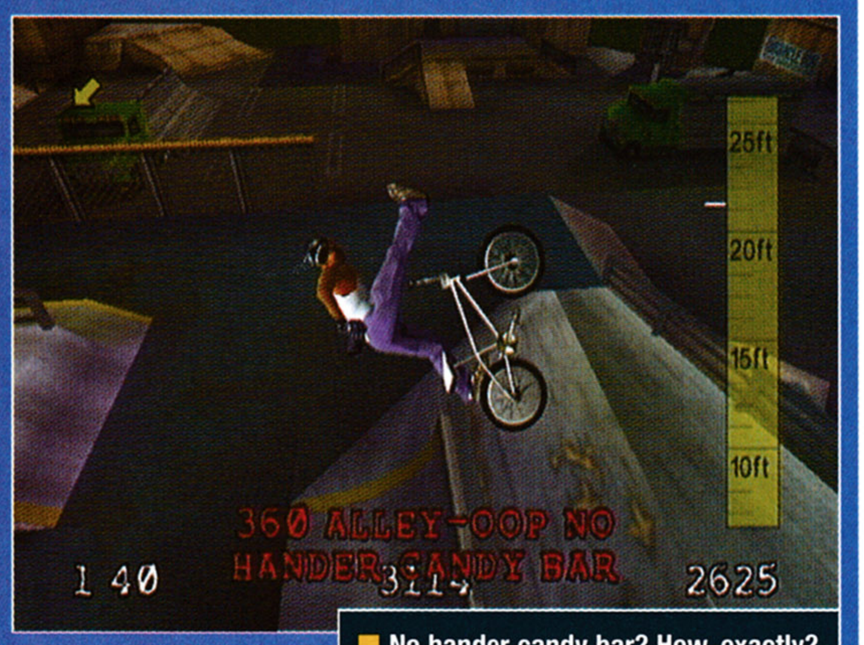
Trick variety is impressive – and you earn more as you go

TRICK OR CHEAT



Your imagination is the only limitation

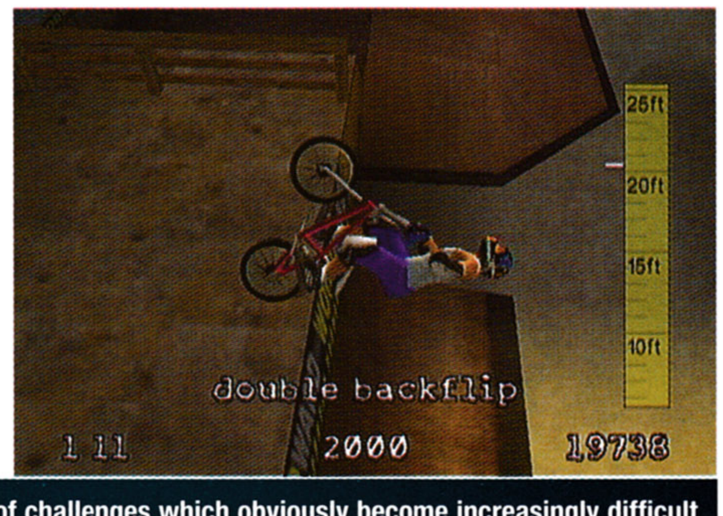
To its credit, *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX* offers an astounding range of tricks. Better still, by implementing a modifier system, you can pretty much combine any of the moves together, boosting the variety further still (some 2000 are allegedly possible), and – crucially – the animation remains convincing. Tricks end up looking rather silly, yes, but it is a game, after all. For instance, a 'no hander superman', anyone? ■



No hander candy bar? How, exactly?

Competition levels are crammed in the second half of the career mode. They tend to be more progressive in feel

Analogue control can be used but you'll probably find it lacking the precision of the d-pad



Clearing levels requires successful completion of challenges which obviously become increasingly difficult

> "Perfect videogame material. But not, sadly, a perfect videogame"

tasks if you plan to reach the later levels.

That's not to say you don't get rewarded for fulfilling the lower assignments – new sponsors and bikes unlock alongside the levels. Interestingly, rather than intersperse the expected competition rounds, the developer has opted to cram these into the second half of the proceedings, meaning the last six levels focus on scoring the best overall point average (you get two runs per round) before the next competition opens up.

Totally master the last tournament and you're further rewarded with a new character, video footage of your chosen riderman and a secret bike with a suitably amazing set of stats to match. You can then go through the game with a different character or course, indulge in a single session, or convince a friend to join you for one of the ten twoplayer events, which prove particularly engaging provided both players are evenly matched. Or perhaps you'll feel the urge to go back to the equip screen, select the new bike and tackle some of the levels again. This isn't as obsessive as you may be currently thinking. Cleverly, every course maintains a records list (biggest air, best single trick score, longest manual, etc), which proves hugely compelling. It's not impossible to lose an hour trying to wipe a competitor's name off the list in search of ultimate supremacy.

Overall, perfect videogame material, then. But not, sadly, a perfect videogame. Sure, the intricacies of the sport are remarkably conveyed with a currently unmatched trick list (see Trick Or Cheat) – you can do virtually everything real riders can (as well as plenty they can't) and it looks convincing. The structure is competently balanced and the locations are all superb which, as most are recreations of the world's best bike parks, you'd expect them to be. Granted, it doesn't look fabulous (it's only a little smoother than the preceding PlayStation version) and the scenery has an annoying tendency to continuously build itself in front of you, but you'd almost forgive it had the resulting gameplay experience been better.

But unfortunately, the ride isn't particularly smooth. Aside from the significant levels of slowdown the game frequently suffers from, there are too many cases whereby landing a trick becomes a question of chance, the result of a toxic mix of uneven controls and dodgy collision detection.

Those prepared to resist the temptation to judge *Dave Mirra* based on the first couple of levels should find a game that although initially feeling very sluggish, has a reasonable amount of charm to win it some friends. But were the proceedings less rough and ready, it might well have enjoyed the same adulation usually reserved for the man whose name it carries on the box ■

João Sanches

DC-UK VERDICT

GRAPHICS
Rather angular and very un-Dreamcast like, which is a shame

SOUND
Music selection all suitable but sound effects very, very quiet

GAMEPLAY
Pretty rough around the vertices – rather crucial given the game

MULTIPLAYER
Twoplayer mode is reasonably engaging

OVERALL
Initially leaves you cold but this remains an enjoyable – if sadly flawed – BMX fest

5
OUT OF TEN

Racoon City isn't the safest place to park your car

"Purely on gameplay terms, this is a fantastic adventure packed to the brim with classic survival horror action"

Resident Evil 3: Nemesis

Capcom's zombie-fest lurches back to Dreamcast. Don't forget your spare pants

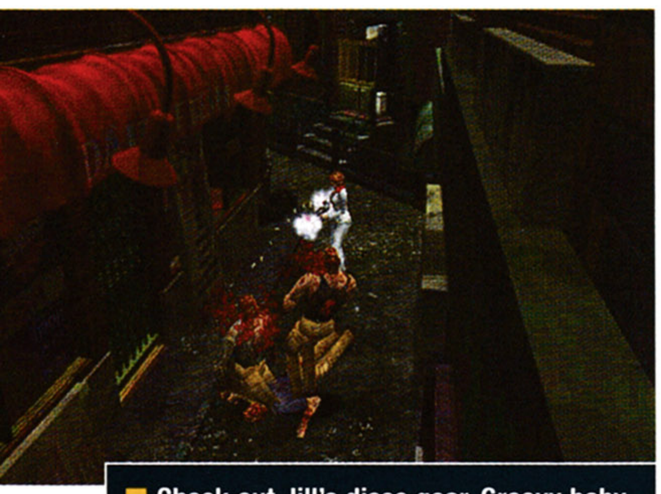
DETAILS

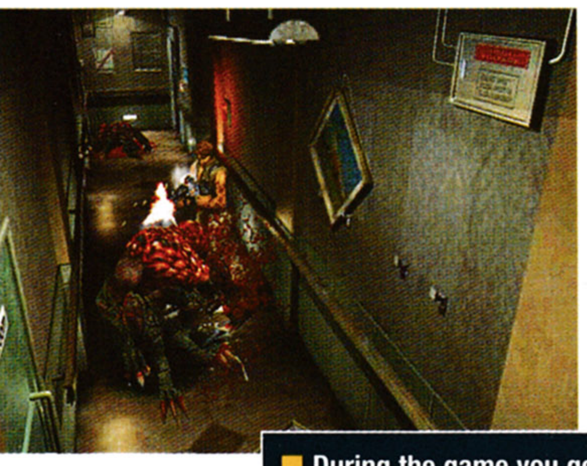
Publisher:	**Capcom**
Developer:	**In-house**
Price:	**£29.99**
Release date:	**December**
Players:	**One**
Extras:	**60 Hz, Vibration**

Raccoon City isn't the kind of place most sane people would like to visit. There's no cosmopolitan atmosphere, pretentious coffee shops or bustling nightlife here – unless you're into socialising with flesh eating zombies that is. In fact, you're about as likely to find this American town in the latest Rough Guide of tourist hot spots as you are Beirut or Israel's war-torn West Bank. Despite this, gamers can't seem to get enough of the place. Why? Because wasting zombies with big guns and having the bejesus scared out of you is superb fun, that's why.

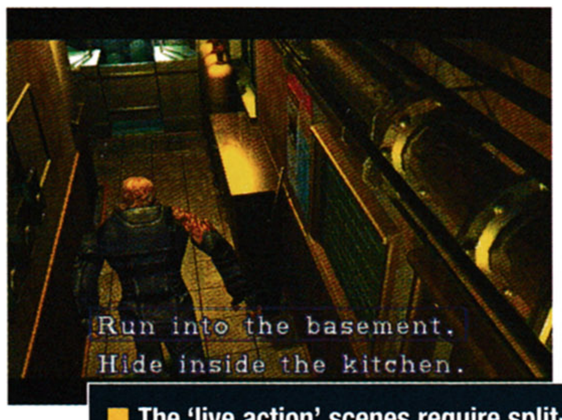
Poor old Jill Valentine might beg to differ, though. After escaping the madness of the Umbrella mansion (in the original *Resident Evil*) she returns to the devastated Raccoon City only to find herself trapped by the ensuing undead madness. Jill's problems are compounded further by the Nemesis creature, a rotting, eight-foot, genetically engineered monstrosity that's got one thing on its mind – her impending demise. Your predictable task in *Nemesis*, the third instalment in the *Resident Evil* saga, is to guide Jill out of Raccoon City to safety.

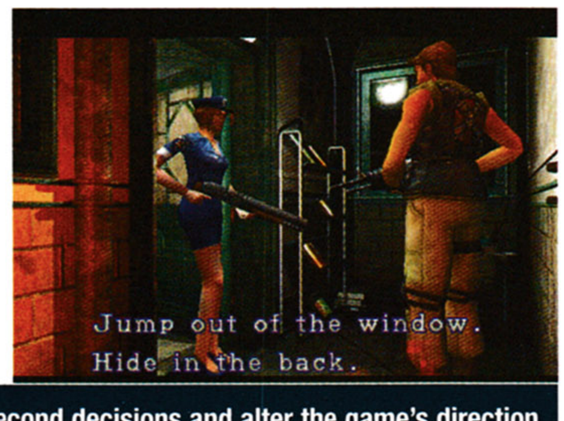
As a port of a year-old PlayStation title, *Nemesis* was never going to look as good as *Code: Veronica*. While the characters are high-res, the backgrounds remain pre-rendered 2D images. So we can safely say it's not going to win any awards for graphical innovation this year. That said, they're still some of the most detailed environments that you'll see anywhere and fit the atmosphere of the series perfectly. The abandoned city streets with trashed cars littering the place, smashed up buildings and blazing fires raging uncontrollably are reminiscent of George Romero's zombie flicks from where Capcom's franchise


Check out Jill's disco gear. Groovy baby

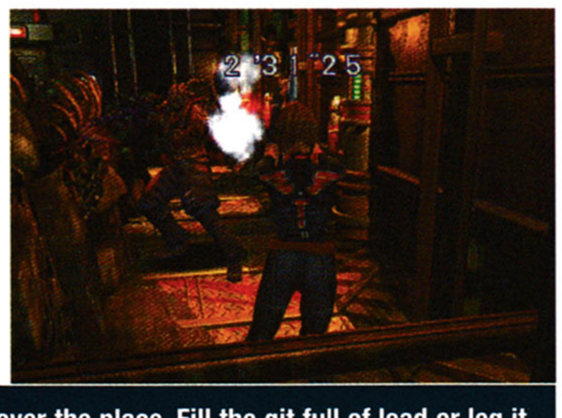


During the game you get to control Carlos, one of the mercenaries. Vicious mutant creatures are no match for this dude





The 'live action' scenes require split-second decisions and alter the game's direction



The Nemesis creature pops up all over the place. Fill the git full of lead or leg it

The assault rifle is a handy piece of kit, making short work of the undead minions

takes most of its inspiration. Sound, as ever, also plays a major role in building the spooky atmosphere. With the haunting groans of zombies carrying on the wind and the droning voice of the Nemesis creature, moaning 'S...T... A... R... S...' as it tries to spread your guts over the nearest wall, you'll be gripping the pad so tight you'll be in danger of snapping it.

Gameplay wise, we're in familiar territory. Jill dashes around, sending rotting corpses back to hell with powerful weaponry, and solving puzzles as she goes. These usually involve scouring areas for keys or objects, such as finding coloured jewels to open the gate to the city hall. A new element is introduced in the form of gunpowder that Jill can mix together in various combinations to produce different types of ammo. This means that you can always have a plentiful supply for your favourite weapon, such as the head-popping Magnum.

To add to the tension, there are several moments where you have to make a split-second decision and the choice you make alters the game direction slightly. Near the start of the game Jill reaches the police station and the Nemesis confronts her. You can choose to stand your ground and fight the swine (foolish) or quickly duck past him to the safety of the precinct (sensible). These 'live selection' sequences don't really bring too much to the overall experience, but they do represent a welcome touch of variety in the established survival horror formula.

One area where a bit of variety would have been even more welcome is in the game's controls. *Nemesis* utilises the same rusty old control system veteran players will be accustomed to. It's outdated and can be frustratingly clumsy at times but it serves its purpose and doesn't detract too much from the enjoyment.

Thankfully, the quick-turn move (first seen in *Dino Crisis*) is included and proves extremely useful as Nemesis is prone to turning up when least expected, forcing you to beat a hasty retreat.

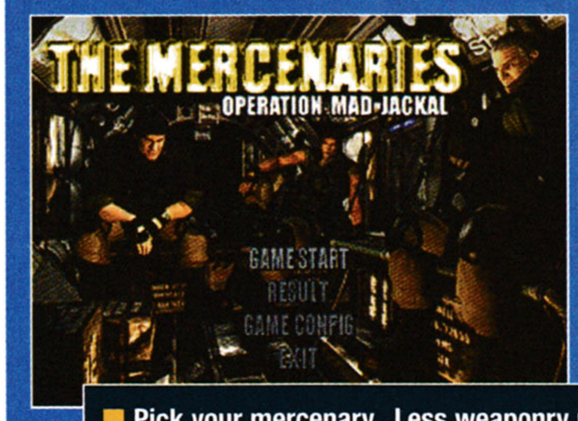
Despite being a basic PC conversion, there are a few new features to distinguish *Nemesis* on Dreamcast. The Mercenaries battle game (see The Mercenaries) which previously had to be unlocked by completing the adventure is now available from the start, and Capcom has taken advantage of Dreamcast's VM, providing a handy health meter on its screen (as seen in *Code: Veronica*). In addition, Clothes Show fans will be pleased to learn you can now choose to kit Jill out in eight different costumes!

Resident Evil 3 is undoubtedly hampered by the fact that it isn't a dedicated Dreamcast game and, as such, can't hope to compete with the outstanding *Code: Veronica*. But taken purely on gameplay terms, this is a fantastic adventure packed to the brim with classic survival horror action. If you haven't already completed it on PS or PC, *Nemesis* is an essential addition to your videogame morgue ■

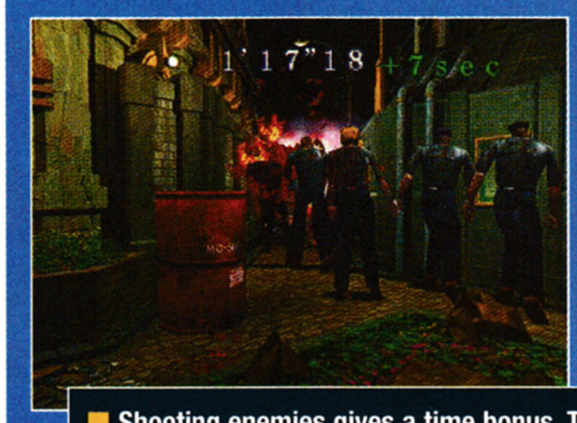
Adrian Lawton

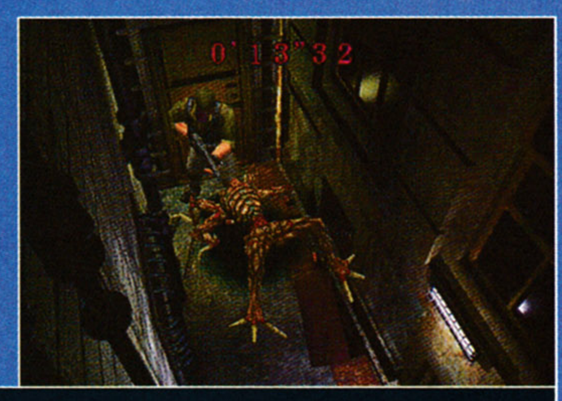
THE MERCENARIES

This mini game is a real test of your battle skills. Pick one of the three mercenaries and try and make it to your destination in one piece. The time limit's tight and the game chucks everything its got at you. This is no training exercise soldier! ■

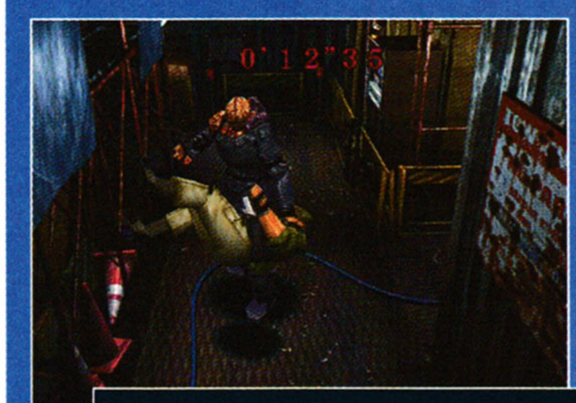


Pick your mercenary. Less weaponry means a bigger reward at the end of the game





Shooting enemies gives a time bonus. Take out multiple targets for increased bonuses



Reaching the end isn't easy. But waiting is cash to buy unlimited ammo on weapons

DC-UK VERDICT

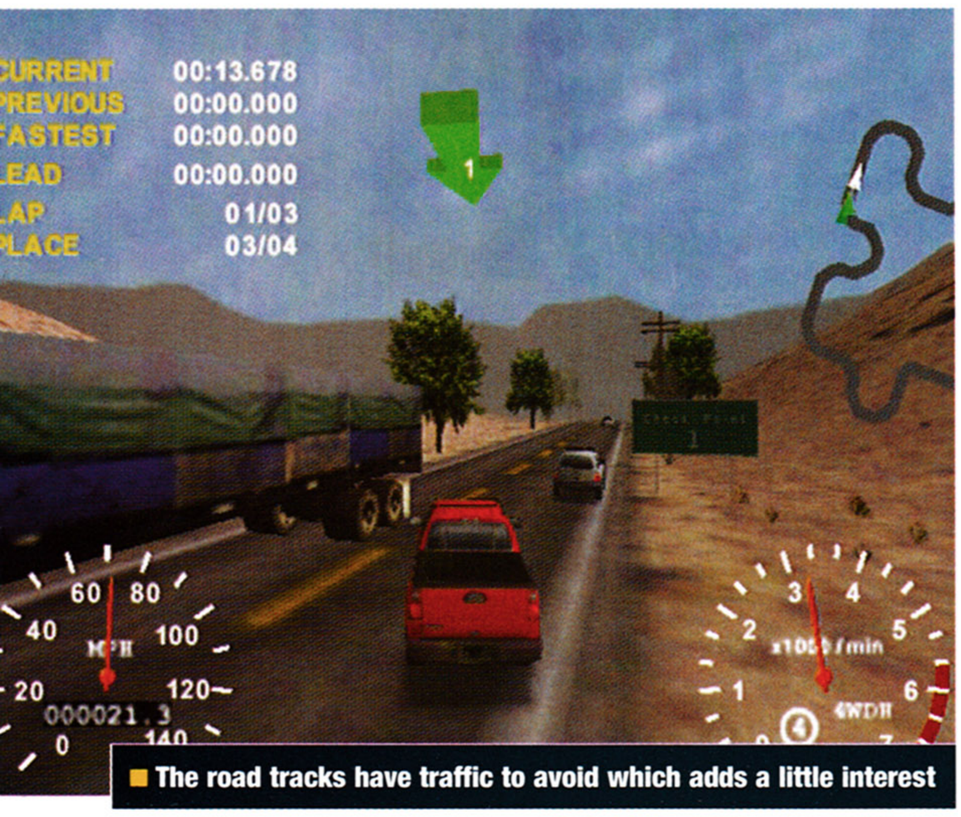
GRAPHICS
The graphics still create one of the most immersing adventures you'll find anywhere

SOUND
Suitably spooky sound effects and dramatic score keep the tension up throughout

GAMEPLAY
Erm. It's *Resi Evil* (puzzles and gruesome zombie murder for those who don't know)

OVERALL
A worthy addition to the collection of any self-respecting *RE* fan

7
OUT OF TEN



The road tracks have traffic to avoid which adds a little interest

Follow the green arrow to race through the numbered checkpoints in sequence. Miss one and you're in trouble

4X4 Evolution

Get your motor running, head out on the highway, then drive off it and struggle up a bloody great hill. That's offroad for you

DETAILS

Publisher: Take 2
Developer: Terminal Reality
Price: £39.99
Release date: December
Players: One to two (offline) Two to four (online)
Extras: 60Hz, online functions

Our idea of going offroad is riding a bike on the footpath during rush hour. But for those who laugh in the face of danger and pull moonies in the general direction of fear, the word 'offroad' will no doubt conjure images of vehicles with big wheels driven by men with big beards over all kinds of perilous terrains. The latest racer to leave the relative safety of tarmac for the rough and tumble of all-terrain action is *4X4 Evolution*. So, with a flask of steaming hot tea and a tired Fast Show reference at the ready – "Let's offroad!"

Featuring a decent selection of options (Quick Race, Career, Versus, Time Attack), a massive range of 70 offroad vehicles (including jeeps and pick-ups from manufacturers such as Dodge, Ford, Mitsubishi and Nissan) and 15 tracks covering different surfaces from grass to gravel and varied conditions from dense fog to sheeting rain, initial impressions of the game are promising.

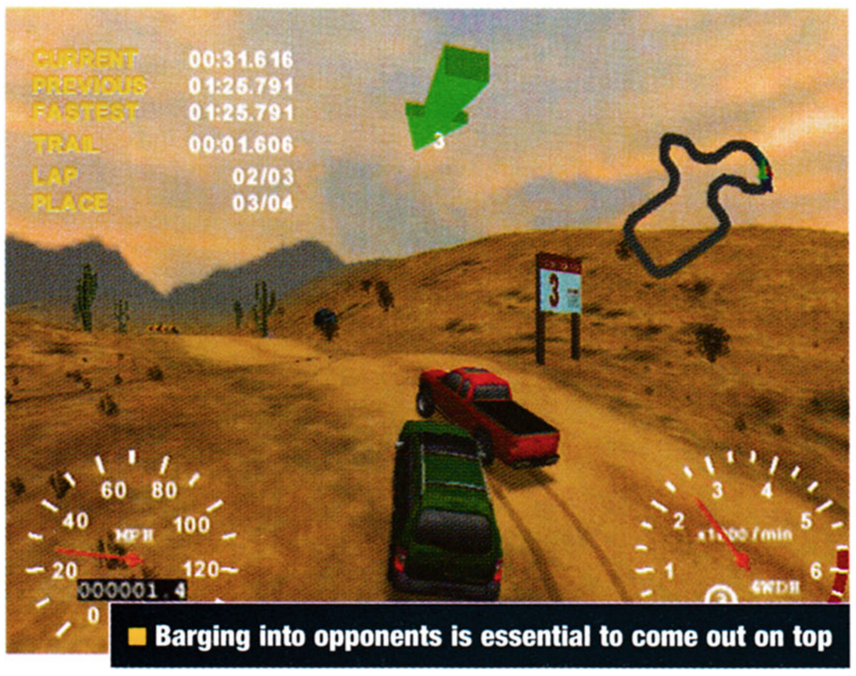
Your first port of call will probably be the in-depth Career mode. Here you take part in a number of competitions with the aim of accumulating money by winning races and spending these earnings on vehicle improvements in the Shop. The possibility of adding new parts and tinkering with your car to make it the ultimate 4WD monster is an enticing prospect, and by this stage you'll be dying to get stuck into some offroad action.

But from the first minute of the first race, all of *4X4 Evolution*'s positive elements will be forgotten faster than a Westlife number one. The game might just as well have been titled *Moon Buggy Evolution* because the gameplay is so sluggish and floaty that it feels like you're driving in zero gravity. This lethargic motoring is exacerbated by some dull (PC-ported) visuals, with the drab colour palettes of the vehicles and the bleak, pop-up plagued environments making the whole experience feel disappointingly lifeless. To be fair, the game isn't totally lacking in excitement: you're free to drive even further offroad to look for short-cuts which inevitably result in steeeep climbs and huuuge jumps. And there are some decent examples of interactive scenery where you can plough through road blocks and scatter heavy crates (but, strangely, you come to a standstill if you try and drive through cacti).

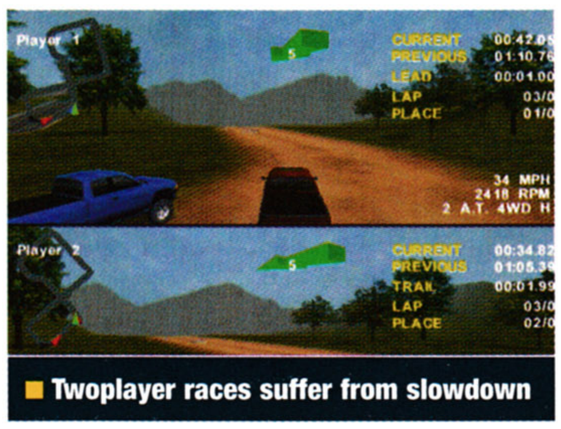
Of course, *4X4 Evolution*'s best feature is its Net capabilities but until the network is up and running and we can test the online racing against you lot, we can't really judge the quality of this (look out for a full online gaming trial of *Quake III*, *Pod II*, *Worms World Party* and *Speed Devils Online* in the next issue). Let's face it though, the majority of DC owners will still be playing their games without the added delights of the Net, and as an offline experience, *4X4 Evolution* doesn't really cut it.

With Dreamcast petrolheads being spoiled by the glorious triumvirate of *MSR*, *F355* and *Le Mans*, a racing game that is anything less than brilliant will be fighting a losing battle before it's even started its engine running. Admittedly, DC's driving holy trinity are all tarmac-based so the opportunity to head offroad in *4X4 Evolution* is a welcome one. But then there's the small matter of *4 Wheel Thunder*, a sadly neglected all-terrain racer that is thrillingly fast and exciting and jam-packed with speed boosts, interactive scenery and short-cuts to keep you on the edge of your seat. If you're determined to sample the muck and bumps of offroad racing, *4 Wheel Thunder* is the game to go for ■

Lee Hart



Barging into opponents is essential to come out on top



Twoplayer races suffer from slowdown

DC-UK VERDICT

GRAPHICS
Foggy, PC-ported visuals with drab-looking cars and dull environments

SOUND
Predictable rock 'n' roll tunes accompany the offroad action quite nicely

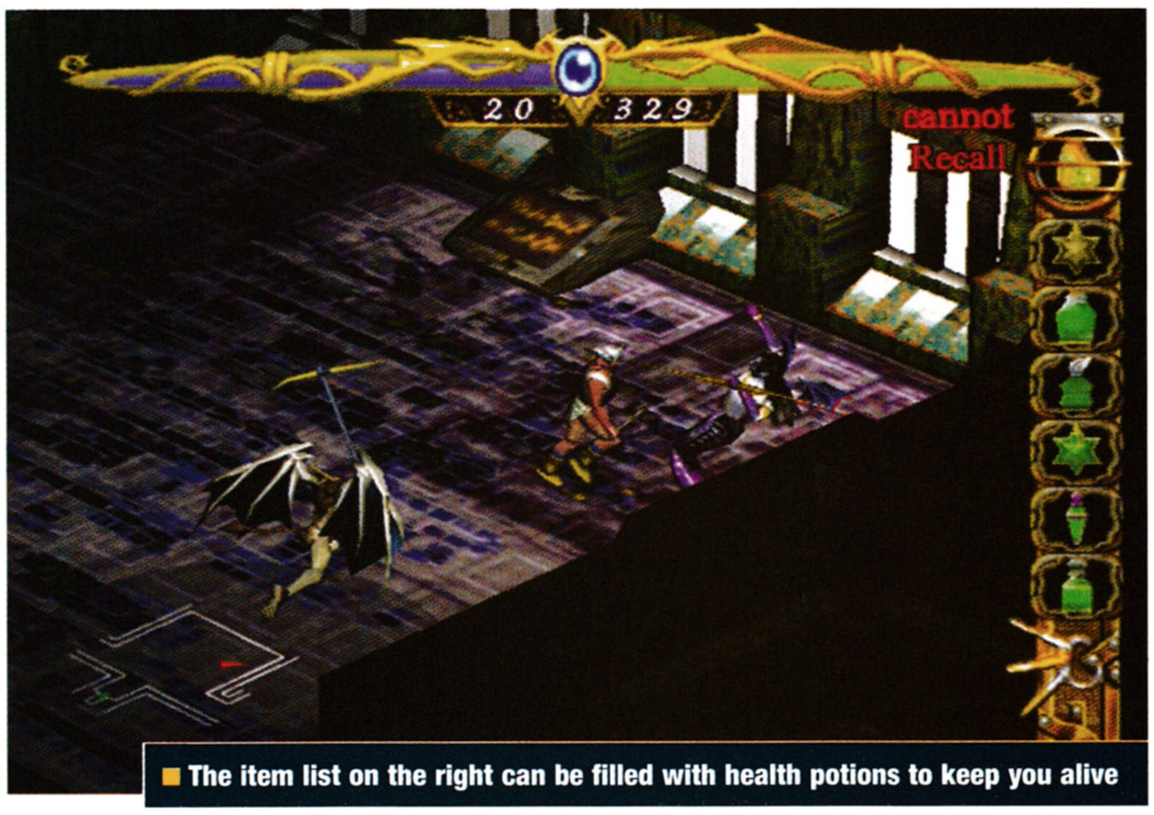
GAMEPLAY
Race through checkpoints on a variety of offroad tracks. Average

MULTIPLAYER
Twoplayer is plagued by slowdown, online action still to be tested

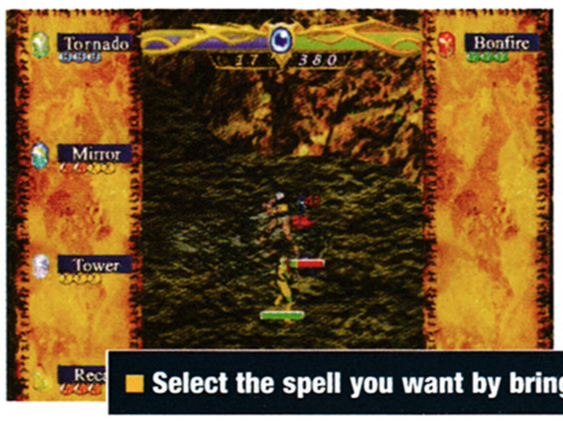
OVERALL
A playable enough game that simply can't hope to compete with DC's premier racers

4
OUT OF TEN

■ During enemy encounters you're often heavily outnumbered. Have at you!



■ The item list on the right can be filled with health potions to keep you alive



■ Select the spell you want by bringing up the menu then kill everything in sight

■ Different weapons have varying effects depending on the enemy – choose wisely

Record Of Lodoss War: The Advent Of Cardice

Is this a contender for daftest title ever? We think so

Big swords, powerful spells and extravagant fantasy settings. We love 'em at DC-UK, but we just don't see enough of them on Dreamcast. Yes, we've got *Grandia II* and *Skies of Arcadia* on the way but there's always room for more dungeon-dwelling gubbins. Enter the ungracefully titled *Record Of Lodoss War: The Advent Of Cardice* from Virgin Interactive. Inspired by a little known Japanese anime series this low-key release has them all – in spades.

You're a long-dead hero resurrected by a wizard, The Great Wart, to put stop to a plot to free the evil goddess Kardis, who threatens to destroy the realm of Forceria. Suffering from amnesia, you attempt to piece together any memories you can, as you go about your righteous task. This journey will take you through maze-like underground caverns, vast dark forests, huge fortresses and many other daunting domains.

DETAILS

Publisher:	Virgin Interactive
Developer:	Kadokowa Shoten
Price:	£39.99
Release date:	Out now
Players:	One
Extras:	60Hz

To anyone who's played *Diablo*, *Lodoss*'s gameplay will be very familiar. Rather than the ponderous turn-based combat found in RPGs like *Evolution*, you directly control your character with the analogue pad and press B to swipe with your sword. Enemies come thick and fast and the variety is impressive – Orcs, Golems, Gargoyles and Giant Scorpions, to name but a few. Weapons can be inscribed with ancient words that give extra abilities, like extra magic points or intelligence and can be customised further using a rare metal called Mithrill which you collect on your travels. Spells are numerous and can be learnt by collecting and reading magic books during your quests. Many items (like lockpicks) can also be found lying around or retrieved from corpses.

Everything is controlled through a simple inventory system that allows you to easily manage the items you're carrying. When you need to get rid of some, the game uses warp points to allow you to teleport to town to deposit them in chests. And while graphically, *Lodoss* isn't outstanding, it uses true 3D throughout and there are some really nice touches, especially the spectacular spells and weather effects. Sounds are used well to add atmosphere, like the scuttling of insects and the groans of the undead as they lumber around.

In short, *Lodoss* is a bit of a hidden gem. It's reached our shores with no hype and fanfare and yet has some great aspects that make it extremely enjoyable to play. While combat is repetitive and basic, you'll be too busy busting heads to worry too much. The story is typical RPG guff, but the whole package is so well put together that *Lodoss* proves to be more than a match for the likes of *Evolution*. If you're a budding adventurer it will provide some class entertainment for those long winter nights ■

Adrian Lawton

■ Huge areas like the Dark Forest are great to explore

DC-UK VERDICT

GRAPHICS
Doesn't push your DC to its limits, but it's still nicely done overall

SOUND
Great. Very atmospheric and pulls you into the game

GAMEPLAY
Non-stop hack 'n' slash action with a fantasy storyline

OVERALL
An engaging and fun adventure that probably won't get the credit it deserves

7
OUT OF TEN

These guys have a taste for spiky leather outfits and chuck lethal blades around

Spawners churn out enemies constantly. Destroy 'em as quick as you can

Kiss Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child

DETAILS

Publisher:	Take 2
Developer:	Tremor
Price:	£39.99
Release date:	December
Players:	One
Extras:	60 Hz

Plenty of big guns and some of the strangest enemies you're ever likely to face await in this all-action shooter

On the rare occasions we think of Kiss, we think of four men in girly make-up and Spandex, with huge platform shoes and a taste for bad guitar riffs. The large-tongued rockers of the 70's and 80's don't really conjure up a connection with comic book heroes in our minds. Fans of Todd (*Spawn*) McFarlane's graphic novel Kiss: Psycho Circus would beg to differ and now Take 2's latest offering, brings the bizarre concept of heavy metal superheroes to Dreamcast as a first person shooter.

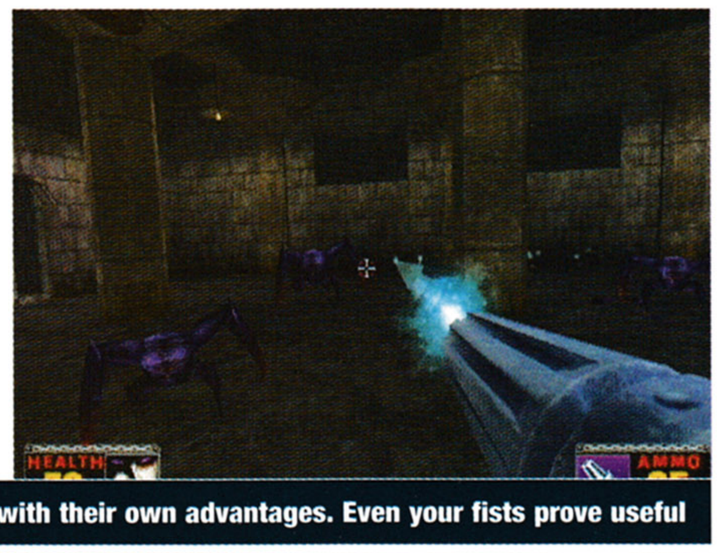
Psycho Circus is split into distinct realms for each of the characters and their alter egos, the Elders. The aim of the game is to battle through the water, earth, fire and air realms before finally confronting the Nightmare Child, an evil demon foetus. As you go, you'll find armour that aids you in your quest, but it is no ordinary armour. This armour consists of gaudy Kiss stage costumes, like the platform boots, which here enable you to jump higher and reach previously inaccessible areas.

Graphically, the game's quite pleasing with plenty of variety in the locations. Everything from city streets to giant bookshelves and lava-filled caverns crop up en route to the nightmare infant, and they're all interestingly lit and and filled with a dark menagerie of gruesome enemies. But while there are some truly ugly beasties to fight, the AI is dubious – it's more a case of being over-run by masses of cannon fodder than stalked by intelligent killers. Mowing down row upon row of creatures that just run straight at you quickly becomes repetitive. A little more variety would have been nice.

Another missed opportunity is the game's lack of a strong, explorable story. Sure, there are plenty of cut-scenes that point you towards your next goal but there's such a linear feel to the action that there really is little room for discovering things for yourself. Considering *Psycho Circus* is based on a comic, it feels all the more shallow for this lack of a decent interactive scenario.

Essentially, *Kiss* is a *Doom* style old-skool FPS and if you're up for some mindless blasting then you might enjoy it. These days though, we demand a little bit more. A strong story line, intelligent puzzles and interactive environments are just as important to a videogame as big guns and hordes of enemies and *Kiss Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child* just doesn't deliver. But what really leaves a sour taste in our mouths, is that while the PC version had a decent online deathmatch, this has been mysteriously removed from the Dreamcast port, making it a rather average oneplayer experience. It's a shame – this game had so much early promise yet it ultimately disappoints ■

Adrian Lawton



***Psycho Circus* is full of mental weapons, each with their own advantages. Even your fists prove useful**

DC-UK VERDICT

GRAPHICS
Gruesome enemies and nicely drawn locations are the title's saving graces

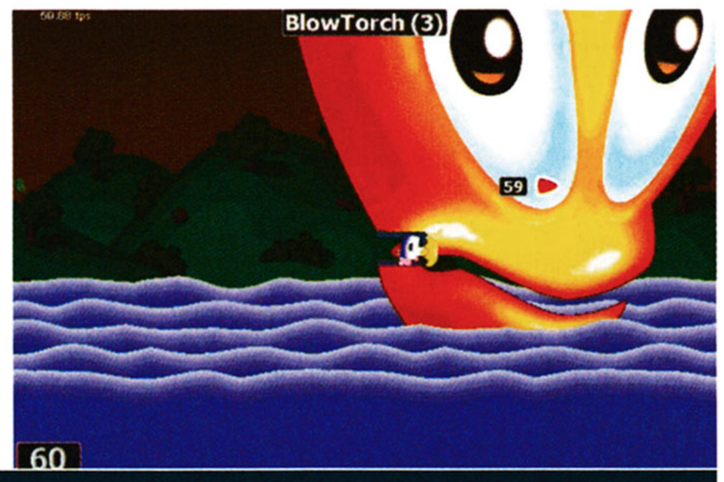
SOUND
Decent enough sound effects, but most of the speech from the PC version is gone

GAMEPLAY
Fast, furious, mindless blasting. And that's it

OVERALL
A mediocre shooter that could have been much better if the multiplayer had made it over from the PC version. Decidedly average, but entertaining for a while

6
OUT OF TEN

The exploding sheep make a welcome return. Let it go, watch the counter fall down and boom! Worm pizza



The mission mode includes this *Space Invaders* tribute, while time attack is a frantic affair

Pick your instrument of destruction and wipe 'em out

Worms World Party

Invertebrate insanity makes a network debut on Dreamcast. Do you have what it takes to become the world's best worm killer?

DETAILS

Publisher:	Hasbro
Developer:	Team 17
Price:	£29.99
Release date:	December 15
Players:	One to four
Extras:	Internet play

Who says you need three dimensions to have fun? Certainly not Team 17, whose latest instalment in the *Worms* saga, *World Party* is still stuck firmly in two. But this game isn't about cutting-edge visuals and never has been. It's about having fun, pure and simple. Take turns to destroy each other's worms with ludicrous weapons – and that's it. The series has long been renowned for its top multiplayer antics and now *World Party* sticks a bloody great cherry on its multiplayer wormcake with the added bonus of Internet play.

But what else is new for this latest outing? Well, don't expect a radical overhaul of the tried and tested formula that's been entertaining gamers since '95. Team 17 knows when it's onto a winner and instead of a complete (and unnecessary) renovation, has gone about fine-tuning every aspect of the gameplay to offer the most complete *Worms* experience to date.

One enjoyable new feature is the Wormopedia, a book packed with handy details on the game's massive and massively eccentric arsenal – you can expect to sample the delights of the exploding sheep, the air strike and the methane-equipped deadly skunk, among many others. The singleplayer game has been boosted by a number of new gaming modes including Training which offers 20 different levels to hone your weapon skills; Mission, where you can tackle 40 outrageous scenarios (including a tribute to *Space Invaders*) varying from the fairly easy to the tooth-grindingly frustrating; and some excellent deathmatch action, in which you take on a series of increasingly formidable computer-controlled opponents in battle.

But, as ever, it's in the multiplayer department where *Worms* truly excels. *World Party* offers a fully customisable fourplayer experience both off and online. Create your own teams, pick your special weapons and gravestones, and even build custom landscapes, then save 'em all to your VM. Fourplayer worming fun is still as enjoyable offline as it always has been, but the real bonus with *World Party* is it's full online gaming. Although it's impossible to judge the true quality of the game's Net play until we can enter the mother of all worm battles with you lot (check out our online round-up in the next issue for the full verdict), from the few encounters we've had already, things look very promising indeed. Turn-based games are ideal for online play as there's no latency issues to worry about and the action is enlivened considerably by the instant messaging system allowing you to taunt the opposition from anywhere on the planet.

Worms World Party is the kind of game you can shove into your DC for a quick bash with your mates after the pub and before you know it, the sun's coming up. That's the real beauty of it. Unlike most games it's an extremely social experience and you can lose yourself in it's simple, addictive gameplay for hours at a time. Though not pushing Dreamcast to its limits, and not worth considering if you want strictly singleplayer gaming, *World Party* offers as much multiplayer fun as you're likely to have on your trusty DC and is well worth forty quid, whether you're a novice or a veteran ■

Adrian Lawton

DC-UK sends the opposition to a watery grave with the bazooka

DC-UK VERDICT

GRAPHICS
Cutesy and colourful but it doesn't exactly test DC's capabilities

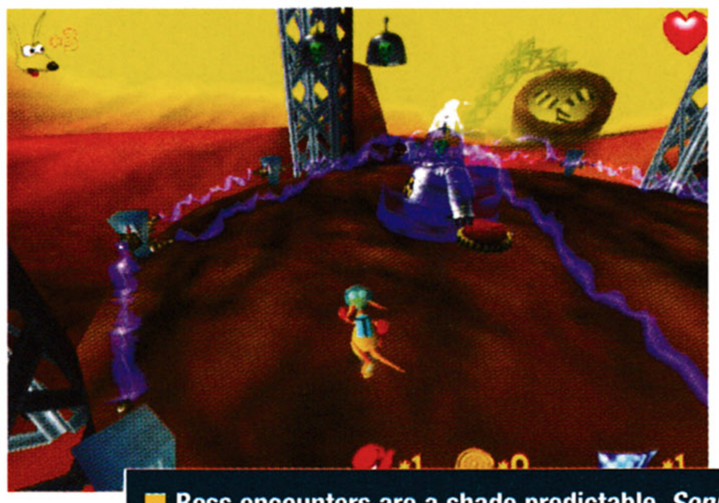
SOUND
Soundtrack is typically wacky and worms' comments are amusing in a cheesy way

GAMEPLAY
Turn-based single or multiplayer invertebrate destruction with outrageous weaponry

MULTIPLAYER
Fourplayer worming is almost as much fun as a night in with Britney Spears and a bottle of baby oil

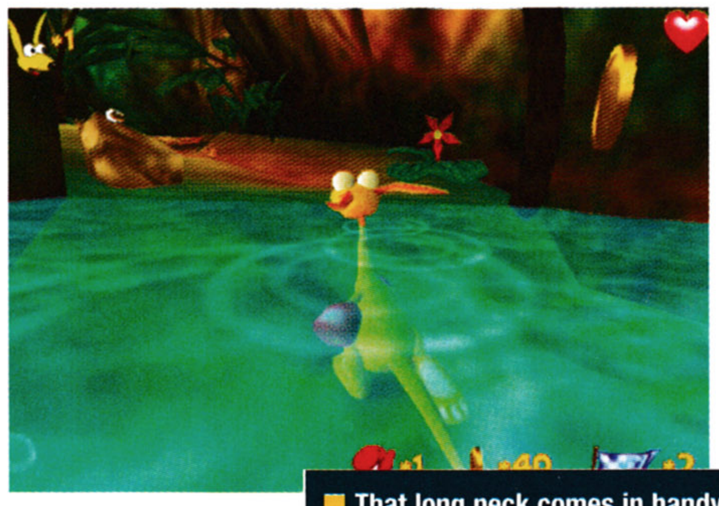
OVERALL
Fun, fun, fun. Have we made our point yet?

8
OUT OF TEN



Boss encounters are a shade predictable. *Sonic Adventure*, anyone? (Left) Oh look. Some lava pits (Right)

The coins are on loan from Mario. And he wants them back



That long neck comes in handy at times. Ain't gonna save Kao from that snowball, though

Kao the Kangaroo

Shenmue was Sega's Lawrence of Arabia. *Bangai-o* was its Withnail and I. Get ready for the Dreamcast equivalent of Lethal Weapon IV

DETAILS

Publisher:	Titus
Developer:	X-ray
Price:	£39.99
Release date:	Out now
Players:	One
Extras:	60Hz, vibration

Hard to please. That's us. We're forever looking for the more absorbing experience, the newer, innovative approach. Of course these qualities are rare, with most games falling between very good and just plain bad. But occasionally a title lands in our lap that is a complete rip-off. And as they rarely match up to the excellence of the original, these games usually find themselves on the receiving end of a verbal shoeing. So with DC-UK having just laced up its size 11 hobnailed boots, this is exactly where *Kao the Kangaroo* was heading, if it hadn't been for one small detail...

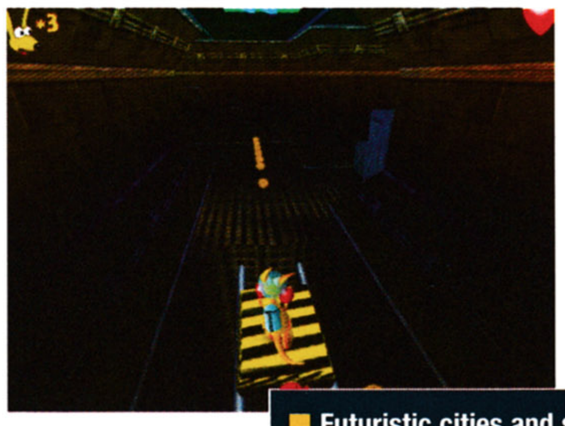
Before we expose the cause of our mercy on the marsupial mammal, let's explore his background first. For reasons unknown, the Aussie must traverse 25 levels of corridor platforming action, using his boxing skills to defend himself. Press the Y button and he performs a spinning attack, while the X button throws his boxing gloves at the the enemy. Snow, tropics, forests and underground caverns feature, with every third and fourth zone containing a boss, which Kao must conquer by memorising its pattern before bashing the weak spot. There's even a spot of hang gliding, snowboarding and motor boating to top it off.

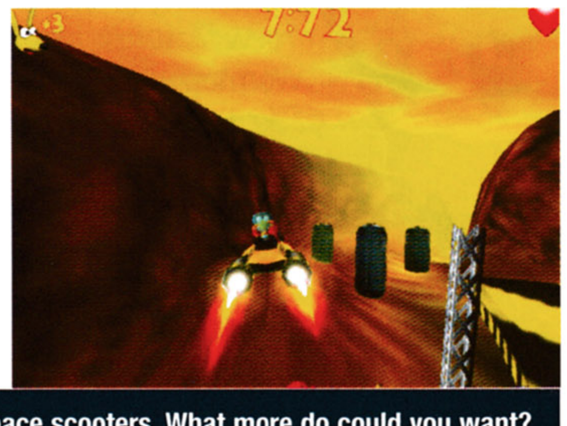
Sounds familiar, huh? Well it ought to, as it's as original as every other game starring a cute animal hero. Hedgehogs, crocodiles and French wonders – they've all had their day, but it's *Crash Bandicoot* that's the inspiration to X-Ray. Jumping and punching his way through levels populated by cute enemies, rolling boulders and lava pits, Kao seems to be the poorer cousin of Sony's premier mascot.

Which may not be such a bad thing. Let us explain: not every game can be a massive sprawling quest to discover your inner self. While the *Shenmues* of the world are indeed the very essence of hardcore gaming, there is still the masses to consider, not to mention their children. Colourful, cute, simple, yet enjoyable, this Kangaroo is totally lacking in pretense. And no matter what the genre, there is always room for a copycat. Without *Manic Miner*, there'd be no *Sonic*. No *R-Type* would have meant no *Gradius*. *Virtua Fighter* never existed? You can forget *Soul Calibur*.

Like the whole Pokémon fad, X-Ray's title is aimed squarely at the under-tens and anyone over that should steer clear. While he may be in danger of being a total plagiarist, Kao does what he does very well, namely generic platforming larks. So, as we threatened at the start, **DC-UK** would normally have doled out an A1 kicking to *Kao the Kangaroo*. But the fact is, his intended audience is likely to be fast asleep while we're trying to gibb each other on *QIII* at three in the morning. And amen to that ■

Neil Randall





Futuristic cities and space scooters. What more do could you want?

DC-UK VERDICT

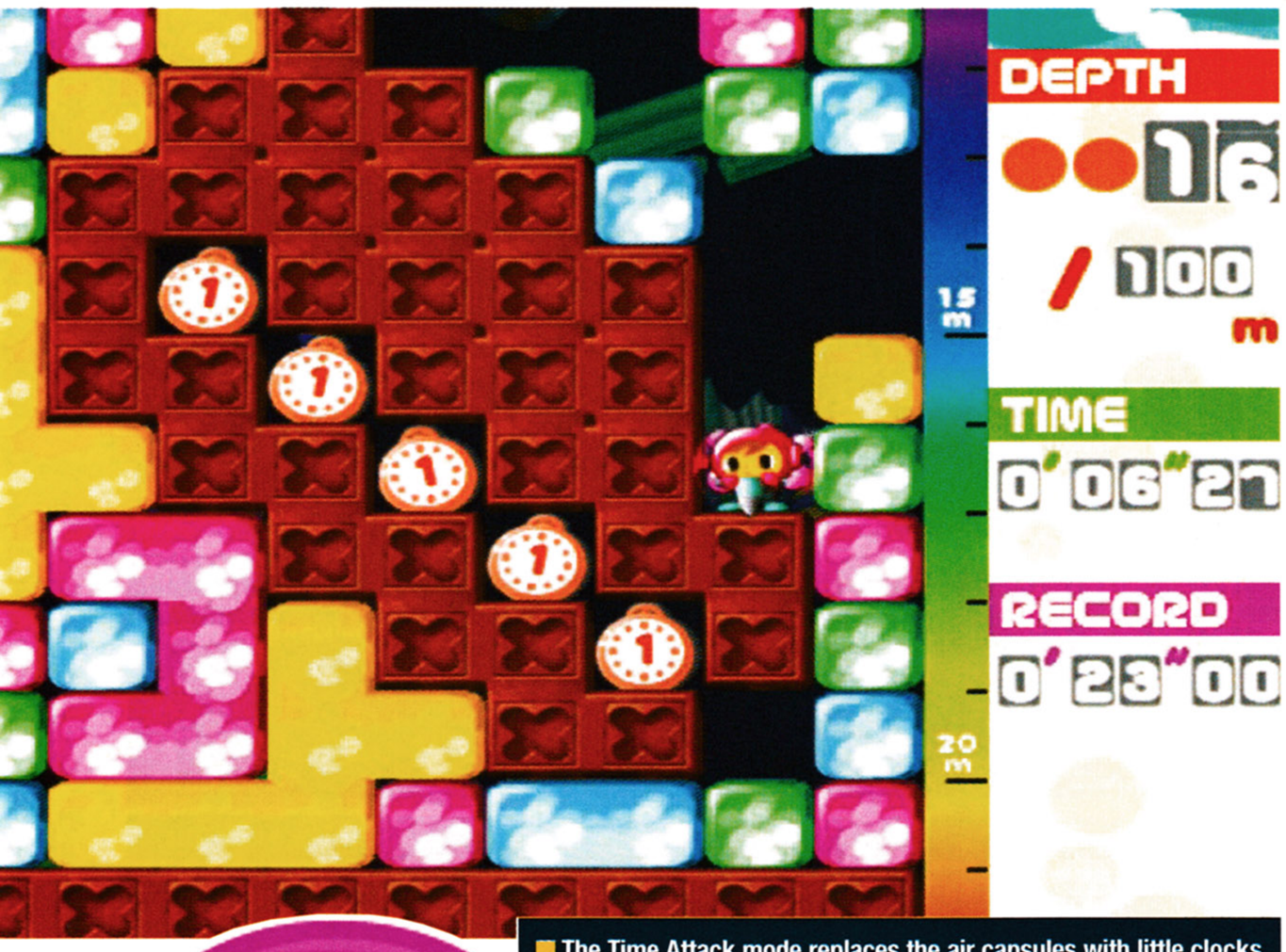
GRAPHICS
Bright, brash and bold. Just right for the genre

SOUND
Upbeat ditties that complement the gameplay perfectly

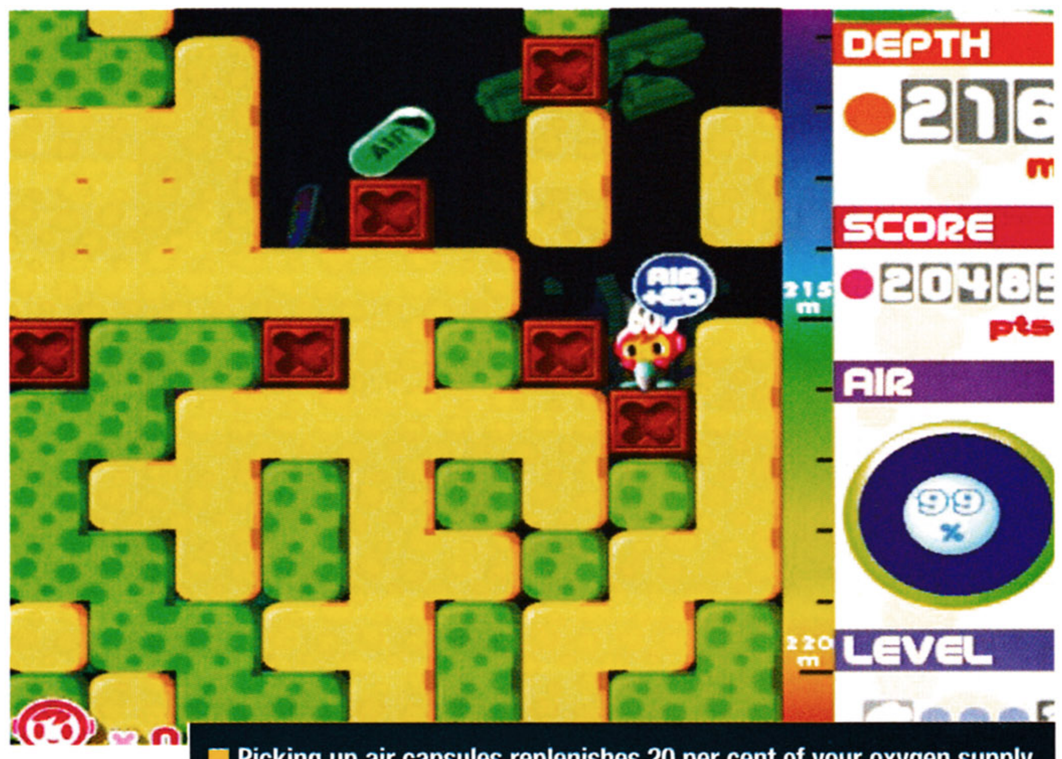
GAMEPLAY
Not a hint of grandiosity or introspection. Just instant, processed fun

OVERALL
As generic as generic can be. *Croc*, *Crash* and *Spyro* all rolled into one. Kids'll love it

6
OUT OF TEN



The Time Attack mode replaces the air capsules with little clocks



Picking up air capsules replenishes 20 per cent of your oxygen supply

Mr Driller

The miniature miner gets ready to blast through some European rock

DETAILS

Publisher:	Virgin
Developer:	Namco
Price:	£39.99
Release date:	December
Players:	One
Extras:	60Hz, Vibration

Namco's one and only contribution to Dreamcast so far was a rather successful number that went under the name *Soul Calibur*. Still regarded by many as the best game for Sega's white box, it defines everything that is great about 3D games; particularly in its visual appeal. But give any Japanese game giant half a chance and it'll revert 15 years at the drop of a hat.

Mr Driller couldn't be further from *Soul Calibur*. Where the latter was complex, visually pioneering and bloated with extras, the former is not. *Mr Driller* is basic, graphically simple and about as slim as they come. But God, it's fun to play. As you may have guessed, picking up and playing is easy. Putting it down is not. *Mr Driller* is an addictive puzzler in the same vein as such gems as *Boulderdash*, *Mr Do* and *Dig Dug* (see Glossary). In fact, that last one is an old Namco game, so it's not hard to spot how they came up with the idea for this.

The premise is simple. The squat digger must drill down into layer after layer of coloured blocks, avoiding falling debris while trying not to suffocate. Pressing any button makes him drill in whichever direction he's pointed and the d-pad moves the little blighter around the screen. There are also X-blocks that require five taps to drill through, but other than that, it's all about quick reflexes and a roving eye. Get caught by a falling block and you'll be splatted. Run out of air and your spirit floats up to heaven.

Keeping Mr Driller alive isn't just about digging and avoiding falling blocks. The little beggar needs to breathe and his supply is measured as a percentage, which falls steadily throughout the game. Hit an X-block and your air drops sharply. Luckily, there are air capsules dotted around the screen, usually in hard-to-reach spots. Grabbing one will partially replenish your supply, so keep track of the nearest capsule if you fancy surviving beyond the first hundred metres.

A little variation has been introduced through Arcade, Survival and Time Attack modes. The first of these lets you pick either a 500-metre or a 1,000 metre goal, each hundred metres awarding you bonus points. Survival is exactly that – how far you can get on one life, while the Time Attack is a series of smaller levels that require rapid negotiation in a certain time limit. It's just a pity there is no twoplayer head-to-head mode.

The bottom line to such a limited pitch is that it makes for incredibly compelling gameplay. That 'just-one-more-go' feeling will keep you in front of your telly for literally hours and with ever-changing scenery and the cutesiest tunes we've heard in ages, it all adds up to a fantastic retro experience. In a world of flash over substance, it's gameplay that counts. And *Mr Driller* has it in spades ■

Neil 'Maximus' Randall

DC-UK VERDICT

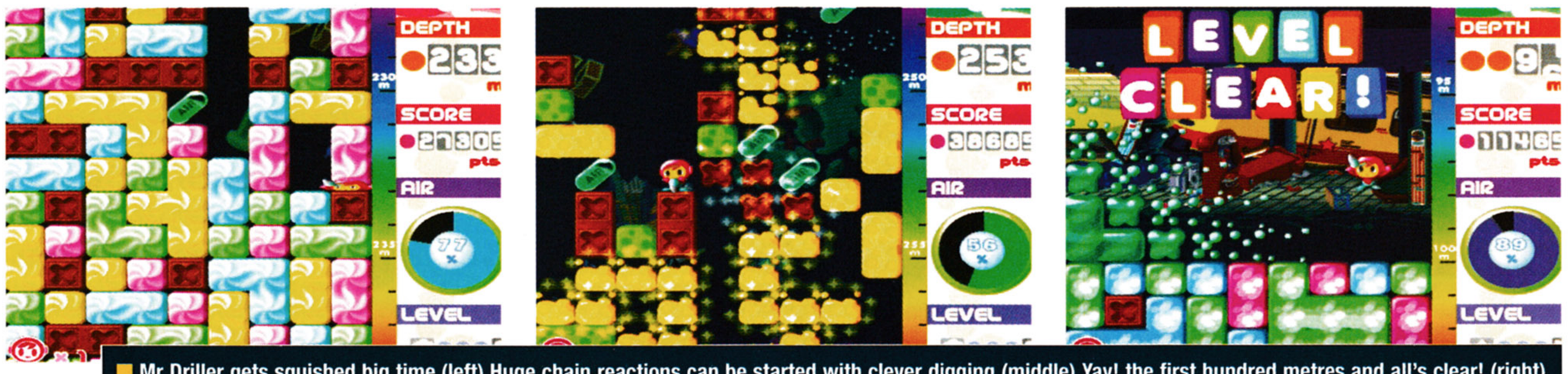
GRAPHICS
State-of-the-art, super-cute, sharp-as-a-pin 2D art

SOUND
Loveable tunes that remind you of all those classic puzzlers

GAMEPLAY
Try playing it once only. Go on, we dare you. It ain't possible

OVERALL
Aside from a non-existent twoplayer mode, utter brilliance. All together now – *Mr Driller*!

8
OUT OF TEN



Mr Driller gets squished big time (left) Huge chain reactions can be started with clever digging (middle) Yay! the first hundred metres and all's clear! (right)

Reviews

You must stop making your buying decisions based on what that weird bloke down the pub – the one with the dodgy eye – tells you is good.

Instead, peruse this massive list of every game we've ever reviewed (and a few we haven't, for good reason). Remember: your money is safe with us. Kind of... ■

KEY

ACTION/ADVENTURE | BEAT 'EM UP | DRIVING/RACING | MISC | RPG | SHOOT 'EM UP | SPORTS | STRAT/SIMULATION

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER		PLAYERS	NET SUPPORT	ISSUE	SCORE
4WHEEL THUNDER	MIDWAY	Hectic, simple arcade racer, with enough modes to keep you interested. But no fourplayer option.	TWO	✗	09	8/10
AERO WINGS	CRAVE	Attractive flight sim, but we'd recommend this one to hardcore enthusiasts only.	ONE	✗	Not reviewed	
AERO WINGS 2: AIRSTRIKE	CRAVE	A vast improvement on the original with excellent dogfighting action added to its flight sim aspects.	TWO	✗	14	8/10
ARMADA	ACCLAIM	Enjoyable, in-depth shooter with relentless action, but there aren't that many different types of missions.	FOUR	✗	06	8/10
BANGAI-O	SWING/VIRGIN	Fantastically addictive retro shooter with constant swarms of enemies and vast environments.	ONE	✗	14	8/10
BLUE STINGER	ACTIVISION	Unoriginal gameplay and too many frustrating moments, but some nice graphical touches.	ONE	✗	02	3/10
BUGGY HEAT	SEGA	Pretty much a dune buggy version of *Sega Rally 2*, marred by limited depth and slow turning speeds.	TWO	✗	03	6/10
BUST-A-MOVE 4	ACCLAIM	Addictive, exciting and mentally challenging. It's the best version yet of Taito's puzzle classic.	TWO	✗	12	8/10
CAPCOM VS SNK	CAPCOM	The most important of beat 'em up franchises have been immortalised in one beautiful disc.	TWO	✗	17	9/10
CEASAR'S PALACE 2000	INTERPLAY	A Commodore 64-style gambling sim? On a 128-bit Dreamcast behemoth? In the year 2000? Do give over…	FOUR	✗	Not reviewed	
CHEF'S LUV SHACK	ACCLAIM	Boasts a variety of mini-games and enjoyable fourplayer fun, but it won't keep you coming back for more.	FOUR	✗	05	6/10
CHICKEN RUN	EIDOS	*Metal Gear Solid* but with chickens. And not quite as good.	ONE	✗	17	6/10
CHUCHU ROCKET	SEGA	One of the best puzzlers you'll ever play. It's fast, infectious and hilarious. An online gaming essential.	FOUR	✓	10	9/10
CRAZY TAXI	SEGA	Brilliantly original driving game with completely addictive gameplay and infectious mini-games.	ONE	✗	07	9/10
DEADLY SKIES	KONAMI	Some nicely designed missions and great scenery, but ultimately a short-lived shooter with a lack of depth.	ONE	✗	07	6/10
DEAD OR ALIVE 2	ACCLAIM	The boobtastic beat 'em up is one of the smoothest, sauciest and best fighting games you'll ever play.	FOUR	✗	13	9/10
DEEP FIGHTER	UBI SOFT	Fairly original underwater action ruined by dull environments, zero atmosphere and repetitive gameplay.	ONE	✗	12	5/10
DINO CRISIS	VIRGIN	Survival horror – with dinosaurs. It's no *Code: Veronica*, but worth picking up for the fear effect.	ONE	✗	17	6/10
DRAGONS BLOOD	INTERPLAY	A typical hack 'n' slash game that's fun for a while but is too shallow to be an essential purchase.	ONE	✗	12	6/10
DYNAMITE COP 2	SEGA	A dull arcade beat 'em up, with a few humourous touches and little else.	TWO	✗	Not reviewed	
ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE	SEGA	Looks beautiful and plays equally well – except it may be a bit too challenging for some.	ONE	✗	11	8/10
ECW REVOLUTION	ACCLAIM	Limp wrestling game with bad graphics, rubbish characters and awful moves. Believe us, it's no revolution	FOUR	✗	09	3/10
EVOLUTION	UBI SOFT	Average RPG with some nice touches, but not much to really get excited about.	ONE	✗	05	5/10
EXPENDABLE	INFOGRAMES	Old-skool top-down shoot 'em up that soon becomes tiresome.	TWO	✗	01	6/10
EXTREME SPORTS	SEGA	Reasonably good-looking sports sim which sacrifices depth for diversity.	TWO	✗	16	5/10
FIGHTING FORCE 2	EIDOS	Satisfyingly violent adventure that disappoints due to its lack of depth and awkward movement.	ONE	✗	05	7/10
FUR FIGHTERS	ACCLAIM	A superb videogaming experience that has a top quality fourplayer mode and glorious graphics.	FOUR	✗	10	9/10
F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX	VIDEO SYSTEMS	Challenging racing sim, marred only by some slow down and an imperfect twoplayer mode.	TWO	✗	03	7/10
F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX 2	KONAMI	The best F1 game available for DC but doesn't do anything particularly new with the Grand Prix genre.	TWO	✗	15	7/10
FERRARI 355 CHALLENGE	ACCLAIM	The most realistic driving game ever. Totally hardcore, if you can handle it this is virtually peerless stuff.	TWO	✗	15	9/10
GAUNTLET LEGENDS	MIDWAY	Half-hearted attempted at regenerating the magic of the original. It rapidly becomes a tedious affair.	FOUR	✗	12	6/10
GIGA WING	VIRGIN	Enjoyable retro shooter that is outrageously action-packed but a bit too short-lived.	TWO	✗	13	7/10
GTA2	TAKE 2	Worthy sequel that outclasses and will probably outlast the original.	ONE	✗	10	8/10
GUNBIRD 2	VIRGIN	Typically frenzied 2D shoot 'em up that is extremely good fun while it lasts.	TWO	✗	15	7/10
HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS	TAKE 2	War's never been so much fun than in this engrossing, strategic WWII adventure.	ONE	✗	13	8/10
HALF-LIFE	HAVAS	The PC classic works equally well on Dreamcast. You'll need a mouse, though.	ONE	✗	16	9/10
THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2	SEGA	Arcade perfect shoot 'em up with addictive gameplay, but not much replay value.	TWO	✗	01	8/10
HYDRO THUNDER	MIDWAY	Frenetic racing action that never fails to thrill or infuriate. Great level design but gameplay is a touch shallow.	TWO	✗	03	7/10
INCOMING	INFOGRAMES	This simple shoot 'em up is fun for a while but it'll soon be gathering dust on your shelf.	ONE	✗	01	5/10
INTERNATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD	KONAMI	Disappointingly lack-lustre button basher, seriously letting down its predecessors.	FOUR	✗	16	6/10
JEDI POWER BATTLES	ACTIVISION	Derivative hack and slash adventure with characters from Episode One.	TWO	✗	17	6/10
JET SET RADIO	SEGA	Innovative and addictive skate punk graffiti action game. Unique.	ONE	✗	16	9/10
JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL	VIRGIN	Above average snooker sim marred by awful loading times and awkward controls.	TWO	✗	03	6/10
JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE	VIRGIN	Insane 2D beat 'em up offering two games for the price of one. But it's a bit easy with limited moves.	TWO	✗	08	7/10

DC-LISTINGS

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER		PLAYERS	NET SUPPORT	ISSUE	SCORE
LE MANS 24 HOUR	INFOGRAMES	Excellent racing game with great visuals and exciting handling.	FOUR	✗	17	9/10
LOONEY TUNES: SPACE RACE	INFOGRAMES	Another sub-standard *Mario Kart* wannabe. Replicates everything except the addictive gameplay.	FOUR	✗	16	5/10
MAGFORCE RACING	CRAVE	Below par futuristic racer that combines *Rollcage* and *WipEout* in sick-making fashion.	FOUR	✗	Not reviewed	
MAKEN X	SEGA	Innovative firstperson adventure that uses swords rather than guns. Difficult but worth the effort.	ONE	✗	13	8/10
MARVEL VS CAPCOM	VIRGIN	Cool characters and attacks but most players will try this once or twice before dashing back to the shops.	TWO	✗	03	6/10
MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2	VIRGIN	Fantastically competitive 2D fighter. The graphics will have you drooling all over your Dreamcast.	TWO	✗	12	8/10
MDK2	INTERPLAY	With an imaginative three-character set-up and a great sense of humour, it's far superior to the original.	ONE	✗	09	9/10
METROPOLIS STREET RACER	SEGA	Totally deserving of only the second **DC-UK** perfect score. Arcade-style racing taken to a new stratosphere.	TWO	✓	15	10/10
MIDWAY ARCADE CLASSICS	MIDWAY	These are 20-year old titles and it shows. The gameplay is embarrassing by today's standards.	TWO	✗	12	3/10
MOHO	TAKE 2	Interesting but flawed attempt at the much-maligned 'futuristic sport' genre.	TWO	✗	17	6/10
MONACO GRAND PRIX	UBI SOFT	Detailed simulation, enjoyable arcade mode, but more than a little unrewarding.	TWO	✗	02	6/10
MORTAL KOMBAT GOLD	MIDWAY	Beat 'em up fans are spoilt for choice with DC's line up of fighters. This dated offering is not one to opt for.	TWO	✗	02	6/10
NBA SHOWTIME	MIDWAY	Not much longevity in the oneplayer mode, but fourplayer hoops is superbly addictive.	FOUR	✗	04	6/10
NBA 2K	SEGA	Standard-setting visuals, arcade and simulation modes. It's the best basketball sim ever. Need we say more?	FOUR	✗	07	8/10
NHL 2K	SEGA	Good looking title that's perfect for ice-hockey fans, but may not appeal to newcomers to the game.	FOUR	✗	12	7/10
NFL BLITZ	MIDWAY	Fast, fun and outrageously violent American football game. Ideal for anyone who's into instant sports fun.	FOUR	✗	04	8/10
NFL QBC 2000	ACCLAIM	Appalling American football title. Even grid-iron fans should avoid this stinker.	FOUR	✗	Not reviewed	
NIGHTMARE CREATURES	KONAMI	A great storyline and atmosphere have been wasted on a game engine that just isn't up to the job.	ONE	✗	11	5/10
THE NOMAD SOUL	EIDOS	Graphically flawed sci-fi adventure that allows you take control of other peoples bodies.	ONE	✗	09	7/10
PEN PEN TRIICELON	INFOGRAMES	Weird racing game that looks fantastic but is let down by horribly repetitive gameplay.	ONE	✗	Not reviewed	
PLASMA SWORD	VIRGIN	An average weapons-based fighter that gets its head cleaved in by the mighty *Soul Calibur.*	TWO	✗	13	5/10
POD II	UBISOFT	*WipEout* again.	SIX	✓	17	4/10
POWER STONE	EIDOS	Groundbreaking beat 'em up featuring giant arenas and eye-popping power-ups and weapons. Excellent.	TWO	✗	02	9/10
POWER STONE 2	EIDOS	A superb sequel that adds much to the original, but its big new feature, fourway scrapping, is a bit of a mess.	FOUR	✗	14	8/10
PSYCHIC FORCE 2012	ACCLAIM	Beat 'em up with a difference: the action takes place in the air. That really is it. Avoid.	TWO	✗	Not reviewed	
QUAKE III ARENA	SEGA	Superb Dreamcast conversion of the epic PC frag-stravaganza.	FOUR	✓	17	9/10
RAILROAD TYCOON II	TAKE 2	DC's first real strategy game is a trainspotters dream, but is probably too slow and dull for most.	FOUR	✓	14	6/10
RAYMAN 2	UBI SOFT	Challenging platformer with stunning scenery, huge levels and lasting appeal for those who persevere.	ONE	✓	08	8/10
READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING	SEGA	One of the best box 'em ups ever with hugely enjoyable play and superstar characters. Hilarious.	TWO	✗	02	8/10
READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING: ROUND 2	SEGA	Better graphics and more varied fighting, but if you have the first game you may feel short-changed.	EIGHT	✗	17	8/10
RED DOG	SEGA	Futuristic shoot 'em up with diverse locations, superb missions and great multiplayer games.	FOUR	✗	07	8/10
RESIDENT EVIL 2	VIRGIN	Still scary, still absorbing, but still a half-hearted PC port of an old game.	ONE	✗	06	7/10
RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA	EIDOS	Doesn't stray too far from the *Resi Evil* formula, but is the best yet in the series. Survival horror genius.	ONE	✗	11	9/10
RE-VOLT REVOLUTION	SEGA	Remote-controlled car racer with plenty of variety, but the handling is a bit too tricky.	FOUR	✗	05	7/10
ROADSTERS	TITUS	Awful driving game that pales in comparison to the likes of *MSR.* Spend your cash elsewhere.	TWO	✗	Not reviewed	
SAN FRANCISCO RUSH 2049	MIDWAY	Enjoyable arcade racer with big jumps and bigger crashes. Boasts loads of cool extra modes, too.	FOUR	✗	15	7/10
SEGA BASS FISHING	SEGA	Novelty arcade fish 'em up that's great fun for the first few cast-offs. Gets repetitive quickly though.	ONE	✗	03	7/10
SEGA GT	SEGA	Decent attempt to remake *Gran Turismo* for Dreamcast, now superceded by *MSR* and *Le Mans.*	TWO	✓	17	7/10
SEGA RALLY 2	SEGA	Playable and intuitive rally driving game with some nice touches, but it lacks handling complexity.	TWO	✓	01	7/10
SHADOWMAN	ACCLAIM	Great visuals and plenty to do in this massive, atmospheric adventure title. Magic.	ONE	✗	04	9/10
SHENMUE	SEGA	Absolutely essential adventure epic from the videogame mind of Yu Suzuki.	ONE	✗	17	10/10
SILENT SCOPE	KONAMI	Hardcore arcade shoot 'em up with a great console adaptation of the famous coin-op sniping system.	ONE	✗	16	8/10
SILVER	INFOGRAMES	The sort of RPG that will appeal to the casual gamer. It's fun to play, but not overly engrossing.	ONE	✗	10	7/10
SLAVE ZERO	INFOGRAMES	Linear mech shoot 'em up with a poor multiplayer experience. It's got rather large guns though.	FOUR	✗	07	6/10
SNOW SURFERS	SEGA	Badly designed tracks with no sensation of boarding and no opponents. Appalling.	TWO	✗	04	3/10
SONIC ADVENTURE	SEGA	Excellent new adventures mixed with tried and tested gameplay in *Sonic*'s impressive 128bit debut.	ONE	✓	01	9/10
SOUL CALIBUR	SEGA	Possibly the greatest beat 'em up ever with an addictive oneplayer mode and twoplayer action to die for.	TWO	✗	03	10/10
SOUL FIGHTER	MINDSCAPE	Approach this below par scrolling beat 'em up with extreme caution. It's repetitive and boring.	ONE	✗	04	4/10
SOUL REAVER	EIDOS	Truly magnificent visuals, fangtastic design (sorry) and you can't die either.	ONE	✗	07	9/10
SOUTH PARK RALLY	ACCLAIM	Comedy racing action in a perfect conversion from TV to DC, but only avid *South Park* fans will hold it dear.	FOUR	✗	12	5/10
SPACE CHANNEL 5	SEGA	Ulala is the undisputed Dancing Queen in Sega's fantastic boogie 'em up. Utterly irresistible while it lasts.	ONE	✗	15	8/10
SPEED DEVILS	UBI SOFT	Great fun to play and unique looking, but it's marred by a lack of opponents and few tracks to race on.	TWO	✗	02	7/10
SPIRIT OF SPEED	ACCLAIM	Dreadful racer in which you drive 1930s F1 deathtraps. Or don't, because no-one should ever play this game.	TWO	✗	Not reviewed	

DC-LISTINGS

KEY

ACTION/ADVENTURE | BEAT 'EM UP | DRIVING/RACING | MISC | RPG | SHOOT 'EM UP | SPORTS | STRAT/SIMULATION

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER		PLAYERS	NET SUPPORT	ISSUE	SCORE
STAR WARS: EPISODE 1 RACER	LUCASARTS	A very entertaining but limited hyperspeed racing game. It hasn't got a fourplayer option either.	TWO	✗	11	7/10
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3	VIRGIN	Capcom's allstars have never played so beautifully or or looked so good on a console. Loads of options too.	TWO	✗	04	8/10
STREET FIGHTER 3: DOUBLE IMPACT	VIRGIN	The definitive sequel to *SF2*. It lacks *Alpha*'s options, but the gameplay and controls are pure *Street Fighter*.	TWO	✗	08	8/10
STREET FIGHTER III: THIRD STRIKE	VIRGIN	Hopefully the final title in the *Street Fighter* series. Already superseded by *Capcom vs SNK*.	TWO	✓	16	7/10
SUPER MAGNETIC NEO	CRAVE	Enjoyable old skool platformer with great magnetic gameplay, but may be too hard and frustrating for many.	ONE	✗	14	7/10
SUPER RUNABOUT	VIRGIN	Poor sequel to a cult PlayStation game. It's *Driver* mixed with *Crazy Taxi*, but it doesn't work too well.	ONE	✗	17	4/10
SUZUKI ALSTARE	UBI SOFT	This motorbike racer is a lazy PC conversion that lacks charm and originality. Rubbish twoplayer mode too.	TWO	✗	03	5/10
SWORD OF THE BERSERK	EIDOS/ASCII	Incredibly bloody hack 'n' slash adventure with overlong animated story sequences. Fun for a while, though.	ONE	✗	10	5/10
SWWS 2000	SEGA	Fun footie game with more depth than *Virtua Striker*, but poorer visuals. Some find it lacks pace.	FOUR	✗	05	7/10
SWWS: EURO 2000 EDITION	SEGA	Quality update which boasts all the Euro 2000 teams and faster, more fluid gameplay.	FOUR	✗	10	8/10
SYDNEY 2000	EIDOS	The best button-basher on DC so far is spoiled by some irritating control problems.	FOUR	✗	14	6/10
TECH ROMANCER	VIRGIN	Manga-style robot fighting game, filled with standard Capcom touches. Not one for the 'casual gamer'.	ONE	✗	09	7/10
TEE OFF GOLF	ACCLAIM	Approachable golf game modelled on the PlayStation title *Everybody's Golf*. Not quite as good.	FOUR	✗	06	7/10
TIME STALKERS	SEGA	Interesting RPG from Climax Entertainment. Similar to *Evolution* in many respects, but not as good.	ONE	✗	12	4/10
TOKYO HIGHWAY CHALLENGE	CRAVE	An admirable attempt to create a totally new style of driving game, which unfortunately fails.	TWO	✗	Not reviewed	
TOMB RAIDER CHRONICLES	EIDOS	Another entertaining outing for Lara Croft, this time taking in four periods of her exciting life.	ONE	✗	17	7/10
TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION	EIDOS	Challenging if lazy conversion of the PlayStation and PC hit. Formula fatigue is definitely setting in.	ONE	✗	08	8/10
TONY HAWK'S SKATEBOARDING	CRAVE	Excellent conversion of the PlayStation hit with intuitive controls and compulsive gameplay.	TWO	✗	11	9/10
TOY COMMANDER	SEGA	Innovative mix of gaming styles and challenges which may frustrate those who lack the patience of saints.	FOUR	✗	02	7/10
TRICKSTYLE	ACCLAIM	Futuristic hoverboarding stunt racer with fine visuals. The last few tracks are gut-wrenchingly hard.	TWO	✗	01	9/10
UEFA DREAM SOCCER	SEGA	Disappointing sequel to *Sega Worldwide Soccer*, knackered by the dodgy player animation.	FOUR	✗	17	6/10
UEFA STRIKER	INFOGRAMES	Decent football sim which, like the England Euro 2000 squad, is let down by dodgy throughballs.	FOUR	✗	03	8/10
ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP	CRAVE	Surprisingly decent US beat 'em up based on the violent pay-per-view sport of the same name.	TWO	✗	16	8/10
URBAN CHAOS	EIDOS	Quality action/adventure set in a massive metropolis with loads of missions and combat.	ONE	✗	15	7/10
VIGILANTE 8	ACTIVISION	Poor car combat title with extremely average visuals and one-dimensional gameplay.	FOUR	✗	06	3/10
VIRTUA ATHLETE 2K	SEGA	Disappointing button-basher hamstrung by a lack of events and some dodgy control methods.	FOUR	✗	15	5/10
VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB	SEGA	The expert's beat 'em up. More depth than the Marianas trench – and just as inaccessible to most people.	TWO	✗	02	7/10
VIRTUA STRIKER 2	SEGA	Limited football game which provides more twoplayer fun than it really ought to.	TWO	✗	06	6/10
VIRTUA TENNIS	SEGA	Smashing tennis 'em up that will thrill you with its blisteringly quick and addictive action. An ace.	FOUR	✗	13	9/10
V-RALLY 2	INFOGRAMES	Excellent rally game with slick handling but dodgy collision detection.	FOUR	✗	10	8/10
WACKY RACES	INFOGRAMES	Poor handling and unimaginative design make this only an average use of a great licence.	FOUR	✗	11	6/10
WALT DISNEY	EIDOS	A dreadful *Mario Kart*-clone that handles like a nightmare and trumps in the face of its Disney licence.	FOUR	✗	14	3/10
WETRIX+	TAKE 2	Hectic puzzle game which could have been a classic if it weren't for a couple of design flaws.	TWO	✗	08	7/10
WILD METAL	TAKE 2	Tank battle game with some cool features and decent design. But the lack of diversity soon palls.	TWO	✗	08	5/10
WORMS ARMAGEDDON	HASBRO	Decent Dreamcast outing for the long-running battle puzzle series. Excellent multiplayer longevity.	FOUR	✗	05	8/10
WWF ATTITUDE	ACCLAIM	Typically average wrestling game which aims at appeasing fans of the 'sport' and achieves nothing more.	TWO	✗	04	6/10
WWF ROYAL RUMBLE	THQ	Average wrestler with one saving grace – a mad feature enabling nine fat blokes to be in the ring at once.	FOUR	✗	15	5/10
ZOMBIE REVENGE	SEGA	*Streets of Rage*-style scrolling shoot 'em up with gameplay too limited for most console owners.	TWO	✗	05	6/10

DC-GLOSSARY

Confused by something we've mentioned in this Issue? The answer may well be here...

Dig Dug

Platform – Arcade/2600/5200/7800/C64/Spectrum
Genre – Labyrinth/maze **Year** – 1982 (Arcade)
Developer – Namco, licensed to Atari

Most probably the seed from which *Mr Driller* grew, *Dig Dug* is a hallmark of the days when arcade games were simple, yet devilishly addictive, not to mention a shade barmy. The character in question was a robot armed with a pump and a shovel that dug tunnels under a lawn with the sole aim of wasting any garden-dwelling baddies that he found. These came in two flavours, the Pooka, tomatoes with yellow shades, and the Fygar, fire-breathing dragons. Encountering either of these fellows was the cue for a particularly cruel, but nonetheless funny brand of justice: touching the enemy with Dig Dug's pump and hammering the button would inflate them until they burst. Naturally, coming into physical contact with a pooka or Fygar spelled instant death.

Beyond these evil delights were such strategies as dislodging impassible rocks so that they would fall on your enemies and picking up fruit bonuses. As you progressed through each level, the enemy would get faster and faster, until the game decided to switch on its autokill function by starting the screen with a Pooka right on top of the player, thus creating a stale mate. The level number? 256!

Layer Section

Platform – Arcade/Saturn **Genre** – 2D vertical shooter
Year – 1994/1995 **Developer** – Taito

Along with the PC Engine, Saturn was the machine to own where 2D shooters were concerned and none were considered finer than the home conversion of Taito's *Ray Force*. While appearing to be an ordinary overhead shooter, *Layer Section* was anything but, oozing playability, addiction and strategy. Where other members of the genre could be considered unfair in later levels, filling the screen with unavoidable flak, Taito instilled its game with a perfect learning curve that made for progressive gameplay. Taking a hit was only ever the player's fault.

Layer Section's innovation was its lock-on system that allowed players to target ground objects and destroy them with guided lasers. The more you locked up, the higher your score rose, exponentially so. And this was the killer app: you had to stop firing in order to target ground enemies, so while the temptation was to accumulate a bigger bonus, the longer you spent locking on, the more likely you were to be destroyed by enemy fire. Balancing this feature was the core of the game.

With some wonderfully interactive scenery and vicious-as-hell bosses, *Layer Section* was an understated slice of gameplaying heaven. Make no mistake – along with *Gunhed*, *Tatsujin II* and *Soukygourentai*, shooting fans have never had it so good ■

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Computer and video games, DVD and movie news, as it happens.

Reader Reviews

Have you bought a real undiscovered treasure? Tell the whole world about it!

WHAT YOU WIN!

In conjunction with our new pals at online shop, **www.theslammer.com**, we've got a copy of *Ferrari 355 Challenge* to give away to each of this month's reader reviews. If you want to be in the next issue of **DC-UK**, simply send your review (no more than 240 words) to the usual address (or email it to us on **dcuk@futurenet.co.uk**). The prize may well be different next month, but it'll be just as good. So start writing.

Worms Armageddon

James Goldspink

This is a fantastic game! It's definitely the best multiplayer game on Dreamcast. DC-UK put it down a little too quickly. The singleplayer is a little difficult, but, hey, that adds to the replay value, you'll constantly be coming back to a level again and again to get that gold medal.

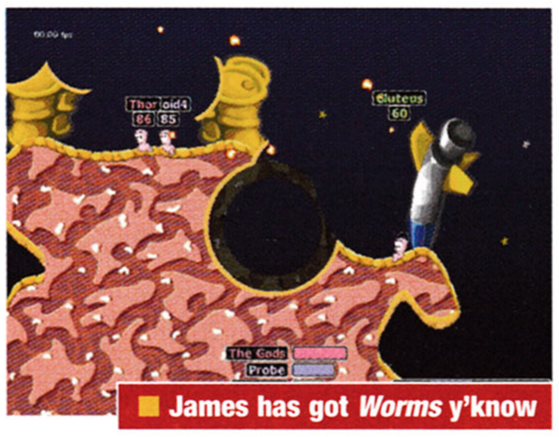
The game revolves entirely around trying to blast your opponent's worms while keeping your own alive and well, using weapons such as sheep, moles, donkeys, and, of course OAPs.

The weapons you're given are often difficult to aim but, with practise – you will be hooked enough to practise – you'll become a expert in one of the many different playing styles involved.

This game is multiplayer heaven, you can have up to four players. Playing alone you can get accustomed to one particular style, so when you start playing other people, not only is it great fun, it also makes for interesting, deep and enjoyable gameplay. You'll be feeling pretty chuffed with yourself when you pull off a rather special move, wiping out four worms at once.

The graphics are great too, though you mustn't put it down as an uninspiring 2D game because it isn't. Play it, and then try and imagine how impossible the game would be in 3D. Its hard enough as it is, thank you.

Once you've played it for half an hour you will see what I'm talking about, it's a great game and has very little wrong with it. Easy to pick up, not so easy to put down. **10/10** ■



■ James has got *Worms* y'know

Hidden and Dangerous

Mark Woodward

The year is 1940 and the Germans are winning the war. England needs some kind of saviour. That saviour comes in the form of 60 of the bravest men in Britain willing to die for their country. These men will do anything, from sniping German soldiers from rooftops to blowing up fuel tanks with

■ "England needs a saviour"

dynamite. In the future this group of people will become known worldwide as the Special Air Service. Welcome to *Hidden And Dangerous*, a game that in my eyes, is the first and best World War II epic adventure title to hit the DC.

In this magnificent game there are five campaigns, within which are more levels (usually about four). You then choose eight men from a selection of 60, who then try to complete a campaign. Each campaign consists of its own unique story line that's so engaging it'll keep your electricity bill sky high as you just can't stop playing it. And if all that isn't enough for you, there's a large arsenal of guns and explosives to experiment with.

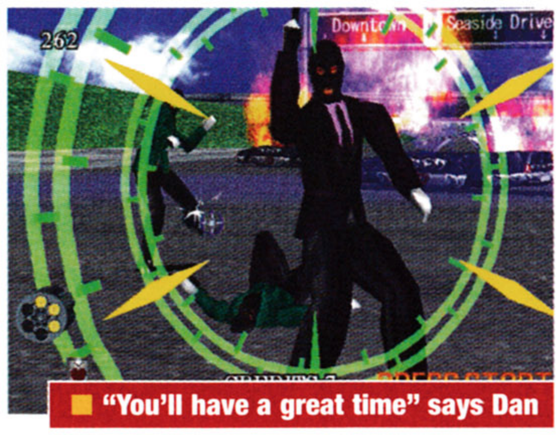
The in-game controls are a bit confusing at first but trust me you'll get used to them after the first few plays. Also, one of the best things about *Hidden And Dangerous* is that the death of an enemy relies on where you hit them, eg, one snipe in the head will kill, whereas one snipe in the arm only wounds, so you have to have a good aim. Overall, with stunning graphics and brilliant gameplay I think this game is a real winner. **9/10** ■

Virtua Cop 2 (Import)

Dan Wilkin

Finally another DC game which uses the gun! It's a welcome change from the zombie blasting *House Of The Dead 2*, too. Although this game is a port of the PC version, *VC2* has ace graphics and excellent gameplay. It should have had specific DC only features, like time trials or different stages but the improvements on the graphics make up for it.

Unlike *HOTD2* it only takes one shot to kill all enemies (except for the bosses) making it a little easier, but there are a lot more foes on the screen at once to give you a challenge. Most people will know what to expect from this game – shoot what moves and fire off-screen to reload, all the while getting gun power-ups and making sure not to shoot civilians. The action is pulse racing from start to the finish and it can be tricky. To make it easier the original sight from *Virtua Cop* is included to point out the enemies. There are bonuses for the



■ "You'll have a great time" says Dan

amount of hits you get on your opponent and where you hit them on their body influences the score.

The levels are excellent and although not as well textured at *HOTD2*, it's in a class of its own. The graphics have been tweaked and are an improvement over the arcade and Saturn releases. There are clear lines, no polygon clipping and a fun twoplayer game is included. Get down to your import shop and bag yourself a copy, you'll have a great time guaranteed, a classic arcade game in your very own home. It is tops! **9/10** ■

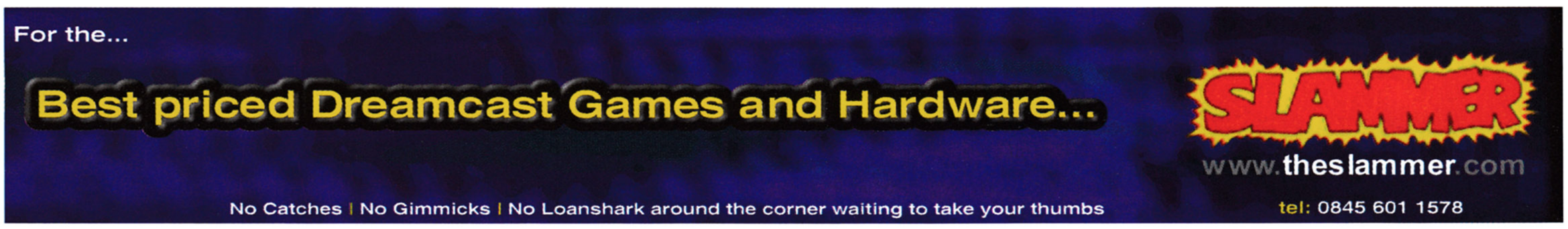
Street Fighter Alpha 3

Yuk Yan Fung

As a member of the dying breed of *Street Fighter* fanatics who stalk this Earth looking for their next two dimensional fighting fix, I awaited this latest instalment with nothing less than obsessive anticipation. And I wasn't disappointed. Much... The innumerable pseudo-sequels churned out by Capcom over the last decade have refined the classic (if a little well-worn) gameplay to near perfection. Dozens of fighting modes, over thirty different, perfectly balanced combatants, a tweaked combo system, expert opponents downloadable from the Net. Capcom has thought of everything! It sounds too good to be true. The ultimate beat 'em up. So what's the catch? Weeell...

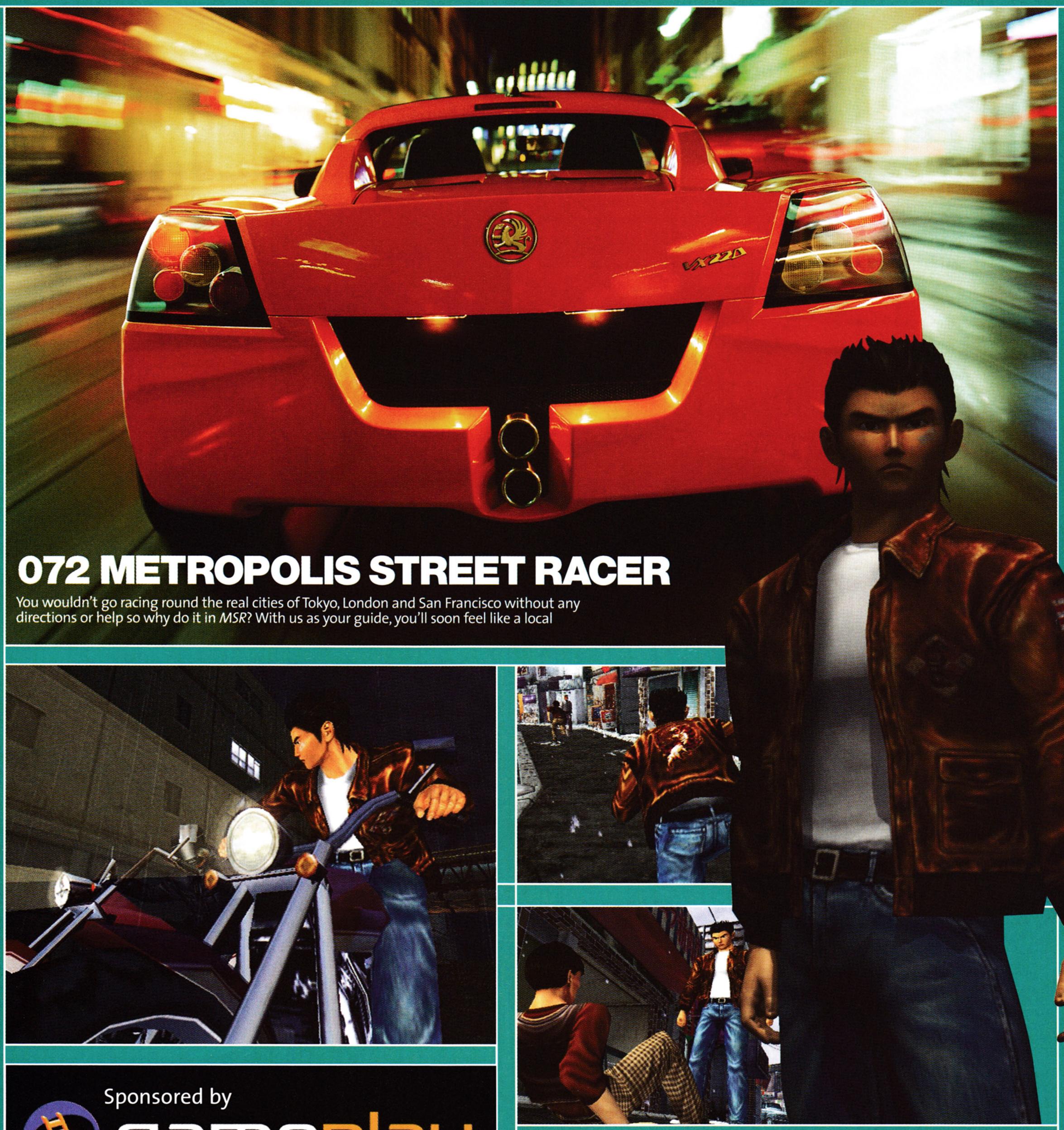
I hate to sound picky, but Capcom has seen fit to change the musical style from previous versions. Gone are the famous stage tunes of Ryu, Blanka, etc, replaced by forgettable, feeble dance tunes. Eurgh. Not only that, but the end sequences seem to have been drawn on an Amiga 500. Sacrilege. Worst of all, though, high scores can only be saved on level four... Nooo! What were Capcom thinking? *SF* fans play this on nothing less than eight. Sigh.

So what's my opinion? The best thing since sliced bread? Well, almost, but not quite. Casual gamers will love it, but real *Street Fighter* fans will be annoyed by the changes in style and ridiculous high score problem. **8/10** ■



DC-TIPS

Take a long, deep drink from our cheats trough!



072 METROPOLIS STREET RACER

You wouldn't go racing round the real cities of Tokyo, London and San Francisco without any directions or help so why do it in *MSR*? With us as your guide, you'll soon feel like a local

078 SHENMUE

We gallantly steer you through the first two discs in part one of our immense guide to *Shenmue*, the most realistic gaming world ever created

Sponsored by gameplay
THE GATEWAY TO GAMES

METROPOLIS STREET RACER DRIVER'S GUIDE

Having trouble getting past Chapter Two? Can't get more than 50 kudos points for that overtaking challenge? Continually drive straight into phone boxes? You need our *MSR* driver's guide written for us by Ged Talbot, head of QA at Bizarre Creations (the company that designed the game, natch) and *MSR* king.

Rather than simply printing 250 maps of all the circuits, we decided to give you a few hints on how to improve your actual driving ability. We've also provided a few cheats to make sure you're always getting the most points possible, and there are some quite stupendous diagrams lovingly crafted by Beast to help you out with power-sliding and inertia drifting. In fact, everything you need to get you to Chapter 25 is here. Just read it and PRACTISE. Now off you go ■

■ Learning the layout is the only way to prosper on tricky tracks like Asakusa Higashi (Ch 7)

KUDOS POINTS

Kudos Points are used in *MSR* to open up new stages and chapters, and there are loads of ways of winning points. The obvious method is pulling off crazy power-slides and handbrake turns while keeping the car under control (see Power Sliding and Inertia Drifting). Another way is by gambling wisely. If you gamble on beating the par for the course and then achieve your time, you'll get far more points than if you bet that you would just beat the maximum allowed time. If you are really confident of your abilities you can use your joker, which will double your score – be careful though, if you fail the course, your penalty is also doubled. On top of that you will have also wasted the joker as each one can only be used once.

SPECIAL RACES

These are basically normal stages that can reward the player with extra goodies such as new cars, extra jokers and garage slots. Some of the special races can be entered with any car and at any time of day but most of them have some kind of restriction. Some special stages need to be raced in certain cars before the reward can be collected and others need to be raced at a specific time of day. While some of you won't mind waiting up until 03.30 in the morning before you can qualify to enter a special, for the rest of you here's a little tip.

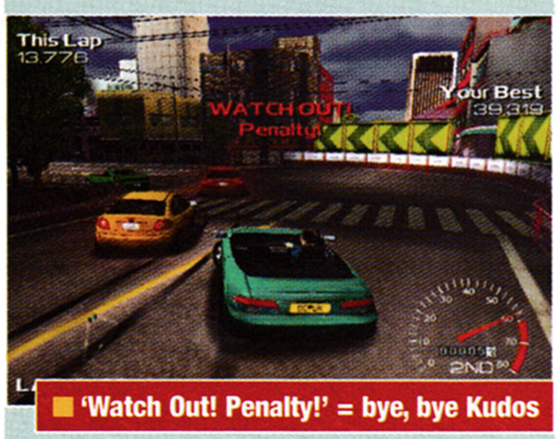
When you first boot up *MSR* you are given the chance to adjust the time of the game's internal clock and select what time zone you want to play in. Using the three small clocks showing the time in London, San Francisco and Tokyo you can change these options and fool the game into thinking that it is 03.30 in the morning when it's not.

LEARN THE TRACKS

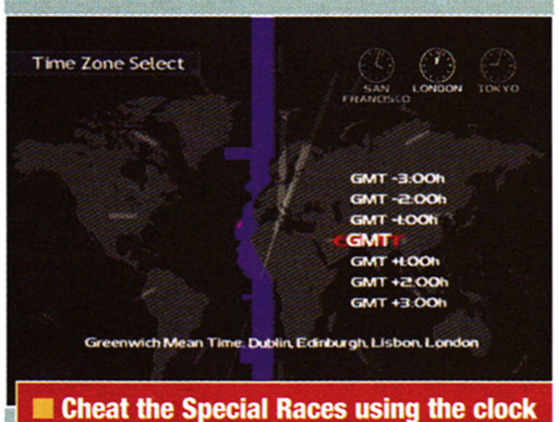
Because of the sheer size of the game, learning the tracks may seem like a very daunting task at first but within a fairly short space of time you will have had the chance to race along every road of all of the nine districts in both directions. This means that you should soon be able to identify the fastest racing lines and best overtaking corners and quickly use them to your advantage in street races.

LEARN THE CARS

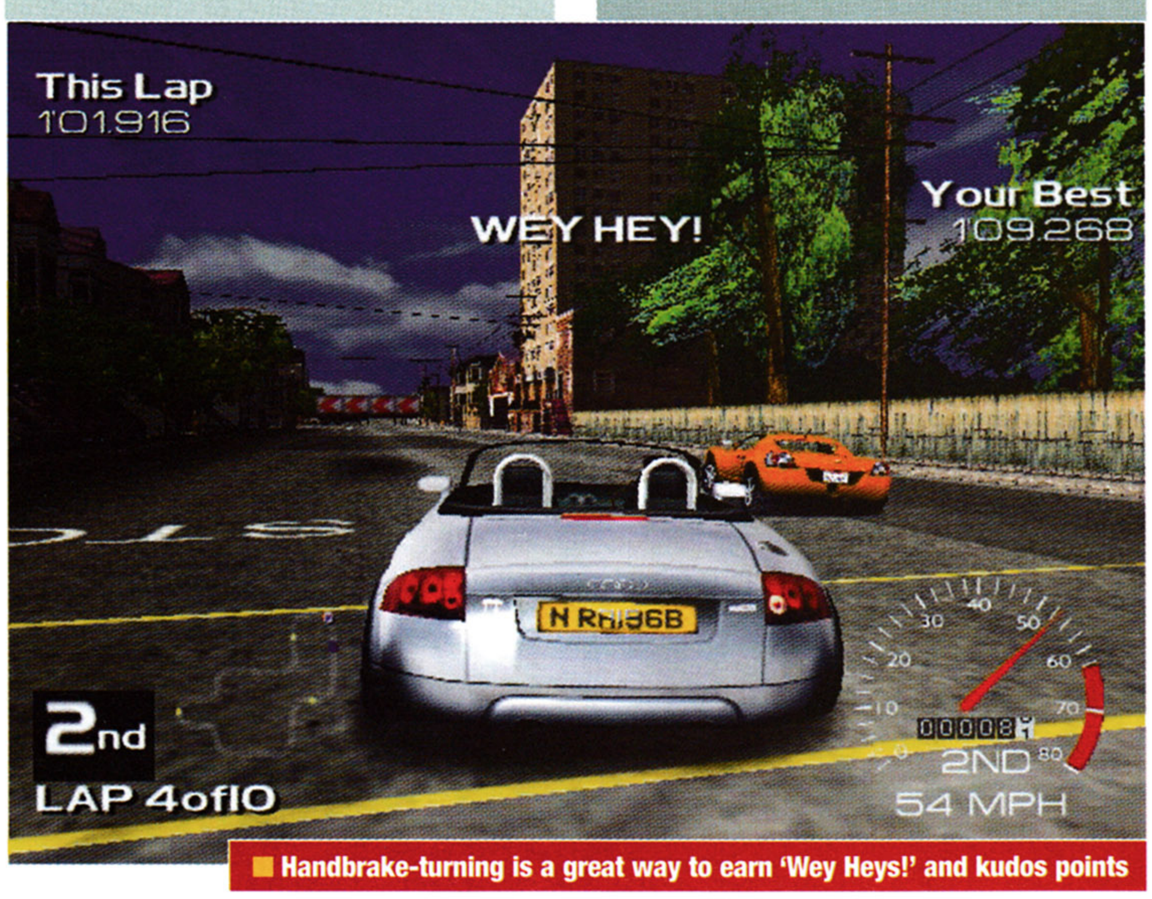
At first you will be slamming into the other cars and crashing into barriers left, right and centre, but don't worry about it too much, if you keep practising and use the brakes, you will soon start to get an instinctive feel for the car's dynamics. Once you're at a point when you know how your car will react to your actions you can start pushing yourself and the car to the limit. As you become more confident in your driving skills you can start to attempt advanced driving techniques such as power-sliding



■ 'Watch Out! Penalty!' = bye, bye Kudos



■ Cheat the Special Races using the clock



■ Handbrake-turning is a great way to earn 'Wey Heys!' and kudos points

■ With a limited garage you'll have to select your cars wisely. The Opel is a superb all-rounder

and inertia drifting.

WEATHER

In *MSR* you have to race in very different weather conditions and the car you choose becomes vitally important as you have to change your driving style in order to complete the stages. Mist and fog should not present too much of a problem, provided you know the route, you'll need to have a keen eye to find the apex of the corners but it won't affect the handling performance of you car. Rain on the other hand is another matter entirely.

The amount of rain in the stages varies from drizzle to a downpour and as such the effect it has on your car also varies greatly. The main problem comes as you try to accelerate out of corners in RWD cars, if the car isn't straight when the gas is applied, the back end will whip round and you'll find yourself facing the wrong way wondering what went wrong. Instead of power-sliding through corners you have to brake steadily into the corner then make sure that the car is moving in a forward direction before accelerating away. Note: when you do start to accelerate, do it gradually, don't try to hit the gas full on, wind it up slowly and you will accelerate with the minimum of wheel spin. When you do feel the car sliding out of control try putting some opposite lock on the steering, if you're quick enough you can recover grip on the tyres before it's too late. As always though, try to keep your movements on the thumb stick smooth because if you turn the wheel too far or too sharply you will end up over-correcting the slide and go into a spin in the opposite direction.

Sometimes you will find that controlling your favourite motor in the wet is simply too much like hard work. If you are having trouble go for a change and take one of the other cars for a spin as FWD and 4WD cars do not suffer quite so badly from the effects of rain, (though the overall traction on the road is still greatly reduced). As the steering, accelerator and brake controls are all analogue you can make very small adjustments on the road so try not to stab at the controls and use only as much force as is required.

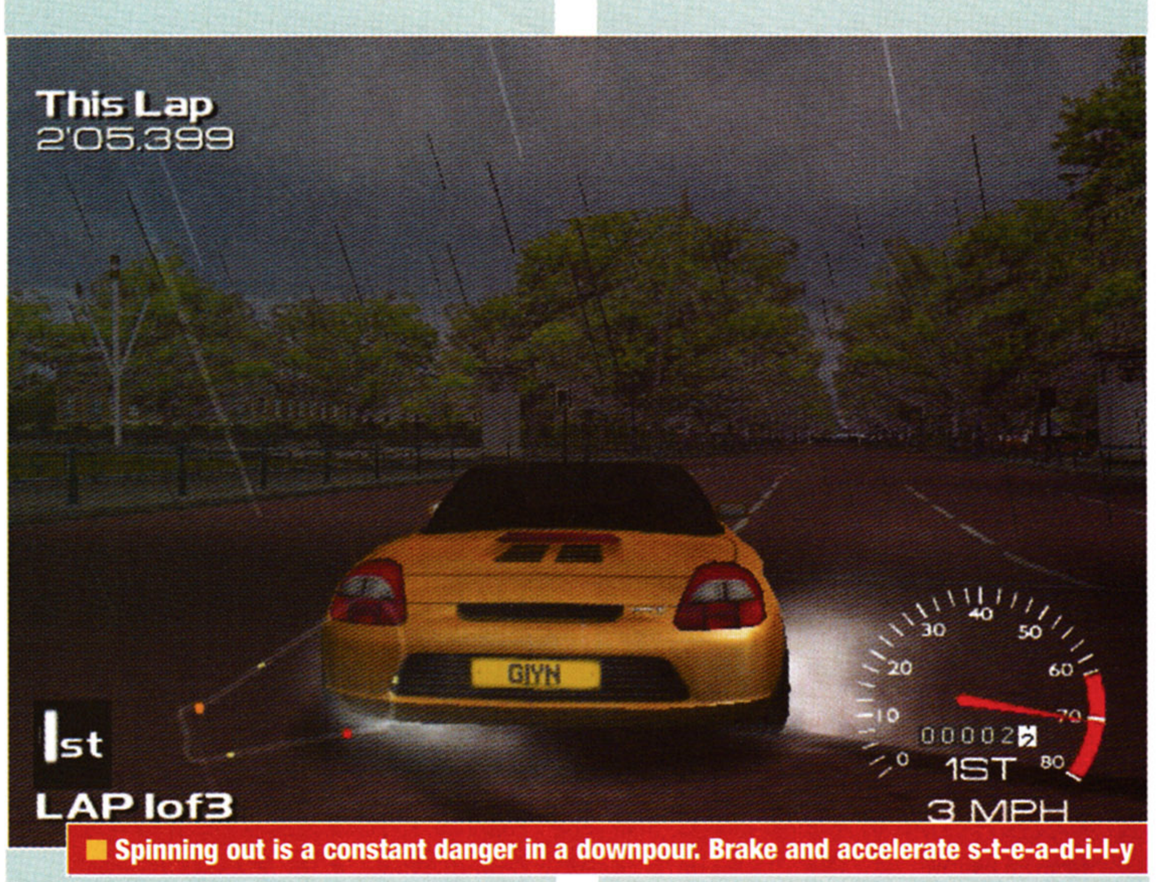
ACCELERATING

Doesn't present too much of a problem in the early stages of the game as the first cars do not possess the power of some of the later ones – the only place you should have to take care is when accelerating out of corners. If you try to floor it before you are past the apex of the corner the back end of the car will start to slide out and you'll have to back off on the gas until you can get it back under control (at the cost of valuable seconds). Later cars have the power to use slides in a controlled manner as you can use subtle control of the accelerator (along with the steering wheel) to accurately define the angle and length of the slide.

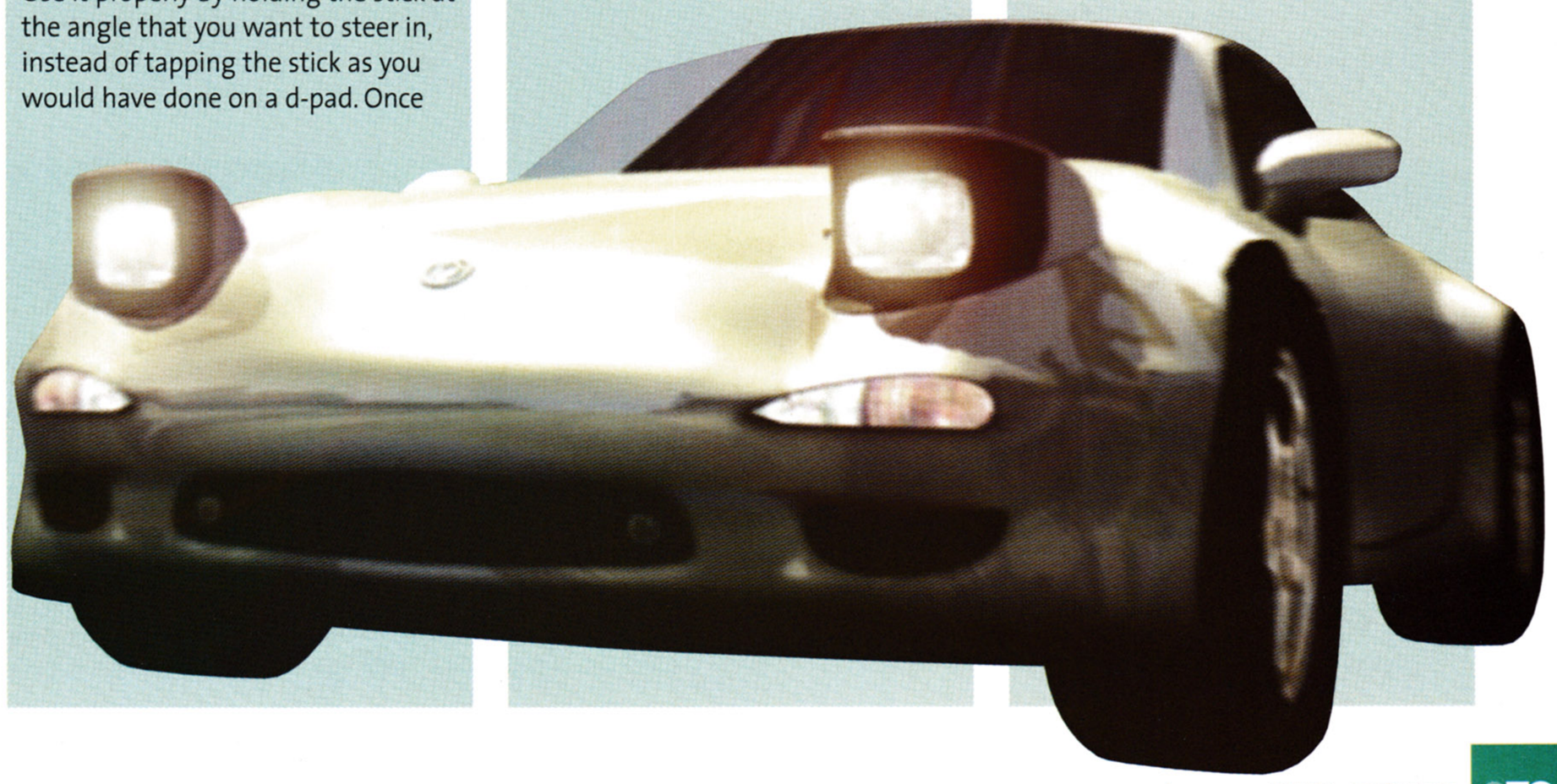
STEERING

Using the analogue thumb stick means that you can control the direction of your car very precisely. Whereas a digital d-pad has only two states, full on or full off, the analogue stick has over 256 gradual stages. Use it properly by holding the stick at the angle that you want to steer in, instead of tapping the stick as you would have done on a d-pad. Once

Unless you're familiar with the track, you'll really struggle when driving in pea-soupers



Spinning out is a constant danger in a downpour. Brake and accelerate s-t-e-a-d-i-l-y



METROPOLIS STREET RACER DRIVER'S GUIDE

The in-car view is not only the fastest and most exhilarating but it also helps you accurately judge overtaking manoeuvres

you master it you will find that the car's movements will be much smoother, increasing overall speed and stopping unwanted slides/spins.

BRAKING

Probably the hardest part of any racing game to get right, as controlled use of the brakes can mean the difference between taking the corners at speed and buggering up yet another lap. Again try to remember that the trigger is analogue so try not to slam on the anchors when only a small amount of braking is required. This is especially true when using non-ABS brakes because the brakes will lock up and you will not be able to turn into the corner. To begin with it is a good idea to choose ABS brakes as they never lock up and you will always be able to turn the car into corners (provided you're not going too fast). For finer control you should switch over to non-ABS as soon as possible as being able to lock the wheels is excellent if you want to change the car's direction at speed so you can power-slide through tight corners a lot faster. The Handbrake is another essential tool in *MSR* as it allows you to get round the tight hairpin bends found on some tracks.

You will still have to use the foot brake to slow down to a reasonable speed first or your car will swap ends as it spins off the road into last place.

TEST DRIVE

As each of the forty cars in the game has a unique set of handling characteristics not all of the cars on offer are going to suit your particular driving style. After unlocking each new vehicle (either at the end of a chapter or by completing a special stage) go into your garage and take it for a test drive. You can test the car on any circuit that you've opened up

Always test drive before choosing a car

in street racing so take your time. The beauty of using the test drive option is that you can make an informed choice on your next racing car without having to go through the sometimes incredibly hard challenges to earn it before finding out whether you like the darn thing or not.

THE IN-CAR VIEW

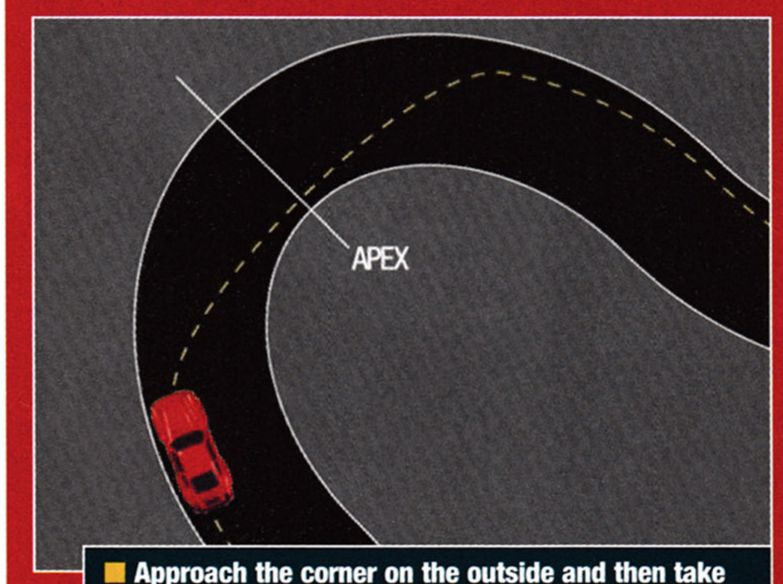
Within *MSR* there are several pre-determined camera angles that you can view the action from along with a fully adjustable chase camera. Each camera has a different use; the bumper cam gives the player the best sense of speed, as it is really low to the tarmac à la Formula One. The in-car view gives the player the best perspective for judging corners and overtaking opponent cars so go for this if you're after the world record. The two chase cameras are good for learner drivers as they show the player what the car is doing and its position on the track. Choosing a viewpoint that suits you best is a matter of personal choice, but if you want to be the best driver out there go for the in-car camera, once you get used to it you'll never go back.

OVERTAKING

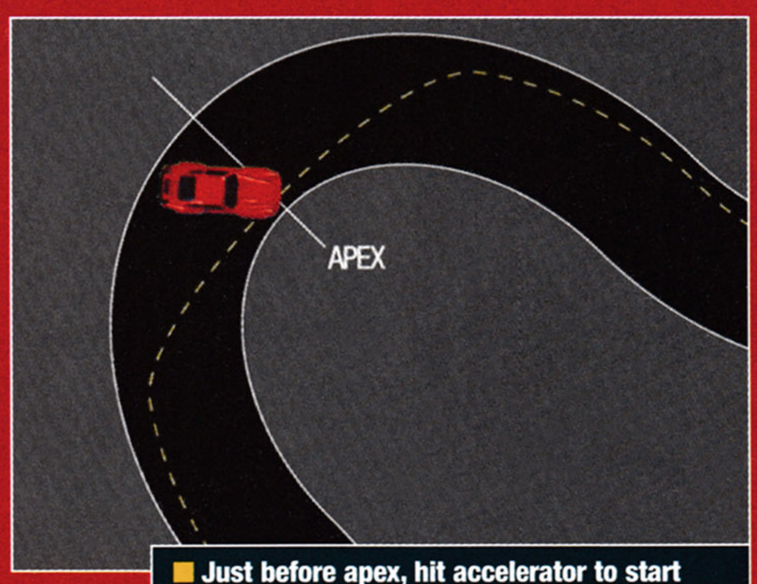
Getting past other cars on the road can be difficult when you're trying to get a clean lap, apart from adding penalties to your score they can cost

POWER-SLIDING

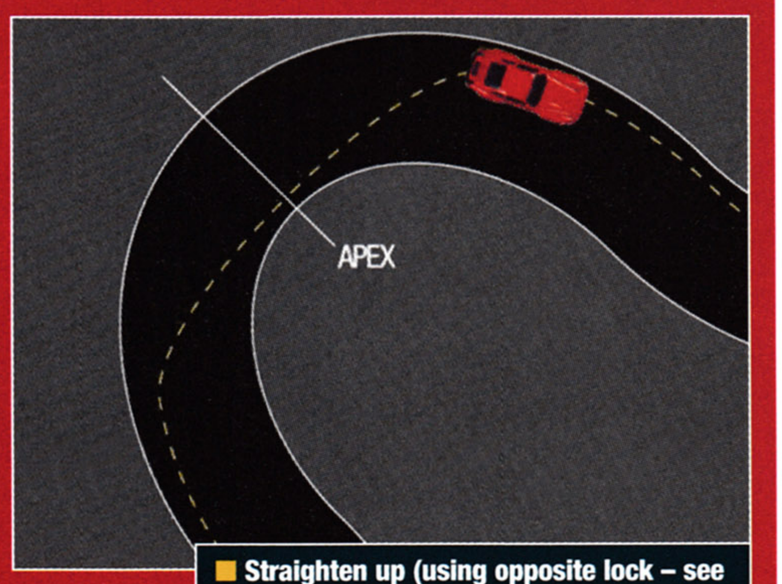
This occurs when you turn into a corner and then hit the gas hard as you get close to the apex of the corner causing the rear tyres to reach the limits of their grip and the car to start sliding toward the outside of the corner. Power-sliding tends to work best on fast corners (90 degrees or less) where you enter the corner at speed, because when you exit the corner you need to retain a lot of forward momentum to prevent the rear wheels losing grip completely and putting the car into a spin. If you do find yourself sliding too much the best thing to do is to turn the front wheels in the opposite direction to the way you are travelling thus stabilising the car. This is known as adding opposite lock and if you manage to perfect it you'll get kudos points



Approach the corner on the outside and then take your foot off the accelerator after you enter the corner



Just before apex, hit accelerator to start wheel spin and angle wheel toward exit of turn



Straighten up (using opposite lock – see text above – if necessary) and exit the turn

An example of out-braking your opponent. You can now overtake comfortably on the inside

The Alfa Romeo Spider is one of the best examples of a front wheel drive vehicle

you dearly in seconds.

The best way to get into the lead is to out-brake your opponents into corners, but to do this effectively and safely you need to first know the roads and the handling characteristics of your car. When setting up for an overtaking move it is best to have a good idea of where on the track ahead is the best overtaking point. Once you've made that decision you can prepare your attack by taking the corners leading up to the overtaking point bang on the racing line to conserve as much speed as possible and get close up behind the opponent. As the corner approaches move over slightly to the inside and wait until the opponent's brake lights come on before applying the brakes. When braking into the corner try not to drift to the outside of the track as the other car could still be alongside you, control the urge to put your foot down on the gas until the car has straightened up so you don't lose traction and start sliding sideways. It sounds simple and in principle it is, it's just a question of staying calm and holding your nerve. In many cases, getting past the other cars is not as straight forward, with up to six cars jostling for position on the track overtaking becomes less the result of precise preparation and pinpoint accuracy. Instead you will find yourself relying more on a combination of quick thinking, fast reactions, skill, experience and sometimes luck.

One final point about overtaking concerning the opposition cars. *MSR* is about skill, and overtaking makes up a large part of that, so try not to hit the AI cars while attempting passing moves as you will lose kudos points. The opponent cars are clever enough to know when to try and resist your attack and when they've been beaten and should back off, so its up to you to watch your rivals so you can pick up on, and take advantage of their mistakes.

Finally, the best players are the ones who know when to bide their time and wait behind the car ahead and also when to make their move and make it stick. This is what *Metropolis Street Racer* is asking from you. To be the best you have to be a fast thinker as well as having lightning fast reactions.

Be sure to avoid hitting the other cars as you attempt to pass them or you'll lose kudos

DRIVE TYPES

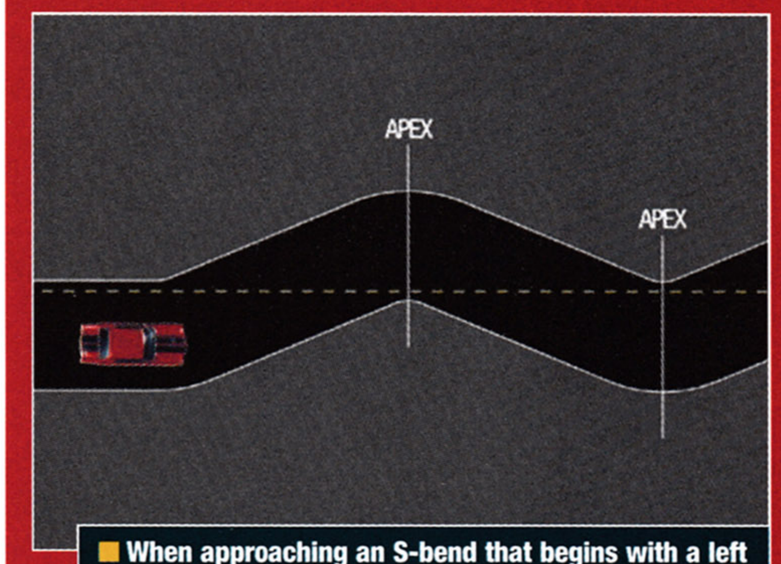
FWD

Front wheel drive cars take power supplied by the engine and use it to drive the front wheels, effectively pulling the car along the road. In real life FWD cars are by far the most common cars on the road as they can be driven easily and safely in most weather conditions.

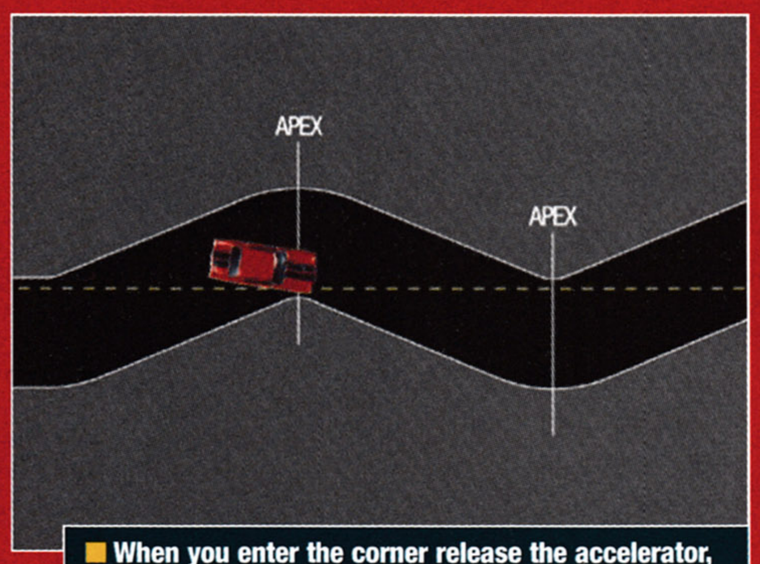
FWD cars tend to be the easiest cars in the game to drive, making them perfect for beginners who are just getting a feel for the game. As a general rule FWD cars handle corners well and don't lose the back end of the car and spin out which can be a problem with RWD and 4WD cars. They are also good in wet conditions

INERTIA DRIFTING

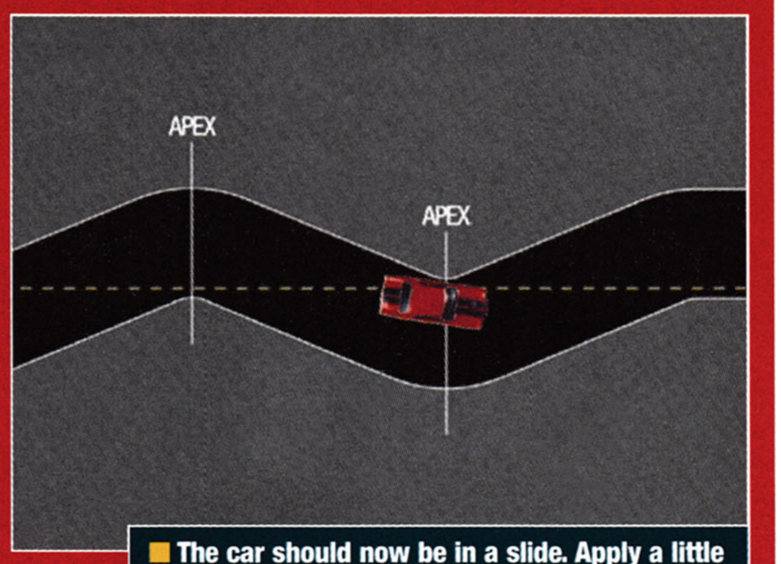
Inertia drifting is a skilled way of taking chicanes and other multiple corners in one clean move, at high speed. The principle is similar to that of power-sliding as you are controlling a car that is at the very limits of its grip on the road. For example; imagine heading into an S-bend that turns to the left then immediately to the right, as you get near to the corner you should aim to be as close to the right-hand side of the track as possible travelling at almost full speed. As you enter the corner release the accelerator, turn the wheels into the bend and apply the accelerator again to force the car into a controlled slide. While in the slide use a small amount of opposite lock to keep the car moving forwards. If you've managed to do this correctly and the angle of the slide is right your car should slide in a straight(ish) line sweeping gracefully past the apex of the left-hand turn and drifting towards and past the apex of the right-hander immediately after it. Using drifting techniques is the only way you are going to beat the world records on most courses so start practising



When approaching an S-bend that begins with a left hand turn, approach on the far right. And vice-versa



When you enter the corner release the accelerator, turn the wheels into the bend and then re-apply firmly



The car should now be in a slide. Apply a little opposite lock to keep the car sliding forward

METROPOLIS STREET RACER DRIVER'S GUIDE

The Toyota MRS is an excellent RWD drive choice with its high speed and smooth handling

Use the landmarks to keep track of where you are – and what's round the corner

so if you're having trouble with a stage that is set in the rain it might be a good idea to change over to a front wheel drive car. The disadvantages to using a FWD car are that while they don't spin and slide as much as the other cars, they are prone to under-steering on corners. Also the engines in FWD cars are generally less powerful than those found in rear wheel drive or four wheel drive vehicles, resulting in lower top speeds.

Great FWD cars to try – Peugeot 306 GTI, Alfa Romeo Spider, Mitsubishi FTO.

RWD

Rear wheel driven cars transfer the power from the engine to the rear wheels. Most sports cars from small two-seaters to large grand tourers are rear wheel driven.

Rear wheel drive cars are more higher powered than FWD cars and are capable of much higher speeds, but this is not without risk as RWD also require a much greater degree of control/skill to get the best out of them. When cornering in a RWD car great care should be taken to ensure that you don't apply too much power to the rear wheels as they will lose grip on the road surface causing the car to spin out. Once you get familiar with the handling characteristics of your RWD car you can start to use the car's ability to slide to your advantage with subtle control of the thumb stick and the Analogue accelerator and brake triggers.

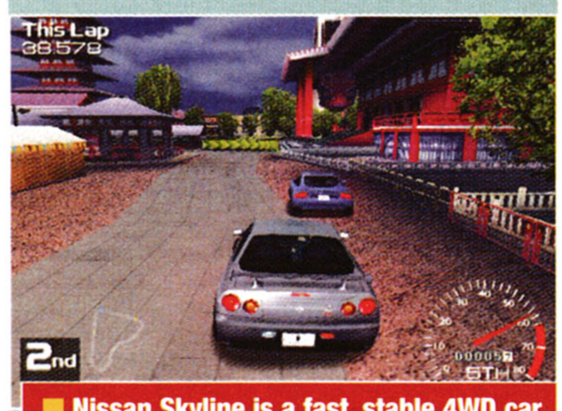
Great RWD cars to try – Toyota MR2/MRS, Fairlady Z, Jenson SV8.

4WD

Four-wheel drive cars work by applying an equal amount of power to each of the four wheels of a car.

This makes them the most stable type of cars on the market, especially in wet or off-road driving conditions.

Because all four wheels are used to drive the car, 4WD cars are relatively easy to control, even when sliding; this makes 4WD cars great for tight, twisting circuits. The only real drawback to using a 4WD car is that because it is so easy to make the car drift through corners you can lose a lot of speed (and time) if you don't recover the slide quickly enough. Great 4WD cars to try – Audi A3, Mitsubishi GTO, Nissan Skyline.



Nissan Skyline is a fast, stable 4WD car

Race your ghost car in a Hot Lap

STREET RACING HOT LAPS

These make up the first stages in each chapter and come in two guises. The first is straightforward in that all you have to do is complete one of the set number of laps within the target time (your ghost car will appear and act as a useful target after the first lap). For the second type of hot lap challenges you'll need to complete a number of laps and gain an average lap time that is within the target time. Make sure you read the instruction screens properly before changing the target time for these.

TIMED RUN

Timed runs challenge the player to complete a given number of laps within the target time. Unlike the hot lap though, there are other cars in timed runs whose primary aim is to act like irritating mobile chicanes. The key to completing the timed runs is to stay cool and not to try and force your way through this slow-moving traffic. Also, timed run stages can take place on a single track or over a number of rounds, so again be sure to read the stage instructions carefully before risking your kudos points needlessly.

CHALLENGE

There are several different Challenge events, which test your ability to drive fast while keeping the car under complete control. To raise the stakes in these stages, the penalties for making mistakes are a lot higher than in normal stages so watch the railings because even scraping the sides of the road will cost you dearly in kudos points.

OVERTAKE CHALLENGE

You must attempt to overtake as many cars as possible within a given time. The best way to get points here is to just go for it as any penalties that you might pick up (which are double their normal value) should be small compared to the amount of points you can collect. Overtake challenges can reward the player with loads of kudos points, more than most other stages in fact, so take risks to get past as many cars as possible. The difference between giving up and getting one more car than you had before can be worth hundreds of kudos points so risk everything and gamble high.

AVERAGE SPLIT SPEED CHALLENGE

Your top speed is recorded at each of the three split points and calculates the average speed over the total number of laps. It's not as easy as it sounds because the penalties for hitting the railing at the side of the road are five times greater than normal (this is the same for all of the speed challenges). If you want top points though you'll have to gamble on your skills of consistency. To complete the stage you will have to also complete the required number of laps within a time limit.

TOP SPEED CHALLENGE

This challenge records your maximum speed, so to get the points, practice the track to find out where the best speeds can be found. During the challenge itself, use your prior knowledge of the route to set yourself up and fly through the corners immediately before the fastest stretch of road perfectly.

TOP SPLIT SPEED CHALLENGE

These record your top speed at each of the three checkpoints in the same way as the Average split speed, but this time it is the absolute best speed that you should be striving for. Like the other speed challenges there is usually only one point on the track where you can get the fastest speeds so find it in the first couple of laps, then go for broke.

LAP CHALLENGE

You have to try and lap another car. The opponent is not racing at 100 per cent, so the question is not if you will do it, but how long will it take you to do it. The main issues here are your knowledge of the course and the car you're using.

ONE ON ONE

The opponent car has been chosen to give the player a tough challenge in relation to their position within the game so beware these stages are very hard. Don't try and give the opponent a large head start because unless you have a much better car you will almost certainly lose the race (and the kudos points). If you are having trouble beating the opposition or don't have a good enough car it may be an idea to give yourself the advantage by giving yourself a small head start, you'll get less points for it but you can go back to it later on when you're driving skills have improved, or you've earned a better car.

STREET RACES

These involve the player racing against between two and five other cars. The racing in street races is usually very close with point-rewarding positions being changed all of the time, so it's important that you always know where your opponents are on the track. Use the mirror or the reverse view (Y on the controller) to constantly check the position of your rivals and get ready to block whenever they try to overtake you. You don't have to come first in the race to complete the stage, but you do have to reach the target that you set for yourself. Before you bet on first place take a look at the opposition and consider whether the car you've cherished for the last five chapters is really going to be up to the task.

CHAMPIONSHIP RACES

The last stage in each chapter is similar to street races except this time the stages are over multiple rounds (sometimes with very changeable weather conditions). If you're having trouble on one or more of the rounds it may be an idea to go back to the garage and look for an all-round car that is easier to drive. It might not have the all out speed but in the long run it might work out better for you ■

■ If you're feeling cocky/brave/foolish, give your opponent a head start in One On One races

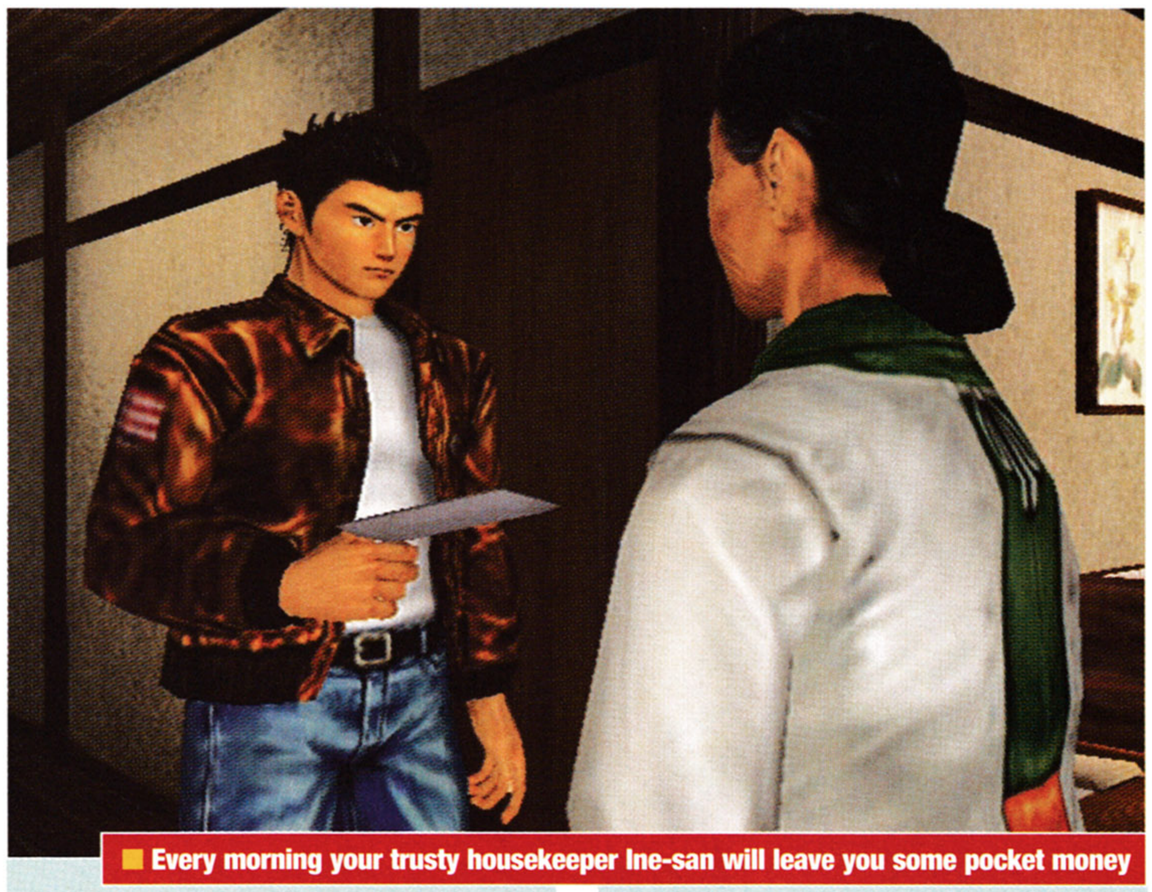
■ Street racing in its purest form – you, the course and between two and five CPU vehicles attempting to beat you across the finish line

SHENMUE WALKTHROUGH

PART ONE

The greatest game of the 21st Century (so far, at least) provides a whole lot of adventuring for the money as your role playing alter-ego, Ryo investigates the events behind his father's murder. Our walkthrough takes you through every step of the detective work necessary to reach *Shenmue*'s conclusion.

But please, take our advice and treat this walkthrough as just an A-Z guide for when you get stuck. You won't see half of the game's delights by rushing through every step as quickly as possible. Go everywhere, talk to everyone and you'll discover a host of hidden extras and story nuances that makes this game the work of art that it truly is ■



■ Every morning your trusty housekeeper Ine-san will leave you some pocket money

DISC ONE

■ Cassette player + tapes = music. Nice

01 Look through every drawer and cupboard in your room and take the cassette player and Shenmue and Shenhua tapes.

02 Leave the room and housekeeper Ine-san will give you a letter containing ¥15,000.

03 Search through every room in the house to get used to your bearings (and pick up some juicy bits and pieces). Bizarrely, you'll find a Saturn in the TV room despite it only being 1986. In Fuku-san's room (he's your friend and dojo sparring partner) there's a document which gives you a fighting move when examined.

■ Keepsakes like this photo can be found

04 Another of these leaflets can be found in the corridor behind your father's room, and in the room itself is a letter from your dad and a box containing a rusty key which you'll need later in the game.

■ Root through all the drawers in the house

05 Make your way into the kitchen and look at the table for a flashback to your childhood.

■ There are two flashback to Ryo's youth

06 Leave the house and turn left to look at the old tree and experience another flashback.

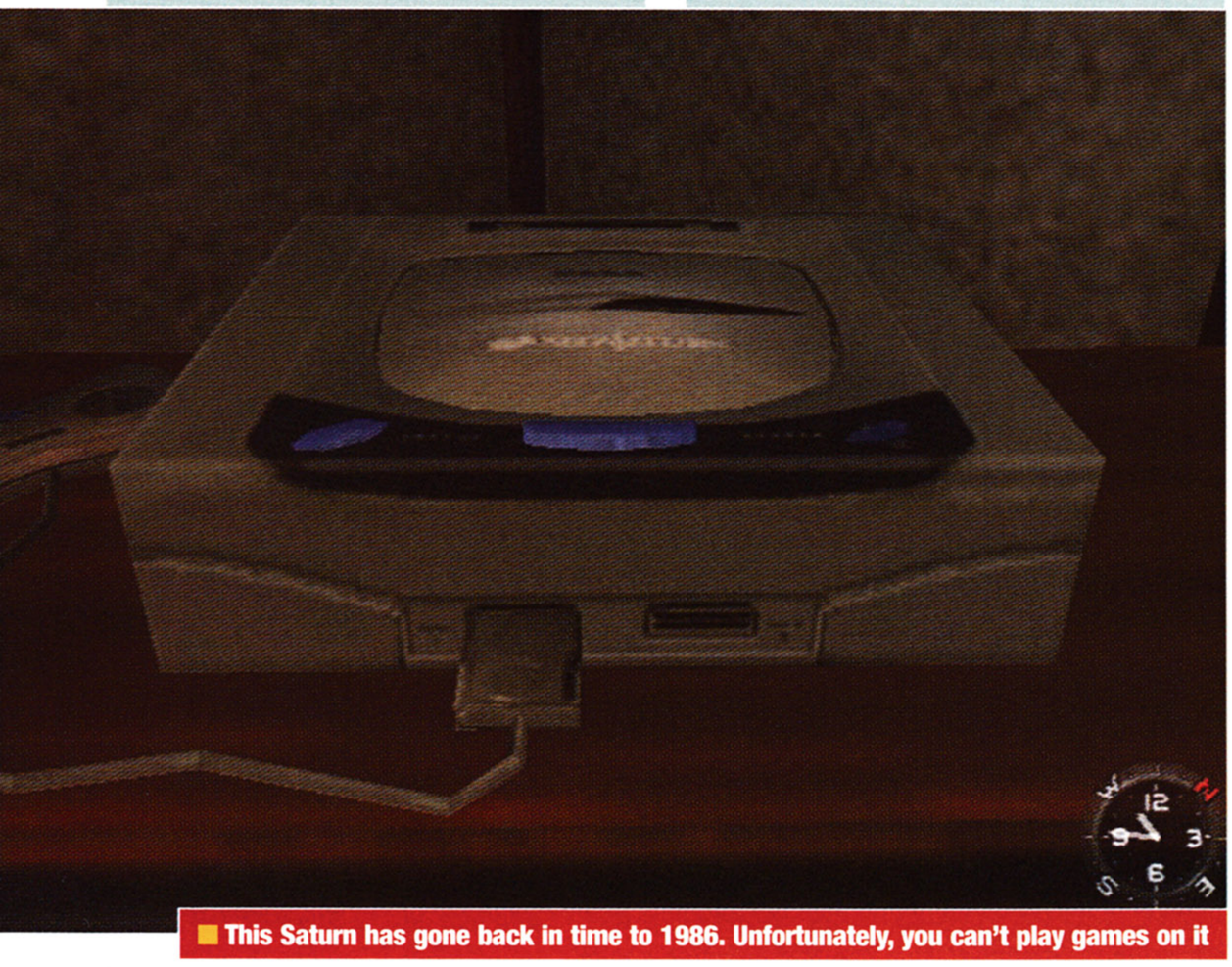
■ Learning Jujitsu with daddy

07 Go into the dojo and talk to Fuku-san about your father's death.

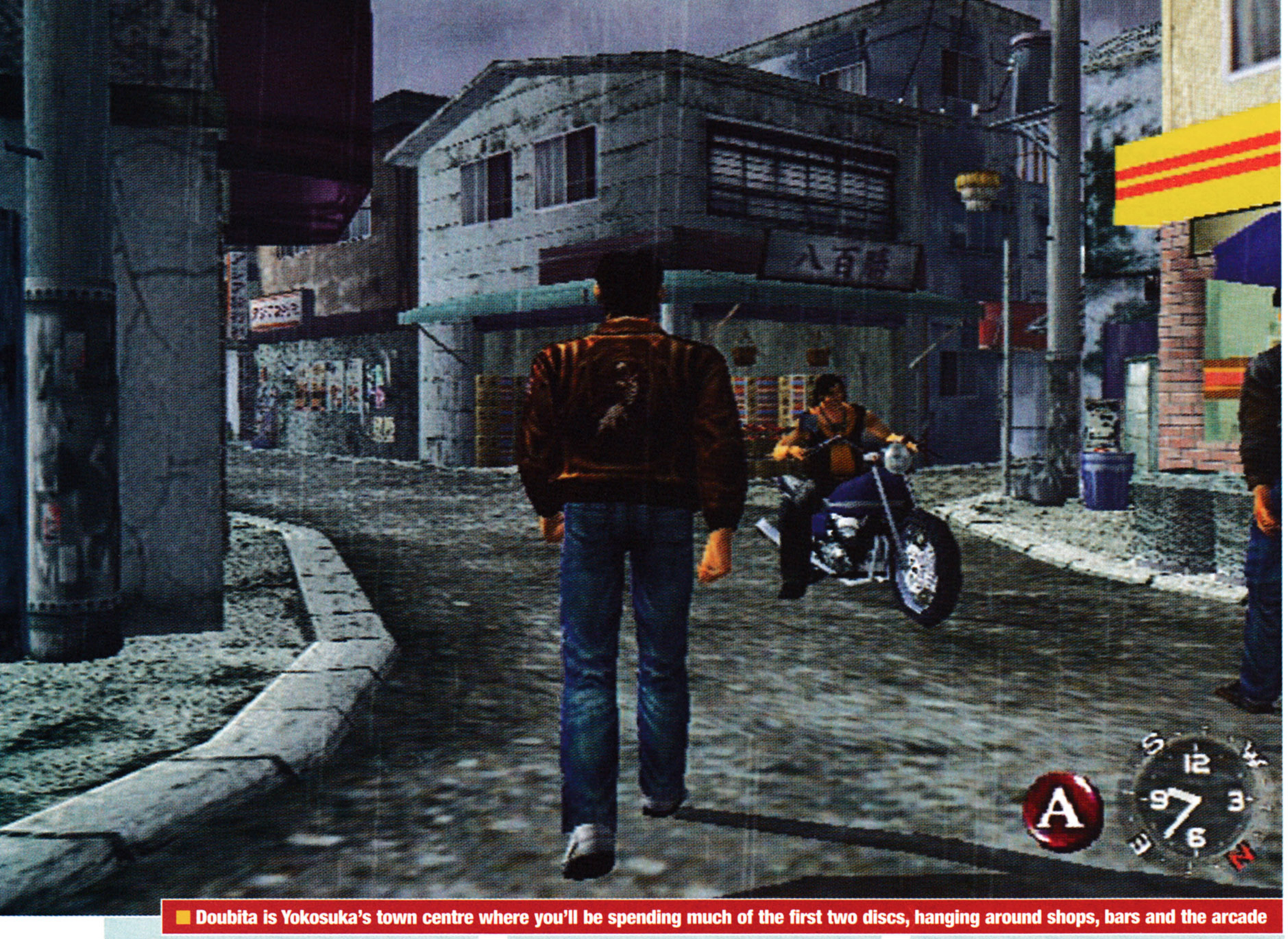
■ Your pal, Fuku-san

■ Feed the cute little kitty-witty

08 Exit through the front gate and walk down the hill towards a shrine where a cut-scene will ensue involving a little girl and her kitten. When you're given the two options choose the left one to feed the cat.

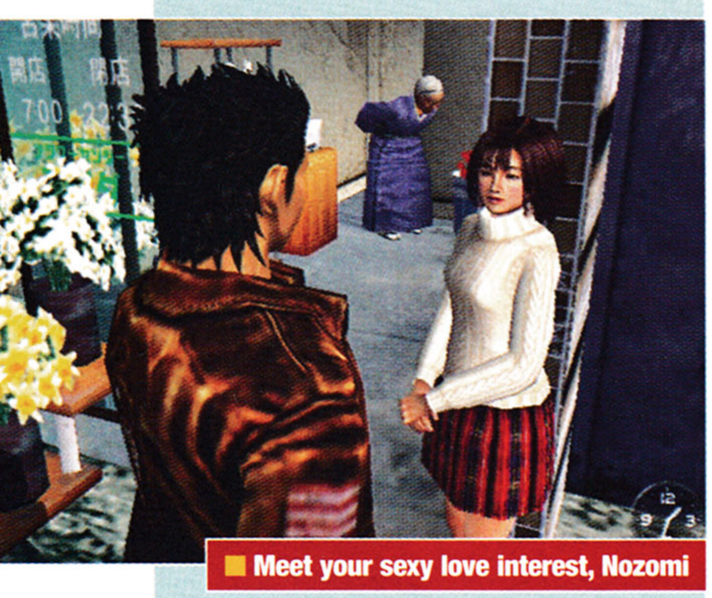


■ This Saturn has gone back in time to 1986. Unfortunately, you can't play games on it



Doubita is Yokosuka's town centre where you'll be spending much of the first two discs, hanging around shops, bars and the arcade

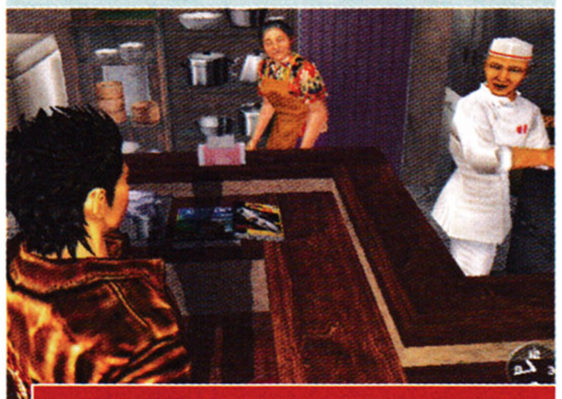
09 Continue into Yamanosa and talk to the two women chatting next to the phone box. Go right and nip through the gap in the fence to chat with the old man, Yamagishi-san about events on the day of your father's death.



Meet your sexy love interest, Nozomi

10 After this, head through the trees and down the steps into the main part of town, Doubita. Here, you can talk to a number of people who will soon become familiar faces. Speak with your love interest Nozomi, the girl in the white jumper outside the flower shop. Move on to Tomo-san, the mad dancing bloke next to his hotdog stand and opposite him, Kuruti-san the guy in the orange jacket.

Tomo is often a good source of advice



Hi! I'd like some chips and peas please

11 Now, head down the back street to find a Chinese restaurant across from the sports shop and go inside to talk to the chef and his wife.

The barber refuses to cut off your mullet

12 Nearby Game You arcade, go in the barber's and talk to the owner, then go to the other barber's shop at the opposite end of the main street and chat to the owner.

Buy these great toys outside Game You

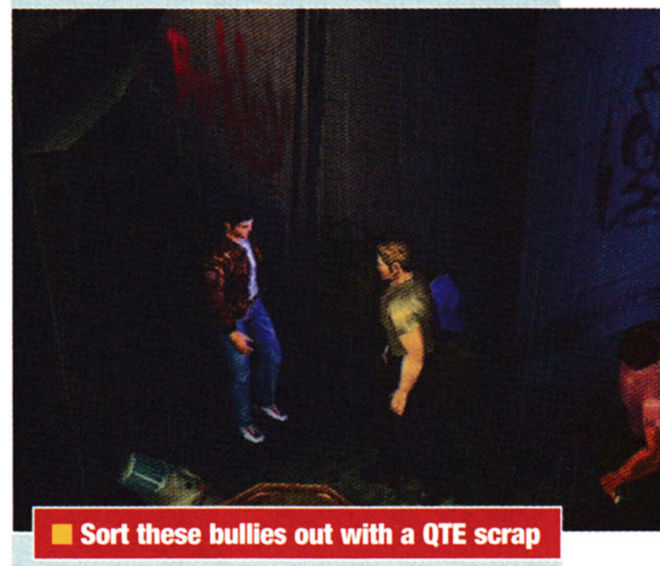
Old men bend over backwards to help you

13 Next, go back to the playground at the side of Game You and talk to the old feller in the black and white checked shirt.

14 Kill some time in Game You until the evening, then once it opens for business, go to Bar Yokosuka in the back street and talk to the bartender.

Win a bet by successfully potting the red

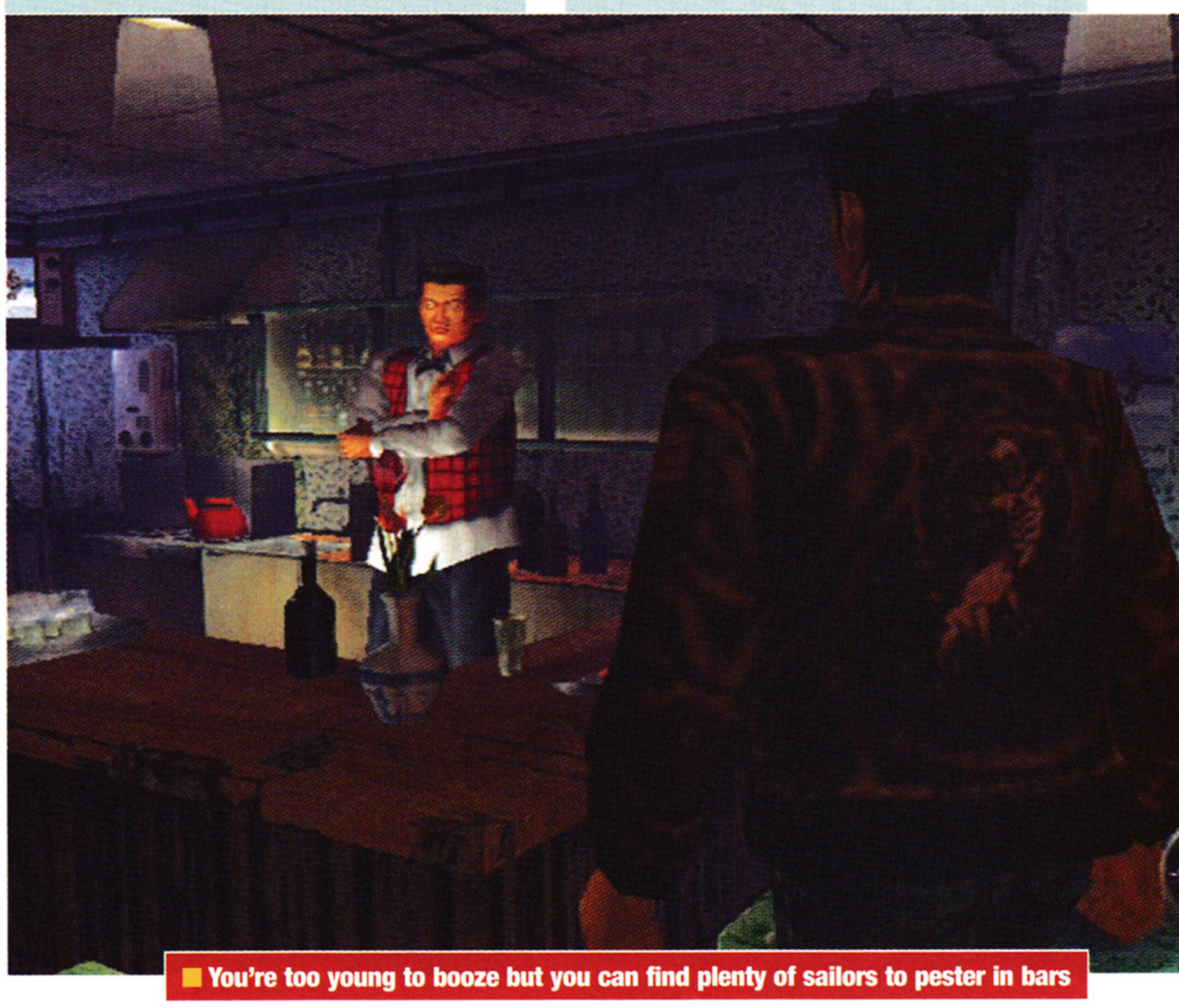
15 When the guys playing pool shout to you, go over and chat with them then select the left option to bet ¥1000 on a pool shot.



Sort these bullies out with a QTE scrap

16 Leave Bar Yokosuka and go down the stairs next to the motorbike shop where you'll have a Quick Time Event fight with some thugs. After teaching them a lesson, go into the Heartbeats bar and you'll have yet another QTE with the heavies inside.

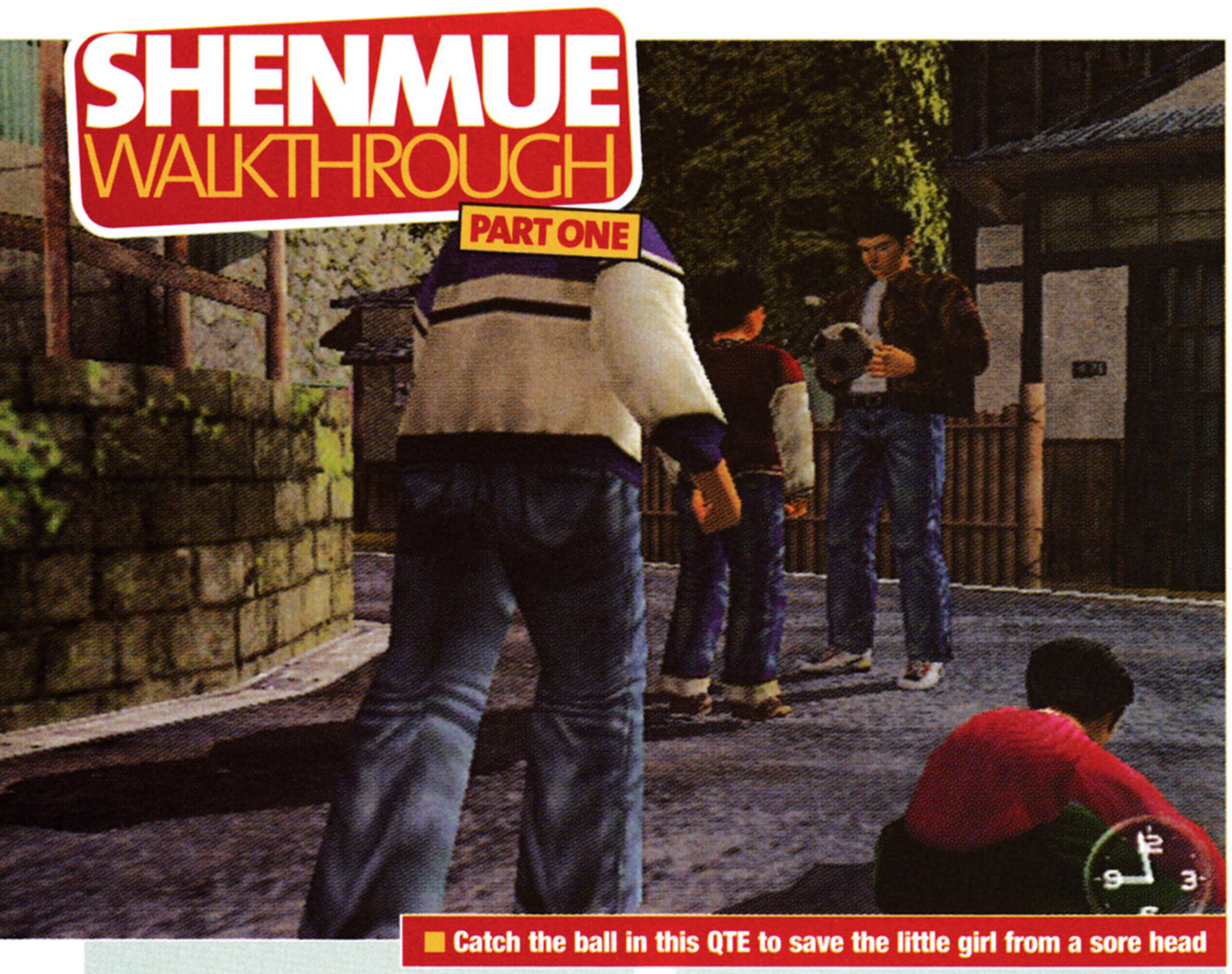
17 Back up the stairs, talk with the white-haired guy fixing his bike then go and see the female chef in the small restaurant a few doors away. There's nothing else you can do today, so head back home before your 11:00 pm curfew.



You're too young to booze but you can find plenty of sailors to pester in bars

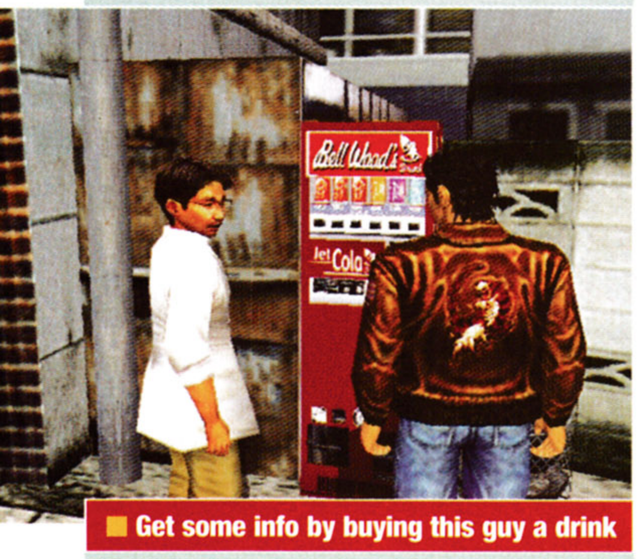
SHENMUE WALKTHROUGH

PART ONE



Catch the ball in this QTE to save the little girl from a sore head

18 The next day, walk towards town and you'll have a short QTE where you have to catch a football before it hits a little girl.



Get some info by buying this guy a drink

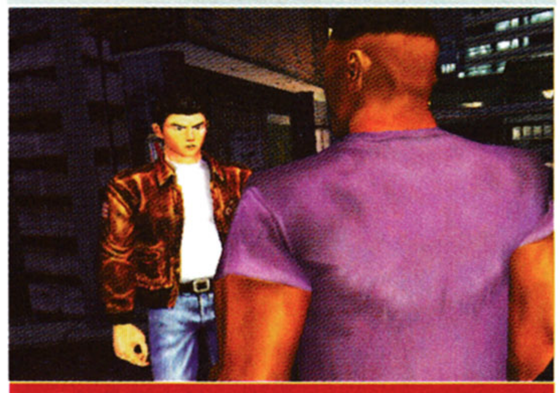
19 In the town centre (on the road that leads to the bus stop), talk to the guy stood at the vending machine and buy him a can of orange then speak to the bloke in the black apron stood outside the jeans shop.

Mafia heavies offer some cryptic advice

20 You should now be able to access the locked door with the symbol above it and CCTV camera pointing at it.

21 Talk to all of the shady looking characters inside.

22 Leave and talk to Kuruti-san (opposite Tomo) again.

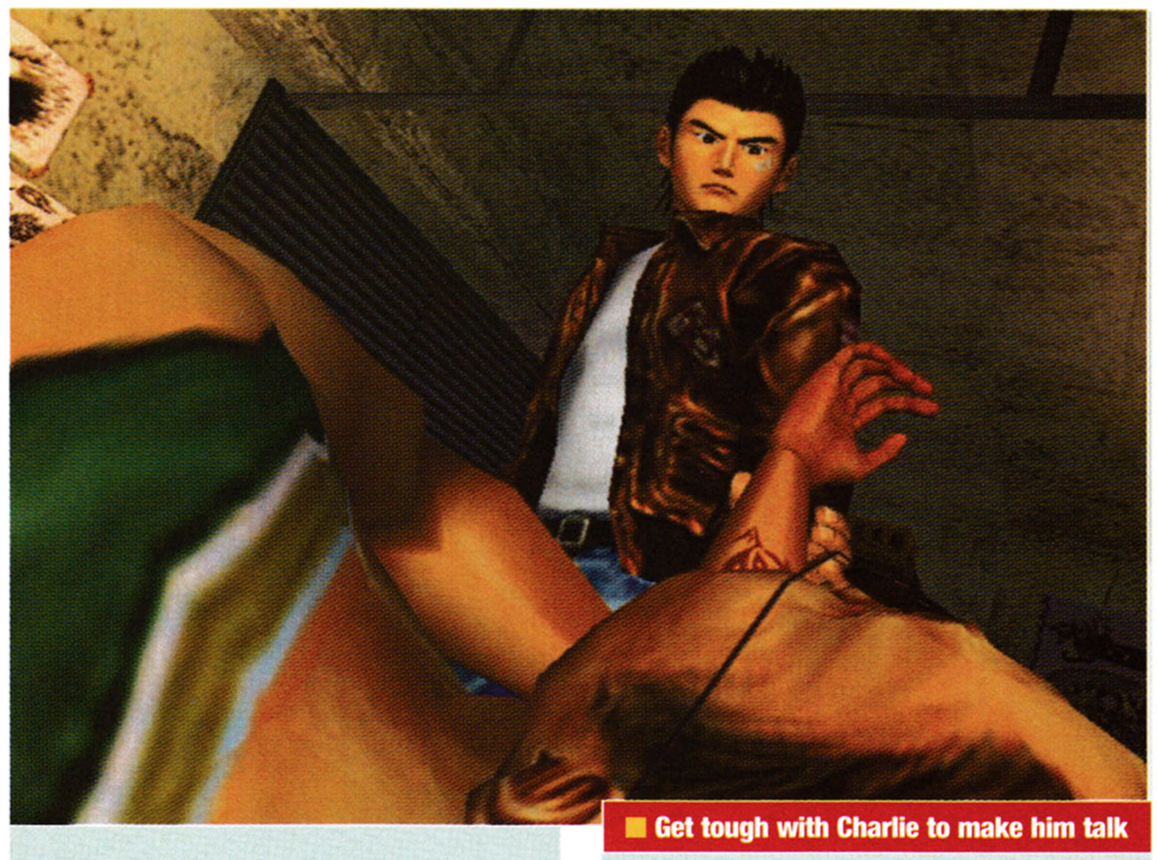


After being lured into a trap by this bloke...

23 After 7:00 pm, go towards Game You and you'll meet one of the ruffians you beat up the night before. After following him to the car park you'll be surrounded by a gang of thugs. Kicks their heads in with your first free battle and one of them will eventually spill the beans about a tattoo parlour.

Check out the seedy tattoo parlour

24 Talk to the heavies inside Game You and select the left answer. Go to the apartments opposite Bar Yokosuka, up the stairs and on to the second door to find the tattoo shop, the man inside will tell you to come back tomorrow. Head back home.

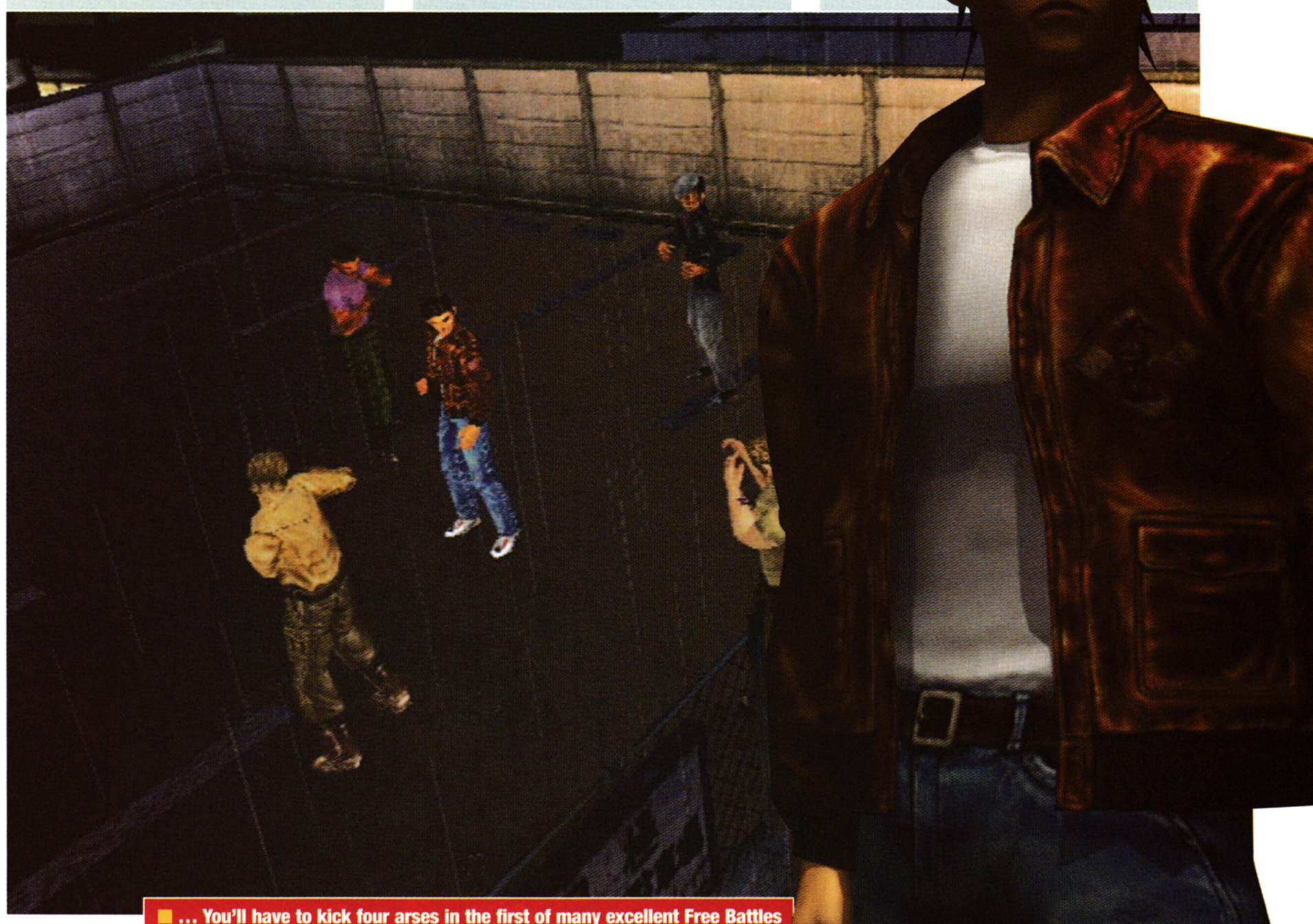


Get tough with Charlie to make him talk

25 The next day, go to the tattoo parlour when it opens at 2:00 pm. After the cut-scene there's a QTE with a geezer called Charlie who will give you some information after a little persuasion.

26 Leave the shop and there's a cut-scene with Nozomi.

27 You can't progress any further today so just spend some time



... You'll have to kick four arses in the first of many excellent Free Battles

There's absolutely no excuse for boredom when you can just go to Game You and play it's many coin-operated delights

playing all the great coin-ops in Game You.

Spar frequently to learn new moves

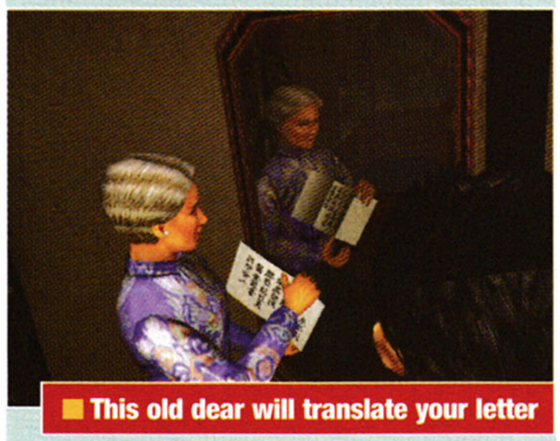
28 The day after begins with a sparring session in the dojo with your friend Fuku-san.

Kick off in this fantastic QTE

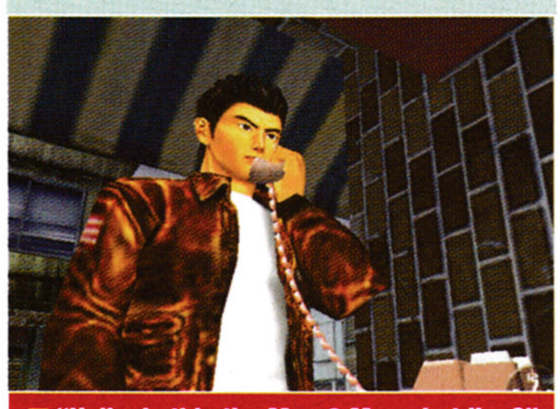
29 Ine-san gives you a letter but you can't read it because it's in Chinese.

30 Go into town and a cut-scene begins in which a little boy has had his footie nicked. Free battle with the bullying thugs and then there's a cool QTE where you boot the ball at Charlie to make him release the young boy.

31 Head for Game You to trigger a cut-scene with the boy you just helped. He tells you that his Gran is Chinese.



This old dear will translate your letter



"Hello, is this the Man 2 Man chat line?"

32 You can find her in the China Shop near the vending machine where you bought that guy a can. She will translate the letter for you. There's a phone number on the letter. Go to the small telephone kiosk at the end of the road and dial the number 0468-61-5647. When the guy who answers asks you a question, reply with the right codeword, when he asks a second, reply with the left codeword.

33 Talk to the old woman in the kiosk and look at the phone book to search through it for an address.

34 Go and talk to Tomo to find out about this address then exit the town (down the road past the kiosk) and wait for a bus at the bus stop. When it pulls up, get on board and Disc one will finish.

DISC TWO

Catch the bus to travel to the harbour

35 You are now at the docks. Get off the bus, turn left and walk forward until you trigger a cut-scene where two knuckleheads are beating someone up. Give them a taste of their own medicine in a QTE.

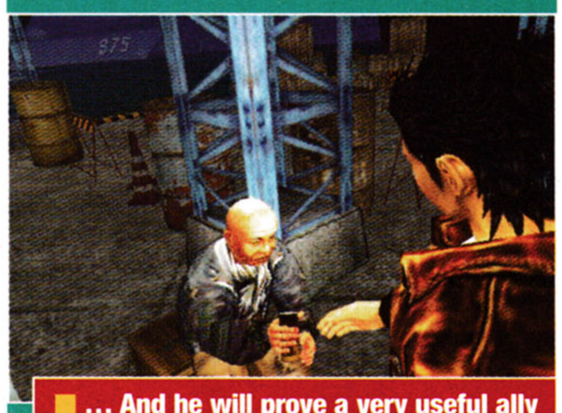
36 Walk in the direction they point you in and talk to the workers milling about.

37 Go right towards dock eight and a security guard will prevent you entering. Go behind the building and you'll look up at the open window.

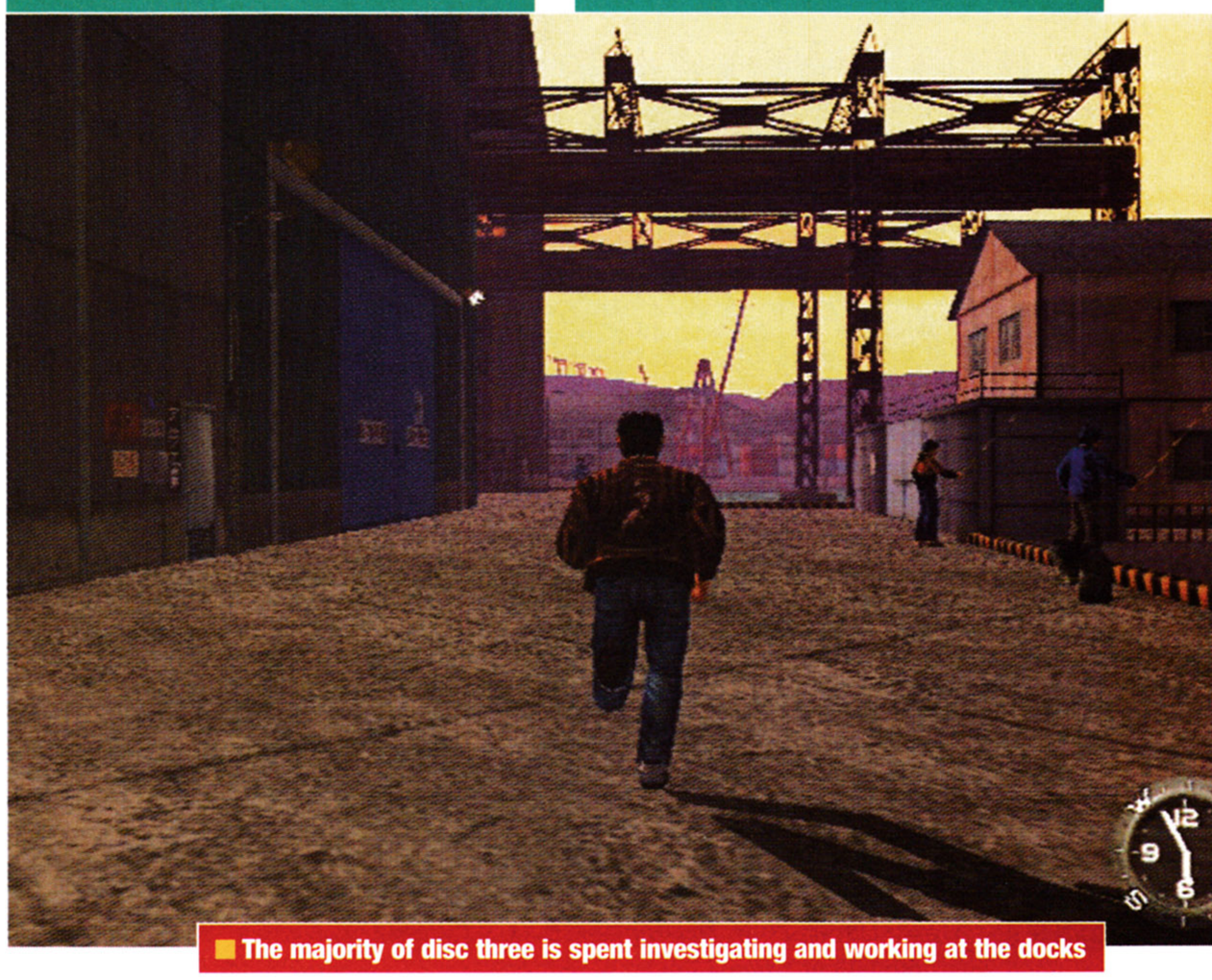
38 Push the single crate next to the tower of crates under the window, climb up them and go through the window.

39 Walk around the gantry to the office and watch the cut-scene then leave through the front door. Follow the arrow pointing toward dock 18 and speak with the three fishermen. After 7:00 pm, go back to the area around dock eight and you'll see an old homeless man being chucked out of a warehouse. Talk to him and buy him a coffee from the vending machine nearby.

Buy a cup of coffee for the old tramp...



... And he will prove a very useful ally



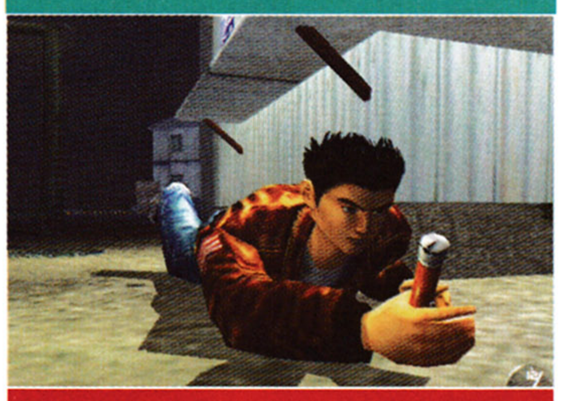
The majority of disc three is spent investigating and working at the docks

SHENMUE WALKTHROUGH

PART ONE

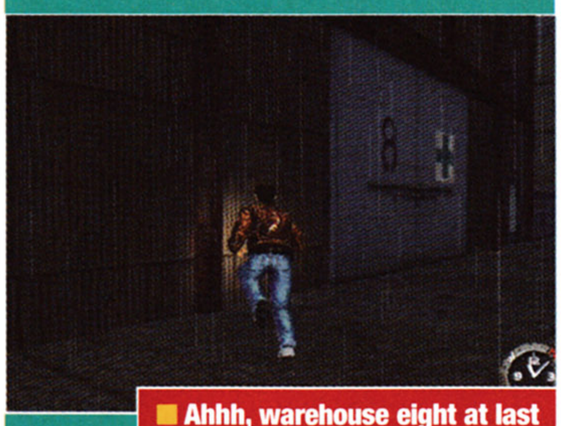
This is the beginning of an excellent (and fairly tricky) stealth sequence as you try and sneak past security to access warehouse eight

40 Now search for the security area with a gap in the fence that you can sneak through. As you crawl past the guard in his shelter, the phone rings causing you to knock the torch off the shelf, quickly press right to catch it or it'll hit the ground and disturb the guard.



Catch the torch before it alerts the guard

41 There now follows an excellent *Metal Gear Solid*-style stealth sequence where you have to sneak around the compound to find warehouse eight (it's up and to the left) without being seen by the guards. This is quite difficult but you get numerous attempts and if you're really struggling the old tramp will give you a map.



Ahhh, warehouse eight at last

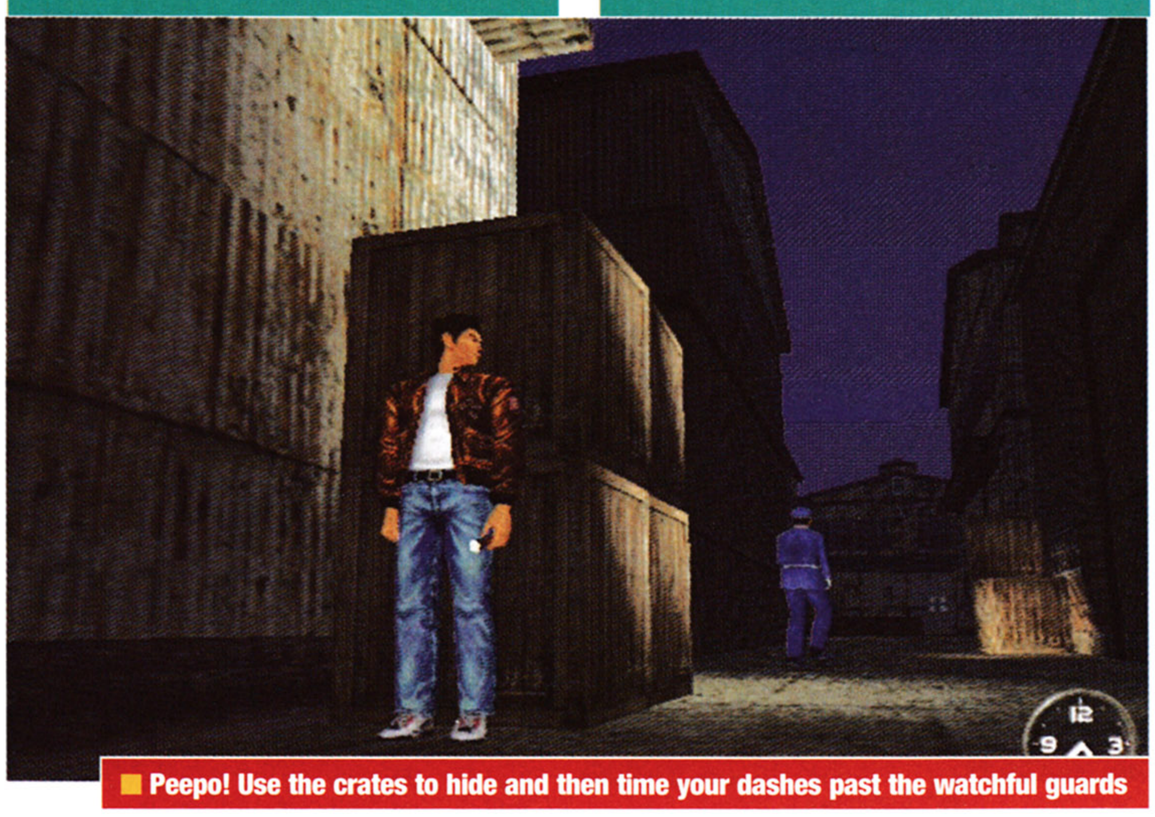
42 When you finally get into warehouse eight you'll meet an old friend of your father's, Master Chen, and his son Gui Zhang. After talking to them you'll automatically be sent back home.

Your father's wise old chum, Master Chen

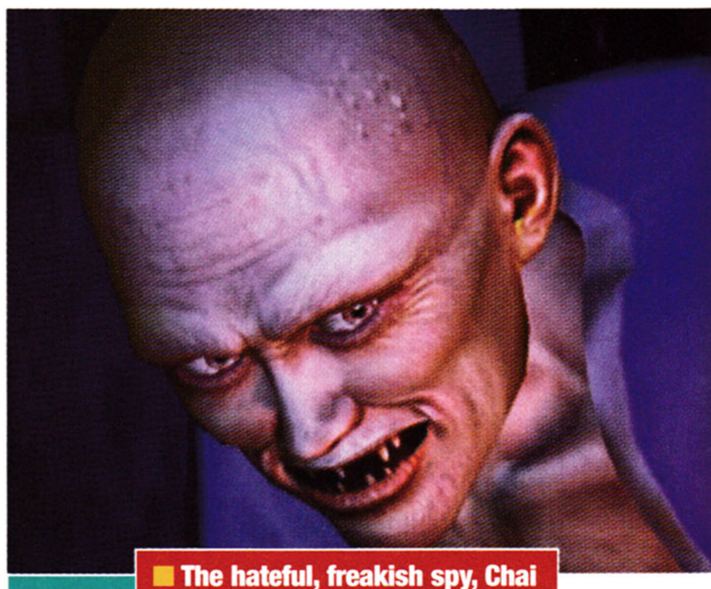
43 The next day walk into town and talk to the girl in the antique shop next-door to Tomato mart. She'll tell you to come back later and speak to her Grandfather.

Zhang likes a scrap but he's on your side

44 Return home and on the way you'll face Gui Zhang in a free battle. He's only testing your skills and says he'll be looking out for your interests from now on. This scene is observed by a freak called Chai who will continue to spy on your activities.



Peepo! Use the crates to hide and then time your dashes past the watchful guards



The hateful, freakish spy, Chai

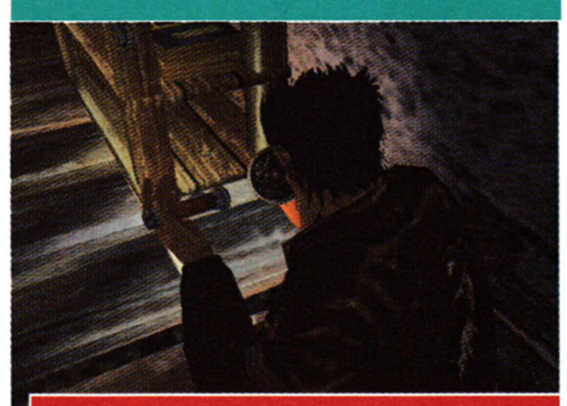
45 At home, go to the dojo to trigger a cut-scene with Fuku and Ine-san. Go inside the dojo and use the rusty key you found in your father's room to open the long box on the floor. Inside is a Katana sword.

46 Lift the right-hand banner off the wall in front of you and slide the Katana into the gap behind it. Return to the antique shop in town and talk to the old man who will give you a keepsake from your father. Then nip next-door and buy a lightbulb from Tomato mart (you'll need it in a minute).

Purchase a lightbulb from Tomato mart

47 Go back home and show the keepsake to Fuku and Ine-san then go inside the dojo and put it in the hole next to the Katana sword. This opens a secret door leading to the basement.

48 Go down the ladder and turn on your torch, move through to the room then put the lightbulb into the socket and turn on the switch next to the entrance. With the room lit you can turn off the torch and examine everything in the room. A leaf, a fighting move and an old photograph can all be picked up.



Search the cellar to discover the mirror

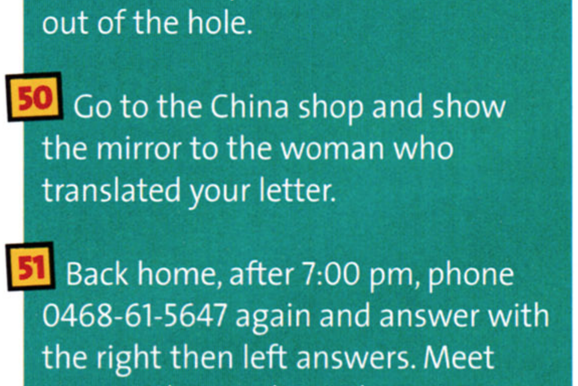
"Look, Fuku-san. It's a green thing."

Next to the shelving unit, against the left wall, look at the floor to see some groove marks, you can now push the shelves to the left. Behind it is a discoloured part of the wall.

49 Grab the axe next to the entrance and hack through the wall with it. You will then pull the Phoenix Mirror out of the hole.

50 Go to the China shop and show the mirror to the woman who translated your letter.

51 Back home, after 7:00 pm, phone 0468-61-5647 again and answer with the right then left answers. Meet Master Chen and Gui Zhang in warehouse eight at the docks. In the ensuing cut-scene, Chai will steal the Phoenix Mirror and you have to press left in a QTE to retrieve it. After this you'll return home automatically. The next morning you'll have all your bank account money, ¥32,000. Go and see Fuku-san in his room and in the cut-scene you'll tell him and Ine-san of your plans to go to Hong Kong to track down your father's murderer. Head into town and go to the Asia Travel Company (on the corner, across from the Happy Bear Hamburger Bar) and get a travel brochure from the surly woman.

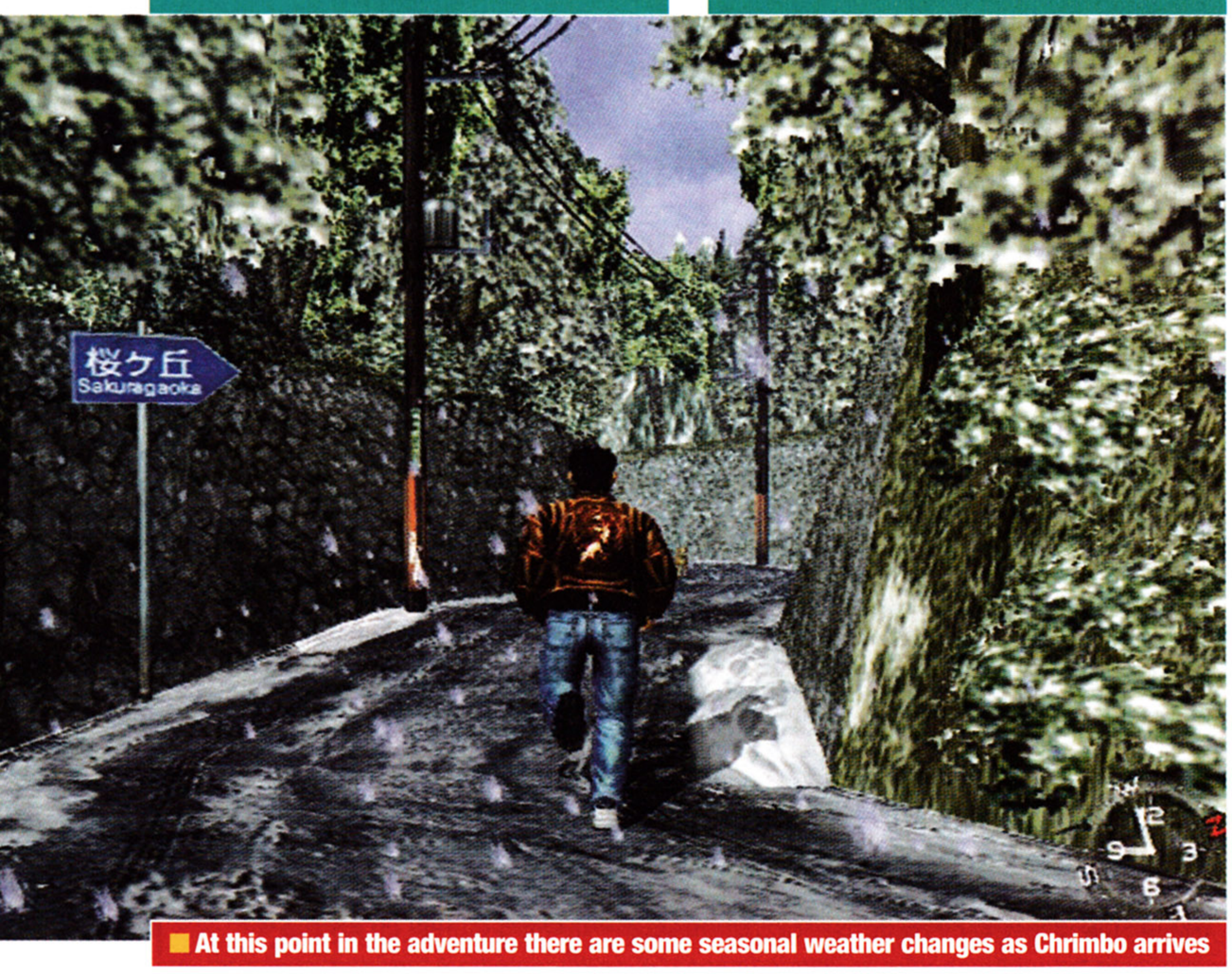


Foil Chai's antics in an action-packed QTE

52 Go to the Global Travel Agency opposite Tomo and get another brochure.

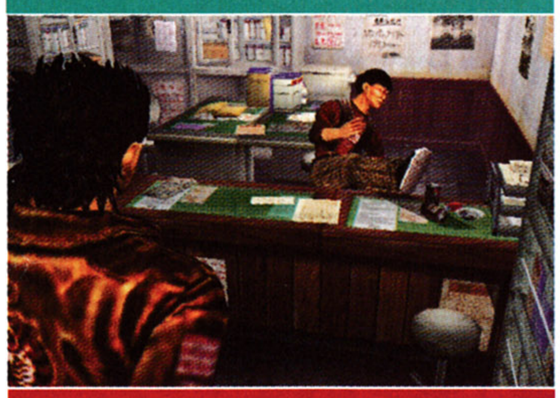
The Global Travel Agency is too expensive

53 Return home and talk to Fuku-san who will very kindly give you all the cash from his (slightly worrying) piggy bank, pushing your total savings up to ¥72,000.



At this point in the adventure there are some seasonal weather changes as Chrimbo arrives

You'll have to put up with this miserable madam at the Asia Travel Company



Dodgy dealings are afoot with this joker

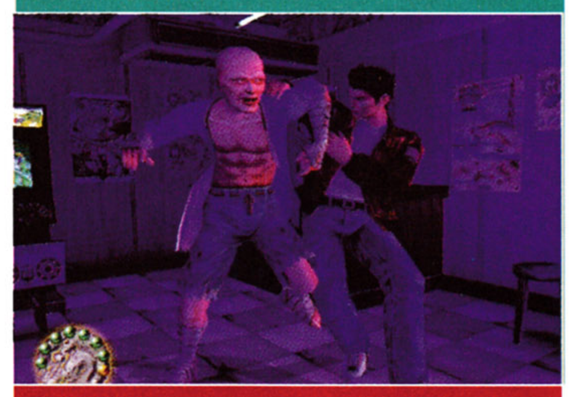
54 Back in town, talk to Nozomi and go to the Asia Travel Company to buy a ticket to Hong Kong.

55 Speak to the guy outside the jeans shop and he'll give you some worrying information about the Asia Travel Company. Go back home after this.

56 The next day, go back to Asia Travel once it opens to pick up your ticket. The heavies inside deny all knowledge of your payment so sort them out in a QTE. Jimmy, the chief swindler, promises to get you a ticket by tomorrow. There's nothing more you can do today so kill time until you can go home and sleep.

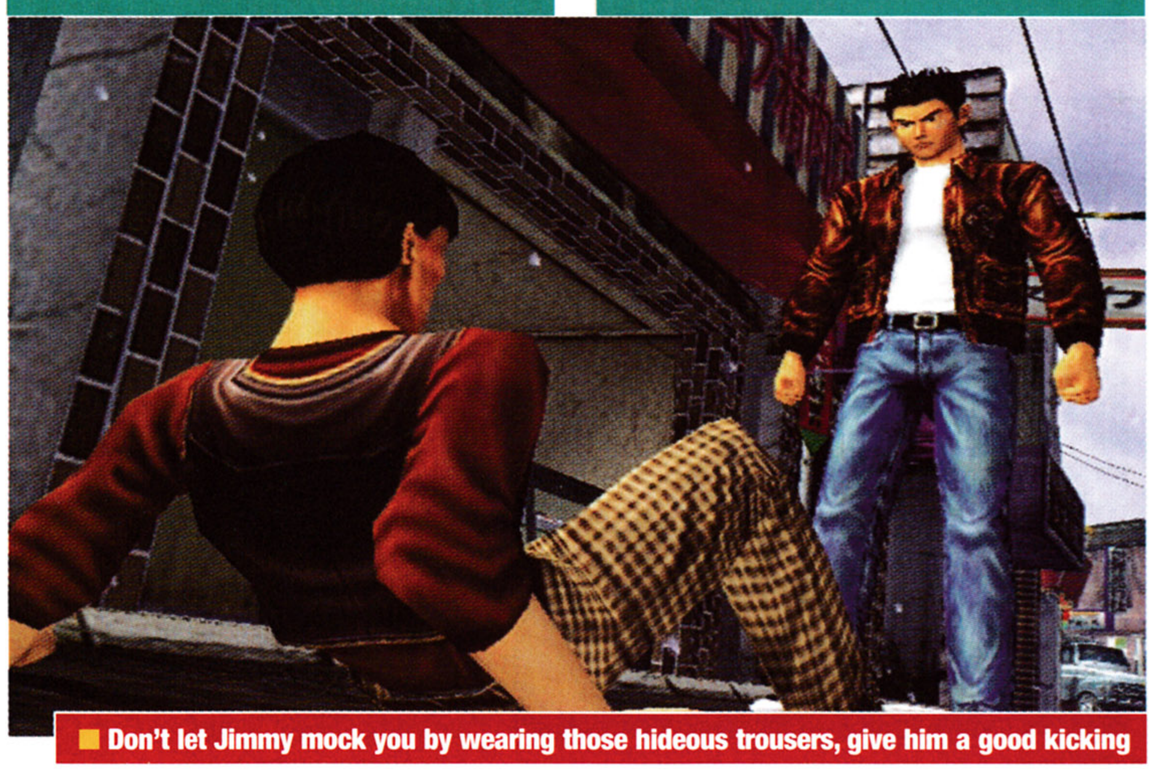
57 In the morning, Jimmy phones to arrange a meeting at Game You before noon.

58 Down at the arcade, Chai is waiting and the weirdo eats your ticket. A free battle follows and the freak actually turns out to be well-hard. If you manage to beat him there will be a short QTE, but if he kicks your ass Fuku-san will burst in and take you home.



Chai proves to be a surprisingly tough nut

59 The day after, go to Asia Travel Company and there's a fantastic QTE where you chase Jimmy through the town with loads of pedestrians and obstacles to avoid. When you catch him, Disc two finishes ■



Don't let Jimmy mock you by wearing those hideous trousers, give him a good kicking

WELL THAT'S DISCS ONE AND TWO SORTED. BUT WHAT THRILLS AWAIT IN DISC THREE? FIND OUT IN DC-UK 19!

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

Challenge

Show the world how talented you are!

Are you good at videogames? No, we mean REALLY good? Are you tired of beating your rubbish friends again and again and again? Do you often dream of receiving some sort of reward for your brilliance?

Well, **DC-UK** Challenge is the place for you. Just take a look at the challenges we've set below and then beat them so convincingly that the previous record holder feels like a talentless gimpoid. It'll feel good and might earn you a joypad! ■

METROPOLIS STREET RACER

NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW!

Come on, prove your motoring brilliance in Bizarre Creations' superb city racer

THE CHALLENGE

KUDOS TO YOU

> Enter any race and get as many Kudos points as you can without a joker. Take a photo of the score and send it to us along with the circuit and chapter info ■

TONY HAWK'S SKATEBOARDING

We've honed down our skating challenge into one ollie-tastic grind-fest. Rad

THE CHALLENGE

BUST THAT MOVE DUDES!

> Go to the Warehouse, where you can only use the rail in the middle of the floor. Hop on it and pull as many tricks as you can along it. Take a shot of the total score for your combo and make sure you wear knee-pads ■

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

Get to grips with our saucy *DOA2* challenges. Filthy sods...

THE CHALLENGE

TIME ATTACK

> How quickly can you battle past the six opponents to finish the game? To win, beat Stephen Mill's fast time of 1'05"84

SURVIVAL MODE

> Send us evidence of your highest number of consecutive victories in Survival scraps ■

SOUL CALIBUR

Namco's fighting game has enough depth to keep even the most hardened warriors coming back for more

THE CHALLENGE

TIME ATTACK

> Can you beat **00'35"93**?

Or:

SURVIVAL MODE

> Keep sending in evidence of your highest number of wins ■

SEGA BASS FISHING

Sega's bass-catching romp provides a decent challenge for the determined angler

THE CHALLENGE

LAND A BIGGUN'!

> Just catch the biggest darn bass you can, then send us a photo of the weight (in metric). You'll still have to beat John and Lachlan's 9998g though ■

CRAZY TAXI

Pick one of the challenges below and go for a manic ride!

THE CHALLENGE

CRAZY JUMP

> Can you beat David's leap?

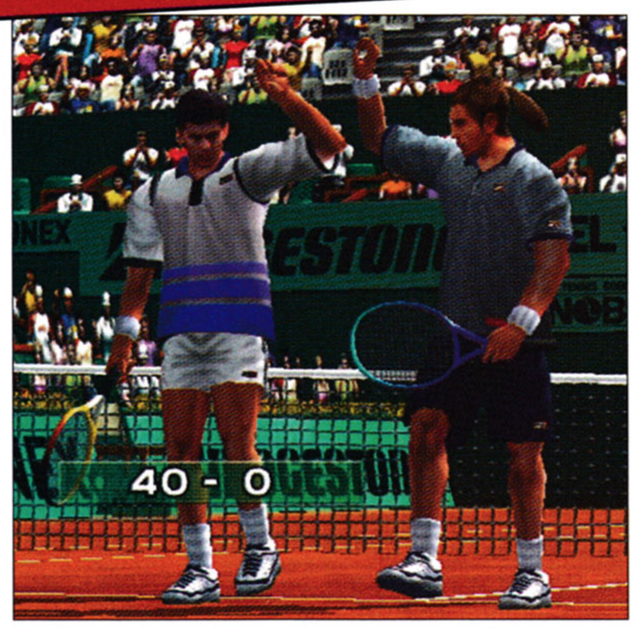
CRAZY JAM

> Glyn holds 1st place with **26.69**

CRAZY FLAG

> Robert McMillan is still at the top with a fantastic time of **5.05** ■

VIRTUA TENNIS



Prove you're a tennis ace in Sega's superb racquet 'em up by sending us your best times and scores for the Training games

THE CHALLENGE

TRAIN LIKE A PRO!

> World Circuit mode has a selection of eight fantastic Training games. Smash your way to the third stage for each of them, then send us your best scores/times for any of the Training games on level 3 ■

FERRARI 355 CHALLENGE

***Ferrari 355 Challenge* is *extremely* hard to master. Do you think you're up to this?**

THE CHALLENGE

BURN SOME RUBBER!

> Race at Suzuka Short with all assistances off, manual gearbox and tuning measurements at default. Choose Single Race, Racing Mode, and do three laps. Go really fast. Then prove it! ■

HIGH SCORES

Can you beat this month's top scores?
The three best get a Mad Catz joypad...

CRAZY TAXI

CRAZY JUMP

1	397.99	**David Chennells,** *via email*	◆
2	397.91	**Zakir Ahmed,** *Kent*	◆
3	396.66	**Dan Martin,** *Wimbledon*	◆
4	392.26	**Patrick Clarke,** *vie email*	◆
5	388.43	**Stephen McLeod,** *Manchester*	◆

CRAZY JAM

1	26.69	**Glyn Horsley,** *Nottinghamshire*	◆
2	27.47	**Daniel Bell,** *North Lincs*	◆
3	27.57	**Dean Tallon,** *Penzance*	◆
4	27.70	**Dean Taylor,** *Cumbria*	◆
5	27.94	**Dipen Karia,** *Peterborough*	◆

CRAZY FLAG

1	5.05	**Robert McMillan,** *Bedfordshire*	◆
2	5.14	**Daniel Salway,** *Bedfordshire*	◆
3	5.15	**Glyn Horsley,** *Nottinghamshire*	◆
4	5.44	**Richard Lee-Wright,** *Devon*	◆
5	5.49	**Steve Ashley,** *Kent*	◆

TONY HAWK'S

PULL AS MANY TRICKS AS YOU CAN ON THE WAREHOUSE RAIL

1	597313	**Gareth Shipley,** *Nottingham*	★
2	293800	**Jamie Slater,** *Hampshire*	◆
3	241598	**Paul Leighton,** *via email*	◆
4	208307	**Daniel Moffat,** *via email*	◆
5	194512	**Richard Sutton,** *Kent*	◆

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

TIME ATTACK

1	1'05"84	**Stephen Mills,** *Leeds*	WIN! ★
2	1'16"67	**Jon Ashley,** *(no address)*	★
3	1'41"19	**Daniel Moffat,** *Rhyl*	★
4	2'07"35	**Sabina Carpenter,** *Leeds*	▼
5	2'13"41	**Stuart Blyth,** *West Midlands*	▼

SURVIVAL MODE

1	1293236	**Sam Smith,** *Surrey*	WIN! ★
2	1251784	**Jason Ruddock,** *via e-mail*	★
3	1241120	**Daniel Moffat,** *Rhyl*	★
4	800000	**Stuart Blyth,** *West Midlands*	▼
5	627250	**Candy Campbell,** *Edinburgh*	▼

VIRTUA TENNIS

PIN CRASHER

1	$2,580	**Mark Wells,** *vie email*	◆
2	$2,560	**Donna Winter,** *Aylesbury*	★
3	$1,380	**Freddie Silver,** *Cheltenham*	▼

RETURN ACE

1	$6,700	**Mark Wells,** *Stoke Mandeville*	★
2	$5,700	**Mark Gilmour,** *Co. Londonderry*	★
3	$4,800	**Stephen Mills,** *Leeds*	★
4	$3,800	**Leigh Brown,** *Wakefield*	▼
5	$3,400	**Mark Wells,** *vie email*	▼

SEGA BASS FISHING

CATCH A BIG ONE!

1	9998g	**John Roche,** *Co. Cork*	◆
1	9998g	**Lachlan Bastiaen,** *(we need your address!)*	◆
2	9993g	**Graham Massen,** *Ashington*	★
3	9985g	**John Tuckey,** *London*	▼
4	9984g	**Adam Ketley,** *via email*	▼

SOUL CALIBUR

HIGHEST NUMBER OF WINS IN SURVIVAL MODE

1	109	**Kevin Bremmer,** *Inverness*	◆
2	109	**Jayne Barker,** *London*	★
3	101	**Bon Pang,** *London*	▼
4	91	**Guljar,** *Kent*	▼
5	78	**Aidan Fitzgerald,** *Cheshire*	▼

TIME ATTACK

1	00'35"93	**Marcus Butcher,** *Surrey*	◆
2	00'39"85	**Jon Bexon,** *Derby*	★
3	00'45"15	**Sam Smith,** *Essex*	▼
4	00'48"10	**Kevin Bremner,** *Inverness*	★
5	00'48"85	**Tony Richardson,** *Derbyshire*	★

FERRARI 355 CHALLENGE

RACE LIKE THE WIND!

1	2'46"881	**Daniel Moffat,** *Rhyl*	WIN! ★
2	2'58"934	**Alan Buchan,** *Via email*	★
3	3'47"389	**Jason Cook,** *Via email*	★

WIN! WIN! WIN!

A joypad or DC-UK T-Shirt!

■ Become a DC-UK challenge winner and get one of these prizes for your trouble

The THREE best new game scores we receive every month (we write WIN! next to their name, so you know who they are) will each win a Mad Catz joypad – perfect as a second, third or fourth pad for those multiplayer gaming sessions. Other top new entries will receive a DC-UK T-shirt. To get on the chart, simply attempt one of our challenges and send us proof of your massive score. A Polaroid will do the trick (or a Game Boy camera pic) – you could either post it to us, or email it. Oh, and for heaven's sake send us your address so we know where to send the prize! NB: Chart-toppers only receive one prize each, even if they stay on top for more than a month ■

Send proof of your high scores to one of the addresses below:

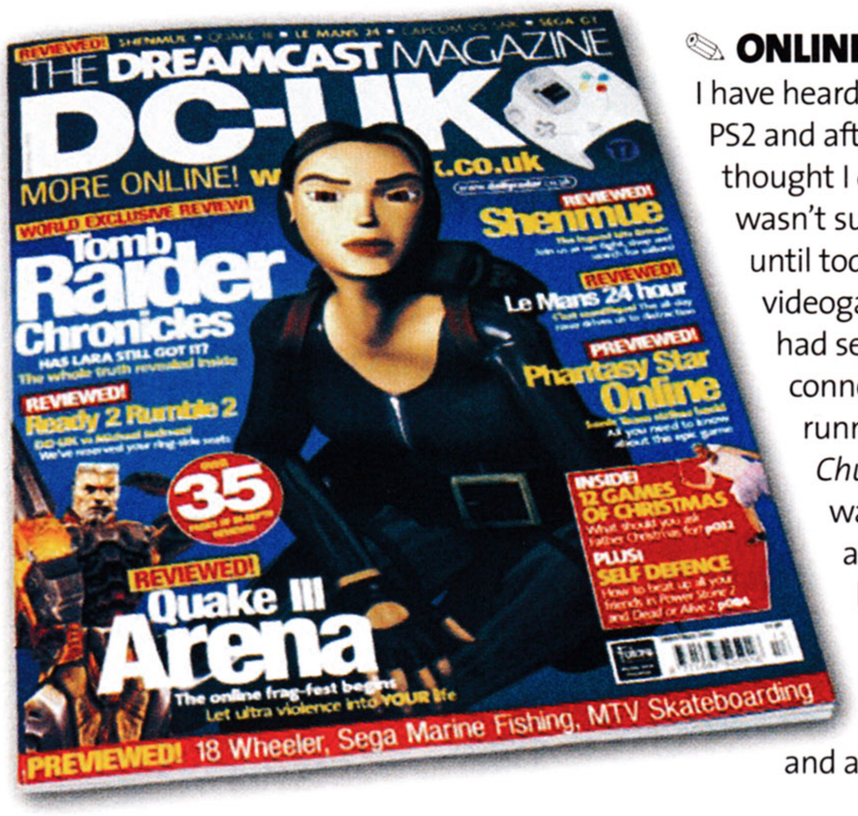
Email: dcuk@futurenet.co.uk
Fax: 01225 732275
Write:

DC-UK
Challenge
Future Publishing PLC
30 Monmouth Street
Bath, BA1 2BW

DC-INTERACTIVE

D-m@il

Enlist now for Dreamcast opinion warfare!



ONLINE GAMING ROCKS

I have heard all the hype about the PS2 and after giving it a bit of thought I decided not to get one. I wasn't sure about my decision until today though. I went to a videogame shop where they had set up four pods connected by the Net, and running two games. A *ChuChu Rocket* online final was being played as well as another game which had a Japanese name.

What I first noticed was that the latter had headphones and a microphone attached to it. It was a game where one person has a restricted firstperson view of a map and the other has a thirdperson view. The object was to get bags of money and get back to your car without being caught. The way to do this is by one person directing the other using the microphone. It was so much fun! I've always been sceptical about online gaming but this has totally changed my beliefs. The best news is that we get it first in the UK! The only way I will ever buy a PS2 now is if they can match that simplistic and yet totally engrossing kind of game. If the DC keeps churning out games like this then it will prove that it really is the console of the future.

David Talisman, St Johns Wood

> "The sad, sad fact of the matter though, is that your average consumer will be sucked in by the mindless hype and lies"

***DOA2* better on PS2 than DC? No way!**

The game you are referring to is Dream Darobo *– we wrote about it in* **DC-UK** *17 (see Internet news). Microphone technology could well be the element that finally propels online multiplayer gaming into the mainstream. Fighting against other people is much more fun when you can shout, laugh and generally abuse them in the process. Previously, the only way players could communicate with each other while indulging in games like* Half-Life *and* Quake *was via the keyboard. The only problem with this is, by the time you've typed in 'Ha, I killed you', you've already have been blasted into smithereens yourself!*

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE

Dreamcast is dead! But, before you dismiss me as some whining PS2 pre-orderer, let me explain. I am a DC owner, and a happy one at that. The games are among the most original and inventive I've played. So why do I feel that Sega is fighting a lost battle? Purely for my interests as a gamer, I bought a PlayStation 2 magazine, to see what was up and coming on the PS2. Quite surprisingly, I found that there actually wasn't a great deal of exciting titles on the way (indeed they have yet to give a game a 90 per cent plus review score in their opening two issues). Yet, to my horror, the writing was some of the most blind and biased I've ever witnessed. Apparently *Dead or Alive 2* on DC pales in comparison to the PS2 version and much the same was said about the second instalment of *Ready 2 Rumble*. Throughout the magazine, there was an air of expectancy and the belief that PS2 offered an experience head and shoulders above any console ever. Well sorry, but sequels and dull uninspiring games, doth not a good console make.

The sad, sad fact of the matter though, is that your average consumer (ie, the same people who made the original PS the behemoth that it is) will be sucked in by the mindless hype, and downright lies. I, as a gamer, am interested in the PS2, but I can honestly, hand on heart, say that the DC's future (in terms of games anyway) looks ten times rosier than that of Sony's offspring. It's just a bugger that it'll be swept aside by Sony, no matter what Sega seems to pull out of the bag.

Ascott, via email

UNDERWATER FOOTBALL

Has anyone seen the little soccer game in *Ecco the Dolphin*? It's in the Powers of Levitation stage. In the inspection dolphins' room there is a secret room with the Stealth power. If you head butt one of the glowing orange spheres

MAIL OF THE MONTH

MARACA MADNESS INFECTS MANSFIELD!

Yes, it cost me a whopping £140 but buying *Samba De Amigo* on import was one of the best decisions I've ever made. After reading your review there was just no way I could resist the opportunity to shake those maracas and see Amigo the Monkey getting down to the samba sounds, and after five minutes play I fell deeply in love with this crazy game.

So much so, in fact, that me and my mate, Chris, decided to turn our burgeoning Britpop combo into a Samba duo instead. We've only played one gig so far in our guise as 'The Mansfield Maraca Monkeys', (me on flamenco guitar, Chris on maracas – not the game versions, naturally) but our unique interpretations of Soul Bossa Nova and La Bamba went down an absolute storm, as did our poncho and sombrero outfits.

We'd like to thank **DC-UK** for letting us know about this amazing game and give a massive big up to Sega for producing the best *Beatmania* game ever and inspiring our new musical direction. Because of *Samba De Amigo* you'll probably be seeing us on Top of the Pops in the not too distant future. Well, possibly...

Steve 'Samba' Hughes

Please tell us you're making this up?!

You win...

This month, thanks to those chaps at Simply Games, we are giving away four top games and a VM to the reader lucky enough to win Mail of the Month. So, well done, er, Steve Samba.

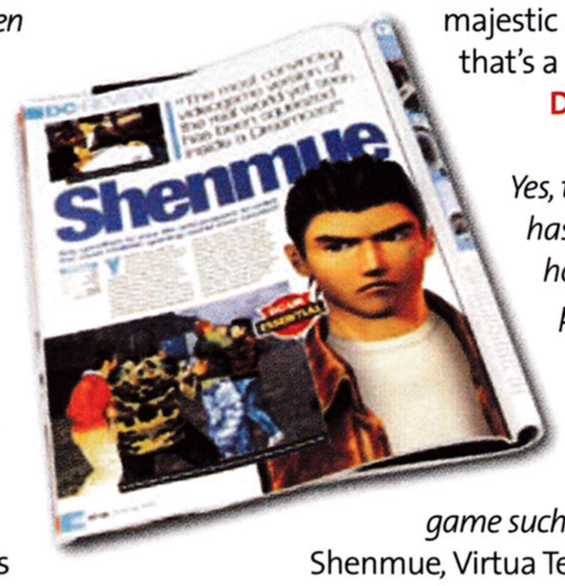
simplyGAMES.COM

Was Mario the inspiration behind Thunderbirds? Not unless Gerry Anderson saw into the future!

below it, you should be taken to a secret and frustrating soccer game!

Douglas, New Zealand

If you want to be taken to a frustrating soccer game and don't have Ecco, *simply ask someone to drive you to Man City.*



✎ WHY NO SUPPORT?

With some fantastic games out, DC hardware is now showing us what it is really capable of and with peripherals such as the microphone and digital camera to come, we really are being spoiled by Sega. And yet, the doubt remains. Yes, the games DC have are all classics, and ones that Sony, Nintendo and Microsoft would kill for. But, and it's a big but, the majority of them are all firstparty. Looking ahead into the release schedule after Christmas, the big hitters are once again mostly from Sega themselves. And this worries me – where are the big games from Namco, Konami, Capcom, Eidos et al? Personally, with the games collection I've already amassed, I can safely say that I've had more than enough value from the Dreamcast, even if not one single game was ever released for the system again.

However, in the battle for new users, I'm worried that the lack of thirdparty support is going to put a lot of potential customers off, and with a machine as majestic as the Dreamcast, that's a real big shame.

Danny Edgar, Coventry

Yes, third party support has waned of late, but hopefully things will pick up if Dreamcast sells as well as it ought to this Christmas. If the mere existence of game such as Quake III, Shenmue, Virtua Tennis, MSR *and* Jet Set Radio *doesn't persuade people to support Sega's machine then we really don't know what will. Oh, hang on, of course we do. Advertising.*

✎ DC MODEM SLOW? NO WAY!

Anyone believing that the Dreamcast modem is slow and laggy read this. I regularly play *NFL 2K1* on my import machine against opponents in the US with hardly any lag at all. Some games are more playable than others, but if you stick to the East coast lobbies like Miami, Boston and New York, and play someone with a fair to good connection rate you would think you were playing against someone sat next to you. If you both have keyboards you can chat while you play. *NFL 2K1* is a stunning and realistic game which is made almost perfect by the extremely addictive online option.

L Mitchell, via email

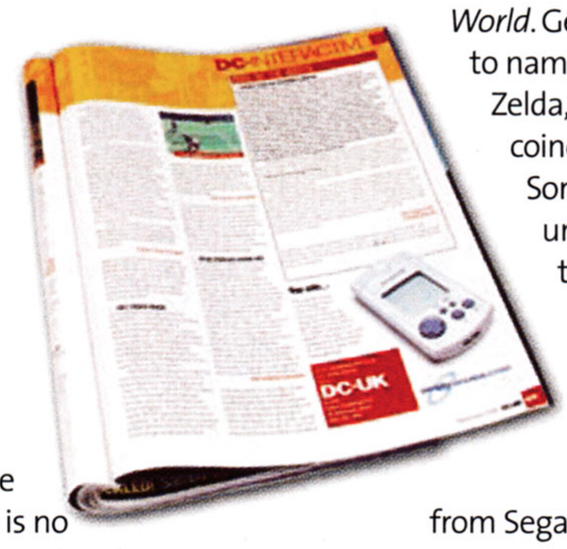
We'll be taking a look at – and rating – all the online games next month, including the ones you can only buy on Import – like NFL 2K.

✎ NOT ENOUGH COMPETITION

I am the proud owner of a PlayStation, N64, Dreamcast, Saturn, and PlayStation 2 and for as long as I've been playing games you lot have been bickering about what's the best and how whatever machine you decided to buy MUST be the greatest machine there is. Well wake up. There is no 'greatest machine' in fact there's not even a reliable brand name. Can any of you really say that you're not glad that the PlayStation brought us adult games (at last!) like *Silent Hill* or *Resident Evil*? Can anybody argue with the genius of *Zelda* or *Perfect Dark*? And can any of you PlayStation 2 boys dismiss such important works as *Shenmue* and *MSR*? Even the most ardent Sega fan must be licking their lips in anticipation for the sumptuous *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Every machine has them, and they always will, we need to learn to accept and appreciate that. Just think... the only reason we have these stupid arguments is because there's only three major players in the console industry and it is just an industry like anything else – imagine how we'd be if there were as many choices as there are for every other type of machinery, eg, TVs, CD players, speakers etc... Thought about that, anyone?

Al White, Cambridge.

Yeah, but arguing about consoles is fun.

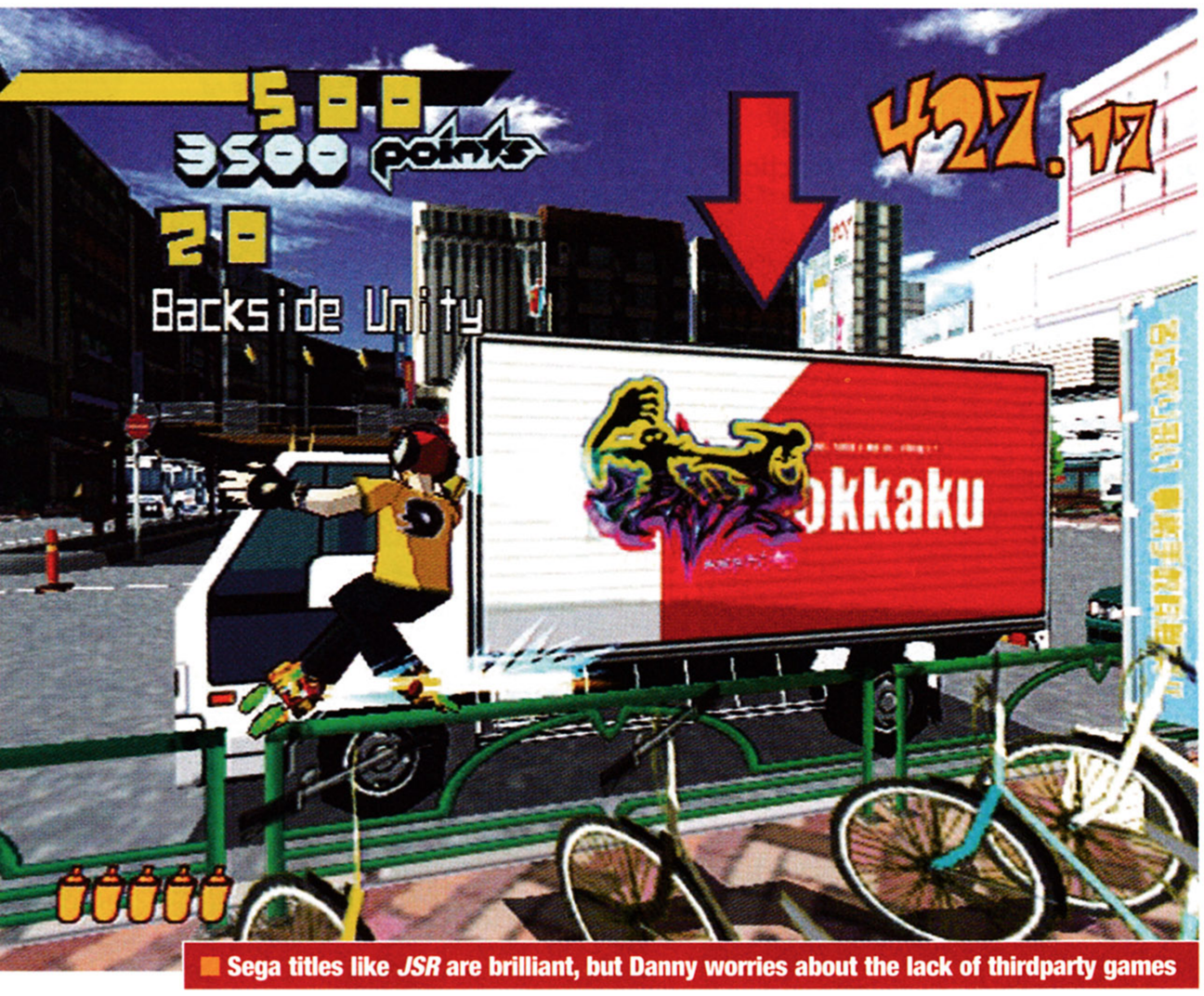


✎ SUPER MARIO TV

In response to Kees Fluiter's letter in the December issue of **DC-UK**, I must point out that while there may not be a gene named after Nintendo's moustachioed mascot, he does have a TV show to his credit (which is nearly scientific). The opening credits of Gerry Anderson's Thunderbirds clearly states it was filmed in 'supermarionation', an obvious reference to Shigeru Miyamotos *Super Mario Land* and *Super Mario World*. Gerry later went on to name the evil old lady Zelda, in Terrahawks. A coincidence? Surely not. Sony's PS may be undeservedly leading the console wars in terms of sales, but it has a long way to go before it can better such prestigious boasts from Sega and Nintendo.

Tito, via email

Erm, I'm afraid you've made a slight miscalculation. Thunderbirds was actually produced in the sixties, at least a decade before Miyamoto even thought of his dungaree wearing hero. The 'mario' in 'Supermarionation' actually stands for 'marionette' which of course means puppet (at least that's what our Art Editor Karl says). Have any other readers spotted videogame references in books, plays, films or TV programmes which crop up before the game itself was written? Send them in!



Sega titles like *JSR* are brilliant, but Danny worries about the lack of thirdparty games

Email: dcuk@futurenet.co.uk
Fax: 01225 732275
Write:
DC-UK
D-m@il
Future Publishing PLC
30 Monmouth Street
Bath, BA1 2BW

Q and A

Sit down, relax and let **DC-UK** sort your gaming life out

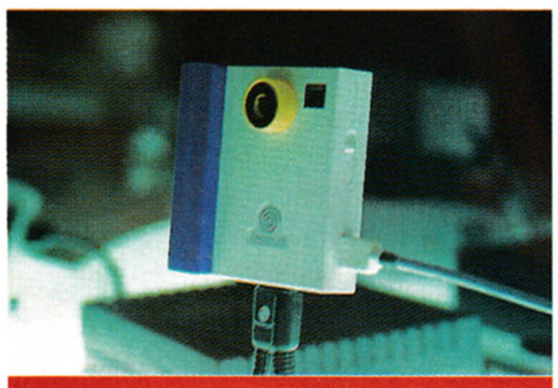
"Does *Quake III* feature splitscreen play?" Asks Kanthan

DREAMEYE DATE

Do you have any idea when the DreamEye would be coming out and do you know how much it will cost?

Dan, via email

No hard date at the moment, but we suspect it'll be early next year. Price-wise, it's impossible to tell, but we'd estimate at anywhere between £50 and £100. But don't quote us.


"Does it take still images?" Asks Cassie

WILL THE INTERNET LIVE?

In the future when the Dreamcast is officially a dead console will the home page on the Internet still be active? Also I have heard of the digital camera for Dreamcast, but does it take still images, like the Game Boy camera, or moving pictures, like a video camera?

Cassie Master, Leicester.

In the year 2084, it's likely that Sega, let alone Dreamcast will be dead and buried. An official homepage may well be defunct as well, but there'll be trillions of retro fansites dedicated to the memory of Sega's wonderful console. As far as DreamEye goes, it will have the ability to take still and short animated sequences that can be tagged onto emails. Look out for it next year.

DO I BUY A WHEEL?

Should I buy a racing wheel? I've got a couple of racing games, and *Crazy Taxi* would be cool with a wheel and pedals, but is it worth it? Most of them are crappy unstable things that are too weedy to hold the pressure.

BD Rookes

Wheels only work well if the game is programmed to accommodate them. *Crazy Taxi* is indeed fun with a wheel, but given the game's frantic nature, it will take a right thrashing. *Ferrari 355* also works brilliantly, as does *Sega Rally 2*. We'd suggest the Thrustmaster Ferrari Wheel, as it's small, allowing easy one-handed action, as well as having a g-clamp for firm bolting to a work surface. And it's only 40 notes.

BROADBAND INFO PLEASE

1) The Sega Europe Website has an article about a DVD player and DC console package for £299, but every shop I have been to has not heard of it. Could you suggest somewhere?
2) When is the mouse coming out for the Dreamcast?
3) Could you give me some information on the broadband network for Dreamcast, Is it coming out in March?

M Morris, via email

1) The £299.99 deal that includes the Encore 450 DVD player should be widely available. Try your local independent, multiple and import shops, if you have any. If that still doesn't turn anything up, give one of the more reputable mail order companies a ring. Try Gameplay on 0845 20 10 444.
2) No date yet on the Dreamcast mouse, but an intelligent guess would be on December 8, when *Quake III Arena* launches, probably in the form of a bundle.
3) Broadband communications, otherwise known as ADSL (Asynchronous Digital Server Line) in this country is dependent upon British Telecom installing an infrastructure of broadband cabling throughout the country. Big cities are already enjoying the benefits of high-speed Net access, while small villages will have to wait a good few years before they are connected. Sega isn't likely to be offering ADSL to its customers yet, so much of the population will be stuck with modem technology for a long while.

"I can't work out *MSR*!"

CAN I REPLAY MSR RACES?

This may or may not seem like a stupid question but I have had *MSR* for a day now and cannot work out how to either view or save replays after a race. Am I missing something that is staring me in the face?

Nick, via email

As far as we can tell, there is no way to save replays after a race as they are limited to short highlights only. It is possible to save ghost data for racing against at a later date, but there is no replay save/view function.

CAN I FRAG MY MATES?

I would like to know if *Quake 3* on DC will feature spiltscreen play?

Kanthan, via email

***Quake III Arena* is indeed splitscreen, allowing up to four fraggers to take each other on. Check last month's review for the full verdict.**

DC NEEDS THE ELITE

Do you have any idea if Star Trek Voyager Elite Force is coming to the Dreamcast in the near future as its probably *Half-Life*'s only real competition in the first person shooter area.

Podge, via email

As it stands, there is are no plans to bring *Star Trek Elite Force* to Sega's white box, but it would be a welcome number among the swelling ranks of Dreamcast shooters. In terms of being *Half-Life*'s only competition, well, we'd have to disagree, Podge (if indeed that is your real name). *Quake III Arena* is a phenomenal game and the likes of *Unreal Tournament*, *Outtrigger*, *System Shock 2*, and *Soldier of Fortune* will certainly give it a run for its money.

"Crazy Taxi would be cool with a wheel and pedals, but is it worth it?"

SCIENCE OFFICER MAXIMUS HAS GONE AWOL

He was last seen with that naughty minx 7 of 9. Hopefully, we will find him, spank his bottom and return him to Q and A next month.

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Internet News

DC-UK heads out on another Web surfing safari

Shopping is the new gaming

Forget playing online and start PAYING online

Sega wants you to shop via Dreamcast. Or one of its Net cafes (above)

Yes, Sega Japan is really, really serious about diverting it's business concerns toward the Internet. At a recent show in Tokyo, Sega and its big daddy company, CSK, showed off a range of new Dreamcast peripherals aimed at making ecommerce a whole lot more accessible – in turn making Dreamcast the natural web surfing choice for anyone too afraid to own a PC.

The major item revealed at the event was a tiny flat box that plugs into your DC transforming it into a video phone in tandem with a camera you place on top of your TV. It's actually meant for online shopping, allowing you to talk with real life shop assistants and view products in all their 3D glory.

Backing the video phone up is a new smart-card device. This will hold all your personal and financial details, so you can avoid having to repeatedly typing them in every time you want to buy something from **www.amazon.co.uk**. Sega has already developed one of these for it's Net@ Internet cafes in Japan and that seems to be working fine.

No release date has been mentioned for either of these. But we can expect them to arrive late next year (if at all) in the UK ■

Dream a little DreamCall

Sega Europe set to offer cheap phone calls

A question: What do you get if you cross the DC microphone with Sega's ISP service and something called DreamCall? International calls at local rates is the answer! Coming to the UK 'soon' (Sega's helpful words, not ours), DreamCall is a real-time voice service which allows you to communicate with others via the DC microphone, and as you're dialling through your DC, any calls are only charged at the standard Internet access local rates (ie, one pence a minute off-peak).

Dream Dorobo (one of the initial Planet Ring games) is the first title to support it, allowing you to communicate with a team mate from overseas. Assuming you both speak a common lingo that is. Also, (and a bit more technical than we usually like to report on at **DC-UK**) there's a bit of paper going through Parliament at the moment suggesting that BT should have to offer the facility to provide unmetered Internet access for all other phone companies. Basically, if it goes through without a hitch, it'll mean more telecommunications companies offering more 'free' Internet deals for DC ■

Become a prize-winning online pilot thanks to Sega Japan

Of Dog Fights and Fish

Win stuff online. In Japan

Hey, it just wouldn't be an Internet news round-up without some report of the Japanese getting preferential treatment in the online gaming domain. This time they've got another two competitions to take part in. First up, *Aero Dancing i* will launch on November 16 with a 'Catch and Flight' competition, which basically translates to dogfighting online with three of the game's characters (each at differing skill levels). It's also rumoured that there is a secret Kamikaze option too.

For the more serene and reflective gamer, the *Sega Marine Fishing* 'Joshu-ya Cup' offers the chance to download some special lures and hunt down the elusive Blue Marine fish to win prizes. Whether we'll ever get such online support from Sega over here in our rainy climes is doubtful. We can but hope ■

BROWSER

Speedy news snippets from the WWW

Broadband for US

The second day of the year 2001 will see our electorally-challenged US cousins being able to take advantage of Broadband Internet access. Coming in at just $59.99 (about £40), Sega estimate that its performance is on a par with anything else out there at the moment (DSL, LAN or any other three letter acronym you care to chose), with the speed being described as 'incredible'. But then they would say that wouldn't they?

No news of a UK release date yet, but look out for some sort of tie-in with one of the big online first person shooters that keep being delayed until next year ■

No wire for Japan

A Japanese company named KDDI has created a wireless Internet connection thingy for DC. Instead of wiring your machine up to the phone socket, thereby creating a potential trip hazard, you just put this aerial thing in the back of your machine and that sends Internet data rays to the phone line instead, or something. The device was recently shown off at the huge CEATEC Japan show, held in the same exhibition centre as the Tokyo Game Show. No further details about this handy device are available at the moment and, as usual, there's no guarantee at all of a European release. Looks like you're going to have to live with that dodgy wire-all-over-the-floor situation a little longer ■

HOME CINEMA

This week we show you how to download films and watch them on your Dreamcast! Actually, don't get too excited…

A veritable menagerie of mini-Flash animations!

WATCH! Ever wanted to enjoy all the fun of the cinema from your front room without the hassle of having to go out to the video shop? Well, why not use your Dreamcast to view some downloadable goodies?

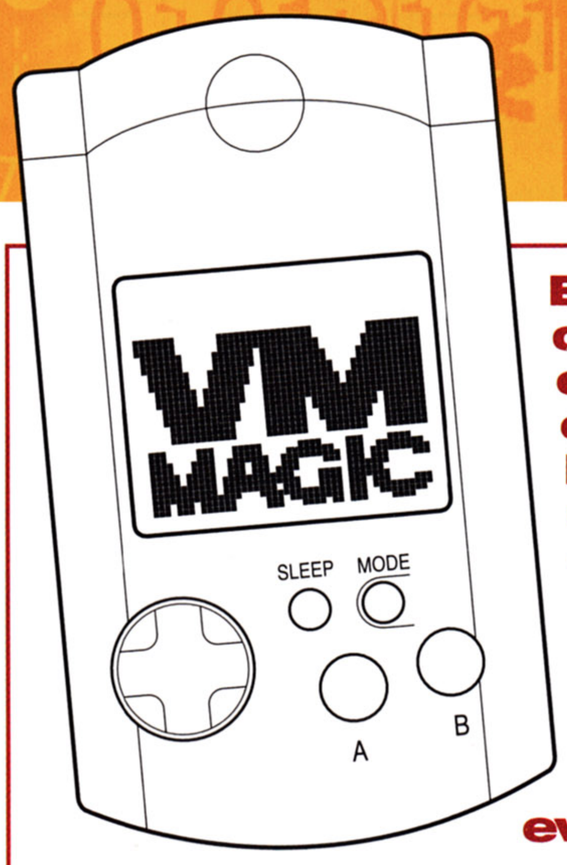
WHAT? Take a seat, sit back and relax with some cutting-edge DC viewing. That is, if your definition of 'cutting-edge' equates to Sega ads, related movie clips and amateur Flash animations. While the current ageing DreamKey browser doesn't support the type of technical know-how required to download the many mini-Net films out there, you might as well make use of what it can do.

WHERE? While film and download sites are more common on the Web than the cast of Beverly Hills 90210 now signing on the dole, it's a sad fact that most sites don't work on Dreamcast. However, building on the premise that we want to fill up the other few hundred words needed for this mini-feature, we'd like to direct you over to **dreamworld.vgamin.com**, where the 'media' section contains a selection of about ten Sega related bits and pieces put up there especially for your viewing pleasure. Our particular favourites are the bizarre *ChuChu Rocket* ad (with accompanying acoustic guitar based theme song) and the previews for the tag 'em up urban action of *Jet Set Radio*. And if all this Sega bias is getting you down, visit the world of Newgrounds (**www.newgrounds.com**) for a veritable menagerie of mini-Flash animations (found under the 'toons' heading). Be warned though, some of them hanker on the edge of the line that says 'bad taste.' Even by today's standards.

HOW? Download! It's easy – simply select your retina-pleasing visual entertainment of choice from the menu and click on it. You'll then be presented with one of those cute little download boxes that you get when using VM's on the net. When the blue bar fills up, you're done. Simple.

TIME? One slight problem though, due to some technical jiggery-pokery probably involving a lack of internal RAM or ROM, it can take an age to complete a download. Well, up to ten minutes at least. Don't then, do what we did and accidentally press the cancel button after the download was 95 per cent complete. How we look back and laugh at those wasted minutes of our lives!

HELP! As we said, downloadable films are not generally DC friendly, so if you're presented with an empty box where your intuitive judgement tells you the action should be at, move on and put the past behind you. While viewing things, the joypad buttons act as they would in most games – the red one kicks things off while that lovely grey triangle known only as 'start' pauses things. So you can look at them. Watch out for the blue one though, it has a nasty habit of quitting the current download. Finally, don't worry if, while waiting for something to download, the screen suddenly fills up with disturbing pictures of a shaven haired man with a scowl on his face – it's only the energy-saving screensaver kicking in. And on that tasteful note we'll finish ■



Every issue our online experts comb the Net for useless VM downloads. (Then they go back to the same site we get them from every month)

Booyaka. We show this picture every month, don't we?

Another world exclusive folks – this time our intrepid team of dedicated VM experts have locked themselves away in a dingy underground laboratory to dissect your favourite mini-Game Boy shaped friend and come up with a money-saving technique guaranteed to revolutionise your lives. We're proud to announce that it is actually possible to get away with using cheaper batteries than the ones recommended in the VM instruction manual. Simply purchase the slightly more waif-like CR2025 ones and place a thin piece of card on top of them to keep them in place! Okay, so we discovered it when we bought the wrong batteries and couldn't be bothered to walk back to the shop – but hey, they work, and they seem to last longer as well, so stop complaining at the back.

After that, we thought that we'd check out an official Sega site to see what they were doing to promote the downloadable capabilities of the VM. Not a lot seems to be the answer. In fact, over at **www.sega.com** all we could find was one measly old *Soul Calibur* game, so we skipped back to **www.booyaka.com** (you know, the same place we get them from every month) and uncovered another mixed bag. At the very bottom was 'VM Pager', which, as far as we can tell, does absolutely nothing (unless it does actually transform the unit into an annoying bleeping box). We faired better with *Sniper 3* though, and it should certainly feed your appetite if you're saving up for its big daddy *Silent Scope*. Top of the pile was *Mario* which, and we're going out on a limb here, contains the best VM character likeness we've yet to see. No square heads here. It also contains on screen instructions and gives you a choice of three characters. Bet you'd never thought you'd see Mario, Luigi and Princess on DC did you? ■

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COOL SITES

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www.mrshowbiz.go.com
Long-running showbiz gossip site with nice design and up-to-date celebrity clap-trap.

Fat Babies
www.fatbabies.com
Stupidly named games industry news and rumours site with US bias. The forum is quite astoundingly ugly and is full of Americans insulting each other and rarely making a salient point. Fun for five minutes, though.

Lisa Snowdon
www.lisasnowdon.com/main/welcome.html
An incredibly obsessive shrine to the gorgeous Ms Snowdon with tons of pics and even a few movies of her TV ad appearances. Unfortunately the webmaster has taken it upon himself to censor the arty nude pics. For heaven's sake, what kind of a man are you?!

Am I Hot or Not?
www.amihotornot.com
Okay, most of you know about this, but the rest of you go there now, it's great fun. Make sure you post a pic of one of your mates. An ugly one ■

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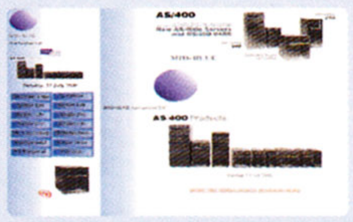

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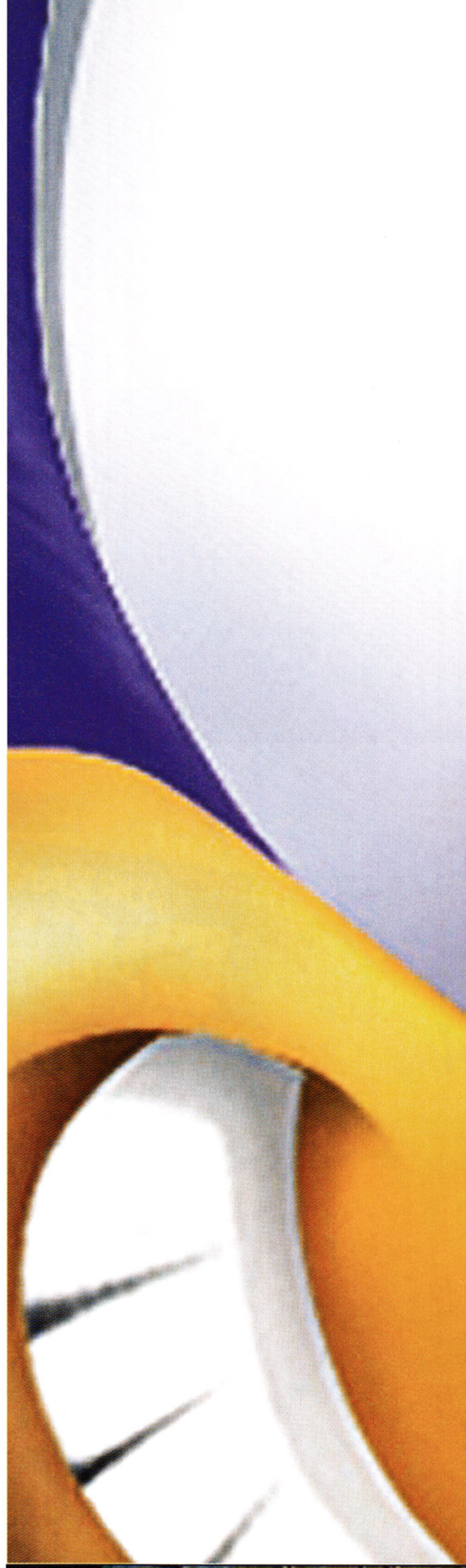

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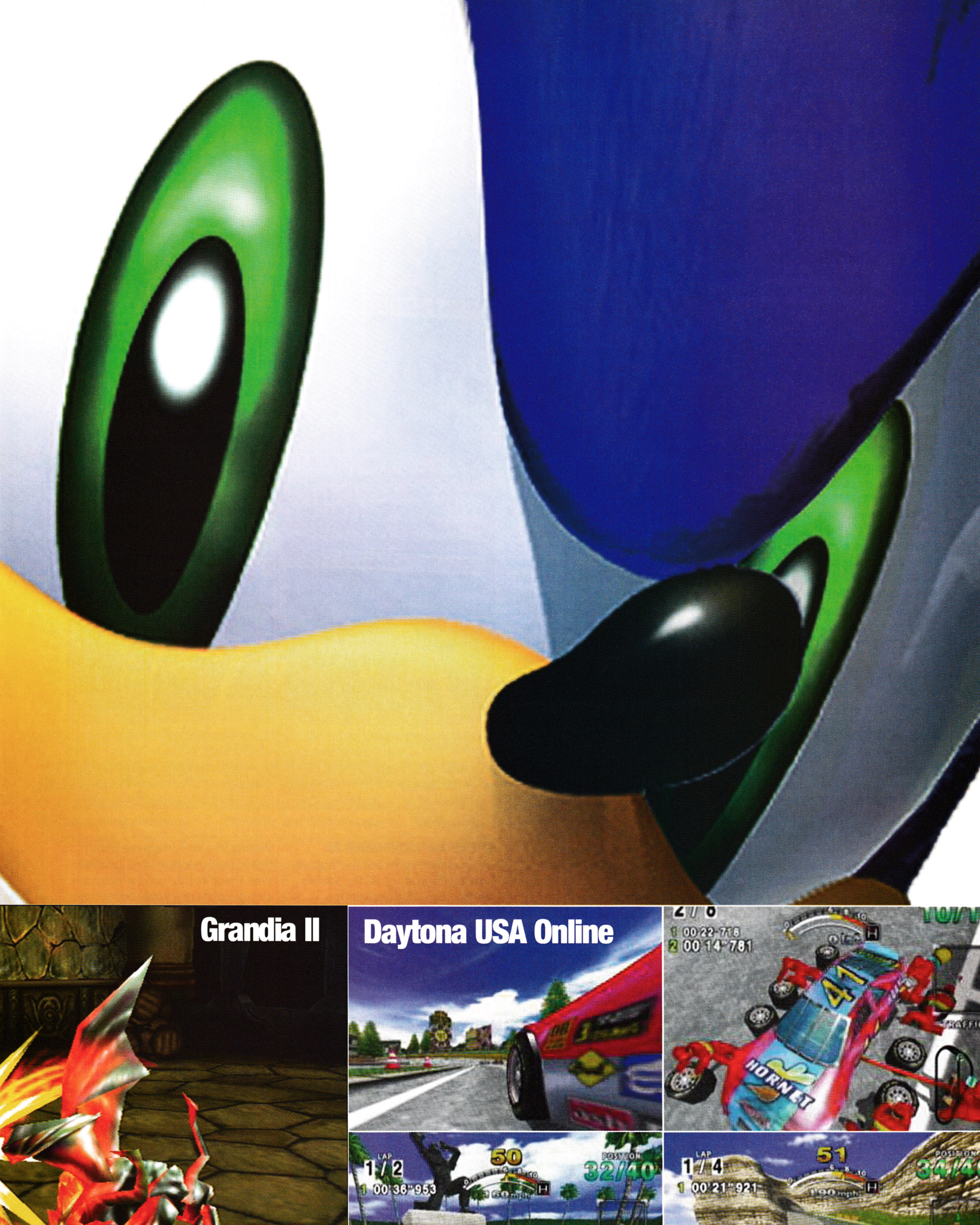

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DC-FINAL

Team Diary

Another truly fascinating glimpse into the making of **DC-UK** from Mr Stuart

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 16
Well, we're two weeks into the issue and this is how it looks so far: 21 pages have been written and designed so they're ready for the printers; 19 pages have been written, but not yet laid out; and 47 pages remain in various states of undress. Hmmm, it could be better, but that's not bad considering it's been another rollercoaster month for game releases. *Samba De Amigo*, *European Super League* and *Speed Devils Online* all dropped off the plan at an early stage, leaving a couple of embarrassing gaps. We've filled 'em now though.

I spent much of today editing the main feature, and checking pages. Apart from that, me and Lee had a game of *UEFA Dream Soccer* this lunchtime, as Manchester City vs Manchester Utd. Man City were leading one goal to nil until 15 minutes from time, when Utd suddenly put three past Weaver. I attacked Lee with a chair. Luckily, though, we played again later on and City won four – three in extra time after a thundering Dickov golden goal from 40 yards out. Lord, please let that happen on Saturday.

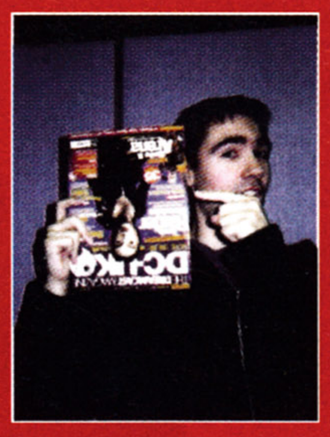
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 17
An excruciatingly boring day – for me at least. I've started doing a bit of forward planning for next issue, but quickly got bored of that. Unfortunately, nothing else has happened. There are no pages for me to check, because they're still all being written. The *Metropolis Street Racer* tips have come in so I can take some screenshots to go with them – which at least gives me an excuse to play the game for two hours. Oh, and *Toy Story 2* arrived today with a Toy Story chocolate bar selection pack and a copy of the film. That'll be getting 10/10 then.

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 18
Me and Lee went to see the Manchester derby. As guests of Eidos Interactive we got some great seats – right in the heart of the Man City fans, so Lee had to keep his gob shut – even when David Beckham scored a cracker within the opening two minutes. I feel I took City's defeat very well and only refused to speak to Lee for about a two hours after the match.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 21
Right, we've decided to try and get everything done by Friday, even though deadline isn't technically until Monday 27. Knowing us, everything will take longer than we think, so it's best to try and accept that rather than pretend it won't happen. *Vanishing Point* has now shown up so we can slot that in with the other previews. And then there's the mysterious case of *NBA 2K1* – it's only a page but for some reason it's taken about three days to lay out and two days to check – what is going on? I'm getting scared, I think it must be cursed by the evil spirit of a dead LA Lakers player or something. Luckily Karl made us all feel better late in the afternoon with his unprompted impression of 'how dinosaurs walked'. Apparently tyrannosaurus rex, history's most terrifying predator, stalked the Earth like Dale Winton with both legs in plaster.

David Beckham's freekick against City, here reproduced via *UEFA Dream Soccer*

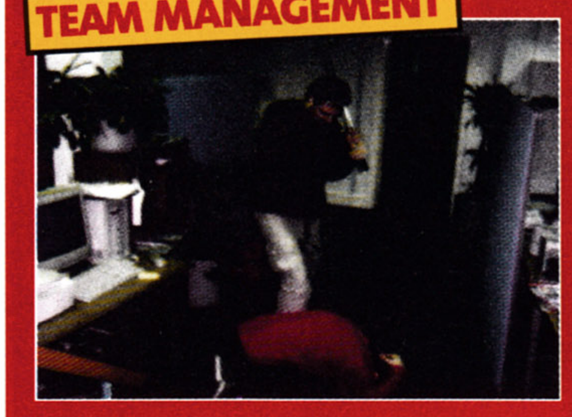
THE ART OF EDITING



Keith gives you an in-depth look at the demanding job of an editor

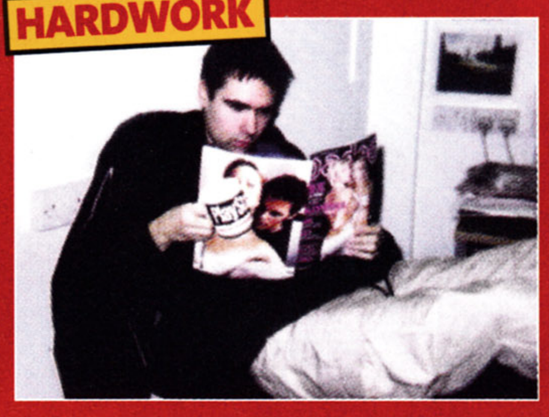
"Hi readers. Now I expect you think editing a magazine is a complete doss of a job. Sitting there playing all the best games while bossing everyone else around like a member of the landed aristocracy. But it's not that easy. Editing a videogame magazine is a tough demanding job that requires you to master a variety of skills. Still don't believe me? Right, I'll show you!"

TEAM MANAGEMENT



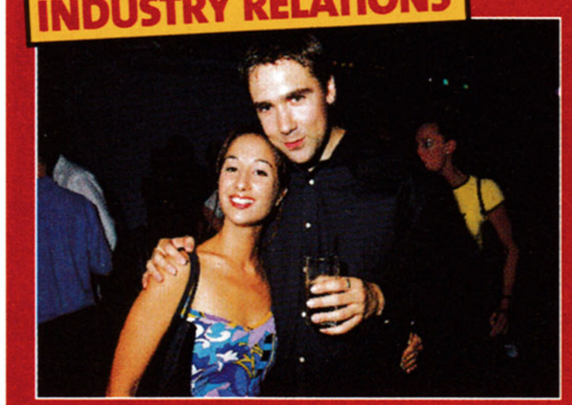
"Managing your staff well is a key part of editing. Sometimes they might get out of line, but you have to respect their feelings and talk through any disagreements that may arise."

HARDWORK



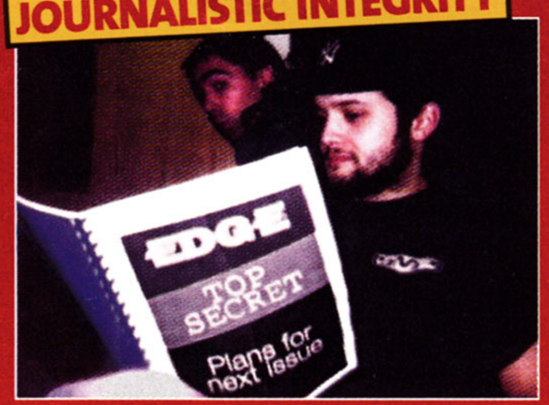
"A hands on approach is crucial in this business. Writing, taking screenshots, going to meetings and stuff – I never get anytime to myself. This is the way it ought to be."

INDUSTRY RELATIONS



"Getting out and meeting members of the industry is important. Here I am in a meeting with Eidos PR manager Eva Whitlow. As you can see, this is an extremely difficult part of the job."

JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY



"Making sure that DC-UK has its finger on the pulse of the videogame industry is vital, and I do a lot of the news hunting myself. Luckily, my many contacts feed me exclusive stories."

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 23
Two days till deadline and the magazine is taking shape at last. All the features are done, we've finally drawn the diagrams for *Metropolis Street Racer* and *Cannon Spike* has arrived in the office, filling Neil 'I wish 3D had never happened' Randall with pure joy. Resident Evil 3 still isn't here though. Pesky zombies.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 24
Well, it looks like we're going to make it. Two whole sections of the mag are finished now, with only late-comers *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2* and *Resident Evil 3* yet to be completed. I think this is the first time in my magazine history that so much has been done in so little time. The office has suddenly become a calm place, the only noise coming from Neil's Neo Geo CD console. Yes, the retro mad fool has abandoned Dreamcast in favour of an obsolete console that shows a juggling monkey on its loading screen. Admittedly, though, *Metal Slug* is one of the finest games ever made and if you ever happen to find a copy (along with the console itself) at a car boot sale, buy it.

But, anyway, I digress. The mag is almost done, the weekend is almost here and thankfully my job almost done. See ya ■

> "Yes, the retro mad fool has abandoned Dreamcast"

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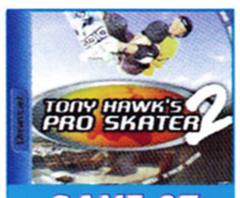

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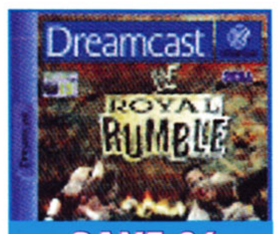

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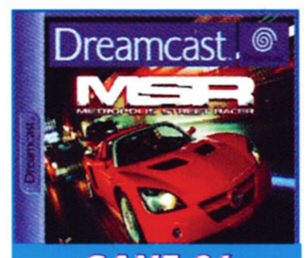

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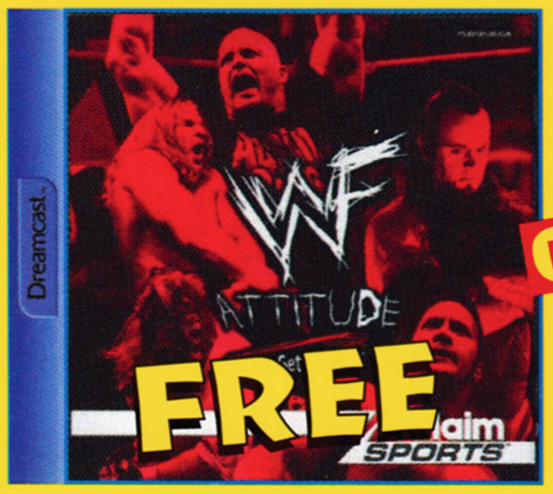

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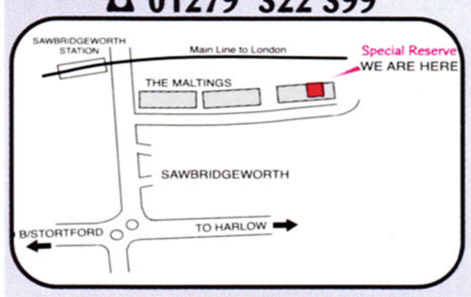

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