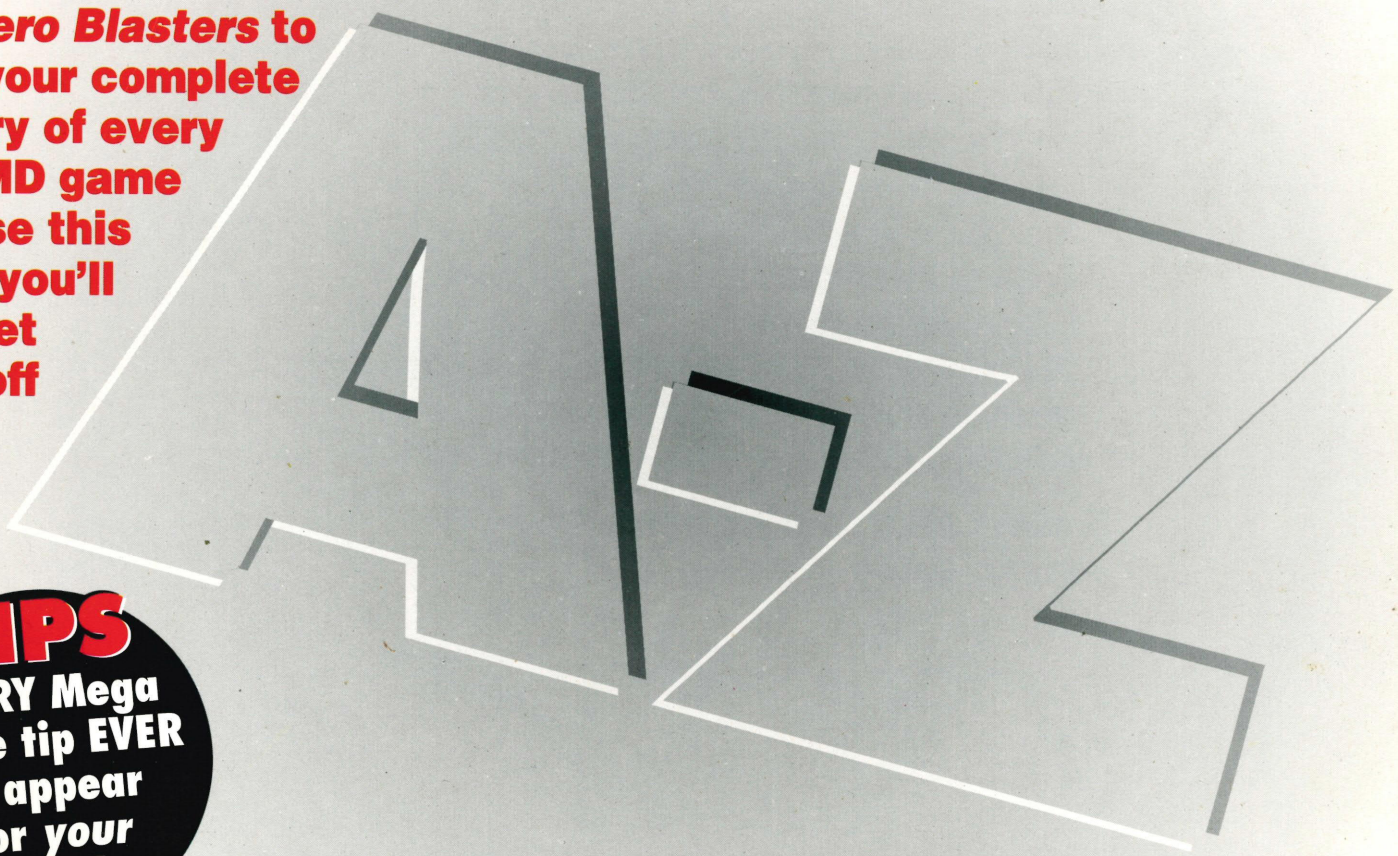
MEGA GOLD

Summer Special £2.95

339 MEGA DRIVE GAME REVIEWS!

From *Aero Blasters* to *Zoom:* your complete directory of every single MD game ever. Use this guide – you'll never get ripped off again!



TIPS EVERY Mega Drive tip EVER to appear for *your* carts!

100s of dead cheap classic oldies inside!

IMPORTANT WARNING:

The world is full of secondhand carts... this guide *will* help you buy smartly

Future PUBLISHING
Your guarantee of value

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SUMMER SPECIAL '93

THE COMPLETE MEGA DRIVE GAMES GUIDE

MEGA

THIS DIRECTORY COMES TO YOU FROM THE WORLD'S BEST MEGA DRIVE MAG...

MEGA is the UK's best-selling Mega Drive and Mega CD mag – it's not surprising, no other mag offers anywhere near the same depth of Mega Drive coverage.

The next issue on sale features:

- **Ultimate Soccer: the exclusive review of Sega's new eight-player soccer game. PLUS An exclusive preview of Sensible Soccer.**
- **ALL the latest news from USA, Japan and Europe.**
- **A Mega Drive gamer's guide to Anime: the art of Japanese Animation.**
- **3DO stripped bare: can this new super-console *really* kill Sega and Nintendo?**
- **EVERY new release reviewed and rated.**

If you're serious about Mega Drive gaming, then don't miss it!

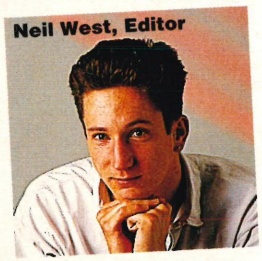
ON SALE Thursday 15 July

MEGA

100% PURE SEGA MEGA DRIVE...

Welcome to MEGA GOLD

A MEGA SPECIAL WELCOME



Welcome to this special, one-off edition of MEGA – the UK's best-selling and most authoritative Mega Drive mag. Mega Drive gamers have been hounding us for months, demanding a full, encyclopedia of Mega Drive gaming – and so here it is: 339 Mega Drive reviews, a complete directory of *every* cart *ever* to go on sale in the UK...

We hope that MEGA Gold will become an invaluable reference guide for you. As the second-hand market of Mega Drive carts takes off, hundreds of old and forgotten carts can be picked up at second-hand prices (one of the great things about a cart-based console is that carts are practically indestructible and last forever). Now some of these old carts are best forgotten, but some are *excellent* games that can now be picked up at bargain prices. You need more than just a monthly update on the new Mega Drive releases – you need the full back catalogue. And that's exactly what you've got.

Just three things you should know:

1. A lot of the reviews that follow are copies of the reviews printed in MEGA over the last 10 months: purely because in my opinion they're the best, most honest and authoritative Mega Drive reviews around.
2. There are Mega Drive games in existence that you won't find in this directory – but these are mainly just crappy Japanese text adventures (or something) that no one ever bothered importing – you'll never find them in the UK. All the games you'll find here were – at some point – on sale in significant numbers this side of the big ponds.
3. There may be some slight discrepancies between ratings you'll read here and those previously printed in MEGA. This is because over time, some games are superseded by new, more sophisticated games and so the old game's rating must fall. And secondly, the views expressed in MEGA Gold are *my* opinions, whereas a game is rated in MEGA on a team decision.

That's enough "things you should know": enjoy MEGA Gold, we hope it's useful to you.

Ⓜ *Neil West.*

P.S. Oh yes, one more thing. A lot of the newer import games will be fitted with security chips preventing them from being played on a UK Mega Drive without an adaptor (call Datel on 0782 744 324 for more info') so always check with the importer before parting with any cash. Happy hunting!

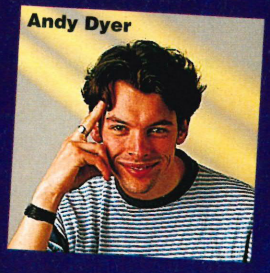
THE GAME REVIEWERS

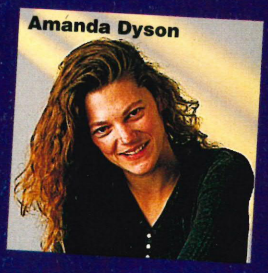
Not all of the game reviews in MEGA Gold were written by Neil, much though he'd love to pretend he did all the hard work. No, these three reviewers (regular readers of MEGA will recognise them) helped out considerably.

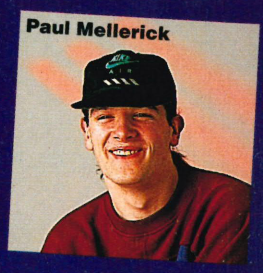
Andy Dyer is the Deputy Editor of MEGA, he used to work for Nintendo mag TOTAL, but traded in his SNES for the more exciting world of Sega almost a year ago and hasn't regretted the decision once.

Amanda Dyson is the girl responsible for making the pages look so damn fine, but also knows her games and brings a feminine touch to a few game reviews.

Lastly, there's Paul Mellerick. Long haired, but knows his games.







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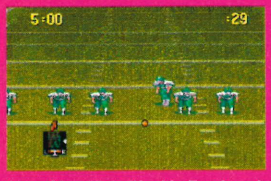
If you're looking for a certain *type* of game, then here you'll find all games of a similar style grouped together. Then, simply look up each game in the main directory...

Your GAME STYLE index to every MEGA DRIVE game ever released

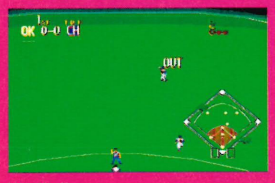
SPORTS GAMES

AMERICAN FOOTBALL



Jerry Glanville's Pigskin Footbrawl
Jo Montana Football
Joe Montana 2 – Sports Talk Football
Joe Montana 3
John Madden Football
John Madden Football '92
John Madden Football '93
Mike Ditka Power Football
Mutant League Football
Pro Quarterback
Super High Impact

BASEBALL

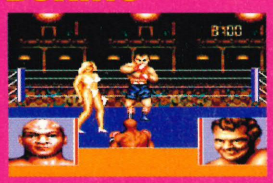


Hardball
Hardball 3
RBI 3 Baseball
RBI 4 Baseball
Sports Talk Baseball
Super League Baseball

BASKETBALL

Arch Rivals
Bull Versus Lakers
David Robinson Basketball
Jordan vs Bird
Lakers Versus Celtics
Super Real Basketball
Team USA Basketball

BOXING



Evander Holyfield's Real Deal Boxing
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Olympic Gold
Summer Challenge

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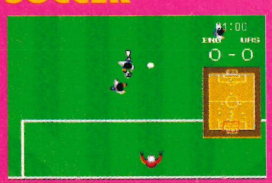
Dino Land
Dragon's Fury (Devil Crash)

POOL GAMES

Side Pocket

SOCCER



Euro' Club Soccer
Super Kick-Off
World Cup '92
World Cup Italia '90
World Trophy Soccer

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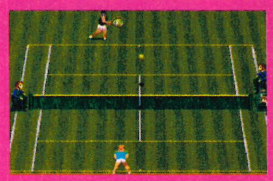

Grand Slam Tennis (Jennifer Cappriati's Tennis)

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Super Real Volleyball

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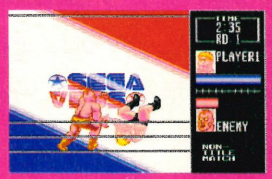

Thunder Pro Wrestling
Wrestle War
WWF Super Wrestlemania

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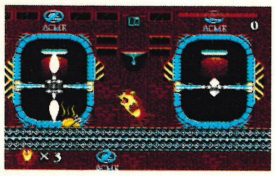

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Castle Of Illusion (starring Mickey Mouse)
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Cool Spot
Fantasia
Flintstones
Ghostbusters
James Pond 2 – Robocod
Marvel Land (Talmit's Adventure)
Monster Lair
New Zealand Story
Quackshot
Rainbow Islands
Sonic 2
Sonic The Hedgehog
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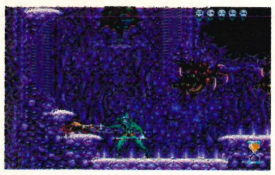
Taz-Mania
Tiny Toon Adventures
Todd's Adventures in Slime World
Wani Wani World
Wonderboy 3
Wonderboy 5: Monsterworld
World Of Illusion

PLATFORM BEAT-'EM-UPS



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Strider 2
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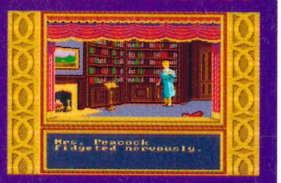

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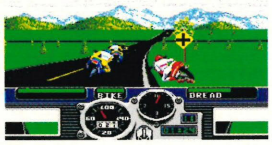
RACERS



Fastest One
Hard Drivin'
Out Run
Outlander
Outrun 2019
Road Blasters
Road Rash
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Super HQ
Technocop
Turbo Out Run

MEGA CD

Afterburner 3
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Funky Horror Band
Heavy Nova
Hook
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SEGA FACTS

All you need to know about your Mega Drive – **page 92**

MEGA GOLD

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MEGA

From the makers of Sega Power, Super Play, Total, Amiga Format, Amiga Format Specials, Amiga Power, Amiga Shopper, ST Format, PC Format, Mac Format, Commodore Format, Amstrad Action, Edge and Future Music

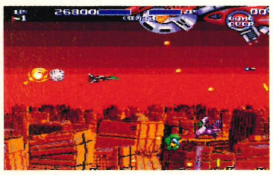
future PUBLISHING LEISURE

Your guide to every Mega Drive game ever officially released or imported into the UK. Let's get to it...

The A to Z of Mega Drive game CARTS

A GAMES

AERO BLASTERS
Kemco • IMPORT



If you're one of the not-very-many people who've played this brilliant game in the arcades (under the name of *Air Busters*, more likely than not), you won't need telling what a fantastic, all-action, exciting and varied blastathon it is. If you aren't One Of Those People, then be told right now – *Aero Blasters* is one of the fastest, meanest, sexiest, joy-pad-grippingly sweatiest son of a bitch shoot-'em-up there's ever been.

More impressive-looking than most Mega Drive zappers (it may not have the multi-layer parallax backgrounds of the *Thunderforce* series but it moves like a dream – AND you can see what the hell's going) more innovatively designed, better off in the end-of-level boss department, and with frighteningly fast and dangerous tunnel sections that provide some of the biggest wide-eyed thrills you'll ever get from your console.

If you reckon you're a bit of a shoot-'em-up demon, try *Aero Blasters* on Hard level and prove it or die trying. You probably will die trying though – you'll probably prefer to starve rather than stop playing this one once you get started.

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 9
Game Size 8
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: One of the best Mega Drive shoot-'em-up ever, without the tiniest shadow of a doubt. Don't miss it.

MEGA Rating: 92%

AFTERBURNER 2
Sega • £34.99

All style and no content, the arcade version of *Afterburner* threw the player and his lunch all around a hydraulic cockpit while simultaneously flinging huge graphics at the screen so fast that all you could do was wrench the joystick around wildly, keep your finger locked on the trigger and hope desperately for the best. Mega Drive *Afterburner* recreates the feel of the coin-op perfectly, except that you'll have to get someone to come round and jiggle your chair for you while you play. What else is there to say? Better bring on the ratings then…

Graphics 9
Sound 7
Gameplay 2
Game Size 6
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: *Afterburner 2* (ie *Afterburner* the coin-op) is excellent short-term blasting, but it's thinner than gold plating on a window and there are plenty other shoot-'em-ups that'll give you bigger thrills.

MEGA Rating: 35%

TIP: • On the intro screen hold down A, B, C and Start. When the carrier appears, select your start level with Left and Right.
• When pressing the speed-up button, wait until you reach maximum speed then double tap the speed-up button quickly for an extra burst.
• For 100 missiles press Left and B on stage 3, Right and B on stage 5, B on stage 9 and Right and B on stage 11.
• For 100 missiles press Left and B on stage 13, Right and B on stage 16, B on stage 19 and Right and B on stage 21.

AIR DIVER
Sega USA • IMPORT

A shoot-em-up, viewed from inside your ship (that's first-person perspective then) that's a good blast to start off with, but soon has shown you everything it's got to offer. Very easy to finish too.

Graphics 8
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 2
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Nice 3D graphics, but very little else to excite.

MEGA Rating: 39%

TIP: • Move the mission-select cursor to an un-named area. Hold Start and press A, B, C, B, A, A, B, C, B, A, B. Select your target and press Start for invincibility.
• Move the mission-select cursor to an un-named area. Hold Start and press A, B, C, B, A, A, B, C, B, A, B. Select your target and press A to meet the fighter ace.
• Move the mission-select cursor to an un-named area. Hold Start and press A, B, C, B, A, A, B, C, B, A, B. Select your target and press B to go to the super carrier.
• Move the mission-select cursor to an un-named area. Hold Start and press A, B, C, B, A, A, B, C, B, A, B. Select your target and press C to face the last alien ship.

ALESTE
(see Musha Aleste)
Unknown • IMPORT

A vertically scrolling shoot-em-up. Nothing exciting here, if shoot-em-ups are what you're after check out *Hellfire* or *Aero Blasters*.

Graphics 5
Sound 3
Gameplay 3
Game Size 3
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Old and out-of-date blaster.

MEGA Rating: 45%

TIP: • For a level select press Reset on the title screen and then hold Left until the title screen comes back up.
• Pause the game and press Up, Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Left, Left, Right, Right, C, C, B, A and then Start for 20 extra continues.

ALEX KIDD IN THE ENCHANTED CASTLE
Sega • £19.99

Alex Kid is one of Sega's oldest game heroes, very much in the *Mario* mould – this is a platformer in the old style. This was one of Sega's first attempts to create a game character to rival Nintendo's Mario but it never really worked and the character never became *that* popular. It took the arrival of a certain hedgehog before that happened. Definitely a game for the kids, only they would fall for the simple graphics and lack of gameplay. Too damn easy, it looks and plays like a Master System game. It's very cute and colourful but also very crap. Sorted.

Graphics 6
Sound 3
Gameplay 2
Game Size 3
Addiction 2

MEGA says: It's uninvolving and ultimately very boring. It should appeal to the youngsters reading this (or probably having it read to them) though.

MEGA rating: 39%

TIP: • Paperockians' solution: 1) Rock, rock; 2) Scissors, scissors; 3) Rock, scissors; 4) Paper, paper; 5) Rock, rock; 6) Rock, scissors.
• On the final screen, Lake Deep, walk in the following order: Sun, wiggly lines, moon, star, sun, moon, wriggly lines, fish, star, fish, crown.

ALIEN 3
Flying Edge • £39.99

A stylish platformer from programmers Probe – the team who bought you Virgin Games' *Terminator* – so it's no real surprise that the two games look very similar and play with a similar feel. You play the part of Ripley, and it's your job to work your way through loads of Alien-infested platform mazes rescuing hostages. There's nothing particularly new or inventive here, but there's a big enough challenge to get stuck into and plenty of weapons to check out.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 6
Game Size 7
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: Just like the film: technically OK and good solid entertainment, but at the end of the day just a little bit of a let down.

MEGA Rating: 79%

TIP: • You'll need two joypads for this level-skip cheat. Using pad one, enter the options screen. Now on joypad two, press C, Up, Right, Down, Left, A, Right and Down. You should now hear a sound as if you had collected a power-up. This tells you the cheat has worked. Now start the game as normal and then pause. On pad one press Start to pause and then C, A and B. The screen should go green to let you know the cheat has worked. Unpause and you'll skip the level.

ALIEN STORM
Sega • £19.99

This wants so badly to be a futuristic *Golden Axe*. *Alien Storm* features some disgustingly slimy graphics as you battle against an alien invasion. There's a neat *Operation Wolf* style sub game (lots of shooting at disgusting slimy things through a crosshair) included to break the monotony. Some neat graphic touches but it is just too easy and not just a tad tedious.

Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 4
Game Size 5
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Despite being wrapped up in some fancy graphics this is a poor clone of *Golden Axe*. To be avoided.

MEGA RATING: 45%

TIP: • To get to the end of the final level just keep choosing the route on the far left and you should only have to clear out three levels before you reach the Alien Brain.

ALISIA DRAGOON
Sega • £19.99

Dragons! They don't usually appear in platform adventures do they? You have to take your revenge on the Prince who murdered your wizard father.

For a platform shoot-em-up *Alisia Dragoon* is different from the pack, the graphics are absolutely gorgeous, the backdrops really stand out and the plethora of creatures you will come across vary wildly from flying chimps to killer fungus.

Possibly the most amazing thing about *Alisia Dragoon* is the sound. There are 21 different tunes included in the game and over 100 sound effects. There are eight huge levels to blast through and the whole game is just very damn playable. There are numerous ways to do each level and of course there are the inevitable hidden areas all over the place.

This is graphically great, musically wonderful and tough enough to provide anyone with a challenge. It is very playable and a welcome addition to Sega's £19.99 budget range.

Graphics 8
Sound 9
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: The game is only a year old and hence a real pick of the budget bunch. It's also the best dragon-based platform game around. Probably.

MEGA RATING: 81%

TIP: • When you turn the game on wait until the SEGA logo disappears and then hold down A until the words GAME ARTS have disappeared as well. Now hold down B until the word GAINAX disappears and then hold down C until the words 'music composed by' disappears, then as the screen scrolls along to dragon, wait until the stars fly out and press START. You should hear a sound that indicates the cheat is active. Now start the game and press C on the seconds controller to pause the game. You can now use the cheat, by doing any of the following combinations to do certain things.
C – Warp to Stage 1.
B – Warp to Stage 2.
B and C – Warp to Stage 3.
A – Warp to Stage 4.
A and C – Warp to Stage 5.
A and B – Warp to Stage 6.
A, B and C – Warp to Stage 7.
START – Warp to Stage 8.
• Then again you might want to press A on the second controller to pause the game and then any of these combinations.
PAD 2, B – Start playing again
PAD 1, UP and PAD 2, B – Maximises hit points.
PAD 1, LEFT and PAD 2, B – Raise lightning level.
PAD 1, RIGHT and PAD 2, B – Raise current monster level.
PAD 1, Lightning button and PAD 2, B – Power up lightning
PAD 1, Monster select button and PAD 2, B – Become immortal.

ALTERED BEAST

Sega • Deleted

A lot of embittered gameplayers rate *Altered Beast* as the most tedious platformer ever. A lot of you reading this may have all too much reason to believe this as the truth as this was (at one time) the game that Sega chose to include free with every Mega Drive bought in the shops – what an introduction to Mega Drive gaming! Still, by the time any unwary punter got this home and played it the money was already spent so it's too late. We could tell you all about the plot, all about the gameplay (such that it is), the prehistoric graphics and all about the patent-applied-for snooze-o-vision level design – but take our word for it, you're better moving swiftly onto *Another World*.

Graphics 4
Sound 5
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Are you still reading? In Mongolia '*Altered Beast*' translates to "completely tedious" and the Mongols aren't stupid.

MEGA Rating: 22%

TIP: • Press Start and B on the intro screen to access an extra options menu, including power, lives etc.
• Press A, B, C, Start, Down and Left simultaneously. You can now change into any animal on any level.
• Hold down A and Start for infinite continues after a game.

ANOTHER WORLD

Virgin Games • £39.99

Well, it looks like a movie – but does it *play* like one?

Lester is the Warren Beatty of scientists. He drives a flash black Ferrari, earns huge pots of money and gets to hang out with lots of hot babes (such as the legendary science groupies, Judith Hann and Maggie Philbin out of Tomorrow's World).

Late one stormy night, Lester was working on an experiment – he'd probably just had a big row with Maggie Philbin and felt obliged to leave the flat; you know how it goes. Suddenly, a bolt of lightning struck the laboratory, blew up his equipment and sent him into a hostile world full of blobby aliens. And guess what, it's your job to get him out of there.

The first thing you notice about the other world is that it looks pretty weird. And weird graphics is what *Another World* is all about. If you missed the hype when the game was released on the Amiga and PC last year, you won't know that *Another World*'s "unique selling points" are its cinema-style graphics and storyline. It's obvious from the start that this game fancies itself as a bit of a Steven Spielberg production. These days lots of games boast about having cinema-style graphics, but *Another World* goes further than most in order to deliver the goods. For instance, when Lester wakes up in an alien prison, the game shows a close-up of his cellmate coming into focus as Lester recovers from a stun laser.

Unfortunately, it's these graphics that really are what *Another World* is all about. "Looking good" is its reason d'etre. If you take away the clever visuals, you won't find much else. Most of the levels are standard run left, run right, jump and shoot platformers. They're a lot trickier than the average platform game – there's only one particular way of doing each level – but that old platform gameplay shines through. It's still moderately fun to play though – watching the plot of the "movie" unfold before you is really engrossing (for the first few times you play anyway). Most of the moves are context-sensitive, so you'll need to press a button to make him open a door or use a teleporter at certain points in the game. This moves the plot along nicely, but makes the game feel somewhat restrictive.

Blasting it out in the enemy-infested cells of *Another World*

To conclude, *Another World* is an oddity, really. The unusual graphics and impressive filmy bits are stunning at times and the game is structured in a way which means it does feel as if you're playing through an enjoyable sci-fi thriller, but just like a movie, it'll all be over in an evening. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 7 Game Size 5 Addiction 6

One of the earlier puzzles: work out how to stop hanging around

MEGA Says: Original and (for the first couple of plays) jaw-dropping arcade adventure. But you'll soon complete it and you won't come back for more.

MEGA Rating: 73%

A GAMES

ARCH RIVALS

Flying Edge • £37.99

Comedy basketball, that's not very funny. That's why this little sentence is all we're going to say about it.

Graphics 6
Sound 6
Gameplay 5
Game Size 5
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Beating up your chums is a laugh, but hey – you don't need a Mega Drive to do that, right kids? Besides, with *Team USA Basketball* on offer, you really shouldn't bother with this one.

MEGA Rating: 52%

ARCUS ODYSSEY

Rennovation • IMPORT

A lovely looking 3D game that scores points for offering some of the best simultaneous two-player action going.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 7
Game Size 4
Addiction 6

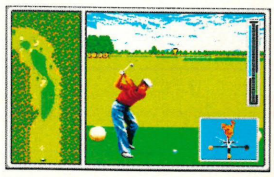
MEGA Says: We like two-player games, and so *Arcus Odyssey* is OK by us.

MEGA Rating: 71%

TIP: • The code to enter the final level is KYMEMUU05F.

ARNOLD PALMER TOURNAMENT GOLF

Sega • Deleted



The Mega Drive's first golf game, and now showing its age. The original *PGA Tour Golf* destined *Arnold Palmer* to become an also-ran and that was almost two years ago. With *PGA Tour Golf 2* available, *Arnold Palmer* is effectively retired.

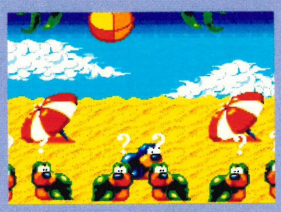
Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 7
Game Size 7
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: If you can pick up a cheap copy second-hand

THE AQUATIC GAMES

Electronic Arts • £34.99

Wacky animal sports-related adventures ahoy!



Oh dear. Your job was to let them all fall asleep but now they're all awake

A giant penguin, yesterday. Ten points for spotting the advertising...

The *Aquatic Games* are not just any multi-event sports championships, they star James Pond, intrepid underwater superhero and fish, and they can be played in the comfort of your own bedroom. There are eight sub-aqua sporting events in total. All have a vaguely marine-linked theme, all are guaranteed to wear your fingers down to the bone – there's a lot of button bashing involved, and all will give you a bit of a giggle.

The 100 Metre Splash is the first event. It's a two-creature race in which James (under your control) has to race against his long-time buddy F-fortesque Frog. To get a bronze medal you have to complete the course in under seventeen seconds. Obviously, a bit more is expected from you for the more valuable medals: do it in less than sixteen seconds for a silver and under fifteen for a gold. You'll need nerves of steel and finger tips to match to qualify for this one.

Next up is Kipper Watching (watching seals kipping, get it?). You are Cecelia, and you have to protect a group of sleeping seals from the bouncing beach balls which are threatening to disrupt their slumber. Nut the balls away before they hit the snoring seals.

The Aquatics version of the Hop, Skip and Jump adds a new dimension to the Olympic event. Run up to the mark by waggling the joypad rapidly, hop along a little, then, when a skipping rope appears, do a bit of skipping. Finish off the event with the biggest leap you can muster.

Bouncy Castle is a gymnastic event in which you have to bounce up and down on a couple of giant sponges, performing all sorts of somersaults and twists in a limited amount of time. There are six manoeuvres, each of which has to be done a total of six times within a four-minute limit before you can qualify.

In Feeding Time you have to satisfy the appetites of the little fish which peep up above the water-line. Feed them sweets from the machines at either side of the screen, and the fish will disappear beneath the waves again. If you're not generous enough with the sweets, the fish could end up on the plates of the unseen fishermen, who lure them with tempting bait (which looks very much like a certain mint with a hole).

Probably the best event in terms of gameplay is Shell Shooting. Two machines at either side of the playing area spit out limpets. Leap onto the edges of the limpet shells to flip them into the air, catch them in a tub and then pop balloons with them. Make sure that they don't knock you over, or you get stunned and therefore waste valuable time incapacitated.

Tour de Grass features a shark on a unicycle – all this stuff is starting to sound a bit commonplaice (sorry, that's common-place) really, isn't it? You pedal along (by "cycling" the directional controls on the joypad) and jump over crabs in an attempt to complete the course in record time.

The final event, Leap Frog, would be called hurdles in the real world of athletics because the event involves running along and jumping over obstacles, in this case eels in the sand.

If you score highly enough in one of the main events, you are recompensed with the bonus events. First up is a rather uncomfortable looking juggling penguin followed by the more athletic long-jumping frog.

The game truly excels when you take on your mates as well. You can play in pairs or in groups of three or four, each player taking it in turn to compete in each event – unfortunately there's no simultaneous multi-player mode, but the take-it-in-turns style works OK.

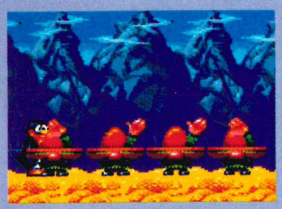
To conclude, game is extremely slick, and technically it has been very well programmed. It has brilliantly attractive graphics and shows a great deal of humour – it's a lot more interesting than looking at a tank of tropical fish anyway. However, suspicions have to be cast on the game's longevity. It's a joypad-prodding sports sim, and, as such, much of the gameplay involves little more skill than being able to press buttons rapidly to increase speed. The more interesting events are marred by the amount of time you have to play them – they last too long and there's little variation.

The appeal of James Pond and his mates is hard to resist but, if you're expecting a game in the style of *Robocod*, you'd be better off waiting for the arrival of *James Pond III – Splash Gordon*, which will see James returning to his more familiar platform-style game. *Neil West.*

Graphics 8 Sound 8 Gameplay 5 Game Size 6 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Great graphics and a great sense of humour make this a winner. It's a big shame that there's no simultaneous multi-player mode but as post-pub entertainment, this is fine.

MEGA Rating: 75%



If the standard events aren't enough, then just check out the sub-games

Yo James! Our fishy-friend poses unaware of the pain that awaits him

Mark The Shark (yes, Mark The Shark) in full effect

then this is OK, but get either of the *PGA Tour* games in preference.

MEGA Rating: 65%

TIP: • Take over 100 shots on a hole. Now press A, B, C and Up to enter a version of Fantasy Zone!
• This is the code to enter the last round with loads of money: 0MHE2VfC4gVUra0Ujd qKUD6vygcUAAur-bgv
• Enter a secret tournament by using the following code: fffffffffffffffff 999999999999999999

ARROW FLASH

Sega • £19.99

Another one in a seemingly never ending line of boring horizontally scrolling shoot-em-ups, this one having the token novelty of putting you in the cockpit of a spaceship that can turn into a fiery blob. The poor graphics and utterly pathetic sound really do the Mega Drive no justice whatsoever. Give this one a very wide berth.

Graphics	3
Sound	2
Gameplay	3
Game Size	3
Addiction	2

MEGA Says: One of the oldest shoot-em-ups, and (it must be said at this point) quite possibly one of the worst.

MEGA RATING: 24%

TIP: • Set the arrow flash to charge and watch the demo. Start the game, and if the arrow flash which should have been charged is stocked, you should be alright.

ART ALIVE

Sega • £14.99

This has to rate as one of the most pointless releases ever. An art package is an interesting idea but as there is no way of saving your pictures (unless

you use video tape) it is little more than a novelty piece. Very limited and extremely boring.

Graphics 6
Sound N/A
Gameplay N/A
Game Size N/A
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: This wouldn't even interest anyone who likes art. Best left on the shelf eh?

MEGA RATING: 19%

ASSAULT SUIT LEYNOS

Sega USA • IMPORT

Also known as *Target Earth* in USA, this is ann eight stage scrolling shoot-em-up (yes, another!). It's very tough, but this is more down to a frustrating control method than a well-designed, large challenge.

Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 3
Game Size 7
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Tough, but for all the wrong reasons.

MEGA Rating: 46%

TIP: • Get all the weapons by shooting just the end-of-level guardian on level one to give you 2,800 points and massive destructive power.
• For invincibility press Start on controller number two at the intro.
• For nine extra continues go to the options screen when you have only two continues remaining and then press Start.

ATOMIC ROBOKID

Asmik • IMPORT

Shoot-em-up in a maze with loads of power-ups and a strategic element to the gameplay. Some people regard this as a Mega Drive classic, but we don't.

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 6
Game Size 5
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: A nice variation on the shoot-em-up theme, but by the time you've finished this directory, you'll be thoroughly fed up with shoot-'em-ups like this.

MEGA Rating: 60%

ATOMIC RUNNER

Sega • £34.99

Appaling coin-op conversion of a game that should never really have been in the arcades in the first place: this is a scrolling, platform shoot-em-up set in USSR. If you want Soviet action, try *Strider*.

Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 4
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: With Sega's new selection of £19.99 releases, there's plenty better to spend your cash on.

MEGA Rating: 45%

AXIS FX

Unknown • IMPORT

Tricky control, fuzzy graphics and a repetitive game recipe make this old shoot-em-up even less exciting than most.

Graphics 4
Sound 5
Gameplay 3
Game Size 4
Addiction 3

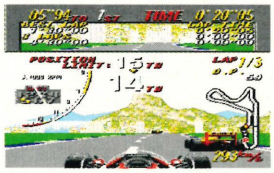
MEGA Says: Shoot-em-up tedium personified.

MEGA Rating: 33%

TIP: • On the control configurations allocate A for option, B for select and C for hand. Exit and hit Reset. Demo to level five and join in!

AYRTON SENNA'S SUPER MONACO GP 2

Sega • £39.99



Super Monaco GP (incidentally, does anyone else remember Sega's original *Monaco GP* arcade game? Nope, thought not) was the most popular driving coin-op before *Out Run*, and the staggering graphics were thought by many to be completely impossible on a Mega Drive. And indeed they were, but disappointment turned to joy within seconds of loading this cart into the slot – the graphics may be ultra-impressive, but the gameplay is also astonishing. Superb, definable control, high-speed adrenaline-pumping driving, but a bit of strategic depth to keep things interesting after the first few days too. Like *John Madden's*, the sequel improves significantly on the earlier game (without really changing it very much – again, you don't want them both unless you've got more money than sense), especially in the area of car handling (thanks to input from Ayrton Senna), but with something that started off as fab as *Super Monaco GP*, that's still just window-dressing.

The addition of the ful Grand Prix tournament season – across all 16 Grand Prix circuits – is an excellent addition providing *Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco GP 2's* gameplay with a real shot in the arm in the longevity stakes.

A simultaneous two-player mode (as found in *Road Rash 2*) would have been a real luxury, but hey – we can't have everything can we? Even without this option however, this is one game that remains an essential purchase for any new Mega Drive owner. And if you can't afford the price of a new cart, look for the original game second hand.

Graphics 9
Sound 7
Gameplay 9
Game Size 8
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: The competition isn't really up to much as far as F1 racing goes (yet) but even so, you'd have to go a long, long way to come up with a better driving game than this one. (And you'll probably have to wait a long, long time for someone to write one).

MEGA Rating: 91%

TIP: • Select Japanese text from the options menu, then go to Free Practice mode. Press the D-button down to scroll through the text and a flashing red arrow appears to indicate the most difficult corner on the circuit.

ARIEL
THE LITTLE MERMAID

Sega • £34.99

Please don't ask us what that dolphin is doing to Ariel

On first sight *Ariel The Little Mermaid* looks very similar to *Ecco*. But play it for a few minutes and you'll soon realise there's a *lot* of difference.

The basic game idea is the same as *Ecco's*, only on a smaller scale. You've got to search through four levels of underwater scenery to reach the ultimate goal of rescuing your father Triton from the clutches of Ursula, the evil Sea Witch. To complete each level, collect all the little sea creatures called polyps. These are in fact your own Merpeople, who have been magically altered by Ursula. Walk over them and they'll reform to their old selves.

You can use weapons to help you battle against the various underwater creatures and you can also enlist the aid of three types of fish if you come up against anything difficult in the game.

Each level is mapped out, and the flashing white dots are the polyps. You must work your way around each maze, collect all the polyps and then fight the level boss.

You can, if you choose, reverse the roles and play the game as Triton, and try to rescue your daughter, Ariel. The game scenery is exactly the same, however, so there really isn't much point.

When you access the map, by pressing start, you'll find that although it looks very big, it is actually quite small. And the mazes (if you can call them that) don't tax the grey matter at all. Controlling Ariel (or Triton) is very easy; there's no inertia or any currents to battle against, it's just a simple eight-way control system.

The graphics and sound are OK and the Ariel and Triton sprites are nicely animated. All the sea creatures look menacing enough and from this everything would seem to be hunky-dory. But play the game, and you'll probably walk straight through it. The four levels are small and there's no challenge until you get to the end boss. Even then it's just a simple matter of firing all your weapons, taking a few hits and moving onto the next stage.

If you do lose all your energy, you don't die, you just lose a life and your health bar goes back up to full. This means that you can stand in front of a level boss, keep firing and although your health bar might decrease, you will still kill him. And with five lives, and continues as well, it won't take long to finish.

Sega must be aiming this game directly at younger players, because the graphics and sound remain very close to the film, and even inexperienced gamers will find this lacking in challenge. But if you're after a cute, water-related game, no matter what age you are, then go for *Ecco* instead. It's a lot nicer, will last you a long time and it shows that when Sega put there minds to it, they can produce great software. *Amanda Dyson.*

Graphics 7 Sound 7 Gameplay 5 Game Size 2 Addiction 4

MEGA Says: *Ariel*, on the other hand, shows that they can produce some really horrible stuff as well.

MEGA Rating: 44%

BACK TO THE FUTURE 3

Virgin Games • £37.99

The best of the *Back To The Future* series (a couple of them never got to see the light of day due to Mirrorsoft, the software house responsible, sinking like a fat git when the Mirror/Maxwell scandal broke. Fact fans will be interested to know that Neil "Mr Bitter" West was owed £500 by Mr Maxwell when the company went under and is still readily prepared to harp on and on about the fact to anyone unlucky enough to sit next to him when he's drunk) but still not outstanding. With a different game style each level, Marty gets to ride a horse, chuck plates around and solve puzzles. What fun.

Graphics	6
Sound	5
Gameplay	7
Game Size	6
Addiction	5

MEGA Says: Two halves don't necessarily make a whole, and four different game styles don't necessarily make for a great game.(Wow! Philosophy!)

MEGA RATING: 68%

TIP: • Pause game then press Up and A, Down and A, Left and A, then Right and A to warp to the next level.

BART VERSUS THE SPACE MUTANTS

Flying Edge • £39.99

You play the part of Bart Simpson in this absorbing platform adventure. The town of Springfield has been taken over by mutants and it's your job to get rid of them, good stuff!

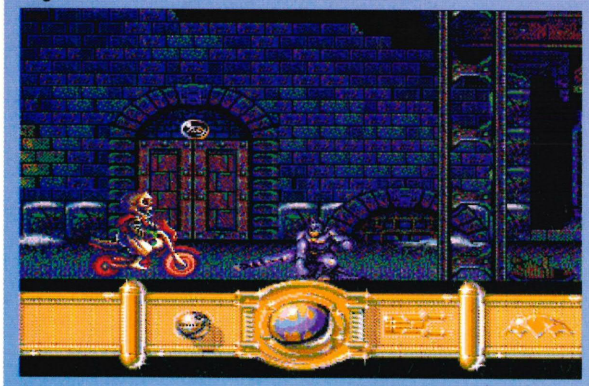
Graphics	7
Sound	6
Gameplay	8
Game Size	8
Addiction	7

MEGA Says: The best Simpsons game, and not a bad game in its own right.

MEGA RATING: 80%

BATMAN RETURNS

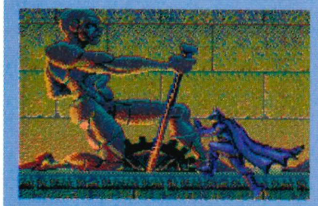
Sega • £39.99



Batters generously volunteers as a makeshift ramp

It must be one of the trickiest jobs in game development to get the difficulty setting right on a game. Make it too easy, and you get well and truly pasted in reviews for creating something that costs 40 quid and provides half a day's entertainment, but make it too tough and nobody can get past the first level. This means they never get to see all the fabulous, clever and pretty stuff you did later on, and nobody ever buys your games again because they can't see the point in forking out a huge sum of money just to get really frustrated and unhappy when they could watch the news and do it for free.

Tricky dilemma, huh?



Gotham City in all its glory. The graphics are great

So companies employ playtesters to thoroughly try out the games before they are released. These playtesters attempt to make sure that the game's got a halfway-reasonable difficulty curve, that lets players progress gradually through it. If this fails, they ensure that there are at least a few adjustable difficulty levels, so that players of all abilities can have a chance to get a bit of value for money out of it.

Leastways, that's what usually happens. With *Batman Returns*, someone obviously forgot all about this. Or, more likely – no-one paid any attention to what the playtesters had to say. OK, OK – so let's start justifying this criticism...

This is one of the most annoyingly hard Mega Drive games it's been my misfortune to have been annoyed by in quite a long time. It's not the fact that it's hard that's annoying (usually, this level of toughness would earn a hearty MEGA commendation), but it's the way in which it's hard that winds me up.

Batman Returns is one of those games that only has one purpose in life, and it's not to provide fun. Nope, what *Batman Returns* is there for is to provide a challenge to be overcome, something to brag to your mates about for a couple of days (a lot like drinking ten pints of Scuttocks Old Dorrigable) and then leaves you free to buy the next big movie license title, which should be conveniently coming along at any moment.

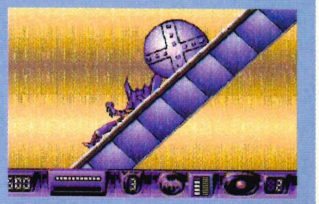
But is this such a bad thing? Surely us poncy game reviewers can't sit up in our ivory towers safe from the tough realities of programming limitations and demand the best of both worlds? Well yes we can – and here (over the next 200 words or so) is why.

Batman Returns is hard, because if it wasn't, you'd notice how utterly, utterly tedious it is and never play it again after the first ten minutes. Cynical? Us? It's a bit hard to be otherwise when a game's such a blatant production-line, wrap-it-up-in-a-juicy-film-license-and-no-one-will-notice-the-cracks-underneath effort like this. Oh yeah, sure, the graphics are a bit different (although in all honesty this isn't very far at all in front of the 8-bit Nintendo version of *Batman*), there are a few little bits of cosmetic tomfoolery like the level set in a crumbling old building which leans diagonally at 45 degrees to the horizontal, and all the different baddies and suchlike that you might expect, but at the end of the day, it's the same old scene – you walk along a little bit, maybe swing Spiderman-style from the occasional girder using your bat-rope, clobber/kick/belt a baddie who appears out of nowhere very particular, walk along a little bit further and do it all again...

Utter tat hiding behind a big name like this is the biggest threat to the continued survival of the Mega Drive as a cutting-edge gamesplayer's machine in the next couple of years.

The graphics in *Batman Returns* aren't good. Most of the backdrops, although initially appearing atmospheric, soon become blobby, repetitive and featureless, so that you never really know where the hell you are. All three frames of the animation of most of the characters are very attractive by themselves, but put them into movement and you start to wonder if Batman is really Metal Mickey in a purple rubber suit. Most of the time, the baddies are just characterless, lifeless, useless blobs with no distinguishing features other than the fact that they're obviously "bad". If the manual didn't tell you who everyone was, you'd never work it out for yourself, that's for sure.

Now, where's that fat bloke Penguin gone? Hmmm...



Batman learns about gravity the hard way. Run away!

The sound in *Batman Returns* does nothing to salvage the situation. It's aimless, pointless, hopeless twittering, which signifies nothing very much. The odd generic "thump" and "oof " ported across from any of a million other crap beat-'em-ups is all there is on offer.

And the gameplay in *Batman Returns*? It'd be a good idea if there was some, we're all for that sort of thing. This is crap, crap, crap, crap, CRAP.

And that's a real shame. *Neil West.*

Graphics 6 Sound 5 Gameplay 3
Game Size 7 Addiction 5

MEGA Says: Just about the least interesting job of a license anyone could have made. Frustrating and hugely dull.

MEGA RATING: 40%

And here's BM trying to look up Catwoman's hotpants

TIP: • Wait outside the cinema on level one. When your timer counts down to 400 a boy dressed in purple will walk out. How about that?
• At the end of the level, stand under the last window of the retirement home and use the whistle to get more money.
• To get your hands on Moe without the risk of taking a hit, you have to stand on the stool, put your coin in the phone box as normal and do the following. Press Left and C together, and Bart will skid off. Touch only button C, but keep Left pressed until you pass the door. Stop, press Right to turn towards the door, then wait for Moe to come out, and spray him.

BATMAN (THE ORIGINAL)

Sega • £34.99

Nothing massively (or even tinnily) original here, just Batters with his Bat-a-rang doing lots of Bat-wandering around Bat-platforms and mazes beating up Bat-opponents. Plenty of Bat-action but not many thrills.

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 5
Game Size 6
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Well, y'know, if you're really after a Batman game then wait for the Mega CD Batman game which will feature video stills and animation from the film, making it one of the first true multi-media games. Word is that the CD version will run twice as fast as the cartridge with a full driving level, a Batski level and extra secret bonus levels.

MEGA Rating: 62%

TIP: • On level three, get the extra life from the first chimney. Continue upwards then return. Repeat nine times for nine lives.
• If you're being attacked by a bad bad guy, then press start to pause the game. Hold down B and press Start again and you won't take any more hits from that particular bad guy.

BATTLE GOLFER

Sega Japan • IMPORT

The weirdest Japanese golf game you'll ever play. Shame it's not much good though.

Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 4
Game Size 4
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Weird, but not in an exciting way.

MEGA RATING: 38%

TIP: • Press B and Start on the title screen for a secret music test.

BATTLE MASTER

Sega USA • IMPORT

Basic RPG fare from USA, but with *Phantasy Star 2* now re-released at £24.99 go for that instead.

Graphics 6
Sound 3
Gameplay 5
Game Size 4
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: One of the worst RPGs, and now undercut price-wise as well.

MEGA RATING: 40%

BATTLE SQUADRON

Electronic Arts • Deleted

Amiga conversion time again, but this vertically-scrolling blaster looked pretty dated even at the time it originally appeared about two years ago, and it hasn't really improved with age. Good solid zapping action (with the considerable boost of a simultaneous two-player mode) but nothing to really hold your attention.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 8
Game Size 8
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Bog-standard vertical zaperama with little or nothing to make it stand out from the crowd. More repetitive than most, but the two-player option is a bonus.

MEGA Rating: 75%

TIP: • Stick to the red weapon, seriously.

BEAST WARRIORS (BEAST WRESTLER)

Unknown • Deleted

The Mega Drive's worst wrestling game. Check out *WWF* or *Ringside Angels* instead.

Graphics 3
Sound 4
Gameplay 2
Game Size 4
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Slightly less fun than hiding in Hulk Hogan's pants.

MEGA RATING: 29%

TIP: • For the Dom Championship fight enter JQYAGQMRZRBATQX, and for the sixth world title fight enter: JZAZOADFADMXQRO.

BIMINI RUN

Unknown • IMPORT

Kind of *Space Harrier* but in a speedboat, this 3D shoot-em-up is OK in a very shallow, er speedboat, kind of a way.

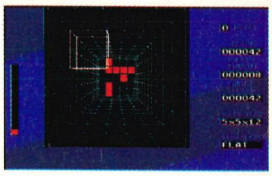
Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Do you love shoot-em-ups? Do you love speed boats? You've just found your perfect game.

MEGA RATING: 50%

BLOCKOUT

Sega • £19.99



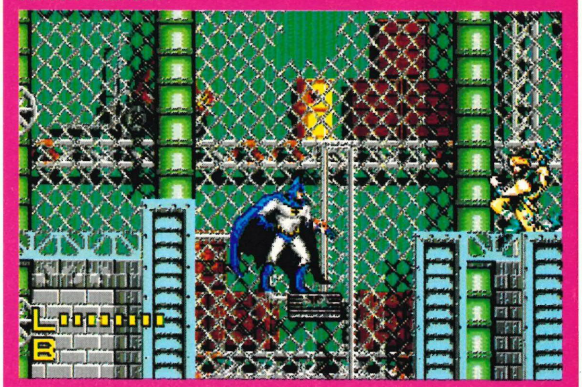
Your brain will never forgive you. Imagine *Tetris,* played looking down a well, with three-dimensional vector-graphic wireframe blocks which can be moved, turned and rotated in each of the three axes. Having problems imagining it? Just you try playing it, mate. Play against the machine or against a friend (you won't have many of those left if you take them on at this) and you'll discover that this is one of those games that you either love or hate. There's not much in the way of action but it's quite compelling to play. In one player mode this'll do your head in but there is quite a contest in the two player game.

Graphics 6
Sound 3
Gameplay 7
Game Size 5
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Complete mind torture, but if you're a professional mathematician or more

BATMAN REVENGE OF THE JOKER

Sunsoft • IMPORT



Once again: the superhero without the supergame...

After the steaming great rumbler of a pile of tosh that was *Batman Returns*, this Batters game is a bit better. Let's rush through the plot details with a minimum of fuss. The Joker has been mucking around in Gotham City. Some of the pranks he's played are so indescribably nasty that I can't even begin to describe them here. But suffice it to say that they're really nasty. So heinous, in fact, that the manual doesn't describe them either, so the whole thing's left to your imagination.

The only person who can stop this evil japester is Batman. Well, anyone with a gun could do it as well, but that's not the point; it's got to be Batman. It's a platform game, of the sort you see a great deal. You can walk along, jump, kick, shoot and crouch, exactly like real life, except that generally in real life you aren't hampered by wearing a stupid costume and a mask which restricts your vision by 60 per cent.

You start off with a weapon so pathetic that no self-respecting superhero would ever take it seriously. Even small children laugh at it. But fear not, because as you wend your way through the levels, you get to shoot crates and things which disgorge collectibles. These add significantly to your fire-power, and after a while you'll be carrying a weapon of which you are very proud and you'll start killing people with ease.

The graphics have that old-fashioned, fiddly look which generally doesn't stretch the Mega Drive. Here, however, it quite suits the subject because, as we all know, Batman is a throw-back to earlier times, and he spends most of his time wandering around in shadows and gloom.

There are seven levels in the game. They are all pretty similar in their platform-ness, but some overflow with baddies while others pit you against obstacles like airships and stuff. I suppose they aren't all that similar, then.

What else? Oh yes, the sound is a bit crap, but you don't buy games like this hoping they'll have excellent sound; they never do. At best, you are pleasantly surprised and at worst, you think, "Oh bloody hell, this poor sound quality is just as I expected".

Ta-da! I am Batman, foe of evil and wearer of leather pants!

Batman is a pretty bog-standard game. There isn't anything you won't have seen before. It's actually better than *Batman Returns*, but that's not exactly a scorching recommendation – *Batman Returns* was immensely depressing, as everybody who's got an ounce of brain knows.

So. Let's recap, mes enfants. This is a pretty normal game; nothing special at all, really. But before you write *Batman – Revenge Of The Joker* off completely, its strength is in the difficulty levels, which are set about right, if anything slightly on the tough side (a good thing, in my book). *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 7 Sound 5 Gameplay 7 Game Size 6 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Better than *Batman Returns*, but still not the Batman game that Mega Drive owners deserve.

MEGA RATING: 67%

BATTLETOADS

Sega • £39.99

There's a terrific Nintendo game called *Battletoads*. It appeared towards the end of last year and picked up some of the warmest reviews anything's ever got anywhere. ("Full to overflowing with fabness," expounded MEGA's Nintendo-specific-but-otherwise-quite-OK sister magazine Total!)

The game stars three toads. Well, two, anyway, and one who's been kidnapped and who needs rescuing. And, although it starts off looking like an off-the-peg beat-'em-up, as you work your way through the levels you'll discover platform bits, surfing bits, descending-mine-shaft bits – just about every different sort of game under the sun, and more besides. You're never quite sure what to expect next, so it really keeps you on your toes. And the fact that it's not the easiest game around means that, whatever does come next, actually reaching it will take ages.

The graphics are also impressive in *Battletoads*. They're much better than the sort of stuff you normally get on the NES – large, well-animated sprites and really nifty backgrounds. As well as the NES version of *Battletoads* there's one for the Game Boy, which is a bit different but just as good. And then there's the Mega Drive version, which looks and plays just like the NES version. But the best I can say about it is that it's "quite good".

See? Push one over and the rest topple like dominoes...

And now I have a problem. Somehow I've got to explain how *Battletoads* on the NES can pick up 90%-plus ratings, while what's essentially the same game on the Mega Drive is going to get (and I don't mind telling you now) 75%. Not that 75% is anything to complain about, mind you. A game scoring 75% is well worth thinking about, but there's an undeniable discrepancy here.

Perhaps the best thing to do is look at statements above, starting with "It looks just like the NES version". Well it does. The sprites look just the same, move in exactly the same way and are just the same sizes, and the backgrounds look pretty similar too. However, what turned heads on the NES just doesn't cut the mustard on the Mega Drive (a machine which is capable of jumbo-sized sprites, parallax scrolling and lots of colours). Any Mega Drive game is up against a certain hedgehog in the graphics department, and *Battletoads* consequently looks really crude and washed-out. You'd be forgiven for thinking this was a Master System game.

An evil babe

A heroic toad

An evil seagull

Another heroic toad

Wooooooooooooaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh!

Hanging by a thread, our hero descends to his doom

And then, "It plays just like the NES version", which isn't strictly true, to be honest. While the NES version was almost impossibly difficult, the Mega Drive *Battletoads* is merely ludicrously difficult – it's been tamed a little in the translation, which is probably just as well. It still uses every trick in the book to get the better of you, though. Some bits are just plain tough, like the surfing sections, in which obstacles whizz towards you incredibly fast and in which you'll need lightening reflexes if you're to make it through alive.

Take that! Battletoads take *no* grief from pink things

However, in other parts, mainly the platform sections, *Battletoads* just doesn't play fair. You're constantly getting killed off by hidden booby traps which, unless you've played that section before, you haven't a hope of knowing exist. So the game has to be played very slowly and cautiously, with lots of getting a bit further, getting killed, going back to the beginning and trying to remember not to make the same "mistake" again. Sensibly-placed restart points help to some extent, but if you've just used up your last continue, you're not going to be terribly amused at the thought of having to go all the way back to the start of the game again. Some people do like their games tough, I know, so all this "horribly difficult" stuff is more of a warning than a criticism. But prepare to have your vocabulary of rude words tested to the limit. And, although it could be called varied, to me the game just seems plain patchy. Some bits are really well done, like the platform sections (although these are painfully difficult, they're very well designed), but other parts are merely so-so (the surfing sections, for example, or the mine shaft). And the beat-'em-up bits are downright embarrassing. You only ever get attacked by a couple of baddies at once, and they rarely manage to lay a finger on you as long as you keep hammering away at the B button.

So on balance, I think the fairest thing I can say about *Battletoads* is that it's OK. There's masses to it, and if you can avoid getting too cross with it, it'll keep you going for weeks. But it's not the out-and-out corker I was expecting, and – more importantly – there's nothing in there that couldn't be, and hasn't been, done on the weedy NES. It's "OK". *Neil West.*

Graphics 5 Sound 6 Gameplay 7 Game Size 9 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Not a bad game, but a bit rough looking and incredibly frustrating to play.

MEGA RATING: 75%

laid back than a particularly relaxed sloth, you'll get some serious puzzling fun out of this one. Strictly for the hardy, though.

MEGA Rating: 67%

BONANZA BROS.

Sega • £19.99

Robo and Mobo set out on a night of breaking and entering in this two-player coin-op con. It's all quite fun and the idea is clever. But the arcade version never made enough of the two player interaction so there was never any hope of the Mega Drive version being any better. Shame.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 7
Game Size 5
Addiction 5

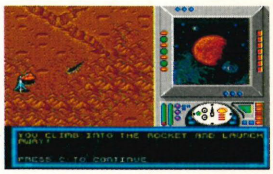
MEGA Says: Puts the fun back into two-player fun, but don't attempt a one player game.At £19.99 this is worth investigation.

MEGA RATING: 60%

TIP: • Step on a rake at the same time you're hit by a bullet to be temporarily invincible.

BUCK ROGERS "COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY"

Sega • £39.99



Tacky graphics but tons of depth in this strategic RPG. Buck finally turns up to help you towards the end of your adventure, but where's Tweaky?

Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 8
Game Size 9
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Very nice, but MEGA reckon (in our infinite wisdom) that it would have been a lot better to use the

license for a good old-fashioned shoot-'em-up. But then, we're just blood-thirsty hooligans.

MEGA Rating: 80%

TIP: • Steal the Plasma Cannon from the pirates.

BUDOKAN

Electronic Arts • £39.99

Martial arts-type beat-'em-up with a little more thought required than most. At the end of the day it's still a lot of wiggling the joypad, hitting the buttons and hoping for the best, though.

Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 7

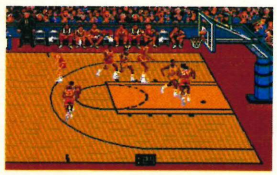
MEGA Says: If beating computer people up (in four different 'sporting' events) is where you get your thrills, *Budokan* is one of the less brain-rotting ways you can go about it. Until *Street Fighter 2* turns up that is.

MEGA Rating: 79%

TIP: • The jumping strike is the most powerful move in Kendo.
• Kicks are the most crippling blows in Karate.
• The triple strike is the way to go in Nunchaku.
• Use the overhead and spinning jump strikes in the art of Bo.

BULL VERSUS LAKERS

Electronic Arts • £39.99



Along with *Team USA Basketball* (essentially the same game, but with different game stats and player names) the best Mega Drive basketball game money can buy. Designed for the USA market, the only reason *Bulls Versus Lakers* hasn't done so well over this side of the pond has nothing to do with the game's qualifications – if basketball's your bag, then this is unmissable.

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Pure basketball entertainment. Not as well suited to a computer game version as American Football, this is probably as good a basketball game as you'll ever find.

MEGA Rating: 88%

TIP: • Using the following password and the codes below and you can choose which team you want to play as and which team you want to oppose. Enter (opposition code), (your team code), then OGPBBB.

OPPOSITION:

Eastern	Western
B – Bucks	V – Golden State
C – Bulls	W – Blazers
D – Celtics	X – Lakers
F – Pistons	Y – Spurs
P – 76ers	I – Houston
R – Hawks	3 – Phoenix
9 – Pacers	9 – Utah Jazz
M – Seattle	

YOUR TEAM:

Eastern	Western
D – Bucks	6 – Golden State
X – Bulls	B – Blazers
N – Celtics	L – Lakers
S – Pistons	G – Spurs
8 – 76ers	Z – Phoenix
4 – Hawks	V – Utah Jazz
J – Knicks	2 – Houston
0 – Pacers	Q – Seattle

BURNING FORCE

Namco • IMPORT

Another *Space Harrier* clone that fails to deliver in the lastability stakes. The much-hyped *Microcosm* (due on Mega CD soon) is basically *Space Harrier* in a tube: all you have to do is move a crosshair accross a constantly moving background shooting at everything that is stupid enough to get in your way. It's not big, it's not at all clever but strangely, games programmers seem to love it. We wish it would go away.

Graphics 6
Sound 4
Gameplay 2
Game Size 4
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: If you *must* by a *Space Harrier* game then buy *Space Harrier 2* OK?

MEGA Rating: 41%

TIP: • On the options screen press B, A, B, A, A, C, A, A then start the game. You'll have ten lives.

BIO-HAZARD

Sega • £39.99

Bio-Hazard Battle is an 8 Mbit game and the programmers have certainly made the most of the capacity. Instead of the usual crappy explosions that consist of about two frames of animation, the game incorporates some great special effects. The explosions are lovely – enemies are blown into thousands of pieces, which then fade away into nothingness. And no expense has been spared on the aliens either: they move this way and that, all over the screen, firing at you as they go.

Each level has its own theme, and nicely implemented it is too. Particularly notable are the underground levels with festering piles of maggots (nice), and the underwater level that's full of intergalactic kippers (Smoke me one, I'll be back for breakfast – Neil). It's graphical touches like these which give the game a little something more than the average shoot-'em-ups which plague the Mega Drive.

The sound, it also has to be said, is excellent. It actually sounds as if someone has thought about what they're doing, and not like it's been ripped off a Spectrum, like most game soundtracks.

OK, so the game looks and sounds great, but what does it play like? It is, after all, only a shoot-'em-up. The basic gaming strategy is the same "shoot, shoot and shoot some more" game that has been seen a thousand times before, but this one does have its own little touches.

Although most games give you the chance to acquire power-ups – you know the kind of thing, laser, side ships and then more lasers – *Bio-Hazard* has the distinct advantage of giving you a power up to begin with, namely an orbiting satellite. This satellite can be controlled, and you can also choose the weapon with which you want to equip it.

When you shoot a certain ship during the game, a coloured orb will float around the screen. This coloured orb will give you a specific weapon (see the box below). There are four of these coloured orbs, and you can change your currently selected weapon by collecting a new colour.

Another point which raises this game above the average shoot-'em-up is that you can't crash into the scenery, which makes a change from flying around and having your multi-billion turbo-nutter galaxy destroyer blown to pieces by a stray twig.

Simultaneous two-player action is a great bonus

To add to the excitement, there is a simultaneous two-player option, which allows both players on screen at the same time. The advantage of this is that you can cover each other's backs. The disadvantage is that with all this movement, the game does tend to slow down, and it's a bit tricky to tell who's who. It's good fun, but only if your eyes can stand the strain.

When you inevitably die, you start again immediately from the same position. Use up all your lives though and, if you decide to carry on, you'll have to go right back to the beginning of the level. This shouldn't be too much of a problem, however, because although the levels are long, they are not too long. The learning curve is viciously hard, taking you from really easy to incredibly hard in only a few short levels. But with so many average, finish-in-one-afternoon shoot-'em-ups around, are you about to complain?

There isn't a lot wrong with this game, and if you are new to the Mega Drive and are looking for something a little bit different, then you could do a lot worse than buy *Bio-Hazard Battle*. But for those with the big "seen it, done it" badge stuck on their gamesplaying talents, you'll already have played this type of game many times before. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 8 Sound 8 Gameplay 5 Game Size 5 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Tough, but a good fun game with lovely graphics.

MEGA Rating: 77%

TIP: • For a level select, wait until the SEGA logo appears and then press and hold button C. Now press the following on the pad with C held down. UP, UP-RIGHT, RIGHT, DOWN-RIGHT, DOWN, DOWN-LEFT, LEFT, UP-LEFT and UP. Press START and the stage select screen will appear. Select your level and off you go.

The backgrounds may be fairly plain, but at least...

...you can see what you're about to fly into

CADASH

Taito • IMPORT

Arcade action mixed with an RPG could work OK, but this one doesn't. It's far too easy to finish too.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 5
Game Size 3
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Quite good fun, but simply too short. A lot like Andy Dyer.

MEGA Rating: 49%

CALIBRE .50

Unknown • IMPORT

A *Mercs* clone that unfortunately isn't as good as *Mercs*.

Graphics 5
Sound 5
Gameplay 2
Game Size 4
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: It might be an idea to check out Mercs then.

MEGA Rating: 29%

CALIFORNIA GAMES

Sega • £19.99

Half-pipe skateboarding, footbag, roller skating, surfing and BMXing: those Californians sure know how to have a great time don't they? This multi-event game is a lot of fun to get into, but there's no real long term appeal.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 6
Game Size 5
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: Not bad, but put the £20 in a bank at 12% interest for about 50 years then go to the USA yourself. Sorted.

MEGA RATING: 60%

TIP: • Half-Pipe Skateboarding – go for the straight up and down movement of the aerial turns.
• Foot Bag – perform two jesters and the bag will flash red. Now all stunts are worth double.
• Surfing – turn to ride up a wave then turn in mid air to come back down at the same angle.
• Roller Skating – spinning while jumping will increase your points.
• BMXing – the move that gives you the most points is the backward flip. Get to the end of the level with more than 40,000 points and get a new bike.

CASTLE OF ILLUSION (STARRING MICKEY MOUSE)

Sega • £39.99

Mickey Mouse, eh? Don't you just love 'im? No matter what he does, no matter where he goes, his little mousey ears always stay perfectly round. Yep, even when he appears in really lovely platform adventures like this one, with all manner of strange and beautiful Disney-style fantasy creatures trying to off him in a deeply unfriendly manner as he tries to rescue his sweet mouse babe from the excellently-named witch Mizrabel.

Graphics 9
Sound 8
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: A lovely platform epic very much in the style of (whisper it) *Mario*, except without all that tedious head-butting palaver. Gorgeous to look at and gorgeous to play (playing *Castle Of Illusion* has been compared to watching a cartoon) the whole family will love this one.

MEGA Rating: 87%

TIP: • When you've finished a level, press Start while your score's being added, for extra lives.
• Kill the tree-trunk boss by waiting to the left of the screen and firing apples at him when he's a tree trunk.

CENTURION: DEFENDER OF ROME

Electronic Arts • £39.99

A strategy war game from EA in which you get to control Roman hard cases. Not enough depth for war game fans and too dull for novices.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 8
Addiction 4

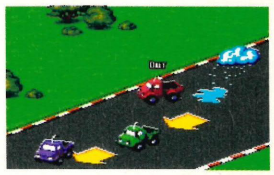
MEGA Says: Not really an RPG, and not really a war game. Although the Mega Drive could sorely use a decent war game, this isn't it.

MEGA Rating: 55%

TIP: • Use the code: QDUA YQ25 5555 55NK VKXW IPJI to get well ahead.

CHAMPIONSHIP PRO AM

Tradewest • IMPORT



CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE AVENGERS

Sega • £39.99

The Avengers are a bunch of superhero comic-strip characters who have absolutely nothing to do with the '60s TV series of the same name! These chaps have been around for donkey's years and their line-up changes more often than that of the English football team. There have, however, been a few faithfuls who make up the cast of *Captain America and the Avengers*.

Unlike the original coin-op version which had a four-player simultaneous option, you can only have a two-player game on the Mega Drive. You do, however, have the opportunity to choose which character you want to be, but two players can't be the same character in game.

You take control of either the Captain (Cap to his mates) or one of three other Avengers – Vision, Iron Man and Hawkeye – in a desperate fight against evil. Evil in this particular case comes in the shape of Captain America's oldest enemy, the Red Skull. This evil skunk has made several previous attempts at world domination, all of which have been unsuccessful, primarily due to the timely interference of Captain America (and occasionally that of other superheroes such as Spiderman and The Incredible Hulk).

Each of the Avengers has his own idiosyncrasies but the game controls are universal, making it easy to play any hero you want without having to learn an entirely new techniques. Schmart.

Each hero has three basic moves: jump, kick and punch, plus their special moves, which enable you to vary the height and power of each basic move. Further "help" comes in the shape of other Avengers. Look out for Quicksilver on level one, Wonder Man on level two and the Sub-Mariner on level three. Although they show up and help you out (by giving you blue discs or telling you where to go), they don't really alter the gameplay. They make polite cameo appearances and bog off.

All a bit pink and blue isn't it?

This is a somewhat plump Captain America facing up to some huge purple bloke. Pretty obvious really!

The graphics are OK, but they fall short of the arcade coin-op standard (fair nough) but the sound is very good. Nice epic (and not to say patriotic) tunes play throughout the game and alter distinctively from level to level.

As far as gameplay is concerned, *The Avengers* falls flat on its face, and the lack of decent animation doesn't exactly make it easy to get into. Once you're in, however, the good control method takes over and it soon becomes easy to despatch the first baddies you come across.

So, having got to grips with level one, you then prepare yourself to come up against some real problems in level two. Trouble is, nothing new happens – you waltz through level two, level three, level four and level five and then that's it, finished, over, kaput, THE END. There's no real challenge except at the end of each level, and your special weapon makes easy work of any special powers the end-of-level bosses might have.

Captain America and the Avengers could have been a real challenge and, indeed, a joy to play, but the game suffers from a few gameplay glitches and it is generally too easy.

If you're looking for some serious quality superhero action then we suggest you check out *Spiderman* or *X-Men. Paul Mellerick*

Graphics 7 Sound 8 Gameplay 6 Game Size 4 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: It's a fun (if short-lived) two-player romp, but don't expect the coin-op.

MEGA Rating: 62%

An attempt to recreate the feel of *Micro Machines*, this one fails dismally. Don't be fooled by the screenshots – this one's nothing like the Codemasters classic.

Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 6
Game Size 3
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: This is fun for a couple of hours, but that's about it. There simply isn't enough here.

MEGA Rating: **58%**

CHI CHI BOYS

Sega • £39.99

Chiki Chiki Boys, the conversion of the the 1990 arcade game *Mega Twins* from Capcom, has come to the Mega Drive, and it is indeed a rather predictable affair. While it's all very nice and cute and all that, it is not unfortunately going to be the most original or thrilling game you've ever played.

The characters (all big eyed, oversized heads – you know the type) are on a quest. Seemingly, an evil lord is trying to take over their worlds, and these boys don't like it one bit. So with supplies of swords and sushi sandwiches, they set off to rid the world of another dark evil thingummybob.

The game has four worlds and the fourth one is the only one which has any substance. This world, which is split into five parts (all of which you have to travel through to reach the final battle), appears only when you've successfully completed the first three.

To get this far though, you'll need weaponry. Collect coins from the dismembered bodies of enemies, then, when you've finished the level, you're presented with a shop screen. Now you can buy that bigger sword you've always wanted or even that shield which would go so nicely with your tunic.

Possibly the most important item you can purchase is the extra continue. The only thing which makes this game tough (in the short term) is the lifespan of your character. He's got just one life and only one continue. So, kick the bucket twice on the same level, and it's game over.

If you do die, however, and then go on to reach the end of the level, you'll have a chance to buy back your continue. You're only allowed to carry one continue, so if you get through the level without dying, you're not allowed to buy another one.

Now, while all this sounds nice and playable, the game suffers from a couple of major drawbacks. The levels all look the same and the end-of-level bosses are laughably easy to beat. After a couple of days of serious playing, it's possible to suss the pattern for each level and therefore just waltz through all four of them.

Another thing that's a bit disappointing is that the game is one player only. You'd think with a name like *Chiki Chiki Boys*, you could play with your mate, or mates. Nope, you can choose who you want to be at the start of the game, but two of you can't play at the same time.

Even though the graphics and sound make for a playable coin-op convo, the lack of challenge spoils anything you might have thought this game would have to offer.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 4
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: There's nothing new in this game – and there's no two player mode.

MEGA Rating: **44%**

CHAKAN

Sega • £39.99

Hmm, yes. This appears to be an old photograph of Chakan taken during his career as a Morris dancer

Chakan is a bit of a boob. A mighty warrior he may be, but when challenged to a duel by Death, he accepted, won, then lost his soul and was sentenced to roam the land racked with the pain of countless sinners, killing evil creatures as he went. And, the story goes, that only when all the world's evil creatures were dead could he die peacefully. Bit of a raw deal really, wasn't it?

But Chakan's loss is our gain, and his sorry little tale of misery has given us quite a smart variant on the Shinobi style of platformer. At the start of the game, Chakan's armoury consists of only two swords. However, as he travels around the levels he finds a variety of flasks, which will enable him to access a whole range of spells. These spells allow him to do almost anything. They allow him to become invisible or they can simply be used to top up his energy levels. He can also charge up his swords to make them effective against enemies who he previously couldn't harm.

If you enter the options screen at the beginning of the game, you can select one of three skill levels: normal and hard speak for themselves, but enter the practice level and everything's the same except Chakan has infinite flasks and thus all the spells at his disposal. In this way you can learn what everything does before you actually attempt to play the game properly.

So once you've become fully versed in the mystic art of "killing stuff", it's onto the real challenge. There's one main level in the game which contains no foes whatsoever. It does, however, contain four portals, which lead to the four realms of earth, air, fire and water. These are the places which need cleaning up, so what Chakan needs to do is enter each door, finish the level contained therein and collect the weapon at the end of it. Once this is done he can re-enter the portals to find a new set of levels. This is the way the game continues for a massive 24 levels. And when I tell you that these levels are by no means small, or easy, you'll begin to realise that we're looking at a pretty hefty challenge.

But challenge alone is not enough, so it comes as a bit of a relief to discover that there's plenty of playability here too. The control mechanism is very similar to that used in the Shinobi series of games. Chakan can crouch, jump and wave his dual swords around pretty well, but with a bit of deft joypad pushing you can also make him do a double jump for extra height, attack in mid air, and roll along the floor.

One criticism of the game is that it plays a little slowly. Chakan moves very nicely, but he does tend to amble around the place. Mind you, being immortal I guess he's got all the time in the world. However, if he loses a life, he gets sent right back to the beginning of the level and that's when the game's sluggishness becomes a bit of a nightmare.

Another minor problem is that although many of the enemies are only a few sword swings away from death, some take absolutely ages to kill. This wouldn't be a problem, but there are no real tactics you can employ to duff them up, it's just a case of bashing away at them until they're dead.

Chakan isn't the busiest game in the world, and things can get a bit repetitive, but the advantage this game has is atmosphere, and lots of it. The scenery is very eerie and foreboding and the creatures that inhabit this strange world are all very different and nicely drawn. Chakan is not a classic, it's nothing really new, but what it does, it does with style and slickness.

Andy Dyer

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 7 Game Size 8 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A good-looking and atmospheric game. Very like the try Shinobi games, but er, a bit better. Try it!

MEGA Rating: **84%**

TIP: • Start the game is practise mode and make your way to the Air Portal (with a small platform above it) at the very bottom-right of the navigational screen. Jump on the platform and you'll find that, although you've collcetd no potions, you'll can activate the Portal spell only to find that you're rewarded ith a full set of potions and warped past the first 12 levels!

CHUCK ROCK

Virgin Games • £39.99

Unga Bunga! Or something like that, anyway. This is an old Amiga game brushed up a bit for the Mega Drive, and as you might expect, it's a bit of a lush looker. What you might not expect, though, is a fabby prehistoric platform game which plays like an episode of The Flintstones, except funnier, and where you dispose of enemies by bouncing them off your gigantic beer belly (sounds like a night out with Neil West). Nope, you might not expect that, but it's what you're going to get anyway. Ha!

Graphics 8
Sound 9
Gameplay 8
Game Size 6
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: A really enjoyable platformer, packed to the brim with variation, lovely little touches and more imagination than a dozen lesser efforts in this overloaded genre. Almost as delectable as Wilma Flintstone's bottom. The soundtrack is absolutely, stunningly marvelous too.

MEGA Rating: **84%**

TIP: • While the band plays, press ABRACADABRA and the guitarist will smile. Also , press A, B and C together, start the game and then press Up while holding A to advance a level. Hurrah! Now there's a useful little thing for you.

CLUE

Sega • IMPORT

Columbo, Poirot, Holmes, Dale Cooper, erm, Starsky or Hutch – possibly... we all crave the life of the classical detective. We all want to be that sophisticated, thoroughly annoying smarty pants who inexplicably seems able to describe all sorts of personal details about a murderer – based only upon a terribly coincidental series of events and a tell-tale bit of fluff that's been found six miles from the scene of the crime.

Anyway, *Clue* is a version of that famous board-game which, like Trivial Pursuit and Monopoly, is only ever played in a semi-drunken state at parties or at home when you've run out of hideously grubby household chores and you want to do something really boring.

The idea of the game seems to be based around the following, very straightforward, concept: a murder has been committed at Boddy Mansion. Now, you've always thought you had a bit of the Private Dick in you – and so, you set out to discover which dastardly git committed the crime, in which room and with which weapon. This is achieved via a considered process of elimination, taking note of a series of decidedly conspicuous clues and, eventually, gathering everyone together and smugly taking them through the entire situation, pausing pompously for effect before turning dramatically to the murderer, pointing, and saying, "You did it! It was you, Professor James Crowley, but you made one fatal mistake..." Er, or something like that.

So, to shoehorn this scenario into the game itself, you roll a dice, move your character into each of the rooms and make "suggestions" as to who, what and where. The game will then give you a varyingly cryptic clue – depending on the skill level. It'll be something like, "Eamon had the screwdriver" or "Mrs Euripides was not in the Airing Cupboard" (probably). The theory is, should you be availed with a sufficient amount of logic and/or intelligence, you'll use these clues to arrive at a possible solution in order to make that vital "accusation".

The game's fine – I suppose – there's just no escaping the fact that attempting this kind of thing on the Mega Drive is like using the washing machine to do the accounts. It's unjustifiable and incompatible. If you want to play *Clue(do)*, then what on earth is wrong with buying the board-game? It's far more fun sitting around on the living room floor with several beered-up mates and half a pound of Twiglets than squinting into a TV.

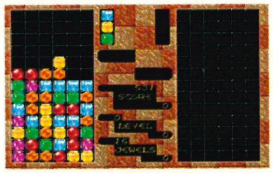
Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 4
Game Size2
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Designer mediocrity. Don't stand for it. Even the multi-player mode is tedious: altogether a bad idea.

MEGA Rating: 40%

COLUMNS

Sega • £29.99

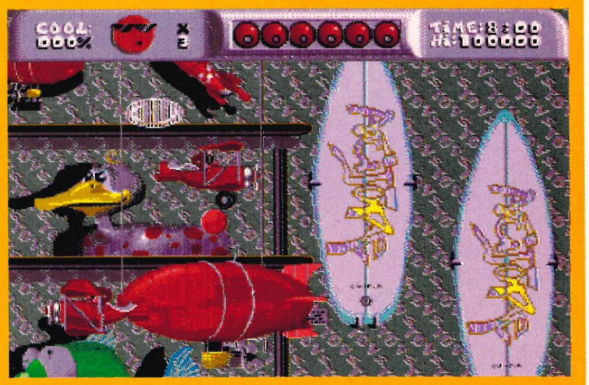


The game they give away with the Game Gear, and it's easy to see why – it's worth buying one of the fabby little machines just to play this. Except, of course, you don't have to. This brilliant cross between *Tetris* and *Klax* is better on the Mega Drive than anywhere else, thanks mainly to the fact that the graphics are big enough to let you actually see what's going on. Great stuff solo, but the two-player head-to-head 'Flash' game is unbelievably competitive and totally wonderful. The best Mega Drive puzzle game going.

Graphics 2
Sound 3
Gameplay 9
Game Size 9
Addiction 9

COOL SPOT

Virgin Games • £39.99



***Cool Spot*. The most perfectly animated and beautifully designed Mega Drive platformers of all time?**

Let's get it out of the way right at the start – this is one of the best platform games I've ever played. In fact, it's one of my favourite Mega Drive games ever, full stop. We've already seen practically every feature you could ever imagine a platform game could have, so it takes a lot for a platformer to surprise us these days, but *Cool Spot* manages it with a game that's had the kind of time and effort put into it that you don't really expect anymore.

From the opening seconds, when the shades-wearing tiddlywink that is the star character leaps out of the choppy sea onto a floating bottle (green, fizzy pop container, no logo – hmm) and starts to surf along to a rollicking accompaniment of the Surfaris' (or the Fat Boys', if you're a bit younger) Wipe Out, my face was permanently contorted in the sort of grin that led the rest of the MEGA team to book me in at the Betty Ford Clinic.

First off, I suppose I could have a go at justifying the absurd ten out of ten I've given it for graphics. Cool Spot himself is, without a shadow of a doubt, the best-animated character I've seen on any computer or video game, making even the heroes of *Prince Of Persia* or *Flashback* look like Thunderbirds puppets by comparison. He's got charisma by the bucketload, this little guy – from the way he yawns, polishes his shades or plays with his yo-yo when you bore him by leaving the controls alone for a while, to the wondrous theatrical swoon he performs when you're stupid enough to get him killed. Everything he does, he does so impressively that I reckon the total number of animation frames involved in his movement alone must be, ooh, more than twelve, anyway. But it's not just Spot – all the other characters in the game have, astonishingly, had just as much attention paid to them. My special favourites are the mice in nightshirts on the "wall" levels, but every single enemy feels like a real, individual, "living" creature, not just a good-looking collection of pixels. And I haven't even mentioned the lovely parallaxing backgrounds yet, or the smoothness of the scrolling, but I can't because now I've got to tell you about the sound.

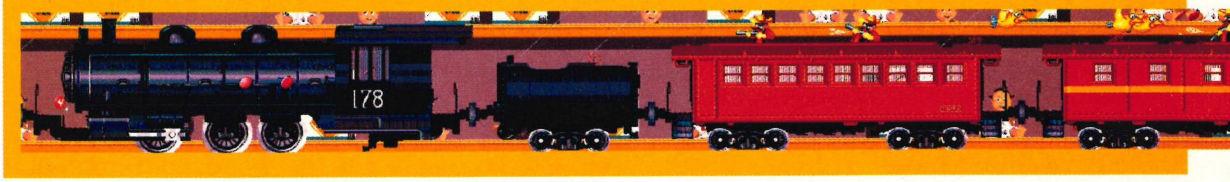
It's brilliant. Spot himself squeaks and yelps in a deeply endearing fashion, but there's stunning music too. And not just *Thunderforce IV*-style "Mmm, listen to that, isn't it multi-channel-near-CD-quality-tastic, mates? But hey, shame about the actual tunes, though" stunning – actual boppy, hummable, tuneful kind of stunning (especially on the Loco Motive level, which plays something distinctly reminiscent of the theme tune from Bonanza. Or maybe The High Chapparal).

The gameplay is, in all honesty, the least amazing aspect of *Cool Spot* – brilliant though it is, you really have seen all this jumping-around-platforms-and-collecting-stuff stuff before. You've almost never seen it done so well, though, from the design of the levels themselves to the original touches (like on the first stage where you leap around in the sky, hanging from a succession of balloons) to the groovy bonus stage, where you can earn yourself continues. *Cool Spot* isn't original, but it's a joy to play from start to finish, and that's the only thing that matters at the end of the day. Game size? It's a whopper – the levels are all massive, and it'll take you upwards of three hours to play through all of them even when you're good enough to zip straight through. And as for addiction, this game kept me in for an entire weekend, when I had half-a-dozen far more "important" things that I really ought to have been getting on with. Nuff said? *Neil West*

Graphics 10 Sound 9 Gameplay 7 Game Size 9 Addiction 9

MEGA Says: Bar *Sonic 2*, this is the Mega Drive's best ever platformer, and bar *Flashback*, it's the best animated game we've ever seen. *Cool Spot* is real top drawer stuff and no mistake.

MEGA Rating: 93%



MEGA Says: Buy another joypad, buy *Columns,* and then invite some of your friends round. Then see if you can get them to leave...

MEGA Rating: **90%**

TIP: • Build a column of blocks on one side of the screen. Position a magic block so that only two of the three blocks fit on the screen.The third block will fall separately.

CRACKDOWN

Sega • Deleted

A sweet but dull maze shoot-'em-up in its own right, *Crack Down* is one of the best two-player co-operative games ever. Playing two characters with the unfortunate monikers of Ben Breaker and Andy Attacker, you get a split-screen kind of affair where devious interaction will see you getting all the computer enemies to shoot each other instead of you, which is one of the most satisfying things you can ever do in a video game. Limited, but good for a laugh.

Graphics 6
Sound 6
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: If you haven't got that extra joypad and that game-loving friend, forget it completely, but if you're the sociable type this is one of the better ways to have a good time with two people (and a Mega Drive).

MEGA Rating: **72%**

CRÜE BALL

Electronic Arts • 34.99

Pinball on your Mega Drive, this one's not bad but not as good as *Dragon's Fury.* Why don't software houses ever do anything NEW with pinball, when – on a computer – the only limits to the table are in your imagination? It's a mystery, but at least *Crüeball* makes an attempt – at some stages the table becomes infested with monsters and you have to silver-ball them back from whence they came. It's only a fraction of computer pinball's potential though.

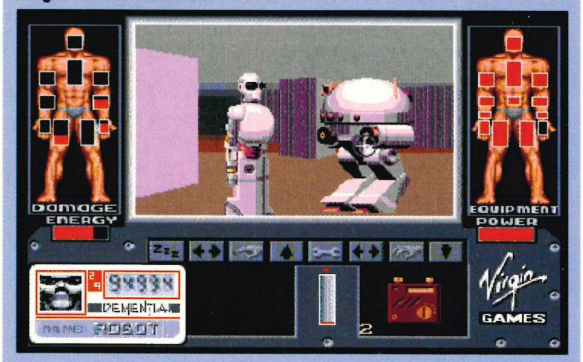
Graphics 7
Sound 8
Gameplay 6
Game Size 4
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Change your £35 into 10ps and head for an arcade – you'll have more fun.

MEGA Rating: **70%**

CORPORATION

Virgin Games • £39.99



"How are you then Frank?" "Not bad, not bad. Spot of trouble with rust up me recharge vent though."

A genetically engineered mutant has escaped from the lab it was made in, and has been killing people. In order to find out what the hell is going on, a secret agent (working for the government) needs to enter the labs and get hold of a sample of the experiment to see what's afoot. And that agent is, wait for it, you.

There's a choice of characters you can take on the mission. Most are human, but there are a couple of droids in there too. Once you've kitted out your character with weapons and various technological widgets (like lock picks), it's off to the UCC building (that's the Universal Cybernetics Corporation) to begin your mission.

Controlling your character couldn't be simpler. You move forwards, backwards and rotate left and right using the joypad. There's also a menu bar at the foot of the screen, from which you can select items that you've collected. Dead simple, huh? This leaves you free to think about the job in hand, which is just as well, because the job in hand is not immediately apparent.

I'm not exactly raving about it though, am I? The thing is, the graphics are all very smooth and spooky and the gameplay is straightforward while being involved and often intriguing, but as I've already said, the scenery is bland. To start with, this is not a problem, but after exploring five floors that all look the same, the feeling of being involved in some sinister plot inside a large corporate building is utterly lost. It's because your environment doesn't change that there are no real progressions in the gameplay. In other adventure games of this type there are points when you sit back, sigh and say to yourself, "That's that bit sorted, onto the next phase." This is not the case with *Corporation.* It's just a hard slog through to the end.

It's spooky, it's challenging, it's engaging, but ultimately *Corporation* is nothing more than a short-term diversion. *Andy Dyer*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 7 Game Size 8 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: There's a good deal of challenge and lots of playability. It's just a bit on the repetitive side, that's all.

MEGA Rating: **78%**

TIP: • Get to level five and update your access before descending to level four. Update your access on level four and go back up to level five. Once in teh lift, take down the password and reset the game. When you start again enter teh password and rest the game. When you start again enter the password and repeat the process. You should find that you can update your card seven times and can now go to any level you like. Go to level three where you'll find the Embryo Chamber. Collect an Embryo and run to the car park on the ground floor. You've completed the game! That wasn't too bad was it now?
• At the start, buy one gun(2), two grenades, one bomb, one power pack, four refills, three electronics, one armour(3).
• The most important weapon is the bomb, but don't use it until you get put into prison.
• If thrown in prison, simply check your pockets...
• Don't buy a lock-pick, find one.
• The crab monster is only a hologram, but sometimes it's hiding something infinitely more dangerous.

CURSE

Unknown • IMPORT

Bog-standard horizontally-scrolling shoot-em-up. There are so many of these to choose from, you really don't need to bother with this one.

Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 3
Game Size 4
Addiction 3

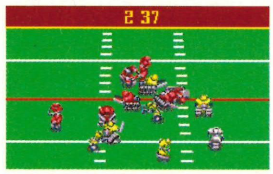
MEGA Says: Check out *Hellfire* or *Aero Blasters* instead.

MEGA Rating: **25%**

TIP: • Press Reset, hold down A and press Start to choose the level on which you wish to start.
• For a level-select cheat, reset the game and press A and Start together.

CYBERBALL

Sega • £19.99



Take American football, substitute robots for the human players and you get *Cyberball.* Mind you, you can keep it. The graphics are pathetic and the plays that you use make the likes of *Madden* and *Montana* look light years ahead. It's a very sub standard game that is bad as it looks.

Graphics 4
Sound 4
Gameplay 4
Game Size 3
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Why bother with *Montana* at the same price, and *Madden* for a few pounds more to go for? A perfect proof of the argument that arcade games and home-console games should be designed with two COMPLETELY different approaches: one should be picked up and mastered within seconds, the other can provide real long term appeal.

MEGA RATING: **31%**

TIP: • Enter P5BB B5PS IHEX to play in the finals as the Minnesota Maulers.
• Use the code L5BB LDCI BFAV to play the LA Assassins in the final with $6,948,000 in the bank.
• Use the code: CGBB B8FB BB2V to see the end.

CYBORG JUSTICE

Sega • £34.99

Occasionally a game comes along that, while being very obscure, is also very fab. *Ecco* was one and now *Cyborg Justice* is another. So what is so good about it? And what do I mean by obscure?

We've all played beat-'em-ups like *Final Fight* and *Streets of Rage 2* where you can pick up various objects to help you on your quest. But take that one stage further. Imagine being able to beat up someone, rip their arm off and replace yours with it. Weird? Yes. But transfer that ability to non-feeling, powerful Cyborgs and you take out the gross factor and add an amazing power up strategy element. Good eh?

Each level is split into three sections, and each section is just one big left to right scrolling landscape. Beat up a series of baddies then fight the obligatory end of level boss. This all sounds very formulaic, but this is a very well programmed game and it's hard to find fault with it. I'm not usually like this, but I'm going to sit on the fence and suggest that you try this before you buy it.

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 8
Game Size 6
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A game you'll either love or loathe

MEGA rating: **79%**

DANGEROUS SEED

Unknown • IMPORT

Yet another bog-standard vertical shoot-em-up.

Graphics	4
Sound	3
Gameplay	3
Game Size	5
Addiction	3

MEGA Says: Yawn.

MEGA Rating: 39%

TIP: • Press Up, Down, Left, Left, Right, Right, Up, Down to enter "expert mode". You'll hear a chime.
• When the demo starts press Left, Left, Left, Up, Up, Right, Left and then Right. You should now have 99 credits.

DARIUS 2: SAGAIA

Taito • IMPORT

Seven different endings? Now here's a way of extending a game's life span: not that it needs it, with 26 levels this is a big challenge. This classy sideways-scrolling shoot-em-up offers enough, but doesn't break any new ground.

Graphics	5
Sound	5
Gameplay	4
Game Size	8
Addiction	6

MEGA Says: Nice graphics, nice sound, nice challenge – but nothing new whatsoever. An above average sideways-scroller that's worth a look.

MEGA Rating: 60%

TIP: • On the intro screen press A, B, A, C, B, C, C, B, C, A, B, A. A "No Hit" message should appear and then you're invincible.
• A level select: press C, A, C, B, C, A, B, A, B, C, A, C on the intro screen.

DARK CASTLE

Electronic Arts • Deleted

A departure from the usual sort of EA game, *Dark Castle* is a puzzle/platformer that suffers in both the visuals and gameplay departments.

Graphics	4
Sound	5
Gameplay	3
Game Size	6
Addiction	3

MEGA Says: Don't let the EA badge fool you, this one's not up to scratch.

MEGA Rating: 44%

POWER ATHLETE

Keneko • £39.99

My word, what a stunningly realistic combat move this one is. Steer well clear of *Deadly Moves*

Seeing as you've probably looked at the screen shots already and drawn your own conclusions, I'll start by confirming that – yes – *Deadly Moves* (or *Power Athlete* as the import version was called) is pretty closely based on *Streetfighter 2*. It's a one-on-one fighting game in which you can either try your luck against the computer, using one of the characters (he's called Joe) to take on the other eight, or play against a friend using whichever characters you like.

The thing is, though, you've probably also already looked at the score, and you'll be wondering what the problem is.

Baraki looks just a little like *SF2*'s Blanka, yes?

To put it bluntly, *Deadly Moves* isn't any good. The sprites are a bit on the small side, and aren't particularly well animated. The moves available are by and large pretty boring. The computer doesn't play fair – it just stands around performing moves seemingly at random, and when it wins it's generally by virtue of the fact that its moves do a lot more damage than yours. And it's very limiting the way that, in one-player mode, you can only control Joe. He's got to be the dullest character ever, with one special move to his name – a sort of jumping punch thing. (He might be able to do some kind of fireball, too – I think I triggered it off accidentally a couple of times – but the manual's all in Japanese so it's difficult to be sure.)

This game is truly worthy of a cackiness award

Having said all that, I can't deny that *Deadly Moves* does everything it claims to, and I managed to while away a couple of hours with it. But it's all so unadventurous, and you've only got to have a really, really quick go on *Streetfighter 2* on the Super Nintendo (shh!) to see that the Mega Drive version should be well worth waiting for. *Paul Mellerick*

Graphics 6 Sound 5 Gameplay 5 Game Size 4 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: A horribly average beat-em-up. Save your pennies for you-know-what.

MEGA Rating: 54%

TIP: • Here are some character codes for *Deadly Moves*
Warren – XXI E4T2 0ZY
Vagnad – WBY MFDI HOZ
Li Yong – WBY E42Q UZI
Baraki – HB1 Y9JK D4W
Bu-oh – HB8 MFO6 NNN
Gaoluon – HY6 Z9J3 W47
Nick – QY1 G9J9 J97

DARWIN 4081

Unknown • IMPORT

Another vertically-scrolling shoot-em-up, but this one looks better than most. Some nice animated touches and the sight of your ship evolving (you pick up DNA as power-ups don't ya know) make this a pleasing change from the norm.

Graphics	7
Sound	6
Gameplay	5
Game Size	5
Addiction	5

MEGA Says: Not the best Mega Drive shoot-em-up by a long way, but worth a look.

MEGA Rating: 60%

TIP: • Play track 32 on the sound test. Hit A for each level you want to skip.

DAVID ROBINSON BASKETBALL

Sega • £39.99

The best of a whole clutch of basketball games recently released by various people, though still not up to *Team USA* this one boasts by far the smoothest, fastest action, and some of the nicest effects too. If basketball's your bag (ahem), this is your kind of shopping trolley. (What? – Ed). Well, you know what I mean don't you? (Frankly, no – Ed)

Graphics	8
Sound	5
Gameplay	5
Game Size	6
Addiction	5

MEGA Says: Bouncy-bouncy, bouncy-bouncy, fun, fun, fun, fun, fun. (What? – Ed). Tiggers. And basketballs. (Ah – Ed). But not as much fun as *Team USA Basketball*.

MEGA Rating: 69%

TIP: • Here are some spectacularly useful passwords for *David Robinson's Supreme Court Basketball*:
CABCDEA1F – Los Angeles vs Detroit
ASTURBQIE – Chicago vs New York
FMJCLJY1B – New York vs Detroit WYBCDEAYU – Detroit vs Los Angeles

DECAP ATTACK

Sega • £34.99

Originally released as *Magical Hat Turbo Adventure*, at first glance you'll probably go 'Yeuch'. But if you persist with Decap Attack past the first 20 seconds you'll suddenly discover that you're having a brilliant time, thanks to the rollicking platform escapades that make up this wonderfully tasteless game. Controlling a character that can chuck his proper head (his name's Chuck D. Head, good eh?) and with an extra, telescopic, head in his ribcage is simply great fun, and the cheesy music complements the gameplay perfectly.

Graphics	8
Sound	7
Gameplay	8
Game Size	7
Addiction	8

MEGA Says: Ropeyish graphics, but don't let that put you off this gorgeous and funny platformer.

MEGA Rating: 81%

TIP: • Land vertically on top of a bouncy pole. If the red segments turn white, your life is replenished.
• Level 1-3: when you start, fall down from the platform on which you are standing and walk right. Smash the statue for your prize.
• Level 2-3: Fall down, jump up, fall down again, walk as far left as you can go, jump up to the platform above you and smash the statue.
• Level 3-3: Jump on the clouds and head right towards the two columns with arrows pointing inward. Jump between them and walk right on the water to the statue
• Level 4-3: Travel through the first puddle of water to the next one. Go left and fall down the hole. Keep heading left over the lava pit and bash that statue.
• Level 5-3: Hop over the first two lava pits and when you reach the third one, stop in and grab your prize.
• Level 6-3: The statue is hid-

den under the ice but above the molten lava in the middle of the stage.
• Level 7-3: The statue is in the water surrounded by those horrible little fish-like creatures.

DESERT STRIKE

Electronic Arts • £39.99

Yes, okay, so it's in extremely poor taste, but you can't deny that *Desert Strike* is one of the most excellent pieces of blasting fun that the Mega Drive's ever played host to. Sometimes it can feel like you're fighting the entire war yourself, what with missions to complete, hundreds of enemies to blast and all manner of stuff to rescue with your helicopter's all-purpose winch. But even if you're not the xenophobic type you'll be hard pushed not to have a great time with this atmospheric and action-packed shoot-'em-up.

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 8
Game Size 8
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: Never mind the plotline, go out and get yourself enlisted today. *Desert Strike* is a great game, and that's the only thing that really matters and the sequel, *Jungle Strike* is even better!

MEGA Rating: 86%

TIP: • To rescue your co-pilot from the bomber, blow a hole in the middle of the bomber then wait until he walks along the wing. Get close to pick him up.
• Here are some codes:
Level 2: BQJRAEF
Level 3: TLJKOAP
Level 4: WTEOVJP
• Jake is hidden in the top right-hand corner on the second campaign, you're told you've rescued him in campaign three.
• For five lives instead of three enter code: TQQQLOM
• For ten lives instead of three enter code: BQQQAEZ
• When the Apache AH-64 attack helicopter and the words "DESERT STRIKE" appear on screen, fire Hellfires by pressing button A

DEATH DUEL

Razor Soft • £39.99

Tales of terror, doom, darkness and oblivion are ten to a penny when it comes to Mega Drive shoot-'em-ups. *Death Duel* is no exception.

Nine increasingly butch opponents present themselves to be slaughtered, but it's not long before you realise that it's not going to be easy to take these suckers apart. They're all pretty big, they can all take lots of hits, and they all give as good as they get.

Luckily, it's not entirely a one-sided affair, and there's a rather handy shop just around the corner from the battlefield, which stocks more military hardware than any self-respecting hero could ever hope to use. There's cheap stuff such as the machine gun and missiles. But for the ultimate in alien-busting weaponry, you have to turn to the lob mine or the homin' rocket which can demobilise an enemy with a single shot.

The range of weapons isn't just a nice touch to keep the Terminator wannabees happy. All the aliens have different strengths and weaknesses, so you have to work out which weapons to use against each monster. It takes several attempts before you strike upon the right combination of guns, grenades, rockets and missiles to destroy them with.

But even when you do win, there's always a niggling feeling that victory is more down to trial and error than your pre-calculated military genius. If you choose the wrong equipment to start with, you get the chance to go to the shop again before you start your last life, but most of the time you have to play through from the start to get to the monster that defeated you last time out. And when you get to him, you just have to trawl through the weapons until you find the right one for the job.

The amount of money you have for new weapons depends on how quickly you can dispatch the enemy. The faster you do it, the more money you get to spend in the shop. There's also a bonus round in which you have to shoot at small creatures, which parade across the screen in front of your machine guns. Once again, the quicker you achieve a minimum score, the more money you get and the better weapons you can buy.

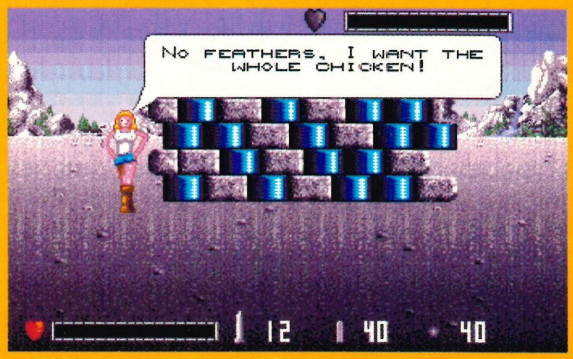
At first you spend all your money at once on a random selection of weapons, but the best tactic is to buy the basic minimum hardware to dispose of the early beasts, and save up for some really juicy equipment for the mongrels who come later. Usually this means you end up buying a couple of homing missiles (the most powerful weapon) and very little else. There's also another drain on your reserves – the Cyborg suit isn't damageproof, you have to pay to get it repaired.

Even though there are nine monsters to fight, there isn't enough variety, because most of them are so ridiculously hard to kill that you end up using homin' rockets and the more powerful grenades. And using a homin' rocket against one creature is exactly the same as using it against another. The game would have been much better if it relied more on skill than luck, but there's still plenty of gung-ho fun to be had. *Paul Mellerick*

Graphics 8 Sound 6 Gameplay 4 Game Size 5 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: An original game, which would have been ideal for the Menacer. As it is, it's A good laugh but it could have been so much better.

MEGA Rating: 61%



I've absolutely no idea what she's on about but I presume she's talking about the next beast I have to fight

Right, let's buy some really serious weapons

Hurrah! There go his legs. What a lovely game!

DEVILISH

Unknown • IMPORT

A copy of the ancient old Breakout game, this one's fun – but not £40 worth.

Graphics 4
Sound 5
Gameplay 6
Game Size 7
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: A classic game design that will never lose its appeal. But you can get the same game on the Sinclair Spectrum for about 20p.

MEGA Rating: 50%

TIP: • Hold A, B, C and Left on the title screen and press Start for 99 balls.
• Here's a code for all you pinball wizards: ALCLAE8ECK.
• To get to the last level, enter code: 5VENAXUEMN

DICK TRACY

Sega • £19.99

The man in the flasher mac is back. A shoot-em-up with a few neat touches to the action make this a playable game. Maybe a few gratuitous shots of Madonna would have livened it up a bit. The graphics are fine but the action dissolves into a repetitive and tedious blast. In a similar vein to *ESWAT* et al, but less sophisticated.

Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 4
Game Size 5
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Less sophisticated than *ESWAT*? Yikes!

MEGA Rating: 47%

DINO LAND

Unknown • IMPORT

Average pinball game that's no where near up to the standard of *Dragon's Fury*.

Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 4
Game Size 4
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: As with golf, you'll only ever need one pinball game – and this isn't it.

MEGA Rating: 34%

DJ BOY

Sega • Deleted

A beat-em-up on roller skates, this is one tough game – but for all the wrong reasons. The controls are tricky, the bad guys impossibly tough and the inclusion rollerskates inexplicable.

Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 3
Game Size 8
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Appalling. *DJ Boy* is to your game collection what a Radio One DJ would be to a peaceful summer picnic.

MEGA Rating: 35%

TIP: • Hit the third falling barrel on level three to reveal loads of secret goodies.

DODGEBALL

Sega Japan • IMPORT

It's you versus your opponents, seven on seven, on a pitch very similar to a tennis court but without the net. Your only weapon is a ball that you must throw at the other team with the intention of knocking them senseless.

Each of your seven players has a health rating, which gets lower when hit. You can check the progress of your four on court players using the on screen pole system. The further up the pole the player is the better but if he's shaking down the bottom, you'd better get the stretcher ready.

If a player is knocked out he'll be taken off the pitch and put around the rim and replaced by somebody else. Get down to less than four players and when somebody croaks they won't be replaced. This is all over when you've despatched all seven opponents or they've done it to you.

Controlling the game is what really grabs you and makes it great fun to play. You only control one player at a time but you can pass between them by pressing A. Button B is the business button, firing the ball at your rival or attempting to catch it when it's thrown at you. Button C makes you jump, either giving you more momentum in your throw or letting you dodge an incoming one.

One important thing to remember is that you're stuck inside the lines of your section and if you try to move out with the ball you'll automatically drop it and give away possession.

More than just simply throwing the ball, you can do all sorts of other things within the game and also control types of throws depending on how long you hold down the B button and the direction of the joypad.

The graphics aren't exactly ground breaking but the character sprites on screen are nicely detailed and well animated in a very cartoony way. The colours are nice and cheerful and don't clash with the ball so that you can always see it coming. Sound wise though the game lets itself down with an annoying little tune grating away throughout the match and bland FX.

With a league option, including up to six players, a one on one against the computer or a mate and options galore, you won't get bored of this one in a hurry and you'll definitely come back for more time after time. This is a novel sports game that won't appeal to everyone but definitely breaks the mould of serious sport sims and let's you have a bit of fun for a change.

Graphics: 7
Sound: 5
Gameplay: 7
Game size: 8
Addiction: 7

MEGA says: *Dodgeball* is great fun to play and okay to look at. But it's not going to suit everybody. Try before you buy.

MEGA Rating: 73%

DOUBLE DRAGON

Accolade • £29.99

A tedious two-player beat-em-up. *Streets Of Rage 2* offers everything *Double Dragon* does, plus about 200% more.

Graphics 3
Sound 4
Gameplay 2
Game Size 5
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Avoid. Stay well clear. If you see *Double Dragon*, run in completely the opposite direction.

MEGA Rating: 13%

DOUBLE DRAGON 2

Unknown • IMPORT

Even worse.

Graphics 3
Sound 3
Gameplay 1
Game Size 4
Addiction 3

DOUBLE CLUTCH

Sega • £39.99

It looks simplistic and rather dull doesn't it? Well, it is. *Micro Machines* is a much better bet by far

This is a racing game. I use the word "racing" under duress, because the sensations evoked by this one-bit wonder are more akin to rigor mortis or possibly constipation than anything close to speed or competitive racing. It has been fashioned in the style of the famous, not to mention brilliant, *Micro Machines* (this game earned 92% in issue five of MEGA) and is a one- or two-player game in which you move a car around a series of tracks with the aim of beating the competition.

The actual "races" in this game are viewed from overhead, with the action centred on either the human-controlled car in a one-player game or on the lead car in a two-player game. By pressing the B button you accelerate, pressing the C button brakes and pressing A hits the nitros.

Now let's look a bit closer at those descriptions, shall we? Firstly, the acceleration bit. This is a slight exaggeration, as your car doesn't exactly accelerate, rather it coughs its way asthmatically along the track a bit until connecting with a roadside obstruction or a car. It moves with all the nimbleness of a constipated wildebeest. In short, it is slow and sluggish.

Now let's examine the braking bit. What this does is completely arrest your movement within about three nanoseconds, enabling all the other cars to nip around you and disappear off into the distance. As far as the Mega team can ascertain, it serves no other purpose except, just possibly, for making sure that the C button doesn't feel left out from the whole endeavour.

Of course the "nitro" bit is a similarly thrilling experience. By pressing that A button, your car moves forward about four pixels and then stops. This is no light-the-blue-touch-paper-and-stand-back nitro, more a blow-gently-on-a-large-boulder-and-see-if-it-moves job. The nitros in this game have the usefulness rating of a hairnet for Duncan Goodhew.

And now it's snowing. Still tedious

Give this game a miss and get hold of a copy of *Micro Machines* instead. Do not attempt to approach *Double Clutch* under any circumstances. I don't care if you're the kind of wally who voted the Tory government in again (oops politics, risky), I don't care if you're the sort of dweeb who enjoys the Antiques Roadshow or, indeed, Noel's House Party, I don't even care if you own a Pac-a-Mac. Do not buy this game. It is dull, has just four different race tracks, four different driver characters (Lance Quick anyone?), knob sound and cack gameplay. Reading the memoirs of John Major while listening to Songs of Praise would be more fun than playing *Double Clutch*. 'Nuff said? *Andy Dyer*

Graphics 5 Sound 2 Gameplay 1 Game Size 2 Addiction 1

MEGA Says: Is *Double clutch* crap? Does Dolly Parton sleep on her back?

MEGA Rating: 20%

MEGA Says: Yes, along with *Strider 2* one of the few sequels to be worse than the original.

MEGA Rating: 9%

DRAGON'S FURY

Tengen • £39.99

Ah now this is more like it. A top rate pinball game that actually makes use of the fact that it's a console game to incorporate all sorts of fantastic features (such as little monsters running across the table) that you'd never be able to get on a real table. What can we say? Go out and get it.

Graphics 9
Sound 8
Gameplay 8
Game Size 4
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Great stuff.

MEGA Rating: 83%

TIP: • Enter UUBV99BQRE for 73 balls and 505,705,300 points.
• Enter ALCLAE8ECK for 21 balls and the end-of-game sequence.
• This tip lets you get the 2,000,000 special score. Launch the ball and hold down both flippers. The ball should pop straight into the head.
• Enter TECNOSOFT to start the game with ten balls and 2,000,000 points.

DYNAMITE DUKE

Sega • Deleted

Operation Wolf/Terminator 2 style shoot-em-up. 'Nuff said.

Graphics 8
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 6
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: If this is the sort of game you like, you won't be disappointed.

MEGA Rating: 77%

TIP: • Press Start for the options screen, but press C ten times and Start for a totally different options screen.

EA HOCKEY

Electronic Arts
• £39.99

You might not think ice hockey was a very good idea for a real-life-to-Mega-Drive conversion, and let's face it, normally you'd be right. Amazingly though, by some astonishing quirk of fate, Park Place Productions for EASN managed to turn it into a brilliant game anyway! Taking a strange top-down scrolling viewpoint seems even dafter, but it worked beautifully, and the gameplay is as perfect as you could ever hope for it to be. Mind you, just like in the real thing, the best bit is when the gloves come off and the punch-ups start. Not as involved as Madden's, and the naive or short-sighted player will tell you that scoring's more down to luck than skill. But for nerve-tingling tension that's second to none, *EA Hockey* truly comes up with the goods.

Graphics	**9**
Sound	**7**
Gameplay	**8**
Game Size	**7**
Addiction	**9**

MEGA Says: Great stuff, and *NHLPA Hockey* (the sequel) is even better. Go buy.
MEGA Rating: 91%

TIP: • For a 4-2 lead in the finals as the USSR against the USA, enter the following code: HKT82Y93JDB7G435
• Don't forget that you can substitute goal keepers if one isn't behaving properly.

EARNEST EVANS

Wolfteam • IMPORT

This game became famous as the Mega CD's first platformer, and this cart version is roughly the same. This is a shame, because the game really is quite appaling. Nice character though, and hopefully we'll be seeing him again.

ECCO THE DOLPHIN

Sega • £39.99

If some computer programmers had come up to me a couple of months before the release of *Ecco* and said that they were thinking of releasing a dolphin simulator, I'd have had a few pertinent questions to ask like "Will it be called Mutant Machine Gun Sea Mammals From Hell then?" or "Will it involve hordes of murdering robotic Dolphins?". Had I been told that it was quite simply a game about a dolphin which has to swim gracefully around the seascape rescuing other underwater animals, I'd have laughed and pointed the programmers towards the door.

I was surprised then to find that *Ecco* is a gentle dolphin sim with little action and heaps of twee loveliness. I am further surprised to report that it's one of the best Mega Drive games I've ever played.

At the start of the game, everything is just perfect. You get to swim around a beautiful lagoon practising your graceful dolphin movements and chatting to a number of other dolphin chums. Once you've got the hang of the controls you can begin the game by leaping high into the air. This activates a vortex, which sucks all the various life forms from the sea. It is then up to you to try to figure out what's going on and rescue your chums.

The question on everyone's lips is what on earth does Ecco have at his disposal for solving mysteries? Well, firstly he can use his sonic abilities in a variety of ways. By sending out a sonic blast Ecco can call up a map of the surrounding area. This is very useful for route-finding, a lot of which has to be done in this game. He can also use his "voice" to talk to other sea creatures (dolphins and whales). When Ecco's spoken to an animal, a bizarre cryptic reply is displayed on the screen. This will detail one of two things. You'll either find out what Ecco has to do on a certain level (like save a dolphin's friends who are trapped) or you'll be given a clue.

Another useful ability Ecco has is the nose butt. This can be used to fight off enemies, eat fish in order to top up his energy supply or activate glyphs. Ah yes the glyphs. Occasionally Ecco comes across a crystal (that's what a glyph is) blocking a passageway. When he tries to talk to it a message tells you that he cannot pass yet. You then know that Ecco has to search for another glyph. Nose butt the second glyph and a sonic beam will engulf him. If Ecco now returns to the first glyph and gives it a sonic blast, it'll fall away and the route through the passage will be clear.

So what else do dolphins get up to? They fight of course. They may appear to be all sweetness and light, but dolphins are actually pretty tasty in a ruck, especially against sharks. Again, this is where the nose butt comes in. But useful though it is, it's not infallible, and care must be taken to line Ecco up for a shot properly or he'll get wasted – the most dangerous creature Ecco comes up against seems to be the puffer fish. They may be small, but these spiky little bleeders can zip around like Dickie Lightning (a phrase which parents always use but never seem to know where it came from).

One final point on hazards: not all the enemies can be fought. Some are just there to cause trouble, and an excellent example of such an obstruction is the giant octopus. When Ecco tries to get past his tentacles, the octopus strikes. The secret is to gently swim past as slowly as possible.

killer Whales may be scary, but try talking to one...

Ecco's top mates, moments before being kidnapped

This in turn causes additional problems, because by the time Ecco's ambled past, his air supply is dangerously low and this can be a right old pain when you discover that he's at a dead end and must go back past the octopus before he can resurface for more air.

At the top of the screen is an energy meter and an air meter. The energy goes down whenever Ecco gets hit by an enemy or runs into some spiky coral formations. The air supply, however, goes down gradually but constantly. This means you either have to return Ecco to the surface regularly or find an underwater air pocket in order to top up. All this adds yet another element of danger and excitement to the game as it means you're constantly at the mercy of tight time limits.

Much of the gameplay involves route-finding. Ecco'll start off in one place and have to find his way through a labyrinth of undersea caves, searching out key glyphs and returning to the surface for air en route. However, once in a while he'll have to complete a minor mission. One of the earlier tasks is to go and rescue a dolphin who is trapped deep under the water by a large group of sharks. It's up to Ecco to find him and then lead him back to the surface.

So against all the odds this strange idea for a game has given rise to one of the most enjoyable Mega Drive titles ever. Just learning the controls and thrashing around in the water is entrancing enough, but even when the novelty wears off there's a big, big game underneath with neat challenges and plenty to discover. It's great for any gamer, but be warned, only the best out there are going to reach the end within a reasonable amount of time.

Ecco is the best thing I've seen in a long time and, for once, it doesn't rely on gratuitous violence or a cacky plot that's been used a million times before. No, this one's a true original and will be a true classic. *Andy Dyer.*
Graphics 9 Sound 8 Gameplay 9 Game Size 8 Addiction 9

MEGA Says: This is a truly original game – something that you don't see very often on consoles. It's a vast game in every respect.
MEGA Rating: 93%

TIP: • Here are the codes for the levels:
The Undercaves – WEFIDNMP, The Vents – PUDPXJDK, The Lagoon – TCXSXJDT, Ridge Water – QZOMOQLE, Open Ocean – KEQKALGF, Ice Zone – FJTZCLGZ, Hard Water – TRAWCLGZ, Cold Water – IBRWXREO, Island Zone – WTCAVREH, Deep Water – UHPHVREN, Marble Sea – ELNLXREF, The Library – TSGPXREX, Deep City – TOVHXREB, City of Forever – GACTXRET, Jurassic Beach – QDZAVNLK, Pterandon Pond – BQVVAPEA,Origin Beach – GRPZAPEE, Trilobite Circle – UCJDBPEC, Dark Water – ZDCHBPEF, Deep Water – YBDIBPEG, City of Forever – YUPIGPLV, The Tube – MIBFKMLH, Welcome to the Machine – VUFBKMLC, The Last Fight – KTPMLMLM
• Here's the cheat code. Enter your password as SHARKFIN and you'll start on the Lagoon level. You'll notice that your breath meter has gone. You can now stay underwater for as long as you like.
• When the name of the level appears, press A, B and Start to make Ecco invincible.

E GAMES

Graphics 5
Sound 8
Gameplay 3
Game Size 6
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Strange name (Thoughtful Thompson is rumoured to be a good mate of Earnest's) but that's where all appeal stops.
MEGA Rating: 35%

TIP: • If you're having trouble with a particular level, then skip it. Pause the game and press Up, A, Down, Left, A, Right, B and then unpause the game.

EL VIENTO

Unknown • IMPORT
What do you expect to hear about yet another bog-standard platform beat-'em-up? That the name means 'The Double-Decker Bus' in Spanish? That'd be interesting, wouldn't it? If only it were true...

Graphics 5
Sound 5
Gameplay 4
Game Size 6
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Not true, though. Yet Another Bog-Standard Beat-'Em-Up. Sorry.
MEGA Rating: 42%

TIP: • Pause the game and choose from either of these. Up, Left, Right, Down and C will give you BIG magic. Up, Left, Right, Down and A moves the game in slow mo and Up, Left, Right, Down and B will skip to the next level

ELEMENTAL MASTER

Unknown • IMPORT
Nice intro, shame about the boring shoot 'em up underneath.

Graphics 8
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 6
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: You're on foot and the enemy throw rocks, but even with these novelties, we're already sick of saying "just another shoot-'em-up" and we're only at E.
MEGA Rating: 55%

TIP: • Press A and Start simultaneously and you'll enter the hidden options screen.

ESWAT

Sega • Deleted

Bearing only a slight resemblance to the coin-op, *ESWAT* luckily manages to be an even better game than its arcade counterpart. It's got more to it than the coin-op's limited beat-'em-up formula, and although it's still no *Phantasy Star 2*, there's enough thinking to keep you interested to the end.

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 7
Game Size 8
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: There are dozens of this type of game around, but this one is actually worth having. Simplistic, but involving and addictive.
MEGA Rating: 81%

TIP: • Finish the game and then press Right and Down and A, B and C while simultaneously pressing Start on the title screen for a level select.

EUROPEAN CLUB SOCCER

Virgin Games • £39.99

Previously seen on home computer formats as the extremely popular *Manchester United Europe*, the fact that this is one of the best Mega Drive football games around isn't so much down to it being brilliant as the fact that there only are about two competitors, both of which are rubbish. Still, this is slick, fast and enjoyable, and though it's easy to beat, you'll get months of fun from the two-player mode. If *Super Kick Off* doesn't suit your style, this is well worth a look for footy fans.

Graphics 9
Sound 8
Gameplay 5
Game Size 8
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: *Euro Club Soccer* fights it out with *Super Kick Off* as the Mega Drive's best footy game, but that title will probably go out of the window when *Sensible Soccer*, *Goal!* or *Ultimate Soccer* appears. Wait for them and then make your own judgement.
MEGA Rating: 77%

TIP: • Take your pick of the following English teams to play as in the final:
Norwich City – 373UAA4IGC (vs Rangers)
Liverpool – SAHEAA6ICA (vs Celtic)
Aston Villa – BEDUAA7ICA (vs Real Sociedad)
Tottenham Hotspur – J6CUAA8IHA (vs Celtic)
Arsenal – ZWNEAA9IAE (vs Bordeaux)
Nottingham Forest – KQAE-ABAIAE (vs PSV Eindhoven)

EX-MUTANTS

Sega • £34.99

The year is 2055 and thanks to the biological and chemical warfare of World War III most of the world's population has been mutated. These mutants have taken refuge underground, in the forests and in the crumbling buildings of what's left of their cities. Their intention is to take over the world. (A band of mutants taking over the world? Come on, their minds must have got mutated somewhere along the way too.) Anyway, their leader is called Sluggo, and boy is he one ugly git.

So, to stop the uglies accomplishing their task, the Ex-Mutants are formed – a band of six very skillful and brave humans who swear to protect the rest of the human populace. (What? Six ordinary humans against the entire mutants population. That's comic books for you.)

This is all very well until four of them get kidnapped on a particularly tough mission. The two remaining members (Ackroyd and Shannon) realise that they can't fight for the survival of the world alone and so they hatch a plan to rescue their kidnapped members... And that's where the action starts and YOU come into things.

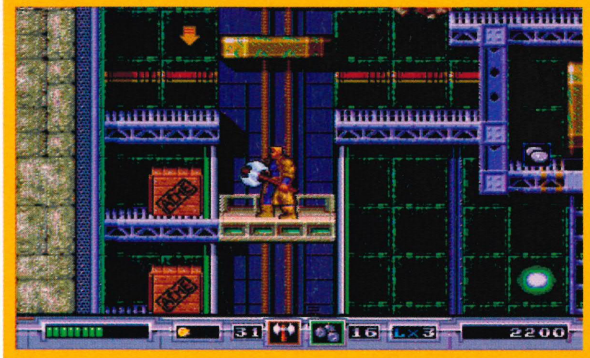
Choosing either Ackroyd or Shannon (each has his own special abilities and weapons, balanced between crap and fantastic) you must work your way through 12 levels (there are actually only nine different scenes, as some levels share exactly the same scenery).

And so your fight begins, a fight which is not going to be easy as there are hordes of mutants already out there waiting for you. And just to make things even worse, each scene has a BIG level boss to deal with as well. Add to that the fact that you need to find a battery cell (to keep your cyborg instructor alive while you are on your mission) on each level before you can finish it, and you've got one tough task ahead of you.

Don't worry unduly, however, because Ackroyd and Shannon are real tough cookies and dab hands when it comes to using weapons. They both have primary and secondary weapons, which they can pick up and indeed use on their way through the game.

Your primary weapon stays the same (Ackroyd has an axe and Shannon uses her nunchakus), but you can power it and turn it into a longer-range weapon. The secondary weapons (like grenades and things) allow you to clear the path ahead and blow up all sorts of things – if you can't reach a particular point, try setting a bomb. You collect these different weapons by walking over them. If you're already carrying something and you don't want to collect the new icon, simply jump over it.

While *Ex-Mutants* might not be the most original game that's ever been made, everything in the game is so well put together that you really don't mind. The graphics stick to the comic book theme and each character stands out well from the background. All the different mutants you come across are so grotesque that you really do want to kill them. And if you want



This bloke's got a bloody big axe. This makes him "hard"

In every Sega game you'll find a waterfall. Probably

Leeds United – J9NUABBIAE (vs Gothenburg)
Everton – 7BKEABCIAE (vs Seville)
Manchester United – 3YREAB-DIAE (vs Hearts)
Chelsea – D7FUABEIAE (vs Hearts)
West Ham United – GE8UAB-FIARE (vs AC Milan)
Rotherham United – PVUUAB-GIAE (vs Hamburg)
• Here are some foreign alternatives:
Rapid Vienna – WTYEAACIAE
Club Liege – OMJUAALIGC
Omomia – N9OUAASIAE
Aarhus – HDCUAAZIAE
Marseille – JQ4UABOIAE
Hamburg – HMKUAB7IGA
Videoton – 98LEACQICA
Legia Warsaw – CXEUADPICA
Partizan – W9SEAFDICA
• Enter your password as THREE SHREDDED WHEAT, with each word on a separate line, and your player will be able to kick incredibly hard, meaning you can score from all sorts of ridiculous positions.
• Enter your password as QUITTER and when you quit a match you won't forfeit the game. Instead of the computer winning, the score will remain the same.
• If you lose the final, wait until the score is shown at the end sequence and then press A, B and C together. You'll then go back to the European Cup Final , but you'll be playing against Flamenco.
• One final (but popular) cheat in the MEGA offices is the good old fashioned "pulling your opponents' joypad out when he's not looking" gag.

Sewers? Sluggtown? Not exactly glamourous work

to see something really gross, check out the death sequence of an end-of-level boss as he explodes and the contents of his stomach fill the screen. Yeeucch!

The sound and sampled speech are great too. Completely waste a mutant, and hear Ackroyd shout out "Die you scumbag" or Shannon say "Get outta my way". The speech adds to an already heavy comic book feeling, but it is more than welcome.

Another nice thing about the game is the way the difficulty levels work. Rather than make the bad guys harder to kill or the bosses stronger in each stage, the game varies the amount of life you get from picking up food icons, the amount of super shots that power up your primary weapon and the number of continues as well. It might sound very complicated, but in practice, it makes the game a great challenge, something lacking in many of today's games. I'm not saying you won't finish it ever, just that it will take you some time to get through it.

You may find it very useful to know that you can't finish the game on Easy level; you can play through some levels, but you stop someway from the end. This means that you won't finish the game straight off and so the Easy level acts as more of a training mode than anything else.

Ex-Mutants is a classic arcade platform slash-'em-up, but this time Sega have done some serious game testing and have provided some realistic options. If you like a bit of a challenge and platformers are your thang, then this game is definitely worth buying. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 8 Sound 8 Gameplay 7 Game Size 6 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: A great game: highly polished and very playable. It's quite tough too.

MEGA RATING: 81%

EVANDER HOLYFIELD'S REAL DEAL BOXING

Sega • £39.99

Boxing games are notoriously crap, but this one's not *too* bad. Boxing is just one of those sports (a lot like football) that doesn't translate well to a videogame – the real intrigue of the sport is by nature physical, and then trying to recreate the 'feel' of the sport with just a three button joypad is trickiness personified. Still, it's a popular sport and the Americans seem to buy boxing games by the spade full and so they're never going to stop coming…

If you *must* have a boxing game (and MEGA don't see why you couldn't live perfectly happy with out ever owning one) then save your cash for Virgin Games' *Muhamad Ali Boxing* – this one just doesn't seem to give you the same feeling of being in control, although the range of options available is well impressive.

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 2
Game Size 5
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug slug snooze.

MEGA Rating: 60%

TIP: • Start the Career Mode and create a new fighter. Enter you name as THE BEAST and you'll be green skinned. You'll also notice that you're power, stamina, skill and defence bars are full. Now you're unbeatable and you should be able win the world championship, except if you're crap that is.

EXILE

Unknown • IMPORT

RPG meets arcade action and (in this case, at least) the two don't seem to get along very well at all. Oh dear!

Graphics 4
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 8
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Next!

MEGA Rating: 38%

F-22 INTER-CEPTOR

Electronic Arts • £39.99

Mig 29 is the only other flight sim on the Mega Drive, which is most of the reason why this, for a very long time, was able to describe itself as the best Mega Drive flight sim, to be honest. OK, so the graphics are fairly good, but the gameplay gets repetitive a bit too quickly for our liking and *Mig 29* is by far the better game.

Graphics 8
Sound 5
Gameplay 7
Game Size 6
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: If you want a flight sim, check out *Mig 29*. Also, Microprose has some fantastic up, down, flying around, looping-the-loop and defying the ground type stuff in the pipeline in the shape of *F-15 Strike Eagle II.*

MEGA Rating: 70%

TIP: • Teleport to the final HQ message in the final two levels: Russian Challenge: KSQGIV
• Teleport to the final HQ message in the final two levels: Aces Challenge: MH01K1
• Teleport to the final HQ message in the final two levels: Korean challenge: BI0F8P
• Teleport to the final HQ message in the final two levels: Iraqui challenge: GTGE8V
• Teleport to the final HQ message in the final two levels: American challenge: 6PGE02

F1 CIRCUS

Nichibutsu • IMPORT

Second only to the *Super Monaco GP* twins, *F1 Circus* looks ropy but plays well. The Formula One tie-in is well implemented and playing the game makes a fairly realistic representation of putting you in the cockpit of the real thing. In other words, you'll crash a lot.

Graphics 6
Sound 8
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: If realism gets your motor running (even at the expense of lush graphics) then check this out.

MEGA Rating: 75%

TIP: • To skip training mode, select step one of training, and as the starter counts down to 0, move into reverse and drive backwards around the course for a good lap time. If you continue to clear all the round like this, six teams will try to sign you up.

F1 GRAND PRIX

Unknown • IMPORT

Another racing game that's often confused with *F1 Circus*, it's not as good though.

Graphics 6
Sound 4
Gameplay 5
Game Size 4
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: With so many other good Mega Drive racers out there, this one doesn't really deserve anyone's cash.

MEGA Rating: 47%

TIP: • Start the British Grand Prix in a McClaron's car by using the following code: NABCTPHSNGKTIXBDDE GMHUJOKLMTFJ HOILKL LONVORQX LQMW

FAERY TALE ADVENTURE

Electronic Arts • Deleted

One of EA's lesser moments, an RPG that starts off dull and well – carries on being dull for far longer than is strictly necessary.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 5
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: If RPGs are your bag, then check out the *Shining'* twins.

MEGA Rating: 31%

TIP: • To see the end of the game enter this code: 7R2KUL6RSZXSK6NHGS-DCB72Ø663RI2HO785P.

FANTASIA

Sega • Deleted

The follow-up to *Castle Of Illusion* and a BIG let down. The graphics are first rate (never before has a Mega Drive game captured the spirit of a film so accurately) but the gameplay is appaling. A real shame, and a real wasted opportunity. Mickey Mouse returned in *World Of Illusion* with Donald Duck, so Disney fans should check there.

Graphics 10
Sound 9
Gameplay 2
Game Size 6
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: As fundamentally flawed as the captain of the Titanic's plan to play 'chicken' with an iceburg.

MEGA Rating: 11%

TIP: • On level 1-2, grab the extra life then go right, get in the treasure chest and warp back to the start of the level. You can repeat this if you wish.

FASTEST ONE

Unknown • IMPORT

One of the worse Mega Drive racing game. The perspective is similar to that of *Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco Grand Prix 2* but similarities should stop there.

Graphics 3
Sound 5
Gameplay 2
Game Size 2
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: The Mega Drive's Nigel Mansell, but only in the league table of Charismatic Sporting Figures.

MEGA Rating: 32%

TIP: • If you're having trouble staying on the track in this game, then enter your name as HAPPY NEW YEAR in the world championship mode and you'll get better tyres.

FATAL LABYRINTH

Sega • £19.99

A surprisingly addictive hack and slash adventure. The graphics are small but the use of detail is very nice. The over-head view where each room opens up as you walk into it works really well. Quite a large game with loads of exploring to do but falls down by being too easy.

Graphics 7
Sound 4
Gameplay 6
Game Size 6
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: If it was more difficult this could have been a good game, it's better than *Super Hydlide.*

MEGA RATING: 59%

FATAL FURY

Sega • £44.99

Street Fighter 2! There, I've mentioned it and I'm not going to mention it again for the rest of this review. So if you want to know about *Fatal Fury* and nothing but *Fatal Fury*, then read on. But if you're not really interested, do something else instead.

Take a look at the screenshot on this page and you'll quickly see that this is one of those incredibly popular one-on-one beat-'em-ups. But has it got loads of characters? Has it got hidden special moves? Can you play against a mate? The good news is yes, but that's about the end of the good news. Yep, yet another disappointing beat-'em-up which joins the likes of *Power Athlete, Fighting Masters* and that truly crap classic, *Beast Wrestlers.*

As with most street fighting games there is a sort of plot, so here it is. The South Town is a den of violence, money and power (nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there) and is run by an amazingly hard dude called Geese (it seems that to be a warlord you need to either be called Mr X or have an incredibly stupid name). Geese has his enemies of course, but two brothers, Andy and Terry Bogard, have a very special reason to despise him in the way they do. You see, Geese killed their father.

Biding their time waiting for the right moment, the brothers have entered the Geese-sponsored King of the Fighters tournament in an attempt to bring down the crimelord. Taking their Mu-e-tai (some sort of martial art) champion friend with them, they don't expect to come second best. Obviously you can't play the game as all three characters, but you do get the chance to pick which character you want to play as. Once you've chosen your character, you've then got to work through to the five areas of the city to reach the Geese Building. Each area has a fighter waiting in it, and for some unexplained reason you've also got to fight your brother and your mate (unless of course you're playing as Joe, in which case you've got to fight your mates, who are brothers). This makes a total of seven fights before you can get to Geese.

Oh, now what *other* game does this remind you of...?

Each of the fighters you come up against has a variety of attack strategies and loads of special moves. You, using your own abilities and moves, must figure out how to knock them out twice in a three-round fight before you can move on to the next arena. Get through to Geese and you can then take your revenge.

The first thing that takes you by surprise when you start playing *Fatal Fury* is the size of the characters; these guys are BIG (well over half the size of the screen) and they move very well too. Controlling them, however, will take quite some time to master.

There are simple controls (button A to jump, B to attack and C to throw), but actually getting the characters to do what you want them to at the right time is another matter. Add to this the nigh-on-impossible-to-get-right-all-the-time special moves and you've got some serious problems in the gameplaying department. Even though it is difficult to get very much from *Fatal Fury* in the way of attacking combinations, you can still walk through the game (I finished the EASY level on my second attempt and the harder levels don't offer much more resistance) using the bare minimum of moves (a jump kick, it's sad to say, followed by sweep kick works on almost every opponent).

I'm not saying that the whole game is crap, far from it, but it does sort of, er, stick when you're trying to put together an attacking combination. This isn't so bad in the two-player head-to-head mode, because you'll both suffer the same problems and let's face it, most people will buy a beat-'em-up of this kind for the head-to-head option. And even though this is probably one of the best games of its kind on the Mega Drive, it's still rather dull.

It's a shame really, because Fatal Fury does have some makings of a very good 12 Mbit game. The interlude screens, where Geese is watching you progress, add a little bit of atmosphere, and, as I've already said, the graphics are very impressive. It's just that when you play a beat-'em-up you want something slick, controllable and difficult, and Fatal Fury quite frankly doesn't even come close to fulfiling these criteria. I suppose we'll just have to wait for *Street Fighter 2* (Ha! you mentioned it again, didn't you? I knew you would – Neil). Oh, bog off Neil. *Paul Mellerick.*

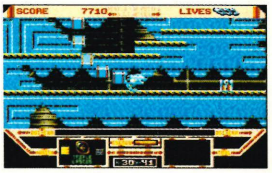
Graphics 9 Sound 7 Gameplay 6 Game Size 4 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: A nice-looking beat-em-up that with a few gameplay tweaks could have been great.

MEGA Rating: 65%

FATAL REWIND

Electronic Arts • Deleted



Another retitled computer-game classic, you may know this one better as *The Killing Game Show.* It's like *Rainbow Islands* in many ways, but with big butch metallic graphics and a little bit more to think about, not least how impressive the interactive action replay feature is. No more going back miles when you get killed, just watch your last performance then take over a split second before you made that last silly mistake. Excellently compulsive platforming fun.

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 7
Game Size 8
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: If you fancy something a bit different from the ordinary cutesy-graphics formula stuff that is most Mega Drive platform games (and who doesn't from time to time?), then this could be the game for you.

MEGA Rating: 79%

FATMAN

(see Slaughter Sport)

FERRARI FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX

Flying Edge • £39.99

A disastrous attempt to capture some of the success of the *Super Monaco GP* games, *Ferrari'* offers a simultaneous

two-player option but that's about it. Awful. If a realistic racer is what you're after, then either of the *Super Monaco* games will suit you better.

Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 2
Game Size 2
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Why is it that so many crap racing games start with the letter F?

MEGA Rating: 21%

FIGHTING MASTERS

Treco • IMPORT

Solid two-player beat-em-up action is the name of this lovely looking game. If only there was more to the beast in one-player mode.

Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 2
Game Size 4
Addiction 1

MEGA Says: Two-player pummelling can be a great laugh (especially with 12 intergalactic hard cases to play with) but don't bother with *Fighting Masters* if you're a solo scrapper.

MEGA Rating: 20%

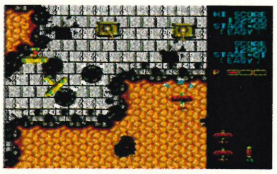
TIP: • Play one-one one with the same character. Select a two-player game, select your monster and then press Up and A at the same time. A second guy will appear and player two will be able to select him.

FINAL BLOW

(see James Buster Douglas Boxing)

FIRE SHARK

Sega • £19.99



It may be another vertically scrolling shoot-em-up but it is one of the better ones. Packed with bad guys and power ups by the ton this is one of the best shoot-em-ups you can get.

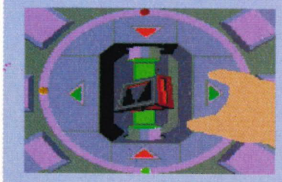
Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 6
Game Size 8
Addiction 8

FLASHBACK

US Gold • £39.99

Through the years, many aliens' plans for the invasion of earth have come to light. Who could forget the classic attempt by the Daleks who, in a moment of stupidity, decided it would be rather neat to roll around on wheels and subsequently got screwed over by all manner of minor obstacles. What about those foolish blobby aliens in The War Of The Worlds? My, how foolish their superiors back on Mars must have felt when all their invasion troops died of a slight sniffle. But never has an alien plot been as cunning, or sinister, as that in *Flashback.* However, cunning and devious it may be, but no-one actually knows what the plan is, except for Conrad B Hart, special agent in the G B I (Galaxial Bureau of Investigation). Sadly, ol' Cozzer's gone and lost his memory, which is, in technical terms, a "major bummer".

And this is what makes playing *Flashback* such an attractive prospect. The manual you get with the game only gives the merest hint of what lies ahead. For a change, you don't have a clue what's going on in the game, you don't know what you're supposed to be doing, you don't know who the enemy is, and you haven't the foggiest how you're going to go about sorting the whole messy business out.



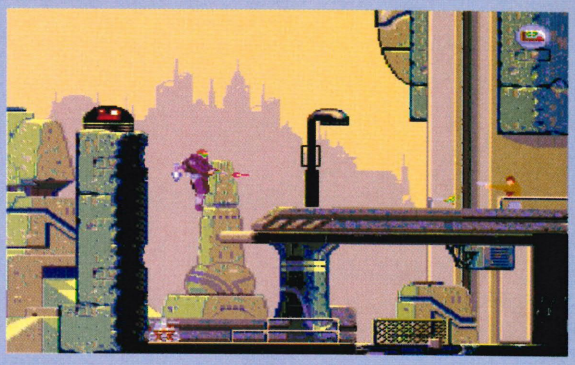
Animated breaks...

...explain the plot

And so as you progress through the seven levels of alien worlds and curious unfamiliar buildings, the plot unfolds and your mission becomes more clear.

At the start of the game, Conrad wakes up on an alien planet with nothing more than the clothes he just slept in, a gun, and a bloody awful headache. His first task is to find his lost holocube, which contains a message from himself which he recorded before he lost his memory (yes I know this is alarmingly similar to the plot of Total Recall, but that was such a brilliant concept that this blatant plagiarism can only be regarded as a bonus). It's vital that Conrad finds the holocube because it will provide valuable information throughout the game. So, having located his box of trick, Conrad's next task is, er, well whatever he wants it to be really. Or rather, whatever you want it to be since it's you who is actually controlling the little guy. Basically, all you need to do is explore, leap around a bit, dangle off things, jog, crouch, fire at nothing, roll around, plummet... whatever. There are lots of intricate moves that Conrad can perform, so it's best to spend a bit of time getting to grips with the control mechanism. It won't take long, and once you're familiar with it, your little agent is a real joy to use.

Activate a "save" device and it acts as a restart point



Conrad grabs a jet pack and takes off. What a guy!

Mega Drive graphics don't get a lot better than this

While moving around can be a little slow, the animation on Conrad himself is perfect, and you soon get used to the fact that you're basically controlling a real person and not some cruddy make-believe sprite which obeys none of the laws of physics that a normal human would. The novelty of watching Conrad's perfect movements doesn't wear off.

But we'll be needing some gameplay as well won't we? *Flashback* takes the basic framework or *Prince Of Persia* (realistic movement but no gameplay), throws in a bit of *Another World*-style action, then crams in a lot more besides.

First there are the puzzles. When you come across a locked door, what do you do? Well, you don't know. Then elsewhere you activate a strange pod-like thing which seems to do nothing. Later when you return to the door it's open. Ah ha, so these "switches" activate the doors. But what of that huge un-leapable gap with a strange device next to it? Or the series of platforms and lifts that you can't negotiate? Well, it's all a bit confusing at first, but slowly and surely you'll discover objects, people and accidentally activate things that make it all fall into place. The puzzles range from the simple to the bloody-frustrating but all of them are entirely logical.

The levels are also chocka with quality traps, tricks and enemies. On easy level many of the enemies are removed, but on normal level it's a nightmare (in the most entertaining kind of way). In the early stages, shooting bad guys is fairly easy, but later in the game, they have annoying little abilities such as suddenly becoming, er, transparent and teleporting behind you.

I could wibble on about *Flashback* for pages. Instead, drool over the screenshots and take my word for it that this is one of the most entertaining, expertly designed and beautifully animated platformers ever to appear on the Mega Drive. *Andy Dyer.*

Graphics 9 Sound 8 Gameplay 9 Game Size 9 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Faultless animation, beautifully designed puzzles and a challenge as big as Paul Mellerick.

MEGA RATING: 94%

MEGA Says: A hell of a shoot-em-up, and at £19.99 another essential buy. Sega plan to release a few more games at £19.99 later in the year, and if they're all as good as this one then we're in for a real treat.

MEGA RATING: 78%

TIP: • Finish the game and you'll restart with full power ups. • Fully power-up your weapons, grab three power-ups, destroy either a General Porter or Yonemaru for two extra lives.

FIRE MUSTANG

Taito • IMPORT

Another repetitive sideways-scrolling shoot-em-up.

Graphics 4
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Snore.

MEGA Rating: 34%

FLICKY

Sega • Deleted

Many games are accused of being all mouth, no trousers – all window dressing, and not really coming up with the goods, or (more often) all name – no game. *Flicky* is exactly the opposite. It looks appaling, there's no big intro sequences, no sampled speech and nothing in the way of "polish" – all you get is a hideously addictive game in which you have to guide Flicky The Bluebird (who is, incidentally and particularly bizzarely, quite obviously yellow and not blue at all) around a series of platform-filled rooms rescuing his friends, while avoiding the bad guys. Simple, straightforward and unhyped – and worth ten crappy licensed platform shoot-'em-ups any day of the week. Excellent stuff.

Graphics 2
Sound 5
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Buy this, take it home, slap it in your Mega Drive, press start, take a look at the game and you'll feel you've been ripped off. Play it for five minutes, and you'll change your mind.

MEGA Rating: 80%

TIP: • On the explanation screen (the one after the title screen) hold A, C and Up. Press Start and you can now choose your level (up to number 36). If you need of an extra life, take all of the chirps to the exit on two consecutive levels.

FORGOTTEN WORLDS

Sega • Deleted

This is a very faithful clone of the coin-op of the same name, except that the Mega Drive doesn't have the rotating-knob controller which allowed you to fire in eight directions independently of movement. Inconveniently, that was pretty much the crux of the arcade game, but apart from that (er...) this does a pretty respectable job of recreating the coin-op experience.

Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 4
Game Size 5
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: A decent coin-op con', it's just a pity that it wasn't a very good coin-op then, isn't it?

MEGA Rating: 68%

TIP: • For infinite continues play in two-player mode and press Start three times or so when a player dies.

THE FLINTSTONES

Sega • £39.99

Hooray! Taito have managed to take the rather tedious cartoon series and turn it into, well, quite a good game.

Let's kick things off with a comparison, so, er, here goes: *The Flintstones* is a bit like *Chuck Rock*. And not only because they're both platform games with a caveman bashing dinosaurs over the head with a club in, either. Like *Chuck Rock*, *The Flintstones* has you "making use" of some of the dinosaurs you'll encounter to help you get through parts of the game. Some of them hold up platforms for you to hop onto, some bash through bits of wall if you lead them in the right direction, some you can ride on, some you can climb across, and all that sort of thing. But that still leaves plenty to bash with your club – don't worry about that.

And it is here that *The Flintstones* starts drifting away from *Chuck Rock*. The latter got a bit bogged down with its "using the dinosaurs to move around" approach, making the game feel rather claustrophobic at times. *The Flintstones* is much more free 'n' easy, leaving plenty of room for straightforward rushing about and jumping across platforms. It's a bit more like *Sonic* in that respect.

Fred makes like a fish

But (and here, barely having touched upon that particular comparison, we shrug it off again) it's nothing like as fast or slick as *Sonic*. It's much more of a slow, thoughtful game. It looks a bit empty, too – there's rarely more than four or five things other than Fred on-screen at any time. But that really doesn't matter once you've settled into the game's easy-going style.

Where the game comes into its own is by providing lots of variety between levels. Fred has lots of tasks to perform. And, in a roundabout sort of way, this means that each level is completely different from the last. So although it starts off looking like you'll be leaping from platform to platform until the bitter end, pretty soon you find yourself in a swimming bit, where a whole new strategy needs to be adopted. And after that there's a driving bit. And then there's the bit on the train that all these types of game have to feature (which, rather cunningly, incorporates the slippery ice-world section that's also universal to this sort of thing). It's difficult to get bored when you're having variety spoon-fed to you like this.

Clinging on to ledges requires a steady joypad hand

A blue thing with teeth! Fred is understandably scared

The graphics aren't too bad, either. The sprites are mainly a bit titchy, and the colours have rather a Master System air about them, but the animation's really nice. The music's quite Flintstoney, too.

Fred's car, yesterday

But *The Flintstones* isn't perfect, and MEGA isn't about to suggest that you dash unquestioningly to the shops and buy a copy. For one thing, its laid-back, easy-going approach means that it never really gets the adrenaline pumping. The game achieves what it sets out to do perfectly adequately, but doesn't excel in any department.

The other problem is that it's a bit on the easy side. Set it on Easy level and you'll romp through it on your first go. True, the other difficulty settings add new levels, as well as extra baddies, but even then, once you've worked out what does what, it'll only take a day or two to finish.

There are certainly better platform games on the Mega Drive. And many would argue that there's at least one better game with dinosaurs in. (Although I'm secretly a sworn-in member of the What On Earth Do People See In Chuck Rock? Society.) But, given that *The Flintstones* isn't the most inspiring choice of subject matter, Taito have made a pretty good job of this, and it's certainly one to at least think about buying. *Amanda Dyson.*

Graphics 7 Sound 7 Gameplay 7 Game Size 5 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A little insubstantial but otherwise as good a Flintstones game as one could hope for.

MEGA Rating: 78%

GAIARES

Renovation • IMPORT

A horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up with decent graphics. *(Is that it? – Ed).* Yup.

Graphics	8
Sound	6
Gameplay	7
Game Size	7
Addiction	7

MEGA Says: It's not *Hellfire* or *Aero Blasters* though.

MEGA Rating: 70%

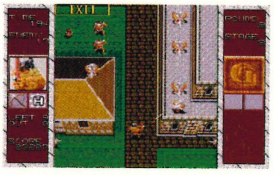
TIP: • At the start of each level, pause the game and hold down buttons A and C then press Left. Unpause, and you'll be invincible.

• Go to the config screen by holding down A, B and C, then press Start. Set the sound test to 18, hold down A on the second controller and exit the config. Press Start on the first controller to go to the stage-select screen.

• Start the game and pause. Hold Up on the pad and press the A button any number of times between 1 and 14 to choose a weapon. Unpause and play the game.

GAIN GROUND

Sega • £19.99



Here's a novelty: a strategy shoot-'em-up. A giant computer entertainment set up has gone on the blink trapping people inside, your team has to go in and get them out in one piece. When they are rescued the people join your team adding extra fire power, but you have to work out when to use them to the best of their abilities.

The graphics are not much to look at but if ever there was a game to prove that graphics aren't everything then this is it. The strategy element is really enjoyable, even for blast freaks, and makes this a very addictive game. Some of the later levels will provide you with a real challenge as well. The addition of a two player mode so that two of you can team up to plan the computer's demise makes it an excellent game.

Graphics 5

G-LOC

Sega • £39.99

Hmm. G-LOC – "Loss Of Consciousness by G-force". Surely, then, this game should be called LOC-G, no? Hell, I'm probably being a bit too picky. It's just that when I see a game that can't even really get its own name right, I begin to worry a little about the rest of it. In such a way I worried a little about G-LOC. This was a mistake. Had I worried by the correct amount, I'd be writing this review from the security of a padlocked crate inside a darkened coal cellar 300 feet below the seediest no-questions-asked bar in Rio De Janeiro. And the reason I'd be doing that is *that* it'd be the only place in the world I'd feel safe from having to play this game ever again.

To help you understand why G-LOC is so gut-wrenchingly awful, it'd be useful to explain the game properly to you. It goes a bit like this. You are a fighter pilot. You begin the game on the deck of an aircraft carrier – well, a sort of slab of grey, anyway. After taking off from the aircraft carrier, you find yourself in a landscape consisting of two slabs of blue in different shades. Into this landscape will occasionally fly two or three enemy aircraft. There are now three courses of action available to you.

PLAN A: complete non-starter. Plan A involves doing nothing at all. Faced with such a fiendish tactic, the enemy planes will almost certainly fly away, shortly to be replaced by another little squadron. This continues until, eventually, some enemy planes attack from in front of you. They will be armed either with machine-guns (in which case they will invariably shoot harmlessly over your head), or homing missiles, in which case you'll probably be shot down. After a while, your mission time will run out and your game will be over. Clearly, then, Plan A is a bit of a non-starter.

PLAN B: plan a with homing missiles. Plan B is a bit trickier. It's similar to Plan A, except that when the enemy planes appear, you have to move your plane round very slightly so that the enemies appear inside a large square box in the middle of the screen. Having done this, you now wait for a second or two until your missile sight homes in on the enemy planes, at which point it will "lock on", a red target will appear, and a voice will say "Fire!" (or it could be "Target!", the speech is a bit on the muffled side). Now, press button B on your joypad. A homing missile will zip out from your plane and, without fail or further intervention on your part, destroy the enemy. Repeat this procedure until you've downed enough enemies then move onto the next mission. It will be exactly the same.

PLAN C: plan b with a machine gun. Again, Plan C is quite a lot like Plan B. However, when the enemies appear on screen, you should fly around until they're in your sights and shoot them down with your machine-gun (press button A). This is a bit more difficult than Plan B, but luckily the huge supply of homing missiles you get for each mission should ensure that it's completely unnecessary. Phew.

It's important that you realise I'm not exaggerating for dramatic effect here. That's really all you do. For the vast majority of the game, it's completely unnecessary to use any controls whatsoever except the "fire missile" button. Very occasionally you'll have to manoeuvre a tiny little bit to avoid a missile or a canyon wall (once or twice per level you get a mission that consists of blowing up ground targets or ships in a canyon with dangerous walls, rather than shooting down planes, but it's always the same, wide, canyon, so there's still very little dodging to do, and otherwise the gameplay is identical – wait for the sight to pick up a target and fire a missile at it).

Be careful not to crash into the canyon walls! (Ahem)

Machine guns perpetually firing, you're well 'ard

The reason why getting killed doesn't really matter is that you have a limitless supply of lives, save for the fact that getting blown up costs you five seconds of mission time. If you don't blow up the required number of targets within the time limit, you fail the mission and the game's over (except for your two continues), but that's the only way you can bite the dust in *G-LOC*. In fact, getting your plane blown up has a positive side to it as well – if you're out of homing missiles, your replacement plane will come with a handy supply of its own.

Of course, you can make things more complicated if you like. You can fly around a bit to get the enemies in your sights a fraction sooner (although more often than not all the jiggling around just makes things more difficult).

You can buy armour so that you can survive a couple of hits (but so what? You've got infinite planes). You can buy heavy bullets so that your machine-gun kills bad guys quicker, if you ever use it. But why bother? If you want to make life harder for yourself, why not just play the game blindfold? That's not such a stupid idea, either – by just hitting the missile button every time you hear "fire", you'll sail through the first, six-mission, level on the hardest difficulty setting. I know – I've tried it. And Sega are asking for 40 quid – 40 QUID! for this game. Think about how much money that really is! – for this? If you buy *G-LOC*, you're not being conned, you're being robbed, simple as that. Mind you, you're being conned as well – most of the code in the game (right down to the picture of a trigger which appears on the "continue?" screen) is reminiscent of *Afterburner 3*, the Mega CD game we reviewed in issue five. It's just that what interesting bits there were in *Afterburner 3* (the different types of game, the intro sequence, the bits where missiles chased you from behind, the bombing runs and so on) aren't here.

So, now we get to the summing-up. Bit of a problem here, as MEGA isn't allowed to print any of the words I'd like to use when summing *G-LOC* up. Let's go straight to the mark, then. I'd like to give this no marks for gameplay, but will instead give it one because it's a game and you play it. The graphics are mostly slabs of colour with about three different sprites dropped on them, but we'll give them five anyway. There's nothing much the matter with the sound, but I'm not going to tell you to spend £40 on something because it goes "bang" quite nicely – you could buy a packet of balloons for a lot less money and have much, much more fun, but that's another story. And the total points I'll award to the game size and addiction add up to the number of letters in the title of this pathetic lump of cack. All this somehow adds up to a meagre 22 percent. The game, quite simply, deserves no better, and no more. *Neil West.*

Graphics 5 Sound 7 Gameplay 1 Game Size 3 Addiction1

MEGA Says: This is one of the worst Mega Drive games I've ever played. Anyone who takes any cash for this should be done for theft.

MEGA Rating: 22%

Sound 5
Gameplay 7
Game Size 8
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: Another of those games that you'll either love or hate.
MEGA Rating: **77%**

TIP: • For a level-select option go to the option screen and press A, C, B, and then C. "Round select" will appear below "sound test".

GALAHAD

Electronic Arts • £39.99

Bog standard platform rescue princess-'em-up that is (uncharacteristically for Electronic Arts) boring and tedious.

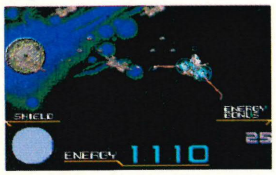
Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 3
Game Size 7
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: It looks fab and plays OK too. The only trouble is that you'll die from lack of action in about half an hour.
MEGA Rating: **55%**

TIP: • To get to level two enter ZXSP.
• Enter LTUS then press START to be able to skip levels and become invincible.

GALAXY FORCE 2

Sega • £19.99



Whoa, another one. This disease must be spreading. What disease? Well the crap shoot-'em-up syndrome is catching on fast. This one is different, the action is viewed from behind the ship as you annihilate all comers. The game is ridiculously easy and couldn't look good to save its life. No wonder they reduced the price of this turkey.

Graphics 6
Sound 4
Gameplay 2
Game Size 2
Addiction 1

MEGA Says: No challenge makes this truly sad, should be renamed *Galaxy Farce. (Ho ho ho – Ed)*
MEGA Rating: **31%**

GAMES – THE WINTER CHALLENGE

Accolade • £29.99

Pretty run-of-the-mill snow-bound sports sim with eight ice-tastic events. As ever, lots of laughs with your buddies but a snoozeathon if you try it solo.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 5
Game Size 7
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: This one's been kind of overtaken by *Olympic Gold*, but it's still a good example of the genre. It's just not a particularly outstanding genre, is all...
MEGA Rating: **71%**

GEMFIRE

Koei • IMPORT

Anyone can do this fantasy lark. Make up a few names, cobble a mystical land together, throw in a couple of bad guys and you're on the heady path to becoming a rich and famous game designer. Well, probably. Koei has opened up the cliché cupboard and picked the battered cardboard box labelled "fantasy games" and tipped a liberal sprinkling of over-used and over-ripe plot elements into *Gemfire*. They're all there – wicked rulers, fair maidens locked up in towers, dragons, wizards and knights in shining armour. Why can't designers be just a touch more imaginative with their plots eh? It would sure make a game reviewer's job more interesting.

Anyway, the objective is to recover seven gems from a magical crown, and so become the leader of a reunited country, which for the moment has been split into 31 provinces. But while the plot is ripe for a Shining in the Darkness-style 3D romp, what you get is a complicated, but nevertheless moderately engrossing, strategy game. You play the part of one of four lords, all of whom are competing to find the gems.

Depending on the scenario, you start with a certain number of provinces, and you have to gradually take over the whole country by attacking the other lords and making peace pacts. If you're afraid of being stomped on by a powerful neighbour, you can hire monsters such as ogres, gargoyles and lizards to help boost your army.

Each battle is played out in detail, with you controlling your troops on a top-down view of a tiny single-screen battlefield. The units have special attacking and defending abilities, but the whole thing is so simplistic that it usually boils down to who's got the most men, or who's got the most powerful monsters. It's all pretty sad stuff really.

But soldiers don't work for free, and an army marches on its stomach (to coin a cliché), so you have to earn money and grow food. This is where the

THE GADGET TWINS

Imagitec • IMPORT

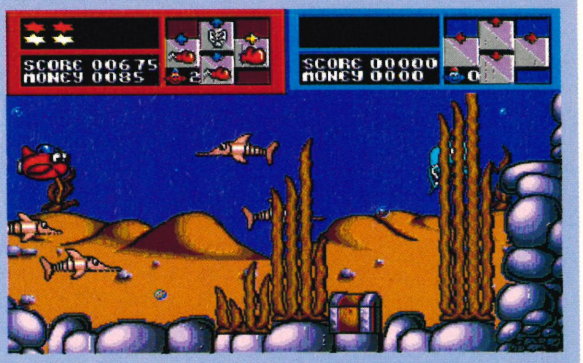
This is weird. You get to control either of these – well, cute is the only word – chubby planes, both armed with a disturbing variety of weaponry ranging from boxing gloves to ruddy great hammers, in a strangely unhinged quest to nab back the Gadget King's beloved Gadget Gem, which has been swiped by an evil swine called Thump.

The only vaguely normal thing about the game is that it scrolls horizontally right to left... and that's where it ends. The general idea is to fly around bopping your adversaries on the nose with your boxing glove, crushing their craniums with the mallet or pinching them to death with a weird, metallic thing, which wouldn't look out of place on an operating table.

When you've knocked them out of the sky in this manner, you get to grab coins of varying currency, which must be spent on extra weapons in the shops that frequently float past. Occasionally, an extra large nasty appears who must be viciously bashed in before you can move on to the next level.

The weapons can, and need, to be extended in four different directions to deal with the rather erratic behaviour of the enemies, which take the forms of psychotic squid, demented octopuses and many other weird mutations of water and air inhabitants as the game moves from submarinal to, er, above-water action. In addition, treasure chests sometimes crop up, which, if punched open, will spew out something delicious like a speed-up or a shield, making your progress that little bit more bearable.

Being a "thing" is OK, until you meet a much bigger "thing"



A bop on the sword quickly deters the subaqua menace

The two-player option gives you the opportunity to crack the other player on the head and nick his weapons and cash – thus allowing you to lose friends and have arguments with people very easily.

The Gadget Twins is a refreshingly warped little game with masses of playability and endurance. It has a cartoon-like look and will best appeal to those with deranged minds. But be warned, it's damned difficult and you need to spend quite some time mastering the control system to get very far into this spaced-out game.

There's nothing particularly awe-inspiring about the gameplay, but creaming crustaceans to a pâté with a hydraulic boxing glove makes a pleasant and whimsical change from the norm. *Amanda Dyson.*

Graphics 7 Sound 6 Gameplay 7 Game Size 6 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Fantastically weird and attractive, er, bop-'em-up with cutesy appeal and terrific two-player mode.
MEGA Rating: **78%**

TIP: • For a level-select option load up the game and on the title screen (when the words "Gadget Twins" and the two planes appear) press C, A, Right and Left. Repeat this and the colours of the two planes should swap (red becomes blue and blue becomes red), now you can choose your level.

provinces come in again. Each month you have to give orders to all the provinces under your control, bearing in mind that you have to maintain food production for the people and the army, while taking care of recruitment, trade, negotiations or spying. There's plenty of stuff to do, but it's hard to keep track of what's going on, and even harder to see what effects your decision will have in the future.

Gemfire is a reasonable little strategy number, but it's just uninspiring and really rather dull. It looks OK and it's easy enough to get to grips with, but there's nothing in it that grabs you and makes you want to keep playing. It's all a bit of a yawn really, and I'm usually not averse to a spot of meddling with statistics and strategy. Not the best strategy game you'll ever come across, but equally it won't be the worst. Definitely one for fans of the genre.

Graphics 5
Sound 5
Gameplay 7
Game Size 7
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Decent spot of strategy, but not the most exciting game you'll play. Take it or leave it.

MEGA Rating: 59%

GHOSTBUSTERS

Sega • £19.99

How do you turn a potentially good license into a boring, humdrum shoot-'em-up? Call the *Ghostbusters*. Yep, this one is well past its sell by date (can anyone seriously remember the Ghostbusters?) and while the graphics are OK, jumping about and shooting ghosts gets laborious. To be quite honest, this game was out of date even at the time of its release – and this isn't a new game. Still, having said all this, we still here from people who're playing *Gostbusters* so it must have a few fans somehwere.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 4
Game Size 5
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Busting will make you feel bad.

MEGA Rating: 62%

GLOBAL GLADIATORS

Virgin Games • £44.99

Hype springs eternal, and Virgin did a good job of keeping *Global Gladiators* in magazine news pages and previews sections for months. It was a game people were looking forward to. But now the game's finished, it's show-time.

And?

Well...

I know this isn't going to sound dreadfully exciting, but the conclusion we've come to is that it's OK.

Sorry, but after a serious amount of thought and playing that's the only decision the MEGA team can muster. It's OK.

The first level is fun, even if the amount of gameplay ground covered is spectacularly small. All you do is run around the place, jump over gaps and onto the occasional secret platform, shoot the slime monsters in your path and collect a load of MacDonald "M" symbols while trying to find the level's exit (just keep heading right, you'll find it). And that's it.

Level two is the same. Level three is the same. So is level four.

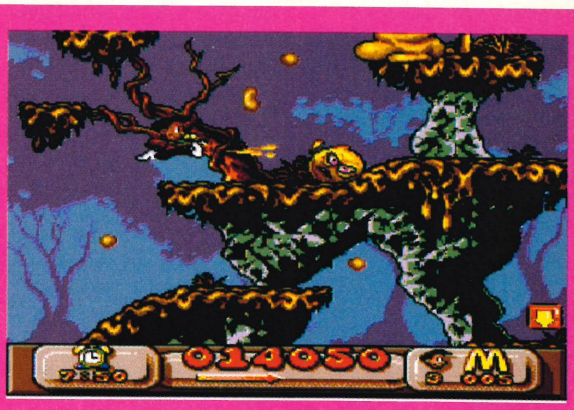
It's all very slick, the graphics are superb, Mic or Mac (there are two game characters, but you can only play one at a time – despite the misleading title) are delightfully animated and the monsters ooze menace (as well as slime). The control method is both instinctive and responsive – all in all *Global Gladiators* is a highly polished, professional example of how all Mega Drive platformers should look and behave. No doubt it was this display of technical expertise that won *Global Gladiators* Sega USA's award of game of the year (either that or the fact that Sega were at the same time frantically trying to negotiate a deal with Virgin to distribute *Cool Spot* as their own game). But I digress.

If only there was more to do, or more variety in the level design (a problem that *Cool Spot* doesn't suffer from), then this would be a classic. As it is, *Global Gladiators* is a tad too small and simply too much of an (albeit) good thing. A near miss. *Neil West*

Graphics 8 Sound 8 Gameplay 5 Game Size 7 Addiction 4

MEGA Says: One Big Mac™ ? Yum! But 12 Big Macs™ in a row... catch my drift?

MEGA Rating: 75%



Mac (or is it Mic?) in full gun-toting, monster-splatting, platform-jumping, just-the-same-as-the-last-level, action

Cross the finishing line with enough "M"s...

...and you get to play the bonus game. What sport!

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

Sega • £44.99

A frighteningly tough coin-op conversion, but hey – it's not as if you have to shovel money into the thing, so who cares? You'll certainly not be seeing the end of this one the same day you buy it, and that's even with infinite continues. The graphics and sound are both practically flawless as brave Sir Arthur scuttles his swathe through legions of platform-placed monsters. *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* is simply one of the best arcade ports around.

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 8
Game Size 9
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* is the business – and for once the tough difficulty tuning guarantees decent value for money as well as being great short-term arcade fun. Go for it!

MEGA Rating: 89%

TIP: • On the title screen press button A four times, then Up, Down, Left then Right. Wait for the chime, then press B and Start for invincibility.
• On the title screen press A 16 times, then Up, Down, Left then Right. Wait for the chime, then press Up, A and Start to start halfway through level two.
• On the title screen press A 16 times, then Up, Down, Left then Right. Wait for the chime, then press Down, A, and Start to start on level three.
• On the title screen press A 16 times, then Up, Down, Left then Right. Wait for the chime, then press Down-Right, A, and Start to start on the final boss level.
• On the title screen press A 16 times, then Up, Down, Left then Right. Wait for the chime, then press Right, A, and Start to start on level five.
• On the title screen press A 16 times, then Up, Down, Left then Right. Wait for the chime, then press Left, A, and Start to start halfway through level four.
• Select number 26 on the music test, then number 56 on the sound test, hold Down/Left with A, B and C, then press Start to play in Japanese.

GODS

Mindscape • IMPORT

The game that Sega UK turned down, but Sega USA accepted, *Gods* is a platform adventure from the Bitmap Brothers, a programming team noteworthy for two reasons: firstly, they were the first computer programmers to try and look like pop stars; secondly, along the years they've designed and programmed some damn fine games (including *Speedball 2*).

Aside from these trivialities, however, there's very little to say about *Gods*. It's OK.

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 6
Game Size 7
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A well-polished platformer that holds few surprises.

MEGA Rating: 76%

GOLDEN AXE

Sega • £19.99

What's that? You want some beat-"em-ups? OK, here's a real golden oldie (well, a game with deep roots anyway). If you're one of those strange people who likes nothing better than to wander in straight lines through strange lands kicking

lumps out of the previously-happy inhabitants, then you'll probably like *Golden Axe* (the game that launched a thousand cheap jibes from magazine writers about dwarves with big choppers) better than anything else in the whole wide world.

As with the sequel, the linear gameplay (Ax, Gillius or Tyris start heading right and just keep going) remains rooted to a walk-along-and-hit-fire-a-lot-whenever-you-meet-anyone kind of affair, but the execution is lovely, with impressively muscular sprites and some great attacking moves. The five big levels will keep you entertained for quite a while, and while it's all very repetitive the scenery is pretty enough to make you want to keep at it until you see the end. Whether you'll want to play it again after that is a different matter.

Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 7
Game Size 5
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: One of the best games in a very limited genre. But why are they always so easy to complete?

MEGA Rating: 71%

TIP: • Select a one-player arcade game and hold Down-Left with A and C. Let go for nine continues. Then hold B, Start and Left for a level select.

GOLDEN AXE 2

Sega • £19.99

Golden Axe 2 received a fair amount of abuse when it was first released as it was just a rehash of the first game. But then again, when the first game was as much a classic as *Golden Axe* then this isn't such a bad thing. At £40 most people saw it as a complete rip off (which when you think about it, it probably was). Now that it is only £20, however, it is a must have.

Gillius Thunderhead and the crew hack, slash and generally abuse their foes as they once again battle against the Death Adder and his cronies. Great fun as a one player game but it really comes into its own when there are two of you romping through the levels wiping out the enemy and screaming, "Oh sorry, I didn't mean to smash your skull with my axe, honest", when you hit each other by mistake.

The graphics, like the original are arcade quality with superb animation, the slashing action is guaranteed to keep you hooked. Some of the moves are really comical as well which helps to make this a classic game. As if the sideways scrolling hacking wasn't enough, two players can compete against each other in an arena, fighting to the death. In one player mode you get to fight against ever increasing numbers of enemy in the arena.

Golden Axe 2 never received the praise it deserved, maybe it will now that it is available at this new price point. With such enthralling gameplay it absolutely oozes with addictive playability.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 7
Game Size 8
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Thumbs up to Sega for re-releasing this classic game at budget price. You have no excuse for having the set now. *Golden Axe 3* is due for release shortly and so fans should soon have something else to cheer about.

MEGA Rating: 91%

TIP: • Fight the first boss holding down A. Release A at the campfires, but don't attack anything. Continue with 200 magic units.

• Press A, B, C and Start on the titles, select options, keep holding A, hit B and C again, move to exit, keep holding A and hit B and C until you get to character select, hold A and Up and hit B and C one last time. Now pick your level.

GRANADA X

Unknown • IMPORT

Slick horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up that's a good blast, but at just four short levels long – suicidally short.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 7
Game Size 1
Addiction 7

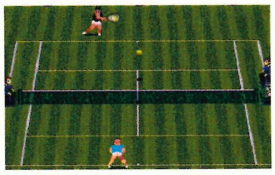
MEGA Says: Shoots itself in the foot, really. Great if you are indeed the worst gamer in the world.

MEGA Rating: 55%

TIP: • On the options screen, press C ten times on the rank section. You can now choose the easy rank.

GRAND SLAM TENNIS

Sega • £39.99



Tennis sims are definitely what you would call a popular genre. Ever since computers hit the home and software houses have been making game, sooner or later they come up with a Tennis sim. Some are small pathetic games, some are even backed by big names (the American version of this is called *Jennifer Capriati's Tennis*) but they almost always fall down in the playability stakes. Think about it, Tennis isn't a game that converts very easily, what with all the tactics, moves and shot power it will be a very difficult thing to do.

The only game that's really ever come near and been very good to play is a SNES game called *Super Tennis*. Now the reason we mention this is because this game bears more than a passing resemblance to the SNES game.

You view the game from a TV point of view and although you start at the bottom you also control you player at the top of the screen, because just like in real life, these players change ends after two matches.

Control of the game is very simple, button A is used for a weak shot, button b for those more powerful net-busters and button C to fool a net hungry opponent with a lob. Add to that the fact you can delicately control the spin and direction of the ball using the d-pad and you've got a very controllable game that's not overly complicated.

Trouble is the computer opponents are too easy and the game makes is virtually impos-

GEORGE FOREMAN'S KNOCKOUT BOXING

Flying Edge • £39.99

And here we have George Foreman (the bald, tubby geezer on the left) taking on, well – it *looks* like Elvis

Ok, so software peeps always like to have a big or famous name attached to their products, but let's face it, in the case of boxing games, it's a bit of a dead loss. I mean, forget Mike Tyson, unless the game you're producing is a jail break simulator. Frank Bruno's a waste of time because he's crap and the remaining legends are either laughably past it (such as Ali) or merely barrel shaped and making a comedy comeback, which brings us rather nicely to *George Foreman's Knockout Boxing.*

In real-life, Georgie-boy is a bit of a laugh to look at – not really the stuff of champions – but what's worse is that by the time he's been converted into his on-screen counterpart, the results are hilarious. The representation of all the other opponents is pretty appaling too. What I'm basically getting at is that the graphics as a whole in this game are pretty dreadful. And just get a load of the scantily-clad woman who arthritically hobbles across the ring to display the round number. She looks more like a bloke in drag than a lithe young thing who's there to titillate the crowd.

But how does it play? Unfortunately, it plays a lot like the graphics look. For a start, the range of moves is a bit limited. You have five different punches, but to be honest, they're about as different as the individual members of the Black and White Minstrels. Just as those singing fellows varied in height, so do George Foreman's punches. And just as the Minstrels all but died out because they were blamed for being a bit racist and, er, crap, no doubt George Foreman's "boxing" "game" will slip into obscurity on grounds of its phenomenally high crapness factor.

You can perform left and right hooks (to the body and head) and (when a small boxing glove appears in the top left of the screen) a super-punch – but it is in fact not a great deal better than a normal punch.

However (and this is where things get really annoying), the opponent occasionally winds up his fist in preparation for his own "super" punch, and before you have a chance to gracefully side-step it, it's been delivered depriving you of almost all your energy in one go. This is, when all's said and done, rather bad. Instead of having fairly evenly matched players who gain victory by guile and cunning, we have some pretty unintelligent opponents who are tough only because their punches are a lot harder.

OK, it's obvious that I'm not all keen this, but it would be a pretty sad story if I couldn't find one good thing about it. So, while it's bloody awful to play and it looks crap, there *are* 15 opponents to beat and they *are* tough.

So, if you're a boxing freak, make sure you try this one out before you buy it and maybe, just maybe, it'll appeal to you. I doubt it, but if it does appeal, it'll be because there's plenty of challenge. There we go, compliment time over: *George Foreman's Boxing* is a sad and sorry little affair, and if you simply must have a boxing sim, get Muhammad Ali Boxing.

Andy Dyer

Graphics 4 Sound 5 Gameplay 4 Game Size 7 Addiction 2

MEGA Says: There are more than enough opponents to fight, but the dire gameplay and abysmal graphics make this a game to avoid. This has no entertainment value at all.

MEGA Rating: 35%

sible to make a bad shot. There's also only four tournaments to win to become world champion so it's not going to last you that long either. The two player mode will add some lifetime to the cart, but unless you've been dying to play Tennis on your console, I can't really recommend this that highly.

Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 7
Game Size 6
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Tennis sims aren't usually very good, and unfortunately this is no real exception. Good for short-term fun, but there's no series long-term life for this one.

MEGA Rating: **66%**

TIP: • Enter your password as GRAND.SLAM and then fill the rest of the password space with full stops. The game will now be tougher.

GREAT WALDO SEARCH

Parker Brothers • IMPORT

While strolling up and down the aisles of your local branch of Smith's, you may well have come across a series of books called Where's Wally?. These books consist of intricate drawings of crowds of people, hiding amongst which is a little chap called Wally. (Or Waldo, for some reason, if you're American.) And you've got to find him. It's a nice idea, but it probably never occurred to you that the idea might translate well to the Mega Drive.

It evidently occurred to someone, though. Each level of *The Great Waldo Search* takes the form of a scrolling picture, three or so screens wide, and the object of each one is to find Waldo. This is done by moving a magnifying glass around the picture until you "find Waldo", and clicking on him. Oh, you might have to find "clues" in a similar fashion too, and you can look for bonus points as well. So how many of these levels are there? Go on – have a guess. Fifty? Thirty? Fifteen? Ten?

Try "five". At an estimated completion time of about fifteen seconds each, that adds up to around one and a quarter minutes total playing time, not including listening to the little tunes when you finish each level.

Oh, but hang on! We take it all back! We were completely forgetting the fabulous bonus game. If you spot a picture of a dog on the screen, click on it and you'll find yourself in this terrific scrolling section where you're a dog flying on a magic carpet and you've got to collect all these bones and... and... er... it isn't actually very terrific at all. Don't click on the dogs, that's my advice.

"No, no, no! This can't be right at all!" said Neil, snatching the controller and pressing Start. But he, too, finished the game – in an impressive one minute twelve seconds – and walked away shaking his head. Everyone else on the team had a go too, and each had to pinch themselves to make sure they had indeed just witnessed what they thought they had.

The Great Waldo Search raises a long list of questions which urgently need answering, questions like: Whose idea was it to base a game on Waldo? How on earth have they managed to stay alive this long, remembering to breathe in and out regularly and all that? Would you be better off simply withdrawing £40 from the cashpoint and setting fire to it? What sort of a world is it that allows appaling games like this to find their way into the shops? Is there really any point in carrying on at all? Could somebody please pass that shotgun?

Graphics 2
Sound 6
Gameplay 1
Game Size 1
Addiction 0

MEGA Says: MEGA feel woefully inadequate – we simply can't find the words to convey how utterly pitiful this is. The though processes that must have gone into making this game are (quite frankly) beyond our comprehension. This, for our money, is possibly the worst Mega Drive game ever. Check it out for a laugh – you'll be amazed.

MEGA Rating: **5%**

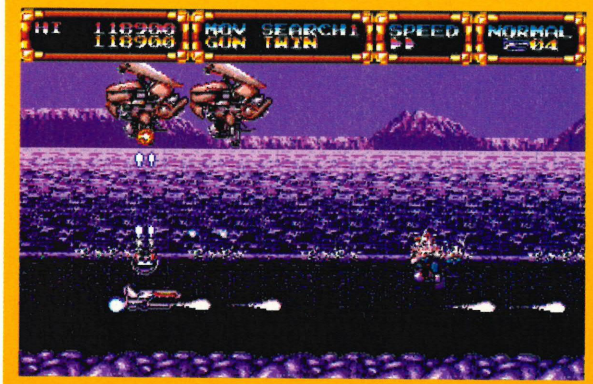
GLEY LANCER

NCS • IMPORT

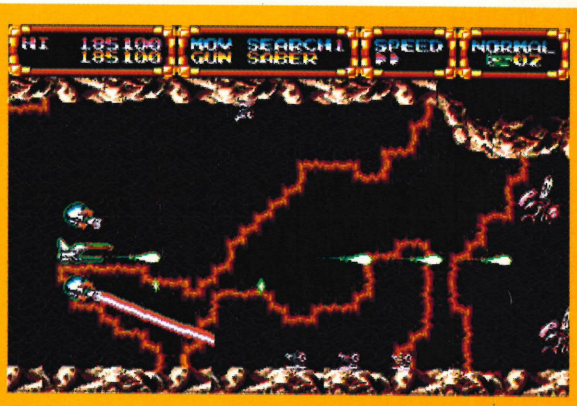
The makers of *Gley Lancer* have gone out of their way to provide you with plenty of varieties of weaponry and ship-type and it's here where this (otherwise standard) shoot-'em-up game earns its heartiest thumbs-up.

You have the choice of six configurations of ship and gunner (the add-ons that follow your ship around, blasting constantly) and, instead of being just an excuse to pad out the lack of variety in the gameplay, these choices actually alter the difficulty and determine how big a part you play in the control of the ship. With the "Search" ship mode, it's really just a matter of moving the thing around and keeping your finger on the fire button – everything else is virtually done for you. In "Roll" mode, however, things are very different indeed – the control of the gunners, as they rotate around the ship, is entirely up to you – adding a welcome dimension to the whole affair. So, if you want to ease yourself into things, are terrified of shoot-'em-ups or are just plain crap, then the Search method is for you. Alternatively, you may fancy yourself as a bit of a hotshot and crave the challenge of fiddling around with the way your ship shoots, as well as worrying about the aliens. In this case, choose the Roll mode and impress your mates with a dazzling display of competence, calibre and, er, something else beginning with "c".

The business of speed is also well catered for. There's none of this tedious grabbing of power-ups and frittering them away on speeding your ship up. You have, as bog-standard, a choice of four speed options: slow – useless, bearable – the best one, fast – probably too fast, and ridiculously zippy – which may look impressive, but let's face it, you're not perfect and neither is your co-ordination. The point is you can switch between the four as freely and as often as you like throughout the game so, as "they" say, "Choose wisely O great frazzler of alien scum". Erm, possibly



Your automated wing men fire independently at every enemy, no matter the angle of attack. Useful eh?



Typical. You arm yourself to the teeth with laser death and then you don't see a bloody alien for miles

Now, technical boring-bit alert... Graphics are good – nothing special – just good. Scrolling is well executed and, occasionally, things – gasp – actually start to scroll upwards as well as sidewards. The parallax is smooth and effective and, on the later levels, things move along at a pretty hectic pace, demanding the fullest of attention from your joypad tactics. Meanies lurk all around the screen – flying in, as usual, from behind when you least expect it and the music is completely, totally and intensely... mediocre. Take our advice – turn it off and slot in a CD of your favourite thrash-metal sounds. Things will seem a whole lot more urgent.

It does seem as though the programmers have tried to incorporate some of the best bits from all the infinitely more superior shoot-'em-ups on the market and wound up with a game that plays well (albeit with the pitch of the difficulty going a tiny bit haywire, with things tending to be way too easy or just too darned difficult – with no inbetweens) and looks pretty but which lacks that spark to push it over into the "must-buy" category.

Not bad, but not outstanding. *Andy Dyer.*

Graphics 8 Sound 3 Gameplay 5 Game Size 6 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: A decent enough shoot-'em-up which coasts along comfortably, though no one's going to be frantically dragging you away from your joypad to get a go.

MEGA Rating: **72%**

TIP: • When the title screen appears and the words 'push start button' are on screen, press Up, down, Left, Right, B and then A. The title should now turn gold and you can chose a Mania game from the options screen.

GREENDOG

Sega • £34.99

Sega is keen on "character" games. The success of the ubiquitous hedgehog and the manic two-player buffoonery of *Toe Jam & Earl* is proof that cool characters sell games. So how come *Greendog* fails to deliver?

Well there's nothing wrong with the new hero. He's one of the kind who's perpetually tanned; the kind who understands what "walking the dog" really means; the kind who knows that jams are a fashion accessory as well as a type of fruit preserve; the kind who realises that "surf's up" isn't just a reference to a type of washing powder.

Great, a game with surfing, sunning, and bumming around. Imagine those waves crashing down, imagine riding that wall of surf. Now imagine something completely different, because *Greendog* ain't no surfing game. Greendog is really no different to any other platform game. *Greendog* is... well, let's not get too far ahead of ourselves. Let's find out what this game's all about.

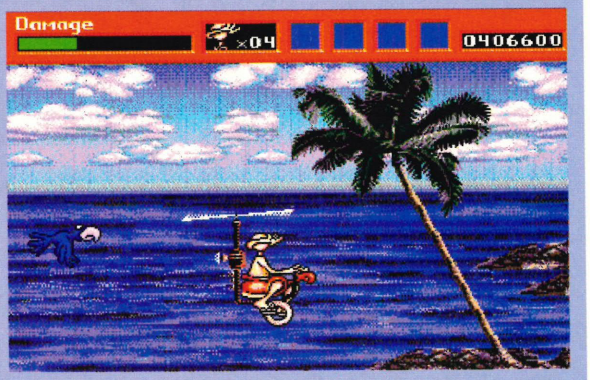
Sega's *Greendog* centres around a surf dude of the same name, who must traverse six islands in and around the West Indies, seeking out parts of the Great Surfboard. On his travels, he'll have to fly, skate, swim, and stroll over scenery which mostly scrolls from right to left. And, um, well, that's it.

OK, OK, so it's not really quite that straightforward. A host of gnarly nasties stand between Greendog and the parts of the surfboard. These include birds, crabs, starfish, little doggies, piranha fish, fish hooks and giant clams. And then there's the scenery, which includes dissolving platforms and springs on some levels, speed ramps and spikes on others – as far as atmosphere goes, *Greendog* has a helluva lot going for it.

Of course, your average beach bum isn't going to get very far by loping around and jumping occasionally, so a frisbee is always at hand to help dispense with the local nasties. Power-ups are also available along the way, including an invincibility umbrella and a "smart" frisbee, which automatically whizzes round the screen knocking out bad guys. Extra bonus objects are also there for the taking, and are usually made available by smacking bits of the scenery with the trusty frisbee.

On later levels, Greendog gets to use various goodies, such as a ramshackle pedal-powered 'copter and – best of all – a skateboard. It's all amusing, goodtime stuff. Greendog wanders along in his beach jams and straw hat, pulling surf stances when he ducks, and achieving total cool when he finds a skateboard. Soundwise, we're in real Bajan territory, with mellow Caribbean tunes and slapstick FX to match the on-screen antics. But...

Can we just cut to the chase here? When all's said and done, *Greendog* boils down to a few formulaic levels which just go on too long, and offer very little variation along the way. The programmers obviously had some really cool ideas, but it seems that they ran out of ways in which to implement them half-way through, and ended up repeating all the little tricks and traps umpteen times on each level.



Greendog takes to the skies in his patent-applied-for surf-o-cycle. But how can he see with that hat on ?

On any one level, there are typically four or five nasties to deal with, and a couple of idiosyncrasies in the scenery to get the hang of (rope swings, totem poles, springs etc). We're not exactly in wildly varying terrain here and so it boils down to employing the same tactics time after time, until the – yes! – the end of the level is reached, and a new level type can be tackled. Completing a level doesn't so much give a feeling of progression, as one of relief – at last, something new and different to do!

Despite this bleak picture, *Greendog* is actually quite good fun – for a while. It's just frustrating that such a wild idea couldn't have spawned a more substantial game. In places, *Greendog* has all the right moves – elements of *Chuck Rock* and even touches of *California Games*. However, my initial excitement fizzled after the first half an hour at the controls, as the pleasant touches and surprises appeared less and less. And, let's face it, with the limited number of hazards which await *Greendog*, it's not going to take long to complete the whole game. There's also a problem with the restart points – basically, there are hardly any of them. Oh, and the inaccurate jumping, and... well, you've probably got the picture by now, haven't you?

Next time guys, how about some lasting gameplay to match the originality of the characters? Oh yeah, and how about some surfing? *Neil West.*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 5 Game Size 5 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A potentially great idea, but it's not just varied or challenging enough. And where's the surfing?

MEGA Rating: 57%

This is the pose that Greendog tends to strike when he's not doing anything. Why? Who knows...

And here we have Greendog seconds after leaping off a branch while snagging his pants on a twig

GROWL (RUNARK)

Unknown • IMPORT

Rescue the animals and beat up the guys who are holding them captive. Kind of like Noah in reverse.

Graphics	5
Sound	4
Gameplay	5
Game Size	4
Addiction	4

MEGA Says: An old, old game that should be allowed to slip quietly, without further hassle from us, into obscurity.

MEGA Rating: 40%

GYNOUG

Sega • £19.99

A lot of people really rate this shoot-'em-up but you won't find them working on the MEGA team – there's neither the depth of gameplay or the graphical "Wow" factor to make this a winner.

The action is fairly run of the mill shoot-'em-up. It's all been done before, and done a lot better as well. Though while people still buy shoot-'em-ups, the likes of Sega are going to carry on making them, MEGA do honestly believe that any one person only needs one shoot-'em-up in his or her collection at one time. And this ain't it. Try *Hellfire,* any of the *Thunderforce* games or *Aero Blasters* instead.

Graphics	5
Sound	5
Gameplay	4
Game Size	4
Addiction	4

MEGA Says: *Gynoug's* quite good in a small and fiddly kinda way. But there are at least five better shoot-'em-ups out there so why bother with this one?

MEGA Rating: 52%

TIP: • Hold Left, A and C then press Start on the game-over screen for more continues.
• On the options screen, select the control icon and hold down A, B and C for ten seconds for a stage select.

HARD DRIVIN'

Tengen • £29.99

Hard Drivin' took the coin-op world by storm about five years ago as the first driving simulator that actually felt anything like driving a car.

The graphics move at a realistic speed and the car handles as you would expect a real car to handle as you negotiate banked curves, jumps, bridges and loops. The action is viewed in 3D first-person perspective and the Mega Drive makes a very good job indeed of recreating the coin-op completely.

Thing is though, after three minutes of going "gosh, wow, I mean to say, look at that!", and a further 10 minutes of actually playing it, you'll be completly fed up and bored. All you have to do is race around and around the two different tracks trying to beat the other cars and beating your previous best lap time, and that's not really Excitemtent Central.

As a five minute arcade thrill *Hard Drivin'* was tops, but as a home console game that's supposed to give you months of entertainment this one's a non-starter.

Graphics 9
Sound 7
Gameplay 5
Game Size 3
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: A great reproduction of a coin-op, shame that the game underneath the graphics isn't up to much.

MEGA Rating: 50%

TIP: • Hit the cow!

HARDBALL

Accolade • Deleted

A bog-standard baseball game that has since been superceded by *Sports Talk Baseball, RBI 4* and *Hardball 3*.

Graphics: 5
Sound: 5
Gameplay: 4
Game Size: 6
Addiction: 3

MEGA Says: It's another baseball game, but it's not as good as *Sports Talk Baseball*. And one baseball game should be enough for anyone, really, don't you think? And it's not going to be this one – if that's not labouring the point.

MEGA RATING: 45%

HEAVY UNIT

Unknown • IMPORT

Multi-directional, viewed-from-above shoot-'em-up that doesn't really come up with the goods. Kind of like *Herzog Zwei* but without the tactics.

Graphics: 4
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 4
Game Size: 3
Addiction: 3

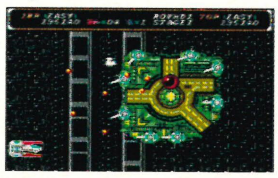
MEGA Says: Just another shoot-em-up

MEGA Rating: 42%

TIP: • Hit A, B, C and Start on the title screen for a new skill level.

HELLFIRE

Sega • Deleted



The only serious competition to *Aero Blasters* in the space-blast department, *Hellfire* is Number One in a different field – if the Mega Drive's ever seen a more accurate coin-op conversion than this, we'd like to know what it is.

A clever and imaginative shoot-'em-up, *Hellfire* makes you think before you zap with four switchable weapon systems which have to be employed with expert speed and accuracy if you're going to make any progress through the game.

The end-of-level bosses have had a bit more thought put into their design than the usual 'find the weak spot and sit and pummel it for a couple of minutes' routine, and the graphics change enough from level to level to make it a real joy when you discover what's in store in each new stage. You get a lot of continues, which makes it a bit easy to complete, but hey, let's face it – nothing's perfect.

Graphics: 8
Sound: 8
Gameplay: 9
Game Size: 9
Addiction: 8

MEGA Says: Great stuff. A superb game, although it pales a bit in the frenetic action

HARDBALL 3

Accolade • £39.99

From the point of view of someone who's got absolutely no interest in baseball: Although the Americans would probably deny all knowledge of any connection between the two, baseball is pretty clearly a rip-off of the traditional British game of rounders. The only difference is the addition of flag-waving, Hammond organ music, silly technical terms and popcorn, without which a sport simply isn't a sport in America.

And as for being material for basing a video game on, baseball's got nothing like the potential of football, golf or ice hockey, or even American football for that matter. After all, there's only so much you can do with one chap who throws a ball, another who hits it with a bat, and a few more who retrieve it and throw it back again. Consequently, every single baseball game that's ever been written is stupendously dull, no matter how good the graphics are or how many statistics are crammed into it.

Hardball 3 is no exception. If you're playing against the computer, you're unlikely even to make it through one innings before nodding off. With another human player, you've at least got someone to prod you if your eyelids start drooping, but it's really not that much better. And why's it so hard to hit the ball?

Now, from the point of view of an American (hence the crap American accent) baseball fan: Yo! Baseball?! Crazy sport! Just can't get enough of it!?! And what have we got here? A baseball game! Way to go!

And hey! It's great! Check out those cool statistics! You can change all your teams around, each player's got his own record with loads of happenin' numbers and stuff, and you can play in real leagues and everything. (Although there ain't no law against just ignoring all that stuff and playing the game as if the stats weren't there.) There's loads of detail in the game itself, too – there are all kinds of different options for the batter and pitcher, although it might be nicer if you could move the guys around on their bases a bit rather than just having them standing there.

Erm, why's everyone just standing around? How odd

I don't really think a baseball shot needs explanation

The outfield's another area where *Hardball 3* really chills. Normally in baseball games, you've got a real job chasing after the ball once the batter's hit it, and you're never quite sure where your fielders are in relation to it. But *Hardball 3* gives you a good, clear view of the pitch so you can see just what's going on. And – yo! – if you're still having trouble, switch on the automatic fielding option and the computer takes care of it all for you.

The graphics are hangin' tough, too. The animation's not much crack, but the colours are awesome. Whoop! Way to go! And those menus and things are really cookin', even if the writing's a bit too small to read without squinting. All that's really missing is that weird organ music that every good baseball game should include. How are you supposed to know the inning's up if there's no-one there belting out a tune like something you might hear on Blackpool Pier, England? Instead we've got some crazy dude giving a digitised commentary. Al Michaels? Ever heard of him? Boy, this guy's got problems! Just didn't have a clue what he was sayin' half the time!

But hey, hang on a minute! Let's not go and get all gloomy now! This is one mother of a baseball game. The animation could be better, and, jeez, that commentary really screws you up after a while, but otherwise everything's cool. Yo, everything is really cool!

To conclude, it wouldn't be fair to penalise *Hardball 3* simply for being a baseball game. Believe it or not, there actually are people out there who buy and enjoy them – there must be, or games like the Hardball series wouldn't have gone on for as long as they have. But if you in any way resemble what the MEGA team would regard as a "normal person" (though some might say we're hardly in a position to judge), the chances are you'll find this very boring indeed. You have been warned. *Paul Mellerick*

Graphics: 6 Sound 6 Gameplay 6 Game Size 4 Addiction 5

MEGA Says: A good baseball game – perhaps the best – but actually a pretty dull game.

MEGA Rating: 60%

HIT THE ICE

Taito • IMPORT

Ice hockey never started out as a violent game, it just kind of grew into it. These days, an American audience expect to see plenty of scrapping on the ice and the odd fractured jaw or they call it a dull game. Unless at least two men limp off the rink with fractured jaws or dislocated shoulders it just hasn't been entertaining enough. Damn it.

Well, it's violently crap, certainly. After the Mega Drive gaming world ascended to the dizzy heights of *NHLPA* it became obvious that a few companies would try to cash in on the game. I mean, it happens all the time in the record and film industries, so why should the video game business be any different? Well, for starters, because video games cost a damn sight more than a ticket to the cinema or a CD single.

There are three broad methods of play in *Hit the Ice*. These enable you to play the computer, to play another person or to play with another person against the computer. There's also a league option, but this is a largely redundant feature which enables you to play the other seven built-in sides.

More like a beat-'em-up than a sports sim really

The programmers of this game have attempted to jazz the game of ice hockey up a bit by adding some "extras". Thus, if you want, you can include obstacles on the ice (either an octopus which grabs you or a beer bottle which slows you down) or attack the other side with special moves (and we're not talking *Streetfighter 2* here either). Each side has its own special abilities, ranging from a simple stick thrust to a roundhouse punch.

Oh and the other main difference between this and any other hockey game I've ever laid eyes on, is the fact that you've got only three players on each side. That's one goalie and two attackers, sports fans. Your frisky chaps can skate up the ice, bash the other guys, pass the puck between themselves or even take a shot at the net. Although this last bit seems almost incidental to the gameplay.

Graphically, *Hit the Ice* is great. I'm sure you're all sat there thinking that those sprites are nice, large and colourful and you know what dear reader? You'd be right. However, this is the single redeeming feature of the game. Every other factor is either shoddily programmed or frustrating. Sprites glitch up on screen, computer controlled players get a bit lost and stare blankly at the crowd, the sound drones desperately on like a knackered pipe organ and in the end you die of boredom. It's insipid, tedious and only marginally original. Learn to crochet instead. *Paul Mellerick*

Graphics: 8 Sound 3 Gameplay 4 Game Size 3 Addiction 3

Another dreadful shot from this utterly dreadful game

MEGA Says: *Hit The Ice* is the Andy Dyer of the school hockey squad. Get the message?

MEGA Rating: 36%

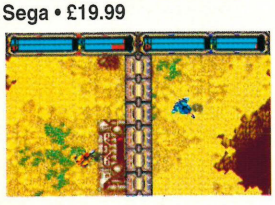
department when you put it alongside *Aero Blasters*.

MEGA RATING: 91%

TIP: • Choose the hard difficulty setting and listen to any track on the sound test for over a minute. The game will start itself with 99 continues and you'll be playing on "Yea Right" level. I Play through level one to the columns with prizes in their tips. Blow up the last one and occasionally you'll see a robot woman dancing.

HERZOG ZWEI

Sega • £19.99



Eight-way scrolling, view-from above, simultaneous two-player, head-to-head, split-screen shoot and think-em-up with bags of strategy. It could have been a classic, but didn't quite manage to hang together. Tragic, but it has to be said, true.

Graphics	**6**
Sound	**5**
Gameplay	**8**
Game Size	**7**
Addiction	**8**

MEGA Says: Almost excellent for two players head-to-head. If you can pick it up cheap, you may love it.

MEGA RATING: 74%

TIP: • Passwords:
GGGKHAGOKLO
BPHOHACAGML
NPLOFOCAGKP
IMLPFEGEMLC
LILOPBDPIKJ
JLJOMGJAOKL
JLJOIGJBOKO
LHJKINAFAMA

IMMORTAL

Electronic Arts • £44.99

Massive but ropey-looking RPG with loads of blood 'n' guts for the gore-thirsty. It's very slick (the isometric 3D looks great and the wizard-swallowing worms are fab) but ultimately insubstantial. Probably best to go for another RPG such as *Shining In The Darkness*.

Graphics	**8**
Sound	**6**
Gameplay	**6**
Game Size	**7**
Addiction	**4**

MEGA Says: Okay, but think very carefully before you blow £45 on it. Will Harvery is EA's man responsible for *The Immortal*, and MEGA can confirm that he is currently beavering away on a sequel – although it may look nothing like the original. Hopefully it'll play nothing like the original also, sorry.

MEGA Rating: 60%

TIP: • Passwords:
Level five: D4BFD41000EB
Level six: BCFEF51010A4
Level seven: 6B10F61010AC
• On level four, put a ring on each hole and then walk round in a clockwise direction until the exit appears.
• In the room with the three pentagrams, place one gem on the right hole of the first pentagram, one on the left hole of the next, and one in the centre of the last one.

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE

US Gold • £39.99

Indy gets his whip out and takes to the platforms in a quest to rescue his dad.

There's really nothing exciting here at all – the action is slow and very deliberate. The challenge lies firmly in the 'die horribly then try not to make the same mistale next time around' mode, but you'll get through it fairly quickly just through stubborn will power.

There's one very neat touch at the end, when Indy has to walk over the Test Of True Flippin' Faith Bridge (or whatever it's called) that secures a real sting in the gameplay tail. But other than

HOME ALONE

Sega • £34.99

Annoying brat or annoying brat? Make up your own mind, but he's got to be one of the world's most obnoxious superstars. And to make matters worse, he's made a fortune out of being a precocious whippersnapper, who doesn't know when to lie down and let his house get robbed.

There's nothing wrong with being annoying, famous or 14 years old, or even all three at once, but there is a problem when there are thousands of other youngsters eagerly awaiting the Home Alone computer game, and boy are they going to be disappointed.

You could be forgiven for thinking that the game of the biggest grossing comedy of all time would be a right royal riot of a romp, but sadly, it's yet another pitiful excuse for a software house to cash in on the mass hysteria produced by an over-hyped and over-rated film.

The two crooks are on their way to rob five houses and you have to frustrate their criminal antics until the police arrive. You have to collect weapons and ammunition and then go into a house to set fiendish traps before the crooks break in. But if they get in before you, all you have to do is shoot them with a BB gun, pepper shooter or snowball bazooker. The weapon you use depends on the gagdets you've collected.

When the crooks' pain threshold has been reached, you've saved the house, and the crooks move onto the next residence. If they grab all the loot, that's bad news for you and you get fewer bonus points at the end. The game moves at an appallingly pedestrian pace, the controls are unresponsive, the graphics are decidedly sad. There is no depth to it and it's far too simplistic. An embarrassment to the entire Mega Drive world. *Amanda Dyson.*

Graphics 3 Sound 2 Gameplay 1 Game Size 1 Addiction 1

Macauly. What a git!

MEGA Says: Yet another wasted film license.

MEGA Rating: 24%

this, tedium rules the day.

Graphics	5
Sound	4
Gameplay	5
Game Size	6
Addiction	6

MEGA Says: Nicely atmospheric Indiana Jones game, but nothing to risk a pit full of snakes or a bloody great rolling ball for.

MEGA Rating: 51%

TIP: • When the Sega logo disappears and the Lucasfilm logo appears, press A, B, C, B, C, A, C and A for a level select.

INSECTOR X

Unknown • IMPORT

Tackle giant insects with your bug gun in the game that is to insect love what Bernard Mathews is to chickens. Quite good fun though, and worth investigation.

Graphics	7
Sound	5
Gameplay	5
Game Size	5
Addiction	6

MEGA Says: Novel and entertaining variation of the shoot-'em-up theme.

MEGA Rating: 58%

TIP: • On the continue screen hold Up and Left and repeatedly press C very quickly for more credits.

ISHIDO: THE WAY OF THE STONES

Accolade • Deleted

An ancient Chinese philosopher once wrote: *Ishido* is a bloody difficult puzzle game involving funny shapes and grids and things. Well, all right we'll admit it. An ancient Chinese philosopher didn't actually say those exact words but had the Mega Drive been around at the time he probably would have said something very similar.

Graphics	3
Sound	4
Gameplay	7
Game Size	10
Addiction	7

MEGA Says: One for real brain-bending freaks. Anyone who finds *Sonic* mentally taxing should steer clear.

MEGA Rating: 74%

THE HUMANS

Imagitec • IMPORT

Fab graphics, tricky puzzles, but sluggish gameplay

Evolution always was, and always will be, a right pain in the butt. Let's face it, for years mankind had to suffer rather unpleasant meals like runny eggs, raw sausages and frozen McCain oven chips. Then, of course, we discovered fire... Hoo-bloody-rah – nice piping hot meals. But what about protecting your wife, kids and home from vicious prehistoric beasts? Before weapons were discovered, the caveman's only defence was shouting, "I say, you can't do that. Remove your teeth from my child's skull at once you cad," while waving a fern frond menacingly at the attackers. Crap!

Needless to say, however, we soon discovered how to create weapons like the flint knife, spear and Uzi 9 mm and everyone was then happily able to fend off the attacks of animals, rival tribes and Salvation Army campaigners. Brill! So then, things came on apace until, eventually, we developed into the civilised, peace-loving, successful, affluent folk that we are today. Er...

Anyway, the fact is that all this evolution lark and discovery business actually makes a pretty good basis for a Mega Drive game, and here it is. *The Humans* has, gameplay-wise, borrowed fairly heavily from the *Lemmings* theme. Although the humans in question are entirely under your control, you still have to get them to perform various tasks to overcome platform-related obstacles and hazards.

At the start of the game the puzzles are very simple indeed. All you really need to do is get a few humans together, get them to stand on top of each other so that they can get over tall obstacles, and reach the exit before your time runs out. You only ever have to get one human to the exit to complete a level, so all the others humans who appear on the screen are used only in a puzzle-solving capacity. So, in fact, as long as you keep enough humans alive to complete the puzzles, it doesn't matter if a few die along the way. But don't get too complacent in these early stages, because things change pretty fast.

As you get further into the game the challenges get a lot harder and, unfortunately, the time limits don't get any kinder (well, not much anyway). What's more, the humans at your disposal get less, erm, dispensable. Whereas before you could afford to go at it like a bull in a china shop, now you have to do everything possible to keep all your friends alive or you'll just end up getting stuck.

Later on, you have to find and then use spears and torches. Wave them around, throw them or (in the case of the spears) use them as pole vaulting, er, poles to, um, vault over gaps. Add to this the introduction of monsters, enemy cavemen, collapsing bridges and pressure-activated walls and obstacles, and the whole thing starts shaping up to be quite an involved little experience.

This however is where the trouble begins. In *Lemmings* (sorry to keep comparing them, but the similarity is obvious) you don't actually control the movement of the main characters; they just keep on moving relentlessly and so, ultimately, reach their destination of their own accord. This speeds up what could have been a mind-numbingly slow-paced puzzle game.

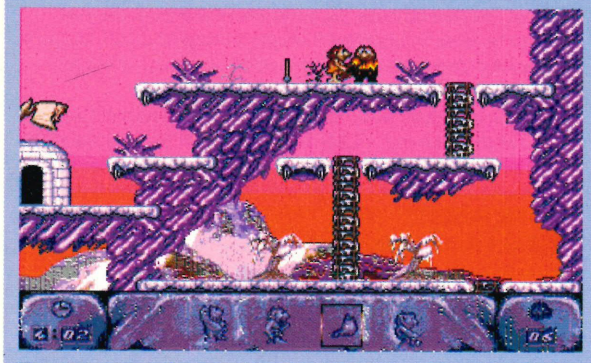
Sadly, in *The Humans* you have to control the movement of the characters manually and individually. If only one or two of the little chaps were needed for each puzzle, this would be fine, but later in the game you'll need to manipulate six or seven of the lumbering little gits to achieve your goal. What's more, quite often you have to move all of them right the way across the play area to perform one task, only to have to move the cheesy little bleeders all the way back again to the exit. This is all fine and dandy for the first few attempts, but on particularly complex levels you'll get incredibly racked off after about your fifth attempt.

This one failing makes *The Humans* a somewhat poorer relative of *Lemmings*. But, even though it's not quite up to the standard of that Psygnosis classic, it's still a damn fine game in its own right. The slow progress on later levels is annoying, but fortunately, the inclusion of a good password system just saves it from being annoying enough to put you off playing it. If you liked *Lemmings* then *The Humans* is well worth a look. It's cute, colourful and very, very playable. *Andy Dyer*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 8 Game Size 8 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Not quite *Lemmings*, but pretty close. It's slightly repetitive, but fans of this type of game certainly won't be disappointed.

MEGA Rating: 81%



Try not to torch your friends. It's not big or clever

TIP: • 80 level codes:

1	JWHVRMRKNKHB	27	WTBSDCBXKTWL	54	WHYNDZMTYNQT
2	YHQBSBGTSFXY	28	QXJKDYRMLSTC	55	QDDGVHPGFWLS
3	DGTVQBWXBJNC	29	VSPQXYVCLVCB	56	NGJFTCRVQXKZ
4	PBGPGHQZMZGT	30	MFKTJGNSXQJM	57	KNCFXXKRMHGV
5	TMHCPYPCDQHQ	31	FHWHHMTCJSPN	58	TSDRLSHXZMJD
6	DTMFCPWJWFPW	32	FTWFSBZLYNXS	59	WZWZWZSHCJMH
7	FKNMZXDGJKBW	33	LWLSTSLVWDRX	60	YNTBXYJYNWLK
8	XSJKNQLMFHWZ	34	WXTXBCHBWLDG	61	FQXXPTYLQJZM
9	DVDQTNKTMHSF	35	ZSRGHXCZYFLQ	62	TZYNMBQRSFZW
10	VYJMDMPVXHHD	36	ZGHWLXSXSZM	63	BSHJMJTMFCFS
11	SDKJRGJHDWZQ	37	RSBMVGVSTSBL	64	LTLJQVMRYZLM
12	HCDFWZSNXCPH	38	CZQNJYZWLWFQ	65	NCHQVFQXFQZH
13	CBJHXXDMHSVL	39	ZFPKPYXJCRGX	66	MFGLYVGRQVZP
14	FPYBCXGPMPMP	40	NSFLKXCBJDWF	67	QTSDFMBYTMJJ
15	SRQHNLDRDWPG	41	HQVQNQVMVGPO	68	CLYBHVQNGBYN
16	NYZKBLPGZXMF	42	FCTRRYFMZMVK	69	ZWKGZQRGLPPN
17	ZGXMLRRNWHLK	43	BYNNYHYTGDTC	70	VWPKNRSXXYTY
18	RKLLKDZHXNQP	44	BDMBGXDYLKHG	71	NCHMNXGHZGLS
19	VCRMFKNSRDF	45	TNLQVNQPJBZQ	72	TWJZBHKTMHCP
20	WDFGNXGRRMPN	46	PZFCTHKXBVXM	73	TQVCXVNFFZZN
21	YXLPSLBXWHBQ	47	DFGFGFWRRCXW	74	QLMVQJNJMZLQ
22	XQHHWPQBJMPC	48	VNWLGXTRQNCF	75	VKPKLSLLYTFC
23	VYNSJGFQJHCB	49	ZWNSXGFYNMHS	76	DWJPYHKDGPYT
24	SDMFCJKBCJGC	50	PDJTKPCTYXDK	77	RKLDKFSJBSJV
25	TKJXCLWLZTWP	51	HHJYFSXNNPFG	78	TYZNGBCBWPJV
26	CVYXWHYRGDWD	52	BPHGLQXJHWJY	79	BCDDSNZQZYPC
53	BWLPKPNGVFQD	80	XPMNWJKFNQZC		

J GAMES

JAMES 'BUSTER' DOUGLAS BOXING

Sega • Deleted

Appaling! Possibly the worst Mega Drive game you could ever imagine! Stick your joystick on auto-fire, press "jab" and leave it for half an hour. Within 30 minutes the World Championship belt will be yours.

Graphics	7
Sound	7
Gameplay	1
Game Size	3
Addiction	1

MEGA Says: Words fail, they really do.

MEGA Rating: 6%

TIP: • Win four matches to win the heavyweight belt, then defend your title four times to meet a secret opponent called Iron Head.

• If you've run out of continues on *James "Buster" Douglas Boxing*, then press Up and Start on the game-over screen for one more try.

JAMES POND

Electronic Arts • £39.99

The environmentally-friendly prequel to *Robocod,* and a much inferior game. Some cute platform/swimming around fun, but nothing that'll really set your head on fire. Er, not that you'd especially want it to.

James has to complete 12 underwater missions that basically involve exploring a large playing area, locating a number of relevent objects and then transporting them to a specified location. It's still worth a look, but there's definitely nothing exceptional about it.

Graphics	7
Sound	8
Gameplay	6
Game Size	7
Addiction	7

MEGA Says: The very first Mega Drive game developed in the UK, and now looking dated. Still worth investiagtion if you can pick it up at a budget price though.

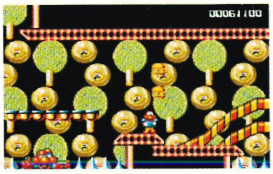
MEGA Rating: 71%

TIP: • On mission one there are hidden entrances to level 11 (on the far left, out of the water) and on level 6 (on the far left of the sea bed, just before the cliff).

• Collect all the letters in the baddy rooms to spell out the name James Pond and earn a massive 10,000,000 point bonus. Wowzer!

JAMES POND 2 – ROBOCOD

Electronic Arts • £39.99



Many people love this game, and we'd largely agree that it is pretty fab. Converted from, but significantly improved on, the 16-bit computer classic, *Robocod* was the game that took on *Sonic* at his own game and didn't make a half-bad stab at it.

It's a little, er, spacey in bits, but for the most part this gigantic platformer is busy and impressive. Exceptionally pretty, and funny too, this is one of the best hedgehog clones you can buy. What's more, unlike *Sonic,* there are lots of little secrets to discover.

Graphics	8
Sound	8
Gameplay	7
Game Size	9
Addiction	8

MEGA Says: Great little game, with a different feel to most platformers (largely thanks to your extendable character...) A right good laugh, and no mistake.

MEGA Rating: 85%

TIP: • Collect the objects on the roof at the start in this order: cake, hammer, earth, apple, tap for ten minutes of utter invincibility.

• On the sports level, collect the items on the tennis ball in this order: lips, ice-cream, violin, earth, snowman for infinite lives.

• On the title screen hold Down/Left and A and C and then press Start for a level select.

• At the start of the game, jump over the first two doors and then run up the staircase. Instead of going left, go right as far as you can. Jump up onto the ramparts of the right tower until you come to the roof. Jump onto the roof, run left as if you were going to collide with the wall and Hey Presto! you'll find yourself with an extra life.

JAMES BOND THE DUEL

Domark • £39.99

Fly in on your trusty jet-pack, and it's time to face level one. The first thing you notice is the alarming number of guys in uniforms running backwards and forwards. The second thing you notice is, as you climb the first ladder and casually mince along the first platform, you are duly shot in the head by a guy in a uniform. This is where you realise that things have to be approached a little more furtively.

The "things" in question on the first level are three girlie hostages, who have been tied up and forced to listen to Brian May songs, before being dumped in annoyingly random areas across the level. As you chip away through the levels, the hostages you need to rescue increase in number and are stashed in more inaccessible places.

Bond (who, incidentally, takes the Timothy Dalton guise for this particular adventure) has plenty of athletic stunts with which to impress and baffle the enemy. Aside from trotting around at a fairly healthy pace, he can also swim, jump and hide in doorways and niches, ready to leap out at the last second and surprise the guards with a well-aimed slug. When an enemy agent is dispatched, he will usually leave behind a highly convenient extra cartridge of ammunition which can be used to increase the firepower of your own weapon. You can fire in six directions and – in a realistic, but potentially lethal touch – you often need to stand around for a second and change your cartridge, giving any baddie in the area time to get in a shot of his own.

Now for the bad news. At the end of each level you have to face the might of one of the famous Bond arch-enemies like Jaws, Odd Job or Bones in a vicious fight to the death. Here, the idea is to wait until the baddie straps you onto a table with a laser going down the middle, before he gives you an in-depth explanation of his dastardly plans while you throw in a corny line or two. No, actually you have to shoot him – more than once, about fifty times actually. Only then can you saunter onto the next level, fresh and glowing from your temporary victory.

007: Licensed to wear a suit

There's also a tiny puzzle aspect – in the form of a bomb, which must be found and attached to, er, something which looks like a rather obvious bomb icon. Other tiny, but game-enhancing frills include the grenades, which seemed to be next to useless against anything, including the end-of-level bosses, and the swimming, where drifting into the path of the sharks is most entertaining... seconds of fun.

Colourful, but ultimately naff

Unfortunately, that's about it. The graphics are adequate – they're animated well, but they sure ain't gonna stun you into disbelief. Game action is strictly limited to frolicking around, picking up things and taking them to certain sections of the terrain.

Think of it like this – you run, you jump, you shoot someone, you avoid someone, you get shot by someone, you can't find the bomb, you find the bomb, you plant the bomb, you kill the end-of-level boss, you leave. Although the levels feature different geography – tropical islands, sea-ports – the actual structure of the game action doesn't go through any radical changes.

There are no level passwords, the music is unbelievably irritating and, hell, it's all just so familiar. It's difficult to see the logic behind releasing this kind of thing on the Mega Drive. *James Bond – The Duel* is a complete waste of the hardware's capabilities. It's more On Her Majesty's Secret Service than Dr No. *Neil West*

Graphics 6 Sound 4 Gameplay 7 Game Size 6 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Don't believe the hype. This is a rather dull and routine platform game, which just happens to carry the James Bond name. Stunningly ordinary.

MEGA Rating: 55%

JEWEL MASTER

Sega • Deleted

This is a platformer with some nice touches of originality to it (wearing different combinations of rings creates different special weapons) but you don't have to use any of the clever stuff in order to finish it inside two days. Insanely easy and not very exciting.

Graphics	7
Sound	6
Gameplay	7
Game Size	7
Addiction	5

MEGA Says: Not really a jewel. More of a matching decanter set.

MEGA Rating: 59%

JOE MONTANA 2 – SPORTS TALK FOOTBALL

Sega • £39.99

Nope, sorry, even this sequel to the original 'not too bad but let's face it, it's not as good as *John Madden*' American Football game fails to lace the

boots or plump the padding of the boy from Electronic Arts. Nice try (the talking is great for the first couple of hours) but no cigar.

Graphics 8
Sound 9
Gameplay 5
Game Size 7
Addiction 5

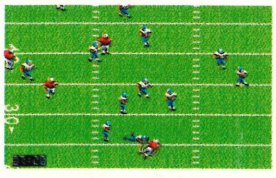
MEGA Says: It's not as good as *Madden's* but it talks to you. Perfect for gridiron fanatics with no friends.

MEGA RATING: 65%

TIP: • Choose the team you'd like to play as in the Sega Bowl final by using the following codes.
San Francisco
– ZABT5EBPII (vs BUFF)
Los Angeles (A)
– MABT54IHIA (vs New York)
Philadelphia
– UX3T54IHIA (vs KC)
Los Angeles (N)
– NAATAXXXKA (vs Miami)
Detroit
– HPOTPVPGIE (vs S Diego)
San Francisco
– ZABT5EBPII (vs Buffalo)
Los Angeles (A)
– MABT54IHIA (vs New York)
Philadelphia
– UX3T54IHIA (vs KC)
Los Angeles (N)
– NAATAXXXKA (Miami)
Detroit
– HPOTPVPGIE (vs S Diego)
• One for the masochists: go to the league password entry and enter your password as JOHNMADDEN, you'll be transported to week 13 of the season as Indianapolis. You need to beat all you opponents to even stand a chance of getting into the playoffs, so you'd better be good if you want to win.

JOE MONTANA FOOTBALL

Sega • £19.99



It's a great American football game with some neat graphical touches and sound effects but it just ain't as good as *John Madden*. There's a £20 price difference and in this case we would suggest you save up the extra. If you can't then there is no shame in going for Mr Montana's game.

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 8
Game Size 8
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: We're all *Madden* nuts here but *Montana* is great value for money.

MEGA RATING: 73%

JERRY GLANVILLE'S PIGSKIN FOOTBRAWL

Razorsoft • IMPORT

Jerry Glanville's a scary guy. If he spilled your pint, you'd apologise to him; he's that kind of guy, and he's renowned in the NFL for coaching tough American football. This game bears his name and emphasises the more violent aspects of the sport, to put it mildly.

As you should all know by now, *John Madden's* is not only the best American football game, it's also (in MEGA's opinion) the best game full stop on the Mega Drive, so *Jerry Glanville's Pigskin Footbrawl* is up against tough competition. Fortunately, *Jerry's* doesn't try to beat *Madden's* at its own game. Instead, it goes for a different style of gameplay altogether.

The game is set in the dark ages when men were men, warriors were psychopathic sadists and American football hadn't even been invented. Until 621 AD that is, when a very early version was conceived at court by a court jester named Inefel. This version is very simple – two teams of gladiators take to the field and try to get a pigskin football to the opponent's end zone. In true gladiator fashion, things are spiced up a bit with the introduction of a scattering of deadly weapons on the playing area.

Nice idea, but there's simply not enough depth to it

American football is a many faceted game, and the control system is something which needs careful consideration. *John Madden* set a fine example. This game, however, doesn't. As I've said, it's loosely based on the American game, but it is a lot simpler. All you have to do is chase the ball, and when you've got it, run or pass it. There are no rules – any number of forward or backward passes can be thrown, and tackling is really just unadulterated violence.

You control only the team captain with the joypad, but you do stipulate the team's attitude during the game. You can choose Scatter and Block on the offence, or Man to Man, Get the Ball and Bad Attitude on the defence. When one of the players gets the ball he can be either left to his own devices, which entails him pegging it for the end zone clutching the pigskin, or you can force him to pass to the team captain. As team captain you have the option of running with the ball, making a short or long pass or a drop kick. You can also press the punch button, which causes the whole team to start hitting out at the opposition.

As mentioned, the playing field is littered with dangerous weapons, which you can pick up as the team captain. Once you've got them though, it's up to the game when you use them, which is generally during the massive pile-on rucks that frequently occur. There are also obstacles, like water holes and trap doors, so your team is constantly bumping into things and falling over.

Sadly, although vaguely amusing at first, the novelty of seeing a load of gladiators fall all over the place soon wears off.

You do get to play on two different playing fields and there's the concession to tactics with the attitude setting, but apart from that it's all just rush around pushing the punch button and hoping for the best. There's very little sense that you're having much to do with the proceedings and consequently there's no satisfaction when you do well. As much as I like American football (and Jerry Glanville) this can't be recommended. *Neil West*

Graphics 6 Sound 4 Gameplay 4 Game Size 3 Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Whether you're an American Football fan or not, this game has very little to offer. Avoid.

MEGA Rating: 42%

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL

Electronic Arts • £39.99

Shock! Horror! MEGA rate this game (and its two updates) better than either of the *Sonic* games! And there's a very good reason for this – *Sonic* is a wonderful, beautiful game, but you can finish it in a week without trying too hard. *John Madden*, on the other hand, came out at the end of 1990, but still gets played in the MEGA office to this very day. You might not care for American football as a sport, but spend 30 minutes getting into *John Madden's* and it won't be a problem.

That the *John Madden* series are the Mega Drive's most sophisticated sports games is without doubt, but we're going a step further, we're raising the stakes. In both two-player and single player modes, *John Madden Football* (in all its forms) is the most exciting, blood-churning, charming, absorbing, frustrating and adrenaline-pumping game we've ever played.

But why? Surely there are loads of games that offer more? No way. You want graphics? Madden's got them – in full parallax, multi-frame animation. You need sound? Check out the Rob Hubbard soundtrack and digitised samples throughout the game. And this game's beauty isn't just skin deep.

You should never judge a game by its screenshots (just ask anyone who bought *Fantasia*) and so it's only when you scratch beneath the surface that you realise *Madden's* full potential. With over 1000 play combinations, there has never been a game that offers so much depth.

Forget *NHLPA Hockey*, forget *Speedball 2* and forget any other game that claims to allow you to develop your own skills and tactics. Once you've truly explored *Madden*, every other two-player head-to-head game will seem tame. In the brutally competitive head-to-head mode, it'll last you a lifetime.

Neil still actually rates this original as the best videogame ever – better than either *Madden '92* or *Madden '93* (the graphical tweaks and extra animation, in his opinion, cost definition and clarity) and is directly responsible for three issues of Sega Power turning up late at the printers (him and Andy Smith played the game non-stop for three months).

The '92 and '93 updates added a few extra features, but suffice to say that the original is basically the same as the updates so a bargain purchse should not be overlooked.

If you're at all into American football, you'll love this. if you don't know the game, this will teach you and turn you into fan. Oh, and it's the best two-player game ever. Classic stuff!

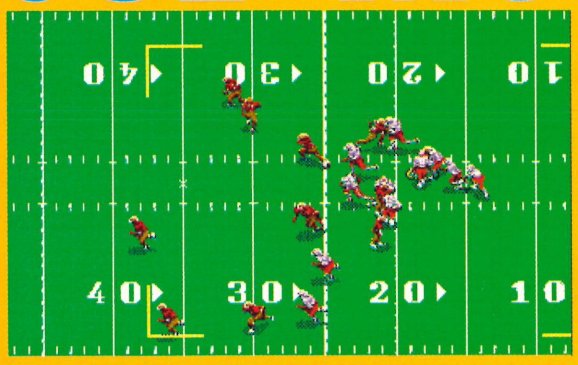
Graphics 9
Sound 8
Gameplay 10
Game Size 9
Addiction 10

MEGA Says: The best American Football game ever? Yep. The best sports game of any kind ever? Definitely. The best Mega Drive game of all time full stop? You bet. And we'll take on anyone who says otherwise...

MEGA Rating: 92%

TIP: • Get to the quarter finals: 0465100
• Get to the semi-finals : 0075121, 0076310, 1111111 or 3333333
• Get to the Superbowl : 0475121, 0476314, 0633253, 0673125 or 0631573
• Fancy playing in the snow? Enter: 5504500

JOE MONTANA 3



Not a *Madden* beater but still a fairly good footy game

Sega • £39.99

Sega have already tried twice to win over American Football gameplayers, but both times they've left people complaining that, "*Joe Montana's* not as good as *John Madden*". So, here Sega bravely make a third attempt. Can Sega pull off the coup of the century and beat *Madden* at his own game? MEGA has its doubts.

If you're a big *John Madden* fan, then getting to grips with, and understanding *Joe Montana 3* is going to take quite some time. The control system is fiddly at first, but it is comprehensive and once you get used to it, you're sorted.

The first thing to do is to decide which type of game you want to play. If you want to, you can play a straight one-off exhibition match or, if you feel ready for it, a league. Before you get into this, however, you've got to decide how you want to play the game: do you fancy getting your hands on the whole team, or is sitting on the bench and shouting out plays more your style? If you do fancy controlling the team, but find it all a bit daunting, you can get a mate to help you out as well.

Once you've chosen how you want to play the game, you can choose both the duration of the game and the pitch surface on which you play. Then you can get down to the business in hand, playing American Football.

And this is where arguably the best feature of *Joe Montana 3* comes into play, the ability to change the view of the pitch. From the play selection screen, you can pause the game and select Horizontal, Vertical Defence, Vertical Offence or Blimp, by pressing Up or Down on the pad.

The vertical views work best, because you can change the viewpoint play by play. So, if you like coming down pitch when you're on defence, but prefer going up-field when you've got the ball, it's very easy to do, and a very good idea indeed.

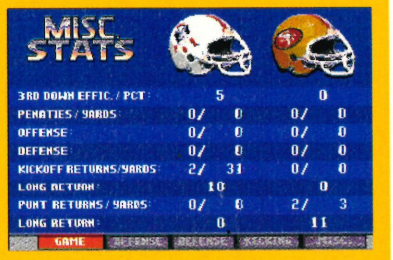
Certainly, there are plenty of good points about *Joe Montana 3*, but there are equally as many poor aspects. There's a helluva lot of plays, the graphics are very smooth, especially in zoom mode, there's a league, a coaching option, where you just take a managerial mode, excellent speech and loadsa stats.

Unfortunately, there are too many control systems, the play selection screen is rather too comprehensive (especially if you're new to American Football), executing a play isn't very smooth, and the overall gameplay is very repetitive.

It's not that playing the game isn't fun, it just lacks the individuality and friendliness of *John Madden Football*. You don't have as much control over each player, and the lack of moves and possible outcomes on each play just isn't there.

If you're a big American Football (or indeed sports) fan, then *Joe Montana 3* will appeal to you, primarily because it has a league and *John Madden doesn't*. But *John Madden* wins hands down on the playability and realism stakes, and MEGA thinks that these are the most important aspects of any game.

Don't dismiss *NFL Sports Talk Football completely*, just make sure you have a good long play before you buy it. Weigh up the pros and cons of both games and see which one is right for you.



Stats, stats and yet more stats. Bloody thrilling screen, that is

Joe Montana 3 isn't a bad game, (and I know this is a cliché, but I've got to say it) it just isn't as good as *John Madden '93*. Same old story... *Paul Mellerick*

Graphics 9 Sound 9 Gameplay 7 Game Size 7 Addiction 7

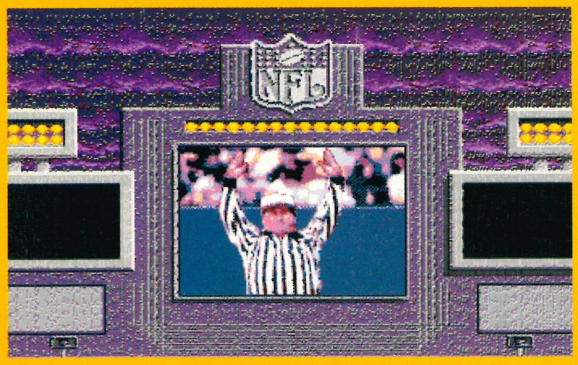
MEGA Says: A nice alternative to *Madden*, and the full season is great, but two gridiron games are for serious sports fans only methinks.

MEGA Rating: 81%

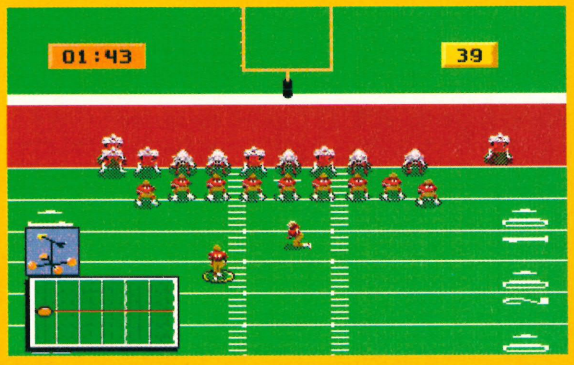
TIP: • In order o get the San Francisco 49ers into the Sega Bowl enter the following code: 45TY??KBL.

• Here's a jolly password breaker for you. Enter the three-letter code by the side of the team you wish to play as, then tag the following code onto the end of it: YNTSKBC.

DLB – Bears	JDB – Broncos	FLB – Bengals
MDB – Colts	KLB – Lions	NDB – Chiefs
LLB – Packers	PDB – Oilers	RLB – Rams
QDB – Raiders	TLB – Vikings	SDB – Dolphins
VLB – Saints	WDB – Patriots	ZLB – Eagles
YDB – Jets	0LB – Cardinals	1DB – Steelers
3LB – Seahawks	2DB – Chargers	4LB – 49ers
5HB – Buccaneers	6LB – Redskins	XTB – Giants
CDB – Bills	HCB – Cowboys	GDB – Browns



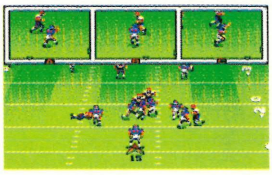
Just a graphical touch but quite nice nevertheless



"4000, 5000, check canopy..." er, no, that's not right

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '92

Electronic Arts • £39.99



This '92 version slicked-up the graphics (although a lot of players actually preferred the original's, more blocky, approach) as well as tarting up the game's front end and options. Basically the same game as the original *John Madden Football* however.

Graphics	**9**
Sound	**8**
Gameplay	**10**
Game Size	**9**
Addiction	**10**

MEGA Says: While you'd have to be a real fan to buy both versions, you'd have to be completely and utterly out of your tree to own a Mega Drive and not get into this astonishingly enduring game.

MEGA Rating: 93%

TIP: • At the end of the final, when the display of the pitch is shown and the score comes up, press Up, C, Down, C, Left, C, Right, C, Up, B, Down, B, Left, B, Right, B, Up, C, Down, C, Left, C, Right, C. The screen should then move upwards to display the fireworks.

• Choose the team you'd like to play as in the finals by using the following codes:

Atlanta (vs San Diego) – CG1PYFTM
Buffalo (vs San Francisco) – BXMMC6M1
Chicago (vs Denver) – CG8JYLC1
Cincinnati (vs San Francisco) – BOXWLRM8
Cleveland (vs Philadelphia) – D5C5N11G
Dallas (vs Miami) – BDNT6NX7
Denver (vs Philadelphia) – C5ZWM8BZ
Detroit (vs Buffalo) – CZYZYZS8
Green Bay (vs Cincinnati) – DSBK3W5W
Houston (vs New York) – DSRTMLVY
Indianapolis (vs Phoenix) – BD1X612H
Kansas City (vs Atlanta) – CLG7Y8FF
Los Angeles (vs Miami) – CNY-

GOYHL
Miami (vs San Francisco) – B6KKGYOL
Minnesota (vs Buffalo) – BTDWO9BN
New England (vs Washington) – B9M3YDIP
New Jersey (vs New York) – C235TOZD
New Orleans (vs Kansas City) – B27O9V41
New York (vs Buffalo) – D42HGN2K
Oakland (vs Washington) – CDLLB7LM
Philadelphia (vs Houston) – CSWV7Z76
Phoenix (vs Buffalo) – CSSXHF4P
Pittsburgh (vs Chicago) – CZ97W14F
San Diego (vs San Francisco) – D8L3T4XY
San Francisco (vs Denver) – B3DFNO5K
Seattle (vs San Francisco) – BLTJXL6Z
Tampa Bay (vs Denver) – CK5HHPYP
Washington (vs Oakland) – CZSK2TMR

• Alternatively, simply set the game to playoff mode then sit back and watch th edemo mode. When a team reaches the final, simply copy down the password and then enter it for a real game.

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '93

Electronic Arts • £39.99

More sampled speech, more frames of animation (although many players reckon that all this achieves is to make the feel and look of the game "mushier") and general tweaking and upgrading. The best of the three *Madden* games and in MEGA's opinion, the best Mega Drive game ever.

Graphics	9
Sound	9
Gameplay	10
Game Size	9
Addiction	9

MEGA Says: What more can we say? If you haven't yet bought one of the *Madden* games then get this.

MEGA RATING: 95%

JUNGLE STRIKE

Electronic Arts • £40

Way-hey! Zip-de-do-da! Whouf! Yippee, three cheers for EA. Well done lads. Let's hear it for the boys. Who's buying? Everyone down the pub, come on let's go. (Er, excuse me for a moment while I deal with Paul, who is a bit excited at the prospect of playing *Jungle Strike*. If you would be so kind as to take a look at the screenshots of this review and come back in a minute, thank you – Neil.... SMACK! OOF!)

Right, I'm sorry about that, but *Desert Strike* is one of my fave games ever, and when you find out that this little beauty of a game improves on every aspect of the original, you may well have the same reaction. (I doubt it, but I take your point – Neil.)

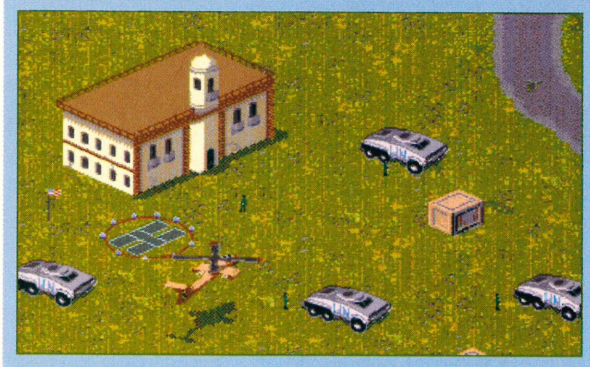
The mad dictator Kilbaba (the enemy in *Desert Strike)* had a kid called, strangely enough, Kilbaba. After you defeated his father, the populace of Kilbaba's country overturned the dictatorship and ran the family out of the country. But, by using his father's amazing wealth and knowledge of nuclear weapons manufacture (and not to mention cutting a long story short), Kilbaba has joined forces with a South American drug lord and together they plan to launch a nuclear strike on the United States of America. It's about revenge and all that.

Ah, it's good to get back to the parched, barren desert again

This is obviously a bit of a problem, and so the good ol' US of A need to put both these guys out of business. This is where you come in. You must start the whole process again, and save the world from not one but two power-crazed madmen. As with *Desert Strike*, *Jungle Strike* is all about military precision and timing. You've got to take things in order (mission by mission) and keep your cool under very stressful circumstances. To win the game, you have to gradually, defeat their forces and stay one step ahead of the enemy.

In gaming terms this revolves around completing campaigns, which will have a big effect on the success of the madmen's goal. Each campaign is split into missions and you must make sure at all times that you stick to these missions in the right order. Don't try to get ahead of yourself, or you might find yourself in more trouble than you can handle. But there is more to each campaign than just completing missions, and basically this involves you staying alive. You've got to pick up fuel and ammunition, and you've got to rescue MIA's and drop them off to safety. The list of duties is endless.

There are nine campaigns in all (ranging in places from the lawn of the White House to the mountains of South America), totalling 50 individual missions.



Let's hope those armoured cars are on your side

Night flying. But the gunfire is lighting up the sky

Now I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, "50 missions, there were 25 in the original game and I got through those easy enough, so I shouldn't have any problems getting through this game". Well, if you were playing 50 missions in *Desert Strike*, you might be right. But this game is different. For a start, your helicopter is different; you've upgraded from the Apache AH-64 to a more powerful and stronger Comanche. You have the same basic weapons (guns, hydra missiles and, of course, Hellfires) and the machine controls in the same way, but you've got more co-pilots to choose from (and they vary differently too), different enemies to take out and, you've got different vehicles to master.

Yep, the original may have been all about one man and his chopper, but this game requires a little bit more skill. Most of the game still involves flying low over dangerous territory, but on some campaigns you're going to have to use other vehicles. These vary from an amphibious hovercraft to an obviously *Road Rash*-inspired motorbike. They don't affect the game greatly, but they do mean you have to change your tactics slightly. For instance, although you start the second campaign with the helicopter, you quickly obtain the hovercraft and have to do battle with the numerous other craft. The same control method makes piloting the hovercraft easy enough, but the weapons work differently, so you'll need to keep your wits about you. And, in a nutshell, this is what makes *Jungle Strike* more than just a sequel. OK, so there are more missions, and the game difficulty is a lot tougher, but the added strategy element of controlling and then using the other available vehicles is fabulous.

But the good news doesn't end there. The original *Desert Strike* was often criticised for being a little lacking in the graphics department. With *Jungle Strike* any criticisms like that can be thrown out of the window straight away. With the campaigns taking you from Washington DC to the top of South American mountains, you can expect to see some pretty fabbo graphics, even a scaled-down White House.

But there's no point just picking out bits and highlighting them. The game as a whole is just so good. The difficulty curve is spot on, and a lot tougher than the original. However, it's not so hard that you get tired of it.

The best thing about the game though (and unlike most sequelsse-quels) is that it does warrant buying even if you've got the original. The only advantage you'll have from owning the first game is that you'll already know how to manoeuvre the helicopter out of trouble.

I recommend that you seek out this game as soon as it appears and then lock yourself in a room until you finish it, and then play it all over again, because it's the most fun you could ever have. *Paul Mellerick*

Graphics 9 Sound 8 Gameplay 9 Game Size 8 Addiction 9

MEGA Says: A classic shoot-'em-up. Challenging, enthralling and all manner of other big words that mean fab.

MEGA Rating: 93%

K GAMES

JORDAN VS BIRD

Electronic Arts • £34.99

Oh dear. Electronic Arts finally proved that they are, in fact, only human and released a real plopper in the form of *Jordan Verses Bird*.

This isn't a basketball game as such, but a series of sub games (such as Three Point Shoot Out and One On One) none of which manage to capture any interest from the gameplayer at all. Avoid.

Graphics 8
Sound 6
Gameplay 2
Game Size 3
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Why EA? Why? A BIG mistake, we're talking HUGE.

MEGA Rating: 17%

JUNCTION

Unknown • IMPORT

Known in the arcades as *Q-Brix*, this arcade puzzler is sure to get the braincells working. Not as inspirationally simple as *Tetris* or *Columns*, but still a fabulous alternative to alien-blasting.

Graphics 7
Sound 3
Gameplay 7
Game Size 5
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Check this one out, if you can find it.

MEGA Rating: 70%

KA-GE-KI (FISTS OF STEEL)

Unknown • IMPORT

A comedy beat-em-up (well, the characters have massive heads and tend to look as if they're about to fall over) it's set over eight levels, but the "joke" will have worn terribly thin by then and you probably won't be particularly bothered if you make it or not.

Graphics 5
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 6
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: A beat-em-up that sells itself on its "comedy" but isn't very funny. Bit of a problem that, don't you agree?

MEGA Rating: 40%

KID CHAMELEON

Sega • £39.99

Ultra-cute platform thang with lots of really neat touches (Kid puts on various different helmets to take on the strengths of a whole variety of characters). There's a lot of game here, but it's not all that exciting in play. Sega hyped this game almost as much as *Sonic*, and so they must have come away a bit disapointed with its lack-lustre performance sales-wise. But the game isn't at all bad and remember – you don't have to be great to be good.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 8
Game Size 9
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Not too bad at all. But don't listen to any of the blah that Sega spouted.

MEGA Rating: 80%

TIP: • At the end of Blue Lake Woods one, don't touch the flag. Climb on the last block, and press Down-Right while holding jump and special to warp to the last boss.

KING'S BOUNTY

Electronic Arts • Deleted

Enjoyable and accessible RPG, but after the first half-an-hour of play you'll pretty much have seen everything it's got to offer. It works quite well as an RPG introduction for beginners, though.

Graphics 5
Sound 7
Gameplay 6
Game Size 8
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: For complete novices or real RPG diehards only – the casual player will get restless after a while.

MEGA Rating: 55%

TIP: • When going into battle, always start with your long-range troops.

KLAX

Tengen • £29.99

A massive coin-op cult (ie hardly anyone played it but everyone who did loved it to bits), *Klax* is one of the best puzzle games ever.

Unlike *Tetris* et al, you get a bit of scope for your own strategies instead of just needing lightning reactions, although you'll have to have those too.

This is a very original product indeed. It's excellently-designed, it has a terribly groovesome soundtrack and a two-player head-to-head game to boot. *Klax* will test your speed, sight, and spatial perception, all at the same time. Can you handle it?

Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 8
Game Size 9
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: *Columns*, *Tetris*, *Blockout* and *Klax* – the only puzzle games you'll ever need. Geniuses shouldn't be without any of them.

MEGA Rating: 80%

TIP: • Press Up and Left, buttons A, B, C and press Start on the title screen to increase the level of difficulty.
• On levels 6 or 11, try to make an X with the tiles to teleport you straight to level 49.

KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE

Flying Edge • £39.99

Krusty's Super Fun House has a very cartoony look to it. And so it should have, as Krusty is one of The Simpsons clan and in this game he has the help of Bart and Homer to de-verminate his house of fun.

What we have here is a reversed scenario of Lemmings. Instead of trying to help the rodents to safety, however, you have to be totally ruthless and mash their cute twitching snouts into oblivion.

The first level is moderately simple and eases you into the gore gently. Very basically, *Krusty's* is a puzzle game which involves assembling bits of pipe and blocks through which to guide the rodents to their doom.

Each of the five levels takes the form of a corridor lined with doors, which give access to some 6 to 14 rooms. From the corridor it is possible to choose whichever room you wish to enter (having the choice of what to do is somewhat more appealing than playing a game sequentially). Each level (or corridor) spans a vast number of screens which unfold in all directions, and so a great deal of frantic running around will be needed before you can move on to the next room (progress through which could be easy or more often than not mind-numbingly impossible). But, with a bit (or in some cases loads) of practice, you'll get there. And if you choose a door which takes you to a level that you can't manage, you can simply move onto another one, returning to the previous level later. After you've completed all the rooms in a level, you have to find a block with which to open the door to the next level. When you've found the block, access to the next level is granted and the pace steps up.

Krusty shoots a green thing(!)

The graphics are very representative of The Simpsons as-seen-on-TV, and Krusty zooms around with astounding fluidity. The rest of the Simpsons family make little cameo appearances as rat-killing machine operators. The accompanying music is good to a point, the point being that there is no option to turn it off. The spot effects, however, add to the overall appeal of the game – the sound of Krusty's little laugh when he finishes a level is just one such example.

Getting the mice through the tubes can be a bugger

This is a fun game with bags of gameplay. There's even a password option which improves the longevity of the game, a game which gets progressively tougher and should have you kicking the screen in frustration. Apart from this little quibble, there isn't a whole lot wrong with *Krusty's Super Fun House*. *Amanda Dyson*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 6 Game Size 6 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A platfrom-puzzler ith class, but the passwords will help you finish it quickly and you probably won't want to come back to it.

MEGA Rating: 80%

TIP: • Here's all the passwords you'll need if you get stuck on a level.
2 – WHOAMAMA 3 – FLANDERS 4 – BROCKMAN 5 – SIDESHOW.
• Here's a special password to open every level and give you infinite lives so you only have to complete level 5 – SMAILLIW

LAKERS VERSUS CELTICS

EA • IMPORT

The prequel to *Bulls Versus Lakers*, this was the best basketball game for the Mega Drive. Well worth investigation if you can pick it up cheap.

Graphics	8
Sound	7
Gameplay	7
Game Size	7
Addiction	7

MEGA Says: If you can't afford *Bulls Versus Lakers* and get the chance to pick this one up cheap, go for it.

MEGA Rating: 77%

TIP: • Try this password: 3L2 GJS.
• To get to the final as the Bulls with a 3-1 lead, enter 087 ROS.

LAST BATTLE

Sega • £14.99

Hmm, Sega must be desperate to get rid of this one by now. A shallow beat-em-up really is starting to show its age. You have to think that it is overpriced in the extreme. With any luck this game will now vanish into the pit from where it came.

Graphics	4
Sound	3
Gameplay	3
Game Size	2
Addiction	2

MEGA Says: Listen up, don't even think about buying this heap of trash.

MEGA Rating: 29%

TIP: • Complete the game. Now press A, B, C and Start to choose your level.

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE

Electronic Arts • £39.99

This is not so much a driving simulation as an arcade game, which suits us just fine at

LEMMINGS

Sega • £39.99

Lemmings is a classic and there's no getting away from it. It's appeared on almost every computer and console format and each version has successfully incorporated the playability and cuteness that made the original Amiga game an instant hit and also made Psygnosis very rich indeed.

But wait a sec... there must be some people out there who wouldn't know a lemming from a speedy old hedgehog. So come with me and I'll tell you what this game's all about.

Lemmings are small rodents, which live quietly in Northern Europe, minding their own business. Trouble is they tends to get carried away with a certain reproduction activity, and so the population explodes. Then something very strange starts to happen.

The lemmings all get together and hold a meeting (or something, I dunno). Thing is they hold it on the edge of a cliff. They walk all the way there and keep walking, right off the edge. They do this until the population decreases to the right amount and then they start the whole thing all over again.

Oops! Someone has nuked this level

Yeah, you've sussed it, lemmings are stupid. They keep going and going until they either run into an obstacle, which prevents them from going any further (in which case they turn around and go the other way), or they fall off and die.

Using this built-in desire to commit suicide as a basis for a computer game, Psygnosis (the game's original programmers) came up with a maddening platform puzzle game that's a right little beaut.

The game consists of 180 levels, each of which follows the same principle: a whole gang of lemmings emerge from a point on the screen and start walking in whichever direction takes their fancy. It's your job to make sure that enough of them (you're given a target percentage survival rate at the start of each round) end up in the official designated exit point without killing themselves (walking into a lava pit, falling off a high ledge, drowning, or all number of other fatal possibilities) in a set time.

But rather than just stand there shouting, "Left... right... no right a bit more" at the screen, you have to "turn" each lemming into a specialist, so that he can do a certain thing.

If, for instance, your parade of lemmings is heading towards a hole in the ground, turn one of them into a builder and he'll build a short bridge,

There's a 'blocker' stopping the pack from drowning, a 'builder' making a ramp to the top of the level and a load of suicidal lemmings trying to kill themselves

allowing fellow lemmings to walk over it. Do this at the right point and they might walk over a fiery pit or a big gap, saving them from certain death.

You can turn a lemming into many things, such as a digger, a miner, a floater or even a blocker (see the explanatory box below). So check out the level and then start to work out which type of lemming you need to do which particular jobs – remembering that all the while you are up against a five minute time limit and a percentage survival rate. So, that's what the game is all about.

Although *Lemmings* may be a simple idea, it's the lateral thinking demanded from the cunning design that makes it such a classic game design, and a game which will keep you going for weeks on end. Believe me when I say you won't finish this in a week.

There are 180 levels and some of them are going to send you head-scratching for days. Thankfully, though, each level has a password. Complete one level and write the password down. Now you can come back to the exact point at which you finished – an excellent use of a password system.

An extra bonus for those of you who like to pit your wits against your mates, is the two-player head-to-head game. For this, the screen window splits in two and two different tribes of lemmings emerge (blue for player one and green for player two). Both tribes are on the same landscape at the same time, but you only get to control your own lemmings. The idea is not only to guide all your furry-friends to safety but to scupper your opponents chances – great stuff. And, the two-player game (set over 20 levels) effectively makes the game 200 levels long.

Following the leader, the leader. In traditional Lemmings styie...

The trouble with converting an Amiga game to the Mega Drive is the control system. A simple shoot-'em-up (much like *Xenon II*) is easy enough, but with a game that was originally controlled by a mouse, the movement of the joypad and control system is very important – the joypad can only move the cursor in eight directions for a start.

Using the pad, the on-screen cursor moves very quickly – some would say too quickly. Moving from a lemming to the control panel needs to be easy and quick, so you can get back in time to "turn" that particular lemming into something useful.

Although you'll use the D-pad most of the time, the buttons play an important role too. The system takes some time to get used to as it does require precision and timing, but you can pause the game while you decide what to do, and you should soon feel comfortable and in control.

The presentation's OK. The graphics are almost identical to every other version of the game, and although they're by no means stretching the Mega Drive to it's limits, they are really all that's needed – crisp, clear, well defined and easily spotable. Meanwhile, the silly little sound ditties may be cute and all that, but they are really irritating and I suggest you put something on the stereo while you're playing.

To conclude, Lemmings is a fantastic puzzle game, very well converted and more than just a Mega Drive version of an Amiga game. It's a classic in its own right – go out and buy it. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 5 Sound 4 Gameplay 9 Game Size 10 Addiction 9

MEGA Says: It's fun to play, will last you fore ages and will make you think. What more could you ask for?

Mega Rating 90%

L GAMES

TIP: • UK Version codes:

	Fun	Tricky	Taxing	Mayh'm	Present	Sunsoft
1	RXBGD	FPBMD	FZBMD	SQBMD	GTRSE	HLDCW
2	WQHMN	XMJWF	GDHKP	HZJSG	ZXLYG	BVLJY
3	TXBGD	DZBJF	JLBDF	SFBKF	YJDTW	NPDQZ
4	YQHMN	WXJSG	KHHKP	QDJTG	KRLQK	HRMZB
5	LNBJM	ZPBLN	BFBGN	VKBCR	XRFMJ	MTFPK
6	OGHPW	SNJVP	HMJCB	KMJMS	DWLPT	GWMYL
7	NNBJM	YSBLN	KTBWQ	VYBYR	CHFKK	SBFFF
8	SGHPW	RRJVP	LQJCB	SXJJT	NZLDP	MLMLH
9	BYBGD	RDBKF	YHBVH	PNBXJ	XVDWV	NBDZW
10	GRHMN	KCJTG	ZLHXS	JMJWF	DZLYG	MPMZB
11	DYBGD	VSBZH	CTBRJ	TRBMD	CLDTW	TFFNB
12	JRHMN	NRJKK	DQHXS	RQJWF	NSLQK	NHMXC
13	VNBJM	RJBCR	VMBTR	RSBLN	BTFMJ	DFFHF
14	ZGHPW	KHJMS	BGHPW	GVSVP	HXLPT	XHMRG
15	XNBJM	QMBCR	DNBJM	WLBCR	GJFKK	FYFDG
16	CHHPW	JLJMS	FKHPW	TKSMS	XHLHP	DMMFL
17	BCBJD	YZBBJ	JFBJD	GDBCV	XGDBW	VFDVZ
18	GVHNN	RYSLK	KJHLP	VMJJL	DLLDH	PPMBD
19	DCBJD	XLBYJ	MQBFF	GSBYJ	CHDXW	BVDGW
20	JVHNN	QKJJL	NMHLP	DRJJL	NDLVK	VWLQX
21	VTBKM	TBBBS	FKBHN	PPBSM	BFFRJ	ZYFFG
22	ZKHQW	MZJKT	LRJDB	DRSLP	HJLTT	TBMQH
23	XRBKM	SFBBS	NYBXQ	PDBQN	GTFNK	GWFWJ
24	CLHQV	LDJLT	PVJDB	MCJZP	RMLJP	ZFMDM
25	LCBJD	LQBYJ	CNBWH	JSBNF	BJDBW	BWFRB
26	QVHNN	OPJJK	DRHYS	CGJPK	HMLDH	XYLNX
27	NCBJD	PQBND	BYBSJ	NLBFJ	GXDXW	FQDBX
28	SVHNN	HPJXF	HVHYS	LKJPK	RFLVK	YRLLY
29	FSBKM	LGBQM	YRBVR	LMBDS	FGFRJ	JYFTJ
30	KLHQM	DFJZN	LRHSW	ZNJNT	LKLTT	CBMFL

• US Import version codes:

	Fun	Tricky	Taxing	Mayh'm	Present	Sunsoft
1	None	YTDYD	YFDTD	MWDYD	NZGJW	BRGPW
2	QWKYN	MSJXX	ZJKWP	PVJXX	LDNMH	QSMNQ
3	NDDTD	XFDWF	CRDQF	MLDWP	SPGGX	HVHCB
4	SWKYN	TSJXX	DNKWP	KNKPB	DXNCL	PMMFT
5	FTDWN	TVDXM	VKDSN	PQDPR	RXHYJ	
6	KMKBX	HMKZG	BSLPB	HHXRX	XBNCV	ZQMSX
7	HTDWN	SYDXN	DZDJR	PFDMS	WMHWK	MHHRF
8	MMKBX	PMKZG	FWLPB	HWKNL	HGHRP	KGMQY
9	VDDTD	LKDWF	SNDHJ	JTDKK	RBGKW	HHGMX
10	ZWKYN	DMKPB	TRKXT	GHJBX	XFNMH	BNMFT
11	XDDTD	PYDMJ	WYDDK	NXDYD	WQGGX	NLHZB
12	CXKYN	LMKPB	XVKXT	GWJXX	HYNCL	LCMCV
13	PTDVM	LPDPR	PSDGS	LYDXM	VYBYJ	XLHTF
14	TMKBX	YFKRK	VLXBX	DQKZG	BDNCV	MNMSY
15	RTDVM	KSDPR	CLDVD	QRDPR	ZNHWK	YDHRG
16	WMKBX	GGKRK	DPKXP	JJKRK	RNNTP	BHNKC
17	VHDVD	SGDPJ	GWDRF	ZJDPJ	RNGNW	PLHHB
18	ZZKZN	GFKNC	HSKXP	SHKNC	XQNQH	DNMGV
19	XHDVD	RRDLK	YPDTN	ZXDLX	WBGLX	VZGSW
20	CBKBP	NFKNC	FXLQB	DSJFX	HKNHL	SRMVP
21	PXDWM	NHDNS	HFDLR	JVDFN	VKHDK	TFHSG
22	TQKCX	BYKPL	JBLRB	BMKHG	BPNGV	NLNLC
23	RXDWM	MLDMS	WSDJJ	JKDCP	ZYHZK	ZBHXX
24	WQKCX	JYKPL	XWKLT	BBKFH	LSNVP	XZNHD
25	FJDVD	FWDLK	WSDJJ			VBHFC
26	KBKBP	XJJCX	XWKLT	ZZXSB	BSNQH	CTMRP
27	HJDVD	JWDZD	ZDDGK	HRDRJ	ZCGLX	PRGMX
28	MBKBP	FKJCX	BBXHT	ZPKQC	LLNHL	MJMPQ
29	YVDWM	FMDCN	SXDHS	FSDQS	YLHDK	SZHFK
30	DRKCX	SCKFG	FXKFX	XJXSL	PQNVG	HCNFD

MEGA.

There's no farting around with the actual laws of physics, just get straight into the game and thrash the car around as much as you like without fear of crashing or dying. Hurrah!

What's more, you can do it with a friend (race, that is).

From the smart presentation screens (piccies of a Lotus Elan and a Lotus Esprit with technical details) to the straightforward options menu, track plans and ultimately the levels themselves, this game is slick and well presented.

It would have been easy to keep the courses fairly similar and just make them harder for each level, but you won't find any such cop-outs in this game. Each level is significantly individual and features different kinds of hazards from the one that precedes it. Level one features rocks and water; level two is a night race so it's, err, dark; level three is foggy; level four features snow... I could go on and on but it would be much for fun for you to play the game and discover for yourself.

There are eight courses in all, each made up of around eight stages. Good gamesplayers will probably rattle through more than half of these in just the first couple of days of play, but the last few levels really are tough so expect to come to a grinding halt after a while.

It's possible to scrape through many levels with a bit of luck, but to finish the whole game you'll definitely have to become an exceptional driver.

You see, the real increase in difficulty from level to level comes from the ever-tightening time limits. In the early stages, you'll reach each checkpoint with several seconds to spare, but later, even if you go flat out and make no mistakes whatsoever, you'll still run out of time just before the checkpoints and trundle across the line in neutral – it really gets that tight.

Fortunately, it's possible to drive over turbo pods in later levels, which give you an extra burst of speed. This does, however, test your driving skills still further.

So, are we looking at a 100% rating? No, not really. Fab, this may be, but at the end of the day it's just a race game and it won't last a lifetime.

LHX ATTACK CHOPPER

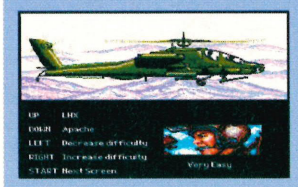
Electronic Arts • £39.99

Power-up your Mega Drive and immediately you're faced with the choice of which chopper to fly. Firstly, there's the LHX Attack Chopper itself – a spectacularly advanced piece of kit. Its wonderful camouflage paint job makes it something like a stealth fighter with rotors. It's been designed to evade radar and nip into high-security war zones to blow seven shades of shampoo out of the hun. Sticklers for reality, however, will choose to pilot a humble AH-64 helicopter, a real aircraft without the stealthy bits.

Once you've chosen your chopper, it's time to turn your attention to the hun. The hun in this case are the Libyans and it's your job to give them as hard a time as possible throughout a series of sorties in the desert. The nature of each mission varies greatly (there are 30 missions in total, of ten different types). One trip may see you blasting the hell out of some chemical warfare bunkers, while the next may involve you picking up a couple of stranded CIA agents who are being held in a POW camp.

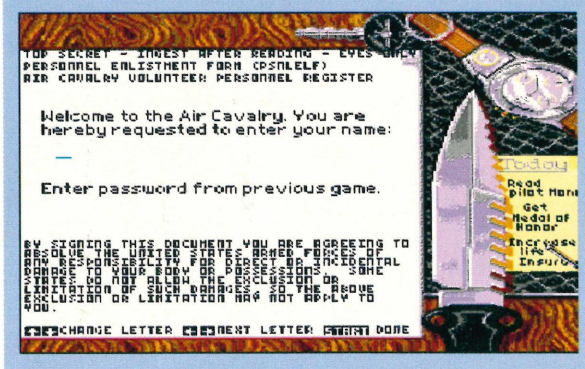
Before each mission you receive a concise briefing (in the form of graphical screens), which incorporates details about the nature of the trip, the reception you're likely to receive, the weather conditions and any other special instructions. It's well worth noting down the essence of this briefing, because it's all too easy, once you're in the air, to assume that all you have to do is blow the hell out of something, swagger straight into the action and create a steaming great crater the size of Pittsburgh, only to discover later that you were (in fact) supposed to pick up a couple of measly hostages. So, once you've absorbed the essential ingredients of your mission, you can actually take the helicopter up into the air.

Once you're in the cockpit, it's time to try to work out how (exactly) to control one of these things. The LHX has an automatic target-sighting computer, automatic navigational aids and automatic chaff/flare functions (wow!), all of which leave you wondering what exactly you're meant to do, bar chewing gum and smiling innocently at the enemy as you razor them in half with the chain gun. To fully control the LHX takes two joypads, and you'll soon discover that there are loads of control functions with which to become familiar before feeling comfortable in a combat (hey!) situation.



The more realistic (but boring) Apache chopper

The actual game-screens open up with a view from the cockpit, in essence a view of the runway and your home base. To take off, you have to use the rather awkward combination of Start and Up on the joypad. (You'll have to get used to this, as the Start key is used in quite a few instances to increase the number of control options.) To actually move the 'copter for-



Your Boys Own Chopper Pilot Kit, complete with knife (cardboard), watch (plastic) and GTi car keys

Those vertical lines don't appear in the real game, they're just there to muck up our grabbing system

A strategic night operation and you have an enemy camel in your sights. Let's hope it doesn't fire back

wards, you have to tilt the nose downward. The angle of tilt dictates the speed you'll fly at, so it's perfectly acceptable to tilt the whole thing backwards and fly in reverse (try doing this in a MiG). At this point you can get some height before proceeding to the rendezvous point. Unfortunately, the top speed of the LHX is a rather pedestrian 340 mph, so it does take a little while to get from base to rendezvous.

As you whizz over the desert, the targeting computer picks out all sorts of interesting sights. This does mean that you can pick off the odd troop carrier or radar sight en route to the strike zone and, for all you sadists out there, even the occasional innocent camel, sitting just waiting to be blown up by a Hellfire missile.

The graphics which appear during these trips are, it has to be said, rather bland. I mean, the desert isn't noted for its stunning variety of landscape, is it? So don't expect to see any skyscrapers or petrol stations. Instead, you'll see the odd bush, a few small hills and tonnes and tonnes of lethal weaponry installations.

Once your weaponry computer has picked out a target you'd like to go after, pick a weapon and zap the unsuspecting blokes to smithereens. Obviously the distance from which you can attack is dictated by the weapon you're using. Thus the Hellfire and Sidewinder missiles can work from a couple of miles away, while the chain gun needs to be within 2000 metres before it'll do any damage. Anyone who's played *Desert Strike* knows the score.

LHX Attack Chopper is not just a bog standard shoot-'em-up. It has got plenty of depth and is still a lot of fun. If, however, your idea of a good value Mega Drive game is beating it in the same afternoon that you bring it back from the shop, then steer clear of LHX – even in the highly unlikely event of you wading through all the missions on one of the easier levels, there's always the challenge of the hard or very hard levels left to tackle.

Graphically the programmers are working the Mega Drive jolly hard. While there's no slow-down when there's lots happening on screen, the update rate isn't the quickest in the world, so things can get a tad juddery. The cockpit graphics and remote camera views, however, are excellent and they add greatly to the atmosphere.

The sound is also pretty radical. Lots of nice whizzy, bangy sounds ring out when you blow the enemy up, and when you lose an engine, the tone drops to signal a loss of engine power.

To conclude, *LHX Attack Chopper* is a game to really get your teeth into. If you're bored witless with all those duff shoot-'em-ups then check this out. As opposed to previous Mega Drive flight games (such as *Afterburner 2* or *G-LOC*), however, *LHX* isn't thrill-a-minute stuff. It is, in fact, just like war itself – a few tense moments of waiting and then some frenzied moments of action. This game requires strategic planning and individual tactics, as well as a quick trigger finger and A1 hand-eye co-ordination.

Gung Ho pilots will love the depth of gameplay while laser-spurting sprogs might be better off sticking to *Mickey Mouse*. Now, where did I leave the ignition keys? *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 8 Sound 8 Gameplay 9 Game Size 8 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: This is a game with *real* depth. The control system is fairly complicated but who said flying a chopper was easy? With 30 missions to complete, this one's a *real* challenge.

MEGA Rating: 88%

TIP: • Here are all the codes for NORMAL with the LHX Chopper:

Level 1: DAAAIHA	Level 2: DAAAQEA
Level 3: DAAAYFA	Level 4: DAAAAWC
Level 5: DACAIWC	Level 6: DACAQVC
Level 7: DACAYUC	Level 8: DACABHE
Level 9: DACAJGE	Level 10: DACARFE
Level 11: DACAZEE	Level 12: DACABXG
Level 13: DACAJWG	Level 14: DACARVG
Level 15: DACAZUG	Level 16: DACAAPA
Level 17: DCKAIKE	Level 18: DCKAQJE
Level 19: DCKAYIE	Level 20: DCKAA6G
Level 21: DCKAI4G	Level 22: DCKAQZG
Level 23: DCKAYYG	Level 24: DCKABLA
Level 25: DCKAJKA	Level 26: DCKARJA
Level 27: DCKAZIA	Level 28: DCKAB6C
Level 29: DCKAJ4C	Level 30: DCKARZC

• Here are the codes for VERY HARD with the LHX Chopper:

Majestic Twelve – CBAAAEC	Anterior Nova – CBCAIEC
Reindeer Flotilla – CBCAQHC	Phoenix – CBCAYGC
Rainbow Veil – CBCAAVA	Chess – CBCAIUA
Lobster Quadrille – CBCAQXA	Hen House – CBCEYWC
Desert Two – CBCEBFE	Flaming Arrow – CBCEJEE
Plain Aria – CBCERHE	Lobster Quadrille – CBCEZGE
Reindeer Flotilla – CBCEBVG	Flaming Arrow – CBCEJUG
Hen House – CBCERXG	Lava Lamp – CBCEZWG
Anterior Nova – CDCEANE	Gemini – CDCEIME
Chess – CDCEQPE	Binary Rainstorm – CDCEYOE
Freedom Train – CDCEA9G	Arc Lite – CDCEY-G
Anterior Nova – CDCEBNA	Reindeer Flotilla – CDCEJMA
Hop Toad – CDCERPA	Olympic Torch – CDCEZOA
Lobster Quadrille – CDCEB9C	Grand Theft Hokum – CDCEJ7C
Flaming Arrow – CDCER?C	

• Here are the codes for the Apache Chopper:

Level 1: AQAAABA	Level 2: AQAAIAA
Level 3: AQAAQDA	Level 4: AQAAYCA
Level 5: AQAAARC	Level 6: AQAAIQC
Level 7: AQAAQTC	Level 8: AQAAYSC
Level 9: AQAABBE	Level 10: AQAAJAE
Level 11: AQAERDG	Level 12: AQAEZCG
Level 13: AQAEBRE	Level 14: AQAEJQE
Level 15: AQAERTE	Level 16: AQAEZSE
Level 17: ASIEIMG	Level 18: ASIEQPG
Level 19: ASIEYOG	Level 20: ASIEA9E
Level 21: ASIEI7E	Level 22: ASKEQ-E
Level 23: ASKEY?E	Level 24: ASKE8MC
Level 25: ASKEJNC	Level 26: ASKEROC
Level 27: ASKEZPC	Level 28: ASKEZPC
Level 29: ASKEJ9A	Level 30: ASKER-A

Because of the password system you won't ever have to attempt a course twice (not unless you really want to) so even though it's challenging, sheer determination will get you through it in a matter of days, weeks at most.

This isn't so much a criticism as an explanation of the limitations of this sort of game. And having said all this, even when you have finished it you have the superb two-player head-to-head game to play.

Playing against a friend is mind-blowingly exciting. Steer clear, though, of any close friends who don't like losing. By the end of a session on this split-screen, ultra-fast and incredibly smooth race game, you'll either be screaming bloody murder at each other or, worse still, you won't be talking at all. This is partly due to the crash-free gameplay (Lotus wouldn't allow the programmers to show wrecked cars). It's not simply a game of the best man winning – quite often you'll find it's the dirtiest driver who wins.

If you're ahead of your opponent, you can position yourself just in front of him blocking his route past you. Eventually, he'll nudge the back of your car, sending you shooting forwards and leaving him far behind. Entirely unfair it may be, but incredibly satisfying.

OK, so there's not much thought needed for the game, and elaborate skills are not what's required, but for a challenge of sheer concentration and speed of reactions, this is almost on a level with *Road Rash 2*, and that's praise indeed.

Graphics	**8**
Sound	**6**
Gameplay	**7**
Game Size	**8**
Addiction	**9**

MEGA Says: For fast, smooth challenging two-player drive-em-up action, only *Road Rash 2* is better.

MEGA Rating: 83%

TIP: • Enter MANSELL on the password screen and you will qualify every time.
• Enter SLUGPACE and play the game. You may notice that you seem to be moving faster than normal. That's because you now have infinite turbos.

M GAMES

M1 ABRAMS BATTLE TANK

Sega • £39.99

Battlezone for the '90s, as you trundle around a fast-moving landscape blasting an impressively wide range of enemies over loads and loads of top tank-based combat missions. Ideal for anyone who wishes they'd been born a tuna.

Graphics	7
Sound	8
Gameplay	7
Game Size	5
Addiction	8

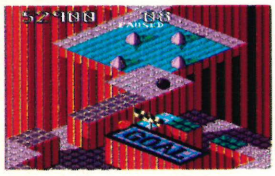
MEGA Says: Entertaining war sim that's a good deal livelier than you might expect. Different and fun.

MEGA Rating: 76%

TIP: • On the demo screen press B, B, C, B, C, C, C, B, C, B, B, C and then press start. You'll now have infinite ammo and infinite invincibility!

MARBLE MADNESS

Electronic Arts • £29.99



Could this be the world's most ubiquitous game? It's been converted onto just about every format there's ever been since it first appeared in arcades in the early 1980s, but still the bizarre appeal of rolling marbles down weird geometric courses suspended in space holds a strange sway over gamers everywhere. Mega Drive *Marble Madness* is a flawless conversion of the coin-op, right down to the crucial two-player mode, and though it won't last you very long, it's great fun while it does.

Graphics	9
Sound	8
Gameplay	8
Game Size	2
Addiction	6

MEGA Says: Short-lived entertainment, but a classically original and enjoyable arcade game in the meantime. A bit on the expensive side for what you get, though.

MEGA Rating: 59%

TIP: • Play the two-player game, but play player one as fast as possible, then let player two lose; each round player one wins gets him five extra seconds, giving you more time to win.

MARIO LEMIEUX HOCKEY

Sega • £39.99

Nice try, but never as good as either *EA* or *NHLPA Hockey*.

Graphics	7
Sound	6
Gameplay	6
Game Size	8
Addiction	7

MEGA Says: The viewed-from-the-side perspective doesn't work as well as *EA's* behind-the-goal view, and there's not as much depth. Nice try, but destined to be second best.

MEGA Rating: 81%

TIP: • Play Detroit versus Montreal in the final with this password: K45C LVA5 8E23 • Enter XXXX XXXX XXXX on the password screen, got to Cancel, press A and you'll get a selection screen. Now play a tournament and when the team details come up you can change them to what you want.

MARVEL LAND

Sega • Deleted

A wonderful, cutey platform game from Sega – like a cross between *Alex Kidd*, *Wonderboy* and *Sonic*. Great graphics and solid gameplay make this worthy of investigation.

Graphics	7
Sound	8
Gameplay	8
Game Size	5
Addiction	7

MEGA Says: Good cutesy action. Check it out.

MEGA Rating: 75%

MASTER OF MONSTERS

Unknown • IMPORT

Monsters and strategy are the two main ingredients in this unusual game. Not recommended.

Graphics	4
Sound	4
Gameplay	4
Game Size	4
Addiction	2

MEGA Says: Monsters are always intriguing. Er, except this time.

MEGA Rating: 35%

TIP: • Press A, B and C then Start at the start to get to the end.
• Press A, B and C then Start at the start then hold Up-Left for English text.

MEGA GAMES 1

Sega • £39.99

World Cup Italia '90, *Columns* and *Super Hang-On* ALL on one cartridge and ALL for just £34.99. Is it a bargain? We think it is.

Graphics	n/a
Sound	n/a
Gameplay	n/a
Game Size	n/a
Addiction	n/a

MEGA Says: As with all 'three for the price of one' deals, the parts don't necessarily add up to make a whole, but this does offer good VFM.

MEGA Rating: 88%

MEGA PANEL

Unknown • IMPORT

Tetris-style puzzler with fabby two-player mode. Worth investigation if you can pick it up second-hand.

Graphics	5
Sound	5
Gameplay	8
Game Size	8
Addiction	8

MEGA Says: One for all you brain-busters out there.

MEGA Rating: 77%

TIP: • Stop the girl talking by pressing button C any time during play.

MERCS

Sega • £19.99

Oops, those careless Americans have gone and got

MEGA-LO- MANIA

Virgin Games • £44.99

Well, it doesn't *look* very exciting – we'll give you that – but get into the game and you'll be addicted

Four megalomaniacal tyrants have fought each other to a standstill in a war for control of the 26 islands. You are the wild card in the *Mega-Lo-Mania* pack: a new leader so mad, so bad, so dangerous to know, that there's a real chance you can break this stalemate!

Mega-Lo-Mania is an evolutionary war-game. It starts in the Stone Age and by force of arms you must drag your army into the '90s. As each Epoch (three islands set in the same time zone) falls, your scientists develop new weapons – bows, bullets, bombers and eventually nuclear warheads.

The battle for each island takes place in close-up on the right of the screen. A huge map is displayed, showing your tower (HQ) and some of your folk going about their business. These boys are your cannon fodder, your warriors, who must be raised, cherished... and killed.

To the left of the map, at the top of the screen, sit three (or four) shields, the colours of which represent different leaders. Click on these, close your eyes and you'll be in for a big surprise, because *Mega-Lo-Mania* actually talks back! Now, synthesised speech is nothing new, but it's normally totally crap; however, *Mega-Lo-Mania's* lines are spoken in character by radio actors.

Oberon, who sounds as camp as a row of tents, implores, "Do you want to be on my team?" Caesar, the decidedly Latin chappie, adds, "Si, si" to everything, while Scarlet makes Thatcher looks like Bambi! Your lackeys speak too, and their words offer valuable clues as well as add character to the game – for example, a lisping scientists proudly announces, "Ergonomically tewiffik" when an invention is as potent as it can be.

Effects, however, aren't everything – there has to be gameplay too. *Mega-Lo-Mania* sneaks the gameplay in through the back door while you're marvelling at the smart use of sound and pics. You see, *Mega-Lo-Mania* is a bit of a con. It looks like an arcade game with strong, cute graphics, yet underneath it's a nastily vicious test of guns, guts and your god-like powers.

Manpower, minerals and time are all that matter in *Mega-Lo-Mania*. You have to gain dominance in two of these areas if you are to prosper. Investing all your resources in research will leave you an advanced, but sparse, race. Sending everyone off mining will boost your minerals stockpile and aid weapons production, but you'll have to push your "tech level" up if you want to make best use of them. And leaving a large gang of warriors in your tower will boost population growth, but it won't produce anything to arm them with.

The basic gameplay remains the same, despite the changing Epochs, but as the weapons improve the gameplay mutates. The first Epoch lets you get to grips with the basics. The second is an arms race to invent the cannon or catapult. Epoch three introduces a new range of killer toys and it all slows down to a test of your management of finite resources. In Epoch four, warplanes appear and long-range raids are feasible. Eventually nuclear weapons are developed, and then you fight to be the first to get the bomb.

Mega-Lo-Mania is a furious challenge. It's big, but it doesn't cop out and use just sheer weight of numbers to overwhelm your forces, preferring real tactics instead. It's not always exciting, just wonderfully tense as you watch the clock tick. The voices give your in-game foes character, and combined with the graphics, provide a powerful incentive. And once you've learned how to kill people efficiently, it's kind of hard to stop playing. *Neil West.*

Graphics 9 Sound 10 Gameplay 9 Game Size 7 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Vicious, addictive and silly. What more could a god-game give you? You'd be mad to miss this.

MEGA Rating: 88%

another one of the Presidents kidnapped. To get him out looks like a job for a tough mercenary, but since he's on holiday in Bognor you'll have to do. In true *Commando* style you run through the levels, blasting everything that moves, and everything that doesn't.

It's pretty much the same as the arcade game but the omission of the two-player mode is a serious error. Still, as a single-player blast it is enjoyable and fairly challenging. There are two game modes: arcade mode, and original mode, which will prove to be the real challenge. Now it's available at this new price there's no reason not to get it.

Graphics 7
Sound 4
Gameplay 7
Game Size 7
Addiction 7

MEGA SAYS: As shoot-'em-ups go this is one of the better ones, and still rates favourably against the full-price games.

MEGA Rating: 72%

TIP: • Get the gold first-aid box when you've got max energy, pause the game, select another player, wait, select another player, and so on until all your team are at full strength.
• Enter the original mode and hold down A, B, and C. Now press Start to heat things up.
• On level eight (in original mode) annihilate all the guys exiting the door, then buy kit in the shop, with just one medal.

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

Sega • Deleted

Fairly faithful conversion of the original coin-op. If this was your coin-op fave, then you won't be disappointed, but otherwise you'll get bored quickly.

Graphics 6
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: It really should have just stayed in the arcades.

MEGA Rating: 38%

TIP: • On the title screen, hold C and press Start. Pause the action and hit A to skip to the next level.

MICRO MACHINES

Sega • £37.99

Adios, Ayrton, there's a new racing demon in town and (assuming that you've got some friends to play with) it's more fun than your *Super Monaco Grand Prix* game ever was. Converted from the award-winning NES game, this Mega Drive cart is the astonishing début offering from Codemasters – a UK-based team of whizzkids also responsible for that infamous (and decidedly useful) cheating device, the Game Genie. It's not a coin-op conversion – the graphics are primitive, there's no big-name endorsement and you can forget your Formula One, 300bhp state-of-the-art Lotuses. *Micro Machines* puts you behind the wheels of toys: toy 4WDs, toy helicopters, toy racing cars, toy tanks and toy speedboats – hardly the usual ingredients of a classic Mega Drive game.

But playing *Micro Machines* is so fab we don't care at all. No, Toys 'R' fine by us! (sorry about that). You can't really tell that they're toys (they do have engines and it's not as if the wheels fall off every five minutes) but what will strike you as strange is the terrain you're driving over: a breakfast table, a bath, a garden and even a pool table. In other words, giant oranges, globs of glue, huge pool balls, swirling plug holes and the occasional cornflake make up the tracks' obstacles.

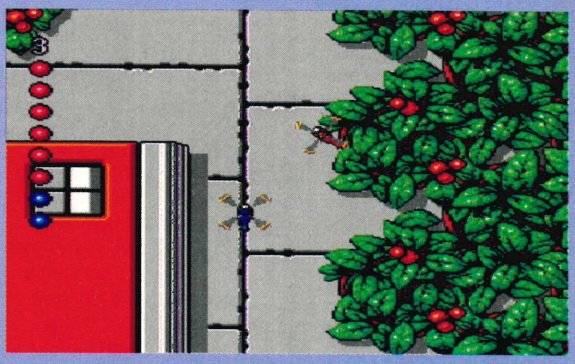
So, now you've got a selection of vehicles (there are eight to chose from) each with their own track, all you need now is some people to race against – and I guarantee you that is the most instantly addictive two-player game you'll ever play!

So, what we've got is a ruthless head-to-head racing game in which you get to drive toys around household objects. Still doesn't sound that special, does it?

Well, to be quite honest I don't know how I'm meant to explain why the gameplay is so fab. I mean, how would you go about explaining to someone why flying a kite is so much fun, holding a bit of cloth in the air with a couple of strings hardly ranks up there with Kim Basinger in a bubble bath in terms of obvious enjoyment potential now does it? But you're a games player, I'm a gamesplayer so you'll know what I'm talking about when I say that Micro Machines just oozes playabilty, has an addictive hook you could bottle and will keep you up all week.

You want me to be more specific? OK, I'll try...

Part of *Micro Machines*' appeal has got to be the fact that the vehicles move supremely well, are dead easy to control and are animated to perfection. Although we're talking about computer impressions of toys of the real thing – you do feel you're driving the real thing (if you see what I mean), which can only be a bonus.



See that fan on the left? (Yes, it's meant to be a fan) well, it blows your chopper into the bushes. Git

Another large part of *Micro Machines*' charm is the scheming, violent and downright dodgy cheating element of the gameplay, in which it's easily possible to nudge your opponent's car off the edge of tables, shunt them sideways into a pool of honey of mercilessly ram them into a garden sprinkler. It's all good, dirty fun.

Then, of course, there's the variety of vehicles. Although each handles roughly the same, each requires some specialist training before you feel entirely comfortable controlling them. The sports cars and formula one racers are fantastically fast (for once you'll find that you can't push your computer car to the limit, you actually have to hold off with some of the power or the screen scrolls – get this – too fast to keep up with), the helicopters are a different kettle of fish altogether and the tanks (complete with forward-firing rocket-launcher with which to take out your opponent) add yet another, if somewhat sinister, dimension.

Then, of course, there are the courses themselves, which are cunningly designed to be big enough to offer straights, turns, bridges and jumps, sprawling enough to provide a large playing area, yet not so big that you can't (in time) learn the layout and take short cuts.

Oh yes, short cuts. You don't actually have to stay on the track at all. As long as both cars venture off together, you can actually drive/hover/sail in any direction you want. Thing is, though, if one player remains on the track when the other zooms off into the distance then the other one wins. In this way, the car behind can often take short cuts that the player in front can't risk (if he streaks ahead as a result of going off the course, then the other player wins the point). Sounds confusing? It's not really, trust me.

So what we've got is a fantastically simple game that relies entirely on its gameplay merits to take on the licensed big boys. That and the budget-friendly price tag of £34.99 make *Micro Machines* an essential purchase. There are slight faults: the one-player game never quite manages to equal the two-player head-to-head option in terms of raw excitement, but the same is true of *John Madden Football*. Also, the life-expectancy of the game has to be questioned. In the short and medium term, you won't be able to put it down, and you'll probably never tire of taking on a mate in a tournament, but in one-player mode, although you won't necessarily complete it, you may find that its long-term interest doesn't quite match that of *Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco Grand Prix*, with its season and team options.

Still, these slight worries are nothing to knock *Micro Machines* from its status as one of the best two-player games ever, and arguably the best race game ever written. It really is fab. Buy it!

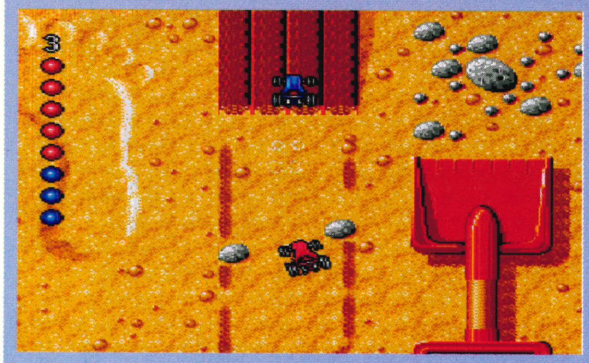
Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 10 Game Size 7 Addiction 9

MEGA Says: Fast, furious and unstoppable two-player racing action. Destined to become a classic.

MEGA Rating: 92%

The power boat race takes place in a bath

And the formula one race is on a pool table



And where do you think the beach buggy race takes place? Answers on a postcard please to the usual...

MIG 29

Domark • £39.99

Does the old Soviet Union still have armed forces? If so, which of all the splinter nations gets the really good bits? Did all the warlords sit in a dusty old room with a large table and arm-wrestle each other for submarines, tanks, satellites and aeroplanes? Who got custody of the potatoes? Who got that set of really phallic-looking mobile missiles on lorries, which they always wheel out during the May Day ceremony? And who, dear reader, gets custody of the best fighter jet in the world – the MiG-29M SuperFulcrum?

Now, let's establish this much from the start. Technologically the Americans produce better planes than the Russians. However, in terms of manoeuvrability, ruggedness and downright sexy Action Man™ testosterone go-faster stripes, the Ruskies win it every time. The MiG-29M is the hottest fighter in the skies; it's the sort of plane which can shoot down ten enemy jets, bomb five bunkers and get stains out of your rugby kit at really low temperatures all at once. All of which begs the question: is it still sexy now that Domark have got their hands on it and Mega Drived it?

First things first – this is a combat flight simulator, not a shoot-'em-up. Whereas most programming teams decide that the only way to get you lot to part with some blue folding stuff is to convert aeroplanes into little more than up-down-crash simulators, Domark's boys have more faith in general IQ levels. All of this means that you won't be able to complete the game in one sitting between the end of the ITV Chart Show and the start of Baywatch. Dear me, no, you're going to have to practise this one. And that, my old muckers, is great news, because it makes this cartridge good value for money.

The game kicks off with a lovely little animated intro showing a MiG-29 pulling its famous tail slide. Hit the start button and you end up on the mission screen. This shows five missions and one training flight. The safe option here is to plump for the training mission, especially if you're like every other Mega Drive owner on earth and can't be bothered to read the manual.

The training flight is an interactive affair, with a lovely little joypad diagram indicating which button you should press at the appropriate moment. Before you know it, you've shot down four fighters, bombed a runway and landed too. Now that's what I call trial by fire.

Safely cheered by your incredible completion of the training mission, you can have a bash at the first sortie, the delightfully named Red Witch mission. At this point your commander will whizz you through a mission briefing. It's a good idea to pay attention while this is happening or you'll end up bombing the M62 and not a wodge of Scud sites. From there it's on to the weapons choice screen (handy hint: leave the weapons as they are) and then into the plane.

Here you get your first glimpse of the rather impressive bank of dials, knobs and LCDs which comprise your cockpit. What's more, they all work, and you'll need to use most of them at some point during your missions. The most important dial is the radar, a handy device which shows all the enemy jets, helicopters, missiles and Scud sights. It is rarely empty.

Whack up the engine revs, take the wheel brakes off, putter down the runway, pull up the nose a bit, whack the wheels up, level off, choose your waypoint and you're on your way to gasoline alley. It shouldn't be too long (try about ten seconds) before the enemy cotton on to you and try (usually pretty successfully) to knock you out of the sky.

At this point you can fight back or perish. This is also when you find out that aeroplanes are buggers to fly. You see, they don't just zip round, you have to coax them... at the right speed... and with the right pitch... and with the appropriate amount of height. Get it wrong and you'll hit the ground at a chassis-denting speed.

Every now and then your intelligent missiles will lock on to an enemy. This is either a ground target (if you've got your air-to-surface missiles switched on) or an air target (if you've got your air-to-air missiles switched on). If the target square turns to red, then you've got lock and should dispatch a missile up their bottoms. If the enemy fire back (this happens quite a bit), you should let loose some chaff to divert their missiles or put your foot to the floor and get the hell out of there.

This is a jolly fun game. For all you techno fans, it's stuffed full of assorted views (inside, outside, from the tower, from a chase plane etc.), assorted gizmos (five different kinds of missile and your cannon) and lots of impressive dials (the fuel gauge being the most important one). However, if you're a bit new to this flight simulator lark, then you'll also find lots of novice friendly touches such as auto-landing and air-stab (which levels your flight if you're in spin). The plane is very easy to get used to and you'll soon find yourself unleashing banks of missiles while simultaneously releasing some chaff and picking your next waypoint.

Graphically, the game's great, with a surprising amount of ground detail and some great animation sequences at the start and end of the game. The update of the aircraft, even when there's lots happening, is quick and smooth and I certainly didn't notice any slowdown. Big bang fans won't be disappointed either as there are some funky samples included in the game.

So is it all good then? Well, no. Not exactly. You see, the missions get a bit hard a bit quickly. Succeed in some of the earlier sorties and try your hand at, say, the Sea-Sprite mission, and you'll die... quickly... a lot. No sooner have you taxied up the runway and taken off than six million sodding F-15s line up behind your exhaust pipe and take it in turns to ping missiles up it. It's just not on. I'd also say that there aren't enough missions. With just five of them you'll be yearning for a bit of variety after a while.

But then, you lot like challenges, don't you? If you're a bit tired of the same old waves

MONOPOLY

Parker Brothers • IMPORT

Looks like a Monopoly board really doesn't it? Question is, can this be better than the board game?

This is, indeed, Monopoly – as in the board game – converted to the Mega Drive. And what we've basically got is the board, the pieces, the dice, the cards, the houses and hotels, and the money, all squashed into a cartridge. The computer takes care of throwing the dice, moving the bits around and the financial side of things, leaving you and your chums to decide whether or not to buy properties, when to build houses and whether to trade with each other.

Now here, as far as I can work out, are the advantages the Mega Drive version of Monopoly offers over the traditional version:

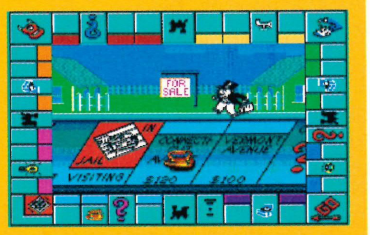
a) You can play against computer opponents if you haven't got any friends

b) Nobody has to be the banker

c) Er...

d) That's it.

Not really that many, huh?



Your charcater dances between locations. Prat

The disadvantages, on the other hand, are more plentiful. For one thing, playing Monopoly is much harder when you can't easily see what property you own and how much money you've got. That's something this version lets you do only when it feels like it, so you have to do things like bid in auctions without knowing how much you can afford or which other properties you own.

The computer players don't tend to win many friends, either. Luck certainly seems to be on their side most of the time, and they tend to do all their wheeling and dealing incredibly quickly, in a blur of text on the screen. After a couple of games you won't invite them back.

Perhaps most significant, though, is the fact that after you've been playing for half an hour or so, you realise that all you've actually been doing is pressing button A every so often, and occasionally moving your thumb over to the C button and pressing that instead. There really isn't an awful lot to do. Now you could say, "Hey, that's Monopoly!" And to some extent you'd be right. But at least if you're playing the cardboard-based version of the game you can kill time between goes by counting your money, or arranging your property cards into order, or putting your houses into neat rows, or trying to filch £500 notes while the banker's back is turned. No such luxuries are available in the Mega Drive version.

Well, that's the restrained, carefully reasoned argument. Now for what you've really been hoping to hear – the no-holds-barred slagging.

What? Monopoly? On the Mega Drive? How utterly pointless. The board game's dull enough, but who the hell is going to pay twice as much for a computerised version which completely eradicates what little fun there originally was? Board game? Bored game, more like...

Graphics 5 Sound 5 Gameplay 4 Game Size 2 Addiction 3

MEGA Says: A respectable version of the board game, but why would anyone want to play Monopoly on the Mega Drive?

MEGA Rating: 35%

of ships in *Thunderforce 3* or if your dad fancies his chances at this Mega Drive lark, then check it out. *MiG-29* is one hell of an experience and is good value for money. You may, however, find life getting a bit repetitive after a week or two. Right, that's your lot for now. Off you toddle, and could you ask the stewardess to get me some more bland peanuts and another four of those little bottles of vodka? There's a love.

Graphics 9
Sound 7
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Tougher than a wildebeest's jockstrap, but not quite as smelly. Gets a bit dull after a while.

MEGA Rating: 84%

MIGHT AND MAGIC

Electronic Arts • Deleted

Drastically over-expensive (at £49.99), with a dated control interface and crap graphics – but somehow this is, to some, still a deep and absorbing RPG. But we think you can do much better for the money.

Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 5
Game Size 7
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: This one's past its prime, to be honest. Actually, it's doubtful if it ever had a prime to be past

MEGA Rating: 48%

TIP: • To complete his Plus quest the knight must face and defeat (with only knights and robbers) the Dread Knight, who is in B3, location 5,14.
• The Sorcerer must travel to the Isle of Ancients in B3, 4,15. There's a dungeon at either end of it; each holds a wizard, who must be freed from stasis.
• The Paladin must defeat the Frost Dragon, who is in C3 in the Forest Cavern.
• The Archer must pit his wits against Baron Wilfrey in B2,

MUHAMMAD ALI BOXING

Virgin Games • £39.99

That this is the best boxing game available on the Mega Drive is without question, but is it any *good?*

Virgin reckon that this game will appeal to two different kinds of Mega Drive owner. The first variety don't give two hoots whether the game's about skeet shooting, toe-nail biting, crouton flicking or boxing; all they care about is that it's a frantic two-player button-bashing game. The second variety quite enjoy boxing (watching it on the television anyway) and fancy their chances against any like-minded person who can successfully grasp a joypad and who gets naturally excited at the ringside. To this end the game has two methods of play: arcade or simulation.

The arcade game has simple controls, which ensure that it's a zappier experience than the simulation. In the arcade game you simply hit A to do jab, B to defend and C to hit hard. The direction controls propel your boxer around the ring and hopefully in the direction of your opponent. When you're close, you hit the button and this hopefully connects with the other chap's nostrils.

Now I say 'hopefully' most advisedly because your opponent has the ability to duck and sway to the left and right (he can also do a very convincing moonwalk across the ring, but that's not important right now). What's more, the other chap might choose the moment at which you swing to lob a fist towards your head or kidneys.

As a result of all this you'll soon discover that to beat the other chap you'll actually have to think a bit. Admittedly, some of the lower-ranking boxers can be taken out by repeatedly hitting the C key, but as you compete against the tougher chaps you'll need to learn how to time your punches and when to duck. The idea is to exhaust the other chap's energy meter; get it down to zero and he hits the canvas.

If your two boxers get a bit too close to each other, then they'll grab each other. At this moment the ref will order you apart, because it's a boxing match not a leaning competition and you should take the opportunity to hit the other guy in the kidneys, jolly hard. Apart from this tip, there's not really much more you need to know before climbing into the boxing ring with a sour-looking boxer.

The simulation portion of the game is a lot more fun. To master this you'll have to play for a lot longer than five minutes. For starters, the controls are completely different, but there are also lots of subtleties to these matches which the arcade portion of the game lacks.

The principle control difference here is that to punch you have to hold down either the A, C or A and B buttons together and then tap the joypad in one of the four directions to determine how you punch. Thus you can direct a jab or hard punch to the head or midriff from either underneath, above or the sides.

Frankly, the simulation portion of the game is a hell of a lot more fun than the arcade game. In the case of the latter you spend a few minutes whacking the hell out of the joypad in the vain hope of hitting your opponent, but in the former you actually have to think about your punch – when to throw it and if you should duck or move out of the way after you've done so. The idea, of course, is to either win on points (these are displayed in the bottom left and right of the screen) or knock out your opponent.

Virgin have added various options to the game, like exhibition or tournament matches, but essentially all the options are the same. Perhaps the most pleasing aspect of the game is that while the console-controlled opponents are well weighted in terms of difficulty, it's when you play a human opponent that the game really comes alive.

It's one of those games which could quite easily turn into a boxing match off-screen, because as each of you gets hit you really start to feel for your little digital representation. You end up swearing at the other person, wrapping the lead from the joypad around their hands, pointing out interesting landmarks through the window (a cunning diversion), stamping on their feet, hitting them with a handy cushion and generally acting like the jolly bad sports we all are. Erm, all in the hope of landing a flurry of punches. This is bad news, of course, because the one and only secret to winning a boxing match is keeping your cool. Just ask Rodney King.

Graphically the game's nothing brilliant. There are some pleasant touches, such as the way the ring slowly rotates while you play to show a different viewpoint, but the sprites aren't very detailed, things can slow down when you're doing a lot, and by and large it's all pretty simplistic. Sonically it's better, with some nice samples. My own personal favourites are the squelchy head-hit sound (which I'm sure is a sample of a jelly fish hitting a Marks and Spencer sherry trifle) and the chap in the crowd who mutters "He's down..." when one of you drops to the canvas to examine the stitching of the ring a bit better.

This is definitely a mid-week beer-and-pizza game. It's one of those cartridges which you should get down from the shelf when you and your mates are too lazy to leave the house and nobody can be bothered to trek into town to hire out a dirty video.

Muhammad Ali Boxing won't win any prizes for originality (come to think of it, neither would the beginning of this sentence), but it is a pleasing two-player game which is assured of a long shelf life. If you think your Harry Carpenter impression is up to scratch and your cushions can take the punishment, then check it out. It's sure as hell a lot more fun than taking part in the real thing, but it doesn't pay quite as well and won't improve your image in front of the chicks.

Graphics 7 Sound 8 Gameplay 8 Game Size 7 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Smashing little prod-'em-up, especialy in the two-player mode.

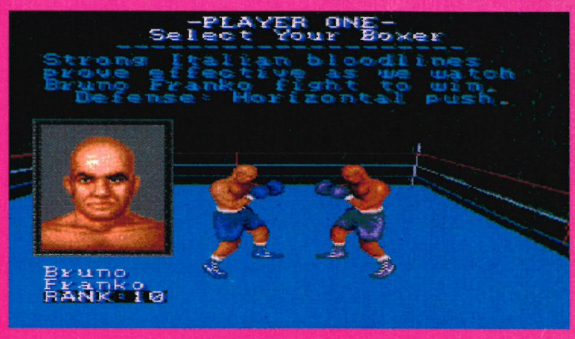
MEGA Rating: 80%

TIP: • Codes to get you through the levels:

Simulation:	Arcade:
H07 KEHCZ 007 KEHCZ	H07 EBXCZ 007 EBXCZ
H07 5C7CZ 007 5C7CZ	H07 B4NCZ 007 BCNCZ
H07 2N4CZ 007 2C4CZ	H07 CNCCZ 007 CCCCZ
H07 WNBCZ 007 WCBCZ	H07 4NECZ 007 4CECZ

• There's actually a hidden boxer in this game. Take him on with any of these following fighters by entering the appropriate password:

Bruno Franko L07D6KC7	Carlos Espinoza V07D6KC7
Eddie Montague 607D6KC7	Kim Lee D07D6KC7
Marvin Cooper 80MD6KC7	Jack Blake M0MD6KC7
Tommer Hammer 107D6KR2	Mac Robinson P0MD6KC7



So, this "Bruno Franko" geezer then. If he's meant to be our man Frank, why's he the wrong colour?

11,2. This quest is one of the tougher ones.
• The Cleric finds Corak's Soul in C1, location 10,15. The body is in C2 in Corak's Cave. To enter, the Cleric must have the Admit 8 Pass from the cavern beneath Sansobar.
• After completing the Juror's Quests (winning a black triple crown) go to Queen Lamanda in the Luxus Palace Royale. She will make one of your party her Chosen One.

MIKE DITKA POWER FOOTBALL

Accolade • Deleted

Look, it's not 'football', you bloody American gits – 'football' is a game you play with a ball and your feet, not some missile-shaped thing and a load of padded bodies crunching into each other all the bloody time. Jesus...

OK, OK – so this is another American Footy game that falls hopelssly short of matching any of the *John Madden* triplets.

Graphics 5
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 6
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Another American 'football' game that isn't as good as *John Madden's*. You know the drill by now.

MEGA Rating: 39%

TIP: • Go straight to the finals of Mike Ditka Power Football by using this code: QzH5EG.

MONSTER LAIR

Sega • £19.99

One of the most ridiculous shoot-'em-ups ever, with fish skeletons among the enmies. Cute graphics, but there is slow down when there's a lot going on. It's showing its age now.

Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 3
Game Size 3
Addiction 3

MEGA SAYS: So cute you can take it home and introduce it to your mum. Pity it's no good.

MEGA Rating: 37%

MOONWALKER

Sega • £19.99

Side-on version of the good-looking 3D coin-op. Average platformer, really, but the way Michael Jackson dances baddies to death with a quick 'Ow!' is great. Wacko fans will also love the Jackson soundtrack. The action is predictable and it's so nice it'll make you sick.

There isn't much variety in the action, but the graphics are varied. Michael uses lots of different moves to defeat all the enemies, although you only really need a couple of them.

So, neat graphics and great music 'n' effects, but it could have been better. Still, worth looking at, especially if you're a fan.

Graphics 7
Sound 9
Gameplay 6
Game Size 8
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Not bad, but not much of a thriller.

MEGA Rating: 78%

TIP: • Pick up a certain kiddie first and a star will flash across the screen. Catch it and you'll become a robot for a while.

MS. PACMAN

Tengen • £39.99

Pac Man, starring a girl.Sexual equality? Well, maybe – but it's a crap game.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 5
Game Size 6
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: A once much-loved game that's now hopelessly dated.

MEGA Rating: 40%

MUSHA ALESTE

Unknown • IMPORT

Yet another vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up.

Graphics 7
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 3
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Yawn.

MEGA Rating: 35%

MYSTIC DEFENDER

Sega • £19.99

Another platformy shooter. How many more evil wizards can there be in video game land? The backgrounds and enemy sprites are outstanding but the action is predictable.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 5
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Hard to get into and the enemies get very tough. Not exactly an outstanding game.

MEGA RATING: 61%

MYSTICAL FIGHTER

Dream Works • IMPORT

Mystical Fighter is a below-average beat-'em-up which, quite honestly, should never have been made.

On the surface it has all that should be necessary to make a decent beat-'em-up, but it's all put together so badly.

The screen scrolls from left to right and your character deal with any bad guys who appear. When you've defeated the end-of-level boss you move on to the next level, where the whole process starts again. This is the usual beat-'em-up formula t, but here it's all so bland. The graphics for each level don't alter, nor do the characters.

The gameplay is fun, however, and your fighter does have the ability to make quite a few good moves. However, you can sail through all the levels.

If you're after a classy beat-'em-up, *Mystical Fighter* just isn't in the same league as *Streets of Rage 2.*

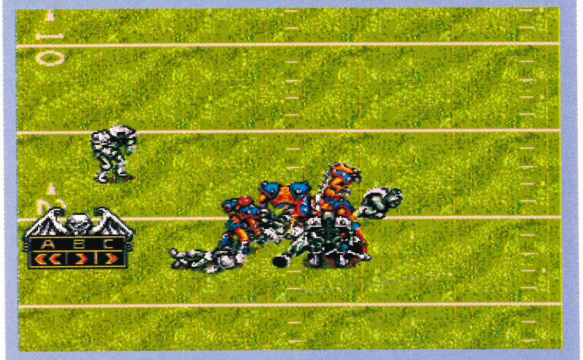
Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 4
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: It's alright, but it's just too simplistic. When you can buy *Streets of Rage 2*, why even get this?

MEGA Rating: 58%

MUTANT LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Electronic Arts • £39.99



That'll be an almighty great pile of American football-playing mutants then. Avoid them in the pub

There's a strange concept behind this one. EA claim that *Mutant League Football* uses a totally different game engine to their own *John Madden* games. On playing the game, this does seem to be true, but it clearly isn't a *better* game engine (better than *Madden '93*? I think not, and EA aren't claiming otherwise) and it isn't the same, so you come to the conclusion that they've deliberately written a game worse than their star performer. Not a very inspiring start, then, but *Mutant League Football* still comes out smiling. Why? The answer's obvious to anyone who bought *Splatterhouse 2* – when gameplay lets you down, use extreme violence...

So what's the idea? Well, *Mutant League Football* is *John Madden's Speedball 2.* Essentially, you're playing good old American football, but without all those picky rules about not being allowed to kill your opponents. In this game you're positively encouraged to smash the other teams into piles of bones. Many plays don't aim to get the ball forward at all – they're only there to maim, wound and slaughter the opposing players.

So far so good, but the actual football lets the side down. I'm not bad at Madden, but I don't expect to play a game for the first time without even a brief glance at the manual, and rack up an 85-0 victory in a two-minutes-a-quarter game with plays selected at random. It doesn't get much better as you go on, either. Whereas *John Madden* gives the player the impression of total control over the action, *Mutant League Football* doesn't.

When you're playing in defence, your team will effectively stop the opposition on anything but the highest difficulty levels without any intervention on your part at least 70% of the time. On the higher difficulty levels all the intervention you can muster won't do much good, as the computer players are comprehensively smarter and tougher than yours.

Still, since when was American footy supposed to be a one-player game? Even the fab *Madden* is far more enjoyable in two-player mode, so it comes as no surprise that *Mutant League* is also stronger in this area. When two people play, the game's humour adds a real edge to the competitiveness of the proceedings. And while it would have been nicer for each team and player to have an individual personality, it's still a laugh.

So where does all this leave us? Well, obviously EA haven't written a Madden-beater. This leaves *Mutant League Football* in an unfortunate position: it's not different enough to justify buying it *and Madden,* and if you're only going to buy one American footy game, it won't be this one. So, how do I mark a game that I enjoyed playing but couldn't in all conscience tell you to spend £40 on? I think it will have to be a middling kind of mark, but with the proviso that the game in its own right is worth a bit more. It's just that, looking at what it's up against, it doesn't get much of a look in.

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 6 Game Size 7 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A good laugh in two-player mode, and decent enough really. But *John Madden* is still the king by a long, long way.

MEGA Rating: 63%

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Taito • IMPORT

Another classic coin-op that's seen incarnations on just about every format imaginable, but the Mega Drive version takes an unexpected twist by being less of a conversion than a rearrangement of the original. All the same features found in the arcade game are present and correct, but the level lay-outs and structures are almost completely different. While this is a bit of a bummer for arcade perfectionists, it means that *New Zealand Story* fans now have a whole new game to play, and that can't be a bad thing.

Graphics	7
Sound	6
Gameplay	7
Game Size	8
Addiction	7

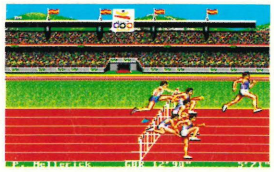
MEGA Says: *New Zealand Story* on the Mega Drive is as cute, clever and addictive as it ever was, so who cares if I the bits are in different places? Not us, that's for sure.

MEGA Rating: 74%

TIP: • During the demo, rotate either joypad for nine credits.

OLYMPIC GOLD

US Gold • £39.99



A nine-event Olympic simulator. Lush graphics, but at the root of it all it's just a creative way to pummel the living daylights out of your joypad. Great for frustrated athletes and great for multi-player (well, up to four) games after the pub – although there's no simultaneous player option, players take turns after each other.

Graphics	8
Sound	5
Gameplay	7

NHLPA HOCKEY

Electronic Arts • £39.99

NHLPA Hockey is EASN's sequel to *EA Hockey*. There's a lot of people who rate *EA Hockey* – Electronic Arts' classic Ice Hockey simulation – as the greatest Mega Drive game of all time, MEGA's Paul Mellerick to name just one. Me? I always found the game just a tad too random, without the depth of strategy or tactics demanded from a game such as *John Madden Football*. Don't get me wrong, I suckered for the adrenaline-pumping, end-to-end action as quickly as everyone else. For sheer excitement, tension and non-stop head-to-head action only *Speedball 2* comes close. It's just that everything that *EA Hockey* game had to offer was discovered within the first few matches.

EA agreed that the game's one weak point was a lack of real depth, so *NHLPA Hockey* is the answer: the same heart-stopping action but this time built on top of a solid bed of seasons, player rostas, management decisions (sort of) and personalities.

But have they actually managed to get the best of both worlds? The big question now is whether *NHLPA Hockey* is significantly better than the original classic, or whether due to too much fiddling and change for change's sake, a great game's been ruined. But for the moment, let's go back to basics and find out exactly what the game's all about. And where better to start than the original game itself...

So get your skates on and take to the ice for the fastest full-contact sport in the world. Ice Hockey is played by two teams of six men: each team has a goalie, a centre, two defenders and two wingers. Full-force slapshots travel at speeds of between 90mph and120mph, the game is so physically demanding that players typically join the game for three minute periods and then are substituted to rest.

No wonder then that Ice Hockey is internationally renowned as the hardest sport in the world. Fighting is accepted as an element of every game. It's partly because of the violent nature of the sport that Ice Hockey makes such good TV. In the USA, it's right up there with basketball, football and baseball as the favourite sport of a whole nation.

And it's because *EA Hockey* recreated the feel of the real sport so well that it became one of the most popular Mega Drive games of all time.

EA Hockey featured all the elements of the real sport. Using a top-to-bottom, 3D perspective pitch to display the action, *EA Hockey* bought to the Mega Drive all the speed, all the violence, all the excitement and all the tension of the real thing. All the realism was there: games took place over three periods, players could be substituted (by sending on and off different 'lines' of players), all the rules of the sport were incorporated into the gameplay (don't worry you could – and still can – turn them off) and the teams available for play faithfully reproduced the genuine strengths, weaknesses and styles of real international squads.

All the game speed was there: an instinctive control method complemented realistic skating animation (just like an Alvin Stardust EP doesn't complement a rave) to create a supremely realistic 'feel'. Swapping control from player to player was simplicity in itself and if your guys didn't perform – well, there's only one person to blame.

But EA though that this wasn't quite ALL and saw fit to make a sequel. And so let's check it out...

Forget the front-end, no-one really bothers watching the visual gymnastics of the title screens anyway. Let's get straight into the action. On first impressions, the game feels the same, looks the same and plays the same. From the outset it's obvious that the graphics haven't really been changed spectacularly, but then maybe that's no bad thing. Personally, I much prefer the blocky, chunkier character graphics of *John Madden Football* to the slicker, less-defined animations of *John Madden '92* – no such complaints here. OK, so there are a few extra frames of animation chucked in but after a while you don't notice the change – they tend to crop up in between the 'real' action or away from the puck. It's only when you go back to playing *EA Hockey* afterwards that you realise just what's been changed.

The second thing to strike you (or more accurately, your goalie) is the fact that the game's tougher. These new players are as hard as nail pie and meaner than Arnie on laxatives. Within seconds of gaining possession your computer opponents will be comin' at ya, all guns blazing. The game-intelligence of all the computer opponents has been upped a couple of notches, and that includes the goalkeepers – try casually fooling a shot past them as you may have done in *EA Hockey*. A stick, arm or leg intercepts the speeding puck and bats it down with worrying consistency.

But then, well – that's it. The game's basically the same as it ever was, with just a little bit more of everything. It's only in between matches and storing data on the battery-backed memory that the improvements really begin to shine through – during standard play you'd think that the game had never been away.

When all is said and done, *NHLPA Hockey* is a better game than *EA Hockey*. There's nothing ground-breaking or of drastic improvement on the original, but a little bit of tweaking can go a long way. The battery-backed memory can only be a good thing – though why a proper league option hasn't been included I've got no idea. It should have been top priority.

Forget the real player and real team features (unless you're a genuine follower of a genuine squad) and forget the signature moves. Relish in the stats and game analysis if that's the sort of thing that lights up your christmas tree and get stuck in to the tougher challenge.

If you already have *EA Hockey* then *NHLPA Hockey* isn't worth the extra investment. If you can flog on your old cart then by all means do yourself a good deal, but owning both copies is pure extravagance.

If you're new to the idea altogether, then find yourself a friendly dealer and try it out. If you don't love it after five minutes then you probably never will. *Neil West.*

Graphics 9 Sound 8 Gameplay 9 Game Size 8 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Bigger, better and bloodier than its older brother, *NHLPA Hockey* truly kicks.

MEGA Rating: 92%

TIP: • If you are having trouble finding some space from which to score, then a few extra players might help. Get a couple of players in the sin bin and then pause the game and enter the Edit Lines mode. Now change all your players and go back to the game. When the sin bin time is over, the player(s) will come back onto the ice. It's possible to have up to seven players on the ice at one time.

• Choose the All Stars West as your team and go to the Edit Lines menu. Now change your team to the following:
RD – Housley, RW – Yzerman, C – Reonick, LW – Fedrov, LD – Chelios. Now you should always come out on top.

• Plug in two control pads and turn the Mega Drive on. Select the on-player mode and select the teams. Press Start, and on the options screen use the other pad to move down to Edit Lines and/or Change Goalie. Now change the line-up or even remove the goalie. This can be done only before the game starts, so make those decisions wisely.

The instant replay feature shows off the last goal

O GAMES

Game Size 8
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: Pretty dull by yourself, but excellent fun when you've got a few mates round.
MEGA Rating: 85%

ONSLAUGHT

Accolade • Deleted
Appaling platformer set in medieval Britain or something – all crossbows and cannons. Words fail, no – they really do.
Graphics 2
Sound 5
Gameplay 1
Game Size 6
Addiction 1

MEGA Says: Don't look, let alone touch
MEGA Rating: 5%

TIP: • Enter just zeros on the password screen to start well ahead.

OUT RUN 2019

Sega • £39.99

Out Run 2019 is the third in the *Out Run* series. So, what does this game have to offer that its predecessors don't? Well, for starters, it's set in the year 2019.

The basic *Out Run* idea is simple: you've got to speed your way through a course before the timer runs out. Each course is split into sections and if you pass a section before the timer reaches zero, then you can carry on because you're awarded more time. Get all the way to the goal (the finish) and that's one course out of the way.

What makes the courses (there are four of them in total) that bit more interesting is the route which you can take through them. When you come towards the end of a section, you reach a fork in the road. Take one route and you could be driving through the desert, but if you take the other, you'll be mowing down trees in the countryside.

You can choose between an automatic or manual gearbox, but if you choose the manual, you're creating problems for yourself. Just put the pedal to the metal and go! Oh, and if you reach your top speed (285 kph), you can then sit back and wait for the turbo to kick in and zoom you up to 341kph.

Driving straight through courses, no matter how sharp the turns, just wouldn't be as much fun without the small obstructions of traffic and gaping holes in the road, and *Out Run 2019* has these in abundance. Some cars are kamikaze and will head straight for you, while others will stick to their lanes and are therefore very easy to avoid.

And, er, that's it – not amazingly complex these *Out Run* games. And that's where the problem lies. At the moment, we've got *Lotus Turbo Challenge*, *Out Run*, *Turbo Out Run*, *Super HQ* and many, many more driving games, and with the exception of Lotus Turbo, they're all pretty crappy. And this game is no exception. OK, so the graphics are futuristic looking, but they do lack a bit in the detail department.

There are, however, some nice road layouts, and the way in which the road rises and falls (like you're actually driving over a flyover) means that you can fly straight off the road. But the gameplay is just so dated that no matter how many new tricks you use, unless you alter the game radically, all you end up with is a tarted up version of a very tired old game.

The game does have some nice additions, like a save game and records facility and even a replay option so that you can see where you went wrong. However, even these novelty additions can't really lift this game out of the doldrums – it's a very average game indeed. *Paul Mellerick.*
Graphics 6 Sound 5 Gameplay 3 Game Size 4 Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Better than the likes of *Super HQ* and *Turbo Out Run*, but not by too much. Not very good, really.
MEGA Rating: 45%

OUTLANDER

Mindscape • IMPORT

Never before have I read such an elaborate plot for such a straightforward pile of cack. The story goes something like this: The world has been ravaged by a (yawn) nuclear holocaust and (zzzzz) the human race has all but died out. However (snooze), the few remaining survivors are getting water from the seas, taking all the salt out and scraping a meagre existence out of the disaster.

However, the ice caps are growing, and therefore locking up all the water supplies. So it's pretty good news when a scientist discovers a way of creating almost unlimited amounts of fresh water. Great, so now this revolution can be spread around the globe and all will be well again. Alas no, the professor's plane is shot down over Australia and he's kidnapped by a load of bikers who want to rule the world. Enter our mercenary hero (that'll be you then) who drives across Australia (à la Mad Max) and tries to save the prof, and thus the world.

At first sight, the graphics may well grab you and make you sit up and take notice. While slightly blocky, the scaling of the various sprites is really rather impressive. The bikers approach with alarming speed (and not a little menace) and they invariably either attack or explode in a spectacular fashion. Tragically though, this initial buzz wears off within about five minutes when you realise the long tedious haul you're experiencing in level one is a good indicator of things to come.

Three seconds ago that bonfire was a person. Tee hee

For a start, the first driving level is not only easy, but it goes on forever. After shooting about three billion adversaries off their bikes, you really wish it would all come to an end, as, indeed, it eventually does. Your car decides it's had enough and slows to a halt. Then the game switches to a horizontally scrolling shooty, beat-'em-up type of thing. Your blokey is now on foot and has to walk along the road, punching and shooting people off their bikes as they try to hit you with chains on their way past.

It's a nice idea having two very distinct game styles in the one package, but they really shouldn't have bothered with this beat-'em-up bit at all. It's complete crap. The main character moves very awkwardly and unconvincingly, and the duck, punch, shoot formula is as primitive as it is dull.

There's really no excuse for rubbish like this these days. What we have in the Mega Drive is a state of the art 16-bit games console, and what we have in Outlander is a game that, gameplay-wise, could quite easily have appeared five years ago to a lukewarm reception. There is no place for such poor quality games. It's fine to occasionally come across an average game that's no worse, or no better, than a previous title, but it baffles me that anyone can actually produce something so bad without realising the fact.

Basically, what we have here is a pretty hot graphical engine (as I said, the visuals are at first quite impressive), but without the support of any gameplay, pace, difficulty curve, fun, enjoyment, variety... it's hopeless. Well, I really have to say, most definitely, that this just isn't good enough. We're in an industry in which every single product costs £40 or above to buy. These products are, for the large part, being bought by kids, who can't afford to waste £40. What's more, it's unfortunately a self-governing industry, so this kind of cack will continue to be churned out. It would be nice to be able to rely on the producers own quality control, but this game is a fine example of the kind of rubbish that can get through the system. It is then down to us magazine game reviewers to ensure that the public know exactly what they're getting, before they cough up for it.

Sorry to rant on, but there's no excuse whatsoever for unadulterated tosh like this. Er, that's it. Thank you for your time, and, um, avoid this game at all costs. It would be the worst spent £40 of your life. *Andy Dyer.*
Graphics 6 Sound 4 Gameplay 3 Game Size 5 Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Graphically impressive at first sight, but minutes later you'll realise this is one of the worst games you've ever played.
MEGA Rating: 20%

OUT RUN

Sega • £19.99

The first in the series of identical racers. Very close to the arcade version but now it looks dated. It rates as a back marker compared to some of the other racing games. The animation on the car is very poor although it is the gameplay that really lets this down.
Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 2
Game Size 3
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: The game *Out Run* holds a cherished place very near to a lot of gamers' hearts – the arcade version was such a classic and such great fun to play. The Mega Drive version could have been more of a let down, but not much.
MEGA RATING: 37%

TIP: • Enter your name as ENDING to see the end sequence.
• Press Start to reach the option icon. Press the C button ten times, then press Start to access a Hyper difficulty level.

PAC-MANIA

Import • TBA

The sequel to *Pac Man*, this one's basically the same except in isometric 3D, over bigger levels and *Pac Man* can now jump over the ghosts.

Graphics 5
Sound 5
Gameplay 6
Game Size 6
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Better than the original, but still too dated for the 1990s.

MEGA Rating: 50%

PAPERBOY

Tengen • £37.99

Dated, tedious, OK-in-the-arcade-but-should-never-have-ventured-outside coin-op conversion that will send you to sleep within 30 minutes.

Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 4
Game Size 6
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: In some under-developed countries, we hear, they use *Paperboy* as an anaesthetic

MEGA Rating: 31%

PAPERBOY 2

Tengen • £39.99

Many years ago, when Mrs Thatcher had just started her Destroy Britain mission, Atari released an arcade game called *Paperboy*. This coin-op stood out from its peers because instead of controlling it with a joystick, you had a set of handlebars. Unfortunately, the control method was the only original thing about the game and so *Paperboy* soon disappeared from sight... until, that is, the game was released on every console and computer format known to man. Unfortunately, it was just as (if not more) crap on cartridge.

So here then, is the illustrious *Paperboy 2*, the (and I quote) "awesome sequel to arcadeland's most popular bike ride...". Yeah, right. How many other push-bike arcade games do you know? For that matter, how many awesome sequels have you heard of and where and what is arcade-land?

The principle differences between *Paperboy 2* and the original are that you can control either a paper*boy* or a paper*girl*, you can have two players at once, the bike can now jump, and there's a large number two on the front of the box. Apart from that, nothing much has changed here since *Paperboy* first avoided a lawn mower.

Similarly, there are no differences between the paperboy and the papergirl, except that one is starting to experience peculiar feelings towards girls and enjoys watching Baywatch a lot and the other has a pony tail and is in love with Take That and Luke Perry. Both sexes have the same paper-throwing range, style of bike and ability to appear distorted when riding up the street.

The idea of the game is simply to deliver newspapers. You have a number of subscribers who you have to deliver to and you can also lob newspapers onto non-subscribers to get them to sign on. There are also lots of different obstacles intent on ruining your centre of gravity and some of these can be stopped with a well-aimed Sunday Times. And that's about it.

I suppose that back in the early 1980s, when *Paperboy* first came out, this game might have seemed like fun, but it's certainly showing its age now. What's most surprising about this sequel is that aside from the odd graphical change and new hazard, naff all is different. The way you move, the difficulty of dealing with that odd side-on perspective and the basic premise of the game are exactly as they were the first time round; it's almost as if the only thing that's changed is the sprite data for the houses.

We at MEGA are very cynical about the release of this game. It is decidedly average and, worse still, it's far too similar to the original *Paperboy* to be considered anything more than an average two-wheeled shoot-'em-up.

Graphics 4
Sound 5
Gameplay 4
Game Size 5
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Rather bland, very unoriginal and not terribly fun push-bike game.

MEGA Rating: 32%

PGA TOUR GOLF II

Electronic Arts • £39.99

PGA Tour Golf 2 retains the basic competitive fervour of the classic original, and adds several refinements to improve the game's slickness and all-round playability. The most obvious difference from the original is visual: the graphics have been improved all round.

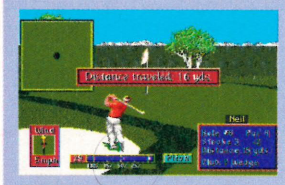
A good chip from the rough earns respect!

The holes have a more meaty 3D feel, the trees look great and your player looks much more convincing as he swings smoothly to hit the ball. And speaking of swinging, there's a new option that enables you to play a draw (bend the ball deliberately to the left) or a fade (bend it deliberately to the right). So, if your path to the pin is blocked out by a clump of trees, bend the ball around them.

It's a great feeling to see the ball curve in the air, to know that it's going exactly how you planned, and then to see it drop snugly next to the pin. On the other hand, you get a real feeling of despair when your ball zooms off for about three miles in completely the wrong direction. Funny old game, golf.

Next up there are seven courses – the original four plus three more. All of them are typically American, with vast lakes, huge bunkers (sorry, sand traps) and tiny greens. You can play round each in practice mode or in tournaments against the combined might of the American PGA. There's also a new game format to test you out. Skins is played for money hole by hole against one other player, rather than playing a complete round as you do in tournaments. So if you bodge up one hole, it doesn't ruin the score for the hole round. This makes for exciting matches when playing against a friend – call it a pint a hole and you're on for a steaming evening's entertainment.

There's also a new hole browser that gives you a 3D view of the hole. It's useful for seeing round corners, but you can quite happily get along without it. Detailed stats let you keep track of how you're playing, so you know which parts of your game are letting you down. If you're really keen, you can go to the practice ground to iron out the wrinkles, but I'd sooner play a proper round than spend an hour or two practising.



All the stats, choices and data at a glance

And there you have it, the best golf game gets bigger and better. Unless you're a massive golf fan, or have shares in EA, you won't need this if you've already got the original. But if you haven't got a golf game, this one's a must. Great graphics, good sound effects and finely tuned gameplay make this one of the best sports sims around. *Neil West.*

Graphics 8 Sound 8 Gameplay 9 Game Size 8 Addiction 9

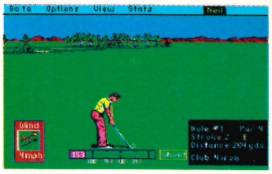
MEGA Says: The best Mega Drive golf game and possibly the best post-pub game ever just got better.

MEGA Rating: 91%

TIP: • The original "cheat" from the first PGA Tour Golf Game works just as well in the sequel: simply save your game after every hole, then simply restart your game if the shot's crap.

PGA TOUR GOLF

Electronic Arts • Deleted



The *PGA Tour* golf games are miles in front of the rest of the pack when it comes to Mega Drive golf and this is the first. The graphics are exquisite, the control is practically perfect, loads of people can play at once, it's got every option you could possibly want, and there's even a battery back-up. Nothing else so far captures that elusive 'wandering around a beautiful landscape pausing occasionally to batter a harmless little ball around with a series of big sticks' atmosphere as well as *PGA* does. *World Class Leaderboard* comes close, but if golf is your bag (ho ho), then this is your game.

Graphics 9
Sound 8
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: The best golf game there is (bar *PGA Tour Golf 2* , of course) and also the best Mega Drive game for more than two players.

MEGA Rating: 88%

TIP: • Save your game after each shot, then simply restart if your next shot is crap.

PHANTASY SOLDIER 3

Unknown • IMPORT

Stylish platform slash-'em-up very much in the same style as Strider, well worth a look.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 7
Game Size 6
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Good quality platform action. Try it.

MEGA Rating: 74%

POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts • £39.99

After a revolution, you play the part of a deposed king with only a small band of loyal followers in tow. It's now your job, as monarch, to lead them to a new promised land. At your disposal is a lone captain and his formative army. By telling your troops where and when to fight, you must conquer a continent composed of 195 islands. In "Goldrun" style you must work from the top left-hand corner of a map to the bottom right if you are to re-assert your divine right as ruler.

It's not all straightforward island hopping though, let me tell you. Each of the 195 islands poses specific tactical problems that have to be overcome using 20 different commands, a catapult you knocked together in the shed, and a handful of farmer recruits. As raw materials these hardly constitute an unstoppable war-machine, but used in the correct combination in the right situation, they just about give you a chance of capturing a new kingdom.

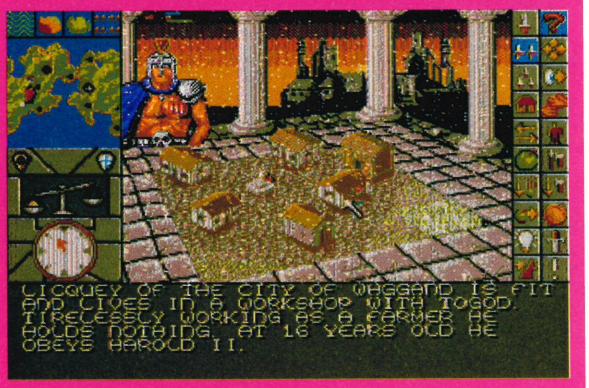
The battle for this isometric world is fought for you by warriors, but they'll only be effective – awake even – if you tell them exactly what to do and when to do it. You tell them by telling their Captain. And you tell the Captain what and when to do via an initially terrifying command menu. The commands, and their specific uses, are slowly revealed by gameplay example as your campaign unfolds. Slowly, the compound effects of each action, at each aggression level, become clear. Then it's your ability to turn your troops from nice guys to nasties in an instant that determines your fate. Unfortunately, this learning curve is made steeper still by the size of the command icons. They are tiny pics and are hardly recognisable on all but the very sharpest TVs. Before long, you know intuitively where each icon is, but this graphic gripe ensures that only players who stick at it will ever see *PowerMonger* at its exceptional best.

Each island has its own geography. Some are rich with mines that allow city- busting cannons to be created, others are separated by vast lakes that must be traversed by boat. But these cannot be built unless the right raw materials and workshops can be taken, and the correct aggression setting chosen.

PowerMonger is a battle for hearts and minds as much as territorial possession. The first few islands can be stormed by just collecting troops, food and weapons on the most merciless setting. Then the true game appears in the shape of the people you're conquering. Every person on every island has a name, history and loyalty rating. If the warlord you're currently fighting has stolen a character's food, killed their sheep, or press-ganged their men-folk, then their resentment can be turned to your advantage. Desperate lords will have to make desperate calls, but those who look after their locals will have a longer, more powerful life.

These characteristics make the tight battle for the balance of power an intriguing, if not exactly exciting, struggle. *PowerMonger* hides its gameplay potential behind a mask of fancy graphics and quirky humour. It looks like a god game and sounds like a war game, but in reality it's just a management

There's a lot of computing going on during a game of *PowerMonger*. Luckily, it doesn't take too long



That main screen in full. *PowerMonger* isn't for everyone, but if your brain needs a challenge, check it out

sim with a sophisticated graphic interface. The decisions it forces you to make and the graphic illustration of their implications, are challenging and highly entertaining. The inter-relation of certain gaming elements is never fully defined, but the more you play, the greater your tactical abilities and strategic intuition become. The later islands are struggles that last for hours, and this guarantees that this game has massive staying power.

Many folk may be put off by *PowerMonger's* slow pace, the long games and low gore count. The heavy controls and hard-to-read graphics don't help much either, but anybody who's brave enough to face one of the biggest and most audaciously different games yet seen on the Mega Drive, is in for a brilliantly desperate battle. *Neil West.*

Graphics 5 Sound 5 Gameplay 9 Game Size 10 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: If you've got the time and the patience to get to grips with this game, you'll come away more than satisfied.

MEGA Rating: 81%

TIP: • Some level passwords:

1 – HOTAXG
2 – JHUPHUZQ
3 – 5ELUAJFDQ
4 – 5PLODP2VI
5 – KYL6ZTDJD4
6 – KCLTDP27LDK
7 – KPKZTDJPMOQ
8 – 4DLA23AKJZTF3G
9 – L4L6ZTDJPBZKQ
10 – L26ZTDJPB4PBX
11 – ZTA23AAKJZTJKOB6
12 – ZNLA23AKJZTJKPXTTD7
13 – ZNKZTDJPB4PHAKGEBQ
14 – ZNLYZTDJPB4PHAGM7GLZQ
15 – ZNLFDP27L36LEZO6OWP723
16 – ZNLPZTDJPB4PHAHZ7GLEZSG
17 – ZNFLAJZOTDATJLC7JIPHAK5AQ
18 – TSPZTDJPB4PHAKJEKP27GLQQQQ
19 – UPZTDJPB4PHAKJEKP27GLE6QQQ
20 – UUVJZOTDATILCOWPTDJIPHYTFQQQ
21 – T7MDP27L36LE2O7TILCOWP7X4QQQ
22 – 72UVJZOTDATILCOWPTDJIPHYTJKQQ
23 – 7CFZTDJPB4PHAKJEKP27GLE6ATXQQ
24 – EFZTDJPB4PHAKJEKP27GLE6AT3A37Q
25 – TPFZTDJPB4PHAKJEKP27GLE6AT3A37Q
26 – TBMDP27L36LEZO7TILCOWP7X4AJZJPKQ
27 – 7CFZTDJPB4HAKJEKP27GLE6AT3A3P7X

• Alternatively, make things considerabbly easier for yourself by simply entering this code which thinks you've already completed all the levels!
2MN0A2WSD

PHANTASY STAR 2

Sega • £24.99

This is the game that set the standard that all further Mega Drive RPGs had to follow. Not quite as big and sexy as *Phantasy Star 3*, but pretty damn impressive all the same.

Graphics	**5**
Sound	**5**
Gameplay	**8**
Game Size	**8**
Addiction	**8**

MEGA Says: Great stuff, and at a new budget price an essential purchase for RPG fans.

MEGA Rating: 88%

TIP: • Continually turn the status screen on and off during the action to avoid being attacked.
• To get the Maueragum, the third tree from the right is the real tree.
• To get to Piata, park your jet scooter in the indentation on the right-hand side of the map (next to the mountains) and then just walk.
• To get to Climatrol, go to Uzo Island, go under it, to the left. Go south from the island that looks like Uzo and you'll find a spider's web in the water.
• To get to the Visaphone, take Shir (the thief) to the baggage room in Paseo. Go in and out until she finds the Visaphone.
• To get the Moon Dew and Star Mist, take Shir (the thief) to the tool shop in Paseo. Go in and out of the tool shop until she steals it.
• Megoid is gained at level 35 by Rolf. Nasar is gained at level 30, by the Doctor.
• Once you have all the Nei items, go to Lutz and he will give you the Neisword.

PHANTASY STAR 3

Sega • £44.99

A completely huge RPG, with

loads of different worlds and a whole gang of characters to control. Try and complete this one in a night without using the battery back-up...

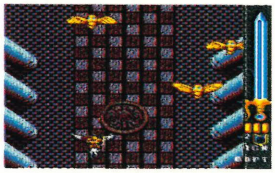
Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 8
Game Size 10
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: It's a lot of money, but in terms of hours of fun per pound, you'll be hard pushed to beat this one.

Mega Rating: 90%

PHELIOS

Sega • Deleted



An ancient Greece style vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up that doesn't offer anything spectacularly new.

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 5
Game Size 6
Addiction 5

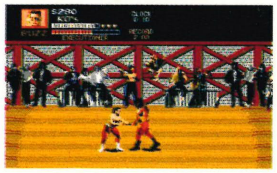
MEGA Says: Standard shooty action.

MEGA Rating: 61%

TIP: • When the Chapter One message appears with credit three, press C, A, B, A, C, A, B, A for nine credits.

PIT FIGHTER

Tengen • £39.99



Ooh look, it's another beat-'em-up. Ah yes, but wait – this one's different. How come? Well, it's got digitised graphics, guv. That means the fighters you take on in this simulation of that ugliest of 'sports' (pit fighting, that is) look incredibly realistic, which means you can imagine that it's a Real Human Being you're knocking the living daylights out of. You sad person.

Graphics 8
Sound 5
Gameplay 5
Game Size 6
Addiction 7

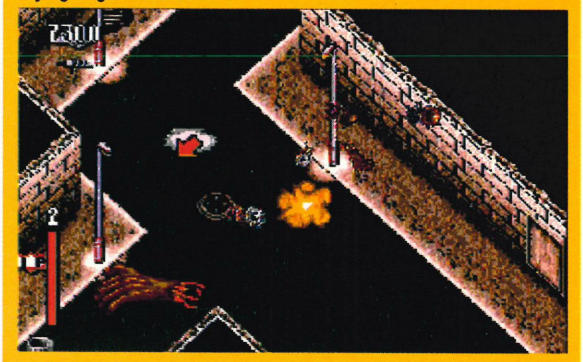
MEGA Says: Pretty dull and morally dubious beat-"em-up fare.

MEGA Rating: 78%

TIP: • On level nine in one-player mode, pause, plug in the second joypad, and press Start for three extra lives.

PREDATOR 2

Flying Edge • £39.99



Limbs fly everywhere as another would-be hero bites the dust. The game's OK, it's just suicidally short

Film-license games are notorious for not being as good as the films on which they are based – and that includes the ones which are based on films which were crap in the first place.

Nabbing high-profile film-licenses eats up a lot of software houses' budgets and this very often has the knock-on effect of reducing design, programming and development budgets. It's games like this that remind you that software companies really don't care how good a game is, they're only interested in how many copies it sells. The sad truth is that a decent movie tie-in can work just as well as decent gameplay. Mega isn't afraid to point an accusing finger at the worst offenders.

And we're pointing a finger at one right now. *Predator 2*: nice film, shame about the gameplay.

Predator 2 sticks closely to the film's plot – you play the Danny Glover character and have to rescue hostages on seven different levels, killing members of drug gangs as you go (and trying not to be killed by them of course).

Each level is in isometric 3D, and you have to run around in eight directions, firing, collecting weapons and trying to avoid being run down by hoods in cars and helicopters. Finding the hostages is easy because red arrows tell you which direction to run in.

Levels one, three and six are on the streets of LA, while the others take you to the subway, the slaughterhouse and the roof-tops, which, incidentally, feature some rather smashing parallax isometric scrolling. You'll rattle through the first six levels in a couple of hours – you get a password at the end of each of the first five – and then it's on to the alien's ship and the anti-climax of the game.

When you've rescued all the hostages on the ship, there's one mother-of-all-predators to kill. Having got this far, you might have expected a bit of a challenge, but no. The giant Predator's as dumb as they come and he gets stuck at the bottom of the screen and you can blast him while hardly getting hit. A dodgy end sequence shows your character legging it for the exit and you're given a glimpse of a black shape moving in front of a fireball. If you haven't seen the end of the film, you won't know what it's supposed to be.

The whole game is just too easy and too unexciting. There can't be much more than two evenings worth of entertainment here. There's a feeble attempt to add some urgency to the proceedings – the Predator's on the prowl and you have to get to the hostages before it does – and if you don't make it in time, you're treated to a delightfully gory display of the hostage exploding and his entrails and limbs flying out of the screen.

This, however, just isn't enough to salvage yet another disappointing film-license game. *Neil West.*

Graphics 6 Sound 5 Gameplay 2 Game Size 3 Addiction 3

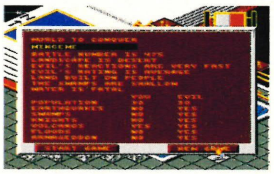
MEGA Says: Yet another film license flushed down the toilet of mediocrity. The game under the license simply isn't up to standard.

MEGA Rating: 28%

TIP: • Passwords:
Level 2 – KILLERS, Level 3 – CAMOUFLAGE, Level 4 – LOS ANGELES (including the space), Level 5 – SUBTERROR, Level 6 – TOTAL BODY (including the space)

POPULOUS

Electronic Arts • Deleted



Immensely strange and original god-simulator game where you hold sway over the very shape of the land itself as you try to create an army of followers to defeat an opposing deity. Slightly forbidding at first with a mass of controls to get the hang of, but once you're in you'll never want to come out.

Graphics 8
Sound 6
Gameplay 9
Game Size 9
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: A classic game. Survive the first 30 minutes and you'll be hooked.

MEGA Rating: 86%

TIP: • Here are some level-select codes:
025 – QAZITORY
050 – HOBOZJOB
075 – NIMLOPILL
100 – CALEOLD
125 – FUTDIMAR
150 – BINQUEME
175 – ALPAPAL
200 – EOAMPMET
225 – HURTOGODOR
250 – VERYOXT
275 – BUGINOND
300 – BILQAZOUT
325 – SCODEING
350 – SUZDIEHOLE
375 – SADOUTER
400 – BADMEILL
425 – BURIKEPIL
450 – JOSYMAR
475 – MINCEME
494 – WEAVUSPERT

POWER ATHLETE

(see. *Deadly Moves*)

POWERBALL

Unknown • IMPORT

A *Speedball 2* clone that's no where near *Speedball 2* standard.

Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 3

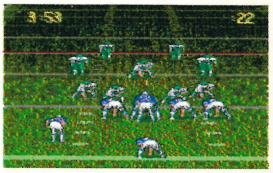
MEGA Says: Get *Speedball 2* instead.

MEGA Rating: 44%

TIP: • Fancy a sound test? Then go to the league-continue mode and choose China. Enter KWGEN as your password and hit start.
• To find extra teams, pause a game, press B, B, C, B, B, C, now press Down for four extra teams.

PRO QUARTERBACK

Pub • Price



It's only when you start playing the game properly that you realise how poor it really is. Firstly, the sprites move in a ridiculous fashion and secondly, the scrolling of the pitch is jerky, making it difficult to focus on the action.

You may have enough teams in *Pro Quarterback*, but what are you going to do with them? Well, there's a two-player mode so that you can play against a mate, but where's the tournament facility? You don't get the chance to enter a league or any play-offs.

Let's sum up: you've got an American football game that on the one hand has loads of teams and a good play book, but on the other hand has appaling graphics and dodgy gameplay. Not to be recommended.

Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: If you're going to make an American football game then what's the point of releasing it if it's not as good as *John Madden's*?
Next!

MEGA Rating: 25%

Q GAMES

QUACKSHOT (STARRING DONALD DUCK)

Sega • £39.99

Yes, it's another platformer, yes, it's another Disney license, yes, it's a bit of a clone of Mickey Mouse's *Castle Of Illusion*, but none of that matters one bit. Why not? Because *Quackshot* (even labouring under the burden of starring Donald 'can't even speak properly' Duck) is excellent fun. There's loads to do, lots of laughs and plenty to discover – it's actually fairly tough too.

This is the game that *Fantasia* should have been, and luckily for Sega it's a cracking game. It looks lush, it sounds lovely, and it's action-quacked (I'm really sorry about that) from start to finish.

Graphics 9
Sound 8
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: Are you deaf? We said GET IT!

MEGA Rating: 89%

TIP: • In Transylvania, collect the one-up, finish the level, call the plane, go back to the start of Transylvania and repeat to max out your lives.
• After the tiger when the roof falls down, jump on SUN, then MOON, then STAR.

QUAD CHALLENGE (FOUR TRAX)

Unknown • IMPORT

Two-player racing that would never get to the same race-track as *Micro Machines*, let alone offer a decent challenge.

Graphics 3
Sound 3
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: A lot of games are only available on import for good reason: *Quad Challenge* is one of them.

MEGA Rating: 32%

RAIDEN TRAD

Unknown • IMPORT

Go on, guess! Guess what this game is... Yes, it's another shoot-"em-up. But this time, it's actually quite good. A faithful reproduction of the original coin-op, this one offers bags of power-ups and some nifty graphics. Not quite up there with the shoot-'em-up big boys like *Hellfire* and *Aero Blasters* though.

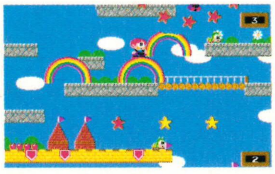
Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 6
Game Size 6
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A middle-of-the-road shoot-'em-up that will serve you well if you can pick it up cheap.

MEGA Rating: 77%

RAINBOW ISLANDS

Taito • IMPORT



Already hailed as one of the best 16-bit computer game of all time, *Rainbow Islands* has come to the Mega Drive and, miraculously, got even better. The impossibly addictive platform action is the same as ever, the amazingly cute graphics are as sweet as ever, and the devilishly fiendish hidden bonuses are as devilishly fiendishly hidden as ever, but with Mega Drive *Rainbow Islands* you get a whole extra game on top! Well, it's more of a variation than a completely different game, true, but the extra, harder version extends the life of a game which was already practically immortal, and makes it just about the best value-for-money investment you'll ever see in an arcade platformer. At once incredibly simple and deeply complex, *Rainbow Islands* is old, but right up there at the peak of the platform programmers' art.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 9
Game Size 8
Addiction 8

RAMPART

Tengen • £37.99

Two-player mode is where you're going to get most of the fun out of *Rampart*. So get some friends, quick

You might also be thinking that Rampart looks a little bit like a cross between *Missile Command*, *Tetris*, and the ancient Atari coin-op *Warlords*, but frankly that's unlikely, because the number of you out there who'll remember the ancient Atari coin-op *Warlords* is likely to be roughly on a par with the number of you out there who can whistle the whole of "Prelude à L'Après Midi D'Un Faune" by Claude Debussy while simultaneously balancing two snooker balls on top of one another on your nose. So we'll forget about that completely. Still, even if you simplify it down to *Missile Command* meets *Tetris*, you'd not be a great distance away from the truth, so let's go with that for now.

Ha harr! With all those cannon you're invincible

That intro screen in all its brick-built glory

What happens in *Rampart* is that you start off with a castle on an island surrounded by walls. The castle is then attacked by enemy ships, which attempt to blow away the walls, enabling troops deposited by said ships when they reach the beach to storm your castle and mercilessly slaughter its inhabitants. This happens for a set period of time, after which there's a bit where you rebuild the castle walls by joining up lots of *Tetris*-type blocks to form an unbroken barrier. At this point you get a load more cannons with which to fire back at the enemy ships. (It is, of course, all a bit more complicated than this, but hey, we haven't got a great deal of room here.)

Rampart is all well and good for half-an-hour or so, but after that you'll notice that it never changes, and indeed gets really boring. Try playing the game in two-player mode, however, and it's a different kettle of fish.

It's much the same game, except there aren't any ships and the two players face each other across a river and try to destroy each other's castles. This happens in such a way as to make rebuilding them difficult or impossible. It's very simple, but it's so frantic and panicky that it's enormous fun, and you'll play it for years and years. And that's it, really. If you've got any friends, this is fab to the point of being unmissable, but if you haven't – well,get some. *Neil West.*

Oops. Those ships have blown up your forts

Graphics 6 Sound 4 Gameplay 8 Game Size 3 Addiction 9

MEGA Says: The two-player mode more than compensates for the ludicrously limited one-player game, rescuing Rampart from obscurity and elevating it to a position of greatness. (Wow).

MEGA Rating: 82%

MEGA Says: A classic computer game, a blast from the past that still holds its head up today.

MEGA Rating: 85%

TIP: • Press Up, B, Down, Left, C, A, A, B and C on the title screen for full power-ups.
• On level one, collect all the diamonds in sequence from red to purple and kill the boss to access an entrance to a bonus screen.

RAMBO 3

Sega • £19.99

Rambo is a sensitive look at life in a small town... ah who am I trying to kid? This is an out and out blast fest with lots of view-from-above, brain-dead (you guessed it) blasting but not a lot more. Good graphics and sound are completely blown away by the frantic action. Heaven forbid, you may even have to think about some of the levels. Worth a look.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 7
Game Size 6
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Sort of like *Gauntlet* meets, er, Rambo. Only more violent. And less complicated.

MEGA Rating: 74%

TIP: • On stage two you'll see two crate which you can blow up. Walk to the right hand crate and then walk away. Head right until half the crate in in sight. Fire a full power arrow at it and turn towards the right. When you reach the wall go up and you'll be invincible.

RASTAN SAGA 2

Sega • Deleted

A Master System favourite converted to the Mega Drive, but with little noticeable improvement in quality.

Graphics 4
Sound 5
Gameplay 4
Game Size 6
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: One for hack 'n' slash addicts only.

MEGA Rating: 48%

RBI 3 BASEBALL

Tengen • IMPORT

Another flippin' mediocre base-

ball game.
Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 4
Game Size 4
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Snooze.
MEGA Rating: 44%

REVENGE OF SHINOBI

Sega • £19.99

This has to be one of the oldest games that you can get , yet it still rates as one of the best. You are the Shinobi, the martial arts expert who makes the likes of Bruce and Brandon Lee look like the hosts of Play School. Rather predictably you are looking for revenge on the Neo Zeed, who has killed your Sensei.

Romping through the levels you can use a few different combat moves to fight your enemies, including the spectacular somersault shuriken display, very nice to look at and very deadly to the enemy. You also have four different kinds of ninja magic, always handy for those unexpected moments. The limited number of moves actually helps the game, making it easy to play without having to consult the instructions every five minutes.

The game is challenging, the opponents and scenarios will keep even the most hardened player battling away for a long time. The graphics are spectacular with smooth scrolling parallax backgrounds and some pretty impressive sprites. For such an old game it could still show some of the young whipper snappers of today a thing or two. *Revenge of Shinobi* is one of the best of the bunch. True arcade action and actual challenge (which is unusual for a Sega game these days).

A true golden oldie *Revenge of Shinobi* deserves its place in your collection. If only all games these days were as good as this. A real classic.
Graphics 9
Sound 8
Gameplay 9
Game Size 8
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: What are you waiting for, if you didn't buy this first time round go and get it now.
MEGA Rating: 91%

TIP: • Select 00 shurikens at the start and wait for the two zeros to merge into an infinity symbol for infinite shurikens.
• On level 4-2, fire at the base of the conveyor belt and a special Musashi symbol will appear collect it and you'll get two lives. Die straight away and keep doing this to accrue lives for as long as you like.

RINGS OF POWER

Electronic Arts • Deleted

Another stab at the RPG genre from EA, and another mediocre performance.
Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 4
Game Size 7
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: If they can do it with sports sims, why can't they do it with RPGs?
MEGA Rating: 51%

TIP: • The ring of mutation can be found at 24, 1 longitude and 14,3 latitude.
• All the money can be yours if you do the following. Enter the secret temple (at location 32', 2' – 6', 6') and raid the four chests inside. Exit the temple, go back in, and the chests are full up again. You can keep doing this for as long as you like.

RINGSIDE ANGEL

Unknown • IMPORT

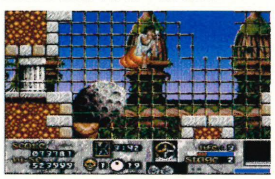
Girlie wrestlers grapple it out in an unashamedly pervy Japanese wrestling game. Fab!
Graphics 9
Sound 8
Gameplay 5
Game Size 5
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: As politically incorrect as a vivisection simulator, but (ahem) MEGA loves it. *(Speak for yourselves boys – Amanda).*
MEGA Rating: 81%

TIP: • Choose Cuty Suzuki, hold A while pressing Start on the select screen to play against yourself.
• During a tournament, skip the computer bouts by holding Start and pressing any buttons.

RISKY WOODS

Electronic Arts • £39.99



The first thing you need to do when you sit down to play *Risky Woods* is read the manual. If you plough straight into the game, you're going to get lost within the first two minutes. There's a lot of activity in here and at times it can be mightily confusing.

Draxos, the evil git who has imprisoned all the monks, is sitting up in his castle. He's successfully trapped the monks, paid the mortgage on his castle, and is now just lounging around enjoying life.

Rohan (that's you, that is) decides to rescue the monks and defeat the evil Draxos. His followers can be dispatched with by a swift dagger to the chest, but Draxos's gatekeepers pose slightly more of a problem. Collect the two pieces to the key (found somewhere on the level) and press button C to use the key when you're at the gate. The key will light up in a sequence and you must input

RBI BASEBALL 4

Tengen • IMPORT

Caption
Caption

Hot on the heels of *Sports Talk Baseball* came *RBI Baseball 4*. Yep, it's yet another baseball simulation, so how does it shape up against the competition? Not brilliantly, I'm afraid. There's nothing really wrong with it, it just doesn't feel "quite right". Sorry to be so vague, but there it is.

At the start of the game you're faced with an options screen from which you can select the type of game you want, whether it be a single game, a Home Run Derby, or a whole season, amongst others. Then you decide whether you want to play the computer, a friend, or simply sit back and watch the computer play itself (dull, or what?). Righty ho, into the game itself then.

The first problem you encounter is that the opponents are, well, a bit dim. Yes, they're very good at hitting and fielding, but when they're actually batting, most of them will swing at a pitch even if it's veering about three miles away from the base plate.

OK, if it were you or I playing ball in the park, it would be understandable for us to panic at the sight of a speeding ball and swipe regardless. These guys, however, are supposed to be professionals, so they ought to be able to tell if a pitch is way off target and let it go because (for those of you who don't know) a crap pitch that is left alone is called a "ball", and four crap pitches in a row mean that the batter gets to walk to first base, unhindered. Another thing that can really get your goat is the way fielding is handled. When the ball is in flight, the fielders come under your control. In most ball games, the guy nearest the ball will be the one you control. In this game, however, they all come under your control simultaneously. Now (bear with me), most of the time one of your fielders will automatically be in a good position to catch the ball, so you can leave it well alone.

Caption

Occasionally, though, when this is not the case, you'll start chasing the ball with one guy, realise he's not going to get it, then annoyingly discover that there was already a guy in position, but you've unknowingly just moved him out of the way while he was still off screen. It doesn't happen all the time, but it is frequent enough to frustrate you a bit.

In the *Sports Talk Baseball* review we said that baseball games were all much of a muchness, and this is true. Unfortunately, *RBI Baseball 4* doesn't quite hang together as well as the other games out there. So, if you're only going to get one baseball cart, you may be better off going for one of the others.

Obsessive baseballers may still want to try it out, but be prepared for a slightly less than satisfying game. *Paul Mellerick.*
Graphics 7 Sound 6 Gameplay 7 Game Size 7 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Pretty much as feature-packed as any other baseball game out there, but it simply doesn't seem to work as well.
MEGA Rating: 65%

TIP: • On the password screen enter RBI BASEBALL 4 as the code. You'll now see a message appear at the bottom of the screen and you'll be given a special passcode.

this sequence using Up, Down, Left and Right on the joypad.

Once inside Draxos's castle, it's worth noting that not every monk you see encased in stone is a real monk. Free the evil ones, and you'll suffer the consequences.

OK, so this quest business isn't going to be easy and you're going to need all the help you can get. Hey-presto, that's where the chests come in. Shoot a chest open and all will be revealed. Be careful though, because some items have both good and bad qualities. Suffice it to say, beware of the apple and the arrow.

One special power you have which nobody can take away from you is the ability to make armour. If you shoot an oncoming baddie, you'll see him drop a link of armour.

Collect 33 of these links and you'll be donned in silver armour. This halves the amount of power you lose when you get hit. Collect 67 links, and you'll get the gold armour, which takes the full force of a hit. Bear in mind, however, that when you do get hit by something, you'll lose a link. Lose your life, and several links will disappear.

Each of your lives has 11 units of energy. Get hit or fall off screen (unless you're wearing gold armour) and the units decrease. If, however, you die by running out of energy, your units don't go down. The counter is only reset when it goes down to zero, but if this happens, you lose a life.

This is OK in the platform stages, but when you get to the boss stage it can get very annoying, because if you die, the boss's energy goes back up to full (even if he is just about to die), but the timer keeps going.

Graphically and musically *Risky Woods* is very nice, and the game as a whole is brilliantly presented.

The levels, however, are repetitive, and once you've got hold of the gold armour, you'll find the game very easy. It's not the best platform game ever, but then it's not the worst either. It's just average.

Graphics	**8**
Sound	**8**
Gameplay	**7**
Game Size	**5**
Addiction	**4**

MEGA Says: It's short term

ROAD RASH 2

Electronic Arts • £39.99

Tempting though it is, real life *Road Rashing* is strictly a no-no. That's why this game is so good. Instead of setting out to be a racing simulator, it's just a fairly simple arcade race game, with the added advantages of on-bike combat, police chases and simultaneous two-player action. The first thing to mention about this game is that if you liked *Road Rash*, *Road Rash 2* will be just what you've been waiting for. Those who haven't got the original should get this, because it'll blow your socks (and we dare say your riding boots) clean off.

So what has changed? The biggest difference (and the thing which makes this game even better than the last one) is the split-screen two-player option. There are two different options on the two-player game. You can either play the courses in the same way you would the one-player game, except now you'll also be racing one other human (or even helping each other), or you can play the straight head-to-head option (it's all-out war).

A tip: don't try and ride through cars; you can't

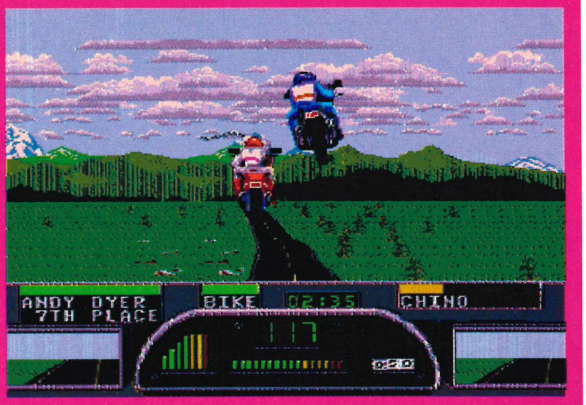
If the truth be known, the straight head-to-head option isn't as good as taking part in the real races. Having only one opponent can be a problem, in that if you crash once, there's very little chance of you catching up again before the end of the race. You may not think this is too major a problem, but if the crash happens at the start, it leaves you thinking, "Oh what's the bloody point?"

No, the two-player option is much better – there's you, a mate, and squillions of other road rashers and road users to either get past or pummel. Start playing this option and the hours will fly by.

As for the one-player option, changes have been made here too. For a start, the tracks are different (but then they would have to be really, wouldn't they?). There are now more bikes to choose from. They are divided into three different classes, however, and you can only buy them if you've accumulated enough money. What's more, you can really feel the different handling capabilities of each bike. This is also where the only bit of thought required in the game comes into play.

The three bike classes are Ultra Light, Nitro Class and Super Bike.

Another change in *Road Rash 2* is your new-found ability to knock the police off their bikes. What laughs!



***Road Rash 2* brings you faster bikes which means more air time over the jumps. You've been warned**

Saving up just enough cash to buy the next model up in the Ultra Light class won't really do you much good. You'd do far better to ride like the devil, and save up enough dosh to make a purchase from the Nitro Class shop. Beyond this, you'll have to work things out as you go along.

The game as a whole is quite a bit tougher than the original. The opponents fight back viciously on later levels, and there are more policemen and more hazards to avoid. The first level, which consists of five stages, is fairly easy to get through, but as soon as you enter level two, things start to get really hairy.

Whereas in *Road Rash* you could only steal clubs from the other riders, there's now a length of chain to find. This is dead (or should that be deadly) useful, as you don't have to be as near to the other riders as you do with the club. You can also spin the chain above your head for added effect.

All in all, these changes add up to make *Road Rash 2* quite a good deal more fun than *Road Rash*. Admittedly, the sequel isn't a million miles from its predecessor, but even so, any Road Rash owners should seriously check out this game. If you don't own the original, you'd be downright stupid to let this one pass you by. This is one of the most adrenaline-pumping race games available on any games machine. *Andy Dyer.*

Graphics 8 Sound 8 Gameplay 9 Game Size 8 Addiction 9

MEGA Says: At a push, we'd say that this is worth getting even if you have the original. if you don't alreday have *Road Rash*, then this is an absolute must. We love it.

MEGA Rating: 92%

TIP: • Here are five level codes.
0FUI 34TR: Shuriken TT250, $20,410, Level 3
0FIA 39TA: Banzai 7.11, $19,410, Level 3
0P1I 4SKO: Diablo 1000, $30, 810, Level 4
0CTQ 4JAG: Diablo 1000N, £17,730, Level 4
0H4R 550H: Diablo 1000, $20,930, Level 5
• When starting the game, go to Game Options and enter the Set Player Mode. Go to Mano a Mano, pick your level, pick either Club or Chain and exit. Go to the Bike Shop and now buy any bike you want (yes, even the Diablo 1000N). Exit, go to Game Options, then Set Player Mode. Choose to take turns and you can now start the race with your chosen level and bike.
• To get hold of the Wild Thing bike either enter Action Replay Code FF50 3000F or on the title screen press and hold down Up, A and C. Keep them held down and press Start to go to the race-select screen. Now release the buttons and you'll enter the first race with this bike.
• Start level one with $1000 and any of the following bikes:

Shuriken 400 – 00D8 110N
Shuriken TT 250 – 00C9 150R
Banzai 7.11 – 00D9 190O
Banzai 600 – 01C9 1M0D
Shuriken 1000 – 01D9 1Q0I
Banzai 600 N – 01D9 1B03
Shuriken 1000 N – 01C8 1E04
Diablo 1000 N – 01D8 1I09
Panda 500 – 01D8 130Q
Panda 900 – 01C9 170U
Panda 600 – 00C9 1K0A
Banzai 750 – 00D9 100F
Diablo 1000 – 00C8 1T0I
Banzai 750 N – 00C8 1C01
Banzai 7.11 N – 00D8 1G06

fun, but once you've finished it you'll never come back.

MEGA Rating: 64%

ROAD BLASTERS

Tengen • IMPORT

If you ignore *Outlander* (and you really should you know) this is sort of the car-driver's equivalent of *Road Rash*. Superficially a straightforward *Out Run* clone job, *Road Blasters* boasts the intensely desirable feature of a machine-gun mounted on the front of your car with which you can blow away the rest of the field in each of 50 stages of heads-down no-nonsense racing. It gets repetitive very quickly, but there's a lot of high-octane excitement in store first.

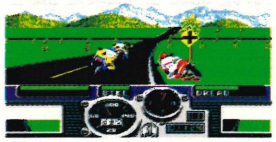
Graphics 6
Sound 6
Gameplay 5
Game Size 2
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Actually one of the more enjoyable driving games around, but if you're looking for anything with any degree of depth to it whatsoever, you're looking in the wrong place.

MEGA Rating: 57%

ROAD RASH

Electronic Arts • £39.99



So you've played *Super Monaco 2* to death, huh? You're after more racing, but something with a bit more of an edge to it, right? You want a *Road Rash* game, mate. It might sound like a nasty disease you get after spending too long in a sweaty boiler suit, but in fact *Road Rash* (and *Road Rash 2*, of course) is a brilliant motorbiking race game with a difference – you don't just get to overtake your competitors, you get to smash their heads in as well.

Hurtle down five dangerous courses at suicidal speeds, avoiding traffic and speed cops as well as other racers, make your fortune only to spend it all on new and ever-faster bikes, and wear your knuckles down riding alongside your enemies and punching them in the face. Loads of bikes, loads of violence and five stages – this game's got the lot!

Graphics 9
Sound 6
Gameplay 8
Game Size 8
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: Superbly atmospheric full-throttle romp that's arguably even more entertaining than *Super Monaco GP*, if a little less sophisticated. Whatever the arguments, though, there's no denying that *Road Rash* is a true classic, only bettered by the sequel.

MEGA rating: 85%

TIP: • Here are some level-select codes for this fab racing game.
Race to the final level – 21111 05VT0 102HF 47132
Level 2: 10000 01CMO 01435 243DE
Level 3: 00000 02TT1 10A2J 45TOT
Level 4: 43143 067KO 01EVD 571RQ

ROLO TO THE RESCUE

Electronic Arts • £34.99

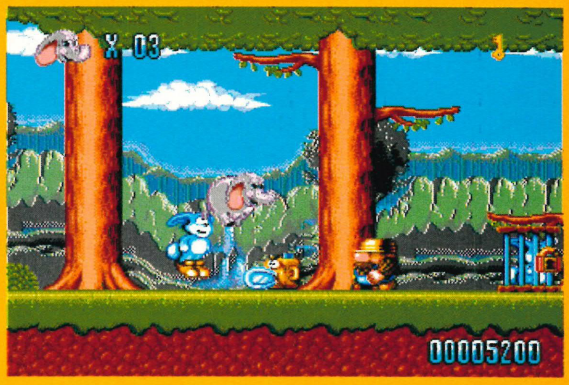
First of all, it's big. There are over 90 levels to get through, but then there is the map screen, which enables you to reach the end without actually finishing all the levels. What's more, there are heaps of secret rooms to discover, lots of simple puzzles to solve and hidden bonuses to find. This is something which even *Sonic* (or *Sonic 2* for that matter) failed to deliver.

Anyway, enough of all this rubbish. What's the game all about? The McSmiley twins are a pair of complete and utter gits who insist on taking control of all the zoos and circuses on the planet. They've kidnapped all the animals they could find, except, very oddly, one tiny baby elephant called Rolo. And so it's up to this tiny chap to rescue not only all the animals, but also his mother, who's one of the hostages.

The only moves that *Rolo* himself can perform are jumps. Oh dear. Later in the game, however, he can also find things which provide a limited amount of weaponry. For example, finding a glass of fizzy pop enables him to fire deadly bubbles at opponents, and inhaling helium makes him float. Beyond this, *Rolo* can also enlist the help of any animals he rescues. Once he's freed the various creatures from their cages they mimic his every move. Then, by pressing Start, you can select any one of the rescued animals and control him (or her) instead. This is not only useful, but vital for solving some of the puzzles. For example, squirrels can climb walls, rabbits can jump really high, and beavers can swim. So what we have is a platformer that requires a bit of thought .

The game was coded by the same team who did *Robocod*, and while that too was a decent game, it was just a little too empty for all its vastness. Not so with *Rolo*. There are no sections in which you think "Oh dear, looks like the programmers ran out of ideas here". No, this improves upon the *Robocod* theme and may end up as a bit of a Mega Drive classic. It's only slightly repetitive, and other than that it's cute as hell, challenging, rather huge and, most importantly, it has elephantine playability. *Andy Dyer.*

Oozing cuteness, the moles ride on Rolo's back



Rolo (complete with a faithful recently-rescued bunny) bouncing his way to victory. How sweet

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 9 Game Size 9 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: A superb platformer which is vast, but busy, and full of ingenious challenges.

MEGA Rating: 89%

TIP: • On the title screen, press and hold down the Up/Left diagonal and A and C. Now press Reset, but keep holding those buttons. Hold them down for about five seconds and then press B. You should now get the special options screen, where you can choose to be invulnerable, see all of the map or get infinite lives.
• Once the previous code is in operation, start any level and then press START to go to the animal select screen, now move the cursor to the compass marker and press A and B together. The screen will flash, you'll go back into the game and you'll be standing next to the exit with the level already finished.

ROLLING THUNDER 2

Sega • £39.99

The original *Rolling Thunder 2* was a fantastic coin-op, and *Rolling Thunder 2* on the Mega Drive is a fair copy. But the sprite movement is severely limited, letting down what could have been a great, basic platform-shooting game.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 5
Game Size 6
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Not bad at all, but not in the same league as *Revenge Of Shinobi, Chakan* or the Disney games et al.

MEGA Rating: 60%

TIP: • The code for the final level is A PRIVATE THUNDER CREATED THE POWDER.

• Level codes for the EASY game:
1 – A ROLLING PROGRAM SMASHED THE GENIUS
2 – A CURIOUS RAINBOW LEARNED THE FUTURE
3 – A MAGICAL ISOTOPE BLASTED THE DEVICE
4 – A PRIVATE LEOPARD PUNCHED THE NEURON
5 – A SLENDER FIGHTER ELECTED THE GENIUS
6 – A DIGITAL RAINBOW MUFFLED THE SECRET
7 – A LOGICAL THUNDER SMASHED THE POWDER
8 – A ROLLING MACHINE DESIRED THE FUTURE
9 – A SLENDER NUCLEUS BLASTED THE TARGET
10 – A CURIOUS ISOTOPE CREATED THE KILLER
11 – A NATURAL PROGRAM DESIRED THE NEURON

• Level codes for the HARD game:
2 – A MAGICAL THUNDER LEARNED THE SECRET
3 – A MAGICAL ISOTOPE BLASTED THE DEVICE
4 – A PRIVATE LEOPARD PUNCHED THE NEURON
5 – A SLENDER FIGHTER ELECTED THE GENIUS
6 – A DIGITAL RAINBOW MUFFLED THE SECRET
7 – A LOGICAL THUNDER SMASHED THE POWDER
8 – A ROLLING MACHINE DESIRED THE THUNDER
9 – A SLENDER NUCLEUS BLASTED THE TARGET
10 – A CURIOUS ISOTOPE CREATED THE KILLER
11 – A NATURAL PROGRAM DESIRED THE NEURON

S GAMES

SAINT SWORD

Unknown • IMPORT

Strange hack-'em-up set over seven levels. Avoid.

Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Weirdness is no substitute for quality.
MEGA Rating: 35%

TIP: • Here are some level-select codes for Saint Sword.
IQW1EL – level 3-1
K2JOCK – level 4-1
KWWKQQ – level 4-2
QWQ10C2 – level 5-2
S2YY2Y – level 6-1
SOGZAL – level 6-2
XXKSIS – level 7-2

SHADOW BLASTERS

Unknown • IMPORT

Limp beat-'em-up in which you get to play a variety of equally limp characters.

Graphics 4
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Yeah, good word, limp.
MEGA Rating: 34%

SHADOW DANCER

Sega • Deleted

ESWAT with a dog, basically. This ninja beat-'em-up is a lovely looking game that sees Joe Musashi out for a (violent, frankly) walk with his dog, Yamoto. Joe can send Yamoto off to do his dirty work for him, and then go clean up the mess. The plot involves rescuing hostages and killing bad guys. We're sure you know the score.

Graphics 9
Sound 7
Gameplay 7
Game Size 6
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: More fab scrolling beat-'em-up action, and you'll find yourself getting really attached to your ninja pooch. Well worth a bang.
MEGA Rating: 83%

TIPS: • Complete the whole of the first level using only magic and you'll receive 100,000 bonus points.
• On the title screen, press A, B, C and Start all at the same time to access a practice mode level select.
• On the first bonus level, don't shoot, simply dodge all the ninjas to earn an extra life.

SHADOW OF THE BEAST

Sega • £19.99

Hmm, gorgeous graphics and some awesome sound. One problem: the gameplay sucks. A phenomenally difficult game with loads of exploring and some neat action bits that are too sparse. Unfortunately, looks are very deceptive in this case.

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 4
Game Size 7
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Looks good, sounds good, plays like a dog.
MEGA Rating: 48%

TIP: • Enter your name as ZQX and press and hold A, B, C and Start until you get back into the game for infinite lives.
• Drop a coin down the well to receive an extra life.

SHINING IN THE DARKNESS

Sega • £39.99

Gorgeous, mammoth RPG with lovely aesthetics and gameplay which will keep you entranced for months.

Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 9
Game Size 8
Addiction 8

Mega Says: A bit of a must for RPG fans, but even if you're not into the genre, give this game a try. You might be pleasantly surprised.
MEGA Rating: 89%

TIP: • Take a magic item that loses power when used to be repaired. Have less money than it costs, go to sleep, pick up the items the following day and you'll get loads of money.
• The Vial of Tears: get all the Arms of Light and visit Jessa in the castle. Theos will gather her tears when she cries. Take the Vial of Tears from Theos.
• Keep returning to the tavern in the village to get up-to-date information, like the whereabouts of important characters.
• Here are some passwords:
Level one: stairs from level one to level two – 10S, 12E
Cave of Courage: stairs down to get to the Boss – 10S, 9E
Cave of Truth, use the Fake Idol – 7S, 23E
Cave of Wisdom: hole to fall down (gets you to the end) – 10S, 18E
Level 3: Light Helm – 8S, 29E; Light Shield – 9S, 1E; Rope – 27S, 1E
Level 4: Light Blade – 5S, 11E; Cell Key – 13S, 9E
Level 5: Light Armour – 5S, 9E
Bosses: Kaiser Crab – 18S, 12E; Gila (Cave of Strength) – 21S, 7E; Tortolyde (cave of courage) – 17S, 4E; Doppler (Cave of Truth) – 7S, 21E
Bosses: Grim Wall (level one) – 20S, 16E; Black Bone (level three) – 27S, 19E; Dark Knight (level four) – 13S, 7E; Dark Sol (level five) – 11S, 15E

SHINING FORCE

Sega • £39.99

Where did your Mega Drive come from? No, not Dixons – Japan, right? And so does just about every other console and arcade machine. So who are the people you'd expect to know most about video games? Yup, the Japanese. And guess what sort of game consistently outsells every other in Japan? Role-playing games. It's true. They're absolutely crazy about them over there. In fact, on the day that one particularly long-awaited RPG finally hit the streets of Tokyo (er, on another system, as it happens) there were queues of up to 12,000 otherwise perfectly normal citizens

SHADOW OF THE BEAST 2

Electronic Arts • £39.99

As with the original, the graphics are great but the game underneath is disappointingly shallow. EA have made the effort of trying to add a puzzle-solving element as opposed to the previous aimless maze-wandering, but there's nothing that will require too much brain power and you'll soon grow bored. This is an ancient game formula, and (to be quite honest) the videogames genre has moved on too quickly for *Shadow Of The Beast* to keep up. *Andy Dyer.*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 7 Game Size 9 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Mildly entertaining, and it does draw you in eventually. But why is it so average when the graphics are so good?
MEGA Rating: 70%

You're looking for a big blue crystal thing. Hmmm...

SIDE POCKET

Sega • £34.99

Pool sims are not very popular on the Mega Drive – in fact, this is the only one. So what's it all about and where did it come from?

Well, if you want to find out you'll have to take a trip down arcade-memory lane, because it's a coin-op conversion again.

About two years ago a small coin-op called *Pool Gal* appeared. It was nothing spectacular – there were no hydraulic chairs or mounted Uzis, just a small cabinet and a telly. But when you put in your ten-pence piece, you got the shock of your life. This may have looked like a normal pool game, but once you finished level one, it happened. It was only there for a split second but there it was, a fully naked computer image (and female as well). You played the next level and it happened again. Then you died on level three and spent the next few hours (and several pounds) playing the damn thing. That's how it became so popular.

Phwwwooooooooooooaar! Eh lads? Eh? Eh? EHHHHHH?

But before you get yourself into a state over all this, calm down. *Side Pocket* on the Mega Drive is only based on the coin-op and doesn't include naked girlies, more's the pity. It has got some nice women in it, but they've always got their clothes on.

Pool on the Mega Drive is simplicity itself. Forget all the different pub rules and ball set-ups, because in this game the person who pots the most balls wins. It's as simple as that. But to base a cart on such a straightforward principle would have meant instant death to the thing. So

Data East have spruced up the concept a bit and actually made the gameplay very exciting, with special bonus zones and the chance to practice your trick shots.

Side Pocket is nice to look at (especially the girlies) and good to listen to as well, but it is the gameplay that really makes this pool game a joy to play. The game is easy to control and once you've started playing you'll find it surprisingly hard to stop. It's going to take a good while to finish, and the two-player games and the trick-shot challenge add to the game's life span.

In a world of shoot-'em-ups, platformers and more shoot-'em-ups, Side Pocket offers a refreshing change of pace, and I'd recommend the game to anyone. It is, in fact, a cracker. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 8 Sound 8 Gameplay 9 Game Size 5 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Great stuff and a real breath of fresh air. Brilliant on your own and just as much fun with a mate. Try it, and there's a good chance you'll become addicted.

MEGA Rating: 84%

Bounce that ball off the cushion and into the bag

Game Size 9
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: Huge, gorgeous-looking and absorbing. You'll never scoff at an RPG again

MEGA Rating: 92%

SHOVE IT: THE WAREHOUSE GAME

Unknown • IMPORT

Also known as *Boxxle* and *Soko-Ban*, this is another block-sliding puzzler. A good one, too.

Graphics 4
Sound 2
Gameplay 7
Game Size 6
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Get your brain round this game and you'll probably come out of it second best.

MEGA Rating: 65%

TIP: • Enter !AYASAM! to get to the last level.

outside some computer stores, along with reports of people getting mugged and relieved of their copies on the way home. So there's got to be something in it.

Play *Shining Force* one evening, and at about half past four the following morning, with the remains of the previous day's breakfast slowly solidifying beside your Mega Drive, you'll realise what.

The first thing to point out is that RPGs really aren't at all scary. Not when they're this well put together, at least. If the only RPGs you've played before have been things like *Dungeon Master* on the Amiga, (a fine game though that is) you'd be forgiven for being put off spells and magic potions for life. But with *Shining Force*, the amount of buggering around with complicated instructions as opposed to actual gameplaying has been cut down to a minimum. You'll have the whole thing sussed out in about five minutes.

You'll soon be up and running, even without the help of the instructions, partly because of the way it eases you in gently, and partly because of the intuitive controls. Even the battle sequences are really easy to do, and let you put cunning strategies into action without getting swamped with statistics.

The next thing you'll find out is that, rather than simply wandering around beating up monsters and collecting vials and herbs, playing a top-notch RPG (which is what *Shining Force* is) is actually more like reading a really good book. And like all good books, *Shining Force* has a plot. The Land of Runes has been overtaken by evil, and you've been chosen to liberate it from all the baddies swarming all over it. As you wander around you can talk to the inhabitants of the towns you pass through to glean helpful information. Although you're following a predetermined course the whole time, you always feel you're in control. And there are lots of funny diversions along the way. It's all hugely enjoyable and absorbing.

Shining Force scores for accessibility, then, for clever design and for being great fun. It also comes up trumps for graphics and sound. The graphics are simple and clear where they need to be and stylish and Japanese when there's room to be a bit more adventurous. Battles look particularly attractive. And, although the music can get annoying at times, it's generally very well done. It's all got flair and polish.

Shining Force is undoubtedly the best RPG for ages – and not just for people who "like that kind of thing". It also surely provides just about the ultimate in value for money – there must be weeks of playing time in here.

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 9

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2

Sega • £39.99

Quite simply the most famous, the most-hyped, the fastest-selling and most eagerly-awaited videogame in history. *Sonic 2* takes the success of the original *Sonic The Hedgehog* and builds a bigger, better game on top of it.

The addition of a two-player game and doubling the number of levels answered the critics who claimed *Sonic* was too shallow and too short, and while the game is still easy, completing it with every single ring is still a real challenge.

A lot of people slammed *Sonic 2* for being too similar to the original – MEGA don't subscribe to this point of view. Yes, it's undoubtedly very similar, but if a formula ain't broke, then why try to fix it?

We could wibble on about *Sonic 2* for pages, but seeing as you've undoubtedly got a copy, there's very little point. And if you haven't got a copy – buy one.

Graphics 10 Sound 9 Gameplay 9 Game Size 7 Addiction 10

MEGA Says: *Sonic 2* is pure, top grade videogame entertainment.No one should miss it. Fight for a copy.

MEGA Rating: 94%

TIP: • When you collect a Chaos Emerald, reset the game. Now enter the options menu and press Start. The game will start again, but you should still have the emerald you collected. You can now collect all the emeralds on the Emerald Hill Zone and burn through the rest of the game as Super Sonic. Also, by collecting every ring on the special stage, you get a 50,000 point bonus at the end.

• Go to the options screen and start the game as Sonic and Tails together. Now plug in a second joypad and player two will be able to control Tails. Tails is also invincible.

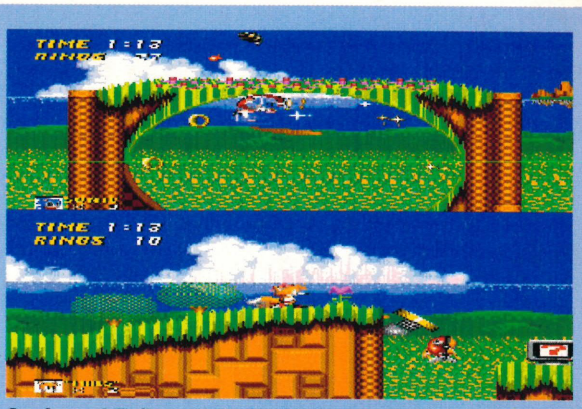
• Here's a level select for Sonic 2. Go to the options menu and play the following tunes on the Sound Test. Play 19, 65, 09 and 17 in that order. When you play 17, you'll hear a ping. Press Start to go back to the title screen then hold down button A and press Start to enter the level select.

• Here's the Super Sonic cheat. Enter the level select as above and on the Sound test option play 04, 01, 02 and 06. Now select your level and play as normal. When Sonic has collected 50 rings, press B and C together and watch him turn into Super Sonic.

• When the level-select cheat has worked, you can play the game in slow mo by pausing the game and holding button B. Button C will make Sonic jump and button A will reset.

• To construct your own levels and have 14 continues play tunes 19, 65, 09, 17, 01, 01, 02 and 04. then highlight the player select and press start to play.

• To mess about with the levels, go to sound test and enter the level select and play tunes 1, 9, 9, 2, 1, 1, 2 and 4, select your level, then press and hold down A and press Start, your score should now be letters and numbers. B switches sonic, A cycles through the sprites and C places them on the scenery.



Sonic and Tails star in *Sonic 2*'s two-player mode

SLAUGHTER SPORT

Unknown • IMPORT

Also known as *Fatman* and *Mondu's Fight Palace*, this is a weird one-on-one beat-'em-up that's based on *Street Fighter 2* but in an infinitely lower league.

Graphics	5
Sound	5
Gameplay	3
Game Size	3
Addiction	4

MEGA Says: Wait until *Street Fighter 2* comes along. This is just a sad imitation.

MEGA Rating: 41%

TIP: • Choose the character you want to play as by doing the following key combinations:
Bonapart – press A then Up then C then Start on the title screen.
Buff – press Left then C then B then Start on the title screen
El Toro –press B and C together, A then Up then Start on the title screen.
Guano – press Up, Right and A and B together then Start on the title screen.
MC Fire – press Down then C then Right then Start on the title screen.
Mondu – press A and B together then Down then Left then Start on the title screen
Ramses – press Right then Left then A then Start on the title screen.
Robo Chic – press Right then Up then Down then Start on the title screen.
Sheba – press B and C together then B then B again then Start on the title screen.
Skinny – press Right then Down then Right then Start on the title screen.
Webra – press A and C together then Up then Right then Start on the title screen.
Weezil – press Down then Right then Up then Start on the title screen.

SMASH TV

Flying Edge • £34.99

The most appaling conversion of a coin-op that no one should ever have attempted converting (if you know what we mean) that we've ever seen. Avoid like the plague!

Graphics	6
Sound	6
Gameplay	2
Game Size	5
Addiction	1

MEGA Says: Next!

MEGA Rating: 37%

TIP: • When you enter a room and you've wiped out almost everyone, leave one guy alone and avoid him. Now the room will start to fill up with goodies, such as weapons, lives and keys. Make sure you don't kill him or pick up a smart bomb, because you'll then have to exit the room.
• Play the game as normal, then pause. Now do any of the following key combinations to activate the particular cheat you want.
Up, Down, Left, Left, Right: For an extra credit on level one.
Up, Down, Up, Down, Left, Right, Left: To skip to the Mutoid Man.
Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Down, Left, Right, Up: To start on level two.
Down, Down, Left, Right, Up, Up, Right, Left, Down, Up, Down: Start on level two with two extra credits.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

Sega • £34.99

Okay, so MEGA don't rate the Sonic games (original or sequel) as the best ever Mega Drive game, but they're still bloody wonderful. It's quite possible that the original Sonic is the most famous video game ever – it's certainly the one that, more than anything else, lifted console games out of the spotty schoolboy ghetto and into the real-world limelight where they truly belong. Ask any rock star worth his salt these days who Sonic is and the chances are they'll not only know, but will then proceed to bore the pants off you with tales of how they once completed Green Zone 1 in 28 seconds, and now demand that a Mega Drive running *Sonic* is placed in the dressing room at every gig they play.

Yeah, it's a bit easy to finish, but why be selfish? Isn't it nice that everyone gets a chance to see the end sequence for once? Anyway, there's so much hidden away in *Sonic The Hedgehog* and it's just so much damn fun to play that you'll never get bored with it, no matter how many times you whup nasty ol' Dr Robotnik's ass. And if you don't still get a buzz when Sonic loops the loop at maximum speed with his superfast boots on, get someone to check your pulse immediately – you may be dead.

Graphics	9
Sound	9
Gameplay	8
Game Size	6
Addiction	9

MEGA Says: Still the most technically stunning game the Mega Drive's ever seen, and the standard-bearer of a whole new era of video games. Completely amazing, completely brilliant and only matched on its own terms by *Sonic 2*.

MEGA Rating: 90%

TIP: • On the intro screen press Up, Down, Left, Right and then

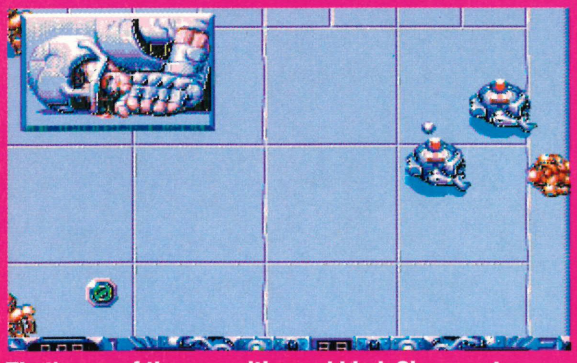
SPEEDBALL 2

Virgin Games • £34.99

It's gonna be pretty obvious from the *Speedball 2* screenshot that this isn't a simulation of any real sport, or even one of those obscure team events which Channel Four broadcasts to keep a small minority of telly-mad lunatics happy. No, this is pure fiction. Ignore the paper-thin plot about disintegrating values and the emergence of a violent full-contact sport. Who cares? All that matters is that pretend characters can beat the living daylights out of each other in an arena and get away with it, and this (I'm sure you'll agree) is the perfect recipe for a rip-roaring game.

Basically there are two teams, two goals and a ball. Use whatever means you can to score goals, and rack up extra points by injuring people or using the "gadgets" around the play area. The lack of rules means that there's a fairly large amount of luck involved in the outcome of a game. Passing the ball around is a pretty skillful business but once one of your players and an opponent get into a one-to-one situation, it's a case of thrashing the button and hoping you come out with possession. Getting a couple of goals early in the game is important but, even if the opposition gets an early lead, the game is by no means over.

Unlike a game such as *Madden*, in which it's skill all the way, *Speedball 2* sometimes gets frustrating, especially when you're playing against the computer and can't understand why you're getting thrashed!



That's one of the opposition nobbled. Six more to go

When you play against a friend who has roughly the same level of expertise as you, it's a lot more fun. But even then you'll often find that you'll give your opponent a huge thrashing one game and then receive the same treatment the very next.

Speedball 2 is a high-speed bash and despite being annoying at times, is still a right good laugh. And this is where the game's strength lies. If you're bored with *Madden*-alikes (or any game which requires a little thought, for that matter), *Speedball 2* is a breath of fresh air. It's a joy to be able to sit at it for half an hour, get all fired up, curse, swear and come out of it thoroughly exhausted and hating your best friend.

Beef up your team in the training sessions in between matches

If you suffer from stress at work, school or home, have a bash at it and you'll feel a lot better. Don't, however, expect any real one-player fun in the long term. *Neil West.*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 8 Game Size 5 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Definitely best when two people are playing. It can get a bit frustrating but it's good aggressive fun.

MEGA Rating: 81%

TIP: • Enter LCLI CWAF O6XE ya3q 2bst -is1 gGVC to enter division one.
• Save your cash for the first few games. Better players will soon be available on the transfer market.
• Always finish as runners-up in division two, because the play-off game will give you a few extra pennies in your purse. Convincingly beat Steel Fury twice and then let the Renegades beat Deluxe (you) twice by 200 points. These sneaky tricks put you (Deluxe) and the Renegades up a league, and in the second season you should be able to put 350 points past the Renegades, while Hashwan and co can only manage 200.
• This cheat allows you to improve your team by altering the password you get at the end of the season.You need to swap the blocks of four in the password with other blocks of four in the password. You can play around with this for as long as you like until you find the best code.
• Here's a mystery code: LBXQ MHAR Mk7I Y8T1 2fZW -2ww 7vVD IBMH

hit A and Start to access a level select.
• Press Up, C, Down, C, Left, C, Right, C, hold down A and press Start. Play Green Hill Zone, Act 1 and get at least 50 rings. Enter the chaos maze and press B to turn Sonic into a ring. Now find the hidden zone.
• Finish an act in under 30 seconds for a 50,000 points bonus.

SPACE HARRIER 2

Sega • £19.99

Short of having someone shaking and tilting your chair when you're playing this there is absolutely no way it can come close to 'feeling' like the arcade game. The graphics are okay, as is the sound, but there is a problem. Without the hydraulics and the other arcade gimmicks this a pretty inadequate 3D shoot-'em-up.

Graphics 6
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 5
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: It was a bit of a novel release at first but now just looks a bit sad.

MEGA RATING: 51%

TIP: • For a level select, press buttons A, B, C and the joypad Left or Right during the start sequence.

SPACE INVADERS '91

Sega • USA IMPORT

NOT the same game as the fabby *Super Space Invaders* on the Master System, *Space Invaders '91* is a strange 'updating' of the first-ever coin-op shoot-'em-up. It's a lot faster and a lot zappier, with some neat-power-ups and tough new baddies (and no defence bases!), but somehow it just doesn't capture the classy atmosphere of the original. You'd be better off with a Power Base Converter and the Master System version of *Super Space Invaders*, to be perfectly honest.

Graphics 6
Sound 6
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: Fun for a while, and the contoured-ground effects are nice, but really you'd need to have a lot of money to burn to think about buying this.

MEGA Rating: 54%

TIP: • On the intro screen, press and hold buttons A and C. Now press Start, then B, A and C for the level-select screen.

SPIDERMAN

Sega • £19.99

SPORTS TALK BASEBALL

Sega • USA IMPORT

***Sports Talk* Baseball is another baseball game and the only real difference between it and its predecessors is that it talks, and talks, and talks, and... well, talks. This game chucks out more wibble than Ronnie Corbett when he's on a roll. Every move you make, every strike you take, every pitch you take (ahem. Sorry Sting) is acknowledged by the little electronic commentator inside your Mega Drive. There's no denying that initially this makes for a more exciting game but once this novelty has worn off, you're left little that improves upon a tried and tested formula.**

One good reason why you should choose *Sports Talk Baseball* over all the other baseball carts is that it's easier to control. Another good reason is that all the players' statistics represent exactly those of the real teams in the 1991 MLBPA league. This may not be interesting to most people, but this sort of extra detail *can* make a game more interesting.

If you've been gagging to get your hands on a baseball cart, *Sports Talk Baseball* is possibly the one to go for. But if you're not a fan of the real-life game, or if you have already tired of the idea, you won't find enough here, over and above what's already been done in other baseball carts to make it a worthwhile purchase. *Andy Dyer.*

Graphics 7 Sound 9 Gameplay 7 Game Size 5 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Apart from the smart speech, you've seen (or should that be heard?) it all before.

MEGA Rating: 74%

R Henderson about to whack a baseball. What a guy

Another corker. *Spiderman Vs The Kingpin* must feature just about every type of gameplay you could imagine (with the possible exception of sport and RPGs). Playing Spidey, you have to defeat a whole host of foes leading up to the Kingpin himself to clear your name and restore law and order. Along the way you also have to take some juicy photos to keep your Editor boss happy (we know the feeling well).

The outstanding feature of this game is the sheer size of it – each of the levels is absolutely huge, and the web-slinging action will keep you glued to your joypad for ages. You'll have to push your Spidey senses to the limit to conquer each level packed with bad guys, all out to get themselves a piece of you. At the end of each stage you meet one of your deadliest foes. As if that weren't bad enough, on the later levels they team up to take you out. Also, the later levels become more puzzle orientated to really test you.

The graphics are brilliant, with great use of animation throughout. The whole game has been thoughtfully designed to keep you interested right up until the end. If you like huge games with stacks of challenge then you can't go wrong with old Spidey. *Spiderman Vs The Kingpin* is a very addictive and very trick version with great graphics and a moody, atmospheric soundtrack. What more could you ask for?

Graphics 9
Sound 9
Gameplay 9
Game Size 9
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: 'Spiderman, Spiderman, does whatever a spider can'. So how come you never see him getting trapped in a bath, then, eh? A pretty run-of-the-mill platform game, but lifted out of the ordinary by some pretty spiffy graphics and a nice line in enemies. Still only really for web-slinging fanatics and the Manic Street Preachers (evidently they're big fans), though.

MEGA RATING: 92%

TIP: • Before you meet the kingpin, investigate the maze and find the full web power-up. It'll stop Mary Jane from falling into the fiery pit.
• On Nightmare mode at the warehouse, climb onto the first pile of crates, swing onto the next pile, beat up the bad guy, swing over the guard dog and land on the next pile then start crawling.
• When you get to the Sandman, carry on right to the edge of the screen to collect a full life power-up.

SPLATTERHOUSE 2

Sega • £34.99

Seemingly starring Jason from the Halloween Horror movie series, this platform horror-'em-up doesn't live up to its own hype and ends up as a snooze-a-thon.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 4
Game Size 5
Addiction 4

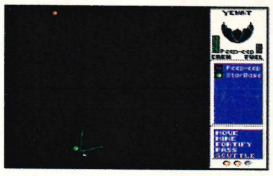
MEGA Says: Boring.

MEGA Rating: 45%

TIP: • Press A, B, C and Start together in the game to reset – so be careful.
• Here are some level-select codes:
Level 2 – EDK NAI ZOL LDL
Level 3 – IDO GEM IAL LDL
Level 4 – ADE XOE ZOL OME
Level 5 – EFH VEI RAG ORD
Level 6 – ADE NAI WRA LKA
Level 7 – EFH XOE IAL LDL
Level 8 – EDK VEI IAL LDL
• If the passwords are just too much hassle, then on the title screen (NOT the menu screen) press Left, Right, A, B and then C. Now start the game and you can select your level by pressing :Left or Right when the stage number is displayed.

STAR CONTROL

Accolade • Deleted



Massive but not actually all that complicated (it's just a souped-up coin-op game called *Space Wars*) space strategy trading thing with zappy and tactical bits thrown in as a life-pre-server. Excellent fun with two people playing.

Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 7
Game Size 8
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A bit of a lark with a chum if you're after something different, but kinda dull on your own.

MEGA Rating: 74%

TIP: • Put the game into Full Game mode and choose your scenario. When the scenario appears hold the joypad down and left and press button B. Keep them held down until the Star Map appears and then release them. Now every unexplored star (the blue ones) will have a precursor relic.

STAR FLIGHT

Electronic Arts • £49.99

An attempt to recreate the atmosphere of that home-computer classic Elite, this space trader-shooter/explorer from Electronic Arts seems to have all the right ingredients but somehow doesn't seem to contain the magic ingredient X, which every game needs in order to make it a real winner. Nice, involved stuff, though, and definitely a game worthy of investigation.

Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 7
Game Size 8
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Check this game out. It's a welcome break from the norm, even if it's nothing outstanding.

MEGA Rating: **79%**

STAR CRUISER

Unknown • IMPORT

Can you speak Japanese? Then maybe you'll be able to get past the strange Question and Answer sections that make up the end-of-level boss sequences in this vertical blaster. It's a novelty, but a bit of a crap novelty.

Graphics 4
Sound 4
Gameplay 1
Game Size 6
Addiction 1

MEGA Says: You'll never get past the first level!

MEGA Rating: **15%**

STEEL EMPIRE

Flying Edge • £39.99

Horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up that fails to excite.

Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 5
Game Size 5
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Forget about *Steel Empire*. If it's sideways-scrolling shoot 'em ups you're after, *Hellfire* is the game you really want.

MEGA Rating: **44%**

TIP: • On the title screen, hold button B and press Start, and you'll start the game on level two.
• If you want to get hold of 99 bombs, press C, A, C, A, Start and B on the ship-selection screen.
• If you fancy getting yourself 99 lives, go to the options screen, set the difficulty level to hard, set the stock to two and set the credits to one, and then play tune 65 on the soundtest option.

Sega • £44.99

A year after Axel, Blaze and Adam beat Mr Big (the final boss), felled the crime syndicate, and faced the moral dilemma of whether to take over as boss or return to a life of doing good, the crime syndicate is back.

So, you know what you've got to do? Flex those biceps and get stuck in to those bad guys, right? Right. Axel and Blaze are joined by Max (incredibly big guy) and Skate (hip, roller-blading dude) on a skull-crunch-

Prepare for extreme violence. And lots of it. *Lots*

STEEL TALONS

Tengen • £39.99

Steel Talons is a helicopter flight sim, which sets you the goal of completing 12 missions to become a member of the Steel Talons, the élite core of helicopter pilots. Each of these 12 missions is set over different terrain (from fog and snow to mountains and deserts), which you must navigate. It sounds easy enough, but you also have to destroy targets, and these vary from gun emplacements to tanks and even other helicopters. These aren't just useless decoys either, because they fire back at you.

Your helicopter can take a few hits, but take too many and you'll come crashing to the ground. You also achieve this end by flying into mountains, so avoiding this situation is advisable. If you lose a life (no matter how you do it), you continue from the position where you were destroyed, so you don't have to go through the whole mission again. You have got only three lives, however, so don't think you can just throw them away.

To help you complete your missions, your helicopter is armoured to the hilt with homing missiles (just enough to get you through each mission) and a 30 mm chain cannon, that has unlimited ammunition. You've got the helicopter, you've got the ammo, but have you got the talent?

You view straight ahead into the action, but by pressing Start and button C you can zoom in and out of the cockpit. By far the best view, however, is the one which allows you to see the whole of the helicopter. If you do decide to view from the cockpit, you're looking for some serious trouble,

Mountain 1 – You 0. Not the best result in the world

because you can't really see what's coming up and when.

Once you've got used to the 3D view, you should really take some time out to look at the info panel along the bottom of the screen. This shows all the information you'll need and the most important bit of information is the map. This map shows your flying area and where all the targets are (denoted by a yellow flash). Your position is shown by a white chevron, which also points in the direction in which you're flying.

The two gauges next to the map (the airspeed and the altimeter) are also important and need to be watched. Your score and time are also shown, along with how many missiles you have left, a target radar, how many lives you have, a bank indicator and an enemy radar warning device. It may all sound very complicated, but it's all nicely laid out and easy to use.

It's a shame then that the joypad control is so appaling. The 3D view is very jerky and even turning your helicopter around is disorientating. Also, the map is about as much good as a driving license is to a fish. It's small, but your play area is massive. If you fly off one end, you then appear at the other side, and the map is hopelessly out of scale. You can't get an idea of where to go or how far it is, and as such you get terribly confused.

You also have great trouble getting your altitude right. You can move up and down easily enough, but getting the thing to stop at any one height is almost impossible. This in itself wouldn't be that bad, but because you can get attacked by things at different altitudes it is an annoying fault.

After the frustration of the normal game let's move onto the head-to-head option. Well, it does say two players on the back of the box. Well, there's another disappointment – the two-player mode is a con. You don't get two games, or a split screen, but you do both get to control the same helicopter... yes, exactly. One of you flies while the other controls the gun. Well, at least both of you can get annoyed at the same time.

Steel Talons could have been an exciting alternative to *LHX Attack Chopper*, because so many of the elements in the game are very different. As it is, however, it isn't. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 6 Sound 5 Gameplay 6 Game Size 7 Addiction 4

MEGA Says: The stills may look impressive, but the movement is crap and the control is awful.

MEGA Rating: **55%**

STORMLORD

Razorsoft • IMPORT

Scroll along, beat things up, go 'Phwoar!' at the naked fairies, and, er, that's about it, really.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 5
Game Size 4
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: Hey, there's nothing wrong with naked fairies. If you're going to buy a scrolly beat-'em-up, you might as well have one with naked fairies in it.

MEGA Rating: **48%**

TIP: • Pause the game, then press A, A, A, A, C, C, B, B, B, C, A. Now unpause and you'll have five extra lives.
• At any point in the action, pause your game and press C, B, B, B, A, A, A, A, C, C, A, A, A, A to skip to the end of the level.

STREET SMART

Unknown • IMPORT

Remember the coin-op *Fighting Street?* Well, this is the conversion. Completely crap beat-'em-up action ahoy.

Graphics 3
Sound 4

STREETS OF RAGE 2

ing, leg-breaking romp through some of the worst baddies you'll ever see.

So what's so special about *Streets of Rage 2*? Well, let's take a look at what goes into making a great beat-'em-up. OK, so these aren't the sort of ingredients that most chefs would find appetising, so think of this as, erm, Delia Smith's Cookery Curse. For your ideal beat-'em-up, you will need:

1. A simultaneous two-player option. *Streets of Rage* has got two – two players can take on of Mr Big's henchmen together, or you can beat the stuffing out of each other. In a "proper" two-player game (two heroes versus the bad guys) you can't select the same characters, of course, but there are lots of different combinations to try out.
2. Lots of versatile, accessible moves. Every classic beat-'em-up has bags of easy-to-control, devastating moves. *Streets of Rage 2* is no exception.
3. Variety in gameplay. Each big bad guy requires a different strategy. As well as this tactical element, alternative weapons are available if you look around. You can pick up drainpipes and knives, as well as food icons, which restore lost energy.
4. Slick presentation, graphics, sound and animation. The graphics are wonderful, and all I can say about the sound is that the guy who programmed it is a genius. *Streets of Rage 2*'s soundtrack is even better *Sonic*'s.
5. A large, tough challenge. Ah. As with *Sonic 2* and *World of Illusion*, challenge is the only aspect of design that lets *Streets of Rage 2* down. But not quite all is lost.

Because this is the first 16-Mbit game, we were expecting a huge game. *Streets Of Rage 2* isn't huge, but it is large. There are eight levels, with sub-levels and mid-level bosses. However, the start-up options are too generous. On easy level with max lives and max continues you've got far too much of an advantage. The solution? Simply play it on the tougher levels.

So to conclude, *Streets of Rage 2* is a lovely game. It has all (just) the right ingredients and delivers them with genuine class. It's more fun, slicker and a lot better to play than even the arcade version of *Final Fight*. But be warned, you may finish it very quickly. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 9 Sound 9 Gameplay 7 Game Size 7 Addiction 9

MEGA Says: The best beat-em-up on the Mega drive so far. Just make sure you use the hard setting with no continues.

MEGA Rating: 55%

TIP: • The level select. Press Start as normal on pad one. Now, on the game-selection screen, move the cursor to Options. Hold buttons A and B on

Gameplay 2
Game Size 2
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: You'll finish it in one go and not even enjoy it.

MEGA Rating: 22%

STREETS OF RAGE

Sega • Deleted

If every third Mega Drive game that gets released is a beat-'em-up, how come hardly any of them are any good? Thankfully, that's a question that *Streets Of Rage* doesn't have to answer, because it's great stuff – if only it were tougher to beat!

Lovely backdrops, loads of athletic fighting moves, excellent two-player action (two players can interact with each other to pull off some frightening moves) and an imaginative approach to special weapons (the police car firing rockets from half a dozen screens back and still managing to pick off the bad guys with pinpoint accuracy – brilliant!) all go together to make this (with the exception of big brother, *Streets Of Rage 2*) the most challenging and rewarding game the Mega Drive has to offer in the genre.

Graphics 9
Sound 9
Gameplay 9
Game Size 5
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Classic two-player beat-'em-up action. Lovely stuff!

MEGA Rating: 89%

TIP: • For more continues press Left, Left, B, B, B, C, C, C and then Start when Game Over appears.
• Play to the end with a mate, both say yes to the question, go back to level six, continue to the end, and then fight it out for the "bad ending".
• Move to Options. On the second joypad press and hold Right then hold A, B, then C. Now press Start on pad one and select your lives or level.

SUMMER CHALLENGE

Flying Edge • £39.99

A fine view of a shapely bum

Summer Challenge is a multi-event sports simulator, with eight events on offer: archery, canoeing, equestrianism, hurdles, pole vaulting, high jump, javelin and cycling.

So what are the events like? Well, to be brutally honest, they're largely cack. You'd have thought that more could be done with a sports game than merely regressing to early '80s *Hypersports*-style gameplay, but no; these are more cartoon-like than anything approaching realism.

The archery epitomises the game's cackness. There's little skill involved, as the target moves erratically all over the place and in the end you give up through boredom. And archery is one of the better events!

Canoeing is moderately fun, except that your brave paddler has all the navigating skills of a Filipino oil tanker crew. The idea is to get successfully through a series of gates without touching them. It's virtually impossible to predict your angle of attack and whether or not you make it through a gate successfully depends on how your Mega Drive's feeling.

The equestrian event suffers from similar timing problems. It's virtually impossible to gauge your horse's speed, and therefore impossible to judge when you should hit the jump button to tackle a fence. The hurdles event suffers from the same problem.

Similar hassles ruin the pole vault, high jump and javelin events. Cycling is impossibly dreary: all you've got to do is hit the A and B buttons as fast as possible while avoiding the bottom and top of the circuit.

The only real challenge you'll face here is in overcoming your boredom. Graphically and sonically it's great, but little thought has gone into the gameplay. If you're thinking it might be a laugh with a few mates round, think again. *Andy Dyer.*

Graphics 8 Sound 8
Gameplay 3 Game Size 5
Addiction 3

A fine view of a horse's arse

MEGA Says: About as much fun as cleaning fat off a cooker with a toothbrush.

MEGA Rating: 55%

STRIDER

Sega • £19.99

It finally happened: all the world's countries stopped fighting and started being nice to each other. Unfortunately, they scrapped all their armies, which, although it seemed like a nice touch at the time, has left them ripe for invasion from outer space. And this is exactly what happened. Three giant monsters are laying waste to everything in their way. Back on Strider Island, where ultra-tough superheroes called Striders are trained, they're not going to stand back and let this just happen. No, sirree. So they've dispatched their toughest agent to deal with them.

This is as near to the arcade original as you are going to get. The graphics are pretty awesome, with cracking effects to match. For a long time they were heralded as the best on the Mega Drive (until the likes of Sonic and co appeared). The gameplay is very addictive, and the cart-wheeling antics of the hero will keep you glued to this right up until you finish it – which probably won't take all that long. The last level is the most challenging – in fact it is the only one with any real challenge at all.

Despite the easiness of the game, don't be fooled into thinking that it isn't worth having in your collection. The action is very fast and packed with arcade-quality sprites and backdrops. There are 77 different sensational sound effects and a sinister main soundtrack throughout which goes to create an incredible atmosphere. If only there were a few more levels then *Strider* would be a truly amazing game. However, that reservation aside, it's still a very addictive game, and deserves to be up there with the best of them.

Graphics 9
Sound 9
Gameplay 7
Game Size 7
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Ah, these were the good old days, and now we can have them again. If you're on a bit of a nostalgia trip. or just want the chance to play a game which is classic in every sense of the word, check this out Oh yeah, and the 'running down the side of a mountain' sequence is just about worth the money by itself. Lovely stuff.

MEGA RATING: 89%

TIP: • On the airship, fall to the bottom, walk left, destroy all the bombs, climb to the top left and kill the panda!

SUNSET RIDERS

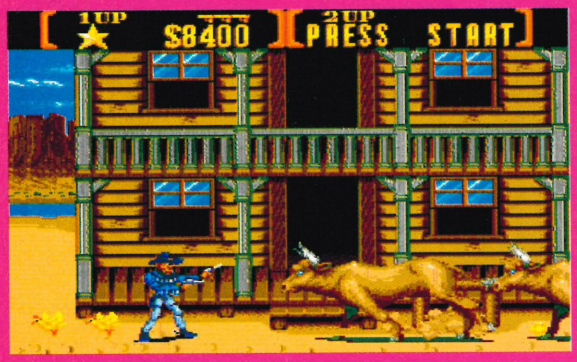
Konami • £39.99

Sunset Riders is a conversion of a Konami coin-op. It's a scrolling platform shoot-'em-up in the style of *Rolling Thunder*. It's got eight levels, and one or two players can pl... zzzzz... Oops, sorry. That wasn't very exciting either, was it? Maybe a different approach is called for.

Bum! Wow! This is one of the best games since, well, one of the last games we reviewed! It's brilliant! It'll make you wet your pants with excitement – I know I did! No, hang on, I've done that routine before. Another go.

Perhaps the best thing is if I just tell you how much I enjoyed playing this game. We see lots of platformers every month here at MEGA, and lots of 'em are perfectly decent, with even the odd one that you could describe as "good". Mostly, though, even the good ones are nothing we haven't seen before, and hence the number of them that we ever load up and play after the review has been written could be fairly comfortably counted on the fingers of one plastic football from Woolworth's. *Sunset Riders* is a bit different, though. Y'see, *Sunset Riders* actually brought a smile to my face while I played it, not just once but, ooh, several times. Not just a laughing kind of smile, either (y'know, the kind of smile you get when playing *G-LOC* and thinking "Hey, I didn't pay 40 quid for this"), but a good old-fashioned "Blimey, this is a really good game – I'm enjoying myself" kind of smile.

As I said, this is much the same game as *Rolling Thunder* at heart, which is to say you simply trog along the screen from left to right and shoot bad guys. The action takes place for the most part on two vertical levels, with an athletic one-handed leap bringing you from one to the other, and the landscape is cunningly designed to provide lots of places for meanies to conceal themselves.



Cormano is about to experience a whole load of bull

It's an unusually interactive landscape too, in as much as that there are barrels suspended from roofs (for no immediately obvious reason) that you can shoot loose and drop on baddies' heads, telegraph poles that can knock you flying off the train you clamber across on level two, dynamite that you can pick up and lob back at the bad guys before it explodes, and stuff like that. Even the scenery conceals gameplay features, like the saloons on level one which house, er, "actresses", who give you power-ups and bonuses before sending you on your way with a healthy smooch.

It's lovely to play, with responsive controls which make leaping into the air while simultaneously shooting diagonally below you seem like the easiest and most natural thing in the world, and butch, bright, glowing graphics that give you a real urge to get to the next stage. The gameplay is pretty short on variety, but what kind of a criticism is that? *Sonic 2* isn't exactly a new experience a second, is it? More tangible are the differences that have been made to the original arcade game – you only get to choose from two characters instead of four, and the bonus stage is different, being more like an entire horse-based normal section from the coin-op, which is also missing here. But at the end of the day, who cares as long as it's still fun, eh?

As if all this wasn't enough, there's even a fun little two-player head-to-head game thrown in, where you and a chum take one character each and stand at either end of a single screen, leaping around and shooting at each other. There are three different screens of this, and first to gain two victories is the, er, victor. OK, it's not *Street Fighter 2*, but it's a smart little diversion from a game that doesn't really need to be diverted from.

There isn't a lot to this game (almost by definition – it's an arcade conversion, after all), but if you compare it to something like *Hook*, which is pretty undeniably technically superior (better music, more levels, more depth, all the rest of it), you suddenly realise how little fun there is to be had from technical superiority on its own. I've finished this already (on Easy level, anyway), but I still keep going back and playing it, and the chances of *Hook* ever coming out of the game cupboard again are infinitesimal. I like this, and I don't care what anybody says. *Neil West.*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 8 Game Size 6 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: A simple arcade game for sure, but it's fast, funny and simple fun. One of the most enjoyable platformers I've played in months.

MEGA Rating: 79%

SUPER AIRWOLF (CROSS FIRE)

Kyugu • IMPORT

Super Airwolf is known as *Crossfire* in the US and that should be enough to tell you that this game's got absolutely nowt to do with *Airwolf* – it's just an old vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up with a new name stuck on it for a quick license cash-in. Fortunately it's quite a good old vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up, but it's still nothing you haven't seen a dozen times before.

Graphics 8
Sound 10
Gameplay 6
Game Size 6
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: One of the best vertical-blasting games, but only worthwhile if you don't already have half a dozen of the blighters.

MEGA Rating: 77%

SUPER BATTLETANK

Absolute • IMPORT

Control of a tank in a Gulf War simulator. Not too bad at all.

Graphics 9
Sound 8

STRIDER 2

Sega • £39.99

Erm, this isn't very good, we're afraid – a bit of a disappointment, to say the least. We suggest that you go out and buy the original game instead and leave this rather inferior sequel well alone.

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: And that's all we're prepared to say on the matter. Case closed.

MEGA Rating: 50%

SUPER HIGH IMPACT

Arena • IMPORT

I stuck this cart into the office Mega Drive, having never played the arcade game of which it's a conversion. I was in a bit of a hurry, so I didn't bother reading the instruction manual, just picked a couple of teams and got straight down to it. I lost the toss and received the ball from the kick-off on my 30 yard line.

I checked out the bewildering range of possible offensive plays, and plumped completely at random for whichever one happened to be in the middle of the screen at the time (I think it was a "Flood" play). The two teams lined up, danced around a bit and shouted a couple of insults at each other ("Yer toast!" and "Yer mommy's boys!", in charmingly butch sampled speech).

Well, it certainly *looks*

I pressed the A button (it seemed like a logical thing to do) and the ball snapped back to my quarterback. Flushed with success, I pressed the A button again (hey, why muck around with a winning formula?). The quarterback flung the ball athletically up towards one of my receivers, who gratefully and just as athletically made a great catch before being brutally knocked to the ground by the opposing defence. Never mind, 19 yards gained and first down. "This is a great tactic," I thought, and promptly tried exactly the same one again for the next play. Bingo! Another 21 yards gained! Surely it couldn't work again, could it?

Funnily enough, it did. I was a bit slow on the button this time, so I only made 14 yards before getting clobbered, but it didn't matter because I was only 16 yards from the line. Breathless with the tension and excitement, I lined my boys up for one last push. Select that move! Press that button! Press that button again! Touchdown!

Now I don't know about you, but when I play a game, I like to feel as if I'm actually achieving something. *Road Rash* wouldn't be any fun if the other bikes just sat on the starting line and let you ride off all by yourself, would it? It seems to me, then, that *Super High Impact* leaves just a little bit to be desired in the challenge and reward department. Fair enough, I was playing on the easiest of the three difficulty settings, but even so, eight presses of a random button without the first glance at the instructions really oughtn't to produce such startling success in my book.

It's a pity, because *Super High Impact* really looks the part. The graph-

Gameplay 6
Game Size 5
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A strange sort of strategy/blaster game. It won't appeal to everyone, but maybe to people who, in a previous life, were once a tuna fish. Possibly.

MEGA Rating: 70%

SUPER FANTASY ZONE

Sega • Deleted

High class cutesy shoot-'em-up that's a lot harder than it looks. Well worth a try.

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 6
Game Size 8
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Pick this one up cheap and you'll be laughing.

MEGA Rating: 77%

TIP: • When you're playing press START to pause. Plug in a controller in port two and hold down DOWN-LEFT and START, then press B. Do this and the word PASS appears on screen and tells you the cheat has worked. Now press C to go to the next stage, B for infinite credits, and B again to be invincible. Play the game, pause again and press C to go to the boss and A to get $999,999,999 in gold.
• Alternatively, press Up and Down repeatedly at least 50 times. Start and then go into the shop you should be able to buy lives at $1000.

SUPER HQ

Taito • IMPORT

Super HQ adds a twist to the run-of-the-mill racing formula found in *Out Run* and *Lotus Turbo Challenge* by giving you three cars to choose from: a sporty little red number, a four-wheel-drive jeep and a huge truck. Each has a rating for speed, strength and size. It's important not to go just for speed, because the aim of the game is to catch the criminal's car, and then force it to stop by ramming into it.

You must, therefore, pick your car carefully. Consider also the terrain – after all, a sexy red sports car isn't any good on a mud track, is it? There are five levels in all, and probably the best way to attack this game is to use your sports car for the first two and the four-wheel-drive jeep for the next two, saving the truck until last. This set-up, accompanied by appropriate turbo boosts, should ensure success.

Ah yes, the turbo boosts. You have three boosts, which temporarily make you go about 50 miles per hour faster. When driving the four-wheel-drive and the truck it's essential that you use the boosts wisely, because otherwise you'll have real trouble catching the enemy. When you've run out of boosts, the game takes on a real nervous edge, as you're slowly bearing down on your opponent with only a few seconds left on the clock and a couple more hits to get.

The game doesn't really add anything new to the racing game genre,

See that explosion? That's you again. (Snigger, laugh)

See that blue police car? That's you that is. No, *really*

though it does take several elements from other racing games. There's *Road Rash*-style bashing and bumping, leaps and jumps à la *Lotus Turbo Challenge* and the turbo speed which is to be found in the ageing classic, *Super Hang-On*.

After a few warm-up games you'll soon get the hang of racing around the tracks, and catching the first few cars won't present any problem at all. The next two levels, however, are rather harder, because more cars get in your way and the opponents have a greater turn of speed. However, if you use the built-in continues, which allow you to start from the same position as you finished in but reset your timer and give you back three turbos, you'll finish the game easily.

Even though there are three cars to choose from in *Super HQ*, it won't take you long to get through the whole game, and when it's all done and dusted, there's not much to make you keep coming back for more. The game is fairly good fun while it lasts, but , with bigger and better racing games on the market, you'd be wise to look elsewhere for your fun. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 4 Sound 6 Gameplay 4 Game Size 3 Addiction 5

MEGA Says: In the short term it's fun and hard, but after a few plays you'll crack it wide open.

MEGA Rating: 44%

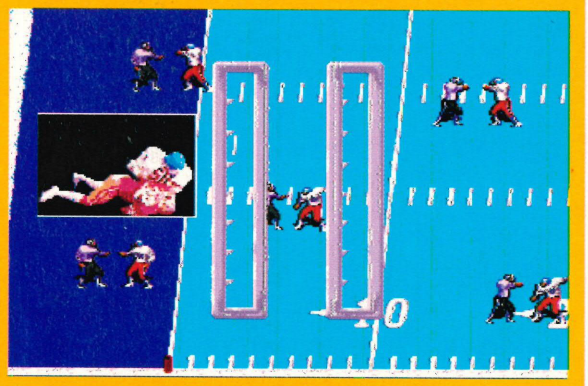
ics are big, colourful, fast and smooth, and some really nifty digitised animations and speech samples accompany the game and they do a lot for the atmosphere. For a bit of a break from the constant "football" action, you even get a selectable "fight" option, whereby every now and again the teams will suddenly leap up and start pummelling the living daylights out of each other. Batter the three fire buttons fast enough and you'll win the fight, with the opposing team sent flying onto the turf.

Sadly, and a little confusingly, there's absolutely no point to it – you get no advantage of any kind from winning, and no penalties for losing. But what the heck, it's a bit of a chuckle anyway. Similarly, when you make a particularly crunching defensive tackle, you get a rating on the "Hit-O-Meter" to show how tough you are, but it's got no other purpose than as a bit of window dressing.

Everything else about the game is pretty well thought out too – the control system and the method of choosing plays are both really easy and natural to use once you do read the manual, and even if you don't know the first thing about American football, you'll pick up what's going on very quickly indeed.

It's just that all the game's excellent features are rendered utterly useless by the fact that the gameplay just isn't there at all. This is about as playable as (to use my favourite analogy) a Pizza Hut Cheese Feast – and that's (hold finger and thumb very close together) *that* playable.

I don't care how pretty it looks, I don't care how close it is to the arcade game, I don't care how great all the little extra frills are, pressing the



Well, it certainly *looks* great but where's the game?

A button eight times to score a touchdown isn't top American football thrills, and that's that. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 8 Sound 8 Gameplay 3 Game Size 3 Addiction 5

MEGA Says: This was never going to outdo *John Madden*. It's another case of nice conversion, shame about the original coin-op.

MEGA Rating: 39%

SUPER HANG-ON

Sega • £19.99

When a budget range is launched you expect some of them to shine above the others. *Super Hang On* is without a doubt the pick of the bunch, a superb racing game when it was released at full price. Now that it is available at this ultra-low budget price it is an absolutely essential purchase.

It has super smooth graphics and the high-speed action is breathtaking. You wouldn't believe that this is one of the oldest Mega Drive games around. In true racing tradition it will have you on the edge of your seats as you battle your way around various circuits. It's

SUPER KICK OFF

US Gold • £44.99

You can play any European team in *Super Kick Off*. It does matter considerably which team you choose, as the crap ones (like Wales) run slowly and pass badly, while the good ones, like AC Milan and, if they'd bothered to include it, Bristol Rovers, do everything extremely well.

Obviously, the major attraction with a game like this is that you get to choose from a host of teams, each of which has different skills and tactics. And instead of just seeing all the players haring off up the pitch after the unfortunate bloke who happened to accidentally trap the ball, you can actually sort out your playing styles properly.

Of course, *Kick Off* has been around for countless centuries on all those old-fashioned computery formats (you know, those things with keyboards and boring stuff like that), and pretty popular it's been too. But on the Mega Drive it's just so much better than on any of the other formats. The Mega Drive joypad is ideal for controlling your players, and you'll find you can dodge, jink, run and dribble with an ease that will astonish you. And the top-down view, complete with scrolly pitch and little radar, is good too.

But hang on a moment. There is a bit of an annoyance here as well. Sometimes the arrow which shows you which player you're currently controlling doesn't seem to be making the right decisions, and you end up having full control over a bloke who's several yards from the guy with the ball (who's also on your team). This isn't a drawback of huge proportions and it sorts itself out in a fraction of a second, but the delay might just be long enough to cause you to muff that vital shot which would have given you victory over Real Madrid and the chance of a knighthood in the New Year's Honours List, plus a trout farm in Kent and all the adoring babes you could handle.

As well as the standard business of playing each game, you've got the option to have a bit of a practice (or a kickabout, as we experts call it), which allows you to scoot the ball around an empty pitch and take loads of free kicks from any position you like. The free kick bit is brilliant – once you've decided the most attractive place from which you want to shoot (and it needn't be anywhere near the enemy goal) all you do is hit button B and everybody (both teams, in other words) comes tumbling onto the pitch to assume their positions. The baddies line up and, presumably, cross their hands to protect their dangly bits (the resolution of the screen isn't quite good enough to see them doing this, though). Then you just whack away at the ball.

You can also take part in your very own penalty shoot-outs. Yes, you've guessed it; the ball is placed lovingly on the correct spot, then a cursor thing slides up and down forever, unless you hit a button. The trick is to tap the button at exactly the right moment, thus scoring a goal and earning yourself more babes, a few medals and a Ferrari Testarossa in racing red, complete with...

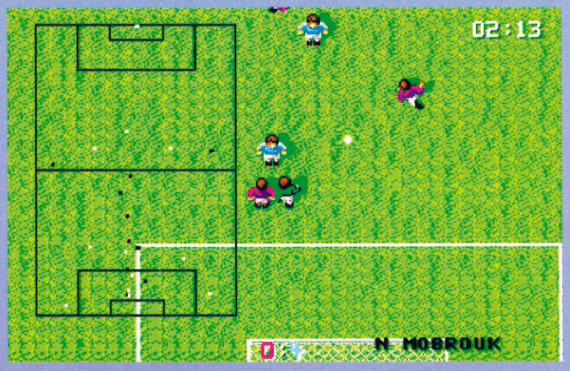
Ahem. Anyway, the only things which spoil the game slightly are the made-up names for all the players. These appear at the bottom of the screen during the match, and are really rather pointless when you consider that you'll have heard of none of them.

A fine goal from the, err, well it *looks* like the goalie

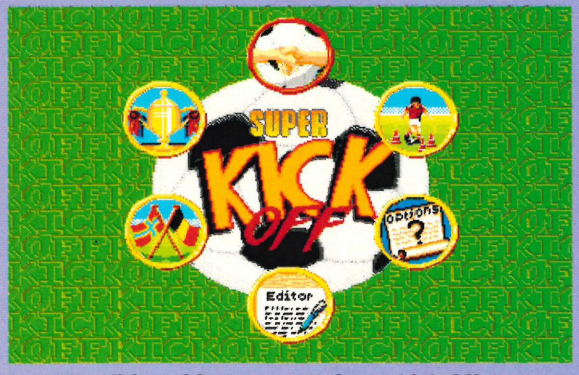
But, despite this, what do I reckon? Well, it's the best version of *Kick Off* to date, but that's what you'd expect from the Mega Drive really, wouldn't you? It's also a pretty fab footy game in its own right. It's fast and a bit tricky to master, but if you give it a bit of time, you'll be laughing. *Neil West.*
Graphics 7 Sound 6 Gameplay 8 Game Size 7 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: This is a pretty damned OK football game. There's a reasonable amount of control in here, and the players seem slightly more intelligent than most (in real life, that is). But there are plenty better Mega Drive footy games in the pipeline. I suggest you save your money for something else.

MEGA Rating: 79%



The radar shows you if your teammates have buggered off down the pub while you weren't looking



In the tradition of footy games *Super kick Off* presents you with more options than you'll ever need

Carefully ork out your defensive and offensive tactics, and then resort to wellying the ball up the pitch

a perfect copy of the arcade game and still rates as one of the best arcade conversions ever. Sega even put in an extra option where you can race for money to soup up your bike to awesome proportions. Combine this with the brilliant conversion and you've got a hell of a cart.

This is one of those games that most people will have forgotten about by now, but it should enjoy even more success now that it has been rereleased at this new price. This is the nearest you can get to real bike racing without risking life and limb racing around Brands Hatch at 150mph.

Graphics 9
Sound 9
Gameplay 8
Game Size 8
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: *Road Rash*, without all the violence. Yes, we know is sounds like a bit of a bad idea, but if what you're after is pure high-speed racing thrills, then this is still your best bet. A near-perfect rendition of the coin-op, too – just try and stop yourself from leaning into those bends...

MEGA Rating: 90%

TIP: • Here's a code which gives you loads of money on the Original mode. Just enter the following password: 6FF3F546F35564 FFISKJIMBAMIRJ.

SUPER HYDLIDE

Sega • £19.99

Unusual title for an RPG, and not a very good one at that. It's in the style of the *Phantasy Star* games but it's nowhere near as good. The graphics are the worst seen in an RPG and the plot is as weak as Andy's coffee. The quest is a long one if you can suffer to the end of it. No wonder it's cheap!

Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 3
Game Size 7
Addiction 2

MEGA SAYS: For the die-hard RPG fans only. It's still overpriced, though, and (yes, we're going to say it one more time) it's not as good as the *Shining'* games.

MEGA RATING: 39%

SUPER LEAGUE BASEBALL

Sega • Deleted

You thought there were no more crappy baseball games?

Graphics	5
Sound	3
Gameplay	4
Game Size	4
Addiction	3

MEGA Says: You were wrong. This is another.

MEGA Rating: 30%

TIP: • Look at the car park before the start. In the right-hand corner is Virgil Tracy's Thunderbird 2.
• Use this code to start with a four-game lead: JORQWVVRROOQSH-PQGUDEAM

SUPER MONACO G.P

Sega • Deleted

Read the *Ayrton Senna Super Monaco GP 2* entry for more details, but in short, this is a fantastic formula one simulator, complete with pit stops, qualifying laps, team changes, world tours and ultra-smart graphics. An unmissable game.

Graphics	10
Sound	7
Gameplay	9
Game Size	9
Addiction	8

MEGA Says: Fantastic stuff – the only game that betters it is the sequel.

MEGA Rating: 90%

TIP: • Here are some level-select passwords for *Super Monaco GP.*

Race 2 – Brazil:
0961 4003 0000 0200
000N R123 4567 O9AB
0CDE F000 0000 0000
0000 0000 1200 F9DE

Race 3 – France:
0F8A 8033 0000 0300
000N R123 4567 O9AB
0CDE F000 0000 0080
0000 0000 2100 5F8D

Race 4 – Hungary:
0J8D 9233 6000 C000
0000 7123 4567 09AB
C8DE F000 0000 0000
0000 0000 3200 759D

Race 5 – West Germany:
0P9H B533 6000 L000
000O 7123 4567 0PAB
C8DE F000 0000 0001
0000 0000 4200 ACF9

Race 6 – USA:
0VCH D633 F000 P000
000K N123 4L67 0PAB
C8DE F000 0000 0000
0000 0000 5200 E09D

Race 7 – Canada:
05GH F733 O000 S000
000K N123 4L67 0PAB
C8DE F800 0000 0080
0000 0000 6100 F7BA

Race 8 – Great Britain:
0BHL HR33 7005 0000
000R K123 4067 59AC
R8DE F800 0080 0000
0000 0000 7200 41D1

Race 9 – Italy:
0HLM K433 9005 0000
000G KH23 4067 59AC
R8DE F808 0080 0000
0000 0000 8200 5D53

Race 10 – Portugal:
0NLQ MD43 9008 0000
000G KH23 4067 59AC
R8DE F808 0080 0080
0000 0000 9100 BE4D

Race 11 – Spain:
0MRR QP73 9080 0000
000K 0023 4H67 59CA
B8DE F808 0010 0001
0000 0000 A200 9352

Race 12 – Mexico:
1MV4 RRA3 90E0 0000
0004 0023 4167 59CA
B8DE F888 0010 00G1
0G00 0000 B200 054A

Race 13 – Japan:
1V55 UTA3 90I0 0000
000K 0023 4H67 59CA
B8DE F898 0010 0001
0000 0000 C200 DC75

Race 14 – Belgium:
189B VVA3 90L0 0000
000K 0023 4H67 59CA
B8DE FG98 0010 0001
0000 0000 D200 3241

Race 15 – Australia:
1HFC 21A3 90P0 0000
000K 0023 4H67 59CA
B8DE FG9H 0010 0001
0000 0000 E200 6AB4

Race 16 – Monaco:
1QJI 42A3 90S0 0000
000K 0023 4H67 59CA
B8DE FG9H 0010 0001
0000 0000 F200 65DA

• Start in the Madonna team, with a World Championship title:
4000 0000 0000 0000
0000 GGD5 3627 B14C
FA89 E000 0000 000I
0000 0000 G300 FA0F

• Finish in the top three on the Monaco circuit. Hold down buttons A, B and C as you finish in the top three on the wet circuit and you'll hold up your head instead of a trophy.
• Smash into the guy holding the chequered flag at the end of the Monaco race and he'll fly away into the background, losing all your points.

SUPER OFF ROAD RACER

Accolade • £29.99

This was never supposed to be a one-player game, but if you do try to play it that way you'll get a solid couple of days' fun before you throw it to the back of your games cupboard never to be seen again (helped out by the fact that here you get the coin-op's original eight levels plus an extra eight from the little-seen sequel). Get someone else involved and it's much more entertaining, but the Mega Drive version lacks the three- or four-player modes of some other versions and so never quite reaches the same giddy heights as the coin-op original did.

Graphics	6
Sound	5
Gameplay	8
Game Size	7
Addiction	8

MEGA Says: A definite luxury, unless you're a real *Super Sprint* freak. You'd be better off hanging around until someone invents a multi-player adaptor and then seeing what happens.

MEGA Rating: 69%

SUPER REAL BASKETBALL

Sega • Deleted

Not bad, but not up to the standard of *Bulls Versus Lakers.*

Graphics	7
Sound	6
Gameplay	7
Game Size	6
Addiction	7

MEGA Says: Er, not (ahem) as good as *Bulls Versus Lakers.*

MEGA Rating: 68%

SUPER REAL VOLLEYBALL

Sega • IMPORT

Well, it's volleyball, alright. Not really a great deal of fun as a videogame, though.

Graphics	7
Sound	4
Gameplay	5
Game Size	5
Addiction	5

MEGA Says: Buy a volleyball, make some friends and play the game for real. You'll have loads more fun.

MEGA Rating: 55%

TIP: • Do you fancy a game of volleyball, with you as the United States and your opponents as Russia? You do? Then enter RP.VE as your code and away you go.

SUPER THUNDERBLADE

Sega • £19.99

One helicopter against an entire army? Yep, that sounds really plausible, doesn't it.? In *Super Thunderblade* the action is either viewed from behind the chopper or from inside it. The game is packed with blasting action but is let down by sub-standard graphics and gameplay that, well, simply gets tedious after you've had a couple of goes.

Graphics	5
Sound	6
Gameplay	3
Game Size	4
Addiction	3

MEGA Says: It looked pretty dated even when it was first released, and now it really looks ancient.

MEGA Rating: 41%

SUPERMAN

Sunsoft • IMPORT

Soops plummets to the depths of mediocrity in this lame effort of a platform beat-'em-up. A shame, really, because there was great potential here. Virgin Games sneaked this one into the shops without giving out review copies beforehand. We wonder why?

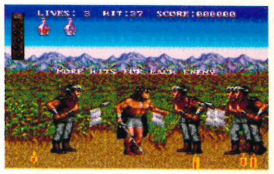
Graphics	6
Sound	5
Gameplay	4
Game Size	5
Addiction	4

MEGA Says: Someone's obviously been on the Kryptonite.

MEGA Rating: 45%

SWORD OF SODAN

EA • Deleted



Appaling beat-'em-up with large sprites that desperately attempts to liven things up with a potion-drinking power-up mechanism, but fails miserably. About as likely to generate enjoyment as a rattlesnake in a lucky dip.

Graphics	3
Sound	4
Gameplay	3
Game Size	5
Addiction	2

MEGA Says: Not for anyone with any taste or a remote conception of the meaning of the word 'quality'.

MEGA Rating: 25%

TIP: • Collect four Etherium potions and drink them all at once to warp to the next level.
• Cleanse a cursed sword at a church.

SWORD OF VERMILLION

Sega • Deleted

Try not to be put off by the fearsome price tag on this, because if you're into all that RPG hacking-and-slashing malarkey, it will be money well spent. *Sword Of Vermillion* is probably the best game of the type on the Mega Drive, and, against the *Phantasy Star* games, that's no mean feat. Big, slick and sexy.

Graphics	8
Sound	5
Gameplay	8
Game Size	9
Addiction	6

MEGA Says: Look, you might as well to spend £50 on something excellent as waste £35 on something average. Quality costs, but it's usually worth it.

MEGA Rating: 86%

TALE SPIN

Sega • £34.99

Baloo enters the Customs Office only to find he has to face the might of the incredible Upside-down Man

Tale Spin comes from the same mould as *World of Illusion*. It has all the usual Disney film licence ingredients: stonking looks, tuneful ditties, but very little in the way of gameplay.

Baloo and Kit are battling it out with Shere Khan for a transport contract. This involves partaking in a spot of globe-trotting. With the aid of their Sea Duck, they've got just seven days to grab enough cargo to win the contract. It's up to you whether you want to go it alone, but be warned, you'll get bored to tears on yer todd, so team up with a mate.

If you go for the "sad git with no friends" option, you can choose to play the part of either Baloo or Kit. It doesn't really matter which one you choose, because their character traits will only become apparent if you're playing the two-player game.

You begin your journey in a platform-style jungle. Here you must collect all the cargo; simply press Down and button A to pick up the boxes. There are ten boxes of cargo to be found on each level, and with eight different locations to visit, there's a lot of humping around to be done. The only weapons Baloo and Kit have to help them are Baloo's high-powered bat and ball and Kit's catapult. To take a sure shot, just press button B. Once you've collected the cargo on a level, all that remains is the tedious stroll along to the exit.

After completing each level, you'll find yourself in the customs office to meet an end-of-level boss. Shere Khan's planted one of his men there, and you'll have to defeat him before you can clear customs.

Your journey continues through seven more locations. Some of them are far too long for fat ol' Baloo or little Kit to walk, so they're stuck. End of game? Unfortunately not, because, amazingly, they can become high flyers. If your side-kick hasn't gone off and left you yet, Baloo gets to pilot a plane fitted with a grease gun, while Kit, still armed only with a catapult, tows behind on the airfoil and defends you both against enemy fire. That's about the gist of it really. I found it all rather dull but a younger player would probably find it entertaining, especially in two-player mode. There are some nice touches in here: Kit's jumping is fun as is the way in which Baloo's weight sometimes restricts his progress through the game.

All aboard the Sea Duck for high flying hoots

This is, however, just another duff game in Disney wrapping. It has about as much get up and go as Baloo himself, and basically you would be better off spending your money on something, indeed anything, from your local Disney store. *Amanda Dyson.*

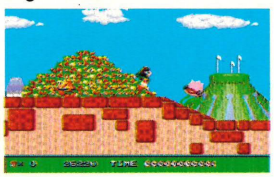
Graphics 7 Sound 6 Gameplay 4 Game Size 4 Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Never judge a cart by its cover. No real challenge to be found here, but it's well suited to the younger games plaer.

MEGA Rating: 52%

TALMIT'S ADVENTURE (MARVEL LAND)

Sega • £39.99



Super-cutesy platforming action, like *Sonic The Hedgehog* with more primary colours. It looks fabulous and plays better than it looks, so why don't you go and get it?

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 6
Game Size 7
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: One of the best platformers around, and one of the few games that can lure girls to your joypad too.

MEGA Rating: 77%

TIP: • Enter the code TRIDENT for the last level.
• Enter ARDE as your password and you can start on any level you want.

TASK FORCE HARRIER FX

Unknown • IMPORT

Nice power-ups, shame about the rest of this bog-standard vertical scrolling shooter. Give it a miss.

Graphics 4
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: If you really want an old, out-of-date blaster – try *Truxton.*

MEGA Rating: 38%

TIP: • Place the cursor over the Config option and press Up, Down, Left, Right, A and C together, then B and Start simultaneously for more options.

TAZ-MANIA

Sega • £39.99

The most cartoon-like Sega game so far, *Taz Mania* stars that lovable psychopath the Tasmanian Devil in a *Sonic*-like game of epic (in everything but game size) proportions. It's beautiful, it's hilarious, but it's also a bit repetitive and none too tough to get to the end of. If you've got a Looney Tunes-loving younger brother or sister, though (or if you ARE a Looney Tunes-loving younger brother or sister, or if you're just really crap at games), this is absolutely ideal.

Graphics 9
Sound 8
Gameplay 8
Game Size 7
Addiction 9

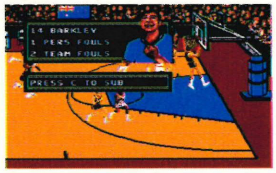
MEGA Says: Brilliantly entertaining, but not all that demanding, *Taz Mania* is perfect for the kids, or if you can afford to splash out for games you'll finish in three days.

MEGA Rating: 87%

TIP: • Plug in two joypads, press A, B, C and Start on both of them simultaneously on the title screen, pause the game, press B and then unpause the game for invincibility.
• Plug in two pads, press A, B, C and Start on both of them simultaneously on the title screen, pause the game, press C then unpause to select a level.
• On the arctic level near the end on a block of ice above some water, jump down to a hidden room full of bonus items.

TEAM USA BASKETBALL

Electronic Arts • £39.99



The team that bought you *NHLPA Hockey* and *John Madden Football* turn their hands to basketball – and a decent enough job they've made of it too. But basketball as a sport is never going to make an ideal videogame (too much tactile invention you know) and so this really, at the end of the day can only be labelled "one for the fans".

As the sequel to the impressive *Celtics Vs Lakers*, this is basically exactly the same game as *Bulls Vs Lakers* and (the recently released) *Bulls Vs Blazers* – the games are the same but feature different teams. *Team USA Basketball* is based on the Olympics, and so you get to play the 'Dream Team' – this does wonders for the ego but little to develop a challenge.

This aside though, if you simply have to buy a basketball game, then this is the one it should be.

Graphics 8
Sound 5
Gameplay 8
Game Size 4
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: A decent enough basketball game but unless you can find someone else to play with then it's just too easy.

MEGA Rating: 72%

TIP: • Here are codes to get seven teams to the final.
CIS vs Yugoslavia – P4T3DB9
ANGOLA vs Yugoslavia – 0DR7BBQ
CANADA vs Yugoslavia – FDT32B3
AUSTRALIA vs Italy – R0T7LBY
CHINA vs Slovenia – YNT7GB9
CROATIA vs United States – 08TWNBN
USA vs China – SXT7RC0
I Your best formations (for the USA) are:
Mullin – Forward
Drexter – Forward
Jordan – Center
Guard – Stockton
Guard – Johnson
And then sub them into this formation:
Laethner – Forward
Robinson – Forward
Ewing – Center
Pippen – Guard
Jordan – Guard
• Here are the codes for the final:
France – FOT7PBB (vs USA)
Italy – 64T7SDS (vs China)
Lithuania – Q4T7KBY (vs Canada)
Netherlands – 2JT7TBN (vs France)
Slovenia – 4OT7CB4 (vs Netherlands)
Spain – JDT7MCJ (vs Croatia)
Yugoslavia – 90T7FBB (vs France)

TECHNOCOP

Unknown • IMPORT

Very similar to *Outlander*, this game also attempts to mix driving with platfrom action. Doesn't work though.

Graphics	7
Sound	5
Gameplay	4
Game Size	4
Addiction	3

MEGA Says: It's a shame, but a jack of all trades rarely proves to master anything. Oh, and two halves very rarely make a whole. (That's quite enough clichés. We get the point – Ed)

MEGA Rating: 40%

TIP: • In any building area, pause the game, press C ten times, A five times, B twice and A ten times. You'll hear "Techno Cop" and then get all your lives back.

TERMINATOR

Virgin Games • £39.99

You're enjoying yourself, you're marvelling at the lush graphics, you're blown away by the platform shoot-'em-up gameplay, you're blasting through level four and... er, then you finish it. That's it then, eh?

Graphics	9
Sound	9
Gameplay	6
Game Size	3
Addiction	8

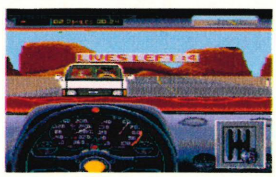
MEGA Says: Lovely game, but there's not nearly enough of it. Shame!

MEGA Rating: 75%

TIP: • Wait for the extra time bombs at the start of each level. If they don't appear, run left and right over the spot where the last lot appeared.

TEST DRIVE 2

Accolade • £39.99



TURTLES: THE HYPERSTONE HEIST

Konami • £39.99

The Hyperstone is a stone and it has great powers. Some raging great berk has allowed this thing to fall into the possession of Krang (famed criminal and of hideous deformity). And typically, the fat berk has decided to use the stone's power to shrink New York City and ultimately take over the world. Not a very rosy prospect, but hey, at least we have four bloody great fat, pizza-eating Turtles to help save the world. Despite being the least likely looking heroes ever to appear, the portly foursome is actually pretty tasty when it comes to duffing people up. Although each Turtle has a different weapon, most of their moves are the same. It must be said that there are an awful lot of moves in there, but unlike a beat-'em-up like Streetfighter 2, not all of the moves are accessed using specific key presses. Some of them (like grabbing hold of the enemy and bashing him from side to side) simply occur if you are in a certain position or situation. That doesn't necessarily reduce the skill needed, because, at the end of the day, it's still up to you to get into those positions in order to trigger off the more complex moves. Also, each Turtle has a special move which, while more powerful than any of the others at his disposal, also uses up lots of energy, so it's only to be used in the direst of emergencies. Having said that, if you accidentally select the special move, as long as the attack doesn't make contact with an enemy, no energy will be lost. It's only a small point, but again it indicates that a lot of thought has been put into the programming of the game.

There are quite a few opportunities in which to come face to face with a "dire emergency" in the form of one of the many opponents or bosses in the game. Krang's lowest of the low are his footsoldier-type people. They're pretty crap and even their ninja skills are sadly lacking, but as you progress up through the chain of command (an enemy's skills are represented by the colour of his clothes, so you soon know what to expect) they increase in strength and ability so you'll find that blue opponents charge at you, pink ones throw shurikens and so on. Apart from these you also get robot dogs, lasers, force fields, large rolling balls and even holes in the ground, all of which can give you some grief.

But now for the first criticism. Despite how fast and furious the fun may seem, you will eventually think "Hang on, this is only my first go and I'm already on level four!". And indeed, this will happen to practically everyone who plays *Turtles*. On the easy level (and especially in two-player mode) the game can be completed very easily indeed. On hard level things do become a lot more difficult, but even then I was able to get through to the end in only two attempts.

It's not that the levels are small though, not by any means. In fact they're really quite large. It's just that the enemies don't really put up that much of a fight. However, within the levels themselves there are a few "extra" hazards to give you a slightly harder time of it. For example, when you're on the ghost ship level, your opponents are able to hit the deck and the planks that make up the floor dislodge themselves and send the Turtles hurtling through the air. And at other stages of the game, cars roll out of garages or large paintings fall from walls to squash you – another pleasing aspect is the high level of humour in the game. Sometimes, if your Turtle's foot gets hit, he'll hold onto it and hop up and down.

Editor's note: Under no circumstances should a "Roll out the barrel"-type caption appear in this space

Begone foul ninja, or I shall be forced to remove your soft parts with a couple of swift swipes of my blades

It's all very cartoony, and while we're on the subject, there are also two graphical modes in which to play the game. "Anime" is the first, and features brightly coloured Turtles, much like those you'd find in a television cartoon, but switch to "comic" and things are a little different. Before the Turtles became utterly famous and started appearing on bed linen, mugs and so on, they appeared in their own comic books. And unlike the kiddie-style cartoons that subsequently appeared, these original Turtles were rather a serious affair with the style being very dark and almost sinister. And to that end, the comic mode in the game makes the Turtles a more traditional muddy colour. This serves absolutely no purpose of course, but it's quite pleasant for the purists out there. (Is there such a thing as a Turtles purist though we wonder? And in fact, if they do exist, perhaps we should simply refer to them as sad gits.)

Oh dear. More world conquering plots afoot

So there we have it, a game which is a bit too easy, but which at least has plenty of variety and novel features. But it's gameplay that really counts and I'm pleased to say that this has oodles of it. The hassle-free control method means that accessing moves is easy (and often automatic) and although this could make a game rather repetitive, in the case of this *Turtles* game, with so many opponents constantly attacking, it makes for a very entertaining bash indeed. You will want to keep playing to get through to the end and even then it's fun to come back to once in a while. In two-player mode it's just as much fun, but again if you're expecting to play the game for weeks, forget it.

While actually hacking through the game is more fun than *Streets Of Rage 2*, at the end of the day *Turtles* just doesn't quite have the variety of clever moves or quite as much challenge. It's a close thing, and if you're a fan of this sort of game, you'll probably love it, but beat-'em-up novices may want to try out *Streets Of Rage 2* or, better still, wait for *Streetfighter 2*.

The Hyperstone Heist is slick. It looks great, it's full of humour and there's a lot of imaginative variety in there. If you can live with cracking a game within a couple of days, then you'll have a real hoot. It really is an awful lot of fun.

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 9 Game Size 5 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Once again (and why does this always happen?) it's too bloody easy! That aside, this is a very slick beat-em-up.

MEGA Rating: 80%

TERMINATOR 2 THE ARCADE GAME

Flying Edge • £39.99

The wildly successful *Terminator 2* coin-op took a very old game style (the *Operation Wolf*-type duck shoot), and beefed it up for the Nineties with some very spanky digitised graphics and all that kind of palaver.

After a load of licences which turned the Terminator saga into various dull beat-'em-ups and platform games, Arena have finally released the game everyone wanted to see in the first place. But a coin-op costs thousands of pounds – is the humble Mega Drive really up to the job? In a word, yes.

The old Mega Drive's really pulling out all the stops with this game, with some of the most impressive graphics yet seen outside a Mega CD game. Recognisable Terminators – John Connors and Arnies – glare out of the screen at you, and some enormous sprites lurch around the place in stunningly smooth fashion. It sounds pretty excellent too, with lots of rousing music and sampled sounds, although the noise of your gun firing is irritatingly akin to someone playing a washboard in a skiffle band.

Playability's probably the weakest part of the game, not that it's actually very weak at all, but the joypad response is a bit skittery in a game that's tough enough to demand some real precision control. Not surprisingly, the game plays well with Sega's new Menacer light gun.

The game is extremely entertaining, and even more fun if you get a chum along to join in at the same time. Indeed, if you don't, you can pretty much forget about seeing the end without some fairly major practice. This isn't really such a bad thing – in a game in which the concept is simplistic, serious challenge is the only way you're going to get enough playing time to get value for money, and serious challenge is certainly what you get here.

OK, so the game may not have a great deal of depth but the challenge is certainly there and the execution of it won't leave you disappointed.

Graphics 9 Sound 8 Gameplay 6 Game Size 7 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: A great conversion of the coin-op, and an excelent example of the Operation Wolf genre.

MEGA Rating: 82%

Hmmm... I don't remember an old T100 arnie-type model appearing in the second film. Ah well...

Hurrah! I've just picked up some guided missiles

The level from hell. This one is tough beyond belief

TIP: • When the words "PRESS START" appear on the title screen, press Up, Down, Left and Right twice. Arnie should now say "excellent". Then start the game as normal, and during play pause the game. Press B and C together and you'll be taken to the end of the level screen, whee your performance will be analysed.

• If you have an auto fire joypad and you turn it on and keep you finger down on the button your gun won't overheat.

• On the truck level, watch the rear gunner: the direction in which he aims his guns will warn you where the next attack is coming from.

A two-player, head-to-head driving game that sounds as if it should be great, but somehow never lives up to expectations.

Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 5
Game Size 6
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Enjoyable racer, but no rival to the *Super Monaco* games.

MEGA Rating: 65%

TIP: • When driving, press and hold down A, B and C for a secret options menu.

• Pick the Ferrari for superior acceleration.

TETRIS

Unknown • IMPORT

Okay, hands up everyone who doesn't know about *Tetris*. Three of you, eh? Well, pay attention next time. Tsch.

Graphics 2
Sound 3
Gameplay 10
Game Size 9
Addiction 10

MEGA Says: The biggest and sexiest puzzle game of all eternity comes to the Mega Drive. If, by some incredibly unlikely fluke, you don't already have a *Tetris* game, then get this one right now.

MEGA Rating: 88%

TIP: • For a really fast game, press Start and Down at the same time at the start.

THUNDER FOX

Unknown • IMPORT

Similar to *Rolling Thunder*, but nowhere near as good.

Graphics 3
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 3
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Should've stayed in the arcades.

MEGA Rating: 25%

THUNDER PRO WRESTLING

Unknown • IMPORT

Wrestling games are notoriously crap...

Graphics 4
Sound 4
Gameplay 2
Game Size 3
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: ...and here the Japanese cement the reputation further.

MEGA Rating: 31%

THUNDERFORCE 2

Sega • Deleted

Thunderforce III, with some different scrolling bits, but not quite as good. Basically.

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 6
Game Size7
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: A standard sideways-scrolling shoot-em-up that has been overtaken since it first apeared.

MEGA Rating: 70%

TIP: • Hold down buttons A, B and C and switch on. Still holding the buttons, press Start on the title screen for a secret menu screen.

THUNDERFORCE 3

Sega • £34.99

Miss this and *Thunderforce 4* and you'll be missing out on some of the best blasting mayhem this side of, er, anything. Not only that, but you'll be missing out on the chance to make your mates go 'Woo!' at some of the best visual effects yet seen on the Mega Drive. It's not all cosmetics, though – *Thunderforce III* is also a damn fine shoot-'em-up in its own right. If you're a zapping fan, this is another one of those 'must-haves', basically.

Graphics 8
Sound 7
Gameplay 7
Game Size 8
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: Some say better even than *Thunderforce 4* (no obtrusive backgrounds) and they may be right.

MEGA Rating: 80%

TIP: • Pause the game then simultaneously press Up and B ten times, then B and Down ten times. Repeat the process to get all the weapons.

• Finish the game and then press buttons A, B and C to get the pilot to wink at you.

TIGER HELI

Unknown • IMPORT

Helicopter shoot-em-up that manages to lift its head above the herd. Good, solid fun.

Graphics 8
Sound 5
Gameplay 6
Game Size 6
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: There aren't many helicopter shooters but this is the best.

MEGA Rating: 80%

TIP: • On the Game Over screen, keep pressing C, B, A in that sequence for loads of extra lives.

TODD'S ADVENTURES IN SLIME WORLD

Unknown • IMPORT

Simply too crap to talk about.

Graphics 1
Sound 1
Gameplay 1
Game Size 1
Addiction 1

MEGA Says: <silence>

MEGA Rating: 2%

TOEJAM AND EARL

Sega • £19.99

Two-player action doesn't get a lot more entertaining than this. Toejam And Earl are two of the grooviest aliens you could ask to have a close encounter with, which is part of the reason why it's such a pleasure to help them out in their quest to rebuild their crashed space-ship. The rest of the reason though, is the superbly manic and zany action which takes place as our two heroes career around the screen causing havoc wherever they go.

This is a two-player walk-around-and-explore-em-up unlike any game you've ever played before. The idea is that the crashed rocket ship pieces can be found in far flung corners of 20 increasingly more hazardous worlds. All Toejam and Earl have to do is wander around and locate them. Easy – except that the baddies wandering around the levels are some of the craziest guys you've ever been up against: mad dentists, little giggling devils, hypnotic hula girls, gangs of nerds, chickens with mortars – all of which will do their best to stop your progress.

Toejam and Earl's defence? Power-ups, crazy power-ups. Rocket skates, Icarus wings, hi-top trainers (enabling them to run faster), rubber rings – all manner of wacky accessories. Add to this mixture some ingenious two player interaction (make the two characters high-five and your combined energy is evenly shared, for example) and two players cannot fail to have a great time exploring.

After a few plays, the lower levels tend to drag a bit (there's no password option) and you waste your power-ups just speeding them up but this game is both original and insane.

Graphics 7
Sound 9
Gameplay 8
Game Size 8
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: As a one-player game it's just OK, but when played with someone else (and at just £19.99) it becomes completely essential. Got any friends? Buy this. Haven't got any friends? Buy this and make some.

MEGA Rating: 85%

TIP: • Go to level three, grab some wings, fall to level one, fly to the bottom left-hand corner, and then fall through the island to a secret level.
• The ship pieces are found on levels 2, 6, 10, 12, 15, 17, 20, 21, 23 and 25.
• At the end of the game, when you're told to follow the Yellow Brick Road, explore the bottom-right corner and top of the level instead.

TOKI

Sega • £19.99

Tom King's girl has been kidnapped and he has been changed into an ape. Not to be put off he is going to get her back. The graphics are arcade quality and you'll feel the urge to keep playing even if you come across a tough bit. Highly playable although slightly easy.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 7
Game Size 5
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: *Toki* is well-worth a good look.

MEGA Rating: 69%

TORA! TORA!

Unknown • IMPORT

Stylish (you guessed it) vertically scrolling shoot-em-up that's just too easy. Ten levels, but you should get through them all in a couple of plays.

Graphics 7
Sound 4
Gameplay 5
Game Size 2
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: Too easy – a shame.

MEGA Rating: 45%

TOXIC CRUSADERS

Sega USA • IMPORT

You may or may not have heard of the *Toxic Crusaders*. They were conceived in what was originally thought to be a very poor film from a company called Troma. The film soon turned out to be a cult classic and then spawned a cartoon series. And so, in traditional Mega Drive manner, we've now got the game of the cartoon of the film.

The Smogulans have broken through the Earth's ozone layer (they must have found that small hole the size of North America then) and are attacking us. We need a Pollution Warrior... no sorry, a Slimy Saviour... er, how about a Toxic Crusader? Yes, that's the one.

However, Toxie (as he's known) is not alone. He has

THUNDER

Sega • £39.99

Thunderforce IV brings you 11 levels of high-speed, horizontally-scrolling, hard as nails shoot-'em-up action. In most of these levels there's a cheeky little hint of verticality to the scroll too, as the stages are roughly two screens high. This means that you can weave around a bit and simply avoid many of the baddies by moving to a bit of the screen where they, rather dimly, can't apparently see you.

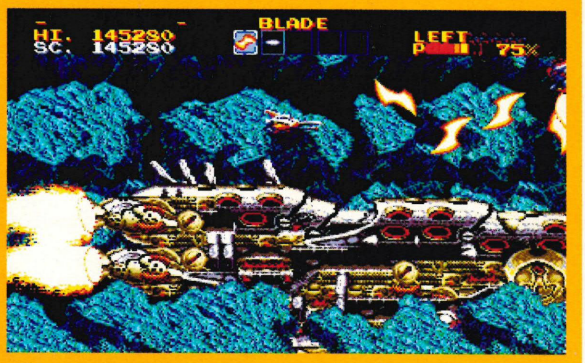
Talking of weaponry, you've got some pretty crap stuff at the start, but picking up icons from destroyed nasties gives you plenty of power. You can have up to five different kinds of gun at any one time, which you can select at the touch of a button, and when you die you only lose the one that was actually in use at the time. You can also select the speed at which your ship moves. Continuing the theme of selection, you can also choose to tackle the first four levels in any order you like, but beyond these little tweaks we're talking about shoot-'em-up business as usual.

Thunderforce IV is one of the best three Mega Drive shoot-'em-ups ever. The fact that it stands head and shoulders above most of the competition is, sadly, only due to the utter crapness of most of the competition.

But let's not take anything away from *Thunderforce-the fourth*. For a start, we're most assuredly looking at the Mega Drive's most beautiful graphics yet. Huge, bold, dramatic landscapes are the order of the day, the desert backdrop of the third level being particularly stunning. Ground-based enemies scuttle below the surface, popping up only to fire at you and then diving back underground like something out of Dune. Meanwhile, a sandstorm is whipping across the entire screen, obscuring enemy attacks and creating a real atmosphere of frenzied confusion. And this graphical quality continues throughout the game. The gorgeousness of the backdrops, though, only serves to make the enemies themselves all the more disappointing. They are all just shapeless blobs of colour which look like they could have been taken from any shoot-'em-up we've seen during the last three years. And that, to be honest, simply isn't good enough.

Hmmm... Huge snakey thing. Tricky blighter!

The same criticism can be levelled at the actual attacks of the aliens – the majority of which simply appear out of nowhere without any warning. These unpredictable onslaughts make progress through the game more a matter of learning and remembering where to sit, than something which depends on any application of skill.



Nice visuals, but the gameplay underneath is just the same old shoot-'em-up formula we've all seen before

So, the little aliens are crap. But what about the big ones? Well, they're no different, really. They're also all completely featureless and lifeless but, more importantly, they don't flash when you hit them, which means you can be flying around one until you grow a beard, pumping all manner of hot laser death at it without doing the slightest bit of damage.

But let's not be all nasty and negative about this. If the purpose of a game is to impress your friends and provide a couple of weeks of slavish dedication before completion then *Thunderforce IV* fits the bill well. It's just that beneath the graphical gymnastics, it's average. *Neil West.*

Graphics 9 Sound 4 Gameplay 5 Game Size 8 Addiction 7

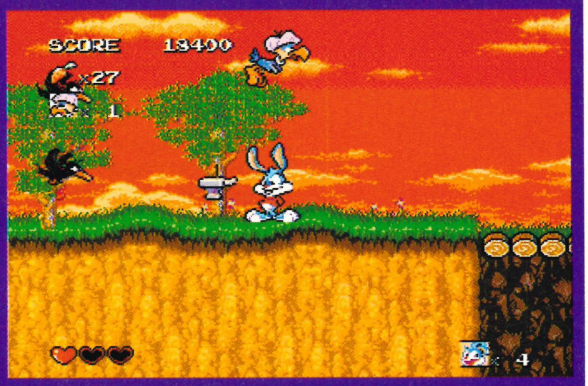
MEGA Says: Technically amazing, but the only amazing thing about the game underneath is how bog-standrd it all is. *Aero Blasters* and *Hellfire* stomp all over it, with big boots on.

MEGA Rating: 81

TIP: • Select zero stock ship on the options menu, move to exit and hold down A, B and C. Press Start until you're into the game and you'll have 99 lives. If you lose them and then continue, you'll still have all 99.
• When you've finished the game, go to the sound test screen and listen to those really crappy Japanese tunes.
• During play, pause the game by pressing Start and then press Up, Right, A, Down., Right, A, C, Left, Up and B. Now press Up to get all the weapons.

TINY TOON ADVENTURES

Konami • £39.99



There's Buster Bunny neatly side-stepping an anvil drop towards his head by a passing bird of some sort

OK sports fans, what we've got here is a humungous platform game starring a cute bunny called Buster. Buster's one and only method of attack is to bounce on his enemy. This is a tricky manoeuvre to master, especially when his enemies move erratically (like the bats in later levels). And what of the enemies? Well, most of these little chaps are a cinch to take out; a well-timed bum on the head and they're history. These enemy characters start out with all the moves of an arthritic statue, but as the game progresses and you run into the bulldogs, the bats, and the fish, it becomes apparent that your ability to jump's going to be jolly useful.

Every four or five levels there's a funky baddie sequence in which one of the main cute characters, under the mind-control of Dr Gene, attempts to do you a mischief. Thus Dizzy Devil, Plucky Duck, Calamity Coyote and Hampton, all in their endearing ways, try bouncing you out of the game.

During these sequences the idea is to avoid your woodland chum and bounce on Dr Gene's head. You can tell when you've got a successful hit because his head wobbles and he looks a bit bemused. Dr Gene doesn't have it all his way of course. No platform game would be complete without a good smattering of power-ups, and Tiny Toons is no exception. These power-ups include simple energy restorers and smart bombs, but also include invincibility, extra lives and power boosters. Unfortunately, as with most games, you aren't just handed these power-ups on a woodland plate; they're stuck in odd, and often hidden, places. This brings us along quite nicely to the hidden bits.

Er, not faring too well here though I feel

No self-respecting game would dare occupy shelf space in WHSmith these days without having at least one hidden screen per level. Fortunately, *Tiny Toons* is no exception. It's chock full of hidden bits, which you often only encounter by pure luck when you miss-time a jump or fall off a platform.

There are also some novel traps waiting to ensnare our floppy-eared friend. For instance, you might be screaming along at full pelt when you trip on a fizzy drink can and fall flat on your face. Or some caring individual might have left a rake lying on the ground, just waiting for an unsuspecting mammal to come flitting through the forest and into broken-nose land.

Who cares if this game's a lot like *Sonic*? Let's face it, *Sonic 2* was a fabulous game, and we've been a bit starved half-decent platforming fun of late. To this end, *Tiny Toons* is commendable because it's a game you just know someone's spent a lot of time creating.

Tiny Toons is large and well-weighted in terms of difficulty. To progress between levels, you move Buster on a *Rolo*-like map and this does well to illustrate the size of the game. Life gets progressively harder but in a clever way. You find out after about ten levels that you've suddenly become adept at controlling Buster, even underwater or on collapsing platforms.

Alright, so we've seen it all before. So what? When a game's as well written and playable as this, it doesn't matter what it looks like. *Andy Dyer.*

Graphics 9 Sound 8 Gameplay 9 Game Size 7 Addiction 9

MEGA Says: Obviously derivative but exceptionally fun woodland platform game with oodles of eco-friendly action.

MEGA Rating: 91%

two friends (NoZone and Junkyard), who are more than willing to die for their planet. You can choose to play as any one of these characters or you can play a simultaneous two-player game, as long as one of you is the Toxic Crusader.

Once you've chosen your crusaders, you've got to get used to the attacking system. You have two normal modes of attack and a jump. And you can collect power-ups as you kill more Smogulans. As well as powering up your attack, they can also replenish your strength. There are many different coloured "orbs" to collect, and it'll take you a while to remember what each one does.

Once you've got all that sorted out you can then get on with the mission in hand. There are six main levels to get through and each level has two acts. Starting in Tromaville, you need to chase the Smogulans onto their ship, to the space-port, across the water, into Smogulaville and finally to Czar Zoster's Palace.

Your mission will not be easy, however, because this game is... no sorry I can't continue with this, let's get down to the bone. This game is terrible. Graphically, it's very poor with plain colours, boring characters and some dodgy animation, and sonically it's fair to middling, but the whole game just plays so abysmally. The first level is OK, but get to level two and things really start getting on your nerves. It has one of those awful sections in which you have to manoeuvre through a pathway to reach the other side, but because you can't control Toxie delicately, you fall in the water a few too many times. This also happens on level four, and you just lose too many lives, not through any fault of your own, just because the game is such rubbish.

Toxic Crusaders is also much too easy. After a couple of hours play you'll be on the fourth level. After a couple more, you'll finish the game.

This game is just the same old dire scrolling game that we've all seen before. Come on guys, let's have some interesting software before everyone goes off and starts buying Super Nintendos.

Graphics 5
Sound 6
Gameplay 3
Game Size 6
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Boring, slow, ugly, repetitive and far too easy. Why you'd want to play this one is beyond me.

MEGA Rating: 33%

TRAMPOLINE TERROR

Unknown • IMPORT

A simple puzzler, but not one of the best. If you simply have to own every puzzle game ever invented, then you might as well give this a try. Otherwise, *Columns* is your best bet.

Graphics 3
Sound 3
Gameplay 6
Game Size 5
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: Yet another brain-bender.

MEGA Rating: 50%

TIP: • Hold down A, B, C, Up and press Start. You'll get 99 credits and a level select.

TRAYSIA

Unknown • IMPORT

American RPG – merely proving that the Japanese make the best role playing games.

Graphics 3
Sound 2
Gameplay 4
Game Size 7
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Yep, the Japanese have got this sort of game off to a fine art – not the Americans.

MEGA Rating: 33%

TROUBLE SHOOTER

Vic Tokai • IMPORT

Madison and Crystal take to the skies to kick some alien butt in an entertaining shoot-em-up with a choice of five special weapons, some wacky bosses and five levels of action.

Graphics 8
Sound 8
Gameplay 7
Game Size 5
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: A tad too small and a tad too easy. But while it lasts, *Trouble Shooter* is great stuff.

MEGA Rating: 81%

TIP: • If you want a level select, press C, Right and Start together on controller two on the title screen and then press Right, C and Start to advance the stage number.

TRUXTON

Sega • £34.99

Shoot-'em-up, huh? Vertical scrolling, huh? You're not exactly 'one of a kind' are you?

Graphics 8
Sound 6
Gameplay 8
Game Size 6
Addiction 8

MEGA Says: On the whole a decent, solid enough effort. It's good fun to pick up and play now and again.

MEGA Rating: 84%

TWINKLE TALE

WAS • IMPORT

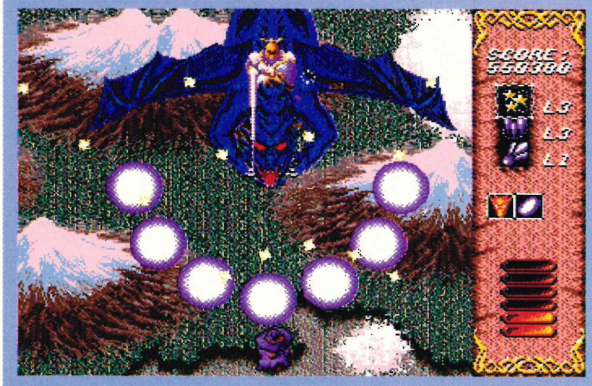
No, it's not a fantasy role-playing game, it's a fantasy shoot-'em-up. Instead of blasting spacecraft and extra-terrestrials, you have to take pot-shots at all manner of weird and devilish creatures.

As a wizard, you have three "spells", or weapons, at your disposal. One weapon is a sort of orange spray of little fireballs and another is a fire-the-way-you-face sort of affair. But the most useful form of attack is by using the blue balls, which home in on your enemies. All three weapons can be used right from the start, but they're pretty weedy so it's just as well that you can collect star tokens that boost the weapons.

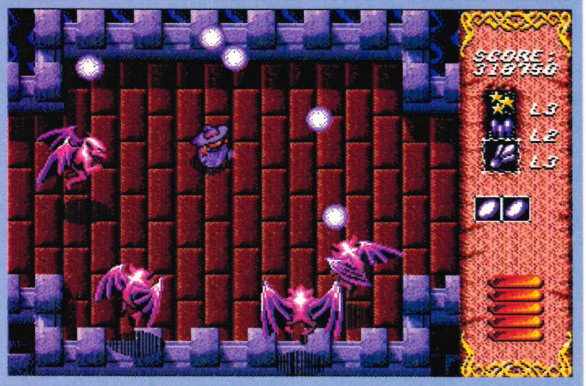
Right, so that's the stumpy little sorcerer kitted out then. But what is his mission? Well, if all the text wasn't in bloody Japanese, I'd be able to tell you. But never mind, the plot is irrelevant. This is just one big blast, right through to the end. There are no puzzles to solve, no cryptic riddles to sort out, it's just frantic button bashing all the way.

What makes this a little different to other shoot-'em-ups, however, (apart from the fantasy theme) is that it's viewed from overhead and doesn't constantly scroll along. The screen only scrolls when you decide to move, and most of the time you can move in any direction you like. The only time this changes is when you meet an end-of-level guardian.

During this confrontation you can move around the screen in any direction you like, but the play area no longer scrolls and you always face towards the enemy, which makes things a bit more manageable – very neat. Add to this the inventive graphics, the varied opponents and the end-of-level



Nasty piece of work this bloke. Advice. Right, in the style of Paul Mellerick "Shoot him a lot, and don't die!"



Three demons swirl around you at a cracking rate. Make sure you concentrate your fire on one at a time

challenges and you have what appears to be a stonking little game. So sould you rush out and buy it immediately then? The answer is no. So bear with me while I explain.

Alas, as is always the case, there is a fly in our otherwise unsullied ointment. Now I hope all you coders out there are listening (God knows we've said it enough times before): "IT'S TOO GODDAM EASY!" OK, so I wasn't actually able to kill the final guardian, and yes I played it on easy level, but I reached this final guardian in one three-hour play session. And, to be honest, it would only have taken another day at most before I finished this level and having done that, I wouldn't have been even remotely interested in trying it all again on the harder levels (basically because the harder levels are exactly the same as the easy one except that the guardians take more hits).

For younger gamers, and novice players, however, this game will work well. I loved playing it and was determined to continue until I'd finished, but most people will want a bit more for their money. No matter how pleasing it is, you don't want to see the end in a day. Considering the high quality of *Twinkle Tale*, it was a bit short-sighted not to have made it slightly more challenging. *Andy Dyer.*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 8 Game Size 5 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Almost a great game. It's original, good-looking and plays like a dream, but why make it soooo easy?

MEGA Rating: 62%

TIP: • On a boss level drop a smart bomb, then hit pause. Wait ten seconds, then unpause to kill the boss.

TURBO OUT RUN

Sega • £19.99

Yet another in the outdated and largely outclassed series. *Turbo Out Run* is very little more than a few different backgrounds and a turbo for your car. Not exactly what you would call a sequel. You would have to be hard pushed to buy this.

Graphics 5
Sound 6
Gameplay 5
Game Size 4
Addiction 3

MEGA SAYS: Marginally better than the first but there isn't enough to it to make it worth adding to your collection. Good for £19.99 though.

MEGA Rating: 53%

TURRICAN

Accolade • Deleted

A supremely popular home computer game, but maybe that just shows how easy to please all those Amiga and ST owners are. *Turrican* is an absolutely colossal platform-leaping, shoot-'em-upping, landscape-exploring epic of a game, but after a while you start thinking 'Oh good, another hundred screens to plough through before I get to the next interesting bit. I wouldn't mind, but they're exactly the same as the last hundred screens.' It'll frustrate the hell out of even the most tolerant people.

Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 5
Game Size 8
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: It's decent enough for a while, but if you've got the patience or the high boredom threshold needed to get to the end, you're a better man than any of us.

MEGA Rating: 59%

TIP: • Select options on the menu, skip to the exit icon. Hold Down, and then quickly press A, B, B, A, B, A, A, B, A, A, B, A, A for more options.

TWIN COBRA

Unknown • IMPORT

Having said that *Tiger Heli* was one of the few helicopter shoot-em-ups, here's another.

Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 4
Game Size 4
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Not bad, but not brilliant Average!

MEGA Rating: 46%

TIP: • Hit start to get to the green title screen, then press Up, Down, Right, Left, A, B, C and Start to see the end credits.
• For maximum weaponry, pause the game and press Up, Down, Left, Right and hold A while pressing Start to resume the game.

TWIN HAWK

Unknown • IMPORT

And here's another shoot-em-up in which you get to fly a whole squadron of bombers!

Graphics 5
Sound 5
Gameplay 5
Game Size 4
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Surely there can't be many more shoot-em-ups?

MEGA Rating: 48%

TWO CRUDE DUDES

Data East • IMPORT

Well, it's a beat-'em-up and it's got some crude dudes in it..

Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 4
Game Size 3
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: A fairly accurate version of the coin-op *Crude Busters*, this is OK. The whole game looks good and plays OK but is just too easy to finish.

MEGA Rating: 43%

TIP: • Select a two-player game and then you can use player two as a chuckable weapon!
• Play a one player game and plug in a second pad. When you start to run out of lives in single player mode, simply press start on pad two and continue as player two.

U,V&W GAMES

ULTIMATE TIGER
Unknown • IMPORT
Another helicopter shoot-'em-up that doesn't really inspire.

Graphics	4
Sound	3
Gameplay	4
Game Size	3
Addiction	4

MEGA Says: Nothing to break the mould here.
MEGA Rating: 35%

TIP: • For a level-select press Up, Down, Left and Right on the title screen.

UNDEADLINE
Unknown • IMPORT
The Americans love this game.

Graphics	5
Sound	5
Gameplay	7
Game Size	4
Addiction	4

MEGA Says: No, really they do.
MEGA Rating: 48%

VALIS 3
Unknown • IMPORT
Swords and sorcery is the order of the day in this high quality slash-'em-up. The graphics are great, and as you progress some mates will join in and help you out.

Graphics	7
Sound	6
Gameplay	5
Game Size	6
Addiction	6

MEGA Says: A good, solid, fun fighting game.
MEGA Rating: 60%

TIP: • Hold Up, A, B and C, press Start, and hold it until a blank screen appears. When you release the buttons, the words "Select Map 000" will appear. Now you can select your stage.

VERYTEX
Unknown • IMPORT
Another shoot-'em-up with better visuals than most, but still nothing too special.

Graphics	5
Sound	4
Gameplay	3
Game Size	4
Addiction	3

MEGA Says: Only a few crappy shooters left!
MEGA Rating: 38%

TIP: • Pause the game, hold A, B and C, then press Down and Start for an extra life. Keep pressing Down and Start for more lives.

VOLFIED (ULTIMATE QIX)
Variation on the classic *Painter* puzzle game – worth a look for history's sake if no other.

Graphics	4
Sound	4
Gameplay	7
Game Size	7
Addiction	7

MEGA Says: Old design, but one of the best.
MEGA Rating: 68%

WANI WANI WORLD
Kaneko • IMPORT
You play the part of a cute little dinosaur in this classic old game of bashing bad guys on the head with mallets.

Graphics	5
Sound	4
Gameplay	6
Game Size	6
Addiction	5

MEGA Says: An oldie, but a real goldie.
MEGA Rating: 75%

TIP: • Press Reset twice when the Sega word appears on the screen. You'll then find yourself with an incredible 200 lives.

WARDNER
Unknown • IMPORT
Standard cutesy platform adventure. Nothing special.

Graphics	4
Sound	4
Gameplay	3
Game Size	3
Addiction	4

MEGA Says: *Alex Kidd* action that's better suited to the Master System.
MEGA Rating: 47%

WARDNER SPECIAL
Unknown • IMPORT
Kind of a turbo-charged *Wardner*, this has more of a platform shoot-'em-up feel to it with some great graphics. Slightly dated now though.

Graphics	7
Sound	5
Gameplay	5
Game Size	5
Addiction	6

MEGA Says: Good solid platform action, but there's plenty newer and better.
MEGA Rating: 60%

WARRIOR OF ROME (AMBITION OF CEASAR)
Unknown • IMPORT
With only four scenarios, this wargame is fundamentally flawed in terms of length.

Graphics	4
Sound	5
Gameplay	5
Game Size	3
Addiction	4

MEGA Says: Try *Centurion* if ancient Rome action is what you crave for.
MEGA Rating: 35%

WARRIOR OF ROME 2
Unknown • IMPORT
The sequel (surprisingly enough) to the original *Warrior Of Rome* game, this one offers loads more.

Graphics	5
Sound	5
Gameplay	6
Game Size	6
Addiction	6

MEGA Says: Still a fairly unexciting war game at the end of the day though.
MEGA Rating: 59%

TIP: • Start a new game of two-player tug of war and press START on pad 1. On the selection window go down to load data line and move the cursor over to the right hand side of the line. With control pad 2 press and hold the START but-

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

Accolade • £34.99

As a film license this is crap with a capital CRAP – this is basically just *Turrican 2* with a different intro screen. Naughty, naughty Ballistic, don't deceive your public, tch, tch, slapped wrists, don't do it again.

As a Mega Drive port over of *Turrican 2*, however, it works out just fine. I must admit that I've never been a fan of *Turrican 2* and let me tell you why not. For a start, the attack patterns of the enemies, while probably not actually being so, appear to be almost random. Most of the creatures simply home in on you in their hundreds, and do untold damage unless you can actually blast them first. There's very little opportunity to play through, come to grief, then learn by your mistakes. It's more a case of "Ah ha, right, here goes, dagga, dagga, dagg... oh. Bugger, that didn't happen last time".

Another frustrating thing about the game is the size of the levels. Now normally I'd complain if levels weren't big enough, but this time they're too big. Mmm... let me make that a bit clearer. If you had levels this big with a whole string of challenges, battles and puzzles placed ingeniously throughout, things would be just fine. Thing is, these huge complex labyrinths of tunnels and caves are yours for the exploring.

You're completely free to trog wherever you like while constantly meeting up with those random assailants I was on about. It all gets a bit repetitive and tedious after a while as there's no real sense of getting any nearer to your goal or achieving any more each time you play – you simply scoot around until you eventually happen upon a guardian or the exit.

But having said all that, there are a few nice touches in here. There are loads of power-ups to collect, and there are also a few neat sections in there, like the wind shaft, which is full of very spread out platforms. You start at the bottom, but to progress up through the shaft, you have to wait until there's an updraft (you can tell when this is happening, because a load of leaves blow up through the shaft to signal that a brief updraft has started).

As I said, it's all a bit too random and sprawling for my personal tastes, but it must be said that if you like action in your games and are prepared to put up with the high frustration level and the lack of need to use any thought processes whatsoever, you may become one of those strange people who actually end up loving the game. If you liked the movie, don't touch this with a large smelly stick, but *Turrican 2* buffs will find that this is as good a version as any. *Andy Dyer.*

Graphics 7 Sound 6 Gameplay 7 Game Size 8 Addiction 6

Now can you spot the star of *Universal Soldier*? He's that round, grey, spiky thing. It's *just* like the film!

MEGA Says: Bog all to do with the film, but not too bad.
MEGA Rating: 68%

TIP: • Here are some level-select codes:

Level 2 – CHSGM	Level 3 – MKSNS	Level 4 – SGGBY
Level 5 – JLGPH	Level 6 – JDRSD	Level 7 – PKSND
Level 8 – CWBPN	Level 9 – SFTNP	Level 10 – CMVDG
Level 11 – BYTCM		

• Enter the code PWRZS for invincibility
• Enter the code SHBXZ to reveal all the hidden bonuses.

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Gametek • IMPORT

The basic idea of the game is to solve a word puzzle by choosing a letter. By spinning the wheel beforehand, you determine how much money each of that letter is worth. So, if you spin $1000 and pick a letter S, of which there are three in the puzzle, you get $3000. Simple eh? In fact, things are a little bit trickier than that. You're allowed to pick any letter in the alphabet, but if you want a vowel, you have to pay for it – $250 in fact.

If you pick a letter that isn't in the puzzle, you lose your turn and pass the wheel over to your opponent. You then have to wait... (Snip! – Ed).

Look, this is a truly dire game

Snnnnnnore, snoooooze, yaaaaaaaaaaaaawn. Etc

As in the TV programme, the questions aren't very brain taxing. Even though there are 4,500 of them, they are all incredibly simple, except, that is, the one's which are so American that your average Brit doesn't have a clue what the answer is.The graphics add to the dullness of the game. The horribly drawn characters and garish colours make the game as horrible to look at as it is to play.

If you're after a good afternoon of trivia, then you'd be better off spending your money on Trivial Pursuits and a gross of Wagon Wheels, than this pile of old nob. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 2 Sound 4 Gameplay 5 Game Size 8 Addiction 1

MEGA Says: There's no skill involved and the challenge in pretty much non-existent.

MEGA Rating: 22%

WHERE IN TIME IS CARMEN SANDIEGO?

Electronic Arts • £49.99

This game comes with a whopping great encyclopedia and you'll need it – this is a "edutainment" game in which the idea is that you learn as you play. Your task is to track down through history the elusive Carmen SanDiego and learn lots on the way.

Graphics 7
Sound 5
Gameplay 7
Game Size 9
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: The adults will find it too simple and the kids will resent the idea of this "education" business. A shame: it's a nice idea.

MEGA Rating: 75%

TIP: • Here are some codes to help you through the game.
Ace Time Detective – LHMN-FGF
Capture Carmen – MJDFPDG
Super Time Sleuth – MJDF-SGG
Super Ending – JHBHHXS

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS CARMEN SAN DIEGO?

Electronic Arts • £39.99

The second installment in EA's "Edutainment" games, again you play the part of a detective as you journey through the world on the trail of (the still elusive) Carmen SanDiego – learning as you go.

Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 5
Game Size 9
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: If the first suited your style, then this offers just as much..

MEGA Rating: 77%

WHIP RUSH

Unknown • IMPORT

Multi-directional shoot-'em-ups are a rare breed, but here's one of them. While it makes a change to fly in a different direction every now and again, the gameplay stays the same.

Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 4
Game Size 3
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Could this be the last shoot-'em-up in the MEGA Directory? We'd bet against it.

MEGA Rating: 43%

WONDERBOY 3

(See. *Monster Lair*)

WONDERBOY 5: MONSTER WORLD

Sega • Deleted

Cutesy platform action featuring the Master System's sword-swinging child hero. good, clean, well-designed fun.

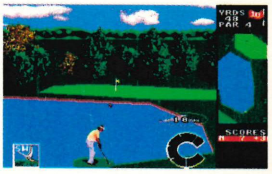
Graphics 6
Sound 5
Gameplay 4
Game Size 6
Addiction 5

MEGA Says: A good cutesy even if not technically impressive in any way..

MEGA Rating: 57%

WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD

US Gold • £39.99



It's a golf game but it's not *PGA Tour Golf.* You'll only ever need one golf game,and this isn't it.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Gameplay 5
Game Size 6
Addiction 7

ton and push button A on control pad 1.The tug of war game will appear. Press START on pad 1 and away you go. Press button C on each pad and see who wins.

WARSONG

Treco • IMPORT

A fantasy strategy game involving wizards, mythical beasts and all sorts of bloodthirsty warriors. The idea is that you're a deposed king who's fighting to get his crown back – so good luck to you.

Graphics 3
Sound 4
Gameplay 5
Game Size 5
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Not bad, but *Shining Force* or *Sword Of Vermillion* are the ideal introductions to this style of game.

MEGA Rating: 44%

WWF SUPER MANIA

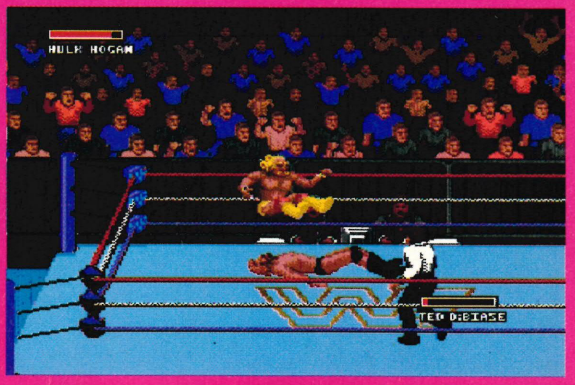
Flying Edge • £39.99

WWF Super Wrestle Mania (the game), features all the best known American wrestlers, pixillated and shrunk in their tie-dies. They're all there, complete with a couple of those ineffectual referees and the bald commentator with the large microphone.

On the surface, it would appear that there are lots of different moves you can use. There are standard ones, like punches, kicks or clotheslines, and then there's a special move which is unique to each wrestler. For example, Hulk can perform a special Leg Drop move. This does add a bit of variety to the proceedings, particularly when you time your special move well. The actual graphics are slick, the animation's great and the sampled sounds are smart. So on the surface everything looks rather peachy.

The actual gameplay takes a little while to master. It's one of those games in which simply hitting the buttons as rapidly as possible isn't going to do the trick. To land a punch or connect with a special move, you've got to time it just right. With the standard moves, you usually have to hit the other wrestler three times on the go to make him fall over. Then you can try and pin him for a count of three and you've won.

I suspect that this is one of those games you'd slap into your Mega Drive after an evening at the pub with your mates. So long as you play



Levitation antics inbetween rounds at the WWF Royal Rumbler. If you really like wrestling, then you're sad

against someone else, it holds some long-term interest, mainly in the giggle department. But if you're a solitary console player (and if you are, you should get out more), then playing against the console alone just won't offer enough long-term interest. *Neil West.*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 6 Game Size 4 Addiction 6

MEGA Says: In two player mode it's quite a giggle. About as much fun as being the Ultimate Warrior's jock strap in one player mode.

MEGA Rating: 71%

WORLD OF ILLUSION STARRING MICKEY MOUSE AND DONALD DUCK

Sega • £39.99

The gameplay complements the graphics in terms of slick simplicity – both Mickey and Donald are easily controlled as they walk, run, crawl or jump around their world – due to attentive sprite animation routines and a well thought out control system. And each character comes armed with a magic table cloth with which to transform its foes into plants or butterflies.

The nature of the game is reasonably simple, it's a fairly linear platform adventure with tricky jumps to make, baddies to disperse and end-of-level bad guys to deal with – you've seen the formula many times before, although maybe not as well presented. There are three separate game modes, two-player, or single player with Mickey, or single player with Donald. Each mode provides a change in level design, but the feel remains the same throughout.

Anyway, that's the game mechanics pretty much in their entirety, let's just get on with the review shall we? Firstly, for anyone over the age of 11:

Look, just forget it, OK? When *World Of Illusion* first appeared in the office, we sat Paul down with it at 9.30 am and told him that he wasn't allowed to eat again until he'd finished the whole game. At 10.15am Andy fancied a cup of coffee, so he shouted for Paul to go and make one. At about 10.30am he realised that he was still thirsty, and wondered where Paul had got to.

"Oh, he nipped off to McDonalds at about ten past ten," said Amanda. "He mumbled something about the easiest game he'd ever played."

Yep, our boy Paul Mellerick, in the guise of Mickey Mouse, sailed through the entire one-player version of *World Of Illusion* in 40 minutes flat on his first attempt, and it wasn't a fluke either – the rest of us found it just as straightforward. The thing is, while it's all very (very) pretty and everything, there's very little actual game in there – enemies only stroll up every half a day or so, and when they do, a simple swipe of Mickey's magic cape from half a screen away will miraculously turn them straight into a harmless little flower or butterfly.

Even the bosses are an absolute pushover, and generally the only way you'll ever lose any lives is by getting a bit careless and falling off the bottom of the screen on one of the mildly complicated cloud-hopping sky levels. OK, so the Donald version is slightly more taxing, but nothing that should cause a relatively able gamer (Eyes? Fingers? Reflexes? You'll do) to break into a sweat.

If you're at all grown-up, you'll go through this single-player game like a dose of salts, and get very, very grumpy indeed about what you've just done with 40 quid. Unlike *Sonic 2*, when you finish *World Of Illusion* there's no reason at all to ever come back to this game: there's none of the multiple pathways, secret passageways or time trials of *Sonic* to keep you hooked.

No, for a single, well experienced gamesplayer *World Of Illusion* is chronically small and severely lacking in (what football commentators are so fond of calling) legs. After all, if you just want to watch a cartoon, buying a video of Fantasia is a lot cheaper and it lasts twice as long...

Mickey explores the underwater world of the standard underwater level that appears in all Sega games

Next, let's look at this game for anyone with a friend:

The first thing you notice when playing in two-player mode isn't so much the extra thing you get (ie the other character), but the stuff you actually lose. Lots of gameplay bits and bobs, which were previously present, disappear, to make the two-player interaction a bit more, well, interactive .

But wait – progress a little bit (ie past the first level) and you suddenly notice that something's changed. In fact, something's been completely added – it's a whole new level! Yep, in the two-player game you get whole new extra sections, which just aren't there in the solo version, and it makes the whole thing massively more entertaining, because, unlike most two-player games, where you're simply there to get in each other's way and hold up the scrolling, *World Of Illusion* in two-player mode is a real co-operative effort – most of the time you can't get anywhere if you don't play as a team.

It's a lot more rewarding, too – you get a real sense of achievement from managing to co-ordinate your efforts. It's still not the toughest game in the world, but *World Of Illusion*, two-player style, will make you smile a lot, and there aren't too many games you can say that of these days.

Bear in mind that if you're playing the game by yourself, you should knock about 30% straight off, and if you're a battle-hardened action freak, you'll probably want to drop even that by about another 10%. If you're quite young, not very good at games and a fan of Mickey and Donald, however, this might well be the best game you ever buy. *Neil West.*

Graphics 9 Sound 9 Gameplay 6 Game Size 3 Addiction 7

The animation of the two starring characters in *World Of Illusion* truly is incredible – just like a real cartoon

MEGA Says: Very, very easy to complete and very, very dull in one player mode, but fantastic for a couple of youngsters.

MEGA Rating: 82%

TIP: • On the last level you'll come across a top hat. This gives you an extra live. At the end of the level, jump on the die with the four on it. This will take you back to the hat and you'll be able to collect again. This can be repeated.

• Passwords for Mickey Mouse:					Forest:	QofS	KofH	QofH	KofS
Clouds:	KofC	QofH	KofH	KofD	Underwater:	KofH	KofS	KofD	QofS
Library:	QofH	KofD	KofS	KofC	Magic Box:	KofD	KofC	KofH	KofS
• Passwords for Donald Duck:					Forest:	KofH	QofS	QofH	KofS
Clouds:	KofS	KofD	KofC	QofS	Underwater:	KofC	KofH	QofH	KofS
Library:	QofH	KofD	KofH	KofS	Magic Box:	KofS	KofH	KofC	KofD
• Passwords for Two Players					Forest:	KofD	KofC	QofS	KofH
Clouds:	KofS	KofH	QofS	KofC	Underwater:	KofS	QofH	QofS	KofD
Library:	KofC	QofS	KofD	QofH	Magic Box:	KofH	KofC	KofD	QofH

MEGA Says: Mildly entertaining for a bit, but this is both too old and too basic to please today's video golfers.

MEGA Rating: 50%

WORLD CUP '92

Unknown • IMPORT

Tedious football game.

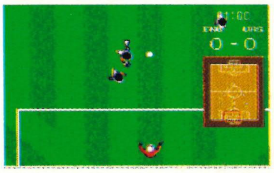
Graphics	3
Sound	4
Gameplay	2
Game Size	6
Addiction	3

MEGA Says: Save your cash for *Ultimate Soccer* or *Sensible Soccer*.

MEGA Rating: 37%

WORLD CUP ITALIA '90

Sega • £19.99



Another tedious football game.

Graphics	6
Sound	3
Gameplay	4
Game Size	3
Addiction	3

MEGA Says: Two player mode is mildly good fun, otherwise nothing special.

MEGA Rating: 35%

WORLD TROPHY SOCCER

(See. *Euro Club Soccer*)

WRESTLE WAR

Sega • £19.99

Big and bold graphics but they're poorly animated and (with only a few poor moves) the gameplay stinks

Graphics	6
Sound	4
Gameplay	3
Game Size	4
Addiction	3

MEGA Says: Bad.

MEGA Rating: 38%

TIP: • Switch your joypad to auto-fire when grappling an opponent.

XENON 2
Virgin Games • £34.99

Tedious vertical-scroller only salvaged from complete crapness by a top-rate weapons shop that enables you to treble the weight of your ship with extra lasers and other assorted alien-unfriendly accessories.

Graphics 4
Sound 7
Gameplay 5
Game Size 6
Addiction 2

MEGA Says: Slow, dull and hideously out of date.
MEGA Rating: 31%

TIP: • Play the game, get a high score and then enter your name as ARM. Play again, but get a lower score than before. Enter your name as OUR and now the high score table should show ARM and OUR in first and second place. Wait for the game to go to Attract mode and press Reset. You should now be indestructible.
• For infinite lives do the same as above but enter your names as OLD and AGE.

Y'S 3: WANDERERS FROM Y'S
Unknown • IMPORT

An old RPG, and not up to the standard of the *Shining'* twins.

Graphics 3
Sound 4
Gameplay 6
Game Size 4
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Old and best forgotten.
MEGA Rating: 36%

ZANY GOLF
Sega • Deleted

Some carts are just destined to be crap. Some games just never actually ever get a fair chance – take *Zany Golf* for example. Crazy Golf on the Mega Drive. I mean, seriously? What the hell were Electronic Arts (the game's programmers) playing at?

The joy of playing crazy golf is the cheating, the hiding your mate's ball, laughing at the game old granny on the next hole hacking away for all she's worth at completely the wrong ball, attempting glorious chip shots over the windmill, screaming "INCOMING!" at the top of your voice and then watching as half the other competitors fling themselves at the floor in terror… you know the kind of thing.

Certainly no fun is to be found in methodically trogging round the course playing the game properly. But that's exactly what *Zany Golf* offers. Thing is, they don't even make a decent job of it. The graphics are awful, the gameplay stinks, the ball moves about as smoothly as a three-legged dog over hurdles and the whole sad, shambling, mockery of a video game limps along at its own nauseating pace until either: a) you die of boredom; or b) you discover just how far it's possible to lob a cart when truly motivated.

Graphics 3
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 2
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Sad
MEGA Rating: 15%

X-MEN
Sega • £39.99

The X-Men are mutants, advanced human beings who, thanks to a genetic hiccup, have unique abilities that separate them from normal human beings. The evil mutant Magneto has hatched his most fiendish ever plot to destroy the world of humans but first he must rid the world of the X-Men. This is where you come in...

The game is set over six very different levels and each level also features an arch enemy of the X-Men, who will try to stop you getting any further through the game. Each level will suit a certain X-Man better than the others, but it's not impossible for any character to get through any level. You would, however, be making things harder for yourself if you didn't change character. And that's where the real beauty of the game lies.

Although you can pigeon-hole the game as a basic platformer, the added strategy element to changing characters and figuring out which one is suited to which level lifts it above the norm. Add to that the animation of the characters, the cartoony scenery, and some apt (if not brilliant) sound, and you've got a game that comic fans will fall over themselves to get at.

The game is also on the tough side. You start *X-Men* knowing very little about what you've got to do, but by playing, dying and trying again you slowly learn more about each character and how to do each particular level. The levels are by no means straightforward either. The first level, for instance, has a hidden switch, which must be flipped in order to lift a wall blocking your way. The second level is a maze of rooms, corridors and doors that cannot be accessed until you've hit all the keys – and actually finding the keys is definitely no mean feat.

This is a really good use of a comic licence, and although the basic game lacks anything new or exciting, the interaction with the cartoon characters, the strategy elements, a simultaneous two-player game, and the difficulty curve are all features which go to show what Sega can produce if they put their mind to it. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 8 Sound 7 Gameplay 8 Game Size 5 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: A fantastic platformer and a good example of how to use a license properly.
MEGA Rating: 85%

Yet another heroic pose from one of the *X-Men*

ZERO WING
Sega • £19.99

Of all the millions of horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-ups for the Mega Drive, *Zero Wing* is probably, er, the easiest. You'll finish this inside three attempts, which is a bit of a shame as it's otherwise about as good as the genre gets.

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 7
Game Size 7
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: A really lovely, playable shoot-'em-up, but way too easy for all but the most unco-ordinated.
MEGA RATING: 70%

TIP: • You're advised to stick to the homing missiles.
• For some extra help in this game, watch all the animated intro screens and then play the game and collect nothing but the green power-ups. When you're up to full power, the next power-up should be a purple mega power-up. If it isn't, change weapons and power up that colour. Sometimes it doesn't work, but you get a 1-up or 10-up instead, so it's not all that bad.

ZOOM
Sega • Deleted

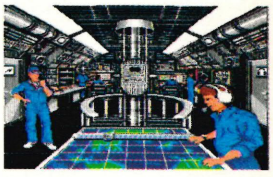
This is one of those "dash around a grid tracing over the lines filling in squares" games. You are an ice-skating alien faced with colouring in all the lines on a series of grids, wobbling in space. There are some interesting power-ups, some interesting bad guys and some interesting novel features. Underneath it's still as tedious as a big tedious thing though.

Graphics 5
Sound 4
Gameplay 3
Game Size 5
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: Ancient game idea unsuccessfully tarted up.
MEGA Rating: 41%

TIP: • Press Up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, A and B slowly on the player selection screen. An options menu will appear.

688 ATTACK SUB
Sega • £39.99



Nice, atmospheric submarine simulator with a bit of zapping and some pleasant aesthetics. It's still a submarine game though, isn't it?

Graphics 6
Sound 7
Gameplay 6
Game Size 6
Addiction 6

MEGA Says: PING!… Not the kind of thing you ever PING!… imagine anybody buying a Mega PING!… Drive for, but good at what it does. In a wet, damp, kind of way.
MEGA Rating: 66%

TIP: • The final Hit And Run mission is tough, but a MEGA reader reckons he can sort you out if you're playing Beginner or Standard mode. Start off activating the top-down map. Then, sail out until a target appears, sink to periscope depth and arm and fire all four missiles ASAP. Don't panic if you're spotted by patrolling subs, just fire your missiles and do a runner. Set your speed to 1/3 turning you 330 degrees, aim for the edge of the continental shelf. Use the contour mapping to see when you reach the drop off and then plummet like a stone. Accelerate your speed and head NW. When you near Denmark, ignore any attacks that may result from you being detected on sonar and just keep running, eventually you'll reach saftey and the mission will be over.

Sorted.

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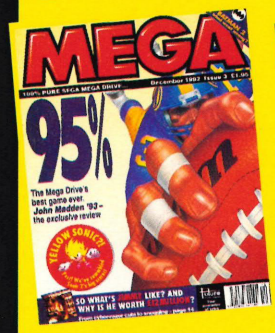

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- PLUS! A six-page review of *NHLPA Hockey*.

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- *Alien 3* mapped! if you're having trouble, and the tips in this directory aren't enough, then try here.

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- Do videogames screw you up? MEGA hear from five people who genuinely believe that videogames were the cause of failed marriages, bankruptcy and bad performance at school. We then talk to the experts to sort this controversial matter out once and for all. The results may surprise you.
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- Virtual Reality is coming to your Mega Drive! So read our six-page feature on the current state of Virtual Reality and how good Mega Drive VR will be.
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- Mega Drive games are to be beamed down by satellite to your TV! Read all about it.
- So where did *Sonic The Hedgehog* come from? Read an exclusive (ahem) interview with the super spiky speed merchant.

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Your guide to every Mega CD game currently officially released or imported into the UK. Let's get to it...

The A to Z of MEGA CD

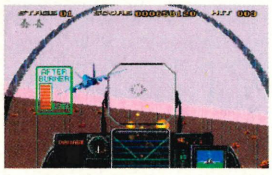
First off all, let's just point out a couple of important facts:

① These reviews were written as and when the games arrived in the UK over the last year, so if it all comes across as being, well – a bit negative, then that's because for a very long time we were waiting for that one good game that would show the system off to its full capacity. To their credit, Sega were waiting for that selfsame "decent game" until they released the Mega CD officially. That game was a very long time coming.

② All these games marked 'IMPORT' will NOT operate on a UK Mega CD without the CDX-Pro adaptor available at £49.99 from Datel (call them on 0782 744 707). They may well, however, be released officially in the UK at some time in the future. So pay up or wait.

AFTER BURNER 3

Sega • IMPORT



If anything, this is even more straightforward than its predecessor. *Afterburner 2* could have been described as shallow and mundane if it hadn't been so damn fast and slick, so in the event it turned out to be quite a good blast. The sequel to this game, however, is disappointing. While *Afterburner 3* retains all the speed and gloss of the last game, important tactical options like conserving missile supplies have been taken out.

In this game you are equipped with infinite missiles, which enable you to simply keep blasting throughout. This, in turn, means that the mid-air refuelling and power-up stage presence in the last game has been lost, and any modicum of thought required has also been removed.

We are, however, still looking at a pretty frantic blaster, but we don't want just another blaster when we've forked out several hundred quid on supposed state-of-the-art CD ROM, do we?

There are three game versions for you to try out. Play the normal game and you have to try to get through from start to finish and rack up a monumental score. Play the Time Competition and you play the game as normal, except that at the end of the game your time is displayed along with your score on the high-score table. Play the Hits Competition and, yep you guessed it, at the end of the game the number of planes you've hit is recorded along with your score on the high-score table. Not exactly rivetting, is it? In fact you play the same game using all three options – the only difference being the stats which are displayed at the end.

Within the game itself a little effort has been made to make *Afterburner 3* just a little bit different. For example, whenever an enemy missile or plane manages to creep up behind you, the view switches from one from inside the cockpit to a rear view of the plane in miniature. You then have to use your slow-down and afterburner buttons to out-manoeuvre the blighters.

Also, every few stages you get a rest from the aerial dogfights and take part in a low-level bombing run. Trouble is, it's not so much a bombing run, as more of the same, but with pylons and buildings as targets instead of aircraft. Oh yes, and instead of rolling the planes during these sections, the view only scrolls left and right. It may be rather unrealistic, but it's a lot easier than targeting enemy installations while banking.

Great, so there's definitely some new stuff in there, but with an infinite supply of missiles and no mid-air refueling, there's really not a lot here over and above what we saw in the last *Afterburner* game.

A good hard mindless blast is always fair enough entertainment, but this is meant to be a Mega CD game and it's really no better than *Afterburner 2* on the good old fashioned Mega Drive.

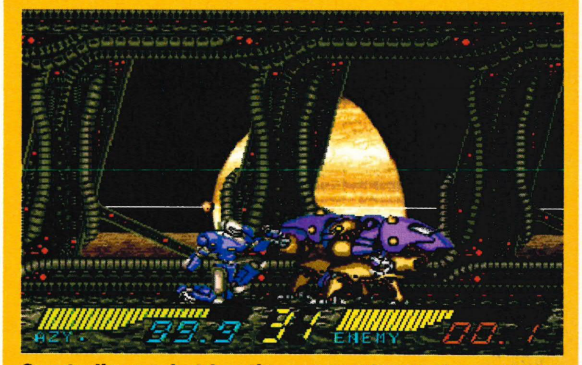
Graphics	**8**
Sound	**7**
Gameplay	**6**
Game Size	**7**
Addiction	**6**

MEGA Says: A frantic shoot-'em-up, but no improvement over its predecessor. It doesn't look like a Mega CD game and should really have been released on cart. (Cynics will tell you that it was, only that Sega chose to change the intro sequence, add a couple of new options and called it *G-LOC*).

MEGA Rating: 42%

BLACK HOLE ASSAULT

Micronet • IMPORT



One tedious robot beating up another tedious robot

Yet more decrepit robots aimlessly twitching at other decrepit robots in an attempt to beat each other up – that's what this game is all about. It's pathetic, it really is. Quite what Micronet (the authors of this follow-up to the appaling *Heavy Nova*) are playing at is completely beyond me.

"Building on past successes" or figuring "if something ain't broke, then why fix it?" are worthy (if conservative) maxims for producing a sequel (it worked for *Sonic 2*) though why Micronet should bother digging out their motley selection of recycled Zimmer frames for another sad, shambling totter through the motions of a beat-'em-up is unfathomable.

Let's take a look at what exactly is on offer. *Black Hole Assault* is a series of one-on-one beat-'em-ups in which you pit your particular robot against a series of progressively harder opponents. OK, so this formula may work just great for the *Street Fighter 2s* of this world, but when your man's (sorry, your robot's) repertoire of moves is restricted to just eight twitches, a little of the game's depth is lost. When the characters move slower than most standard Mega Drive sprites, a little more is lost. When the controls are so unresponsive that the gameplay degenerates into merely facing off an opposing lump of metal and pounding your joypad through the floor, you begin to wonder whether it's worth calculating "how much is lost" and instead wonder if there's any game left at all. *Neil West.*

Graphics 2 Sound 8 Gameplay 3 Game Size 3 Addiction 1

MEGA Says: Pure unadulterated tedium. The worst Mega CD game since the appaling *Heavy Nova* and *that's* bad.

MEGA Rating: 14%

CHUCK ROCK

Sony Imagesoft • £39.99

Chuck Rock is a decent enough platform game, decent enough to merit a decent showing in MEGA's all-time Top 100 (check out the latest issue for the current, up to date positions). So making a CD version of the game is a great idea, and making it bigger and better than the original definitely gets the thumbs up from MEGA, but there's no real improvement on the original.

The gameplay is the same as the cart version, but it's the number of levels, baddies and the in-game tunes that have undergone drastic changes.

Just in case you're not familiar with the game, you are Chuck Rock, a Neanderthal who likes nothing better than sitting in front of his TV (?) and drinking vast quantities of beer. Actually he does like something else, but because his wife has been kidnapped by arch rival Gary Gritter, he can't get any. Chuck's not too happy about this, so he sets off to find his wife and teach Gary a lesson. And this is where the game starts.

The original game had five scenes each with three levels, making fifteen levels in all. *Chuck Rock* on CD still has the same five scenes, but now each scene has five levels. So, although you have the same five scenes, you have more completely new levels.

The programmers have added some new baddies as well. And because the game is now that much larger, they've kindly added a password system as well. Don't think this is going to be a walkover though, because you've got only three lives and one continue and the two new levels on each scene make things much tougher.

Chuck Rock is a great looking and enjoyable game, which has been seriously thought about. The soundtrack is fab, with spiced up versions of all the sounds from the cart, and the opening demo is hilarious. All in all, it's great platform action – but nothing that couldn't have been done on a standard Mega Drive cart and that's why it doesn't score so good. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 5 Sound 8 Gameplay 6 Game size 7 Addiction 5

MEGA Says: Bigger and (therefore) better than the cart version, but Core Design (the game's programmers) know what the Mega CD is really capable of (wait until you see *Thunderhawk*) and this ain't it.

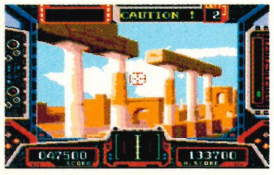
MEGA Rating: 50%

Chuck Rock – about to be eaten by a giant frog

COBRA COMMAND

Wolfteam

• Free with Mega CD



When you load up (the more things change, the more things stay the same, as anyone who remembers the Sinclair Spectrum will tell you) *Cobra Command* (also known as *Thunderstorm FX*) for the first time, your jaw will drop to the floor in amazement at the movie-quality animation on display in the lengthy intro sequence – it's just like Akira. The really, really impressive thing, though, is that once you start the actual game, the graphics are exactly the same...

Unfortunately, that's a bit too literally true. Not only is the graphic quality of the game the same as the intro, the level of player interaction is disturbingly similar as well. This isn't so much a problem with the Mega CD itself, but the original coin-op on which *Cobra Command* is based.

If you remember the old laserdisc coin-ops, like *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* you'll be familiar with the concept of a game which appears to play itself for about 90% of the time, only calling the player into action at certain intermissions in the proceedings to perform a simple joystick move, which if done correctly, lets you move on to the next bit of the game, or if done incorrectly, results in your instant death. They were great to look at, but really didn't offer much in the way of gameplay.

Next came the second generation of laserdisc games, like Atari's awesome *Firefox* and *Cobra Command.* Things are now slightly improved gameplay-wise in that all the way through the game you can wiggle the joypad around and have some sort of effect on what's happening onscreen, but since all it actually lets you do is move a gunsight which only lets you shoot things the Mega Drive feels you should be allowed to shoot, it's still not all that interactive. This is getting a bit confusing, isn't it? Let's explain properly.

In *Cobra Command*, your Mega CD takes you through a predefined (although beautiful) action sequence. At certain points, the screen will helpfully suggest (accompanied by some excellent sampled speech) that you should "GO UP" or "GO RIGHT" or whatever, at which point holding down the joypad in the appropriate direction until the screen stops telling you to do whatever it is you were doing, will allow you to continue. Miss the move, or release the pad too early, and you'll crash horrifically into something and get a chance to watch one of the rather lovely animated death sequences.

OK, so in a way, it could be said that you're actually "piloting" your chopper, but don't believe it. No matter how many times you try it, you'll always miss the Statue of Liberty's head by the same number of heart-quickening (but only the first time) inches, or not at all. All you do is trigger the execution of pre-set animated sequences.

In addition to all this, many enemy targets (also in a predefined sequence) attack you as you progress. You can only shoot them when your onboard computer locks on to them (you can blast away all you like before they're named as a target, but it won't have any effect), at which point you have to manoeuvre your onscreen gunsight to bring them down with gunfire or missiles. Miss your shot, or don't make it quickly enough, (or fail to work out exactly what you're supposed to be shooting at in the dramatic-but-sometimes-too-dynamically-messy-to-see-properly blur of action in front of you) and you'll be blown unceremoniously out of the sky

And there you have the gameplay in its entirety. For a large amount of the time, you just sit back and watch what's going on. Survive nine (pretty short) levels of this without waving bye-bye to all your lives and continues, and you've won. Hmm.

So is it actually any fun? Well, yes it is. Although it's a very limited idea, the very simplicity of it, and specifically the way everything always happens at the same place and the same time every time you play it, means that it's very easy (in the short term at least) to get yourself addicted to it – whenever you get yourself killed, you know that all you have to do to get past that bit next time is remember what happened and be ready for it, and that always seems like an easy enough thing to manage, so you have another go. The trouble is, that's also the game's downfall. If you do get addicted, you'll persevere solidly for a couple of days and, unless you've got a really useless memory, you'll get to the end equally quickly.

Since the main grabbing point of *Cobra Command* is the urge to get on and see the next amazingly impressive bit of animation, once you've seen all the amazingly impressive bits of animation, the compulsion to play disappears almost instantaneously, and at a cost of around £40 this is a pretty expensive couple of days' amusement. Ideally (and hey, it'll be Christmas before you know it), spend someone else's money on this. It does look bloody good though...

Graphics	**10**
Sound	**10**
Gameplay	**3**
Game size	**7**
Addiction	**7**

MEGA Says: It looks absolutely beautiful, but it's a memory test rather than a game. Simple enough to be addictive, though and worth a look just for the sheer 'Gosh Wow' Factor'.

MEGA Rating: 80%

ERNEST EVANS

Wolfteam • IMPORT

An Indiana Jones-style, bull-whip-cracking, platform-jumping game that, to be quite honest, would easily squeeze into a standard 4Mbit Mega Drive cart. Yep, it's another standard Mega Drive game with just a complicated intro sequence (lots of Japanese animation with actors overdubbing a speechtrack which, of course, is all out of sync with the pictures due to different Mega Drive operating speeds between the UK and Japan) and some CD in-game soundtrack.

To be honest, even if this

was just a Mega Drive game it wouldn't rate much above 40% in a MEGA review – the "action" is full of glitches and bugs. This is one of the first Mega CD releases, and to be quite honest it should never have made it at all. To be avoided.

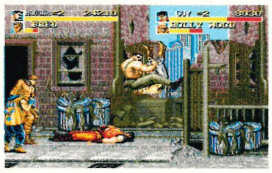
Graphic 4
Sound 7
Gameplay 4
Game Size 4
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: A complete rip off aimed at Mega CD owners who are trying to justify having just spent £270.

MEGA Rating: 30%

FINAL FIGHT

Capcom • £44.99



Haggar, Cody and Guy. Do you know who they are? No? Well these three guys are the saviours of the Mega CD. Yep, we've waited for the game that's going to show off the machine and this game is going to be as big a hit on the CD as *Streets Of Rage 2* is on the Mega Drive. And that's big.

Why? Well after several, to be honest, poor conversions (including the Super Nintendo game) we now have the WHOLE arcade game packed into one CD. OK, not that impressive, but when you find out that it plays as well as the arcade machine, sounds brilliant, looks amazing, and has an additional Time Attack mode, well... you just don't know what's hit you.

There is, of course, a plot to all this, but I'll get to that later. All you need to know is the basic idea of the game... beat up everyone. You choose your character at the start of the game and each of them has very different abilities.

Guy is the martial arts expert and although he's fast and agile he's not very strong. Cody is a street brawler and as such is quick and strong, but wrap a lead pipe around his head and he'll fall to the floor like the rest of us. That leaves Haggar, a retired Pro-Wrestler who although moves like a laid back sloth, is a bit of a hard nut and has some great moves hidden up his sleeve.

Once you've chosen your character, you've got to get on with the job in hand. Jessica (daughter of Haggar, girlfriend of Cody and close friend of Guy) has been kidnapped in an attempt to blackmail Haggar, who just happens to be the mayor of the city. If Haggar will give special considerations to the gang, they'll release his daughter. If not, they'll... well you know the rest.

The game is simple enough to control, as only two buttons are used: one for attack and the other for jump. But using these buttons in combinations, grabbing opponents and then using the buttons in combinations, or pressing the two buttons together, will bring out some amazing moves. Haggar, for example, has a bone-crunching pile driver, which takes a lot of power off anybody silly enough to get in the way. To execute it, grab an opponent by walking into them and then press Jump to pick them up. When in the air, press the Attack button, and you'll tuck the thug in between your legs and proceed to sit on his head.

Graphically, the game is amazing. It doesn't seem to have lost anything in the conversion at all. The sound and special effects are also top notch, but where this game really excels is in the game-playing department.

Add to this the simultaneous two-player mode (where you can beat each other up if you want to) and the special Time Attack Mode (a sort of training area where you need to beat up as many people as possible) and you've got everything you could want in a game.

If you're going to buy a Mega CD, then get this.

Graphics 9
Sound 9
Gameplay 8
Game Size 6
Addiction 9

MEGA Says: A fab beat-'em-up conversion that (kind of) uses the Mega CD to the limit. It's the arcade game and a whole lot more besides. Essential stuff!

MEGA Rating: 82%

FUNKY HORROR BAND

Victor • IMPORT

A cartoon-style RPG in which you take on the role of managing a pop band (at least, we think that's what you're meant to be doing – it's all in Japanese so it's kind of difficult to tell). Again, there's a big flash intro sequence but there's nothing here that couldn't fit on a Mega Drive cart. A rip-off.

Graphics 3
Sound 6
Gameplay 5
Game Size 5
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: One of the first Mega CD titles to be imported into the UK and a complete waste of money. Not a bad game in its own right, but as a game to showcase the Mega CD? About as much use as a luminous coconut.

MEGA Rating: 31%

HEAVY NOVA

Micronet • IMPORT

The prequel to *Black Hole Assault* and (amazing as it may seem) even worse than the phenomenally crap sequel. Yep, it's another crappy robot beat-'em-up and really, you deserve a whole lot better than this appaling rubbish so don't bother with it. Some people actually though that this as a game was OK – you may have read reviews giving it as high as 90% – but don't be fooled. This is a wart on the backside of the Mega CD and it should have been surgically disposed of months ago.We've just heard that the American comapny distributing this game have just changed their name – this says it all.

Graphics 3
Sound 5
Gameplay 1
Game Size 2
Addiction 1

MEGA Says: A steaming great rumbler of a dollop of a mockery of a joke of a game. With about two moves with which to develop your own style of play, this is one of the worst sad, shambling, mockeries of a beat-'em-up you'll ever have the sad misfortune to play. We're not joking. It really is that bad.

MEGA Rating: 12%

HOOK

Sony Imagesoft • £39.99

Hook, sadly, is just another in a long line of titles to be added to the list of Mega CD disappointments. It's big, it's tough, it's pretty, it sounds beautiful, but it's also slow, frustrating, and no bloody fun at all. It begins promisingly enough, but as soon as you stop listening to the music and start to play the actual game...

OK, let's get the facts out of the way first. As you've doubtless deduced from the screenshot, *Hook* is a platform game. It uses the memory capacity of the Mega CD to be a BIG platform game, and one with a lovely soundtrack and the odd beautiful cameo sequence between levels, but a platform game nonetheless. Nothing wrong with that, of course (hey, some of my best friends are platform games), but beneath all the frills and frippery, *Hook* isn't a very good platform game at all.

Why not? Well, for a start it's really slow. *Hook* moves like a sleepy slug on sedatives. Not only is the overall pace of the game slow, but the control of your character within the game leaves a bit to be desired, too. As you control Peter Pan in his mission to rescue his children, you can't help thinking that Tinkerbell would have been better off employing someone more suited to the job, like Esther Rantzen. Of course, maybe Pan's supposed to be slow to react, seeing as he is a porky old accountant-type who, in the plot of the film, gave up all this adventuring lark years ago. However, if that is the case (which I severely doubt anyway, but we're all for giving people the benefit of the doubt here at MEGA) it's no excuse for making a game as annoying to play as it does here.

And that brings me tidily to the other major bugbear. *Hook's* levels are reasonably sizable, which is a good thing. They don't, however, have any restart points in them, which is a bad thing. Get killed, as you frequently will due to the aforementioned controls and the general difficulty level, and it's all the way back to the beginning (unless you've made it to the end-of-level boss. Restarting at the boss also applies if you use a continue). With no passwords on offer, this means that if you want to finish the game, you're going to have to stick at it (using your limitless continues) until you've been through the entire thing in a single sitting.

The very worst thing about *Hook* is that (gameplay-wise) it never really manages to raise an eyebrow. Sure, there are a few pretty bits, but nothing as good as 95% of the Mega Drive's *World Of Illusion*. Sure, there are a few nice touches, but nothing as good as nearly all of *Sonic 2*. And sure, it's difficult and you won't finish it in two hours flat (like, since we're being fair, the aforementioned *Sonic 2*), but it's a nasty, tedious, unimaginative and unfair kind of difficult, compared to (plucking a arbitrary but close all the same example out of thin air) *Rolo To The Rescue*.

There's a bit of the feel of the film here, but not nearly enough to keep you interested after your tenth consecutive death on the unpleasant forest section – the Mega CD is going to have to do a lot better than this if it's ver going to take videogames anywhere further than we've all already been 100 times before. *Neil West.*

Graphics 5 Sound 8 Gameplay 5 Game Size 7 Addiction 5

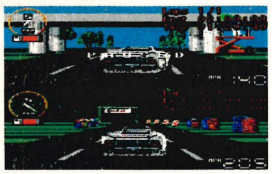
MEGA Says: One of the more challenging platform games around, but there's very little fun to go with the difficulty.

MEGA Rating: 55%

Take that, you evil barrel-balancing bas(snip! – Ed)

JAGUAR XJ220

Sega • £39.99



At first glance, you might be forgiven for thinking that we've accidentally printed a screenshot from classic Mega Drive racer *Lotus Turbo Challenge* (check it out elsewhere in this directory, it really is a cracker), but hold hard, good readers. 'Tis not so. For a start, this isn't a Mega Drive game, it's a Mega CD one. Secondly, it's licensed by a completely different major car manufacturer. And thirdly, it's a bit crap.

"Ooh, bit of a contentious one there, MEGA," I hear you say. "Everybody else thinks *Jaguar XJ220* is great, you're just trying to be different for dramatic shock value." Not true. How is this game duff? Let me list the ways...

For a start, where *Lotus'* used time limits as your main enemy, in *Jaguar'* it's money. "Money?" you cry. Yep, money. You start (in the World Tour game) with a set amount of cash, which you have to use to buy air tickets to the round-the-world venues where you race. Do well in the race and you'll win more money with which to repair the damage caused to your car during the race and you'll also be able to pay your fares to the next venue. You can race the 16 tracks in any order you like, but if you try to go Britain, Australia, France, China, USA (for example), you're going to chuck a frighteningly large amount of dosh straight into Richard Branson's pocket. It's better, therefore, to plan your route carefully (what is this, a racing game or Around The World In Eighty Days with Michael Palin?)

What all this means is that you never encounter a "Game Over" screen just because of bad driving – however crap you are you'll finish every race, you just won't win much money, and eventually (after about three weeks) you'll run out and lose the game through bankruptcy. Pop! What was that? That was the sound of the game's feeling of challenge evaporating.

"But hey, that's not necessarily a bad thing, surely? This isn't an arcade game, it doesn't matter about having to keep starting all over again, does it? As long as you're having lots of racing fun, that's OK isn't it?" Well, yes, it would be, but the time you'll spend actually racing in *Jaguar XJ220* is some of the least eventful time you'll ever pass sitting in front of your Mega Drive.

You hardly ever see any opposition cars, and when you do, they just kind of sit there getting imperceptibly larger for about an hour until eventually you slip past them. They don't jiggle around in front of you, they don't try to get in your way, they just drive along in blissful isolation. I can't even begin to tell you how dull it all is.

"But what about all the options? It's not just the World Tour, there's a Grand Prix game too, yes?" Indeed there is, but it's just the same except you win championship points instead of money and you don't choose which tracks you race on.

"But there're loads of different tracks, with scenery and, er, weather, and stuff!" Yeah. Did you know that Australia looks exactly the same as Peru? Holland is identical to Italy, but with windmills? Now maybe they are in real life, but that's no excuse for not giving the game a bit of characterisation, is it? There's no sense of excitement when you reach a new track in *XJ220,* partly because you didn't have to qualify for it in any meaningful way (just manage your budget carefully), but mostly because every track looks as near as damn it the same as the one before it but in different colours. And the weather? Seen it before, guv. Big deal.

"But the two-player game? You're not going to tell me that that's not great fun!" Sorry, but I am. The game slows down noticeably in two-player simultaneous mode, to the extent that it feels more like you're driving a Chevette with the handbrake on than £400,000's worth of state-of-the-art supercar. And while jockeying with each other for position is significantly more fun than racing the soulless Mega CD drivers, it's still not nearly as much fun as doing it in *Lotus Turbo Challenge.*

"But, but..." And another thing – the amount of time you have to spend waiting for the game to access the CD is a right royal pain in the butt. If I'd wanted an Amiga, I'd have bloody well gone out and bought one.

"But aren't there ANY good points?" Oh, sure. The CD-quality (of course) music is, well, CD quality. It's a CD of some crap elevator muzak, but a CD all the same. And Sega do deserve credit for making use of the Mega CD's save-game facility. When you play the Grand Prix mode, you can save your game to the Mega CD's RAM chips and then reload the game when you next come back to it. You can also save any tracks you might create with the built-in Track Editor (if you've got the patience). But the thing is, the game's so dull that you're extremely unlikely either to play the Grand Prix mode more than twice or bother to spend half a day designing a track when the game's already got 16 perfectly serviceable ones of its own.

What *Jaguar XJ220* needs, I'm afraid, is a complete Gameplay Editor. Other mags may have raved about this, but they'll be eating their words when they see what the Mega CD can really do over the next 12 months.

Graphics	6
Sound	6
Gameplay	5
Game Size	8
Addiction	3

MEGA Says: It's got nothing on *Lotus Turbo Challenge,* really, and it's horribly dull and annoying most of the time. The disc accessing pauses are really irritating too.

MEGA Rating: 52%

MAKE YOUR OWN VIDEO:

Sony Imagesoft • £44.99

Make your own pop video for C&C Music Factory

In Kriss Kross, C&C Music Factory and soon to be Marky Mark and INXS flavours, these are more gimmicks than games.

If you were to sit down and think about putting together an actual music video, you'd probably give up very quickly, because there's definitely more to this video lark than meets the eye. Making your own video on the Mega CD, however, is very simple indeed, so you don't have to worry about endless reams of negative spilling all over your living room floor. All the hard work is done for you by the Mega CD, and all you have to do is create the ultimate visual experience.

Your "editing suite" is all shown on screen at once, and moving between and splicing different pieces of footage couldn't be easier. Along the bottom of the screen are three footage windows. One of these displays the actual promo video footage and the others contain lots and lots of other bits (mostly video footage of people dancing) that – if cut and pasted into your own video prudently – could make your video a winner... or a dreadful loser.

Directly above these windows is the view screen. This is where you'll see the pieces of footage which you are actually putting together to go out on air. As you click between the three footage boxes, the image in the main view screen should change accordingly . On the left of the view screen is the effects box. This is where you can really let your creativity go wild with a strobe, and erm – well, some pretty feeble effects really.

But anyway, so you've got to grips with actually making your own video. It's now up to you whether you fancy a bit of a challenge or whether you prefer to take your time and be creative. If working under pressure brings out the best in you, then you should be playing the Edit Challenge.

Presented by some kind of DJ, the idea of the game is to listen to what is required from you and then make your video accordingly. Get it right, and you'll be awarded with the title of one of the top ten video editors. Get it wrong, and your street cred takes a enormous dive.

The U-Direct mode is a lot more laid back. Everyone from the studio has gone home and the whole studio is yours. You can do exactly what you want without taking instructions from some spotty pre-pubescent teenager. If you mess up, no problem. If you make a masterpiece, then you can save it and show it off when you like.

A "dude", yesterday

Actually getting to grips with the concept of making your own video is easy enough, and the video footage, as well as being fun, flows well. The whole idea of creating a video yourself is great, but there is one huge reason why you might hate this Mega CD: you can choose from only three songs, and if you don't happen to be a big fan of whichever groups is starring on your particular Make Your Own Video CD, you'll be sick to death of all three after the first day and your brain will start to melt. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 7 Sound 8 Gameplay 3 Game Size 2 Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Great fun for the first hour (all of a sudden, no, really – it's spooky) then mind-numbingly tedious.

MEGA Rating: 35%

MONKEY ISLAND

JVC USA • IMPORT

Guybrush Threepwood has a problem. Well, several problems, actually, not least of

which is being lumbered with a stupid name that no-one can remember. But biggest among Guybrush's problems is his career anxiety – the one thing he'd like to be is a pirate.

Now that might seem like a slightly pie-in-the-sky dream to most of you, but Guybrush is lucky. Y'see, he just happens to live in the middle of an island that's simply heaving with the scurvy seafaring knaves. So one fine evening he takes himself down to the boozer and presents himself to the most important-looking pirate he can find. "Gissa job," he says...

Sadly, as most of us already know, life isn't that simple. "You don't become a pirate just by asking," mocks one of the pirates, but his laughter is interrupted by a couple of pirate chums pointing out something of a manpower shortage in the Dept. Of Skullduggery, and hence Guybrush finds himself on a kind of piracy youth training scheme.

The three pirates set him three tasks, the successful completion of which will prove him fit for a life in a three-cornered hat and a suspect beard. Fired with burning ambition and an overpowering sense of purpose, Guybrush strides manfully out of the tavern and into the biggest adventure of his young life.

So, enough waffle already. Let's talk game. Fairly clearly, there are two sorts of people reading this review, those of you with Amigas or Amiga-owning chums, who've seen this before, and *Monkey Island* virgins. We'll deal with the first group first.

If you've seen *Monkey Island* before, this is exactly the same game, but with better music, and without all of the horrible faffing around with different floppy disks and eternity-long gaps for them to load in bits of code. Mind you, it is slightly slower in play, and the accessing gaps are actually still present, it's just that they're from CD instead of floppy, and they're not as long. Make no mistake, though, as someone used to Mega Drive software, you're still going to have a little bit of an uncomfortable time getting the hang of waiting around twiddling your thumbs while the game amuses itself with clever technical stuff. But hey, this is the bit of the review for people who know *Monkey Island* already, so let's forget about disk accessing for now. The upshot of everything is, for *Monkey Island* fans this is a dream come true. You can skip straight to the percentage box, thanks. Bye. OK, who's next?

Oh yeah, that big gang of *Monkey Island* virgins. Right, well, first off, *Monkey Island* is an adventure game. However, it's not like most other adventure games. Most other adventure games have ridiculously crap plots about elves, magical kingdoms, sorcerers bewitched turnips and stuff, but *Monkey Island* is different.

The puzzle element is based on logic – you may find yourself in need of money,what do you do? You can try stealing it, finding it or walking into a travelling circus and asking for a job. You get the picture?

But there's a big difference between *The Secret Of Monkey Island* and the usual adventure game. *Monkey Island* is funny. Not just occasionally funny or incidentally funny, but repeatedly and extremely funny, all the way through. In fact, it wouldn't be far off the mark to suggest that *Monkey Island*'s entire raison d'être is funniness – much of the time, the whole plot seems to be nothing more than an elaborate run-up to a punchline, and it's all the better for it.

As Guybrush's quest unfolds, the poor chap trades insults with his enemies, he's fired from a gun as a human cannonball, he gets drunk, visits the "Rubber Chicken With A Pulley In The Middle Shop" – and, oh dear, it doesn't sound very funny does it? You'll just have to take our word for it – *Monkey Island* is funnier than MEGA will ever hope to be. (You're meant to disagree at this point, by the way).

Y'see, it makes it feel almost like you're taking part in a film, except that you get the chance to choose your own lines. Playing *Monkey Island*, you'll get a choice of several lines of dialogue to use when talking to other characters, and even though you more or less know which is the right one to get you through the game, you find yourself deliberately saying the wrong ones just to see what kind of responses you get.

The urge to go for the laugh line is an illustration of just how involved you get when you play this. You can really identify with Guybrush, and that's something that most games don't offer. Many computer magazines have called this the greatest computer game of all time, and they could be right. What it certainly is, is the best use anyone's yet made of the Mega CD, and if you own one, it's all but unmissable.

Graphics	**8**
Sound	**9**
Gameplay	**6**
Game Size	**8**
Addiction	**8**

MEGA Says: Possibly the most popular computer game of all time, and now you can play it on your Mega CD with now of that tedious disc-swapping malarkey. A triumph!

MEGA Rating: 91%

NIGHT TRAP

Sega • £49.99

Yep, this is the game that caused all that controversy. Weighing in at an estimated 900 megabytes, it's the biggest console game of all-time.

You are a member of SCAT (Sega Control Attack Team) and you're on a mission. Five girls have gone missing and the last place at which they were seen was the house of Mr and Mrs Martin. Five more girls are now due to stay at the house and it's you're job to protect them.

As the SCAT agent, you have complete control over the security system and this enables you to look at any one of eight rooms. This isn't an ordinary security system though. As well as hidden cameras, the house is full to the brim with all sorts of traps, hidden trap doors, perspex cages, sliding doors and other strange devices. Using your remote control (the joypad) you must look through the house and trap any intruders.

Snoop on people snooping round other people's toilet

As an undercover agent you must also work out what happened to the other girls and find out just who the Martins are and what they're up to. Also, the occupants in the house will change the colour of the access code to the security system – you need this to keep up your observation. Listen in on conversations and you'll hear when you'll need to change colour. It's then your job to keep a constant eye on each room, and prime traps for intruders as and when they appear and this is where the fun begins.

The guilty table?

Don't spend too much time in one room, or you'll miss the chance to trap someone, but don't flick between all the rooms either, because you'll probably miss some important information. It's finding the balance between these two factors that is the root to being successful in *Night Trap*. Another point worth note is the way in which the action is timed to relate to other pieces of action: you can be listening to a conversation, leave the room, come back five seconds later and you'll miss five seconds of conversation.

Night Trap is an amazingly atmospheric game – the digitised film footage, though obviously not of cinematic quality, is good enough. This game is a definite step forward for CD games and the sound, both the speech and the intense mood music when the bad guys appear, makes it feel like a real (if badly acted) movie. *Night Trap* is a great example of a novel game that will never appear on a cart. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 8 Sound 9 Gameplay 5 Game Size 7 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: The first experimental Mega CD game in which you *really* participate. If you're planing to get a Mega CD then get this.

MEGA Rating: 85%

NOBUNAGA AND HIS NINJA FORCE

Compile • IMPORT

Nobunaga And His Ninja Force is a vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up in which you play a super deformed-type giant robot with a jetpack, flying over all the usual sorts of bad guy-infested scenery and, er, shooting things – up.

And that's it.

Graphics	**6**
Sound	**8**
Gameplay	**6**
Game Size	**8**
Addiction	**5**

MEGA Says: A decent shoot-'em-up, but we can't for the life of us work out where the Mega CD comes into the equation here.

MEGA Rating: 42%

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Victor • IMPORT

Prince Of Persia is a platform game with a difference. That difference lies in the animation, which is rotoscoped from the actions of a real person. The way your character moves is more impressively realistic than, well, just about anything there's ever been. *Flashback* on the Mega Drive is the latest game to use this technique – and you can hear jaws hitting desktops all over the country. If you've never come across this particular programming technique before, you'll be amazed as you watch your hero run, jump, crawl, climb and swing around in a breathtaking display of acrobatics that give the game an amazingly atmospheric quality – and that's before you've even really started playing it. But man cannot live by fancy animations alone, so how good is the game which is hiding in there beneath all the gloss?

Well, it's okay...

There's a lot of it...

There's a lot of exploring and discovering stuff to do...

But, at the end of the day, you're going, we suspect, to be pretty disappointed with this one. Why? Here's why.

For a game that's showcasing the Mega CD (£270 of state-of-the-art video game technology) there's nothing whatsoever in this *Prince Of Persia* that distinguishes it from, say, the Master System version. Oh, sure, the graphics are a fraction neater (only a fraction, mind you), the sound's a good deal sexier (a collection of not-especially-melodic but beautifully-executed – CD, remember – tunes twitter away charmingly as you play), and it's got a useful front end that lets you define, among other things, how sensitive you want the controls to be. But all the flashy expensive hardware for which you've just paid a hell of a lot of money has gone completely and utterly to waste. Sprite scaling? Rotation? Use of colossal memory space? None of that in here, guv.

Looking at this version, you'll wonder why it couldn't have been done on a plain, ordinary, common-or-garden Mega Drive cart. But hang on, though, we're getting a little ahead of myself – there's the voices of a thousand readers, and they're all saying, "But what's it all about, anyway?". Here's what.

Right, the plot. You're a guy (a prince, as it happens). You've got a babe (a princess, logically). And there's a bad guy (evil sultan type. Boo hiss). The bad guy nicks your babe, on account of her unfeasible gorgeousness, and decrees that he's going to marry her.

Being a rich and powerful sultan-type dude as well as an evil one, this is something which it is apparently totally within his power to do (despite any thoughts the princess might have on the matter) and what's more he's in a bit of a hurry. He's going to tie the knot with his reluctant paramour in just one hour's time (yep, that's one hour; sixty minutes; 3600 – count 'em! – seconds), unless you can dissuade him with the aid of your trusty sword. All fine and groovy then, yes? Just pop up to the front door, knock three times and when Mr Nasty answers, lop his head off.

Well, no. You see, the sultan lives in a big (no, really – it's enormous) castle, and before you can drop in for tea, you're going to have to navigate its labyrinthine passages. And kill people.

So that's enough storyline, back to the action. While *Prince Of Persia* gives you a far more sophisticated control system than most platform games, there's a price to pay. That price, in this particular case, is fluidity. The prince moves in fairly big steps of predetermined size (you can take little careful baby steps, but they're just as measured), which means that for the majority of the time, he's only half under your control – you're just triggering the execution of set animated movements. In other words, once he starts to do something, all the joypad-wrenching in the world won't make him stop until he's completed the move. This, in turn, means that to get any kind of smooth flow to the game, you have to plan every move about a second in advance – try to jump when you're bombing along towards the edge of a platform, and the bold prince will simply ignore you and plunge to his death at the bottom of some massive pit. Prat.

What this all boils down to, then, is that while *Prince Of Persia* is a great game which will make your friends go "Woof!" for five minutes and start simultaneously plotting: a) getting you to leave your Mega CD to them in your will, and b) your death, you'll get, firstly, annoyed and, secondly, bored with it before you're halfway through it. Below the surface it's pretty thin material for a game, and although it's beautifully done, all this style-over-content stuff isn't what we really want to see from this potentially astounding bit of kit. There, we said it. Again.

Graphics	**5**
Sound	**8**
Gameplay	**5**
Game Size	**6**
Addiction	**6**

MEGA Says: A nice game to play, but not something that you'll get a lot of value for money from. And (once again) a complete and utter waste of the Mega CD's potential capabilities.

MEGA Rating: 41%

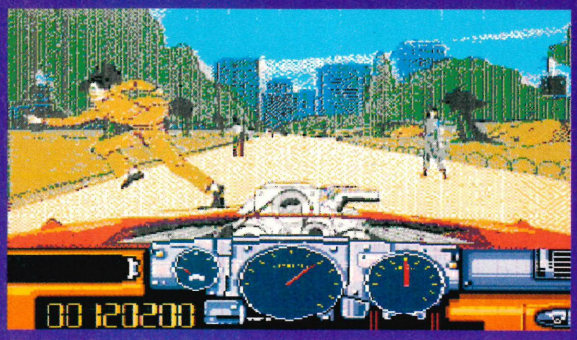
ROAD AVENGER

Renovation • IMPORT

Road Avenger is from Wolfteam, the same people who made *Cobra Command*. And much in the same way that, in Japan, *Cobra Command* goes under the name of *Thunderstorm FX*, in Japan this game is known as *Road Blaster FX*. Another link between the two games is that you don't control all the action, you just take over at vital points in the game. But where the lack of excitement and the feeling of not actually doing much spoilt *Cobra Command*, *Road Avenger* goes someway towards putting this right.

To start with, *Road Avenger* is visually stunning. Now we know this sounds familiar, but to date there hasn't been a faster moving, better animated or more colourful game on the Mega CD. It beats *Cobra Command* into a cocked hat (whatever the hell that means). The sound effects are also more than its elder brother's. The sound the pedestrians make when you run them over or the squeal of the tyres as you brake and steer to make that last-second turn are really first class) and a thumping soundtrack means that things move along very nicely.

You may remember that we said *Cobra Command* was all graphics and not much else. All you had to do was sit back, watch the action and press the button when you needed to – not very inspiring and really quite simple. Well, Wolfteam have been working on things a touch since they produced *Cobra Command*, and they have added bits and bobs to *Road Avenger*, which should keep you more interested.



Pedestrians flee from your turb-charged path. Wimps

The first major difference is the number of buttons you have to press. Not only do you have to control the steering of the car, but you also have to apply the brakes or use the turbo at the right time to clear or avoid whatever obstacles suddenly appear in front of you. You also get drawn out of the action, when you finish a stage (various accidents you've caused along the way are replayed for you, you're then thrown back into your car using some clever scaling and back into the action) or if you're too slow with your joypad and you die (and you get a nice animated sequence of your demise).

The game is played over eight large levels, each one being tougher than the last. The scenery is also very different from stage to stage, so you don't get bored looking at the same graphics all the time and although the gameplay is basically the same as other Mega CD games we've seen (*Time Gal* and *Cobra Command*), the pace of the action is furious. You can't let up for a minute, and the great graphics, animation, sound and edge-of-the-seat action leave you gasping for breath. Well, nearly.

With only eight levels though and relatively easy-to-understand gameplay, this game should not prove too hard to finish – Neil actually finished the game on his third go, flash git, and reckons it only takes 20 minutes – the last level, however, is a real toughie. You do get three continues, but if you're a hardened gamer, you might be better off not using them and trying to get through the game in one go.

Hopefully, *Road Avenger* will be the last of these pseudo-interactive games, because the Mega CD should really be breaking new ground and going even further ahead. But this is the most exciting, most playable and best-looking game yet to appear for the Mega CD. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 10 Sound 9 Gameplay 5 Game Size 5 Addiction 8

MEGA Says: It's very, very shallow. But it looks amazing, and the furious pace will keep you on the edge of your seat. Read the review of *Cobra Command* for a more in-depth look into how this style of game works, and then try and borrow a copy – it's great fun, but not worth buying.

MEGA Rating: 81%

SEWER SHARK

Sony Imagesoft • £39.99

Sewer Shark isn't going to have shoppers besieging their local Dixons to splash out £270 on a Mega CD. Indeed, it's going to have a bit of a job selling itself, never mind any expensive hardware. If you've been reading up on some of our previous Mega CD reviews, particularly the likes of *Cobra Command* and its rather better sister game *Road Avenger*, you might well, if you're the perceptive type, be expecting *Sewer Shark* to be an impressive-looking game boasting stunning real-life visuals but gameplay over which you have very little real control. If so, you might like to take a little moment out to pat yourself on the back. Very well done.

In *Sewer Shark*, you're a kind of futuristic Rentokil man, in control of a zappy little sewer buggy and with a mission to, er, clean up the sewers. Yes, I know it's a contradiction in terms, but at least you haven't got a princess to save at the end of it all, so be grateful for small plot mercies. You fly down the tubes and blast at a variety of nasties (an impressive total of, er, about five different types) with your buggy-mounted laser. Frequently, tunnel junctions crop up, which the digitised voice of a guide will give you directions down. Take the wrong turn and you risk running into a dead end, which is also what you'll get if you do. And that's all you do. Oh dear.

A drain. Don't laugh, someone's sent you down it

Oddly, though, it's not as bad as all that, as long as you make a few allowances. First, allow for the fact that the Mega CD isn't quite up to the job of displaying the fast-moving and detailed tunnels very well – it looks better moving than the screenshots on these pages suggest, but it's still very bitmappy indeed. To get the best effect, play the game sitting as far away from the monitor as you possibly can, and screw your eyes up a bit. You'll also have to allow for some very confusing gameplay – much of the time, the instructions shouted to you appear to have almost no relevance to whether you smash into a dead-end wall or not. This, in fact, is the biggest handicap to the game's addictive qualities – it's hard to make yourself play again and think "I'll do better this time" when you're not at all sure what you did wrong the last time.

And finally, you'll have to allow for the fact that at its heart, this is a game which in terms of depth and brain-power, makes *G-LOC* look like *The Secret Of Monkey Island*. *Sewer Shark*, a bit like *Cobra Command* only a lot more so, does almost all of the gameplaying work for you – while doing the screenshots, we stuck it on demo mode for a bit while we fiddled with the screen-grabbing equipment. Or at least, we thought I did. We were actually (without touching any of the controls, of course) playing the game as normal and lasting for about the same length of time, the only difference being that we weren't shooting any sewer beasties.

In all honesty, this is quite an entertaining game. If you play it in a shop (or see the demo video currently doing the rounds, which somehow manages to make it all look a bit more impressive and coherent than it does on our big TV here in the MEGA office), you'll probably end up thinking, "Hey, that's really neat, I'll have some of that", but beware. In that five-minute skim, you'll have experienced practically everything that there is in the whole game. If you fork out your 40 quid and take it home, the chances are that after an hour you'll be trying to think of ways in which you can persuade the shop to take it back... or you'll at least be contemplating a joypad with a lead 30 feet long. *Neil West.*

Graphics 7 Sound 9 Gameplay 4 Game Size 5 Addiction 7

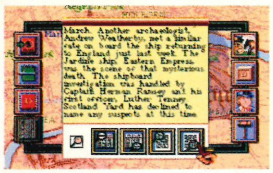
Another drain. Yes, they do all seem to look the same

MEGA Says: More engaging that it first appears, but not much of a game and it won't last you long at all. If hands-off thrills are your thing, then check out *Road Avenger*.

MEGA Rating: 56%

SHERLOCK HOLMES: CONSULTING DETECTIVE

Icom Simulations • IMPORT



It had been a while since my learned friend Sherlock Holmes had solved his last case. I imagine you will all remember the skill with which he unravelled the notty problem which later became known as The Case Of The Stinky Trout, but stranger things were ahead.

One wet evening, Holmes and I were enjoying a quiet evening at home talking about Holmes' curious relationships with burly sailors and his affinity for smoking a rather bizarre and ornate pipe which emitted very odd smells and made him giggle a lot. Suddenly and quite unexpectedly, the Baker Street Boys (a group of street urchins who often helped Holmes out for payments of cash) burst through the door.

"Mr 'olmes," said one of them, "I 'ave found this strange package in your 'allway."

Indeed, the package was quite large and when opened, it revealed all manner of gadgetry.

"This can mean only one thing Watson," said Holmes. "We have been sent an American Mega CD from Liz at Gamesville."

"Good God Holmes, how can you possibly know that?" I said in amazement.

"Elementary my dear Watson, she enclosed an explanatory letter."

"Oh. But look, there's also a game about you, based on a rather popular board-game I once saw."

On loading the game we observed that it contained an icon-driven adventure based on three of Holmes' most famous cases. During each case, the participant had to read the newspapers for background information and, after collating a small file of relevant names had to also look through the London Directory to locate them. Players could then enter these notes in a computerised notebook and go off to question the witnesses, suspects and so on. But what followed amazed both myself and my normally ice-cool colleague. Whenever a character was questioned, live video footage with speech was displayed on our television telling us of any clues that we needed. True the picture was not of the best quality, but the visuals were clear enough and the sound impeccably distinct.

"Well Watson, this is incredible indeed, but having played the board-game, there are a few comparisons that must be made."

"And they are?" I asked with interest.

"Well Watson, 'board-game' is a bit of a misnomer as there was, in fact, no board. There was simply a map, newspaper archives, a directory, a casebook and a clue book. In this game there is no map and there are far fewer cases than in the so-called board-game but that aside, the newspapers are much the same, as is the directory, and this amazing video footage replaces the clue book."

"What are your conclusions Holmes?"

"They are twofold. Firstly, the board-game oozed atmosphere. There was nothing quite like getting your hands on actual documents and papers. However, my second point is that the video footage more than amply makes up for the slight lack of excitement of looking at a TV screen (even if those awful actors perform a cockney accent with even less aplomb than Dick Van Dyke's diabolical attempt in Mary Poppins). And finally, there are only three cases to solve. This too is a shame, but having said that, the structure of this game makes it harder to solve cases than in the board-game and there's no way to cheat."

"But Holmes, that makes three conclusions."

"What?"

"You said your conclusions were twofold, then proceeded to give three."

"Watson, you stick to medicine and allow me to conduct my investigations without the intrusion of your irksome trivia."

"Sorry Holmes. So what do you think?"

"I think that while the CD game doesn't quite match up to the brilliance of the board-game, it is sufficiently different and well-implemented to make it a must for CD-gamers who have a bit of a talent for more cerebral pastimes. Initially, the poor video footage is off-putting, but once used to it, there's a fabulous little game beneath. And of course, above all, it's got me in it. And now Watson, I must go and visit an

old friend of mine in order to stock up on, erm, tobacco. Good day!"

Graphics 7
Sound 7
Gameplay 8
Game Size7
Addiction 7

MEGA Says: OK, so the video quality is a bit poor but this game's both challenging and very atmospheric. A good use (at last) of the Mega CD if nothing else.

MEGA Rating: 70%

SOL FEACE

Sega • Free with Mega CD

As anyone who's bought a Mega CD will tell you, this is an OK shoot-'em-up but as far as the actual game is concerned, there's nothing here that (yawn) couldn't have easily appeared on the Mega Drive. OK, there's a decent soundtrack and a bit of graphical trickery at the start of the game, but that's your lot. If you're kidding yourself that your Mega CD's being used at all, then just replay *Sonic 2* and see what the standard piece of kit is capable of – then go back to this and ask yourself is there's really any change.

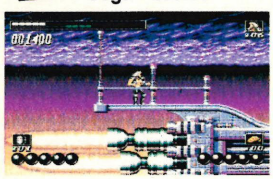
Graphics 3
Sound 5
Gameplay 3
Game Size 3
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Not bad, but not a Mega CD game.

MEGA Rating: 38%

WOLF CHILD

Sega • £39.99



Hmm. Let's do some maths, shall we? (No, trust me, it'll be fun. Well, sort of.) Mega Drive cartridges cost, apparently, around £10 to manufacture, helping to explain the high price of games. CDs, however, are something closer to a quid (helping to explain why the latest Michael Jackson album doesn't cost £40).

When people first heard about the Mega CD and suggested that these lower costs might reduce the price of software a bit, Sega and the software firms were quick to pooh-pooh the idea. They claimed that with so many hundreds of megabytes of storage space to fill with game increased development costs would keep prices (coincidentally) around the same level.

Where, then, does something like *Wolfchild* figure in the equation? To all intents and purposes, this is a game ported directly over from the Amiga (yeah, yeah, enhanced sound, a few more levels, blah blah blah), so development time must have amounted to, ooh, a good three or four weeks at least. On the Amiga, where nearly all of the involved and costly development work was done in the first place, *Wolfchild* cost £25. Now it's £40. Punters, someone, somewhere, is driving a Lamborghini Diablo at high speed down a private track, and you're paying for the petrol!

Anyway, let's get on with the game review. Or, on second thoughts, let's not bother. This is a platform game so bog-standard that it makes *Hook* look like a picture of inspiration. *Wolfchild* got mixed reviews when it appeared on the Amiga in the first place, and that was a year and a half ago.

Graphics 4
Sound 6
Gameplay 4
Game Size 5
Addiction 4

MEGA Says: A really, really, *really* dull platformer – we can't imagine what the Mega CD's doing with most of its time when it's running this. Don't bother.

MEGA Rating: 32%

TIME GAL

Wolfteam • IMPORT

Er, excuse me, but isn't all this CD stuff getting very samey? First of all we got *Cobra Command*, which was all graphics and no gameplay, then came *Road Avenger* which improved on the former a tad, and now we have *Time Gal* (wot no FX?), which comes somewhere in the middle.

This is another one of those games that you're going to see labelled as an "interactive cartoon". Now these games are a bit of a let down, because after playing the game frantically for five minutes, you realise that you're not doing very much at all and get a bit peeved off.

Wolfteam (the programmers of this and *Road Avenger)* have tried to spice up the gameplay, however, by adding random elements into the game so that you're always kept on your toes. So, each time you play the game you will play the levels in a different order, which in this case means a different time zone: one time you'll start in 65,000,000 BC, the next time you might be in 1600 BC.

You may be thinking this is quite easy, as (seeing all you have to do is press Up, Down, Left or Right whenever the screen flashes in a certain direction – this is one of those "interactive" cartoons, remember) what difference does a change on plot make to the proceedings?

Well, the screen also flips viewpoints from game to game. If you're playing through the 1600 BC period, you might have to press left to make the jump. Next time you play, however, the view might be flipped around, meaning you'll have to press right instead. This makes the game a lot more interesting, as you always need to be alert.

Another gameplay "extra" is that you also have the opportunity to use your gun every now and again. When all four points on the screen flash, you press button B and let fly with your laser gun. Sometimes, however, you'll freeze the action instead and be given a choice of three types of weapon to fire. Choose quickly, 'cos there's a timer counting down.

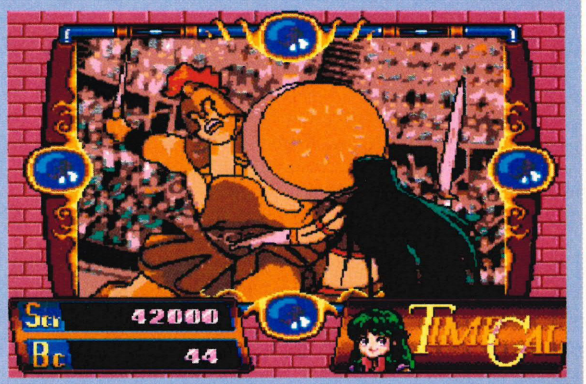
The trouble with the weapon options is that they are in Japanese text. You therefore just have to guess which weapon to use. The order also changes with every game, so you need to be careful when selecting.

There are good things and bad things about this game. The graphics and animation are indeed top quality, and the in-game soundtrack and effects (especially *Time Gal*'s cute little laugh) do make the game more enjoyable to play. But if push comes to shove, I'd go for *Road Avenger*. It's basically the same type of game, but it's slightly better looking and more fun to play. If you've got money to burn, however, there are enough differences between the two games to warrant buying them both. *Paul Mellerick.*

Graphics 9 Sound 8 Gameplay 5 Game Size 6 Addiction 7

MEGA Says: Even less involved than *Road Avenger*, and that's saying something. Still quite good fun though.

MEGA Rating: 61%



Is it just me or is Time Gal tickling that bloke's... erm

WONDERDOG

Victor • IMPORT

Wonderdog is a bit different from you average Mega CD game, because it wasn't actually made for the Mega CD – *Wonderdog* is one of the free games you get when you buy the Wonder Mega.

The Wonder Mega is a Japanese only machine made jointly by Sega and JVC, that combines a Mega Drive and Mega CD all in one nice little grey unit. Launched about eight months ago it's selling quite nicely but JVC decided that they'd sell the game on it's own and make a bit more money. Enough of this corporate rubbish though, lets get down to the game in hand shall we.

It's a platform game, it's nothing that couldn't have appeared on the Mega Drive and you'll finish it within two hours of leaving the Virgin store.

Sounds grim? That's because it is. This is yet another (and you think you're bored of hearing this? How do you think *we* feel? We've got to *write* this same sentence over and over again, so all together now...) "yet another game that could quite easily have appeared on the Mega Drive". And you know what? Even if it had appeared on the Mega Drive no one would have payed it any attention because it's so easy to finish it's a complete waste of money.

Graphics 4
Sound 8
Gameplay 5
Game Size 2
Addiction 3

MEGA Says: Complete and utter crap.

MEGA Rating: 22%

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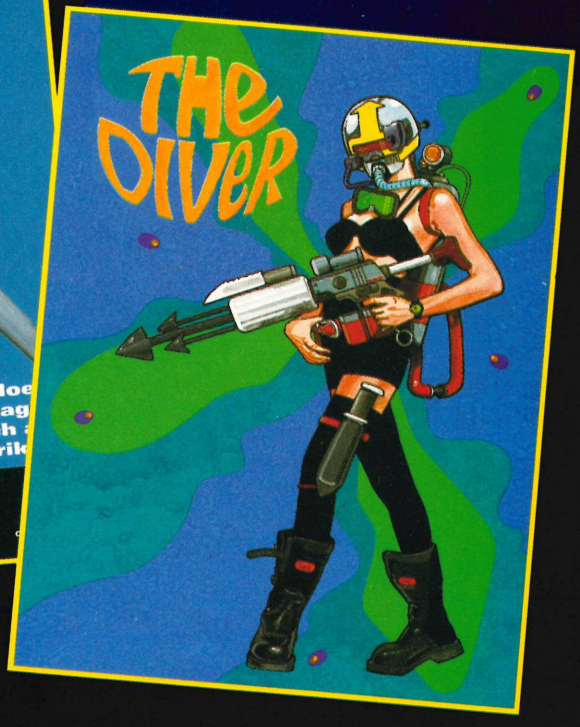
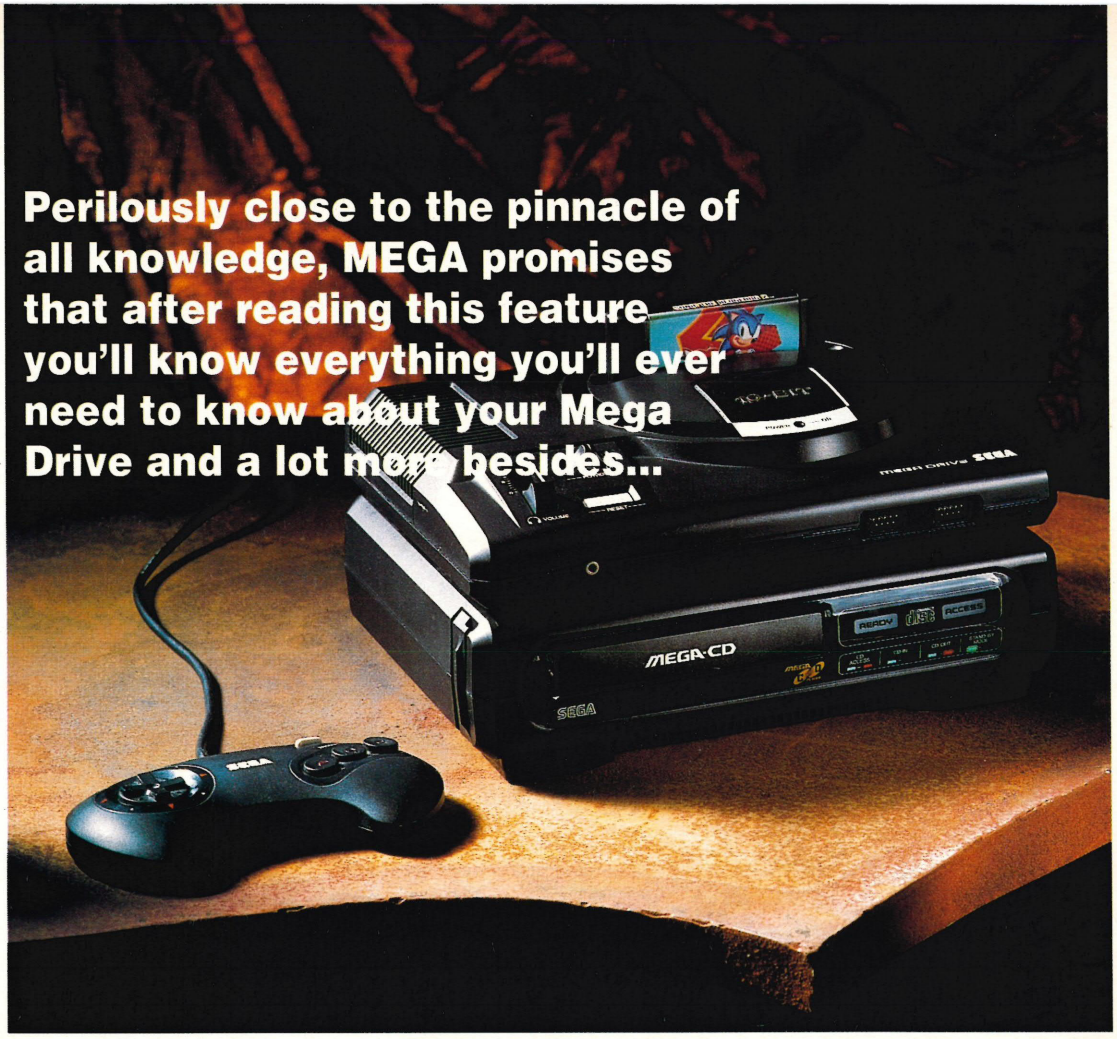


SEGA FACTS



Perilously close to the pinnacle of all knowledge, MEGA promises that after reading this feature you'll know everything you'll ever need to know about your Mega Drive and a lot more besides...

Your Mega Drive is a natty little machine which originates from Japan and which enables you to play video games on your TV screen. That much, most of the nation knows by now – thanks to £15 million worth of Sega advertising.

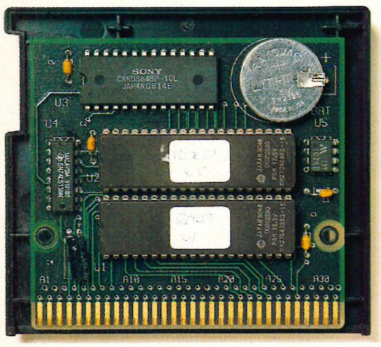
But once you start getting into Mega Drive gameplaying, things get a tad more complicated. For example, do you know the exact differences between an English, a Japanese and an American machine? Do you know what exactly the Mega CD is and how it will work? How exactly does a cartridge work for that matter? Do you even know what's inside a cartridge?

If you're new to the Mega Drive scene, then your answers to the above questions will probably be "no" or "not exactly sure". Well then, this feature is for you. It will tell you everything the manual which came with your machine should have told you but didn't (Sega Europe don't actually acknowledge the existence of imports, compatibility problems, TV systems or cheating devices).

If, on the other hand, you've had your Mega Drive for a while and reckon you know pretty much everything there is to know about it, then read on anyway. Even if you don't learn anything new (and we doubt that'll be the case), then you'll come out at the end of page 91 with that self-righteous glow of egotistical smart-arsedness.

You see. MEGA *can* please all of the people all of the time.

On with the questions...



Yes, this is what's inside a cart. See that thing on the left, that's, erm, a chip and that thing below it is, er, another chip. It's what's inside these chips that makes a game work

What's inside a game cartridge, exactly?

There's more to a cartridge (or cart for short) than meets the eye. Open it up and you'll see chips, solder and then some more chips. Hidden in these chips is the essential information that tells the Mega Drive the exact details of the game – all the info on how the game looks, what the characters look like, how many levels there are, and how the game plays.

How are carts different to the tapes or floppy disks that home computers use?

As well as the obvious differences in shape and appearance, carts and floppy disks do exactly the same job, but in different ways. "Loading" a game into a home computer transfers game data from the tape or cassette to memory chips inside the computer. Once the game has finished loading, the chips are ready to play the game. Consoles don't have such chips inside them, the pre-loaded chips are found inside the game carts. So plug a cart into a console and you're ready to play straight away.

Tapes were used in the old days of Spectrum and Commodore 64s, but computers now use floppy disks instead, because they can access information much faster and they are more reliable. Most people reckon that CDs will eventually replace both carts and disks as the most popular storage medium, because they're cheap to make, last for ages, and can store tons of information.

How much does a cartridge cost to make?

As you may remember from issue two of MEGA, the actual cost of manufacturing an average sized cartridge is around £9. This is just the price it costs to actually *make* (remember, it has memory chips inside), without any of the other overheads (such as programmer's wages and design costs).

Where are all the carts made?

This entire console business started in Japan, so it's not surprising that both Sega and Nintendo have most of their cartridge-making factories in their home countries. However, some of the larger games publishers (such as EA and Flying Edge) make their own carts – hence the peculiar yellow tabs on EA carts.

Master System: Not many colours, and not very good really

Mega Drive: Loads of colours, fab sound, and, ooh, loads more

Why can't Mega Drive carts work in a SNES?

Obvious? Maybe, maybe not. When you plug in a cart, it becomes an integral part of the console – like a missing jigsaw piece. Two different types of console will effectively be two different jigsaws, hence the piece won't fit. On a more technical level, the chips inside a cart look for certain things inside a console to make them work. Because the internal differences between a Mega Drive and a Super Nintendo are so great, the SNES would search a Mega Drive cart (assuming you could plug it in – the two systems use different connectors) for information, but look in the wrong place, ask the wrong questions and not understand what information the cart fed back even if it were to say anything. You simply can't just shove any old cart in one of the machines and expect it to work.

Why can't Mega Drive carts work in a Master System (albeit with slightly less complex graphics)? They're both Sega machines...

The Master System was the first Sega

What Sega's instruction book didn't tell you...

machine to be launched and uses old hat 8-bit technology. The Mega Drive uses spanking new 16-bit technology and so...

Hang on, hang on. What's all this 8-bit, 16-bit business then?

OK, this is a common way of describing how powerful (how fast) the console can process data – hence how quickly and detailed graphics can move. An 8-bit console (such as the Master System, the Game Gear or a Nintendo NES) can handle eight bits of information each "cycle", a 16-bit console can handle 16 bits – hence it is twice as fast. A useful analogy is comparing a 16-lane motorway to an-8 lane motorway – the larger the motorway, the more cars it can handle in the same amount of time.

Alright, so back to the Master System and Mega Drive. Isn't the Mega Drive just a quickened-up Master System?

No, the two machines differ greatly. The Mega Drive has all sorts of other clever chips and special devices that make it more than just twice as powerful as the Master System. You can buy a Master System convertor that lets you play Master System games on a Mega Drive, and this uses a process called backwards compatibility. Using some very clever architecture inside the machine and an adaptor, you can play Master System titles. All this device really does is ignore all the chips that make the Mega Drive so very different from the Master System, but there's no way Mega Drive carts could work on a Master System. A BMW is designed to do 120 mph but is happy cruising at 60mph but a Robin Reliant can only do 60 mph, no matter what sort of petrol you put in it. Now *there's* an analogy.

Here they are, the three different types of cart. As you can see, the English and American versions look the same

What is a Mbit?

You may have heard (or seen in MEGA) the word Mbit (Megabit) used a lot, but what does it actually mean? Well, the greater the number of Mbits (usually four, six or eight), the more memory the game uses. Put simply, the more Mbits, the bigger the game. Up until recently 8-Mbit carts were the norm (*Sonic, Thunder Force IV* etc.), but now Sega can make 16-Mbit carts. The first of these BIG carts to hit the shelves was *Streets of Rage 2*, a large beat-'em-up with some astounding sound. More memory though doesn't mean bigger games. With 16-Mbit carts you can now spend more time on graphics, animation and better sound. It's rumoured that *Street Fighter 2: Champions Edition* and *Streets Of Rage 3* will be 24-Mbit carts – now that's big.

Because console games are smaller in memory size than computer games (because they don't have to worry about a lot of the graphical workings – the console does it automatically without being told what to do) we use the term Mega*bits*. Computer games tend to be talked of in terms of Mega*bytes*. There are eight Megabits in a Megabyte, so a game like *Sonic* is equal to one Megabyte.

What does a battery back-up do?

A battery back-up is a battery that keeps a tiny part of a cart's memory operational even when it's not plugged into the console.This memory can then be used to save your position in a game and then enable you to restart the game at that point in the future.

This is of obvious benefit to large games (such as RPGs) and games that let you save your own personal scores and stats (such as *PGA Tour Golf*).

You can buy Japanese, USA and English Mega Drives. How can you tell which is which?

The first one to be launched, the Jap Mega Drive, is very recognisable because of its purple trim all over the place. The USA version (called Genesis) and the English Mega Drive look very similar and you can tell the difference only by the name on the front by the cartridge slot.

Which games work on which machines?

a) For Japanese machines – If you've bought a Jap Mega Drive, then you really don't have any problems with compatibility. The Jap cart slot is rounded to play

Turn Over

SEGA FACTS

Jap games. The Genesis and Mega Drive carts are squared at the edges, but they still fit into the slot.

b) For American machines – Getting hold of an American Genesis (they don't call it a Mega Drive) is tough in the UK, because they cost a bit more to import than Jap machines and the only advantage they offer over English machines is the fact that they run 20% faster (due to different TV signal standards between the two countries). The cart slot is the same shape, and so are the carts. You can buy a bridge adaptor that lets you shove Jap games in the top, thus giving you all-round compatibility.

c) For English machines – The official Mega Drive is the most popular one, but it looks just the same as the Genesis. You can play most American games on your English Mega Drive, but some are configured to run especially on the American TV systems and so don't work at all on English Mega Drives. One such game is *Speedball 2*. You need to check out the information

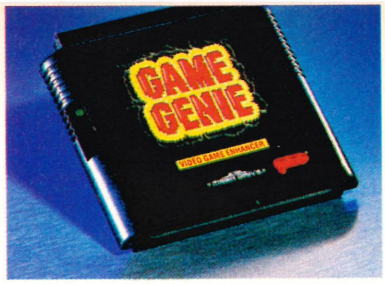
Well, we all own one of these, don't we? What do you mean NO?

on different TV systems in this feature to get the whole picture.

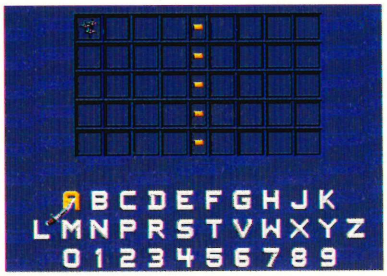
Note: With the introduction of Security Chips in games produced in one country, to stop them being played in another, the issue has now become very cloudy, although the above descriptions are up to date at the time of going to press. You'd be advised to take a look at the information on Security Chips that Sega are introducing into their software if you have any further queries.

Can you modify different machines to run all three sorts of games?

You can always file down the edges on a Genesis or English Mega Drive to fit Jap carts, but a bridge adaptor will do the same job without the fuss – and without invalidating your warranty. Running a Genesis in the UK is awkward because of different power supply standards and TV signal standards.



Finding your own codes is tough, but the results can be very funny



This is where you put in all those codes. You then press Start to see all those funny bits

Which machine does MEGA advise buying?

Although you can get a good import machine cheaper than an official one and with a guarantee, we have to recommend that you go for the official English Mega Drive. With all the problems concerning new security chips (see the next question) and the new Mega CD being compatible only with English Mega Drives, you'd be better off sticking with the official one – it's a lot less hassle all round.

What's all this security chip business then?

To stop the spread of imported carts and to split the world market into three sections, Sega are introducing Security Chips. These little extras, fitted into carts, detect what country's system you're running and whether the cart is an import or not. The first of these was *Thunderforce IV*. Try to run the Jap cart on an English machine and it won't load; you'll just get a message saying that the game is only meant to be played in Japan. You've been Security Chipped.

What are NTSC, SCART, PAL and what do they all mean?

These are three acronyms that are bandied around, and here's what they mean. The first thing you need to understand is that NTSC and PAL are TV systems and that SCART is a socket that lets you view the NTSC signal.

The NTSC system is used in Japan and America and works at a speed at 60hz, the PAL system is used in Europe and runs at 50hz. There are all sorts of other technical differences, but this is the most fundamental.

You can import Jap and American machines, but, unless you have them altered, you can only view the picture if your TV has a SCART socket. You can buy a SCART lead to work with the official Mega Drive, but this just gives you a slightly brighter picture.

Is it worth buying Sega gear direct from Japan or America if I get the chance?

It's worth buying things like carts (as long as you are sure they will work), but never buy machines, because different countries use different electrical systems and this can cause lots of problems. If you do want imported stuff, check with your friendly console dealer.

What's a cheating cartridge?

A cheating cart, such as the Game Genie or the Action Replay, is a great device. If you're having trouble getting far in a game or you want to make an easy game that little bit harder, then these are for you.

How do cheating devices work?

Slot a cheating cart into your Mega Drive, then put your game cart on top of that and switch on. You should see a code input screen. This is where you get the chance to input codes that will alter and tailor specific parts of the game. For example, you can change the number of lives your player has from three to 1000.

Which should I buy, the Pro Action Replay or the Game Genie?

This is a difficult question to answer, because they are both as good as each other in the things that they do.

The Pro Action Replay has the unique feature of allowing you to look for basic codes by yourself – you don't have to rely on codes from the manufacturers.

The Game Genie, however, is a bit different. Although you can't find your own codes as easily, the codes available from the manufacturers tend to be entertainingly strange or wacky (such as altering the height of your character's jump) as well as the usual infinite lives variety.

When you buy either cart, you'll get a code book featuring loads of games, and you'll be regularly updated on new codes. Buy a Game Genie, and you'll *also* be able to ring up a helpline if you get really stuck.

One thing worth noting is that these carts only affect the game while you're playing it. Turn it off and on again and the game will be back to normal.

The last time I got my hands on something that big I was.. (Snip)

What other add-ons can I get for my Mega Drive?

Ah, now there's a question. Add-ons can vary from the useful to the incredibly ridiculous. In issue two (if you haven't got a copy, get your back issue now – see page 80) we did a quick rundown of all the most popular add-ons, namely joysticks, joypads and things, but there are plenty of other things around.

What's The Menacer?

The latest addition to the add-on family is the Menacer, a light gun. A light gun is a device that enables you to aim and "shoot" objects on the screen in games like *Terminator 2*. How it works is kind of complicated, but here's an attempted explanation.

Your TV screen is updated (a new picture is shown) 50 times a second. The new screen doesn't just flash into existence, but each pixel (the dots that make up the picture) is changed in order. When you aim the Menacer at a point on the screen, the Menacer can detect when the pixel it's aimed at is updated.

And here we show the *amazing* differences between music and game CDs

This information is immediately fed back to the Mega Drive (by use of an infra-red transmitter and receiver). The Mega Drive knows which pixel (there are 71,680 in total) is being updated at which time, and so when it gets a message from the Menacer saying that the pixel it's pointed at has just been updated, it can work out which pixel the Menacer is pointed at. Follow this so far? Good, I'll continue.

If the Mega Drive knows which pixel the Menacer is aimed at (and this is

accurate to the nearest fiftieth of a second), then it's not too hard to draw a cross-hair or sight on screen at the relevant place and work out if the player is hitting or missing his targets. Easy.

The games at the moment aren't that good, with the exception of *Terminator 2*, but expect more in the future. If you fancy more information on the Menacer, read the special feature in issue four of MEGA (back issues available – page 80) or visit your local dealer.

What's a Master System convertor?

We mentioned the Master System Convertor before, and it really is quite an old piece of kit. The convertor sits on top of your Mega Drive, and you simply plug in your Master System cart and play using a conventional Mega Drive joypad. There are some really good Master System games, and the unit, priced at £30, is good value for money. This piece of hardware is ideal for someone who's upgraded from their Master System to a Mega Drive, but who can't sell all their games.

If I want another joypad or joystick, which should I buy?

We recommend the SG Pro Pad or the Competition Pro Series II. Either one is as good as the other. For you joystick fans, try the Intruder 3 – very useful with games like *Desert Strike* and *LHX Attack Chopper*. Give Quickshot a ring for more details – 081 365 1993. For the full report, get yourself a copy of issue two of MEGA.

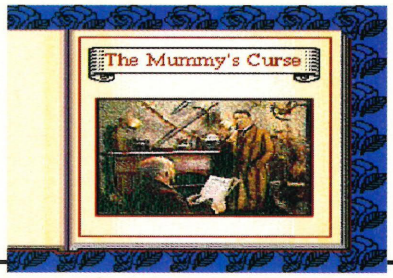
What is the Mega CD, exactly?

The Mega CD, the Sega CD, the Mega Drive CD ROM and the Mega CD ROM are all the same machine. People just call it by different names

The Mega CD was launched recently in Great Britain to the accompaniment of a huge TV advertising campaign (don't say you missed it – we won't believe you) at a price of £269.99. Included in the bundle comes copies of *Cobra Command*, *Sol Feace* and five Mega Drive games repressed onto CD (*Golden Axe*, *Streets Of Rage*, *Super Monaco GP*, *Revenge Of Shinobi* and *Columns*).

The Mega CD is an add-on to any existing Mega Drive, and it's NOT a new machine in itself. At the moment (Sega are currently redesigning it) it sits below your Mega Drive. The Mega CD basically turbocharges your Mega Drive, offering a whole new range of features, which include the following.

- Every single Mega Drive game ever released to date (and there's over 250 of them) could fit on a single CD easily. The Mega CD has immense storage capacity – 650 Megabytes of data on one single disk. Most Mega Drive games use just one Megabyte (8 Megabits = Megabyte) so the games could be huge.
- CDs cost less than £1 to manufacture, cartridges cost £10. So a drop in game prices is possible. But (and isn't there always a but?) because Mega CD games will take so long to develop, they'll probably end up costing the same.
- All Mega CD games will be "fingerprinted" with a special code, according to whether they are designed for use in Japan, the USA or Europe. If you try to use a CD outside its allocated area, it won't work. Sega 1:grey importers 0.
- The Mega CD is basically an entire computer in itself. A Motorola MC68000 Central Processing Unit running at an impressive 12.5 Mhz is the brains of the Mega CD. This is the same processor that controls the Mega Drive, though the Mega Drive runs at only 7.6 Mhz. The two chips work hand in hand; the CPU controls all the operations of the Mega CD, freeing the Mega Drive's CPU to get on with the business of running the game without interruption. So there's all this, as well as custom graphics chips for scrolling and scaling.
- Sega are reckoning on selling a Mega CD to 25% of all existing UK Mega Drive owners in 1993 alone – that's over 250,000 machines.
- Audio CDs play just as well as games. All the normal functions you'd expect on any half-decent CD player are there – you can program tracks, select random play and so on. Two phono jacks on the back of the machine allow you to link it up to a hi-fi and really give the neighbours something to complain about.
- The Mega CD has a couple of lights on the front, but nothing else. There are no controls, not a single button to press, on the outside of the unit. It's even switched on via the power button on top of the Mega Drive – everything is controlled via the joypad using a pointer system. You place the arrow over the various icons that appear on screen using Up, Down, Left and Right on the direction pad.
- Sounds. Theoretically, the compact disc could be used to play sampled sound effects too, but the laser pick-up head can't be in two places at once, and so to have both music and sound effects playing simultaneously, the Mega CD has a very powerful sound chip built into it. This chip provides eight channels of sound using a technique called Pulse Code Modulation (PCM for short). Compare this to the Mega Drive's three-channel chip and you can be sure that the Mega CD's sound will kick.
- CD loads data almost at the speed of light, but it's still not fast enough to load data and keep up with the gameplay. For this reason, 768K of buffer memory have been built in. The main core of the game is copied from the CD into this memory, along with the data for the current level. Additional levels are accessed when they're needed.
- The most exciting bits of hardware inside the Mega CD are two graphics' chips. The scaling chip allow images to be re-sized at a lightning fast pace to add perspective to games, while the rotation chip allows sprites to be rotated smoothly at any angle. All this is done under these chips' own power, freeing the processor even more to get on with the business of running the game code.
- The Mega CD can be used to play CD+G (Compact Disc + Graphics) disks. CD+G disks have video pictures stored on them which can be displayed on a TV while the music is being played. The CD+G format never really took off, and disks with such capability are rare – shame.



Sherlock Holmes opens his casebook for sleuthing Mega CD players

THE LATEST MEGA DRIVE ADD-ONS...

WHAT IS A CDX PRO?

So you've got a Mega Drive right, and you want a Mega CD, but you're not sure about compatibility. Well, the CDX Pro is here to solve all your problems. By putting the CDX Pro into your cartridge slot, you can use any combination of Mega Drive and Mega CD (as long as they been converted to run at the right TV system), and then play any version of software on them. Now you won't have to wait six month for the latest CD shoot-'em-up to be officially releasedbecause you can play the imported Japanese version (or American come to that) on your lovely official English system. Neat or what?

A very useful and easy-to-use CDX Pro -Yesterday

WHAT IS A MULTI-TAP?

Four (and indeed eight) player action ahoy!

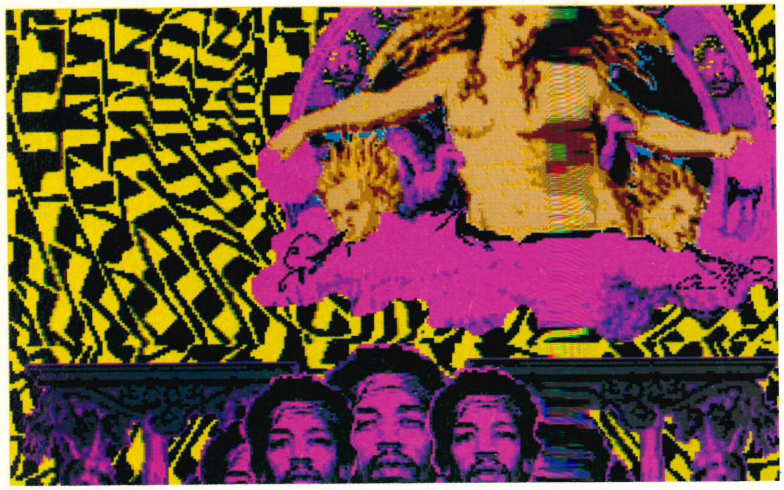
What's the future for video games? While everyone talks about CD's, rotation and scaling, and that sort of stuff, the multi-tap is here to bring a whole new meaning to the words multi-player. Plug the multi-tap into your joypad socket on your Mega Drive and you can now have up to four players taking part in a game at the same time. Software is already in developed to take advantage of the four player adaptor (games such as *Gauntlet* and *Ultimate Soccer*, which will use both joypad ports to bring you stonking eight-player action) and can you imagine a simultaneous four player game of *John Madden American Football*?

WHAT IS THE POINT OF A SIX BUTTON JOYPAD?

By adding buttons X, Y and Z to a normal Mega Drive joypad you may think Sega would be trying to rip you off and while everyone will initially buy a six button joypad to play *Street Fighter 2: Champion Edition*, it won't be an lost investment thanks to other software companies getting behind the idea. Using the six buttons to full effect, games like *International Rugby* from Domark and *Ultimate Soccer* from Sega will show us that's it not all for show and does have a use. And just think of games like *Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco Grand Prix 2*, where you can set all the buttons for the gears so that you can move quickly between them and not worry about any awkward control systems. The possibilities are endless and it's a definite step forward in Mega Drive gaming. It just means that Amanda will have to redesign out lovely Get-a-Grip thingy of a Sega joypad.

Not useless at all – Sega's new six button joypad

SEGA FACTS



CD graphics are fab and well groovy, so let's all get down and hang out with old Jimi Hendrix

But are the *games* any good?
They're getting better. Keep watching the review pages of MEGA.

What's a WonderMega then?
You may have also heard talk of a WonderMega. The WonderMega was launched in Japan in the summer of last year, and it is basically the result of a joint venture between Sega and JVC (called Victor JVC in Japan). This machine combines a normal Mega Drive and Mega CD in one nice compact little unit. However, because the machine was co-developed by JVC, it can also be used for karaoke and CD mixing, without adding any extra parts.

OK, so is a Mega CD (currently on sale at £269.99) worth the money?
This is a tough one to call. One the one hand, there's no denying that it is THE cool piece of kit to have nestling under your Mega Drive at the moment, but (so far) there hasn't been enough decent games to warrant spending such a large amount of money – we seriously recommend you trying the games for yourselves before parting with any cash.

Also, Sega are denying it but MEGA suspects that (exchange rate fluctuations permitting) there will be a fairly substantial price drop in the price of the Mega CD before Christmas – with the imminent arrival of the much cheaper to manufacture Mega CD 2, the emergence of competitive videogame systems, the force of tradition (when the Mega Drive was first launched in the UK it cost £199.99, within six months it was down to £149.99 – there's no reason why a similar fall shouldn't happen again) all the ingredients of a price fall are in place.

What's all this about a Mega Drive 2 and a new Mega CD?
After over two years on sale in the UK and after being available in Japan for over three years, the Mega Drive is to have a new shape, which according to Sega will be "smaller, sleeker and sexier". The new Mega Drive will be called the Mega Drive 2 (must have taken them AGES, to come up with that one). Don't worry though, it won't make the old Mega Drive obsolete, because the carts will still be the same. The big news, however, is that the Mega CD is also to be redesigned so that it fits on to the Mega Drive sideways, instead of underneath it. Obviously with over 1,200,000 old-style Mega Drives in the UK already, the new Mega CD will still be compatible with them, but it will also work with the new Mega Drive 2. As soon as we find out more, you can be sure we'll tell you.

What does the future hold?
You can listen to various rumours until you're blue in the face, but the fact is that nobody is really sure what the future will bring. Will the next generation be 32- or 64-bit? Will it still be compatible with the Mega Drive? Who knows.

The new machine will be launched in 1994 though, and it will most likely be a 32-bit machine. Don't get too excited, because nobody has seen it yet. In fact, nobody knows any details at all at the moment, but as soon as Sega want the world to know, we'll tell you.

***Secret Of Monkey Island* on the Mega CD is the first of a new generation**

JARGON BUSTER

Just in case you're still confused about some of the terms used in this feature, and throughout the rest of MEGA for that matter (and if you're new to the world of computer games, then there's no reason why you shouldn't be), here is a quick rundown of those all-important techie terms.

Software – Games, really. Not the cart (that's hardware), but the information written inside is software.

Hardware – The actual physical bits 'n' bobs that the computer and assorted add-ons are made of. Here's an analogy: your body is hardware, the thoughts inside your head are bits of software.

Mbit – Short for Megabit. This is a measurement of memory. Most games are 8Mbit (*Sonic*), but newer ones can be up to 16Mbit (*Streets of Rage 2*).

CD ROM – The CD stands for Compact Disc and the ROM stands for Read Only Memory. This means that the machine uses the CD for games. Simple really.

NTSC – An acronym for something, but I don't know what (Not The Same Channel, or something). The important thing, however, is that it refers to the Japanese and American TV systems.

PAL – Another acronym and I still don't know what it means. This is the European TV system.

SCART – This is an interface that allows for better audio and video picture quality.

Security Chips – Special chips used in finished games, that detect which machine you are using the game on and whether or not it is an import. If the game is an import, it won't run on the hardware.

RPG – This means role playing game. It's a game in which you take on the role of a character and interact with others on a quest.

Shoot-'em-up – Probably the most common type of game for the Mega Drive. The whole idea of the game is to shoot things. Usually written around a space/future scenario, these games, if done well, are essential purchases. They come in two main types; horizontal scrolling and vertical scrolling. Check entry on scrolling below for more information. *Hellfire* and *Aero Blasters* are two of the best shoot-'em-ups around.

Scrolling – Scrolling is simply the movement of a screen from one direction to another. Games like *Sonic* scroll in all directions, but things like *Hellfire* scroll horizontally left to right.

Parallax – This effect is used to add realism to games that scroll along. Parallax are layers (usually in the background) that move in relation to the action. If you're running through a street, the buildings will move past you faster than, say, a hill in the background.

Platform game (platformer) – Platform games are very popular and their name says it all. *Sonic* is a platformer (all those platforms you see) so is *Rainbow Islands*. These games also tend to star incredibly cute animals and things. Don't know why though.

Top-down – The action is viewed from above.

1-up – Simple, find one of these in a game, pick it up and you will miraculously get one extra life.

Continue – After you've used up all your lives and died, you may be able to carry on by using a continue – similar to the result of putting another coin in an arcade slot machine. Some games will allow you to continue from where you were, others will send you back to the start of the level.

Passwords – Large games that have stages use these so that you don't have to do a level all over again. *Lemmings*, with 180 levels, has a password for each level, so you can enter a password at the start of each fresh game session and start from wherever you left off.

Battery Back-Up – This is a battery inside your cartridge which stores information so that you can continue from where you last left the game. This is very useful, and you'll find the facility in role playing games more than in any other type of game

Power-ups – Fancy getting hold of some turbo-nutter galactic space weapon? First you've got to collect the power-ups. Used to best effect in shoot-'em-ups and platformers, they add another dimension to the game by enabling you to build up your ship's/character's weapons and/or strength as the game progresses. If you die having collected power-ups, however, you are usually put back to your original abilities when you continue.

Grey import – A grey import is a cart that has been imported from another country. They're called grey, because they are not official products.

Sprite – A sprite is a character on screen. Sonic is a sprite, all the players in *NHLPA Hockey* are sprites, but the ice rink isn't a sprite.

EDGE

There are much cheaper magazines.

Some have posters. Or stickers.

Some review every game good, bad or average.

Some are easy to get hold of, any time: they never sell out.

Edge isn't like that.

To be honest, **Edge** isn't for everyone.

Edge: decide for yourself.

EDGE

Thursday 19 August 1993

Aero Blasters, Afterburner 2, Air Diver, Aleste, Alex Kidd in the Enchanted Castle, Alien 3, Alien Storm, Alisia Dragoon, Altered Beast, Another World, Aquatic Games, Arch Rivals, Arcus Odyssey, Ariel The Mermaid, Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf, Arrow Flash, Art Alive, Assault Suit Leynos, Atomic Robokid, Atomic Runner, Axis FX, Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco GP 2, Back to the Future 3, Ball Jacks, Bart Versus The Space Mutants, Batman (The Original), Batman Returns, Batman: Return Of The Joker, Battle Golfer, Battle Master, Battle Squadron, Battletoads, Beast Warriors, Bimini Run, Blockout, Bio-Hazard Battle, Bonanza Bros., Buck Rogers "Countdown to Doomsday", Budokan, Bulls Versus Lakers, Burning Force, Cadash, Calibre .50, California Games, Captain America and the Avengers, Castle Of Illusion (starring Mickey Mouse), Centurion: Defender of Rome, Chakan, Championship Pro Am, Chiki Chiki Boys, Chuck Rock, Clue, Columns, Cool Spot, Corporation, Crackdown, Crüe Ball, Curse, Cyberball, Cyborg Justice, Dangerous Seed, Darius 2: Sagaia, Dark Castle, Darwin 4081, David Robinson Basketball, Deadly Moves (Power Athlete), Death Duel, Decap Attack, Desert Strike, Devil Crash, Devilish, Dick Tracy, Dino Land, Dinosaurs For Hire, DJ Boy, Dodgeball, Double Clutch, Double Dragon, Double Dragon 2, Dragon's Fury, Dynamite Duke, EA Hockey, Earnest Evans, Ecco The Dolphin, El Viento, Elemental Master, ESWAT, European Club Soccer, Evander Holyfield's Real Deal Boxing, Ex-Mutants, Exile, F-22 Interceptor, F1 Circus, F1 Grand Prix, Faery Tale Adventure, Fantasia, Fastest One, Fatal Fury, Fatal Labyrinth, Fatal Rewind, Fatman (Slaughter Sport - Mondu's Fight Palace), Ferrari Formula One Grand Prix, Fighting Masters, Final Blow, Fire Fight, Fire Shark, Fire Mustang, Flashback, Flicky, Flintstones, Forgotten Worlds, G-Loc, Gadget Twins, Gaiares, Gain Ground, Galahad, Galaxy Force 2, Games – Winter Challenge, Gemfire, George Foreman's KO Boxing, Ghostbusters, Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, Gley Lancer, Global Gladiators, Gods, Golden Axe, Golden Axe 2, Granada X, Grand Slam Tennis, Great Waldo Search, Greendog, Growl (RunArk), Gynoug, Hard Drivin', Hardball, Hardball 3, Heavy Nova, Heavy Unit, Hellfire, Herzog Zwei, Hit The Ice, Home Alone, Humans, Immortal, Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade, Insector X, Ishido: The Way of the Stones, It Came From The Desert, Jack Nicklaus Golf, James 'Buster' Douglas Boxing, James Bond: The Duel, James Pond, James Pond 2 – Robocod, Jerry Glanville's Pigskin Footbrawl, Jewel Master, Joe Montana 3, Joe Montana 2 – Sports Talk Football, Joe Montana Football, John Madden Football, John Madden Football '92, John Madden Football '93, Jordan vs Bird, Junction, Jungle Strike, Ka-ge-ki (Fists of Steel), Kid Chameleon, King Salmon, King Of The Monsters, King's Bounty, Klax, Krusty's Super Fun House, Lakers Versus Celtics, Last Battle, Lemmings, LHX Attack Chopper, Lotus Turbo Challenge, M1 Abrams Battle Tank, Marble Madness, Mario Lemieux Hockey, Marvel Land, Master of Monsters, Mega Games 1, Mega Panel, Mega-Lo-Mania, Mercs, Micro Machines, Midnight Resistance, Mig 29, Might And Magic, Mike Ditka Power Football, Monopoly, Monster Lair, Moonwalker, Ms. Pacman, Muhamad Ali Boxing, Musha Aleste, Mutant League Football, Mystic Defender, Mystical Fighter, 1943, New Zealand Story, NHLPA Hockey, Olympic Gold, Onslaught, Out Run, Outrun 2019, Outlander, Pac-Mania, Paperboy, Paperboy 2, PGA Tour Golf, PGA Tour Golf 2, Phantasy Soldier 3, Phantasy Star 2, Phantasy Star 3, Phelios, Pit Fighter, Populous, Power Athlete, Power Monger, Powerball, Predator 2, Pro Quarterback, Quackshot, Quad Challenge (Four Trax), Raiden Trad, Rainbow Islands, Rambo 3, Rampart, Rastan Saga 2, RBI 3 Baseball, RBI 4 Baseball, Revenge Of Shinobi, Rings of Power, Ringside Angel, Risky Woods, Road Blasters, Road Rash, Road Rash 2, Rolling Thunder 2, Rolo To The Rescue, 688 Attack Sub, Saint Sword, Shadow Blasters, Shadow Dancer, Shadow of the Beast, Shadow Of The Beast 2, Shining In The Darkness, Shining Force, Shove It: The Warehouse Game, Side Pocket, Slaughter Sport, Smash TV, Sonic 2, Sonic The Hedgehog, Space Harrier 2, Space Invaders '91, Speedball 2, Spiderman, Splatterhouse 2, Sports Talk Baseball, Star Control, Star Flight, Star Cruiser, Steel Empire, Steel Talons, Stormlord, Street Smart, Streets Of Rage, Streets Of Rage 2, Strider, Strider 2, Summer Challenge, Sunset Riders, Super Airwolf (Cross Fire), Super Battletank, Super Fantasy Zone, Super Hang-On, Super High Impact, Super HQ, Super Hydlide, Super Kick-Off, Super League Baseball, Super Monaco G.P, Super Off Road Racer, Super Real Basketball, Super Real Volleyball, Super Thunderblade, Superman, Sword of Sodan, Sword Of Vermillion, Tale Spin, Talmit's Adventure, Task Force Harrier FX, Taz-Mania, Team USA Basketball, Technocop, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Terminator, Terminator 2, Test Drive 2, Tetris, Thunder Fox, Thunder Pro Wrestling, Thunderforce 2, Thunderforce 3, Thunderforce 4, Tiger Heli, Tiny Toon Adventures, Todd's Adventures in Slime World, Toejam And Earl, Toki, Tora! Tora!, Toxic Crusaders, Trampoline Terror, Traysia, Trouble Shooter, Truxton, Turbo Out Run, Turrican, Twin Cobra, Twin Hawk, Twinkle Tale, Two Crude Dudes, Ultimate Tiger, Undeadline, Universal Soldier, Valis 3, Vapor Trail, Verytex, Volfied (Ultimate Qix), Wani Wani World, Wardner, Wardner Special, Warrior of Rome (Ambition of Ceaser), Warrior of Rome 2, Warriors of the Eternal Sun, Warsong, Wheel of Fortune, Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?, Where In The World Is Carmen San Diego?, Whip Rush, Wonderboy 3, Wonderboy 5: Monsterworld, World Class Leaderboard, World Cup '92, World Cup Italia '90, World Of Illusion, World Trophy Soccer, Wrestle War, WWF Super Wrestlemania, X-Men, XDR, Xenon 2, Y's 3: Wanderers from Y's, Zany Golf, Zero Wing, Zoom